

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF ORGANIC FARMING IN TURKEY

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Curriculum Vitae of Vildan KARAARSLAN:

She was graduated from Aegean University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Field Crop Breeding and Improvement in 1981. She completed her Master of Science degree at Ankara University, Faculty of Agriculture, and Department Of Agricultural Products Technology in 1986. She has English Language Course Program A Grade Certificate issued by the Directorate of Foreign Languages Teaching Center for Government Employees. At present, she is Head of Department of Good Agriculture Practices and Organic Farming at General Directorate of Plant Production at the Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock. Moreover, she is member of Organic Farming Committee and Organic Farming National Guidance Committee.

Summary:

Practices in the field of organic farming have been carried out within the scope of legal framework since 2003. In Turkey, organic farming activities are conducted under the auspices of Department of Good Agriculture Practices and Organic Farming of the General Directorate of Plant Production of the Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock. There are Organic Farming Committee and Organic Farming National Guidance Committee. Besides, there are Organic Farming Units in 81 Provincial Directorates. The Ministry has assigned its control and certification authority for organic farming to private bodies.

In Turkey, organic farming practices has commenced in 1985-86 because of increasing demand of foreign buyers and request of export companies and has pursued so on till 1994.

Within the structure of the Ministry, Department responsible for coordinating and managing organic farming practices in 2003 and 5262 Numbered Organic Farming Law was ratified and connected regulation for Procedures and Principles of Organic Farming was issued in 2004 and afterwards, regulation has been revised in harmonization with EU Legislation.

Revisions made for EU Organic Farming Regulations have been closely monitored so as to protect export chance of the Turkish organic products and supply our citizens with safe products.

Alternative Production Methods Department was established in 2003 under the umbrella of the Ministry for the purpose of extension of organic farming. In Turkey, activities in the field of organic farming have been supervised by Department of Good Agricultural Practices and Organic Farming of the General Directorate of Plant Production of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

As defined in the legal framework in force, there are Organic Farming Committee and Organic Farming National Guidance Committee. Moreover, Organic Farming Units have been established within the body of 81 provincial directorates.

Control and Certification authority has been assigned to private bodies.

Data on organic farming are recorded in Organic Farming Information System.

Organic Farming Committee

Organic Farming Committee consists of eight members three members, of whom are deputy General Director, Head of Department of Good Agricultural Practices and Organic Farming and one member from the same department from General Directorate of Plant Production, one member from the General Directorate of Animal Husbandry, one member from the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, one member from the General Directorate of Food and Control, one member from the Department of Legal Consultancy and one member from the Presidency of Guidance and Inspection.

Responsibilities of the Organic Farming Committee are to assignation of authority to authorized bodies, to extend authorization duration, to suspend work permit and to cancel authorities of authorized bodies.

Organic Farming National Guidance Committee

Organic Farming National Guidance Committee; under the chairmanship of the General Directorate of Plant Production; consists of at least ten members from the General Directorate of Plant Production, General

Directorate of Animal Husbandry, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Development, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Custom and Trade, Ministry of Science Industry and Technology, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs, General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Politics, General Directorate of Food and Control, Representative of European Union, Turkish Scientific and Technologic Research Agency, Professional Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Representatives of Authorized Bodies, Representatives of Private Sectors and Representatives of the organizations in relation with the Meeting Agenda of the Committee.

Organic Farming National Guidance Committee performs duties such as implementation and development of organic farming, incentives, improvement of public awareness, marketing of organic products domestically and internationally, identification of implementation troubles and designation of strategies for the identified troubles, assessment of project proposals on organic farming and evaluation of priorities for research.

Organic Farming Units

Responsibilities of Organic Farming Unit were defined by the 2011/4 numbered circular on "Responsibilities and Legal Authorities of Organic Farming Units.

Organic Farming Units are established by the designation of Provincial Director, by taking into consideration of organic farming potential of the city and consists of at least two technical and health staffs

Staffs to be designated are selected by the Provincial Director among the staffs completed organic farming training and working at Section Directorates of Plant Production and Plant Health, Animal Health and Breeding, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Food and Feed, Agricultural Infrastructure and Land Evaluation, Coordination and Agricultural Data and Rural Development and Organization.

Furthermore, staffs from the District Directorates can be designated at Organic Farming Units by taking into account of organic farming potential. Secretariat of Organic Farming Unit (OFU) is carried out by Section Directorate of Plant Production and Plant Health. Organic Farming Unit records information of entrepreneurs of the city into Organic Farming Information System. OFU also performs training and publication activities, control companies and entrepreneurs of the city, pursues meeting, panel, symposium, fair and etc. activities in the field of organic farming.

Organic Farming Information System (OFIS)

It was aimed complete and uninterrupted information exchange among the Ministry, Control and Certification Bodies authorized by the Ministry and Provincial Directorates. For this purpose, database software named Organic Farming Information System (OFIS) was prepared and put into service for Control and Certification Bodies as of 2005. Data Flow between the Ministry and Provincial Directorates was also commenced as of 2005. For the purpose of efficient data collection, limited connection permit was given to Aegean Export Union, and Institution Agriculture and Rural Development Support so as to evaluate the project proposals within the framework of IPARD Program

Authorized Bodies for Organic Farming

Organic Farming control and certification legal authority has been assigned by the Ministry to private bodies. At present, there are 27 authorized private bodies in the field of organic farming. Control and certification activities are carried out by those bodies and inspection of activities of those bodies are performed by the Ministry.

Organic farming activities have been developed under the umbrella of the institutional structure clarified above and product number has increased from 8 to 213.

Organic farming is practiced in the whole geographical regions of Turkey. It was targeted to increase proportion of allocated areas for organic agriculture within total arable land from 1, 95% to 3% until 2015.