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Designing Inspection Worksheets for Greater Impact



By Alice Varon

Time and again we hear from farmers that what they value about participating in Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) is the peer-inspections - the opportunity (or rather, requirement) to have one's own farm operation reviewed by another farmer. Inspections serve several purposes. Certainly they must verify that the certification standards are being met. But in a PGS they are also valuable learning opportunities for the farmer being inspected, and often for the inspector as well. Ideally inspections will support farmers' ongoing efforts to improve their operation's sustainability. And typically they'll strengthen social connections that support farmers' prospects for success.

This spring we re-vamped our inspection forms. The changes we made were designed to enhance the likelihood we'd meet these objectives and maximize the benefits of the peer-inspection process.

Improvements include the following:

- A section dedicated to sustainability goals, which creates a space for the farmer and inspector to discuss and explore efforts to go beyond the baseline certification requirements
- The Summary Inspection Report (posted to each farm's public online profile) now includes space for inspectors to record highlights, and for the farmer to report on their own sustainability goals
- A section for notes on recommended corrective actions with suggested timelines, to help ensure constant improvement
- More guidance on the CNG standards throughout, and clearer instructions for the inspection process
- A new section to record Farm Inputs
- A new format that more clearly indicates the inspector's qualifications to conduct an inspection.

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You can view the revised inspection forms online for [Produce](#) and [Livestock](#). Before we announced the new inspection forms, they were given a test-run by the [Georgia Mountains Farmers Network \(GMFN\)](#) during a recent gathering.

We feel good about these changes, and in the spirit of constant improvement, expect to make more in the coming years. Feel free to contact CNG via [e-mail](#) or visit its [website](#) with your questions, feedback and suggestions. Just as one farmer can learn from another, so can one PGS learn from another!

For more information: www.facebook.com/CNGfarming.



Chuck Taylor and members of the GMFN test run the new forms

Participatory Guarantee System meets Community Supported Agriculture in Milano next October

By the [International network of CSA](#)

From 10 to 12 October this year, a meeting will be held to identify a shared vision for food distribution systems committed to Food Sovereignty in Europe, to define future thematic focuses and to develop an organizational structure for a new European platform. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movements in Europe want to create a decentralized platform, where experience sharing between food distribution projects can happen independently from any central institution.

This meeting will be the follow-up process of the Nyeleni Forum in Krems focusing on the Axis 2 of the Action Plan, “Changing how Food is Distributed”. As part of the European movement for Food Sovereignty, the CSAs are indeed increasingly exploring the PGS model, as an alternative guarantee process that is developed and owned by the community of farmers themselves, in association with supporting consumers. Indeed, a recurring debate within the CSA movements is whether consumers really require the “formal certificate” for organic assurance, or whether trust grows with relationships when it comes to direct marketing in small communities.

Most PGS projects have some documentation, but their touchstone is farmer integrity and trust between farmers and their customers. Shared goals are to empower even the poorest and smallest-scale farmers to become active contributors to and beneficiaries of local sustainable development, and to offer continuous education to farmers and other stakeholders in the system.

CSA is a connection between a nearby farmer and the people who eat the food that the farmer produces, summed up as “food producers + food consumers + commitment to one another = CSAs and untold possibilities.”¹ In CSA, the consumers have a trust relationship with the farmers and cooperate in the planning and marketing of the produce to meet the food needs of the community involved. CSAs work well where there is a close proximity between the farmers and consumers, and when both consumers and producers are able to commit their time, resources and efforts to support one another.

Thus, PGS and CSA are similar in their overall objectives of betterment of livelihoods of organic farmers and improved access to safe food. According to some in the CSA movement, PGS could be a pedagogical tool, to make sure that the goals and principles of CSA are well understood and shared among stakeholders. In an ever-expanding movement, where there is a continuous danger of confusion between direct marketing models, PGS is an excellent tool for awareness-raising among CSA members.

During the meeting in Milano, on the basis of the experience already gathered in several countries, the participants will reflect on how PGS models have been adapted within the CSA concept. They will also consider an action plan to develop PGS models further.

For more information and for registration to the European meeting of CSA movements, visit this [link](#).

1 Source: Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En, 2007, *Sharing the Harvest*.

News from the Global Comparative Study on Interactions Between Social Processes and PGS



By Hervé Bouagnimbeck

In the last issue of this newsletter we announced the training of local researchers and the start of the data collection from the PGS Rede Ecovida de Agroecologia, in Brazil.

We are pleased to report that the training has been successfully conducted from July 3 to 4 in Passo Fundo. The training was held at the head office of Centro de Tecnologias Alternativas Populares (CETAP), an NGO that has been working together with the producers for the implementation of the Ecovida PGS in this area. During the training, the researchers and trainer discussed about the activities of CETAP and the development of Ecovida. They also addressed areas

of the survey such as roles and responsibilities of local researchers and IFOAM, the content and use of the guiding questions and other tools for data collection, how to select respondents, and logistics, among others.

The data collection took place from July 5 to 13. The researchers had the possibility to carry out interviews with representatives from CETAP and to conduct in-depth interviews with producers that are part of the PGS groups in of Planalto and Alto Uruguai.

We are very grateful to Alvir Longhi and all the CETAP staff for their valuable contributions and support before and during the training as well as during the data collection.

For more information about Ecovida, please visit this [link](#).

Marc Lewis replaces Konrad Hauptfleisch in the IFOAM PGS Committee

One year after Alice Varon, from Certified Naturally Grown, USA, was nominated as the successor of Ron Khosla, a second change to the IFOAM PGS Committee originally nominated by the IFOAM Executive Board (EB) in 2009 is taking place.

This year in March, we launched a call for a volunteer to replace exiting PGS Committee member Konrad Hauptfleisch. After a review of the applications and the decision of the IFOAM EB, Marc Lewis has been nominated

as the new member of the PGS Committee.



Marc Lewis from South Africa

Marc is completing a postgraduate research degree at the Institute for Land, Poverty and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The focus of his research is on urban and peri-urban agriculture in Johannesburg, with an emphasis on organic and agroecological

farming practices. His background in organic agriculture includes extensive experience working with grass roots

organizations in Africa and India, having volunteered for Navdanya and Ecosphere, assisting with organic farming development and promotion of sustainable livelihood strategies.

With regard to PGS-related work experience, Marc has been involved with the Bryanston Natural and Organic Market's PGS for the past two and a half years. This was the first operational PGS in South Africa, set up in 2005 with Konrad Hauptfleisch's help and managed by him until he took on his current position in IFOAM as Academy Manager. Therefore, there is an interesting continuity between Marc and Konrad, as with Alice's replacement of Ron in 2011.

Marc is also one of the researchers in charge of completing the South African component of the Global comparative study on PGS and social processes currently being implemented by IFOAM and coordinated by Hervé Bouagnimbeck (see above).

We welcome Marc on board and look forward to fresh insights on PGS from the African continent, as well as supporting him in engaging further within the PGS global network.

Consumers and farmers cooperating in Korea: Hansalim

With contributions from Kim Sang Chae, Manager of Quality Manager Team of Hansalim and Mathew John, member of the IFOAM World Board and of the IFOAM PGS Committee

The organic sector has been developing steadily in the Republic of Korea, in the past 30 years. Official intervention contributed to it from the end of 1990s, especially with the adoption in December 1997 of the 'Environmental Friendly Agriculture Promotion Act - EFAPA' (code 5442). The legal framework in the country allows only for third-party certification for organic products. Therefore, guaranteeing the organic status of produce can be quite expensive for small producers, especially considering the cost of the comprehensive testing that must be undertaken to fulfill EFAPA requirements (Panyakul, V. in TOS, September 2009). Therefore, an important factor promoting the sector development is the existence of organizations promoting direct sales between producers and consumers.

Hansalim is one of these organizations: this is a non-profit cooperative, with a focus on organic agriculture, established in the Republic of Korea in 1986. As the first consumers' cooperative in the country, it aimed at linking producers and consumers, in the rural and urban areas, while promoting "an alternative way of life based on ecological ethics". In 2011, Hansalim's members included 300,000 household consumers (individuals) and 2000 producers, from all over the country. The cooperative operates 144 stores offering box-schemes, three of which also provide exclusively

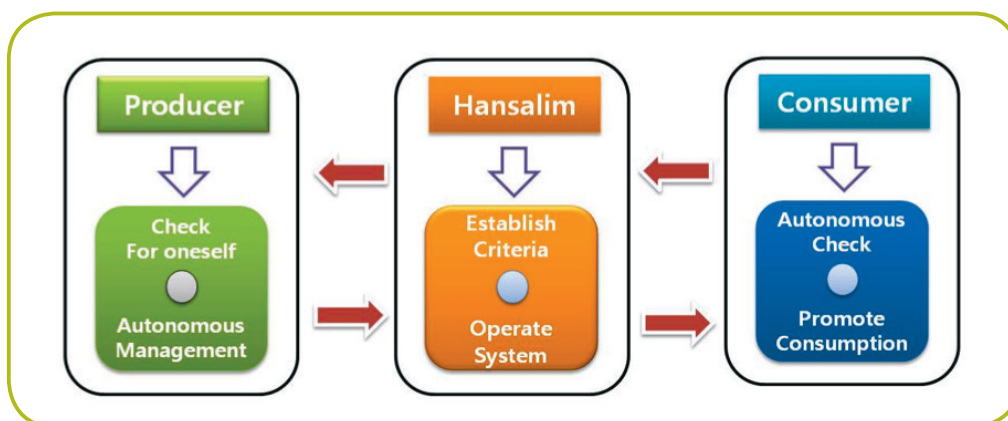
seasonal packages. The cooperative has built their brand based on the motto: 'Local Organic Food'.



Hansalim logo

Building up on years of experience with direct sales, Hansalim has decided to set up a guarantee system aimed at small producers, carried out with the participation of consumers and other stakeholders. It is referred to as "autonomous certification" and it is based on the principle that the farmer can be trusted. The diagram below illustrates the process: producers comply with the production standards set by Hansalim, while the consumers have direct access to the farms to check how these standards are being applied. The products are delivered to the cooperative, which is responsible for the final quality check of the products, and then these are delivered to the consumers. According to Hansalim, the "autonomous management" and "autonomous check" promote responsibility among the stakeholders, while through broad participation contribute to the improvement of the quality of the products.

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Hansalim's process of "autonomous certification"

In general, Hansalim adopts the following principles for direct sales:

- They only source local products (no imported products).
- They handle mostly seasonal produce.
- They currently handle different categories of produce: organic, pesticide-free and low-pesticide produce; but their aim is to source only organic products.

Hansalim relates to the PGS movement, as most of the values that the cooperative holds dear are close to the PGS shared ideals. They also feel that the system they have developed might be more stringent than the national regulation, since it includes trust building mechanisms for both the consumers and producers. The “autonomous certification” is being tested this year.

For more information, please visit [Hansalim website](#) or contact [Ji Young](#).



Members of Hansalim

Continental News: What's new in...



...Asia and Oceania

India: The state of Madhya Pradesh has included PGS in its state agriculture policy and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has established a National Advisory Committee on PGS. For details, please contact Miguel Braganza (braganza.miguel@gmail.com)

Turkey: PGS has recently started to gain more attention in Turkey and several actors in the organic sector are considering its potential. One of them is the Bugday Association for Supporting Ecological Living. This organization is committed to the promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns and it organizes organic farmers markets in various regions in the country. Now Bugday hopes to establish PGS as a reliable guarantee system for these markets. The association is currently preparing two projects that aim at pushing PGS forward. One is a national PGS conference to be held by 2013, with the purpose of creating a network among interested actors in the country, to define a common vision and to set a base for cooperation. The second is a pilot PGS application in the Canakkale region in Turkey, expected to start soon. For more information please contact Gözde Okcu at gozde@bugday.org.

Vietnam: On July 15, the “Binh Minh” (Sunrise) group was the latest group to be issued with the PGS certificate from the [Vietnam PGS](#) network. With this new group, Vietnam PGS has now 28 registered groups, of which 20 groups are PGS certified. The number of certified farmers is 171 and the certified area is nearly 27 ha, of which around 7 ha is for organic vegetables, 14 ha for organic pomelo and nearly 6 ha for organic longan. The Vietnam PGS Coordination Committee is now preparing to continue the implementation of this PGS after the conclusion of the ADDA-VNFU Organic Agriculture Development project, which had been the main supporter of the initiative. For more information, visit this [link](#) or contact [Truong Minh Hoang](#).

(continued on page 6)



...Africa

South Africa: The Siyavuna Development Center, a non-profit organization that aims at empowering poor rural people with organic agriculture skills, has been implementing a PGS. According to its recently released "Narrative Report 2011," 212 active farmers were registered in the Siyavuna PGS system last year. They sell their products in the associated Agri-Marketing Consumer Cooperations. In the future, Siyavuna plans to map all the farmers with Global Positioning System (GPS) and pinpoint their locations on the website to provide a high level of transparency. To read the full report, please click [here](#).



...North America and Europe

Spain: The association Ecovalle has released a valuable instructional video illustrating their understanding and practice of PGS. The video includes information about the reasons that led to the adoption of the system, the benefits for producers and consumers, and examples of how the visits are conducted. Consumers and other local stakeholders are also interviewed and provide their opinion on the initiative. The video is available [online](#) and on the [IFOAM PGS Portal in the Video section](#), alongside 14 other videos and audio material. More information about this PGS can be found [here](#), in Spanish.

Imprint

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