



Activity report of the European Consortium for Organic Animal Breeding (Eco-AB): 2011

by Wytze Nauta, President

Members

Eco AB has 7 registered full members: organisations from the following countries: Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Sweden, United Kingdom and Denmark and 2 associate members: "Forschungsinstitut für ökologische Tierzucht und Landnutzung (FIT)" and "University of Kassel"

The board

Board members are Wytze Nauta (president), Anet Spengler (secretary), Joanne Conington, Peter Lovendahl and Lotta Rydhmer.

Activities

The 5th general meeting of Eco AB took place in Wageningen, 15th March 2011. This was mainly a formal meeting, with 6 participants. On August 31st Eco AB met again in Stavanger (N) during the EAAP conference (7 participants). During this meeting we discussed the possibilities of doing research together concerning the view of organic farmers about breeding in different countries. Only The Netherlands and Switzerland have done such research in recent years and it would be useful for further development of organic breeding. At the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) a new project started in 2012. It has 3 levels: 1. Pig and dairy producers' preferences – Which goal traits are considered important? 2. Genetic gain in breeding strategies based on producers' preferences. 3. Agreement between producers' preferences, current breeding goal and society's expectations.

Eco AB members agreed that the questionnaires used for the surveys in Sweden should be adapted to other countries to start with further national surveys. The goal is to get a broad picture on organic animal breeding in Europe (pigs and dairy cows). It was seen as a possibility to use some of the Eco AB-money for the translations / adaptations of the questionnaires, but each joining country would also have to look for financial support of the project. Eco AB members decided to define further steps after the first project year in Sweden.

We decided to write an Eco AB Position Paper on organic animal breeding in Europe. The first steps were done in 2011. It should be finished for the IFOAM / ISO FAR conference in Hamburg in September 2012.

Website

The Website is still rather quiet. Some new publications from Eco AB members are online, now.

Finances

The membership fee is still €400 for full members and 100 € for associate members. All members paid their fee.