

## **Workshop on reproductive techniques in animal breeding**

Around 15 People from all over the world attended the three workshop discussions on reproductive techniques in animal breeding. Our goal was to discuss and assess every single technique from the standpoints of organic agriculture and of different countries and continents on the basis of a discussion paper originating from Europe. We wish that IFOAM will start to work on guidelines for the use of reproductive techniques in organic animal breeding on the basis of our workshop discussions.

We switched from value-based standpoints (ethical background), such as: “naturalness and the integrity of all animals is most important in organic agriculture; that’s why we don’t allow any reproductive technique besides natural mating” to practical or pragmatic thinking, such as: “artificial insemination is used by 90% of the organic farmers in Europe and in the USA; it is very practical and impossible to prohibit and most of the sires used originate from embryo transfer; so this technique can’t be totally prohibited, either”. People from Africa and India however, argued that in their countries artificial insemination is not yet used that often and can cause problems, such as lower fertility rates and the introduction of not well adapted breeds.

Reproductive techniques are strongly connected to big breeding companies which don’t care much about organic agriculture or local breeds and participatory breeding. But the discussion of the techniques themselves, without relating them to the breeding companies, showed that some of them could be used for the goals of organic agriculture and of participatory breeding, such as: semen sexing to get more females in very small populations of local breeds or artificial insemination using semen from bulls of different organic farms to prevent from inbreeding in small herds.

Our discussions were not finished by the end of the conference and we decided to go on by e-mail until we get standpoints that are good enough to be sent to the IFOAM-board to promote the discussions there.

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