

The state of organic farming in Bulgaria

History

The first swallow of organic farming in Bulgaria was the establishment of the Agro-ecological Center at Agricultural University, in Plovdiv Bulgaria in 1989. The main goal was to be increased the popularity of organic farming, the approaches of environment protection and the biodiversity in the country. It is the first Bulgarian structure, which has been a member of IFOAM since 1993.

The Swiss government through its agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) played a significant role in the development of organic farming in Bulgaria. From 1997 to 2007 it supported the development of:

- the first Bulgarian organization concerning organic farming – foundation Bioselena;
- 2 model organic farms and the establishment of an organization of farmers' associations of organic producers;
- consolidation of the structures engaged with organic farming – training organizations, consulting and advisors organizations, NGOs and farmers associations.

State of organic agriculture at the end of 2007

Organic crop production

Crops	Cultivated area in conversion (ha)	Cultivated area passed conversional period (ha)	Total area (ha)
Cereal crops	551,23	811,68	1 362,91
Forage crops	470,06	444,24	914,30
Medicine and essential oil crops	711,89	716,21	1 428,10
Fiber crops	-	1 285,00	1 285,00
Tuber crops: potato, sugar and forage beet	13,20	43,53	56,73
Vegetable crops	175,38	218,55	393,93
Greenhouse production	-	58,90	58,90
Fruit crops	646,89	2 918,59	3 565,48
Vineyard	297,85	0,68	298,53
Total cultivated areas	2 866,50	6 504,38	9 370,88
Permanent meadow and pastures	505,94	155 286,61	155 792,55
Collecting of wild herbs and fruits	-	242 677,31	242 677,31
Free land/fallow	1 169,2	408,37	1 577,57
TOTAL AREA	4 541,64	404 876,67	409 418,31

Organic animal production

1. Cattle (total number) – 395
2. Sheep (total number) – 1690
3. Goats (total number) – 1058

4. Beehives (total number bee families) - 35747

Animal production

1. Raw milk (thousands liters) – 681,18

2. Yogurt (thousands liters) – 62,32

3. White feta cheese (t) – 7,6

Bee-honey (t) – 998,25

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and food

The total number of certified farms was 477 for plant production, 5 for animal production and 258 bee-gardens.

The largest organic event in Bulgaria is the yearly organized National Holiday of Organic Agriculture (exhibition of organic products). It is a great opportunity to meet most organic producers, institutions and organizations dealing with organic farming. The organic holiday increases consumers's knowledge for the nature of organic products.

At present 10 certifying agencies are accredited and operate in Bulgaria. The first Bulgarian certification organization is BalkanBiocert.

The most active NGOs and farmers associations working in the field of organic farming are Ekofarm, Bioselena, Agrolink, BioBulgaria Oil.