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INTRODUCTION

Organic Agriculture in Israel started its main development in the early eighties. Today it includes a wide range of fresh and processed products for local and export markets with farms ranging from small private farms to big cooperatives (kibbutz).

REGULATORY ASPECTS

First draft of organic law was accepted by parliament to be completed by the end of this year. The outcome of this law will be one authorizing body, with a few inspection companies under it, that will follow the organic law and EU, NOP and IFOAM regulations. Collecting data is done by the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Statistics Organization, Israel Bio-Organic Agriculture Association and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. All inspection and certification bodies are local.

Inspection and certification bodies

- Agrior 121 - Hahashmonaim str., Tel-Aviv-Israel
- GMP-p.o.b 5026 Kiriyat Bialik -27150-Israel
- PPIS-p.o.b 30 Beit Dagan 50250-Israel

Organic Agriculture in Israel is not especially supported; in general the support for agriculture in Israel is lower than Europe and the US.

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Of the 18 000 farms in Israel only 400 farms are organic over an area of 5640 ha (table 1). They include cooperatives, private farms and factories dealing with processing of organic products.

Table 1. Size of organic farms divided by crops

Crop	Area (ha)
Green house vegetables	200
Fresh herbs	40
Open field vegetables	500
Field crops	3200
Orchards	1200
Citrus	450
Small scale plots	50
Total area	5640

Organic seed production turnover in Israel is around 100 000 US\$.

Organic animal production

2 500 000 litres of organic milk
2 000 000 organic eggs
Sheep and goats for milk and cheese production
Organic honey production -2 producers
Organic fish grown in pools

56 factories are dealing with organic production.

Main products are: olive oil, fruit juices, halva, textiles, cosmetics, dry herbs, wine, bread products, milk products, jams.

Producers' association

Israel Bio Organic Agriculture Association- I.B.O.A.A
450 members
Products as mentioned above
Markets local, EU, US, Far East.
Promotion, lobbying, training and extension services.

MARKET ASPECTS

There are 17 authorized organic shops, 50 points of sale in supermarkets and also a few hundred health food shops that sell also organic products.

There are 12 companies dealing with organic export. The biggest in volume is Agrexco.

The total volume of organic export is around 35 million US\$ per year (2003) of fresh products.

The local market covers around 10 million US \$.

RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EXTENSION

Most of the organic training activities in Israel are done by I.B.O.A.A with some help from the Ministry. We arrange 3 courses a year for new farmers. Extension is done mainly by organic instructors of I.B.O.A.A with some help from the national extension service. There are different instructors for all range of activities and professions. The organization holds field days and trips for farmers.

Research is done mainly by the "Volcanic Institute" with the help of instructors and organic farmers. Most of the budget comes from the "national scientist" office of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the management of the different crops (meaning farmer's assistance in budget).

SOURCES

I.B.O.A.A archive
National vegetation council
Ministry of agriculture
Export companies