



Final Version – 12.12. 2017 / Otto Schmid, IAHA chair

IFOAM 19th Organic World Congress in India

Minutes of the

WORKSHOP 9. Nov 2017: Development and research needs of Organic Animal Husbandry – based on recommendations from Pre-Conference “Role of Livestock in sustainable agriculture”

Goals of the workshop at Organic World Congress

- to discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the Pre-Conference on Organic Animal Husbandry 6-8 Nov. 2017;
- to identify the most important development and research needs, also linked to Organic 3.0 discussions;
- to propose policy recommendations for different actors for the further development of organic livestock towards sustainability and ethical principles;
- to develop a catalogue of recommendations integrated in a declaration for the General Assembly 2017.

Moderators: Otto Schmid, IAHA Chair assisted by Mette Vaarst

Group 1 Pasture and feeding. Rapporteur: Florian Leiber, FiBL

Recommendations and questions from Pre-Conference:

a. Feeding general: The nutrient/sustainability issue:

- Should we set thresholds for feed imports into OA systems in the organic standards?
- Should we set thresholds for animal units per area unit in OA systems in the organic standards?
- Should we set thresholds for the use of human-edible feedstuffs as animal feed in OA systems in the organic standards?

Discussion at OWC workshop

- *Imports of feed need to be better defined on farm level – what are the borders of organic agricultural livestock-based systems?*
- *Any livestock should increase or maintain soil quality and fertility - we need suitable indicators (see bio-dynamic standards), e.g. appropriate stocking densities.*

- *Challenge how to feed poultry with regional sources.*

b. Grasslands

- How can we as the organic community support maintenance and sustainable use of global grasslands as the main source of animal feed in animal-based food production?
- Can we take the grassland issue more seriously in our hands in standard setting, policy making and R&D?
- Which are the most efficient next steps to develop the grassland issue in OA?
- Should we generally acknowledge traditional pastoral systems for their contribution to food production in an organic way?

Discussion at OWC workshop

- *Shrubs and hedges should be included in agro-sylvo-pastoral /forage systems.*
- *Different solutions to increase efficiency of grazing, e.g. patch grazing, etc.*
- *Important: more site-tailored forage strategies supported by research & development.*
- *We should more classify different grazing/feeding systems.*
- *Importance of traditional site-adapted breeds for grazing.*

Group 2: Animal health: Rapporteur Marion Johnson

Recommendations and questions from Pre-Conference:

a. Animal health challenges:

- Legislation differs in each country
- Skepticism about other therapies
- Blind faith in treatments
- Lack of knowledge
- Large traditional knowledge but either not freely available or not approved for treating animals
- Wrong animals, wrong place, wrong climate

b. Animal health recommendations

- Collaborative research where every contribution is valued, including animals
- Easily accessible, publically available QUALITY information
- Document practices IN CONTEXT
- Consider relationships between animals humans and landscapes
- Collaboration across borders on common diseases e.g. mastitis, parasites
- Local management and focus on local breeds

Discussion at OWC workshop:

- *Good management and surrounding are the basis for animal health promotion.*
- *Responsible disease handling (treatment) of animals is important (no suffering).*
- *Document the use of homeopathy (and other alternatives) in practice systematically.*
- *More linking traditional knowledge on animal treatment (e.g. with medicinal plants) with modern knowledge.*

- *More focus on pasture management as a parasite handling strategy.*
- *Third generation of antibiotics should be reserved for humans.*
- *Always think on the environment when using a medicament.*
- *Look at animal and look at systems!*

Group 3: Animal welfare and breeding: Rapporteur Chris Atkinson

a. Animal welfare – Development

- Promote and ensure good human/animal relationships.
- Communicate information on
 - Welfare assessment
 - Welfare improvement (toolkits)
 - Complementary and alternative therapies
 - The need for good human/animal relationships.

b. Animal welfare – research needs

- Evidence on welfare and health of different breeds.
- Develop welfare friendly research methods.

Discussion at OWC workshop:

- *Use of welfare indicators. we need more feedback for improvement.*

c. Animal breeding – Development

- Establish mechanisms for ensuring that breeding takes place under organic conditions.
- Farmers and consumers better informed about the need for locally adapted breeds.

d. Animal breeding – research needs

- Breed animals adapted to organic conditions.
- Breeding takes place under organic conditions.

Discussion at OWC workshop:

- *We need to develop key principles for what “breeding material” we need.*
- *Difficult currently to insist, that breeding should take place under organic conditions ; sometimes no more appropriate breeds available, so we have to use available breeds*
- *Life time productivity (Longevity) remains important breeding goal.*
- *Breeding techniques: usefulness discussable - - promote more organic system thinking.*
- *Keep in mind what resources we need to have natural breeding on system level.*
- *Dual purpose (or even more purposes) breeding desirable.*
- *Different opinions regarding the use of sexing.*
- *We should be clear: what we should not do and what we should do.*

Group 4: Boosting organic livestock with policies and market development: Rapporteur Otto Schmid

a. Knowledge exchange

- The inclusion of local knowledge in raising organic animals.

- Synergy with science.
- Change of thinking - not a box of other inputs – better understanding of systems and local context.
- Different disciplines and actors should go much more together.
- Training for farmers, Vets, inspectors, animal scientists.

b. Sustainability and Organic Standards

- Standards must be better linked to fundamentals of organic.
- Limit animal protein per ha of arable land.
- Define ecological capacity of region.
- Appropriate tools for sustainability check of animal husbandry (for farmers and inspectors).

c. Certification /Inspection system more appropriate for animal husbandry

- Inspector/ controller for livestock: better trained, understanding of livestock systems.
- Certification should be more flexible to the organic farmers (e.g. in Africa).
- More innovative and farmer friendly inspection for animal welfare (animal-oriented indicators for self-assessment, e.g. AssureWel Soil Association or in Germany (Bioland, Demeter, Naturland).

d. Integrated Programs / Organic Action Plans

- Develop organic livestock with action plans.
- Develop production supply and demand together.
- Support producers and consumer awareness rising and new markets.
- Capacity building for farmer groups.

Discussion at OWC workshop:

- *Integrated programs including livestock are very important. Often livestock is associated with environmental problems instead of highlighting the value of livestock in organic systems.*

More information Website IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance (IAHA)

<http://www.ifoam.org/en/sector-groups/iaha-animal-husbandry-alliance>

There you can inscribe with a questionnaire

A summary of the discussions of this workshop and the outcome of the Pre-Conference will be put on this website

Proceedings of Pre-Conference will be updated and also on website, integrating the results of the workshops

Annex 1 More detailed recommendations

Worked out by Anita Idel, based on the presentations and discussions

Grassland Group A. Recommendations / IAHA pre-Conference 8.Nov 2017

Acknowledging that

- Pastures are the biggest biome in the world.
- Pastures is the biggest perennial plant society in the world.
- The grasslands of the world are the result of a thousand yearlong co-evolution between grass and grazing animals.
- Mobile grazing animals were key for the development of landscapes, biodiversity and soil fertility.
- Pasture is key for water purification, storage of water and replenishment of groundwater.
- The growth dynamics of pasture are different – it requires a growth impulse (the bite) to start growth by photosynthesis.

B.

- That conservation and sustainable use of wide areas of the grasslands of the world depend on the knowledge, experience and social systems of livestock keeping communities, including nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists.
- Local communities have developed locally adapted breeds that are able to convert resources in outputs (food, fibre, fertilizers, and draft power) and use as capital.
- Low input systems

C.

- The significance and value of pastures for nutrition, biodiversity, soil fertility, climate protection, water purification, storage and replenishment of ground water remains largely unacknowledged and underestimated.

Pastures are increasingly under pressure due to

- Alienation (land grabbing)
- Intensification (fertilizer)
- Overgrazing
- Abandonment, succession

Recommendations

We participants of the workshop on grazing held during the Animal Husbandry Pre-Conference recommend

Threats / →policies

1. Land tenure for nomadic pastoralists have to be secured and land grabbing be controlled by international agreement. Note that land grabbing is also a security issue.

2. Lobby to remove the key obstacles and external pressure (especially land grabbing) on pastoral communities.
3. Recognition of traditional knowledge customary rights of livestock keeping communities for the sustainable use of grasslands.

Improvement

4. The promotion of improved methods of grazing in ecologically fragile areas.
5. Support only system that prove to:
 - i. Maintain or increase soil and soil carbon
 - ii. Maintain or increase plant productivity and animal efficiency
 - iii. biodiversity (flora and fauna)
 - iv. Contribute to the food market outside the grassland area
6. Encourage the reintroduction of livestock in cropping farming systems. No natural ecosystem is devoid of animals.
7. Steps need to be made to de-intensify the use of pastures in developed countries, where appropriate.

Research

8. a. Research into the role and best conditions to support methane trophic bacteria to neutralize methane emissions.
b. Good information is needed to counter the claims of the anti-ruminants lobbies.
9. More research on grazing and pasture management focused on the special dynamics of the co-evolution of grass and grazing animals.
10. Systematic studies need to validate the animal husbandry practices of pastoralism (nomads and semi nomads).
11. Systemic studies to quantify the outputs of pastoral systems.
12. Breeding for long lactation (persistence).

Information

13. Develop system of facilitating the empowerment of grassland farmers and pastoralists to adapt their production methods.
14. Organizing a campaign to inform the general public and policy makers about the importance of the animals in ecosystems and food production.
15. Nomad farmers need to be oriented and educated about organic standards.

Added value and organic standards

16. Organic standards need to be developed for pastoralism livestock producers.
17. Recognition of pastoralism as an animal husbandry system that conforms to organic principles.
18. Formal recognition of added value of pastoral products and production methods.
19. Development of business models and commercial interests to ensure that vulnerable nomadic communities receive attractive returns for their untapped treasure of organic products.
20. Europe: to let animals get old as a fair treatment of their contribution