

Dios Bio – Certification process needs to be improved**Björn Gehrman, Weikfield Products, India, suggests more incentives for small companies in organic sector to enhance organic sales**

“The most difficult part of exporting our organic tea was to understand the import certification process for organic products in Eastern Europe and not the actual production of more than 15,000 boxes of tea”, admits Björn Gehrman, Sales and Marketing Manager EU, who’s company Weikfield has recently sold its first container in accordance with EU-Regulations to Hungary. “Since May 2004 a number of new countries in Eastern Europe have joined the EU and our research shows a huge demand for organic tea. However, the certification processes have not yet been harmonized”, says the German, who works in India.

The second challenge which an exporter of organic food products faces is the unbalanced burden of certification costs. Despite the demand for Bio-Tea, actual sales figures remain low. High expenses for certification processes especially for small buyers and sellers impedes the growth of organic product sales, believes Gehrman. “We invest huge amounts of time and money in finding individual solutions within our customer’s range of possibilities just to get started. However, there is no difference between a newcomer and a well-established firm as far as costs are concerned”, says the Sales and Marketing Manager. He suggests a discount for the first import authorization or a license in advance for one year only. This could make the difference and may help to give small companies a chance. “I am very open to discuss incentives and ways to economize certification costs”, says the graduate of international economics.

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