

Newsletter EU Access



This is the fourth 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).

Organic Agriculture:

Farming practices and intentions in plant production

This was the title of a course organized by Applied Plant Research and the International Agricultural Centre in the framework of the Organics Project. Seventeen participants from eight candidate or new EU Member States attended this intensive 10-day course in September 2005. The course was attended by mid-career professionals from producer organizations, research and extension as well as policy in private and public settings.

The course dealt with the intentional level of organic farming as well as with very practical technical farming issues. The course included a wide range of excursions to Dutch organic organizations involved in production, education, processing, knowledge transfer, and research. Participants also had the chance to extend their international network with regard to organic production.

In addition to the course participants, 30 people attended the seminar '*Organic farming in West and Central Europe, local and/or global markets*' which was part of the course. The seminar dealt with new insights in the social, economic, environmental and agronomic consequences of local and global markets.

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

Qualiman in progress

The Qualiman project will be continued in winter 2005/2006 with two pilots with growers. 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 about quality management.

For the first pilot a training on European (and UN-ECE) quality standards will be developed and tested with onion growers in Poland. The EU sets out quality and marketing standards for various types of produce. The European standards for vegetable produce are derived from the UN-ECE standards. Knowledge on these standards is therefore necessary while trading within the European Union. The concept documents and training will be tested by The Research Institute of Vegetable Crops in Skierniewice (Poland) and Applied Plant Research at Lelystad (The Netherlands) will support and develop the test. Training and supporting documents will be tested in February 2006.

The second pilot focuses on Eurep-Gap certification. All major supermarket chains demand some type of food certification to assure food safety and product quality. Since supermarkets are controlling a big part of the food market, it is important to implement food safety and product quality standards. The first step in the pilot is to gain better insight in bottlenecks of certifying for Eurep-Gap in the new EU Member States. A questionnaire is drawn up for participants from different countries of the pilots. These interviews will yield a better view on bottlenecks and knowledge of Eurep-Gap in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. A training programme will be developed on the basis of the information collected in the interviews. The training programmes will be tested in early 2006.

For more information, please contact Herman Schoorlemmer (herman.schoorlemmer@wur.nl; phone: +31 321 29 13 37).



Innovative advisory approaches:

Transfer Network members visit the Netherlands

In November 2005, three members of the Transfer Network made a study tour to the Netherlands; the outcomes of the tour were used to prepare the Budapest workshop (December 4- 7, 2005). They visited LTO farmer study clubs, Applied Plant Research with its participatory research approach, ETC multi-stakeholder platforms in the dairy supply chain, as well as Agro-Eco Consultancy with advisory services for organic market chains.

Major lessons learned were:

- Farmers do have access to many sources of high quality advice, including study clubs which are relevant and not so expensive.
- Farmer groups do influence applied research agendas as well as national policies.
- Farmers actively participate in programmes that aim at agricultural innovation, such as the *Farming with a Future* and the *Agro-Eco* projects.
- Research and advisory programmes focus on entire market chains.
- Both farmer study clubs and multi-stakeholder platforms need external facilitators in order to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Advisory systems reforms, low quality of advice and farmers' mistrust are constraints to those innovative approaches.

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

New partner: Turkey

From 30 November to 3 December 2005 Marianne Groot and Arij Everaarts visited Antalya, Turkey, to meet Prof. Burhan Ozkan of the Agricultural Faculty, Akdeniz University, Antalya. Prof. Ozkan and his colleague Dr. Cengiz Sayin recently joined the Producers Project. Possibilities for further co-operation in the EU Access programme and urgent issues in horticulture in Turkey in relation to EU accession were discussed. Marianne Groot gave a presentation on the Producers Project at the Faculty. GrowTech Eurasia, an international fair for agriculture and horticulture, was also visited where the assistants to the Agricultural Counselor at the Embassy in Ankara, Mrs. Mary Supeno and Mr. Ugur Isin were met. Possibilities for next year's programme workshop in Ankara were discussed.

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

Agenda 2006

May-June: Programme Workshop

Producers' Organisations:

Quality Management Workshop

In co-operation with the Qualiman project a workshop on Eurep-Gap was held on 30 November 2005 at the Research Institute of Pomology and Floriculture in Skierniewice (Poland). Partners from this institute, Agro Quality Support Poland, and Applied Plant Research contributed to this workshop, attended by 32 participants. The workshop programme included presentations on quality assurance and food safety, Eurep-Gap – consequences for your fruit farm, on Tracking & Tracing and record keeping, and a presentation about certification procedures. The workshop also included two practical exercises on record keeping and Tracking & Tracing as well as experience exchange by discussions. A handbook of this workshop is being prepared.

For more information, please contact Marianne Groot (marianne.groot@wur.nl; phone +31 488 47 37 12).

Market

The purpose of Market is to develop a training module containing methodologies on market chain analysis, on the development of marketing strategies, as well as appropriate producer support on marketing by local supporting agencies. Market aims to improve the integration in market chains of Producers' Organisations (POs). The implementation of the marketing training module is aimed at successful market integration of producers' organization in pre- and post accession EU countries. The Market programme will be setting up a tailor-made workshop that addresses the specific marketing needs of the Czech producers involved. As specific topics of interest they mentioned the development of strategies of branding for niche markets, cost benefits of choosing and targeting specific (extra quality) market segments, and the development of preferred suppliership with one customer. These topics will for the particular situation of each PO involved be further specified in order to provide the exact inputs needed for their marketing strategy.

For more information, please contact Olga van der Valk (olga.vandervalk@wur.nl; phone; +31 70 3358154).



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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