

Your Organic Certification Service 1/2013 Official Newsletter of the Certification Body DE-ÖKO-001

Independent - competent - consequent



Peter Grosch, BCS-founder and CEO

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#### Foreword by Peter Grosch

#### Dear clients, dear readers,

In the fashion world there is a saying that you only have to keep old clothes long enough. Every fashion comes back, drainpipe vs. bell bottom trousers, mini vs. midi skirts, etc..

Altering old things is unfortunately not restricted only to clothes; the motives of such alterations are pretty easy to see. Unfortunately this also happens in organic agriculture!

I am talking about the basic definition of that what one understands to be organic food - by the way, by no means for the first time. If for instance somebody should think that the old fashioned, outdated and erroneous viewpoint, that the presence or lack of residues can be determined, is dead and buried, then he is mistaken. In fact there is a "homemade revival" - for, of all things, it is the European representative of the controlling body, the European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC) which has published a paper that with virtually scientific perfection steers our attention in the wrong direction.

The approach that environmental management is defined by a standard whose observation and compliance can be monitored and confirmed, so that a certification can be awarded, is being displaced by more and more refined detection methods of residues and contaminants. Of course they say nothing about the culprit or the cause, they also distract from the actual issue about overall quality. And they are completely unsuitable where the recording of the overall services of organic farming to society is concerned. They do not even have this claim. Such "noble" numbers that lead us to believe in accuracy in partially completely irrelevant areas, blur the view of what is essential - and then quite suddenly, thanks to their irresistible exactitude, become decisive - just as if we are performing some sport: whoever is one thousand of a second in front has won the race! Applied to organic products does that mean, whoever has a trace of "dirt" in his product has lost, automatically and independent of his liability?

We are running the risk of rushing with flying colours into a corner where old injustices have been renewed and lead to classifications and limits that are evaluated using the wrong criteria. I will not cease referring to the fact that the reversal of the burden of proof puts organic



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farming at a disadvantage: the motto "There is something in it - prove that you didn't put it there!" is comfortable, but unfair. What was it about the "polluter pays" principle?!

There are a lot of possible sources for residues and quite often it cannot be determined what comes from where. Analyses can help, as often said, they can give decisive indications, but they must not be emphasized as the basis for the definition of an organic product! Then you might just as well get rid of the monitoring system and pragmatically leave it at measuring. That would of course be absolute nonsense - and the end of 'organic' understanding!

Every economic party concerned is called upon to oppose this erroneous path. Nobody is against an analytical test for safety, nobody supports abuse and unfair tricksters. It is however absolutely dubious, damaging and extremely expensive if one talks of mini-concentrations as "a proof of initial suspicion" - it is well-known that 50% measuring errors are normal. We must not let ourselves be misled - so to say, with blind enthusiasm - into a witch hunt for residues through precise and increasingly refined measurement techniques with unimaginable limits of detection! The technical possibilities must not be the guiding principle, but that which makes sense!

The meaning of organic agriculture is as diverse as its overall service to society. This is becoming clear to more and more people in the world. Fortunately there are also several politicians amongst these people who are active in this field. It is also a stroke of good fortune that more and more employees of the authorities understand that organic farming is not just something that needs to be controlled and supervised, but is something to do with social organisation, responsibility for the future and ensured sustainability of basic needs. Organic farming must not suffer from "over-administration" and "overmeasurement"!

Organic farming associations, politicians - from Brussels to the regional departments of agriculture - and supervisory authorities together must however also have the strength to put a stop to the nasty negative effects in organic farming. What has partially happened in animal farming with the viewpoint of maximum profit has nothing more to do with being organic! Even when journalists can occasionally create a false impression by means of selected pictures, alone the possibility that such pictures can be made on an organic farm must not exist. We too as control bodies must clearly intervene in time! 'Organic' becomes incredible, much worse than when a "speck" of residue from conventional neighbours unavoidably lands on the organic cabbage. That this can happen is clear to everyone - but nobody expects the so called negative effects: There must be an end to this!

"The market decides on what quality is." Where people shop, they find what they see to be their quality. Some buy cheap products - the others buy ORGANIC products. The organic market continues to grow! Let's keep it like that!

BCS remains loyal to its assigned task. We will not allow ourselves to be subjected to certain deceptions and confusions. We are commencing our 24th year: we want to earn the silver anniversary next year!

To you and us: we wish everyone a successful BIOFACH Fair and good health in 2013 for everyone!

With best wishes

Peter Grosch



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News about the standards (EU, JAS, FairTSA, GlobalG.A.P., GOTS, UTZ Certified, SPP)

> EC Regul. 834/2007 (by Mr. Reiner Claus)

#### Changes of regulations and laws

#### Changes referring to wine

Since 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 wineries have been included into the scope of the EU organic regulation. Up to now only the growing of organic grapes could be declared. The EU regulation also applies to wine, starting with the 2012 harvest season. Though, also the term "organic wine" may be used now.

The IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No. 203/2012 is mandatory since 1 August 2012. Covering wineries now, also the labeling rules (EU logo, designation of origin, code number) do apply completely. However, wine "made from organically grown grapes", that means stocks of wine produced prior to 2012 harvest cannot be labeled with the EU logo.

With regard to the wine blending rules the Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Food, Viticulture and Forests of the German state Rhineland-Palatinate, announced their decision about the labeling of blended wine from vintage 2012.

Wines even produced according to the current rules of Regulation (EC) No. 889/2008 but blended with up to 15% of former vintages cannot be labeled as "organic wine". But it may be traded as "wine of vintage 2012 made from organically grown grapes", if it is blended with wine or sweet reserves produced according to the former EU organic stipulations.

This serves to harmonization of the above mentioned regulation within the EU.

#### Import procedure

The controls of the import procedure are at present subject to a basic change. By means of the implementing regulation (EU) No. 508/2012 essential annexes of the "import regulation" Regulation (EC) No. 1235/2008 of the Commission were revised respectively completed.

Please refer to page 14, we will provide you an overview of the countries and product-categories BCS has been approved for as equivalent control body. This creates an additional benefit for your import procedure. Like before there is the procedure of the so called third countries list. This refers to imports from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Israel, Japan, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United States of America and New Zealand, the specifications of annex III have to be taken into consideration.

The annex IV now lists the approved control bodies and control authorities classified as equivalent, in this context the respective specifications and the list of third countries, product (categories) and exceptions have to be observed for the control bodies according to their listing.

#### Import authorisations

For the moment the procedure of the import authorisations will be continued unless the products fall under the listed categories or origins. It is to be considered that previous import authorisations granted before 1 July 2012 will expire on 1 July 2014 by the latest! From this date on no import authorisations can be granted. Since import authorisations can only be granted for a period of maximum 12 months, this means that this procedure will end on 1 July 2015 by the latest.

#### What else will come?

The regulation- and legislator will keep being very active. Please therefore consider the legal changes. You can find more information e.g. at <u>www.oekolandbau.de</u>. Please also look into the internet offers of the EU Commission (<u>www.organic-farming.eu</u>), the BMELV <u>www.bmelv.de</u> and the competent country authorities.



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#### Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) (by Mr. Wolfgang Broszat)

"Update" of the Japanese Organic Standards In 2012 there was an extensive update of the Japanese organic standard. Many details were regulated more precisely. All positive lists (what is allowed by JAS - in farming and processing) were revised; numerous working materials were added, some removed. In addition, the question and answer catalogue (Q&A) of the JAS Standard was completely revised and extended. Here too there are numerous "new interpretations" or new aspects that were not explained, i.e. regulated, in the previous Q&A catalogue. The list of questions has a brief summary at the beginning of the document. It is urgently recommended to read the relevant questions for each control area.

The current legal text, translated into English ("Notifications"), and also the Q&A catalogue can be downloaded from the home page of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture (see address given below). On request we will gladly send it to you by e-mail.

There were also changes in the so-called technical criteria ("Technical Criteria"); that is those regulations controlling company management, procedure descriptions (Standard Operational Procedures - in brief: SOPs), gualification and training of the responsible personnel, as well as the grading procedure. Here, too, important details relevant to management and controlling were regulated more precisely. New is that the "handling of complaints" and "cleaning measures" have been compulsorily amended. This means that the SOPs of companies/enterprises that have already been certified by JAS must be extended by the two mentioned points. The updated SOPs are to be presented to BCS - in the case that no annual inspection has taken place since the amendment or these details have been forgotten or overlooked - at the next JAS inspection in 2013 at the latest.

#### JAS Information (not only) for new customers

BCS has put together information for new customers about JAS that goes into detail on the specialities of the Japanese Standard. This information about JAS has been adapted appropriately. In addition - and this is new! - we have made sample SOPs and grading checklists that cover all essential aspects of the most important control areas. We are sure that these will facilitate the access for newcomers to these special JAS requirements and help them to produce their own documents adapted to their own enterprise operations. This is because insufficient SOPs were almost always the main reason for the delay in JAS certification.

Here again the internet address of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF): http://www.maff.go.jp/e/jas/specific/organic

#### <u>FairTSA</u> (by Dr. Winfried Fuchshofen and Mr. <u>Severin Schönberger)</u>

#### FairTSA News

FairTSA is the open Fair Trade standard for organic certifiers that wish to add a Fair Trade program to their organic certification services competently, smoothly integrated in their existing services and with the least hassle and cost for the certified producers. Another goal is to ensure that the smallholders and cooperatives actually receive most of the additional money spent for fair trade products, and our efficient certification system and lean administration accomplish exactly that. All the producers have to pay, are the added inspection and certification costs plus a small producer licensing fee to FairTSA, which covers parts of our coaching for standard compliance and support of marketing for Fair TSA certified products.

#### Independent Recognition for FairTSA

Recently the renowned "green" magazine "ÖKO-TEST" examined about 20 Fair Trade and "Fair Trade like" programs on the market in Germany. As in an independent study in 2010, products certified by our program were given the highest grade, "fair". In this context it is worthwhile to mention that Hella Hansen of the professional journal "Ökologie & Landbau" interviewed Dr. Winfried Fuchshofen, co-founder of FairTSA, regarding FairTSA's history, mission and goals. The full article can be read in the January 2013 edition of Ökologie & Landbau.

#### FairTSA and Rural Development

In line with our commitment with rural communities FairTSA created its own community development service, which emphasizes local transparent and democratic projects financed by the Social Premium paid by our licensing partners. Be it the drilling of wells for access to clean potable water, literacy projects for farm workers, or simple health care and prevention projects - our aim is to contribute to improving the living con-



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ditions in rural communities and provide the opportunity for participants to learn new skills and improve their self-confidence.

#### What's up in the Fair Trade Arena?

GEPA has recently split off from FLO - after the earlier break-up between FLO and Fair Trade USA the second big split in the Fair Trade movement. After more than a decade of a virtual monopoly by FLO, we are now entering the area where many organizations are jumping the FT bandwagon - some legitimate, some less, with some companies "buying" the least expensive program just to have a package on their labeling that pretends to do something significantly good for their producers. At FairTSA we will continue to provide real value for our certified smallholders, cooperative members and farm workers, with the certification guaranteed by the very same certifiers you've come to trust for your organic certification needs. If you're interested to learn more, here is a hint: by e-mailing newsletter@fairtsa.org you can sign up for our new electronic newsletter that will be published 3-4 times a year starting in January 2013.

#### <u>GLOBALG.A.P</u> (by Mrs. Martina Chacón)

#### <u>Certification of the supply chain - Chain of</u> <u>custody (Coc) for traders and packaging com-</u> <u>panies</u>

With the launch of version 4.0, the certification according to the GLOBALG.A.P. Guidelines is no longer reserved only for producers, thus it does not necessarily end at the farm gate. Traders and enterprises dealing with GLOBALG.A.P. certified products or involved in any other way in the supply chain can be certified according to the GLOBALG.A.P. standards. As a result, the transparency is guaranteed over the entire supply chain from producer to retailer and it is ensured that only certified products from GLOBALG.A.P. certified" are resold.

In doing so, the GGN of the packager/trader and/or the GGN of the producer can be shown on the product.

BCS is accredited for the certification of the supply chain not only in the area of aquaculture but also for plants. Since the spring of 2012, enterprises in Germany, Latin America and North Africa have been certified according to this standard. The criteria and control points as well as the checklists can be downloaded from www.globalgap.org.

#### First update of version 4.0

In February 2012 the normative documents were published in a new edition on the GLOBALG.A.P. home page. The current version is update 4.0-1\_Feb2012. It does not contain any new criteria or requirements. The changes concern only the notation of GLOBALG.A.P. (with 3 dots) and minor corrections.

Some questions were raised in 2012 about the new control points in version 4.0, concerning their interpretation and implementation. For some of these there is now a binding explanation:

Module overall operations for all types of products

<u>Control point AF 10.1. - Statement of the prod-uct status:</u>

All invoices and accompanying documents of goods must show the GLOBALG.A.P. status of the product. During the first inspection of an enterprise or if none of the registered products have been sold, this criterion can only be checked in a subsequent inspection. However, every enterprise, even from the first control on, must have in place a functioning traceability system.

For certified products it is compulsory to show the status (e.g. potatoes, GLOBALG.A.P. certified), <u>independent of</u> whether they have been sold as certified or non-certified. For noncertified products the statement is voluntary.

In exceptional cases there can be a deviation from this obligation, if for example the buyer declares in writing that he does not wish to have the statement. This document must be provided as evidence during the inspection.

### Control point AF 10.2. - Agreement to prevent misuse of the GGN by the buyer:

This agreement can consist of an additional clause to an existing contract or a formless, written declaration of the buyer. The declaration can also be included on the order form.

If the buyer can prove his demand that he will forego the labelling with GGN then the agreement is not necessary.



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In cases of parallel production or parallel ownership, certified products <u>must</u> be labelled with the GGN or a sub-GLN. The GGN must <u>never</u> be used on non-certified products, here only the statement of a sub-GLN is allowed.

#### Residue analysis:

Every enterprise must conduct a risk assessment with regard to the possibility of exceeding the maximum residue level (MRL), even if no plant protection products (PPPs) are used on its premises.

If this risk evaluation reveals that there is no or only an exceptionally low risk, then the residue analysis may only be dropped when <u>all</u> of the following conditions have been fulfilled:

- 1.) A historial of analysis results over 4 years without showing any risk (e.g. exceeded MRLs, the usage of non-approved PPPs etc.)
- 2.) No or only a minimum usage of pesticides
- 3.) No usage of PPPs near the harvest time (= the interval between usage and harvest is considerably longer than the reguired pre-harvest interval)
- 4.) The risk assessment must be validated by an independent third party (e.g. CB inspector, expert, etc.) or the buyer.

This means that even at a low risk, each enterprise must evidence annually residue analysis for a period of 4 years.

Flowers & ornamental plants - the purchase of seedlings/plant material /young plants

The declarations for the transition period will be integrated in the next edition of the IFA Introduction.

Plants/Flowers grown of plant material from non-certified source and then cultivated afterwards according to the GLOBALG.A.P. guidelines can only be marketed as certified if one of the following options has been implemented:

#### Option A:

The young plants have been cultivated in a GLOBALG.A.P. enterprise for at least 3 months before being marketed further. For a cultivation period of less than 3 months, at least two thirds of the growing cycle must take place in a certified enterprise, for flowers this period starts at the latest before the flowers start to open.

The supplier of the young plants must be a recognised enterprise and, for example, possess a breeder's right/patent or the like, according to the national regulations.

#### Option B:

The producer can apply for a transitional period. Then all his suppliers must register in the first year. In the second year, 50% of the suppliers must be certified according to GLOBALG.A.P. flower & plant standards. In the third year the enterprise may only be supplied with young plants coming exclusively from GLOBALG.A.P. certified enterprises.

### GLOBALG.A.P. Data bank (<u>https://database-globalgap.org</u>)

The central element of the GG data bank is the verification of certificates. This is possible for anyone by means of a public search, even without registration, in as far as the GLOBALG.A.P. number (GGN) of the producer or the certificate number of the product is known. As well as certification bodies, producers and producer groups, it is also possible for traders and other buyers to register and thus use other comprehensive services of the data bank.

New differentiation of the rights to data access Producers basically have the choice about whether their company name and address are visible for the public or only for registered users. In a second step it can be determined whether additional data about production methods or volumes harvested are visible for traders as well. This information can also be restricted to particular buyers.

Please contact us if you wish to have the rights of access to your data changed.

#### QR Code

By means of the QR code a customer can check faster on site whether a product has been certified. The QR code is scanned with the help of a smartphone, and then via the direct link to the GLOBALG.A.P. data bank the current certification status can be checked immediately. The QR code can be used in addition to the GGN on the label and also on stationery, invoices, e-mails, etc. There is a series of applications available in internet for downloading free of charge (keywords "QR code generator" or "read QR code"). Alternatively the product status can also be called up via the direct link http://database.globalgap.org/mobile



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plus the GGN. (For example:

http://database.globalgap.org/mobile/40499281 45208).

#### **Bookmarking for traders**

In order to enable an easier overview and search for the certification status of your suppliers, everyone who buys or sells GLOBALG.A.P. certified products can buy a bookmarking package. The annual fee, depending on the number of suppliers listed, is between  $100 \in$  and a maximum of  $500 \in$ . The package is free of charge for GLOBALG.A.P. members. In every case, however, a confidentiality agreement must be signed. The individual lists of suppliers deposited can be updated, filtered or expanded at any time. By means of the bookmarking system, producer information can be supplemented by additional product, batch or delivery data (e.g. article name, delivery date, traceability code.

#### <u>GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard)</u> (by Ms Monika Bachmann)

#### A fair seal for the future

This year sees the fifth year of the GOTS seal, developed by the International Association of the Textile Industry (IVN) (Germany) together with the Soil Association (SA) (England), the Organic Trade Association (OTA) (USA) and the Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA) (Japan).

The level of awareness of GOTS is continuously increasing and as such demonstrates the good performance of the textile industry and the contribution of anyone buying organic cotton. It is, after all, a global standard and also in Asia it is enjoying increased usage. At the end of 2011 2,714 industrial enterprises in 57 countries worldwide had been certified according to the leading standard for organic textiles, including 450 dye factories, more than 220 spinning, knitting and weaving mills and about 160 printing and sewing factories. However, competition does not sleep here either, and in addition to the GOTS seal there are about 120 other textile seals inspected by 100 certifiers.

Fortunately there has also been a change in thinking in the textile certification over the last few years. The textile industry, which in the EU was gradually going downhill, discovered the textile seal as a medium for presenting its qualitative and ecological approaches as well as a corporate identity. This is supported by the constantly increasing demand for "clean" products.And this is exactly a way in which it is possible for every consumer to make his or her contribution, by buying an organic cotton T-shirt.

Based on requests for the seal, it is seen that these are primarily, however, not only the large enterprises, but also the small, up to 5-man enterprises which are deciding to obtain a GOTS certificate and close the circle in this certification. Companies can have their organic cotton certified under the label "organic", where at least 95% of the clothing items must be of organic cotton. Under the label "made with organic..." are at least 70% of the fibres from controlled organic farming. The contents of the GOTS seal do not only include environmental technological requirements like accurate waste water disposal, as well as avoiding the use of genetically modified organisms, substances endangering the health, azo dyes or formaldehyde. Social criteria like e.g. continuous wage payments, the possibility of employee meetings, provision of protective clothing or even accommodation are, primarily in socially poorer countries, important components of the certification.

A good beginning and an easy contribution for the benefit of our environment.

#### UTZ Certified (By Mr. Lars Tuschen)

Our company is one of the few providers in Germany of the certification according to the guidelines of the "UTZ" foundation for the standard "UTZ CERTIFIED Good Inside Chain of Custody" for each of the three product groups cocoa, coffee and tea.

"UTZ Certified" is a worldwide program for sustainability that sets standards for responsible production and sourcing of agricultural raw materials.

In the countries of origin, production is certified according to the criteria of the "UTZ Certified code of conduct", also often carried out by our company.

The conditions of the "UTZ certified chain of custody" are, on the other hand, relevant for importers, processors and finally the seller of the products which have correspondingly been awarded the claim.



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In the meantime several products are available on the market marked with the red-white "UTZ certified" logo, like for instance, nut spreads, chocolate bars and ground coffee.

During the inspection, the auditor uses amongst other things the checklist provided by the "UTZ" foundation which the enterprise can use in advance to control itself about whether the requirements of the standards are fulfilled, complete and send to us.

The test criteria are, amongst other things, the presence of a clearly documented monitoring system for tracking and separating the "UTZ" certified products in the enterprise, activities of possible subcontractors, the storage practice and the use of the UTZ logo (seal).

For the product group "cocoa" there is a special feature: here, according to the type of product, the enterprise can choose between two different tracking models, the so-called mass balance and the segregation models.

In the segregation model the certified volume must stay separated for the entire supply chain, and for manufactured mixed products like e.g. chocolate, in 2013 at least 60% (2014: 90%) of the cocoa used must be "UTZ" certified. In the more frequently used mass balance model, separation does not have to be guaranteed in the production. Here, by means of a credit account, a certain volume purchased is balanced by the corresponding volume sold.

All enterprises receive access to an internet portal, the so-called "GOOD INSIDE PORTAL", from the UTZ Foundation in which primarily the sale and purchase of every batch is documented to create transparency between the supplier and the buyer.

More fundamental information is available about the standards and the procedure from the web site of the UTZ Foundation www.utzcertified.org.

If you are interested in obtaining appropriate certification, please do not hesitate to contact BCS. We would be pleased to prepare and send you our offer.

#### <u>SPP</u> (Símbolo Pequeños Productores) (Symbol of Small Producers) (by Mr. Hansjörg Götz)

As of May 24, 2012, BCS Öko-Garantie GmbH, is authorized by FUNDEPPO, as a Certification Body for Small Producers' Organizations, Processors and Traders who want to use the Small Producers Symbol.

#### Definition of the Small Products Symbol

The Small Producers' Symbol SPP is a hallmark of sustainability of organized small producers; it allows consumers to identify these products in the market. The symbol represents the high quality of products made by organized small producers and their work for a dignified life in their communities, local economies, and the health and the environment of producers and consumers.

#### Fair Trade

The Small Producers' symbol is based on the principles and values that gave rise to the Fair Trade movement. It is part of the sustainable production movement, solidary economy and Fair Trade.

The standard for this label establishes sustainable prices and sets clear rules for a fair treatment in trade.

The Small Producers' Symbol is not only a Fair Trade label, but also represents sustainable production, organization and democratic selfmanagement, and empowerment of local economies.

#### Differences with other labels

One of the unique characteristics of this label is that it was created and driven by the small producers, so that they could be identified in the local and international market, which is why, we can say that this symbol meets the specific needs of certification and promotion of small producers.

The Small Producers' label is the only label that focuses exclusively on distinguishing the products of organized small producers.

Additionally we can say that through the label we seek to strengthen self-management capacity, sustainable development and a decent life for families and communities of organized small producers through a equitable and solidary Fair



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Trade relationship with of consumers and businesses.

### The main advantage of the symbol for those who are certified or registered:

- Integration into a large alliance to safeguard the sustainable future of small farmers by being part of an inclusive market based on values and principles of sustainability, justice and solidarity.
- Accessible certification that allows for authentic organizations of small producers and their products to be distinguished from other products in the market.
- The opportunity to differentiate their product from other labels in the market, outlining all the added values such as solidarity, sustainability and social, economic, and ecological responsibility.

#### Process

If a group of producers is interested in the certification they must complete the FUNDEPPO application and in case of processors / traders the registration application should be used.

Next BCS makes an offer considering that the first year it is not necessary to conduct an onsite visit but rather BCS will evaluate the documents. For the second year, BCS will do a document review and an onsite visit, and alternate these two options in the future.

Logically, if there is documentary evaluation it is not necessary to add inspection hours and packages can also be made with other services.

When the offer is accepted by the client, BCS sends the request to FUNDEPPO, who then publishes on its web site to determine if there are any objections.

From that point we follow the process of inspection, evaluation and certification.

#### Contacts

Should you require further information please contact the office of BCS Öko Garantie - Ecuador through e-mail: <u>info@bcsecuador.com</u>

For more information, go to the FUNDEPPO website - <u>www.spp.coop</u>

"Small Producers creating a fair and solidary world" We would like to invite you to our informationevent of SPP on the occasion of the BioFach-BlueNight on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> of Feb 2013 from 6 pm to 8 pm, at stand #431 in hall #9 (please refer to our invitation-ad on page 15).

Miscellaneous

 DDAC
 Export to S

Export to South Korea

#### DDAC - an unexpected surprise (By Mr. P. Grosch and Mr. St. Andrae)

Initial awareness of the presence of DDAC (Didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride) in fruit and vegetables resulted from the chance discovery of QAC (Quarternary Ammonium Compounds) during routine tests of conventional goods. In the organic market, at that time, nobody even assuming the worst fears had thought that these groups of compounds could be found in fresh organic products like bananas, vegetables and fruit. Furthermore, until then the accredited laboratories were not technically set up for testing for DDAC. For the first time in June 2012 there were cases of residues found in bananas from Ecuador in projects under our control.

These cases of residues did not only cause great uncertainty amongst producers in the countries concerned. The responsible authorities in Germany and the diverse levels of the food control administration also showed a certain lack of orientation that was expressed partially through contradictory instructions about how to deal with this problem. The EU took a position that was seen by some as not being appropriate, and there were other varying and differing interpretations. In brief, it took a very long time until an official body presented a statement on binding and clear stipulations for the practice. Thus the producers and importers were left more or less alone with the problem and had to bear enormous financial losses. Today, the entire damages caused by the DDAC residues are estimated at about 4-5 million euros (Agrarheute.com). There are other estimates that are even much higher.

#### Properties and toxicology of the QAC

Quarternary ammonium compounds, to which DDAC also belongs, belong to the group of cationic tensides; they are surfactants, adhere for a long time to plastic and stainless steel surfaces and can only be removed from these surfaces





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with great difficulty by washing with cold water. They are easier to remove with warm water, acids and particularly well with fatty substances like, for example, dairy cream (A. Friedle 10/2012).

A particular feature of these substance groups is their very good bactericidal and fungicidal effects. QACs adhere very well on to lipid cell membranes of living organisms and impair their normal cell function. This explains their good disinfectant effect.

The risks arising from DDAC are human toxicologically categorised as "low". Hence the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung - BfR) comes to the conclusion "... that neither an acute nor a chronic risk for consumers is unlikely" (BfR, Nr. 024 7/2012). Nevertheless, synergy effects with other substances cannot be excluded so that the threshold value for marketability in the EU for particular, processed conventional foods has been established at 0.5 mg/kg. It is assumed that for organic products the level of these nonapproved substances (QAC, DDAC, BAC) has to be less than 0.01 mg/kg and thus lies at the detection limit. That such a high level of residue is not quite unproblematic is obvious to experts because the analysis at such a low level of measurement also causes a high percentage of measuring errors. In as how much this position is therefore sensible and tenable has yet to be demonstrated.

#### Where are substances containing QACs used?

As it has been demonstrated, QACs are much more widespread in our everyday living than was initially assumed. In particular they are used in disinfectant and cleaning agents. Surprisingly they have also been found in well-known plant strengthening products. And furthermore they are also found in many products for everyday use like e.g. Sagrotan, sanitary cleaning agents, as preservatives in cosmetics, eye drops, hair care products and as an auxiliary agent in textiles.

#### Disinfectants and cleaning agents

Until now, disinfectants and cleaning agents have been judged by their effectiveness and less by their potential to leave residues in foodstuffs. As described above, the QACs contribute decisively to a long-lasting disinfection, adhere well to stainless steel surfaces and are particularly very fat-soluble. Thus it is not surprising that they are used in dairies and thus can cause partially increased levels of residues in a vast number of dairy products. Here too the source of contamination was the cleaning and disinfecting agents of the plant operator (A. Friedel 10/2012).

A further important area of usage is the washing plant for post-harvest treatment of fruit and vegetables. Certainly many producers have been so sensitized by the EHEC virus epidemic that, in order to reduce risks, they have recently taken to using strong disinfectants without any hesitation at all (K. Arp, 10/2012).

#### Plant strengthening products

A particular surprise was the detection of DDAC in a whole series of well-known plant strengthening products. Until then, these products had been accepted over many years by all authorities and organic organisations, and had been tested for their approvability and suitability by distinguished international control bodies. It was completely unknown that these proven products contained DDAC. As in the general public awareness, there was no suspicion here and even less of an indication of DDAC.

As it was demonstrated, there were two different contamination routes for bananas. On the one hand these products were applied directly to the banana plants to prevent any possible fungal disease, and on the other hand they were used in the post-harvest treatment. Bananas are washed before being packed into boxes and the cut surfaces of the "banana hands" are then sprayed with exactly these plant strengtheners against the so-called "crown rot".

Immediately after the DDAC-contamination became known, BCS removed all plant strengtheners concerned, and also those that even came only slightly under suspicion for any kind of usage in organic farming, from the list of usable products. Manufacturers and producers were informed worldwide.

But in order to be able to make a final and realistic picture of the risk potential of bananas for the end-consumer one must know the following about how samples are taken. As is normal in analysis, the contaminated samples were taken from the <u>whole</u> banana, including the skin. Samples from the same batches that had been previously peeled were, in contrast, free of harmful substances - this was actually to some extent an all-clear.



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Nevertheless at a threshold level of 0.5 mg/kg, even in unpeeled bananas, it can occur that the marketability of these goods in the EU is not approved, so that they may not even be donated to a zoo - although every "monkey" peels the skin off a banana before eating it. Could it be that the regulations are somewhat exaggerated? But this is just a rhetorical question.

#### Conclusions

Quarternary ammonium compounds (QAC) have accompanied our daily lives for a long time in various ways, mostly more often than we would perhaps like. Hence it is clear that DDAC in our foods has been a problem for a long time, but until now it has not been recognised as such nor has it been explicitly named. Even if its toxicity is classified as being only "low" we must take all measures to avoid the use of DDAC entirely.

A first step in the right direction is definitely a thorough inspection of the production procedures locally, by taking samples orientated at the risks. A blind increase in the number of analyses is the wrong way, this would lead to enormous price increases of the organic goods and would not achieve any "more" safety. A second important step is to create a central register for organic plant strengthening products from which every producer in every country of the world can obtain information about the suitability of the products for organic farming.

Here the responsible authorities in the Third Countries are called upon to make the appropriate requirements. However, until it gets that far, the big internationally functioning organic control bodies are well advised to evaluate the plant strengtheners using the most uniform procedure possible and to exchange this information with each other.

After all, we all have the same goal, namely: to protect the organic market and thus the consumers sustainably.

#### Stephan Andrae

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- Agrarheute.com (home page)
- DDAC Wikipedia

K. Arp, Quartäre Ammoniumverbindungen in Bio-Lebensmitteln, Aktuelle Entwicklung und Auswertung der Krise aus Sicht des BNN Herstellung und Handel e.V., KdK Conference on 16.10.2012

#### Export of organic products to South Korea (By Mr. Tobias Fischer)

Until 31° of December 2013 organic products can still be exported to South Korea - as in the previous years - on the basis of equivalent organic certifications approved by the South Korean Government.

Originally it was required that from 1° of January 2013 on all organic products to be imported into South Korea had to be certified according to the South Korean organic standard. This would have meant that companies exporting to South Korea would have had to have their own production certified as well as possibly their pre-suppliers according to the South Korean organic standard.

However, it's only a pleasure deferred! In case that no bilateral equivalence agreements between South Korea and i.e. the EU will have been achieved until 31° of December 2013, certification according to the South Korean organic standard will be obligatory from 1° of January 2014 on. We therefore kindly recommend companies exporting to South Korea to deal with this subject in time. BCS offers this certification and is accredited by the competent authorities in South Korea.



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#### Market Presence

In 1992, **BCS OEKO-GARANTIE GmbH** became the first German certification body registered under the Organic Regulation of the European Union (EEC 2092/91). Since that time, **BCS OEKO-GARANTIE** has become very well established in the European market and has gained a strong international presence.

According to a rough estimate, BCS is involved in the certification of approx. 35% of all organic products in Germany. BCS certifies about 450,000 operators in about 70 countries worldwide.

**BCS OEKO-GARANTIE** maintains offices / local representation in:

Latin America:	Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dom. Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay
Europe:	Germany and Spain
Eastern Europe:	Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey
Asia:	China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Philippines and Thailand
Africa:	Ethiopia, South Africa, Tunisia
	Our Clients

Our client base encompasses all sectors of the organic industry, including farmers, processors, (re-)packers, importers, exporters and warehousing companies.

Our services are also frequently requested by other well-established certifying agencies that seek to complement their range of product offerings.

#### **BCS Services**

#### 1) Certification

**BCS OEKO GARANTIE** is accredited for the following organic certification standards:

- EC 834/2007 and 889/2008 (EU Organic Regulation), 710/2009 (EU-Aquaculture)
- JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard of Organic Agricultural Products)
- **KOR** (Korean Organic Regulations)
- > NOP (National Organic Program, USA)
- > Ley 20.089 DS17 (Chile Organic Standard)
- > FairTSA, GOTS (Textiles
- OSKSA (Organic Standard Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
- SPP (Símbolo Pequeños Productores)

In addition **BCS** certifies according to ecological and social certification standards:

- > GLOBALGAP (Good Agricultural Practice)
- > UTZ CERTIFIED (Certified Responsible Coffee)
- Bird Friendly (Coffee Certification)

Thanks to an efficient cooperation with our partner INTERTEK, the 'one stop shopping' has become reality for our clients: we also offer jointly various certifications such as TNC, HACCP, IFS, ISO 9000, ISO 22000 etc.

2) Inspections

Besides the above mentioned standards BCS OEKO-GARANTIE also cooperates with and conducts inspections for the following organizations according to their private or national standards:

Bioland / Demeter / Gäa / Naturland (Germany), Bio Suisse (Switzerland), Austria Bio Garantie (Austria), Soil Association (Great Britain), COFCC (China)

and others

3) Support of Exports into the EU

Our name - well-recognized in the EU - builds confidence in the brands and products certified by us and is helpful in the import process.

4) Customized Services

**BCS OEKO-GARANTIE** offers control and evalua-tion of guidelines, contracts (incl. specifications) and licensing payments for associations and other brand owners.

#### The BCS Philosophy

**BCS OEKO-GARANTIE** - celebrating its 20<sup>st</sup> Anniversary in 2010 - is one of the pioneers of the organic movement in Europe. The motivation of BCS is to provide clarity and transparency for the consumer.

Control is a need for the protection of serious producers and providers and trusting consumers and thus for the credibility of the organic production in general.

**BCS OEKO-GARANTIE** is committed to support the growing organic marketplace by maintaining the consumers' confidence in the conformity with the organic guidelines along the complete supply chain from producer to the consumer.

#### Contact Us

Please contact our office by phone or email as listed in the **BCS** Contact List 'BCS worldwide', or through the central office listed below. We will customize our services to meet your company's specific needs.

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#### Excerpt of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 508/2012 Annex IV - List of Control Bodies and Control Authorities for the purpose of Equivalence

#### BCS Öko-Garantie GmbH Duration of inclusion in the list:

until 30 June 2015. BCS has also applied for inclusion for the purpose of equivalence into Annex IV for the following category/product: "C" (Aquaculture products and seaweeds), wine

Third country	Code number	Category of products
	•	
Albania	AL-BIO-141	
Angola	AO-BIO-141	x  -  - x  -  -
Belarus	BY-BIO-141	x  -  - x  -  -
Bolivia	BO-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Brazil	BR-BIO-141	
Cambodia	KH-BIO-141	x  -  - x  -  -
Chad	TD-BIO-141	$ - - - \mathbf{x} - - $
Chile	CL-BIO-141	
China	CN-BIO-141	x   x   -   x   -   -
Colombia	CO-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Côte d'Ivoire	CI-BIO-141	
Croatia	HR-BIO-141	
Cuba		
Dom. Republic		x   x   -   x   -   -
		x  -  - x  -  -
Ecuador	EC-BIO-141	x   x   -   x   x   -
571		x   -   -   x   -   -
El Salvador	SV-BIO-141	x   x   -   x   -   -
Ethiopia	ET-BIO-141	x   x   -   -   -   -
Ghana	GH-BIO-141	x   -   -   -   -   -
Guatemala	GT-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Honduras	HN-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Hong Kong	HK-BIO-141	x   -   -   -   -   -
Iran	IR-BIO-141	x   x   -   x   -   -
Kenya	KE-BIO-141	x   -   -   -   -   -
Laos	LA-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Lesotho	LS-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Malawi	MW-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Mexico	MX-BIO-141	x   x   -   x   -   -
Moldova	MD-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Mozambique	MZ-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Nicaragua	NI-BIO-141	x   x   -   -   -   -
Panama	PA-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Paraguay	PY-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Peru	PE-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   x   -
Philippines	PH-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Russia	RU-BIO-141	x   -   -   x   -   -
Saudi Arabia	•	
Senegal		x   -   -   x   -   -
Serbia		x   -   -   x   -   -
South Africa		
Sudan	•	x  -  - x  -  -
Swaziland		x   -   -   x   -   -
French Polynesia	•	
Taiwan	•	
Thailand	•	x   -   -   x   -   -
Turkey	•	x  -   -  x  -   -
		$  \mathbf{x}   -   -   \mathbf{x}   -   -  $
Uganda Uruguay	•	
Uruguay	UY-BIO-141	x   x   -   -   -   -
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There will also be many stand parties at BioFach 2013 after the exhibition closes in the evening. We would like to invite you to our information-event of SPP on the occasion of the BioFach-BlueNight on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> of Feb 2013 from 6 pm to 8 pm, at stand #431 in hall #9.

http://www.biofach.de/en/highlights/bluenight/



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### **Zertifizierung - Certification - Certificación**



Soil Association, Bioland