



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC ACCREDITATION SERVICE

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PRESS RELEASE - December 12th, 2011 **IOAS welcomes publication of list of 30 equivalent control bodies**

The publication by the European Commission on December 6th of the implementing regulation [\(EU\) 1267/2011](#) which lists the control bodies that have been recognised by the Commission as competent to carry out controls in third countries of organic food and farming enterprises for the purpose of equivalence and import of products into EU Member States marks a significant landmark in the regulation of international trade in organic products.

As the Commission indicates in this regulation the process took longer than anticipated (over 70 control bodies applied) and was demanding for all involved. This makes the achievement all the more significant. The incoming President of the IOAS, Robert Duxbury of the United Kingdom commented, *'We would like to offer our warm congratulations to all those control bodies that appear on the list and their collaborating assessment bodies.'*

23 certification bodies on the list are supervised by the IOAS, two of them being based in Europe and the remainder in third countries. The role of the IOAS was to provide an independent analysis of the organic standards and the control measures applied by each control body assessing their equivalence against standards and control measures set out under Regulation (EC)834/2007 and its related implementing regulations.

Equivalence is not an easy concept to apply in any environment but it is the only reasonable way to proceed in the context of organic agriculture and its control when applied internationally across so many different agroecological, social and legal contexts.

What the two year process of assessment by the Commission Services has shown is that there is still room for a more harmonised approach by the various assessment bodies and for greater transparency and feedback in the delivery of this service to control bodies. The IOAS is committed to collaborating with other assessment bodies and with the Commission Services in pursuit of this.

Dr Jochen Neuendorff of Germany, long standing member of the IOAS Accreditation Committee stated, *'We congratulate the Commission on its good quality work and look forward to an improved and effective surveillance system for certification bodies operating in third countries'*.

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International Organic Accreditation Service

The International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) is an independent, non-profit organisation that works with the world food and farming sector to ensure trust in products labelled as organic and sustainable. Our main role is the assessment and accreditation of competence of certification and control bodies working in these fields and which, in turn, inspect for conformity on farms and in processing and handling facilities. This provides a level playing field for producers and builds trust from consumers.

The IOAS was incorporated in 1997 in the USA by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (www.ifoam.org), a membership organisation based in Germany established to provide a network for the promotion of organic agriculture.

The IOAS is itself supervised and/or approved by various national and supranational agencies:

- the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a division of the United States Department of Commerce, for its IFOAM accreditation and ISO Guide 65 programmes.
- the Canada Organic Office (COO) as a Conformity Verification Body for assessing certification bodies under the Organic Products Regulations 2009 of Canada.
- the Organic Unit of DG AGRI of the European Commission to perform expert assessment of certification bodies seeking equivalence status

For further information, please visit our web site at www.ioas.org

Imports of organic products into Europe

The framework for the regulation of the production and labelling of organic products in Europe is set down in Regulation (EC) 834/2007 and in various more detailed implementing rules. Implementing regulation (EC) 1235/2008 describes various mechanisms for controlling imports, one of which is based upon the recognition of control bodies working in third countries through a process of application and assessment by the Organic Unit of DG AGRI of the Commission Services. The role of assessment bodies like the IOAS is to provide independent analysis of the equivalence of the organic standards and the control measures applied by the control body when compared to the rules set down in the European regulations.

For further information, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/news_en