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Organic farming rules

MEPs vote to boost sustainability and credibility of organic farming

The European Parliament's agriculture committee today voted on draft new EU rules on organic farming. The vote sets out parliament's position and paves the way for trilogue negotiations with EU governments, with a view to finalising the legislation. Commenting after the vote, Green agriculture spokesperson **Martin Häusling**, who is the rapporteur/draftsman for the EU Parliament, said:

"Today's vote would be boost for the sustainability of organic farming and for consumers. The rules voted by MEPs today would help strengthen organic farming methods and ensure consumers can have even greater confidence in the products they buy under the organic label. We hope EU governments will now take their lead from parliament's position.

"MEPs voted for a strict, process-based controls regime to tackle food fraud. The controls should be more risk-based, with mandatory on-site checks on all organic farms. National authorities would be responsible for ensuring traceability of each product at all stages of production, preparation and distribution. This will give consumers greater certainty that the organic products they buy are truly organic.

"The vote introduced precautionary measures to avoid contamination of organic products with non-authorised substances, like pesticides. MEPs called on the Commission to further investigate the issue and, if necessary, make proposals such as maximum thresholds for non-authorised substances and compensation for farmers for unintended contamination.

"Under the rules voted today mixed farms, with organic and conventional sections, could only exist if there is a clearly distinct separation of crops and animals. The vote also introduced provisions to make it easier for small farmers to turn organic.

"MEPs backed the Commission's initial proposal to ensure that all imported products comply with tough EU rules. The current equivalence rules, which require third countries to comply with similar but not the same standards, would be phased out within next five years."

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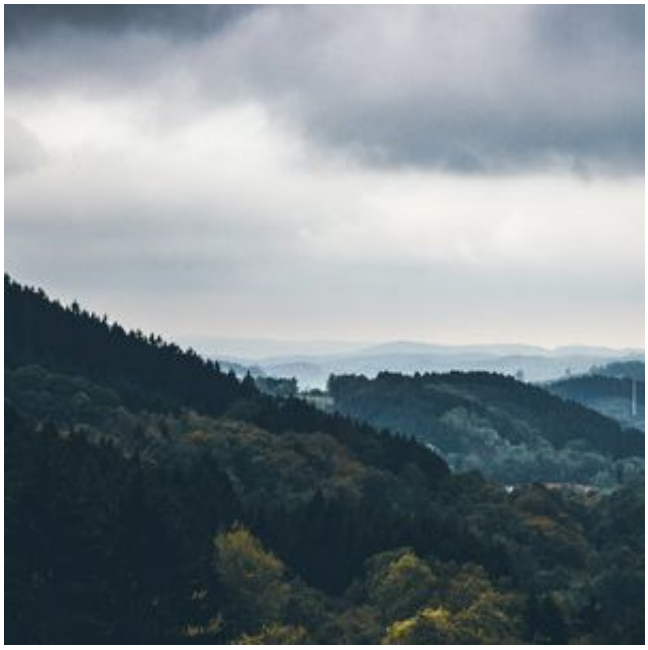


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Martin Häusling

Member

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