



14<sup>th</sup> November, 2008

## Herculean task for Germany's new minister of agriculture

### Food security and organic agriculture: two sides of the coin

**Munich – The secretary of state in Germany's Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Gert Lindemann, is convinced that organic agriculture can present strong arguments as a solution to global food problems. As he said last week at the autumn convention of BÖLW, the German Federation of the Organic Food Industry, in Berlin, organic farming is a sustainable form of agriculture which conserves precious natural resources such as soil and water, the climate and diversity of species, giving it a distinct advantage over capital-intensive agriculture. "Naturland appeals to the new minister of agriculture to put her money where her mouth is," declares Hans Hohenester, a Naturland farmer and chairman of Naturland's steering committee. "The Federal Ministry for Development and the Ministry of Finance should cooperate quickly to produce a plan of action facilitating global investments in organic agriculture," he demands.**

Several speakers at the BÖLW conference on the topic "Can organic feed the world?" made the point that in recent years investments in agriculture, especially in Africa and Asia, have been on the decline. This is why Naturland demands first of all that concerted aid be invested in agriculture in the fields of research, consulting, education and infrastructure schemes, for rural areas to be given a new chance. Almost three quarters of the world's undernourished live in the countryside and not, as often assumed, in cities. Secondly, all aid schemes must be linked to alignment with organic farming practices.

However, it is asking too much of any one agricultural cultivation method to shoulder the whole burden of alleviating world hunger. Nevertheless, organic agriculture can nourish the whole world's population if the causes of hunger and poverty are removed at the same time. The report of the IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development), which was published in April 2008, points the way: only organic farming practices which are adapted to local conditions and preserve their precious resources can provide sustainable food guarantees. This does not apply to developing and emerging nations only, but also to Europe and the USA. Frauke Weissang, a Naturland farmer in Italy, reported at the BÖLW conference that the humus content in the Italian region of Marken has dropped from 3% to 0.8%. Meanwhile it has become clear that only organic agriculture can put a stop to the dramatic depletion of the soil, and this has led to the conversion of over 40% of the farms in this area to organic.

Over 50,000 Naturland farmers throughout the world have demonstrated that organic agriculture is an opportunity, especially for smallholders, to increase their yield and to protect their environment. Traditional knowledge combined with modern scientific insights have made organic farmers independent of expensive materials such as pesticides, mineral fertilisers and agro-genetic engineering from external suppliers.

Naturland press release ♦ 2.400 characters ♦ contact: Steffen Reese

Naturland – Verband für ökologischen Landbau e.V.

Kleinhaderner Weg 1 ♦ 82166 Gräfelfing ♦ Germany ♦ ☎ +49 89 898082-0 ♦ fax +49 89 898082-90

[naturland@naturland.de](mailto:naturland@naturland.de) / [www.naturland.de](http://www.naturland.de)