

**Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming (SAFO)
EU Concerted Action QRLT – 2001 – 02541**

**WORK PACKAGE 6: TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER
In part completion of Objective O6.2, Deliverable D6.2, Milestone M 6.4**

**REPORT OF ONE-DAY ROADSHOWS IN
FIVE NEW & CANDIDATE EU MEMBER STATES
VOLUME 1: MAIN REPORT**

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Organisation of meetings such as these five Roadshows requires a significant amount of time and effort. The members of the SAFO Steering Group are very grateful to the many people involved in the organisation of the Roadshows. Particular thanks are due to the SAFO Participants in each country who carried the main responsibility for each seminar; Ragnar Leming, Gheorghe Mihai, Olga Ondrasovicova, Elita Selegovska and Gyorgyi Takacs. However, many others were involved, particularly translators, the many helpers who undertook the administrative work, and of course the speakers in the five Roadshow countries who contributed to the success of these meetings. We wish to convey our thanks to all of them.

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SUMMARY

As part of SAFO Work Package 6 (Technology Transfer), a series of one-day Roadshow seminars was organised in five new or candidate EU Member States. The overall aim was to disseminate information from the project to the end-user level in new and candidate Member States and to establish information exchange in a two-way communication between the project and the end-users in these countries regarding the national potential and constraints in relation to organic livestock production. The Roadshows were aimed at livestock producers, certification bodies and policy makers.

The Roadshow seminars were held during 2005, as follows:

Country	City	Date	Organiser
Latvia	Jelgava	4 March 2005	Elita Selegovska
Hungary	Budapest	9 June 2005	Gyorgyi Takacs
Slovakia/Czech Republic	Kosice	28-29 September 2005	Olga Ondrasovicova
Estonia	Saku	7 October 2005	Ragnar Leming
Romania	Cluj-Napoca	28 October 2005	Gheorghe Mihai

The Roadshow held in Kosice, Slovakia, was jointly organised with SAFO participants in the Czech Republic, and were organised as two sessions each taking a half day on two consecutive days. The Roadshows attracted between 60 and 90 delegates. The main elements of the programme for each meeting were as follows:

1. Presentations on SAFO activities by SAFO project Participants
2. Presentations on the state of the art of organic livestock production in the country
3. Presentations by organic livestock farmers outlining their main issues and challenges
4. Group and plenary discussions.

In most of the five Roadshows the balance between dissemination of SAFO information and presentation of national information and discussion, was approximately 25:75. Summaries of presentations by SAFO Partners and of the presentations by national speakers are presented here in individual Roadshow reports. Some of the Powerpoint presentations are published in an Appendix Volume to this report.

SAFO Partners emphasised the principles on which organic livestock production is based and provided information on the current state of organic livestock production in Europe, including the market situation for organic livestock products. SAFO Partners also highlighted the challenges of diversity in livestock systems across Europe associated with widely different physical and social conditions, and discussed the sometimes wide gap between the high aims of organic farming in terms of animal health and food safety and what actually occurs at farm level. In addition to the plenary presentations of SAFO material by SAFO Partners, all delegate packs contained detailed summaries of the four main SAFO Workshops, translated into each national language.

The presentations and discussions on national issues painted a relatively consistent picture of organic livestock farming across all Roadshow countries. A number of common problems restricting the development of the organic sector were repeatedly emphasised in all Roadshows. These were major structural issues, typical of a young and immature organic sector. The main problems identified by producers, advisers and researchers were lack of

home markets, processing facilities, advisory provision and subsidy support. It is perhaps understandable that at this stage in the agricultural and organic development of these countries, the focus of producers is on these issues rather than on animal health and food safety as a specific issue. Representatives from organic certification bodies reported on the major non-compliance issues in organic livestock farming. Difficulties with livestock housing, in particular tethering of stock, as well as poor documentation and record keeping, were common in most of the Roadshow countries.

There is clearly a considerable degree of commitment, enthusiasm and potential for organic livestock production in all of the Roadshow countries. The problems reported were related to the stage of development of the economy and of the organic sector in these countries, rather than to major technical issues requiring further research. However, technical challenges do exist, particularly in relation to improving the housing conditions of livestock, provision of sufficient organic replacements and organic feedstuffs, and improving producers' understanding of preventative health strategies for livestock. To some extent these issues are linked to the state of development of the broader economy and of the organic sector, but improving the provision of organic farming advice will also have a major impact on these issues.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT

SAFO Work Package 6 relates to dissemination of technologies (knowledge and conclusions) from the project to end-users in EU member states. Objective O6.2 relates specifically to dissemination of this information in EU candidate countries and also focuses on the establishment of information exchange between the project and the end-users in these countries. The methodology for this activity was primarily a series of Roadshows in new or candidate EU countries.

The concept of the SAFO Roadshows was a series of coordinated one-day seminars in a number of countries, at which material from network activities would be presented and discussed. In addition, country specific conditions would be presented by local stakeholders and discussed in a two-way communication. The Roadshows were aimed at end users (livestock producers), certification bodies and policy makers. The overall aim was to disseminate information from the project to the end-user level in the candidate member states and to encourage discussion among farmers and policy makers in accession countries regarding the potential, constraints and research requirements in relation to organic livestock production.

2. METHODOLOGY

SAFO Partner 4 (David Younie) was responsible for the overall supervision of the Roadshow programme, but the detailed planning and implementation of the programme was undertaken by a team which also included the organisers of each individual Roadshow and the SAFO Coordinator (Partner 1, Mette Vaarst).

At the 2nd SAFO Workshop in Witzenhausen in March 2004, SAFO Participants from new EU member states and candidate countries were offered the opportunity to organise one of the Roadshows in their own country. Although they were not official SAFO participants at the beginning of the SAFO project, Romania, Bulgaria and Czech Republic were all included in this group because their participation was still highly relevant. Following this, the SAFO Steering Group made the final selection of locations for Roadshows, taking into account the need for a representative range of climatic conditions and farming systems. Table 1 shows the locations, dates and local organisers of the five SAFO Roadshows.

Table 1. SAFO Roadshows: locations, dates and local organisers.

Country	City	Date	Organiser
Latvia	Jelgava	4 March 2005	Elita Selegovska
Hungary	Budapest	9 June 2005	Gyorgyi Takacs
Slovakia	Kosice	28-29 September 2005	Olga Ondrasovicova
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In addition to the initial meeting of the Roadshow Planning Group in Witzenhausen, further planning meetings were held at the 3rd and 4th SAFO Workshops at Falenty in Poland (September 2004) and Frick in Switzerland (March 2005) and at the Steering Group meeting in Reading in December 2004. The Roadshow planning meeting at Frick in March 2005 included a review of the Latvia Roadshow which had taken place earlier in that month.

A generic model for the programme for the Roadshows was developed, with the final programme for each individual Roadshow being agreed between the individual organiser, Partner 4 and the SAFO Coordinator, Partner 1. The main elements of the generic model programme were as follows:

1. Presentations on SAFO activities by SAFO Project Participants
2. Presentations on the state of the art of organic livestock production in the country
3. Presentations by organic livestock farmers outlining their main issues and challenges
4. Group and plenary discussions.

3. RESULTS: REPORTS OF INDIVIDUAL ROADSHOWS

The material from the Roadshows is presented here in two separate sections. The presentations by SAFO Project Participants were largely the same at each Roadshow so they are summarised here only once, as a separate section (Section 3.1 below). Detailed summaries of the Roadshow presentations relating to organic livestock production in each country then follow in Section 3.2. This also includes a summary of the discussions at each Roadshow and a breakdown of the delegates' backgrounds. English translations of some of the individual presentations are presented in the Appendix Volume.

3.1 Dissemination of SAFO project technologies

Dissemination of material from the SAFO project at the Roadshows took two forms: a) presentations by Steering Group and local SAFO Participants, and b) translated summaries, in the national language, of the main SAFO Workshops were included in delegate packs at all five Roadshows. SAFO presentations at the Roadshows were made by Steering Group members David Younie (Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia and Romania), Mette Vaarst (Latvia and Slovakia) and Albert Sundrum (Hungary), and by local SAFO Participants Elita Selegovska (Latvia) and Gheorghe Mihai (Romania).

An overview of organic livestock production in Europe was presented by SAFO Steering Group member David Younie (in Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia) and by SAFO Romania Participant Gheorghe Mihai (in Romania). The focus of stakeholders in the organic movement is often on the legal definition of organic farming, i.e. the EU Regulation. However, organic farming is firstly defined by a set of principles (e.g. the IFOAM Principles), and organic food and farming is worth nothing if we lose sight of those principles. The basic aims of organic livestock farming were highlighted, i.e. the maintenance of animal welfare, the emphasis on ensuring a production system which is as close as possible to the natural situation, related to the requirements of the species, using appropriate breeds, the need to express natural behaviour, etc. The main features of the EU Regulation were outlined: natural and species-specific feeds, preventative health strategies, minimising veterinary drugs, access to range, appropriate housing conditions, etc. The greatest differences between conventional and organic systems were to be found in pigs and poultry rather than in ruminants, because conventional pig and poultry production have moved much further away from natural systems than ruminant systems have. The importance of livestock in most organic systems was emphasised by pointing out the very high percentage of the organic farms in most European countries which were livestock farms. Hungary was one of the few exceptions, with only 11% of organic farms being livestock farms. The market size for organic food in different European countries was summarised, with the highest per capita per annum consumption being in Switzerland (99 euros in 2003) and Denmark (60 euros), although highest total sales were in Germany (over 3 billion euros in 2003). The organic share of total food sales was still rather low (just over 1% for EU in 2001). Much of the livestock produce which was produced and certified as organic was not able to find a market in the organic food chain. In 1991, over 90% of pig and poultry produce was sold as organic, but only 54% of sheep meat and 65-70% of beef and dairy product was sold as organic.

In the second SAFO presentation, Mette Vaarst (in Latvia and Slovakia), Albert Sundrum (in Hungary) and David Younie (in Estonia and Romania) presented some of the intellectual outcomes from the SAFO project. The challenges facing animal health and food safety had been identified, including the significant diversity in livestock systems and environments between different European countries.

The implementation of the EU standards at farm level was also a huge challenge. It was clear that the EU Regulation in itself was not sufficient to guarantee good animal health and safe food. Indeed the Regulation increased the challenge in some respects, e.g. the requirement for access to pasture for all animals increases the risk from environmental pathogens. Most of the health problems found on organic farms were the result of multiple causal factors, often due to failures by the farmer himself and including poor housing design. A higher level of skill was required by the organic stockman than by the conventional stockman. At the same time there was often inadequate advisory support for organic farmers. Thus there was still a gap between philosophy and practice.

Many examples of improved practice had been presented at SAFO Workshops. These included bio-active forages for worm control in ruminants, techniques for increasing the use of the run by poultry, appropriate breed selection and improved sanitation practices for mastitis control in dairy cows, prolonged suckling of the calf in dairy herds, and the use of animal health plans. In addition, better training of farmers, vets and advisers, and networking projects like SAFO, were vitally important. Although it was important to have an EC Regulation to provide a framework of organic farming standards, it would be difficult to make organic livestock farming completely uniform across all countries. Instead, diversity of systems can be used as a basis for learning and improvement.

At the Latvia Roadshow, Elita Selegovska, SAFO Latvia Participant, reported on the survey of SAFO project members to determine the main problem areas in each country (if any), relating to specific paragraphs in the EU Organic Livestock Regulation, particularly with regard to animal health and food safety. In general, there was a tendency for more issues to be raised by representatives from those countries in which organic livestock production has been established for the longest time. Many issues were raised, including lack of expertise in preventative health management techniques amongst farmers, lack of availability of robust breeds, questions about traditional housing systems including tethering and use of outdoor runs in pigs and poultry, lack of knowledge and reluctance to use complementary therapies. There was also some concern about lack of clarity in the Regulation, and the lack of definition/examples of preventative health management techniques.

3.2 Individual Roadshow Reports

3.2.1 SAFO Roadshow in Latvia

Title: **Organic Animal Husbandry In Latvia – Problems And Solutions**
Location: **Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural University of Latvia, Jelgava**
Date: **Friday 4 March 2005**

The SAFO Latvia Roadshow was organised by *Elita Selegovska of the Agricultural University of Latvia, the SAFO Participant in Latvia.*

Attendance

86 delegates attended the Latvia Roadshow, from all regions of Latvia. The background of the delegates can be broken down as follows:

Background	Number of delegates
Farmers	41
Processors, traders	7
Consumer representatives, food quality	4
Government, policymakers	4
NGOs	3
Advisers	7
Researchers, lecturers	10
Students	4
Inspection bodies, auditors	6
Total	86

Programme

9.30	Registration, Coffee
10.00	Opening of meeting, welcome <i>E. Selegovska, LUA Dept. of Animal Science, SAFO contact in Latvia</i>
10.10	Organic farming and livestock production in EU. Perspectives. Differences between countries in legislation, funding and certification. <i>David Younie, SAFO Steering Committee</i>
10.45	Implementation of the EEC-Regulations on organic livestock farming in different countries. <i>E. Selegovska</i>
11.00	Organic farming in Latvia – current situation. <i>D. Kreizmane, President of Association of Latvian Organic Agriculture Organisations (ALOAO)</i>
11.15	Organic Development plan, national policy, targets and prospects. <i>L. Drozdovska, Latvia Ministry of Agriculture</i>
11.30	Problems in fulfilling standards in organic animal husbandry. Certification. <i>A. Sietinsone, Food and Veterinary Service</i> <i>S. Rubezis, Certification body “Vides kvalitāte”</i>
12.00	Animal welfare in organic farms. <i>D. Kairisa, LUA Dept. of Animal Science, Assoc. prof.</i>
12.15	Discussion
12.30	Lunch
13.30	Outcomes from SAFO network <i>Mette Vaarst, SAFO coordinator</i>
14.00	Experience and problems in animal husbandry: Ruminants, Pigs, Poultry. <i>Farmers: I. Virsnite, B. Tidemane, M. Viluna, I. Kocina</i>
14.40	Group discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock health and housing (ruminants, pigs, poultry); • Food quality and safety; • Marketing of organic livestock products.
15.30	Tea/coffee
15.45	Plenary discussion. Results of group discussions. <i>E. Selegovska</i>
16.30	Finish

Organic livestock farming in Latvia

Dzidra Kreizmane, President of Organic Farming Association of Latvia described the current state of organic farming in Latvia (see Appendix Volume for presentation). She indicated that there were two main issues: a desire for naturalness on the one hand, and a trend towards intensification on the other hand. Food quality and safety issues tended to have a higher profile in cities than in the countryside.

Currently 2% of agricultural land in Latvia is organic and 0.7% of all farmers are organic. Positive factors in the development of organic farming include increasing support payments for conversion, and these may be increased further. Demand for organic food is also growing. Negative factors include poor availability of organic product, slow development of processing facilities, and lack of co-operation amongst producers.

Farmers motives for conversion were twofold:

- a) Most farmers are motivated by economic incentives (i.e. subsidy support).
- b) Some are also motivated by environmental considerations

It has been primarily smaller farms which have been converting because they cannot compete with large scale farms in the production of commodity conventional foods

The Latvian Association of Organic Farmers was an active association which played major roles in the development of national strategy and in the provision of information and training on organic farming, environmental protection and healthy food. She felt that there was a lack of trained and competent organic farming advisers but looked forward to increased possibilities for international collaboration in both organic training and organic research.

Liga Drozdovska, Senior Officer of Division of Quality Management Veterinary and Food Department of Ministry of Agriculture provided a description of the national Organic Development Plan (see Appendix Volume for presentation). The aims of this Plan were to

- (a) establish a place for organic farming within the agricultural sector
- (b) improve the availability of organic products
- (c) encourage an environmentally friendly farming system.

In order to achieve these broad aims, additional specific objectives of the Plan were to improve access to knowledge about organic farming, increase organic production, improve production infrastructure and encourage market development.

Among the targets in the Plan were to have 3% of land (i.e. 56000 hectares) registered as organic by 2006, to have a wide range of organic products available in the market (including milk, meat, cereals, vegetables, honey and fruit), and to have 2% of all consumers regularly buying organic products, also by 2006.

The targets on agricultural land were close to being met (nearly 2% is organic as of early 2005). There is a good level of knowledge of organic farming amongst producers and the conversion subsidy payments are providing a good incentive to convert. In terms of achieving a good diversity of products in the market place, the main problems were not with livestock products but with fruit.

An excellent paper on the main problems faced by organic livestock farmers in meeting the organic standards was presented by *Adria Sietinsone, Leader of Department for Supervision and Control in Organic Farming* (the national competent authority) within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Service (see Appendix Volume for presentation).

In the organic farming control system in Latvia there are two organisations which can issue organic certificates:

- Environment Quality in Salaspils
- Certification & Testing Centre in Priekuli

The scale of the organic sector in Latvia is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of registered organic producers and land area in Latvia.

	2003	2004
Number of organic farmers	550	1043
Organic land area, ha	24480	43889

There was a rapid increase over the last two years in both the number of registered organic farmers and in the area of registered organic land. This substantial increase was a result of increases in subsidy payments for conversion.

Table 3 describes the size distribution of organic enterprises in Latvia and confirms that the majority of organic farms are relatively small.

Table 3. Size distribution of organic enterprises in Latvia.

Percent of organic enterprises	Size range (ha)
42	1-20
50	20-100
6	100-200
2	Over 200

The speaker provided very useful information on the main non-compliances found during inspections of organic livestock producers. The main problem areas were as follows:

- (a) There were no feed mills in Latvia which can produce organic animal feed
- (b) Many farms had unsuitable buildings (old Soviet buildings)
- (c) Tethered animals (including tethering in pastures)
- (d) Difficulty of sourcing organic replacement stock, especially in pig and poultry production
- (e) Beekeeping: conventional sugar used to feed bees – this will become a problem after August 2005.
- (f) Documentation: poor farm record keeping
- (g) Mostly small and medium sized farms: need for restructuring

Table 4 describes the range of non-compliances in organic enterprises identified during inspections.

Table 4. Identified non-compliances in producing enterprises in year 2004

Identified non-compliances	% of total
Documentation, accountancy of production	39
Labelling of products	3
Seed material	7
Plant protection	1
Conversion period	5
Provision of organic feed, additives	10
Animal husbandry, housing issues	16
Veterinary treatments	11
Common hygiene	4
Separation of organic and conventional products	4

Most livestock produce requires to be processed in some form but this was another problem area in Latvia. Because the market for organic food was not well developed, most processors were not interested in becoming registered to process organic food so farmers had a very limited or non-existing choice of processing outlets.

Sandijs Rubezis, a speaker from the Vides Qualitate (Environmental Quality) certification body agreed with *Adria Sietinsone* with regard to the main problem areas in certification. He also mentioned poor record keeping by farmers, which makes the annual farm inspection more difficult, and a lack of practical knowledge amongst farmers. There is a need for more training courses. The other issue he raised was poor feed quality.

Welfare of Organic Livestock

Dr. Daina Kairisa, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture presented a paper on welfare of organic livestock. She highlighted the importance of understanding the animal's natural behaviour and its physiological needs, so that farming conditions can be established which meet these requirements. She described individual and social behaviours and made comparisons between species in terms of their behaviour types. She concluded by outlining the Latvian legislation on animal welfare and provided some examples of good welfare: e.g. cattle handling facilities, housing, desirable environmental conditions, access to pasture.

Farmers' experiences

Mrs. Iveta Virsnite, owner of a dairy farm "Strautmali" and director of a cooperative of organic milk producers, started farming eight years ago, and converted to organic farming four years ago. She produces butter as well as liquid milk on her farm. Her main motive for converting was to obtain SAPARD financial support to develop her business. The requirements of the organic standards are rather high and so there is a general reluctance to convert amongst farmers. The main problems she experiences are practical issues such as the collection of organic milk. There were only two processing plants for organic milk in Latvia. This is also a typical experience in other countries where a small sector of the industry, with a lack of critical mass, is faced with large transport costs because of the lack of registered organic processing plants. Mrs. Virsnite felt that the development of the market is hindered by the consumers' lack of understanding of the difference between organic and conventional food.

Main conclusions:

- The main organic product for marketing in Latvia could be milk;
- Lack of small-bore equipment for milk processing in processing plants;
- High requirements of the organic standards – lack of producers;
- Organic milk should ideally be non-pasteurised, but lack of understanding by consumers about such positive benefits as this;
- Lack of trust in organic certification by consumers.

Mrs. Igita Kocina, owner of organic farm "Zageri", produces pigs, dairy cows, goat, poultry and sheep. The farm is self-sufficient for feed, producing all feed for stock on the farm in the form of hay and grain. She stated that she has no health problems in her small pigs, but emphasised that it was important that they are outdoors and get good quality feed. Feed is mixed on the farm although it would be easier to buy in concentrates. She recognises the attraction of supplying niche organic products in the EU market and whilst acknowledging that no quality comparisons had been undertaken with conventional pork, she felt her organic pork was of high quality. But because of the lack of organic slaughterhouses and market she sells the meat as conventional.

Main conclusions:

- It is necessary to use trace mineral Se for piglets (for prophylaxes) – for that they need permission from certification body;
- As mostly we have rather small farms, there is a lot of difficult hand work, especially in animal feeding;
- Lack of certified organic slaughterhouses for pigs.

Mrs. Merija Viluna, owner of organic farm "Laukgali", an organic poultry producer, raised a number of problems associated with the EU Regulation and specifically the poultry standards. She highlighted the problem of sourcing organically reared pullets in Latvia after the derogation on the use of conventionally reared replacements was removed in December 2005.

Achieving a balanced diet and ensuring adequate water intake (when birds had uncontrolled access to the outside environment) were also problems highlighted. In fact she felt that there were difficulties at every stage between rearing the chicken and retailing the eggs and there was a need to develop a new EU Regulation on poultry.

Main conclusions:

- It is necessary to develop the national regulation on organic poultry;
- Problems in optimising feed ration and water consumption in summer time;
- Lack of knowledge in management and breeding of layers which are well adapted to organic farming.

Mme. Baiba Tidemane was an organic inspector with the Vides Kvalitate certification body, but was also a beef farmer herself. She described two farm examples. The first was a group of farmers producing bull beef from calves from dairy farms and the second was a group of farmers selling by-products from cattle, including sausages. There were problems on these farms because of a perceived lack of clarity in the organic standards and a lack of knowledge on the part of the farmers. The concentrate fed on these farms was more or less from conventional sources. Mme Tidemane also highlighted the issue of choice of breed for beef production. Another more general problem is that most farmers have lost their skills and expertise in maintaining health without relying on drugs. This is a direct legacy of the management system on state/collective farms, on which health management was the responsibility of the farm veterinary practitioner, not the farm manager or stockman.

Main conclusions:

- The best choice for organic farming could be suckling cows;
- There are problems in feeding of bull beef from calves from dairy farms. Lack for understanding of EU Regulation.
- It is necessary to organize discussions between organic farmers, and spreading of useful information;
- Shortage of knowledge of farmers in organic production.

Plenary on Group Discussions

The delegates were divided into six working groups and were asked to list the main problems in three areas relating to organic livestock production in Latvia: (a) housing and health; (b) food quality and safety issues; (c) marketing of organic livestock products. In the event, lack of time meant that most of the discussion focused on item (a).

The difficulty of ensuring access to range for poultry, especially in winter, was again mentioned in this discussion. In summer it was difficult to feed the birds according to their nutritional requirements, because at pasture they eat as much as they want, and drink water from puddles and ponds. In summer time hens are laying eggs in pastures. There was a lack of advisory information on organic poultry nutrition, lack of knowledge of alternative medicine amongst veterinarians. Problems with waterfowl – they need water, but it is not allowed to use ponds or rivers.

Delegates also highlighted the lack of information available to producers on what feed products and additives can be used. There is confusion about what is allowed, and lack of information. Delegates also felt that there was a lack of suitable breeds available for organic production (e.g. in poultry).

Other issues arising from the relatively early stage of development of the organic sector were also raised. Practical issues such as the lack of a source of organically reared pullets in Latvia,

or finding additional calves to utilise surplus milk in suckler cows. Delegates suggest allowing the milking of suckling cows for on-farm use.

In cattle there was concern about aggression in horned cows if tethering is prohibited completely after 2010. It was also felt that loose housing resulted in less contact between animals and human. Farmers are not ready to realize this demand because most are short of finances. In this context there was a call from delegates for a clearer definition in the EU Regulation of what constituted a 'small' farm. For very small-scale farms there was also a call for the EU Regulation to permit the keeping together of all the village livestock in one barn.

A question arose about pastures of beef cattle and horses. These animals need pastures with trees and bushes, but farmers are not able to receive EU funding for such pastures.

Delegates felt there was a need for vets to be trained in organic farming standards and practices, and for Government funding for research in organic farming (nutrition, welfare, breeding, management, quality of products etc).

The main issue discussed in relation to food quality was the shortage of processing units for livestock products. In Latvia there is only one organically registered abattoir for cattle and one for rabbits and a poultry abattoir currently under development. There was a need to consider how to get processing companies motivated to register as organic. It was suggested that farmers should be allowed to sell eggs without a stamp in market, because consumers don't like such eggs. Also the exact requirements for quality of organic products before and after processing are not clear.

In relation to the question about marketing of organic livestock products, delegates find that mostly organic products are sold as conventional because of the shortage of certified processing units. Delegates also questioned the validity of the information about amounts of organic products produced. In Latvia it is believed that legislation on home produced products has not been established and that this, is the main reason for the small home market in organic food. It is necessary to develop Government legislation to protect consumers from low quality products (also GMO) and inform consumers about positive sides of organic products.

3.2.2 SAFO Roadshow in Hungary

Title: **Organic Livestock Farming in Hungary: Questions And Answers**
 Location: **Faculty of Veterinary Science, Szent István University, Budapest**
 Date: **Thursday 9th June 2005**

This Roadshow was organised by Dr Györgyi Takács of Szent István University, the SAFO Project Participant in Hungary, jointly with “an open day” of Biokontroll Hungaria Kht, the main Hungarian organic certification body. This joint approach therefore ensured that one of the major stakeholders in the organic sector in Hungary was centrally involved in the meeting.

Attendance

A total of over 79 people attended the meeting, comprising 23 farmers, 12 certification body (inspectors, etc) and organic association personnel, 4 representatives from Government (Ministry of Agriculture, Food Safety Authority, marketing institute), 14 advisers and veterinarians, 18 researchers and 8 students and others from industry. Albert Sundrum and David Younie attended on behalf of the SAFO Steering Group and made presentations.

Programme

The language of the seminar was Hungarian. The presentations of Albert Sundrum and David Younie were made in English but simultaneously translated into Hungarian.

The programme was a one-day programme as shown below:

10.00	Registration, coffee
10.00	Opening and welcome. (<i>Dr Miklós Rusvai, Deputy Dean of Faculty</i>)
10.10	Perspectives of organic farming and livestock production in the EU. (<i>David Younie, SAFO Steering Group</i>)
11.00	Hungarian Organic Farming Development Plan. Development of organic livestock farming in Hungary. Aims and perspectives. (<i>Mr József Marticsek, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</i>)
11.15	Federation of Biokultúra Associations and the present situation of organic farming in Hungary (<i>Mr Gabor Czeller, Biokultúra Association</i>)
11.30	Development of organic livestock farming in Hungary (<i>Dr Peter Roszik, managing director, Biokontroll Hungária Kht</i>)
11.45	Organic livestock farming and entirety. Organic pig farming. (<i>Dr Géza Márai, Szent István Univ. Gödöllő</i>)
12.00	Methods of the collective marketing and the market of organic food in Hungary (<i>Mme Judit Bujdosó, Agrar Marketing Centre, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</i>)
12.15	General Discussion
12.30	Lunch
13.20	<i>Outcomes from the SAFO Concerted action Project (Albert Sundrum, SAFO Steering Group)</i>
14.00	Traditional animal varieties in the Hungarian organic animal husbandry (<i>Dr Janos Seregi & Peter Pusztai, Corvinus University, Budapest</i>)
14.15	Experiences and problems in organic livestock husbandry: Honey bee (<i>Dr Tamas Szala, Szent István University</i>); Poultry (<i>Dr István Szalay, Institute for Small Animal Research</i>); Sheep (<i>Mr Gábor Csatári, Awassi Sheep Company</i>); Goats and dairy cows (<i>Mme Zsuzsa Ökördi, farmer</i>); Hungarian Grey beef cattle (<i>Mr Csaba Cene, farmer</i>)
15.15	Group discussions: Solutions for problems in: <div style="text-align: right;">Livestock health and housing Food quality and safety Marketing of organic livestock products</div>
16.00	Tea/coffee
16.15	Group reports
17.00	Close of seminar (<i>Dr Györgyi Takacs, SAFO Hungarian Participant</i>)

Development of organic farming in Hungary

Jozsef Marticsek from the Ministry of Agriculture indicated that the Hungarian National Rural Development Plan had started in 2004 but a number of legal problems had prevented its immediate implementation. Modifications to the Plan had been approved and it was expected that payments would start being made in 2006. There is no subsidy specifically for organic livestock farming, but there is a subsidy scheme for livestock production, especially for native/autochthonous Hungarian breeds. (“Support Scheme of Agrar-Environmental Management”) Organic farmers will have an advantage in the competitive entry procedure. This scheme applies to native/autochthonous female animals: horses; Hungarian Grey Cattle; sheep (Hungarian Racka sheep on Hortobágy, Gyimesi Racka, Cikta, Tsigai); Mangalitsa pigs and poultry. Support payments would be provided on a per female head per year basis (e.g. 113.67 € /head/year for Hungarian Grey cow, 78.53 €/head/year/ for Mangalitsa sow, 20.59 € /head/year for ewe, 0.33-1.53 € /head/ year for hen). This contrasted with previous schemes in which payments were made on an area basis. There was much concern amongst farmer delegates at the meeting about the delay in implementing the scheme and about a number of the details of the scheme. There is also a definite conflict between this scheme, which will encourage farmers to keep greater numbers of stock (in order to obtain subsidy), and the principles of organic farming, which require stock densities to be restricted in order to minimise health problems. However, the response is that stock numbers in Hungary are already very low and an increase, at least at national level, will not be a problem and in any case, the EU Regulation will limit stocking rate.

Gabor Czeller, Chairman of Biokultúra Association, described the development of Biokultúra and organic farming in Hungary. The organisation was founded in 1983 as a club for environmental concerned people, “friends of garden” and national organic farmers but it is now in the process of converting into a federation, since this change in legal status will give it greater power to lobby the Government and other politicians. Organic farming has developed from 4000 hectares in 1992 to over 130,000 ha now. Most of this increase in activity involves the production of grain and other feedstuffs for export as raw material. The lack of local processing facilities has prevented crop farmers from adding value to the raw materials they produce, and also has limited the development of organic livestock farming in Hungary. The national market for organic food has been very slow to develop. One of the main aims of Biokultúra now is to focus on developing the national market and to encourage local processing. It was felt to be ridiculous that organic bread made from Hungarian wheat is imported into Hungary from Germany.

Biokontroll Hungária Kht (Kht = Public Interest Company) was established as an organic certification body in Hungary in 1996, according to its Managing Director, *Dr Peter Roszik*. In 1996 the certification of Hungarian organic agriculture had been taken over from the former certifying organisation Biokultúra Association by Biokontroll Hungária Kht. Hungary had already gained the status of an EU approved Third Country Certification in 1995 and Biokontroll Hungária Kht also has EN 45011 accreditation. It has mutual accreditation with BioSuisse and since 2004 also has IFOAM accreditation. Organic farming has developed in Hungary to the stage in 2004 when 123,000 ha were certified (2% of total agricultural area). Most of the organic livestock farms in Hungary are based on ruminants (69% are cattle farms, 20% are sheep farms). There are relatively few pig and poultry farms but honey bees are an important sector, although it is relatively poorly regulated and there are problems with infectious diseases and parasites. There are also small numbers of fish, rabbit and game farms, which are not controlled under EU Reg 2092/91. There is however a serious imbalance

between crops and livestock in the organic sector in Hungary. Only 11.4% of organic farms are livestock farms. This is caused essentially by the poor profitability of livestock farming in Hungary, exacerbated by the lack of government subsidies. The small number of animals overall, particularly pigs and poultry, results in a serious shortage of organic manure. Some crop and livestock farmers are beginning to co-operate by exchanging straw for manure. Other problems caused by the low level of development of organic livestock farming include a) inefficient utilisation of alfalfa fields (it is alternatively used simply as a green manure), b) difficulty in finding organic replacement breeding stock, and c) poor utilisation of large areas of natural pastures which would be suitable for organic livestock production. The poor profitability of organic farming does not motivate farmers to invest in added value processing facilities.

Dr Géza Márai of Szent István University also highlighted the need for more integration of livestock and crop production in Hungary, agreeing with Dr Roszik. Livestock numbers overall have reduced considerably because of poor profitability. He estimated that the overall stocking rate of animals on organic land in Hungary overall was between 0.1 and 0.2 Livestock Units per hectare. In fact this was much higher than on conventional farms (0.005LU/ha) but was still nevertheless very low. Dr Márai described the potential of the native pig breed, the Mangalitsa, which was the only breed used in organic farming in Hungary. Not only is this breed well suited to extensive management, but it also has an ideal ratio of meat to lard.

Mme Judit Bujdosó from the Agrar Marketing Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development focused on marketing issues relating to organic livestock products in Hungary. She emphasised that the EU food market was essentially saturated and it was not easy to find new markets. There were increasing trends towards niche or traditional foods, and branding was becoming ever more important. It was important for food producers to recognise the increasing desire for processed food. She highlighted the potential for organic farmers to benefit from an improvement in the diet of Hungarian people. In general public health in Hungary is poor and the life expectancy is 6-8% less than the EU average. Many factors need to be considered in improving this situation, but a higher consumption of organic food, and the other lifestyle changes this implies, may have a role to play. In 2004 total value of organic food sales in Hungary totalled 4 million Euros (from home production and imports), approximately 0.5% of overall food sales. There is scope to increase the home market, therefore. A consumer survey showed that only 3% regularly buy organic food, 21% have heard about organic food but do not have access to it, and 48% of consumers have heard about organic food but do not know enough about it.

Total production of organic food in Hungary in 2003 was valued at 35 million Euros. Of this 90% was exported, primarily to Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Netherlands. Almost all of this was unprocessed raw material, particularly feed grains. There is therefore a great need to increase the amount of processing which takes place within Hungary.

The Agrar Marketing Centre distributes financial support to processors and provides promotional support for producers. It also has a display each year at Biofach in Germany.

General discussion: Morning

There was considerable discussion about the reasons for the relatively limited home market for organic food in Hungary. It was suggested that Biokultúra should start public campaigns to persuade the public about the benefits of organic food. A uniform 'eco-logo' for Hungarian products might also help. In fact a competition to design a logo had been completed but no further action had as yet been taken. In addition to the reasons presented earlier by Mme

Bujdosó, other surveys were quoted which indicated that 26% of consumers thought that organic food was too expensive. Delegates also focused on the need for more processing. It was felt that difficulties had been placed in the way of small-scale, on-farm processing in Hungary

Experiences with organic livestock production in Hungary

Native livestock breeds in organic farming: Dr János Seregi et al, Corvinus University

Dr Seregi suggested that in the past, organic livestock husbandry was equated with the keeping of traditional breeds of livestock. However, the EU Organic Livestock Regulation does not require the use of traditional breeds specifically and this has therefore weakened the position of these breeds. Examples in Hungary were the Mangalitsa breed of pigs, Hungarian Grey cattle and the Hungarian Yellow chicken. He argued however, that traditional breeds potentially had a major role to play in organic farming for a number of reasons: they often provided a better equilibrium between feed quality/quantity and animal performance potential, they met consumer expectations that organic food was locally produced, they often had better product quality characteristics, and they had more potential in enhancing agrotourism than modern breeds. In fact this coincides with the expectation amongst at least some organic consumers that organic products should be produced locally. He reported the results of comparisons of meat quality between Hungarian Grey and Holstein meat (much better ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids in Hungarian Grey meat) and between Mangalitsa and other pig breeds (higher and better distribution of intra-muscular fat content in Mangalitsa).

Honey production: Dr Tamás Szalai, Szent István University, Gödöllő

Dr Szalai reported that 1% of the 15000 beekeepers in Hungary were organic. The most important bee pasture in Hungary is the black locust pasture (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) which can be found in extensive forest areas with minimal risk of pollution. Until 20 years ago there was relatively little difference between organic and conventional honey production in Hungary but since the arrival of the *Varroa* mite, a difference in method of control of this mite has arisen between the two systems. In general, preventative chemical control is used in conventional apiculture, whereas only treatment of affected hives (oxalic acid) is permitted in organic apiculture.

Poultry production: Dr Szalay et al, Institute for Small Animal Research, Gödöllő

Dr Xuan Dong suggested that breed selection is the most important factor in successful organic poultry production. In previous times farmers kept a range of different species and breeds, which responded differently to the range of feed crop species which were available. Modern poultry strains are less well suited to the conditions of organic farming. She was strongly of the opinion that breed selection should be more strongly elaborated in the EU Regulation. There was also no guidance in the Regulation relating to flock size and stocking density for geese and turkey.

Sheep production: Mr Gabor Csátori, Awassi Sheep Company

This company close to the border with Ukraine operates both conventional and organic sheep enterprises. It started the development of its organic enterprise four years ago on 250 hectares, based on a traditional breed *Gyimesi Racka*. The main objective is sheep's cheese production. Sheep are milked on a carousel with which 2-3 people can potentially milk 3000 sheep in three hours. Lambs have had to be sold live, because local abattoirs have closed. The company was able to sell produce as organic for the first time in 2005 after four years of financial loss. It has been promoting its cheese in international exhibitions and at present

cannot supply enough product to meet demand. A price premium of 40-45% is obtained relative to conventional farmers' cheese, and a 25-30% premium compared with the company's own conventional cheese.

Goat and dairy cow production: Mme Zsuzsa Ökördi, farmer

Mme Ökördi is a small producer (40 ha with 20 goats and 5 cows) producing milk in a remote area in southern Hungary. There is a serious problem with ticks in this area, but her other major problems relate to the small size of the enterprise and the remoteness of the location – lack of access to veterinarian assistance, lack of availability of replacement animals.

Hungarian Grey beef cattle production: Mr Csaba Cene, farmer

Mr Cene's farm is located in the Mátra mountains in the north of Hungary, close to the border with Slovakia. He started with 16 heifers and now has 76 cows, initially under conventional management then converted to organic. He uses electric fencing for grazing control at pasture, and houses the animals in traditional wooden stable buildings. Diets are based on pasture, legumes and hay. Finishing bulls and heifers receive most of the cereals. Mr Cene has started to cross-breed his Hungarian Grey cows with the Bagota breed and hopes to improve milk yield in this way. In his experience the Hungarian Grey has very few disease problems – little or no lameness, mastitis or reproductive problems.

General discussion: Afternoon

There was discussion about issues not directly related to organic farming and the EU Regulation (e.g. handling of fallen stock, regulations on manure treatment, live animal transport and food safety regulations). Comments also focussed on the motivation for conversion. There was an echo of the same discussion here as has taken place from time to time in western European countries i.e. has it been a good thing that increasing numbers of commercially-minded farmers have started converting to organic. There seemed to be a number of both ideologically and commercially minded farmers present at this meeting.

Group discussions

Four groups of delegates were asked to discuss the same three issues: a) livestock health and housing, b) food safety and c) marketing. The report below is an amalgamation of the points raised by the four groups within these three discussion points. A full report on the discussions of the Working Groups is presented in the Appendix Volume.

a) Livestock health and housing

Some producers felt that there were too many requirements in the Livestock Regulation, which were not possible to follow or to implement. This may be related to the view of some delegates that there should be more differentiation in the requirements of the Regulation as applied to large and small farms. Some other changes in the EU Regulation re animal health were suggested: i) conventional treatment of honeybees against the varroa mite should be allowed, but honey should be discarded; ii) Regulation should be more specific in relation to beef production; iii) size of entrances in poultry houses should vary according to the number of birds rather than the size of the building; iv) maximum size of cattle herds should be stipulated; v) need for some livestock species to be incorporated more specifically in the Regulation (*see summary of paper by Szalay above*). There was a call, both from farmers and from veterinarians, for more information on preventative health management strategies. On a specific point, whilst mixed grazing of different livestock species is generally encouraged as a preventative management strategy, there is a local Hungarian law which prohibits different ruminant species from being grazed together in the same pasture.

b) Food safety

The view was expressed that existing Hungarian food safety law was actually more strict than new EU regulations. Certainly there was general support for strict regulation on origin and traceability. Delegates suggested that there should be different hygiene requirements for small and large processors. Perhaps part of this general topic area was a desire to encourage the development of abattoirs for organic farmers.

c) Organic food marketing

There was relatively little discussion on this point, but delegates wanted to see the development of a uniform Hungarian logo for organic food. There was a view that the Government had failed the organic sector in this respect in the last few years.

3.2.3 SAFO Roadshow in Slovakia/Czech Republic

Title: **Organic Livestock Farming in the Slovak and Czech Republics**
Location: **Institution for Postgraduate Education of Veterinarians, Kosice, Slovakia**
Date: **28th and 29th September 2005**

This seminar was organised by Dr Olga Ondrasovicova, the SAFO Project Participant in Slovakia, jointly with Jan Holoubek and Bohuslav Cermak, SAFO Project Participants from Czech Republic.

Attendance

A total of 79 people attended the meeting, comprising 47 farmers, 4 certification body (inspectors, etc) and organic association personnel, 6 representatives from Government, 8 advisers, and veterinarians, 4 researchers and 10 students and others from industry. Mette Vaarst and David Younie attended on behalf of the SAFO Steering Group and made presentations.

Programme

The languages of the seminar was Slovak, Czech and English. The presentations of Mette Vaarst and David Younie were made in English but simultaneously translated into Slovakian. The programme was a two-day programme as shown below:

September 28 2005

11.30	Registration, coffee
12.00	Lunch
13.00	Opening and welcome (<i>Dr Olga Ondrasovicova, and Prof.E. Pilipcinec,PhD., Vice Rector, University of Veterinary Medicine, Kosice</i>)
13.20	Perspectives of organic farming and livestock production in the EU (<i>David Younie, SAFO Steering Group</i>)
13.50	Outcomes from the SAFO Project (<i>Dr Mette Vaarst, SAFO Coordinator</i>)
14.20	Concept of organic farming in Slovakia (<i>Ing. R Trebaticky, Ministry of Agriculture</i>)
14.50	Concept of animal health management and food quality (<i>Dr R Matejcik, State Veterinary Service</i>)
15.20	Coffee/tea
15.40	Potential for development of organic farming in the Czech Republic (<i>Mr J Holoubek, University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic</i>)
16.10	Organic farming from the perspective of the Central Testing & Control Institute, Bratislava (<i>Ing. J Schlossova, Central testing and Control Inst. Bratislava</i>)
16.40	Production parameters of organic & conventional cattle in mountainous regions of Czech Republic & Austria (<i>Prof B Cermak, University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic</i>)
17.10	Activities of Pro-Bio Farmers Association in support of organic farming in Czech Republic (<i>Ing. Renata Osladilova, Pro-Bio,CR</i>)
17.40	Plenary discussion
19.00	Presentation of Biofoods and Bioproducts Dinner

Thursday 29th September 2005

08.30	Animal health and welfare from the Certification Body perspective (<i>Ing V. Cabuk, Naturalis SK, Bratislava</i>)
09.00	Effect of contaminated environment on health of animals and products (<i>Dr Olga Ondrasovicova, University of Veterinary Medicine, Kosice</i>)
09.20	Animal health and quality of products – the farm Liptovska Teplicka (<i>Mme Anna Glejdurova</i>)
09.40	Experiences of an organic livestock farmer in the Czech Republic (<i>Ing. Travnicek, Czech Rep.</i>)
10.00	Coffee/tea
10.30	Situation in organic farming from perspective of Ecotrend Association (<i>Mme Z Homolova, Ecotrend,SR</i>)
11.00	Video presentation of two organic sheep farms visited during Bioakademie, June 2005 (<i>Ing.R. Osladilova, PRO-BIO, CR</i>)
11.10	Plenary discussion
12.00	Conclusions from seminar
12.15	Lunch

Government Policy

The presentation of *Rudolf Trebaticky of the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture* focused on the Slovak Government policy for development of organic farming. At present there were 205 registered organic farms in Slovakia, with many farms in conversion, and organic farming was the most dynamic sector in the agricultural industry at present. The main factor holding back the development of the sector is the poorly developed home market for organic produce, which results in 85% of Slovak organic produce being exported. The Government has established a system of conversion, which provides converting farmers with financial support for a period of three years. Approximately 12 % of the budget of the Rural Development Plan is allocated to organic farming. The Government has a target of 5% of agricultural land to be farmed organically by 2010. A Government advisory sub-committee for organic farming is about to start work on a programme for the development of organic farming, including promotion and marketing issues. This work will be aligned with the actions listed in the EU Action Plan on Organic Farming.

Development of organic farming including certification issues

A picture of the organic livestock sector in the Czech Republic was presented by *Jan Holoubek*. In 2004 there were 836 registered organic producers and processors in the Czech Republic, including 350 farms with livestock production. The percentage of total agricultural land which is registered as organic was 6.16% in 2004. Most of this (89.4%) was permanent grassland. There was good financial support for conversion up until 1993, after which the level of support was reduced, but subsequently was increased again after 1997. The main organic livestock enterprises are beef, dairy with some poultry and pigs. Lack of processing facilities for organic livestock products is a problem, which results in some organic products being processed as conventional food. In the past most organic product was exported but the proportion which is exported is decreasing and is now approaching 50%. The Czech development plan for organic farming aims to achieve 10% of agricultural land to be organic by 2010. Priorities included improving the availability of processing facilities for organic products, education of consumers about organic farming, strengthening the trust of consumers in organic farming by enhancing the welfare status of organic livestock.

Mme Juliana Schosserova from the Slovak Central Control and Testing Institute of Agriculture (UKSUP) (the national competent authority for organic farming) presented a detailed description of the current state of organic farming in Slovakia (see full paper in Appendix Volume). The only inspection body operating in Slovakia is Naturalis SK, a private sector body. The organic sector has developed as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Development over time of the organic farming sector in Slovakia

	No of registered farmers	Area of registered land (ha)
1991	37	14773
2003	88	54479
2004	117	53091
2005	205	93943

Organic land area in 2005 represents 4.7% of total agricultural land. Of this 71% is permanent pasture and 29% is arable land or orchards. Of the 205 registered organic farmers in 2005, 127 had cattle, 101 had sheep and 32 had pigs. A weak point in the organic sector, as in most new EU countries, is lack of organic livestock processing facilities. In 2004 a total of 242 organic plant bioproducts (single ingredient food) were licensed but only 6 products of animal origin. In 2005 thus far, no organic bioproducts of animal origin have been licensed, despite that fact that 187 of the 205 organic farms are livestock farms. The bulk of production from organic livestock farms is exported to the Czech Republic or to other EU members states as raw unprocessed product.

Pro-Bio is the Association of Ecological Farmers in the Czech Republic and is the main NGO promoting organic farming. *Ing. Renata Osladilova* added to the picture of Czech organic farming sector provided earlier by Jan Holoubek and also described the activities of Pro-Bio. The main certification body in the Czech Republic is KEZ. In early 2005 there were 810 certified producers, farming 254995 hectares of land (5.97% of total agricultural land). The main products produced by Czech organic farmers were cereals, herbs, wine, milk products, fruit, vegetables and processed meat (e.g. salami). Pro Bio had 520 members (approximately 400 farmer members farming 138000ha plus 120 consumers and other supporters). Pro-Bio has two main offices (Prague and Brno) plus 10 regional centres. Its main activities are advisory, education and promotion. It provides help to farmers on conversion, crop and animal production, processing and marketing, through advisory leaflets and articles, conferences and farm visits. It organises one large conference each year, called the Bio-Academy.

Mr V Cabuk of Naturalis SK, the only national inspection body operating in Slovakia, described the operation of the Naturalis certification system and presented certification statistics and reviewed areas of non-compliance by organic livestock producers (see full paper in Appendix Volume). In 2005 there are a total of 230 organic licence holders in Slovakia, 89% involved in primary agricultural production and 7% producers of biofood (i.e. processed product). The breakdown of livestock types is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Number of registered livestock herds for inspection in 2005

Species	Ecological	Conventional
Cattle	85	11
Sheep	85	2
Pigs	7	8
Goats	20	0
Horses	26	4
Bees	1	2
Hens	2	2
Geese	1	0
Ducks	1	0

Although there are many organic livestock farms, many are in conversion, and all of the certificates issued in 2004-05 for bioproducts (primary products) and biofoods (processed products) were plant products. None of the certificates issued related to animal products. In 2005 only two applications for animal products have been received by Naturalis (sheeps milk and sheeps cheese).

Many farmers enter conversion unprepared, ill-informed, motivated by conversion subsidies and with the mistaken view that what they practise already is organic farming, simply because they do not use artificial fertiliser. A further major problem for the inspection body is farms which are part organic and part conventional. These may comply with the requirement for physical separation but generally have poor record keeping. Of the inspections completed on livestock farms to date in 2005 (many of whom are in conversion), there were non-compliances in 56.3% of cases. Forty-one per cent of these non-compliances concerned tethering of stock, and almost 11% concerned unauthorised intervention (e.g. de-horning, tail docking). The most common areas of non-compliance on livestock farms in the period 2004-05 are as follows:

- tethering in cattle herds
- unauthorised interventions
- parallel production, most frequently conventional dairy cows and organic dry cows
- the use of unauthorised feed, mixed feed and feed additives
- exceeding the permitted proportion of conventional feed
- early weaning of the young, particularly calves
- insufficient or inaccurate evidence, accounting not separated
- failure to comply with requirements on internal or external area
- unauthorised purchase of animals
- unsuitable housing, insufficient light, no bedding, slatted floors
- no access to pasture or runs particularly for young animals and fattening
- conventional and ecological inputs and outputs are not separated
- unavailable data, for example formulas of mixed feeds, premixes, accounting documents
- use of unauthorised medicines and hormones.

Farmer experiences

Mme A Glejdurova is a farmer representing the Liptovska Teplicka organic cooperative farm, extending to 1325ha (60 ha arable land) in the National Park of the Low Tatras mountains in the north of Slovakia. The entire farm has been organic since 1993 and it produces potatoes, winter cereals, fodder crops and cattle, sheep and horses for agro-tourism. Lack of a home market and premium prices for organic products are major disincentives to continuing in

organic farming, but recent improvements in Government support has encourage the cooperative to continue. Lack of processing facilities (e.g. reduction in the number of slaughterhouses, no pasteurisation of sheeps milk for cheese) is also a major barrier to the further development of organic production, and most of the weaned calves are currently exported to Italy as conventional animals. In terms of animal health, the farm has found that de-horning of calves is essential to prevent animals damaging each other, cattle occasionally have locomotion problems because of the mountainous terrain, and trace element deficiencies in both cattle and sheep require supplementation.

Mr Travnicek is an organic farmer from the Czech Republic, farming part-time on a 100ha farm. His main enterprise is 100 breeding ewes producing lambs for meat, sold direct to consumers. He feels that there is insufficient government support for people starting the conversion to organic which makes the conversion hardly profitable. There is concern about the bureaucracy of the control system, particularly the amount of information (records) which have to be provided by the farmer during the inspection process. Another potentially major problem for organic farmers is contamination by GMOs. It is permitted to grow GM maize in the Czech Republic, without notification to the authorities or to neighbours so there is potentially a major risk of contamination of the environment and of purchased feed for organic farmers.

Mme Z Homolova is an organic farmer in Slovakia and president of Ekotrend, an association of organic producers, processors and consumers in Slovakia. Ekotrend was formed in 1997 when Naturalis was split into a producer association (Ekotrend) and an inspection body (Naturalis SK). Its main functions are to provide advice (including publication of advisory leaflets, organisation of conferences, excursions, etc), education and promotion of organic farming.

Technical issues

Dr Olga Ondrasovicova of the Department of Environmental Hygeine of the Veterinary University of Kosice emphasised the need to recognise the potential effect of a contaminated environment on animal health and food safety. Diffuse pollution from manures and from grazing animals can affect not only fish in watercourses and in ground water (e.g. pathogens, nitrate content), but can also have regional (e.g. acid rain) and global effects (greenhouse effect). Dusts can act as a carrier for micro-organisms which can have a serious adverse effect on product quality e.g. in dairies.

Professor Bohuslav Cermak presented the results of a study comparing organic and conventional dairy production in mountainous regions of the Czech Republic and Austria. In the study there were 20000 cows in Czech Republic and 30000 cows in Austria. Herbage production and quality were measured, as well as milk yield and quality. Herbage quality was lower in extensive organic pastures. Average milk yield per cow was 500kg lower in organic than in conventional cows but there was no significant difference between O and C in fatty acid profile.

Dr R Matejcik from the State Veterinary Service described how the Slovak Republic had introduced animal health legislation which now equates with EU legislation on control of animal diseases, in order to ensure safe food from 'stable to table'. At present eight multi-annual programmes have been introduced for the monitoring, elimination or reduction in occurrence of a wide range of animal diseases which either present a risk to animal and human health or constitute a barrier to trading.

Plenary discussion:

General discussion on development of the organic sector.

A major difficulty for both Slovakia and Czech Republic was the lack of a well developed home market. Development of the home market is constrained by at least three factors: a) lack of awareness or knowledge amongst consumers about the benefits of organic food; b) ability of consumers to pay a premium price and c) by the limited range of products available. This lack of a home market results in the vast majority of organic production in both Slovakia and Czech Republic being exported or sold into the conventional food chain. For example it was claimed by one delegate that in the Czech Republic 14000 organic calves are sold as conventional animals. Another major factor constraining the development of organic farming is the lack of availability of organically registered processing facilities. A contributing factor here, according to some delegates, is that there is over-regulation, particularly of small abattoirs. It was felt that there was a need to encourage more on-farm processing.

Some of the technical problems in organic livestock mentioned by delegates included:

- mineral deficiencies – there are problems of finding acceptable formulations of mineral supplements
- reproductive problems in dairy cows
- respiratory problems in cattle
- ticks in sheep and goats (although there is a tick forecasting service which organic farmers should follow)
- additional information and training required on homeopathy
- a problem of meat quality in native Pinzgau cattle
- GMO contamination of feeds in Czech Republic

The problem of enhancing animal health status in the organic livestock sector is not helped by the fact that the State Veterinary Service does not now have an advisory function – which it used to have. Its activities now are concerned only with control and prevention of diseases, particularly zoonotic diseases.

3.2.4 SAFO Roadshow in Estonia

Title: **Organic Animal Farming In Estonia: Problems & Possible Solutions**
Location: **Estonian Plant Production Inspectorate, Saku**
Date: **7th October 2005**

This seminar was organised by *Ragnar Leming, Estonian Agricultural University, Tartu*, the SAFO Project Participant in Estonia.

Attendance

A total of 59 people attended the meeting, comprising 34 farmers, 6 certification body (inspectors, etc) and organic association personnel, 6 representatives from Government, 4 advisers, and veterinarians, 5 researchers and 4 students and others from industry. David Younie attended on behalf of the SAFO Steering Group and made two presentations.

Programme

The main language of the seminar was Estonian. The presentations of David Younie were made in English but simultaneously translated into Estonian.

09.30	Registration
10.00	Opening (<i>Ragnar Leming</i>)
10.10	Organic farming and livestock production in EU. (<i>David Younie, Scottish Agricultural College, SAFO Steering Committee member</i>)
10.45	Organic development plan, trends and strategy in Estonia (<i>Peeter Prass, Organic Agriculture Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture</i>)
11.00	Problems of implementing the EU standards for organic animal production – from a certification point of view (<i>Egon Palts, Estonian Plant Production Inspectorate</i>)
11.30	Problems of implementing the EU standards for organic animal production – from a farmers point of view (<i>farmers A. Pikk mets, E Sellis, and adviser M. Mansberg</i>)
12.00	Plenary discussion
12.30	Lunch
13.30	Outcomes from SAFO network. (<i>David Younie</i>)
14.15	Working group discussions:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal health – problems and possible solutions (common diseases, veterinary treatments used, prevention measures etc.)• Quality and safety of organic animal products (how to ensure?, potential risks at production level etc.)• Animal breeding for organic production (organic breeding index – is there a need for a such index, selection traits important for organic animals etc.)
15.15	Coffee
15.35	Working group reports and Plenary Discussion
16.30	Closing remarks

Government policy

Peeter Prass of the Ministry of Agriculture Organic Agriculture Bureau presented a government view of organic farming (see translated presentation in English in Appendix A). He indicated that organic farming should be a suitable option for Estonia given the present stage of development of the agricultural industry and since the land is relatively unspoiled. A new official Estonian organic logo was introduced in April 2005. More than 60% of organic land in Estonia is grassland. Approximately 60% of all organic farms are livestock farms and one third are beef and sheep farms. The main problems for development of the organic farming sector in Estonia are:

- The lack of awareness and knowledge on organic food amongst consumers, which results in a limited home market for organic food
- A low level of production nationally (many farmers are still in conversion) and limited availability of product in the shops
- Almost no organically registered processing facilities
- Considerable bureaucracy and paperwork associated with organic production.

The Government has a five year development plan which contains an action plan for organic farming. This will tie in closely with the EU Action Plan on Organic Farming. One of the main aims of the national action plan is that at least 95% of the population should be able to recognise the Estonian organic logo and know what it means. The actions in the plan include a) development of organic processing facilities; b) increasing the level of production e.g. by improving the advisory service, introducing a network of demonstration farms; c) improving the financial viability of organic production (low interest loans, educating consumers, facilitating exports; and d) other actions such as addressing the GMO issue.

Development of organic farming including certification issues

Organic certification in Estonia is undertaken by the Plant Protection Inspectorate. *Mr Egon Palts, Assistant Director* reviewed some of the issues (see translated presentation in English in Appendix Volume). The development of organic farming in general is shown in Table 7 and the number of organic livestock in Estonia in 2005 is shown in Table 8.

Table 7. Number of organic farms and area of organic land 1999-2005

Year	Organic farms	Area of organic land (ha)
1999	89	4 000
2000	230	9 900
2001	369	20 100
2002	583	30 600
2003	764	42 600
2004	810	46 100
2005	1015	64 000

Table 8. Organic livestock production in 2005

Species	Number	% of Estonian total
Cattle: Total*	11916	4.6
Of which dairy cows	3031	2.6
Sheep and goats	17182	29.2
Of which goats	447	11.8
Pigs	348	0.1
Poultry	5704	0.3
Horses	1309	23.6

* includes calves and young stock

On the basis of reports by organic inspectors, Mr Palts suggested that the main problems in organic animal production in Estonia were as follows:

1. Tethering of stock
2. Required minimum space allocation not fulfilled
3. GMO in feed
4. Using too little bedding material
5. Advisory service very often not used

The issue of tethering is a problem even on relatively large farms, for example where former Soviet livestock buildings are being used. There are many examples of farmers beginning the conversion to organic without seeking advice. Farmers have to pay for organic advice whereas the general advisory service is partly state subsidised.

Other problem areas he identified were a shortage of protein feed for dairy cows, particularly with the reduction in the permitted proportion of non-organic feed in the diet, lack of organic feed mills, both resulting in non-compliances on the use of non-organic feed, and the buying in of non-organic animals, particularly bull calves.

He questioned whether existing feed mills would be willing also to undertake mixing of organic feeds, because of the extra cost and administrative burden. There is one organically registered abattoir in Estonia, but it is located on an island and is therefore not readily accessible by the majority of producers. A mobile slaughtering facility may be a solution to this problem. Availability of organically approved mineral supplements and organic milk replacer is also a problem which a few producers are addressing by importing product. Clearly there is a need to develop the technology for growing protein-rich crops and to encourage or provide support for farmers to use organic advisors. Mr Palts also raised the issue of how animal welfare should be assessed by inspectors, given the lack of specific criteria for this assessment over the full range of livestock species.

Farmer Experiences

Mr Aivar Pikk mets Matiku Farm

Mr Pikk mets has a dairy farm of 429 Ha (inclusive of 102ha of forest and 26ha of natural grassland) with 45-50 milking cows (see translated presentation in Appendix C).. Land in crop rotation extends to 131 ha. On this land temporary grass leys are rotated with winter and spring cereals. The farm has been organic since 2001. Cows are fed approximately one tonne of cereal or concentrate per head plus potatoes. Around 4-5% per annum of conventional feed is fed (rapeseed cake and minerals) and average milk yield of the Estonian Holstein Freisian cows is currently 6700kg per lactation. Both alternative and conventional medicines are used on the farm and Mr Pikk mets does select bulls to improve udder health. No specific health problems were highlighted, but he suggested that the veterinary service needs to be improved, particularly veterinarians' knowledge about organic livestock production. Other general problems were improving milk yield, identifying appropriate selection traits for the organic situation, and the logistical difficulties of collection and marketing of organic milk.

Mrs Ell Sellis: Väike-Hauka Farm

Mrs Sellis described her sheep farm of 96 ha, inclusive of 33 ha of cropping land, 11 ha of natural grassland/bog, 52 ha forest (see translated presentation in Appendix Volume). The farm has been organic since 2000. There is a ewe flock of 55 ewes with the main enterprise being production of replacement ewe lambs for breeding. Oats are rotated with temporary grass leys on the cropping land and the farm is totally self-sufficient in feed, except for purchased mineral supplement. The sheep breeds are Estonian White Face and Texel. Sheep are housed during winter, with daily access to pasture when weather conditions allow. Winter diet for the ewes is ad lib hay and silage, with supplementary feeding of oats and home-produced potatoes during lactation. Health problems on this farm include foot rot, lambing problems particularly with the Texels, and endoparasites in lambs. More general issues relate to manure storage regulations, potential GMO contamination of the environment and feeds, lack of availability of organic milk replacer, and lack of interest or knowledge about organic livestock production amongst veterinarians.

Margo Mansberg

Mr Mansberg is an organic farming adviser (see translated presentation in Appendix Volume). He discussed current issues and practices on organic livestock farms in Estonia, in relation to the overall aim of producing high quality product with minimal drug residues, keeping animals in as natural an environment as possible. Currently the focus of organic livestock farmers is on basic issues such as the need for access to pasture, buying organic feed, buying organically reared animals and treating sick animals. He felt that organic farmers need to be prepared to do more to change their systems (as well as buy organic food themselves) and to recognise that the organic standards are made to serve the consumer. Farmers should therefore be doing everything they can to reduce drug use, reduce the use of conventional feed, etc. He felt that problems such as parasite problems could be solved relatively easily, and yet some organic farmers are still using veterinary medicines prophylactically. All problems can be solved – the issue is about whether there is sufficient will to accept and to pay for the solution.

Working Group reports

Animal health – problems and possible solutions

This group agreed that the choice of breed was probably the most important factor in ensuring a good animal health status in herds or flocks. For example the group questioned whether the Belgian Blue beef breed should be permitted in organic farming because of the high frequency of caesarian calvings in this breed. In dairy cattle they identified the most important selection criteria as a) the need to extend the productive life of dairy cows, b) ensuring a high level of fertility in the cows and b) improving the feed conversion efficiency of the cows. Other problems which were identified were selenium deficiency in sheep or cattle (but Estonian soils have already been mapped in relation to this problem), parasite problems (which should be solvable at farm level through the establishment of clean grazing systems), and mastitis.

There is a great need for investigations and knowledge in subjects like preventive management and alternative treatment methods under local conditions. Information about the sources of mineral (and other) feedstuffs suitable for organic production is also needed. Improvement of the veterinary service and advice in organic farms was one of the most discussed problems in the group. It was also mentioned that information and knowledge from good experiences should be exchanged between the farmers.

Quality and safety of organic animal products

The group discussed the criteria for defining healthy and safe food. In addition to good nutritional composition and being free of pathogens, it was recognised that healthy food should be free of preservatives and could therefore rot more easily than food containing preservatives. Nevertheless, questions remained about how ‘safe food’ should be defined. The problems identified by the group included residues of veterinary medicines, GMO contamination, dioxins and heavy metal contamination, and the short shelf life resulting from the non-use of preservatives. The solutions suggested included producers taking more responsibility (for avoidance of contamination), the use of older, traditional preservation methods, and the use of modern packaging technologies to improve shelf life. One example of an old preservation method originates from ancient Rome, where meat was conserved in honey. Meat jerking was another example that was mentioned. In order to avoid accidental usage of GMOs in organic farming, handling and labelling of feed products that include GMOs should receive more attention and control.

There have been no investigations about food safety in organic farming, therefore it is important to study the current situation and possible risks. State financial support is needed to carry out such investigations.

Animal breeding for organic production

The group indicated that the level of feedback from the Animal Recording Centre needed to be improved in order to enhance breeding progress. The group expressed interest in adopting the concept of the Ecological Animal Breeding Index which has been developed in Switzerland, and beginning to put it into practice. However for some criteria required in organic farming there will be a lack of collected data (e.g. animals suited to loose housing). Some technical questions were raised: How to select the right animals for crossing to avoid health problems and complications; and crossing of different breeds in beef cattle. Other issues raised included the lack of good quality beef bulls and the lack of systematic selection in sheep production. To increase rapidly the number of beef cattle a temporary permission to use embryo transfer in organic farming was one of the options that was mentioned.

3.2.5 SAFO Roadshow in Romania

Title: **Organic Agriculture In European Union And Romania: Present & Future Perspectives In Livestock Production**
Location: **University of Agricultural Sciences & Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca**
Date: **28th October 2005**

This seminar was organised by *Dr Gheorghe Mihai*, the SAFO project participant in Romania and his team of assistants (*Dr. Antonia Odagiu, Sonia Nechifor, Valentin Mihai, Lenke Balint, Camelia Echim, Viorica Olar*).

Attendance

A total of 85 people attended the meeting, comprising 32 farmers, 7 certification body (inspectors, etc) and organic association personnel, 3 representatives from Government, 8 advisers, and veterinarians, 10 researchers and 22 students and 3 marketing specialists and others from industry. David Younie attended on behalf of the SAFO Steering Group.

Programme

The main language of the seminar was Romanian. The presentations of David Younie and Mr Wil van Eijsden were made in English but simultaneously translated into Romanian.

9.30	Registration, Coffee
10.00	Welcome (<i>Gheorghe Mihai, UASMV Faculty of Animal Husbandry & Biotechnology, SAFO Romania Participant</i>)
10.10	Outcomes from the SAFO Concerted Action (<i>David Younie, SAFO Steering Group</i>)
10.40	Perspectives on Organic Livestock Farming in Europe (<i>Gheorghe Mihai, SAFO Romania Participant</i>)
11.00	Present and Future Perspectives in Development of Ecological Agriculture in Romania (<i>Cornel Man, USAMV, & Teodora Adelescu, National Authority for Ecological Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development</i>)
11.15	Organic Farming in Romania -Present and Future Perspectives in Ecological Livestock Farming (<i>Cornel Man, USAMV, President, Bioterra Association</i>)
11.30	Present and Future Perspectives in Inspection and Certification of Organic Livestock Farming (<i>Piroska Lorincz, "Ecoinspect" Director</i>)
11.45	Enhancing Animal Health Security and Food Safety in Organic Livestock Production: The Perspectives of Romania (<i>Vasile Cosma & Calin Gherman, UASMV</i>)
12.15	General Discussion
12.30	Coffee, Tea and Snacks Break
13.00	Farmers Experiences and Problems in Organic Livestock Husbandry (<i>Willi Schuster, Wil van Eijsden, Marius Sabau</i>)
13.45	Animal Welfare and Loose Housing Design (<i>Marcela Sirbu, UASMV</i>)
14.00	The Quality and the Marketing of Ecological Products (<i>Daniela Quai, UASMV</i>)
14.15	SAPARD Programme – Opportunities for Organic Animal Husbandry (<i>Rodica Mihai, SAPARD</i>)
14.30	Plenary Discussion. Results of work group
15.00	Close of seminar
15.15	Lunch

Development of Ecological Agriculture and Ecological Livestock Farming in Romania

Professor Cornel Man of UASMV in a joint paper with *Teodora Aldescu from the Organic Agriculture Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development*, described the development of organic farming in Romania. The legislative framework had been put in place through various Government Orders between 2000 and 2004, so the legislation in Romania now essentially equates with EU Regulation 2092/91. Inspection and certification of organic farming in Romania had initially been undertaken by foreign

inspection bodies, but the first national certification body (Ecoinspect) was approved in 2004. Financial support for organic farming would be available through Measure 3.3 of the SAPARD programme (Sub-Measures A, B and C) (see below), although delivery of this Measure had not yet started. Institutional support for organic farming included the National Authority for Ecological Agriculture within the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Federation of Ecological Agriculture, a number of NGOs and producer associations including Bioterra, which had 1700 members, ANCA (the national advisory organisation) and universities such as UASMV.

The area of registered organic land in Romania has grown over time as shown in Table 9. The target of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development is to see this area increase to 170,000 ha by 2007. Fodder crops and pastures make up approximately 50% of organic land. The current level of organic livestock production is shown in Table 10.

Table 9. Development of organic farming in Romania.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005*
Total area (ha)	17,438	28,800	43,850	57,200	73,800	104,000

* estimate

Table 10. Organic livestock production in Romania.

Number of head	Dairy cows	10,000-12,000
	Dairy sheep	70,000
	Laying hens	8000
	Honeybee (families)	8000
Production	Sheep Feta cheese	80-100 tonne
	Schweitzer (cows) cheese	260t
	Dalia (cows) cheese	380 – 400t
	Eggs	1,500,000
	Honey	>200t

Organic cows' milk production is dominated by large companies who collect milk from many small producers. For example SC Dorna Lactate collects milk from approximately 1700 suppliers with land area ranging from 1 to 20 ha each and with cow numbers ranging from 2 to 20 each. Similarly SC Camylact collects milk from 520 small producers. In contrast, AsiNature is a large commercial company with 3500 ha of organic land and 5000 sheep (including 3500 milking ewes) under its own management. There are other examples of businesses establishing organic enterprises on a relatively large scale (e.g. buffalo for cheese, laying hens).

Although there is substantial potential for the development of organic farming in Romania, there are many weaknesses slowing progress. These include the following:

- The home market is weak because consumers are not aware of the benefits of organic food and in any case have limited ability to pay premium prices
- Limited approved organic processing facilities (e.g. there are no approved abattoirs)
- Many very small producers with fragmented farms, and a reluctance to cooperate
- High cost of conversion coupled with lack of financial support (to date).

Mme Daniela Quai, representative of Gross Market explored further the marketing issue. She indicated that 95% of organic livestock products (mostly cheese) from Romania were exported. Indeed, a substantial proportion of the organic food sold within Romania was actually imported. Although there is a well developed network of large stores and

supermarkets within Romania, organic food has very low market penetration. Because of the structure of the agricultural industry in Romania, small-scale farmers have a weak bargaining position when marketing non-processed primary products to intermediary merchants. Although cooperative marketing is a possible way forward, there is a general lack of confidence and reluctance by farmers to participate in cooperative marketing. Government programmes to assist the development of market structures can play an important role. A good certification system is important, with payment based on product quality, as is a good system of labelling or branding. A good wholesale market needs to be developed in which farmers can trust. Similarly the development of specialist organic or health food shops provides another possible outlet for organic food. There are one or two examples of producers who have begun to use the web as a route for marketing (e.g. Cortina SRL is an organic egg producer with its own website). The National Federation of Organic Agriculture has developed an organic development strategy 2003-2006 which includes the following recommendations: adoption of a unified logo, export subsidies, support for representation at food fairs and exhibitions, development of cooperative marketing, development of web-based marketing, creation of pilot specialist organic markets and stores.

Dr Calin Gherman of USAMV provided a detailed description of the epidemiology and control methods for some of the main zoonotic problems which might be a threat for organic livestock farmers and products in Romania.

Adhering to the organic standards on housing is a significant problem on many farms in Romania, since tethering is still very common. *Mme Marcela Sirbu (UASMV)* presented a paper describing possible design options for loose housing of cattle (dairy cows, beef cattle and young calves), ensuring adequate space allocation, good ventilation, and access to a bedded lying area.

Mme Rodica Mihai described the opportunities available for organic farmers in Romania to access EU funding through the SAPARD programme. This programme of funding is specifically targeted to new eastern European EU member states and pre-accession states, aimed at facilitating the passage from a state economy to a commercial economy. It aims to address four main issues:

- market access in agriculture and fisheries
- improvement of infrastructure
- economic development
- human resources development.

The measures most likely to be applicable to organic farmers are Measure 3.2, which provides support for creation of producer groups to facilitate cooperative marketing, and Measure 3.3 which provides support for projects focused on the development of 'agricultural production methods designed to protect the environment and maintain the countryside'. Organic farming is one of the three specific Sub-Measures of Measure 3.3, along with soil conservation and maintenance of biodiversity. Measure 3.2 is currently open for applications but Measure 3.3 is not yet available.

Organic inspection and certification issues

Mme Piroska Lorincs described the development and operation of *SC Ecoinspect*, the first national inspection and certification body in Romania. It is one of 2 or 3 national certification bodies, although there are 13-14 bodies in total operating within Romania. Ecoinspect was established in 2002 as an initiative of the Bioterra farmers association and other organisations and between 2002 and 2004 worked in collaboration with Biokontroll Hungaria. Until 2008,

Ecoinspect has financial support from the Swiss government and technical assistance from FiBL. Currently Ecoinspect certifies 1040 farmers and seven processors. Of these farmers, 79% are livestock farmers (980), and produce products from cattle, buffalo, sheep, poultry (840 farmers), and honeybees (140 beekeepers).

The main problems which Ecoinspect finds in organic livestock can be summarised as follows:

- lack of support of organic farming and in simultaneously inspection and certification fees;
- relative high cost of inspection and certification fees;
- lack of a coherent strategy of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development in order to support organic farming, by all its segments – inspection/certification, production/processing; partial support of organic livestock is to be put into practice beginning with 2006;
- within control area of Ecoinspect, under 0.3% of farms practising organic farming were found to be using products forbidden for organic farming.

Farmer experiences

Willi Schuster is an organic dairy producer in the Sibiu county of Romania. He has 10 dairy cows (Romanian Red Simmental), with the unpasteurised milk processed into cheese on the farm by his wife. He is part of a producer marketing cooperative which sells the milk and cheese on behalf of the producer members. The price of milk at farm gate level is 0.8 euros per litre. He feels that there is a good, very transparent, relationship locally between producers, processors and consumers.

Mr Schuster has built a specially designed loose housing building with a separate feeding stance/hay storage building. The uncovered space between the two buildings is slatted, with an underground slurry tank. He milks the cows by hand and the milk is processed immediately. This immediate processing is vital for pathogen control. (Poor hygienic quality of milk is a problem in Romania because of poor road transport networks and consequent long transport times to processing plants, coupled with high summer temperatures). Treatment for parasite control is based on veterinary advice. He has few major health problems with his animals. Apart from the severe winter temperatures, the main problem according to Mr Schuster is structural – in the spring, sheep flocks graze all the land around villages, consuming all herbage growth, and there is alleged to be corruption of local officials and police by the shepherds, which results in no action being taken.

The success of Mr Schuster's farm as an organic unit is based on a number of factors:

- farm is isolated from other farms so there is good biosecurity
 - animals have direct access to pasture so there is good biosecurity
 - well preserved alfalfa hay
 - good manure storage and management
 - good well ventilated loose housing
 - small number of cows, therefore high level of individual attention
- A major issue for animal health in Romania is the fact that livestock belonging to different owners are frequently mixed for herding on common grazings. A good level of biosecurity is therefore not possible in these circumstances.

Wil van Eijsden manages a one year old *organic buffalo enterprise* for the company TNP (Transylvanian Natural Products) at Mesendorf in Brasov county. The unit is 400 ha in size, with a stock of 250 mostly young buffalo and 15 Brown Swiss cows and young stock. There are currently 50 milking buffalo. The intention is to increase the buffalo herd to 350 milking animals. Winter diet is mostly alfalfa hay plus some cereal. In order to ensure high milk

quality no silage is fed. A loose housing facility similar to that of Mr Schuster is currently being built along with a herringbone milking parlour. The company also has a second farm of 200 ha in the same area, which produces primarily cereals for the buffalo. The third activity of the company is a milk processing factory at Rupea, in the same region. This factory is processing buffalo milk only, into four products at present: mozzarella, blue cheese, yoghurt and ice cream. Berry fruit production is also being developed, for mixing into yoghurt and ice cream. The company will start contracting supplies of buffalo milk from smaller producers, but this poses many problems: small number of buffalo in each village, distance from the factory, poor road network, resulting in milk quality problems. Mr van Eijsden believes that Transylvania is one of the best places in Europe to be a dairy farmer – it has good soils and, in northern Transylvania a good climate with sufficient rainfall, but the road system is poor, there is poor access to markets, and grassland production is inefficient. To achieve better grassland production and improved biosecurity, the system of shepherding (see comments above by Mr Schuster) needs to be changed and there is a need to install fencing to enable efficient grazing management practices to be established.

A good collaboration had been developed between Transylvanian Natural Products and University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj – Napoca. Presently a research project with the aim of study the possibility of obtaining organic products by grassland management is developing.

Marius Sabau of UASMV recently undertook a *survey of 115 farmers* to determine the difficulties facing organic farmers in Romania. The following groups of farmers were surveyed: farmers in conversion, fully certified organic farmers, farmers following organic methods but not certified, and farmers who have dropped out of organic farming. Although more than 50% of respondents indicated that they had no contact with the county advisory service OJCA, one of the major complaints was that there was a lack of information about how to convert. The most important problem identified by the respondents was the lack of market outlets for their produce. They felt that consumers are not well informed about organic food and that there was insufficient promotion of the benefits of organic food. The areas where farmers felt they needed more help included marketing and state subsidy. The respondents' expectations of Government included the introduction of conversion subsidy on a per hectare basis, and the establishment of minimum prices for organic produce.

General discussion

Most of the critical issues for organic livestock production in Romania were highlighted in the presentations described above. Additional points mentioned in general discussion include the following:

- Most small scale farms in Romania are fragmented and unfenced. Livestock are housed within the village, herded in common, and do not have direct access to pastures and so biosecurity and efficient grassland management are difficult to achieve. Ideally organic farms should be isolated from other farms.
- Many small local abattoirs are being closed because they do not reach EU standards. Clearly this restricts the availability of local outlets for livestock.
- It was felt by delegates that there is already a very rigid legal framework protecting food safety.
- Difficulties in selling organic products due to lack of an organic market.
- Consumers do not have enough knowledge about the benefits of consuming organic products

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Fulfillment of the objectives of the roadshows

The objective of these Roadshow seminars was to provide opportunities both for dissemination of information from the SAFO project, and also for presentation of national issues relating to organic livestock production, animal health and food safety. The exchanged information as well as the discussions had two main purposes. One of them was to facilitate the further development of the organic sector and the implementation of the EU regulation in new and candidate EU member states. The other was to contribute to the base of information and discussion within the SAFO project in order to include in our work as many relevant aspects as possible of animal health and food safety issues. Unfortunately the short time available in a one-day seminar limits the opportunity for comprehensive presentation of information and discussion. In most of the five Roadshows the balance between dissemination of SAFO information and presentation of national information and discussion, was approximately 25:75.

Diversity and similarities across EU countries

The inclusion of translated summaries of the main SAFO Workshops in the Roadshow delegate packs provided a good opportunity for delegates to have access to information on the many specific technical issues discussed at these Workshops. The time restriction meant that the SAFO presentations at the Roadshows had to be focused on more general concepts. It was important to emphasise the principles on which organic livestock production is based, to provide information on the current state of organic livestock production in Europe, including the sometimes fragile market situation for organic livestock products. This latter issue resonated strongly with organic livestock farmers in all five Roadshow countries (see below).

SAFO Partners also highlighted the challenges of diversity in livestock systems across Europe associated with widely different physical and social conditions, and discussed the sometimes wide gap between the high aims of organic farming in terms of animal health and food safety and what actually occurs at farm level. This is recognised by SAFO participants as being a challenge for the whole of the organic movement across Europe, including countries with a well-established organic livestock sector (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Denmark). In fact the recognition of this challenge is perhaps stronger in these countries, where many farming systems are intensive and focused on high production levels, than in countries where organic livestock farming is still relatively undeveloped. Many factors are inter-linked in this issue of achieving high levels of animal health, welfare and food safety, including the knowledge and stockmanship of the farmer, the availability of good veterinary training and advice, economic pressures including the availability of capital for investment in appropriate housing, etc. In the new and candidate EU countries, including the Roadshow countries, these issues are very real. There has been a relatively rapid expansion of organic farming in recent years in these countries, with many farmers starting with less than ideal physical resources (e.g. livestock accommodation), having relatively little capital for investment, and with a lack of advisory support. However, the issue is certainly not restricted only to the new EU countries and there remains a challenge in all countries to ensure that all organic livestock farmers are given training (perhaps compulsory) in preventative health management strategies. Farmers (and veterinarians) are often focused too strongly on the concept of reducing veterinary medicine inputs instead of focusing on the development of preventative health management strategies, particularly during the early stages of conversion. This potentially results in poor welfare and health status of stock. Perhaps the issue is much wider than the organic livestock sector alone,

and is related also to the way in which the veterinary profession provides information and support to farmers. In many countries veterinarians simply provide treatment for sick animals and do not provide advice on preventative health strategies. For example in the Slovak Republic, the State Veterinary Service does not now have an advisory function, which it used to have.

Common problems in new and candidate EU countries

A relatively consistent picture of organic livestock farming emerged in all five Roadshow countries (six including Czech Republic), as illustrated through the presentations and discussions on national issues. Whilst there were of course some problems specific to individual countries (e.g. potential biosecurity issues in Romania because of the system of communal village herding and lack of fencing to control sheep grazing), nevertheless a number of common problems were repeatedly emphasised in all Roadshows. The most important of these are listed and discussed below.

- The home market for organic food is relatively undeveloped in all Roadshow countries, partly because consumers are not aware of the potential benefits of organic food and farming, and partly because consumers are not wealthy enough to afford premium prices. The bulk of organic livestock produce in these countries is either sold into the conventional food chain, or exported
- Related to the limited home market is the poor national marketing infrastructure for organic produce. In particular there is a lack of available market outlets, especially processing facilities, which are approved for processing organic produce. Lack of approved abattoirs is a particular problem. Limited availability of processing facilities means that organic produce is either simply not sold as organic, or it incurs considerable costs to transport it to the nearest processing facility, or it is exported as raw material rather than added-value processed product.
- Another common problem in all countries was the lack of advisory provision for farmers converting to organic production. This includes a lack of adequate veterinary advice. In fact veterinarians are usually poorly informed about the principles and standards of organic livestock production. There are some notable exceptions to this lack of training and advice, however. For example the Bioterra farmers association in Romania has, with help from the Swiss Government through FiBL, provided training courses, conferences and advisory publications. Similarly, Pro-Bio in Czech Republic has a network of offices and provides help to farmers on conversion, crop and animal production, processing and marketing, through advisory leaflets and articles, conferences and farm visits.
- Other problems mentioned at more than one of the Roadshow seminars included the poor availability of organic replacement livestock (particularly in pigs and poultry), and livestock feeds (particularly protein), and concern over the increasing risk of GMO contamination of livestock feeds. There is also concern amongst producers in some countries about lack of organic conversion subsidy support and the costs of inspection and certification.

Lack of processing facilities and small (but growing) home markets

These issues are problems also in many other EU member states, although the problems may be more severe in the new eastern European member states because of the relative immaturity of the organic food and farming sector, and the limited spending power of consumers in these countries. The home market for organic food in these countries will undoubtedly grow, particularly given the emphasis on promotion of organic food within the EU Organic Action Plan. The lack of approved processing outlets associated with a small home market is a major practical problem for organic producers. This difficulty might be eased if the processing requirements of the EU Regulation were made more flexible (although auditing would still

have to be rigorous), especially in countries at this early stage in the development of the organic sector. Improving the local availability of approved organic processing facilities would at the same time enhance the availability of organic product in the home market.

Advisory provision needs improvement

The lack of effective advisory provision in organic farming hinders the ability of farmers to convert to organic production successfully with a minimum of financial and technical problems. This is a particularly important issue for livestock farmers since any lack of preparedness and competence may have an adverse effect on animal health and welfare, and may increase the risk of zoonotic infections. Problems are most likely to arise when ‘farmers enter conversion unprepared, motivated by conversion subsidies and with the mistaken view that what they practise already is organic farming, simply because they do not use artificial fertiliser’ (Mr V Cabuk, Slovakia). This latter view is quite likely to be a commonly held view amongst east European farmers, as it was amongst Scottish hill farmers when many of these converted to organic production in 1999 and 2000.

There is a clear need to improve the organic farming advisory services in all Roadshow countries, even although there are some good examples of advisory provision. As in other countries, many farmers have lost their skills and expertise in maintaining animal health without relying on drugs. In former Soviet bloc countries this may be a legacy of the management system on state/collective farms, on which health management was the responsibility of the farm veterinary practitioner, not the farm manager or stockman. The provision of adequate organic advice (including veterinary advice) should be a central element in the organic farming strategy in all countries. This needs to include a programme of training for vets and advisors, perhaps including study tours in other countries, and the establishment of organic demonstration farms, or at least a regular annual programme of farm walks and seminars on organic farms. However, simply making organic advice available is not sufficient. Experience elsewhere suggests that farmers do not always seek advice even when it is available, and incentives need to be provided to encourage farmers to seek advice. For example, in Scotland acceptance into the state organic conversion subsidy scheme is facilitated if the farmer can show that he has attended a recognised training event.

Livestock housing a main non-compliance area

The presentations given at the Roadshows by representatives from certification bodies provided a good insight into the main certification issues in these countries. Some very comprehensive and detailed presentations were made in this regard, particularly from Mme Sietinsone (Latvia), Mr Cabuk (Slovakia), and Mr Palts (Estonia). Livestock housing was the main area of non-compliance in most countries, particularly the issues of tethering (including tethering outside at pasture) and failure to meet the minimum space requirements for stock. This is at least partly due to the fact that farmers have no option but to continue to use buildings from the Soviet state farm era, and they lack the capital required to modify these buildings. Insufficient bedding material was also an issue in Slovakia and Estonia. Non-compliances such as these are probably more common in east European countries than in west European countries, but another major area of non-compliance listed by the speakers i.e. poor record keeping and documentation, is common across all countries in Europe. Speakers also reported non-compliances in the use of non-organic feeds, medicine use and interventions such as de-horning and castration. Many of these could be resolved relatively simply with improved provision of training and advice, but some of the structural issues (housing, availability of organic replacements, GMO contamination) are more challenging or costly to resolve.

Food safety legislation adequate in new and candidate EU countries

The focus of the discussions at the Roadshows primarily fell on the major issues of lack of markets, processing facilities, advisory provision and subsidy support. Animal health and food safety issues were not a specific primary focus at this moment in time, at least not for producers. Many delegates at the Roadshows felt that their country had very adequate food safety legislation. For example, the State Veterinary Services in Slovakia and Romania are both focussed strongly on reducing risks from zoonotic pathogens. All of the Roadshow countries have been going through the process of EU accession and at the same time rapid development of organic farming. At this stage in the agricultural and organic development of these countries it is understandable that the focus of producers is on major structural issues. However, it is essential to encourage producers to focus also on animal health and welfare, firstly for the welfare of livestock themselves, but also to maintain the high-welfare image of organic livestock products in the eyes of the consumer.

Clear potential for development of organic livestock production

There is clearly a considerable degree of commitment, enthusiasm and potential for organic livestock production in all of the Roadshow countries and it is important to build on this. The problems reported were primarily related to the stage of development of the economy and of the organic sector, rather than to major technical issues requiring further research. Nevertheless technical challenges do exist which need to be addressed in order to ensure further expansion of the organic food and farming sector. Whilst to some extent these issues are linked to the state of development of the broader economy and of the organic sector, improving the provision of organic farming advice will also have a major positive impact.