

Press Release

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

27-28 September 2007, Gangtok, Sikkim

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, BioFach - the world leading organic trade fair and Morarka Organic, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Horticulture, Government of Sikkim.

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 and also from APEDA & NCOF. Critical issues related to the furthering of the organic movement in Sikkim and realizing the vision of ORGANIC SIKKIM using the hill farmers was discussed. Crops like large cardamom, mandarins, high fiber ginger, 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.

Gerald A. Herrmann, Director of Organic Services stated: "Sikkim should retain and build on its strength which are clean environments and a wealth of plants for not only human nutrition, but also for the growing natural medicine and cosmetic industry globally. State can move forward by focussing on a consistent organic policy and investing in centralized infrastructure and capacity enhancement".

The former Chief Secretary Mr. Pradhan as guest of honor and the Secretary of Agriculture and Horticulture Mr. Telang attended the Seminar. In his closing remarks Mr. Telang highlighted three areas of future development for Sikkim: "First..., second..., third".

The organic agribusiness is growing in leaps and bounds and the global organic business for 2006 was 37.6 Billion US\$. "Organic farming with regional identity is an excellent tool for enhancing the livelihoods of small and marginal hill farmers. The focus must be on low volume high value products like plant extracts and essential oils through value addition" according to Ramesh Harve, Director of Organic Services and Solutions India.

This workshop helped in enhancing capacities and competence of farmers, researchers, product manufacturers, policy makers, NGO's, departmental staff which were the various sections who participated in the seminar. The participants were satisfied with the exposure they got and were keen on attending more programs of the similar kind.

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