



06. Juli 2009

## **Naturland Responds to the new EU Organic Regulation New: Aquaculture in the EU Organic Regulation**

**Gräfelfing/Brüssel - After lengthy discussions, the EU Commission has approved the detailed Implementing Rules of organic aquaculture in the new EU organic regulation, on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Thus, a legal regulation of organic fish and seafood exists throughout Europe for the first time. The organic association Naturland had already developed a standard for organic aquaculture twelve years ago and played an important role in the process in Brussels. „Naturland welcomes these measures of the EU to encourage organic fish production. However, the new standard is only the lowest common denominator, important points were defined too weakly,“ emphasized Hans Hohenester, organic farmer and chair of the board of directors of Naturland.**

### **Gaps in the EU Organic Regulation**

As a result of industrial fishing and increasing consumer demand, fish stocks in oceans and inland waters have long been exploited to the upper limit. Today, one in three fish consumed by humans comes from aquaculture, which is why aquaculture is the fastest growing food sector. While the current version of the aquaculture regulation adopted the suggestions of Naturland and other European associations in numerous issues, in further points it is a compromise with the position of the conventional industry: In particular, most of the stocking densities are set too high. For trout the densities are twice as high as the Naturland standard, while for shrimp the densities are almost three times as high. Furthermore, the regulations allow critical chemicals, such as for the impregnation of net cages and for preservation in processing. Many requirements of the EU organic regulations, for example regarding the transport of live animals, are too vague. Dr. Stefan Bergleiter, director of the aquaculture department of Naturland: „The Naturland standards make high demands on the operations with good reason and make strict requirements. Only through this can the organic character of production be ascertained and thus a meaningful certification made possible.“

### **Strict Naturland Standards**

Since the mid-90s, Naturland has carried out pioneering work and developed standards for different species and production systems in aquaculture. Operations in 18 countries in Europe, Latin America and South East Asia produce fish, shrimp and mussels according to Naturland standards. The organic association requires certified organic feed and species-appropriate low stocking densities, forbids the use of chemicals and sets guidelines for the protection of nature and animals. In addition, the operations must uphold social standards. Naturland experts have many years of practical experience and know the operations of their members. A multi-step quality control system ensures organic fish and sea food under the Naturland logo comply with the standard.

More information about organic aquaculture: <http://www.naturland.de/aquakultur.html>

*Naturland promotes organic agriculture worldwide and is, with more than 50 000 farmers and 400 processors as Naturland partners, one of the largest organic associations. As an association that is future-oriented, organic competence and social responsibility go hand-in-hand for Naturland.*

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