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First I would like to thank the organizers of premiobiol and especially Mr. Paparella for inviting me to participate in your event. Personally Italy is my favorite Mediterranean country so it is always a pleasure for me to come and spend some time in your beautiful country.

I am following biol from far for the last few years and I think it is a very important tool to promote quality and image of the organic olive oil worldwide. I am standing here today wearing two hats so also my presentation will be divided in two.

The first hat is the one of an organic olive grower from Israel I have an organic farm in the hills of the Carmel mountain in the north of Israel.

As you probably know the origin of the olive tree is from the land of Israel from there it was distributed to North Africa and Greece and from there to the other southern European countries.

The olive is mentioned in the bible on many occasions as one of the basic products of ancient agriculture. But also as a main ingredient in the ancient religious ceremonies and as a symbol of peace and fertility. You can find a lot of evidence to the major role of ancient olive oil production in my country at the archeological sites around the holly land.

Olive oil from the holly land was known as high quality product and it was exported during the Roman Empire time even to Italy.

It is known that in ancient times in the holly land a lot of the olive oil was not used for eating but as an ingredient of the perfume industry.

All of this huge activity in the past we could certify today as organic. Because it is clear that no chemical was used than. So that leads me to another statement, that an organic olive grower of today is reviving a tradition of thousands of years.

Now let me describe in short the situation in Israel today. Israel has developed through the years a very intensive agriculture. The reason for that is that we are a very small country that has very little spare land for agriculture and a very serious lack of water for irrigation. For these two reasons our farmers where always in an intensive search for techniques to maximize the use of water and land. This lead us to some very important achievements like the invention of drip irrigation that is used now all over the world, but also our farmers started using more chemicals like the intensive agriculture demands. The start of the organic movement in my country by Mario levy some thirty years ago tried to change the attitude of farmers to a sustainable organic agriculture that will save the land on one hand and give the farmer the ability to survive on the other.

Organic agriculture in Israel is known mainly for fresh vegetables and fruits, which we export mainly to Europe. But in the last few years we see also the rise of planting of organic olives and converting conventional olive plantations to organic. Today out of 20000 hectares of total olive plantations in Israel 200 hectares are certified as organic. The growth rate is 10% per year. Farmers plant olives mainly because they don't have water or they have very little amounts of water. Farmers go organic mainly because of the increase for the

demand for organic products in our local market among them of course is the organic olive oil and organic table olive.

I want to conclude this part of my presentation by illuminating the major problems that we as organic olive growers encounter.

First I would like to say that the demand of the market today is for a top quality organic olive oil. The days that we could sell organic olive oil just because it is organic have passed. Today and I think biol competition is a very good example of it, the market demands from us only top quality. For this purpose we as organic farmers and olive oil producers have to find certified solutions for problems that might endanger our quality. And I will give an example.

The problem of *dacus oleae* (*bactrocera oleae*) that we as organic growers mainly use traps of many kinds and still we have to find some more solutions because the effect this insect has on the quality of our oil. Another solution that we in Israel are inspecting is finding varieties of olives that are more resistant to insects and diseases.

Another issue is the question of nutrition to the olive tree, my attitude as an organic farmer is that in order to keep our crops at a reasonable level we have to take care of a proper organic nutrition. Mainly using high quality compost that includes all the macro and microelements.

This was just a short demonstration of the main issues we have to deal with as organic olive growers.

I believe that we have to find a way to communicate better between us the organic farmers of the Mediterranean for the benefit of us as farmers and for the benefit of the organic movement.

This brings me to the other hat I am wearing here today. The hat of the organic Mediterranean movement. As you all know ifoam as a global movement has regional bodies. One of them is the *agribiomediterraneo*. The duty of the regional body is to serve the specific needs of the region, in terms of all aspects of the organic world like: research, certification, marketing and training. As the training coordinator of the *agribiomediterraneo* my duty is to promote training in the region. In this audience I don't think I have to explain the importance of training in our section of agriculture.

The organic farmer, especially the new farmers in our movement, are in great need of training. Also the extension service or the instructors need training in order to help our farmers.

This task is done by seminars, courses and creating training tools for the benefit of local and regional farmers. One of our tools is producing training films that can be shown to different audiences.

The film that you will see now is a film that was produced by ABM in order to show organic Mediterranean agriculture in different parts of the region. This film was an example of cooperation between 3 associations from 3 different countries: Dio- from Greece, AIAB from Italy and IBOAA from Israel. This year 2001, the ABM declared as the olive year. As part of our activities during this year we are producing a training video on organic olives. The video will include all aspects of organic olive production including the latest techniques of nutrition, plant protection irrigation and other issues.



**ATTI DEL FORUM**  
**PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION**  
**ACTES DU CONGRÈS**  
**ACTOS DE LA RIUNIÓN**

The film will be translated to some Mediterranean languages so that it will be useful to a large audience.

Thank you for your attention and let us now watch the film organic agriculture in the Mediterranean.

ABM training video – 30 minutes