Egypt

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Part II

COUNTRY REPORTS

ALBANIA

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1. General aspects

Organic agriculture products have been firstly introduced in Albania by HIPP, the German producer of organic baby food. It has been promoting and selling basically organic foods in Albania since 1995. They have a good distribution system all over the country and operate basically with drug stores.

Oxfam - Novib support a very interesting project in Northern Albania in the region of Shllak to develop permaculture. (Permaculture is a dose relative to organic agriculture, with a strong orientation on farm planning and very diverse cropping. The objective is to produce sufficient amounts of diversified food in a small area). They have developed a good extension network in approximately 30 villages, elaborated interesting training modules and introduced numerous successful technical improvements (including water reservoirs, mulching and "Konfej" as fertilizer). In 1998, they created a resource centre (near Skodra) with the objective of creating a model farm according to permaculture. Even though the centre is not yet fully operational, they have been holding courses and demonstrations (train approximately 20 people a month) during the summer months. This project has supported the establishment of a co-operative for herbs, which tends to export under 'organic' label.

At least one private fresh herb producer and exporter "Aris-frucht" is certified by BIOSWISS and is exporting fresh herbs to Switzerland, since January 2001.

Two groups of women are certified by an Italian certfication body as organic herb collectors in Zadrima, region in Lezha district. There are no data on exporting wild herbs.

Three bee-keepers have applied to the Organic Agriculture Association (OAA) to convert to organic, but OAA is not yet recognized as a certification body, neither by IFOAM nor by the Albanian government.

Some olive oil producers, members of OAA, are actually trying to enter the procedure for labeling 'organic' and thinking for exporting.

The OAA, whose objectives are the promotion of organic agriculture in Albania, is a young and dynamic association. It was established on June 1997. It has undertaken a number of interesting activities, all on voluntary basis, and has developed a strong membership among the

agricultural experts. The Association is very conscious of the need to motivate more producers to become involved in organic production. Agricultural producers in three districts are members of the Association and are willing and capable to deliver organic goods if and when some infrastructure will be set up. However, efforts in contacting producers is limited because of the lack of resources.

The activities OAA has undertaken, especially efforts to present organic agriculture to a wider public, have created a lot of interest among both "intellectuals" and consumers. A local market, though small, does exist in Tirana for higher quality goods, for Albanian specialities and products, which can be easily traced to the producer.

OAA has established a commission for the certification of organic products based on the IFOAM basic standards.

OAA is now supporting the efforts of one of its members to improve the performance of a shop (natural and organic) in Tirana in which organic products can be sold.

Recently OAA has been appointed as Albanian coordinator for the project "Introduction of Organic Agriculture and Low Input Sustainable Agriculture in Balkan Countries", in the framework of Stability Pact.

From the government side, there are attempts to introduce organic agriculture in its policies. In the governmental strategy for agriculture "The Green Strategy" organic agriculture is considered as an alternative in rural areas, especially in the mountains.

2. Regulatory aspects

Actually, there is no legislation in the country concerning organic agriculture. The inspection and certification system in the country is managed by OAA, but it is still weak, since it is not associated with any national legislation or international scheme of inspection and certification.

3. Structural aspects

There is only one organic farm certified by BIOSWISS, Switzerland.

The farm's area is about 4 ha (two in the open field and two under green house). It is located in Gjokaj - Tirana. The main product is fresh herbs. The total production per year is around 20 tons. The turnover is around $US 80 000 per year.

There are groups of farms in Lezha districts involved in wild collection of herbs and certified by an Italian association (not yet identified). Also, there is a herb cooperative called "Kiri 2" in Shllak Shkoder, which is collecting organic herbs (but not yet certified). Some training activities

were organized, financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, the World Learning Program (USAID) and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari.

4. Agronomic aspects

The main problem in soil fertility management is the lack of adequate drainage and irrigation systems.

The main issue in pest and weed control is the quality of pesticides and the lack of knowledge about their use.

The main authorized product for soil fertility is manure.

Imported propagating material is basically certified, but not necessary as organic. Propagating material in the country might be considered organic.

There are not local companies producing technical means.

5. Market aspects

There are no organic shops in Tirana and no organic products are sold in supermarkets. Products usually go to the foreign market such as Switzerland and Italy. About 20 tons of organic fresh herbs are exported to Switzerland per year.

Aris-frucht is the company that exports to Switzerland. There are some demands from German and British markets.

The main difficulty in exporting Albanian products is the lack of internationally recognized inspection and certification body.

Domestic consumption of certified organic products is not developed yet. Ten percent of people in remote rural areas consume non certified organic products (self producing and self consuming).

There are no evident forms for promoting organic products, apart from the organization of pavilions in national fairs by OAA.

6. Association

In Albania actually there is only one organic association, the OAA, which has branches in main districts of the country, and good membership (90 members). It has also continuous contacts with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

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ALGERIA

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Introduction

Algerian agriculture includes the so-called "modern" and traditional production. At the contrary of the "modern" and intensive, the traditional production (70% of agricultural useful area) is characterized by a low level of mechanization and absence of fertilizers and pesticides.

Organic agriculture, as a system of production under legislation, does not exist yet.

This delay comes from the fact that the last thirty years, agriculture was not considered as a priority by the authorities and so, not encouraged as it has been done for industry.

1. Organic farming in Algeria: the beginnings

In the year 2000 the first attempts to introduce organic agriculture in Algeria started:

- Some lectures addressed to teachers and students of the National Institute of Agronomy (Algiers) and the Institute of Agronomy of Blida and to the executive staff of the Ministry of Agriculture were organized.
- A report about the importance of the development of organic farming in the country and its environmental and economic aspects was submitted to the Minister of agriculture.
- The Minister of agriculture strongly supported the promotion of organic farming in the country.
- First contacts with the main producers' organization were undertaken.Potential organic farms were identified and a first list was compiled.In the year 2001 a seminar on "Introduction to organic farming" was organized by the "Institut National des Recherches Agronomiques d'Algers" (INRAA) with the contribution of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (ASI Global).

2. Regulatory aspects

There is no legislation on organic agriculture in Algeria. The competent authority for the promotion of organic farming is the Ministry of agriculture, principally through the following departments:

- the National Centre of Control and Certification;

- the Veterinary Services;
- the Vegetable Protection and Control techniques;
- Training, Research and Vulgarization;
- The National Institute of Agricultural Vulgarization.

3. Conclusion

Organic farming in Algeria is at its beginnings. However, there is a certain interest to its promotion from the authorities, especially the Minister of agriculture, and also from a certain number of producers. Some measures have been undertaken to set up a development project.

EGYPT

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1. General aspects

The Egyptian agriculture has been fully organic for more than ten thousand years and until 1940. Since the beginning of agricultural activities in the Nile Delta and Valley and due to the high fertility of these soils, there was no need for any kind of fertilizers particularly in soils destinated to be flushed and flooded every year by new fresh mud brought from the jungles of Ethiopia, Uganda and South of Sudan. Crop rotation, including clover and grasses for animal feeding, was used. Integrated animal and crop production system was practiced. In such a system animal urine and manure were saved for crop production. Natural agents for disease and insect control were used and are still being used in some areas nowadays. Most of these agricultural practices were documented on the temple's walls during the Pharaonic time, 5000-7000 years ago. These agricultural practices had been the main bases for agriculture and ecosystem sustainability for thousands of years.

Since 1940 the development of agricultural practices focusing on short-term productivity based on an intensive use of external inputs, such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides, introduced a fragile system of monocultures. This new system revealed to have many negative environmental impacts and harmful health hazards for both humans and animals. Serious threats on farmers, due to the use of chemicals, are increasing. Pollution of the Nile as a direct result of the intensive use of agro-chemicals causes a real health hazard for all Egyptian citizens.

Certified organic agriculture started in Egypt 23 years ago in the eastern desert where a small farm (Sekem) of about 17 ha produces medicinal herbs for export market. Expansion of this activity was quite slow until 1988. Thereafter, a rapid growth has occurred in the bio-dynamic production of vegetables, fruits, cereals, cotton and medicinal herbs. This rapid growth was initiated mainly by Sekem and by some other growers in Fayum and Kalubia governorates.

In 1995 a new group of organic growers established the Union of Growers and Exporters of Organic and Bio-dynamic Agriculture (UGEOBA). The Union members produce and trade mainly organic herbs, vegetables, fruits, potato and some cereals.

Shortly after, in summer 1998, a new organic project was started by Al-Hoda for agromanufacturing due to the high market demands for organic fruits and vegetables. At the same time Ever Green Egypt, Sonak, Sultan Farm, Fayum Society of Small Organic Farmers and others got involved in the organic movement (table 1).

Table 1. Development of organic production activities of UGEOBA / ECOA during 1995-1998 (area in ha)

Season	Winter 1995/96	Summer 1996	Winter 1996/97	Summer 1997	Winter 1997/98
Field crops	77	197	297	298	324
Field trees	26	38	62	82	76
Medicinal herbs & ornamentals	10	19	92	92	155
Vegetables	3+30H	10+30H	17+30H	32+30H	21+46H
Total	116+30H	274+30H	468+30H	504+30H	578+46H

H refers to the number of standard plastic house (540 m2)

The organic agriculture activity in Egypt is growing very fast due to the public awareness as well as to the increasing demands for organic food and fibers on both local and export markets. The number of farms reached more than 300, with a total acreage of more than 10 000 feddans (4167 hectares). According to the Egyptian Ministry of agriculture (2000) the total cultivated area is 7.4 million feddans (3 083 333 hectares) of which organic farmed areas represent about 0.14%. Beside the certified organic production, in the remote areas, there are more than 500 thousand feddans (208 333 ha) cultivated traditionally without any use of chemicals and depending only on the rain or the underground water for irrigation. From a technical viewpoint, these areas could be easily converted into certified organic production.

Organic and bio-dynamic productions in Egypt include all kinds of vegetables, mangetot, sugarsnap, baby corn, medicinal herbs, potato, citrus, grape, mango, banana, apricot, strawberry, liquorice, henna, palm date, cereals and cotton.

2. Regulatory aspects

In 1990 the Egyptian Bio-dynamic Association (EBDA) was founded to provide consultancy, training and applied research services to farmers. Together with the German and Swiss partners, EBDA established the Center of Organic Agriculture in Egypt (COAE), a local certification body.

COAE follows the inspection and certification schemes of the Institute of Market Ecology (IMO) of Switzerland. In 1997 COAE was registered

as a limited liability company by Sekem, IMO and DEMETER international for inspection and certification. Sekem owns the major part of this company.

Later, in the same year, this company was accredited by DAP, the German accreditation organization. COAE office is located at the Sekem Headquarter at the beginning of Belbies Desert road, Hiekstep, Cairo. All inspectors, administrators and certification board members are local personnel. Inspection and certification are performed according to the Demeter Bio-dynamic standards and to the EU rules and regulations. COAE inspects 122 farms distributed among 11 governorates as recorded in table 2.

Table 2. Sekem / COAE project

District	No. of Farms	Area (ha)	Main Products
Behira	25	147	cotton, rice, wheat, potato, vegetables, fruits, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Gharbia	2	65	fruits, potato, vegetables and ornamentals
Minofia	2	88	potato, fruits and wheat
Sharkia	32	335	cotton, rice, wheat, potato, vegetables fruits, medicinal herbs, ornamentals and animal products
Qualubia	12	155	cotton, rice, wheat, fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Cairo	1	6	grape, vegetables, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Giza	5	40	date, medicinal herbs, ornamentals, wheat and fruits
Ismaillia	10	118	cotton, vegetables, potato, fruits, ornamentals and animal products
Fayum	21	420	cotton, onion, wheat, rice, medicinal herbs, ornamentals potato and fruits
Beni Sweif	8	97	cotton, onion, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Minia	4	69	onion, medicinal herbs and ornamentals.
Total	**122**	**1540**	

In September 1995, the Egyptian Center of Organic Agriculture Society (ECOAS) was established as a nonprofit, non governmental organization. The 15 initiating members were university professors, agriculture experts, scientists, farmers and consumers. ECOAS started when some organic and bio-dynamic growers felt the need to establish another organic project in Egypt beside Sekem, which until 1995 was the only one in the country. Most of the initiators of ECOAS were working and co-operating with Sekem project.

ECOAS follows inspection and certification schemes reported in the Regulation (EEC 2092/91) and its amendments and in the IFOAM Basic standards. Naturland's guidelines are also taken into account. A complete inspection and certification scheme was designed for ECOAS to do the job under the supervision of IMO and Naturland.

Later on, within the framework of ECOAS and with the support of

Naturland, four organic growers and Agrofood Company founded the Union of Growers and Exporters of Organic and Bio-dynamic Agriculture (UGEOBA) and a local control body.

A filing system was designed for UGEOBA for both farms and firms. Both IMO and Naturland were consulted at all steps, including the format of extension visits, inspection report forms, sanctions, and appeal procedures. Information flow through contacts with the international organic community was very helpful in improving performance.

An evaluation is performed annually by IMO and Naturland to meet international requirements and find markets for organic products in Europe.

From four organic farms and one firm at the beginning of the project in September 1995, we passed, in summer 1998, to 75 farms with an average size of 17 ha, and seven firms. Organic products include medicinal herbs and ornamentals, henna, fresh vegetables, roots and tubers, rice, wheat and cotton. These organic products are exported to most EU countries, the USA and Arab countries, besides being sold on the local market.

Later on, ECOA company was founded as a sharing company of ECOAS mainly for inspection and certification with the aim to comply particularly with the standards of IFOAM's International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS), ISO Guidelines 65 and the European Norms (EN 45011). A new organizational chart and job descriptions for all authorised personnel were developed. Policy paper and standards were prepared for a certification scheme to comply with international requirements.

In the year 2000, ECOA company was accredited according to the EU 45011 by the DAP, same German accreditation body which accredited the COAE earlier. All inspectors and certification board members are local personnel. The number of farms is 62 distributed among 11 governorates as recorded in table 3.

Due to the enormous evolution of organic movement in the country more projects were established in the last few years. The biggest is Al-Hoda for Agro-manufacturing which established the largest organic farm in the Middle East in Sinai with a surface of 650 feddans (about 150 hectares) producing organic vegetables, fruits, roots and tubers, peanuts and baby corn for both local and export market. Inspection and certification of this project is being performed by the English Soil Association ltd.

Three other small groups started in the last two or three years. These are the following:

Table 3. UGEOBA / ECOA project activities, Summer 1998

District	Number of farms	Total Area (ha)	Main Products
Behira	19	293+46H	cotton, rice, wheat, potato, vegetables, fruits, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Gharbia	1	8	potato and vegetables
Minofia	3	26	potato, fruits, wheat and vegetables
Sharkia	3	50	rice, wheat, potato and vegetables, medicinal herbs, ornamentals and animal products
Giza	2	18	medicinal herbs, ornamentals and vegetables
Ismaillia	1	4	vegetables, potato and ornamentals
Fayum	21	303	cotton, wheat, rice, medicinal herbs, ornaments, potato, vegetables and fruits
Menia	3	25	onion, garlic, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Assiut	4	76	onion, garlic, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Sohag	3	40	onion, garlic, medicinal herbs and ornamentals
Asswan	2	2	Henna
Total	**62**	**845+46H**	

H refers to the number of standard plastic house (540 m2)

• Ten farms and firms inspected and certified by the German BCS which has established an office in Cairo, which inspectors are both local and German. Certification is done according to the EU rules and regulations.

• Four farms and firms inspected by the Italian IMC which has established, one year ago, an office in Cairo and inspection and certification processes are performed jointly by local and Italian personnel. Certification is carried out according to the EU rules and regulations.

• Two or more farms are inspected by Bioagricoop, an Italian certification body, according to the EU rules and regulation. Both inspection and certification are performed by Italians. No office is known in Egypt for Bioagricoop yet.

3. Structural Aspects

Two large organic and bio-dynamic projects are now well established in Egypt: Sekem and UGEOBA. More than 3000 ha are organically grown in Egypt, and a very wide range of organic products are available on both local and export markets. Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the organic activities of the different groups and organic projects until the year 1998.

The recent structural situation at the end of 2001 may be summarized in tables 5 and 6.

Table 4. Total export of organic products from UGEOBA farms in export season 1997/98

Crop	Amount (tons)	Destination
Potato	1850	Germany, Italy and UK
Onion	632	Germany, Italy and UK
Garlic	492	Germany, Italy and UK
Peanut	247	Belgium and UK
Green Bean	11	UK
Eggplant	1	UK
Pea	2	UK
Tomato	3	UK
Green Pepper	113	UK
Red Pepper	17	UK
Squash	1	UK
Cucumber	6	UK
Chamomile	45	Germany, Italy, UK, USA and Australia
Basil	20	UK, Germany and USA
Peppermint	2	UK, Germany and USA
Spearmint	8	UK, Germany and USA
Fennel	25	UK, Germany and USA
Hibiscus	10	UK, Germany and USA
Lemon Grass	3.5	Germany
Majoram	6.5	UK, Germany and USA
Parsley	3.3	UK, Germany and USA
Calendula	5.5	Germany, UK and Italy
Dill	1.5	Germany
Coriander	4.5	UK, Germany and USA

Table 5. Structural situation of organic agriculture in Egypt at the end of 2001

District	Project			
	Sekem		UGEOBA	
	Farm no.	Area (ha)	Farm no.	Area (ha)
Behira	22	150	8	53+30 H
Tahrir	8	43	7	48
Gharbia	5	22	8	37
Dakahlia	1	7	7	38
Minofia	2	11	8	69+19 H
Sharkia	13	105	6	69
Ismaillia	7	40	8	87
Qualubia	7	23	8	65
Cairo	1	6	0	0
Giza	5	18	7	32
Fayum	21	182	9	100
Beni Sweif	3	29	8	43
Minia	28	68	8	125
Assuit	10	47	8	80
Sohag	12	95	8	87
Qina	0	0	7	56
Aswan	2	21	5	39
Total	**147**	**867**	**120**	**1041**

H refers to the number of standard plastic house (540 m^2).

Table 6. Structural situation of organic agriculture in Egypt at the end of 2001

Project	District	Farm no.	Area (ha)	Certifier
Al-Hoda	Sinai	1	165	Soil Association, UK
Ever Green & Others	Behira, Fayum and Minofia	10	172	BCS, Germany
Sultan Farms & Sonak	Behira and Alexandria	3	83	IMC, Egypt (Italy)
Others	Behira and Kalubia	3	70	Bioagricoop, Italy
Total		**17**	**390**	

Farm numbers and productions in all projects are increasing quite fast. Organic activities in general are spreading rapidly around the country and all over the southern Mediterranean region. This happened particularly after the establishment of the Mediterranean IFOAM group (AgriBioMediterraneo) in July 1997, with its permanent secretariat at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy.

3.1 Producers' Associations

- Egyptian Biodynamic Association (EBDA)
  Address: Sekem, Hykestep, Belbeis Desert road, Egypt.
  Number of members: about 137 growers plus Sekem Holding Companies
  Products Types and Quantity (see table 5)
  Products destination: local and export markets.

- Union of Growers & Exporters of Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture (UGEOBA)
  Address: Agrofood Co. 3 Kampis str. from Mesadaq, Dokki Giza Egypt
  Number of members: about 120 growers plus 7 Companies
  Products Types and Quantity (see table 5)
  Products destination: local and export markets.

- Egyptian Center of Organic Agriculture Society (ECOAS)
  Address: 17a Hadaik Eloubor, suite 2 –12th floor, Salah Salim Str, 11371 Nasr City, Cairo Egypt.
  Number of members: 30 scientists, growers and environmental activists.
  Products destination: local and export markets.

3.2 Training activities

Sekem deals with Biodynamic practices training whereas ECOAS is involved in Organic agriculture training activities, such as:

- organization of a training workshop for junior inspectors from eight

African countries through the IFOAM African Group project "four of organic agriculture till 99";

- organization of training seminars in Palestine and in Tunisia to help establishing organic projects in these countries;
- attempts to establish an organic project in Bosnia.

ECOAS' Chairman is coordinating the organic agriculture Committee of the Agriculture Commodity Council (ACC) at the Egyptian Ministry of Economy and Foreign Affairs as well as the ad-hoc committee for formulating the organic agriculture rules and regulation in Egypt.

4. Agronomic Aspects

Organic farming practices have long been documented in the Egyptian agricultural traditions. Safe use of environmental resources, building-up of soil fertility, biodiversity and the concept of natural equilibrium were used more than five thousand years ago. Animal manure and Nile mud were the only fertilizers used. Crop rotation was the only mean for soil fertility conservation, and solarization was used in plant protection and disease control. Social aspects were very important in the agricultural community, not only in Egypt but also in most Mediterranean countries. In recent times, in most southern Mediterranean countries, in both conventional and organic agriculture, a socially, culturally and economically integrated system is the main feature of the country side.

Today, in Egypt, the organic farming system depends on reasonnable and continuous applications of composted animal manure and farm wastes and on the use of natural additives for enriching compost, such as rock phosphate, orthoclase, gypsum, desert shale, bone meal, as well as plant and seaweed extracts. Waste recycling is the predominant way of compensating the nutrients removed from the soil. Balanced crop rotations, with 20% legumes, are used with both deep- and shallow-rooted crops. Plant biodiversity is fostered, and the farm environment is made complex through the establishment of evergreen hedges and different plant species to accommodate birds and insects. Green manuring and cover crops are applied. Prevention and biological control measures are considered, beside the safe use of plant extracts and other natural substances for pest and disease control. A successful example is sulfur mixed with bentonite and lime to control mildew; jojoba oil and other mineral oils as insecticides; pheromone traps sticky sheets and mating disruption perfumes as well as cover crops for pest control. Sheep husbandry within the farm makes this system economically viable.

Integrated animal and plant farming is the most successful way to establish organic farms on newly reclaimed land in the Egyptian desert

(a very arid climate). Minimizing the use of external inputs is a successful concept for enhancing the economic feasibility of the organic farming operation, in particular after the stop of governmental subsidies for most agricultural production.

The main issues opposing the progress of organic agriculture in Egypt are the following:

1- Some restrictions in the EU regulations concerning the long conversion period (three years) which is not necessary for Egypt because in most European countries, the growing season is short (four to five months per year), while n Egypt there are three growing seasons a year.

2- Manure limits per unit area requested by the EU regulations is quite low for the desert soils which is very poor in organic matter contents (less than 0.1%).

3- Organic seeds are not always available, sometimes even absent. If available, they are very expensive. There is no local organic seed production for many products particularly vegetables.

4- Disease and insect control is still not easy; biological control agents are imported and are very expensive. Local practices need to be developed through intensive research programmes.

5- Nitrogen requirements are still not fulfilled according to the allowed rates of application in all national and international rules and regulations. More research activities are needed for soil fertility conservation in the desert environment.