



Organic Services at BIOFACH 2014: Global interest in new tools and services

Munich, February 20th, 2014. Organic Services' first appearance at BIOFACH since its establishment in 2004 was highly successful. With all four of the company's directors and the full international team in attendance, Organic Services introduced innovative solutions, "Group Integrity" and "Check Organic". They also participated as moderators and expert speakers - in the BIOFACH Congress in several sessions covering topics such as the future of the organic sector at "Organic 3.0", the Chinese market, fish and aquaculture, biogas and enhancing organic integrity along the value chain.

The launch of **Check Organic**, a global Organic Integrity Platform, with a web-based search facility for real time certification data, was well received by organic certifiers from Australia, China, South East Asian countries, India, the EU, Turkey, the US, from Latin American countries including Argentina, and Brazil. Trade and manufacturing companies also realised the potential **Check Organic** offers in reducing costs in supply chain verification and for fighting fraudulent certificates and products.

Fabrizio Piva, CEO of the Italian certifier CCPB states: "CCPB is engaged in introducing the 'Federbio Integrity Platform' for the grain trade in Italy, linking real time certification with supply chain data for effectively fighting fraud. We will support Organic Services in lifting these efforts with **Check Organic** to the global level."

Group Integrity, the other tool launched, received considerable attention and high acclaim across all agricultural sectors, whether governmental, private or from NGOs. **Group Integrity** was introduced as part of Organic Services' support of the **UN International Year of Family Farming (IYFF)**. Gerald A. Herrmann, founding partner of Organic Services declares: "It is not enough to hold conferences and to declare that unprivileged farmers need our support. We have to offer concrete solutions for tearing down administrative and cost barriers, and to open domestic and export markets."

Meetings at BIOFACH allowed strengthened existing contacts and cleared the way for new partnerships from across the continents, especially from Brazil, India, Thailand and Malaysia, but also from African countries. Promising talks were conducted by Group Integrity Client Manager Melina Armijo, native of Honduras, with representatives from Latin America, e.g. an organic association from Argentina, a ministry from Nicaragua, the umbrella organisation of the Peruvian Quinoa farmers, regional export companies, consultants and a Swiss company conducting business in Latin America.

Paul Espanion, Director of Ecofacilitações points out: "In Brazil there are plenty of producer groups, particularly of participatory guarantee systems. As the Implementation Partner for



Group Integrity in Brazil, it is of particular importance to me that the software allows the administration of the internal certification and that it can be adapted to meet local requirements, e.g. the integration of the Brazilian organic checklist as well as local crops and products."

Ong Kung Wai, Director of Organic Alliance Malaysia and Coordinator of Certification Alliance, a collaboration partnership of 10 local certification bodies working in Asia highlights: "CertAll partners as a group operate in many different countries. **Group Integrity** allows great flexibility regarding multi-lingual administration as harmonised checklists can be designed with different languages to facilitate domestic and export certifications. Additionally, it allows internal inspectors to use tablet PCs offline, a great time saving functionality and source of pride for young village field workers to be associated with working with 'high tech' and not just agriculture."

Lea Michalczik, Group Integrity Client Manager and responsible for Africa and Asia, conducted various talks, among them representatives of Peermade Development Society, India. She adds: "**Group Integrity** is very helpful and necessary, because it enables the interfacing with APEDA's Tracenet, an internet based electronic service facilitating process certification for export of organic products from India."

Organic Services is run by its four founding Directors: Udo Censkowsky, Frank Gerriets, Gerald A. Herrmann (a Past President of IFOAM), and Mildred Steidle. All four Directors are well known – and highly regarded – in the international organic sector. They have each been engaged in national as well as international organic sector for up to 30 years.

Organic Services, founded in December 2004, is an international strategy and management consultancy that specialises in organic production, sustainability and agricultural and industrial development. Based in Munich, Germany the consultancy draws on an extensive global network of dedicated specialists.

Organic Services offers a comprehensive range of services – always designed and conducted in an interdisciplinary manner. The consultancy's specific expertise covers topics such as strategy; policy and business development in the organic, fair trade, social responsibility and sustainability areas; software-based quality management; global value chains; market expertise and sourcing; standard setting, certification and accreditation consultancy; fairs conferences and study tours; biogas; and organic aquaculture and sustainable seafood.

Organic Services has historical ties with BIOFACH and NürnbergMesse GmbH. Its Directors have been involved in the preparation and organisation of several international BIOFACH fairs in China, Brazil and India. Currently, Udo Censkowsky consults NürnbergMesse in the context of BIOFACH China; and Mildred Steidle is consultant to BIOFACH/VIVANESS Congress for a ninth year.

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