

PRESS RELEASE

International congress on

Organic Farming, Food Quality and Human Health

A major international congress jointly organised by European researchers and the organic farming movement is to distribute and discuss research in organic farming and its benefits on environment, food quality and human health. The event will take place in Newcastle upon Tyne in the north of England from 6 January to 9 January 2005

For the last decade there has been an increasing interest in organic agriculture. Practices used in organic farming have been shown to be beneficial for the environment, biodiversity and economic regeneration in rural areas. Furthermore, increasing evidence shows that the way organic farmers manage the soil and look after their livestock can positively affect the health and well-being of people eating organic food. Organic and other 'low input' farming are thus seen as an opportunity to reconnect public health and agriculture.

For these reasons most European governments and the EU Commission have taken an interest in developing organic and low-input farming practices. This interest has been translated into the initiation of a number of European research projects on different aspects of food and farming.

Common to these European research projects is the wish to disseminate research results to actors within the organic food chain, but also to engage in direct discussions with the farming community and other stakeholders, including food processors, retailers and consumers, about the research agenda.

In order to facilitate this dialogue, an international congress on 'Organic Farming, Food Quality and Human Health' has been organised jointly between the Soil Association – the leading organisation promoting and supporting organic food and farming in the UK - and three major European research and development projects. The congress is to be held from 6 January to 9 January 2005 at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in northern England. Full information can be found at the website www.qlif.org.

The main project, underpinning the congress is the Integrated Project QualityLowInputFood, which focuses on "improving quality, safety and reduction of cost in the European organic and low-input food supply chain". The QualityLowInputFood project is supplemented by a project on 'Organic HACCP', which aims to identify improved procedures for securing "consumer-oriented food safety and quality of certified organic foods", and by the 'Blight-MOP' project, which focuses on the control of late blight in organic potato production systems.

Finally, researchers from other European and nationally funded research projects on organic farming will also use the congress to present and discuss their results.

Notes to editors

Full programme

The full congress programme, including information on speakers and a booking form, can be found at <http://www.qlif.org>

Attendance by journalists & media enquiries

A limited number of journalists may attend the conference free of charge if they cover their own travel and accommodation costs and book a place in advance with the conference organisers. Journalists wishing to request press passes should email:

Ms Sue Flook
Media and PR Manager
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Email: sflook@soilassociation.org
<http://www.soilassociation.org>

For practical information about the congress, please contact:

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