

Newsletter EU Access



This is the fifth issue of the Newsletter of the EU Access programme, a co-operation programme on sustainable agricultural supply chains in pre- and post-European Union accession countries. This programme started at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands and is now running in co-operation with partners from Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

The quarterly Newsletter intends to inform you about new developments around the various projects of the programme. A Policy Brief is also published; this contains more information around a specific theme. For more information about programme, projects, newsletter or policy brief, please contact us (arij.everaarts@wur.nl; phone +31 320 29 11 11).

Partnership in Organic Agriculture

An important factor for a successful development of organic production in Central Europe is the cooperation between the different stakeholders. Policy, producers, extension, research, NGO's and trade must work closely together. The Czech Republic is a positive example in this respect. Here the ProBio organisation is taking the lead in bringing together the parties involved in organic agriculture which has led to a rapid development of organic agriculture. In 2006 the Organics Project focuses on supporting the efforts to bring stakeholders together. In March the Organics Project contributed to a multi-stakeholder meeting in Slovakia and on September 14th the Organics Project will participate in the conference 'Partnership in organic farming' in Bulgaria. Main organisers will be the Bulgarian NGO Agrolink, the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and the Organics Project.

A second focal point for 2006 is the translation of practical farmer information that is available in Western Europe. An example is a weed control handbook which is available in English. Together with the project partners the Organics Project is trying to find funds to translate this handbook into Polish, Czech and Slovak.

Course and seminar information can be obtained from Wijnand Sukkel (wijnand.sukkel@wur.nl; phone +31 320 29 11 11).

Producers' Organisations: Quality Management Workshop

In November 2006, a matchmaking event will be organised in Poland for Producer Organisations, participating in the PRODUCER project, Dutch companies and other interested parties.

One of the main objectives of this event is to bring companies together in pre-booked meetings to create new business opportunities. Producers' Organisations of different countries will be able to meet each other and make contact for possible cooperation. The meeting will include seminars on relevant subjects and possibilities for social gathering to facilitate networking. For more information, please contact Marianne Groot (marianne.groot@wur.nl; phone +31 488 47 37 12).



WAGENINGENUR

For quality of life

Transfer pilot project in Slovak Republic

workshop on information processing and advisory service improvement for organic vegetable and fruit production

In April 2006, the Slovak Association for Sustainable Agriculture (SASA), in collaboration with Transfer and Organics, organised a two-day workshop aimed at: 1) making an inventory of the knowledge transfer system in the area of organic vegetable and fruit production, 2) identifying possibilities for improved advisory services, and 3) establishing more effective cooperation and dialogue amongst stakeholders in organic farming.

Together with the partners SASA prepared the workshop for organic farmers in two meetings, during which their information needs were discussed and their willingness to share information and to work together. Major issues were the absence of a stimulating policy environment, the lack of knowledgeable advisors in the organic sector, and the collaboration in the organic chain.

The workshop itself was attended by organic farmers, policy makers, the control and certification institute, researchers, private advisors,

educational system representatives, and organisations in charge of designing an appropriate advisory system for Slovak Republic.

Major outputs are:

- An analysis of bottlenecks in the current system of training and accreditation of advisors. First of all, the training programme does not include specific organic farming topics. Secondly, tuition fees for the training programme are too high for potential advisors who already have enough specific and hands-on experience in organic farming.
- A detailed action plan to improve collaboration between stakeholders in the organic sector. The implementation of this action plan by all stakeholders will be supervised by SASA.

For more information about Transfer, please contact Dieuwke Klaver (dieuwke.klaver@wur.nl; phone +31 317 49 52 40).



Workshop Transfer project

Training manual on quality standards tested

After the quick scan in 2004/2005, two grower pilots were formulated. The first pilot is to develop and test a training programme to inform growers on EU quality standards. The second pilot is to develop and test a training programme for a dialogue with growers on quality management.

Applied Plant Research (The Netherlands) is developing a training programme for the first pilot on European (and UN-ECE) quality standards. This training was tested by the Research Institute for Vegetable Crops in Skierniewice (Poland) and Applied Plant Research at Skierniewice and was attended by 10 Polish onion growers. The programme included presentations on trade and production figures of onions in Poland in comparison with other countries, background of international and EU quality standards, and information on the Polish inspection service and the specific EU quality standard for onions. The workshop was closed with an evaluation by the participants. This showed that the workshop lived up to the expectations of the participants. The level of the workshop and exercise were rated as good and the workshop connected well to the daily farm activities. A draft version of the training manual will now be written on the basis of these positive results. This draft will be reviewed by experts and potential users, which will result in a suitable and useful training manual for interested parties.

A workshop was recently held in Komarno (Slovakia) in the context of the second pilot on quality management systems. The interviews on possible bottlenecks on Eurep-GAP certification were carried out by State Veterinary and Food Administration in Bratislava (Slovakia) and the Hungarian Fruit and Vegetable Board in Budapest (Hungary).

During the workshop the results of the interviews were presented and bottlenecks and possible solutions were discussed, resulting in clear insights in the knowledge gap of farmers. The most important knowledge gap is the lack of registration forms provided by Eurep-GAP to record farmers own activities. Another problem is that farmers need to spend a lot of time gathering information on MRLs (Maximum Residue Levels) and legislation. Insight in bottlenecks and solutions will help to overcome the barriers for farmers in EU accession countries, while facing quality management certification demands. The majority of growers expect to obtain a Eurep-GAP certificate in one to three years.

For more information, please contact Herman Schoorlemmer. (herman.schoorlemmer@wur.nl; phone +31 320 29 13 37).

Market

The second workshop, with participation of three Czech and Slovak Producers' Organizations (PO's), on the issues of marketing and supply chain integration took place on 17 and 18 May 2006.

In the plenary session on the first day, a Dutch apple grower explained his own position as fruit grower. Two main themes were discussed during the day: the marketing position of the PO and the individual farm, and the internal relationship between farm and PO. To improve a deteriorating marketing position, the need for Dutch growers to achieve added value by means of product innovation was emphasized, together with forming alliances with other market partners, to enable corresponding forms of market integration. The second theme, the perspective of the roles and functions of a PO and its relationship with members related to marketing, generated most discussion.

On the second day a visit was made to two PO's in the West Slovak Republic. As had been concluded for the Dutch situation, it became apparent that with heterogeneous POs, members will need to look at divergence of interests when monitoring and steering the PO marketing strategy. Likewise, informal interest groups within the PO might contribute to its efficient functioning. For both the Dutch and Slovak situation, transparency was concluded to be a valuable asset in the relationship between PO and its members.

For more information, please contact Olga van der Valk (olga.vandervalk@wur.nl; phone +31 70 335 81 54).



Workshop Market

Programme meeting Ankara and symposium Antalya, Turkey (latest news)

The 3rd EU Access Programme meeting was held in Ankara on June 13th 2006, at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the republic of Turkey. This meeting was organised together with Ms. Konsten, the agricultural counselor of the Netherlands in Turkey. Many new contacts were made. On June 15th a symposium on 'Producers Organisations and Market Development' was held at

Antalya. The symposium was organised by Prof. Burhan Özkan of the Akdeniz University of Antalya and attracted many participants. The next policy brief will focus on 'Producer organisations' and will contain more information about these meetings.

For more information, please contact Arij Everaarts (arij.everaarts@wur.nl; phone +31 320 29 11 11).



Prof. Burhan Özkan with the announcement of the symposium in Antalya, Turkey



Meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural affairs in Ankara, Turkey

Agenda 2006

September 14-16

Conference on Partnership in organic farming and food quality. Sofia, Bulgaria

November

Matchmaking event for Producers organisations, Poland

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V E G E T A B L E

Addresses

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Three institutes of Wageningen University and Research Centre are involved in this programme: Applied Plant Research (PPO), International Agricultural Centre (IAC) and Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI).

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