



**Thirty-sixth Regular Meeting of the  
Executive Committee**

**REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN  
COMMISSION ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE  
2015**

**July 2016  
San José, Costa Rica**

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## 1. Background.

The Inter-American Commission on Organic Agriculture (ICOA) was established by The Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas through a Resolution of the Executive Committee of IICA at its Twenty-eighth Regular Meeting in 2008: IICA/EC /Res. 484 “Coordination Mechanisms for the Development of Organic Agriculture in the Americas”. At that Meeting, the Ministers of Agriculture designated IICA as the Technical Secretariat of the ICOA and also entrusted the Institute with the task of drafting its Bylaws, in conjunction with the Competent Authorities<sup>1</sup> of the Member Countries.

In 2009, the ICOA Technical Secretariat submitted the draft Bylaws for the consideration of the Executive Committee of IICA at its Twenty-ninth Regular Meeting. These were approved through Resolution IICA/CE/Res.506 and were subsequently ratified by the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) at its Fifteenth Regular Meeting, through Resolution IICA/IAB/Res.455.

At its first Regular Assembly held in San José, Costa Rica in November 2009, and on the basis of the mandates established by the Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas, ICOA established its policy guidelines that served as the basis for preparing its Annual Work Plans.

The ICOA currently consists of 19 member countries from the Americas that have organic regulatory systems and standards: Argentina Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela. Furthermore, Canadian representatives are participating in the Assembly as Observer Members.

The United States, the most recent country to join, participated as a full Member at the Seventh Regular Meeting. This addition revitalizes the ICOA’s institutional mandate to build ties with countries within the hemisphere that have Competent Authorities for Control and Development, and also to support the institutional strengthening process being initiated in countries that do not yet have established authorities in control of organic agriculture. In this regard, mention must be made of IICA’s 2015 initiative in the Caribbean - Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and other regional Offices, to contribute to the further development of organic agriculture by establishing an institutional legislative framework.

As a follow-up to the IABA mandate and with help from IICA and the ICOA, in previous years, the Seventh Regular Assembly of the ICOA Competent Authorities for Development (CAD) of Organic Agriculture was held in 2015. This core group initialed its charter Constitutive Act as Agreement No. 2 of the General Agreement Act, to provide inputs outlining the strategic priorities in support of the development of organic agriculture in the hemisphere.

The Seventh Regular Assembly of the Commission presents another opportunity for Canada’s Member Observers to convince their authorities of the importance of becoming a Full Member of the ICOA. Organic production players in the Caribbean will also meet to coordinate the regional institutional development strategy with public/private sectors in Spain in order to revive and strengthen joint work on public certification, evaluation of materials for organic production and promotion policies and development of organic agriculture, among other important issues.

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<sup>1</sup> The Competent Authorities for organic agriculture are the bodies responsible for ensuring the application of, and compliance with, the technical standards on organic agriculture in the countries, and guaranteeing the organic status of their respective country’s products. Their functions include registering organic producers, processors, distributors, input suppliers, inspectors and organic certification agencies, as well as auditing and keeping records of their activities.

The Board of Directors (BD) of the ICOA currently consists of Argentina, Ecuador, Honduras, and the United States. Argentina is the Chair and will in turn, serve as host of the Eighth Regular Meeting of the BD and the Eighth Regular Assembly of the ICOA.

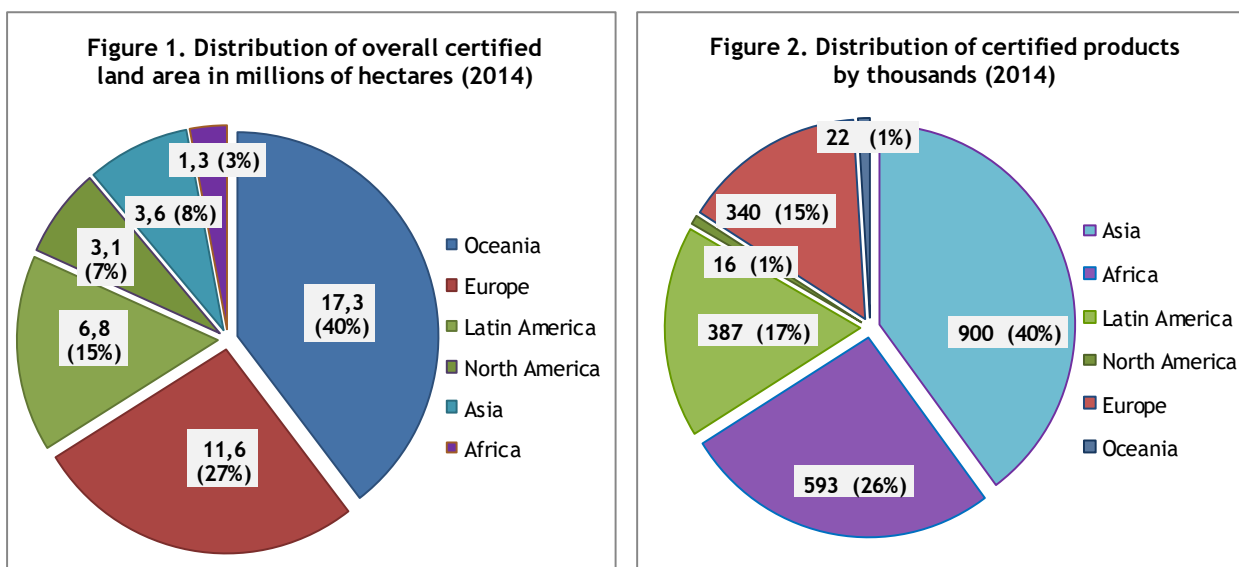
In compliance with Article 3, sub-paragraph m, of the Bylaws of the ICOA, this Report is hereby submitted to the Thirty-sixth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA, held in San José, Costa Rica.

## 2. Organic Agriculture in the Americas and the Global Context

In most of the countries of the region, the contribution of organic agriculture to the development of the agriculture sector is linked to sustainable food production, income generation, and to a large extent to improving the food security and quality of life of the producers engaged in this activity, most of whom are linked to family farming. Organic agriculture has also made undeniable contributions to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity and to the mitigation of climate change, efforts that are an intrinsic part of this type of production.

Based on the most recent data globally (Report<sup>2</sup> from FiBL-IFOAM<sup>3</sup>, 2016) in 2014, there were 43.7 million hectares under certified organic agricultural production worldwide in 172 countries, including in-conversion areas. This represents half a million hectares more than the previous year and approximately 1% of total agricultural land. It is estimated that there are 2.3 million producers involved in this activity who, in 2014, generated a business volume of more than 80 billion dollars. At the same time, approximately 80% of the producers are from developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; the largest domestic markets are in the United States and Europe, accounting for more than 90% of global sales.

The regions of the Americas have 9.9 million hectares of organic agricultural land, i.e. 22% of the world's land area is devoted to this type of production. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have 6.8 million hectares, and the United States and Canada, 3.1 million (Figure 1). It is estimated that there are some 404,000 organic producers in America, representing 18% of total producers worldwide, 1% of whom are located in Latin America and the Caribbean and 1% in the United States and Canada (Figure 2).

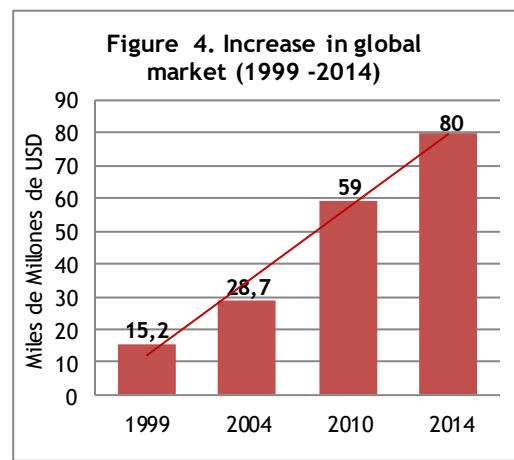
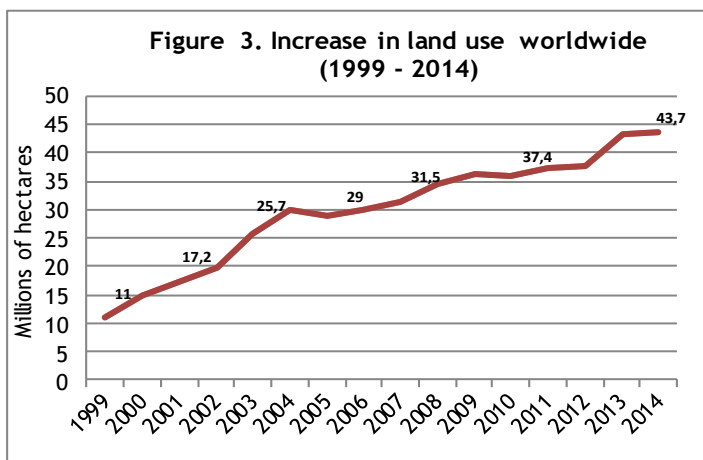


<sup>2</sup> Source: "The World Of Organic Agriculture. Statistics & Emerging Trends 2016"; FiBL and IFOAM, 2016.

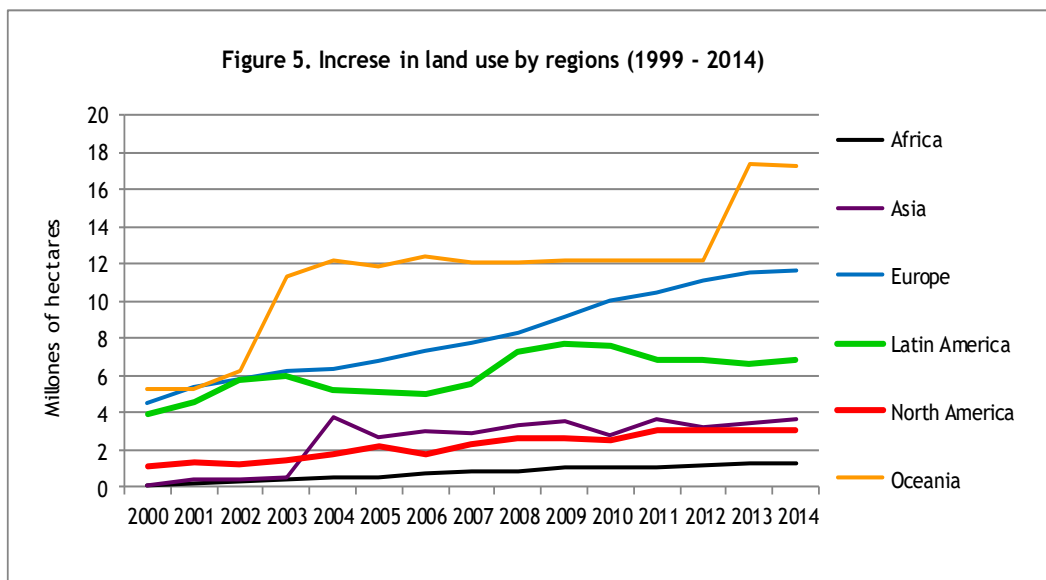
<sup>3</sup> FiBL: *Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau*. (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture)  
 IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

In terms of domestic markets, the United States has the highest volume, with 38.5 billion of the 80 billion dollars, i.e., 48% of the total worldwide. This is followed by the European Union market with 35 billion dollars (44%). Completing the ranking are China and Canada at 4%, Switzerland 3%, followed by Japan at 2%. The domestic market for Latin America and the Caribbean is still in its early stages, and although there is currently greater awareness regarding sustainable and healthy production, the region has a strong profile as a supplier of more developed markets. The exception in the region is Brazil with a marked profile in terms of development of its internal market as a contributor to food security.

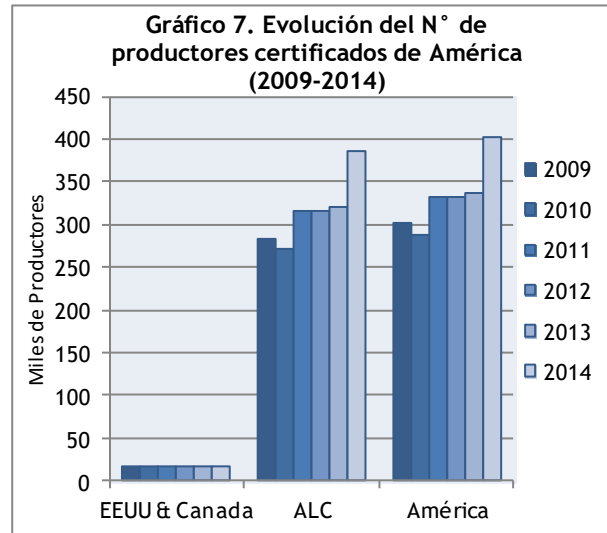
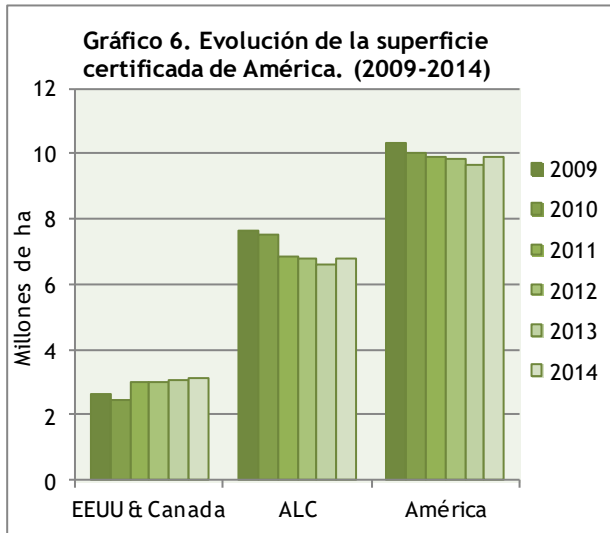
The trend in the increase of land use worldwide has remained stable since the end of the 90s, quadrupling between 1999 and 2014, as shown in Figure 3. Even more pronounced is the number of producers, which rose from approximately 200,000 to 2,000,000. The market in turn responded with a strong and steady five-fold increase in value between the end of the 90s and 2014 (Figure 4).



Overall, all regions experienced an increase in organic production land; however this performance is not homogeneous. As shown in Figure 5, the regions that made the relatively greatest contribution to total organic agricultural land are Oceania, Europe and Asia. The performance of the Americas (Latin America and the Caribbean in particular) is unstable as, while almost doubling their organic agricultural land 14 years ago, they have lost more than 600,000 hectares since 2009.



We will make reference to the 2009-2014 period for a detailed analysis of our hemisphere.



While the USA and Canada have managed during this period to increase their certified organic area by more than 18% at the hemispheric level, the Americas have shown an overall 2% decline, resulting from the 9% fall in Latin America and the Caribbean (Figure 6). In 2008, the region accounted for 28.5% of the overall certified land, declining to 22.6% in 2014. However, it should be pointed out that this reduction in relative and absolute terms in the hemispheric certified organic production area is due primarily to the removal of extensive grazing areas from the certified organic system in South America, whose weighting at the continental and global levels is crucial.

On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of producers with farms devoted to organic production, as illustrated in Figure 7. In this instance, while the USA and Canada remained stable at around 16,500 certified producers, Latin America showed a near 36% increase. This increase is not exclusive to the continent, as worldwide there has been growth in the number of producers, even greater than shown throughout the hemisphere. Whereas the Americas accounted for almost 20 % of all producers worldwide in 2008, in 2013 the Americas accounted for 17.5%.

## • Conclusions

- Recent estimates indicate that the international market for organic food and beverages is valued at 80 billion dollars, and is showing positive growth trends in all regions.
- The USA is the largest volume market globally.
- There is a concentrated demand for organic products in European and US markets that accounts for more than 90% of global domestic sales.
- It is estimated that trade in the USA grew by 11% in 2015, and an increase of more than 10% is expected in 2016<sup>4</sup>. The other regions are also showing positive trends; however, the global market for organic food does not surpass 1% of total food sales.

<sup>4</sup> Estimates provided by the OTA (Organic Trade Association)

- International trade is heavily regulated by rules and standards, and consumer expectations regarding organic products are very important.
  - This greatly limits supply. Organic farmers in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, therefore, must overcome a host of obstacles in order to access global export markets.
  - There is currently on the market a range of products being referred to as “organic” and produced under “sustainable” conditions that may be directly or indirectly competing with the supply of organic products.
  - Consumers are increasingly insistent that the organic certification process give guarantees concerning the methods of production and the origin and provenance of food.
  - While the organic market is normally viewed as a major achievement in the global food industry, given the expansion of its production to 172 countries, and quadrupled sales over the last 14 years, efforts still need to be made to extend consumer demand to new consumers in order to exceed the 1% share of organic products in the global food market.
  - The increase in income of populations in developing countries has led to social mobility, which has resulted in changes in consumer habits and additional demands among emerging middle classes. This presents an opportunity to expand the consumer base, since demand follows a pattern in which a small group of such persons are responsible for the majority of purchases.
- **Outlook and challenges**

From the foregoing, it is essential that ICOA countries have policies for promoting, developing and controlling organic agriculture, as well as building institutional structures to take advantage of opportunities available regionally and globally. At the same time, efforts should be geared toward linking smallholders to regional and international markets, where compliance with conditions and requirements regulated by the rules and standards for organic production and trade are becoming increasingly important.

There are imbalances in international trade that need to be addressed: Most of the products from LAC are marketed as raw materials, or as products with little farm gate value added, and are exported to the developed markets. This is reflected in their relatively low impact on the value of the organic products exported with respect to total commercial trade. Furthermore, products exported by LAC are used to produce organic food, which is then re-exported worldwide. In addition to the inherent environmental footprint of this trade flow, high logistical costs influence the final price to consumers, discouraging demand, and making it imperative that the countries establish policies and strategies that promote the increase, diversification and transformation of organic production and take into account social inclusion and the generation of wealth in the producing countries.

Harmonization of national regulations on organic production among the countries of the region and with *Codex Alimentarius*, as well as strengthening of the national control systems for organic production, are two activities that should continue to be encouraged in order to equal the standard set by the main trading partners, thereby providing guarantees and confidence in the region’s products, facilitating trade, and access to global markets.



It is recognized that overall, the countries of the region have developed organic farming by seizing opportunities available in the international market. However, efforts aimed at the promotion and developments of domestic markets are more recent, and therefore results are still emerging.

Why is it necessary to ensure the development of local (domestic) markets? This challenge should be reflected in the development programs of the countries of the region, focusing on a land management strategy and an opportunity for social inclusion of small farmers and of new consumers into domestic markets. This requires active policies that include sensitization, training of producers and consumers, as well as the promotion of new market strategies for organic products at the domestic level.

Why should there be an effort to find tools and strategies for developing local (domestic) markets? Because this has an impact on:

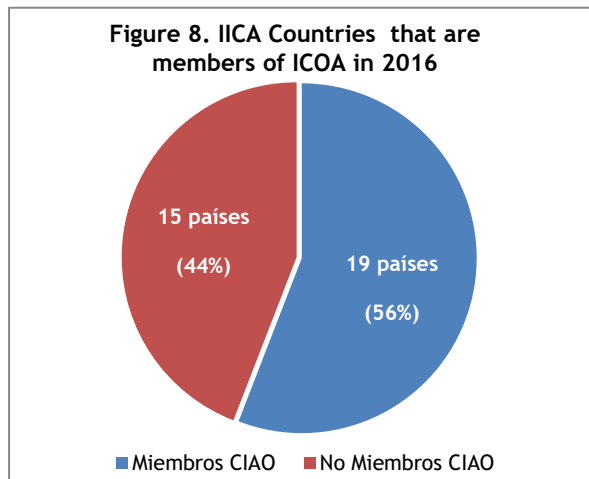
- **Health (of consumers and producers):** This aids in prevention by facilitating the consumption of healthy foods, thus reducing the cost of medical care for both the consumer and the producer.
- **Food security:** Provision, diversity, and accessibility of foods for a well-balanced diet at reasonable costs.
- **Land management:** Availability and use of lands in accordance with their capacity for use and their location within the landscape. Proximity food production in (short-circuit commercialization). Opportunities for agricultural production in peri-urban zones to reduce the risk of contaminating the population (pollution of water tables and water supply sources, spin-offs from phytosanitary applications in urban areas, urban labor force working in rural areas ).
- **Environmental health:** Adequate use of the productive environment, maintaining natural resources as the good that we will bequeath to the next generation.
- **Wealth generation:** Opportunity for personal development of those involved in the productive and business activities linked to organic products; and additionally, the creation of jobs, farm gate value added, and opportunities for funding and balanced regional development.

- Member Countries of the ICOA in 2016**

As was previously mentioned, the countries that are currently part of the ICOA are Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Board of Directors (BD) of the ICOA is made up of Argentina, Ecuador, Honduras and Panama. Argentina is the Chair.

	ICOA	Non-ICOA	IICA
Andean Region	5	-	5
Central Region	6	1	7
Caribbean Region	1	13	14
Northern Region	2	1	3
Southern Region	5	-	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>

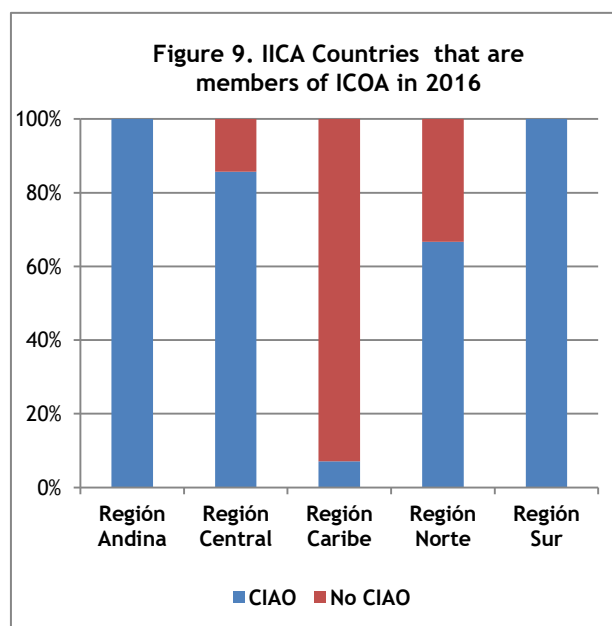


As indicated in the summarized data in Table 1 and in Figure 8, 56% of the member countries of IICA are also members of the ICOA. The majority of the remaining 44% of countries, while being members of IICA, are not yet members of the ICOA and do not yet have Competent Authorities for Control of Organic Production, necessary for promoting and supporting the institutional processes that lead to the creation of such authorities, which is an absolute requirement for becoming a Member Country of the ICOA.

A region-by-region analysis, as shown in Figure 10, reveals that there is a difference in the composition of member countries of the ICOA versus non-member countries.

Whereas all the IICA member countries from the Southern and Andean regions are members of the ICOA, we note that there is also significant participation by the Central and Northern regions. Quite obvious is the low level of participation by the Caribbean region, where 13 of the 14 IICA Member Countries (93%) are not yet members of the ICOA and do not yet have Competent Authorities for the Control of Organic Production.

This provides a regional perspective for guiding the efforts for promoting and supporting institutional processes that lead to the creation of such authorities.



### 3. Results obtained by the ICOA and ongoing actions.

#### • Results

In reference to the five objectives that were established for the ICOA by the Ministers of Agriculture when it was created through Article 3 of the ICOA Bylaw: IICA/ES/Res. 506 (XXIX-0/09), the following are the results obtained and activities carried out, based on the 2015/2016 Annual Work Plan<sup>5</sup> (AWP), approved by the Seventh Regular Assembly of the ICOA.

**OBJECTIVE1. To serve as a mechanism for consultation, liaison and reciprocal cooperation with the competent governmental bodies that promotes and establish standards for the development and control of organic agriculture in each country of the Americas.**

- The results presented below meet the objective of: "Using procedures to evaluate and authorize the use of commercial materials allowed in organic production" [Policy Area No. 2. Objective 3 ]:
  - R1.i)** A survey on "Current status of the evaluation of bio- organic agriculture" was designed, validated and circulated among member countries of the ICOA. Responses were collected.
  - R1.ii)** The synthesis and analysis of results will be presented at the Eighth Assembly of the ICOA (August 8-10, 2016 ) for the purpose of developing and managing a project aimed at the harmonization of ICOA evaluation and authorization procedures for allowing the use of commercial materials in organic production.
  - R1.iii)** A working group was established with INTERECO<sup>6</sup> in order to generate a consensus protocol for evaluation of materials for organic production that will create new technologies and materials for use in organic production, promote their availability from producers at affordable costs and promote their access to markets.
- The results presented below meet the objective of "Promoting the inclusion of technical positions and proposals of ICOA Member Countries in discussion forums on organic production of *Codex Alimentarius* and other International Forums". [Policy Area No. 3. Objective 2]:
  - R2.i)** ICOA countries arrived at a consensus via videoconference concerning the "Proposed draft revision of the guidelines for the production, processing, labeling and marketing of organically produced foods (organic agriculture)".
  - R2.ii)** *Codex* links took the position at the 43rd Meeting of the Codex Committee. CX / FL 16/43/4. The ICOA countries were informed on the results of that meeting.
  - R3.i)** A technical group was formed to advise the member countries of the ICOA regarding concerns about the removal of mineral and other oils (sub paragraph [6] p. 106/8) in the Implementation of Regulation EU No. 354/2014 of the European Commission (08/04/2014) in

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<sup>5</sup> The Annual Work Plan (AWP) of the ICOA constitutes the guidelines adopted by the Assembly. The AWP prioritizes and plans the actions of the period between ordinary meetings. It is organized in the following policy areas:

1. Policy Area No. 1: Institutional Framework for the development and promotion of organic production (3 goals).
2. Policy Area No. 2: International, regional and national trade of organic products (5 goals)
3. Policy Area No. 3: Information Management and Knowledge (4 goals )

<sup>6</sup> Chamber of Control Authorities of the Autonomous Communities of Spain.

organic production and labeling of organic products (Annex VI of the Annex of the Seventh Ordinary Assembly of the ICOA).

- With Regard to technical cooperation and alliances with other international organizations and agencies the ICOA, in 2015, established work agendas with the following bodies:

**R4)** Discussions with the Technical Secretariat of INNOVAGRO and the Executive Secretariat of PROCISUR were initiated.

**R5)** There have been initial meetings with IICA's Flagship Family Agriculture Project (FPAF) to activate the work plan:

Component 1. Public policies differentiated for FA with an emphasis on organic production.

Component 3. Capacity building of technicians and leaders in FA (projected for the Caribbean and Guatemala).

Component 4. Product differentiation strategies of FA organizations.

**R6)** Work with INTERECO resumed under the letter of intent for the signing of an INTERECO - CIAO Agreement "Agenda for a strategic alliance," which highlights collaboration in evaluation and registration of materials permitted in organic production, public certification systems, etc.

**OBJECTIVE 2. To coordinate and promote the development and harmonization of standards and procedures to stimulate and regulate the production, control of and trade in organic food in the countries of the Americas.**

- The results presented below meet the objective of: "Fostering the generation and implementation of regulations aligned to the *Codex Alimentarius* and international requirements for organic production to facilitate trade" (Policy Area No. 2. Objective 1):

**R7.i)** With the backing of the Secretariat of the Central American Economic Integration (SCAEI) and Competent Authorities of Agriculture of the States Parties, the Central American Technical Regulation (CATR) on "Organic Agricultural Products: Requirements for the Production, Processing, Marketing, Export, Import and Labeling" was discussed in a total of 5 rounds of face-to-face negotiation and 6 Video conferences (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama).

**R7.ii)** The final document<sup>7</sup> of the CATR was ratified and sent for consultation to Each Country.

**R8)** The Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN) invited the authorities of organic production of CAN countries to review the project of the Andean Technical Regulation on organic production including aspects of international standards and *Codex Alimentarius*.

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<sup>7</sup> The document in question has been harmonized with the latest versions of the standards of the Codex Alimentarius CAC / GL 32-1999 , European Union (EC ) No. 889/2008 , European Union ( EC ) No. 834/2007, USDA - AMS National Organic Program, USDA Organic standards 7 CFR 205 international standards for phytosanitary measures , ISPM 5 Glossary of phytosanitary terms and based on the regulations of Organic Agriculture in Member countries.

- The results presented below meet the objective of: “Developing proposed regulations for organic products or groups of products that are not regulated”(Policy Area No. 2. Objective 4):

**R9)** A Working Group was formed to promote the development of regulations for organic aquaculture in ICOA countries.

**R10)** A Working Group was formed to promote the development of regulations for organic viticulture in ICOA countries.

The results obtained with reference to the harmonization of standards and assessment systems and common certification for the evaluation of materials allowed in organic production also contribute to Objective 2 of the Statute of the ICOA (R1 and R7 Results).

**OBJECTIVE 3. To contribute to the strengthening of the institutional structures of the Competent Authorities for organic agriculture in the countries of the Americas.**

- The results presented below meet the objective of “Strengthening National Control Systems of Organic Production (NCS)” (Policy Area No. 1. Objective 1):

**R11.i)** Workshops implementing the EPS (Evaluation, Planning and Strengthening tool of the NCS) were held in Ecuador.

**R11.ii)** A diagnostic document and an improvement proposal resulting from the application of the EPS in the Dominican Republic and Bolivia were handed over.

**R11.iii)** Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Bolivia are in the process of implementing in 2016, based on the proposals for improvement.

**R12.i)** A survey on the status and scope of the NCS in each country was designed, validated and circulated among Member Countries.

**R12.ii)** The ICOA is in the process of systematizing information for diagnosis; the results will be presented at the Eighth Assembly of the ICOA.

- In order to meet the Objective of “Promoting the institutional framework for the development of organic animal production” (Policy Area No. 1. Objective 2):

**R13.i)** A survey of the regulatory framework for organic animal production was designed, validated and circulated among ICOA member countries. Country responses were collected.

**R13.ii)** Information for the purpose of creating a working agenda among countries with identified authorities was systemized and analyzed.

**OBJECTIVE 4. Within the framework of other functions that contribute to the development of organic agriculture, to sponsor, insofar as possible, to the development of the activity and its institutional framework.**

- In order to meet the objective of "Encouraging the development and promotion of organic agriculture in countries" (Policy Area No. 1 Objective 3.):

**R14)** A network of competent authorities for development of organic agriculture was formed through the Annex II of the Minutes of the Seventh Regular Assembly of the ICOA.

**R15)** A survey "diagnosis of public policies/measures for the development/ promotion of organic agriculture" was designed and validated for circulation among attendees of the Eighth Assembly of the ICOA.

- In order to meet the objective of "Encouraging the development of local and national markets for organic products" (Policy Area No. 2. Objective 2):

**R16)** Activities to deepen knowledge of public certification systems and other security systems for organic products were harmonized.

**OBJECTIVE 5. Contribute to the development and trade of organic agriculture in the countries of the Americas, acting as a technical body for knowledge management, socialization and dissemination of relevant and timely information.**

- In order to meet the objective of "Promoting the development of a guide to Good Practices (GP) for the production of organic horticultural products that may be implemented in countries". (Policy Area No. 2. Objective 4):

**R17)** Guidelines on best practices for organic products regarding:

- i. Horticultural production. Drafted, corrected and at the editing stage prior to publication.
- ii. Production of tropical fruits and fruit derivatives. Drafted, corrected and at editing stage prior to publication.
- iii. Production of temperate fruits (citrus and stone fruit and seed). In drafting stage.

- In order to meet the objective of "Improving availability and access to information for supporting decision-making processes of actors in organic production" (Policy Area No. 3 Objective 1):

**R18)** Virtual forums were designed and implemented on specific topics (aquaculture, viticulture, proposed EU regulation, organic animal production, the proposed EU regulation, organic animal production).

**R19)** The ICOA website and ICOA monthly newsletter "Inforgánica" was comprehensively redesigned to meet the communication needs of organic production actors in the Americas.

**R20)** As part of the communication strategy which includes the Web site and "Inforgánica" the communication plan of the ICOA for social networks (Community Management) was designed, validated and is in the process of being implemented.

**R21)** Additionally, three videoconferences on "Adaptation, validation and promotion of SCAEI in the Americas in response to climate change were held: Possibilities for Organic Agriculture in Argentina".

- **Emerging topics**

The global growth and development trends in organic agriculture and its markets imply an emergence of topics that are being incorporated into the ICOA agenda, among which are:

- Strengthening of the institutional framework and development of agendas for promotion in the countries that facilitate the growth of organic production in the region and its positioning in the local, regional and international markets.
- Development and standardization of protocols for the evaluation and registration of inputs that are permitted in organic production that will enable the activity to be more vibrant.
- Development of Good Practices for organic products, in response to growing market demands, in order facilitate access for these products and position them in the markets.
- Establishment and strengthening of the institutional framework for production and control of animal-based organic activity, which will enable regular activity in this productive sector.
- Development of proposals for rules governing organic products, or groups of products that are unregulated.
- From an institutional point of view, there is need for support for initiatives aimed at developing the necessary institutional framework in the Countries of the Caribbean Region in order to provide them with Competent Authorities for Control and Promotion.

#### 4. Financial status of the ICOA.

The ICOA has an annual budget to finance the activities approved by the Assembly and outlined in its Annual Work Plan, to which all its Member States contribute.

At the Fifth Regular Meeting of the Assembly of the ICOA held in Santiago, Chile, in May 2013, the representatives of the Member States of the ICOA approved the Operational Rules of the Commission, which, among other things, outlines the following details with respect to payment of the annual quota:

- According to Article 6, the principal resources of the ICOA for financing its Annual Work Plan shall be the quota contributions of the Member States, and, pursuant to Article 2, they shall be responsible for contributing said resources.
- Article 7 establishes that all Member States of the ICOA shall contribute annually the sum of six thousand American dollars (USD 6,000) to finance the Annual Work Plan and its administrative activity.
- Article 10 states that this quota contribution shall be paid during the first semester of each calendar year in order to finance the Annual Work Plan established for that calendar year. The importance of this timeframe is outlined in Article 11 which establishes that any delay in payment of the quota contribution directly affects the Annual Work Plan, which will require that the Board of Directors revamp said Plan.

Moreover, in an effort to provide details on certain aspects of administration and management of the annual quota contributed by the member States of the ICOA, the BD-ICOA approved the Procedures Manual in the Virtual Minutes No.02 of 2014 to support the administration of resources contributed within the framework of the Agreement signed with IICA to this effect.

Table 2 below shows the status of Member Countries' commitment to their quota contribution to the ICOA as of June 2016:

Table 2. Status of ICOA quotas contributions as at June 2016 (in USD)				
COUNTRY	2014	2015	2016	TOTAL arrears
<b>COUNTRIES WITH PAID QUOTAS</b>				
PARAGUAY	0	0	0	0
<b>COUNTRIES WITH UNPAID QUOTAS</b>				
ARGENTINA	0	0	6,000	6,000
ECUADOR	0	6,000	6,000	12,000
UNITED STATES	0	0	6,000	6,000
NICARAGUA	0	6,000	6,000	12,000
BOLIVIA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
BRAZIL	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
CHILE	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
COLOMBIA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
COSTA RICA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
EL SALVADOR	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
GUATEMALA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
HONDURAS	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
MEXICO	0	0	6,000	6,000
PANAMA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
PERU	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
URUGUAY	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
VENEZUELA	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
<b>TOTAL arrears</b>	<b>78,000</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>108,000</b>	<b>276,000</b>



## 5. Requests for support.

In order to promote the development of organic production in the countries of the Americas, as well as its local, regional and international trade, and promote the social inclusion of producers and consumers, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas are being asked to:

1. Support the development of agendas aimed at promoting organic production and its markets.
2. Provide management support for dealing with and replace the current organic production regulations, using as a basis the Draft Regional Regulation for Organic Production in Central America and the Dominican Republic, which was approved by the Ministers of Agriculture of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) in November 2012.
3. Provide management support for dealing with and replace the current organic production regulations, using as a basis the Andean Technical Regulations for Organic Production in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.
4. Support the strengthening of the National Control Systems (NCS) for organic production in the countries that require it, through the application of the EPS tool which facilitates assessment of the performance of the NCS, and prepare proposals for strengthening them.
5. Support the initiatives aimed at development and promotion of organic production in the Caribbean, in order to generate the necessary cooperation for developing the institutional framework required for establishing its regulatory bodies and its authorities for control and promotion.
6. Intervene and promote the necessary efforts to regularize payment of the annual quota contribution of the member Countries of the ICOA. In light of the financial status of the Commission, the Ministers of Agriculture are especially being asked to do this.

## 6. Acknowledgements.

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We are confident that this contribution will continue to be put to excellent use by the ICOA on behalf of the countries of the Americas, the organic producers and their families.



**Juan Carlos Ramírez**

*Chairman, Board of Directors*

**Inter-American Commission on Organic Agriculture (ICOA)**