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Organic farming

Organic crop area on the rise in the EU

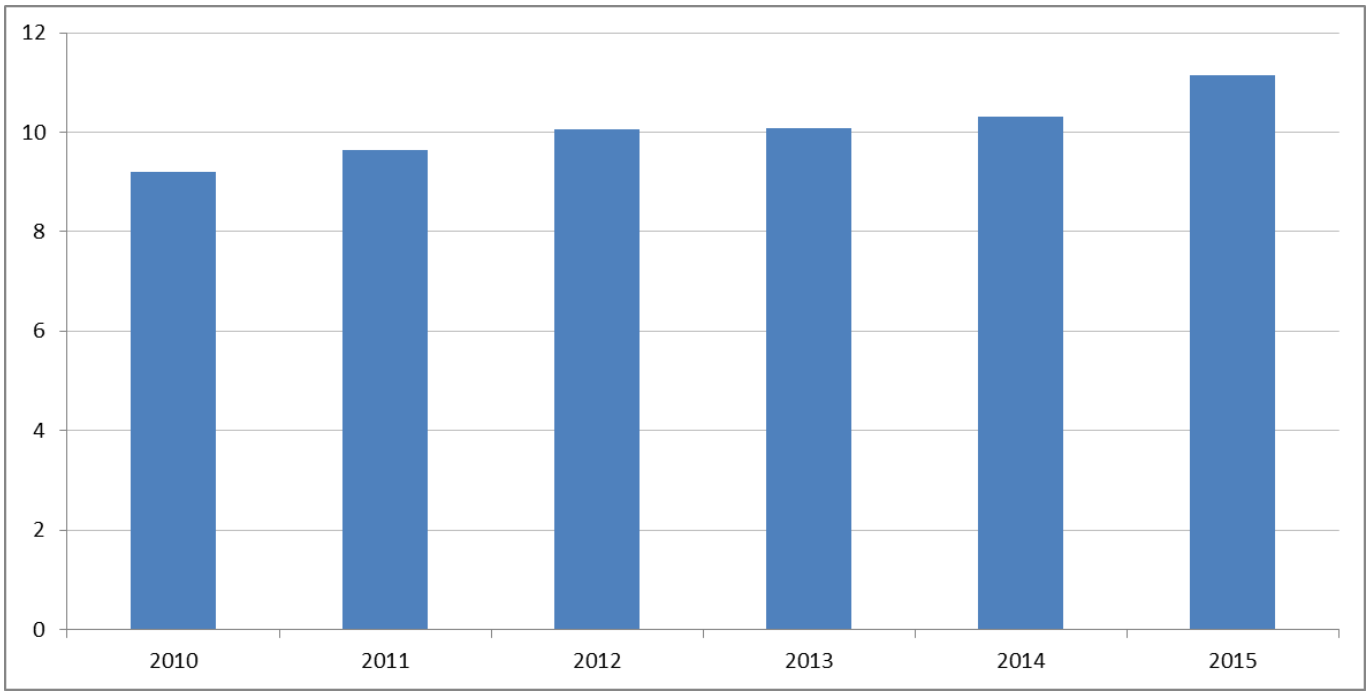
Two million hectares more since 2010

With more than 11 million hectares of certified area or area under conversion in 2015, organic farming made up 6.2% of the **European Union's** (EU) total utilised agricultural area (UAA). Since 2010, the area devoted to organic farming has grown by almost two million hectares. Similarly, an upward trend can be observed for the number of registered organic producers. At the end of 2015, 271 500 organic agricultural producers were registered in the **EU**, an increase of 5.4% compared with 2014.

Among Member States, **Spain**, **Italy**, **France** and **Germany** registered the largest organic areas as well as the largest numbers of organic producers in 2015, accounting together for over half (52%) of both total EU organic crop area and organic producers in the EU.

This information comes from an article issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, and shows only a small selection of the wide range of data on organic farming available at Eurostat. Organic farming combines best environmental practices, a high level of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and high production standards based on natural substances and processes. It provides for a specific market responding to a specific consumer demand while at the same time delivering public goods in terms of environmental protection, animal welfare and rural development.

Organic crop area in the EU, 2010 - 2015
(in million hectares)



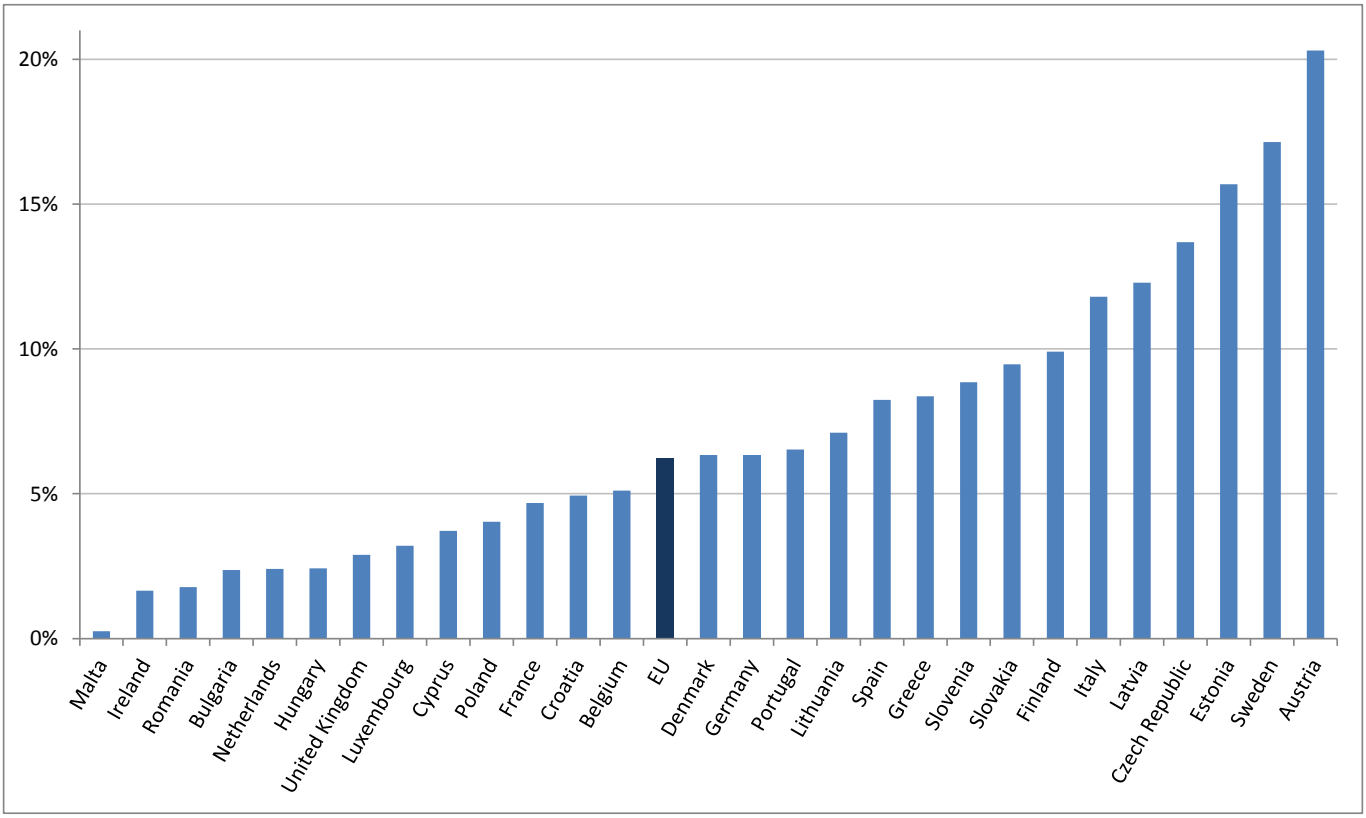
Austria, Sweden and Estonia on top for organic farming

The part of of agricultural land farmed organically differs widely between EU Member States. The highest share of crop area dedicated to organic farming was registered in **Austria**, with one fifth (20%, or 552 thousand hectares) of its total agricultural area farmed organically in 2015. It was followed by **Sweden** (17%, or 519 thousand hectares) and **Estonia** (16%, or 156 thousand hectares). Alongside these top performers, the **Czech Republic** (14%, or 478 thousand hectares), **Italy** (12%, or 1 493 thousand hectares) and **Latvia** (12%, or 232 thousand hectares) also reported over 10% of agricultural land farmed organically.

In contrast, organic farming was not strongly developed in three Member States with the area under organic farming below 2% of agricultural land: in **Malta** (0.3%, or 30 hectares), **Ireland** (1.6%, or 73 thousand hectares) and **Romania** (1.8%, or 246 thousand hectares).

It should be noted that the importance of the organic sector is generally lower in regions with plains where more intensive production systems prevail.

Organic crop area in the EU Member States, 2015
(as % of total utilised agricultural area)



Organic land area up in all Member States, except the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

At **EU** level, the area dedicated to production of organic crops in 2015 has increased by 21% since 2010 to slightly more than 11 million hectares, with the landmark of 10 million hectares having been reached in 2012. Organic land area has risen over this period in all Member States, except the **United Kingdom** (-29%) and, to a lesser extent, the **Netherlands** (-4%). In contrast, **Croatia** (from 16 thousand hectares of organic land in 2010 to almost 76 thousand hectares in 2015, or +377%) and **Bulgaria** (+362%) recorded an almost fourfold increase of their land devoted to organic farming. They were followed at a distance by **France** (+61%), **Ireland** (+53%), **Lithuania** (+49%) and **Cyprus** (+48%).

Organic crop area in the EU Member States, 2010 and 2015

	In hectares			As percentage of the total UAA		
	2010	2015	Change (%)	2010	2015	Change (in pp)
EU	**9 195 813**	**11 139 595**	**21.1%**	**5.1%**	**6.2%**	**1.1**
Belgium	49 005	68 818	40.4%	3.6%	5.1%	1.5
Bulgaria*	25 648	118 552	362.2%	0.5%	2.4%	1.9
Czech Republic	435 610	478 033	9.7%	12.4%	13.7%	1.3
Denmark	162 903	166 788	2.4%	6.1%	6.3%	0.2
Germany	990 702	1 060 291	7.0%	5.9%	6.3%	0.4
Estonia	121 569	155 806	28.2%	12.8%	15.7%	2.9
Ireland	47 864	73 037	52.6%	1.0%	1.6%	0.6
Greece	309 823	407 069	31.4%	6.5%	8.4%	1.9
Spain	1 615 047	1 968 570	21.9%	6.8%	8.2%	1.4
France	845 442	1 361 512	61.0%	2.9%	4.7%	1.8
Croatia	15 913	75 883	376.9%	1.2%	4.9%	3.7
Italy	1 113 742	1 492 579	34.0%	8.6%	11.8%	3.2
Cyprus	3 184	4 699	47.6%	2.8%	3.7%	0.9
Latvia	166 320	231 608	39.3%	9.2%	12.3%	3.1
Lithuania	143 644	213 579	48.7%	5.2%	7.1%	1.9
Luxembourg	3 614	4 216	16.7%	2.8%	3.2%	0.5
Hungary	127 605	129 735	1.7%	2.4%	2.4%	0.0
Malta	24	30	25.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0
Netherlands	46 233	44 402	-4.0%	2.5%	2.4%	-0.1
Austria	538 210	552 141	2.6%	17.0%	20.3%	3.3
Poland	521 970	580 731	11.3%	3.6%	4.0%	0.5
Portugal	210 981	241 375	14.4%	5.8%	6.5%	0.7
Romania	182 706	245 924	34.6%	1.3%	1.8%	0.5
Slovenia	30 689	42 188	37.5%	6.4%	8.8%	2.5
Slovakia	174 471	181 882	4.2%	9.1%	9.5%	0.4
Finland	169 168	225 235	33.1%	7.4%	9.9%	2.5
Sweden	438 693	518 983	18.3%	14.3%	17.1%	2.9
United Kingdom	699 638	495 929	-29.1%	4.1%	2.9%	-1.2

* 2015 data are provisional.
The source dataset can be found here.

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Methods and definitions

Farming is considered to be organic if it complies with Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products.

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 units such as fertilisers, pesticides, additives and medicinal products.

Organic farming differs from other agricultural production methods in the application of regulated standards (production rules), compulsory control schemes and a specific labelling scheme.

For more information

Eurostat website section dedicated to agricultural statistics.

Eurostat database on agriculture.

Eurostat Statistics Explained article on organic farming statistics.

Eurostat Statistical book "Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics – 2015 edition", available in PDF format.

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