IAHA-International Conference on Organic Animal Husbandry
organized at NCOF, Ghaziabad (India) on 6-8 Nov, 2017

The International Conference on the ROLE OF LIVESTOCK IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE - the Pre-Conference on Organic Animal Husbandry, was held at the National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF), Ghaziabad, India on 6-8 November 2017. The pre-conference was linked to the 19th Organic World Congress, New Delhi (November 9-11, 2017). Over 80 participants from 14 countries attended, in addition over 35 students had the opportunity to experience an
international event. The conference was jointly organised by: ICAR-IVRI, FiBL, ANTHRA, NCOF, OFAI, IFOAM Organics International and IAHA

Mr. Otto Schmid, the Chair of IFOAM- Animal Husbandry Alliance (IAHA), from FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture), Switzerland opened the conference. Keynote addresses were given by, Prof. Emeritus Donald M. Broom (University of Cambridge, UK), who spoke on “Sustainability: the role of animal welfare and silvopastoral systems” and Prof. Raymond Auerbach (Nelson Mandela University, South Africa), which spoke on “Integrating sustainable and organic animal husbandry with efficient resource use in Africa”. On the second day Dr. Florian Leiber, head of the animal research group at FiBL gave a key note speech on “The sustainability dilemma in livestock feeding”.

The conference sessions covered various dimensions of organic animal husbandry, from feeding, breeding and rearing, grazing and pastoralism to animal health and welfare. The sessions were moderated by Dr. Mahesh Chander (India), Otto Schmid (Switzerland) Nitya Ghotge (India), Angela Escosteguy (Brazil), Chris Atkinson (UK), Dr. Florian Leiber (Switzerland), Wytze Nauta (The Netherlands), Dr. Anita Idel (Germany), Bhavya Pande (India), Dr. Marc Benoit (France), Dr. Marion Johnson (New Zealand) and Merete Studnitz (Denmark). A large number of posters were divided broadly into the themes of Animal Husbandry and Animal welfare.

The papers presented (and those linked to posters), have been published in the proceedings, which can be downloaded from the IAHA website: https://www.ifoam.bio/en/sector-platforms/iaha-animal-husbandry-alliance

Group discussions are a feature of IAHA conferences, where recommendations for further involvement and future research are debated and developed. The themes were 1. Grazing and pastoralism; 2. Animal health; 3. Animal breeding and welfare; 4. Boosting organic livestock production. The recommendations were further discussed by interested participants in a workshop at the Organic World Congress on the 9th of November 2017. The results of all the workshops and the presentations were summarized and have been acknowledged and accepted as recommendations at the General Assembly of IFOAM Organics International General Assembly on the 13th of Nov. in New Dehli. The recommendations and the presentations given by the key note speakers will be available on the IAHA website.

The detailed minutes of the group discussions will be published in December 2017.

Several of the pre-conference participants also visited Beejom Farm in NOIDA on 6th Nov, 2017. The organic farm is an animal sanctuary, producer of organic foodstuffs and guardian of grains. Delicious ethnic lunches are also served! Medicinal plants abound on the farm and the participants had a unique insight as to the potential of medicinal plants for animal care. Nitya Ghotge gave an introduction to the use of specific medicinal plants for animals, Ms. Angela Escosteguy (Brazil) talked on experiences and traditional knowledge of farmers and Dr Marion Johnson (New Zealand) spoke about the importance of learning your local traditions and using local herbs. The presentations are available on the IAHA website.

The collection of pictures below give an impression of the IAHA-Preconference (photos by Mahesh Chander and Otto Schmid and Marion Johnson).