

## Check Organic at the Sourcing Organic from Ukraine 2016 in Frankfurt a. M., Germany (25-26 October)

18 November 2016

At the end of October, we took part in the Sourcing Organic from Ukraine conference. The conference was designed to give an overview of the current market situation and the import of organic products into the EU. Ukraine remains an important sourcing partner for the EU despite the issues that have occurred in the past. A key element of the conference was to bring together both Ukrainian and EU stakeholders to exchange views on how to go forward as trading partners within the context of these past issues and the guidelines issued by the EU Commission in response to these issues.

While the importance of developing the organic sector was highlighted as an important topic, it is mainly the private sector who has taken concrete steps. Ukrainian politics remain inconsistent and have not made much progress over the last decade. The increased control measures put in place by the EU Commission following the wheat and sunflower cake case, in which these products failed to comply with EU organic guidelines, have impacted trade. Transparency was therefore a major topic of discussion and understanding how it can be improved in Ukraine to prevent further cases such as this one.



Gerald A. Herrmann, Managing Director, Organic Services GmbH presenting Check Organic and the FederBio Integrity Platform.

*Photo credit: organic-market.info*

On this topic of transparency, Organic Services' Gerald A. Herrmann demonstrated how Check Organic can be used to monitor supply chains and reduce supply chain risk. In Italy, Check Organic has partnered with FederBio, the Italian organic umbrella organisation, and worked with them to bring about the FederBio Integrity Platform (FIP). FIP is being used in Italy to bring transparency to the Italian organic grain market. Gerald A. Herrmann and Annette Sutter, Client Manager at Organic Services, gave a live demonstration of FIP, noting how the opportunities for such a systematic approach to organic transparency and integrity in Ukraine are ripe, both at the national and individual company level. In Italy, several organic scandals pushed large retailers selling organic products to call for more transparency. Through a multi-stakeholder approach, the achievement of a nationwide solution for the Italian organic grain market to oversee its integrity was eventually reached.

FIP is built on data coming from control bodies and companies. This means certification and supply chain data are connected to show that the products being traded along the supply chain are coming from certified companies, but also that the products themselves are certified. The volume of

product being traded is also checked using a mass balance approach to ensure the traded amounts are plausible. The leading certifier in Ukraine, Organic Standard, is part of Check Organic and FIP via Check Organic. Live data from Organic Standard certified companies were shown during the presentation.

The conference was a great opportunity to talk to stakeholders both in Ukraine and the EU on how transparency can be achieved. With such an emphasis being placed on greater transparency and integrity, the outlook is positive for the Ukrainian organic sector.

The conference was organised by FiBL Switzerland, FiBL Projekte GmbH, AFC Consultants International, IAK and QueS with support provided by the Swiss government and the German Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft (BMEL).



Sergiy Galashevskyy, General Manager, Organic Standard, presenting the topic unannounced inspections in Ukraine. *Photo credit: organic-market.info*