

Report to NOFA on the IFOAM Organic World Congress, General Assembly and the meeting of the farmers' group, the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farming Organizations (INOFO) – Sept 28 – Oct 5, 2011

Short version for wide distribution – this could be used in NOFA chapter e-news:

**Report on the IFOAM General Assembly, October 3-5, 2011**

Every 3 years, the IFOAM General Assembly (GA) meets in conjunction with the Organic World Congress, a 4-day conference on all aspects of organic agriculture with participants from every country in the world. This year, the brand new Organic Museum on the banks of the Han River near Seoul, S. Korea made a luxurious venue for the assembly. The GA sets the top priorities for IFOAM and elects the World Board. Under the leadership of a new Executive Director, Markus Arbenz, IFOAM is on the path to financial recovery and has created a unified strategic plan. IFOAM is undertaking major advocacy campaigns aimed at the United Nations (Food and Agriculture (FAO), UNCTAD (Commission on Trade and Development) and other international meetings, conventions and events: “People before Commodities (on food security), “Powered by Nature” (biodiversity), and “Not Just Carbon” (on significant role of organic agriculture in mitigating climate change). NOFA members have the possibility of speaking for IFOAM at meetings in N. America, and particularly the UN in NY.

The IFOAM Organic Guarantee System has undergone revamping, and now consists of five parts

1. Family of standards – draws the line between what is organic and what is not, includes all standards and regulations that have passed an equivalence assessment. At the GA, it was announced that the NOFA Organic Landcare standards had been accepted into the Family.
2. Best Practice Standards – to stimulate innovation and continuing improvement
3. Participatory Guarantee Systems – based on community organizing, a way for small farms that cannot afford certification, to group together to provide a credible organic guarantee for use in local markets.
4. IFOAM's Global Organic Mark –a universal logo now available for a fee.
5. International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) - provides Accreditation to organic certification agencies.

IFOAM also continues its commitment to GOMA – Global Organic Market Access – a joint project with FAO and UNCTAD to harmonize standards to allow freer trade in organic farm products, especially important for developing countries.

With more than half of the members present and participating, a new World Board was elected that continues the commitment to promoting smallholder organic farming worldwide.

The next world congress will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, Oct. 4 – 14, 2014.

In his closing remarks, Arbenz praised the Korean organizers for mobilizing so many people with a huge fair to shine light on organic agriculture – 250,000 people attended. The last three years, Arbenz noted, have been hard, but IFOAM was saved by smallholder farmers. He urged the members to rely on diversity and people. IFOAM is committed to a strategy dominated by values, but not dogma. Retiring President, Katherine DiMatteo concluded that it is time to move away from discussions of standards and regulations since their role has been established, so IFOAM can shift to carbon, biodiversity, energy use, and developing local markets.

## **Social Justice Dialogue**

Before the conference began, the Agricultural Justice Project convened a gathering on organic and fair trade, and the relationship among organic certification, participatory guarantee systems (PGS), and CSA/Teikei. This open dialogue has been going on since 2000 at the IFOAM conferences in Victoria, Adelaide and Modena, and contributes to nurturing the Fairness principle in Organic Agriculture. The participants called upon IFOAM to create a task force on fair trade, a resolution that was later confirmed by the membership at the General Assembly. This task force will make recommendations on incorporating social justice principles in organic standards. The afternoon session discussed ways of building bridges among the different approaches to providing organic guarantees for farmers on all scales for both internal and international markets.

## **INOFO (Intercontinental Network of Organic Farming Organizations)**

October 2, 2011

This newly recognized independent body of IFOAM welcomes as members farming associations from around the world, whether IFOAM members or not. Twenty two were represented at the meeting in S. Korea.

Moises Cispes, from ANPE in Peru and president of INOFO, declared that the meeting was an historic moment for small farmers. Introductions around the room revealed the participation from many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania and a few from Europe. I was the only N. American. The meeting discussed the motions that had been proposed as guidance for the World Board. There was unanimous support for including fair pricing and contracts for farm products in organic standards. The group agreed on strengthening the participation of organic farmers in the workings of IFOAM. At the elections to the new World Board, Andre Leu, a vice-president of INOFO, was elected president of IFOAM, and Ghana farmer James Benjamin Coles was also elected. There was not enough time for discussion of all the priority themes:

Climate change and especially access to clean water

Family farming

Sharing economic information – price and trader pressures

Sharing farming information – capacity building program worldwide

Threats to small farmers' rights to land – mining, landgrabbing, conversion.

These will be the topics for continuing communications through the INOFO section of the IFOAM website and a listserv.

**Longer version of report:**

I will start with a report on the meetings and then flash back to highlights of the conference

**Recommendations to NOFA:**

- 1. Spread the word that the “terminator technology” is not dead – we must join the international campaign to stop it.**
- 2. Sign-on to 2012 as International Year of the Family Farming with the UN and FAO**
- 3. Set up a fund so that NOFA can send a delegation of members to the next IFOAM congress and General Assembly in 2014. Ideally, we could raise enough money so that each chapter could select a person to have this great experience.**

The IFOAM General Assembly – the organization’s member meeting that takes place every 3 years. This year, the brand new Organic Museum on the banks of the Han River made a luxurious venue for the assembly. The GA sets the top priorities for IFOAM and elects the World Board. I have now attended five General Assemblies. Like many organizations, the financial crisis hit IFOAM hard, just at a time when there was a change in leadership. Members of the board, including President Katherine DiMatteo, and staff filled in for the retiring Executive Director and hired a new ED, Markus Arbenz. Under his skillful leadership, IFOAM is on the path to financial recovery and has created a unified strategic plan. Urs Niggli, the distinguished Director of FiBL, described IFOAM’s major advocacy campaigns at the United Nations (Food and Agriculture (FAO), UNCTAD (Commission on Trade and Development) and other international meetings, conventions and events: “People before Commodities (on food security), “Powered by Nature” (biodiversity), and “Not Just Carbon” (on significant role of organic agriculture in mitigating climate change). NOFA members have the possibility of speaking for IFOAM at meetings in N. America, and particularly the UN in NY.

Jacqueline Haessig Alleje, (of Swiss origins, married a Phillipine organic dairy farmer and has led the development of organic movement in that country) presented the conclusions of the Good Governance task force for the restructuring of IFOAM. The new IFOAM puts much more emphasis on cooperating with the regional groups – IFOAM Asia, the EU group, GALCI in Latin America, etc. and establishes the farmers group (see INOFO report below) as an independent body. (You can access the full World Board Term Report on the IFOAM website.)

The Organic Guarantee System has undergone revamping, and now consists of five parts

2. Family of standards – draws the line between what is organic and what is not, includes all standards and regulations that have passed an equivalence assessment. At the GA, it was announced that the NOFA Organic Landcare standards had been accepted into the Family. IFOAM standards can serve as off-the-shelf standards that a group can adopt, and for IOAS accreditation

2. Best Practice Standards - Among the sets of standards under development are Best Practices standards that are higher and cover all aspects of sustainability including environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions. These high standards will help renew the continual improvement of organic practices. AJP will suggest social justice/fair trade standards to the group that is working on this.

6. Participatory Guarantee Systems – based on community organizing, a way for small farms that cannot afford certification, to group together to provide a credible organic guarantee for use in local markets.
7. IFOAM’s Global Organic Mark is now available for a fee. A universal logo.
8. International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) provides Accreditation to organic certification agencies.

IFOAM continues its commitment to GOMA – Global Organic Market Access – a joint project with FAO and UNCTAD - purpose is to make certification affordable so low-income producers can access valuable markets and to harmonize the many varying standards around the world to facilitate international trade.

In 2008 in Italy, for the first time, the majority of the WB members were people committed to support for smallholders (what we would call small farms or family-scale farms). As a result, since 2008, IFOAM has started to shift its resources from a focus on certification-accreditation and import-export trade to building local markets for smallholders. Support for smallholders has become a central priority. Hivos has provided financial support for the development of a network of Participatory Guarantee Systems.

There were 317 votes present at the GA out of about 700 member organizations. At each GA, the entire WB stands for election and this time there were 20 candidates for the 10 positions. Surprisingly, only two of the five people who had already been on the WB were reelected. Elected to the new World Board: Andre Leu (fruit farmer from Australia), Matthew John (educator and organizer of hunter-gatherers from India), Matthew Holmes (ED of OTA Canada, and the only N. American who ran), Roberto Ugas (professor, active advisor to smallholder organizations in Peru), James Cole (farmer and marketing organizer from Ghana), Volkert Engelsman (from the Netherlands, founder of Eosta, the largest distributor of organic produce in Europe), Frank Eykorn (environmental scientist from Germany, works on development projects with smallholders in Africa and Latin America), Manjo Smith (farmer and PGS organizer from Namibia), Gabriela Soto (soil scientist and organic inspector, Costa Rica), Eva Torremacha (agronomist, teacher, PGS researcher, Spain). The WB met and elected Andre Leu as president, Roberto Ugas and Gabi Soto as VPs – the three serve as the Executive Board.

A major portion of the GA is devoted to discussing and passing motions that direct the activity of the WB for the next three years. Members can send in motions by a certain deadline. At the GA, a “Motion Bazaar” takes place where members can discuss

proposals with the writers and request amendments or changes. One of my goals in attending this GA was to make fair pricing a higher priority in IFOAM's advocacy and standards. The current standards include a section on social standards, but these only cover conditions for workers on farms and organic businesses. In my view, farmers will not be able to provide good jobs until they get prices that cover their full costs of production. We need to reapportion the food dollar along the organic supply chain, shifting more towards the bottom. I submitted a motion on fair pricing, but it arrived a day too late to be accepted. At the meeting of organic farmers, I presented it as a resolution and it was accepted unanimously. The writers of Motion 64.2 Family Agriculture, agreed to add to their motion this language – "The importance of fairness and justice for all who labor in agriculture." There was a long discussion about requiring fair pricing. Gunnar Rundgren said it is unrealistic. Certifiers were upset that we might require it in standards. After the standards issue was removed and placed in the hands of a social justice task force, the motion was accepted. There was also a motion declaring IFOAM support for next year as the International Year of Family Farming. NOFA should sign onto the declaration.

Motion 62 Carbon Trading called for excluding agriculture from carbon market schemes. There was lively discussion led by Nicaraguans who have benefited from voluntary payments to them for planting trees from European businesses who are trying to offset their big carbon footprints. The conclusion was to pass a motion clearly aimed at financial market schemes. The WB "should promote alternative financing systems that provide a real solution to climate change for vulnerable populations and fair compensation to organic farmers for their contribution to mitigation and adaptation strategies."

At intervals through the GA, inspirational speakers make short presentations to bring new ideas or provide encouragement. At the opening, Kim Sung Hoon, a founder of the organic movement in Korea 45 years ago, talked about a great organic revolution. Obstacles – corrupt governments, pollution. Asia had a great tradition before Jesus Christ. The history of Korea marks 12,000 years of sustainable agriculture. Katherine DiMatteo noted the difficulty of trying to find balance in organic management of this land. As background drama to the GA, the Korean government was in the midst of evicting the longest standing organic farmers in the country from the Paldung Region. Supposedly to ensure clean water, the government is moving all agriculture away from the Four Rivers Region and making an amusement park instead. The WB visited the farmers to express support and wrote a declaration in protest, recommending that the park be managed organically. I later got to visit the Paldung farmers too and heard the moving story of their struggles to resist eviction.

Laercio Meireilles, from the Center for Agroecology in Brazil and one of the founders of the Eco-Vida Network, (a PGS), spoke eloquently on the need to scale up our activities if we hope to reduce poverty and global warming. We need more consumers. We need to do more to democratize organic agriculture. More movement and less bureaucracy. Standards are important but should not be the center of our lives. What kind of movement? Daring and creativity should orient our actions. Meireilles gave as examples

two PGS - ANPE, the Peruvian farmer association and Eco-Vida (started in 1991) – producers, consumers and technicians work together in the same the networks. Under the Brazilian organic law – everybody who produces can be included. Uruguay, Mexico, Ecuador all have PGS networks. PGS provides credibility in the marketplace. We need to find a way to talk with the next generation – PGS is attractive to them.

At previous GAs, competition among national groups for the site of the next GA has been a big feature. The Koreans really knocked themselves out to win for 2011. This year, there was only one contender – Turkey - Bugday, the Association for Supporting Ecological Living. The theme they propose is “Bridging the Organic World,” highlighting the importance of local, regional and global cooperation. Proposed dates - Oct 4 – 14, 2014. The Turks won everyone’s support with a fine meal and a dance party. Those Turkish women can really dance!

Closing remarks from Markus Arbenz – Koreans mobilized many people with huge fair to shine light on organic agriculture. Last three years hard – IFOAM was saved by smallholder farmers. Don’t rely on narrow strategy – rely on diversity and people. We opened up – sought opportunities. Living change. Teamwork and authenticity. Committed to a strategy dominated by values, but not dogma.

In her farewell address, Katherine DiMatteo spoke with deep emotion - the run away world has not factored in human impact. Long list of problems – how to move forward in chaotic world. FAO held meeting on greening the economy with agriculture – Ong Kung presented on role of organic as practical and appropriate. FAO statement – similar to IFOAM advocacy positions. Regenerative economy. Time to move away from discussion of standards and regulations. Their role has been established, so our role can shift to carbon, biodiversity and energy use. Trade and markets. We must persevere in our belief that each farm is unique. Margaret Mead - small group of determined people bring change.

The closing speaker was the new president, Andre Leu, blessedly a man of few, though well-chosen, words. He paid tribute to Katherine, who seems genuinely to have gone through a personal transformation in her role as president of an organization that was struggling financially while at the same time undergoing a major shift in emphasis from organic trade to the great value of organic family-scale farming and internal markets.

## **Social Justice Dialogue**

Before the conference began, with some help from Jacqueline Haessig Alleje, IFOAM World Board member, Michael Sligh and I convened a gathering on organic and fair trade, and the relationship among organic certification, participatory guarantee systems (PGS), and CSA/Teikei. We have done this at the past 3 IFOAM conferences in Victoria, Adelaide and Modena. There are several organic certification programs that include

standards of fairness in pricing to farmers and conditions for workers in their organic certification. The leading agencies on this are Naturland in Germany, Biosuisse in Switzerland, and the Soil Association in England. We have been keeping in touch over the past 5 years on our experience with fair trade certification. Naturland, a certifier and farmer organization with 2500 farmers in Germany and 380 international certifications, makes fair trade voluntary as an addition to organic standards. Steffen Reese from Naturland said that organic is in a state of “burocrazy,” and believes that organic and fair should be one and united. Jorg Schumacher reported that Biosuisse, an organization with 5800 farmer and 750 processor members, has started with a round table dialogue among farmers, processors and cooperative businesses that buy from farmers which may lead to fair trade standards in the future. They have had social standards on working conditions since 2006. Carlos Escobar, who does organic inspections in Colombia, reported that coops of small farmers in Latin America have recently created a new label that identifies a product as coming from a small farm. This is in response to the move by Transfair (now renamed Fair Trade USA and separated from FLO) to include products from plantations in fair trade. Koa Tasaka, a board member of the Japanese Organic Agriculture Association, advocated that standards protect the right of farmers to save seed and feed their own families first. We discussed the resolution we had passed in 2008 calling upon IFOAM to create a task force on fair trade and the need to reaffirm that request. We were later able to do this at the General Assembly meeting and AJP will follow up with this.

The afternoon session turned to the importance of providing a range of organic guarantees for farms of all sizes. We noted with appreciation that IFOAM has championed Grower Group certification for a decade, enabling thousands of very small farms to afford organic certification, and in the past two years has given support to Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) as well. IFOAM has issued a policy brief to governments on recognizing PGS. Nature et Progres in France is one of the oldest PGS, joined in recent years by the AMAP network (Associations pour le maintien d’une agriculture paysanne – the French version of CSA, now numbering over 4000 all over France.) There are active PGS in Basque country in Spain, in India, New Zealand, Peru and Brazil. Certified Naturally Grown in the US counts as a PGS. In Japan, most Teikei farms are not certified organic and depend on the direct relationship between farmer and consumers. We discussed ways of building bridges among these different organic guarantees.

## **INOFO (Intercontinental Network of Organic Farming Organizations) - October 2, 2011**

The meeting opened with greetings from Korean Federation of Sustainable Agriculture organizations including the Korean Catholic Farmers Movement. They apologized for staying only a short while, but they were committed to rejoining the sit-in strike by farmers at the Korean Assembly that had been in motion since Sept 28 protesting the eviction of farms by the Four River project. Small farmers have no protection from government encroachment was their message.

Moises Cispes from ANPE in Peru is the president of INOFO. He is a corn breeder and small farmer (told me they sell a little, mainly exchange with other farmers up and down the mountains). This meeting is an historic moment for small farmers.

Introduction around the room : India – Organic Farmers Assoc – TEAM (together everyone isn't small) (33,000), Seed project of Vanaja Rampasad, Kenya, Brazil (BD), Costa Rica, NOFA, NOC, Philippines – Masipag (35,000 farmers), Go-Organic, a university, a women's association, Rural Workers Assoc., 600,000 Natural farmers – indigenous people in Luzon, Ghana, Indonesia (100,000), Japan, Thailand (30,000), Namibia, Oceania - Samoa (2000), Malaysia, Sri Lanka (7230), Nepal, Nicaragua (Sano I Salvo – 250), Ukraine, Peru (Anpe - 2000), Korea (1000, altogether 10,000 households), Goa (120), Italy (5000), Australia (2000), France (FNAB – 20,000 organic farmers in France with 15,000 in FNAB), Colombia, Senegal (3000 in org, but 18,000 organic farmers), Nigeria,- focus on inspiring new farmers, Mali, Kenya – E. African Organic standards, policy on organic agriculture in Kenya awaiting approval – Kenyan Organic Ag. Network – certification cost too high for small farmers, national governments subsidize conventional agriculture by paying for fertilizers

Convenors' reports:

Europe – 30 countries, informal annual meetings since 2009, busy preparing for CAP. IFOAM has farmer representative in Brussels – discussing organic policy and GMO policy

S. America – Moises – biodiversity conservation, much better organized than US farmers, emphasis on building local networks and markets

Central America – Elba – 3 farmer organizations

West Africa – James Benjamin Cole – 2 blocks – French and English speaking – little internet access –

Asia – Pablito – Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, - attended various conferences – lobbying in Philippines for subsidies of \$20 million, hospitals will start using organic products

Miguel Gomez– S. Asia and India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan – could not get people from Iran and Iraq

Oceania – Steve from Samoa - 22 countries on Pacific islands – Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCOM) – developing standards – last green and clean part of the planet cause of isolation – PGS system using their standards is getting started – climate change very real – islands are going under water

Australia, New Zealand – Andre Leu – massive droughts, then floods – losing 2000 farmers a year, while organic is growing –

E. Europe – Milovanov – organic growing in Ukraine – building local markets, though mainly export previously – small farmers – 90 % local sales, 10,000 hectares of big farms focus on export. Convening conferences of farmers from all over Eastern Europe and W. Asia.

I reported from N. America – all I have been able to do is assemble a list of likely organic farming organizations and forward to them the various IFOAM publications I receive.

Discussion of motions for World Board

Support for soil in greenhouses, but critical of ban on heat and light  
Carbon trading – opposition to it. Sano I Salvo gets payments for its tree planting from a Belgian city that wants to reduce its carbon footprint. Need to differentiate between carbon trading and carbon footprint. Masipag – those who pay are using their capital to continue their carbon emissions – we need to be clear about need to reduce emissions. Voluntary agreements are different from financial gambling through derivatives. Danger of land grabbers claiming large payments, while small holders will get very little, especially if not certified. Costa Rica – develop integrated process for evaluating cycling of carbon on the farm – Cubans have methodology – small mixed farms would be paid more than big ones. Paperwork for proving carbon sinking will be impossible for small farmers. AIAB (Italy) – carbon trading market is not the right way.  
Discussion on having farmers on WB – 2 INOFO reps  
Unanimous support for my motion on fair pricing and contracts.  
Statements by WB candidates – Gabriela Soto, Milovanov, Rivera, Cole, Leu not present, Matthew John (Miguel spoke for him) – India PGS network persuaded him to run. People spoke in favor of Sciurano, Ong Kung Wai, Andre Leu, and Roberto Ugas. Andrea spoke in favor of Torremocha and Jacqueline Haessig Alleje.  
INOFO Convenors – need to build network – already 21 countries. Need for 17 or 18, theoretically. How to reach farmers’ organizations?  
Officers – 5 VPs (one with responsibility to ensure small farmer content in next OWC), and a woman for balance – Gabriela Soto. Moises continues as Pres. Andrea, Pablicito (OWC), Andre, Miguel, and Anton continues as Sec.  
Important themes:  
Climate change and especially water  
Family farming  
Sharing economic information – price and trader pressures  
Sharing farming information – capacity building program worldwide – Facebook page  
Farmworkers, immigration, the landless, indigenous people  
PGS – global PGS logo – and other forms of organic guarantee – Teikei, CSA  
Threats to small farmers’ rights to land – mining, landgrabbing, conversion.  
Who are we, whom do we represent, what do we want, what are we fighting for?  
Landgrabbing, pesticides, gmOs and corporate control over agriculture, dumping GM eggplant in the Philippines, deforestation, seeds (opposition to Terminator technology), access to land and secure tenure on land.  
Food sovereignty  
Issue of group of Korean farmers who were relocated after flooding onto land that belongs to the government which now wants to expel them to build an amusement park. WB went to visit them and there will be a declaration from the Congress. Andre has negotiated a doubling of the compensation offer.  
Staff support from IFOAM – for fundraising – 5-6 days a month for INOFO.  
Report from Executive on past 3 years: main effort aimed at establishing INOFO officially with IFOAM and on beginning to develop network.

## The Organic World Congress of 2011 – Highlights

The 17th Organic World Congress (OWC), held in Gyeonggi Paldang, South Korea from September 26 to October 1, attracted close to 2000 participants from 76 countries. The various side events, including the organic world fair and festival, drew in some 250.000 visitors, making this conference the most successful OWC in terms of attendance.

Each morning of the Congress begins with a series of four keynote speakers addressing one of the four principles of organic agriculture. There was quite a stellar line up: Sarojeni Rengam from the Pesticide Action Network, Master Dobeop, a Korean Buddhist monk, Dr. Hans Rudolf Herren, a leader in biological controls from Switzerland, John Reganold, a soil scientist and professor of Agroecology at Washington State U., LaRhea Pepper, a Texas pioneer in organic cotton, Mette Melgaard, a farmer and leader of Organic Denmark, Moses Muwanga, one of the founders of NOGAMU in Uganda, Humberto Rios Labrada, one of the organizers of the organic transformation in Cuba, Gunnar Rundgren, from Sweden and former president of IFOAM, Bernd Horneburg, an organic plant breeder from Germany, Gary Zimmer, a farmer and farm advisor from the USA, Wen Tiejun, a professor and rural organizer from China, Yoshinori Kaneko, one of the first Teikei farmers in Japan, Liz Clay, a farmer from Australia, Sophia Twarog, who works at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Ulrich Kopke, founding president of the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISO FAR) from Germany, Suh Chong-hyuk, one of the pioneers of organic agriculture in Korea, Pat Mooney, from ETC Group in Canada, and Katherine DiMatteo, IFOAM president. There were many eloquent, passionate and informative speeches, fortunately captured on video and they will be available from IFOAM.

I loved the Cuban message - a ground-up assault on the usual hierarchy of knowledge:

“Researcher – very intelligent

Extension – less intelligent

Farmer – bruta”

By crumbling this ladder, the Cubans have unleashed the energies that have enabled them to feed the people of their island.

I was encouraged by the speakers who have served on the IFOAM board – Rundgren, Melgaard and DiMatteo. All three challenged the old IFOAM emphasis on certification, harmonization and import-export, announcing a new era. Rungren declared that it is time to be “unreasonable and unrealistic,” to decouple from the obsession with standards. The market economy is not the way to manage the planet. We need a “regenerative” economy guided by the IFOAM principles.

Fast talking Gary Zimmer came straight from the US heartland, a startling contrast with the refined Europeans and Asians. As usual, he stressed soil nutrients and plant health, but in a brash, direct style that caught many of his audience off guard. I don’t think they got his jokes.

I was surprised and impressed by Professor Wen Tiejun from China. Until I heard him speak, I had taken as a given that organic agriculture in China is a top-down,

government-led effort to increase exports. Wen presented a broad and deep analysis of the history of agricultural industrialization, both West and East, showing the ugly parallels between capitalist and Chinese development. According to Wen, all the “isms” are following the same path of transferring surplus production from the countryside to industry. Reform in China is accelerating this industrialization by taking even more from the rural areas, resulting in increased pollution and the food safety crisis. But a new movement has begun in China – eco-agriculture – that is training young people to go to the countryside to serve the people. To change the present course, Wen said they need to organize the peasants as an interest group to pressure the government. Wen is one of the leaders of this movement of volunteers, doing work that sounds a lot like what we are up to in NOFA! I was able to observe a little of what is going on in China a week later when I visited Little Donkey Farm near Beijing.

Only one of the speakers generated a negative response. I sat with a group of small-scale farmers from several countries when Sophia Twarog spoke. Her talk infuriated all of us with her insistence that imports are wonderful. Later, at lunch, several of us confronted her. She was astonished – she had been trying to drum up enthusiasm for breaking down the barriers that differing organic standards create for the flow of farmers’ products and had not realized that she had failed to acknowledge the bigger picture – the negative effect of the WTO and Free Trade agreements on family-scale farms all over the world. She promised to revise her presentation in the future.

Yoshinori Kaneko shared the remarkable story of his farm and village. When I visited Japan in 2004 as a guest of the Japanese Organic Agriculture Association (JOAA), I had the inspiring chance to tour his farm, one of the first to do Teikei (the Japanese version of CSA). Starting in 1971, Kaneko has been using organic methods, gradually adding more families as the productive capacity of his farm increased. He uses waste vegetable oil to power his tractor, has a solar greenhouse and solar panels for electricity. To replenish the waning supply of farmers, he has trained many interns who have settled near him. Since 2009, his entire village is organic. He will be a speaker at the Eco-Farm Conference in CA in February 2012.

After recounting the rise to dominance of the seeds of the world by a few seed-chemical companies, Pat Mooney brought the whole assembly to our feet with his upsetting announcement that the “terminator technology,” that we thought had been safely arrested by the UN ban, is rising again. (This is the GMO technology that renders seed sterile.) Mooney declared that we need a food web, the biodiverse array of seed and breed varieties nurtured by peasants, not a food chain, the commercial system of industrial production that has narrowed our food supply to only 12 crops. He explained that there are two bills that will be presented in Brazil at Rio + 20 that would end the moratorium on suicide seeds. In October, Brazil will go to the UN meetings in India and ask the UN to end the ban. Mooney called on us to stop it again – “Suicide seeds are genocide to farmers.” We stopped them before and we can do it again.

Like a NOFA conference on steroids, the Organic World Congress (OWC) offers a tantalizing array of choices of workshops, values tracks and research tracks, panels, posters and special meetings, 17 different simultaneous sessions. I will share some notes

on the ones I managed to attend. IFOAM distributes a set of proceedings with summary write-ups if you want to see the full list and get an idea of the content.

#### “Sharing Our Vision of Teikei (CSA) Movement in Japan”

I was anxious to hear what Michio Uozumi, a Teikei farmer whose farm I had visited, would have to say about the earthquake and Fukushima. Knowing that his farm was only 100 kilometers from the nuke, shortly after the March 12 disaster, I had emailed him to find out how US organic farmers might help. Michio told about how organic farmers brought food to the victims of the tsunami and helped people dig out from the flooding. In June, a group of farmers and fishermen did a tree planting in the mountains above the flooded area. By improving the tree cover, they hope to help clean the waters and renew the phytoplankton in the ocean, thus increasing the food supply for fish. Because of the elevated radiation from the nuke, Michio was faced with the very difficult decision on continuing to grow vegetables at his farm. There were pressures to remove all the contaminated top soil. Michio showed photos of a meeting with his Teikei members to discuss what to do. They decided to have detailed testing of the farm's soils and crops – only 1/10 of the level of cesium in the soils showed up in the crops. As a result, they decided to go on eating the farm's produce. Michio is convinced that high organic matter soils, like those on his farm, can bind with the cesium and hold it in the ground. He is doing deep plowing and adding clay to increase the cation exchange capacity to adsorb more cesium. Because of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a lot of information in Japan about the best diet to limit damage from radioactivity.

The other speakers at this workshop talked about the history of Teikei and the significant role Teikei groups have played since 1971 in enabling farms to convert to organic and to connect with supportive consumers. Of the 800 or so Teikei farms, only one third are certified organic. Members visit the farms themselves to help with farm work and do not need to rely on third parties for verification of farmers' practices.

Under the auspices of Urgenci, the international CSA network, I participated in workshops on member involvement in CSAs and ways to include low-income and diverse groups. Matthieu Roy talked about how Equiterre, the ngo he helps staff, has built a network of 100 farms serving 10,000 families in the Province of Quebec for a total of \$4 million in annual sales. Joy Carey, from Bristol, England, and a member of the Soil Association, talked about that city's initiative to develop a comprehensive plan to support local agriculture. There are currently six farmers' markets, nine box schemes, six organic and whole food shops, four CSAs, four city farms, 40 school gardens and hundreds of community gardens. The various gardens can produce 15% of the residents' vegetables.

Shi-Yan Sina gave a fascinating presentation on the recent spurt of CSAs in China. After IFOAM, I was able to visit her farm, the Little Donkey CSA, and to participate in a CSA conference at Renmin University in Beijing where over 400 participants held non-stop sessions from 8:30 am to 10 pm for two intense days. A student of Professor Wen, Shi-Yan spent 6 months on a CSA farm in the US in 2007 and then spearheaded the organization of Little Donkey on 15 hectares in a village near Beijing. In its third season, the farm provides space for garden plots for 260 families, and grows shares for 460 CSA members. The farm crew combines graduate students like Shi-Yan and 20 village

farmers. The challenge, Shi-Yan says, is rebuilding trust and social capital in a society that has been hurtling into industrialization at rocket speed. In the past few years, organic has become a social movement in China. Their motto is summed up in two traditional characters - "Moderate desire, Gain Happiness." Jane Tsao also reported on a Chinese project, the Bio-Farm near Shanghai which combines a CSA based on an urban garden with sales from nearby farms.

I attended several workshops on Participatory Guarantee Systems. The IFOAM PGS Committee has written a policy brief to governments urging the recognition of PGS, as has been done under the organic law in Brazil and Mexico. Jannet Villanueva, who works as an advisor to ANPE, a small farmers association in Peru, argues that PGS is an important tool of inclusion of the smallest farmers and complements third party certification. PGS is not an end in itself but a means to farmer empowerment and community organizing. Eva Torremocha, a Spanish agronomist who was later elected to the IFOAM WB, talked about case studies on PGS in Europe where she found the greatest development in France where Nature et Progres has functioned for many years. Their process consists of a farm visit, followed by a report, then a group decision on inclusion. There is an annual assembly that serves as the governing body. The standards of Nature et Progres combine ecological production and social standards for the treatment of workers on farms. Consumers are very active along with farmers. A report from Brenjonk, a village of 2700 people in Indonesia, highlighted the close relationship between Grower group certification systems and PGS. This rice and banana growing village has organic standards for these crops, but also requires that each family spend its first energy on feeding the family, selling only the excess. Konrad Hauptfleisch talked about his work creating a PGS in S. Africa to encourage local markets in a country where most organic production is oriented towards exporting to Europe. A PGS network is growing in Namibia as well. He stressed that a supportive network is essential to PGS development.

I was sad that I only got to attend part of a full day of reports on their farms from the delegates to INOFO. I did catch a farmer from Indonesia who showed photos of beautiful terrace farming, unbelievably strenuous work. Most of the farms are tiny by US standards – from two acres to 20. A retired Philippino rice researcher turned farmer told how he spends most of his time organizing a marketing coop while four hired people grow vegetables on his two acres. Similarly, Manjo Smith, a woman farmer in Namibia, hires and provides homes for 17 households on a mere 7 hectare farm. Manjo is the organizer and marketer, and won election to the WB. Andre Leu, from Australia, told how he created a fruit farm over 20 years, producing organic rambutans and apples.

As an upsetting contrast to the wholehearted and energetic support for the IFOAM conference from the Korean government, I went on a tour of the Paldung Farmers cooperative, located on fertile low lands along the Han River. 100 organic farmers have used this land since 1973 when the government built a dam that flooded their former lands. The Korean central government is evicting them, ostensibly to eliminate sources of contamination from the Four River watershed by substituting recreation for farming. Why a park would be less polluting than organic farms seems murky to me. The Paldung farmers showed us videos of the police arresting them and carrying them away. The

farmers returned and intend to hang on as long as possible. They have walked to Seoul three times, been arrested twice, fasted, petitioned. On their land we saw many, many hoop houses. During the summer months, violent rains pour down for weeks at a time, so growing under plastic provides protection from the water. The farmers have a cooperative packing house from which they ship to a group of cooperative stores. They are Catholics and invited us to the mass they hold daily at 3 pm. The government has offered them new land, but of inferior quality at a distance from their markets.

Attending an IFOAM conference is a stimulating and enlightening experience. I have not even touched on the many people I met over these 10 days, people of every age and color, from every continent who are devoting their lives to organic agriculture. This brief acquaintance with Korea leaves me with a profusion of mixed emotions – I am stunned at the beauty of their land, the persistence of ancient traditions despite the headlong modernization. Rice paddies encircle the high speed rail stations. Hundreds of multistory apartment buildings crowd against the 8 – 10 – 12-lane highways, packed bumper to bumper with cars and trucks. A remarkable new organic museum opened to greet us just a few miles from the land of the soon to be displaced organic farmers. I hope in the future that more NOFA members will have the chance to share this rich experience with me.