

Organic agriculture for Syria: Option or Necessity?

Workshop

“The Contribution of Agriculture to the economic reforms of Syria”,

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1

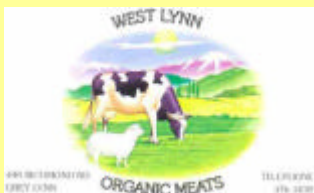
Organic agriculture is growing..

Continent	Area			Farms		
	1999 000ha	2006 000ha	%	1999 000n	2006 000n	%
Africa	22	417	1,4	0,6	175	24,3
Asia	44	3.091	10,2	9	97	13,5
Europe	3.503	7.389	24,3	130	204	28,4
Latin America	546	4.916	16,2	10	223	31,0
North America	118	2.225	7,3	37	12	1,7
Oceania	5.309	12.381	40,7	2	8	1,1
Total	9.542	30.418	100,0	189	719	100,0

Note: Mexico in 1999 was considered in North America and in 2006 in Latin America

Source: Willer and Youssefi 2002

Willer, Youssefi-Menzler and Sorensen 2008



Organic agriculture in the Med

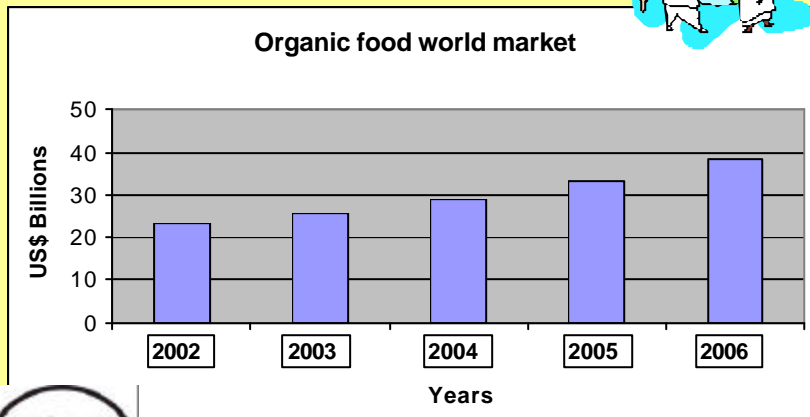


Country	Area (ha) in 2005	Area (ha) in 2006	Farms (no.) in 2006
Croatia	3.184	6.204	368
Slovenia	23.499	26.831	1.953
Albania	1.170	1.000	100
Greece	288.255	302.256	23.900
Malta	14	20	10
Cyprus	1.698	1.979	305 *
Turkey	93.133	100.275	14.256
Syria	20.500	30.493	3.256
Lebanon	2.465	3.470	213
Israel	6.685	4.058	216
Palestine	1.000	641	303
Jordan	10	1.024	25
Egypt	24.548	14.165	460
Lybia	nd	na	
Tunisia	143.099	154.793	862
Algeria	887	1.550	39 *
Morocco	20.040	4.216	na
Portugal	233.458	269.374	1.696
Spain	807.569	926.390	17.214
France	560.838	552.824	11.640
Italy	1.067.102	1.148.162	45.115
Total	3,299.154	3,549.725	121.931

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3

The demand is growing



US about 48%, Europe about 50%

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4

What is organic agriculture?



- It is **NOT** the traditional agriculture practiced in the past
- It is **NOT** the **DO NOTHING** agriculture
- It is the fusion of the **MOST** advanced knowledge about life cycles and the respect for nature, for a sustainable long-term development.

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5

IFOAM Guidelines

Re-naturalization of the environment: shrubs, hedges, trees, canals, stonewalls, to reduce erosion, catch the rainfall, shelter predators and parasitoids, have a beautiful landscape;

Appropriate techniques: rotations, mixed cropping, , agro-forestry, less mechanization, to limit weeds and parasites, save water and energy, reduce erosion and have a better N cycle;

Green **manure**, manure, compost;

Develop **biodiversity** (animal and vegetal);

No OGM;

Production systems compatible with **animal welfare** and environment;

Reduction of plastics and **stop synthetic chemicals**;

Storage and processing, packaging as above;

Fair trade and **Intelligent consumption** (pay more, eat less, spend the same, be healthier)

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6

Should governments support organic agri-food systems? ... Somebody says “no”



- “Organic agriculture” exists since 1926
- For decades, there has been no legislation at all
- Self – managed farmers associations and private firms were trusted by consumers
- Norms (rules of production) and incentives have begun to appear only in the '70s

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7

Somebody says “yes” ...



- Reduction of pollution and hazards
- More attention to food safety and nutritional aspects → health
- Other public goods: biodiversity and animal welfare
- **Food security**: organic systems are more resilient
- Too much water and energy used by conventional agriculture
- Too many hidden and open subsidies received by conventional agriculture
- Domestic and international market opportunities → certification

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8

A logical process for an integrated policy

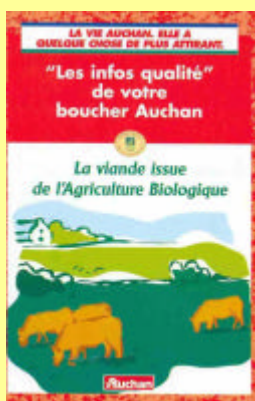


- Present situation of organic agri-food systems (production, processing, trade, research, services, etc)
- Objectives and strategies: where to be in 5 – 10 year time, and how to get there
- Instruments and addressees: regulations and resources (grants, loans, subsidies) for the various stakeholders
- Priorities
- Follow up, monitoring and evaluation
- Role of public institutions, of Civil Society Organizations and of private profit oriented firms

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9

Areas of intervention



- Legislation
- Certification and accreditation
- Applied research
- Extension, training for adult farmers and education at university
- Supply
- Domestic demand
- Foreign trade
- (Reduction of contradictions with other policies)

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10

Conclusions..??



- Syria has started (FAO 011) a process that could lead far away
- Ecological conditions (now and in future) require a more sustainable approach to production
- Economic conditions impose a better use of public resources
- Domestic and external markets demand more organic products
- The engagement of Public Institutions should be strengthened
- CSOs and private firms should be further encouraged
- Links with other Institutions should be improved (Industry, Trade, Tourism, Health, Education, etc.)

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11



Thanks for your attention

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12