

Romanian agriculture – *organic farming*



Organic farming appeared in Europe as an expression of the population distrust in food safety measures and also as a result of the occurrence of diseases through the consumption of pollutant products (dioxin, trichinella, salmonella, type *E. coli O157*, influenza virus, prions, etc.). As more episodes of disease have been generated by technology for intensive industrial production based on over-forcing production by over fertilization of the agricultural land and by using stimulators (antibiotics, hormones, etc.) in animal feeding, a new and strong requirement has emerged and become a true European movement to obtain food products with clean technologies , without undesirable substances. The basis of organic production is the idea that **the main cause of degradation of the biological quality of products is the inappropriate man's intervention at different structural levels of the biosphere**, and the worst effects on humans result from the cumulating of errors on soil, plants, and animals.

Organic farming has a particular focus on **natural quality** products, quantitative aspects and productivity being on a peripheral level. After outlining the new principles, specialized companies immediately appeared and offered such products distinctly labelled and commercialized at high prices. In many countries, specific rules have emerged in order to prevent and combat dishonesty, to eliminate fraud by substitution of organic products with the conventional ones (cheaper) and to ensure consumer protection. This was followed by the development and implementation of international standards, which aim at compliance with strict rules in the production, processing, transportation and marketing of these products. In the development of specific rules an important role lies with the National Federation of Organic Farming, which is part of the *International Federation for Organic Agriculture Movement* = IFOAM). This Federation – IFOAM has developed a standard for organic production, which has been translated into 19 languages and broadcast around the world. IFOAM has a magazine (*Ecology & Farming*) and specialized working groups, being consultatively represented at O.N.U. and F.A.O.

In our country, the legal basis for the organisation of production and marketing of organic products was made by the **Government Emergency Ordinance No. 34/2000**, approved by the law no. **38/2001** and the **Government Decision No. 917/2001**, which establishes the detailed rules for the applications of the **G.E.O. No. 34/2000**. According to **G.E.O.**, organic farming means to obtain food without the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides (insecticides, acaricides, desinfectants,etc.), to combat harmful organisms, food additives and biostimuli for animals (antibiotics, coccidiostats,hormons,etc.), drugs, genetically modified organisms and their derivatives. Agro-organic production aims to contribute to the development of *sustainable farming systems, diversified and balanced*, which ensures the protection of natural resources and the consumers' health and refers to obtaining:

- plant products and unprocessed primary animals;
- processed plant and animal origin products intended to human consumption;
- feeding materials and compound feedingstuffs intended for animal consumption from farms with organic production.

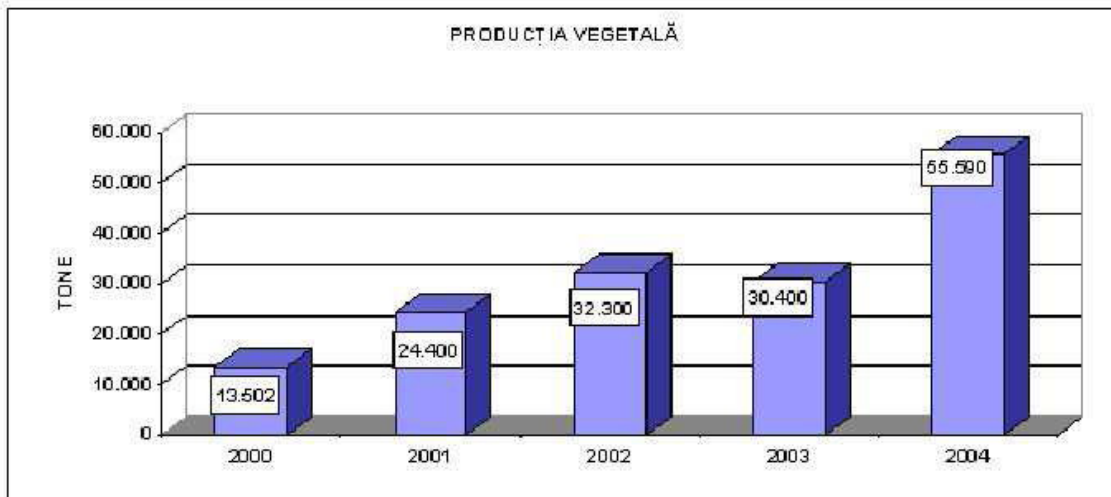
The basic principles of agro-organic production are:

- elimination of polluting technologies and genetically modified organisms and/or products derived from such organisms, except for some veterinary use products;
- realization of production structures and crop rotations in which the leading role lies with the species, varieties and breeds at high strength and adaptability;
- improving the natural fertility of the soil (by using appropriate crop rotations and natural organic fertilisers);
- the economic use of conventional energy resources and replace them - as far as possible - through the rational use of unconventional energy (solar energy, biogas, etc.) and re-usable products;
- application of technologies for livestock, which satisfy the physiological and behavioural (ethological) needs of the species and breeds.

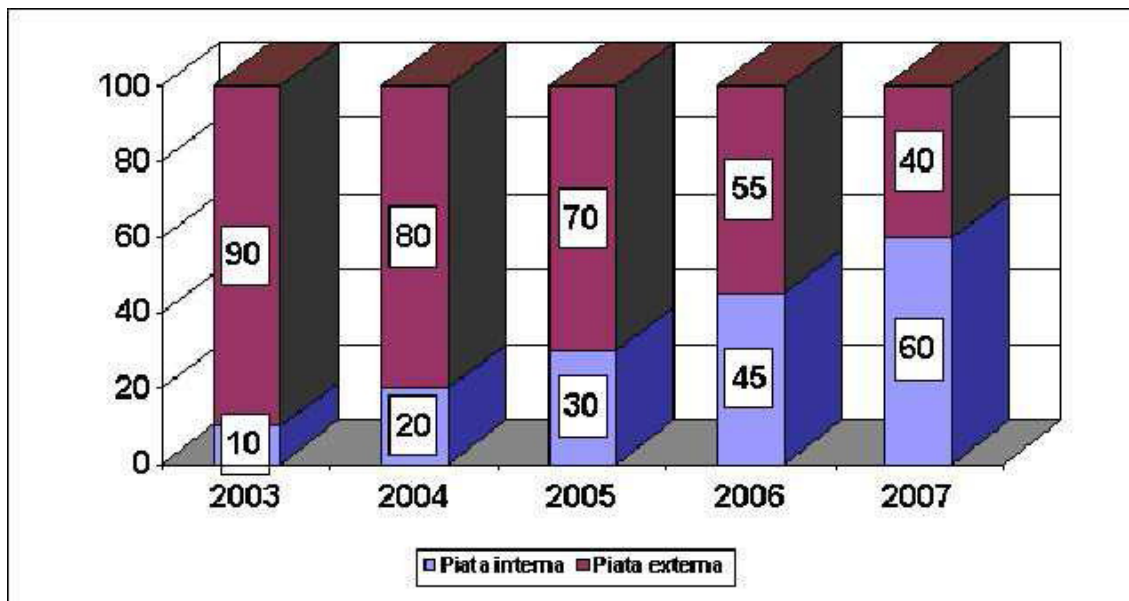
The transition from the conventional agricultural production to an ecological one will be done within a certain period of time (on the order of years), in accordance with international organic standards and with the **H.G. 917/2001**. For the implementation of the O.U.G., the National Authority of Organic Products (A.N.P.E.) has been set up, within the Ministry of agriculture and food, to ensure compliance with legal provisions and specific control methods of organic production, certification and marketing of agro-food products, in accordance with the rules of international organizations (to which Romania is part of). Any organic food producer must register his work at the ANPE and to submit to the control of an inspection and certification accredited body. The information supplied by the ANPE shows that, **in 2003, there were 117 producers legally registered, of which 42 producers for crop production** (including the production of medicinal plants, seeds, import-export of products); **27 producers for livestock production** (milk, meat, eggs) and **48 producers of organic honey**. Due to the fact that Romania does not have yet a developed market of organic products, more than 90 per cent of organic production is exported to countries like Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands and Italy. Domestically marketed cheese products are those manufactured by S.C. *Dorna Lactate* and S.C. *Camylact* from Vatra Dornei.

The areas cultivated in ecological conditions in Romania increased from 17,000 hectares in 2000 to 57,000 hectares at the end of 2003, and the livestock from 10,000 animals (sheep and cows) to 50,000 heads in 2003. In 2004 it was estimated a tripling of ecologically cultivated areas and an increase in livestock up to 86,000 heads, of which 10,000 cows, 70,000 sheep and 6,000 hens. Last year, most large areas have been cultivated with pastures and forage crops (24,000 hectares), cereals (16,000 hectares), oil and protein crops, (15.600 hectares), but also fruits and vegetables. The information supplied by the Ministry of agriculture shows in 2003 an organic crop production of 30,400 tonnes of cereals, vegetables, oilseeds and fruits, 55,590 tonnes being estimated for the year 2004. The organic livestock production provided 60 tonnes of sheep' s cheese, 150 tonnes of Schweitzer, 200 tonnes of cheese and 956, 000 eggs. Moreover, a quantity of 110 tonnes of honey was recorded in 2003. The estimated production of organic cheese will reach 380 tonnes and the Schweitzer production 260 de tone in 2004. The production of honey and eggs will be of 200 tonnes, respectively 1,438 million eggs.

The list of inspection and certification bodies accredited by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and rural development, on 8 June 2004, for inspection and certification of the agro-organic products in the territory of Romania, comprises eight firms, of which: two Romanian (with offices in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca respectively), two from Germany (with headquarters in Targu Mures and Timisoara respectively), two from Italy (with offices in Timisoara), one from Hungary (headquartered in Zalau), and one from France (headquartered in Bucharest). Regulations regarding the system of inspection and certification and accreditation bodies of organic certification and inspection are set out by the **Order of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water no. 527/2003**. For accreditation, complex laboratory examinations on soil and plant products and livestock shall be made. For livestock production inspections shall be carried out at all stages of production, slaughter, processing, up to the sale to the consumer. Laboratories should be RENAR accredited and comply with the ISO standard EN 45011: 1998 on the general requirements for bodies that apply the system of product certification. Agro-food organic labelling of products is applied in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry no. 110/2002. The remark: **organic farming Ecorom- control system RO-** is permitted only under the conditions in the O.U.G. no. 34/2000. Import and export of the ecological agro-food products are covered by the Order of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Environment no. 527/2003.



EVOLUTION OF PLANT PRODUCTION ECOLOGICALLY CERTIFICATED



FORECAST DESTINATION OF ORGANIC PRODUCTION IN ROMANIA

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