



The need for global harmonization in the organic sector

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Stages of regulatory process

- Total of 60 regulations on organic in some stage of development
- Survey categorized regulations as:
- Fully implemented - meaning regulation and conformity assessment in place and functioning
- Finalised, not yet implemented - meaning detailed rules finalised but conformity assessment not in place
- Draft - meaning regulation being developed

Additional factors that need to be examined

- Domestic and export differences
 - Voluntary or mandatory
 - Scope differences
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Fully implemented regulations (37)

European Union (15)	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.
Rest of Europe (11)	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey
Asia and Pacific Region (7)	Australia, India, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan Province of China, Thailand
The Americas (3)	Argentina, Costa Rica, USA
Africa (1)	Tunisia

Finalized -not yet implemented (8)

Europe (2)	Croatia, Estonia.
Asia and Pacific Region (1)	Malaysia
The Americas (4)	Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico
Africa (1)	Egypt

Regulations in draft stage (15)

Europe (4)	Albania, Georgia, Romania, Yugoslavia
Asia and Pacific Region (3)	China, Hong Kong, Indonesia
The Americas (4)	Canada, Nicaragua, Peru, St. Lucia
Africa (2)	Madagascar, South Africa
Middle East (2)	Israel, Lebanon

Summary - National regulations

Region	Fully implemented	Final not implemented	In draft
EU	15		
Rest of Europe	11	2	4
Asia & Pacific	7	1	3
Americas & Caribbean	3	4	4
Africa	1	1	2
Middle East	-		2
Total: 60	37	8	15

Some conclusions

- **Rapid growth in number of countries regulating the sector**
 - **EU Council regulation 2092/91**
 - **IFOAM Basic standards and Codex Guidelines provide blueprints**
- **Production and regulation not matched**
- **Enormous workload for authorities re bilateral equivalency negotiations**

Regulatory "front door" system

- Each country has a regulation and the governments will establish equivalency agreements with each other based on technical comparisons.

Problems with country to country system of acceptance

- Many countries do not have regulations and will not have for years to come.
- Unbalanced relationship:
 - Compliance rather than equivalency.
 - Exporting country's standards need to meet all the "higher" standards of all countries to which it exports - result distorted standards.
 - Little or no reciprocal equivalency.
- May be used to discriminate against imports.
- Bilateral nature cannot deal with multi-ingredient product sourced from around the globe.

Alternative regulatory systems ("back door" systems)

- Systems developed for import regulation where no country to country recognition exists.



Problems with "back door" systems

- Each authority creating its own system - different from others.
 - Result is onerous and potentially contradictory demands on certifiers.
- Different systems have resulted in:
 - Introduction of ISO65 and national accreditation system.
 - Accreditation (compliance not equivalence) by the authority.
 - Reduction of foreign certifier to agent of home-based certifier.

Private sector international guarantee system

System of international accreditation based on IFOAM Basic Standards and IFOAM Criteria for certification bodies, carried out by single accreditation body.



Problems with private sector system

- Not integrated into the regulatory requirements.
- Does not mean automatic equivalence of production standards, only of certification systems.
- Has its own problems of equivalency of imports - in this case "imports" of ingredients into the system.

Enough of problems - where are the solutions?

- In February of 2002 , IFOAM , FAO and UNCTAD came together to sponser a conference on the issue of harmonization
- Conference included delegates from both private and public sectors
- Conference included both presentations and smaller workshops

Conference conclusions

- **Harmonisation is a necessity to prevent trade barriers**
- **Need to increase cooperation**
 - Recognize IOAS as service provider in this arena
 - More government participation in IFOAM guarantee system to bring mutual trust and confidence
- **Initiate constructive partnership**
- **Establish task force to carry these goals forward**

International task force

- Established under the auspices of FAO, UNCTAD and IFOAM
- Membership includes a number of governments & international governmental organizations such as WTO, OECD as well as private sector certification bodies and NGO such as consumers international
- Task force has met twice since the conference, the last time in October of last year.

Achievements of the ITF to date

- Published a number of documents including a review of models for harmonisation in other sectors
- Most recently commissioned a study analyzing the options for the organic sector
- Long way to go but on the right track
- If we don't achieve at least a degree of harmonization the organic sector will suffer