

**3rd SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON ORGANIC FARMING – PRAGUE, CULS – 14 - 15.11. 2011**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Scientific Conference on Organic Farming, which took place on 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011 on the premises of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Suchbátka, Prague, focused on the presentation of current findings in science and research in the field of organic agriculture for the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The conference continued the tradition of previous Scientific Conferences organised by Bioinstitut, o.p.s., in Lednice na Moravě in 2008 and 2009. The conference was arranged on the premises of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague by the **Czech Technology Platform on Organic Agriculture** in cooperation with **Felicius** public benefit company, under the expert patronage of **IFOAM EU Group**.

**Specialist partners** of the Conference: Bioinstitut, TP Organics - European technology platform for organic farming, Palacky University Olomouc CZ, CULS - Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. **Cooperating companies:** Bioforsk, Bioinstitut CZ, Bio Forschung Austria, FiBL International, Institute of Chemical Technology Prague, ISOFAR, Leibniz – ZALF Münchenberg DE, Czech Agrarian Chamber, Federation of the Food and Drink Industries of the Czech Republic, PRO BIO Association of Organic Farmers; other **partners** of the Conference included Hipp Group, Sonnentor, ProfiPress, and Bioškoly (Organic Schools) project

**The Conference was held under the patronage of Ing. Petr Bendl, the Czech Minister of Agriculture and the Czech Ministry of the Environment.**

*Scientific Committee*

Chair: Prof. Dr. Ing. Bořivoj Šarapatka, CSc.  
Members: Dr. Karin Stein - Bachinger  
Ing. Jana Hajšlová, CSc.  
Dr. Bernhard Kromp  
Doc. Ing. Miloš Michlovský, DrSc.  
Dipl. Ing. Agr. ETH Otto Schmid  
Atle Wibe Ph.D.

*Organizing Committee*

Chair: Ctirad Hemelík  
Members: Ing. Perla Kuchtová Ph.D.  
Mgr. Pavlína Samsonová  
Ing. Zdeněk Stehno, CSc.  
Ing. Jiří Urban  
Gabriela Kolářová

146 people registered for the Scientific Conference, of which 35 applied for active participation. Of this number, the reviewers recommended 25 contributions for presentation. The organizers asked another 8 speakers to participate. Of the active contributions, 17 were from the Czech Republic, 4 from Poland, 2 from Ukraine, 1 from Hungary and 1 from Romania.

**Czech institutions** were represented by authors' groups from universities – Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague; Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague; Charles University in Prague; Palacky University Olomouc CZ; University of South Bohemia (USB) in České Budějovice CZ; and research institutions - CzechGlobe - Global Change Research Centre AS CR v.v.i.; Crop Research Institute v.v.i. CZ; AGRITEC, Research, Breeding & Services, Ltd.

**Foreign institutions:**

Poland: Institute of Plant Protection – NRI - Poland; Institute of Natural Fibres & Medicinal Plants - Poland; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland.

Ukraine: National University of Life and Environmental Sciences - Ukraine; Institute of Agroecology and Natural Resources Use; Association of Agroecologists of Ukraine.

Hungary: Corvinus University of Budapest - Department of Food Engineering – Hungary.

Romania: University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine.

Of a total 146 people who registered, the conference was attended by 110 participants from nine countries (CZ, PL, UA, HU, RU, GB, AT, AL, DE). The largest group of researchers (almost 30 people) came from Poland thanks to the Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego w Brwinowie, which organised a group trip with the support of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture. Passive participants included not only representatives of specialist institutions, research institutes and universities, but also representatives of companies, trading associations and governmental bodies.

**Czech participants:** AGRITEC Research, Breeding & Services, Ltd.; Czech Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection; PLA Křivoklátsko Administration; BEMAGRO, a.s.; Billa, spol. s r.o.; bio nebio s.r.o.; Bioinstitut, o.p.s.; Bionea-school catering s.r.o., bioprodejny s.r.o. organic shops; COOP Centrum; Country Life; COUNTRY LIFE s.r.o.; CULS; Dema, a.s.; dm drogerie markt s.r.o.; eBIONeta s.r.o.; Ekofarma Deblín (organic farm); Ekologie na zeleno (Green Ecology); European Commission; Felicius o.p.s.; Fosfa a.s.; Green Garden, s.r.o.; HiPP Czech;

Hop Research Institute s. r. o.; Ing. Eva Přibíková, CSc. – consultancy on agriculture and organic farming; IS Kopanice and the White Carpathians PRO-BIO RC; University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice; CzechGlobe - Global Change Research Centre AS CR v.v.i., Crop Research Institute v.v.i.; CULS - Department of Information Technologies in Prague; LUMO natur s.r.o.; MauMau; Mendel University in Brno, Faculty of Agronomy, Zemědělská 1, 613 00 Brno; MF DNES; Miko Káva, fair trade; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of the Environment; Barták's Pot Endowment Fund; NAVITA a.s.; PRO-BIO League; PRO-BIO RC White Carpathians; PRO BIO Association of Organic Farmers; PRO-BIO Trading Company Ltd.; Bio monthly magazine; Sedium RD s.r.o.; SEMIX PLUSO, spol. s r.o.; SONNENTOR s.r.o.; State Phytosanitary Administration; State Agricultural Intervention Fund; student of CULS - Faculty of Agrobiography, Food and Natural Resources – Organic Farming Course; Union of Oilseed Growers and Processors; Templar Wine Cellars of Čejkovice; Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture; Charles University Environment Center; Palacky University in Olomouc; Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information; Vaševěc.cz portal ; VITAMINÁTOR s.r.o.; Institute of Chemical Technology Prague; Crop Research Institute v.v.i.;

**Foreign participants:** Albanian Association of Organic Horticulture - Bioplant Albania ( AAOH Bioplant Albania) - Albania; FIBL – Austria; BAF - Austria; Corvinus University of Budapest, Department of Food Engineering - Hungary; ÖMKI, Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture - Hungary; Institut of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute in Puławy, POLAND; Institute of Agricultural and food Economics – National Research Institute - Poland; Institute of Natural Fibres and Medicinal Plants - Poland; Institute of Plant Protection - NRI - Poland; IUNG - PIB - Poland; National Research Institute of Animal Production in Cracow, Poland - Poland; Research Institute of Horticulture - Poland; State Higher Vocational School in Krosno - Poland; University of Life Sciences in Lublin - Poland; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland - Poland; Warsaw University of Life Sciences - SGGW - Poland; Uniwersytet Przyrodniczo Humanistyczny - Polska; University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj - Napoca Romania - Romania; Institute of Agroecology and Natural Resources Use; Association of Agroecologists of Ukraine - Ukraine; National University of Life and Environmental Sciences - Ukraine; University of Newcastle - GB; ZALF - Germany.

The conference was held in English with translation to Czech. Proceedings of contributions were issued on a CD.

The first day of the conference was opened by Prof. **Bořivoj Šarapatka** – Chair of the Scientific Committee; an introductory word was given by CULS Chancellor, Prof. **Jiří Balík**, who also congratulated Prof. Ing. **Jiří Petr**, Dr.Hc. on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. In his speech Prof. **Petr**, the doyen of organic farming research in the Czech Republic, summarized the history of education in this field and mentioned some results of his research. MoA representative **Jan Gallas** informed the conference of current statistical data and of the main aims of the Czech Action Plan for OF Development between 2011 and 2015.

**Prof. Carlo Leifert** from Newcastle University devoted his talk to the advantages of organic farming. He stated that conventional agriculture will one day be limited by the cost of energy needed to produce synthetic fertilizer and pesticides, as well as the lack of phosphorus. In the next part of his contribution Prof. Leifert introduced the results of project QLIF (Quality Low Input Food) focusing on the quality of organic food. Food safety was another important part of the project presented by Prof. Leifert. Prof. **Jana Hajšlová** from Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague, who specializes in food safety, introduced a new scientific method, so-called Metabolomic Fingerprinting, for identifying the quality of organic food. In her contribution she also referred to the “myth” of organic food mycotoxin contamination which is often misinterpreted in the media.

In the next part of the conference scientific contributions were presented by their authors:

**Charles University:** Zvěřinová, I., Urban, J., Ščasný, M.: Why do Czech consumers purchase organic foods?

**Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics - NRI, Poland:** Żekało, M.: Cost competitiveness of selected agricultural products on conventional and organic farms in Poland.

**Palacky University Olomouc:** Šarapatka, B., Čížková, S.: The influence of various grass communities in organic farming on selected soil characteristics with emphasis on carbon.

The first day of the Conference was concluded with a **poster section** presenting 20 groups of authors from the following institutions:

CULS Prague; University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice CZ; Institute of Chemical Technology Prague; Global Change Research Centre AS CR v.v.i.; Crop Research Institute v.v.i. CZ; AGRITEC, Research, Breeding & Services, Ltd.; University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary - Poland; Institute of Plant Protection – NRI - Poland; National University of Life and Environmental Sciences - Ukraine; Institute of Natural Fibres & Medicinal Plants - Poland; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland; Corvinus University of Budapest - Department of Food Engineering - Hungary; Institute of Agroecology and Natural Resources Use, Association of Agroecologists of Ukraine.

The second day of the Conference was opened by Ing. Jiří Urban (CTPOA, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture) with a contribution entitled “Czech organic farming research in 2010 and a vision for OF research for Eastern Europe”. Cooperation between farmers, producers, retail, and research plays a key role in the development of the OF field and CTPOA activities are a good contribution to such cooperation. CTPOA members have prepared a vision of organic farming until 2025, creating a long-term perspective of research needs in OF and the food-production system. Ing. Petr Dvořák PhD. (CULS) presented “Findings on organic potato-growing”.

“Growing winter oilseed rape under organic conditions” was the title of a contribution by Josef Škeřík (Union of Oilseed Growers and Processors).

In the concluding part of the Conference Ing. Jiří Urban opened a **discussion** on the concept of the Conference, which aims to present research results in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. A representative of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Hungary appreciated the quality of contributions and emphasized the importance of sharing efforts and work results. Several people mentioned that organic farming offers a number of effective methods to fight degradation of natural resources. Implementation of effective environmental measures, a complex approach, enhancing the role of organic farming within a sustainable rural development, more effective communication with farmers, and developing practical knowledge of environment-friendly agricultural methods – these are recommendations which were emphasised during the Conference.

Participants were acquainted with the new Czech Action Plan for OF Development, which aims to achieve a 15% OF share in agriculture and at least 60% Czech organic production by 2015.

### BIOSUMMIT 2011 CONFERENCE

The Scientific Conference was followed by the Biosummit 2011 conference, held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011 on the prestigious premises of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. This conference enabled the exchange of experience between key politicians, businesspeople, agricultural organisations and other involved organisations, and opened issues of quality of organic produce, significance of organic farming for rural development and environmental protection, and also the role of organic farming in the new EU Common Agricultural Policy. Besides this discussion the speakers focused on dispelling myths and misinformation relating to organic farming, which appear in the media.

The main speakers included **Vlasta Parkanová**, Vice-Chair of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic; **Petr Bendl**, Minister of Agriculture; **Tomáš Tesař**, Deputy Minister of the Environment; as well as **Bořivoj Šarapatka** (Subcommittee for the Protection on Nature and Landscape under the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic); **Carlo Leifert** (University of Newcastle); **Karin Stein-Bachinger** (ZALF Germany); **Jiří Urban** (Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture, CTPOA); **Jana Hajšlová** (Institute of Chemical Technology Prague); **Ctirad Hemelík** (Felicius); professional organisations were represented by **Zdeněk Perlinger** (PRO-BIO Association of Organic Farmers); **Miroslav Toman** (Federation of the Food and Drink Industries of the Czech Republic); **Martin Fantyš** (Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic); the invitation was also accepted by heads of successful companies – **Stefan Hipp** of Hipp baby food and **Johannes Gutmann** of Sonnentor organic produce.

A repeated question during the conference was about whether organic methods aren't wasteful in a time when the global population is growing and needs to be “fed,” and in a time of economic crisis. There was ample opportunity to explain that organic farming now achieves high productivity and adequate yield and shouldn't be an exclusive method for a small percentage of enthusiasts, but rather an accepted method of standard agrarian politics.

The growing demand for organic produce is proof that consumers are following a healthier lifestyle. Customers' interests, however, are much wider: from trying to obtain the tastiest foods, to participating in the protection of the environment and landscape. The purchase of one organic product means support for the whole system of economical processing considerate to nature and natural resources. Not to mention the evident advantages of better flavour, increased nutritional value of organic foods or the absence of pesticide residues. Biosummit brought many impulses, not only for participants in panel discussions, but primarily for practitioners. The public also has much to consider, as a healthier attitude to the environment gives room for a healthier lifestyle, to which more and more people are subscribing. The situation on the organic market and the sustainability of organic farming in Western Europe is proof that this branch can successfully prosper not only in its relationship with the environment and humans, but also in the field of business and trade. Organic farming is a modern field which has many supporters, both among farmers and among consumers.

According to Ministry of Agriculture statistics, in August 2011 the number of certificated organic farms in the Czech Republic reached 4,022, organic foods are processed in 650 companies and the acreage of organically farmed land increased to 11.4% of total agricultural land in the Czech Republic. These figures put the Czech Republic among the leaders in the EU, but foods of organic quality make up only 1.2% of total food production. More than half of organic foods are imported. The situation should be improved by the new Action Plan of the Czech Republic for the

development of organic agriculture, according to which the OF share should increase to 15% and Czech organic food production should increase to 60% by the year 2015.

In the past, Biosummit focused only on marketing organic foods, so it must have come as a surprise for many people that there was also discussion on other themes, especially regarding CAP reforms. The questions covered food quality, food safety, the relationship with the environment, as well as the theme of subsidies for organic farmers.

Biosummit 2011 was **organised by: Subcommittee for the Protection on Nature and Landscape under the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Czech Technology Platform for Organic Farming and Felicius o.p.s. Specialist Partners** of the Conference were Bioinstitut, European TP Organics, IFOAM EU Group, Palacky University Olomouc, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Czech Agrarian Chamber, Czech Federation of the Food and Drink Industries, PRO-BIO Association of Organic Farmers. **Cooperating institutions:** Bioforsk, Bioinstitut CZ, Bio Forschung Austria, FiBL International, Institute of Chemical Technology Prague, ISOFAR, ZALF MÜNCHENBERG DE. **Partners of the Conference:** Hipp Group, Sonnentor s.r.o., ProfiPress, and Bioškoly (Organic Schools).

***Patronage of Biosummit was accepted by the Chair of Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, Miroslava Němcová, the Minister of Agriculture, Petr Bendl, and the Czech Ministry of the Environment.***

A total of 162 people from nine countries registered for Biosummit, (CZ, PL, UA, HU, RU, GB, AT, AL, DE). The largest group of researchers (almost 30 people) came from Poland thanks to Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego w Brwinowie, which organised a group trip with the support of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture. Passive participants included not only representatives of specialist institutions, research institutes and universities, but also representatives of companies, trading associations and governmental bodies.

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## ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

### **Press conference (15.11. 2011, Chamber of Deputies)**

The press conference was attended by: Johannes Gutmann, Bořivoj Šarapatka, Carlo Leifert, Karin Stein-Bachinger, Jana Hajšlová, Ctirad Hemelík, Jan Gallas, Martin Fantyš, Kateřina Nesrstová, Eugenie Linková

### **Guided tours of Prague**

On Monday afternoon, guided “Prague walks” were prepared for conference participants.

### **Festive conclusion of both Conferences**

A closing evening was held on Tuesday in Malostranská beseda.

### **Best PRO-BIO Organic Outlet**

Within the closing evening, PRO-BIO Association of Organic Farmers announced the winner of their competition for the best organic retail outlet of the year. Congratulations to Natural Centrum in Jihlava.

### **PRESS COVERAGE**

Agronavigator.cz, Bio&Natur, Bioměsíčník, Euro, Farmář, Hospodářské noviny, Zemědělec, Agris.cz, Agrovenkov.cz, Agroweb.cz, Bezpecnostpotravin.cz, Bioklub.cz, Biospotřebitel.cz, Businessinfo.cz, ČRo - Radio Česko, ČRo Regina, ČT 24, Eagri.cz, Ecomonitor.cz, Econnect.cz, Ekolist.cz, Enviweb.cz, Euro, Gastroplus.cz, Hospodářské noviny, Iprosperita.cz, Ispigl.eu, Kisjk.cz, Krmivarstvi.cz, Kurzy.cz, Life.iHned.cz, Makrobiotika.info, Mujzpravodaj.cz, Potravinářská revue, Potravinářský zpravodaj, Úroda, Zemědělec.

### **EVALUATION**

Both conferences achieved their intended requirements and aims. The Scientific Conference presented the latest research in organic farming via 25 contributions and 8 requested papers by participants from 7 countries. Biosummit offered space for discussion and debate for the target groups – scientists, politicians, traders and the specialist public. This year's conferences showed that the OF sector and related parties are interested in such events and that they are a great benefit to all participants including consumers. However, for future events it will be necessary to ensure more support from both state and private sectors. Thanks to this event we managed to emphasize the importance of cooperation and communication in supporting organic farming and organic food production in the common agricultural policy.