

Organic farming in the EU

Organic area accounted for 4% of the total utilised agricultural area in the EU25 in 2005

Organic holdings generally larger than average

In the **EU25**¹ in 2005, the organic area² made up 3.9% of the total utilised agricultural area³. The highest proportions of organic area were recorded in **Austria** (11.0%), **Italy** (8.4%), the **Czech Republic** and **Greece** (both 7.2%) and the lowest in **Malta** (0.1%), **Poland** (0.6%) and **Ireland** (0.8%). Looking at a longer time frame, for which **EU15** data is available, the proportion of organic area in the total utilised agricultural area has increased from 1.8% in 1998 to 4.1% in 2005.

In the **EU25** in 2005, 6.1 million hectares of land were used as organic areas. **Italy** (1.1 million hectares or 17% of the EU25 total) had the largest part of the organic area, followed by **Germany** and **Spain** (both 0.8 million hectares or 13%).

On the occasion of the **Green Week 2007**, **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**, publishes a report on organic farming⁴ within the **EU**.

Less than 2% of all holdings are organic

Overall in the **EU25**, 1.6% of all agricultural holdings were organic holdings. In nearly all the Member States of the **EU25** in 2005, the average size of these organic holdings was larger than for all holdings: 39 hectares (ha) per organic holding, compared with 16 ha per holding on average. The largest organic holdings were found in **Slovakia** (463 ha per holding), the **Czech Republic** (305 ha), **Portugal** (148 ha) and the **United Kingdom** (142 ha).

Areas under conversion vary greatly between Member States

Organic areas include fully converted and under conversion areas². Before being considered as fully converted, all areas need to have a period of time during which they are undergoing the conversion process. The proportion of area under conversion in the total organic area varied among the Member States from less than 10% in **Denmark** (1%), the **Netherlands** (4%), **Finland** (8%) and **Sweden** (9%) to more than 80% in **Malta** (100%), **Cyprus** (87%) and **Latvia** (83%).

Organic area and organic holdings, 2005

	Share of organic area in total utilised agricultural area* (%)	Organic area* (ha)	Share of Member State in total EU25 organic area* (%)	Size of organic holdings** (ha/holding)	Size of all holdings (ha/holding)	Share of area under conversion in total organic area (%)
EU25 ¹	3.9	6 115 465	100.0	38.7	16.0	:
Belgium	1.7	22 994	0.4	31.9	26.9	14.0
Czech Republic	7.2	254 982	4.2	305.4	84.2	11.3
Denmark	5.2	134 129	2.2	44.2	53.7	1.4
Germany	4.7	807 406	13.3	47.4	43.7	:
Estonia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Ireland	0.8	34 912	0.6	36.5	31.8	:
Greece	7.2	288 737	4.7	19.5	4.8	28.6
Spain	3.2	807 569	13.3	51.5	23.0	41.7
France	2.0	560 838	9.2	49.2	48.6	11.7
Italy	8.4	1 069 462	17.6	23.8	7.4	31.6
Cyprus	1.1	1 698	0.0	5.5	3.4	86.5
Latvia	7.0	118 612	1.9	41.3	13.2	82.6
Lithuania	2.3	64 544	1.1	35.8	11.0	78.5
Luxembourg	2.4	3 158	0.1	47.8	52.7	13.2
Hungary	2.0	128 576	2.0	76.8	6.0	34.1
Malta	0.1	14	0.0	2.3	0.9	100.0
Netherlands	2.5	48 765	0.8	35.4	23.5	3.9
Austria	11.0	360 369	5.9	17.7	19.1	:
Poland	0.6	82 730	1.4	22.0	6.0	54.4
Portugal	6.3	233 458	3.8	148.0	11.4	52.7
Slovenia	4.8	23 499	0.4	13.6	6.3	32.0
Slovakia	4.8	90 206	1.5	462.6	27.4	69.8
Finland	6.5	147 587	2.4	33.3	32.1	8.4
Sweden	6.2	222 268	3.2	52.4	42.1	8.8
United Kingdom	3.8	608 952	10.0	142.1	55.6	13.3

EU25 data exclude Estonia

* 2004: Luxembourg and Poland

** 2004: Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary and Poland

: Data not available

1. **Bulgaria** and **Romania**, who became members of the EU on 1 January 2007, were not obliged to supply data for the time period covered in this News Release (2005).
2. **Organic farming** can be defined as a method of production which places the highest emphasis on environmental protection and, with regard to livestock production, animal welfare considerations. It avoids or largely reduces the use of synthetic chemical inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, additives and medicinal products. **Organic area**: fully converted and under conversion areas. An organic product, either crop, animal or animal product, is certified as fully organic if it has been sowed or bred using the methods established by Regulation 2092/91. This Regulation also establishes transitional periods to certify a crop, animal or animal product as "fully organic". During this period, which varies by type of crop and animal, the area, crop, animal or animal product are said to be "under conversion".
3. The **Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA)** is the total area taken up by arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops and kitchen gardens.
4. **Eurostat**, Statistics in Focus, Agriculture and Fisheries, 69/2007 "**Different organic farming patterns within EU25**", which can be downloaded in PDF format from the Eurostat website.

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