

Organic farming policy in Poland

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Introduction

Organic farming rules consist of: not using GMO, chemical fertilizers, chemical plant protection means, chemical food and feed additives; preference of prevention and natural treatment rather than allopathic products including antibiotics in animal husbandry; maintenance and improvement of soil fertility and biodiversity on the farm; preference of regionalism. As results, organic farming provides many benefits to the environment: protection of natural resource, prevention of land, water and air pollution from agriculture, maintenance biodiversity and landscape. As organic farming is relatively new system it needs special treatment and support from the state for the appropriate development. The support of organic farming can be divided into three groups: regulation, institutionalization and financial subsidies.

Regulation

After early pioneers, organic farming movement in Poland started at the end of 80'ies. Standards of EKOLAND (Organic Food Producers Association) published in middle 90'ies based on the IFOAM outlines were the first private rules of organic farming in Poland. First national administrative regulation was established in 2001 Law on organic farming of 16th March 2001 (Dz.U. 2001 no 30, item 452). Organic farming became regulated by law due to pressure of organic producer and enthusiasts. Recently, European Union regulations related to organic farming get in force within accession of Poland to EU. European regulations EEC 2092/91, EEC 94/92, EC 1788/2001 and EC 1452/2003 were introduced by national Law on organic farming of 20th April 2004 (Dz.U. 2004 no 93, item 898). In many terms law of European Union regulates many fields in organic farming in Poland. Another example is European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming established in 2004.

Institutionalization

Organic farming like general agriculture needs proper administration. Organic farming is the subject of operation of and is recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in broader extent than other Ministries. As special rules are applied to organic farming, it demands next to general also unique administration. Many institutions in general agriculture in Poland already are forced by law to operate for organic farming. Among them are:

- Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection Service – authority in the control and certification system;
- The Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – authority for fertilizers organic farming
- Institute of Plant Protection in Poznań - authority for plant protection means in organic farming;
- State Plant Health and Seed Inspection Service – authority for seeds, reproducing materials in organic farming;
- Station for Soil Analysis – payment agency for subsidies of control costs;
- Agency of Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture – payment agency for subsidies within agro-environment programs of Rural Development Plan.

The unique administration in organic farming is the system of control and certification. All producer (farmer, processors), units placing products on the market, importer and exporter are controlled at least once a year. In Poland whole system of control of organic farming and food production consist of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection Service and private or state own control bodies. It was established in the force of first law legislation.

Another important institution which operates for organic farming is national advisory. Whole state system consists of Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów and the network of Agricultural Advisory Centres. Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, with 4 branches, is financed by national budget. Its main role is coordination and development of agriculture advisory in Poland. The network of Agricultural Advisory Centres in Poland, which consists of main units in all provinces, has offices in all counties. This network is financed by budget of provinces. Within this network system of agricultural advisory systems there are advisors working for organic farming and Rural Development Plan; however they are providing advisory also in other issues. Organic farming advisory is only part of their specialization. There are around 400 such people in the Polish advisory system in 2005.

National organic farming advisory is located within this national advisory system. National Centre for Organic Farming was established in Radom in 2003 and after the structural changes it alters into the branch of Agricultural Advisory Centres in Brwinów. It coordinates the advisory in organic farming. Important outcome of his activity is 32 publications on animal and plant organic production, organic processing and marketing as materials for advisors' and farmers' education and internet portal for organic producers.

At the regional level organic farming in Poland is recognized in different extent by the local governments. Only in few provinces, some counties and communes organic farming is supported by regional project and plans of organic farming development.

Subsidies

Subsidies are very often are important part of policy. Organic farming is also supported by subsidies due to additional costs of producers' control, equalization of lost profits and as payment for environmental benefits organic farming is providing. Organic farming subsidies in Poland were introduced in 1998 as payment to control costs for

farmers and as area payment in 1999. Level of area payments were changing during 1999-2003 due to national budget limitation (See table 1).

Area payments introduced in 2004 after accession of Poland into European Union within Rural Development Plan are more than doubled. Area payments have limitation: in 1999, 2002, 2003 for each hectare up to 50 ha 100% payment, between 50-100 ha 50% and no payment over 100 ha; in 2000, 2001 - 100% up to 100 ha, 50% between 100-300 ha and no payment over 300ha; in 2004 (in Rural Development Plan) - 100% up to 100 ha, 50% between 100-300 ha and 10% over 300ha. Main reason of introduction of this limitation is decreasing the level of payment paid for one farm. Payments for costs of farm control of organic standards compliance covers almost all farmers' expenses and were reduced in 2005 (See table 2). There are other subsidies related to farm control in Poland. They are subsidies to costs of residues analysis of plant protection means in samples collected by control bodies.

Additionally the support of research in organic were introduced in 2004 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Table 1 Level of subsidies to ecological farming in Poland 1999-2006 (in PLN)

	in conversion	converted	in conversion	converted	in conversion	converted	in conversion	converted	in conversion	converted
	Horticultural crop		Arable crop		Orchards		Berries plantation		Pastures and meadows	
1999	200	150	150	120	220	180	230	200	75	50
2000	600	450	450	360	660	540	690	600	150	120
2001	600	450	450	360	660	540	690	600	150	120
2002	500	400	200	150	550	450	550	500	80	50
2003	500	400	300	250	600	500	550	500	100	80
2004-2006	980	940	680	600	1800	1540	1800	1540	330	240

1 PLN = 0,22-0,25 €

Table 2 Level of subsidies (in PLN) to costs of farm controls concerning the compliances with ecological agriculture criteria in Poland 1998-2005 (in PLN)

Farm size (agricultural land)	up to 5 ha	5—10 ha	10—20 ha	20—50 ha	50—100 ha	over 100 ha
1998	75	100	125	150	175	300
1999	100	130	150	180	200	350
2000	300	350	400	450	500	600
2001	300	350	400	450	500	600
2002	300	350	400	450	500	600
2003	400	450	550	650	700	800
2004	600	750	800	900	1000	1100
2005	450	500	550	600	650	700

1 PLN = 0,22-0,25 €

Development and state of organic farming in Poland

In 1990 organic farming in Poland started with 27 farms and at the beginning it has been developing slowly as the movement of farmers, hotheads and enthusiasts. The after introduction of subsidies to organic farming resulted bigger number of farmers starting farms' conversion into organic production. As a result number of organic farming increased more than double in 2000. (See figure 1). Second significant increase is observed in 2004 and 2005 when farmers were encouraged by higher level of payments introduced after EU accession within agro-environmental programmes of Rural Development Plan.

Newly published data show that there were 7183 farms with 167 740 ha in Poland in 2005. According expectations of The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, number of organic farms will increased up to 15 000 and organic area up to 300 000 ha in 2010. This foresees is underestimated as in 2005 in total 7183 farms certified farms exist in comparison to 6000 estimated (IJHARS 2006).

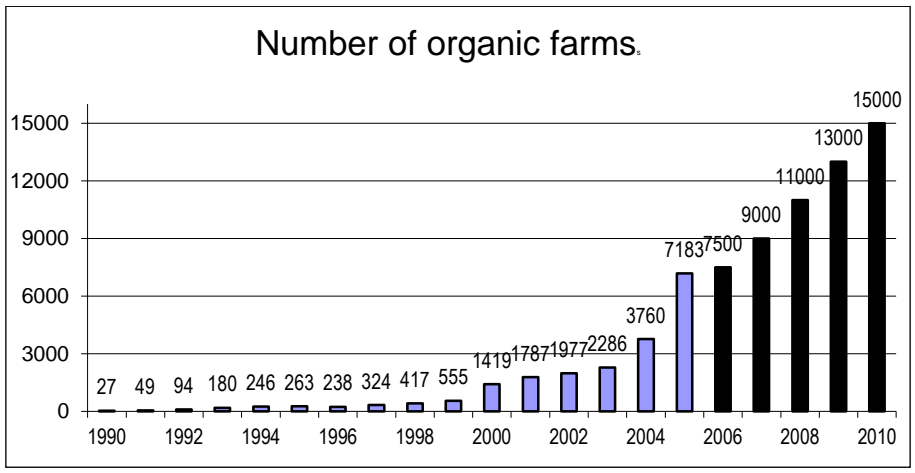


Figure 1 Development of organic farming in Poland