New World Map of Organic Agriculture: Australia is 51%

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For the first time, a single country now accounts for more than half of the global certified organic agriculture hectares (Paull, 2019). The latest world map of organic agriculture reveals that Australia has overtaken the rest of the world (Fig.1).

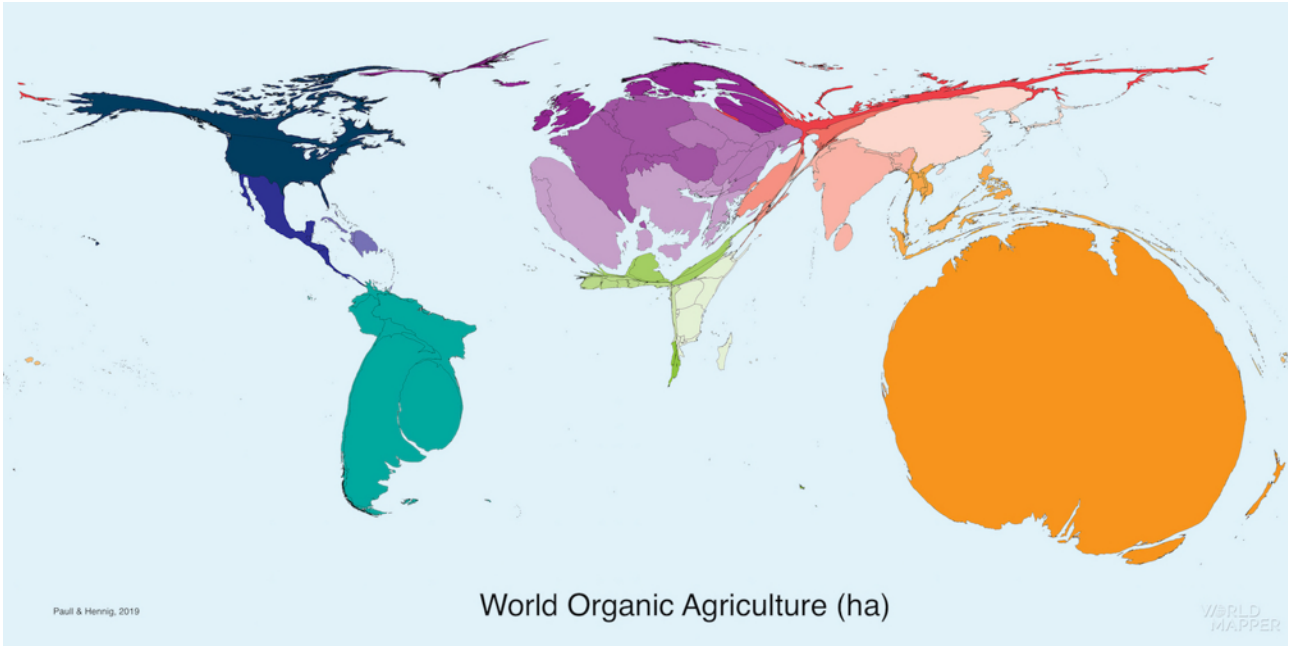

Figure 1. World map of certified organic agriculture hectares (density equalising cartogram).

The latest global figures report that the world total of certified organic agriculture is 69.8 million hectares from a total of 181 countries. Of that total, Australia accounts for 35.6 million hectares, which is 51% of the world total (Willer & Lernoud, 2019).

Organics data reveal that organic agriculture has been on a steady upward trend for the past two decades. Global organics has grown at 12% pa over the past twenty years, while Australian organics has grown at 16% pa in the same period.

For the past five years the growth of organics in Australia has accelerated to 22% pa. It is this growth spurt of Australian organics that has propelled Australia from the number one position in global certified organic agriculture hectares to now accounting for the majority of the total global organic hectares (Paull, 2019).

The global runners up, are Argentina, in second position, with 3.4 million certified organic hectares, followed by China with 3.0 million hectares, Spain with 2.1 million hectares, and USA with 2.0 million hectares. These are followed by Italy (1.9m ha), Uruguay (1.9m ha), India (1.8m ha), France (1.7m ha), Germany (1.4m ha), Canada (1.2m ha), and Brazil (1.1m ha). All other countries each report less than a million hectares of certified organic agriculture hectares.

Previous world maps of organics have appeared in the *Atlas of Organics* and have revealed Australia as leading the world in organic agriculture hectares, with Finland leading the world in organic wild hectares, and India leading the world in the number of organic producers (Paull & Hennig, 2016).

The present map shows the broad global uptake of organics. It reveals Europe as a leading region for organics, along with strong representation from Asia and South America. Africa is under-represented in the global organic agriculture statistics, hence its rather vestigial presence. As the map reveals, USA is an under-performer. Organic agriculture accounts for 0.6% of USA's agricultural land, compared to 1.4% of the world's agricultural land, and 8.8% of Australia's agricultural land.

Organic agriculture is a continuing success story for Australia. The sector has long been a quiet achiever, receiving little or no support from government, universities or institutions. Much of the recent growth has been from the growing global consumer demand for clean and green products, and especially for organic beef.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of production methods, and sufficiently affluent to afford organic premium products. There is a growing army of discerning global consumers who are seeking to avoid a smorgasbord of pesticides and GMOs on their plate (GfK, 2017). Australian government research reported that only 10% of Australians regard GM food as safe, and and only 10% support GM food and crops (Cormick & Mercer, 2017). Around the world, the organics sector continues to have a zero-tolerance for GMOs and to be the champion of clean and green and smart food production.

Technical note: The map is a density equalising map. Equal areas on the map represent equal areas of organic agriculture (see Paull & Hennig, 2016, 2018).

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