

Organic Agriculture in Finland

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Introduction

The national goals of the government development programme for the organic product sector:

- 1) 20% of the agricultural field area is under organic production by 2020 and
- 2) 20% of food served by governmental catering services is organic by 2020.

The first national research programme on organic food system was released in 2014 for five years and gives guidance for research and financing.

FORI – the Finnish Organic Research Institute

• A multidisciplinary research and expert network of 150 scientists and experts operating under the Natural Resources Institute Finland and the University of Helsinki.

• Supports the whole food chain and promotes organic food production in Finland by research, science communication, education and development projects.

Main Research Activities in Organic

• Recently expanded to multidisciplinary research on whole organic food system.

• Four pillars of the research programme based on the fields of research:

Organic primary production

Organic production and the environment

Organic foods

Organic food and farming and the society

- Nordic and international co-operation
- Consumer information based on scientific research

Problems and Challenges

• The agri-environmental support to organic farming in Finland is among the lowest in European reference countries.

• The government development programme for the organic product sector is target-oriented, but its implementation requires concrete actions.

• To engage all actors along the food chain in the implementation of its actions is a big challenge.

Organics in Finland as facts (2016)

- 11 % of agricultural land (0.24 M ha), 7 % increase compared to previous year
- 4400 organic farms, 960 in animal production, 136 in vegetable production
- Mean organic farm size 55 ha (on average 10 ha larger than conventional farms)
- Key organic products:
 - cereals 80 M kg, ca. 2 % of total yield of cereals (oats 60 %)
 - vegetables, berries 4 M kg
 - meat 4 M kg, 5 % increase
 - milk 55 M L, 2,4 % increase
 - wild-collection products (forest berries, mushrooms, birch sap): 13 M ha certified collection area (1/3 of global): mainly to export
- 2 % share of food markets (273 M €), 14 % increase compared to previous year
- ca. 3000 organic products available on the market (half domestic)
- Organic eggs: 15 % increase in sales value compared to previous year
- Consumption of organic food 50 € per capita
- Half of consumers expect increasing their purchases of organic products in the future.

Figure 1. National organic logos and European leaf-logo could be seen in labelling organic rye bread in a Finnish market.



Photo: Tiina Muhonen