**Successful international video conference "Organic Animal Husbandry Systems – Challenges, Performance and Potentials"**

September 30, 2020 update



The IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance (IAHA) together with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) organised a well-attended video conference on 21st and 22nd of September 2020. The importance of an «ultimate one health approach» in organic animal husbandry systems was emphasised.

For Otto Schmid, chair of the IAHA, and Barbara Früh of FiBL, the conference was very successful: “The video conference was an excellent opportunity to discuss project results with colleagues from other parts of the world and to learn from each other’s perspectives and experiences.” More than 140 persons had registered. Beside many Europeans, there were also participants from outside Europe. Twenty papers and posters were presented.

In the keynote speech, Mette Vaarst from the Department of Animal Science at Aarhus University in Denmark and coordinator of several EU-funded livestock projects emphasised the importance of an “ultimate one health approach” in organic animal husbandry systems (health at all levels; individual animal, group life and interaction and animals in their landscape). “We should combine different visions and strategies”, she said. According to her, these strategies should be: 1. integrating diversified multi-species systems; 2. developing sustainable foraging, agroforestry and pastoralism; 3. finding new potential for homegrown protein feeds; 4. adopting resilience as a core of the health principle – and significantly lowering or phasing out antibiotics; 5. emphasising appropriate breeding and breeds, including multipurpose breeds; and 6. enabling improved cow-calf contact.

**Animal welfare and sustainability of livestock systems**

The first morning of the conference focused on dairy and pig systems. The dairy presentations discussed how to improve cow-calf contact systems. The pig research considered better outdoor runs with regard to animal welfare and reducing emissions.

On the second morning, contributions demonstrated possibilities for reducing or replacing anthelmintics and antibiotics in organic animal husbandry. Another focus was on animal welfare and the sustainability of mixed livestock systems. Promising results were presented on experiments with the use of bioactive plants in New Zealand and Ayurveda-based plant preparations in India to reduce health problems.

The IAHA conference is linked to the Organic World Congress of IFOAM – Organics International, the umbrella organisation of the organic movement, initially planned for September 2020 but postponed to September 2021. The video conference was supported by FiBL, the Technical Institute of Organic Agriculture and Food (ITAB) France, the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE), GoodEarthGreatFood from New Zealand, IFOAM – Organics International and ICROFS. Furthermore, several CORE Organic (Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems) and Horizon 2020 EU projects contributed with papers or posters to the video conference: GrazyDaiSy; ProYoungStock, MIX-ENABLE; POWER; Organic-PLUS, RELACS and Polyfarming as well as the BIOBREEDING EUROPE Initiative.

**Follow up in Rennes 2021**

The IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance, IAHA, is organising on the 6th and 7th of September 2021 a Pre-Conference in Rennes, France (if the Corona regulations allow) before the main Organic World Congress. More than twenty contributions have already been accepted, and further contributions are invited. A new programme will be available by the end of December 2020. IAHA is searching for sponsors to strengthen the participation of researchers or practitioners in organic animal husbandry from around the world in order to support all efforts to develop resilient organic animal husbandry. If interested in sponsoring an attendee, please contact Otto Schmid.

**Further information**

**Contact**

[Otto Schmid](https://www.fibl.org/en/about-us/team/schmid-otto-en.html), Chair of IAHA, Department of Socio-Economic Sciences, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL

The proceedings are available on the website of IAHA. A summary of the main issues and questions raised at the conference will be ready in October 2020: <http://www.ifoam.org/en/sector-groups/iaha-animal-husbandry-alliance>

Organic World Congress, 8th to 10th September 2021: <https://owc.ifoam.bio/2020/en>