



RESEARCH INST. OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

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# Organic continues to boom: Global market grew by double digits in 2016, the highest increase ever – 14 facts on organic agriculture worldwide

The latest data on organic agriculture worldwide (2016) indicate that exceptional growth continues. Data show a double-digit increase in 2016 for the

three key indicators: farmland area, retail sales and producers. It is also notable that for the first time in recent years the organic farmland grew fast-

er than the market. In the following article, the key data from the latest statistical yearbook, "The World of Organic Agriculture" are presented.



## Almost 58 million hectares of organic farmland – another all-time high

There were 57.8 million hectares of organic agricultural land in 2016, which constitutes an all-time high. This area corresponds approximately to that of the total country area of France. The regions with the largest areas of organic agricultural land were Oceania (27.3 million hectares, which is almost half the world's organic agricultural land) and Europe (13.5 million hectares, 23 percent).

## Australia has the largest organic farmland area in the world

The countries with the largest organic agricultural land are Australia (27.1 million hectares), which, with a growth of 5 million hectares, recorded the highest farmland growth, followed by Argentina (3.0 million hectares), China (2.3 million hectares), and Spain (2.0 million hectares).

## Globally, 1.2% of the farmland is organic and Liechtenstein has the highest organic share of all farmland (37.7%)

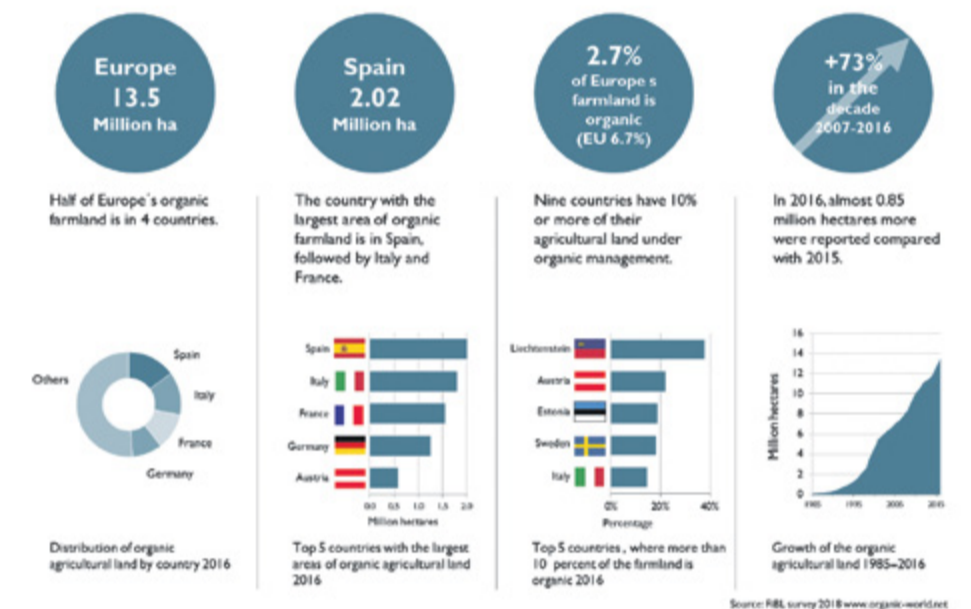
Currently, 1.2% of the world's agricultural land is organic. The highest organic shares of the total agricultural land, by region, are in Oceania (6.5%) and in Europe (2.7%; European Union 6.7%).

In fifteen countries at least 10 percent of the agricultural land is organic – another record. The highest organic shares of the total farmland area are in Liechtenstein (37.7%) and French Polynesia (31.3%).

## Organic farmland increased by 7.5 million hectares or 15% globally

Organic farmland showed the highest increase ever recorded: It increased by 7.5 million hectares (or 15%) in 2016. This is mainly because

## EUROPE: ORGANIC FARMLAND 2016



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5 million additional hectares were reported from Australia. However, many other countries reported an important increase too and thus contributed to the global growth, such as China (42%

increase; over 0.67 million hectares more) Uruguay (27% increase; more than 0.3 million hectares more), and India and Italy, both with an additional 0.3 million hectares.

## DISTRIBUTION

## Distribution of Organic Products at Catalonia (Spain)



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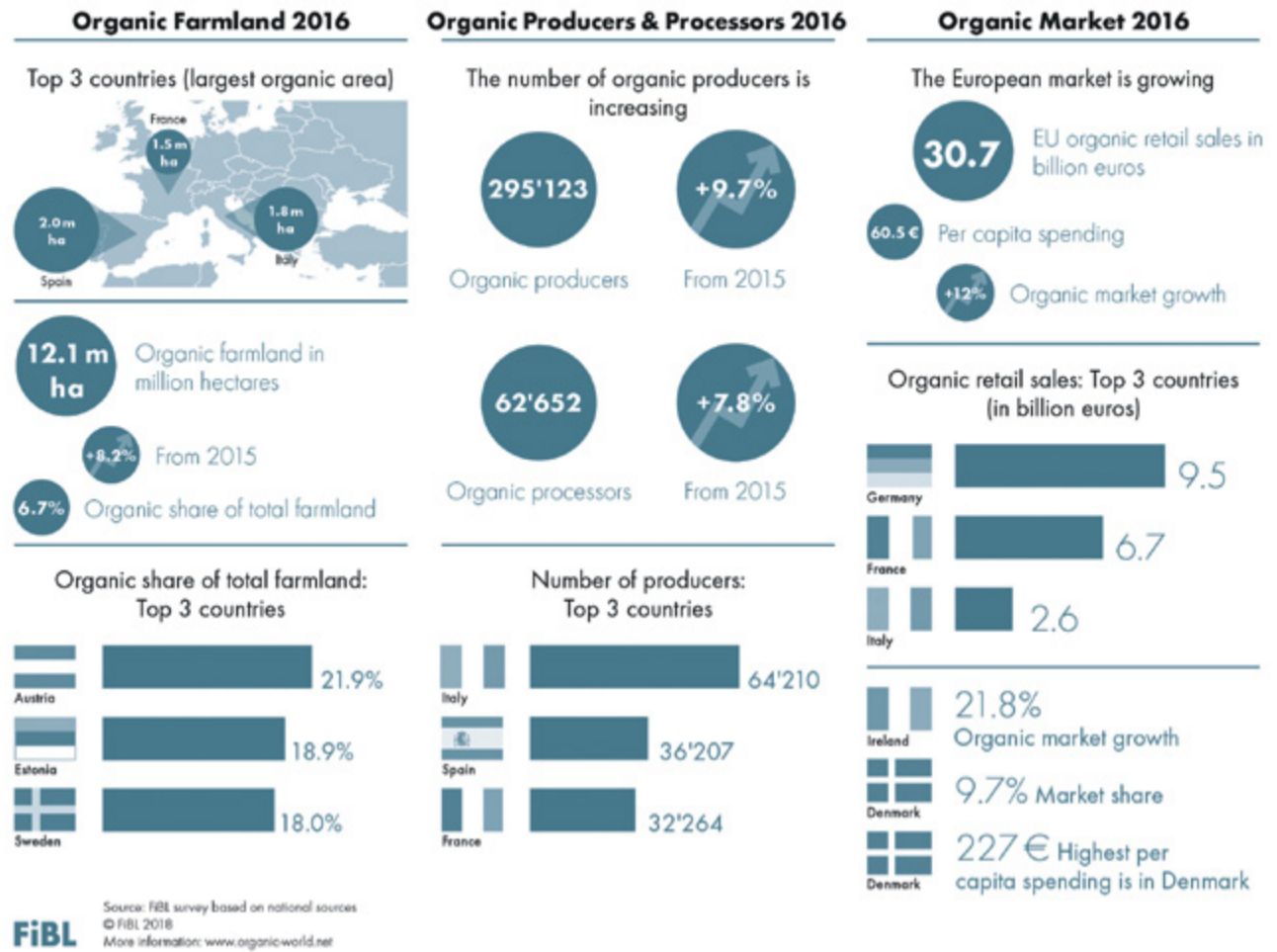
### Organic farmland grew in all regions

There was an increase in organic agricultural land not only in Oceania, but all over the world. In Asia, a very dynamic region, it grew by a stunning 34% or an additional 0.9 million hectares; in Europe, organic areas grew by almost 0.9 million hectares, and thus recorded a much higher growth than in recent years (6.7% increase). Organic farmland grew by 7%, or over 0.1 million hectares, in Africa, by almost 6%, or 0.4 million hectares, in Latin America (after several years of drops), and by more than 5%, or 0.2 million additional hectares, in North America.

### Non-agricultural organic areas reached almost 40 million hectares

In addition to the organic agricultural land, there is organic land dedicated to other activities, mostly wild collection and beekeeping; but also aquaculture, forests, and grazing areas on non-agricultural land. Areas of non-agricultural land constituted more than 39.7 million hectares.

## Organic Agriculture in the European Union 2016



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## Organic producers on the rise – 2.7 million producers in 2016 globally and 0.8 million in India

There were at least 2.7 million organic producers in 2016. Forty percent of the world's organic producers are in Asia, followed by Africa (27%) and Latin America (17%). The countries with the highest number of producers are India (835,000), Uganda (210,352), and Mexico (210,000). There has been an increase in the number of producers of over 300,000, or over 13%, compared to 2015.

### Growth of all land use types

Over two-thirds of the agricultural land was grassland/grazing areas (almost 38 million hectares, an increase of 16.5% compared to 2015).

With a total of almost 10.6 million hectares, arable land constitutes 18% of the organic agricultural land. An increase in almost 6.3% since 2015 was reported. Most of this category of land was used for cereals including rice (4.1 million hectares), followed by green fodder from arable land (2.8 million hectares), oilseeds (1.3 million hectares), dry pulses and textile crops (0.5 million hectares each).

Permanent crops account for 8% of the organic agricultural land, amounting to 4.5 million hectares. Compared with the previous survey, an increase of more than 126,000 hectares, or 9%, was reported. The most important permanent crop is coffee (with more than 0.9 million hectares, constituting over 20% of the organic permanent cropland), followed by olives (almost 0.7 million hectares), nuts (almost 0.6 million hectares), grapes (almost 0.4 million hectares), and tropical and subtropical fruits (over 0.3 million hectares).

### Global market surpassed €80 billion

Organic food & drink sales increased to €84.6 billion according to FiBL. The continent with the largest retail sales was North America with €41.9 billion, followed by Europe with €33.5 billion.

### With almost €40 billion, United States is the biggest single organic market

In 2016, the countries with the largest organic markets were the

United States (€38.9 billion), Germany (€9.7 billion), and France (€6.7 billion). Also as a single market, the United States (47% of the global market) has the lead, followed by the European Union (€30.7 billion, 37%), and China (€5.9 billion, 6%).

### Double-digit growth rates of retail sales in 2016

Globally, organic retail sales achieved an estimated 10% growth. While the world's largest organic market, the United States, achieved 8.4%, the European market recorded a growth rate of 11% (European Union:

12%), which is the second time retail sales had a double-digit growth rate since the financial crisis. Among the global five top markets, the highest growth was observed in France (22%).

### Organic market shares now approaching the 10% mark in some countries – Denmark leading

Globally, European countries account for the highest shares of organic food sales as a percentage of their respective food markets. The highest organic market shares in 2016 were reached in Denmark (9.7%), Luxem-

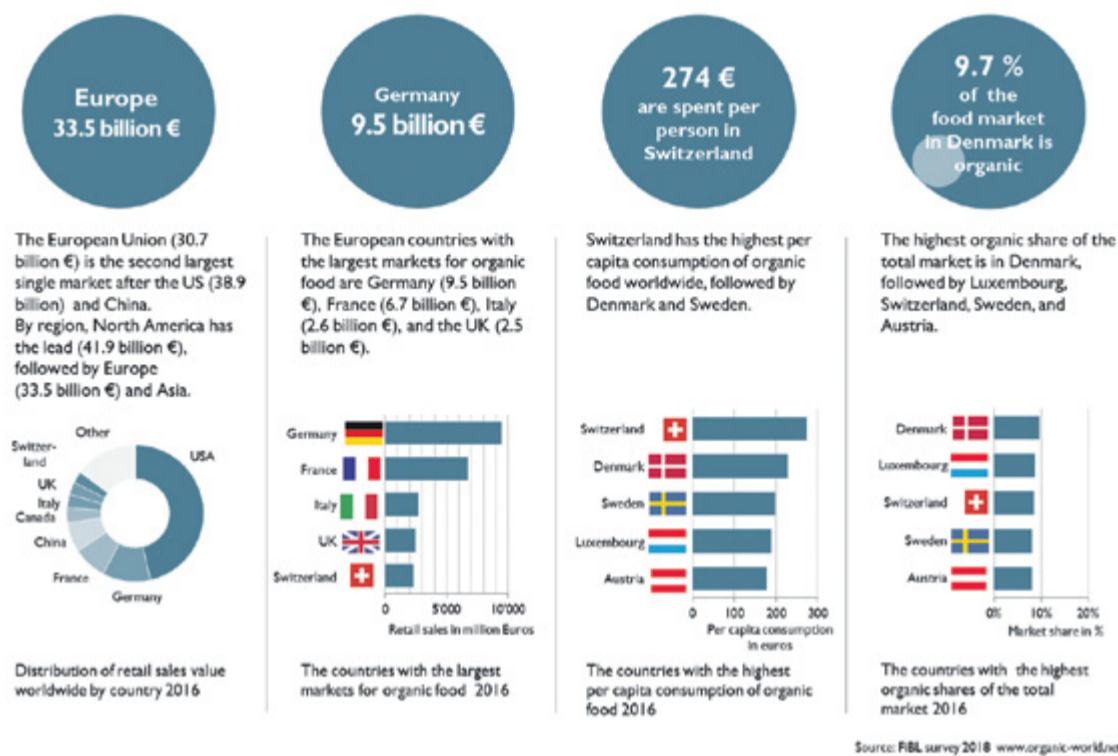
bourg (8.6%), and Switzerland (8.4%). Denmark surpassed the 10% mark in 2017.

Individual products and product groups hold even higher shares. Organic eggs, for instance, constituted more than 20% of the value of all eggs sold in several countries.

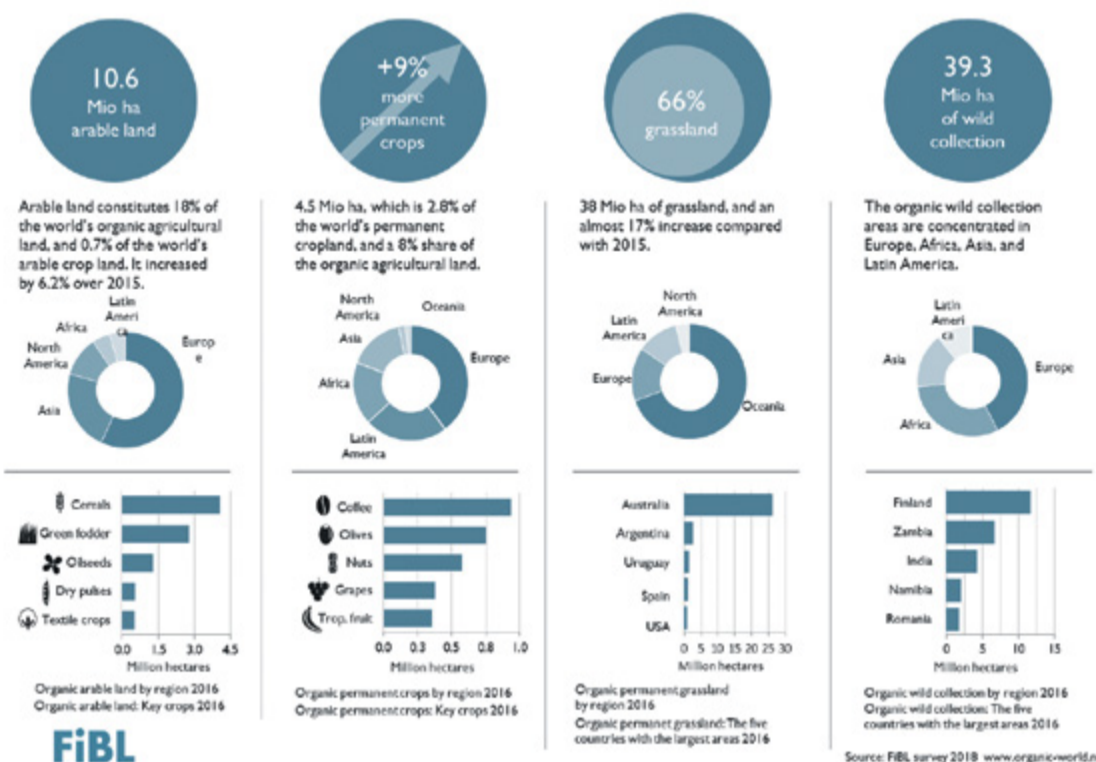
### European consumers are spending more on organic food – Switzerland has the highest per capita consumption (almost €300)

While the organic per capita con-

## EUROPE: ORGANIC RETAIL SALES 2016



## ORGANIC LAND USE 2016



While the organic per capita con-



sumption globally was only €11, it was €117 in North America and €41 in Europe (European Union: €61). In Europe, per capita consumer spending on organic food has doubled in the last decade. The Swiss spent the most money on organic food (€274 per capita).

### Among key Voluntary Sustainability Standards organic continues to be the leader

Looking at other voluntary sustainability standards (VSS), a recent survey among 14 major standards (organic and non-organic) showed that although strong growth continues to be the norm, organic stands out (2015 data). All standards surveyed experienced growth in their areas since 2011. The most successful commodity is coffee; at least 25% of the global coffee area is certified and 8.5% of the global coffee area is organic.

### Conclusion

2016 was another very successful year for the organic sector. On a global level, all key indicators showed double-digit growth. However, growth is not occurring in all countries. In order to be better able to monitor and analyse the development of the sector more accurate data are needed. ■

### ABOUT FiBL

The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL is one of the world's leading institutes in the field of organic agriculture. FiBL's strengths lie in its interdisciplinary research, innovations developed jointly with farmers and the food industry, and rapid knowledge transfer. FiBL employs some 280 staff at its various locations.

### ABOUT THE FiBL SURVEY ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE WORLDWIDE

The survey on organic farming worldwide is carried out by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL in Switzerland, together with partners. Data collection started in 1999. The Swiss State Secretariat supports data collection activities for Economic Affairs (SECO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), NürnbergMesse, and IFOAM – Organics International. The next global organic survey will start in mid-2018; data will be published in February 2019 and presented at the Biofach Organic Trade Fair in Nuremberg, Germany. The data can be downloaded at [statistics.fibl.org](http://statistics.fibl.org); the yearbook is available at [www.organic-world.net](http://www.organic-world.net)

### Download, infographics and online databases:

Download "The World of Organic Agriculture 2018":  
[www.organic-world.net/yearbook/yearbook-2018/pdf.html](http://www.organic-world.net/yearbook/yearbook-2018/pdf.html)

FiBL statistics on organic agriculture worldwide: [www.statistics.fibl.org](http://www.statistics.fibl.org)

Interactive infographics and the latest market and area data:  
[www.ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe](http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe)

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