



PRESS RELEASE
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Sustainable Agriculture Network to Expand Certification System

The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) and the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) have today launched a pilot program that is expected to deliver even greater confidence and trust in the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ frog seal which already appears widely on agricultural products from around the world.

The seal is used on products from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms that adhere to the SAN's rigorous standards for protecting wildlife, wild lands, workers rights and local communities. The seal connects conscientious consumers and responsible producers supporting environmental conservation and fair working practices.

To date the certification of farms has been conducted by a certification body with the support of inspection bodies approved directly by SAN. To make the system more inclusive and transparent, the IOAS will develop an accreditation system that includes internationally recognised procedures for the approval of the certification bodies working primarily in Latin America and Africa. This will be a unique system to empower independent certification bodies to implement the SAN standard. The SAN standard is unusually comprehensive in that it integrates the economic viability of farms with environmental conservation and robust social and labor requirements.

SAN board president, Romeo Dominguez, communicated the importance of the accreditation system for the SAN. "As a founding member of the Sustainable Agriculture Network, I am eager to see its continued evolution and strengthening through the development of an innovative accreditation system. We welcome collaboration with organizations that share the SAN's vision for sustainability to support farmers, farm workers, ecosystems and wildlife."

IOAS Executive Director Ken Commins highlighted the enthusiasm with which the IOAS is approaching this project. 'The business of the IOAS is about cultivating integrity and trust in products that are responsibly produced, and this initiative with SAN fits very neatly into that approach. We hope that our expertise from our well-respected work in the organic sector and, of course, our rigorously-guarded independence will bring even greater benefits to producers, their customers and the world at large.'

Certification and inspection bodies already working with the SAN will be invited to apply for IOAS accreditation during 2010, and they will be subject to the normal assessment procedures of the IOAS. Once the program is fully tested, a decision will be

taken as to whether the accreditation will be opened to other certification bodies around the world.

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The Sustainable Agriculture Network

The SAN promotes efficient agriculture, biodiversity conservation and sustainable community development through the development of social and environmental standards applied to farms aiming to achieve Rainforest Alliance Certified certification. Its sustainable agriculture standard is applicable to more than one hundred crops.

The SAN's global partners form a strong and unique network because they contribute local knowledge and experience in order to jointly develop the standards, particularly contributing to the development of local indicators that guide farmers effectively in each country. The SAN also fosters best management practices across agricultural value chains by encouraging farmers to comply with its standards and by motivating traders and consumers to support sustainability.

In 2008, the SAN board decided to further boost its strength in standards-setting and go beyond ISO65 to create an independent accreditation system. This quality system will include ISO65, additional SAN criteria to ensure high quality audits and interpretation guidance.

For more information visit www.ra.org

The International Organic Accreditation Service

The International Organic Accreditation Service is an independent, non-profit organisation that works to ensure trust and fair trade in products from responsible and environmentally-sound sources.

The services we provide assist:

- farmers and processors or such products to work in a fair environment;
- traders and retailers to sell their products both locally and across the world;
- certification bodies in demonstrating their competence and objectivity;
- government authorities to implement their legislation on labelling and verify the integrity of imports;
- consumers of organic and environmentally sound products to buy with confidence.

Our main activity is to verify the competence of certification bodies active in the field of organic and sustainable agriculture. We work world-wide, focusing our work solely in this field and apply our unparalleled experience with energy and commitment.

By ‘cultivating integrity’ we help to expand the area of land under organic and ecological management throughout the world - our contribution to a sustainable world. Our direct clients are the certification or control bodies that inspect farms, processors and traders and the main services we provide are as follows:

- IFOAM accreditation
- ISO Guide 65 accreditation
- Assessment for the European Union Recognition Programme
- Assessment for the Canadian Organic Regime
- Global Organic Textiles Standard accreditation
- Training

For more information visit www.ioas.org

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