

New Standard for East African Organic Products Launched



A uniform set of procedures for growing and marketing organic produce has been established for East Africa and was introduced by the prime minister of Tanzania at the EPOPA-sponsored event in Dar es Salaam from May 28 to June 1, 2007.

The East African Organic Products Standard (EAOS) is the second regional organic standard in the world, following the one developed by the European Union. The EAOS and the associated East African Organic Mark will ensure consumers that produce labelled organic has been grown in accordance with a standardized method based on traditional methods supplemented by scientific knowledge, and based on ecosystem management rather than the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. As organic produce generally sells at premium prices in rapidly growing overseas markets, it is hoped that the standard will increase sales and profits for small farmers in the region. The standard was developed by a public-private sector partnership in East Africa and was supported by a joint initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). Staff from GroLink AB have been instrumental in the development of the standards. The East African Organic Product Standard was formally adopted by the East African Community in April 2007. The East African Organic Mark is owned by the three national organic movements of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (KOAN, TOAM, and NOGAMU) and will be used on products that conform to the standards.



Khamiss Issa (right) of TAZZOP shows organic spices to Edward N. Lowassa, prime minister of the United Republic of Tanzania. Surrounding him are (from left) Swedish Ambassador Torvald Åkesson; Sophia Twarog of UNCTAD; Angela B Caudle, executive director of IFOAM; and Mwatima Juma chairperson of TOAM.

Other events during the week were a workshop on May 28 on “Developing Local and Regional Organic Markets”; a workshop on May 29-30 on “Moving the Organic Agenda Ahead”; an exhibition on May 28-29 of East African organic products; a public East Africa Organic Forum on May 29; and field trips to organic-agriculture sites on May 30 and June 1. Over 250 public and private sector participants from 25 countries attended, making it the largest organic agriculture event ever in Africa. The Agro Eco staff of Tanzania played a major role in the organisation of the conference, which was co-organised with IFOAM, UNEP, UNCTAD, TOAM and the Ministry of Agriculture of Tanzania.

Angela B. Caudle, the executive director of IFOAM said ‘East African producers are poised to take advantage of the rapidly growing organic markets worldwide. We are gratified by the participation of Tanzanian Prime Minister Edward N. Lowassa and the diverse ministers and dignitaries in this conference, which is indicative of the vast potential that organic production systems represent for this region.’

Gunnar Rundgren – programme director – EPOPA

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The East African Organic Mark for All Organic Produce

The East African Organic Mark was launched at the East African Organic Conference in Dar es Salaam from 28 May through 31 May 2007. It will be the sign that consumers in East Africa will look for when they want organic food and other organic products.

The mark will be available to any certified organic producers in East Africa and can be used in combination with a certification mark and other symbols.

Accessible mark with wide scope

In the future, once there are credible Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) in place, producers in the systems can also have access to the mark. The mark is a registered mark in the five East African countries and is owned by the three national organic movements in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Once there are similar parties in Rwanda and Burundi they will be invited to participate in the system, but producers in those countries already have access to the mark. Those who want access to the mark shall register with the national movement for a nominal fee.

Also on imported certified organic produce

The basis for the mark is the East African Organic Product Standard, but producers that follow equivalent rules, such as the EU regulation for organic or the Indian regulation can also get access to the mark. Currently most certified producers in East Africa are certified according to the EU rules. Importers can also use the mark for products produced under recognised systems. In this way the mark will be a unified sign to consumers that the product is organic.

Campaign to inform consumers

The mark has been followed by a consumer-awareness campaign. Information and promotional materials have been produced, e.g. T-shirts, key rings and caps, banners, and brochures. The media is expected to play a big role in the raising of consumer's awareness, and special media training sessions have been conducted.

Gunnar Rundgren – programme director – EPOPA



The East African Organic Mark is a registered mark for all certified organic produce in East Africa. To use the mark on a product, you will have to register with one of the national organic movements in Kenya, Tanzania, or Uganda. The product must comply with the East African Organic Product Standard or equivalent rules, such as the EU regulation for organic and the Indian regulation.

Contacts to the owners of the mark

The East African Organic Mark is registered and owned by the national organic movements in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. As owners they regulate the use of the mark. Anyone who want to use the mark will have to contact either of the organisations.

Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN)

P.O.Box 72461-00200 Nairobi, Kenya
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Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM)

P.O.Box 70089, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
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Web: www.kilimohai.org



National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)

Pot 268 Ggaba Road, Kabalagala
P.O.Box 70071, Clock Tower, Kampala-Uganda.
Tel: +256 (0)41-269 415 / +256 (0)31-264 039
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Email: admin@nogamu.org.ug
Web: www.nogamu.org



African Pavilion at BioFach 2008

At BioFach 2008 in Nuremberg, Germany on February 21–24, there will be an African Pavilion, where visitors can enjoy African designs, colours, sounds, and flavours.

A piazza in the middle will make the pavilion an oasis that attracts visitors and offers them African coffee, tea, wine, snacks and new and innovative beverages. In the country or sub-regional stands, exporters, national organic movements and export-promotion agencies will showcase the specialities from the sub-Saharan countries. The pavilion will serve as a hub of information on the activities and services of the importers, trade promotion agencies, consultancies, NGO's and certifiers. It will also offer an opportunity for exhibitors to exchange information and contacts with businesses from all over the world.

In addition to the African Pavilion, there will be a day-long symposium on 23 February to highlight the status of organics in Africa. Participants will hear about the opportunities for (and the challenges of) trade and development, including the impact of organic agriculture on smallholder farmers and what is being done to further promote organic by governments, the private

BioFach is the largest organic trade fair in the world. Exhibitors and buyers come from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America to take advantage of this major business-boosting opportunity. Over the years, BioFach has established itself as a meeting place for those involved in organics including traders, exporters, researchers, national movements, consultants, NGO's, policymakers, and development partners. At BioFach 2008 many organizations will join forces to give Africa a prominent role.



sector, and development partners. A high-level panel with policy makers and opinion-makers will discuss the potential of organic agriculture to help achieve the millennium development goals.

The event will be widely covered by African and international media and many journalists have expressed interest in participation. Access to partner organizations' global networks will also help spread the word about the event. The event is likely to be a great success. More than 50 exporters from Africa are expected to participate.

Contact: africa2008@grolink.se

More information: www.organicafrica2008.com

EPOPA to Go to Nigeria?

For more than a year the programme management of EPOPA has been in contact with an initiative to develop an organic-agriculture sector in Nigeria.

Agriculture is a sector that has been relatively neglected in Nigeria since the oil boom that started more than 30 years ago. Recently, under president Olusegun Obasanjo, agriculture has been made a priority again. As most of the sector is not competitive compared with neighbouring countries, due to the high cost of labour, it was determined that organic might be a way to go.

Given its success putting organic agriculture on the map of East Africa, they want a sort of EPOPA programme. President Obasanjo agreed that an organic research and development centre should be named after him and EPOPA was invited to come and speak at the name-giving ceremony, which took place April 18 in State House, Abuja.

Programme Director Bo van Elzakker explained how EPOPA works and the results that have been achieved. A memo of understanding was signed between the Olusegun Obasanjo Centre for Organic Research and Development, the African Leadership Development Centre, Agro Eco, and Grolink. Other institutions involved are the Henry Doubleday Research Association and Coventry University from the United Kingdom.

Negotiations have started about a first phase of activities. The EPOPA programme type of activities are to start with a series of awareness-raising seminars and later training for those most interested. These activities should stimulate the emergence of the Nigerian Organic Agriculture Network (NOAN). There is a high potential for a local market. It appears that cocoa beans, orange juice and palm oil are top priority to develop for the export market.

In Ibadan, the centre of agriculture in the country, facilities have been made available for offices, training facilities, and a demonstration garden.

To be continued ... Bo van Elzakker – programme director – EPOPA

Organic Farming Improves Food Security

and leads to better livelihoods for communities in Uganda

Organic farming has gained momentum around the world and in the last decade it has witnessed steady growth in global markets (estimated at 1.5% to 5% per annum in the EU and the US). The market for organic products is currently estimated at US\$44 billion. The increased demand has led to sustained efforts to promote certified organic production in Africa. Several studies (Gibbon and Bolwig, 2007) have clearly demonstrated the potential of organic farming to improve the livelihoods of communities. Critics argue that organic conversion could jeopardize food security in developing countries; little empirical evidence, however, has been advanced to support these claims.

Studies in Uganda

It's against this background that researchers from the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) conducted studies in central and eastern Uganda in 2005 and 2006 covering smallholder pineapple and coffee-growing communities. The overall objective of the study was to assess food security and gender effects of certified organic farming. The research sought to answer pertinent questions such as "How will expansion of organic farming affect food security?" and "Who benefits and who bears the costs of organic conversion within the household?" (Bolwig and Odeke, 2007)

Positive effects due to raised income

The study revealed that organic conversion did not reduce food security in the communities surveyed but rather improved it. This was possible through raising cash incomes, which in turn enabled households to increase the amount and quality of food purchased in the market. The results further indicated that organic pineapple farmers enjoyed high levels of food self-sufficiency and that organic conversion did not affect food production. These positive dynamics were related to the high incomes earned through pineapple farming and to the large size of the average farm. Most organic farmers could satisfy their calorie needs through on farm production and use the good return from organic pineapple marketing to purchase only "luxury food items" such as meat, fish, sugar, tea, and rice.

Farmers rank education high

Results from focus-group interviews on the use of organic cash crop income indicated that farmers consistently ranked education highly, suggesting a close relationship between education and organic farming. The high incomes earned through high premium prices

had enabled farmers to send their children to better schools. But expenditure on food was consistently ranked low in pineapple growing communities, suggesting high levels of self sufficiency in food.

In the case of organic coffee-farming communities, the study revealed that there was a general reduction in local food production since organic conversion, mainly due to the expansion of coffee on land previously cultivated with food crops. Focus-group interviews revealed that food purchases were consistently ranked highly suggesting low levels of self sufficiency in food. Despite reduced food production after conversion, the interviewees observed that food security had not worsened but rather improved. This was because the higher coffee incomes more than compensated for the loss in food production by improving the capacity for accessing food through the market.

Organic conversion of coffee had also caused a change in family labour utilization without seriously impacting food production. Most of this extra labour was supplied by women, who traditionally are responsible for food production. This switch to involvement in cash crop production meant more labour for the women and yet men pocketed most of the cash earned. Because land was the dominant production constraint, change in labour use did not significantly reduce efforts in food production

Improved farming practices

The study also showed that there were useful spill over effects of organic conversion on food security. For example both pineapple and coffee farmers had applied some of the improved farming practices acquired through the organic project on their food crops and there was some reinvestment of organic revenues into food-crop farming.

Results on the effects on organic conversion on gender inequality depended to a large extent on the local and cultural context and on commodity characteristics. The distribution of the additional costs and benefits associated with organic conversion was much more biased against women for coffee than for pineapple. But it is worth noting that women found organic farming worthwhile despite the extra workload because of the income benefits, even if they had little or no control over the use of the income.

Contributed by Moses Odeke

Organic Sector Development Training in Tanzania

In May 2007 EPOPA conducted Organic Sector Development Training (OSDT) for the fourth time in Tanzania. The training course was held at MS TCDC in Arusha, as in 2005. The area around Arusha offers a wide range of options for valuable study visits.

This year there were 24 participants and there are some trends that can be seen among the participants.

The first thing that is observed over the years is that the participants have slightly higher position in their respective company/organisation. It can also be seen that the participants have more support and stronger commitment from their bosses, which is crucial for them to be able to focus on the topic and also implement some of the knowledge when they get back from training.

Another trend that is observed is that the participants have more knowledge of organic agriculture at the outset, which most likely is a sign that the organic sector has developed well in Tanzania since 2003.

The local capacity of the lecturer, has increased substantially since 2003. Back in 2003 there were two local lecturers from Tanzania and two foreign lecturers, but in 2007 only local staff were used for lecturers, apart from the training staff.

Uganda Organic Sector Training 2007

In June 2007, UMU (Uganda Martyrs University) held Uganda Organic Sector Training (UOST). It is a training course that has developed from OSDT that was offered in 2003 for the first time and has been given every year since then. Today UOST is a regular form of training in the course catalogue of UMU. EPOPA only give some backstopping support as well as some financial support for the course.

There were 25 participants in this years training course. As UMU is also offering a distance programme on organic agriculture, some of the participants stayed on to participate in that program. It is clear that UMU has been able to capture the interest of many organic companies. There is also good collaboration with NOGAMU that ensuring a continued offer of high-level organic training for the organic sector in Uganda.

Peter Lustig – project consultant – EPOPA



Participants in the Organic Sector Development Training in Arusha, Tanzania June 2007.

The practical preparation of the training course and the actual application process were entirely handled this year by Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movements (TOAM), which today has a wide network in all of Tanzania. TOAM staff have implemented the whole application process very well.

There is, however, an issue that still needs to be worked on. The number of women in the training course is unacceptably low. The problem has been discussed with each participant in the training course, but no clear reason can be found. This needs to be worked on by TOAM in the future.

Peter Lustig – project consultant – EPOPA



Participants in Uganda Organic Sector Training held by Uganda Martyrs University in June 2007.

HIV/AIDS Education in the EPOPA Programme

Recently two HIV/AIDS training sessions have taken place in the EPOPA programme in Uganda.

“She is not shy at all! She answers all questions she gets! She knows so much!”

Those were some of the comments heard after a session during Farmers’ Day at one of the EPOPA projects (UCIL, working with cardamom and vanilla). Over 250 contracted farmers showed up at the estate. The day had two topics, vanilla and cardamom growing and HIV/AIDS sensitization. It was facilitated by PSI, an organisation working with HIV/AIDS prevention, improved access to ARVs and training programmes.

Imagine a lady giving information and education for more than an hour and a half to this big group. During the session you could see a lot of concentration, sometimes a big laugh from the crowd, and a lot of questions. *Brenda Kabasomi*, the facilitator could really catch everyone’s attention without any kind of equipment (just Brenda talking). People seemed most impressed by Brenda’s not hesitating to answer any kind of question; nothing made her shy. And there was no question that she couldn’t answer. A girl working in the administration at the estate said afterward that she had learnt a lot of new things. She was surprised because she thought that nothing would be new for her.

Brenda was also pleased with the session. In the surrounding area she has met people with a lot of misconceptions. This day she found the questions very relevant. It seemed as if they really wanted to get more knowledge about for example, discordant couples (when one partner is HIV-positive and one is negative in a sexual relationship that has lasted for quite some time), how well condoms protect you, and mother-to-child transmission, just to mention a few of the topics that were brought up.

The PSI organisation has been running a project in Uganda called Business Part Project helping Ugandan businesses fight HIV/AIDS. This was not the first occasion that PSI has provided HIV/AIDS education in the EPOPA projects. They trained around 150 farmers during a half-day session in the BioUganda project too. The trainers are well-aware of how to work with companies and are well-prepared to meet



Some of the participants of the HIV/AIDS education held by EPOPA in collaboration with The Aids Support Organisation (TASO) in Uganda.

different groups of people. This is a good opportunity to say thank you to Brenda, Carol, and May from PSI, professional trainers who have been so easy to work with! Hope we can collaborate soon again!

“Now I really know the difference between HIV and AIDS”

This was one of the comments in the evaluation form. All the export projects were invited to send field officers to a three-day training programme on HIV/AIDS. Seventeen people attended, among them Kalema and Lisa from the EPOPA staff. Don Kaddu and Eric Olweny, the trainers from TASO, took us through an intensive course. TASO, The Aids Support Organisation, is very big and well-known in Uganda as well as outside the country. On the programme was a wide range of topics: epidemiology, stigma and discrimination, progression of HIV in the human body, HIV testing and diagnosis, prevention and care, positive living, basic ART, helping skills. Yes, we really covered a lot. And still there was time not only for information and education. We were also challenged, for example about our presumptions on who is infected by the virus. Gender roles came up in various ways. The training was so good and well-appreciated that we would like to offer it again to those field officers who could not attend. Both Kalema and I really recommend the training and we hope that all field officers have the opportunity to take part in the training programme.

Lisa Larsson – HIV/AIDS advisor – EPOPA

EPOPA at the World Bank

The Trade and Standards Practitioners Network (TSPN) organized a meeting June 19 and 20 at the World Bank on the topic 'African Smallholders and the Challenge of Assured Compliance: What Have We Learned From Our Interventions?'. The TSPN is a network of professionals from consultancies, universities and the donor community who wish to share their experiences, learn from each other.

Farmers in developing countries have to comply more and more with requirements imposed on them by the markets in the North. An example is Eurep GAP, a food safety standard required by European retailers. Producers, and even more so smallholder farmers, in developing countries have difficulty understanding and complying with the standards. Although that trade is developing, there is a threat that those farmers are increasingly excluded from market access.

Donor interventions are more or less successful. At the workshop, lessons learned were reviewed in a surprisingly open way. The general conclusion is that when there is a vibrant private sector one should work with it. The role of the government is rather limited and is restricted to the minimum, as for example in pesticide registration. Functions like defining good agricultural practices, input provision, extension, inspection, residue testing, and cold-chain management are best done by the private sector. The various actors should cooperate, and that is best done by a sector body, driven by the private sector.

Another lesson is that one cannot expect too much from an intervention when it lasts just three years. An outcome like x groups of farmers trained is not a good one; certification status achieved and maintained and livelihoods improved are better.

I was invited to talk about how in the EPOPA programme smallholder farmers are organized to comply with organic market requirements. Compliance with organic standards is generally seen as problematic. I explained to the audience that keeping to the standard is not the problem; the difficulty is in demonstrating that the farmers comply.

In EPOPA, the exporter's field staffs implement Internal Control Systems (ICS). This is a management and administrative system that allows for group certification. Once an ICS is in place it is fairly easy to tag on more standards. It is a model that has already been taken over by other standards.

The good thing with organics is that the farmers are rewarded for their efforts; they earn a premium. Most other standards don't have such a benefit although farmers benefit from better management and sometimes a more economical use of agrochemicals.

EPOPA shows that it is possible to implement such a model in a wide variety of products. The exporters continue with the organic activities on their own after the EPOPA support has phased out, proof of the sustainability of the system.

Bo van Elzakker – programme director – EPOPA

News in brief

EPOPA Project Highlighted

Saferworld published a conflict-sensitive development report on 28 June 2007. The report is called *The Experience of the Northern Uganda Shea Nut Project*

The report highlights how a conflict-sensitive approach to development can have a positive impact on armed violence and contribute to peace. This is from their presentation: "Development actors are increasingly recognising that development programmes can impact positively or negatively on armed violence, whether they intend to or not. Misplaced development assistance can sometimes inadvertently fuel ex-

isting and potential conflicts, but effective assistance can help reduce the potential for violent conflict. ...

"The report highlights the difficulties in implementing development projects in conflict-affected contexts and highlights some of the key issues that often emerge in these situations. Using the example of a project supporting the production and export of organic shea butter in the Lira district, this report presents a practical example of how we and our partners have attempted to deal with these issues."

Further information: Hesta Groenewald, conflict prevention adviser, Saferworld, +207 324 4646; hesta@saferworld.org.uk

News in brief

Outspan Sesame Project Ended

Outspan Enterprises Ltd was involved in an export promotion project with EPOPA from April 2002 to March 2005 with an extension to March 2006. The initial project had as a target to develop annual exports to 200 tons per year, and the extension increased the target to an annual 300 tons. At the end of the project there were 4,537 farmers registered and exports had reached 400 tons per year. You can read a summary of the project-end report at www.epopa.info under "Publications" and "Project reports".

Amfri Dried Fruits

Amfri Farms Limited had a specific support-to-exporter project with EPOPA from January 2006 to February 2007. During this period, Amfri recruited and contracted 100 out of the targeted 200 new out-growers. Certification was obtained in January 2007, and 138 farmers are now organically certified while 62 are in conversion. Extra income per delivering farmer

was \$76. During the project period exports increased from 4 tons to 18 tons.

You can read more about Amfri farms on their web page: www.african-organic.com.

EPOPA in Gothenburg 4–6 September

EPOPA had a stand at the Interfood fair in Gothenburg in Sweden. This was the first time the fair had a focus on organic and there was a great deal of attention from all kinds of media. Sonia Mwadime from Biofresh Ltd exhibited her fresh and dried fruit. She had several interesting meetings with importers and was interviewed by newspapers.



EPOPA calendar

Date	Place	Topic
September 13–14	Tigoni, Kenya	EPOPA Project Leader Meeting
September 15–16	Tigoni, Kenya	EPOPA Management Meeting
December	Uganda and Tanzania	Programme Director embassy meetings and projects tour
February 21–24, 2008	Nürnberg, Germany	Partner in the African Pavilion "Organic Africa" at BioFach 2008, the largest organic trade fair in the world.
April 21–23, 2008	Tanzania	Sida review
June 18–20, 2008	Modena, Italy	The 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress "Cultivate the future"

Current EPOPA projects

Uganda

coffee robusta, Ibero
essential oils, Tamteco
fresh and dried fruits, Biofresh
fresh and dried fruits, BioUganda
hibiscus, Nile Teas
honey, Bee Natural Products

shea oil, North Ugandan Shea Project
spices, UCIL
vanilla, CNPU

Tanzania

canned pineapples, Dabaga
coffee arabica, KNCU

dried spices, Golden Fruit Products
peanuts, Sumbawanga
sesame, Biosustain
tuna, Sea Products Ltd
vanilla, West Lake Agriculture Products

If you want to know more about a certain product or project please contact the local office; see contact info in box below.

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