DEAR READER

This is the first newsletter edition from IAHA, the *IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance*. IAHA was born when it was officially approved and recognized under its current name, by the World Board of IFOAM, the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements* in April 2012. At the 2nd IFOAM EU Conference in Hamburg in September 2012 IAHA was presented to the public.

This newsletter contains a summary of the results of a questionnaire, which was distributed at that conference to participants. One of the key messages from most of the participants was a desire to have a better exchange of information on organic animal husbandry on a world-wide level. With support of the head office of IFOAM in Bonn the initiators developed a web-based *IAHA platform*, which is hosted on the recently updated website of IFOAM.

The IAHA will send 3-4 newsletters per year to interested persons. Each newsletter will be structured in a similar way with permanent sections and will have a special focus on developments on one continent and specific themes. The editors will also highlight important conferences and events in the area of organic animal husbandry. The first edition focuses mainly on Europe and thematically on animal welfare and breeding. The next editions will then have a focus on South America and Caribbean (1st Quartile 2014), on Asia (2nd Quartile 2014) and on North America (3rd Quartile 2014).

The purpose of IAHA is to
• raise awareness of organic animal husbandry
• be an international forum
• give information on interesting papers and events
• publicize conferences to participate in and to submit papers to.

An important goal of IAHA is to develop common position papers on a world-wide level for the organic movement in different thematic areas. One such area is breeding, and in this edition you can find information on the European Consortium for Organic Animal Breeding (ECO-AB), which has developed a position paper on breeding techniques for Europe. We would welcome comments on the breeding paper by sending an email to IAHA referring to the breeding paper. If there is enough interest, we will install an internet discussion forum on the IAHA web-platform on the IFOAM website.

Another area, where there is a growing interest, is animal-based 'welfare outcomes' (WO) indicators. This approach focuses on animal-based indicators of welfare instead of just looking at space and technical or resource-based requirements, etc. In this edition you can find information about projects from the United Kingdom (AssureWel project), Switzerland and Germany. We would invite others working in this area to exchange information about their initiatives and projects.

We hope that the IAHA can stimulate world-wide information exchange and debate on organic animal husbandry.

Otto Schmid
Chair of IAHA core group, FiBL Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick/Switzerland

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1. IFOAM ANIMAL HUSBANDRY ALLIANCE
IAHA is an informal network of persons/groups, whose goal is to support, strengthen and stimulate the development of organic animal husbandry. IAHA is a Sector Platform of IFOAM that focuses on animal husbandry and it is a think tank comparable to the IFOAM Action Groups.

**Purpose and operations of IAHA**

*Purpose*: IAHA allows IFOAM affiliates to integrate organic animal husbandry knowledge, concerns, positions, and issues into the work of IFOAM and the Organic Movement. Its outcomes and relevance include, but are not limited to:

- Inputs for IFOAM norms developments and IFOAM position papers.
- Contributions to IFOAM’s advocacy for organic livestock and livestock keepers.
- Inputs for the stakeholders of the Organic Movement, e.g. national organizations, certification bodies, research institutions, communicators, policy setters and others.
- The platform can also facilitate learning for national organic sectors and actors, that want to raise the level of their animal husbandry development.

*Operations*: IAHA can build working forums initiated by core group members or other IAHA participants to address a certain issue. Possible themes might be forums on:

- Animal welfare
- Breeding or sustainable animal health practices
- Medicinal herbs for veterinary use
- New sources of supply for animal nutrition
- Policy to develop the organic animal sector etc.

Each working forum defines its terms of reference, objectives, the mode of working, the forum participants and its time span. The core group will compile the results of the working group and make them available to interested parties.

Every three years during the Organic World Congress, the participants of the network will meet and elect (by simple majority of votes by the present persons) a core group to lead the activities and discussions. Stakeholders can become participants by a simple statement of interest and registration.
Results of a survey among participants of the 2nd IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference in September 2012 in Hamburg

At the second IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference in September 2012 in Hamburg/Germany, IAHA distributed a questionnaire designed to get feedback on the needs of the participants. In total, 82 people participated in the survey and of these 75 tasked for more information about the IAHA. The large majority of participants came from Europe (58) and in particular from the organizing country Germany (16). Some of the results are shown below:

**Suggested activities for IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance (IAHA) – survey results Sept. 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants from continent</th>
<th>Website / Newsletter</th>
<th>Training / Education</th>
<th>Knowledge exchange / Networking</th>
<th>Workshops / Conferences</th>
<th>Research collaboration</th>
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<td>AFRICA</td>
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Number of participants: *** many **several * some

The full results of the survey report on the questionnaire can be downloaded from the IAHA Website [here](#).

**IAHA newsletter**

Anybody wishing to receive the newsletter by mail can register by sending an email to [IAHA](#).

We also encourage you to contribute to the next newsletter. Please send your contributions before end of October 2013 to the IAHA email address with a copy to the Chair of IAHA, Otto Schmid. [email](#)

**IAHA discussion forums**

For the time being we plan to have two forums, each with a moderator. In each of these areas we want to work out an IFOAM World position paper and a Strategic Research and Development Agenda. The themes are: Breeding Techniques and Animal Welfare Indicators. If you have a suggestion for another forum and wish to be actively involved please send an email to [IAHA](#). Those wishing to participate in one of the discussion forums must register through the IAHA email address and then will be allowed access to the IAHA internal website.

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2. ORGANIC ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN EUROPE

Growth in organic animal production in Europe

Based on figures from the 14th edition of *The World of Organic Agriculture*, which was published by FiBL and IFOAM in February 2013, not only is the area of certified land still increasing, but also the number of certified animals in organic agriculture in Europe continues to grow.

Since 2009, the amount of organic poultry grew strongly while the quantity of organic cattle and organic sheep increased slowly. Organic pig production remained stable throughout the period (see Tab. 1).

**Tab. 1 Growth of the number of organic animals in Europe 2007-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Poultry</th>
<th>Bovine animals</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Pigs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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Source: Eurostat and national data sources, compiled by FiBL; 2013

Most organic bovine animals were certified in 2011 in France and Austria (see Tab. 2)

**Tab. 2 Organic bovine animals in Europe: Distribution by country 2011 (total: 3.2 million animals)**
Most organic pigs were certified in 2011 in Denmark, France and Germany (see Tab. 3).

**Tab. 3 Organic pigs in Europe: Distribution by country 2011 (total: 0.8 million animals)**

Most organic poultry was certified in 2011 in France and Germany.

**Tab. 4 Organic Poultry in Europe: Distribution by country 2011 (total: 32 million animals)**
More details about the development of organic production worldwide can be found in the book:

The book can be ordered via IFOAM.org or shop.FiBL.org.

More information about organic data can be obtained from: Helga Willer, FiBL-Switzerland email

Revision of the EU regulation on organic production – regulatory challenges

In 2012 a revision of the EU regulation for organic production was started by the unit for organic farming in the European Commission DG Agriculture with a number of hearings, public consultations, external expert evaluation studies and other stakeholder involvement. One current key challenge in animal husbandry, which is being evaluated and discussed, is the exceptional production rules dealing with the non-organic high protein feed (such as potato protein, maize gluten products) for mono-gastrics. Currently 5 % non-organic feed is still allowed due to the fact that the production of organic pulses/protein crops is insufficient in Europe. There is a perceived risk that moving too quickly to 100 % organic feed might result in a high reliance on imports from outside Europe. This may conflict with the consumer preference for local production and for feed from the farm or region. It might also lead to pressure to use synthetic amino acids as a feed ingredient, which could compromise the credibility of organic farming. A solution might be to push the development and cultivation of plant-based proteins with high value protein through research and political support measures. Another challenge relates to the phasing out of the of the exceptional production rule for the use of non-organic young poultry. For the time being (Sept. 2013) no decision has yet been taken by the EU Commission on this issue.
3. ANIMAL WELFARE

AssureWel Project with Soil Association

Animal welfare is fundamental to organic principles and standards. Our standards are designed to deliver the very highest levels of farm animal welfare and to encourage a continuous improvement approach. However, to ensure we are improving farm animal welfare we need to be able to measure it. Measuring welfare enables us to know what level is being achieved on-farm and therefore better understand the impact of resources and management practices on the animals themselves.

AssureWel (Advancing Animal Welfare Assurance) is a collaborative project led by the Soil Association, RSPCA and the University of Bristol. This project is developing practical ways for farmers and inspectors to more directly measure the welfare of the animals assessed and the overall level of welfare achieved on farm, for example by monitoring lameness in cattle and feather loss in hens. To date this 'welfare outcome', assessment has been introduced into assurance schemes for laying hens, dairy cattle and pigs, with implementation for broilers, beef cattle and sheep planned by 2015. This assessment helps more objectively assess compliance with standards, provides feedback (including benchmarking to producers) to help monitor and improve welfare on farm, and is used to inform and improve standards development. Advice and support is also available to producers and producer groups to help further improve welfare. AssureWel is further working to improve the welfare of all farm animals, through collaborative links with several industry bodies including the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme. Please visit www.assurewel.org for more details.

More information: Christopher Atkinson, Head of Standards, Soil Association email

FiBL project with Bio Suisse to develop a tool with a set of animal health and welfare related indicators

Based on experiences from the AssureWel project and the Bioland farmers' association in Germany, which has published a handbook for animal health as well as other projects, the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) with support of the Swiss umbrella organisation Bio Suisse, is developing a tool for farmers with a set of
animal related indicators. This tool would allow farmers to perform self-
evaluations of health and welfare state of their animals with a traffic light
indication.

More information: Christophe Notz, FiBL Switzerland  email

Project of Thuenen-Institute of Organic Farming on Indicators for a
Payment-by-Results Approach for Animal Welfare Measures and
Organic Farming

The Thuenen-Institute of Organic Farming, a Federal Research Institute
for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries in Germany, is carrying out a
project on animal-based welfare indicators in dairy cattle including a
Delphi expert survey. The aim of the project is to provide these
indicators as well as benchmarks and targets for dairy farming and to
draft a scheme which allows for a transformation of the action-based
approach to result-orientated measures. Results are expected by
March 2015.

More information: Solveig March  email and Jan Brinkmann  email ,
Thuenen-Institute, Trenthorst/ Germany

Project ANIPLAN

As health and welfare of animals is a main goal for organic livestock
farming, the CoreOrganic project "ANIPLAN" (2007-2010; coordinator
Mette Vaarst) aimed to:

- develop animal health and welfare planning principles
- carry out farm visits including animal based assessments in 147
  organic dairy farms in seven European countries (A, CH, DE, DK,
  NL, NO, UK)
- develop guidelines for communication about animal health and
  welfare promotion.

Nine principles were defined for successful health and welfare planning
and applied via "one to one communication" with farmers or "Stable
Schools". During the project year the sum of all treatments, udder
 treatments and treatments of metabolic diseases decreased, while the
 treatments of lame cows increased significantly. The somatic cell score
 (SCS) improved significantly, daily milk yield, milk components fat and
 protein and average lactation numbers remained stable. This project not
only demonstrated, that farm individual health planning strategies can be
successfully implemented on farms, but also that experiences
 gained from applied research are attractive for inclusion in advisory
 activities (e.g. "Kuhpraktiker" in Austria; Stable Schools Facilitator
 Training in Norway) and for research projects, extending and building up
 on existing knowledge and networks (e.g. CoreOrganic2 -ProPIG,
 Stable School project in Germany).

More information on the project can be found here.
Project ProPIG
Robust and competitive organic pig production needs to encompass low environmental impacts and good animal health and welfare. In theory, improving animal health and welfare reduces environmental impacts through decreased medicine use, improved growth rates and feed conversion efficiency. However, as data on environmental impacts are scarce, the extent of such improvement has never been verified on working farms.

ProPIG is a CoreOrganic2 project in 7 European countries (AT, CH, CZ, DE, DK, IT, UK) building on the experiences from the previous two CoreOrganic projects ANIPLAN and CorePIG. It started in 2011 and includes data collection using an on-farm recording tool "PigSurfer", on 75 organic pig farms (animal based measures, land use, resources), calculations of nutrient balances and Life Cycle Assessment and the development and evaluation of farm specific improvement strategies ("Catalogue of Improvement Measures"). Currently the final farm visits are carried out, feedback is given to farmers and the degree of implementation of improvement measures is documented.

More information on the project [here](#) and from the coordinator Christine Leeb [email](#)

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4. BREEDING

Breeding techniques in organic animal husbandry – a position paper from Europe

The European Consortium for Organic Animal Breeding (ECO-AB) was founded in July 2007. The aims of the group are to

- provide a platform for discussion, knowledge exchange and experience in all issues relating to animal breeding in organic animal farming systems
- initiate and support organic animal breeding programs
- develop scientific concepts for organic animal breeding
- provide independent, competent expertise for the development of credible and practical standards for animal breeding in organic systems.

More information is available at the [ECO-AB homepage](#).
One important work of this group is a position paper on breeding techniques as well as an assessment of cattle breeding in organic agriculture. The assessment is an update of a paper which was presented at the First IFOAM Animal Husbandry conference in Santa Fe in 2009. In this paper the *European consortium for Organic Animal Breeding* shows differences between organic and conventional breeding and points out arising problems and possible solutions. Several organic animal breeding projects which have been carried out in different European countries over the past 15 years are referenced. An analysis of current breeding techniques with recommendations has been compiled for the European context. It would be interesting to have feedback from other regions of the world. If there is a sufficient interest, we will install an internet discussion forum on the IAHA web space. The two ECO-AB papers on breeding can be ordered soon at the IAHA website. “Organic Animal Breeding 2012 - a Position Paper from the European Consortium for Organic Animal Breeding, Eco AB” and “Assessing Reproductive and Breeding Techniques in Organic Agriculture using Cattle Breeding as an Example”.

More information: Anet Spengler Neff, FiBL, Frick/ Switzerland  email

**EU research project LowInputBreeds on breeding in organic and low input production systems**

The EU funded collaborative project ‘*LowInputBreeds*’ (Contract Nr. 222623) aims to develop integrated livestock breeding and management strategies to improve animal health, product quality and performance in European organic and ‘low input’ milk, meat and egg production through research, dissemination and training activities. The project started in 2009 and will end 2014. The consortium includes 11 academic centers of excellence and 6 genetics/breeding companies (4 SMEs) in 11 European and 3 non-European countries. *LowInputBreeds* focuses on six major livestock production systems: dairy and beef cattle, dairy and meat sheep, pigs and laying hens. The project has four main objectives:

1. To develop and evaluate innovative breeding concepts, including genome wide and marker assisted selection as well as cross- and farmer participatory breeding strategies, which will deliver genotypes with ‘robustness’ and quality traits required under organic and ‘low input’ conditions. The project focuses on six livestock production systems and designs species-specific breeding strategies for different macroclimatic regions in Europe.

2. To integrate the use of improved genotypes with innovative management approaches including improved nutrition and rearing systems. This focuses on issues (e.g. mastitis and parasite control, animal welfare problems) where breeding or management innovations alone are unlikely to provide satisfactory solutions.

3. To identify and ensure potential economic, environmental, genetic
diversity/plasticity and ethical impacts of the project conform to societal priorities, consumer and producer demands/expectations.

4. To establish an efficient training and dissemination program aimed at rapid exploitation and application of project deliverables by the organic and ‘low input’ livestock industry.

By supporting development and integrated use of (a) genotypes selected for performance, robustness and product quality, and (b) management innovations that improve ‘low input’ systems, the project will make a significant contribution towards regionally-adapted breeding strategies that are compatible with sustainable production, high product quality and organic principles.

At the LowInputBreeds Homepage more information and links to project publications are provided.

The last project newsletter can be read here and the newsletter archive is available here. Two of the most recent practical technical leaflets on “Breeding for organic and low input pig production systems” as well on “Adaption of sows to rising temperatures” can be found here.

More information: Project scientific coordinator: Veronika Maurer, FiBL, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick /Switzerland email

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5. CONFERENCE REPORTS

Symposium on organic livestock production systems held in Lima/Peru

IAHA together with the University La Molina (UNALM) organized the SYMPOSIUM ON ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SYSTEMS IN AN AGROECOLOGICAL CONTEXT, on 9th September, in Lima/Peru, during the IV Congress of the Latin American Society of Agroecology (SOCLA).

The Symposium had the following objectives:

- to promote and strengthen the subject,
- to provide exchange and integration between technicians, producers and students and
- to promote discussion of proposals and identification of critical points and higher demands.

The roundtable was composed of technicians and breeders of various
nationalities. The program was:

1. *Intensive silvo-pastoral systems (SSPI) with organic production schemes: potential and limitations in several countries.*
   Med. Vet. Murgueitio Enrique Restrepo - Foundation Executive Director CIPAV-, Colombia

2. *Organic husbandry: bases, market and Brazilian experiments*
   Med. Vet. Angela Escosteguy - Member of IAHA, President of the Institute of Well-Being and of the Organic Livestock Commission of the Brazilian Society of Veterinary Medicine.

3. *Happy Cows: A challenge in the Andes*
   Biologist and breeder Gracille Sangai - Happy Cows - Peru

4. *Ecological Control of parasites*
   Med. Vet. Daniel Zarate - Faculty Zootchny of the UNALM

About 100 people - including university professors, students, NGO leaders and breeders - attended the event. Also present from the IFOAM Executive Board were: Andre Leu, Gabi Soto, Roberto Ugas and Markus Arbenz. The audience was very interested and asked many questions mainly on silvopastoral systems and the use of medicinal plants. For Angela Escosteguy, member of IAHA, the Symposium achieved its objectives by providing an introduction and discussion by numerous teachers, researchers, students and breeders on the topic of organic husbandry. Furthermore, the inclusion of an animal area in the Congress of the Latin American Society of Agroecology has been a breakthrough and IFOAM was congratulated for it by the participants.

*More information: Latin American Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) and Angela Escosteguy email*

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**6. CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Organic animal husbandry conference in Turkey 24-26th of October 2013**

On the 24-26th of October 2013 at Uludag University in Bursa/Turkey there will be 2nd Organic Animal Husbandry Congress, which will be organized by
the leadership of Uludag University, by the incorporation of Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and with the assistance of Nilüfer Municipality, Aydın Dogan Foundation, Ecological Agriculture Organization (ETO) and Ecological Life Organization (EKODER).

More information: See the congress website.

IFOAM Organic World Congress in October 2014 in Istanbul / Turkey
From 13-15 of October 2014 the 18th Organic World Congress (OWC) of IFOAM /ISOFAR (International Society of Organic Agriculture Research) takes place in Istanbul / Turkey. This is a great opportunity for organic animal husbandry researchers and practitioners to meet and to exchange their experiences.

Main conference: The OWC is structured in three conference tracks as well as a series of workshops. The Main Track, made up of two parallel sessions titled Organic Vision Building and Growing the Organic World, sees panellists discuss the future direction of the global organic world.

The Scientific Track is designed for researchers to present their latest findings on systems, plant production, animal husbandry, socio-economics, processing, trade, and human nutrition research. This track will be organised in collaboration with the International Society of Organic Farming Research (ISOFAR).

The Practitioners Track provides a forum for the exchange of hands-on knowledge and experiences in the practical and strategic as well as socio-cultural aspects of organic food and agriculture.

The series of workshops is open to institutes and initiatives interested in sharing their expertise with congress attendees. Further details on the conference tracks can be found here.

Don't forget to submit your application to be a presenter of papers, panelist or workshop host by 30 September 2013.

Pre-conference: It might be possible for IAHA to organize a pre-conference on the 12th of October 2014, where an overview on developments in different areas of the world can be given and position papers in main areas of animal organic husbandry can be discussed.

More information: See the congress website of the 18th IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS, ICEC, 13-15 October 2014, İstanbul.

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7. VARIA

FAO dealing with organic livestock

FAO, the world United
Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture has initiated some work on organic livestock in collaboration with FIBL, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Frick/Switzerland. The following two documents from 2012 are worth taking note of:

**SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANIC LIVESTOCK MODEL (SOL-m)**

**Concept note**

SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANIC LIVESTOCK MODELLING (SOL-m), Impacts of a global upscaling of low-input and organic livestock production  **Preliminary Results**