

IRENA Methodological / Data Fact Sheet

Indicator 7 – Area under organic farming

Indicator Definition

Area under organic farming (as defined by Regulation 2092/91) is indicated by the share of organic farming in the total utilised agricultural area.

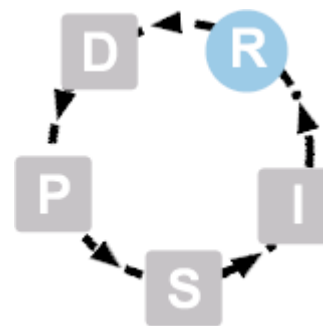
Indicator links

Input Indicator Links:

5.1 – organic producer price premium

5.2 – agricultural income of organic farmers

Output Indicator Links: none

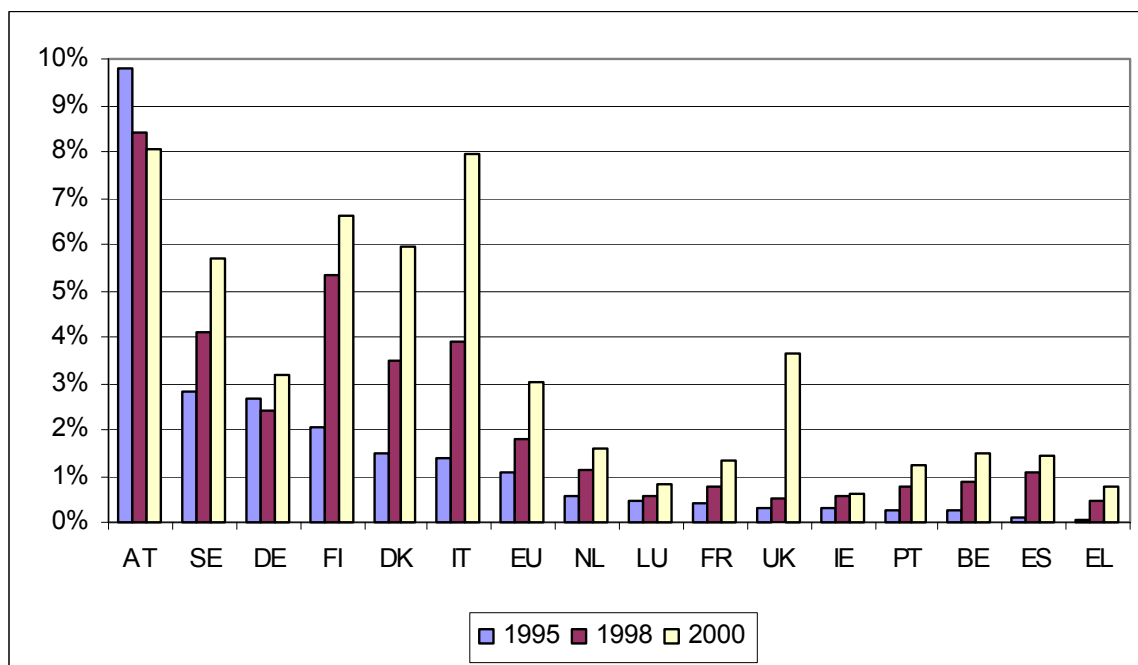


Key message

In 2000, the area devoted to organic farming (sum of organic and in conversion area) covered 3.8 million ha in the EU-15, while in 1995 it covered only 1.4 million ha. This represents an increase of 172% over the period 1995-2000. The organic farming area reached 3.0% of the total Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) of the EU-15 in 2000, up from only 1.1% in 1995. More than a quarter of the EU-15 organic farming area in 2000 was located in Italy. Within the Member States there is a considerable regional variation of the indicator.

Headline graphs and maps

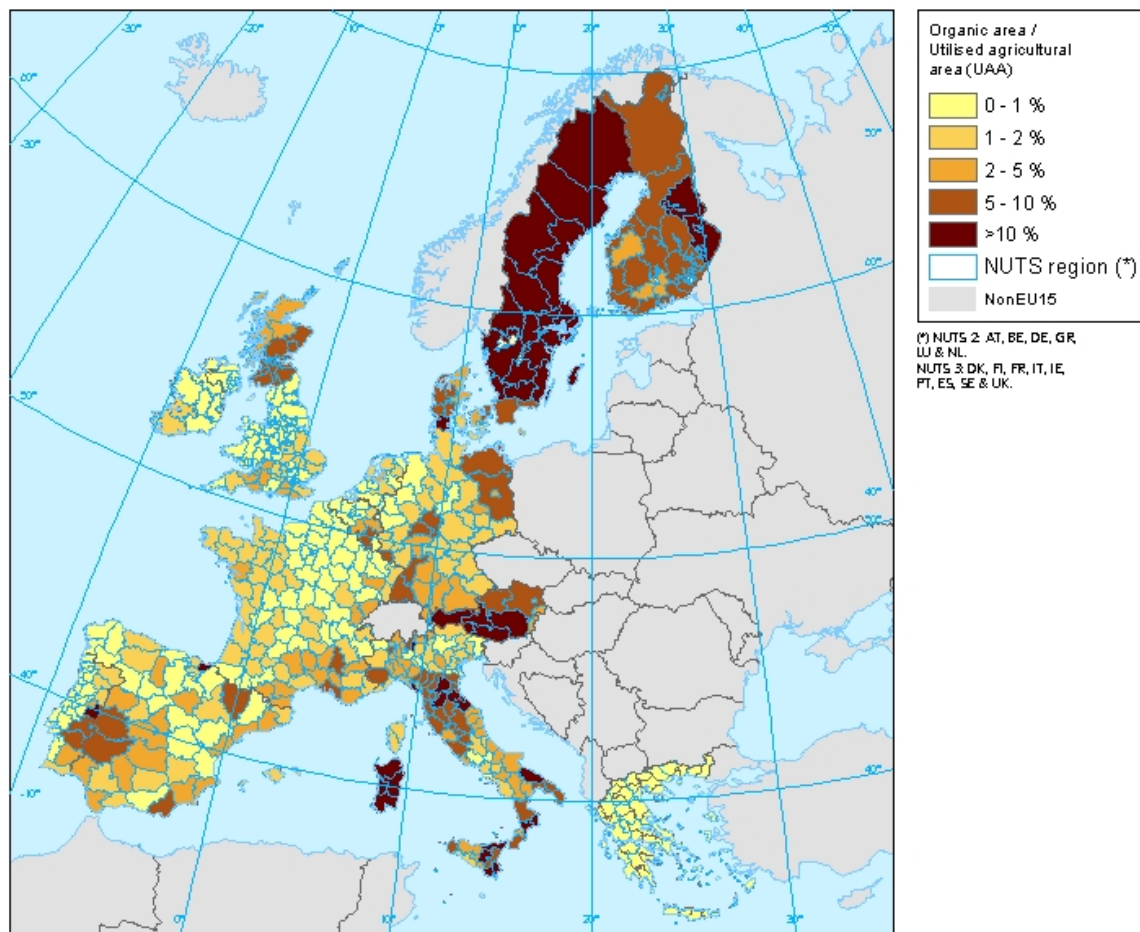
Figure 7-1: Share of organic farming in total UAA



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Figure 7-2: Regional map on the share of organic farming in the total UAA in 2000



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Methodological approach

Introduction

Organic farming involves holistic production management systems (for crops and livestock) emphasising the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs. This is accomplished by using, where possible cultural, biological and mechanical methods in preference to fertilisers and pesticides (Source: Adapted from Codex Alimentarius quoted in: DG AGRI (2001): *Organic farming. Guide to Community rules*. Office for official publications of the European Communities).

Farming is only considered to be organic at EU-level if it complies with Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91. In this framework, organic farming is differentiated from other approaches to agricultural production by the application of regulated standards (production rules), certification procedures (compulsory inspection schemes) and a specific labelling scheme, resulting in the existence of a specific market, partially isolated from non-organic foods. It does not deal with other types of low-input farming, for example integrated production.

Methods and tools

The organic farming regulation obliges Member States to submit yearly information on the number of organic holdings and the area under organic farming. Since Member States in the early 90s used varying formats when submitting organic data, DG Agriculture, in collaboration with Eurostat, drew up a questionnaire with harmonised tables and guidelines in order to facilitate comparison and aggregation at EU level. The present version of the yearly organic farming questionnaire asks for information on organic operators (producers, processors and importers), crop areas/yields and their economic activity (NACE) at national level. A recent revision of the questionnaire included tables on livestock production and products.

The Farm Structure Survey (FSS) collects data on organic farming at regular intervals and at regional level since the 2000 survey. The representativity of the intermediate surveys for organic farming is however not completely assured.

The suggested indicator is the evolution in the share of the organic farming area (where possible divided into fully converted and in conversion area) based on the results from the DG AGRI organic farming questionnaire in the total UAA in the Member States. The FSS data can be used to calculate the indicator at regional level.

Data sources

- DG AGRI organic farming questionnaire (Eurostat F-5 processes the statistical data), yearly national data
- Farm Structure Survey, 2000-2003-2005-2007

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Results

In 2000, the area devoted to organic farming (sum of organic and in conversion area) covered 3.8 million ha in the EU-15, while in 1995 it covered only 1.4 million ha. This represents an increase of 172% over the period 1995-2000. The organic farming area reached 3.0% of the total UAA of the EU-15 in 2000, up from only 1.1% in 1995. More than a quarter of the EU-15 organic farming area in 2000 was located in Italy. The United Kingdom came second, with Germany as a close third. Fourth and fifth were Spain and France respectively. The countries with an increase in organic farming area in the period 1995-2000 above or close to the EU-15 average were Spain, the United Kingdom, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Finland, France and the Netherlands. Austria saw a 19% decrease in its organic farming area due to the saturation of the organic market.

The proportion of organic farming in the total UAA for the Member States varies considerably. The Member States that were front-runners in organic farming in 2000, i.e. where the percentage of the UAA was higher than or equal to the EU-15 average (3.0%), were Austria and Italy (both 8%), Finland (7%), Denmark and Sweden (both 6%), the United Kingdom (4%) and Germany (3%). The other Member States' percentages remained below the EU-15 average. All Member States, except Austria, have seen a more or less pronounced increase in the UAA percentage over the period 1995-2000.

The FSS results show a considerable regional variation of the indicator within the Member States.

References:

Regulations 2092/91 and 1804/99

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/consleg/main/1991/en_1991R2092_index.html

DG Agriculture's questionnaire on Regulation 2092/91

"Organic Farming in Europe: A sustained growth over the period 1998-2000" – Koen Duchateau – *Statistics in Focus*, theme 8 "Environment and Energy" – 2/2003 – 8 pages

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&collection=02-Statistics%20in%20Focus&product=KS-NQ-03-002--N-EN>

"Organic farming" - Jakob Hansen – *Statistics in Focus*, theme 8 "Environment and Energy" - 5/2001 – 8 pages: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-NQ-01-005--I-EN>

"Organic farming: facts and figures", Eric Willems:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/index_en.htm

"Farm Management Systems: (i) organic farming (ii) Integrated Plant Cultivation" in "Proposal of Agri-environmental Indicators – PAIS - Final report" - p273 to 275

"Organic and in-conversion land area, holdings, livestock and crop production in Europe":

<http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/stats.shtml>

FiBL - <http://www.organic-europe.net/default.asp>

Data

Spreadsheet file

MDFS-7-organic.xls

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Table 1 (Figure 7-1): Share of organic area in the Utilised Agricultural Area

| | Organic area 1995 - ha | Utilised Agricultural Area 1995 - ha | Share organic area 1995 | Organic area 1998 - ha | Utilised Agricultural Area 1997 - ha | Share organic area 1998 | Organic area 2000 - ha | Utilised Agricultural Area 2000 - ha | Share organic area 2000 |
|----|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| BE | 3400 | 1354410 | 0.3% | 11744 | 1382740 | 0.8% | 20667 | 1393780 | 1.5% |
| DK | 40900 | 2726610 | 1.5% | 93201 | 2688560 | 3.5% | 157676 | 2644580 | 6.0% |
| DE | 461500 | 17156850 | 2.7% | 414293 | 17160010 | 2.4% | 546023 | 17151560 | 3.2% |
| EL | 2400 | 3578210 | 0.1% | 15402 | 3498660 | 0.4% | 26707 | 3583190 | 0.7% |
| ES | 24100 | 25230340 | 0.1% | 269465 | 25630130 | 1.1% | 380920 | 26158410 | 1.5% |
| FR | 118400 | 28267200 | 0.4% | 218775 | 28331330 | 0.8% | 369933 | 27856310 | 1.3% |
| IE | 12600 | 4324520 | 0.3% | 24411 | 4342380 | 0.6% | 27231 | 4443970 | 0.6% |
| IT | 204500 | 14685450 | 1.4% | 577475 | 14833110 | 3.9% | 1040377 | 13062260 | 8.0% |
| LU | 600 | 126860 | 0.5% | 744 | 126630 | 0.6% | 1074 | 127510 | 0.8% |
| NL | 11500 | 1998880 | 0.6% | 22268 | 2010510 | 1.1% | 32334 | 2027800 | 1.6% |
| AT | 335900 | 3425130 | 9.8% | 287899 | 3415090 | 8.4% | 272000 | 3388230 | 8.0% |
| PT | 10700 | 3924620 | 0.3% | 29533 | 3822120 | 0.8% | 48066 | 3863090 | 1.2% |
| FI | 44700 | 2191700 | 2.0% | 116206 | 2171580 | 5.4% | 147268 | 2218670 | 6.6% |
| SE | 86800 | 3059730 | 2.8% | 127329 | 3109060 | 4.1% | 174227 | 3073200 | 5.7% |
| UK | 48400 | 16446620 | 0.3% | 78833 | 16168850 | 0.5% | 578803 | 15798510 | 3.7% |
| EU | 1406000 | 128497250 | 1.1% | 2287577 | 128690820 | 1.8% | 3823306 | 126791070 | 3.0% |

Source: DG Agriculture

Meta data

Technical information

1. Data source:
Organic farming questionnaire, DG Agriculture, complemented with the Community Survey on the Structure of Agricultural Holdings (FSS), DG Eurostat
2. Description of data:
Data are supplied by Member States to DG Agriculture, using the statistical tables of the organic farming questionnaire.
3. Geographical coverage:
DG AGRI questionnaire: Member States + Norway (national data)
Farm Structure Survey: Member States (NUTS 2/3 data)
4. Temporal coverage:
DG AGRI questionnaire: yearly since 1998
Farm Structure Survey: 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007
5. Methodology and frequency of data collection:
The Member States should send completed questionnaires in yearly to DG Agriculture before 31 July of the following year.
6. Methodology of data manipulation:
Eurostat F-5 treats the statistical data of the questionnaire. In the future DG Agriculture will use the Organic Farming Information System (OFIS) to allow harmonised electronic reporting of data related to organic farming.

Quality information

7. Strength and weakness (at data level):
Weakness: completion of organic farming questionnaire is voluntary, long time delay in submission of statistical data by some of the Member States.
Strength: questionnaire is harmonised, FSS question on organic farming is compulsory
8. Reliability, accuracy, robustness, uncertainty (at data level): Data from FSS is regarded as being reliable and robust.

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| <p>9. Overall scoring (1=no major problems, 3=major reservations): Accuracy: 2 Comparability over time: 2 Comparability over space: 2</p> |
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