

## ORGANIC FARMING IN SIBIU COUNTY, ROMANIA

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### Abstract

Romania has a relatively new history of the organic market, but increase the number of operators registered in the system is a spectacular one. Currently Romanian agriculture is going through a long and difficult transition from centralized economy to the European economy. In these conditions, organic agriculture is an opportunity for the rural population to increase their standard of living, which is far behind the European economy while respecting "sustainable development" by: environmental protection, natural resource conservation, preservation and promotion of cultural values in these areas, keeping the population in rural areas by removing the population exodus, diversification and promotion of occupational opportunities, in order to reduce unemployment in rural areas. This paper aimed to analyze the application of the concept of sustainability in agriculture by organic farming in Sibiu County, a central region of Romania, where it is the largest producer organic in the country, where organic agriculture is applied in the half of village number in the county and where most organic operators are grouped in a core (Vurpar). Methods used followed the knowing awareness among organic operators about benefits of organic farming about human health and environment. The main conclusion of this study is that the operators are aware of benefits and they must look for corresponding methods for products development recovery by getting value added.

*Key words:* ecological (organic) agriculture, environmental protection, sustainable development.

### INTRODUCTION

**Romania and organic farming.** “Organic agriculture is an ecological alternative, rational, that harness the "vocation" of the environment and conserve soil fertility, considered the most valuable component of the agricultural ecosystem” [19]. Fukuoka, a Japanese farmer from the 1940s called it "agriculture that do nothing - no plowing, no fertilizing, no control weeds without pesticides” consider it superior economic even modern methods [20]. Romania has a relatively new history of the organic market, but the growth registered in the system operators is a spectacular one[6].

In Romania, organic acreage increases every year and the number of organic operators also. However, most operators have small areas and fewer animals [16]. In 2012 acreage grew organically so reaching pastures and fodder to hold 44% of the total, 29% cereals, oilseeds and protein 22%.

Most manufacturers export their production as raw material due to lack of processing points. Exports of organic products in 2012 were

EUR 200 million Eur and the consumer market is estimated at 80 million Eur. In terms of consumption per capita, it is the lowest in Europe, with € 1.2 per capita [12].

According to the latest data published on the website of the ministry of agriculture, Romania is the country with the fastest growing in the world in the number of operators enrolled in the organic farming system [13].

Regarding the processed products in 2012 was an increase in the number of processors and the range assortment of organic products was more diversified including: processed milk cow and sheep (cheese, butter, cream, etc.), processed soy products (milk, tofu pate, croquettes), sunflower oil, a wide range of bakery products (bread, pasta, cookies) products processed from rice, corn flakes, herbal teas, juices berry products processed hemp seeds, bee-products (wax, propolis, pollen), processed pork products (sausage, ham) and organic wine [4], [14].

Studies on biodiversity (component of sustainable development) around Sibiu were made over years of various specialists,

diversity and the richness it is an indicator of environmental pollution in the area [7], [10].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials and methods used were: consulting bibliographic data, statistical data, and many incursions into the county to meet farmers practicing organic farming, to get information about why the conversion, traditional practices, opportunities, risks, production, profit, awareness of the benefits of organic farming on the environment and human health. information was processed through analysis, evaluation or comparison with a high coefficient of synthetic truth. According to sources IFOAM [15] the number of producers has increased from 2920 in 2005 to almost 15,315 in 2012, this being possible due to grants awarded by the Romanian state, the area increased from 92,770 ha in 2005 to 288,261 ha in 2012 and from 0.67% organic in 2005 to 2.10% in 2012 (Table 1, Fig. 1.).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In terms of area, it seems that Sibiu is the top organic farming, because it has the largest areas of land for organic farming ie: 450 acres of orchards, 414 hectares of various crops, 3,700 acres pasture and meadow, and most organic sheep farms (21 farms) [18].

Tabel 1. Evolution of organic farming in Romania

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Area (ha)	92,770	107,578	131,401	140,132	168,288	182,706	229,946	288,261
% Organic	0.67	0.77	0.96	1.01	1.21	1.33	1.67	2.10
Producers	2,920	2,033	2,238	2,775	3,078	2,986	9,471	15,315

Source: <http://www.organic-world.net/statistics-data-tables-dynamic.html?&L=0> [15]

In the county of Sibiu, organic farming has experienced in recent years a special scale. "We have the largest organic producer in the country" - claimed George Budrala, executive director of the County Department of Agriculture Sibiu at the time: "It's Ital Agroturism Maluda of Sura Mare, registered with 230.26 acres of apple and cherry trees; Mihai Eminescu Trust Company Malancrav -

registered with 114.97 hectares of apples, nuts and plums and 21 shepherds of Vurpar holding 3,700 acres pasture and meadow green for an effective ecological 16,000 sheep."

Due to the benefits to farmers, the number of applications for organic farming in the county is growing [5], [17].

During numerous incursions in the county, I met, talked and questioned 305 people working in agriculture, forestry and agribusiness, in which 185 people aged under 40, five people are members of a producer group, 80 people farmers are in a semi-subsistence farm.

During these activities were undertaken managed a good exchange of information about organic farming and its benefits on human health and the environment.

Organic farming of Sibiu county is a sector with many development opportunities and a viable alternative to develop a sustainable European agriculture, maintaining biodiversity and maintain environmental health [11].

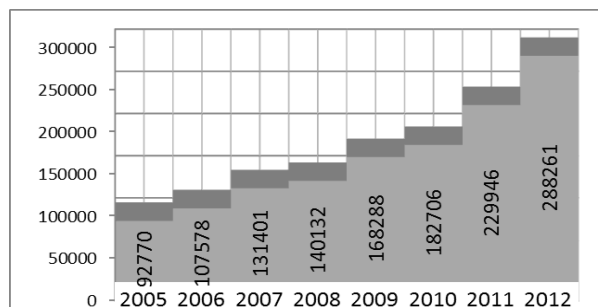


Fig. 1. Organic area evolution in Romania [14]

Organic production involves a global production: agriculture and food, by combining the best environmental practices, with a high level of biodiversity [9], [10], conservation of natural resources, application of high animal welfare standards and a method for production that complying preference of certain consumers. Organic production delivers public goods contributing to environmental protection [8], animal welfare and rural development [1].

Natural honey is the sweetest and miraculous product of nature resulting from processing by honey bees into nectar or other sweet substances found in all kinds of honey (manna

of vegetable or animal origin, fruit juices), by their transformation under the enzymatic action of saliva and gastric juice of the bees [18].

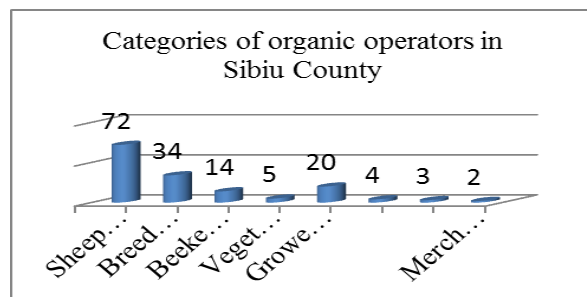


Fig. 2. Categories of organic operators in Sibiu County  
Note: some organic operators dealing with sheep and goats were certified feed production and other crops as well.

Why organic farming in Sibiu county? Because in this county chemicalization and industrialization have not yet reached the level of other counties or in Western countries, organic production is not dependent on them! One can define perimeters green, unpolluted, where specific techniques can be applied to organic farming.

In 2012, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Sibiu were a number of 130 registered organic operators. Of these 121 are farmers, that are either certified as organic producers, or in a period conversion, processors, importers and merchants. They deal with the cultivation of plants (grasses, vegetables, fodder plants, shrubs and fruit trees etc.) and animal breeding (sheep, goats, cattle, buffaloes, bees).

The farm production stage prohibiting genetically modified organisms (GMOs and their derivatives) of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, growth stimulators and regulators, hormones, antibiotics [3]. In the food processing stage restricting the use of additives, complementary substances and synthetic chemicals used in the preparation of organic food. Organic farming has a major contribution to sustainable development, increasing economic activities with significant added value and increase interest in rural areas [2], [3].

Following checks carried out inspection and certification bodies, operators have complied

with production rules will receive a certificate of organic product will be able to label products with the words, organic. The label affixed to an organic product are required following: referring to organic production, logos, names and code inspection and certification body that issued the certificate of inspection and ecological product. National logo ae specific for organic products with the Community logo is used to supplement labeling by consumers to identify products produced in accordance with organic production methods [3].

The process and procedures for obtaining organic products are regulated by strict production rules and principles that go from the quality you need to have to obtain land and ecological product. In our country there are many certified inspection bodies, five of them out inspections and monitoring in Sibiu county.

## CONCLUSIONS

After studying the data provided in this article we conclude that sustainable agriculture in Romania is an opportunity for producers and organic food production is a steady increase in recent years. That certified organic farming areas progressively increased in recent years marked interest among farmers, that from the point of view of the rural economy, make viable expansion of economic activities with high added value and generate new jobs enabling revenue growth and providing job satisfaction.

Currently, organic farming is in Sibiu county productive, conserve environmental resources, but not for all operators sufficiently profitable. For many farmers it is at a subsistence level and trying hard passage of this level. Only a few operators have reached the level of agriculture practiced in other European countries, where family farms are only one source of income for the family.

Although common Vurpăr "the first eco-village" in the county through the will of the majority of the village farmers to practice organic farming operators expect from the authorities in their favor legislation; expects support by facilitating access to projects to

develop; expect help in promoting organic products on the local, national and international.

Some farmers were formed an association to easier access European funds and have big plans for the future (a mini-factory to process raw materials: milk) to open a shop for the sale of raw materials and processed products, to create added value.

Remarkable increase in consumer interest from year to year (2014 - 2015) to purchase and consume organic products, it is known that organic products are important in human life, only that the purchase price is unaffordable for a large segment of the population.

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