

Press release

More than 5.5 Million Hectares of Organic Farmland in the Enlarged European Union

Official interest in organic farming data collection in all countries on the rise, but harmonisation is needed

(Berlin/Frick, 3.5.2004) By the end of 2002, more than 5.5 million hectares were managed organically by more than 160,000 farms in the 25 countries of the European Union, according to new figures from the Institute of Rural Sciences at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. This constituted almost 3.4% of the agricultural area and 1.7% of the farms in the EU. Compared to the previous year, this is an increase of 9% in the 25 European Union countries, mainly due to strong growth in France, Spain and the United Kingdom.

At a recent conference in Berlin, Germany, the issue of organic data collection and processing and possibilities of improvements was discussed. It became obvious that the relevant authorities are highly interested in collecting and processing of statistical data on organic farming but that there is a great need for harmonisation of data collection - both on a national and on a European level. The event had been organised by the project European Information systems for Organic Markets (EISFOM), funded by the European Commission.

The seminar had more than 100 participants, including representatives of the European Commission, Eurostat, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), of statistical offices and competent authorities, as well as researchers and stakeholders of the Organic Sector.

“We are very proud that we can document the impressive development of organic farming with our figures, said project leader Nic Lampkin, but we are aware that methods of collection - which for a long time depended on the efforts of the private organic sector - vary from country to country. There is a need for harmonisation and quality assurance. “

This was confirmed by the seminar, which showed that on a national and an EU level in most cases the collection methods of the EU regulation 2092/91 are not harmonised with existing data collection systems, like the Farm Structure Survey, the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN/RICA), market data collection and others. There are however, also good examples of cooperation of competent authorities and Central statistics offices (Poland, Denmark, Finland, and France).

The seminar revealed that at the European level the data of the Community farm structure survey (2000, 2003), carried out by Eurostat, and now also contains organic

farming data, comprising a wealth of information on organic farming. The General Directorate Agriculture of the European Commission has recently set up the Organic Farming Information System (OFIS) database, into which the administrative data for EU regulation can be delivered by the member states. Some of the information will be made public. Another good news gained at the seminar is that the full set of these administrative data including the „historical data“ will be made available at the end of 2004 on the Eurostat homepage.

The seminar also considered the particular issues concerning availability of trade, retailer and consumer level data, where much less data is currently available and such estimates as do exist, for example of the retail sales market value, are less reliable than the production data. Further work is needed to develop these aspects, involving collaboration between private and public sector agencies.

Conclusions from the seminar were among others that detailed reporting under EU regulation 2092/91 should be mandatory, that there should cooperation / harmonisation of organic data with existing data collection systems and access to data should be improved. Case studies of some of the most innovative approaches presented at the conference will now be made to see what lessons can be learned for wider application.

The next EISFOM seminar will take place in October 2005 in Brussels. It will define a framework for a European Information System for Organic Markets. Further information is available from the EISFOM Homepage.

The conference proceedings including all papers as well as the results of the discussions and conclusions will be published by the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, which is a project partner. The proceedings will be available both at the project homepage as well as the database 'Organic Eprints'.

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Editorial notes

EISFOM is an EU-funded Concerted Action whose aim is to develop a framework for reporting valid and reliable production and market data on the European organic sector, in order to meet the needs of policy makers, farmers, processors, wholesalers and other actors involved in organic markets. It has been formed by a network of researchers from universities, research institutes and market data collection agencies in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, Switzerland, who have been researching and publishing organic farming statistics for many years. The project is co-ordinated by the University of Wales in Aberystwyth and will run from 2003 to 2005. Further information on the partnership and objectives of the project can be found at www.eisfom.org.

The project is financially supported by the Commission of the European Communities' Fifth Framework Research and Technological Development Programme. The views expressed in this press release do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission, nor do they in any way anticipate the Commission's future policy in this area.

Links

- www.eisfom.org
European Project EISfOM
- <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>
Internet site of Eurostat
- http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/data/index_en.htm
Organic Farming Information System (OFIS) Database
- www.orgprints.org
Database Organic Eprints for papers related to research in organic agriculture
- www.organic.aber.ac.uk/stats.shtml
Institute of Rural Sciences organic farming statistics

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Certified and policy-supported organic and in-conversion land area (ha) in the enlarged European Union											Total agric area	
Year end	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	'000 ha	% organic
Austria	135982	192337	335865	309089	345375	287900	290000	271950	285500	295000	3388	8.71%
Belgium	2179	2683	3385	4261	6654	11744	18572	20265	22410	24874	1394	1.78%
Cyprus							30	52	<i>100</i>	166	134	0.12%
Czech Rep	15667	15818	14127	17022	20239	71620	110756	165699	218114	235136	4273	5.50%
Denmark	20090	21145	40884	46171	64329	99163	146685	165258	173497	178360	2645	6.74%
Estonia	1600	1600	3000	<i>3000</i>	3000	3080	4000	9872	20141	30263	1001	3.02%
Finland	20340	25822	44695	84556	102342	126176	136665	147423	149100	156692	2219	7.06%
France	87829	94806	118393	137084	165405	218790	316000	361040	419750	517965	27856	1.86%
Germany-cert	246458	272139	309487	354171	389693	416518	452279	546023	632165	696978	17152	4.06%
Germany-other	126385	173128	152062	121575	60307	0	0	0	0	0	17152	0.00%
Greece	591	1188	2401	5269	10000	15402	17500	24800	31118	28944	3575	0.81%
Hungary	6400	8630	12325	9300	16687	21565	32609	47221	79177	103671	5854	1.77%
Ireland	5460	5390	12634	20496	23591	28704	32478	32355	30070	29850	4444	0.67%
Italy	88437	154120	204494	334175	641149	785738	958687	1040377	1237640	1168212	13069	8.94%
Latvia	1250	1250	1147	1200	<i>1500</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>3000</i>	4353	10549	16935	2488	0.68%
Lithuania	148	267	582	1118	1568	3867	6564	6777	10016	13685	3489	0.39%
Luxembourg	497	538	571	594	618	777	1002	1030	2141	2004	128	1.57%
Malta											13	0.00%
Netherlands	11150	11340	12909	14456	16960	19323	21511	27820	38000	42610	2028	2.10%
Poland	3540	<i>5000</i>	6855	<i>8000</i>	<i>9000</i>	10000	11000	22000	44866	53515	18220	0.29%
Portugal	3060	7267	10719	9191	12193	24902	47974	50000	70857	85912	3863	2.22%
Slovak Rep	14724	14762	18813	27661	27809	50695	46386	58466	58706	49999	2451	2.04%
Slovenia	<i>100</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>400</i>	400	2400	5425	10000	15404	485	3.18%
Spain	11674	17208	24079	103735	152105	269465	352164	380920	485079	665055	26158	2.54%
Sweden-cert	36674	48039	83490	113995	118175	127330	155674	171682	193611	214120	3073	6.97%
Sweden-other	7869	6812	3334	48317	87010	116327	151069	171318	188389	<i>200000</i>	3073	6.51%
U. Kingdom	30992	32476	48448	49535	106000	274519	390868	527323	679631	724523	15799	4.59%
EU25	879096	1113915	1464899	1824271	2382109	2986005	3705873	4259449	5090627	5549873	165199	3.36%

Based on data supplied direct or published up to 16/03/04 (bold) and provisional estimates subject to confirmation. Publication in graphical format preferred because accuracy of data varies between countries. Data are frequently updated - please request current version before publication. Copyright: Nicolas Lampkin, Institute of Rural Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, GB-SY23 3AL. 2002 data are provisional, figures in italics are estimates based on previous growth rates EU15 data for 1993-1998 from Foster and Lampkin (2000): see www.organic.aber.ac.uk

Number of certified and policy-supported organic and in-conversion farms in the enlarged European Union, 1993-2002											Numbers of farms	
Year end	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	'000	% organic
Austria	9713	13321	18542	19433	19996	20207	19741	19031	18292	18576	199.0	9.33%
Belgium	160	168	193	228	324	421	586	666	694	710	62	1.15%
Cyprus							15	15	30	45		
Czech Rep	141	187	176	168	211	348	473	563	654	717	38.4	1.87%
Denmark	640	677	1050	1166	1617	2228	3099	3466	3525	3714	58	6.40%
Estonia	50	60	119	<i>100</i>	70	76	89	231	369	583	40	1.46%
Finland	1599	1818	2793	4452	4381	4975	5197	5225	4983	5071	81	6.26%
France	3231	3556	3538	3854	4784	6139	8149	8985	10364	11288	664	1.70%
Germany-cert	5091	5866	6642	7353	8184	9209	10400	12732	14693	15626	472	3.31%
Germany-other	6157	8861	8413	6753	4184	0	0	0	0	0	472	0.00%
Greece	165	469	568	1065	2523	4183	4500	5270	6680	6047	814	0.74%
Hungary	50	80	105	120	137	330	451	471	1040	995	38.7	2.57%
Ireland	238	198	378	696	808	887	1107	1014	997	923	142	0.65%
Italy	4656	8597	10630	17279	30844	42238	49018	51120	56440	49489	2152	2.30%
Latvia	50	50	90	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	74	220	352		
Lithuania	9	14	36	65	106	144	271	356	452	594	68	0.88%
Luxembourg	12	12	19	20	23	26	29	51	48	48	3	1.60%
Malta												
Netherlands	455	512	561	656	746	962	1216	1391	1528	1560	102	1.53%
Poland	225	225	236	300	400	500	555	1419	1787	1977	2285	0.09%
Portugal	73	213	349	240	278	564	750	763	971	1059	416	0.25%
Slovak Rep	40	41	34	45	46	81	69	88	82	88	7.5	1.17%
Slovenia	<i>20</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>40</i>	41	343	620	883	1150	86	1.34%
Spain	753	909	1042	2161	3526	7392	11812	13394	15607	16521	1287	1.28%
Sweden-cert	1507	1695	2473	2741	2733	2870	3253	3329	3589	5268	81	6.50%
Sweden-other	390	386	1733	5527	8136	10657	12747	13671	14111	<i>14000</i>	81	17.28%
U. Kingdom	655	715	828	865	1026	1462	2322	3563	3981	4057	233	1.74%
EU25	36080	48655	60578	75422	95223	116040	136292	147508	162020	160458	9329	1.72%

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