

## STUDY ON ORGANIC FARMING IN EUROPE

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*The material shows that the statistical organic farming is practiced in many countries in the world and is constantly increasing. Organic agriculture has grown rapidly in the world in the last few years and is practiced according to the latest monitoring in about 135 countries in the world in 2006 over 110 countries in 2003. The paper presents data on the situation of organic agriculture in Europe, with emphasis on organic cultivation area and the number of organic farms in Europe. In 2003, over 26 million hectares were grown organically by at least 558,449 farms in the world, compared with the year 2004 when 22.8 million hectares were cultivated in 398,804 organic farms. According to the latest monitoring since 2006, around 30.4 million hectares are cultivated in the system by 718,744 organic farms, this area is 0.65% of total agricultural area, and since 2005, decreasing, 30.55 million hectares are cultivated in the system by 633,891 organic farms. According to the latest monitoring since 2006, in Europe approximately 7.4 million ha are cultivated in organic system (1.6% of the agricultural area) in more than 200,000 farms and the European Union (UE27) are cultivated 6.8 million hectares (4.0% of the agricultural area) 180,000 farms.*

**Key words:** organic farming, statistics, organic agriculture

The statistical material shows that the organic farming is practiced in many countries in the world and is constantly increasing, and for the countries to which we did not find any statistical material can be assumed that practice organic farming methods. In many countries in Europe, S.U.A. and Japan is practiced organic farming because of higher demand for organic products.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The data material was collected from a various documentation and processed in worksheets with MS Excel. The results were compared with data taken from about 1300 questionnaires.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From early 1990, organic farming has developed rapidly in almost all European countries, but lately the pace of growth slowed. In 2003, in Europe almost 6.3 million hectares are organic worked in approximately 170,000 organic farms (fig. 1). In the European Union, almost 5.7 million hectares were organic worked in more than 143,000 farms, which constitute 3.4% of agricultural land and 1.5% of the number of farms in the EU. The country with the largest area organic is Italy worked with over 1 million hectares, and the country with the highest % of the agricultural area is Lichtenstein, 26.4% (fig. 2).

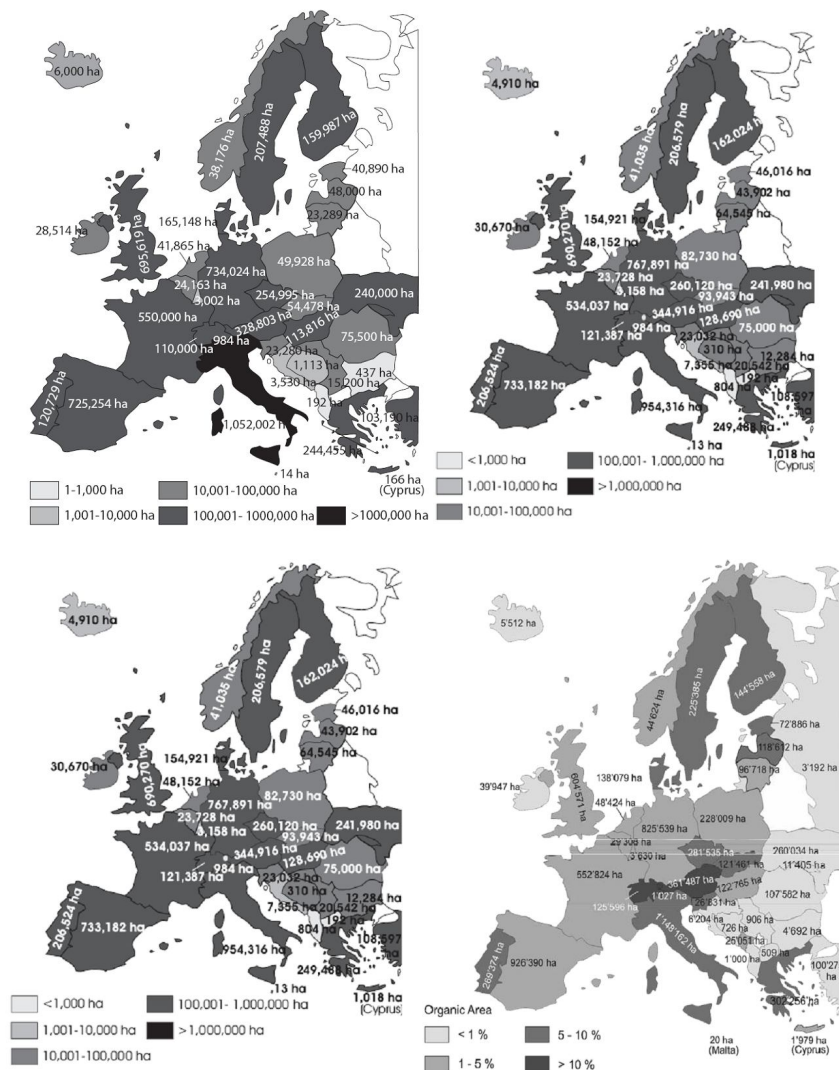


Figure 1 Organic agriculture in Europe (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006), [1,2,3,4]

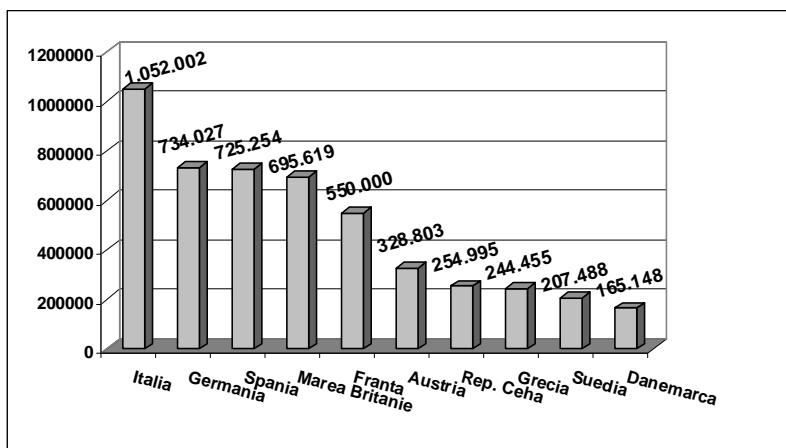


Figure 2 The top of countries with the largest organic areas in Europe, 2003 (ha)

Source: Willer Helga, Yussefi M., *The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends 2005*

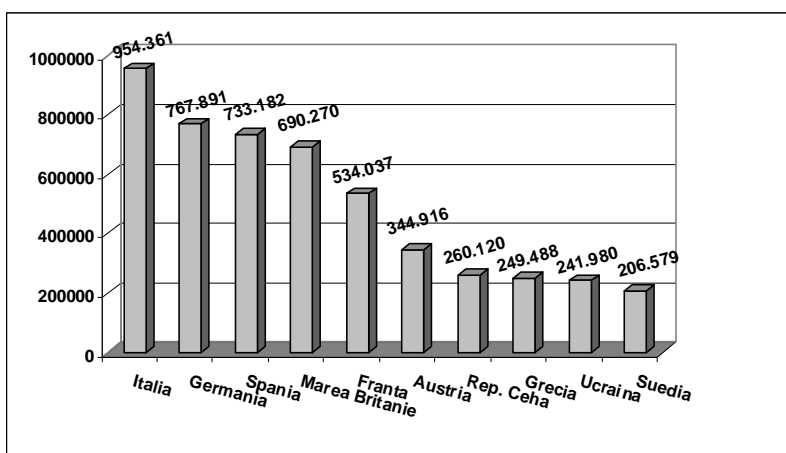
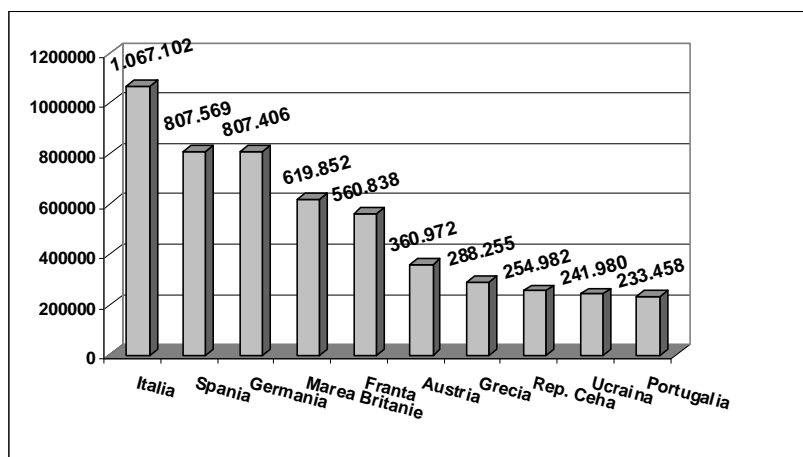


Figure 3 The top of countries with the largest organic areas in Europe, 2004 (ha)

Source: Willer Helga, Yussefi M., *The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends 2006*

At the end of 2004 in Europe were organic managed over 6.5 million hectares (2.21%), nearly 167,000 farms. In the European Union, over 5.8 million hectares were worked in approximately 140,000 organic farms, constituting 3.4% of the agricultural area and 1.5% of EU farms. There are also substantial differences between the various countries as regards the importance of organic agriculture. In 2004, over 13% of agricultural land is organic in Austria and over 11% in Switzerland, around 6% is given in Finland, Italy and Sweden and some countries still have to reach 1%. The country with the highest number of farms and the largest number of hectares is Italy in 2003 and the year 2004. Nearly 1/5 of organic land of the European Union and more than 1/4 of organic farms are located in Italy (*fig. 3*).

In 2005, 6.9 million hectares are cultivated in the organic system in approximately 190,000 organic farms (*fig. 4*), compared to 6.3 million hectares and 160,000 farms in the European Union.



**Figure 4 The top of countries with the largest organic areas in Europe, 2005 (ha)**

Source: Willer Helga, Yussefi M., *The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends 2007*

Compared with previous studies (since December 2004), organic land has increased by approximately 510,000 hectares (7.9%) in Europe and 490,000 hectares (+ 8.5%) in the EU. The increase was due to the EU high rates of development in the new Member States (for example, Lithuania, Poland and +100%, +60%), and important progress in Italy (+113,000 ha), Poland (+85,000 hectares) and Spain (+74,000 Hectares). The support of organic agriculture in the EU include subsidies in the rural development programmes carried out by EU legal protection through the recently revised regulations of the EU organic farming (in force since 1992) and the launch of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Agriculture, in June 2004. Still, Italy is a country with the highest number of farms and the largest number of hectares cultivated organically (*fig. 4*).

According to the latest monitoring since 2006, in Europe approximately 7.4 million ha are cultivated in organic system (1.6% of the agricultural area) in more than 200,000 farms, and the European Union (UE27) are planted 6.8 million hectares (4.0% of the agricultural area) in 180,000 farms. Compared with the previous year, in Europe is observed an increase of approximately 526,562 hectares (+7.7%), a substantial growth in Spain (+118,646 ha), Italy (+81,060 hectares), Poland (+68,300 hectares), Portugal (+ 56,646 ha) and other countries.

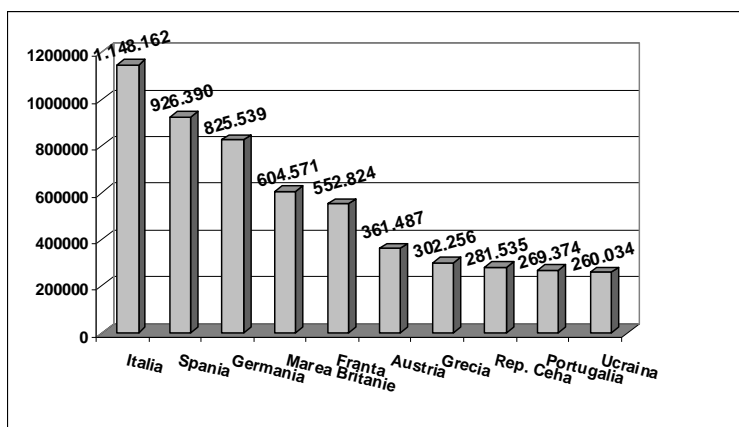


Figure 5 The top of countries with the largest organic areas in Europe, 2006 (ha)

Source: Willer Helga, Yussefi M., Sorensen N., *The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends 2008*

In many countries of Eastern Europe and Southeastern seen a fairly substantial increase, for example in Croatia and Macedonia, organic area has doubled. In the year 2006, over 13% of agricultural land is organically grown in Austria, in the year 2007 is projected 16%, 12% in Switzerland, 9% is given in Italy and Estonia. The country with the highest number of farms and the largest number of hectares is still Italy, followed by Spain, Germany and Britain (*fig. 5*).

## CONCLUSIONS

In Europe, organic agricultural land (7.4 million hectares) is used, in particular, as permanent pasture (44%), arable crops (41%), standing crops represent 9%. They found information about the uses of the land for 99% of organic land. Corn and fodder crops plays the most important role. Among the standing crops, olives, fruits, nuts and grapes are the main categories. In addition, Europe has over 9.5 million hectares of certified organic crops wild. Most of them are in Finland, then in Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina.

Even though this form of agriculture is not yet dominated by any one continent, it seems that at least in the EU, there is a real interest in this form of agriculture. For example, Germany and has set an ambitious goal, to achieve a 20% share of organic agriculture in total cultivated areas, and Austria has a share of 10%.

In recent years, organic crops have increased considerably in some European countries, Greece for example has tripled the area, Portugal has recorded an increase of 50%, 10% of Austria and the Czech Republic by 15%. Organic agriculture is more thriving and Malta and Latvia, Ireland, Spain, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovakia and Italy. Instead, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Finland and the UK have "experienced" little decreases in organic areas in 2004-2005.

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