



### **Vertical farming and off-ground crops: certifications are coming.**

AquaFarm hosts the debate on the certification of production methods and products from vertical farming, aquaponics, and off-ground crops in the opening session of its second edition on February 15th and 16th at Pordenone Fair.

**Pordenone, 16 January 2018.** In the United States, the debate has been very intense, sometimes brought over the limit by one of the parties involved. At the end, the off-shore cultivations and the aquaponics won: it is always possible to certify as Organic a hydroponic plant and to label its products with the leaf's trademark. In Europe the situation is different, hydroponics is excluded from the biological, as the European definition implies the presence of soil in contact with the basic rock. In a world where the population grows and even more so does the demand for quality, safe, sustainable, accessible and low-priced food, does it make sense to focus on the "organic" label? The news also recently report of lots of organic products withdrawn from the market for one problem or another. And all this not because the manufacturer has not respected the norms of the biological protocol, but also after having fulfilled them. So, what's really important? AquaFarm, in its short but consolidated tradition of innovation and hot topics, will give its contribution, even provocative, to the debate on what answers should be given to such a crucial question for the future of the planet. And it will give it immediately from the first day of the event, scheduled for 15 and 16 February at Pordenone Fair. The opening session is in fact dedicated to Post-bio: certifications in soilless crops with an array of speakers of the highest international level. The session will be moderated by Paolo Battistel, an internationally known agronomist, and consultant, who operates from the Siberian steppes to the Sahara deserts, who will also provide a framework for the problems and the state of the art of this debate.

Then the speech of Peter Jens, Director of the Pura Natura Foundation, will follow, for ten years on the most advanced front of the battle for the recognition at European level (recently also in the United States) of hydroponics as a method of biological cultivation. Marc Horler, operations manager of the Association for Vertical Farming, will illustrate for the first time in Italy the project for the certification of vertical farms, from the process to the product. AVF was from the start an active and essential partner for AquaFarm and its commitment to the dissemination of new off-ground crops and the consolidation of operators in a community of knowledge. Beyond the biological, there are other certifications applicable to the vertical farming and the off-shore, always with an emphasis on sustainability. One is the National Quality System of Integrated Production (SQNPI) a voluntary certification scheme for all the agricultural and agri-food products grown with integrated production techniques. Another, voluntary as well, is Friend of the Earth, which will be presented by Paolo Bray, founder, and director of the international Friend of the Sea scheme. More details on AquaFarm, the details for participation and the conference programme are available at: [www.aquafarm.show](http://www.aquafarm.show).



For more information about the conference programme please check:

<http://www.aquafarm.show/program-15-february/?lang=en>

Aquafarm 2018 attendance is free of charge after registration. Register and download your pass:

<http://www.aquafarm.show/registration-to-attend-aquafarm-2018/?lang=en>

Press Office

Marco Comelli e Aurora Marin - Studio Comelli

Press office & Conference management

[press@studiocomelli.eu](mailto:press@studiocomelli.eu)

02 22228345