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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B – Sustainability
The Director (acting)

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MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming

24 May 2024

Chair: AGRI B.4

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 24 October 2024, were approved without any comments.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

3.1 The State of the Organic Market

The representative of IFOAM, COPA-COGECA and SAFE gave an overview of the updated on organic markets around Europe.

3.2 Plant protection products:

a. Study on sources of phosphonic acid presentation (F.E.E.D.M)

The representative of F.E.E.D.M presented the study on sources of phosphonic acid. The presentation was made available on CircaBC.

b. The benefits of organic farming regarding pesticides, particularly focusing on biocontrol (IFOAM)

The representative of IFOAM presented the benefits of organic farming. The presentation was made available on CircaBC.

c. EFSA technical report on non-authorised substances in organics (COM)

The COM representative recalled the overall policy context and presented the manner in which a shortlist of products and substances not authorised in organic production to be looked at by EFSA was compiled, the working method (involving different COM Directorates-General and agencies, enabling the putting together of all available data) and the different questions to be addressed in the study (residue to be monitored, analytical method, authorisation status, usual use, possibility of natural occurrence, concentrations to be found in case of active use, possibility of drift and long-range aerial transport, behaviour in products, persistence in the soil, possibility of contamination with irrigation water, possibility of industrial emissions origin, etc. etc.). It also explained the timeline.

The substances to be looked at by EFSA in the study are: Fosetyl-Al; Glyphosate; Cypermethrin; Imidacloprid; Boscalid; Tebuconazole; Folpet (sum); Pirimiphos-methyl; Azoxystrobin; Fluopyram; Lambda-cyhalothrin; Acetamiprid; Chloromequat; Pendimethalin; Spirotetramat; Cyprodinil; Chloridazon; Pyriproxyfen; Fludioxonil; Difenconazole; Deltamethrin.

3.3 Compliance:

a. Update from the Commission

The Commission representative presented the situation concerning the compliance dossiers submitted by Control Authorities and Control Bodies for the purpose of being recognised under Article 46 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848.

The Commission representative informed that follow-up letters have been sent out for each of these dossiers. Currently, DG AGRI is actively engaged in the second round of assessment. The aim is to assess any additional information promptly and, once the dossier is assessed as complete, it will be possible to propose the inclusion of the Control Authorities and Control Bodies in the list in Annex II of Regulation 2021/1378.

Moreover, it was explained that:

- considering that only a limited number of requests for recognition in accordance with Article 46(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 have been submitted to the Commission sufficiently in advance to allow control authorities and control bodies to prepare adequately the issuance of certificates for operators and groups of operators in third countries in accordance with the compliance regime;
- considering that the recognised control authorities and control bodies can only start operating once the amendment of the Implementing Regulation recognising them as competent to do so enters into application;
- taking into account that the issuance of certificates of operators and groups of operators must be based on the results of the verification of compliance with Regulation (EU) 2018/848, which includes a physical on-the-spot inspection (based on Article 9 of Regulation 2021/1698);

There is the risk that control authorities and control bodies may not be able to perform all the necessary on-the-spot inspections, allowing the timely issuance of certificates to operators and groups of operators in third countries in accordance with the compliance regime.

Therefore, DG AGRI is working on an amendment of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/1698, to temporarily allow Control authorities and Control Bodies already recognised under compliance to issue COIs under equivalence on the consignments of products of operators whose certification under compliance is pending on 31 December 2024.

This would imply that before issuing COIs under equivalence, CBs will need to verify the compliance of the products with equivalent rules, for which they need to rely on operator's certificates issued under equivalence. Therefore, the operator's certificates issued under equivalence before 2024 to those operators whose certification under compliance is pending, would remain valid in 2025 for a limited period of time.

b. EU industry perspective (OPTA)

OPTA informed the Commission representatives that Control Bodies may prefer to start working under compliance regime not before 1 January 2025, due to some contract constraints with their operators.

The Commission representative stated that Control Bodies will be able to start operating for the purpose of compliance import regime as soon as the amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/1378 including them in the list in Annex II enters into application.

c. CBs perspective (EOCC)

EOCC welcomed the position of DG AGRI and would welcome the amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/1698 as regards derogation for the certificates of operators. EOCC had 4 meetings with DG AGRI in the last months to explain the difficulties of the control bodies to transit from the old to the new regime of compliance.

3.4 State of play of organic broiler production in the different EU Member States (COPA-COGECA and ERPA)

COPA and ERPA presented the state of play of organic broilers in the different EU Member States; the presentation was made available on CircaBC.

They highlighted several issues for the organic sector: the gap prices between conventional and organic, the lack of availability of organic protein feed and their concerns linked to the date of 31 December 2026 (ending of the authorisations to use 5% of non-organic protein feed intended for the nutrition of young poultry).

They highlighted a lack of harmonisation regarding the use and definition of slow growing strains in organic poultry production in the EU and the potential distortion of competition between Member States.

The representative of the Commission recalled that the provisions of point 1.9.4.1 of Part II to Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 related to slow growing strains have been in place for many years in organic production and at the time intended to reflect the diversity of availability of slow growing strains and specificities of the poultry meat markets in the different Member States.

These provisions are in the basic act and state the following: *“To prevent the use of intensive rearing methods, poultry shall either be reared until they reach a minimum age or else shall come from slow-growing poultry strains adapted to outdoor rearing.*

The competent authority shall define the criteria of slow-growing strains or draw up a list of those strains and provide this information to operators, other Member States and the Commission. Where slow-growing poultry strains are not used by the farmer, the minimum age at slaughter shall be as follows: (a) 81 days for chickens; (...)"

Changing these provisions would require an amendment of the legislative act to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

Regarding the authorisations to use non-organic protein feed for the nutrition of young poultry, the Commission representative reminded the group of the provisions of Article 53(4) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848. The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts based on the information as regards the availability of organic protein feed for poultry made available by Member States in accordance with Article 53(6) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, ending the authorisations or extending them.

3.5 The synergies between agroforestry and organic production (EURAF)

The representative of EURAF gave an overview of the synergies between agroforestry and organic production. The presentation was made available on CircaBC.

3.6 Sustainable Public Procurement,

a. taking the examples of the French and/or Italian inspiring systems (IFOAM)

The representative of IFOAM gave a presentation on Sustainable Public Procurement comparing the French and Italian systems. The presentation was made available on CircaBC.

b. Sustainable Public Procurement (COM)

The COM representative gave a presentation on Sustainable Public Procurement, highlighting in particular:

- the importance of public procurement as an enabler for the transition towards sustainable food systems,
- the main issues with sustainable procurement of food for schools and public institutes,
- possible actions to facilitate or support sustainable procurement of food and catering services, with focus on possible criteria for products that comply with Regulation (EC) No 2018/848.

It also presented the pilot project on improving the place of organic products in collective catering that it is preparing upon a request from the European Parliament. It presented the objectives of the study, focusing on mapping, at national, regional, and local level, the ambition and state of play as regards the share of organic food in public canteens and educational activities in primary and secondary schools on the organic logo and the nature and benefits of organic farming and organic production and an analysis of relevant strategies, with a view to developing best practices guides. It also explained the planned timeline for the study and the possibilities for stakeholder involvement. The discussion thereafter focused on the need or not of procurement targets at EU level, cost control strategies in case of a switch to organic products, the geographical origin of organic products, and the need for legal procurement training and expertise.

4. Next meeting

18 October 2024

5. List of participants

All organisations were represented (see details in the annex) except Bee Life, BirdLife Europe, EEB, EFFAT, EMB, Europatat, FESASS, FoodDrinkEurope, PFP, UNISTOCK.

List of participants – Minutes
Meeting of the CDG on Organic Farming
 24 May 2024

<u>ORGANISATIONS</u>
AREFLH - Assemblée des Régions Européennes Fruitières Légumières et Horticoles
AREPO - Association des régions européennes des produits d'origine
AVEC - Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU Countries
CEFIC - European Chemical Industry Council
CEJA - Conseil Européen des Jeunes Agriculteurs / European Council of Young Farmers
CELCAA - European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and AGRI-Food Trade
CEPM - European Confederation of Maize Producers
COGECA - European agri-cooperatives / General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives of the European Union
COPA - "European farmers / Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations of the European Union
ECVC - European Coordination Via Campesina
ELO - European Landowners' Organisation
EOCC - European Organic Certifiers Council
ERPA - European Rural Poultry Association / Association européenne de volailles rurales
EURAF - European Agroforestry Federation
Euroseeds
FEEDM - Fédération Européenne des Emballeurs et Distributeurs de Miel
FEFAC - European Feed Manufacturers Federation / Fédération européenne des fabricants d'aliments composés
FEFANA - EU association of Speciality Feed Ingredients and their mixtures
Freshfel Europe
IBMA - International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association
IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements European Regional Group

IPIFF - International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed
OPTA Europe - Organic Processing and Trade Association
SACAR - Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations / Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunion
SAFE Europe - Safe Food Advocacy Europe

<u>OBSERVERS</u>
European Committee of the Regions
European Economic and Social Committee