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FRANCE

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1. General aspects

The French agriculture is dominated by cereals and the so-called "grandes cultures", including potato, sugar beet and wheat. Most of the growers receive subsidies according to the European Common Agricultural Policy, taking into consideration the competition with foreign countries.

Organic growers do have to respect the European Regulation (EC 2092/91) for plant production. They have to declare their intention of selling organic products, and they are to be controlled by certified organisms that check the technical management of different crops on the farm.

Organic Agriculture (OA) concerns around 1.5% of all cultivated surfaces in 2001 (i.e. 420 000 ha), which is increasing but not much compared to other EU countries like Austria or Holland. Most of the OA is done in south-east and west of France (Britannia) where mountains, vineyards and extensive crops are found.

Organic animal husbandry is strongly increasing, especially in the mountainous areas and in Britannia. The organic animal husbandry has led to the development of organic pastures whose surfaces have increased rapidly: pastures (70%), cereals and beets (18%), vineyard (3%), orchards (2%), vegetables (2%) and miscellaneous (7%).

However, organic animal husbandry has caused a lack of vegetal proteins in cereals, oleaginous and proteaginous, which led to the import of around 60% of the concentrates.

Subsidies for Organic Agriculture are given by the government during the conversion period (three years), and they range from US\$ 250 up to 600 for vineyards. Those subsidies may have convinced many growers to produce organically, without having the ethical behaviour, which is a must. We shall, thus, wait that subsidies drop down to see the evolution.

Different local groups are organising training, information and market initiatives for helping organic growers to sell and to be better known.

2. Regulatory aspects

The reference legislation is the European regulation (EC 2092/91) which is always readapted and discussed. Most of the growers refer to

this legislation but some do apply a more severe one, for example, Swiss (Biosuisse) or French (Nature & Progrès), as they consider that some elements of Regulation EC 2092/91 do not belong to their way of thinking Organic Agriculture.

Some growers also work “bio-dynamically” and have very few possibilities of using inputs, but enhance plant or animal health through telluric forces.

The competent authority is the Ministry of Agriculture (Direction Générale de l’Agriculture), which represents France in European decisions. Inspection boards are allowed to control farmers and to deprive them from their label.

Once the producer has gone through the 3-year conversion period, he is authorised to label his products with the logo :



This logo, put on the left of the label, is a national one, and is about to be replaced by a European one, to be put on the right.

During the first year of conversion the grower has to sell his produce traditionally. In the second year, he can indicate that the products are produced organically but in transition period.

Several independent organisms are approved by the government to make regular and unexpected controls on farms.

Those organisms are : Ecocert, Qualité France, Ascert International and Ulase.

Most of these structures have local delegates (table 1).

Table 1. List of French Certification bodies

Name	Address	Number of producers	Localisation
ECOCERT	BP 47 - 32600 L'Isle Jourdain www.ecocert.fr	80%	All France International
QUALITE France	18, rue Volney 75002 PARIS www.qualite-france.com	5 %	All France
UIASE	Place du Champ de Mars 26270 LORIOL	-	Mainly South east
AGROCERT	4, rue Albert Gary 47200 MARMANDE	-	South West
CERTIPAQ	9, avenue Georges V 75008 PARIS	-	France / Europe
ACLAVE	Bd Réaumur 85013 LA ROCHE / YON	-	France

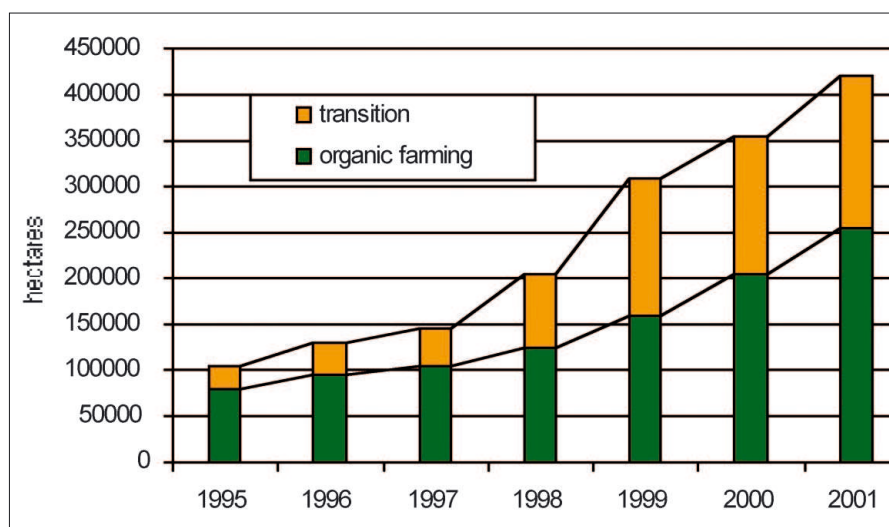


Fig. 1. Evolution of organic area between 1995 and 2001 (ONAB, 2002).

3. Structural aspects

According to 2001 statistics, there are 420 000 hectares (figure 1) organically grown in 10 400 farms representing 1.5% of the total cultivated area and 1.6% of all farms, respectively.

West and south-east of France are the more dynamic regions, because they are already very concerned with husbandry, and they have the capacity to develop pastures.

These regions are: Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence-Alpes-Côte-D'Azur, Franche-Comté, Alsace and Pays-de-la-Loire for the first ones.

Crop and animal productions are shown in tables 2 and 3.

There are some conservatories with old and local varieties of cultivated species, mainly fruits and vegetables. The main conservatories are reported in table 4.

Table 2. Organic and in conversion surfaces divided by crop (ha)

Crop	1998	1999	2000	99/2000
Cereals	34 117	44 436	54 708	30%
Oleaginous	7 515	10 419	16 862	39%
Vegetables	5 099	6 156	7 371	21%
Fruits	5 540	7 084	8 210	28%
Vineyard	7 538	10 213	12 364	35%
Olive	242	338	350	60%
Aromatic plants	017	1 085	1 171	7%
Pastures	143 617	211 860	248 717	48%
Others	11 929	20 952	21 855	76%
Total	218 793	315 770	370 742	44%

Table 3. Number of organic animals in 1999 and 2000

Animal	1999	2000	99/00
Cows	49 931	68 211	37%
Sheeps	63 545	83 502	31%
Goats	12 186	16 368	34%
Porks	37 648	59 303	58%
Fryers	5 441 153	5 992 034	10%
Laying hens	1 355 315	1 386 788	2%

Table 4. Conservatories in France

Name	Address	Fruit species
Porquerolles Jean-Paul Roger Fax: 0033-494-123-030	Hameau Agricole - Porquerolles 83400 HYERES	Mediterranean trees Olive, Ficus and Almond
Gap-Charance Marie-Claude Tarbouriech Cbn-gap@wanadoo.fr	Domaine de Charance 05000 GAP	Apple and pear
Aquitaine Evelyne Leterme eleterme@conserveveget-aui.asso.fr	48, rue du Cdt Cléré - Le Coteau 40000 Mont-de-Marsan	Apple, peach and plum
Nord-Pas-de-Calais René Stievenard Fax: 0033-320-670-337	Ferme du Héron Chemin de la Ferme Lenglet 59650 VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ	Apple and pear
Terre Vivante Terreviv@alpes-net.fr	BP 20 38710 MENS	Vegetables

3.1 Producers' associations:

- FNAB
40, rue de Malte
75011 PARIS
F.N.A.B@wanadoo.fr

- Nature & Progrès
68, boulevard Gambetta
30700 UZES
Nature.et.progres@wanadoo.fr

3.2 Research institutions

- Institut Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique (ITAB)
itab@itab.asso.fr
- Groupe de Recherche en Agriculture Biologique (GRAB)
grab@wanadoo.fr
- Civam Bio Corse
biocorse@aol.fr
- FRAB
civambiolr@wanadoo.fr
- GDAB
Gdab-mp@club-internet.fr

Main investigations are:

- assessment of varieties for organic farming;
- control of main diseases in respect of EC regulation: post harvest decay, fungi, aphids;
- fruit thinning;
- assessment of relations between the crop and its environment;
- relationship between soil and parasitism.

3.3 Training institutions

- Réseau FORMABIO
JM Morin
Morin@educagri.fr
- Ecole d'Agrobiologie de Beaujeu
Domaine de Mallevall
69430 Beaujeu

4. Agronomic aspects

4.1 management of soil fertility

The mineralization and nitrogen kinetics of organic amendments are pretty bad known, since their precise composition is very mobile. Thus, growers hardly know if the organic matter they bring is helpful or dangerous for their soil and micro-fauna. This may lead to soil dis-function and, eventually, sterility.

4.2 Main issues in the control of pests and weeds

- use of natural insecticides (pyrethrum, rotenone and neem) and of antagonists (insects and molecules);
- mechanical control or managed seeding with non competitive species;
- alternatives to the use of copper: choice of varieties, low copper oxides, essential oils;
- EU regulation relevance with some accepted molecules.

We strongly have to enhance the global and systemic conception of organic farming: instead of thinking of a unique solution for a pest, we have to focus on strategies for avoiding this pest to occur in the crop. That means, prophylaxis, use of hedges and floral strips care are going to be more important for production.

The legalisation of more and more natural insecticides (which have a large and non selective spectrum) leads to a classical way of managing the crops and prevents the development of beneficial insects. Large use of copper may also be responsible for ground microbial unbalance.

4.3 Main authorized material for soil fertilisation, protection and processing

are those reported in annex 1 & 2 of EC regulation 2092/91.

4.4 Origin of the propagating material

Organic seeds are becoming more and more available, as seeders and growers are becoming interested. EC regulation asks for organic material starting from the beginning of the 2004, but a lot of research is needed before being able to supply all farmers.

Research institutes, like GRAB (Groupe de Recherche en Agriculture Biologique), are working for its feasibility: a fruit tree nursery was set up in 2001, to evaluate the feasibility of organic apple and peach trees. Some work has also been done for seed disinfection against fungi. ITAB (Institut Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique) joined the European network called ECO-PB, created in 2001 (www.eco-pb.org), which started research mainly on cereals.

Table 5. Commercial channels evolution from 1995 to 1998 (%)

Commercial channels	1995	1998
Supermarkets	26%	42%
Bakeries	17%	15%
Direct selling	17%	15%
Specialised shops	40%	28%

Table 6. Share of specialised shops (%)

Shop	Share of total number (%)
Biocoop Network	39.6
Independents	31.9
Rayons Verts	9.5
La Vie Claire	5.5
Satoriz	4.3
Croq'Nature	3.3
Eau Vive	2.6
Dame Nature	2.3
Naturalia	1
Total	100

There are different cooperatives and around thousand shops belonging to the Biocoop network (tables 5 and 6).

Supermarkets (mainly Carrefour and Auchan) are interested and offer more and more organic products.

The local market is always less important, compared to supermarkets.

The main foreign markets are: Germany (fruits and vegetables), United Kingdom (vegetables and fruits) and Northern Europe (table 7).

Table 7. Export of organic products

Name	Type of produce	Destination
Pronatura Pronatura@wanadoo.fr	All	Germany, Northern Europe
Rapunzel ZI Fontcouverte 84000 AVIGNON	All	Germany mainly

There are some marketing difficulties due to export constraints:

- Italian competition and lower prices for fruits and vegetables;
- Post-harvest decay of fresh fruits;
- high demand of northern Europe, which means long conservation period.

Many bio-markets and special bio-events are regularly organised in all the country.

Also the Ministry of agriculture organised, in 2000 for the first time, the "Printemps de la Bio", a national event for promoting organic produce with local organisms.

Ecocert also organises its national and annual event.

Annex 1 Source for the collection of data and information

Information source	Contact person	Type of information		
		Technical	Market	Legislative
Ecocert Ecocert@iway.fr	Isabelle Verdier			X (EC 2092/91)
Institut Technique de l'Agriculture biologique (ITAB) ¹ itab@itab.asso.fr	Hélène Moraut	X (all crops, husbandry)		X
Bioconvergence 1, avenue de Verdun 33500 Libourne	Marianne Foucher		X (consumption)	
Groupe de Recherche en Agriculture Biologique (GRAB) ² Grab@wanadoo.fr	Catherine Mazoiller marai.chage.grab@free.sbe.fr Natalie Corroyer arboriculture.grab@free.sbe.fr	X Vegetables Fruits		
Direction Générale de l'alimentation (DGA)	Marianne Monod			X (national legislation)
Observatoire National de l'Agriculture Biologique (ONAB) guillaume.queguiner@apca.chambagri.fr	Guillaume Quéguigner		X (French statistics)	
Agro-Sud Consultants Gabriel.guet@wanadoo.fr	Gabriel Guet	x		
Centre National de Ressource en Agriculture Biologique (CNRAB) cnrab@educagri.fr	Monique Trans		X (national information centre about organics)	

¹ ITAB network for organic trials in cereals is pretty efficient, and this kind of trials was done in 1999:

- variety mixtures;
- management of several wheat in organic farming;
- fertilisation monitoring;
- wheat yield comparisons;
- weed control.

² see below the list of our past and present investigations, on perennial and vegetable crops:

- assessment of organic fertilisers mineralisation kinetics;
- comparison of qualitative and physico-chemical properties of organic and conventional carrots;
- control of pests in OA : fruit flies, codling moth, aphids, white fly;
- impact of hedges on the crop sanitary status;
- alternatives to copper on olive, potato and wine;
- alternatives to plastic mulching;
- observation of rootstocks and varieties behaviour.

GRAB has the role of national co-ordination for national fruit and vegetables trials, in order to avoid that experiments are being done twice.