

Risk analysis in organic farming

Nitrofen or the wondrous production of crops in ecological farming – whether misfortune or cheating: an increasing market share of food produced in organic principles necessitates an effective control system based on the EU-Regulation 2091/92.

A project by the Gesellschaft für Ressourcenschutz Göttingen “*Analysis of weak points in the control system according to the EU-Regulation 2091/92 and preparation of proposals for development of certification and control systems in organic farming*”, whose head is Dr. J. Neuendorff – envisages to assure the quality of products and procedures through proposals and measures for the improvement of the control system. The project contributes to strengthen the customer confidence in the quality of eco-products defined by the EU-Regulation. This confidence is essential for extending the organic agriculture in Germany. The project envisages developing certification and controlling systems in organic farming. In Germany, private control bodies perform the control procedure under the auspices of governmental surveillance authorities.

DAP as an accreditation body for these control bodies based on DIN EN 45011 (accrediting them as certification bodies) took part in the project and organized a seminar entitled “Risk analysis in organic agriculture” on 20th May 2003 at the DAP Office. The participants – representatives of control bodies and federal control authorities – were introduced to a series of established risk analyses such as:

- Risk analysis under ISO 9001:2000 and New Approach Directives of EU
- Current development of risk analysis in the area of obligatory beef labeling
- FMEA (or FMECA), technique of risk analysis as preventive action
- HACCP as a tool in the area of food production

The information given from analogous areas with regards to the contents was helpful; the discussion confirmed the fact that tools and techniques, e.g. those used with HACCP, may also be used in organic farming. Last but not least it was the exchange of experience of the various parties, which strengthened the mutual confidence between control bodies, accreditation bodies and authorities.

Final note on our own account:

The revised DAP checklist to assess control bodies according to the EU-Regulation in organic farming has been published on DAP's website.

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News of medical laboratories – publication of ISO/IEC 15189

After many years of discussions and the final voting in November 2002, the ISO 15189:2003 *Medical laboratories – Particular requirements and competence* – was finally published in February 2003.

IIAC and EA have announced that both standards are equivalent and leave the decision on which standard to be used for accreditation to the laboratories, or ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189. The sector committee Medical Laboratories (SC MedLab) voted in favour of ISO/IEC 15189.

At present, a German translation of the standard is being done. So we will have to wait for the publication. What is going on in the meantime?

DAP has actively pursued through the *workgroup “ISO 15189”* of the SC MedLab which since the beginning of this year has been drawing up a checklist based on the English version of the standard. Those who participated admit that this task is not so easy. This checklist, by the way, will also replace the *“Guideline for the Accreditation of Medical Laboratories”*.

From now on, initial and reaccreditations will be conducted based on ISO 15189. The checklist against ISO 15189, though still a draft, has already been used as a trial in DAP assessments. During the next surveillance visits, laboratories already accredited may decide whether and when they wish to have the assessment according to the new standard.

It is important to note that for medical laboratories that request for accreditation or are already accredited for food and potable water testing, only DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025 is to be used for these areas.

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