Dear members the world over,

First the good news: the demand for organic foodstuffs continues to grow, despite the “system crisis”. The fact that organic agriculture is on the road to success is corroborated by climate protection and global food security now being treated as major global topics, solutions for neither of which are possible without including and propagating organic agriculture.

Last autumn the German umbrella organisation BÖLW (Federation of the Organic Food Industry), the chairman of which is Naturland’s president, Dr. Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein, held a conference in Germany on the theme “Can Organic Farming Feed the World?”. The conference demonstrated that investment in agriculture has been falling over recent years, especially in Africa and Asia. Naturland therefore demanded a global plan of action for organic agriculture, with the concerted support of research, consultancy services and education and infrastructure measures in the agricultural field, to give rural regions another chance.

Admittedly, it is asking too much of any form of agriculture to expect it to bear the burden of solving the world hunger problem alone. However, organic agriculture can feed the world’s population, if the causes of hunger and poverty are eradicated at the same time. The report issued by the IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development) in December 2008, indicates the route to be taken, claiming that only organic farm management methods which are adapted to individual farming conditions and which preserve natural resources, can guarantee global food security long-term. This does not apply only to developing and transition countries, but to Europe and North America, too. The sustainable farm management methods of organic agriculture, which conserve our natural resources, present clear advantages over capital intensive agriculture with respect to the soil, water, climate and biodiversity.

You, dear Naturland farmers, are those who demonstrate to the world at large that organic agriculture presents an opportunity to increase yields whilst conserving our environment. Traditional knowledge, combined with modern scientific insights, equip you for the agriculture of the future. On behalf of Naturland’s steering committee, we wish our members the world over an abundant harvest in 2009!

Steffen Reese,
General Manager
Naturland Association
Naturland: top organic standards throughout textile production chain

The cultivation of organic cotton is an important step towards avoiding great quantities of pesticides poisoning the environment. For textiles to be labelled organic, however, not only the cultivation but also every stage of production, from ginning to spinning to fabrication, must be taken into consideration. As long ago as 2005, Naturland formulated its own processing standards for organic textiles, on the basis of international regulations already in existence. Naturland’s textile standards, which were revised in 2008, surpass the minimum standards set by GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) in several cases: for example, Naturland prohibits mercerisation and the use of optical brighteners. Besides this, Naturland also scrutinises the social conditions under which Naturland items are produced and processed, in the course of its organic certification procedure.

First Naturland certification for Living Crafts

On the occasion of the world’s greatest organic trade fair, “BioFach”, this year in Nuremberg, Naturland and Living Crafts announced their new co-operation project. Living Craft’s organic cotton, certified by Naturland, is produced by a co-operative in Mali, West Africa, to which over 6,000 smallholders belong. All subsequent processing stages, from ginning to finishing, are inspected and certified to Naturland’s strict standards.
Teresa Blanco is Naturland’s representative in Peru and Bolivia

Naturland is delighted to welcome Teresa Blanco as Naturland’s representative in Bolivia and Peru. In appointing Teresa Blanco, Naturland has succeeded in acquiring the services of a very experienced expert in the field of organic agriculture and someone with excellent knowledge of these two countries and their people. For many years she was the general manager of the inspection body IMO Latin America, being herself an inspector there. Right now she is a consultant for FTO, Holland, working on a project to improve the quality assurance of smallholders’ organisations in Bolivia, Brazil and Peru. Teresa Blanco will be helping Naturland part-time with member support and quality assurance directly in Peru and Bolivia.

organic + fair offers farmers new opportunities – impressions from Sri Lanka and Southern India

The civil war between the Tamils and the Singhalese makes the situation in Sri Lanka difficult, but still, enlightened Naturland members have been successful in establishing stable structures, be it by organising and training either organic smallholders or those working in processing plants and plantations.

Idulgashena, a project of Stassen Natural Foods, the first tea garden in the world to convert to organic agriculture, is in Sri Lanka, and was assisted and certified by Naturland from the very start. The great efforts made by this organisation, and its partnership with fair trade organisations, have lead to considerable improvements in the living conditions and the prospects of the workers and their families.

What is also impressive is the excellent quality of the tea. Besides tea, Sri Lanka is also famous for its wide range of spices. The organic spices produced by Bio Foods are grown in mixed cultivation, which, for example, encourages bio-diversity. Moreover, Bio Foods places great store by the development of farmers’ associations and community development.

Kerala is the Indian province with the strictest social legislation. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, which is strongly focussed on exports. Here too there are people and organisations who dedicate themselves single-mindedly to the welfare of the local population and to preserving nature intact. Besides employing the latest processing methods, providing smallholders with advisory services, and encouraging diversification, PDS Organic Spices also places emphasis on research geared to practical considerations. By putting the values of organic + fair into practice, Naturland’s members in Sri Lanka and Kerala are the bearers of a message of hope.

Personal data

Teresa Blanco is Naturland’s representative in Peru and Bolivia

Short notice

Amendments to Naturland’s standards – new version 11/2008

At their conference on 27th November, 2008, Naturland’s assembly of delegates passed a resolution approving the further development of Naturland’s standards in various areas. Some important amendments worthy of note were made in the fields of production and processing. Notes on the detailed amendments have already been sent to you.
Lasting impression from a visit to Peru

In November, 2008, 20 of Naturland’s German farmers, processors and advisers travelled to Peru to visit Naturland farmers and projects there.

The first stop on this study trip was a smallholders’ co-operative in Tongorrape, where top-quality organic mangoes, bananas and passion fruit are produced for export. The next stop was Cenfrocafé, a coffee co-operative comprising 262 smallholders. Here the visitors could see for themselves why organic coffee grown under shade trees has earned a justified reputation as a prime example of a sustainable agricultural system for the tropics. At Pronatur in Chiclayo, a modern coffee processing plant was inspected. In Pronatur’s laboratory, the visitors availed themselves of the opportunity to sample the coffee in the presence of experts and to determine the best type of beans for export.

The final stage of the professional part of the trip was a visit to Natural Farm, one of Naturland’s first organic shrimp projects, on the Pacific coast in the north of Peru. Luis Seragaki, a pioneer in the field of organic shrimp production, explained to the German guests in vivid detail the differences between organic and conventional shrimp production, demonstrating that organic shrimps are the better alternative for both human beings and the environment.

Both the Peruvian and the German members and friends of Naturland found it very interesting to exchange experiences. The Peruvian colleagues expressed their delight at being able to welcome visitors from Germany, and the German participants became acquainted with organic agriculture and Naturland colleagues in quite a different world. By taking a look behind the scenes, they obtained a better understanding of the country and its people. It was the personal encounters which were the focal point of the visit. Far beyond the professional aspects, it was the hearty welcome and the hospitality of the Peruvian hosts which created an atmosphere in which the people who make up Naturland could really get to know each other on a personal level.

Naturland’s new coffee flyer.
The quality mark on the organic coffee market

The amount of organic coffee produced world-wide has now reached a figure of 100,000 tons per year. Roughly one third of this amount are Naturland certified, a sign of top organic quality known to the consumer for the past 25 years or more. This makes Naturland one of the major and most important organic coffee certifiers in the world. The eight-page flyer informs producers, roasters, processors and importers of the added value to be found in coffee certified by Naturland. You can download the flyer from our home page: www.naturland.de/publications.html
International members’ meeting at the BioFach 2009

The supreme decision-making body of Naturland, a non-profit association practising grass-roots democracy, is the assembly of delegates. This is composed of elected Naturland farmers from Germany and of elected representatives from abroad.

The last international Naturland elections took place in early 2008. Since Naturland sees itself as an international organic organisation, Naturland’s steering committee – in which Frauke Weissang from Italy is also an international member – questioned the current structure of Naturland. This was prompted by the realisation that, so far, only 10% of the delegates do not come from Germany. For this reason the BioFach 2009 was chosen as the moment to call into being the first comprehensive international meeting of Naturland members.

The chairman of the steering committee, Hans Hohenester, who calls a farm in southern Germany home, where he specialises in pigs, potatoes and cereals, spoke on behalf of the steering committee about the importance of the international members to Naturland. Steffen Reese, Naturland’s general manager, reported on the latest developments within the Naturland association. This was followed by a lively discussion on ways and means of involving the international members more closely. One concrete suggestion was to improve communications within the organisation, but structural changes were also contemplated.

An important concern for all members were the conditions surrounding quality assurance. Particular value was placed on the work of the inspection bodies with regard to Naturland certification, especially with respect to ensuring that the inspection bodies operate and perform their work in a uniform manner, and with reference to Naturland’s training sessions. Besides these comments, the suggestion was made that Naturland increase its farm presence, in order to be able to clear up any doubts and queries at times other than during the inspection tours. In this connection an announcement was made that, with Teresa Blanco, a further representative was found in 2008, to strengthen Naturland’s existing team of international representatives.

Another wish was expressed, that more research be done in organic agriculture world-wide, coupled with the request that Naturland pass on this request and do what it can to have it realised. At the close of this successful meeting, Naturland’s members, with their special expertise in the areas of tea, coffee and aquaculture, had an opportunity to become better acquainted and to exchange experiences whilst enjoying a snack.

New Naturland fish flyer: organic fish for bon vivants

Nowadays, well assorted organic speciality shops in Germany are offering a wide range of fish and seafood certified by Naturland: these range from domestic carp and trout, to shrimps from Ecuador and salmon from the Atlantic Ocean. If the taste alone does not convince you and you would like to learn what alternative organic aquaculture products are available, then you will certainly be interested in reading Naturland’s new flyer. It informs the consumer in detail about what makes organic shrimps, salmon and trout, and many other species of fish, better. The articles are short and to the point, easy for the layperson to understand, and provide many interesting insights into organic aquaculture: You can download the flyer in German and English from our homepage: www.naturland.de/publications.html

Frauke Weissang & Arthur Stein, Naturland steering committee (2nd and 3rd from left)
What is agro-genetic engineering?

Genetic engineering makes it possible for genetic material to be transferred to other organisms of different species. The genetic material from human cells, and from animals, plants and micro-organisms too, is isolated and then transferred to any other organism at will, in order to provide it with new characteristics. In other words, genetic engineering is not a natural follow-up to classic cultivation or breeding methods, since in this case only closely-related species which can cross-breed naturally are used.

Genetically modified plants

Multinationals in the seed and pesticide industries have so far developed and marketed “genetically engineered plants” with the following characteristics: resistance to herbicides and resistance to insects. In the case of resistance to herbicides, the genetic material of agricultural crops is manipulated to become resistant to sprays which kill off each and every plant.

Herbicide manufacturers such as Monsanto and Bayer develop such “genetically engineered plants” and sell them as a package along with the corresponding herbicides, such as “Roundup” and “Basta”. Such non-selective systematic herbicides accelerate the extinction of species and pollute the soil, water and living organisms. In the case of resistance to insects, the intention is to make plants resistant to insects, using genetic engineering. A gene from the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) induces the formation of a poison lethal to insects, such as Bt maize by Syngenta. It has been shown, however, that the poison in Bt plants has seeped into the soil – with unknown effects on soil organisms. Butterflies and other beneficial insects can come to harm through the poison.

Farm areas totalling 125 million hectares throughout the world are now cultivating “genetically engineered plants”. The main commercial uses are for soya, maize, cotton and rape. The main growers of genetically modified plants are the USA, Argentina, Brazil, India and Canada.

Risks and dangers of genetic engineering in agriculture

The chances supposedly offered by genetic engineering in agriculture have to be seen from the perspective to the great inherent risks involved. The increasing use of pesticides in agriculture carries great danger both to mankind and the environment. There are reports from Argentina of grave health problems in people resulting from the production of genetically modified soya, where herbicides are applied intensively.

New ingredients in “genetically engineered food” can pose a risk to human health, for example by triggering allergies. Once they have escaped from control, “genetically engineered plants” can never be retrieved. Traditional plants and spices become genetically polluted and supplanted. Moreover, biological diversity is imperilled.

Organic and conventional farmers, market-gardeners, beekeepers and other agriculturists run the risk of not being able to sell their harvests if their products become genetically polluted. It is not possible for conventional, organic and genetically modified crops to exist side by side. Despite this, the EU Commission in Brussels talks about co-existence. Although it is a known fact that contamination with genetically modified organisms is inevitable, “co-existence” has in politics acquired a new definition value, a step which large bodies of the population consider is depriving them of their right to decide what they want to buy. Genetic engineering in agriculture is a technology for rationalisation, i. e. it is a job-killer. It is not designed to meet the local needs and does not fit into the farming systems of smallholders in the poorer countries.
Resistance to genetic engineering

Scepticism towards genetic engineering has been growing steadily throughout the world because of its risks to human beings and the environment. In Europe, growing numbers of farmers and communities are joining forces to declare their land “zones free of genetic engineering”. Surveys in Germany have shown that over 70% of consumers reject the idea of genetically engineered food landing on their plates.

Naturland considers genetic engineering as a blind alley and categorically rejects the use of this risky technology which makes no contribution whatsoever to sustainability in agriculture. Manipulated seed which is resistant to non-selective herbicides and which the farmer is obliged to buy anew each year leads to new forms of dependence and the disappearance of traditional knowledge. Biodiversity is one of the pillars of site-specific organic agriculture.

Moreover, a recent survey by the University of Kansas shows that the cultivation of genetically engineered soya actually yields 10% less than conventional soya seed. It is welcome news to learn that the report of the World Food Council does not regard genetic engineering as an opportunity not to be missed, despite the current tense situation of the agricultural markets.

In Europe, the right position of points have already been set: The commercial production of genetic engineering maize is prohibited until further notice in France, Austria, Hungary, Greece, Luxembourg and Germany.

Taking Mexico as an example: genetic engineering imperils variety of maize

In Mexico, genetically engineering soya and cotton are cultivated on a grand scale. Up to recently, a moratorium was imposed on genetically modified maize. Since March, 2009, however, multinational seed corporations, such as Monsanto, have been allowed to cultivate genetically engineering maize for research purposes.

This decision of the Mexican government is a precursor to issuing a licence for commercial exploitation in the years to come. What this means to the region from which maize originated, and to biological variety, is: acute danger of gene flow to hundreds of original varieties and thus the deterioration of the crop most important to Latin America as far as sustainable cultivation is concerned. Mexico has no need of genetically engineered maize but would instead benefit greatly from ecologically oriented development and an agricultural policy with sustainable objectives and which encourages smallholders.

What is worse, in Mexican legislation there is no law requiring genetically modified foodstuffs from being declared as such, nor any provisions made for “GMO farmers” to bear liability for economic damage to third parties, e. g. to organic farmers and beekeepers.

For more information on this topic, please consult the following internet pages, which are available in several languages:

- [www.infoxgen.com](http://www.infoxgen.com)
- [www.genet-info.org](http://www.genet-info.org)
- [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)
- [www.saveourseeds.org](http://www.saveourseeds.org)
- [www.gmo-free-regions.org](http://www.gmo-free-regions.org)
Global Organic Agriculture 2008: Continued Growth

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) had presented the latest statistics about organic agriculture worldwide at BioFach 2009. The results of the study titled ‘The World of Organic Agriculture: Statistics and Emerging Trends 2009’. 32.2 million hectares are certifi ed according to organic standards. “Compared to the data of the previous survey, 1.5 million hectares more were reported”, says Helga Willer of FiBL. “At the level of the geographical regions, growth was strongest in Latin America and Africa.”

With its vast grazing lands, Australia continues to account for the largest certifi ed organic surface area, 12 million hectares, followed by Argentina (2.8 million hectares), and Brazil (1.8 million hectares). The greatest share of the global organic surface area is in Oceania (37.6 percent), followed by Europe (24.1 percent) and Latin America (19.9 percent). The global market for organic products reached a value of over 46 billion US Dollars in 2007, with the vast majority of products being consumed in North America and Europe, according to Organic Monitor.

“Policy makers in developing countries need to know the number of farmers involved in organic agriculture as well as its challenges and development potential globally. This type of information is diffi cult to fi nd but is crucially important to help support the sector’s development. ‘The World of Organic Agriculture’ provides a unique and important global service in this regard,” says Alexander Kasterine, Senior Market Development Offi cer at the International Trade Centre.

The study includes comprehensive data sets and numerous illustrations and graphs. Further data are available at the newly launched www.organic-world.net homepage.

>>> Printed copies (25 Euros + postage) of ‘The World of Organic Agriculture’ can be ordered from FiBL, IFOAM and ITC at shop.fi bl.org or www.ifoam.org

Book info:
- 304 pages


“Organic goes mainstream” – the organic market is growing at a rapid rate and major conventional trading corporations are entering the organic market. However, there are considerable differences from country to country. This comprehensive manual contains practical facts and trends – from 27 European countries: a survey of the organic market in general, important protagonists and brands, sales channels, developments and opportunities. This study of the organic market in Europe gives a detailed insight and provides useful inspiration. Naturland was one of the survey’s sponsors.

>>> The survey can be purchased for 350 €. It can be ordered from: www.ecozept.de
Model Farm on the Shetland Islands

From 19th to 22nd August, 2008, Naturland’s steering committee and colleagues from the aquaculture division visited farms on the Shetland Islands. This group of islands, situated north of Scotland, has a population of about 25,000, the main sources of income of which are the oil industry, fishing and tourism. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, the climate there is quite mild. However, storms, heavy rainfall and fog take quite some getting used to for those spending any time there.

Naturland’s party was lucky and enjoyed a spell of a few dry days. The trip was prompted by an invitation from Michael Stark, general manager of Hjaltland Seafoods, a Shetland salmon farm certified by Naturland. Michael Stark is Naturland’s first delegate from the aquaculture division and has been the international representative in Naturland’s assembly of delegates since 2008. He enabled members of the steering committee to gain their first practical insights into the organic production of salmon.

After a reception in the administrative offices of Hjaltland Seafoods in Lerwick, the capital of the Shetlands, Michael Stark gave an impressive general description of the jobs performed on a salmon farm. This was followed by a tour of the processing facilities, in which everything from whole salmon to salmon fillets are processed and packed. Nick Bradbury from BioMar then gave a talk on the challenges to be met in organic fish feed production.

The second day began with a tour of a conventional salmon farm, in order to show how it differed from organic aquaculture. Grant Cumming of Hjaltland Seafoods then took over the group and explained with great emphasis what enormous quality requirements are made by the authorities, the ministries and the private certifier, Naturland, with regard to such a sensitive product as fish. One wall of the lecture hall was plastered with the certificates issued during the past two years. “Hardly a week goes by in any one year when we are not visited by inspectors”, said Cummings, explaining his duties as a quality control manager. The members of Naturland’s steering committee took this opportunity to ask all the questions they had on the topics of organic fish breeding, fish feed, the protection of our oceans and the prospects for organic salmon breeding, and to have them answered on the spot by various experts.

This was followed by a visit to a mussel farm which is interested in certification by Naturland. A tour of salmon farms in Scalloway, in the northern Shetlands, which are certified by Naturland, enabled all the visitors to experience the production of organic salmon first hand. The visit brought two aspects clearly into focus: first, the enormous potential for development in the field of organic aquaculture, and, secondly, the immense efforts required of a farm to breed good, high quality fish to organic criteria.