

THE IMPORTANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN ROMANIA COMPARED TO SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The aim of this present paper is to highlight the properties and importance of organic agriculture, its impact on human livelihood, its evolution, development and perspectives in the European Union. Organic agriculture has made a tremendous contribution to the quality of life and plays a valuable role in our everyday lives by not only providing us with food, but also by maintaining a strong economy. Organic agriculture can contribute to meaningful socio-economic and ecologically sustainable development. This is due on the one hand to the application of organic principles, which means efficient management of local resources, on the other hand, the market for organic products has tremendous growth prospects. Organic farming has grown rapidly in the European Union in recent years. Organic farming is not a miracle, but a creation of farmers who love nature, as an alternative to intensive agriculture, of an industrial type, based on efficient methods and means, especially from the economic point of view.

Key words: organic agriculture, agriculture holdings, European funds, environment.

INTRODUCTION

The organic agriculture is that type of agriculture, which is based on minimizing the use of foreign materials, the use of synthesis chemical substances is prohibited, as well as the use of fertilizers and soil improvers, pesticides, ingredients for the preparation of feed ingredients and auxiliaries (Fossey, 2007). European Union countries use with the same meaning, the following terms: organic agriculture (England), biological agriculture (Greece, France, Italy, Portugal) and ecological agriculture (Denmark, Germany, Spain). Genetically modified organisms and their derivatives are banned in the organic agriculture. Agricultural ecosystems are at the junction of the external action of natural factors, internal factors (genotypes that make agricultural ecosystems) and human population pressure (socio-economic requirements) that influence their management methods, which highlights the complexity agro-ecology problems (Bellon, 2014). The role of this system of agriculture is to produce food in a clean way, more appropriate to the body metabolism, but in correlation with environmental conservation and development. Organic agriculture contributes to the increase of the economical activity with a significant added value and is a major contribute to the increase of the rural areas interest. (Vytantas, 2014)

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Agriculture plays an important role in the European Union, taking into consideration the fact that over 10 million people are involved in working about 8 million agriculture holdings, including 130 million hectares of agricultural land, which feed approximately 350 million consumers. In Europe, the organic farming sector is in continuous development, registering increases from year to year. Organic farming is also a way of producing food that respects natural life cycles. It minimizes the human impact on the environment and operates as naturally as possible. Agriculture is a main branch of the Romanian economy, which is supported by the population employed in agriculture (about 37%) but also its contribution to the gross domestic product (about 16%). Organic agriculture is a dynamic sector in the European Union, which has experienced an upward development in recent years. (Charles, 2009).

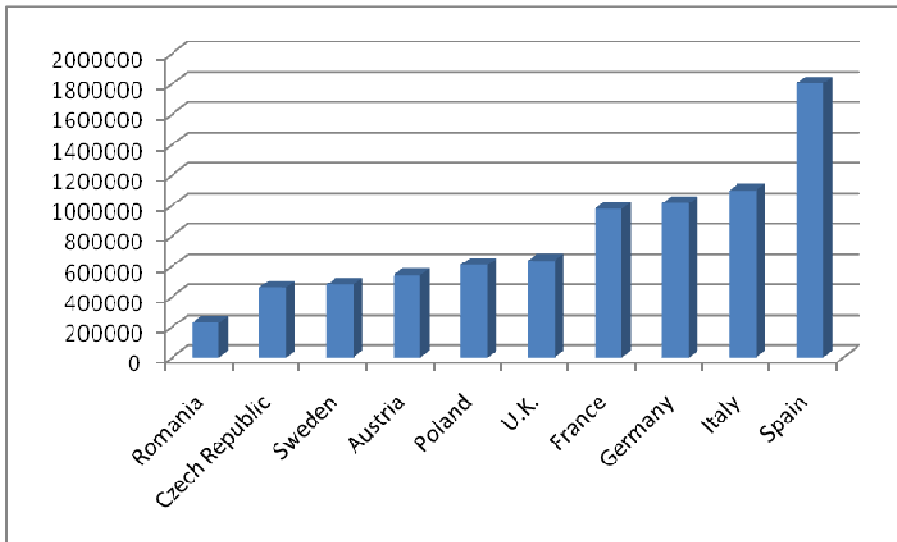


Fig.1. Surfaces used for organic agriculture in Europe in 2014 (ha)

In 2014, Romania ranks place 10 in Europe, with an area of 229 946 ha cultivated in organic farming system, first place is Spain with an area of 1,803,661 ha , followed by Italy with 1,096,889 ha , Germany with 1,015 . 977 234 626 ha and France with 977.234 ha.

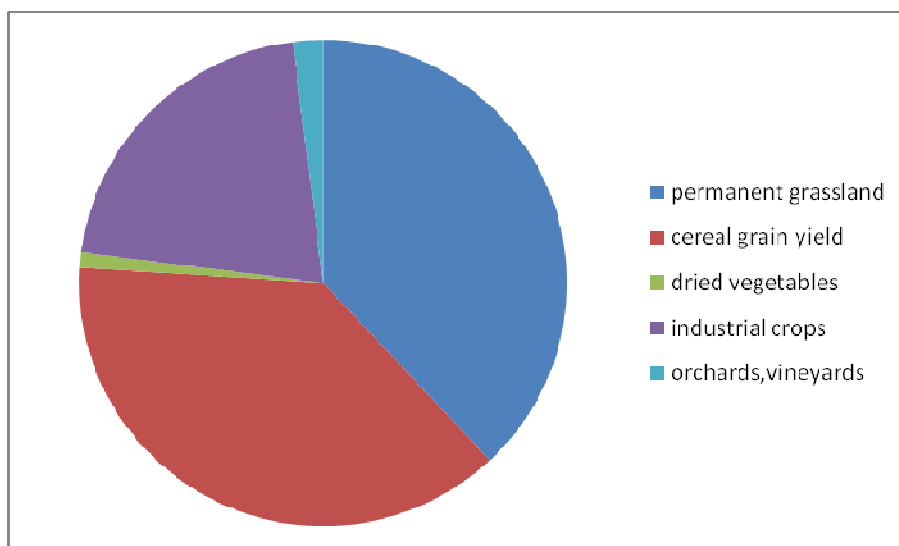


Fig.2. The share of certified organic crops in 2014 in Romania

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From 2015, organic farms and producers in Europe are supported by a wide range of programs. There are direct payments and co-financing from the EU through the new Common Agricultural Policy. All European Union Member States must use 30% of direct payments to finance farmers for sustainable agricultural practices. The new Common Agricultural Policy (2014-2020) contains a number of special measures in order to support organic farming in all Member States. First, the grants for surface will be strict conditioned by some environment rules, so-called "greening measures". Thus, 30% of direct payments will be linked to compliance with environmentally farming practices: crop diversification, maintenance of permanent grassland, conservation of 5-7% of the ecological area. Also, at least 30% of the rural development programs budget will be allocated to agro-environment measures, support organic agriculture or related investment projects or measures for environmental innovation. Romania will have a special measure of the National Rural Development Programme and will be able to access EU funds for the establishment and development of agricultural holdings in the ecological system. Organic agriculture has a huge potential in Romania, especially because the funds allocated for the period 2014-2020 exceed 230 million Euros. If we make a comparison between funds for organic agriculture in 2007-2013 and the program 2014-2020, there has been a significant increase.

Table 1

Comparison between funds for organic agriculture granted in two different programmes

	2007-2013	2014-2020
1.Arable land	162 €/ha	293 €/ha
2.Vegetables	335 €/ha	431 €/ha
3.Orchards	393 €/ha	620 €/ha
4.Vineyards	393 €/ha	479 €/ha
5.Medicinal and aromatic plants	270 €/ha	350 €/ha

Organic agriculture has its own specific measure both for conversion to organic farming practices and maintenance of organic farming practices, aiming at a wider visibility of organic farming production (OECD,2003). Conversion means the transition from non-organic to organic farming within a given period of time, during which the provisions concerning the organic production have been applied (Oancea,2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Organic farming opens up the prospect of producing enough food in the long term without destroying our natural resources, can boast a better energy and environmental balance and makes a substantial contribution to conserving biodiversity and agricultural diversity. From a health and environment angle, a further advantage of organic farming that may gain considerably in importance in the future is that it avoids risks of agro-genetic engineering used in some other forms of agriculture that have not yet been sufficiently analysed.

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