



THE WORLD OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

STATISTICS & EMERGING TRENDS 2006

AUSTRALIA / OCEANIA 12,2 MILLION HA

ASIA 4,1 MILLION HA

AFRICA 1,0 MILLION HA

EUROPE 6,5 MILLION HA

LATIN AMERICA 6,4 MILLION HA

NORTH AMERICA 1,4 MILLION HA



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Additional information (links, graphs) is available from the internet at www.soel.de/oekolandbau/weltweit.html. Information about organic farming around the globe is provided at www.ifoam.org.

Should corrections and updates of this report become necessary, they will be published at www.organic-europe.net.

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7.4 *Organic grapes ... More Than Wine and Statistics*

BERNWARD GEIER¹⁰

Wine plays an outstanding role as “ambassador” of organic quality. Given the rapidly growing importance of the organic wine sector, it is appropriate and timely to devote a special chapter to this crop.

Searching for reliable organic data and statistics is quite a challenging task, which seems to be even paramount when it gets to organic grapes and wine. Helga Willer from the FiBL, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, supported by Bärbara Baraibar worked hard and dedicated to get the data, which are presented in this chapter.

The roots and quality achievements

Viticulture and grape growing was among the crops that were converted early to the chemical treadmill, which subsequently caused an early development of organic and biodynamic alternatives dating back to the 1950s.

Only since the 1980s public research has supported the increasing in organic grape and wine production.

A solid growth of the sector started in the nineties and continues dynamically up to today.

For the pioneers in the first decades, the focus was clearly on finding and practicing alternatives to the use of chemical-synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The consequence of this concentration on environmental aspects – so to say from a healthy soil to healthy grapes - was that often less attention was paid to the cellar and wine quality.

Thus organic wine in its earlier days did not have the best reputation with regard to taste and sensorial quality. As a matter of fact, even today one comes occasionally across the perception or assumption that organic wine is of inferior quality.

Reality shows that organic wine has developed up to prime quality levels, winning most prestigious recognition and awards even in so called conventional competitions. The annual BioFach organic wine award, with its worldwide participation and reputation, demonstrates impressive quality achievements and shows that it is correct to consider organic wine as an ambassador of good taste and top organic quality.

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Table 13: Organic grape area by country

COUNTRY	DATE	VINEYARDS UNDER ORGANIC MANAGEMENT (HECTARES)	SHARE OF TOTAL VINEYARDS IN A COUNTRY
Italy	2004	31'170	3.4 %
France	2004	16'428	1.9 %
Spain	2004	14'928	1.2 %
Moldova	2005	8'155	
Greece	2004	3'303	2.7 %
USA (California)	2004	3'104	1.5 %
Germany	2004	2'500	2.4 %
China	2004	2'000	1.0 %
Turkey	2004	1'988	0.3 %
Chile	2003	1'892	1.7 %
Austria	2004	1'657	3.4 %
Portugal	2004	912	0.4 %
Syria	2004	600	
Hungary	2004	579	
Switzerland	2004	358	2.4 %
New Zealand	2004	299	2.0 %
Argentina	2005	273	0.1 %
Canada	2004	99	0.9 %
Israel	2004	80	
Slovak Republic	2005	78	0.4 %
Cyprus	2005	75	
Slovenia	2004	49	0.3 %
Czech Rep.	2004	48	0.3 %
Lebanon	2005	40	
Croatia	2005	32	0.1 %
Georgia	2005	31	
Serbia/Montenegro	2004	6	
Luxemburg	2004	6	
Albania	2004	5	
Macedonia, The Fmr Yug Rep.	2005	1	
Total grape area covered by the FiBL Survey 2005/2006		90'696	

Source: FiBL Survey 2005 / 2006. For the information sources for the individual countries please check the continent tables in the continent chapters of this book.

Figures for total vine area (Year 2001) (with the exception of France): Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (O.I.V.)¹¹

Please note: data were not available for all wine / grape producing countries

11 Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (O.I.V.); General wine statistics <http://news.reseau-concept.net/images/oiv/Client/Stat%202001.pdf>

A reflection on the statistics

Even though it is great that the 2006 edition of organic world statistics includes information on grape production, it has to be stated that the data presented (more than 90'000 hectares) are not a reflection of the actual area with organic grapes.

It has not been possible to get data from some important wine growing countries like Australia. In the US, organic vineyards do not only exist in California, although this figure covers the major area in the US.

It also needs to be clarified that the grape area is not always for wine production. Especially the grape areas in China, Turkey, Greece, but also in California are not solely vineyards. They also cover substantial grape production for table grapes, raisins, sultanas etc.

Considering the fact that we have “mega” viticulture countries like Italy, France and Spain, it is not a surprise that these countries are also leaders when it comes to organic viticulture. These three countries cover far more than half of the worldwide organic viticulture area.

The fact that Italy is not only leading the statistic, but also covers almost twice as many hectares as the “runner up” France, mirrors the fact that Italy also leads the total organic area statistics in Europe. We cannot (yet) present numbers on organic grape growers and farms, but in the case of Italy, there are in the range of a couple of thousand viticulturists. Considering the fact that grape and wine producing farms are fairly small in terms of hectare size in most countries, it is a safe estimate that on a global level a several ten thousand grape producers are growing organically.

Reliable marketing and economic data were not obtainable, but a short reflection on these aspects is reasonable and possible.

In some countries like Italy and France, the share of vineyards within the total organic area has reached levels of two to over three percent. This is still a small proportion, but considering the fact that making wine (and also raisins) is highly value adding, the economic importance of grape and wine production is way beyond the mere area share. This is also supported by the fact that organic wine has a high proportion of direct marketing, giving the producers a greater and fairer share of financial returns.

Although Chile has proportionally few hectares in grapes, the share of organic wine in the export statistics of the country in the range of eight percent, which supports the conclusions above.

Compiling this data is a start, and we hope that highlighting this sector inspires those with access to regional and national data information to contribute to a more extensive and comprehensive overview in next year's edition.