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## **Pre-event Press Release**

# **1<sup>ST</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANICS CONFERENCE**

## **Vietnam: Leading the way**

*22 November 2017, Hanoi*

Organic food & drink is greatly contributing to strengthening human health, sustainable development and biological diversity around the globe. Organic production is expanding in many countries and the consumption of organic products has become a major growth trend.

Where is Vietnam in this trend?

The answer will be found at the “1<sup>st</sup> International Organic Conference – Vietnam: leading the way” which will feature high profiles domestic and international speakers demonstrate and will help develop Vietnam’s efforts in the production and marketing of international-standard organic products.

The conference, which will be the first of its type in Vietnam, is scheduled to take place on November 22, 2017 at the Melia Hotel in Hanoi. It will be attended by the leaders of the Government, with more than 300 domestic and foreign delegates, including producers of organic products.

The event will be organized by Vietnam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, The Vietnam Association of Organic Agriculture and Zenith Global Ltd, with Platinum sponsorship from TH Group which owns the TH true MILK brand.

According to the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL - one of the world’s leading organic farming information and research centers) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM - the worldwide umbrella organization for the organic agriculture movement, which represents close to 800 affiliates in 117 countries), as of late 2014, 172 countries were active in organic agricultural production across a total area of 81.2 million hectares.

Europe and Oceania have the largest organic agricultural land area, notably in Australia (17.2 million hectares). In terms of trade, in 2010, the European Union ranked first at 19.6 billion euros, of which 6.02 billion euros came from Germany. It is forecast by experts that the land area and commercial value of organic products will continue increasing significantly for the foreseeable future.

Vietnam has more than 70 per cent of its population engaged in agricultural production. It's among the world's top exporters of rice and other agricultural products. It's rich in natural resources, has fertile soil is renowned for its special culinary culture. The country therefore has the best of conditions to develop its own organic agriculture.

At present, however, Vietnam's land for organic agricultural development remains limited and organic production still lacks compliance to strict standards. According to IFOAM's statistics, in 2015, Vietnam had only 76,666 hectares of organic agricultural land, merely 0.7 per cent of the country's total agricultural land.

Although Vietnam has its own organic foodstuff standards, the country still lacks legal regulations on organic agriculture, according to IFOAM and Dr. Nguyen Xuan Hong, former head of the Plant Protection Department under Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

To benefit from the global trend towards organic food and drink consumption, Vietnam would need to have a comprehensive roadmap to take a lead in organic production, this would protect the health of its people through a well-balanced and natural diet. It would also boost exports of organic products to foreign markets. This roadmap should include the development of a national action plan on organic production and consumption based on the world's organic best practices. These practices will be showcased at the "1<sup>st</sup> International Organic Conference - Vietnam: Leading the way", to help Vietnam develop its own policies.

The event will also provide a program in which local and international producers can meet to exchange experiences and establish partnerships. They will also be able to meet with leaders of the Government, scientists and other experts, as well as domestic and international associations.

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For more information, please visit <http://internationalorganic.org/>

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