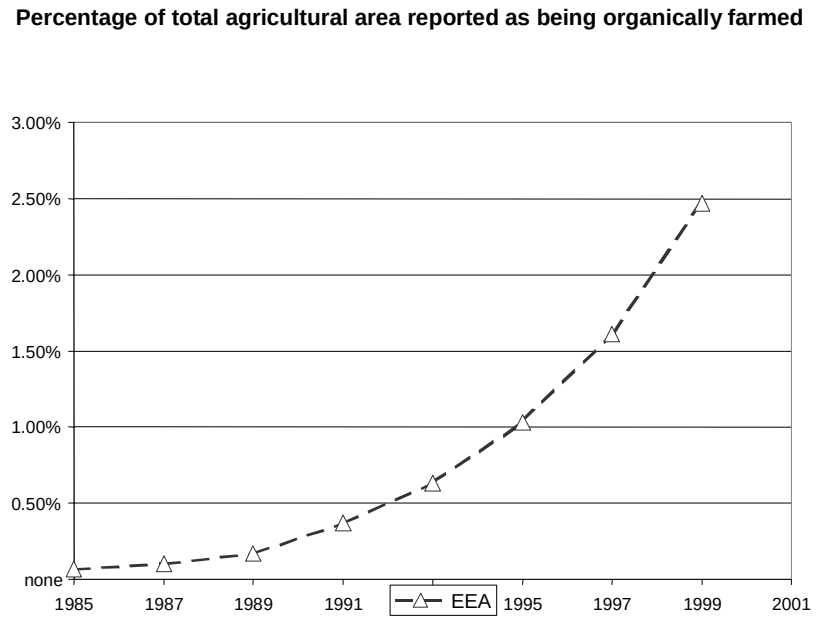
*Indicator Fact Sheet Signals 2001 – Chapter Agriculture*

## YIR99AG05 Area with organic farming as percent of total agricultural area, EEA-18, 1985 - 1999




Title: Organic farming areas as percentage of the total agricultural area, EEA18

Source: FAO, Eurostat and Lampkin, SÖL survey, Willer & Yussefi, 2000

☺ Organic farming now accounts for 2.5 % of the agricultural area in the EEA region. There has been a 5-10 fold increase in organic agriculture in every country in the region during the past 5 to10 years

**Results and assessment**

Relevance of the indicator for describing developments in the environment

Organic farming can be of benefit to the environment. In particular, it can help to create habitats in which biodiversity is encouraged by management practices. However, in general organic farming is less productive, so that more land is needed for a given output. Organic farming should therefore not be considered the only solution to the environmental problems of agriculture and other approaches such as Low Input Farming, Integrated Crop Management and Integrated Pest Control may be important as well. Less data and information on environmental impacts of these are available, however."

Policy relevance and policy references

A number of EC Regulations apply to the promotion of organic farming, including 2328/91, 2078/92, 866/90 and 3669/93, 2081/93 and 2088/93.

Regulation 2092/91 sets out a harmonised framework for labelling, production and control of agricultural products bearing or intended to bear indications referring to organic production methods. The new Regulation 1804/99 extends this to livestock products.

A number of Member States have set targets for area under organic farming, for example 10 % by the year 2000 in Sweden, Austria and some regions in Germany, and 5 % in France (by 2005), Denmark (by 2000) and Finland (by 1999).

Assessment

The area under organic farming in the EEA has increased from 0.314 million ha. in 1990 to 3.2 million in 1999. It now covers 2.5 % of agricultural land; this is expected to increase to 5 to 10 % in 2005. Six countries, Austria, Liechtenstein, Finland, Italy, Denmark and Sweden had more than 5 % of their agricultural area organically farmed in 1999, compared to between 1 and 2.5 % in most other countries.

The increase has been stimulated by EU support for organic farming as an agri-environmental measure (Regulations 2078/92 and 1259/99).

**Data**

**A/ basic data**

Organic farming area (even years omitted)

| country | 1985 | 1987 | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 850 | 1384 | 1750 | 2034 | 2676 | 3956 | 7055 | **11350** | 19574 |
| Luxembourg | | | | | | | | | |
| Denmark | 4500 | 5035 | 9553 | 17963 | 20090 | 40884 | 64329 | 99163 | 146685 |
| Germany | 24940 | 33047 | 69295 | 268477 | 407182 | 460291 | 489693 | **416318** | 452279 |
| Greece | 0 | 0 | 100 | 200 | 591 | 2401 | 6000 | 15849 | *15849* |
| Spain | 2140 | 2714 | 3300 | 4235 | 11675 | 24079 | 152105 | **269433** | 352164 |
| France | 45000 | 55000 | 65000 | 81225 | 87829 | 118393 | 150000 | **234800** | 316000 |
| Ireland | 1000 | 1300 | 3700 | 3823 | 5460 | 12634 | 23197 | **24649** | 25729 |
| Italy | 5000 | 6000 | 11000 | 16850 | 88437 | 204494 | 641149 | **788070** | 958687 |
| Netherlands | 2450 | 3384 | 6544 | 9227 | 10354 | 11486 | 16660 | *19829* | 22997 |
| Portugal | 200 | 320 | 550 | 2000 | 3060 | 10719 | 10000 | **29533** | 47974 |
| United Kingdom | 6000 | 8500 | 18500 | 34000 | 30992 | 48448 | 54670 | *147335* | 240000 |
| Austria | 5880 | 8400 | 16674 | 27580 | 135982 | 335865 | 345375 | 287900 | 287900 |
| Finland | 1000 | 14000 | 2300 | 13281 | 20340 | 44695 | 99000 | *118000* | 137000 |
| Sweden | 1500 | 4870 | 28692 | 37743 | 44590 | 87377 | 194800 | | 311240 |
| Iceland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 717 | 1288 | *1894* | 2500 |
| Liechtenstein | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 700 | *680* | 660 |
| Norway | 90 | 246 | 534 | 2444 | 3778 | 5768 | 11796 | *15285* | 18773 |
| **EU12** | **92080** | **116684** | **189292** | **440034** | **668346** | **937785** | **1614858** | **2056329** | **2597938** |
| **EEA** | **100460** | **143954** | **236958** | **518638** | **869258** | **1406439** | **2255321** | **2464123** | **3336578** |

Figures in italics are extrapolated. Greyed cells indicate use of alternate source of data (Willer & Yussefi, feb. 2000: Organic Agriculture World-wide, table 5)

**B/ calculated data**

Share of organic farming in total agricultural area

| country | 1985 | 1987 | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1997 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 0.06% | 0.09% | 0.12% | 0.14% | 0.18% | 0.26% | 0.47% | *1.31%* |
| Luxembourg | | | | | | | | |
| Denmark | 0.16% | 0.18% | 0.34% | 0.65% | 0.73% | 1.50% | 2.39% | *5.55%* |
| Germany | 0.14% | 0.18% | 0.38% | 1.57% | 2.37% | 2.65% | 2.82% | *2.67%* |
| Greece | none | none | none | 0.01% | 0.02% | 0.06% | 0.15% | *0.41%* |
| Spain | 0.01% | 0.01% | 0.01% | 0.02% | 0.04% | 0.09% | 0.51% | *1.29%* |
| France | 0.14% | 0.18% | 0.21% | 0.27% | 0.29% | 0.39% | 0.50% | *1.09%* |
| Ireland | 0.02% | 0.03% | 0.08% | 0.09% | 0.12% | 0.28% | 0.51% | *0.58%* |
| Italy | 0.03% | 0.03% | 0.06% | 0.10% | 0.53% | 1.22% | 3.82% | *6.03%* |
| Netherlands | 0.12% | 0.17% | 0.33% | 0.46% | 0.52% | 0.58% | 0.90% | *1.20%* |
| Portugal | none | 0.01% | 0.01% | 0.05% | 0.08% | 0.27% | 0.25% | *1.25%* |
| United Kingdom | 0.03% | 0.05% | 0.10% | 0.19% | 0.18% | 0.28% | 0.32% | *1.45%* |
| Austria | 0.17% | 0.24% | 0.48% | 0.79% | 3.94% | 9.79% | 10.09% | *8.44%* |
| Finland | 0.04% | 0.55% | 0.09% | 0.52% | 0.89% | 2.07% | 4.61% | *6.35%* |
| Sweden | 0.05% | 0.15% | 0.90% | 1.21% | 1.43% | 2.81% | 6.17% | *9.98%* |
| Iceland | none | none | none | none | none | 0.03% | 0.06% | *0.11%* |
| Liechtenstein | none | none | none | none | none | none | 7.00% | *6.60%* |
| Norway | 0.01% | 0.03% | 0.05% | 0.24% | 0.37% | 0.56% | 1.15% | *1.79%* |
| **EEA** | **0.07%** | **0.10%** | **0.17%** | **0.37%** | **0.63%** | **1.03%** | **1.61%** | **2.47%** |

Data marked with red are country updates

**Meta data**

Technical information

1. *Data source*
   **Organic farming data**: The table has been compiled by Nicolas Lampkin, Welsh Institute of Rural Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, GB-SY23 3AL. (Several sources)
   Copyright: Nicolas Lampkin

Updated with 1998 & 1999 data: preliminary results SÖL survey, per 25.7.2000
www.soel.de/inhalte/oekolandbau/statistik_europa.html &

Willer & Yussefi, feb. 2000: Organic Agriculture World-wide, table 5
**Agricultural area**: for EFTA4-countries: FAO United Nations (FAO), Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, FAOSTAT database: http://apps.fao.org/
Agricultural land for EU-15-countries: Eurostat/ New Cronos

2. *Description of data*:
   **Organic farming**
   original name of the data file: EEA data warehouse/Socio economic data/Economic sectors/Agriculture and forestry/Certified and Policy-supported Organic and In-conversion Land Area by Country
   original measure units: ha
   original purpose: EEA publications
   **Agricultural area**: EEA data warehouse/ Socio economic data/ land use /land use by country (FAO) and EEA data warehouse/ Socio economic data/ land use /land use by country (New Cronos)
   original measure units: 1000 ha
   original purpose: EEA publications
3. *Geographical coverage*: EEA-18, Eurostat data EU15
4. *Temporal coverage*: agricultural area Eurostat: yearly 1961-1997, agricultural area FAO: yearly 1961-1998, organic farming yearly 1985-1999. Data had to be harmonised prior to calculations.
5. *Methodology and frequency of data collection*:
   **Organic farming**: provisional estimates, accuracy of data varies between countries, data are frequently updated

**Agricultural area**: data collected by EUROSTAT and FAO by tailored questionnaires annually sent to the countries. The definition in use of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) by EUROSTAT includes domestic gardens, which are not included in FAO definition.

6. *Methodology of data manipulation*:
Interpolation to derive agricultural area data from one country when data is missing for different years. If the reported data is missing either at the beginning or at the end of the time series period, the value has been considered to equal the first (or last) reported value. Missing values in the middle of a time series are considered equal to the latest neighbouring value. These interpolations are the responsibility of the EEA.

7. Quality information
*Strength and weakness* (at data level).
Strength: yearly updated
Weakness: accuracy of data on organic farming varies between countries, and includes provisional estimates;. New Cronos agricultural area data: some countries (Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal , Sweden) are not complete over the whole time series, New Cronos data and FAO data for agricultural area are not fully comparable. *EEA warehouse data on total agricultural land do not show the discrepancies observed in raw New Cronos data (series 1975-1987 and 1990-1998 not compatible). Organic farming data suggest that the increase in organic area has stopped in Austria, Sweden and Germany. Comparing with national sources, it seems not correct. Although it may be supposed that the data in Lampkins may have been to high for 1997, there is no evidence that these should be corrected.*

8. *Reliability, accuracy, robustness, uncertainty* (at data level): Not specified.

9. *Further work required* (for data level and indicator level):
using data only on organic farming neglects the potential for pollution reduction of adopting other reduced-input systems, for example schemes associate with EC REG 2078/92 (although this does include measures to support organic farming), and adoption of Integrated Crop Management (ICM). The adoption of these areas as indicators would be a useful addition to the estimate of the area farmed under less burdening systems.