

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY  
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT  
POLICY

Voluntary  Public

**Date:** 11/1/2016

**GAIN Report Number:** GM16023

## Germany

**Post:** Berlin

### **U.S.-EU Organic Trade with High Standards and Big Opportunities**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Events

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events  
and Shows

Promotion Opportunities

Agricultural Situation

**Approved By:**

Kelly Stange

**Prepared By:**

Leif Erik Rehder/Roswitha Krautgartner

**Report Highlights:**

The seminar tour, “U.S.-EU Organic Trade: High Standards and Big Opportunities”, was organized by the Organic Trade Association and the United States Department of Agriculture. The tour brought together key players from the organic sector in Austria, Germany, and the U.S. The seminars successfully provided a platform for a dialogue on mutual recognition of standards by using the example of the EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement.

## **General Information:**

### **Summary**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), together with the Organic Trade Association (OTA), hosted a seminar tour titled: “U.S.-EU Organic Trade: High Standards and Big Opportunities” in Berlin, Munich, and Vienna on August 9-11, 2016. This outreach activity was funded by OTA and CSSF funds. The seminars brought together key players from the organic sector in Germany, Austria and the United States. Germany and Austria are two of the largest markets for organic products in Europe and the United States is the biggest organic market worldwide. Discussions and presentations demonstrated that Germany and Austria, and the United States have many organic market trends in common. The seminars successfully provided a platform for a dialogue on similarities and differences between organic markets on both sides of the Atlantic. The EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement was discussed as an example for good working transatlantic trade relationships and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) could follow that model with both sides recognizing the differences in each other’s systems while respecting both sides’ high standards. Based on the response to the seminar tour and the dialogue between participants, we conclude that U.S. organic agriculture can be a leverage to polish the image of U.S. food and agriculture.

### **Background**

Organic agriculture and the organic food market play a very important role in Germany, Austria and the United States with organic sales continuously growing. The markets have seen long term growth and organic farmers, processors and traders have seen the turn from niche market to mainstream. The EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement, signed in February 2012, turned out to be a great improvement for organic trade on both sides of the Atlantic. Since then, organic products certified under USDA standards in the United States or under EU standards in the EU can be sold as organic in either market. The arrangement broke down most of the trade barriers for organic foods created by two different certification schemes for the U.S. and the EU market. This partnership streamlines trade between the two largest organic producers in the world, and provides organic farmers and businesses access to a growing combined market of over \$50 billion.

The seminars in Berlin, Munich, and Vienna hosted by the USDA and OTA had the target to polish the image of U.S. agricultural production, support ongoing commercial sales and bring together key representatives from politics, organizations, and the industry. The EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement also served as a model for TTIP showing that it is possible to reduce transatlantic technical barriers to trade in the agricultural sector. This equivalency arrangement has been a great example of how both sides of the Atlantic can recognize each other’s systems while respecting both sides’ high standards. The mutual recognition of the EU and U.S. labels simplified market access for both the European Union and the United States to the benefit of both partners.

### **Seminar at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, August 9**

Kelly Stange, Agricultural Counselor in Berlin, welcomed over 30 participants for the seminar “US-EU Organic Trade: High Standards and Big Opportunities” at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin on August 9,

2016. Monique Marez, Associate Director International Trade at OTA, presented background information on OTA and gave updates on U.S. organic industry statistics, policies, and research. Peter Röhrig, Managing Director of the German Association of Organic Farmers, Food Processors and Traders, discussed statistics and policies of organic agriculture and food in Germany. Melody Meyer, Vice President of Policy and Industry Relations for United Natural Foods as well as member of OTA's board of directors presented hot Trends in U.S. organic food, personal care, and textiles. Ms. Meyer highlighted that there was the largest ever dollar increase in 2015 with American consumers spending more than \$43 billion on organic.

Jim Wedeberg, Dairy Pool Director and founding producer at CROPP Cooperatives and Organic Valley, kicked off the second half of the seminar by presenting on successes and lessons in international cooperation of the cooperative. This was followed by a presentation of Dr. Norbert Kolb, head of the working group for organic products at Waren-Verein Hamburg e.V., which represents German companies importing organic products. Dr. Kolb spoke about the opportunities and challenges in the supply chain for organic products and gave detailed insight into trade between Germany. The final U.S. speaker was Robert Anderson, Senior Trade Advisor at OTA, presenting on Trends, Successes, and Outlook in German/U.S. Organic Trade. This was followed by a roundtable discussion on differences and similarities in organic production and structure as well as opportunities and challenges for trade.

At the end of the seminar Kelly Stange made a final statement summarizing the need for a continued dialogue between the two biggest organic markets worldwide. She highlighted that the mutual recognition of the EU and the U.S. labels simplified market access for both the European Union and the United States to the benefit of both partners. The arrangement has proved to be a good example of how the United States and the European Union can recognize each other's systems and work together across borders.

#### Selected Pictures



Keynote Speech: Kelly Stange, Agricultural Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin



Dr. Norbert Kolb presenting on opportunities and challenges in the supply chain of organic products



Roundtable discussion: Melody Meyer, Bob Anderson, Jim Wedeberg, and Dr. Norbert Kolb (left to right) moderated by Monique Marez (at the podium).

Full gallery on seminar pictures:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usbotschaftberlin/sets/72157669196145514/>

### **Seminar at the Bavarian Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry in Munich, August 10**

The seminar, "U.S.-EU Organic Trade: High Standards and Big Opportunities" in Munich was hosted by the Bavarian Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry on August 10, 2016. Hubert Bittlmayer, Head of Department at the Bavarian Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, welcomed about 25 participants to the seminar. Jennifer D. Gavito, Consul General at the U.S. Consulate in Munich, highlighted the growth and importance of organic food in Bavaria and the United States. This followed the previous day's OTA program presented by Monique Marez, Melody Meyer, Jim Wedeburg, and Robert Anderson. Harald Ulmer, Managing Director of the Bavarian Association of Organic Farmers, Food Processors and Traders, discussed statistics and policies of organic agriculture and food in Bavaria and Germany.

The presentations were followed by a general discussion moderated by Monique Marez on the differences and similarities in organic production and structure as well as opportunities and challenges for trade. Of special interest for the Bavarian organic industry were potential opportunities to export to the United States. At the end of the seminar, Anton Hübl, Head of Department European Policy and International Cooperation, thanked OTA and the USDA for starting the organic dialogue between Bavaria and the United States. He highlighted the need for further information exchange with Biofach, the world's leading trade show for organic food, probably being the perfect platform to continue.

#### Selected Pictures



Hubert Bittlmayer, Head of Department at the Bavarian Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry and Jennifer D. Gavito, Consul General at the U.S. Consulate.



Auditorium at the Organic Seminar in Munich.



Bavarian Government officials, U.S. Government officials and OTA delegation members.

### **Seminar in Vienna, August 11**

U.S. Ambassador to Austria, Alexa Wesner, welcomed over 50 participants for the seminar “U.S.-EU Organic Trade: High Standards and Big Opportunities” at her residence in Vienna on August 11, 2016. Kelly Stange, U.S. Agricultural Counselor for Austria, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia who is based in Germany, guided the program and introduced speakers. The OTA team gave the previous day’s presentations and Rainer Haas, Associate Professor at the Austrian University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences discussed the Austrian organic market and trends and strategies of market leaders. The Austrian audience had many comments and questions about the U.S. market and opportunities for Austrian products. Dr. Haas gave some insights on what he saw as the best opportunities for U.S. products in Austria, primarily processed products and snack food.

At the end of the seminar Kelly Stange made a final statement summarizing the need for a continued dialogue between the two biggest organic markets worldwide. She highlighted that the mutual recognition of the EU and the U.S. labels simplified market access for both the European Union and the United States to the benefit of both partners. The arrangement has proved to be a good example of how the United States and the EU can recognize each other’s systems and work together across borders. Feedback from the audience during coffee break and during the organic lunch, sponsored by OTA, was extremely positive.



Welcome Speech: Alexa Wesner, U.S. Ambassador to Austria



Roundtable discussion moderated by Monique Marez; panelists: Rainer Haas, Melody Meyer, Bob Anderson, and Jim Wedeberg (left to right).



Auditorium at the Organic Seminar in Vienna/Austria.

Full gallery on seminar pictures:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembvienna/albums/72157671426441142>

### **Next Steps**

After the organic outreach tour, post has continued interaction with the organic sector in Austria and Germany. The tour was well received in all cities and the seminars have shown the need for information on all aspects of the U.S. organic market from production to consumption. Interest came from various levels of the German and Austrian organic sector ranging from private, industry and governmental organizations as well as research institutions and press. Post is already developing ideas to keep the momentum going with Germany's Biofach, the world largest trade show for organic products, coming up in February 2017. At Biofach, the EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement was officially signed in 2012 and the show in 2017 could be used to celebrate its 5 year anniversary with presentations, discussions, media outreach, or receptions.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The organic outreach tour, with seminars in Berlin, Munich, and Vienna, was extremely well received and the seminars have clearly helped to polish the image of U.S. agricultural production in the EU. The seminars and the interaction between members of the OTA delegation and key players of the Austrian and German organic sector successfully provided a platform for open discourse on the organic market and trade. Discussions and presentations showed that Germany and Austria have many organic market trends in common with the United States. The markets have seen long term growth and organic farmers, processors and traders have seen the turn from niche market to mainstream. Another similarity is using distinction to conventional agriculture as a tool in their marketing campaigns.

However, presentations and discussions have shown that there is not much knowledge about U.S. organic production, the recent development of the sector, or the EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement. Thus, basic information exchange was needed to start a discussion. For example, guests were prejudiced that U.S. organic production standards are lower than Europe's and the audience had little knowledge about the size and recent boom of the U.S. organic market. Perception towards U.S. organic is very similar to perception towards other U.S. agricultural products or U.S. food

safety standards in general. Thus, discussing organic or selling U.S. organic products can be as challenging as marketing other U.S. agricultural products. But, guests could draw the conclusion that the EU-U.S. Organic Equivalence Cooperation Arrangement could serve as a model for TTIP showing that it is possible to reduce transatlantic technical barriers to trade in the agricultural sector.

The seminars in Germany and Austria can be seen as the beginning of a permanent dialogue on organic and Post has already received some inquiries for more information. For further discourse, future initiatives and events, post's takeaway is that the U.S. organic agriculture can be a leverage to discuss U.S. agriculture in a more positive way and help polish the image of U.S. agriculture. Moreover, since the German and Austrian organic sector is among the most hostile groups against TTIP and U.S. agricultural production, any progress here would be essential to change general public perception towards U.S. agriculture.

## **Digital Engagement on events in Berlin, Munich and Vienna**

### **Organic Trade Association**

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/764017438459502594>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/764015188404076546>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/764014112376393728>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763676391967645701>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763649174285922304>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763631073150459905>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763344392438489088>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763321550753796102>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763299024128442372>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763283860238897153>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763272548322684929>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763268756042690560>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762992438147506176>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762965691263815681>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762964868223950849>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762962754902822913>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762960596295938048>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762959522902269952>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762957766524829696>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762956586323156992>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762954187005190144>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762953198860656640>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762948558442102784>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762946973603422208>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762937723359522816>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762934803679309824>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762932747711180805>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762930539007451136>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762929934562127872>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762929041540276225>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762928145200738304>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762927210558808064>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762916328500060160>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762924222838636545>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762924059294400512>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/762916265145016320>

### **Melody Meyer's Organic Matters**

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/MeyerMelody/status/765978689603510272>  
<https://twitter.com/MeyerMelody/status/764132084432658432>

Blog:

[https://organicmattersblog.com/2016/08/17/bavaria-and-austria-put-the-culture-in-ag/?blogsub=confirming#blog\\_subscription-2](https://organicmattersblog.com/2016/08/17/bavaria-and-austria-put-the-culture-in-ag/?blogsub=confirming#blog_subscription-2)  
<https://organicmattersblog.com/2016/08/12/german-american-delegation-begins-ends-with-wurst-salad-ever/>

### **U.S. Embassy Berlin, August 9**

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/usbotschaftberlin/posts/1060244487358678>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762987533491838977>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762981377281110017>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762981377281110017>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762981377281110017>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762935837222809600>  
<https://twitter.com/usbotschaft/status/762916328500060160>

Homepage:

<https://de.usembassy.gov/us-eu-organic-trade-high-standards-big-opportunities/>

Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duxcyHjiM5Q>

### **U.S. Consulate Munich, August 10**

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/usconsulatemunich/posts/10154466353838809>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763268756042690560>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763272548322684929>  
<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/763283860238897153>  
<https://twitter.com/usconsmunich/status/763293510598623232>  
<https://twitter.com/usconsmunich/status/763295503429865472>  
<https://twitter.com/usconsmunich/status/763301434511073280>  
<https://twitter.com/usconsmunich/status/763322052245716992>

## **U.S. Embassy Vienna, August 11**

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/USEmbVienna/photos/a.114538390993.101476.61299260993/10153814498355994/?type=3>

<https://www.facebook.com/USEmbVienna/posts/10153814435900994>

<https://www.facebook.com/USEmbVienna/photos/a.114538390993.101476.61299260993/10153805057060994/?type=3>

<https://www.facebook.com/USEmbVienna/posts/10153798670905994>

<https://www.facebook.com/USEmbVienna/photos/a.114538390993.101476.61299260993/10153791750405994/?type=3>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/765867398784282625>

<https://twitter.com/OrganicTrade/status/764015188404076546>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/764052227841335296>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/763765711680438272>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/763693539674947584>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/762654672347885568>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/762637043428106241>

<https://twitter.com/usembvienna/status/762586679286853633>

Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExAkZBqeiKA>