

Opening Speech of the patron of the conference, the IFOAM EU GROUP

Dear participants, dear organisers,

The IFOAM EU Group is very honored to be the second time the patron of the Conference on Cultivation Technique and Phytopathological Problems in Organic Fruit-Growing. This conference is and has always been a key conference to discuss all current problems, changes and innovations in organic fruit-growing in Europe.

Further I am glad that we achieved to officially establish an IFOAM EU specialist group on organic fruit growing in 2006. The patronage of this conference is also a symbol of closer future cooperation. This group is a chance to integrate your point of view into our political work. I am confident that the organic fruit growers' movement can benefit from the extensive European wide network of the IFOAM EU group.

The challenges for organic fruit growing ahead are impressive. The review and evaluation of pesticides implemented by the European Commission might lead to a situation where some substances used in professional organic fruit growing are not any more allowed, not because they are too toxic for the environment or human being but because of too much costs and red tape. On the other hand consumers expect organic products to be produced without any pesticide or with a minimum of "organic pesticides". In this context this conference plays a very important role in finding innovative solutions for improving permanently the system approach for organic farming and organic fruit growing.

I look forward to cooperate with you in the future and to meet our common organic challenges.

I wish you a successful conference

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Marco Schlüter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Marco Schlüter
Director of the IFOAM EU Group