



Round table debates created a unique opportunity for stakeholders to voice their views

### WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Continuing evidence of the global role that EurepGAP is already achieving was evident at the 7th annual two day conference held in Prague in September.

Attended by 278 delegates from 41 countries it represented a milestone by providing the opportunity for producers, distributors and retailers to discuss and debate the proposed changes prior to the implementation of the revised Protocol which comes before The Board for approval in October.

Emphasis was also on maintaining total transparency as The Board and committees workload increases. EurepGAP now provides the umbrella to ensure Good Agriculture Practice for over 50,000 producers of fruit, vegetables, horticulture, livestock, aqua culture and animal feeds.

"Our decision to have a full day devoted to table top sessions moderated by committee members who are fully conversant with practical but often differing issues was a great success," reports Chairman Nigel Garbutt.

"And for the first time we have provided members with the budget and activity plan for 2007 to show



Chairman Nigel Garbutt  
"Total transparency"

openly the costs involved in operating EurepGAP in 75 countries and more than 19 languages."

In 2007 we will focus on a comprehensive surveillance of our

### NATIONAL GAP SCHEMES EXCHANGE VIEWS

National GAP Schemes met at a special side meeting of the Prague Conference. The first gathering of its kind produced a lively and informative exchange of views on GAP certification around the world. The meeting shared best practice which will lead to a greater level of harmonisation and understanding between national schemes.

Photo (right) shows the inaugural

**POSITIVE APPROACH BEHIND CORE MESSAGE**

"Food safety is an everyday, ongoing concern," said Alfons Schmid of Ahold reflecting the views of 30+ retailer members represented in EurepGAP.

Schmid added that after two days debate there was an extremely positive spirit coming from the conference.

For more details and a progress report from the Secretariat see pages 2-3.

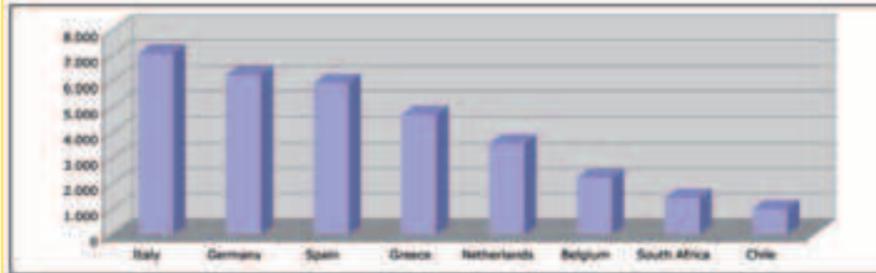
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certification activities evaluating both certification body and accreditation practices. The EurepGAP Board believes this will bring us further towards the harmonisation and consistent implementation of GAP on a global level.



## WE ARE NOW TRULY GLOBAL

EurepGAP Certified Producers  
Option 1 and 2



Kristian Moeller

## PLEDGE TO KEEP COSTS CONTROLLED

The smoothest transition to the new 2007 Protocol presented to delegates which globalises the EurepGAP standard, was the commitment of The Board, its committees and secretariat, stressed Chief Executive Kristian Moeller. "We are now truly global," he said. The objective was to achieve total transparency not just through this process, but to retain it in the years ahead.

For the first time as part of this process the forthcoming annual budget proposals were presented, together with details of revenue cost structures.

Changes recommended regarding the structure of decision making by devolving the responsibilities of the main board through to the specialist committees, tapping into the knowledge and experience that is available was part of the decision.

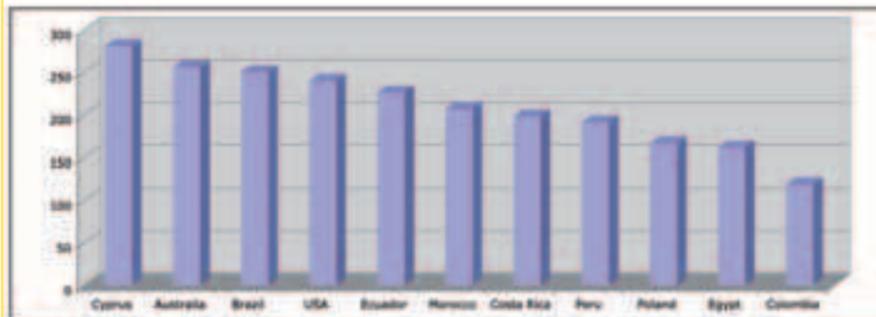
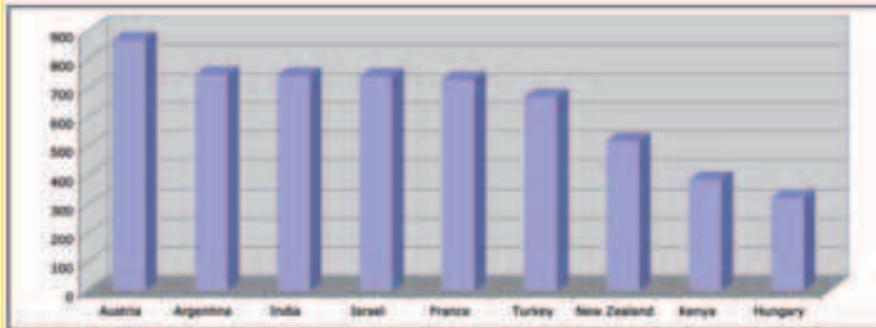
Sector Committees (SC) will comprise six supplier members and six retailers, with nominations invited between November 15 and December 1.

An electronic ballot will then take place between December 4-15, and the SC Chairman announced at the next meeting held to coincide with Fruit Logistica on February 7.

While EurepGAP continues to expand and has already reached global proportions, this is requiring a heavier and more complex workload, said Kristian Moeller.

Reviewing the year's progress and looking to the future he repeated his promise: "We will never start spending money on golden palaces. Indeed we also have our own certification body to hold us to account."

"We started with a valued partnership



## FOOD SAFETY IS AN EVERYDAY CONCERN

If a reason was needed for EurepGAP's existence it is because food safety is an ongoing everyday concern.

This was the powerful message taken away by delegates delivered by Alfons Schmid, Board Member and Vice President of the Dutch chain Ahold.

Similar to many other major retailers throughout the world he confirmed: "Over 70 percent of the food we sell is under our own label. Just because a country has a good record it must not think it does not need standards."

Even when statutory disciplines were in place, often the sheer volume of food

and this must always be our aim," he told delegates.

"The key pillars of EurepGAP will remain integrity, partnership, efficiency of effect, communication, benchmarking and financial control."

The 19 language network has already become truly global, with 132 accredited bodies.

- Currently there are 13 approved benchmarked schemes for fresh products.
- There are 12 applicant schemes in progress, as well as 5 compound feed manufacturing schemes.

The voluntary membership has risen from under 50 in 1999 to nearly 300 this year. Additionally supplier membership includes some of the largest and most significant players in fresh fruit and vegetables sector, which are now being joined by other fresh food interests.

And GAP embraces some 50,000 growers from 75 countries.

**Copies of all the presentations at the conference are available through the EurepGAP web site [www.eurepgap.org](http://www.eurepgap.org)**

passing through the distribution chain meant that government inspections must be limited, while there was always the possibilities of scares and subsequent withdrawals.

"We must have the whole supply chain covered, and know we can recall if the occasion arises. That is what EurepGAP safety standards are all about," he added.

Schmid believes that EurepGAP could find it beneficial for its members to promote a dialogue with major suppliers in the processing industry, and publicise their environmental support.



Alfons Schmid

## SINGLE CERTIFICATE IS THE GOAL

Consistency and rationalisation of GAP across all sectors covered by EurepGAP is the target next year, explained Bert Urlings of Vion Services Boxel BV.

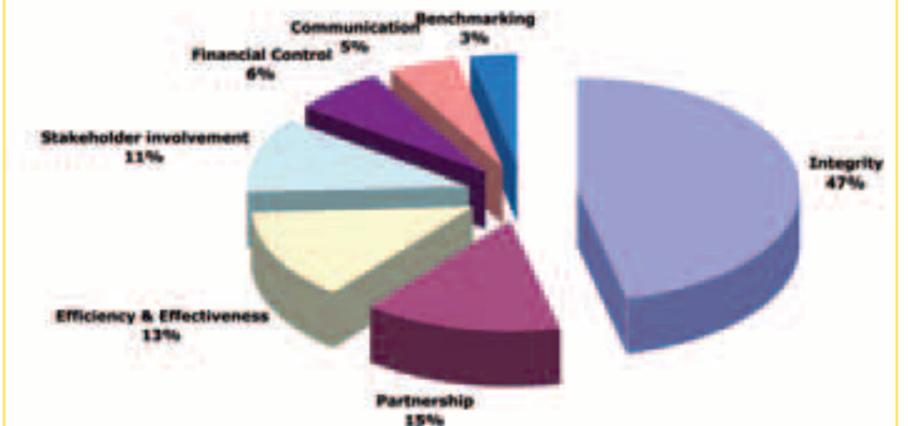
"Ideally we are working towards one audit, one visit and one certificate," he said.

A single communication will remove

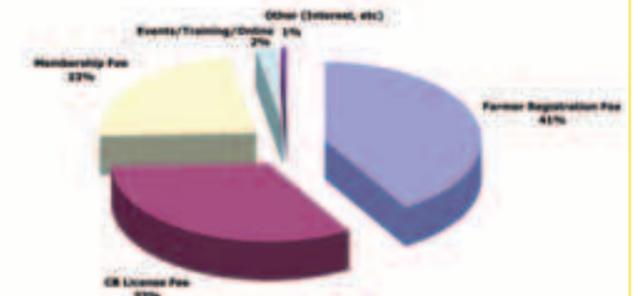
duplication and remove costs. Each sector will fund its own development, but benefit from synergies from the common approach.

A new standard structure with checklists has already been established.

## Budget Plan 2007 - Cost Shares



## Budget Plan 2007 - Revenue Shares



## EurepGAP Standard translated into 19 languages:

- |           |             |              |           |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| > Arabic  | > German    | > Polish     | > Turkish |
| > Chinese | > Greek     | > Portuguese |           |
| > Czech   | > Hungarian | > Romanian   |           |
| > Danish  | > Italian   | > Serbian    |           |
| > Dutch   | > Japanese  | > Slovak     |           |
| > French  | > Norwegian | > Spanish    |           |

# EUREPGAP REFLECTS GLOBAL PEDIGREE

## JAPAN SHOWS HOW TO ADAPT

Every country has its own specific footprint, and Japan is no exception. Reiko Enomoto of JGAI spoke of the speed at which change embracing both producers and retailers was taking place, payed tribute to the help that the EurepGAP Secretariat had been in quantifying how Good Agricultural Practice could be applied.

GAP had become a critical aspect due to changes in Japanese law as the use of CCPs and MRLs became stricter following several national food scares. Liberalisation of trade, had also had an effect.

This had resulted in the initial stage of retailers and government demanding their own systems.

Yet she pointed out that Japan is not an exporting country. "We are now based on EurepGAP, but it is not the same. However your benchmarking is the way to bring our stakeholders together." Designed similarly to create trust between the stakeholders its remit is far wider.

JGAP is split into four chapters: These are:

- Food safety (CCPs, fertilisers, seeds, harvest and produce handling).
- Environmental considerations (water soil, neighbouring sites and energy consumption)
- Workers welfare and safety (minimum wages, training)



Reiko Enomoto compares notes with Peter Ensor of Horticulture New Zealand

- Sales management (record keeping and traceability)

"Our system reflects the specific features of Japanese agriculture," she explained, "where there is often an inefficient supply chain, with too many intermediaries, too long a lead time, difficulty in tracing back and fluctuating prices."

There had been improvements however. It was producers themselves who begun the JGAP initiative now numbering over 100 members and associates.

"The challenge is to implement this on small scale farmers at lower cost," she said. Amongst the solutions was providing

support for farming groups in the field, using government subsidies and sharing a format for record keeping and being creative.

"Retailers are already interested in using JGAP as a base for their private brands and last June the Ministry announced that this would become the national standard," she added.

This will mean that the several parallel schemes including the Japanese Consumers Co-op GAP, Aichi GAP, Aeon GAP, Kogishma GAP and the Ministry's own will come under the same umbrella.

## GHANA PINEAPPLE ECONOMY STRENGTHENS

The adoption of the EurepGAP Option 2 certification scheme creating a quality management system for smallholders in Ghana's pineapple industry is allowing the sector to continue to play a significant role in developing its export trade, confirmed Emmanuel Owusu and Eric Quaye.

It's importance was underlined by the fact that exports increased between 1995 and 2004 by 346 percent to over 71,000 tonnes. However the introduction of new competitive varieties being grown elsewhere in the world are taking some of Ghana's European market share.

Linked to customers increasing demand for traceability and details concerning MRLs it had reached a point where it was disadvantaging smallholders, they revealed.

This sector was of vital economic importance as it accounted for over 45 percent of the exports, and supported 5,000 dependent farm families, which grow often on less than a hectare.

However, the Ghana MD2 programme was designed to keep smallholders in the supply chain and expand sales.

As a result of joint collaboration between the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the German technical group GTZ, the Sea Freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana and trade programmes, progress was



Eric Quaye (left) and Emmanuel Owusu report benefits for small produce

now on a confident footing.

Initially 100 small groups representing 1,500 farms with a capacity to produce 30,000 certified tonnes were set up, with government providing six million plantlets to small holders for multiplication, and a further four million to medium/large sized concerns.

A post harvest infrastructure with cooling facilities and an accredited pesticide residue laboratory was put in place.

The implementation of the scheme in three phases is already well advanced with a pilot programme. This includes training and coaching in documentation and record keeping, food safety, GAP

environment, worker health and safety, and a QMS manual.

Using a district extension service product can be either marketed physically by the farmer or by using a central contract. This states terms and information exchange before being exported by a EurepGAP certified exporter.

In either situation compliance is necessary.

The current time line points towards the industry being ready for internal audits in March next year, and final evaluation of the programme by November. The final Option 2 toolkit will become operational in December 2007.

## TAILOR MADE SCHEMES FOR SMALL GROWERS

The risk for small growers to become marginalised in a world where both retailers and their suppliers are becoming larger is being combated by GTZ through the introduction of internal control systems within horticulture which can lead to certification, reported Dr Jochen Neuendorff of GfRS.

Its value has already been proved in Kenya and Ghana, and is being extended to Macedonia, Thailand and the Dominican Republic.

The private GAP standard ensures compliance with official regulations and has linked farmers to markets by contract farming.

There is a generic ICS manual available which is now being adapted in a series of pilot projects in three continents, alongside a CD training manual.

Public service and private service providers can then be qualified for training and auditing, with the cost

shared between donors and groups to guarantee commitment.

Designed to clarify the roles of the various parties involved together with a lean management structure, this also ensures transparency.

A model and locally adapted handbook is available as freeware as part of the package which ultimately means that growers will reach better standards of livelihood.

## AEON ALREADY PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

A detailed insight into the scale of Japanese retailing by Chiyuki Uehara, sectional director of the vast Aeon group, added a further lustre to the conference presentations, while at the same time illustrated the similarities and differences that EurepGAP members face.

Aeon is the newest retail member and one of the largest with 4,212 stores varying in size from supermarkets to small grocery style outlets, and a further 3,246 specialist stores. Not only is it in Japan but spreading into China, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia. Annual sales of the 158 group of companies is US\$ 38.5 billion.

It prides itself on its environmental and social contribution to the community, reflected in such as activities as using Aeon staff to make the neighbourhood round its stores become "clean and green", revealed Uehara.

It is involved in massive reforestation projects, as well as planting a few trees



Chairman Nigel Garbutt congratulates Chiyuki Uehara of AEON on the company's approach to GAP

on the sites where it trades.

"We aim to practice agriculture that makes the best use of regional nature, and respects producers' health safety and welfare," he added.

"Partnership is with all people involved in the process from production, distribution to consumption."

Just how far this has moved is reflected in the data labelling of fruit and vegetables

which has progressed so far that customers in some stores can use their mobile phones to dial up pack information which includes a photo of the grower.

This is a side benefit from the development of a producer registration system which constantly audits progress on the farm linked to a management package covering packing and distribution.

## KENYA BUILDS ON SUCCESS



Steve Homer of Flamingo (left) checks the presentation with Amos Waweru

The progress which Kenya has made since it had reached its own benchmarking system was evident from the presentation by Amos Waweru representing Standards and Solutions Consulting.

"It has benefited smaller growers, particularly concerning products like green beans, which are major export and make a real contribution to the economy," he said.



Marek Marzec

"During the initial stages we were even asked why we want quality control"

## NEW EU MEMBERS ARE RECOGNISING VALUE

The importance of new member countries in the EU and beyond recognising the value of EurepGAP certification was spelt out Marek Marzec of Metro Poland. The retail chain which has 2,100 stores spreading out as far as Asia and Russia, has already established a presence in Eastern Europe.

Additionally, the arrival of other supermarkets such as Ahold, Auchan, Carrefour, Rewe, Tengelmann and Geant are providing the impetus for change. Concentrating on this region, progress initially, he admitted, had not been easy. "There are millions of farmers, which

have a lack of knowledge in most countries and little international experience."

A tradition of local markets often operating with few legal requirements was distant from modern retail requirements, particularly in the three critical areas of fish, meat, and fruit and vegetables.

While these countries were big producers of fresh produce, in particular, the lack of standardisation had already caused big headaches for buyers, apart from the fear of contamination problems through the irregular use of pesticides. It was one reason why local production

was finding itself having to compete with imports. This has resulted in retailers themselves initially supplying training and establishing quality standards.

"At the beginning products usually have to be delivered directly into stores, although organisation in many cases was improving."

"Often in the early stages were even asked why we want quality control," he added.

"The main barriers for a quick implementation of EurepGAP was the lack of knowledge, operating in areas where there is often a market price war. The operation is initially seen to be too

expensive, while there is a lack of certification bodies and consultants.

Nevertheless progress has been made. Quality Assurance in Poland for example has led to supplier training, candidates for auditor training and working with other retailers on mutual acceptance of EurepGAP for Polish suppliers.

The same message came from Nick Ball, Group Sourcing Technical Manager for Tesco, which also operates its own standards at present, but recommends its suppliers to recognise the value of EurepGAP.



Nick Ball

"We are at the first stage of a very long journey"

## POLAND WIDENS RANGE AS GAP BUILDS

Poland has a history of substantial food exports to Western Europe, and has already made impressive progress towards rebuilding this trade, particularly with fruit and vegetables, confirmed Bozenna Palacha, of Centrum HACCP in Warsaw. "There are already 28 farms with EurepGAP certification, and further 10 are implementing these requirements."

"There is an ongoing programme of national and international seminars, a presence at food fairs, and workshops for retail training network suppliers. "Systems assuring safety and quality across agriculture, production, processing, storage, transport and distribution of food and feed are high on the HACCP agenda."

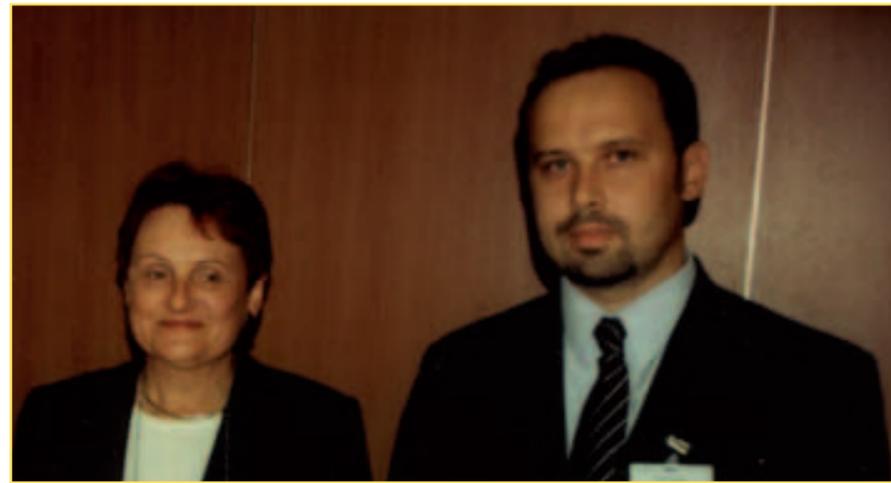
"Producers have also received valuable help from experts outside the country," she added, highlighting the projects carried out as a result of Dutch/Polish co-operation mainly on larger farms, and in particular glasshouse crops.

As the momentum continued to build this expertise was being extended to the range of top fruit and berry fruit crops, and would be followed by green vegetables and root crops.

The methodology of covering training and audits has been tailored to fit the scale and size of producers beyond the areas commonly shared.

These were categorised as individual worker protection such as expendable clothing, first aid boxes and the use of containers for liquid fertilisers and plant protection products all reducing the risk of contamination of water courses.

While large farms dealt with facilities for staff accommodation, for small units this extended to individual washing equipment and breakage proof safety lamps.



Bozenna Palacha of HACCP Poland and Petr Koten of the Czech Society for Quality

"The result has been that farmers are aware of their position in the food chain and are helping compliance with EU food safety and hygiene regulations," she added.

The number of certificates has increased from two in 2003 to 123 this year under

Option 1, and 27 under Option 2.

As the value of the disciplines are more widely understood, there is increasing interest from fresh produce processing plants, adding a further beneficial dimension.

## CZECH REPUBLIC TAKES FIRST STEPS WITH MINISTRY SUPPORT

The impetus to achieve EurepGAP status is coming from the Czech Society for Quality, believes Petr Koten. It is an independent, non profit making organisation which has 2,000 individual and 100 collective members mainly centred around the fruit industry.

Already co-operating with several international associations, it already acts as a certification body, provides professional advice and operates a publishing centre.

Financed by the Czech Ministry of Agriculture it began work on EurepGAP implementation this year, and expects to complete this by December 2009.

It has already selected standards, translated texts and pilot studies were beginning as the conference met. A

technical working group was set up last July.

Koten voiced the view that it being heard more and more as agricultural industries realise the significance of good agricultural practice.

"It will give us more chances against our competitors on the EU market, and create a better position to negotiate with suppliers."

## TESCO SPELLS IT OUT

Retailers must have confidence in farm safety where it is often a choice of ideals versus reality, said Nick Ball of Tesco. "We can do nothing or adopt our own disciplines." But lack of infrastructure did not prevent it moving ahead. Tesco for example was using its own Nature's Choice standard. It recommended EurepGAP to Eastern European countries. In Thailand, Korea, Malaysia and China it required a post harvest standard as there was no farm assurance.

## AUSTRIAN EXPERIENCE SHOWS IT WORKS FOR PRODUCERS IN GROUPS

Small producers of course abound throughout agriculture and horticulture and the example provided by Willibald Nuster, a partner in the Austrian fruit co-operative, Opst Steiermark which represents 1,100 growers, showed how effective EurepGAP ISO and BRC certifications can be.

"We started a discussion over how we could show our product safety system to our customers in 2001, and now we still do it," he said.

Work began four years ago with 60 key growers implementing training at over 100 seminars, and by June the following year 45 were certified. A month later this was followed by 400 more, and today the figure has risen to 800.

"EurepGAP Option 2 in connection with the required product certifications such as BRC and HACCP on all levels is currently the most integrated and sustainable product safety system. "Everyone profits from it," he added.

"The customer is getting a product subject to a continuous safety system on all levels of production. The retail business is getting a product from a large number of growers which comply with their specifications and standards of food safety and Opst has created a uniformly high standard for family run businesses with a low burden on production cost."

## HUNGARY'S TRADE BODY GETS TO GRIPS WITH DETAIL

Hungary has been moving towards certification since 2002, and has made considerable progress according to Anita Ferencz representing FruitVeb, the national inter-professional body for fruit and vegetables. Its product committees operate through a directorate and a general assembly also includes traders, processors and producer organisations Working with SKAL Hungary, and with translation help from Tesco a documentation handbook is already available, backed by a continuous information relay at forums and on the Internet.

Certifications as a result have reached 1,600 in four years, and there are seven



Anita Ferencz

certification bodies in existence. QMS systems include EurepGAP, QS and HACCP.

"More and more people see the need for it," she said. "With Hungarian statutory requirements, compliance is not really difficult. The more and more comprehensive the theoretical training, the easier the practical implementation and higher efficiency."

While welcoming a change in attitude by producers however, the transition has not been without its teething troubles.

"It might seem we have more problems than positive experiences," she said, listing producers dislike of having to become involved in a higher level of

administration, and the difficulties of having to comply with legalities.

Auditing had also initially proved difficult because of different cultures and inadequate handling of non compliance, while producers frequently knew too little because of an apathy in reading the information.

Building up a tracking system has also proved difficult with inadequate risk assessment.

However, the pace is quickening encouraged in no small part by the fact there are now 15 top chains in the country with a total of over some 12,000 stores which includes some of the best known names in Western retailing.

## DELEGATES SPEAK THEIR MIND ON PROTOCOL PROPOSALS

The Prague conference broke new ground for EurepGAP delegates with the introduction of a sea of information islands and booths allowing free practical discussion on a range of the critical issues which have a direct impact on delegates.

Moderated by committee members selected for their ability to have detailed input to get the debates underway it also reflected the policy of global transparency which became the hallmark of the conference.

And to ensure that the opinions and feelings expressed reached the widest possible audience they were succinctly summarised by Elmé Coetzer.

- The vital importance of worker health and safety was considered non negotiable, and should be subject to a continuous update, including its application to smallholders.
  - Training records should include even the basic levels, and trainers must prove that they were competent.
- Both these aspects delegates all



Elmé Coetzer

*EurepGAP Standards Manager*

*"Some elements non negotiable"*

stressed could impact of all other standards under discussion.

- The strengthening of Integrated Pesticide Management (IPM) was well received, although it was recognised that with so many diverse sectors represented by EurepGAP that there were often specific requirements.
- Clear definition was considered vital as far as produce handling was concerned, particularly the certification of stand alone packhouses. Additionally it was appreciated that this included the field packing sector.

- Laboratories needed to be approved to ensure high standards were common, although there was support for setting up independent systems.
- Audit frequency also proved to be a subject which provoked much discussion, with a feeling that there should be longer term contracts. This could lead to fewer full assessments.
- Aquaculture delegates asked for increased awareness of the developing standards, and wish to investigate the opportunity to develop a module to include shrimps.
- A simplified benchmarking appraisal was requested by the feed industry, with work be carried out towards achieving a solution for medicated feed which at present are not within scope.

Overall said Elmé Coetzer there was agreement that attention should be paid to the post farm gate process to provide a practical way of developing new programmes as required which providing they were demand driven.

## RESIDUE MONITORING STILL UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Outlining the main revision proposals from the sub-groups one EurepGAP's most respected members Willem Hofmans of Albert Heijn, explained that the key issues identified affecting fruit, vegetables, flowers and ornamentals had now been assessed.

Residue testing focused on monitoring risk assessment and sampling.

Currently no decision had been reached on implementation of the monitoring system, so meanwhile current requirements remain in place.

A dedicated subgroup would be formed to develop a plan for implementation for the next Protocol version in 2010. EurepGAP, may however support the setup of a parallel voluntary module for monitoring.

There would be an improvement in current hygiene issues.

This related to on-farm packing, covered by sufficient detail so the retailers would not require additional certification.

This had led to the proposal that this must extend to crops being packed which were not the growers' own.



*Clear message for the industry*

There would be an overall improvement

in the current version of IPM/ICM by strengthening existing points and adding new ones where necessary.

No additional auditor or inspector requirements are considered necessary regarding worker health and safety, although the decision was to combine the existing CPCCs from all EurepGAP standards as part of the integration policy. Audit frequency would continue to be annual.

## DATABASE VALIDATES CERTIFICATES

A central database which would ultimately allow all users from producers to retailers to validate the certification of products through the distribution chain is no longer a dream. "We have now a quick and transparent validation system which helps us with our objective to maintain system integrity", says Kristian



Moeller, Chief Executive of EurepGAP. Presentations from Ludwig Schulze Proebsting of GS 1 and Burkhard Fabiszky of Transparent Goods GmbH illustrated the opportunity industry now has by utilizing the voluntary service features of the database. Applying global IT standards and interfaces help to assure product integrity at any point in the supply chain. The field and crop sourcing information can be linked simply by using farm management software as presented in the case of Progis Software AG by Guenter Kronawetter.

