FALL 2021

CULTIVATED

THE NORTH AMERICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY



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EDITOR'S Corner



Democracy isn't Free.
We pay for it with our participation.

LAST MONTH, IFOAM MEMBERS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAME
TOGETHER, MOSTLY ONLINE, TO
DECIDE WHAT ORGANIC AGRICULTURE LOOKS, ACTS AND TASTES
LIKE.

The story of organic agriculture is written in the soil on millions of acres of land around the world. It rises up from a parcel of ground tended by a farmer with a personal relationship to the land and the plants they grow on it. And just as each individual farmer has their own way of managing and working with nature, every member of IFOAM has their own unique vision of how organic agriculture works.

Our uniqueness is what makes us great. Our membership represents members from across the organic community everywhere. And at this year's World Congress we've demonstrated the power of democracy to bind uniqueness into collective action.

Democracy here at home.

North America has our own unique and diverse membership and we celebrate organic agriculture across our great lands. We are an organization composed of small family businesses, independent researchers and organinc organizatons large and small.

This is democracy in action. Our membership list includes a community of farmers incorporating classic agricultural practices dating back hundreds of years, as well as a growing number from the upcoming generation of new agrarians who are well-schooled in advanced agro-ecology techniques and technology— proudly piloting new smart-tractors monitored by iPads linked to the cloud and moving their CSA's onto the internet. We are all are changing the way organic agriculture is practiced.

We also welcome those in the community of conventional

agriculture to join us in growing a sustainable and secure food system, because it's everyone's goal to keep farmlands productive in a climate-challenged world.

Farming wisdom from around the world

We have much to learn from organic community outside of our small patch of the planet. The IFOAM World Congress brought together farmers, agronomists, activists and researchers from all parts of the globe.

Last month our World Congress forums featured an inspiring collection of wisdom and experience, featuring:

- A nutritionist from Nepal
- A French advocate of Willing Workers on Organic Farms
- A promoter of organic farm tourism in Greece
- A Chinese CSA organizer
- An Italian researcher improving the quality of national organic seed banks.
- An organic school lunch program organizer from Taiwan
- An organic livestock campaigner from Brazil
- A producer of organic training videos from Belgium
- A French educator of organic agricultural engineers
- A researcher comparing yields and quality between heritage and modern spring wheat varieties in Norway

• A researcher in Bangladesh evaluating organically grown pepper genotypes

It is this great sharing of experience that creates the value that IFOAM brings to us all.

Personal stories from the IFOAM World Congress and General Assembly

Each one of us has our own story to tell, and you'll find comments and insights from this event from:

- Marla Carlson, co-president of IFOAM North America, who provided critical services as co-chair to the General Assembly,
- Peggy Miars, outgoing remarks as President of IFOAM
- Organics International,
- Dr. Philip Howard, who gave one of the keynote presentations, and
- A special interview with incoming President of IFOAM-Organics International World Board, Karen Mapusua.

For a valuable take-away from this historic event, please click the links on the Membership Services page for a full listing of key sections of the World Congress and the results of the General Assembly.

Thank You!

We owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to the diligent efforts offered by the staff in the IFOAM – Organics International office for preparing the groundwork that made these events run smoothly. Today's current health travel restrictions created circumstances that required a major shift from an in-person event to a predominantly digital experience. And considering the technical resources required, it went amazingly smoothly.

Thank you all.



CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Marla Carlson

EVERY THREE YEARS, VOTING MEMBERS OF IFOAM - ORGANICS INTERNATIONAL GATHER FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA).

I had the good fortune of attending the last GA, which took place in New Delhi, India. It was inspiring to participate in the democratic decision making process and play my part in setting the strategic direction for the organization with my vote.

This past September I had the honour of Co-Chairing the GA with Mathew John (Managing Director, Managing Director at Last Forest Enterprises. India). Like so many conferences and meetings, Covid-I9 dictated that the GA go online this time around. IFOAM - Organics International staff did an excellent job preparing members for engaging with the democratic process (and each other!) in this virtual environment ensuring that the meeting went off without a hitch!

The GA fulfils three important functions.

I. Voting on motions submitted by members suggesting actions to be taken by IFOAMOrganics International for the following three years,

- 2. Electing World Board Members, and
- 3. Selecting the next location for the Organic World Congress.

At the GA in September we voted on 2I motions. Jennifer Taylor, IFOAM NA Co-President was elected to the World Board, and Peggy Miars finished her four-year term as President of the World Board

Congratulations and thank both of you! It's exciting to see North America continuing to raise the profile of the organic movement and take on leadership roles in IFOAM -Organics International.

Last, but certainly not least, members selected Tunisia as the host country for the Organic World Congress and General Assembly in 2024.

This issue of Cultivated provides an in-depth look at the Organic World Congress and the General Assembly. If you did not participate this time around, I hope by the end of your read that you're inspired to take part in 2024.

See you in Tunisia! Best Wishes, Marla Carlson, Co-President



Members, Associates and Supporters:

Accredited Certifiers Association

Acme Agariculture & Food

Agrisystems International

Alan Lewis

Alliance for Organic Integrity

Andrée Deschenes Arnd Zschocke

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A farewell from Past IFOAM President Peggy Miars

Growing North America Together



Since completing seven years on the World Board of IFOAM - Organics International in September, I've received noticeably fewer emails and have felt much less stress! My four years as President were unprecedented because the term was extended by one year due to COVID-19, and meetings were held virtually during half that term. The eagerly anticipated Organic World Congress (OWC) was delayed by one year, ultimately succeeded this year with a mostly virtual audience. The IFOAM General Assembly (GA) followed the OWC after a weekend, allowing everyone to recover from computer screen overload. During the

GA I felt disconnected from my colleagues. We desperately wanted to talk about the various motions on the floor, we wished to chat with the World Board candidates to learn more about them, and I missed enjoying the wonderful presentations from the countries bidding to host the next GA. The OWC and GA were the culmination of my time serving on the World Board, and they ended with a simple click of the mouse: No interactions with French leaders in beautiful Rennes, no opportunities to meet and greet IFOAM members and organic friends from around the world, and no hugs and goodbyes to my

World Board colleagues.

So this column will serve as my farewell as the past President of IFOAM – Organics International – a volunteer job called "the most important organic position in the world."

Looking back, I feel like I learned far more than I taught or shared. The sudden lack of emails and no more late-night meetings are reminders of how much of my time was dedicated to IFOAM – Organics International and how much the World Board accomplished on behalf of the global organic organization.

Thank you to Brian Baker and the diehard individuals who met year after year at Natural Products Expo East and Expo West to talk about forming an IFOAM regional body here in North America. In fact, it was at Expo East when we finally formed a steering committee to work on it, including Margaret Scoles and Bob Quinn, who continue to actively support IFOAM. And it was at Expo East 2016 that IFOAM North America held our first General Assembly, which I had the honor of chairing. We met in an uncomfortably hot and noisy room above a restaurant, yet we accomplished what we went there to do because we focused on a shared goal.

Five years later, I am so proud to see what we achieved together. IFOAM North America has a dedicated Board of Directors and has elevated its image in our part of the globe. More and more people are talking about IFOAM, Organic 3.0 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I'm happy to see the board of IFOAM North America interacting and working with other IFOAM regional bodies, such as IFOAM Latin America, and I hope that collaboration continues.

Even with such progress, IFOAM – Organics International is still perceived as a European-centric organization. When organic stakeholders in North America learn about the benefits of membership in IFOAM – Organics International and how we support organic around the world, we will have a major impact in IFOAM and the global organic sector. Let's work together to increase the amount of glob-

al land farmed using organic practices and principles. The fate of the world depends on it!

Peggy Miars is past president of IFOAM - Organics International, representing North America on the IFOAM World Board from 2014 to 2021. She serves on the Board of Directors of the IOAS, an international organic and sustainable accreditation organization. Peggy has been Executive Director/CEO of the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) in Eugene, Oregon, since 2010 and was previously Executive Director/CEO of California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), North America's largest organic certification body. She has worked in the organic movement for 25 years, previously in marketing and management positions with Earthbound Farm, Whole Foods Market, nonprofit organizations, and her own marketing consulting business.



IFOAM North America offers our thanks to Karen Mapusua for taking on role of the new World Board President. Karen is from Fiji and lives in the capital, Suva. She's been running organic certification programs since the early 2000s.



Interview by Ken McCormick

I'm really honoured to have the opportunity to do this job, and I'm going to learn more and gain more than I could possibly give from taking on this role. From when I first started engaging on organics, that's where I knew I was going to spend a lot of my time and energy.

It's important that the World Board is truly a board for the world and that there are different perspectives, different takes and different experiences from all of our regions. I think this current World Board has a really nice balance with that. So I'm hoping that we'll be able to call on all that diversity and accomplish some valuable goals together to serve IFOAM and the organic movement.

an agroforestry project in Samoa, expanding opportunities for their producers with cocoa and turmeric. Complimented with increasing sales of local lemongrass teas and other herbals, we consider that our organic market development program has made some excellent steps forward.

Now I work in Fiji, and similar to other countries in our region, Fiji is also growing organic ginger and turmeric, and in Papua New Guinea we're proud to have a growing organic coffee market.

Organic in Oceania took life as an export market. As locals, we are very price sensitive and much of what was grown was organic anyways. In the last IO years, there are

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I ENTERED THE ORGANIC MOVEMENT WHILE WORKING FOR AN NGO PRODUCING VIRGIN COCONUT OIL, THE DOMINANT CROP IN Samoa— a project in partnership with The Body Shop, exporting small amounts of coconut oil as part of their Community Trade Program. Other companies have consequently entered the coconut oil trade in Samoa, including a joint venture with Dr. Bronner's. These ventures have made a huge impact on the exports of organically certified products and created valuable opportunities for local farmers. There is now a Particpatory Guarantee System (PGS) program focused on developing local markets and improving the consumption of local fruits and vegetables.

Dr. Bronner's is also running

new organic farmers markets springing up, with a real interest in offering solutions to our Non-Communicable Disease crisis. Local diets have changed dramatically since colonialization, with the serious consequence of having a huge impact on public health issues such as diabetes, heart diseases and obesity. A truly tragic statistic in Fiji identifies that we have an amputation due to diabetes complications every 8 hours, within a population of only 900,000 people.

To help decolonize local diets, we're working at rebuilding local food cultures and reclaiming health benefits from traditional food diets. In our region, traditional diets have included root crops, taro, cassava, sweet potato, yams, with plenty of coconut and fish. Greens are provided by taro leaves and a variety of indigenous green vegetables. Breadfruit is also important across the region.

Pigs play a growing role in our food culture, and while they are not indigenous, they are important for exchange and consumption. Poultry is becoming increasingly important in food production as well, because there are huge pressures on coastal fisheries as our population increases. Climate change is also offering an increasingly negative impact on local coral reefs.

The land tenure systems in our region are largely

traditional, without major influence by big landholders. There is a strong connection by farmers to their land, and most local farmers work on their own lands. This land is predominantly under customary tenure, owned by extended families or clans.

People who farm on the land here, eat from the land.

The situation in Papua New Guinea is somewhat different from the rest of the region because most of the organic sector is foreign-owned. While their coffee sector continues to grow, many of the farmers involved in the trade are not aware of the certification programs that their farms are a part of. They know that someone comes to their farm every once in a while and has a look, but they often have little understanding of improvement around organic practices.

We would like to see the organic sector offering more empowerment to these farmers.

The remoteness and small size of our farms makes Participatory Guarantee Systems a valuable process, since individual certification is unrealistic. Growers are essential to the way third party certification can take place.

I'd like to see us do more work around Internal Control Systems, and the changes in EU organic regulations are going to have a huge impact on our grower groups. So it's

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important to find ways to support this system and prevent farmers from losing their certification. We need to get a better sense of the value chain and the business case around certification, because PGS is valuable for both local market development as well as export and trade.

We accept PGS locally, but we're hoping to get more recognition of PGS outside our region. There are people on the ground who understand PGS but we'd like to have more people involved in the regulation discussions.

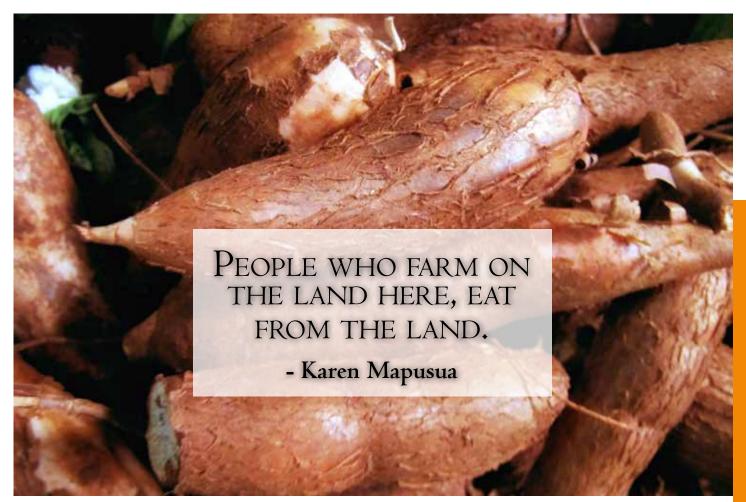
IFOAM Regional offices have unique stages of development, and Oceania does not yet have its own, but we are working on it. Adding our voice in the IFOAM Network Committee would give us access to the insight and experience in various other parts of the world. The Covid crisis has forced us to become better at working through those things, because we've had no other choice. We have to be able to communicate in better ways, and I'm hoping we can continue the learning we've experienced while building communication with our main office in Bonn.

As we're trying to work in new ways, the regional bodies each have a slightly different focus. IFOAM International has also learned to work with the re-

gional offices in a better way as well.

The next few years will require even more learning. We'll all be flying the plane while we build it and learning things about what doesn't work, while finding our places in the network. The challenge is for the International office to get closer to the membership in our diverse regions and understand their unique priorities while supporting all the regions in meeting their individual needs.

For example, gender and equality are issues in all regions, with unique gender issues particular to the Pacific Islands. We find that while our development partners may push certain



agendas, we try to ensure that the agenda is our own. We like to point out that some of our islands are matrilineal traditionally. At the roots, land is often handed down through the women's side. But with colonialism, a lot of the matrilineal authority has been watered down.

Women have different roles across the Pacific region, and we work to recognize women's roles and give them more visibility in the discourse. We support the economic empowerment of women in all these different cultures, particularly in societies that are largely communal, and we need to make sure that gender issues don't become barriers to women.

Race issues in the region are framed in terms of decolonialization, with predominantly indigenous people who are fully in charge of their future with land ownership and decision making.

We also need a discussion on how can we provide viable sources of alternative protein so we don't continue to distress our coastal fisheries. Large scale chicken farms are beginning to develop and large-scale egg production is being done, largely indoors.

Team Building within the World Board

We have now initiated a series of meetings which will be an induction for the board. We recognize on the last board that the whole induction process needed to be strengthened, particularly when we have a relatively small proportion of the board carrying over from the last term. There's a lot of catch-up for members who have come in with different experiences of IFOAM, with every board member owning different levels of understanding about our policies and our history.

So our first job is about getting everybody on the same page and building relationships among board members who don't see each other very often. When the last World Board had to suddenly transition into conducting business on-line, it took us a couple of meetings to work out a smooth process for having effective discussions via Zoom with 10 people around the screen. On-line meetings often take longer than a face-to-face meeting, but we learned how to accommodate that.

Consensus Building

I'm a strong advocate for consensus and it's been the usual way of making decisions on the World Board. If we can't reach consensus and a decision has to be made immediately, then it goes to a vote. I'm proud to say that in the last term of the Board, I didn't see us go to a vote on any issue.

Part of the President's role in chairing the Board is facilitat-

ing the process of reaching consensus. This works well for me personally, because consensus is the way of the Pacific Islands, and the way I'm used to doing 'business.' I believe that in the consensus-building process, conflict occasionally happens and it's important not to shy away from it. In a clash of opinions—that's when we get the new ideas that helps us move toward consensus.

In Board meetings, we often share the chairing function between the president and the V.P. A new voice in facilitating the conversation can help shift things too. It's a team effort and I don't like to sweep things under the rug, because it comes back to bite us.

Facilitating the Divergent Voices of the Organic Movement

Our organization is incredibly diverse and we've all come at this 'animal' of organics in very different ways with very different priorities. The key is making sure that we have developed a strategic organizational plan that is co-creating a vision that we all have bought into. And if everyone is working to that one vision, it doesn't matter which path we're walking on to get to it. We're all contributing to that one vision, and the closer we all get to it, the closer we come together as well.

This new relationship with



South Pacific Commission Land Resources Division team 'building resilience against non-communicable diseases.' Karen Mapusua, Adi Elenoa Salele, Romika Devi, Anju Mangal, and Miriama Kuna Wave Brown.

regional bodies is also really important because it facilitates strategic development that is co-creational. It rises from the grassroots members in the regional bodies, the international office helps to form that vision and gel it, then it's sent back for consultation again to make sure that the messaging is clear. Rather than something coming down from International and out to the regional bodies, this collaboration process is key to building the kind of unified vision and purpose to deal with the challenges of the future, and we're now implementing the mechanisms and tools to do that better together.

If you look at the growth of organics internationally and the organizations and busi-

nesses who are benefiting from the work of IFOAM in promoting organics in the public and policy environments most are not yet members of IFOAM. We don't want to lose the strong focus on the grassroot movement of IFOAM, but we need to find ways to engage with the really big players who receive the bulk of the premium funding from organic consumers—and if they were members and contributing to the business model of IFOAM, they too would continue to reap increased benefits from the growth of international organic agriculture.

There is ample evidence that consumers are looking for more ethical products, and while there is limited fair-trade certification in the Pacific, one of the things that farmers always say is: I'm being asked to jump through all these hoops to achieve certification, but I'm not the problem. The problem is further up the value chain. It's not what is happening on my farm that is unfair.

Our Biggest Challenges

One of our challenges at the moment is our business model. Membership fees make up a very small proportion of our overall budget, so we're very dependent on donor-funded projects just for day-to-day operations and keeping our doors open.

This leaves us financially very vulnerable. So when a crisis like the Covid pandemic

comes up, there is less project money available, and implementation slows down. All of which seriously impacts our cash flow and financial viability. This means that as an organization, we spend a lot of time and energy finding the next project so that we can keep offering core services to

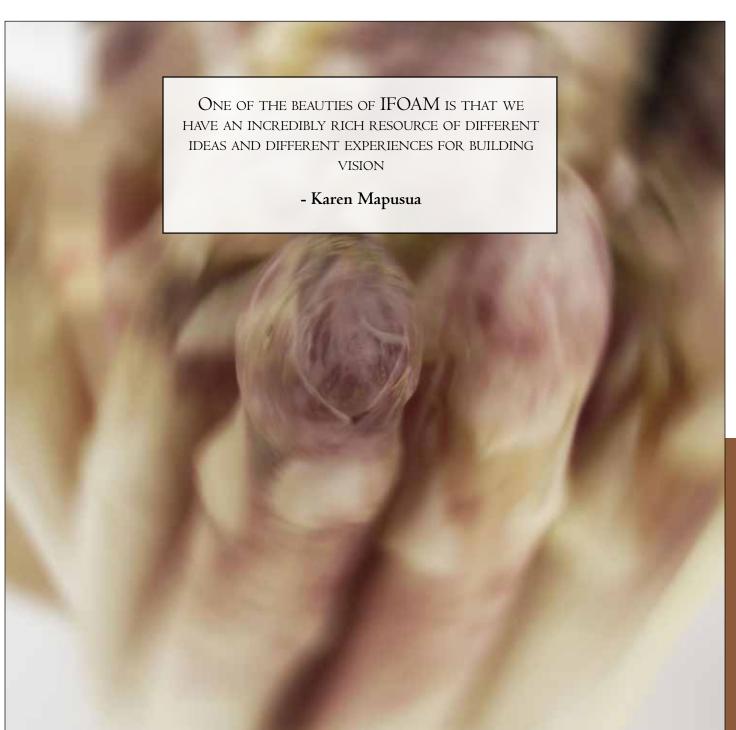
our members.

The most important job we have right now is taking a fresh look at our old business model through the eyes that we've used to create innovations in our organizational structure, and develop a new business model that is more sustainable and better suited for moving

the goals of Organic 3.0 forward.

We need to find a business model that gives us more flexible or core funding to allow us to be more responsive and deal with the issues of the members.

This is the big one for the World Board.



IFOAM World Congress and General Assembly Review

Margaret Graves, Program Manager, Organic Agricultural Center of Canada

THE ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS IN FRANCE FINISHED A MONTH AGO, AND IT LEFT ME FEELING INSPIRED AND CONNECTED TO PEOPLE WORKING IN ORGANIC ACROSS THE GLOBE.

The 2021 version was delayed from 2020, and was held in Rennes, France. OACC was there, virtually! The event was a hybrid model, with some 400 participants in person and 1800 online.

OACC gave two talks as part of the Science Forum and some Organic Science Cluster researchers also participated and presented. The Science Forum is one of six forums, including the Farmers' and Advisors' Forum, where farmers from five continents gather to share experiences, to the Culture and Education Forum, where philosophical and spiritual angles are discussed. The other forums are Leadership, Supply and Value Chain, and Stakeholder.

I gave a presentation co-authored by Emmanuella Ellis, OACC Research Associate, and Andrew Hammermeister, OACC Director. Emmanuella is working on organic research impact and that was the subject of the presentation. We unveiled our impact framework and had excellent discussions with global organic science leaders about measuring success.

Andrew Hammermeister presented his own new, exciting research from the Canadian Prairies about impacts of organic farms on landscape heterogeneity.

One of the major things that leads to impact is adoption of new practices and cultivars developed as part of research. During the Plant Breeding for Organic Cereals session, I asked if the panelists were seeing farmers purchase and seed the varieties that have been bred for organic. I wanted to know if Europe was ahead of Canada in developing these varieties, and if there was a strong demand. Panelists from the US said that their situation is similar to Canada's: there are more organic horticultural crop varieties available and being used by farmers than cereal

varieties. Although Germany and France have had organic breeding programs for decades, and they have more registered cultivars than in Canada, the question of adoption of these cultivars was still uncertain. This leads me to believe that it is a question worth pursuing.

Andrew also attended the General Assembly of IFOAM Organics International as a voting member. Here motions relating to the future of the international movement were voted on. Of note was that hydroponic production was rejected as a form of organic production. Also of interest was the acceptance of the proposal to include gender equality and the social inclusion within the Principle of Fairness. Other motions were made to further encourage no-till techniques, biodiversity, and agroecology within organic systems while discouraging deforestation.

The conference platform allowed engaging discussion in the Q&A periods, and networking with those you have already met.

POLICY UPDATE

IFOAM Virtual General Assembly 13 - 14 September 2021

Summary of Voting on World Board Motions, Member Recommendations, & Member Motions.

Prepared by Margaret Scoles

Of particular significance are the motions passed by this Assembly of organic agricutural representatives from around the world— are that Hydroponic Producition is not in line with Organic Principles, and that Social Justice issues must be included in Organic Standards.

The General Assembly was conducted digitally via Zoom and Lumi voting platform. Quorum was 42.4% with 219 votes.

WORLD BOARD MOTIONS - all PASSED,

Some with amendments.
All motion text is summarized.

- W51 Empowerment and Inclusion of Youth in the IFOAM Network and the Organic Movement acknowledges the crucial role of youth in the further development of the organic sector.
- W52 50 years IFOAM Organics International To celebrate in an inclusive way its 50th anniversary in several parts of the world, in a variety of ways. The IFOAM Network, with all its members, will declare 2022 *The Year of Organic*. IFOAM will support

the efforts with a promotional tool kit.

- W53 Terms of Reference for the Internal Audit approved amended TOR.
- W54 Motion on OWC Consortium Participation mandates IFOAM – Organics Int'l participate in a consortium for the organization of future Organic World Congresses.
- W55 Motion on One Membership (as amended)-The GA confirms the World Board changes to policy 23 under point 6 on 'Affiliation & voting rights' to introduce 'One Membership' and to abolish the option of 'supporting associate'. The one membership concept starts from Jan. 2024, and will be developed in accordance with the regional bodies considering existing by-laws, rules of

procedure and membership fee schemes.

- W56 Decentralised Membership Fee Setting changes in policy 9 The WB shall change policy 9 effective Jan. I, 2023 to decentralize the setting of membership fees to be fully implemented by Jan. 2024. The change shall be phased in over a 3-year period with a progress report at the next GA.
- W57 Motion on Terms of Reference (ToR) for the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International - replaces the Rules of Procedure for the World Board

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WORLD BOARD

Five were presented, all PASSED, for sake of space, only one is listed here.

Recommendation #I - The World Board of IFOAM – Organics International shall take note of the Rennes Declaration of IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance. The Declaration sets out the conclusions of the Pre-Conference on Organic Animal Husbandry. It acknowledges the centrality of animals/livestock in sustainable agriculture and highlights the key priorities for supporting, developing and promoting organic animal husbandry. It emphasizes that organic animal production must take place in the context of holistic systems that enhance environmental benefits and animal welfare.

MEMBER MOTIONS

and actions taken.

Some motions were amended.

M61 Hydroponic Production Not in Line with Organic Principles, Passed.

M62 Organic Leadership on Deforestation, Passed.

M63 Promote No-till Farming Techniques for Sustainable Organic Farming, Passed.

M64 Promote Organic 3.0 through PGS, Passed.

M65 Biodiversity Awareness towards Agriculture, Passed.

M66 Improve Global Organic Data Availability, Passed.

M67 IFOAM Regional Bodies (RB) Strengthen and

Support the Organic Farmers Organisations in their Regions, Passed.

M68 Add Gender Equality and Social Inclusion to the Principle of Fairness, Passed.

M69 Agroecology Criteria in IFOAM Best Practice Guidelines. Passed.

M70 To Expand the Current Scope of the COROS, Passed.

M71 Build Partnerships with the Health Sector, Passed.

M72 To Develop a Social Justice Position, Passed.

M73 – To Encourage SoS to Conduct Consultations on Social Justice, Passed.

M74 Social Justice in Organic Standards, Passed.

M75 Mapping of Benchmark Programmes to Measure Best Practices & Sustainability Impact, Passed.

M76 Revise Voting Rights for Group Members, Passed.

M77 Fair Participation in Regional Bodies (RBs), Motion failed.

For a full set of the text from the General Assembly Motions, please go here:

https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2021-06/organ-icsinaction.pdf



Highlights from the IFOAM World Congress

Today's Brave New World of Food

An Interview with Phil Howard

Dr. Phil Howard was a keynote speaker at the IFOAM World Congress on the September 8, 2021 Plenary Session: The Need to Transform Agricultural and Food **Systems.** Dr. Howard is Associate Professor in the Department of Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. His area of expertise includes: Food systems, political ecology, and data visualization.

Phil is best known for his illustrated diagrams of who-owns-who in the organic foods industry.

I teach a graduate class right now called Community Food and Agriculture. Mostly it's a social science look at food systems and we focus mostly on the US, but look at some global examples as well. There are eight students in the class. And I teach an undergraduate class similar in theme twice a year and have about 50 students in each class.

My research focuses on the 'food system.' The food system involves all of the steps required to produce food and get it to our plates-from farming and processing to distribution and consumption.



I'm a member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, and one of the things we advocate is moving away from industrial agriculture towards agro-ecology.

Difference in the food spectrum are starting to get more traction in places like the United Nations and the FAO. but it's almost immediately co-opted by the big firms, who say: Oh yeah, we'll have some agro-ecological, biological pesticides that farmers can use. And I don't think there are any easy answers to this.

A lot of people don't know how carrots are grown, and are so disassociated from where their food comes from that to understand agro-ecology from a scientific point of view is difficult and not something that

our institutions are promoting. While the system we're in really undermines self-reliance, I'd like us to envision a world where everyone is engaged in food production. For those who don't have access to a community garden or a larger plot of land, I'm a big proponent of starting by growing sprouts on our windowsills, just to recognize that it's one way to counter these big firms and their allies in government who are very effective in taking away our imagination of what is possible.

It's important to have that connection back to the living organisms that we consume. We have to recognize the strategies which are undermining our self-reliance, and take this back by re-skilling ourselves. We may have to do some things that might be inconvenient and not make a huge impact, just by ourselves. But these efforts are very important as a model to illustrate what is possible.

Even though the system of big food interests are putting tremendous barriers in our way and sabotaging any effort to create a real alternative food

system, when more and more people join in, it's going to be harder for all of our efforts to be sabotaged. Their efforts will be spread too thin to take on all of ours.

I use the analogy to my students of "the hourglass food system." At the top of the hourglass are billions of farmers around the world. And at the bottom are billions of people who eat food. But there is a bottleneck in the middle that is controlled by a group of very few firms in key strategic

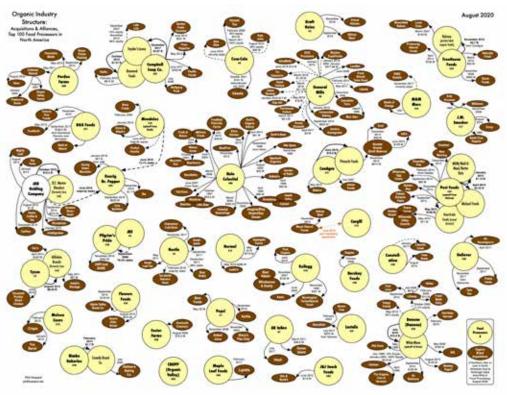
stages, including processing, distribution and retail.

The simple answer for us is to go around that bottleneck, or create alternatives to that bottleneck and make that bottleneck visible.

We don't see that an organic-labeled product might actually be produced by a large corporation with little or no support for organic agriculture. So when that process becomes more transparent and we understand how we're supporting that kind of system, we're bet-

ter able to identify where our dollar is going to, and it will be more difficult for the big firms to continue to co-opt the organic message.

I think that many people are



Organic Industry Strcture. For full size image, click here: https://philhowardnet.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/organicjuly20small.png

becoming more and more savvy about all of these issues by beginning to think more about issues like power and self-reliance. Claims about efficiency and productivity and feeding the world are distracting and reinforcing this problem.

On True "Free Market" Capitalism

There is a case to be made that the concentration of power in the food system is not *free market* capitalism. These firms have become so huge that they

face little competition, while concurrently receiving massive subsidies from governments. If you're a true capitalist with belief in the rhetoric of the free market, you want a lot of

> firms in the marketplace competing fairly with each other. The theory is that this process benefits the consumer. But we now have very little competition, and the subsidies for the big food

companies are absurd. I see that more

and more people are willing to challenge the system and the subsidies these large firms get.

Economies of scale are often not due to economic efficiency, but to political power. Larger players in the food system are able to dictate very strict terms to all of their suppliers, and very strict delivery schedules. They have the power to penalize the suppliers who don't meet those schedules and the power to demand lower prices than the suppliers other customers pay.

This is not economic power, and this is not what happens in a competitive market. So why should taxpayers be subsidizing the continuing concentration of power and growing inequality in our food system?

The Co-op Model

I was a member of the board of my local food co-op, and observed first-hand how they shut down their storefront about a year after a large natural foods retailer moved in right across the street. We heard from other co-ops that there was going to be a hit for a year or two, and how other co-ops who had really planned for it were able to come back stronger afterwards.

Our local food co-op had sourced local organic food from farmers who are just down the road, and a large natural food chain is not equipped to fully embrace local relationships like that. So while some co-ops have survived large chains moving in, ours didn't. In the natural foods industry, we have two big distributors, and for our co-op it was a challenge to deal with them because we were a 2nd tier customer. The national foods chain store across the street was offered the freshest stock at a lower price and a better delivery schedules. Our customers would say: "Why would I shop at our co-op when the milk is just about to expire, when I

can go across the street to the national chain retailer and not only pay less, but it will be fresher?"

That's completely rational if you don't care about things like cooperation and member ownership.

Right now, we are trying to re-open with a different model, which is kind of a subscription. It works like a farmers market with longer hours and more convenience. It has everything there, with the farmers setting the prices and the co-op adding just 10% on top. It's a model that a private retailer in Ann Arbor had done successfully, and will enable farmers who don't want to deal with driving around to farmers markets every day to just drop off their produce and set their own price. The small premium added by the co-op goes to pay for the co-op employees.

Increasing Consumer Awareness

The most important way we can respond to the unfairness in the food system is to raise the floor of the organic movement to make alternatives more visible. There is a lot of co-optation occurring, and a lot of that is hidden. Although consumers may think they're supporting something that's an alternative, they're often just handing their organic premium dollars over to big corporations, enabling them to become even more powerful politically

and economically.

Two key examples of the response to this co-optation are Real Organic and Regenerative Organic certification, making real alternatives to the status quo more visible so that people don't have to do a massive amount of research on a weekly trip to the grocery store.

It's clearly possible to introduce new labels. I've done consumer research which indicates that consumers are not wanting to do all the work reading labels when they're going to a market, purchasing dozens of items and reading each label item-byitem. But consumers are capable of paying more attention when motivated.

The average I0-year old child can recognize 300 different brand names. So we have the mental capacity to distinguish a number of competing labels. And some of these newer 'beyond organic' labels like Real Organic are aware of the potential for co-optation and are building in stronger barriers to prevent them from being co-opted.

It's going to be a constant struggle to keep the large trans-national corporations from swooping in and copying things. I saw an example the other day of a well-known producer in Arizona who has a grass-fed statement emblazoned on their egg carton, even though their chickens are in a factory-scaled operation and presumably offered a little

extra grass in their feed even though their hens are not offered access to pasture.

Consumers who haven't done the research and don't understand what this really means are going to be snowed by this practice, and will pay a premium price for a value-added quality that not being delivered. I think that efforts like Real Organic are needed in the marketplace and are going to resonate with a lot of consumers, particularly those who are more aware of these issues.

Like the first organic label, 'beyond organic' labeling is going to get more and more traction towards steering people towards supporting their values, and away from industrial-scale organic operations. Once they learn what's happening behind the scenes, most people who seek out organic do not support the watering down of organic standards.

Big Data

The rise of Big Data in agriculture is an interesting area today, because what's driving it is pretty well in the wrong hands. Technically, a farmer is supposed to own the data from the farm equipment that they use in their own fields. But the data from their increasingly 'smart' combines connected to public farming databases gets aggregated by other players like John Deere or Monsanto/Bayer. Very quickly, large indus-

trial interests are accumulating enormous amounts of information about the activities of an increasing percentage of the farmers in the US. The consequences are that Monsanto has been using these databases to charge higher seed prices in areas where they expect yields to be higher.

My colleagues are becoming very concerned that as these big data tools get looked into by big firms, farmers are going to become more and more like serfs, with little ability to make decisions about practices on their own farms. Conventional farms in particular will be dictated to by these companies: on which pesticides to spray, and charged accordingly. Public data is now in service of agro-chemical companies maximizing private profits.

I have a book coming out with new research on this practice:

Howard, Philip H. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat? Revised Edition. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

We have similar Big Data privacy issues with food retailers, who now have sensors on shelves that can identify your gender and roughly your age. They know what you pick up after you see an ad, and marketers are using magnetic resonance imaging in the brain to know what lights up neurons the most when you see an ad. This is way beyond the super-

market 'loyalty card.'

There is a new field called 'neuromarketing' which has developed to understand the tools today. They'll have people go shopping with all these sensors on their head: the EEGs and eye tracking to see where people look. These are potentially very powerful tools, but it leads to big questions about how much influence they really have. There is one famous study where people were in an MRI, and were given a straw with cola. And because of the years and years of marketing we've been exposed to, when they were told it was Coke their brains lit up differently than when they were told it was Pepsi— all because Coca Cola has been more successful in their brand image.

Some people are skeptical that we can really be influenced to that extent, but it's scary to think they might have as much power as they claim. I think that the evidence is somewhere in the middle. Many of the decisions that we make are ones where we not even aware, and that is the influence that they have. Only now they can collect that data.

I don't know if you saw the movie *Minority Report*? That's exactly where we are now at: "Tom Anderton, you look like you could use a Guinness."

For more information, go to: https://philhoward.net



I AM IFOAM IS A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION PREPARED FOR IFOAM NORTH AMERICA BOARD MEMBERS TO INTRODUCE OUR ORGANIZATION AT PUBLIC EVENTS AND CONFERENCES.



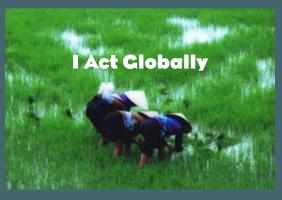
I am International

I am a member of an international movement that brings the diverse organic community around the planet together to speak in one powerful voice with many dialects.



I Think Globally

This pandemic has driven home the message that the entire planet must work together. Increasingly there is recognition that we're not going to solve those problems just by acting local. We have to engage in the global community as well.



I Act Globally

IFOAM offers me a full partnership in a global policy and implementation process.



I See That Solving our Big Problems may require Small Solutions

Global warming is caused by cutting down rainforests to plant soy, by crop failure in Africa, and by drought and wildfires here at home. Small changes like engaging with small farmers everywhere really matter.



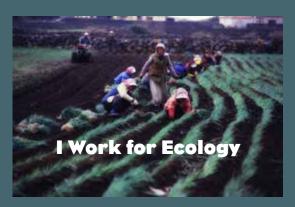
I Support the Four Principles of IFOAM

Fairness, Ecology Health and Care are The Four Principles informing the evolution of the Organic Movement.



ONE. I Work for Fairness

IFOAM supports an agenda of equity and cultural diversity. We advocate strongly for BIPOC and underserved farming communities.



TWO. I Work for Ecology

IFOAM supports diversity in our soils, the diversity in our crops and the entire community of life on our farms.



THREE. I Work for Our Health

No matter what our economic status, everyone deserves clean, safe and nutritious organic food.



FOUR. I am a Caretaker of All Life

I care about my place. My farm community. And the natural world I inhabit.



I Support Organic 3.0

I support a culture of innovation, improvement towards best practice, diverse ways to ensure transparency & integrity, inclusive of wider sustainability interests, empowerment from farm to the final consumer, with true value & cost accounting.



My Actions Matter

I take small steps to change the way the world farms, with a set of initiatives designed to carry our movement wisely and consciously into the future.



I am Part of the Change

I offer input on advocacy and policy implementation we offer to government bodies regulating organic agriculture in North America.



I Donate my Time

I have a working role as a representative of organic agriculture in the global food system.



I Speak for the Earth

Although I'm just one small voice speaking out in the darkness, I enjoy access to the largest international compilation of global facts, policies and advice from the leaders in the global organic community.

The relationship I have with a global network of local knowledge is rich with the wisdom and diversity of organic practices around the world.



I put the "I" into Environmental Change

As IFOAM Members, we form a strategic partnership that can unite the diverse community of organic organizations into a single voice.

This is a powerful tool in developing policy that impacts the entire global organic agricultural community.



I am the Face of IFOAM North America

I am part of a complex yet aligned group of committed organizations who share the vision of a world filled with life and abundance.

My membership makes me a part of a resilient and enduring organic movement.

And in today's rapidly changing world, a strong network of knowledge and experience is the best currency I have.



We are Proud of our Work

We're all in this together, and you too can enjoy a role as a voice for organic agriculture in the global food system.



Welcome To The International Organic Movement

We invite you to join a network of local knowledge, rich with the wisdom and diversity of organic practices around the world.



Take a Seat at the Table We've Saved you a Place

Thank You!

Membership Resources

Listing of IFOAM World Congress Plenary, Forums and Seminars

From September 6 to September 10, The IFOAM World Congress held sessions on the subjects of: Leadership, Farmers & Advisors, Science, Supply & Value Chain, and Culture & Education. These sessions were led by some of the world's leading experts in organic agriculture.

A full listing of all the World Congress events are available here:

https://owc2021.process.y-congress.com/ScientificProcess/schedule/?setLng=en

Motions at the General Assembly

On August 25-26 IFOAM held special pre-General Assembly sessions to discuss the Amendments to be voted on at the General Assembly. For more information:

https://www.ifoam.bio/ about-us/our-network/general-assembly/general-assembly-2021/motions-general-assembly-2021

Elected IFOAM World Board Members

The democratically elected World Board is a IO-member team responsible for overseeing and supporting our work growing the global organic marketplace, communicating the benefits of organic, training organic leaders, and facilitating capacity-building for organic farmers. The World Board members for this session include:

Karen Mapusua, Fiji 2nd term Julia Lernoud, Argentina 2nd term

Choitresh Ganguly, India Sarah Compson, United Kingdom

Paul Holmbeck, Denmark Shamika Mone, India Fortunate Nyakanda, Zimbabwe

Miyoshi Satoko, Japan Marco Schlüter, Germany Jennifer Taylor, USA

The World Board Term Report

The 2017-2021 Report from the IFOAM World Board contains the World Board Commitments, our Strategic Plan, Term Highlights, General Assembly Motions, an Internal Audit Report, Statement of Income & Expenditures, Committee Members, along with Sponsors, Donors & Partnerships. With an introduction by Executive Director, Louise Luttikholt, it is available for download here:

https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2021-06/world-board-term-report-2021.pdf

Organics in Action. General Assembly 2021

A full listing of all the Motions voted on at the General assembly can be downloaded here. All the Motions except Motion M77 presented to the Members were carried.

This publication also includes: What to Expect at the General Assembly, the Preparatory Sessions, The Agenda, Agenda Topics, World Board Candidates, and Bids for The Organic World Congress 2024. In this document you'll find the IFOAM financial report and a listing of all the statements made by the candidates for the World Board.

https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2021-06/organicsinaction.pdf

News Updates

IFOAM NA Founder Honoured

At the IFOAM World Congress, Dr. Brian Baker, one of the founding members and past President of IFOAM North America, received a well-deserved Award of Recognition from the International office for his service to the organization over the past 30 years. We offer our sincere thanks to Brian for his continued dedication and policy work with IFOAM North American region.

Tunisia Selected for the 2024 General Assembly

At the IFOAM General Assembly, Tunisia was voted in as our next venue for the IFOAM General Assembly and World Congress. Congratulations! We're all looking forward to visiting North Africa.

NOSB Comment Session

The National Organic Standards Board meets twice a year to listen to public comments

and review substances for the National List. The Fall 2021 meeting was held live online instead of in-person this session.

On October I3 and I4, several IFOAM members made comment on a number of key issues, including comments that brought important IFOAM values into U.S. regulatory discussions.

More information can be found here:

https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meet-ing-sacramento-ca

The following are excerpts from IFOAM Member and Board of Director comments.

National Grocers

Today I want to check in with Natural Grocers' shoppers, who are core buyers of organic products. How do shoppers currently understand organic practices and the organic seal?

I. FIRST, Organic production systems are a personal health and public health impera-

tive. The soil biome and the gut biome are one and the same. We can't conceive, have healthy babies or ensure thriving new generations unless we remove toxic contaminants from our air, water, soil and food.

- 2. SECOND. What we now refer to as "Organic" production systems are most valued by shoppers when they are just, equitable, and inclusive. Lowering costs by avoiding social standards will kill the seal.
- 3. THIRD What we call organic cropping is an ancient and indigenous practice. It's not owned by anyone and never depended on government sanction and oversight. It has always been inseparable from each community culture and thus mutual beneficial exchange of effort and resources.

The Midwest Organic Services Association

For organic to really be regenerative and be part of a climate crisis solution - not just less destructive than conventional agriculture - then the

News Updates

organic community must emphasize and learn more about the science behind "good organic practices." Some certified organic farms certainly have good intentions, but are not fully regenerative.

Thank you for pointing out that the *Organic Foods*Production Act codifies regenerative agriculture through its soil health requirements. Soil health is similarly required under the "maintain or improve" language at National Organic Standards sections 205.200 and .203. We value our process-based standards and recognize that data alone should not drive our certification systems. We

caution against mandated quantitative thresholds for certification.

However, good, truly regenerative organic practices must be based on good science, with practical measurement tools. Research and more emphasis on good organic practices can help our label rightfully claim the popular regenerative terminology. "Regenerative agriculture" is currently causing market confusion. It's being co-opted, including greenwashing and regenerative claims being used for practices that are in fact degenerative. Organic should embrace regenerative agriculture as its own and research and measures will help us to enforce

that organic is truly regenerative, not just less degenerative.

Chemical fertilizers used to grow food are responsible for the majority of nitrous oxide released into the atmosphere as a result of human activity. There are estimates that agriculture is directly responsible for 80% of deforestation worldwide. Farmers often bear the consequences of our unsustainable economies and lifestyles. They are some of the world's poorest and most food insecure people, most severely hit by climate change. We need to create policies for food and agriculture taking all common concerns of humankind into consideration.



WHY WE HAVE TO LOOK AT ACRICULTURE INTERNATIONALLY

WHY SUPPORT IFOAM?

WHY CAN'T WE JUST BETTER MANAGE OUR OWN LAND RIGHT AT HOME?

ORGANIC FARMING OFFERS A RANGE
OF HEALTH BENEFITS FAR BEYOND THE
VALUE OF AVOIDING TOXIC PESTICIDES
IN OUR FOOD. The nutritional and
ecosystem services that organic agriculture creates supports the health
of local farmers, the economic health
of rural communities, along with
the health of our groundwater and
the diversity of all species who share
their land with us.

Converting the soil of North America's damaged farmland to organic standards may be a powerful step forward towards stabilizing the present environmental crisis in this part of the world, but we live on a very large and interconnected planet.

If there's anything that we've learned from the present climate and biological diversity crisis, it's that what happens when rainforests in Peru and Brazil are converted into soy plantations effects all of us, not just the indigenous people of South America.

The proponents of an agro-industrial Green Revolution are everywhere, advocating an agricultural agenda that is toxic for everyone on our planet, not just for underserved and vulnerable farming communities here at home.

Sitting at the top of the list of human activities threatening environmental health— is agriculture. And it has proven to take much less effort to convince entire countries in other lands to convert to 100% organic practices than it has been to convince agribusiness in North America to change its ways.

Already, IFOAM - Organics International has been instrumental in wining major success in Denmark, India and Bhutan. We have the support of farmers in Indonesia, the Philippines and China, all of whom have made significant advances in converting their landbase to organic production.

In terms of providing bang for our environmental buck,' IFOAM has played a major role in international sustainable agriculture reform— all on a shoestring budget.

With the generous support of members like yourself, the regulatory development process led by the network of IFOAM regional offices around the world offers us one of the best hopes we have for putting the whole world back into harmony with nature.

— Ken McCormick

