

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE

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Current conditions of Ukraine's development prove that it is time to change our attitude to nature, otherwise it will definitely turn into ecological disaster. In our opinion, the only way to prevent the catastrophe is to start 'greening' the economy today. It is well known, that Ukraine has a great agrarian potential which is used inappropriately nowadays. Thus, we are sure that one of the principles of 'greening' an economy – organic production – is to be of crucial importance in Ukraine.

The objective of this research is to prove the necessity of organic agriculture development in Ukraine.

Organic agriculture means the one that produces organic food. The term 'organic food' has become popular only recently, although it appeared in 1939 in *Lord Northbourne's* book *'Look to the Land'*. Originally it was used to describe a holistic, ecologically-balanced approach to farming in contrast to the so called 'chemical farming'.

Current understanding of organic food is more deliberate. "Organic" is a labelling term that denotes products that have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified by a duly constituted certification body or authority. Organic agriculture is based on minimizing the use of external inputs, avoiding the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Although organic agriculture practices cannot ensure that products are completely free of residues (due to general pollution of the environment), the methods it uses are to minimize air, soil and water pollution. It should be noted that the term 'organic' is mostly used in English-speaking countries as well as Ukraine. In other countries 'Bio', 'Oko' or 'Eco' are more usual.

The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people.

Organic food is the one produced according to the most important ethical principles of organic agriculture. Such principles are:

1) *the principle of health* means that organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible;

2) *the principle of ecology* emphasizes that organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them;

3) *the principle of fairness* means that organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities;

4) *the principle of care* states that precaution and responsibility are the key concerns in management, development and technology choices in organic agriculture.

The organic movement in the world started in the early 1970s with creation of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). It is the worldwide organization for the organic agriculture movement created in 1972 and uniting more than 750 member organizations in 108 countries. In many countries organic agriculture is already well developed. Currently organic agriculture uses vast lands worldwide (Europe – 5,1 mln ha, Northern America – 1,5 mln ha, Southern America – 4,7 mln ha, Australia – 10,6 mln ha).

In Ukraine organic agriculture is only at the beginning of the long way (270 thousand hectares are only certified as 'organic'). The analysis shows that the 'organic movement' has already started in Ukraine. There are such non-government organizations as Federation of organic movement in Ukraine, Federation of organic producers of Ukraine, Ukrainian Association of organic food consumers, the Club of Organic agriculture, Association of participants of bioproduction 'BIOLan', etc.

But a lot has to be done to promote organic agriculture development in Ukraine. The first thing to do is changing the way of thinking of Ukrainian people. It is necessary to provide some assistance to organic producers from the government.

One of the problems of organic producers is that people often don't know them and, thus, can't trust them. The organic food traceability has to be provided and seen as one of the prior tasks. Traceability defined as the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution. "Know your farmer, know your food" can be the motto of this process. Besides, the concept of 'terroir' – buying food primarily from the local producers – has to be introduced to the public as well as promoted.

As a conclusion, recent years have seen dramatic changes internationally in the organics industry. Demand for healthier, safer food is increasing and organically grown food absolutely satisfies this need. Organic production is now a commercial alternative but for growth to take place it must be viable for all participants, namely growers, marketers, etc.