**Development of Organic Food Production in some European Countries**

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**Implications**

There are differences between countries in the development of organic food production, consumption and national organic food production policies. The main result was that there are possibilities to increase both production and consumption. The most effective tools were the national policy actions; diversification of subsidies, national development programs and pricing policy. Also consumers’ actions can be effective e.g. by the demand of a larger assortment or a bigger share of organic food in public kitchens.

The farm size has no effect, if the national policy is to increase the organic food production (Austria). Municipalities may have an important role in promoting and increasing the use of organic food in schools, daycare centers and elderly people´s homes (Denmark and Sweden). Consumption of organic products can be increased by active and open information of the pesticide residues found in food products (Denmark).

**Background and objectives**

The aim of the study was to compare the development of organic food production in eight European countries: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden. The comparison was done between years 1998 and 2014. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry named the countries and the research was done by FORI (Finnish Organic Research Institute) researchers. The main objective of the study was to get information of the best practices for promoting and developing organic food chain.

**Key results and discussion**

Many countries have set similar targets for organic agriculture: the most general for the production is 20 % of the field area before year 2020. Austria as the first European country has already reached it, but it had an earlier start for the organic development. Best practices to increase production are better targeted subsidies, national development programs with precise goals and proper actions to reach them and co-operation between farmers and research.

Best countries in consumption of organics are Denmark, Sweden and Austria. The best methods to increase the consumption in Denmark were providing information to the consumers (pesticides, when found) and efficient marketing campaigns. The municipality level programs to enhance the welfare of the nature and humans by including organic food into public catering were effective especially in Denmark and Sweden. The diversification of production has been made possible with policy actions and national level decisions to better target subsides e.g. for plants and products that need an increase in production (Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden).

The reasons for the differences pointed out, are basically cultural. In some countries organic food production is more generally accepted and promoted (Austria, Denmark, Sweden) than in others. In some countries consumers are actively demanding organic food (France, Denmark, Sweden). If the conventional production is considered good enough by the citizens, national food policy is targeted to that more than to organic production (Norway, Finland).

**How work was carried out?**

The main data was statistical and colected from Eurostat, Faostat and IFOAM statistics. Literature on legislation, research reports and expert interviews were used as well. The collection and analysis of the data was executed in 2016.

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