

Greece

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GREECE

Renia BITSAKI

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania – Crete

1. Regulatory aspects and certification

The reference legislation in Greece are:

- Regulation EC 2092/91 with all its amendments;
- Regulation EC 2078/92 for the introduction of hectare subsidies;
- Regulation EC 1804/99 for organic animal husbandry.

The competent authorities for organic agriculture are the Ministry of Agriculture-Bureau of Biological Products and Agrocert-Organization for the Certification and Supervision of Agricultural Products.

All the Certification and Inspection Bodies are accredited by the Ministry of Agriculture.

All the inspection facilities as well as the personnel are Greeks. Some of the organizations have already gained a long experience and they have structured their services and facilities in a very efficient way. Generally, all the system of inspection and certification of organic products, as well as of accreditation of certification bodies, is harmonised with the European templates.

The following three Certification and Inspection Bodies exist in Greece:

DIO, SOGE and Fysiologiki.

DIO is the biggest one and certifies (1999) 2677 producers-businessmen.

No data for 1999 for the other two organisations.

Localisation: DIO: all over Greece, SOGE: all over Greece, Fysiologiki: Central & Northern Greece.

2. Structural aspects

2.1 Number of farms

The data come from the Ministry of Agriculture and from the three certification bodies, and they refer to 1998.

The number of farms in 1998 was 4231 and they represent 0.48% of the total farms in the country.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1998, data were the following:

Area organically cultivated: 27 738 stremma (2774 ha).

Area in conversion: 126 282 stremma (12 628 ha).

The total organic and under conversion area is 154 020 stremma (15 402 ha) representing 0.47% of the total agricultural cultivated land.

Organic farms are distributed all over Greece as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Regional distribution of Organic Farms in 1998 (DIO and FYSIOLOGIKI, 1998)

Region	Surface (ha)	% of entire organic area
Peloponnesus	2842	29.2
Western Greece	1623	16.7
Crete	922	9.5
Central Greece	813	8.4
North Aegean Islands	713	7.3
Attica	676	6.9
Central Macedonia	614	6.3
Ionian Islands	459	4.7
Western Macedonia	427	4.4
Thessaly	242	2.5
East Macedonia and Thrace	175	1.8
Epirus	133	1.4
South Aegean Islands	90	0.9
Total	9730	100

2.2 Productions

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 1998, organic productions was that reported in table 2.

Table 2. Organic production in Greece in 1998 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1998)

Type of product	Surface (ha)
Cereals	999.6
Potato	6.9
Pulse	57
Industrial plants	196.5
Vegetables	240.3
Fodder	437.3
Nut	624
Citrus	1299
Olive	9475
Vine	1566.2
Others	440.3
Fallow	59.5

2.3 Processing units

In 1998 there were 35 processing and packaging units while in 1999 there were 66, 27 of which dealing only with packaging, two with processing and 37 with processing and packaging. These data refer only to processing units certified by DIO (table 3).

Table 3. Processing and packaging units in 1999
(Dio, 1999)

Product	Number of units
Cotton	3
Olive oil	59
Olives and olive pate	16
Currants	6
Wine	10
Vinegar	1
Fruits and Vegetables	5
Orange juice	1
Marmelade	1
Tomato products	1
Pulses	3
Cereals, powder and pasta	6
Bread	4
Rusk	3
Sesame products	2
Aromatic plants	1

2.4 Wild products

There are no data on collection of wild products. BIOLETA company in Lafkos, Pelion region cultivate organic herbs and collect little quantities of wild plants. Generally in Greece, especially in Crete, collection of wild herbs is common but there is no interest so far to certify them as organic.

2.5 Producers' associations

- Cretan Agri-Environmental Group (CAEG)
P.O. Box 59, GR-70400 Moires, Crete
Tel: +30 892 22026
Fax: +30 892 22828
Number of members 115
Products: olive oil, olives, currant
Activities carried out: production, rural development, environment, research and training
- Agroenvironmental Network of Organic Producers of Western Greece (AE.N.O.P.)
Tel: +30 631 28381

Fax: +30 631 28381

Number of members: over 250

Products: olive oil, olive, currant, citrus, cereals and vegetables

Product destination: Greek and European market

Activities carried out: production, processing, trade and vocational training.

There are also some more small producers' associations as well as some mixed associations of producers and consumers.

2.6 Research

In Greece there is not so far a University Department or a Research Institute devoted exclusively to Organic Agriculture. However in all Agricultural Universities of Greece there are integrated topics and issues related with most aspects of Organic Agriculture.

Recently the Technological Educational Institute of Epirus has initiated a new department in Kefallonia island for "Biological Agriculture".

Besides, the National Agricultural Research Foundation is going to establish such departments as well.

There is also the National Network for Organic Agriculture, funded by the Ministry for Development, which includes in its activities the organisation of scientific seminars on Organic Agriculture.

The Inspection and Certification bodies of the country implement, also, training activities including courses, seminars and publishing informative books and magazines. Local Authorities very often contribute in these efforts as well as producers' associations (not only organic).

3. Agronomic aspects

The main problem is the conservative way of thinking of growers: they are used to apply the easy solution of chemical fertilizers, in combination with a low level of technical information.

The problem of soil erosion and soil salinity is significant in some regions of the country.

In most mountainous or semi-mountainous regions, the conditions do not permit to have access to mechanical means and, consequently, the application of green manure is difficult. Additionally the soil in such regions has often a low nutrient content.

Furthermore, since crop and animal production are traditionally separated in Greece, growers cannot be easily supplied with manure.

All over the Mediterranean countries and specially in Greece, many insect problems are very serious, for example the problem with *Dacus*

Oleae Gmel. In many cases, plant protection products allowed in organic agriculture cannot control the pest efficiently. There is also a great number of weeds depending on landscape features, which are difficult to be controlled mechanically.

Since production in Greece is very limited, many organic products are imported. It is also the case of most fertilization and plant protection products allowed.

A lot of this imported material should comply with the European and the national legislation. The national legislation for plant protection agents is different than that for fertilization or processing and is rather strict.

The origin of propagating material in most cases is conventional, although in some cases it is organic (produced by the organic farmer himself). In most cases it is imported. At least the imported propagating material has to be sanitary certified.

The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH) has been asked by most agricultural companies in Greece to tell which products allowed in Organic Agriculture to purchase (for fertilization, plant protection). There are a lot of local companies that either produce such products or import them.

4. Market aspects

Most of the organic products are sold in specialised shops. Fruits and vegetables are also sold in the local open markets. Organic wine is sold in some wine shops together with conventional one. A few big supermarket chains in the large cities have introduced organic products in their stock.

The main foreign markets are Germany and England and, at a lesser extent, USA. The most important product for export is olive oil, wine, fresh fruits, currants and vegetables. The local market absorbs mainly vegetables and some fruits.

Most organic producers or groups of producers trade their produce by themselves, without intermediate organisations.

5. Promotion of organic products

National labels and national laws, subsidies for farmers, trade and processors, training of farmers and consumers, setting up producers associations, development of state research, building of marketing channels are some of the goals that will support organic agriculture and will promote organic products.

Annex 1 Source for the collection of data and information

Source	Contact person	Type of the information source		
		Technical-agronomic	Market	Legislative
Ministry of Agriculture	Agathi Balbouzi		x	x
DIO	Spiros Sgouros	x	x	x
Hellenic Scientific Network for O.A.	Christos Photopoulos	x	x	x
