Food Safety and organic food certification in the EU

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Introduction

Reasons:
- environmental protection
- Promote Sustainable Consumption
- Create awareness and demand for healthy and environmentally friendly food

CESDRRC published the first consumer guide for organic food in Beijing (supported by GTZ)
Worldwide Growth in Fertilizer Use

Fertilizer use has been growing faster in developing countries than in the industrialized world in recent years. But rising demand has produced a big price jump. Increased fertilizer runoff is expected to worsen the problem of dead zones along ocean shores.

“Dead zones”
Areas in which fertilizer runoff has created algae blooms that suck oxygen from the water.

Worldwide fertilizer consumption
160 million tons

Sources: International Fertilizer Industry Association; "Eutrophication and Hypoxia in Coastal Areas: A Global Assessment of the State of Knowledge;" Mindy Selman, Susie Greenhalgh, Robert Diaz and Zachary Sugg (World Resources Institute).
World organic farming development

- 31 million ha organic farmland worldwide
- 7.8 million ha in Europe

Source: SOEL-Survey 2005
The origin of industrialised agriculture in Europe

Mid of 19th century Justus Liebig (the „father of the fertilizer industry“) invents the formula for the artificial production of nitrogen based fertilizer.

At the same time introduction of mechanisation in agriculture

Early 20th century invention of the Haber-Bosch Process by the German chemists Haber and Bosch. The process allows the industrial mass production of nitrogen fertilizer. (agricultural revolution)
The origin of industrialised agriculture in Europe (2)

Positive impacts: Increase of agricultural productivity, surplus of rural workforce. Peasants become workers in the urban industry.

Negative side impacts of the chemical-technical revolution of traditional agriculture are already noticed at the beginning of 20th century:

Culture: Industrialisation of agriculture not compatible with traditional rural culture.

Ecology: Negative impacts of intensive agriculture on soil, pests etc.
Early Organic Movements

• After World War I first organic and „back to the roots“ movements in Europe (critique of industrialisation, modern urbanism, esoterism, romantisation of rural life)

Early organic movements:
• 1920s Rural Reform Movement
• 1924 Biodynamic agriculture (Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner)
• 1930 Demeter = first organic trade mark
Excursus: Permanent Agriculture or Permaculture
(Ecosystems Approach)
„Again, the great movement of cargoes of feeding stuffs and mineral fertilizers to western Europe and to the eastern United States began less than a century ago and never been possible as a means of maintaining soil fertility in China, Korea and Japan, nor it can be continued indefinitely in either Europe or America. These importations are for the time making tolerable waste through our modern systems of sewage disposal and other faulty practices; but the Mongolian races have held all such wastes, both urban and rural, and many others we ignore, sacred to agriculture, applying them to their fields.”

Franklin H. King: „Farmers of Forty Centuries. Permanent Agriculture in China, Korea and Japan“ (1911)
“Permanent Agriculture” = organic farming

2004 reprint, Dover pub.
Development of Organic farming in the EU

- Until 1980s organic food a niche sector
  Since the 1980s, rapid growth of organic farming in the EU
- In 1985, certified organic production only on 100,000 ha or 0.1% of total farmland
- In 2009, about 7.8 million ha or 4% of total farmland
- (In China organic farmland accounts for 0.34% of total farmland)
Development of Organic Farming in the EU

EU25: Number of organic and in-conversion holdings (thousand)

175,000 holdings in 2005
Europe: Organic agricultural land by country 2009

- With 1.3 million ha, Spain has the largest area of certified farmland.
- With 11% of the total farmland, Austria has the largest share.

Source: FiBL Survey 2011
Important Events for Changes in Consumer Behaviour

1986 Chernobyl

1987 BSE (Bovine Sponiform Encephalopathy = Mad Cow Disease)

Increasing Environmental Awareness/
Political impact of environmental movements
Development of Organic Food Market

- Enormous growth rates for organic farming (about 21% per year since the 1990’s) due to increased consumer’s awareness
- for food safety and health issues
- for environmental protection
- for animal welfare
- for food quality and taste
The EU market for organic food

• In 2004, the EU market for organic food accounted for 20.7 billion EURO (2004, datamonitor)
• Germany is Europe’s leading organic market (2.5 billion EURO). Germany is also the leading importer of organic products
• Britain, Italy and France have important markets as well
• Britain is Europe’s largest organic fruit market
Pricing
- In Europe organic products have higher prices than conventional grown products
- Usually organic farmers receive premiums for their organic products, but most of the additional costs for organic food is caused by distribution and processing
- These costs might decrease with growing markets
The EU market for organic food

- 10 - 15 years ago organic food used to be a small niche market for better educated urban citizens with relatively high income.
- Organic food was only available from small specialised shops or directly from the farm.
- Today specialised organic supermarkets as well regular discounters offer organic products.
- Multi national food companies invest in organic food production.
- Consumers ask for the whole range of organic products all over the year and affordable prices.
- Low paid employees in organic supermarkets.
Labelling and certification of organic food

IFOAM – Standards:
(represented in EU „organic farming“ advisory body

German organic logo (2002):
• 1992 the first EU regulation for organic farming and food (EEC No 2092/91) was implemented.

• 1999 rules on production, labeling and inspection of the most relevant animals (cattle, sheep, goats, horse and poultry) (regulation EC No. 1804/1999) The rules cover foodstuff, disease prevention, veterinary treatment, animal welfare, husbandry practices and management of manure
In 2004, the EU adopted the “European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming”.
It contains a list of 21 detailed measures such as

- Improving production, labeling and inspection rules
- Favoring organic farming in the framework of rural development
- Improving information and promotion
- Strengthening Research
Exports to the EU

- EU regulations require that only organic products from third countries can be imported if production criteria and control systems have been recognised equivalent to the EU system.
New EU Regulations

• Council Regulation (EC) No, 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products (June 2007)
• For EU member states the regulations came into force in January 2009
• Commission Regulation No. 1235/2008 (Dec. 2008) with detailed rules concerning import of organic products from third countries
EU Regulations

- **Organic food and GMO**
  - Under the new regulation at least 95% of the final product must be grown organic to be labeled as organic.
  - Products containing GMO may not be labeled as organic.
  - However, an exception is made for those with up to 0.9% GMO from accidental contamination.
  - According to IFOAM this closes a legal loophole, which allowed products to be labeled as organic as long they are labeled as GMO.
  - However, other green groups criticized the paragraph and demanded only food which is guaranteed free of GMO should be labeled as organic.
New Regulation Labelling for organic food

• Since 2010 the use of the new EU logo for organic food is mandatory for organic producer
• The logo replaces an older version
• This should replace the patchwork of numerous national and private logos.
Intensive production of organic food (the example of Spain)

Evolución de la producción agrícola ecológica (1991-2006)

Fuente: Elaboración propia MAPA
Organic Farming in Spain
Intensive agriculture in Spain conventional and organic

Plastic film greenhouses along the coast of Almeria
Migrant workers in Almeria
Food safety and organic food

• Certified organic food is safer than conventional food, however recent consumers are irritated by:
  • Faked logos
  • Organic food contaminated with GMO
  • Traces of dioxine found in organic certified eggs from free-ranging chicken
  • Organic food polluted by EHEC bacteria
Food Safety

- May 2011, EHEC outbreak in Germany caused by organic certified fenugreek sprouts

3063 cases, 838 HUS cases, 47 people died
Where can I find more information?

Useful websites:

WWW.organic-europe.net
www.://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/organic
Thank you!

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