

## **Organic Production**

### **1 Summary**

The organic production method offers farmers in Kosovo an opportunity to improve business profitability, bio-diversity and sustainability within agriculture generally, as well as within rural communities. Consumer interest in organic food is growing. Being involved in organic production can help re-connect farmers and consumers.

### **2 Policy**

Of the many different reasons why consumers choose increasingly to buy organic food, the most significant is a general concern to protect and enhance the environment. Buying and eating organic food reduces the use of pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers, which in turn reduces the risk of consuming contaminants and pesticide/herbicide residues. Protecting the environment and reducing risks to consumers are important policy objectives.

Increased consumer awareness and environmental concerns have contributed to the growth in organic farming over the last few years. In 2006, globally nearly 31 million hectares were managed according to organic farming standards, and organic farming was practised by some 700,000 farmers worldwide. At the end of 2006, organic farming was practised on more than 200,000 farms in Europe managing 7.4 million hectares, representing 1.6% of the total agricultural area. With 6.8 million hectares, the EU accounts for 92% of this area, and organic farming makes up 4% of the EU agricultural area. In 2000-6, the area under organic farming in the EU increased at an average annual growth rate of 8%. In 2006, Liechtenstein had the highest share of agricultural area under organic farming management (29%), followed by Austria (13%) and Switzerland (12%).

Organic farming is a holistic approach to food production, making use of crop rotation, environmental management and good animal husbandry to control pests and diseases. Organic farming has to be understood as part of a sustainable farming system, and a viable alternative to the conventional approach to agriculture. Since the EU rules on organic farming came into force in 1992, some 200,000 farms have been converted to this system as a result of increased consumer awareness of, and demand for, organically grown products.

The sustainability of agriculture and the environment are key policy objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy. Sustainable development must encompass food production alongside conservation of finite resources and protection of the natural environment. This will ensure that the needs of people living today can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This objective requires farmers to consider the effect that their activities will have on the future of agriculture, and how the systems that they employ affect and shape the environment. As a consequence, farmers, consumers and policy makers have shown a renewed interest in organic farming.

Many EU Member States and third country governments actively support the development of their national organic production sectors through strategic development plans, marketing programmes and the provision of subsidies to support farmers through the conversion period. For example, the Republic of Macedonia has taken such an approach, and bilateral contacts between personnel in the agriculture ministries in Kosovo and Macedonia have been established to assist Kosovo to move in a similar direction.

As a first step, an organic agriculture development plan for Kosovo has been drafted for MAFRD's Department of Plant Protection and Production. This proposes, amongst other things, the establishment of demonstration farms and a system of subsidies to enable farmers to convert to the organic production method.

Training of extension service advisers to support the development and implementation of organic production methods is required as part of government policy in this area.

### 3 Implementation

#### 3.1 Legislation

Under current European law, all food that is described as 'organic' has to be produced according to strict European Regulations on organic production. These Regulations require organic food to come from growers, processors and importers that are registered and approved by organic certification bodies, which are in turn approved by central competent authorities in the EU Member States.

Organic certification bodies appoint inspectors who visit farms to check that: fertilisers and pesticides are not being used unless they have been specifically approved for use in organic production; and land has been farmed organically for a conversion period (normally two years) before food is sold as 'organic'. Labels of food sold as 'organic' must indicate the organic certification body with which the processor or packer is registered.

Processed organic foods must normally use ingredients that have been produced organically, although it is not always possible to make products entirely from organic ingredients because not all ingredients are easy to obtain in organic form. Manufacturers of organic food are therefore permitted to use specific non-organic ingredients provided that organic ingredients make up at least 95% of the food. Only a limited number of additives are permitted to be used in the production of organic food.

A new EU Regulation to facilitate the development of Europe's organic food sector was adopted in 2007, and will apply from 1 January 2009: (Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products)<sup>1</sup>. This repeals the current Regulation EC No 2092/91. This has been supplemented by a second new Regulation No. (EC) 889/2008 which sets out detailed rules on organic production, labelling and controls.

The new Regulation is simpler for both farmers and consumers. The new rules set out a complete set of objectives, principles and rules for organic production. They also include a new

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<sup>1</sup> The new regulation:

- lays down more explicitly the objectives, principles and production rules for organic farming while providing flexibility to account for local conditions and stages of development;
- assures that the objectives and principles apply equally to all stages of organic livestock, aquaculture, plant and feed production as well as the production of organic foods;
- clarifies the GMO rules, notably that GMO products continue to be strictly banned for use in organic production and that the general threshold of 0.9% accidental presence of approved GMOs applies also to organic food;
- closes the loophole under which the unintended presence of GMOs above the 0.9% threshold does not currently preclude the sale of products as organic;
- renders compulsory the EU logo for domestic organic products, but allows it to be accompanied by national or private logos, in order to promote the "common concept" of organic production;,
- does not prohibit stricter private standards;
- ensures that only foods containing at least 95% organic ingredients can be labeled as organic;
- allows non-organic products to indicate organic ingredients on the ingredients list only;
- does not include the restaurant and canteen sector, but allows Member States to regulate this sector if they wish, pending a review at EU level in 2011;
- reinforces the risk-based control approach and improves the control system by aligning it to the official EU food and feed control system applying to all foods and feeds, but maintaining specific controls used in organic production;
- sets out a new, permanent import regime, allowing third countries to export to the EU market under the same or equivalent conditions as EU producers;
- requires the indication of where the products were farmed, including for imported products carrying the EU-logo;
- creates the basis for adding rules on organic aquaculture, wine, seaweed and yeasts;
- makes no changes to the list of permitted substances in organic production, and requires publication of demands for authorisation of new substances and a centralised system for deciding on exceptions; and
- is the basis for the detailed rules to be transferred from the old to the new Regulation, containing among others the lists of substances, control rules and other detailed rules.

Source:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/807&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

import regime and a system of official controls that is based on the European Official Control Regulation No. (EC) 882/2004.

The use of the EU organic logo will be mandatory on organic produce, although it can be accompanied by national or private logos. The place where the products were farmed has to be indicated to inform consumers, and food will only be able to carry an organic logo if at least 95% of the ingredients are organic.

If the product contains between 70% and 95% organic ingredients, they can be mentioned as being organic only in the ingredients list, and a clear statement must be given on the front of the label showing the total percentage of ingredients that are organic.

The use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in organic produce is prohibited, although it is also made explicit that the general limit of 0.9% for the accidental presence of authorised GMOs will also apply to organic products. There is no change in the list of authorised substances for organic farming.

The new Regulation also creates the basis for additional rules on organic aquaculture, wine, seaweed and yeast.

Kosovo has made good progress in establishing a legal basis for organic production, having passed the Law on Organic Farming No.02/L-122, which is based on EC Regulation No. 2092/91. Administrative Instructions have also been drafted to define criteria for the packaging, transport and storage of organic production, and establish a system of official controls.

A new framework law and six Administrative Instructions under the framework law to regulate organic production in Kosova (according to the new EU standards) have been drafted to transpose Regulation (EC) No.834/2007 into Kosovar legislation. This is intended to replace the existing Law on Organic Farming.

Further drafting of Administrative Instructions will be required to transpose Regulation 889/2008. This will complete the package of organic production legislation for Kosova based on EU standards.

### **3.2 Organisation**

EC Regulation 2092/91 created a system of organic production based on detailed standards and conditions, or “rules of production”, that operators must meet to be able to use indications that refer to the organic production method.

The system is enforced by central competent authorities in the EU Member States. Competent authorities either carry out this role themselves, or do so through Inspection Authorities (public bodies e.g. municipalities) and/or Inspection Bodies (independent private bodies). These must themselves meet certain defined standards before they can be authorised by the competent authorities to conduct inspections, and to certify producers as meeting the standards for organic production.

New EC Regulations 889/2008 and 889/2008 maintain and develop the system that has been established under Regulation 2092/91, and also establishes a new system of official controls for organic production based on EC Regulation No. 882/2004. Under this new system, which is harmonised with official controls for other parts of the food chain, Inspection Authorities become Control Authorities and Inspection Bodies become Control Bodies.

The organisation of the control system must be sufficiently robust to ensure the organic status of organic production, and therefore maintain consumer confidence in the quality of organic produce.

MAFRD's Department of Plant Protection and Production has the task of organising and regulating the organic production sector in Kosovo. MAFRD is required to train a small team of personnel and create a Unit for Organic Farming to work on the establishment of the registration, certification and official control systems, and organise the payment of subsidies if they are to be made available in Kosovo.

### **3.3 Management Control Systems**

The European Commission monitors the implementation and enforcement of EC law by checking that EC legislation has been properly incorporated into Member States' law, by double-checking compliance through reports from Member States and other countries, and through on-the-spot inspections in the EU and outside.

The Commission's Food & Veterinary Office (FVO), based in Ireland, carries out these inspections. The FVO has the power to check individual organic producers, although its main task is to check that EU Member State governments and those of third countries have the necessary machinery for checking that their own producers are implementing the EU's organic production standards.

Kosovo therefore needs to ensure that it has developed and implemented its own system for checking that its organic production rules are in line with EU priorities and objectives. It must also ensure that the EU laws it has transposed into national legislation are accurate and kept up to date, and that those laws are being implemented and enforced effectively.

### **3.4 Staffing**

Article 4 of Regulation EC 882/2004 requires EU Member States to have a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to carry out official controls. These staff must meet the minimum training requirements set out in Annex II of Regulation 882/2004. The new EC organic production Regulation 834/2007 specifically refers to Regulation 882/2004.

In the field of organic production, the staff of Inspection / Control Authorities and Inspection / Control Bodies must also be properly qualified and experienced.

In addition to inspectors, staff are also required to undertake management and administrative duties for: laboratories; the compilation and analysis of statistics and other data; and media and stakeholder communications.

### **3.5 Budget**

Budget headings for which resources are required to develop organic agriculture include:

- Staff – inspectors, chemists, microbiologists, managers, administrators;
- Subsidies – to assist farmers through the conversion period;
- Accommodation – offices, laboratories, border inspection facilities, warehouses, garages;
- Utilities and services – electricity, water, telephone, internet;
- Equipment – furniture, computers, laboratory equipment, mobile phones, sampling equipment, fridges, freezers, digital thermometers,
- Transport and travel – cars, vans; and
- Sampling, monitoring, and surveillance – payment for testing, payment for samples, data analysis.

### **3.6 Information on Organic Production**

#### **Organic agriculture websites:**

EU - Official EU site includes two useful organic reports as pdf downloads:

#### **Organic farming - facts and figures**

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/facts\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/facts_en.pdf)

#### **Organic farming - guide to community rules**

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/gual/organic/brochure/abio\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/gual/organic/brochure/abio_en.pdf)

**European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming**

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/gual/organic/plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/gual/organic/plan/index_en.htm)

**Organic Europe (links to European country reports)**

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

**Organic farming and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations**

<http://www.fao.org/organicag/>

**Bulgaria**

[http://www.mzgar.government.bg/MZ\\_eng/Eco/bio.html](http://www.mzgar.government.bg/MZ_eng/Eco/bio.html)

**UK** - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/index.htm>

**Elm Farm Research** - Independent advice and information

<http://www.efrc.co.uk/>

**Henry Doubleday Research Association** - research and promotion

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/>

**The Soil Association** – UK charity providing information on organic production

<http://www.soilassociation.org/>

**IFOAM** - International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements

<http://www.ifoam.org/>

**Organic Centre Wales** - provides support to the organic community in Wales

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

**Northwest Organic Centre** - comprehensive directory of organic farmers and food processors in Northwest England and a notice board where goods and stock can be advertised.

<http://www.nworganiccentre.org/>

**Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)** - Swiss nutrition institute

<http://www.fibl.org/>

**Food Standards Agency** - search for 'organic' on their site

<http://www.food.gov.uk/>

**OMIaRD** - Organic Marketing Initiatives and EU Rural Development programme

<http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk/omiard/>

**IFST** - Institute of Food Science and Technology's paper on organic food

<http://www.ifst.org/site/cms/contentChapterView.asp?chapter=1>

**Scottish Agricultural College (SAC)** - Information on the SAC's organic activities

<http://www.sac.ac.uk/consultancy/organic/>

**Northern Ireland Organic Website**

[http://www.ruralni.gov.uk/bussys/organic\\_production](http://www.ruralni.gov.uk/bussys/organic_production)

**Organic Eprints** - international archive for papers related to organic agriculture research.

<http://orgprints.org/>

**The Organic Material Research Institute** - American organisation that advises on materials and ingredients for organic production

<http://www.omri.org/>

**Organic Research** – database of organic farming research (subscription)

<http://www.organic-research.com/>

**Organic TS** - organic news from the UK and around the world

<http://www.organicts.com/>

**The Organic Standard**

International bulletin covering organic standards and certification issues

<http://www.organicstandard.com/>

**University of Newcastle** - Nafferton Ecological Farming Group

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/tcoa/producers/>

**Red Meat Industry** - Food Chain Centre and the Red Meat Industry Forum works on value chain analysis and marketing of red meat.

<http://www.mlc.org.uk/forum/>

**Demonstration Farms Pilot** - Successful organic farmers make their expertise available.

<http://www.forwardfarming.org.uk/>

**Institute of Organic Training and Advice (IOTA)** - list of accredited organic farming advisers

and trainers - provides members with information, training and accreditation.  
<http://www.organicadvice.org.uk/>