

## How N&P revised their livestock standards



By **Sandrine Deblois**,

Technical facilitator for the revision of standards at Nature et Progrès

Starting in 1972, the date of creation of its first Cahier des Charges, the PGS Nature & Progrès<sup>2</sup> (N&P) has developed 15 different production standards. These standards are all developed following a participatory approach by N&P members and they are dynamically maintained, integrating adaptations and improvements as the cultural and agronomic context evolves.

N&P livestock breeding standards were among the first to be created by the PGS and they date back to 1972. They were revised several times in 1988, 1999 and 2002. The last process of revision began in 2013 upon the initiative of the Federal Board, who had received several requests from livestock farmers members of N&P, who felt that the philosophy at the foundation of livestock production needed to be reconsidered. Several points of the standards appeared obsolete or incomplete, such as the choice of the breeds, the adoption of certain veterinary treatments, and the use of mutilation (castration, dehorning, etc.). N&P livestock producers were unsatisfied with the European zootechnical regulation, which does not address or even worsens issues related to livestock genetic erosion caused

by the replacement of the existing domestic breeds with a small selection of specialized 'improved' breeds, brought by the industrialization of the livestock sector.

In order to revise the standards, producers organized themselves into working groups - sheep, goat, cattle, horse, pig production - under the supervision of the Internal Technical Committee (CTI), a body that supervises the writing and the revision of the N&P standards before their validation by the General Assembly.

Several meetings were held remotely and external advice was sought from likeminded partners such as GIE Zone Verte, a group of veterinarians specialized in alternative medicine such as herbal medicine, aromatherapy and homeopathy.

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1. Nature et Progrès is one of the oldest PGS in the world, active since 1972. From the beginning, this French association has involved a number of stakeholders and pioneers of the organic movement, including farmers, consumers, agronomists, technicians and even doctors. In 2013 N&P received official IFOAM PGS recognition.



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Livestock producers  
and member of N&P,  
Ferme de Caroline,  
Haute-Savoie, France

*Photo: M. Anthonioz*

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The choice of the breed and the capacity of the farmers to develop and maintain their own adapted breeds was seen as pivotal to ensure the resilience of the herd and the respect of the N&P Charter. In this framework, a collaboration with the *Confederation Paysanne* and the French Biodynamic Movement was started to launch a working group on animal biodiversity and participatory breeding.

The breeding standards were finally completed at the end of 2016 and presented for approval to the CTI. After validation, the standards were then approved by the General Assembly in April 2017, with the request to further improve them in the coming years by focusing on reducing the adoption of authorized mutilations.

Defining a standard within N&P PGS is always a complex exercise that requires finding a balance between the ideal practices that N&P members wish to defend and the reality of the concrete possibilities of the producers, bound to the current agricultural and political context.

All of N&P's standards are available online (in French) for consultation and download:

[http://www.natureetprogres.org/producteurs/cahier\\_des\\_charges.html](http://www.natureetprogres.org/producteurs/cahier_des_charges.html)

# Green Innovation Centers and PGS development in Cameroon

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By **Hervé Bouagnimbeck**, GADD

A consortium composed of IFOAM – Organics International, Naturland and FiBL are supporting the working group on Organic Agriculture representing the **Green Innovation Centers (GIC)** in several African countries. Following a first mission conducted in March 2018, it emerged that a local market for organic potatoes and further rotating crops can be established. It was therefore decided to conduct an introductory training on Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) with local stakeholders in September 2018 in Cameroon.

The planned training was organized in Dschang from 12 to 14 September 2018, to build PGS capacity among 22 selected key persons in the GIC in Cameroon (ProCISA). The objectives of the training were to:

- develop a good understanding of organic quality assurance, PGS and its operating environment;
- explain how to set up and operate a PGS;
- identify training needs of trainers so that they are able to train others on PGS;
- develop a road map for the implementation of pilot PGS within targeted cooperatives.

The training was organized and delivered by Hervé Bouagnimbeck from GADD with the support of Hervé Boukoua from ProCISA and Flávia Castro and Andrea Richert from IFOAM -Organics International. The GADD team supported the logistics.

The program was quite intense and some of the discussions during group activities provided the opportunity to address key issues for PGS implementation. For example, trainees were asked whether it would be preferable while setting up a PGS to develop their own standards from scratch or to adopt and adapt existing standards, such as

the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS) or the organic standard from Benin. In order to answer this question, trainees were divided in four groups according to their field of activities: training centers, market actors, producers, and the Ministry of Agriculture and the municipality of Dschang. While one group (market actors) felt that it would be more appropriate to develop their own standard, the other three preferred to adapt an existing standard from an African country or the EAOPS, as the climatic and socio-economic situation in these parts of Africa might be similar to those in Cameroon. Finally, given that: (i) the EAOPS were developed through an intensive and inclusive consultation process with national and international experts, including IFOAM – Organics International, (ii) PGS is quite well developed in East Africa, and (iii) Kenya is well known for organic potato production, the participants agreed that it might be better to use the EAOPS as a starting point and adapt it to the Cameroonian conditions.

Challenges for PGS implementation were also considered. The discussion around the peer review visits concluded that a key challenge is the poor documentation and record-keeping among farmers. Indeed, it was noted during the two farm visits carried out by the participants that both visited producers had difficulties to maintain documentation and keep records. As a result, necessary information for understanding farm operations, production expenses and sales records was missing.

Towards the end of the training, trainees were invited to list activities that might be relevant for the development of PGS in their context. Among the first priorities identified were the need to carry out a survey among producers who are willing to convert



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Peer review during  
PGS Training,  
Cameroon.

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or have already converted to organic agriculture, and the need to set up a pool of experts and facilitators, who will be supporting the implementation of PGS

in the country. A follow-up mission is planned to take place soon and we are looking forward to sharing information on further developments.

## The new IFOAM – Organics International PGS Committee

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By **the IFOAM – Organics International PGS Team**

In 2018 the terms of the previous PGS Committee of IFOAM – Organics International came to an end. We launched a call in August to invite applications for the committee. We received a good number of applications, with four committee members reapplying. We would like to thank all the applicants for their interest in PGS and IFOAM - Organics International.

The assessment is now finalized and the new committee nominated by Louise Luttikholt, Executive Director of IFOAM - Organics International, is formed of four re-appointed members: Alice Varon (USA), Audrey Wainwright (South Africa), Chris May (New Zealand) and Luiz Rebelatto (Brazil); and two newly appointed members: Rowena Buena (Philippines) and Sylvaine Lemeilleur (France). Female representation is now higher, with four women, and all of them are directly involved in active PGS initiatives. The contact

details for all members are available in the imprint of this newsletter, on the last page.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank exiting members Ashish Gupta (India) and Eva Torremocha (Spain) for their commitment and support to the development of PGS beyond the regions they represented. Ashish, a PGS researcher, practitioner and trainer, has contributed to important developments in our strategic work during the single term he served as a member. Eva was appointed to the very first term of the PGS Committee in 2009, and has provided excellent contributions throughout these years, not only through her PGS research, consultancy and training work, but also in combination with the term she served as a member of the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International.

We are happy to welcome Rowena as our new representative for Asia, and Sylvaine as our new representative for Europe. Rowena has been involved in the development of the MASIPAG Farmers Guarantee System (MFGS) since its inception in 2004, having contributed to the improvement of the MASIPAG Organic Standards. She provides trainings and is a strong advocate for PGS recognition in the Philippines. Sylvaine is a researcher at CIRAD, focusing on voluntary sustainability standards and their impact on small farmers in developing countries, with practical experience in PGS as a member of the local group Nature & Progrès in Hérault since 2013.



# CONTINENTAL NEWS: WHAT'S NEW IN...

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## Global

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The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is launching a call for submissions of good practices, success stories and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Organics agriculture is a driver for implementing the SDGs, thus we invite the organic movement and PGS practitioners to submit their applications. Where applicable, the submissions can serve as inputs to thematic preparations for the 2019 sessions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which takes place annually in New York. An event will be organized in preparation for the 2019 HLPF to showcase a selection of the good practices and success stories and to present the main findings. Submissions can be made online between 1 November 2018 and 28 February 2019. For more information click [here](#).

## Africa

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**Morocco:** The network of Agroecological Initiative of Morocco, RIAM, is organising a two-day meeting from 30 November – 1 December to bring together national and international institutions in Rabat. The objective of this gathering is to discuss the current status of development of agroecology in Morocco and to share innovative experiences implemented across the country and in the Mediterranean areas. For instance, RIAM has recently established a PGS, located in Rabat, which is composed by around 30 producers and which started the first peer review visits to test its standards and procedures in September.

the trade of organic products between the two countries. Both countries recognise PGS at the same level of third-party certification, with no geographic limitation for the commercialisation of PGS produce. The MoU foresees that PGS will be considered in the scenario of mutual recognition, which is now being discussed. For Virginia Lira, from the Brazilian competent authority for organic agriculture (COAGRE), this is an important milestone in the recognition of PGS as a valid certification system also for the trade of organic produce among countries with regulated organic markets.

## Americas

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**Latin America:** The Red Comparte network has been supporting PGS development among its members, with participatory design of pilots taking place in Colombia, Guatemala and Paraguay. The idea is to develop a common system for the network, to be then launched in 2019. For more information in Spanish, please see this [link](#).

**Chile - Brazil:** From 21 to 26 September, PGS initiatives and organisations from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Paraguay and Peru had the opportunity to meet in Florianopolis (Brazil) and share their experiences on participatory certification, agroecology, production and marketing strategies. This exchange was organised in the framework of the project “*Saberes em Rede*”, implemented by CEPAGRO and funded by the Inter-American Foundation. Some of the events in the program were open to the public, in particular the debate on “*Participatory Certification: Latin American Connections*”, held on 24 September with the participation of Virginia Lira, from the Brazilian competent authority (COAGRE), Laercio Meirelles, from the Latin American PGS Forum, and Romeu Leite, from the Brazilian PGS Forum, as well as the PGS initiatives: Tijtoca Nemiliztli, from México, represented by farmer Fernando George Pluma;

**Chile - Brazil:** On 20 September the agriculture ministers of Brazil and Chile signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at working towards equivalence and promoting efforts to facilitate

Paraguay Orgánico, represented by Daniela Solís and Rede Ecovida de Agroecología, represented by Tãnea Mara Follmann. A recording of this debate is available [online](#).

**Colombia:** RECAB and MAELA recently launched a manual on how to implement PGS for indigenous seed production. The system has been developed through participatory workshops and is based on the work implemented by seed banks and seed exchange initiatives in Colombia. The document includes information on these initiatives as reference, as well as recommendations on the steps and procedures to follow for the development of a guarantee system for seeds. The document is available in Spanish for download [here](#).

## Asia

**Philippines:** A training was held at Cebu City with AFOS Foundation and its partner agencies from Western and Central Visayas from 5 to 7 September. Participants from farmers organizations, NGOs, Local Government Units and its line agencies, Dept. of Agriculture and Dept. of Science and Technology converged at Golden Prince Hotel to learn about PGS and its processes. This training is also a milestone for PGS Pilipinas as it opened the door for partnership between organic practitioners of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Cebu and Iloilo provinces. Plans were crafted after the training and more activities

will follow until the last quarter of 2018. For more information, please contact [Rowena Buena](#). Furthermore, PGS recognition in Philippines has been gaining further support. Senator Cynthia A. Villar, Senate Committee Head for Agriculture and Food, during the 3rd Organic Asia Congress (18 - 23/09) in Bislig City, promised that the Law on Organic Agriculture will be amended to include PGS. For more information please watch the [video of the conference](#) and see more [here](#).

## Europe

**France:** Nature et Progrès launched a crowdfunding campaign to renew their website and produce a documentary on their philosophy, values and members. To read more and discover how to support them click [here](#).

**Greece:** The 7th International Symposium & 4th European Meeting of the Community Support Agriculture movement will be held in Thessaloniki, Greece, from the 9 to the 11 November. The conference, organised by URGENCI, will showcase experiences of solidarity economy, advocacy and CSA in practice. IFOAM – Organics International is organising a panel discussion the 9 November, from 16:00 to 17:30 titled: Participatory Guarantee Systems as drivers for building Sustainable Food Systems. See the flyer for the event [here](#).

## Imprint

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome at any time. Please send your PGS-related articles in English, French or Spanish to [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio).

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