

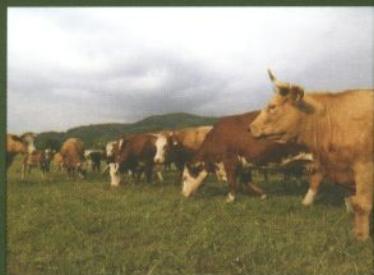
● ● ORGANIC
● ● AGRICULTURE



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In the last decade organic agriculture (OA) in Europe has gone through a vigorous boom. It has come as a reaction to the negative influence of intensive, conventional farming in relation to individual elements of the environment and quality of produce. This development was made possible thanks, among other things, to the issuing of EU legislation on production, processing and labelling of organic produce and the support of education and sales in individual countries. The Czech Republic has also followed this trend and the percentage of land that is farmed organically is currently comparable to the EU average.

Apart from zeal and personal conviction, in order to succeed in organic farming you also require knowledge and the right equipment. Farming organically does not mean doing nothing to prevent weeds, diseases and pests; neither does it have to imply low productivity of livestock.

For practical farming and education in organic agriculture there had long been a lack of educational material. The publication of two volumes of a textbook on Organic Farming in 2003 and 2005 filled this gap. The textbook was positively received, especially by schools and advisers. New findings, legislative changes and specific practical requirements necessitated the updating of textual material. The comprehensive edition of the Czech book was published in 2006. The adapted English version which you now hold is particularly intended for practical farming as well as educational purposes.

As well as its educational purpose, the collectively published book which you now hold is particularly intended for practical farming. The book focuses on growing crops and rearing livestock according to Council Regulation 834/2007 on OA in relation to environmental protection. It thus comes within the overall framework of agro-environmental measures supported by EU funding in individual countries. Integral to the publication is also the history of OA, quality of organic produce, livestock welfare, conversion to organic farming and the economics of organic farming. The book does not attempt to deal with the issues of processing and marketing, these problems certainly deserve attention and publications on these subjects alone in the future.

The aim of this publication is to assist the further spread of this modern method of farming, which is considerate to the environment, to the welfare of animals and, via organic produce, considerate to us humans. The work of the collective of authors does not end with the publication of this book, for advisers and teachers a range of specialist manuals, guidebooks and educational presentations have been prepared in which research findings will be further updated and passed on to students and farmers.