

Press Release

**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON MARKETS AND MARKETING
OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

03-04 October 2007, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

A two-day international seminar was organized by Organic Services & Solutions India Pvt Ltd, a JV with Organic Services GmbH, Germany. The workshop was supported by The German Development Bank (DEG), BioFach - the world leading organic trade fair and Morarka Organic, Government of Himachal Pradesh, CSK Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishvavidyalaya and Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology.

The two day workshop had an inaugural with Shri. Sompal, former Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr. Gerald A Herrmann, President IFOAM, Dr. Tej Partap VC of CSK HP Krishi Vishvadiyalaya, Dr. P.S. Ahuja Director of IHBT. Over the two days there were six technical sessions and presentations from international experts from Germany, UK & USA and national experts from the private & public sector. Critical issues related to the furthering of the organic movement in Himachal Pradesh using the hill farmers were discussed. Crops like Apple, Peach, Plum, medicinal and aromatic plants, wild plant extracts were some of the potential crop areas for focus. Efforts to enhance capacities in market information, value addition, standards and certification, diversification of organic, group certification, internal quality management systems etc. were discussed.

Dr. Ahuja director of IHBT during his welcome address said: "Marketing and certification are major concerns of organic farming, and this workshop may provide some solutions to this concern. IHBT can provide the analytical facilities for testing of organic products for traces of pesticides and heavy metals".

Dr. Tej Partap, Vice Chancellor of CSK HP Krishi Vishvavidyalaya said "HP has 7000 farmers converting to Organic farming, and farmers participating in this workshop would have a mind set change after listening to the presentations of Shri. Sompal and Mr. Gerald A. Herrmann respectively".

Gerald A. Herrmann, President IFOAM said: "Organic is the way to go. Organic farming developed over thousands of years, and IFOAM is leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity with 760 members from 108 countries. The goal of IFOAM is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of organic agriculture. For domestic markets alternatives to third party certification like the participatory guarantee systems are also being promoted by IFOAM, and Brazil is a classical example of adoption of PGS, and IFOAM believes Asian countries must consider PGS as well. There are several examples to show the production cost reduces and productivity increases by adoption of organic farming. A US university study of 290 yield studies globally concludes that 160-180% enhancement in yield when organic farming is pursued marginal lands without the most appropriate natural resources for food production. Organic is not only food but also fiber, cotton, timber, cosmetics, body care and so on". Focusing on Organic in HP he said "global need not always mean export, selling HP produce in Delhi is already global, and HP should look at the 1 billion population for organic markets within India. The state of HP should build on its strength in horticulture and a wealth of Himalayan plants for the growing ISM, nutraceutical and cosmetic industry globally. State can move forward by focusing on a specific group of plants and develop the entire organic supply chain for the same from farm to fork".

Shri. Sompal, former Minister of State for Agriculture GOI said "he was totally convinced as a former member of the Planning Commission, that organic was the only solution to the existing problems of small and marginal farmers, and he also reiterated that productivity should be redefined from the content and not only quantity."

This workshop helped in enhancing capacities and competence of farmers, researchers, product manufacturers, policy makers, NGO's, departmental staff that were the various sections who participated in the seminar. Himachal Organic farmers' forum was conceived and it would be provided a proper direction by Dr. Tej Partap. The participants were satisfied with the exposure they got and were keen on attending more programs of the similar kind.

For more information: Mr. Ramesh Harve +91 9845183797, Gerald A. Herrmann +91 9995922185