

Organic Agriculture in Germany

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1 Agriculture in Germany

The importance of agriculture in general has decreased in Germany over the last decades, as it has in all other European countries. In 1996, the contribution of agriculture to the gross domestic product was one percent. This figure is much higher, however, when related economic sectors such as food processing are also taken into account. German agricultural exports and imports are among the highest in Europe. Trade partners are mainly EU-, EFTA or associated eastern European countries. The number of farms decreased from 648,803 full-time farms in 1990 to 429,000 in 1999. As of 1999, farms with less than two hectares are no longer counted in the official German statistics (until 1998 farms with more than one hectare were counted). In 1998 the agricultural area was 17.26 million hectares, which is 48 percent of the total area.

In 1999, 43 percent of all farms were managed by full-time farmers and 57 percent were managed part-time. Ninety-five percent of all farms were family farms (Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry, Agrarpolitische Mitteilungen 2/2000 (<http://www.bml.de/aktuelles/apms/apm2000-02.htm>)).

The farms in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) were much bigger than those in the West, and even today the official statistics differentiate between farms in the West and in the East. In 1999, the average farm size was 29 hectares in West Germany and 201 hectares in the East.

2.5 percent of the total agricultural area and 1.8 percent of the total number of farms (1998) under organic management in Germany correspond to the European average.

2 History and Development of Organic Agriculture in Germany

The development of organic agriculture in Germany has been strongly influenced both by bio-dynamic and by organic-biological agriculture.

The German catch-all term for all forms of ecological / biological agriculture is *ökologischer Landbau* (ecological/organic/biological agriculture).

2.1 Bio-dynamic Agriculture (Biologisch-dynamische Wirtschaftsweise)

Bio-dynamic agriculture was initiated by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) as early as 1924. He gave eight talks on the spiritual foundation of farming, later called bio-dynamic agriculture at the Koberwitz estate near Breslau in Silesia. According to Steiner, the farm is a living being – an organism – which is also subject to non-material influences. These influences, the so-called dynamic forces, are enhanced by bio-dynamic preparations (Koepef et al., 1996).

The *Forschungsring für Biologisch-Dynamische Wirtschaftsweise* (<http://www.forschungsring.de>) (Research Group for Bio-dynamic Farming) owns the Demeter symbol.



Certification for bio-dynamic agriculture is conducted by the *Demeter-Bund* (<http://www.demeter.de>) (Demeter Association), founded in 1954. It is a member of the German organic umbrella organisation *AGÖL* (<http://www.agoel.de>).

2.2 Organic-biological Agriculture (Organisch-biologischer Landbau)

Organic-biological agriculture was developed in Switzerland by Hans Mueller (1891-1988) and his wife Maria Mueller (1894-1969). As early as the 1920s they committed themselves to the maintenance of family farming. In the 1930s Hans Mueller was influenced by bio-dynamic agriculture, and in the 1950s he developed the organic-biological farming method. The theoretical basis was provided by the German medical doctor and microbiologist Hans-Peter Rusch (1906-1977), who met Hans Mueller in 1951. In his book *Bodenfruchtbarkeit* (Soil Fertility, Rusch 1968), he explains the role of soil life (soil microbiology) with regard to soil fertility (see also Neuerburg / Padel, 1992).

2.3 First Growth Phase (1968-1988)

Towards the end of the 1960s, the negative environmental effects of industrialised farming and pollution in general were becoming obvious. The producer organisation *Bioland* was founded in 1971; the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für naturnahen Obst-, Gemüse- und Feldfruchtanbau (ANOG)* (<http://www.bonnet.de/anog/>) (Association for the Cultivation of Organic Fruit, Vegetables and Field Crops) had already been established in 1961. Since 1975 the *Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL)* (Foundation Ecology & Agriculture) has co-ordinated the exchange of experience and information on organic farming, mainly through its publications. *SÖL* has supported the development of IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (<http://www.ifoam.org>) from its beginnings. During this phase it was important to show agricultural experts that organic farming can be practised successfully. More producer organisations were founded later.

2.4 Second Growth Phase (1988 to the present)

The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau (AGÖL)* (Association for Organic Farming) was founded in 1988 as an umbrella association for the six producer organisations (Demeter, Bioland, ANOG, Biokreis, Naturland and Ecovin) at the initiative of the *Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL)*. Common basic standards (*Rahmenrichtlinien*) had already been developed in 1984. These standards set the framework within which the standards of the individual organisations operate.

Organic agriculture spread very quickly in the following years. This development was encouraged by state funding through the EU extensification programme from 1989 onwards and later EU Regulation 2078/92.

Organic agriculture also spread quickly in East Germany after the German reunification in 1990. Organic farming was not allowed in the days of the former German Democratic



Republic (GDR). Nevertheless, a very small number of farms in eastern Germany had practised organic farming methods.

The market and area under organic management is presently growing at a slower pace in Germany than in some of its neighbouring countries, especially Austria, Switzerland and Denmark.

Forsa, the *Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung* (Society for Sociological Research) conducted a survey in 1997 asking 1000 Germans for their opinion of organic products.

According to those results, the main reasons why consumers do not buy more organic food are: the lack of trust in the genuineness of organic products; the lack of availability; the lack of processed products; and premium prices. However, all participants in the survey stated that they wanted to buy more organic products in the future, mainly for health and environmental reasons and because of their better taste.

Positive factors for the further development of the organic market will be: the growing variety of available products; the fact that more and more supermarkets are now offering organic products; and the fact that prices for organic products are falling. The trade sector saw the lack of a common seal as the main limiting factor for the further development of the organic market. Such a seal was launched in January 1999 and appeared on the market in January 2000 (see chapter 9.3).

3 Statistical Development of Organic Agriculture

The statistics of the state authorities at least one authority per federal state in Germany) show that on December 31, 1998 there were 9,200 organic producers (12.6% more than in the previous year) with 416,5000 hectares under organic management (+6.9%). Approximately 80 % of the organic farms are represented by *AGÖL*.

The increase in the number of organic farms in Germany following Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 is shown in the table at: http://www.soel.de/inhalte/oekolandbau/statistik_d_vo209291.html.

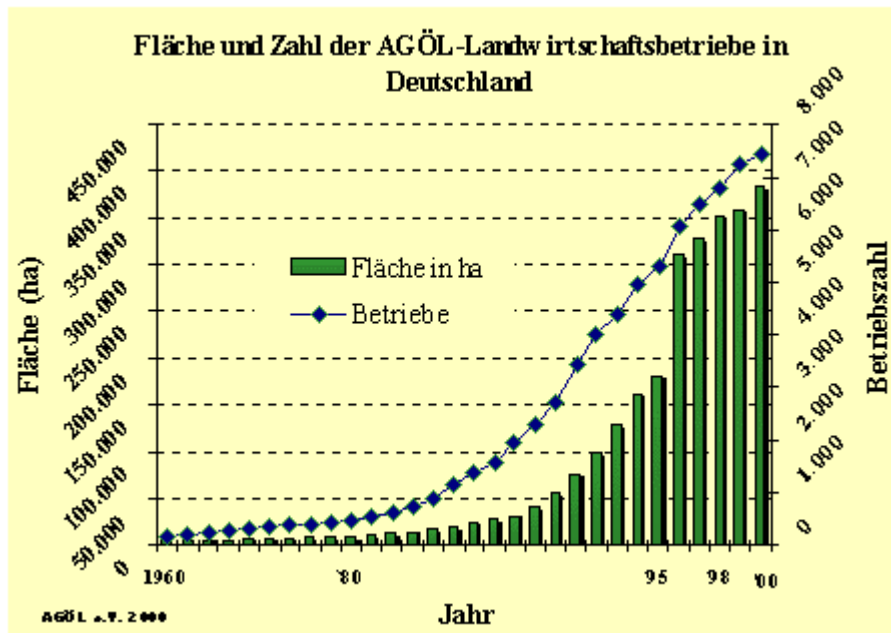
On January 1, 2000, 7.464 farmers belonging to one of nine producer organisations (<http://www.agoel.de/mitgl.htm>) (*AGÖL*-member organisations) managed 383.572 hectares. Eight hundred processing companies are certified by the producers' organisations.

The increase in the number of organic farms belonging to members of one of the producer organisations and in land under organic management can be seen in figure 1.

Biopark (<http://www.biopark.de>), one of the producer organisations in eastern Germany, became a member of *AGÖL* in 1996. The members of Biopark have rather large farms as a result of the former socialist production structures. This development, from 1996 on, can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1: Development of Organic Farming in Germany



Source: AGÖL, 2000

(Fläche= land under organic management; Jahr = year, Betriebszahl= number of farms)

4 Organic Agriculture Organisations

4.1 Producer Organisations

AGÖL - *ArbeitsGemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau* (Association for Organic Farming) is the umbrella association of the German organic producer organisations and has nine members. These are:

- ANOG (*Arbeitskreis für naturnahen Obst-, Gemüse- und Feldfruchtanbau*) (<http://www.bonnet.de/anog>)



- Biokreis



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- *Bioland* (<http://www.bioland.de/>)

Bioland

- *Biopark* (<http://www.biopark.de/>)



- *Demeter* (<http://www.forschungsring.de>)



- *Ecovin* (<http://www.ecovin.de/>)



- *Gäa* (<http://www.gaea.de>)



- *Naturland* (<http://www.naturland.de/>)



- *Ökosiegel*



Standards for the processing of organically produced products (*Rahmenrichtlinien für die Verarbeitung von Produkten aus ökologischem Landbau* (<http://www.agoel.de/verarb.htm>)) have been developed by AGÖL and the *Bundesverband Produzenten Ökologischer Produkte (PoeP)* (Federation of Producers of Organic Products), formerly the *Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren – Hersteller* (Federation of Manufacturers of Natural Foods and Products).

AGÖL represents the interests of its members before government and state authorities, especially when comments on drafts of regulations etc. are required. Internally, AGÖL coordinates positions on issues of common concern. AGÖL helps consumers in cases of



fraudulent labelling with its *Koordinationsstelle irreführende Biokennzeichnungen* (Coordinating Office Against Pseudo-Organic Labelling).

Together with *CMA, Centrale Marketing Gesellschaft der Deutschen Agrarwirtschaft* (<http://www.cma.de>) (the Central Marketing Society of the German Agricultural Sector), *AGÖL* has developed the common organic seal, the *Oeko-Pruefzeichen*, which was presented to the public on January 29, 1999 in Berlin. This seal is administered by the *Oekopruefzeichen (ÖPZ) GmbH*.

AGÖL and its member organisations collaborate with IFOAM in numerous ways, and they are represented on the IFOAM World Board of Directors (http://www.ifoam.org/rep_contact/world_board.html), the IFOAM Standards Committee (<http://www.ifoam.org/standard/index.html>), the IFOAM Accreditation Programme Committee (<http://www.ifoam.org/accredit/index.html>), the IFOAM-EU-Group (<http://www.ifoam.org/europe/index.html>) and the IFOAM Regional Group of German-speaking Countries (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland).

4.2 AGÖL Member Organisations

The organic producers' organisations all own legally protected seals with which certified farms and certified processors can be labelled. These seals are familiar to German consumers, especially those of Demeter, Bioland and Naturland.

Other *AGÖL* member organisations have gained regional importance (*Biokreis, Ökosiegel, ANOG* (<http://www.bonnet.de/anog>), *Gäa* and *Biopark* are mainly active in eastern Germany. *Ecovin* is an organisation of most of the organic wine producers in Germany.

Two small producer organisations – *Ökobund* and *Ökoland* - were recently founded in south-west Germany. They are not *AGÖL* members.

4.3 Other Organisations

There are numerous other organisations related to organic agriculture in Germany, some of which are introduced below. An almost complete overview of all relevant organisations in the organic sector in Germany is given in the directory of IFOAM members, Organic Agriculture World-wide (<http://www.ifoam.org/pub/direct.html>).

Links to homepages of IFOAM member organisations, of which there are almost 100 in Germany, may be found at the IFOAM internet page or at the homepage of the *IFOAM Regional Group of German-speaking Countries* (<http://www.ifoam.de>).



4.3.1 IFOAM and the IFOAM Regional Group of German-speaking Countries (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland)

IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (<http://www.ifoam.org>), was founded in 1972 in Versailles, France. Its head office has been located in Tholey-Theley in the German federal state of Saarland since 1987.

The IFOAM Regional Group of German-speaking Countries (<http://www.ifoam.de>) (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland) was founded in 1991 and meets twice per year to exchange information. Two seminars were held in 1999, one on Agenda 2000 (<http://www.ifoam.de/agenda2000>) and one on the new European organic animal husbandry regulation (Council Regulation (EC) 1804/99).

4.3.2 Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL) (Foundation Ecology & Agriculture)

The *Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL)* (<http://www.soel.de>) – (Foundation Ecology & Agriculture) was founded in 1961 by Karl Werner Kieffer (1912-1995) and has worked specifically on the topic of organic agriculture since 1975. Many of SÖL's activities relate to information about organic farming. It publishes the quarterly journal *Ökologie & Landbau* (http://www.soel.de/inhalte/publikationen/oe_u_1.html) (Ecology & Agriculture), which covers all aspects of ecology and farming. It is the only magazine in the German-speaking countries which regularly publishes articles on organic agricultural research. *Ökologie & Landbau* is also the German-language magazine of IFOAM, the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements*. Since 1997 *Ökologie & Landbau* has been produced in co-operation with the Swiss *Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)* (<http://www.fibl.ch/>). SÖL brochures (*SÖL-Sonderausgaben*) and books *Ökologische Konzepte* (the Ecological Concepts series) cover a wide range of subjects related to organic agriculture. From 2000 on, SÖL and the organic producer organisation *Bioland* will publish books for organic farmers and growers (*the Praxis des Ökolandbaus series*).

SÖL also publishes a quarterly *Berater-Rundbrief* (Advisors' Bulletin). The SÖL internet page covers a wide range of topics on organic agriculture.

SÖL initiated and co-ordinates a biennial scientific conference (<http://www.soel.de/inhalte/projekte/wissenschaftstagung.html>) on organic farming in the German-speaking countries, in co-operation with various research institutions (the first conference took place in Witzenhausen, Germany in 1993; the next conference will take place in Munich, Germany in 2001).

The German organic producers' umbrella association *AGÖL – Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau* was founded in 1988 at SÖL's initiative. Since 1991, SÖL has acted as co-ordinator of the IFOAM Regional Group of German-speaking Countries (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland).



The SÖL research and training farm (<http://www.soel.de/inhalte/projekte/soelhof.html>) (SÖL-Hof für Bildung und Forschung) was established in January 1999 in Queichhambach (Pfalz).

4.3.3 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik (ALOG) (Working Group for Foods Produced Without Genetic Engineering)

The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik (ALOG)* (Working Group for Foods Produced Without Genetic Engineering) was founded in January 1999. Its aim is to promote the availability of inputs (raw products, processing agents) produced without the use of genetic engineering. Thanks to its internet database (<http://www.infoXgen.com>), anyone can find such products. Members of ALOG are:

- *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau (AGÖL)* (<http://www.agoel.de>), Germany
- *ARGE Gentechnik-frei e.V.*, Vienna, Austria
- *Biologica, het Platform voor Biologische Landbouw en Voeding*, (<http://www.platformbiologica.nl/>) Utrecht, the Netherlands
- *Bundesverband Produzenten ökologischer Produkte (PoeP, formerly the Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren Hersteller)* (<http://www.oekoproduzenten.de/>), Germany
- *Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau (FiBL)* (<http://www.fibl.ch>), Frick, Switzerland
- *Verband der Reformwarenhersteller (VRH)* (<http://www.reformhaus.de/>), Germany
- *Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL)*, Germany

The database is supported by numerous institutions and firms (see also: <http://www.infoXgen.com/start.htm>).

4.3.4 Schweisfurth Stiftung (Schweisfurth Foundation)

The Schweisfurth Foundation (<http://www.zukunft.de>) was founded in 1985 by Karl Ludwig Schweisfurth. Its aim is to support projects in research and science for a sustainable environment. Organic farming is a main aspect of this goal. Several projects financed by the foundation deal with organic agriculture.

Several foundation (e.g. Schweisfurth Stiftung, Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau) supports partly with others four chairs at three different universities in Germany: Agriculture and Social Ecology (Humboldt University, Berlin); Ecological Food Quality (University of Witzenhausen); Evolutionary Biology and Morphology (Witten private university); and Applied Studies of Farm Animal Behaviour and Species-Appropriate Management and Housing (University of Witzenhausen). Furthermore, the foundation endows awards for organic farms (*Agrar-Kultur-Preis zur Förderung der ökologischen Landwirtschaft*) as well as research awards for ecological economics (*Schweisfurth-Forschungspreis für Ökologische Ökonomie*) and



for species-appropriate farm animal management (*Schweisfurth Forschungspreis für artgemäße Nutztierhaltung*).

4.3.5 The *Gesellschaft für Boden, Technik, Qualität (BTQ)* (Society for Soil, Technology and Quality)

The aims of the *Gesellschaft für Boden, Technik, Qualität (BTQ)* (<http://www.soel.de/btq>), founded in 1968, are to promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge on organic agriculture and horticulture, to support the use of environmentally-friendly machinery and methods in agriculture and horticulture, and to promote co-operation between consumers, farmers and growers, advisors, scientists and companies.

4.3.6 The *Gesellschaft für ökologische Tierhaltung (GÖT)* (Society for Ecological Animal Husbandry)

The *Gesellschaft für ökologische Tierhaltung (GÖT)* was founded in 1992. It unites agricultural scientists, veterinarians and others to promote the exchange of ideas and information on the relationship between humans, animals and the environment and to address special questions concerning animal welfare such as their social behaviour and adequate housing conditions.

4.3.7 The *Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft* – Foundation for a Future for Agriculture

In July 2000 the *Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft* – Foundation for a Future for Agriculture was founded at the Dottenfelderhof Bad Vilbel as part of the Gemeinnützige Treuhandstelle e.V. It will provide funding for bio-dynamic and organic farming projects, and support training and therapeutic organisations which are using the potential of agriculture.

5 Regional Distribution of Organic Farms in Germany

Most organic farms are located in the federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria in the South of Germany, a pattern which developed after the Second World War. However, the highest ratio of organic farms and organically managed area compared to conventional farming is in eastern Germany.

Information about the regional distribution of *AGÖL* farms in 1999 is available at: http://www.soel.de/inhalte/oekolandbau/statistik_d_1999_reg.html.

These differences are due to: the big changes in eastern German agriculture after the reunification of Germany in 1990; the designation of large conservation areas with restrictions for agriculture that are easily fulfilled by organic farmers; and the fact that many regions in eastern Germany are classified as disadvantaged areas - often with special incentives for organic farmers. Another factor for the high percentage of organic farmers in the East is that there is not as much prejudice towards organic agriculture in this part of Germany as had



developed in the West due to the polemics of both organic and conventional farmers and their organisations in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

Regulations supporting the conversion to organic farming (e.g. the extensification programme in 1989 and the later agri-environment programmes under Council Regulation (EC) 2078/92) and the EU's Regulation on organic farming (2092/91/EEC) have greatly helped to make organic agriculture generally accepted, and nowadays there is dialogue and peaceful co-existence throughout Germany.

6 Standards and Certification

6.1 AGÖL Standards and the EU Regulation on Organic Agriculture

AGÖL standards are in several respects stricter than the EU regulation on organic production (Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91; see Schmidt/Haccius, 1998). For instance, they prescribe the conversion of the whole farm. With respect to processing, the positive lists of the AGÖL and PoeP standards (<http://www.agoel.de/verarb.htm>) are more restrictive, e.g. by limiting the use of enzymes for certain purposes (AGÖL/BNN 1998).

Both private standards (AGÖL 1996) and state standards are inspected according to the inspection system as described in Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 (http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1991/de_391R2092.html). Private inspection bodies, which are approved and supervised by the state authorities, often inspect according to both standards.

On July 19, 1999, the Council of the Agricultural Ministers of the EU passed the EU Regulation on Organic Animal Husbandry (Council Regulation (EC) No. 1804/1999), which was published in the EU Official Journal on August 24, 1999. This EU animal husbandry regulation will enter into force on August 24, 2000. Already from the day of its publication in the Official Journal of the EU (August 24, 1999) it prohibits the use of genetically engineered organisms and technologies in organic agriculture.

After the Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 came into force in 1993, a number of farmers and processors began to produce organically without joining one of the existing producer organisations.

7 Inspection Bodies and State Authorities

Due to the federal structure of Germany, 22 state authorities were designated to implement Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91. They are in charge of supervising more than 22 private inspection bodies.

The inspection bodies co-ordinate their interests in two working groups: the *Konferenz der Kontrollstellen* (KdK) (<http://www.oeko-kontrollstellen.de/>) (Conference of Inspection



Bodies) and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kontrollstellen* (Working Group of Inspection Bodies).

8 Land Use and Animal Husbandry

An overview of land use and animal husbandry in organic agriculture is given in tables 1 to 3.

Table 1: Organic Land Use on AGÖL Farms, 1997/98

Number of AGÖL farms	6,793	
	Hectares	Percentage of area organically managed by AGÖL farms
Agricultural area	354,006	
Arable land	175,450	49.6
Permanent grassland	155,705	44.0
Special crops	9,055	2.6

Source: ZMP, 1999

Table 2: Cropping Pattern on AGÖL Farms in 1997/98

	Hectares	Percentage of area organically managed by AGÖL farms
Cereals	89,824	25.4
Winter wheat	21,240	6.0
Summer wheat	4,155	1.2
Rye	26,655	7.5
Triticale	6,087	1.7
Winter barley	4,940	1.4
Summer barley	5,532	1.6
Spelt	6,054	1.7
Oats	11,642	3.3
Maize	574	0.2
Maslin	1,874	0.5
Legumes	14,858	4.2
Field beans	2,139	
Field peas	6,522	
Soy beans	134	
Root crops	4,371	1.2
Potatoes	4,119	
Sugar beets	149	
Oil Plants	9,115	2.6
Rape/ bird rape	3,027	
Sunflowers	818	



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	Hectares	Percentage of area organically managed by AGÖL farms
Maize for silage	2,357	0.7
Clover, ley, lucerne	27,255	7.7
Flax	1,016	0.3
Hemp	269	0.1
Vegetables	4,408	1.2
Vegetables for processing	504	
Carrots	666	
Cabbage	186	
Onions	206	
Red beets	381	
Fruit	2,710	0.8
Fruit for processing	460	
Pomiferous Fruit	393	
Small Fruit	127	
Medicinal herbs, herbs	267	
Wine	1,578	0.4
Total	354,006	

Source: ZMP, 1999

Table 3: Organic Animal Husbandry on AGÖL Farms, 1999

Animal	Number of Animals
Cattle (total)	279,858
Dairy cows	70,341
Suckling cows	61,158
Pigs	54,058
Boars	272
Sows and gilts	4,519
Fattening pigs	37,903
Sheep	101,075
Goats	10,811
Poultry	803,829
Laying hens	661,761
Pullets	52,585
Fryers	38,421
Ducks	9,547
Geese	181,888
Turkeys	65,438



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9 Marketing

9.1 Marketing Channels

Marketing channels for organic products are diversified in Germany. A study from 1999 showed that the total turnover in 1997 amounted to almost 4 billion DM (approximately 2 billion Euro). Natural food shops hold about 1/3 of the share, supermarkets hold a quarter, direct marketing (farm shops and farmers' markets) accounts for a fifth, and health food shops, bakeries and butcher shops account for one tenth of the share each.

A number of organic speciality products (wine, black tea, coffee) are also marketed via mail-order firms. Many products - not only exotic products - are imported.

Many of the processing and marketing firms have created their own brands and logos, guaranteeing the organic quality of their products. Examples of these are: Alnatura, Füllhorn and Naturkind. A common logo, the *Öko-Prüfzeichen* (see below), was created to help consumers distinguish between the many logos.

9.2 Producer Prices

To make the market more transparent, organic product prices have been collected since 1991 by the *Zentrale Markt- und Preisberichtsstelle für Erzeugnisse der Land-, Forst- und Ernährungswirtschaft GmbH (ZMP)*, a semi-state body in charge of registering prices for agricultural, forestry and food industry products. In 1999, 1,362 organic farms declared their prices to the ZMP. The ZMP also evaluates the *AGÖL* statistics on organic land use and organic animal husbandry and estimates production volumes. At the end of 1998, they investigated the production volumes of 56 out of a total of 67 producers' marketing co-operatives. Together with researchers from the *Fachhochschule Neubrandenburg* (a technical college), they estimated which marketing channels were mainly used as well as the amounts in the respective channels.

9.3 The *Öko-Prüfzeichen* (National Logo for Organic Products)

At the *Grüne Woche* in Berlin in 2000, the biggest agricultural fair in Germany, the first organic products carrying the new common seal for organic products – the *Öko-Prüfzeichen* (<http://www.oepz.de>) - were presented to the public. This logo was developed in co-operation between *AGÖL* and *CMA* (the *Centrale Marketinggesellschaft der deutschen Agrarwirtschaft*, a semi-state body promoting German agricultural products). This seal is supported by the German Farmers Association (*Deutscher Bauernverband, DBV*).



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From now on, consumers who buy organic products in supermarkets rather than in specialised natural food shops should find it easier to recognise genuine organic products. The seal can be used for products that were produced and processed according to the *AGÖL* and *AGÖL/PoeP* standards as well as according to the EU regulation. The seal is administered by the *Öko-Prüfzeichen GmbH*.

10 State Support for Organic Agriculture

10.1 Support for Farmers

In Germany organic farmers have received financial support since 1989. From 1989 support was granted to farmers converting to organic agriculture under the EU-extensification programme.

The follow-up support programme under Council Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92 on agricultural production methods compatible with requirements for the protection of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside (http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1996/en_396R0746.html) started in 1994. As a consequence of this financial support, the number of organic farmers rose sharply at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and the supply of organic products increased.

Because of Germany's federal structure, each of the states had to develop its own programme to support organic farming under this regulation (http://www.soel.de/inhalte/oekolandbau/agrarpolitik_praemien.html). Unlike the extensification programme, this regulation also permitted support for already existing organic farmers. The subsidies for arable farming and grassland were about 125 Euro per hectare and year (100 Euro for existing farms) and 600 Euro for permanent crops (500 Euro for existing farms). The federal states could lower the subsidies by as much as 20 percent or raise them to 40 percent, depending on the regional situation.

These programmes are presently under revision; from 2000 on, support will be granted under the Rural Development Regulation of Agenda 2000 (see also Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 of 17 May 1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and amending and repealing certain regulations (http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg06/rur/leg/1257_en.pdf).

10.2 Other State Support for Organic Farming

In addition to direct subsidies for farmers, marketing initiatives are supported. Under the *Richtlinie zur Förderung der Vermarktung nach besonderen Regeln erzeugter Erzeugnisse* (Guideline for the Promotion of the Marketing of Organically Produced Agricultural Products), which was revised at the end of 1999, subsidies are granted for



producer-based marketing organisations, for processing and for the development of marketing concepts. It is implemented in all federal states.

Many of the federal states have also developed their own programmes to support marketing and other areas of organic farming.

10.3 Referat Ökologischer Landbau (The Organic Unit at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture)

At the beginning of 1999, the German Ministry of Agriculture (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten, BML (<http://www.bml.de>) set up a unit for organic agriculture and extensive forms of farming. The main tasks of this unit are to deal with:

- general questions related to organic agriculture;
- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91;
- subsidies for organic farming; and
- the marketing of organic products, including labelling.

In October 1999 the unit presented a concept for the promotion of organic farming in Germany (*Konzept zur Förderung des ökologischen Landbaus* (<http://www.bml.de/landwirtschaft/oekolandbau/titel.htm>). It is hoped that this concept will allow the area under organic management as well as the market for organic products to increase in the next years.

11 Agenda 2000

Agri-environmental programmes were revised under the Rural Development Regulation of Agenda 2000. Subsidies were increased in most of the federal states, and vegetable production will be specifically supported from now on.

The IFOAM Regional Group of German-Speaking Countries met in March 1999 in order to develop a position paper on Agenda 2000 (<http://www.ifoam.de/agenda2000/positioneng.htm>). The main criticism was directed towards the price cuts, which were seen as a threat to agriculture as a whole, and there were fears that prices for organic products will also be put under pressure. The Rural Development Regulation, however, was seen positively because of its considerable potential for supporting organic farming. As a follow-up of that meeting, the AGÖL member organisations and their co-ordinating bodies in the federal states met twice in 1999 to discuss questions related to the implementation of Agenda 2000 in Germany.



12 Advisory Service

Farmers converting to organic agriculture have a special need for advice. In the first decades of the development of organic farming, there was neither financial support for organic farming advice by the state nor a state advisory service for organic farming. Advice was organised by the farmers themselves, and experienced practitioners played a crucial role. Farmers' meetings to exchange experience were also important in the beginning.

Today there are several forms of organic advisory services:

- Advisory services by the producer associations, partly state-funded;
- Ringberatung: Several producers collectively hire an advisor, supported by the state;
- Official advisory service: state advisors for organic agriculture.

Some organisations have specialised in providing organic advisory services. These include the *Ökoring Niedersachsen* (<http://www.oekring.de>), the *Ökoring Schleswig-Holstein* and the *Bio-Ring Allgäu* (all regionally active). Specialised information on organic animal husbandry is available from the *Beratung Artgerechte Tierhaltung (BAT)* (Species-appropriate Animal Husbandry Consultancy).

Due to higher specialisation levels in organic agriculture, the need for specialised advisors is increasing - e.g. for marketing and animal husbandry.

Once a year advisors meet at the *AGÖL-Beratertagung*, a meeting for all organic advisors. The information flow between the advisors is kept up with the *Berater-Rundbrief* (Advisors' Bulletin), which is published quarterly by the *Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau (SÖL)*, and with other bulletins published by the advisory services themselves.

According to a 1994 study, there were 86 full-time advisors in Germany. This breaks down to approximately 86 farms per advisor. In reality, there were more advisors, many of them working only part-time. Furthermore, the farm-advisor-ratio can vary from one advisory service to another and from one federal state to another. This is due to different budgets and agricultural structures: there are lots of smaller farms in the South and West Germany, bigger farms in the North and even bigger ones in the new federal states in eastern Germany.

The number of full-time advisors may not have changed much since 1994, while the number of organic farms has increased. This is mainly due to cutbacks in public funding.

13 Research and Training

In 1981 Professor Dr. Hartmut Vogtmann was appointed as Professor for Organic Agriculture at the University of Kassel-Witzenhausen - the first chair in organic agriculture world-wide. It is now held by Professor Dr. Jürgen Hess. (Professor Vogtmann has been president of the



Bundesamt für Naturschutz, the German federal state authority for nature conservation, since January 2000).

In 1987 a second professorial chair was established at the University of Bonn, which today has an *Institut für Organischen Landbau* (Institute of Organic Agriculture) (<http://www.uni-bonn.de/iol>) under the directorship of Professor Dr. Ulrich Köpke.

At almost all agricultural universities and technical colleges it is now possible - at least to some extent - to study organic agriculture.

Professorial chairs for organic agriculture have been established at several universities and technical colleges. It is possible to earn a special degree in organic agriculture at the universities of Witzenhausen (since 1996) and Bonn (since 1999). There are also several technical agricultural colleges specialising in organic agriculture.

AGÖL has compiled a list of universities and other research institutions (http://www.soel.de/inhalte/aktuell/adressen_forschung_d.html) (such as federal research centres), listing their research activities (available from *SÖL*). Organic farming research is funded by the federal states, by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture or through various EU-research projects.

The government announced in 1999 that it will establish a national research institute for organic agriculture in Trenthorst in Schleswig-Holstein.

Every two years a scientific conference takes place in the German-speaking regions. It is organised by a university institute in co-operation with *SÖL*, who initiated this conference in 1993. The next one will take place in the year 2001 in Munich. About 200 papers reflecting the state of organic farming research are presented at these conferences and published in the conference proceedings.

14 Challenges

- Organic farming should not be over-regulated, there should remain room for initiative developing and growth.
- The practical experience of the players in the organic sector must be taken seriously, and their experience must be used in political discussions or in discussions related to laws and regulations concerning organic agriculture.
- Research and development must be intensified, including the dialogue with agricultural practice.
- Organic agriculture must maintain a clear profile – especially in comparison to integrated farming. This principle must also be applied to governmental support and official advertisements.



- New marketing channels need to be developed.
- Organic Agriculture has to be combined with a sustainable nutriculture.



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