



Minutes of the 1st Eco-AB General Meeting:

June 18th 2008, 6.30 – 7.15 pm in Modena, Italy

Topics:

1. Opening of GM
2. Activity report (Wytze Nauta)
3. Statement of revenues and expenditures / Income statement of Eco-AB (Ton Baars)
4. Affiliation of new members
5. Election of a new board member: Anet Spengler (FiBL) is ready to run for the former job of Beat Bapst (Secretary of Eco-AB)
6. Next meeting
7. Sundries

In Attendance: **Jacqueline Alleje**, IFOAM; **Joanne Conington**, SAC, UK (Eco AB-board member); **Hedwig Emmerig**, Naturland Germany; **Petra Heine**, Naturland, Germany; **Bernhard Hörning**, University of Eberswalde, Germany; **Birgit Ingvorsen**, Danish Agric. Advisory Service, Denmark; **An Jamart**, Bioforum, Belgium; **Daniel Kusche**, University of Kassel, Germany; **Joannie Leroyer**, ITAB, France; **Peter Løvendahl**, Århus University, Denmark (Eco AB-board member); **Rainer Löser**, die Ökoberater, Germany; **Veronika Maurer**, FiBL, Switzerland; **Laura Montenegro**, Argencert, Argentina; **Wytze Nauta**, Louis Bolk Instituut, Netherlands (Eco AB-board member); **Patrick Ruppel**, Bioforum, Belgium; **Anet Spengler**, FiBL, Switzerland (keeper of the minutes); **Jörg Steinbach**, J. Liebig-University Giessen, Germany; **Anna Wallenbeck**, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden, **Esther Zeltner**, FiBL, Switzerland

Apologies: **Ton Baars**, University of Kassel, Germany (Eco AB-board member), **Lise Grøva**, bioforsk, Norway; **Günther Postler**, Germany (Eco AB-board member), **Lotta Rydmer**, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden; **Janet Schmidtke**, German Society for Animal Production Bonn, Germany

Topics 1 and 2: Opening GM and Activity report (W. Nauta)

It was in Denmark two years ago that we met the last time. We inaugurated Eco AB with six people, Ton Baars (Uni-Kassel), Beat Bapst (FiBL), Joanne Conington (SAC), Peter Løvendahl (DARCOF), Günther Postler (FIT) and Wytze Nauta (LBI). Those six people constituted the consortium and became the board of ECO-AB. Wytze Nauta is the President, Ton Baars is the treasurer, Beat Bapst became the secretary. Since he doesn't work at FiBL anymore (he works now as a geneticist at the Swiss Brown Cattle Breeders' Federation), Anet Spengler from FiBL is ready to take over that job. Günther Postler has been involved with writing the constitution of Eco AB. Günther Postler and Ton Baars are not here today, but Daniel Kusche is representing Ton Baars' institute.

Eco AB is a 'sister' organisation to Eco PB (European Consortium for organic Plant Breeding). Up to now, most of the focus for the group has been to draw up the constitution. This constitution and Eco-AB became official in October 2007. After that we developed a website www.Eco-AB.org. The constitution and other information can be downloaded there.

The main goal of Eco AB is to draw attention to organic animal breeding. To date, there has been very little attention paid to organic animal breeding, as animal housing, feeding and health and welfare aspects are much more frequent in the discussions. This meeting should be a start of activities that lead to sustainable animal breeding in organic farming.

Topic 3: Statement of revenues and expenditures / Income statement of Eco-AB (T. Baars)

Ton Baars, our treasurer, could not attend the meeting. Therefore Wytze Nauta explains; there has been almost no cash flow up to now. Secretary work and administering our homepage at FiBL will cost around 3000 Euro / year. Our meetings and workshops will be organised alongside other conferences, so they won't be expensive and they will not be paid from the Eco AB account. If Eco AB are invited as a group to attend a conference then it may be possible for 1 person to attend such meetings. Part of the expenses associated with such a trip can be paid for by ECO-AB. (For example there was a FAO-conference on biodiversity last year in Switzerland, where Anet Spengler participated.)

We haven't opened a bank-account for Eco AB, because this would be quite complicated; we just opened a project-account at FiBL; so FiBL serves as a kind of a bank for Eco AB.

We will send invoices to our members for the member fee this year.

Topic 4: Affiliation of new members

W. Nauta is referring: Up to now we have seven full members. Everyone who is involved in organic animal breeding can join this group. Everyone who wants to become a member has to fill in the form on our website. Maybe we will find some breeding companies who will become members too, so we will get also involvement of the practical breeders. Our goal is to get around 7000-10000 Euro / year with member fees. There was a short presentation of Eco-AB at the EAAP meeting in Dublin 2007, where interested people were encouraged to become members. However, until now this did not give any result. We have to work on this.

J. Conington points out that our organisation is not particularly for farmers, but it should be not far apart from farmers.

J. Steinbach proposes to ask the GÖT (Gesellschaft für ökologische Tierhaltung in Germany) to become a member. We have to improve breeding after organic principles and this should be in their interest.

J. Leroyer says that ITAB, France wants to become a member.

W. Nauta says that Paola Rozzi (a geneticist from Canada who moved recently to Italy) had been interested in Eco AB, but that we have lost contact to her. He will try to find out her new address.

Topic 5: Election of a new board member

Anet Spengler from FiBL is willing to take the job as a secretary. She is therefore elected as the new secretary of Eco AB (all attendant members agree). She will take over the secretary job from Beat Bapst.

Topic 6: Next meeting

For a next Eco AB workshop in 2009, a suitable location has not been agreed upon. It could be held in Zürich (Switzerland) within the Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture in February 2009. However, the language of this conference will be German, so we do not know yet if this is the right place to organise our workshop, because the non German-speaking persons won't be able to attend this conference. We will look for other possibilities and keep all members informed.

J. Steinbach proposes that we use this workshop to talk about the backgrounds and principles of organic animal breeding to find out what organic breeding really means. Our goal should be to write a paper on this subject. All attendants agree with this idea. We decide that everyone who has already published something on this subject-matter will send this paper to A. Spengler and she will put it on our website so everyone can read it. By the time of our next meeting every member has read everything and we will see how we can put those things together: we will have to find an agreement on the most important topics.*

Topic 7: Sundries

Joanne Conington, Peter Løvendahl and Anet Spengler introduced their projects on organic animal breeding.

For the Presentation Wytze Nauta had prepared we ran out of time and he couldn't show it. He will give his overview at the next Eco AB workshop.

Keeper of the minutes: Anet Spengler