

Memorandum of Understanding between FoodPLUS and EA

Introduction

Considering that FoodPLUS is the scheme owner of the world-wide operated **EurepGAP** certification scheme *including a recognition system of other schemes*.

Considering that **FoodPLUS, from now on called EurepGAP**, requires Certification Bodies operating in its schemes to be accredited by IAF/EA Product certification MLA Accreditation Bodies signatories

Considering that EurepGAP contracts at this time with over 70 Certification Bodies Worldwide and that the supervision of these CBs is carried out by the Accreditation Bodies that are MLA signatories

Considering that EurepGAP delegates the responsibility of supervision of the CBs it contracts with to the corresponding Accreditation Bodies, and that harmonization of criteria applied by the different ABs is increasingly important to ensure consistency of that supervision

Considering that EurepGAP has detected that there are differences in interpretation of EurepGAP rules by different ABs, and that this could be solved by better communication between EurepGAP and the ABs

Considering that the **European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA)** is the cooperation of the national Accreditation bodies in Europe

Considering that EA is responsible for the harmonization and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the ultimate goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited conformity assessment bodies and to support its Multilateral Agreements (MLA)

Considering that the EA MLA is established and maintained on the basis of the ISO/IEC 17011 standard through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which EA contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of certificates issued by accredited conformity assessment bodies

Both EA and EurepGAP have agreed to have a close cooperation between the two organisations to ensure harmonization in the accreditation practices performed by EA members in the EurepGAP owned schemes and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the schemes with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the EurepGAP owned and benchmarked schemes' accredited certification bodies.

In order to achieve such goal both organisations have agreed:



1. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

1.1. EurepGAP shall inform to EA MLA signatories (through info-mails, website extranet and e-mails where necessary) of the following:

- 1.1.1. Any New EurepGAP approved standards and schemes
- 1.1.2. Any revision of EurepGAP guidance documents
- 1.1.3. Outcomes from any CB workshop held by EurepGAP.
- 1.1.4. Official communication between EurepGAP and CBs which ABs would have an interest in.
- 1.1.5. Any change in the status of CBs with respect to EurepGAP Approval
- 1.1.6. Any findings EurepGAP may have regarding CB activities requiring the attention of ABs

1.2. EA MLA signatories¹ shall inform EurepGAP of the following:

- 1.2.1. Whenever the accreditation of a CB has been suspended or withdrawn.
- 1.2.2. Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the EurepGAP documents.
- 1.2.3. Information on which foreign critical locations (as defined in IAF GD 3:2003) of their accredited Certification Bodies have been assessed by the Accreditation Body (on request)
- 1.2.4. Curriculum Vitae and documented evidence of the qualifications of each technical assessor employed for EurepGAP accreditation assessments (on request)

2. MANDATORY INTERPRETATIONS ON EUREPGAP DOCUMENTS

EurepGAP shall establish a system to receive and study questions coming from EA MLA signatories and accredited Certification Bodies and to release mandatory interpretations on the EurepGAP documents

3. CONTACT PERSONS

Both EA and EurepGAP shall appoint a liaison person of each organisation to act as contact person. Each EA member shall appoint a person from its staff to be the EA MLA signatory contact person with EurepGAP.

4. ASSESSORS AND ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 EurepGAP shall establish an online forum to facilitate the information exchange among the EA MLA signatories' technical assessors.
- 4.2 EA MLA signatories adhering to this MoU shall require each technical assessor used for assessment of EurepGAP approved CBs to consult the online forum.
- 4.3 An EA MLA signatory representative shall attend the workshops specifically organised by EurepGAP for Accreditation Bodies for specific issues (normally no more than one per year)

¹ In this document EA MLA signatories means signatories of the EA MLA for Product certification



- 4.4 EurepGAP may provide EA with a list of experts which can be used by EA MLA signatories, under Accreditation Bodies' qualification system, as team members during the assessments.
- 4.5 EA and EurepGAP may in their discussions establish minimum requirements on technical assessors for all EA MLA signatories to follow.
- 4.6 EurepGAP staff persons are encouraged to act as observers in the EA MLA signatories assessment teams if agreed by the assessed certification body, and the Certification body's customer (if applicable).
- 5 CROSS FRONTIER ACTIVITIES
- 5.1 EA MLA signatories shall apply the IAF Guidance on Cross Frontier Accreditation (IAF GD 3) to EurepGAP owned and benchmarked schemes.
- 5.2 EurepGAP shall maintain public information on the locations declared by CBs to EurepGAP. EA MLA signatories should use this information to crosscheck the information received from the CBs in application of Cross Frontier Policy
- 6 IMPLEMENTATION
- 6.1 EA MLA Signatories and EurepGAP shall each bear their own costs.
- 6.2 The implementation of this MoU shall be evaluated during the Peer evaluation to the EA MLA signatories adhering to this MoU.

This MoU is effective from (date of signing)
Signatory EA members accepting this MoU are shown in the Annex

European Cooperation of Accreditation

Name of the Chairman of EA

D. PIERRE

EurepGAP

Name of the responsible person of EurepGAP

FoodPLUS GmbH
Spichernstraße 55
D - 50672 Köln (Cologne)
Phone +49 (0) 221- 5 79 93-25
Fax +49 (0) 221- 5 79 93-45

7. Oct. 2005

Date