

Yearbook On Organic Agriculture In The Republic of Moldova

for years 2021 - 2022





Yearbook On
Organic Agriculture
In The Republic of Moldova
for years 2021-2022

Published in 2023

Dear readers,

It is a great pleasure and honor to welcome you to this useful platform to reflect on the priorities, challenges and opportunities for the development of organic agriculture, as the only form of agriculture capable of sustainably addressing all global and national challenges related to climate change, food supply, product traceability and population health.



The development of this segment is a major priority on the Ministry's Agenda, placing increased emphasis on the transposition of the objectives, principles and community norms applicable to organic production in the relevant national legislation.

In this context, at the end of July, Law no. 237/2023 on organic production and labeling of organic products, which aims to establish a regulatory framework aligned to international standards, as well as ensuring the efficient functioning of the internal market of organic products, fair competition, but also the protection of consumer interests. At the same time, the document aims to grant subsidies to stimulate the development of organic agriculture, through the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and the Rural Environment, and for the purpose of recording and exchanging data related to the activity in the field of organic agri-food production, the operation of an automated information system is foreseen.

The improvement of the aforementioned normative framework will allow the realisation of the commitments from the RM-EU Association Agreement related to organic agriculture, by transposing about 20 EU acts and aligning the sector with the provisions of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, by transposing quality standards and requirements, control , optimising the export to the EU market of several strategic products and reducing the sector's dependence on traditional markets.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely of Vladimir Bolea.

With respect, Vladimir BOLEA
Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry

Dear readers,

This publication comes to reflect the organic farming system in the Republic of Moldova, the current state, the perspectives and development trends of the organic system and the promotion of organic production both on the domestic and foreign markets.



Organic farming is experiencing a rapid rise worldwide, as a direct result of increasing consumer interest in organic products. In order for farmers to feel the benefits of choosing organic farming as a production method, consumers must be sure that the rules for organic production are respected.

Consumer awareness, continuous information and market trends have also ranked organic farming as a hot topic of discussion. The challenges are big and the goals promising, only through joint efforts we aim to develop this production system, friendly to the environment and with a positive impact on the health of society.

It should be noted that, with the support of external development partners, through external assistance projects, we propose to carry out a series of activities related to the development of several informational platforms for the promotion of organic agriculture, but also the creation of experimental lots, with the implementation of the modern cultivation and processing technologies according to organic farming standards.

Through joint efforts between the Executive, the international community of donors, development partners, professional associations and agricultural producers, we will be able to respect the principles of ecological production along the entire value chain: production, processing and distribution of food and animal feed, but also on environmentally friendly practices.

With respect, Tatiana NISTORICA
President of the Public Association
The Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ANSA – National Agency for Food Safety

AIPA – Interventions and Payments Agency for Agriculture

CAECP – Accreditation Center in the field of Product Conformity Assessment

CEE – European Economic Community

EA-BLA – Bilateral Recognition Agreement with the European Cooperation for Accreditation

FiBL – Ecological Agriculture Research Institute

GEF – Global Environment Facility

ILAC-MRA – the international authority for the accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies

MAIA – Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

MOLDAC – National Accreditation Center

MOVCA – Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance

CB – Control Body

CUD – Control Union Dnjestr

EU – European Union

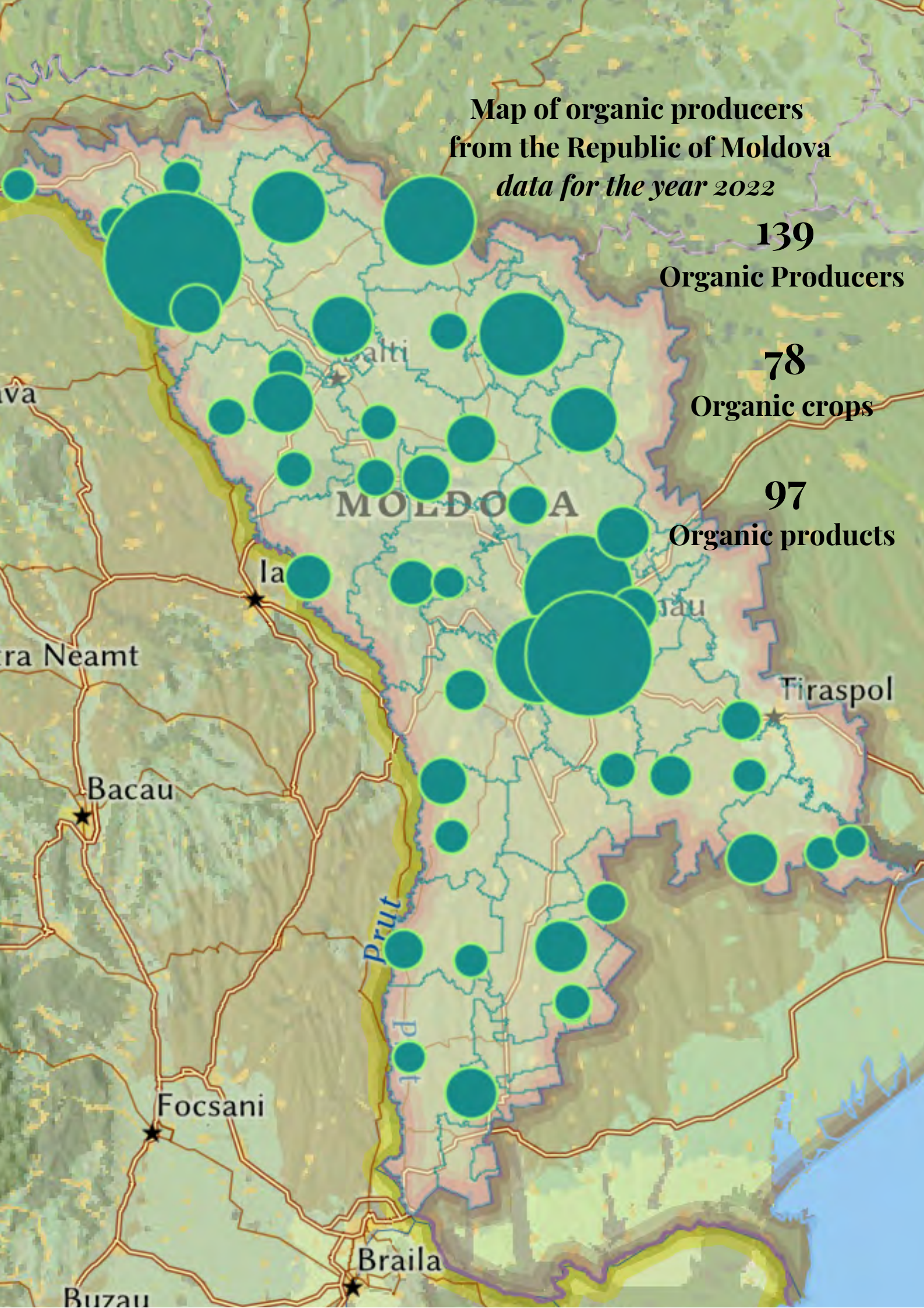
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

ÚKZÚZ – Central Institute of Agricultural Supervision and Testing

Photo source: Pixels.com



**Map of organic producers
from the Republic of Moldova
*data for the year 2022***





01

The current state of organic farming

Photo source: Pixels.com



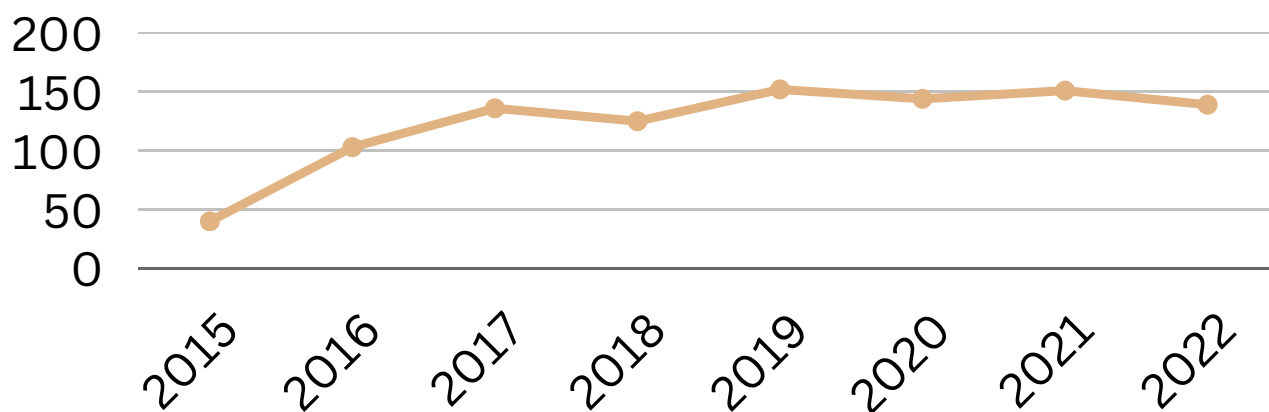
Sursa foto: Pixels.com

01.1 The current state of organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova

The latest available data on global organic farming shows that 2020 was another good year for global organic farming. According to the FiBL Global Organic Farming Survey, organic farmland and organic retail sales continued to grow and hit another all-time high.

The growth trend in organic agriculture is also attested in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, both the increase in organic certified surfaces and the increase in the number of economic agents involved in the organic system in 2021. The year 2022, however, shows a decrease compared to 2021 according to the reports of the Control Bodies, from 151 producers in 2021 to 139 producers in 2022.

Fig. 1.1.1 The number of entities included in the value chain of organic agriculture in Moldova



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

In the Republic of Moldova in 2022, 28616,07 ha of agricultural land were registered in the organic system, 1102,86 ha less than in 2021.

Of the total area in the organic system, 23756.81 ha are already certified; 1100 ha are in the conversion period year 1; 4477 ha were already in the second year of conversion and 383.7 ha are in the last year of conversion. We can estimate that in the next agricultural year there will already be an additional 383.7 ha of organic certified agricultural land.

Fig. 1.1.2 Agricultural lands in organic system, in 2021

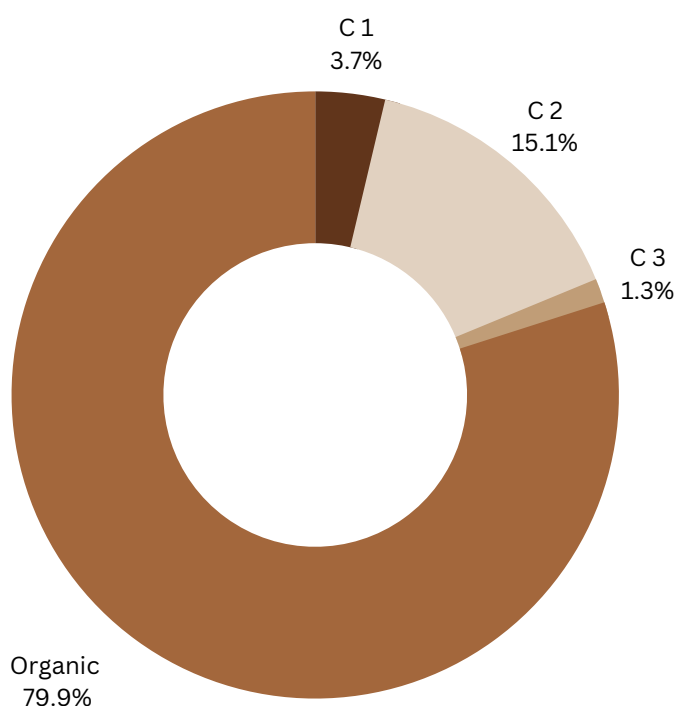
The results of 2021 for organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova

23756,81 ha - Organic certificates

1100 ha - Conversion year 1

4477 - Conversion year 2

383,7 ha - Conversion year 3



Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2021



Photo source: MOVCA

The area of organic agricultural land in the EU increased by 5.3%. The latest figures for Europe show that organic farmland reached around 17.1 million hectares (EU: 14.9 million hectares) or a share of around 3.4% (EU: 9.2%).

If in the EU the land in organic agriculture is increasing, then, unfortunately, in the Republic of Moldova, in 2022 it was registered a decreasing with 3.7% according to the year 2021, from 29718.93 ha to 28616.07 ha.

The area of agricultural land certified organic or in conversion according to the data provided by the Control Bodies, is decreasing with 1102.86 ha in 2022 compared to 2021.

Fig. 1.1.3 Agricultural lands in organic system, in 2022

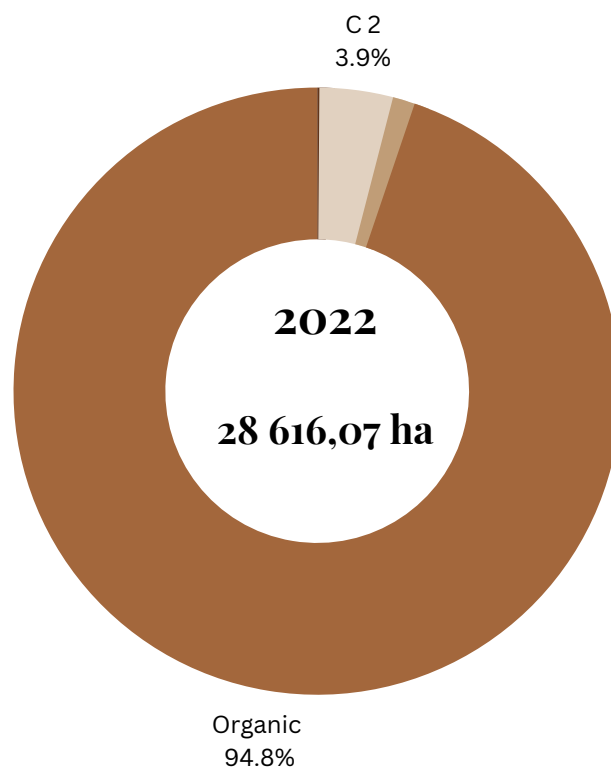
The results of 2022 for organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova

26848,3 ha - Organic certificates

327 ha - Conversion year 1

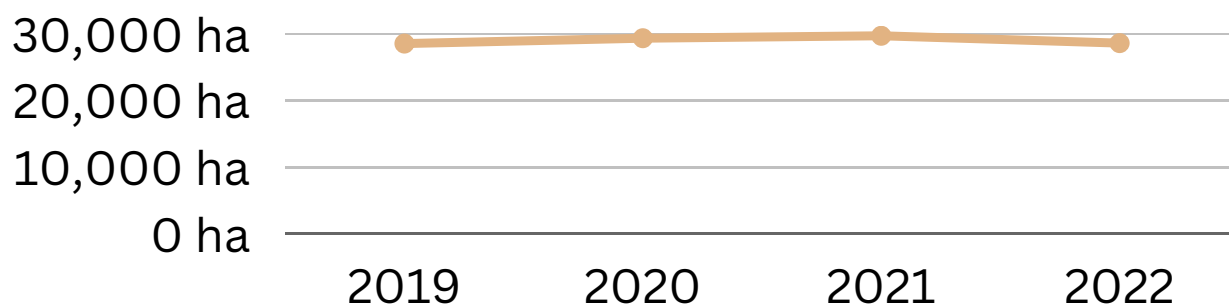
1106,8 - Conversion year 2

334,1 ha - Conversion year 3



Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2022

Fig. 1.1.4 The surface of agricultural land in the organic system in the Republic of Moldova

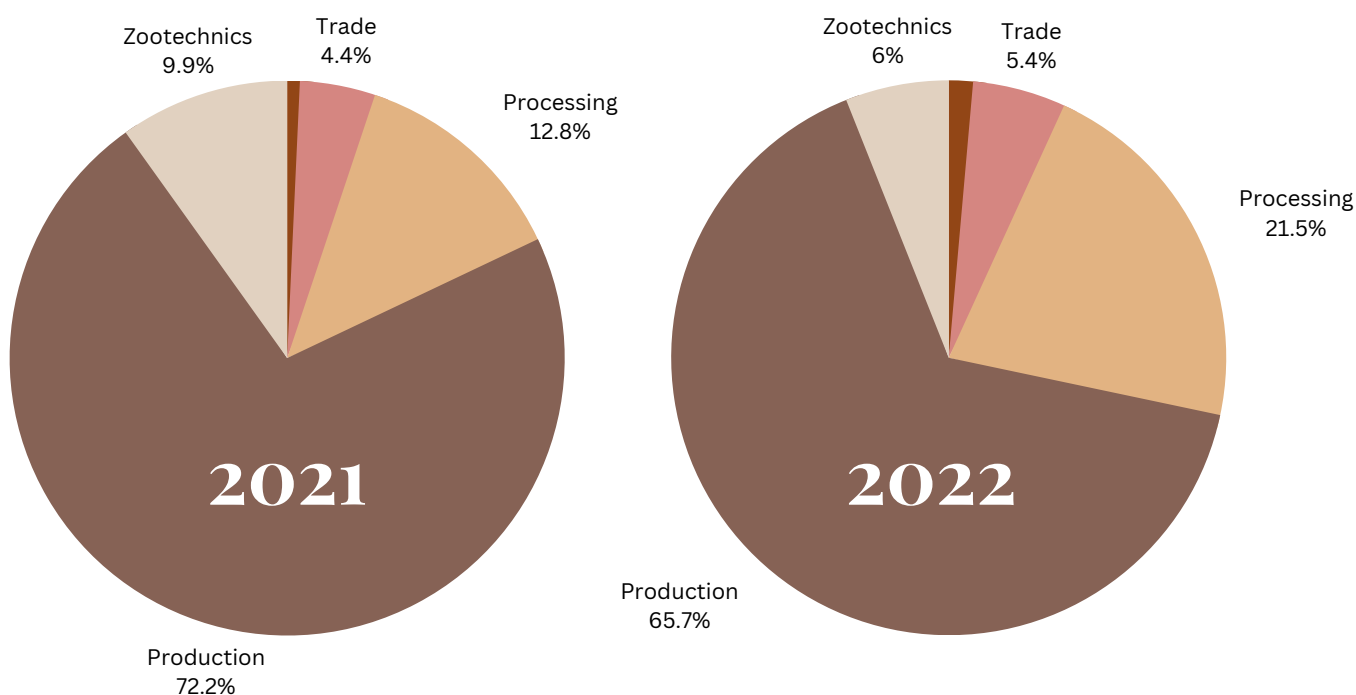


Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

According to the data of the organic agriculture atlas, the number of organic crops and organically certified products has increased. If in 2019 71 crops and 53 certified organic products were registered, then in 2022 we have registered 78 organic crops and 97 certified organic products.

The type of activity of the economic entities included in the value chain of organic agriculture is: production, processing, animal husbandry, trade and collection.

Fig. 1.1.5 Agricultural lands in organic system



Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2022

Increased interest in the type of processing activity in 2022 up to 21.5%, (compared to 2021 -12.8%). The increased interest in the processing field is encouraging, so the raw material produced in the country will be of added value.

This tells us about the fact that the production of organic production on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is mostly processed outside the country, respectively added value on the production chain is outside.

In recent years, the organic system is becoming increasingly attractive for farmers in the conventional livestock sector. Beekeepers are the ones who three years ago, for the most part, were certified organic, and their interest in switching to the organic system is growing.

Bee honey being the product of the zootechnical sector that is exported to the European community and the trends of the European market for organic products being on the rise led the beekeepers in the country to move from the conventional system to the organic system.

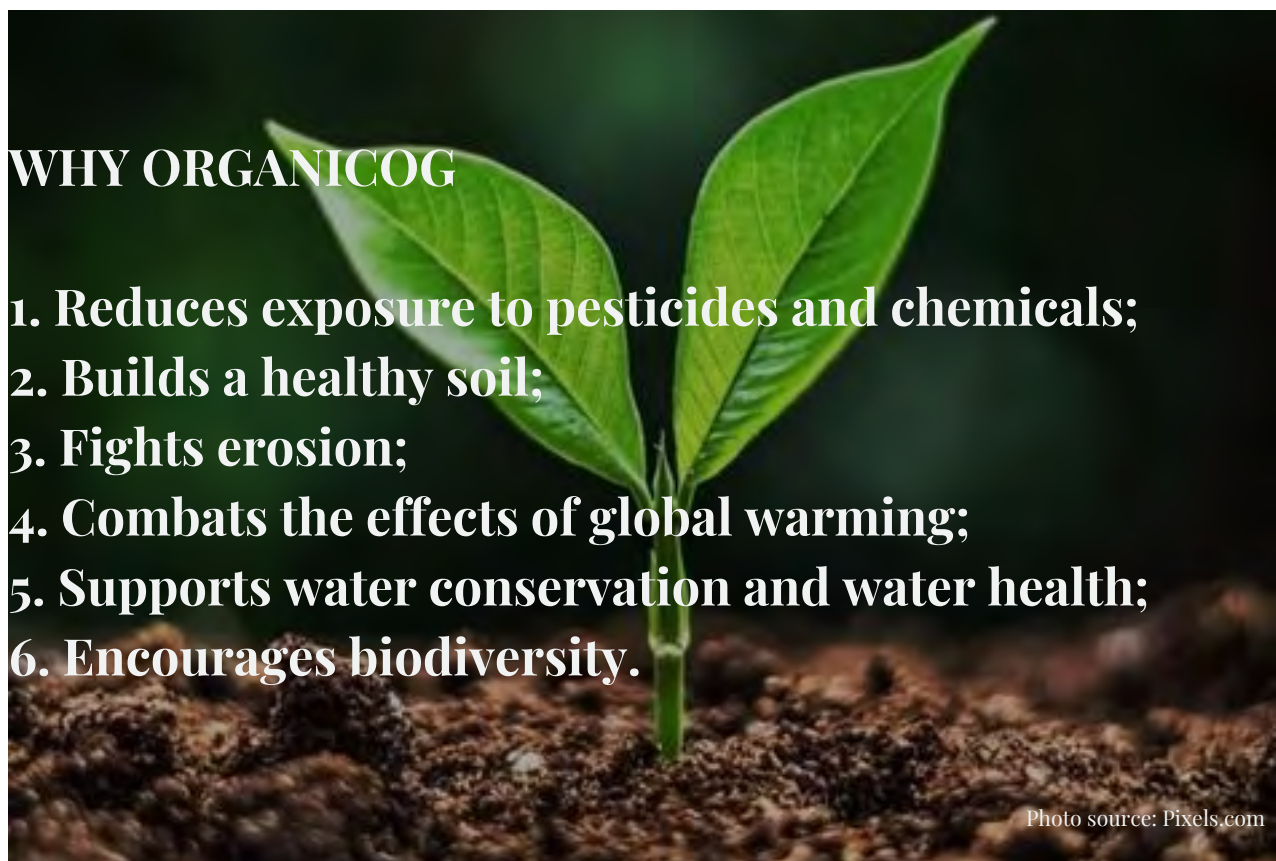
The COVID 19 pandemic period increased consumer interest in organic products both on the European Community market and in the Republic of Moldova. The demand on the internal and external market for organic products dictates the increase of areas in the organic system and the diversification of organic certified products.

This trend towards a healthy lifestyle encourages farmers from the conventional system to convert to the organic system of production.

Strong consumer interest, political support measures, including a good regulatory framework, are essential to achieve this goal of increasing agricultural areas in an organic system.

The state prioritizes the organic system in agriculture in the Republic of Moldova, this being emphasized in the sectoral development policies as well as in the subsidy policy for the coming years.

Organic farming can make a decisive contribution to a sustainable food and agricultural sector, while satisfying citizens' preferences. However, large-scale conversion to organic farming is only possible if the ambition of the Agricultural Policy is increased, allowing more farmers to make the necessary additional efforts and investments. With the right incentives more farmers could make an even greater contribution to the environment, climate and rural communities.



01.2 European Community policy and trends for organic farming

New CAP regulations voted in June 2018, the European Commission launched its proposal for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2020, and the new CAP regulations were adopted by the European Parliament in Plenary only on 23 November 2021. The delegated and implemented acts of these new CAP regulations (2023–2027) will be voted on during the first trimester of 2022.

The regulations will be active from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2027. The new CAP gives more flexibility to Member States in implementing the policy objectives.

Besides, the new CAP will include improvements in social issues. The organic movement welcomes the new social conditionality (mandatory as of 2025) that will ensure enhanced farmers' and farm workers' right.

But since the CAP plays a critical role in providing the means to reach these objectives, it is essential that the CAP implementation at the national level through the National Strategic Plans explicitly and fully contributes to the Green Deal's implementation and related strategies, which include the Farm to Fork strategy, the Biodiversity strategy and the target to reach 25 per cent of organic land in Europe by 2030.

The European Green Deal covers several sectors in which the EU can improve sustainability, including the energy, transport and agri-food sectors. The Farm to Fork (European Commission 2020a) and the EU biodiversity strategies (European Commission 2020b), both a part of the European Green Deal, were unveiled in May 2020 and aim to achieve the Deal's goals for the agri-food sector.

Some initiatives within the Farm to Fork and the EU biodiversity strategies overlap (e.g. the initiatives aim to boost organic and more sustainable practices). The Farm to Fork strategy includes those initiatives and ambitions relevant to the whole (organic) food supply chain. This chapter will focus on this strategy.



Farm to Fork strategy and organic

Organic farming has a prominent place in the Farm to Fork strategy. Perhaps the most significant achievement for the organic sector is recognising that organic farming can be part of the solution in addressing the environmental challenges we face, as the Farm.

Farm to Fork Strategy includes a target that aims to achieve at least 25 per cent of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture. To reach the 25 per cent target, comprehensive policy support for organic farming is needed across the EU to increase the supply and demand for organic products.

In March 2021, the EU published its new action plan on organic farming (European Commission 2021). With its 23 actions, the objectives of this organic action plan are threefold:

- (1) Contribute to increasing the share of organic farming in the EU,**
- (2) Expand the accessibility of organic food,**
- (3) Help Member States stimulate the supply of and demand for organic products. The EU encourages the adoption of national organic action plans to ensure better uptake of these objectives.**



Photo source: Pixels.com



02

Supervision and certification

Photo source: Pixels.com



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02.1 Supervision, controls and certification

On July 31, 2023, in the plenary session of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, the Law No. 237 was adopted in the second reading, on organic production and labeling of organic products, a project promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry.

The draft of the Law was developed with the support of the Czech Development Agency CZDA and the UKZUZ Organization, and the involvement of actors from the organic agriculture sector in the Republic of Moldova, the Public Association, the Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance - MOVCA.

In accordance with the provisions of the new Law for organic production and labeling of organic products, the principles of certification and the control system for organic production are also established.

To introduce any product on the market as "organic" or "in conversion" or before the conversion period, operators and groups of operators who produce, prepare, distribute or store organic products or in conversion, who import or export such products or who introduce such products on the market register their own activity with the control authority. When registering, operators or groups of operators indicate the control body that verifies their activity.

The control body provides a certificate to any operator or group of operators that has registered its own activity in accordance with the provisions of the Law 237/2023. The certificate is issued, as a matter of priority, in electronic format.

The control authority publishes the updated lists with the names and addresses of operators and groups of operators who have registered their activity in accordance with para. (1) of the Law 237, of 31.07.2023, regarding organic production and labeling of organic products, together with the information on the certificates provided in accordance with art. 25 para. (1) of the Law 237/2023. In this sense, the control authority complies with the Law no. 133/2011 on the protection of personal data.

The Government approves: the format and procedure of registration of operators or groups of operators who produce, prepare, distribute or store organic products or in conversion; the content and methods of publishing the lists with the names and addresses of operators and groups of operators who have registered their activity in accordance with the provisions of the Law 237/2023, regarding organic production and labeling of organic products.

An operator or a group of operators can not obtain a certificate from several control bodies for activities carried out on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, regarding the same category of products, including when the said operator or group of operators is involved at different stages of production, preparation and distribution.

Members of a group of operators are not entitled to obtain an individual certificate for any of the activities covered by the certification of the group of operators to which they belong.

Operators who sell unpackaged organic products directly to the final consumer, with the exception of animal feed, may be exempted from the obligation to hold a certificate provided for in paragraph (2) of Law 237/2023, provided that they do not produce, prepare, store other than in connection with the point of sale or import such products from a third country, or subcontract such of activities to a third party and provided that: the respective sales do not exceed 5000 kg per year; the respective sales represent an annual turnover for unpackaged organic products that does not exceed 400 thousand lei; or the operator's potential certification costs not to exceed 2% of the total turnover for non-packaged organic products sold by that operator.

Control system

Official controls on certified operators are carried out by the control authority in accordance with the normative acts on official controls in the agri-food sector, taking into account the rules provided in the Law 237/2023.

The control authority annually carries out official controls on the operators on a sample of operators and groups of operators set at a minimum of 5% of the total number of operators who have concluded service contracts with the control bodies, accompanied by sampling.

Official controls are carried out without prior notification, unless this notification is necessary and duly justified for the performance of the official control. Regarding official controls at the request of the operator, the control authority can decide whether the official control should be carried out with or without prior notification.

Reports on the results of controls in the sample of each control body are submitted quarterly to the competent authority.

Table 2.1.1 Infringements –general records for the year 2022

<i>List of certified companies for organic food production based on reports coming from Control Bodies operating in the Republic of Moldova territory.</i>				
<i>General record</i>				
<i>Year: 2022</i>				
Nr.	Company and address	Code	Infringements	Measures
1	Moldoveanu Nicolae, v.Gotesti, r. Cantemir	MD18020AB	M2-Request for improvement (CA): Presence in the hive of a partition wall made of polystyrene	Removal of the polystyrene product from the hive. Use only natural products in beehives and hives.
2	Pislaru Spartac, v.Cantemir, r. Cantemir	MD18029AB	M2-Request for improvement (CA): Missing doc. proof of purchase (oxalic acid).	Keeping all doc. proof of purchase and their representation at the inspection.

The public institution, the National Accreditation Center of the Republic of Moldova (MOLDAC), is a unique national accreditation body and aims to implement the state policy in the field of accreditation and conformity assessment.

At the regional, European and international level, the National Accreditation Body is a member of:

EA – European Cooperation for Accreditation

ILAC – International Cooperation for Accreditation of Laboratories

IAF – International Accreditation Forum

EASC – Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification

IRSA – Interregional Standardization Association

Contact details: of the institutions involved in the supervision, controls and certification of operators in the organic system, production and processing



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**With the support of the Czech Development Agency CZDA,
Organization UKZUZ**

The Law no. 237, of 31.07.2023, on organic production and labeling of organic products - Adopted. The Law 237/2 partially transposes Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labeling of organic products and repealing the Regulation (EC) no. 834/2007 of the Council, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 150 of June 14, 2018 as last amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/207 of the European Commission of November 24, 2022.

National brand "Organic agriculture - Republic of Moldova"



The right to use the national brand "Organic Agriculture - Republic of Moldova" for products, labels and packaging of organic agri-food products is owned by economic agents who produce, process, import, export and/or trade organic agri-food products registered with MAIA.

In June 2018, the new EU regulation 2018/848 1 on the production and labeling of organic products was published. The new EU Organic Regulation was initially set to apply from 1 January 2021. However, due to many reasons, including the COVID-19 pandemic, its application has been delayed by one year to January 1, 2022. The development of the secondary legislation took place from June 2018 to December 2021.

The Republic of Moldova, through the provisions of the Association Agreement, has the obligation to harmonize and transpose the legislative framework of the European community into the national legislative framework.

The main changes to the regulatory framework in the European community regarding control and certification:

- Low-risk operators will be exempted from the mandatory annual physical inspection visit, which can be carried out every 24 months. Such an exemption applies only to EU operators.
- In any case, a compliance check is required once every 12 months.
- Regarding the certificate, there are mandatory models to consider for both EU and non-EU operators.
- New approaches for dealing with non-conformities and suspected residues are established for operators and control actors.
- New group certification rules are established and are very detailed.
- The group certification system can also be applied to small farmers in the EU and around the world. According to the previous regulation, group certification was only possible for countries in the Global South.

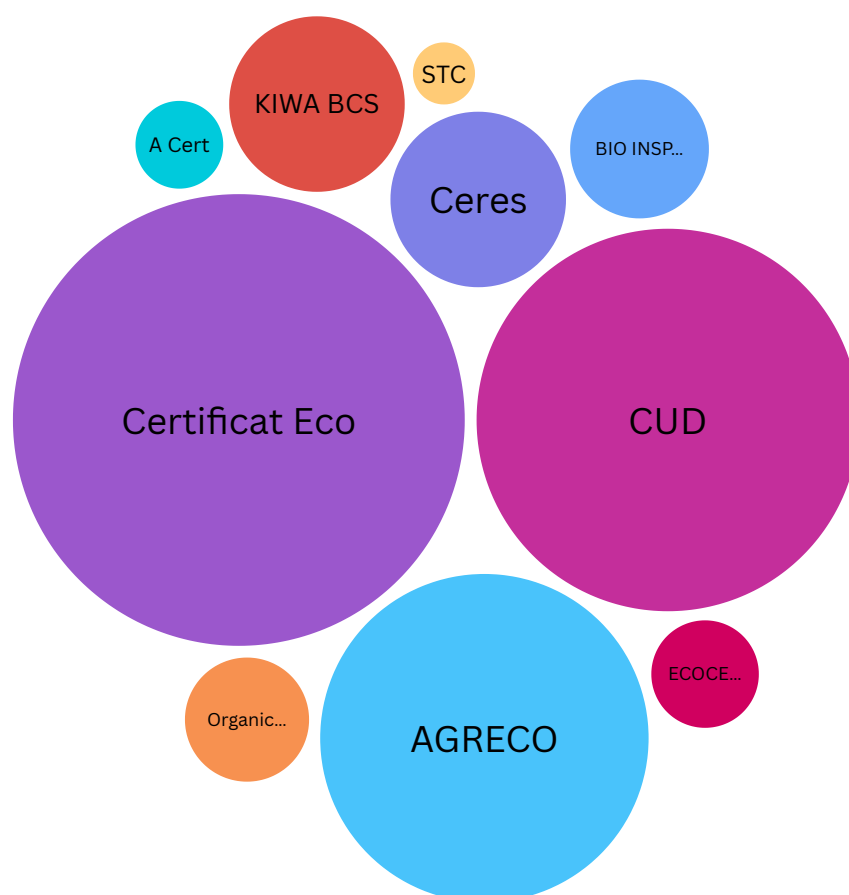
02.2 Control bodies operating in the Republic of Moldova

Registered and active certification bodies in 2021 and 2022 on the territory of the Republic of Moldova:

- „CertificatEco” SRL
- SRL „Control Union Dnjestr”

8 other inspection and certification bodies, recognized by the European Commission, operated in parallel on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in 2022: A Cert, AGRECO, BIO INSPECTA, Ceres, ACOCERT, KIWA BCS, Organic Standard și STC.

Fig. 2.2. 1 Control bodies operating on the territory of the Republic of Moldova



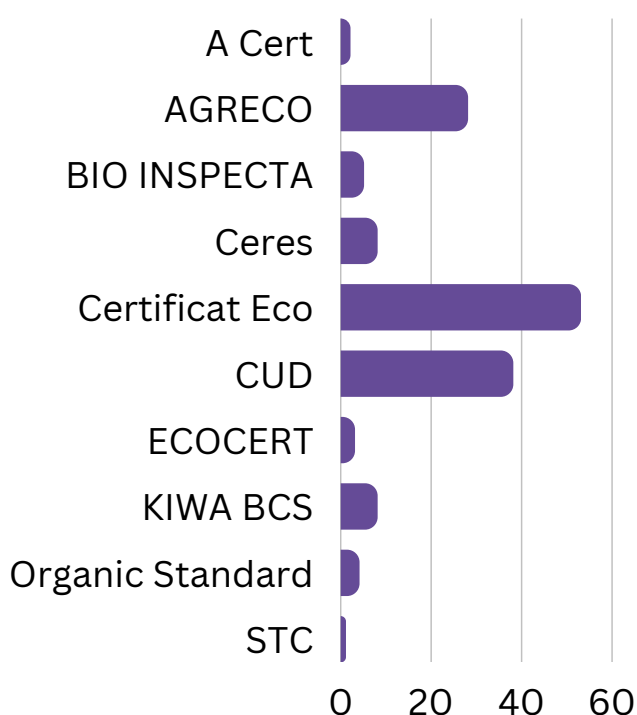
Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2022

Until the year 2023 a large number of economic agents certify organic agri-food production based on the European Union Regulation, and they are not registered at the national level.

Another large number of the economic agents certifies the products at the National Control Bodies based on the national legislation, which do not correspond to the provisions of the EU standard.

The changes transposed in the new Law no. 237, of 31.07.2023, on organic production and labeling of organic products, will exclude this principle of certification on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Fig. 2.2.2 Certification bodies



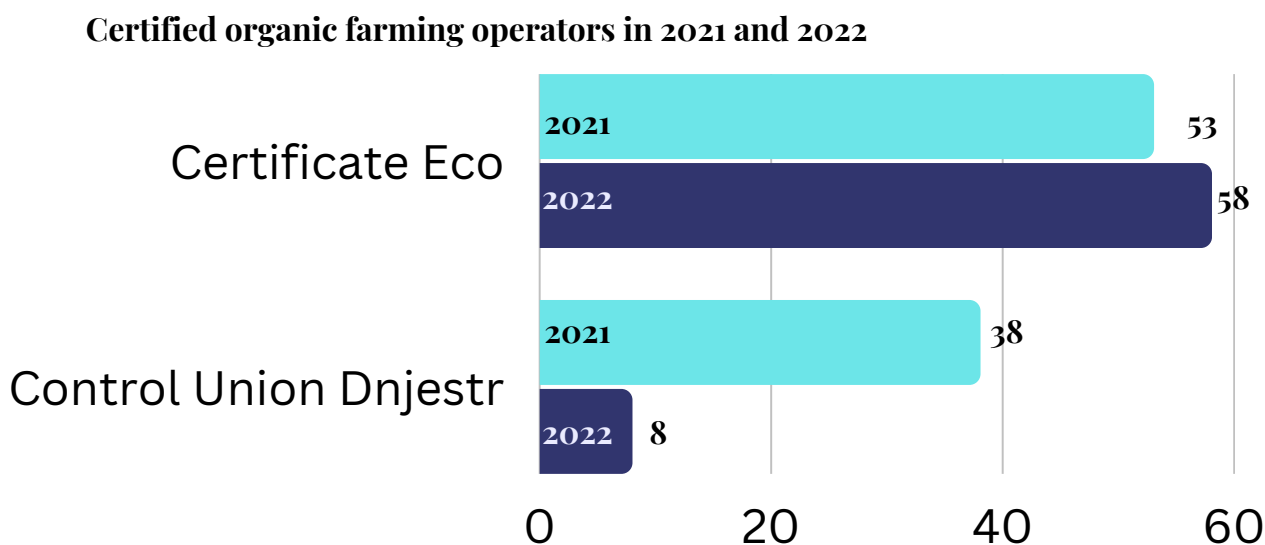
Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2021

Based on the reports promoted by the Control Bodies registered on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in 2022, 12 animal production enterprises (honey producers) were certified organic and one enterprise in conversion (year 2).

Table 2.2.1 Organic operators in animal husbandry field – records for the year 2022

Company and address	Code	Product	Quantity of certified product (KG)	Country of certified products delivering
Ceancansciuc Luminita Ion G. T., sat Criva, raion Briceni	MD18004BD	Honey and other bee products	4200	MD / RO
Simboteanu Andrei, sat Logofteni, r. Falesti	MD18005BD	Honey and other bee products	10700	MD / RO
Sisian Igor, sat Ghioltosu, r. Cantemir	MD18011BD	Honey and other bee products	1800	MD / RO
Serjant Ivan, sat Misovca, r. Ialoveni	MD18012BD	Honey and other bee products	5700	MD / RO
Botnaru Mircea Gheorghe G.T., Zabriceni, Onesti, r. Edinet	MD18014BD	Honey and other bee products	5900	MD / RO
Telesman Andrei, sat Stolniceni, r. Edinet	MD18019BD	Honey and other bee products	9000	MD / RO
Moldoveanu Nicolae, sat Gotesti, r. Cantemir	MD18020BD	Honey and other bee products	6500	MD / RO
Vasilache Eduard Sveatoslav G. T., sat. Zaicani, r. Riscani	MD18022BD	Honey and other bee products	1700	MD / RO
Paslaru Sergiu, str. Mihai Eminescu nr. 30 ap.23 Cahul, r. Cahul	MD18024BD	Honey and other bee products	6800	MD / RO
Buzichievici Roman, sat Cuconestii Noi, r. Edinet	MD18027BD	Honey and other bee products	2300	MD / RO
Pislaru Spartac, sat Cantemir, r. Cantemir	MD18029BD	Honey and other bee products	4600	MD / RO
Bisir Maria G. T., sat. Taraclia, r. Cantemir	MD18033BD	Honey and other bee products	5300	MD / RO
Bozianu Mihai, s. Cojusna, r. Straseni	MD21040BD	Honey and other bee products	C2	

Fig. 2.2.3 Control bodies and certified operators



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

The total area of land certified in the organic system in 2022 was recorded as 28616,07 ha with a share of 1.62 percent of the total agricultural land in the Republic of Moldova.

The stages of the organic certification process

1. Certification service request – The request together with the annexes are sent to the CB

F-7.2-1 Request for certification

F-7.2-2 List of parcels (for crop production)

F-7.2-3 Ecological management plan

2. Analysis of the request by the Certification Body

3. The decision to include in the control system – Signing the Contract

4. Inspection of production in the field/warehouse/processing unit, control of records and documents (field work, treatments, purchases, sales, technological sheets, activity registers) – the inspector checks whether the requirements of the legislation on organic production are respected, samples are taken in case of suspicion (see Links). If non-conformities are detected during the inspection, manufacturers must take corrective action in accordance with the terms communicated by the inspector. Evidence of implementation of corrective actions is presented to the Certification Body.

5. Inspection/Assessment Analysis

6. Certification decision – issuance of the first Certificate. The certificate is issued for a period of 1 year. **The Certificate of Conformity** confirming the "organic" status of the product is issued after the conversion period.

7. Annual surveillance – The producer notifies the Certification Body every year about the production plan, sown land/crops, forecasted harvests. The inspectors of the Con Body carry out at least one planned inspection, in case of suspicion, unannounced inspections can be carried out.

The conversion period is the time between the beginning of compliance with the rules for obtaining organic agri-food production (the date of application to the Certification Body) and the moment of obtaining the certified organic product.

The duration of the conversion period is:

- 3 years for perennial crops and plantations (from the date of application to OC until harvest);
- 2 years for annual field crops (from the date of application to the OC until sowing);
- 2 years for meadows and fodder crops;
- 12 months for beef cattle;
- 6 months for small ruminants and pigs;
- 12 weeks for dairy animals;
- 10 weeks for birds for egg and/or meat production, purchased at the age of 3 days;
- 12 months for bees, if the family was procured from conventional apiaries.

02. 3 Laboratories and laboratory tests

On the territory of the Republic of Moldova, the activity of the Public Institution, the Central Phytosanitary Laboratory, is accredited and recognized at the national and international level. Having implemented the ISO 17025 quality system, the Laboratory operates in the following directions of testing and verification:

- Phytosanitary quarantine
- The quality of products
- Seed testing and certification
- Pesticide and nitrate residues
- Genetically modified organisms

The Central Phytosanitary Laboratory has a history that begins in 1953 when the phytosanitary quarantine laboratory was created within the Plant Protection Inspectorate.

Over the years, this entity has undergone several reorganization processes and is currently a public institution, in which the National Food Safety Agency exercises the function of founder.

The Central Phytosanitary Laboratory has financial autonomy and holds accounts in the single treasury account of the Ministry of Finance.

The areas of competence of the Laboratory are the following:

- Verification and identification of phytosanitary status, plant protection and nutrition, soil fertility;
- Verification of pesticide residues in plants and plant products;
- Verification of the quality of seed and seedling material, of the quality of agri-food products and products involved in organic agriculture;
- Providing testing services regarding the harmlessness of products in its fields of competence;
- Other areas assigned by the normative acts, including the acts of the founder, under the competence of the Laboratory.

The Central Phytosanitary Laboratory includes several testing laboratories to offer its customers the widest spectrum of services in the field of plant production testing. The laboratories apply the requirements of the SM SR EN ISO/CEI 17025:2018 standard.

Specialists from the laboratories were trained in various reference laboratories from: Poland, Romania, Israel, Czech Republic, Italy, Austria, Russian Federation) and participated in various PT/ILS, result confirmations with: ANSES, BIPEA, France, FAPAS UK, Slovenia, LCF, IISPV Romania.

The methods used are accredited by the National Accreditation Center MOLDAC. The activity of the Laboratory is subject to external audit in accordance with the provisions of the normative acts and has the mission of coordinating and organizing the activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of public policies in the fields of competence established by its Statute.

The institution collaborates with various scientific institutions, universities in the country and abroad.

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LABORATORUL
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02.4 Inputs in organic farming

Farmers in the Republic of Moldova procure inputs from input supply companies or organic farmers in the country. Companies that provide inputs usually sell both conventional and organic inputs. Although some products are available on the market in the Republic of Moldova, limited supply and expensive inputs have affected the growth of the organic sector and are key constraints to achieving scale.

Seed supply: The production of organically certified seeds is limited in Moldova, and organically certified seeds and planting material are insufficient.

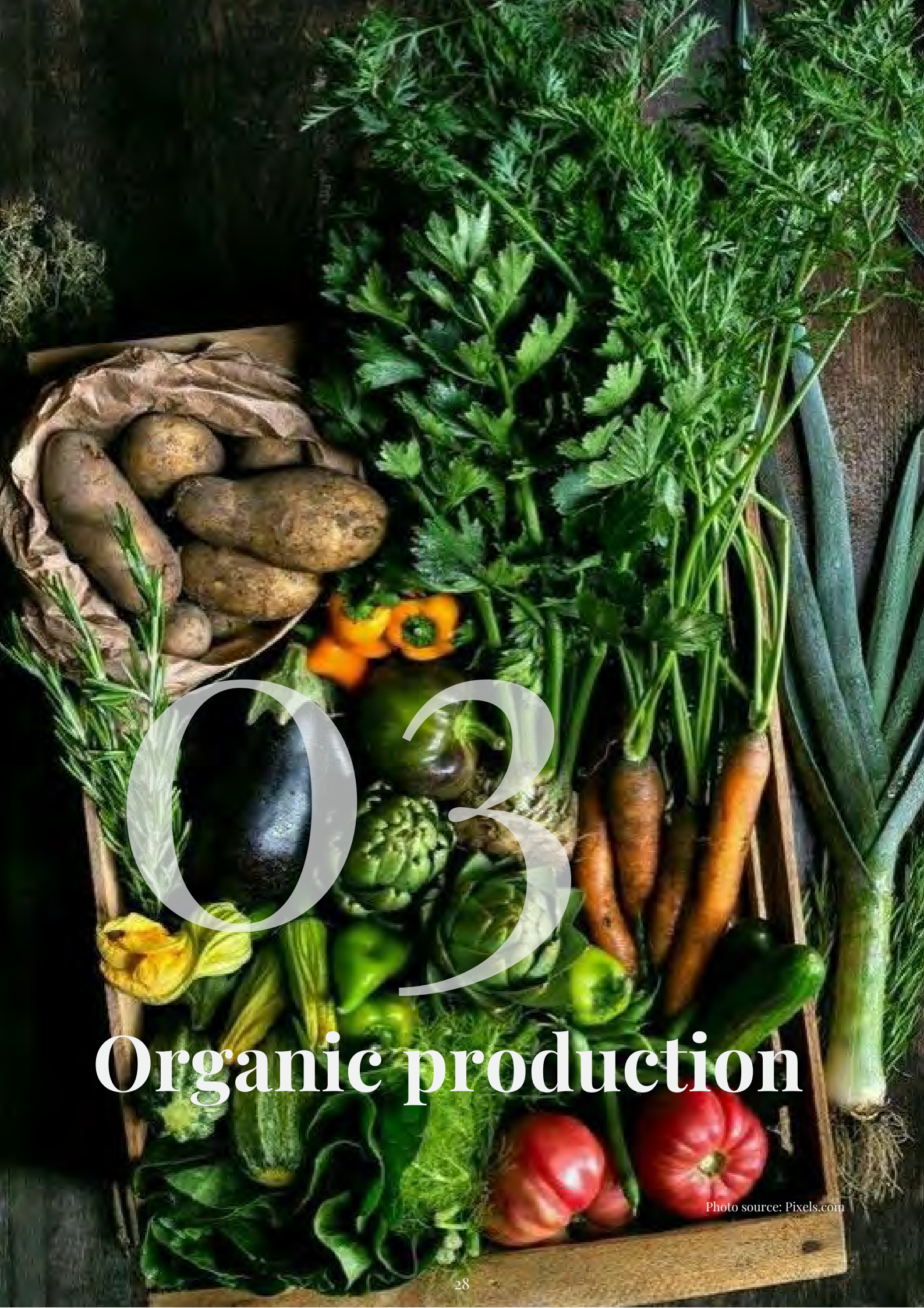
State-run research institutes are responsible for testing and approving new varieties. The approval process for each new variety is long, complicated and expensive, and few companies are willing to go through the certification process for new organic varieties due to the small size of the market.

However, in order for Moldovan farmers to receive subsidies, they must prove that their varieties are registered in the Catalog of Plant Varieties of the Republic of Moldova. This is a hurdle for organic producers, who are highly dependent on access to pest and disease resistant plant varieties developed in other countries.

Pest Management: Importing certified green pest control technologies is expensive, both due to product and transportation costs. Those imported to Moldova come mainly from Germany and EU countries. If active microorganisms are present, they must be transported and stored in cold storage, significantly increasing the final retail price. Inputs for organic farming can have a short shelf life, requiring careful management planning by suppliers and application by producers.

Organic fertilizers: Imported and approved organic fertilizers are not consistently available and are considered expensive. Key inputs such as rock phosphate and potassium are often not available. A partial alternative, increasing the use of cover crops, is being experimented with by some producers.

In general, input prices are high because market demand is low and regulation is complex. It should be mentioned that in Romania the government does not subsidize organic inputs, as in the Republic of Moldova.



03

Organic production

Photo source: Pixels.com



03.1 Information on organic production in the Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova, organic production is mostly focused on annual cereal crops, but also on the cultivation of nuts, dried fruits, sunflower seeds and oil, leguminous crops, such as soybeans, peas, and on the production of organic wine.

151 operators in the organic system registered in 2021 and 139 registered in 2022. Of which 138 units that have chosen organic farming are directly trained in organic production, starting from the advantages offered by the EU market and the demand of local consumers.

In this context, more and more farmers are aware of the opportunities of organic agriculture in terms of profit, competitiveness and sustainability.

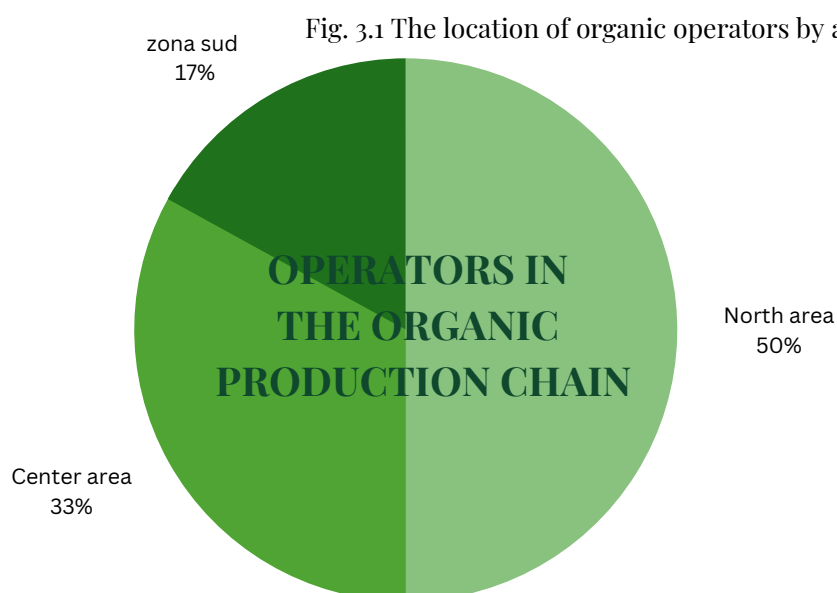
Wheat and sunflower are two crops that provide both domestic sales and important exports. In the Republic of Moldova, wheat is organically grown on an area of over 4,300 hectares, while sunflowers cover approximately 6,400 hectares. Corn (over 5,500 hectares), soybeans (1,444 hectares) and peas (about 1,400 hectares) are among the top organically grown cereals in our country.

The walnut tree is also very popular among ecological crops, the leader in the category of fruit trees, with an area of over 4,800 hectares.

Among medicinal and aromatic plants, the most widespread crop in organic agriculture is lavender (207 hectares), followed by mustard (111 hectares).

A much more modest situation is registered regarding vegetables grown in an organic system. The largest area belongs to the potato, organically grown on 1.48 hectares, and leeks, eggplants, parsley and parsnips are in the last position, each with an area of about 0.01 hectares.

The data from the "Atlas of Organic Agriculture" regarding the producers engaged in the value chain of organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova by location, tell us that the majority of organic agricultural holdings are located in the North (50%), with a smaller share in the center (33%) and South (17%).



Source: Atlas of Organic Agriculture 2021

The number of employees in the organic farming system in each enterprise differs depending on the total area managed, the agricultural work performed and the period in which they are trained. For this reason, the number of employees differs when a large part is trained seasonally, when carrying out the work of harvesting, processing and storing the crop. As for the number of permanent employees in an agricultural enterprise, this value largely depends on the area of cultivated land and the complexity of the enterprise: on average, 20 people are permanently employed at a company that owns 450 ha of arable land. Organic operators, who own from 1-100 ha of land, have permanent employees up to 6 people.

The common problem in both organic and conventional agriculture is the lack of qualified personnel. The interest of the younger generations towards agriculture is constantly decreasing, young people prefer to leave or choose other fields of activity, which generates a pressing problem for farmers.

Table 3.1.1 Operators organic certified by CB Certificat Eco

Operator name	Certified products/crops, ha	Statute
Crama Domneasca SRL	Vine - 5.41 haVine - 1.09 haWine (including blends: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Shiraz, Carmenere, Chardonnay, Răra Neagră, Fetească regală, Fetească albă, Saperavi, Fetească neagră	Organic
GT Birnaz Victor Nicolai	Vine /protected land/ - 0.23 ha Strawberry - 0.25 ha Maize - 0.25 ha	Organic
BioWalnut SRL	Walnut - 20.2872 ha Walnut - 6.4186 ha	O C1
Biocamara SRL	Vegetable production - 15.0 ha	Organic
GT M.A. Gasper	Peas - 16.0 Siderate (Mazariche/Oats) - 9.0 ha Maize - 24.01 ha Spelled wheat - 40.0 ha Sunflower - 12.0 ha	Organic
Decorcasa SRL	Lavender - 4.7105 Aromatic plants - 0.2 ha Pârlogă (acacia) - 0.7234 ha Lavender - 0.4506 ha	O C2
LANACOMLUX SRL	Hazelnut plantation - 9.6089 Hazelnut core	Organic
Natur - Perpetua SRL	White sea buckthorn - 26,579 ha	Organic
FPC Fernuci SRL	Walnut - 113.3179 ha	Organic
GT Elenciuc Igor Mihail	Walnut Plantation - 35.1578 Hazelnut Plantation - 3.75 ha Walnut Plantation - 32.7319ha	O C3
GT Mihaila Ion Vasile	Walnut - 8.3122 ha	Organic
GT Lozan Oleg Simion	Walnut - 11.4077 ha	Organic
GT Stefanet Igor Gheorghe	Walnut - 11.4083 ha	Organic
GT Jelamschi Nicolae Dumitru	Walnut - 12.5035 ha	Organic
GT Jelamschi Lilia Nicolae	Walnut - 38.39 ha	Organic
TETRACOM-AGRO SRL	Wheat Spelled - 58.57 Mustard - 34.46 ha Sunflower - 87.96 ha	Organic
GT Cislari Victor Ilie	Plum plantation - 8.0273 ha	Organic
ALUNE DE PĂDURE SRL	Hazelnut plantation - 10,1388 ha	Organic
ROSE LINE SRL	Rosehip Plantation - 67.4918 Rosehip Plantation - 8.5057 ha	O C1
GT Bejenari Angela Ivan s. Plop	0,1500ha - Raspberry tree / 1,8319ha - Strawberry / 0,1412ha - Gooseberry / 0,0050ha - Blackberry / 0,0200ha - Black currant / 0,0200ha - Red currant / 0,3060ha - fallow ground / 0,0660ha - Cucumbers / 0,0220ha - Tomato / 0,0220ha -Pepper / 0,0360ha	Organic
BIVON SRL	Aronia plantation - 7.7239 ha	Organic
GT Prisacaru Angela Nicolae	Walnut plantation - 17.5844 ha	Organic

Table 3.1.1 Operators organic certified by CB Certificat Eco

RUSU LINTAX SRL	Maize – 41.9465 ha	Organic
Essentialis SRL	Lavender – 52,1004 ha Lavender – 25,7475 ha	Organic
Spandor SRL	Sea buckthorn plantation – 40.0772 ha	Organic
GT SARUC ALIONA BORIS	Walnut plantation – 21.9645 ha	Organic
LIVADA NUCILOR SRL	Walnut plantation – 8.9196 ha	C3
TREIV-FARM SRL	Hazelnut plantation – 62.1786 ha	C3
GT TOPCIU MARIANNA	Almond plantation – 72.98 ha	Organic
AINCOM STIL SRL	Walnut plantation – 14.2781 ha	Organic
GT Schivu Alexandru Luca	Walnut plantation – 16.8 Almond plantation – 1.34 ha Almond plantation – 0.21 ha	C3C3C2
PRO KATALYST	Fruit trees, vegetables – 2.4202	C3
GT Iepuri Galina	Walnut Plantation – 65.4501 ha	C3
CI NUCCES	Walnut plantation – 4 ha	C3
GG Proinvest SRL	Lavender – 7,1986 ha	Organic
CV CRICOVA S.A.	Vines – 23.11 haVine (Feteasca Neagra, Feteasca Regala, Viorica)	Organic
SC POIANA CODRILOR SRL	Vines – 11.7806 ha	C2
AO ACPEAM	20,979 ha (9 sub-units) Horticultural production	C2C1
IM LES TERRES NOIRES SRL	Vines – 22.3757 ha	C2
AGROINBAS SRL	Hazelnut plantation – 8.13 ha	C2
PRONAT AGRO SRL	Aronia – 5.2458 ha	Organic
ECO-YOGA SRL	vegetables – 1.7741 ha / fruits – 0.3116 ha	C2C1
Forest-Berry SRL	Aronia plantation – 3.5 ha	C2
FPSP RAUTEL SA	Sea buckthorn – 5.0 ha	C2
GT Stoica Silvia Victor	Sea buckthorn – 15,6052 ha	C2C1
GT Vizitiu Petru	Walnut plantation – 19.3572	C2C2
II GOGU ILIE	Vines – 6.97 ha	C2
STABIL-NATUR SRL	Hazelnut – 41 ha	C2
C&C BIONUTS SRL	Hazelnut – 21,2467 ha	C1
GT Gheorghiu Sergiu	Walnut – 6,8 ha	C1
LOLLY BERRY SRL	Sea buckthorn – 15,0 ha	C1
Alpador-Agro SRL	Hazelnut – 40,523 ha	C1
Peanuts – Popescu SRL	Hazelnut – 6,0 ha	C1
Minalia Fowl SRL	Vines – 1,8 ha	C1
LEMIRTO SRL	Sea Buckthorn Plantation – 10,085	C1

Table 3.1.2 Operators organic certified by CB CUD

<i>Operator name</i>	<i>Certified products/crops, ha</i>	<i>Statute</i>
"Agroelit" SRL	Cereal crops-90, Leguminous crops-139	Organic
DAAC Hermes SA	Cereal crops-128, Aromatic plans-21	Organic
SRL FOCARO AGRO	Cereal crops-107, Migdal-26	Organic
SRL„Verluxcons”	White buckthorn-11	C3
Euroalun SRL	Hazelnut-33,95	Organic
GT A. Panov Pan-terra	Migdal-20, Nuts-30	Organic
AGROCIORNA SRL	Cereal crops-171	Organic
SC AGROTEHVIT SRL	Cereal crops-93,15	Organic
AMORILIS-AGRO SRL	Cereal crops-103	Organic
CATALAX COM SRL	Cereal crops-408, Leguminous cops-258	Organic
CAZACU and CO SRL	Cereal crops-42, Leguminous crops-10	Organic
GȚ CEBOTARI EUGENIA	Cereal crops-109	Organic
CIULMAL AGRO SRL	Cereal crops-99	Organic
CORIANDRO-AGRO SRL	Cereal crops-91, Leguminous crops-32	Organic
COZĂȘTEANUL SRL	Cereal crops-50, Leguminous crops-50	Organic
DUMITRAȘ ANDRIAN ÎI	Cereal crops-48, Leguminous crops-59	Organic
GLAVMOREX-AGRO SRL	Cereal crops-130	Organic
GRĂDINA DE VIS SRL	Cereal crops-169	Organic
HILIUȚEANUL SRL	Cereal crops-127,50, Leguminous crops-18,50	Organic
LUNCA VĂSCĂUȚULUI SRL	Cereal crops-92, Leguminous crops-61	Organic
PERMACULTURA SRL	Mustard-57,25	Organic
POLIGLIA SRL	Cereal crops-215, Leguminous crops-64, Mustard-50	Organic
RAIREC-PLUS SRL	Cereal crops-37, Leguminous crops-36	Organic
ROTARU LUCIA GȚ	Cereal crops-66, Leguminous crops-33,79	Organic
SIFON SRL	Cereal crops-45	Organic
SILVITA-DOI SRL	Cereal crops-192	Organic
SNEJROMS-NORD SRL	Cereal crops-68	Organic
TIMCU OLEG GȚ	Cereal crops-69	Organic
TOTAL CADELNIC SRL	Cereal crops-56	Organic
UNCHITEȘTI SRL	Cereal crops-146, Leguminous crops-40	Organic
ROTLUX SRL	Cereal crops-67	Organic
Rotaru Constantin GȚ	Cereal crops-27	Organic
SRL Micu and Co	Cereal crops-190, Leguminous crops-45, Nuts-27,14, Plum-10	Organic
SRL Madino Agro	Cereal crops-115, Leguminous crops-7	Organic



04

Production models and success stories

Photo source: Pixels.com

CRICOVA



Winery's priority SUSTAINABILITY

Photo source: Cricova



Photo source: Cricova



With a history that began in 1952, Combinatul de Vinuri "Cricova" S.A. quickly became a reference name in the national and world wine industry.

Combinatul de vinuri "Cricova" S.A., declared by the National Cultural Heritage Law of the country, has an important role in the wine and tourism ecosystem of the Republic of Moldova. Role assigned due to its weight in the sectors in which it operates and its quality as an active promoter of the image of the Republic of Moldova abroad, as well as thanks to its development potential, based on over 70 years of experience.

In an era where environmental responsibility is increasingly stringent, organic viticulture and winemaking is an essential approach in the wine industry. Thus, in 2017, the "Cricova" Winery took the first important step towards sustainability, by planting ecological vines.

This initiative aims to reduce the negative impact on the environment, protect biodiversity, maintain soil fertility and a healthy balance in the ecosystem. By adopting sustainable practices and respecting organic principles, "Cricova" tends to contribute to protecting the environment and the consumer, producing top quality wines in harmony with nature.

CRICOVA owns the largest organic vineyard area in the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

– 23,11 ha

Organically certified grape varieties:

„Fetească Regală” 10,28 ha

„Fetească Neagră” 6,93 ha

„Viorica” 3,67 ha.



The management of organic vines involves the use of products of exclusively natural origin for the fertilisation and protection of the vines, the prohibition of GMOs, the care of the plantation being based strictly on manual work. When growing and caring for this vine, the systems and cycles of nature are respected, which maintain and improve the health of the soil, plants and water, but also the balance between them.

In order to obtain healthy plantations that meet national and international organic certification standards, the company's specialists emphasise natural vegetation, which allows the creation of a balanced and diverse environment, which compensates for the lack of treatments with systemic substances and ensures the humidity deficit. Likewise, the wine materials after processing (bunches, bostina) are later used as ecological fertilizers for the vines.



In the spring of 2022, Combinatul de vinuri "Cricova" S.A., launched the first range of organic single-vineyard wines in the Republic of Moldova - WILD. The wines in this range have been designed in accordance with a series of strict rules starting with the planting and care of the vines, until the actual bottling of the products.



With phenomenal organoleptic qualities, the "WILD" range marks a special first in the Republic of Moldova: with the launch of the first organic rose monosoi wine Fetească Neagră, followed by the aromatic Fetească Regală.

This launch opened the way to great results, thus, ***after participating in the prestigious contest "Concours International des Produits Biologiques et en conversion" in France, the ecological dry pink wine "Fetească Neagră WILD" won the silver medal.***

A remarkable first success for the Combinatul de Vinuri „Cricova”, as well as for the entire country.

In addition to the development of organic vine plantations, it is important to mention that in 2022, the "Cricova" Winery is one of the first companies in the Republic of Moldova to obtain the important European CERES certificate, which represents the certification on the European market of organic products. At the same time, the "Cricova" company managed to implement the Fair'N Green Sustainability System, intended for the evaluation of businesses in the viticulture field according to globally recognized sustainability standards and which indicate that the company's wines in the organic category are "sustainable".

Just as the "Cricova" Winery made its firm commitment to sustainability in 2023, the efforts regarding the production of energy from renewable sources are amplified. An eloquent example implemented within the "Cricova" Winery are the photovoltaic panels, with a total capacity of 350 MW. With the help of this system, the winery significantly reduces the electricity bill, estimated at approximately 50%.

"Cricova" Winery is a notable example of success in implementing organic practices and promoting sustainability in the wine industry in the Republic of Moldova.

PROGRAIN ORGANIC

It ensures responsible and
sustainable organic farming

Photo source: MOVCA



Photo source: Prograin Organic



PROGRAIN ORGANIC operates in the field of cultivation, processing, storage, marketing and export of organic cereal, oilseed and leguminous crops in the Republic of Moldova.

"PROGRAIN ORGANIC" S.R.L. was founded on April 21, 2015, being the first certified company in the Republic of Moldova, which invested in the value chain of organic cereals.

Together with a group of farmers from the Republic of Moldova, who believe in the value of organic farming in terms of the sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Republic of Moldova, they are committed to providing high quality organic products that ensure full traceability from field to fork (throughout the production chain).

Thus, farmers were integrated into the value chain, starting from investments in infrastructure projects, aimed at facilitating the development of the organic grain cultivation sector.

The company promotes the following crops: spelled wheat, common wheat, oats, sunflower, corn, sorghum, mustard, green peas, yellow peas, soybeans, rye, chickpeas, lentils, beans, pumpkin, alfalfa, buckwheat.



Photo source: Prograin Organic

In order to integrate the value chain of organic grains, PROGRAIN ORGANIC supports organic farmers with the following:

- Delivery of inputs for the cultivation of organic cereals (seed material, fertilizers, biological plant protection preparations);
- Assistance and monitoring of farmers in the certification of agricultural areas, cultivated in an organic system;
- Ensuring the logistics of collecting and storing organic grains;
- Investments in organic grain processing lines;
- Access to world markets for organic grains;

The entity owns an innovative warehouse in the city of Florești, its own laboratory and a modernized processing line, which ensures: receiving the goods, taking samples and carrying out physical, sensory, organoleptic and chemical analysis, unloading the goods, cleaning, peeling, calibration by weight, photoseparation, X-ray scanning, CO₂ treatment, packaging, vacuuming, storing the goods in big bags or silo bags for subsequent export.



Photo source: Prograin Organic

PROGRAIN ORGANIC ensures the highest quality of services and products, being the first company in the Republic of Moldova, which was certified according to the IFS reference standard.

From 2021 Anders Invest International Food and Agri Holding BV became the majority partner of the Prograin group of companies. This new stage in the history of the group intervened with the setting of new objectives and strategies for the development of organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova. Anders Invest comes with a clear, modern thinking that acts out of respect for mutually beneficial interests, but at the same time preserves tradition and national values, with the primary focus being fruitful, long-term relationships. Being different and having experience in the fields of production, strategy, finance and healthcare operations, Anders Invest works with a long-term, practical and value-oriented focus.



Photo source: Prograin Organic

In 2023 PROGRAIN ORGANIC launches the first organically certified local product intended for human consumption, which includes all the essential elements of the value chain. These being: organic white spelled flour, organic whole spelled flour, organic spelled groats, organic whole corn flour, organic corn kernels, organic shelled green pea halves, organic shelled yellow pea halves, organic spelt flour, mixes of organic wheat flour.



The PROGRAN ORGANIC teams, both from the Netherlands and the Republic of Moldova, work in close partnership with a group of farmers, selected to ensure quality control throughout the entire cultivation process.

Its farmers are monitored and certified by the internationally renowned body – BIO Inspecta, which carries out periodic inspections and analyzes to verify compliance with EU regulations (Reg. (EC) no. 834/2007 and Reg. (EC) no. 889/2008)



Photo source: Prograin Organic

Thanks to the company's flexible pricing policy, it offers the opportunity to react instantly to changes in the field and offers customers competitive prices to achieve maximum efficiency at optimal costs.

PROGRAIN ORGANIC policy:

- High standards, which ensure the achievement of the goal of offering the consumer the best quality products;
- All products meet the complex requirements of the strictest European food quality standard IFS;
- Ensures responsible and sustainable organic farming;
- Creates wealth through continued profit and growth.

PROGRAIN ORGANIC creates real and sustainable solutions in the field of circular organic agriculture and organic food, which corresponds to the high level of consumer expectation and is always open to establishing new partnership relations.



Photo source: Prograin Organic

REGINA NATURII



Values quality and tradition

Photo source: Regina Naturii



Photo source: Regina Naturii



Regina Naturii SRL is an important actor on the market of production, processing and export of natural bee honey from the Republic of Moldova.

Since its foundation in 2014, the company has well defined its core activity in the production and processing of natural honey. Initially, the company exported its own products, and later facilitated the export of honey for other local beekeepers. Thus, after several attempts, the company became one of the local leaders in the production, collection, processing, packaging and export of natural honey.

In 2018, the company was awarded the "Beekeeper of the Year" award at the 2018 AIPA Gala. In 2019, at the AIPA Gala, it was awarded the "Most Efficient Investment in the Development of Post-Harvest and Processing Infrastructure".

During the years 2018–2021, the company built a new factory equipped with a honey processing, storage and packaging section, this project being unique for the Republic of Moldova, and to reduce the impact on the environment, a water treatment plant was built, solar panels were installed and photovoltaic panels ensuring 100% of the consumption of energy resources.

Between 2018 and 2021, the enterprise facilitated the transition to organic honey production for a group of 6 beekeepers from the Republic of Moldova, who are certified according to European Regulations.

In order to facilitate the transition from conventional to organic (Certified) honey production, Regina Naturii SRL provides beekeepers with the following support:

- Provides training and guidance to beekeepers in understanding organic honey production;
- Provides support in completing the documentation for obtaining organic certification;
- Ensures the implementation and transmission of good practices developed within the group for the production of organic honey;
- Ensures the logistics of collection, storage, processing and sale of organic honey;
- Delivers material inputs used in the organic honey production process.



At the moment, 3 types of organic honey are produced under the Regina Naturii brand of Acacia, Poliflora and Tei, and with the development of the group and the honey collection area, other types of honey will be collected.



The production processes are certified according to the highest quality standards in the field ISO 22000, FSSC 22000 to which from 2021 were added the organic honey processing requirements according to Regulation (EC) 834/2007.



Regina Naturii – the only local brand awarded with the Super Taste Award



90 percent of "Regina Naturii" products are exported, including certified organic honey. The appreciation of the product by partners from Romania, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland and Malaysia speaks of its high quality.

Regina Naturii values quality and tradition, not just commercial profit, thus creating favorable conditions for the development of sustainable organic beekeeping in the country. The quality of the product is periodically monitored in the laboratories of the Republic of Moldova, Germany, Italy and Romania.



Participation over the years in international competitions has brought several distinctions including gold medals. The awards include the Super Taste Award, awarded in Brussels in 2021 by the International Taste Institute. Thus, Regina Naturii being the only local brand designated with the Super Taste Award. London Honey Awards, nominated Regina Naturii as the best honey producer in two sections: Quality Award and Packaging Award.



Commerce

Photo source: Pixels.com



Sursa foto: Pixels.com

05.1 Trade in organic food products

The COVID pandemic has changed the approach of the entire mankind to healthy lifestyle and healthy eating. Health and life issues are on top of the mind for consumers. The demand for organic food has increased since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020.

Sales of organic food have grown considerably globally, this trend is also evident in our country. Healthy growth is expected to continue in the coming years as consumers continue to associate organic foods with health, nutrition and wellness.

However, many challenges lie ahead. Supply chain issues are expected to continue, while competition will come from sustainability standards and eco-labelled products.



Photo source: Pixels.com

The consumption of organic products defines, along with other habits and activities, the concern of the new generation of consumers with a lifestyle as healthy as possible. Many food products look the same and many of them have the same name and the consumer has to quickly decide which product to buy.

Numerous specialized studies have demonstrated that organic food has a high content of nutrients with a positive impact on health, primarily contributing to strengthening immunity and reducing the risk of food allergies or serious diseases.

The promotion of the nutritional benefits of organic foods has led to the creation and consolidation of a favorable image of them among consumers and the expansion of the Eco trend in recent years, both internationally and at the level of our country.

The existence of this positive image of organic food products among consumers has determined an increase in the consumption of organic products, the trend is also inevitable for the coming years.



Even if we analyze the market price of traditional and organic products, we notice that in most cases they have a higher price by about 20%, but, depending on the type of product, the price can be 90 - 95% more expensive. For this reason, the cultivation and production of organic products is a profitable business, but also supported by foreign donors.

In the Republic of Moldova, there is an upward trend in the demand and consumption of organic products, this is probably the result of awareness of the health and environmental benefits.

Supermarket chains in the country already have shelves dedicated to organic products, most eco products are imported, but there are also domestic organic products. At the same time, we are witnessing an increase in the number of local producers offering high-quality organic products, so consumers have at hand the products they need to lead a healthy lifestyle.

If we are to analyze the consumer category, the most important customer group for organic products is represented by young mothers, in second and third place are followers of a healthy lifestyle and those who have to eat healthy diet, in turn these groups promote the consumption of organic products.

However, the low level of awareness and insufficient promotion makes the organic products market in the Republic of Moldova still modest, and one of the reasons is that the population does not know the health and environmental advantages of these products, but also because they consider them expensive. The standard of living also plays an important role, thus, we observe that in developed countries, with a high standard of living, the consumption of organic products is higher and wider.

In the European Union, for example, the share of organic land is approximately 18 million ha, however, there is a shortage of organic products in the EU, which allows European certification bodies to certify areas and products directly on the territories of other countries.



Photo source: Pixels.com

05.2 Distribution to the consumer of organic production

The distribution of organic production in the Republic of Moldova can be directly from the producer to the buyer and can be carried out both on online trading platforms and through specialized markets (exhibitions, fairs). And the form of sale through trade networks remains one known on the local market, specialized retail trade and supermarket chains.

Fig. 5.2.1 Markets specialized in the retail sale of organic production



The weekly ***EcoLocal Farmers Market***, which brings together more than 30 local companies every week and attracts not only local but also foreign buyers, is a very effective fair for marketing, promoting and valorizing organic products.



Photo source: Eco Local



The IarmarEco event organized by EcoVisio, annually in different localities, being organized both in 2021 and 2022. This fair provides access to the consumer from different parts of the country to organic domestic products. This sales channel gives buyers a great opportunity to meet buyers directly and ask questions.

There are also other types of activities in which organic producers participate: Kids Expo, Târgul Gustului, Farmer - exhibitions organized by Moldexpo, but also Cămara Fest - a fair that gathers 70-80 domestic producers on weekends, 2 times a month.

There are several home delivery services for organic or garden-grown vegetables, such as Ecovillage Farms (Katalyst ONG) and Ecoparadis (Vasile Niculita).

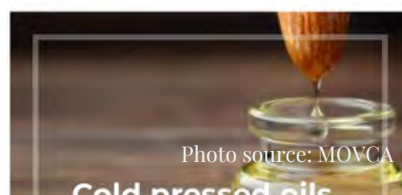
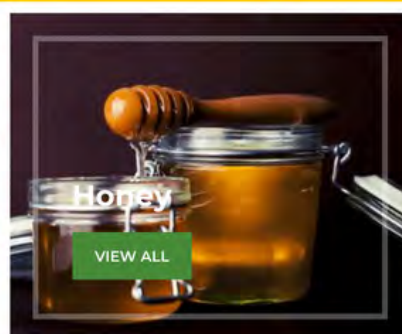


BIOFOOD platform
www.biofood.md

The online sales platform for MOVCA Association members

Some certified manufacturers deliver products ordered from online stores:

Biantti - <https://biantti.md/>, Biocămara - <https://biocamara.md/>, Echinox - <https://equinox.md/>.



Members of the MOVCA Association benefit from the e-commerce service and, through the Bio Food platform, have the possibility of direct distribution of organic production to its consumer.

On this sales platform, domestic organic products are made available to the consumer, delivery is made by courier and payment can be made both online or by courier.

The range of products offered at the moment is a modest one, but the trend of investment in the processing sector among the members of the association will increase in a short time and a wide assortment of local organic products will be on sale.

Product categories



Beans



Cereals



Cold
pressed
oils



Honey



Lavender



Nuts



Organic tea



Local
Brands



Quality
ecological
products



Online
payment by
card or cash on
delivery



Fast delivery
in all the
country

Supermarkets, in addition to organized fairs, have become a suitable location for the distribution of organic products.

A well-integrated and successfully applied strategy for the marketing of organic products and the promotion of their consumption have the large commercial networks such as: Kaufland, Fourchette, Metro Cash and Carry, Nr 1 and Linella.

Organic products are usually placed on a separate shelf and most often sold under the chain's own label.

The Kaufland network has the significant share of the diversity of organic products, followed by the No. 1 network and Linella. Unfortunately, organic products are mostly imported. Supporting the domestic producer and promoting local organic products should become a priority in the sales policy of supermarkets.

05.3 The international market

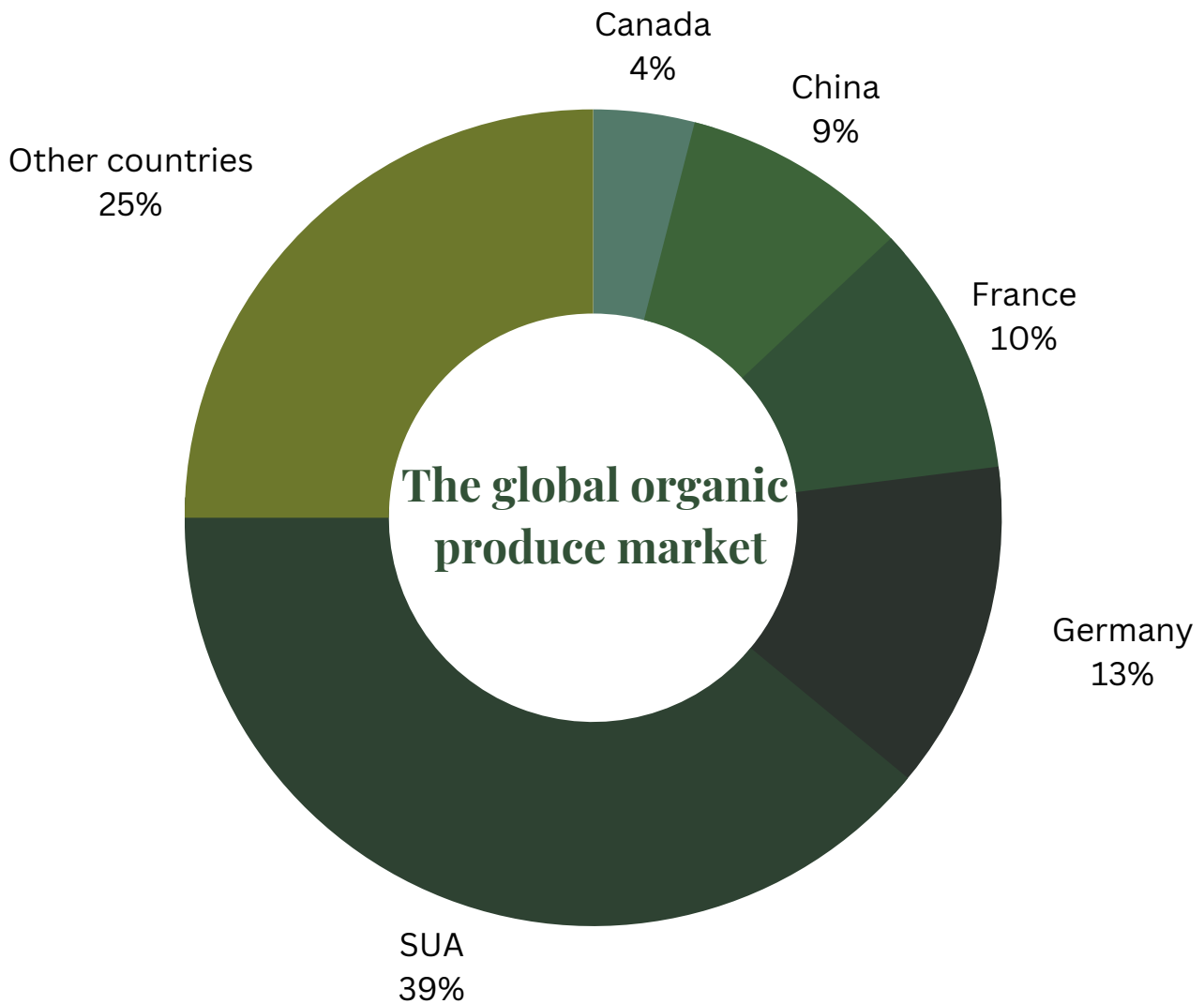
The United States of America and the European Union are the largest organic markets in the world. Both have seen increased growth rates over the past 10 years. The US became the main market for organic food products in 2012, later the EU took over the top position in 2021.

Dynamic growth trends are currently in the Asian market, the consumption of organic products, especially in China, has increased considerably in the last three years. Influenced by the pandemic period on the Chinese market, the demand for organic products has increased.

Organic products have become much more important in population's consumption compared to previous years. With environmental concerns and a desire to live healthy, 82% of Americans buy some organic products on a regular basis. Sales of organic products in the US are on the rise, according to a study by BlueWeawe Consulting, it is estimated that the market for organic products will continue to grow at a rate of approximately 8.7% annually, achieving revenues of approximately 95.1 billion USD by the end of 2027.

Sales of organic products in the United States of America in 2022 for the first time exceeded 60 billion USD, reaching another high for the organic sector. Total sales of organic non-food products were a record 67.6 billion USD, according to the Organic Trade Association's 2023 Organic Industry Survey.

Fig. 5.3.1 *Sales of organic production worldwide in 2021*



Source: The world of organic agriculture

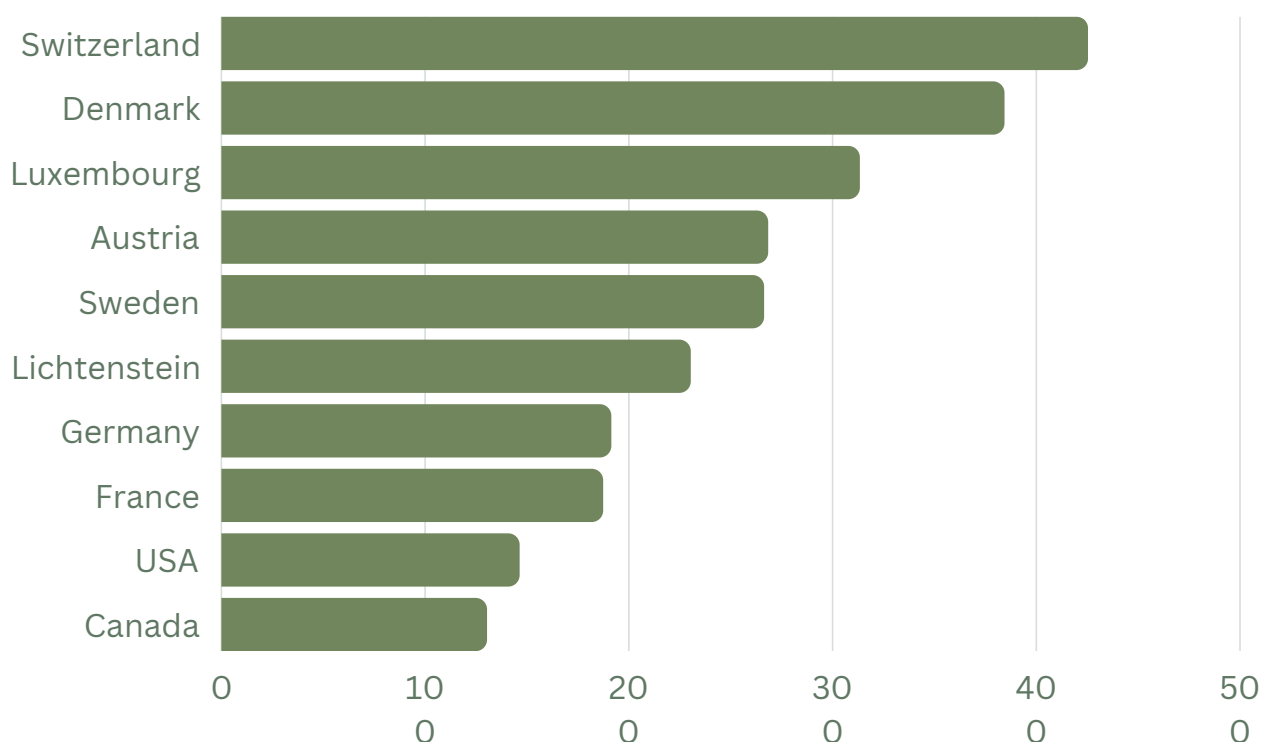
The organic market in the US has been growing despite the pressures of inflation directly affecting consumers, the pandemic that has disrupted the organic supply chain and global political events. Inflation has driven up costs for the entire organic supply chain and organic food supply chain, which has also driven up organic food prices.

The European organic market has grown rapidly over the past 10 years. According to the data published by FiBL and IFOAM as a result of the annual survey, the 2022 edition, World of Organic Agriculture, launched at the event organized by Biofach, shows that the retail sales of organic products increased by 15% in the year 2022, reaching 52 billion EUR.

Unfortunately, not all countries in Europe regularly provide data on their domestic markets, in order to correctly integrate the statistics, it is assumed that the European Union market and the value of sales of organic products would be higher than indicated in the diagram.

Germany continues to be the leader in the European market for the sale of organic products, followed by France, Italy and Switzerland. According to the data provided in The World of Organic Agriculture 2023, as in previous years, the highest per capita consumption of organic food products was in Switzerland (425 euros/inhabitant) and Denmark (384 euros/inhabitant), they are in the top countries with the highest consumption of organic products in the world, not only in Europe. Continued growth of consumer interest in organic products is a notable specific growth in 2020, but a slower growth in 2021. The average consumption per capita in Europe increased to 65.7 euros and to 104.3 euros in the EU, compared to 2020 when an average consumer in Europe had 63.3 euros and an EU consumer 100 euros. In Central Eastern European countries, consumers are spending less, although there are indications that markets are currently developing rapidly, especially in the Baltic countries.

Fig. 5.3.2 *Per capita consumption of organic products in 2021, Euro*



Source: The world of organic agriculture

However, data on retail sales is sparse and not regularly updated, which makes it difficult to process the data and provide a statistic. Only the availability and accessibility of data from the respective area of the Czech Republic and Estonia, the only countries with a rapid data collection system for retail sales, are attested.

In Romania, although the number of domestic organic certified producers is advancing from year to year, organic crop plantations have reached only 2.9% of the total cultivated agricultural area, according to Eurostat. Until the Romanian agricultural sector reaches an organic production capacity close to market demand, trade networks, regardless of their size, will continue to rely on imports.

80% of organic products in supermarkets are imported, and the desire of consumers to have diversity in the product offer, but especially the willingness to pay more money for healthy products, represents a real business opportunity for importers. In 2021, no less than 2,374 natural persons and companies producing organic products were active in Romania, but certifications are also granted to processors, traders, importers and aquaculture companies or individuals.

Organic products have become more and more in demand in Romania as well, and the pandemic context has accelerated this trend. If we analyze the top 10 categories of organic products, we notice that dairy products are at the top, followed by animal products and processed products.

Accelerated growth could be seen in the supermarket chain Auchan, which recorded sales of 50% higher in 2020-2021, while in the category of organic fruits and vegetables sales tripled. If we are to analyze the statistics of the Kaufland network, there is a 60% increase in the lots for organic meats, another category that performed by 30% in 2021. According to a Reveal Marketing Research study, 32% of Romanians use to consume organic products 2-3 times a week.



Photo source: Pixels.com

Taking into account that the prices of organic products are up to 20-30% more expensive than conventional products, the market for organic products is still growing.

A photograph of a field of lavender flowers in bloom. The flowers are purple and arranged in tall, slender spikes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. A large, semi-transparent number '6' is overlaid on the image, positioned behind the main text.

6

Grants and subsidies

Photo source: Pixels.com



Photo source: Pixels.com

o6. Supporting organic farming and organic food production

Organic agriculture is a sector in continuous growth and development in the Republic of Moldova, which has seen an upward evolution in recent years.

An essential condition for the development of agriculture is the promotion of the concept of organic agriculture in order to increase consumer awareness of the advantages of consuming organic products.

o6.1 State support in the development of the organic agriculture

In order to ensure the sustainability of the development of organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova, the state has assumed the responsibility of supporting businesses through various programs implemented by organizations such as ODA, MIEPO and AIPA.

The Agency for Interventions and Payments for Agriculture (AIPA), the institution responsible for managing the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and the Rural Environment, as well as the resources of the development partners allocated for administration and for carrying out the intervention measures for the agricultural sector, including, in order to the development of organic agriculture and the production of organic food.

For more than a decade, AIPA has won the trust of agricultural producers, offering them the chance to develop, to become sustainable and competitive, both nationally and internationally, by accessing grants and support programs intended for the private sector in rural areas.

For organic agriculture in 2021, 59 files were submitted and 54 files were approved, for a total amount of 6 733 246 lei, while in 2022 there is a decrease in the files submitted by 8 files compared to 2021. This positive evolution is due to the impediments encountered by farmers to apply for subsidy measures.



The agency carries out its mission of supporting the development of agriculture by focusing on the following areas of activity:

- ensuring the efficient and transparent management of funds allocated to support agricultural producers;
- monitoring the use of the funds allocated to the beneficiaries through field checks;
- participation in the development of subsidized directions and their promotion;
- continuous monitoring of compliance with the eligibility criteria and the contractual conditions for granting the non-reimbursable financial aid by the grant beneficiaries;
- providing transparency and communication with the interested public regarding agriculture, agricultural opportunities and innovations.



The Entrepreneurship Development Organization plays a special role in promoting and supporting organic agriculture, through the implementation of the Greening Program for Small and Medium Enterprises.

The purpose of the Greening Program for small and medium-sized enterprises is to create favorable conditions and support the business environment for the transition from the consumption economic development model to a model that uses the application of the principles of greening and the integration of green economy measures in the production processes of various branches of the national economy.

The program was approved by Government Decision no. 592/2019, which responds to the national priorities regarding the greening of enterprises, outlined in the following governmental acts:

- *The environmental strategy for the years 2014-2023 and the action plan regarding its implementation* (Government Decision no. 301/2014);
- *The low-emissions development strategy of the Republic of Moldova until 2030 and the action plan for its implementation* (Government Decision no. 1470/2016);
- *The energy strategy of the Republic of Moldova until 2030* (Government Decision no. 102/2013);
- *Waste management strategy in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2013-2027* (Government Decision no. 248/2013);
- *Water supply and sanitation strategy (2014-2028)* (Government Decision no. 199/2014).

o6.2 Subsidies for the organic farming and production

In accordance with the provisions of **Law no. 71/2023**, the Intervention and Payments Agency for Agriculture is responsible for the effective management of the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and the Rural Environment, including financial sources from development partners.

The main financial sources for subsidizing the respective submeasure are those from the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and the Rural Environment, and the methods of distributing the Fund's means between the support measures and submeasures are determined by MAIA in consultation with the professional associations of agricultural producers.

Subsidization to support the promotion and development of ecological agriculture is provided for in the provisions of Government Decision no. 455/2017, namely Submeasure 2.5, which provides financial support to all producers registered in the organic farming system as a compensatory payment for the loss of income and additional costs incurred by the beneficiaries who make voluntary commitments and undertake to remain in this farming system for a period of 5 years.

Starting from 2018 until 2023, the rate of authorized files in relation to submitted files varies on average from 88–97%, with the exception of 2022, when only 2 files out of 51 were authorized by AIPA, which represents approximately 4%. We mention that for the 2022 subsidy year, the approval and authorization of the files continues, this being in processing state, respectively the data will change after the approval and authorization of the remaining files.

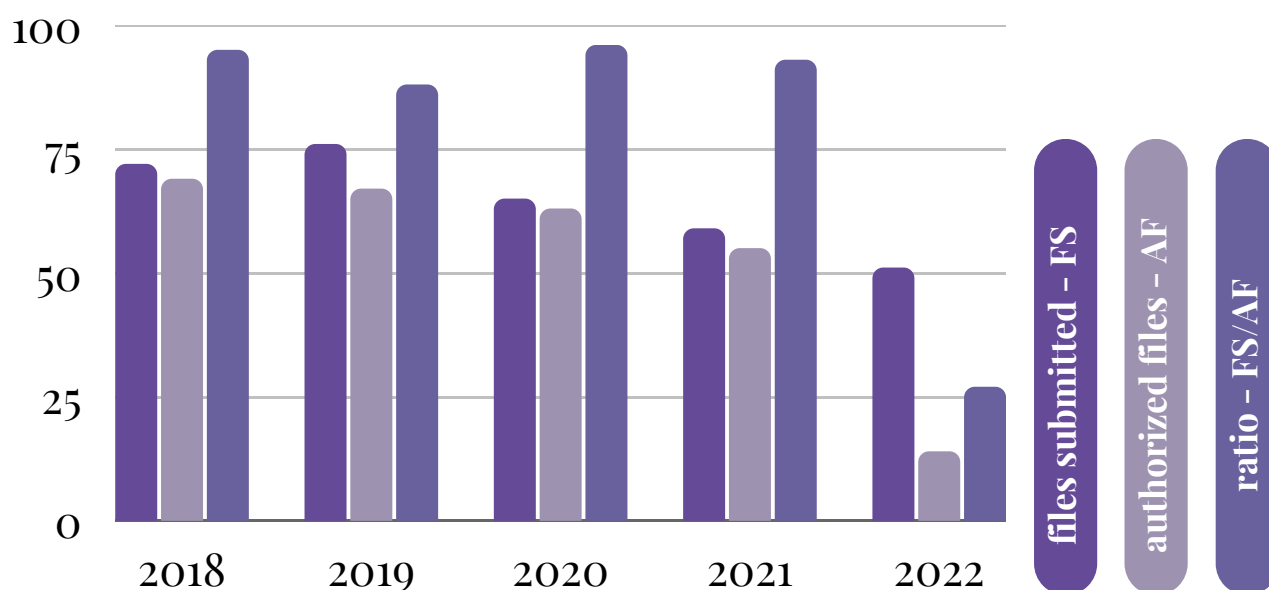
Table. 6.2.1 Number of files and amount of subsidies for Submeasure 2.5

The files submitted to submeasure 2.5 during the years 2018–2022						
Period	Files submitted	Authorized files	FS/AF	Requested amount	Authorized amount	SS/SA ratio
2018	72	69	95,83%	641850,1	596026	92,86%
2019	76	67	88,16%	1880008,23	1590179	84,58%
2020	71	69	97,18%	7317120,86	6636380	90,70%
2021	59	55	93,22%	7482167,8	6733246	89,99%
2022	51	2	3,92%	6925129,69	237342	3,43%

Source: Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture

The value of authorized files shows a positive increase in the amount authorized for subsidy files, from 596,026.00 in 2018, to 6,733,243.00 in 2021, an 11-fold increase compared to 2018, a fact appreciated positively, demonstrating the interest producers in the field of organic agriculture for the production of organic agri-food products but, on the one hand, also supporting the development and promotion of organic agriculture by the state through its institutions. The year 2022 remains outstanding in terms of payments, and the remaining files will be authorized and sent for payment during 2023.

Fig. 6.2.1 Files submitted and authorized under Submeasure 2.5



Source: Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture

The size of the support granted is calculated in the form of a quantum, expressed as a fixed amount per surface unit, and constitutes:

Table. 6.2.2 The amount of the subsidy granted for the conversion period

Category	Year 1 (mdl/1 ha)	Year 2 (mdl/1 ha)	Year 3 (mdl/1 ha)
a) orchards, vineyards, fruit and strawberry bushes	1500,00	2000,00	2500,00
b) medicinal and hetero-oleaginous plants	1300,00	1600,00	2000,00
c) field crops, pastures and hayfields	800,00	1000,00	-
d) vegetables	7000,00	8000,00	-
e) beekeeping	500,00 per family	-	-

Source: Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture

A fact positively appreciated by the farmers in the organic farming system.

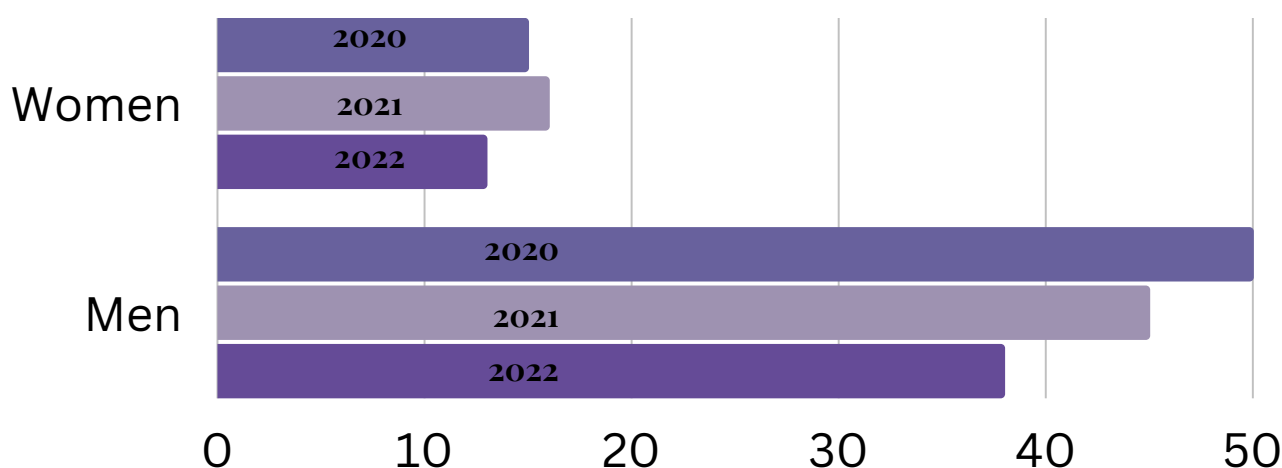
For the 2023 subsidy year, the proposals of the MOVCA Association were accepted and the amount for the conversion period will be increased for all crops, but vegetable producers will feel the increase the most:

- for vegetables in the first year of conversion, the amount will be increased from 3000.00 lei to 12000.00 lei;
- for vegetables, the amount will be increased in the second year of conversion from 3500.00 lei to 14000.00 lei;

Maintaining organic farming practices – 20% subsidy from the value of organically certified and marketed products

The data provided by the Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture indicate an increase in the number of files submitted and the area of maintaining organic agriculture in the period 2021-2022, in 2020 the largest area under conversion for which the state granted subsidies is attested .

Fig. 6.2.2 Women and men active in Organic Agriculture who benefited from subsidies



Source: Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture

Table. 6.2.3 Subsidies granted to producers in the Organic Agriculture

	2020		2021		2022	
	No. Files	Organic lands	No. Files	Organic lands	No. Files	Organic lands
In Organic Agriculture	27	3972	37	4450	34	4190
In conversion	40	4251	24	755	18	469

Source: Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture

In recent years, a great emphasis has been placed on the promotion and support of women in the field of agriculture, thus, some levers have been used to support them.

Beneficiaries of the subsidy, if they do not maintain themselves in the organic farming system for 5 years, return the amounts collected from the FNDAMR account.

If the conversion period is repeated for one and the same area, agricultural producers cannot benefit from financial support.

o6.3 Subsidies for NGOs in the organic farming sector

Since 2010, organic agriculture has experienced a positive evolution, being stimulated by consumers as well as involving civil society, namely NGOs. Namely, by attracting funding sources from both foreign donors and national institutions, they make it possible to get involved in supporting the field of ecological agriculture.

If we are to do a retrospective, the forces behind the development of agriculture and organic processing in Moldova, in recent years fall to MOVCA, as well as Eco Visio and Eco Local.

The experience of the years shows that the involvement of NGOs depends to a large extent on the funding received from donors. They are usually no longer active when the projects end. Some of them maintained the knowledge and networks they acquired in their organizations.

If we were to name a few Non-Governmental Organizations, which through the funds obtained from various donors have significantly contributed to the growth and development of agriculture and organic production, we could mention:

The National Association of Producers and Ecological Agricultural Products from Moldova, "APEM-AGRO", which was founded in 2010 and has approximately 40 members. The association promotes the ecological products of its members and organizes joint stands at local and international fairs.

ProRuralInvest ONG is a non-governmental, non-commercial, apolitical national organization. ProRuralInvest started its activities in June 2003 as a partner organization of Landell-Mills Management Consultants (Great Britain), which was responsible for the implementation in the Republic of Moldova of the Support for Investments and Rural Services Project. At the same time, the National Association of Ecological Farmers (APEM-AGRO), as well as the NGO ProRuralInvest, active in the past, currently have their activities suspended for unknown reasons (EkoConnect, 2020).

Another NGO - Eco Visio, started in 2013, the annual local fairs - IarmarEco, which sensitized consumers for sustainability, not only in terms of food products, but also hygiene products, textiles and energy. Following the campaign to promote domestic organic products, in the period 2015-2017, supported by the "People in Need Moldova" project, in 2018 the Association of Organic and Handicraft Consumers and Producers of Moldova (EcoLocal NGO) was created, which continued the organization of weekly markets in Chisinau.

So far these markets focus on artisanal and traditional products, but unfortunately certified organic products are still rare. EcoLocal creates the first and only web portal in the Republic of Moldova - Ecoportal.md. The portal is created to facilitate the connection between economic agents, who practice organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova, and consumers. Unfortunately, this portal cannot be accessed at this time.

"Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance" MOVCA is a non-governmental organization, which was founded in 2015. Its members include: farmers, processors, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, sellers, consumers, etc. To date, it is the largest association in the Republic of Moldova that supports organic agriculture.

The main aim of the association is to support all the operators and encourage all those interested in the organic farming value chain. Organic farming offers a unique solution to preserve soil quality for future generations. MOVCA facilitated the participation of Moldovan organic farmers in international fairs of organic products, which generated additional income for them.

In 2020, MOVCA launches the organic agriculture education platform: eLearning www.studii.movca.md.

**Moldova
Organic
Value
Chain
Alliance**



The platform is accessible to all comers and enjoys a record number of agricultural students and other participants in the organic farming value chain. MOVCA also launched its own sales platform.

06.4 Ongoing projects and programs to support the organic farming sector

Projects and programs regarding the support of the development of organic agriculture, are those direct financial contributions from the budget of foreign donors, granted as donations to third party beneficiaries, usually non-profit organizations involved in supporting good practices in the field of organic agriculture.

Over the years, the Republic of Moldova has benefited from several grants within the ongoing projects and programs, which significantly contributed to the development of organic agriculture.

The Rural Competitiveness and Resilience Project in Moldova, implemented with the financial support of **USAID**, offers grants to finance and support efforts to diversify markets, increase competitiveness and resilience to climate change, and create an entrepreneurial environment favorable to the development of high-value agriculture through initiatives implemented at the national level.

The total value of the project is approximately 22,860,000.00 lei, but not more than 11,000,000.00 lei per beneficiary.

The project implementation period is 2023 - 2026.



Photo source: Pixels.com

The Rural Resilience Project (PRR) funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), through the Adaptation Program for Small Producers and implemented by the Consolidated Project Implementation Unit is designed to improve the living conditions of the rural population, reduce poverty by strengthening resilience to climate change and improve economic opportunities.

In order to achieve these objectives within the PRR, financial support will be granted to agricultural producers in the form of grants, for the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives in agricultural activities.

Eligible investments in the field of organic agriculture are: machines and equipment used in the production system of organic crops and machines for the distribution of organic fertilizers.

The size of the grant within the project varies:

- For registered ***enterprises/individuals***: **70% of the investment/agricultural machinery cost, but not more than US\$5,000 per beneficiary;**
- For ***cooperatives***: **50% of the investment/agricultural equipment cost, but not more than US\$15,000 per grant applicant.**



Another is the ***Small Grants Program (SGP)*** of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through which the donor's intervention is pursued in areas such as: climate change, environment and energy. The total budget for the given project is 2.84 million USD, project implemented from 2012 to 2024.

The project aims that once its objectives are implemented, it will result in the promotion of innovative climate-smart organic agriculture.





07

Selection and testing of varieties

Photo source: Pixels.com



Photo source: Pixels.com

07.1 Recommending suitable varieties for organic farming

The variety is one of the main factors that determine the productivity and quality of agricultural production. Therefore, the correct choice of the variety can only be made through field testing, in different agroclimatic conditions and in comparison with the control varieties - well-known and cultivated varieties in the Republic of Moldova.

The results of testing domestic and foreign varieties obtained in the official network of the State Commission are generalized annually, and the most valuable ones, by the Decision of the National Council for Plant Varieties, are admitted to the Catalog of Plant Varieties and are recommended for use in the agro-food complex of the Republic of Moldova.

The State Commission tests the cultural and use value of domestic and foreign plant varieties and their criteria of distinctiveness, uniformity and stability in the event that the registration of these varieties in the Catalog of Plant Varieties is requested.

The State Commission, as an expert body, upon request, based on the results of the technical expertise, prepares a technical examination report which it sends to the State Agency for Intellectual Property and which serves as the basis for granting the patent for the plant variety.

Varieties testing, of any genus and species of plants, is carried out in testing centers located in different agroclimatic zones of the Republic of Moldova, which form the variety testing network, and in agricultural institutions and laboratories.

The role of the State Commission for the Testing of Plant Varieties - CSTSP (www.cstsp.md) is to correctly identify the varieties that will best realize their production potential and quality in one or another culture area, which would capitalize on the climatic potential of the specific area and locality.

The specialists in the territory carry out the testing of the varieties according to well-determined methodologies, statistically process the data obtained and present the reports on each crop to the central office of the State Commission, where the main specialists analyze the results received from all the testing centers/sectors and prepare proposals for changing the current assortment of varieties.

Objectives of the State Commission for Testing Plant Varieties:

- **Varietal testing for distinctiveness, uniformity and stability (DUS);**
- **Varietal testing for cultural and use value (VCU);**
- **Authenticity and Purity Testing (Post-Control);**
- **Testing in production and ecological conditions;**
- **Generalization of proposals regarding the registration/deletion of plant varieties and issuing the order;**
- **Editing of the Catalog of Plant Varieties admitted for production and marketing in the Republic of Moldova;**
- **Represents the country in relations with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).**



The Catalog of Plant Varieties of the Republic of Moldova is an official annual edition and represents a database of plant varieties allowed for cultivation in the agro-food complex of the Republic of Moldova.

According to the Law of the Republic of Moldova no. 39 – XVI of February 29, 2008 regarding the protection of plant varieties, the varieties can be used in the production process only after official testing by the State Commission for Testing Plant Varieties.

The inclusion and deletion of varieties from the Catalog of Plant Varieties is carried out based on the decision of the State Commission for the Testing of Plant Varieties.

The Catalog of Plant Varieties for the year 2022 includes 2966 varieties, of which 95 are new.

The Catalog of Plant Varieties for the year 2023 includes 2930 varieties, of which 86 are new and 3 varieties of plants recommended for cultivation in organic conditions.

**XV. LISTA SOIURILOR DE PLANTE RECOMANDATE
PENTRU CULTIVARE ÎN CONDIȚII ECOLOGICE**

Total – 3 soiuri

Denumirea soiului	Numărul origina- torului	Anul includerii în Catalog	Indicii			
			1	2	3	6
2	3	5	7	8	9	12

GRÂU COMUN (*Triticum aestivum* L.) – 3 soiuri

ASZITA	336	2022	R	al	t	S
NUMITOR	1	2022	R	al	t	S
TENGRI	336	2022	R	al	t	S

The Catalog of Plant Varieties for the year 2023 includes 3 varieties of Common Wheat recommended for cultivation in organic conditions.

https://cstsp.md/uploads/files/Registrul_2023_Tipar_Gray.pdf

For efficient and sustainable food production in organic farming, careful consideration must be given to crop rotation, variety selection and technology. Since most of the available varieties have been selected for conventional farming, the potential of organic farming has not been fully explored.

Some important characteristics in organic farming, such as resistance to seed-borne diseases, weed suppression or nutrient efficiency (ENU), are not the most important parameters for the selection of varieties where these deficiencies are solved by the application of pesticides and mineral fertilizers. Another aspect concerns the problem of selecting an efficient root system, which is completely overlooked in conventional agriculture.

Breeders around the world are beginning to focus on producing varieties under organic conditions for use in organic farming, with the aim of stabilizing the production and quality of organic food.

The selection of plant varieties used in the organic system must meet the requirements for high yields for high-quality production, taking into account the nutritional and technological properties of organic food and the hygienic requirements of production.

Choosing the right variety for your local climate, field and market conditions can minimize losses and increase yield success and yield quality.

Address CSTSP:

MD 2004, Chișinău,
bd. Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt, 180

www.cstsp.md
info@cstsp.md



08

Science and research

Photo source: Pixels.com



Photo source: Pixels.com

o8.1 Science and research in the field of organic agriculture

Organic agriculture is a production system that supports the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It thus combines tradition, innovation and science promoting fair relations and a good quality of life for all actors involved.

Research in organic farming is funded by European and national research programs as well as national organic action plans. Since the mid-1990s, several ecological research projects focused on organic farming have been funded through the Horizon 2020 framework programme.

In 2021, the CORE Organic network, which joins forces with EU member states to fund transnational research projects, launched its third call for research proposals: "Organic farming systems for improved mixed plant and animal production".

The funding network consists of 13 funding bodies from 13 countries, and the call committee has selected five project proposals under the sub-themes 'Robust and resilient mixed livestock production systems' and 'Support for robust and resilient crop production systems', which started in autumn 2021.

Collaboration with the European Technology Platform TP Organics and other relevant actors in the sector helped to ensure that the voice of transnational organizations representing farmers, industry and civil society was taken into account. With the Organic Eprints open access repository, a shared knowledge reservoir has been created for effective dissemination of research results.

Table. 8.1 Financing from the state budget of scientific institutions with an agricultural profile under MAIA

Financing of scientific institutions from the state budget, for the year 2023				
				thousands of lei
Name of the institution	Applied scientific research in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	Applied scientific research in the field of environmental protection		Total
	0482/5107/80009– Themes and projects carried out within state programs	0482/5107/80010 – Institutional scientific research	0550/7007/80009–Themes and projects carried out within state programs	
Research Institute for Field Crops "Selection"	1.835,80	21.329,50	0,00	23.165,30
Public Institution: Phytotechnic Institute "Porumbeni", Pașcani, Criuleni	3.494,00	20.631,80		24.125,80
Public Institution: "Nicolae Dimo" Institute of Pedology, Agrochemistry and Soil Protection, Chisinau	1.603,50	9.429,00	1.324,40	12.356,90

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

08.2 Scientific and research institutions

IP Field Crops Research Institute "Selecția",

Founded in 1944 in Bălți, it is the research institution that sets as its objectives and directions of activity the system of organic agriculture and the system of circular agriculture.

The institution implements a research program in the field of ecological agriculture.

The institute's field experience Selection over the years with different crop rotations and soil tillage and fertilization systems, without the use of chemical means to combat diseases, pests and weeds.



Contacts

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The directions of scientific activity and production of the institute are:

- Creation of varieties and hybrids of field crops, tolerant to the main diseases and pests, to adverse environmental factors; with high production quality indices;
- Production of seeds in the primary links and the multiplication of high reproduction seeds on a contract basis with the seed farms;
- Development of ecologically harmless technologies for cultivating field crops, which ensure the saving of non-renewable energy resources and the conservation of natural resources;
- Development of innovative agricultural systems, which ensure the sustainable development of the branch, the reproduction of soil fertility and the production of organic products, the reduction of global warming, the provision of organic services for society.

During 74 years of activity at ICCC "Selection", 349 varieties and hybrids were selected, of which 160 were approved, including 17 varieties of winter wheat, 15 varieties of winter barley, 16 varieties of peas, 18 varieties of soybeans, 12 varieties of beans, 18 hybrids of sunflower, 6 varieties of sugar beet, etc. a.

Alternative farming systems are widely promoted in agricultural practice in the country by organizing seminars, conferences, radio and TV shows; IP ICCC "The Selection" collaborates with various scientific institutions in the country and abroad; participates with projects and as experts in the European research programs Horizon 2020; bilateral projects.

The 2021–2022 agricultural year was a dry one, which led to a reduction in the production level of all field crops. In such conditions it was possible to carry out research in the field:

- evaluation of the "effect of rotation" against the background of the application and without the application of fertilizers;
- determining the weight of crop rotation, tillage and soil fertilization systems in forming the production level;
- applying the effect of crop fertilization with different fertilization systems within the rotation;
- estimating the effectiveness of irrigation and fertilization of winter wheat and sugar beet in crop rotation.



Institute of Genetics, Physiology and Plant Protection

In its current structure, it was founded at the initiative of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova on October 1, 2013 by merging the Institute of Plant Genetics and Physiology of the ASM and the Institute of Plant Protection and Organic Agriculture of the ASM in accordance with the Government Decision of the Republic of Moldova No. 270 of 18.04.2013. The merged institutes have a history of several decades based on scientific achievements recognized in the country and abroad.

From 2019, according to the provisions of GD no. 50/2018, regarding the activity of public law organizations in the fields of research and innovation, the founding capacity of the IGFP was exercised by the Ministry of Education and Research, the name of the institute being modified by excluding the reference to the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

According to HG no. 485/2022, regarding the reorganization through merger (absorption) of some institutions in the fields of education, research and innovation, the IGFP entered the subordination of the State University of Moldova.

Research projects from the State Program (2020-2023)

Sustainable agriculture, food security and food safety.

- The effective utilization of plant genetic resources and advanced biotechnologies in order to increase the adaptability of crop plants and climate change, project leader dr. hab. Vasile Botnari
- Reducing the consequences of climate change by creating and implementing varieties of medicinal and aromatic plants with high productivity, resistant to drought, wintering, diseases, which ensure the sustainable development of agriculture, guaranteeing high quality products, predestined for the perfumery, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, food industry, project leader dr. hab. Goncariuc Maria
- Long-term ex-situ conservation of plant genetic resources in the gene bank with the use of molecular biology methods in testing the health status of plant germplasm, project leader Dr. Ganea Anatolie
- Directed formation of the quality of the immune system in the fruits of late varieties intended for long-term storage, project leader dr. hab. Nicolae Bujoreanu



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- Strengthening the capabilities of forecasting and combating harmful organisms and analysis of phytosanitary risks in integrated plant protection, project leader dr. hab. Todiras Vladimir
- Development of alternative methods of controlling harmful arthropods in different agricultural cenoses based on ecologically inoffensive means and procedures, project leader dr. hab. Nastas Tudor

Environment and climate change.

- Biotechnologies and genetic procedures for evaluation, conservation and valorization of agrobiodiversity, project manager Dr. Andronic Larisa
- Determining the parameters that characterize the resistance of plants with different levels of organization to the action of extreme temperatures in order to reduce the effects of climate change, project leader dr. hab. Alexander Dascaluc
- Synergism between natural factors and ecologically harmless microbiological means of regulating the density of populations of harmful organisms for the protection of agricultural crops in conventional and ecological agriculture, project leader dr. hab. Voloshchiuk Leonid

International projects

- CA18201 - An integrated approach to conservation of threatened plants for the 21st Century

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18201/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA18210 - Oxygen sensing a novel mean for biology and technology of fruit quality

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18210/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA16123 - Safety Culture and Risk Management in Agriculture

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA16123/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA18224 - Green Chemical Engineering Network towards upscaling sustainable processes

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18224/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA19116 - Trace metal metabolism in plants

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA19116/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA19123 - Protection, Resilience, Rehabilitation of damaged environment

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA19123/#tabs|Name:overview>

- CA19125 - EPIgenetic mechanisms of Crop Adaptation to Climate Change

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA19125/#tabs|Name:overview>



Photo source: Pixels.com

VITROHUB

Planting material, including for organic agriculture, is researched in the latest generation laboratory such as VITROHUB, the only one of its kind in the Republic of Moldova.

He works within the Faculty of Biology and Pedology of the State University of the Republic of Moldova, established in 2021 at the initiative of the Euro Alun company.



The purpose of the laboratory being one of solving the problem of farmers in the country, namely the devirusing of the planting material, both the imported planting material and the one produced in the country.

Farmers benefit from quality planting material free of pathogens, with a much stronger root, with a vigorous, healthy stem, resistant to pests and diseases, thanks to the fact that the **VITROHUB** project is designed to be able to offer the best quality planting material, from the point of view of the traceability of the varieties and their health. In the given case, they are VIRUS-FREE micropropagated plants, which would reduce the costs of transport, labor, expenses for energy consumption and fuels and would lead to the possibility of setting a lower local price than on the foreign market.

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Promotion

Photo source: Pixels.com



Photo source: Pixels.com

09.1 Promotion of the organic sector in the Republic of Moldova

The organic agriculture sector in the Republic of Moldova has experienced positive dynamics in recent years. In the European Union, including in the Republic of Moldova, the most used communication methods are consultancy and technical assistance, professional training programs, education and research, investment grants for demonstration projects, support for the establishment of institutional structures and the improvement of their activity.

An essential condition for the development of organic agriculture is the promotion of the concept of organic agriculture in order to make consumers aware of the advantages of consuming organic products, so that they offer a higher price for organically grown products, the quality of which is guaranteed by an inspection system and certification.

An important role in promoting ecological agriculture, apart from the previously mentioned instruments, is also played by the state, by providing financial support through the Investment Agency for participation in Biofach, one of the largest international exhibitions of its kind.

The key element for the promotion of organic agriculture is a strategy to develop the information system regarding the organic food market, by increasing the educational level of consumers, providing all the necessary information to consumers and producers, ensuring full transparency in terms of production standards.

The European Commission has developed a plan for the development of organic agriculture, which focuses on methods to increase the consumption of organic products, emphasizing the importance of information and communication about its benefits. A separate chapter of the plan also includes promoting the consumption of organic products, through campaigns, stimulating the adoption of organic products in public canteens and the distribution of organic products in preschool and school canteens, because consumption education is the most important.

In recent years, attempts have been made to promote the internal market with local organic products, by organizing various fairs and events in which local agricultural producers participate with organic products.



A fairly effective channel in promoting organic agriculture is represented by media platforms. One of the most important media platforms for promoting organic agriculture has become agricultural portal no. 1 in Moldova Agrobiznes.md.

Agrobiznes is a tech-media project dedicated to promoting good practices in agriculture, modern technologies and digital solutions that come to optimize the activity of producers in the agricultural sector. Launched 10 years ago in Chisinau, Agrobiznes expanded further in Romania in 2021 – www.agrobiznes.ro and in Italy in 2022 – www.agrobiznes.it, and one of the basic objectives is to remove borders in agriculture, bringing more almost everything that stands for innovation and performance.

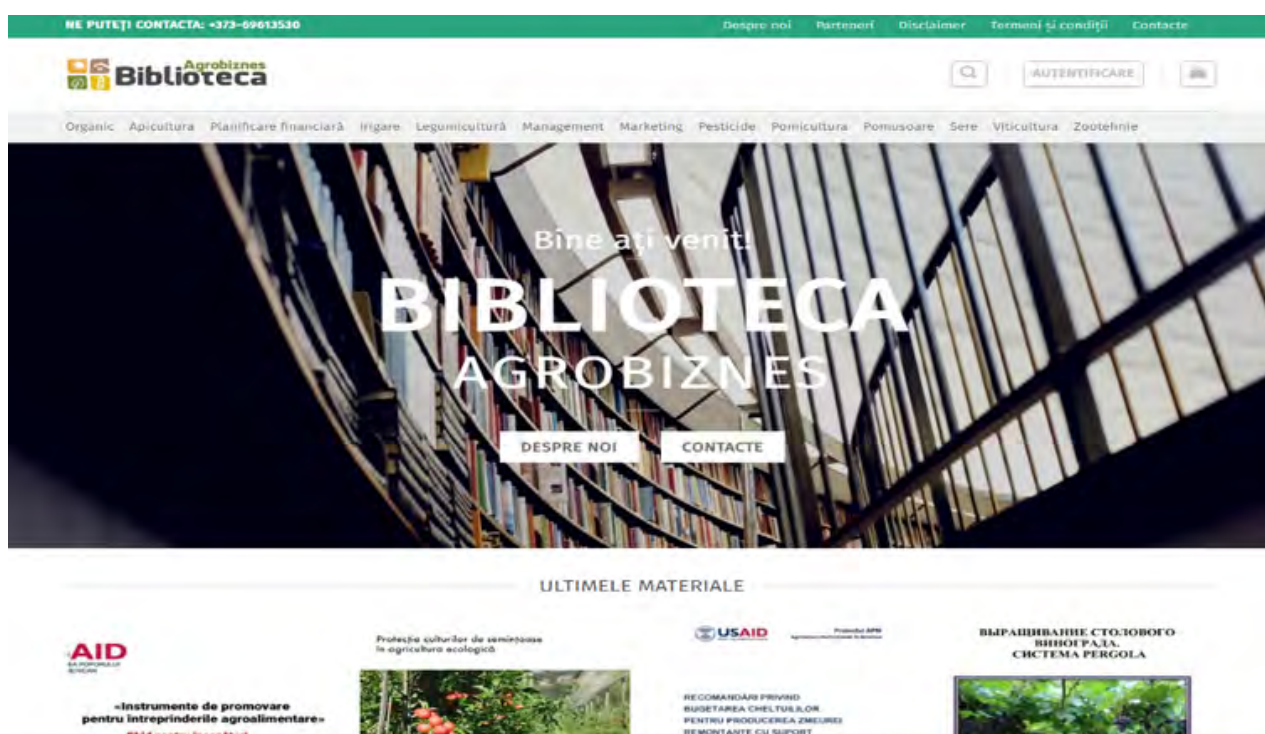
With the support of the Public Education for Development Association (AED), through the partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, the Value Chain Alliance in Organic Agriculture from Moldova, Ecovisio and People in Need, the AgroEco page, currently InfOrgnic, was created.



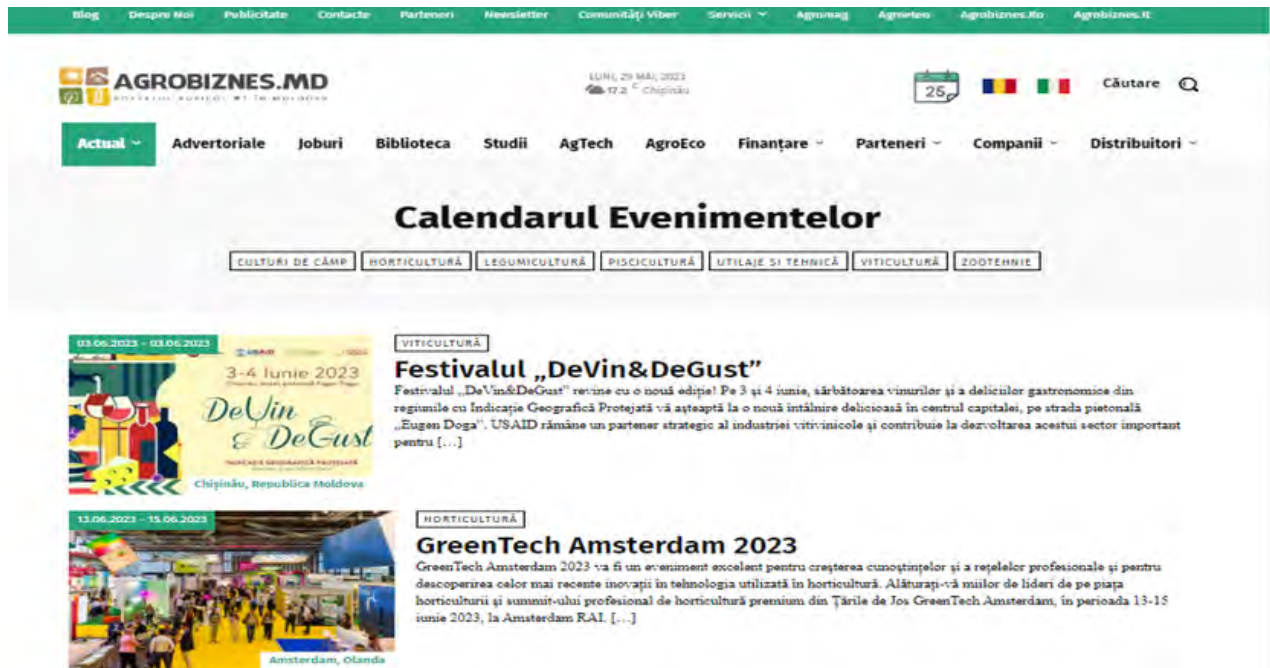
AgroEco includes relevant information on organic and sustainable production, success stories of organically certified or conversion producers, project-developed organic farming brochures, infographics, videos and other useful information.

In 2021, Agrobiznes Portal launched the first digital agricultural library in Moldova – Agrobiznes Library. Within it, useful information is placed, and in partnership with existing associations and projects, both studies, analyzes and brochures related to sustainable, ecological or high-performance agriculture are available for farmers.

Among the partners of the project are the Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance (MOVCA), the Public Education Association for Development (AED), UCIP IFAD, USAID/APM, ACED, AMIB.



Hundreds of events dedicated to agriculture and the food industry are organized annually at the national and international level, and many of them are missed by farmers, due to the lack of their promotion at the national level. In order to exclude misinformation from agricultural producers regarding the events dedicated to this sector, Agrobizes, in partnership with ProCredit Bank, launched in 2022 the Agricultural Events Calendar. The calendar includes information about exhibitions, fairs, conferences, seminars, field days and other important events organized nationally and internationally.



Another media portal is Agro TV Moldova, which produces a series of shows with an informative, analytical and educational content, using all journalistic genres such as news, reports, interviews, talk shows and others. The main objective is to inform citizens about agro-industrial realities, the tasks facing farmers and competent institutions, as well as the process of implementing these tasks.

AgroMedia is a portal that promotes organic agriculture, with the topics of informing farmers about the latest trends in agriculture, promoting success stories and motivating farmers to try something new. This portal combines both the latest news in the field of organic agriculture in Moldova and in the world.

In order to increase the importance and promotion of organic agriculture at the national and international level, joint meetings between the ministerial team, farmers in the sector, donors and foreign experts take place within the Ministry.

Also, through the specialized Associations, various trainings of farmers take place with the participation of national and international experts as well as foreign volunteers willing to share their knowledge and experience in the field of organic agriculture.



10

Beekeeping

Photo source: MOVCA

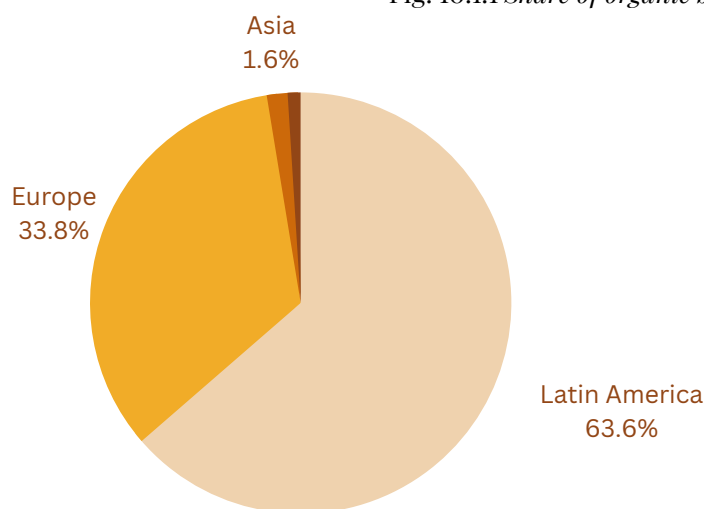
Photo source: MOVCA

10.1 Organic beekeeping on a global scale and in the Republic of Moldova

Organic beekeeping has registered a constant growth worldwide and is becoming a trend for beekeeping in the Republic of Moldova. Worldwide, between 2010 and 2022, the number of ecologically certified beehives increased six times. Latin America and Eastern Europe are the forerunners who have considerably increased the production of organic honey, being certainly dictated by the demands and culture of the local consumer and the increase in consumption worldwide.

Creating the market for organic honey and increasing consumption for certified organic honey comes as a promoter for vector growth trends in organic beekeeping. At the same time, this increase in demand on the organic honey market is also dictated by the trends of using organic honey in the production of organic processed foods such as cereal bars or pastry products.

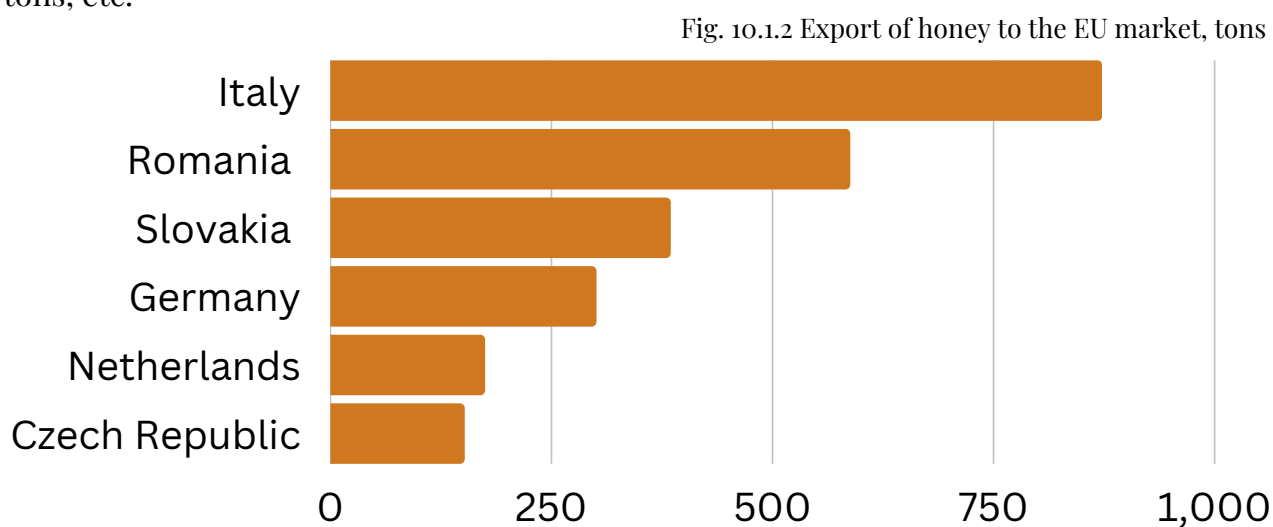
Fig. 10.1.1 *Share of organic beekeeping worldwide*



Source: The world of organic agriculture

Beekeeping in the Republic of Moldova is one of the important sectors of agriculture, having a major role in the pollination of entomophilous agricultural crops. According to some estimates, the benefits obtained through beekeeping products constitute only 25-30% of the total value offered by bees, the rest being the increased harvests of vegetable crops.

In 2022, the total export of bee honey was over 3385 tons. The main destination of bee honey from the Republic of Moldova continues to be the EU countries, where approximately 2893 tons are exported, of which: Italy 872 tons, Romania 587 tons, Slovakia 384 tons, Germany 300 tons, the Netherlands 174 tons, the Czech Republic 151 tons, etc.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

We are all aware of the fact that the export of honey in bulk cannot bring the expected benefits, the added value of this product passing to the benefit of those links of the commercial chain that deal with the packaging of honey in packages intended for the final consumer and traders.

In this sense, through FNDAMR, subsidies are allocated for the establishment and modernization of honey and bee products processing units, which will collect honey from beekeepers, package it and export it in a different way than we have seen so far .

The support from the state for the establishment of these units is 50% of the investment value (building materials, machinery and equipment), but no more than 5.0 million lei per beneficiary per year.

The state continues to subsidize investments in conventional beekeeping, including organic beekeeping. During the conversion period for ecological beekeeping, the state offers 500 lei/year. Afterwards, 20% of the value of each kg of honey sold is given.

Thus, the subsidies for conventional beekeeping, including organic, are as follows:

- 50% for queens over 12 months, but no more than 150 thousand lei per beneficiary per year;
- 50% for swarms with queens over 12 months old, but no more than 300 thousand lei per beneficiary per year;
- 50% for the purchase of machinery or equipment, but no more than 1.0 million lei per beneficiary per year.

Apiculture is a sub-sector that has great perspective, because in this field the most young farmers are attracted, and the investments are the lowest compared to other agricultural fields. For example, in previous years, for the measure of advance subsidies, about 80% of the beneficiaries were young people who requested financial support for investments in beekeeping.

At the same time, beekeeping is one of the digitized fields, recently a BeeProtect Information System has been implemented, intended for the protection of the honey bee, which will prevent bee poisoning following the use of phytosanitary products.

10.2 Conversion period or transition from conventional beekeeping to organic beekeeping

At the basis of the attractiveness of ecological beekeeping and the increasing interest of beekeepers in switching from conventional practices to organic practices is the finished product - organic certified honey. Honey produced in organic conditions is a product with added value and can be sold directly with a high added value, at a good price directly to the consumer.



**Conventional
Beekeeping**

**Organic
Beekeeping**



Important for the conventional beekeeper in making the decision to switch to organic beekeeping is to take into account the requirements and norms to be respected both during the conversion period and in the practice of organic beekeeping. Organic beekeeping requires not only compliance with ecological standards but also the practice of systemic activities and thorough monitoring of bee welfare.

Stages and period of conversion:

First stage: It lasts a total of 12 months and begins with the entry of the bees into the winter and the provision of food for the entire wintering period.

Second stage: It lasts up to 3 years and during this period both the practices and the beekeeping equipment and machinery are replaced, including the honeycombs, the place where the honey is stored and preserved.



Conversion Terms:

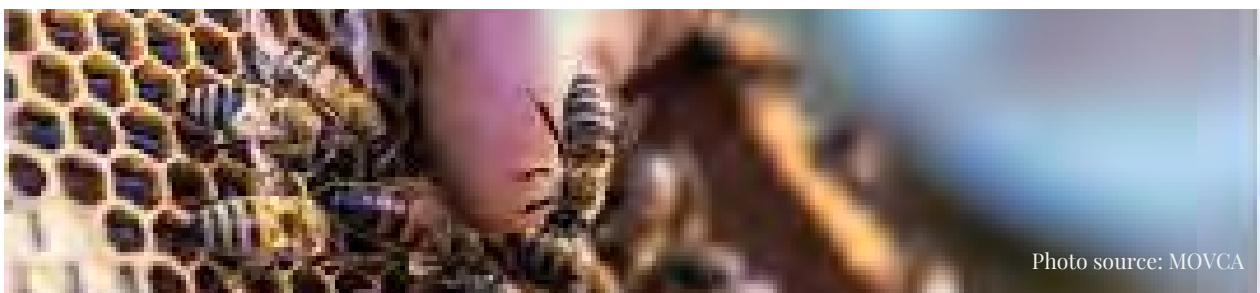
- Contracting the organic certification body for inspection and guidance;
- Use of food for bees allowed by the norms of organic production;
- Treating bees with natural preparations;
- Use of equipment and machinery allowed by the requirements in organic production;
- Use of uncontaminated wax

The certification can be done immediately if the measures applied until now are documented and de facto confirmed that the apiary is already operating according to the organic principles of raising and exploiting bees.

Fast conversion

The conversion process from conventional beekeeping to organic beekeeping can also be done in shorter terms in terms of time if all the bee colonies are placed simultaneously on wax honeycomb frames without residue or on natural honeycombs, so the replacement of the wax can be done in - a single stage. After replacing the wax, in the forced no brood phase allows acid treatment reducing the risk of infestation and disease.

The disadvantage of the fast conversion phase would be the lower honey harvest in the conversion year.



10.3 Strategic objectives of organic beekeeping

Organic beekeeping aims to reach the compromise between the delicate growth of bees and the high quality of honey obtained by implementing natural processes to support the existence of bees, ensuring the vitality and development of bee colonies.

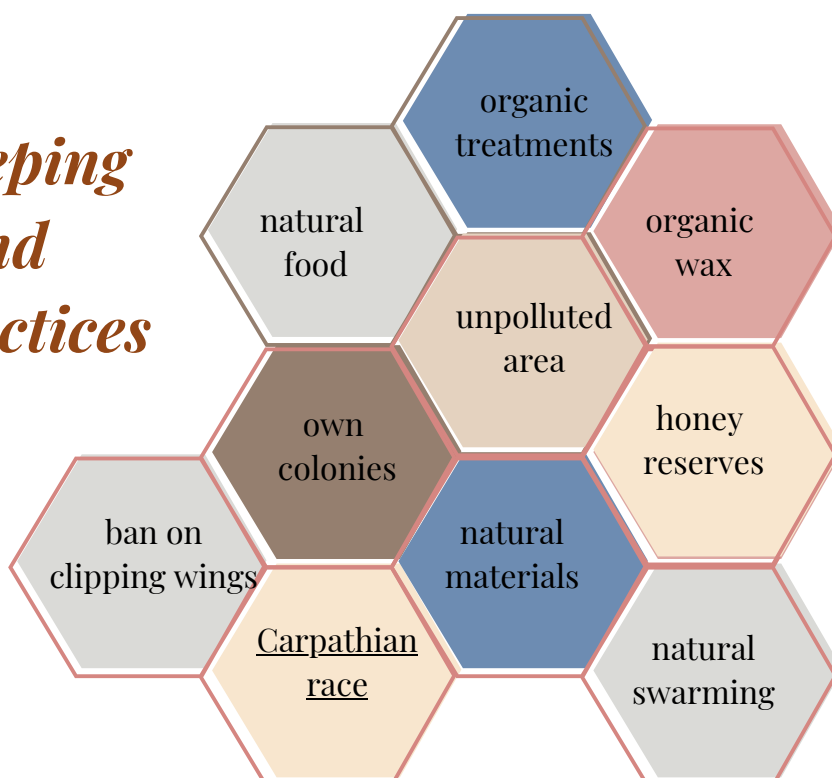


The provisions of the ecological regulations come to guarantee the maintenance, breeding, reproduction and feeding of honeybees in an environmentally friendly way and which prioritizes the specific needs of the species. Organic beekeepers have great freedom of choice and power to focus on bee colony vitality and high honey productivity.

Emphasis on vitality is placed through the use of natural honeycombs, natural swarming, the use of own queens in reproduction, selection according to the criterion of vitality and feeding the bees only with their own or ecologically certified honey.

The practice of increasing honey productivity or increasing production allows the use of artificial honeycombs, which leads to the reduction of drones, artificial swarming, the use of artificial queens, selection based on productivity and efficiency.

Organic Beekeeping Emphasis and Mandatory Practices



Basic principles and practices in organic beekeeping in the Republic of Moldova:

- Placing the apiary in the area of organic crops or natural areas, minimizing the negative impact of the environment;
- The construction material of the beehives is only of natural origin and only using water-based coating paints;
- The use of natural honeycombs or the construction of artificial honeycombs only from organic wax or without residues;
- The Carpathian breed of bees, acclimatized and resistant to the conditions of the Republic of Moldova;
- Reproduction by natural swarming, excluding the use of foreign queens, artificial insemination allowed only with the title of exception, cutting the tips of the queens' wings is prohibited;
- Additional feeding of bees only with their own honey or organic products;
- Periodic additional disease prevention measures;
- Treatment of varosis only with the use of natural preparations, for example, lactic acid, formic acid, oxalic acid, timor, camphor;
- Pest control only when necessary and with the use of organic active substances;
- Practices that ensure beekeeping without residues;
- Honey processing at a temperature no higher than 40 °C.

10.4 Mandatory requirements and criteria in the practice of organic beekeeping

The location of the apiary and the choice of the hearth is crucial for organic beekeeping, the location influences not only the health and vitality of the bees but also the honey harvest. An important criterion in this case is access to the honey base, the food source. The honeydew base needs to be available in sufficient quantities throughout the entire beekeeping season, from early spring to late fall. The development of bee colonies in the spring depends on how close the flowering plantations are and on the diversity and attractiveness of the flowers as the indispensable honey base during the hibernation of the bees.

Before choosing a beehive, it is important to obtain the consent of the neighbors.

Important in choosing the land for the apiary is also its vicinity. The honey resources must be at a distance of several hundred meters from the hive, but at the same time it must be taken into account that the bee has a flight radius of at least 3 km and they can use the honey base in the vicinity. People living nearby and farmers who have land around the location of the apiary must be informed and give their consent for the location of the apiary.

Honeycomb base - an important factor in the placement of the ecological apiary

Rich and diverse sources of honey plants provide the bees' food base, being essential for the good development of bee colonies throughout the entire beekeeping year.

The honeydew base that allows bees to grow after winter and exponentially increase the bee colony:

- Shrubs and hedges such as hazel, willow, dovecot;
- Trees such as Norway maple and horse chestnut;
- Fruit trees such as cherry tree;
- Berries such as red currant, blueberry and strawberry;
- Wild plants such as snowdrops, gorse, dandelions and marigolds;
- Legumes such as clover;
- Cruciferous - rapeseed.

The honey base with the pollen and nectar content that allows the storage of honey as well as the storage of pollen and nectar for the winter:

- Shrubs and hedges such as the willow, the black elder and the rose;
- Wild trees such as acacia, chestnut and jugaster;
- Fruit trees - apple tree;
- Berries such as strawberry, raspberry, red currant, blueberry and blackberry;
- Field crops such as maize, buckwheat, sunflower, phacelia and mustard;
- Legumes such as phacelia, sulfina, alfalfa and clover;
- Crucifers - camelina and white mustard;
- Umbelliferae - cumin and coriander.

Water source - an important factor in choosing the hearth of the apiary

In addition to the honey base as a source of food for bees, the water source is also important for the location of the apiary. Access to clean water is important for bee colony development, disease protection and bee peace. To reduce the risk of disease, apiaries should be at least 3000 m flying distance from open and chemical waste dumps.

Access to clean water should be easy and quick for the bees and be in a sunny, warm and wind-free place. Reducing disruptions to clean water supply also reduces the risk of bees using less clean water sources.

If there are no natural sources of drinking water available nearby in the bee's flight area, a watering can is installed outside the hive that will be kept clean, with the water periodically refreshed throughout the growing season. Bee waterers are installed after late winter cleaning flights, as soon as temperatures rise above 10 °C.

Ensuring an ideal microclimate in choosing the location of the apiary

In order to ensure a favorable environment for bees, in addition to choosing the honey base or the food source as well as the water source, there are also other characteristics that ensure the bee's well-being. It is important that the place is protected from the wind, that it is dry and warm, and that the hive is placed under trees or deciduous trees to protect it from the hot sun during the summer. An important factor is the orientation of the eaves, it must be oriented to the southeast or southwest.

The location of the apiary in winter must ensure access to good sunlight, this in the afternoon favors cleaning flights. During the spring and summer the early exposure of the hives to sunlight is crucial in ensuring an early flight of the bees.



Changing the hive too differently can cause stress to the bees and this risk should be minimized.

In the natural environment, a bee colony lives only in one place and the flora in the immediate vicinity is known to it, which ensures the bee's survival. For this reason, changing the location of the hive causes stress to the bee colonies and the adaptation to the new environment takes time, at the same time the stress is also caused by the process of transporting the hives, especially during the summer heat. It would be advisable not to change the apiary too frequently and the location too different. Bee colonies can withstand one or two changes per summer well. The strength and vitality of bee colonies decreases in direct proportion with the number of changes.

The risks caused by the change of location and the stress caused to the bee colony also persist in organic pastoral beekeeping.

Beekeepers move their hive several times during the flight season of the bee in search of new honey bases, a favorable thing in identifying a rich honey base but available for a short period of time.

The hive - specific features in organic beekeeping

In organic beekeeping, the construction material for the hives must be natural, and wood is mostly used in the construction of the hives. Treating hives is recommended only with water-based paints. Hives can be multi-story or beehives in a bee pavilion (practice used in Switzerland). Multi-tiered hives are boxes open at the top and bottom and can be adjusted during the period of use. The advantage of hives in the apiary pavilion is that the hives can be pulled back which makes them accessible in all weather conditions and the beekeepers can extract honey directly in the pavilion.



Photo Source: Regina Naturii

Honeycombs built naturally and artificial honeycombs

In the shape of the natural building the honeycomb is irregular versus the one built on the wax strip. The advantage of natural honeycomb formation is increasing the health of the bee colony and stimulating the formation of the identity of a bee family given the fact that the building of a natural honeycomb is a social process. The best transition period to natural honeycomb formation is the swarming period and is possible for every hive system.

In organic beekeeping, recycled beeswax is used as support for the formation of the artificial honeycomb. The 3 mm thick wax strip with a hexagonal and embossed structure is used by bees in the construction of the artificial honeycomb either for raising brood or storing honey. The wax strip helps the bees to organize and accelerate the formation of the respective honeycomb, increasing the honey harvest. The artificial honeycomb fills the wooden frames well and facilitates both checking the filling and later, centrifuging the honey.

Swarming - natural reproduction process in organic beekeeping

Bee colony propagation in organic beekeeping is done by dividing the colony by swarming part of the colony. Swarming is the culmination of a beekeeping year, the bee storing a reserve of honey is only a condition for a successful swarm. While the beekeeper's primary concern is honey production, bee colonies serve different purposes.



Photo Source: Regina Naturii



11

Partners

Photo source: Pixels.com



Photo source: Pixels.com

11.1 Organizations and Associations involved in the organic agriculture sector

Development partners and donors, both international and local, have contributed over the years to the development of the predominantly new sector for our country. The contribution of science is an indispensable one for a field that is gaining momentum and including not only the component of innovations but also the training of farmers in the application of good practices and innovative technologies.

Central Institute for Agricultural Supervision and Testing of the Czech Republic (ÚKZÚZ)



CZECH REPUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



The ÚKZÚZ organization is an administrative authority and a specialized public administration body under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. It is an organizational unit of the state system. The institute administers and performs other administrative activities, expert and testing tasks, control and monitoring activities in the fields of: fertilizers and soil, plant varieties, seeds and roots, perennial plants, protection against harmful organisms, plant protection products, food, organic agriculture and laboratories.

Donor – Czech Development Agency (CZDA)

Period of implementation – 2017–2023

The objective of the project is to support organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova in accordance with EU requirements. The aim of the project – to strengthen the capacity, transparency and credibility of state institutions in the field of organic agriculture.

The results of the project are as follows:

- Strengthening the institutional structure in the field of organic agriculture;
- Establishing an operational system for the unified approval of inputs in organic agriculture;
- Strengthening the competence of the local laboratory in the field of organic agriculture;
- Establishing a system for recommending species, varieties and agro-technologies suitable for organic farming.



**UKZUZ - Institutional
support in organic
agriculture in the Republic of
Moldova**

- **Elaboration of publications**
- **Participation in the international event**
- **Harmonization assistance**
- **Training and study visits**
- **Implementation of the IVEM Project**

Supporting the development and publication of the following publications:

- "BULLETIN ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA" - 2019 and 2020 versions, available in Romanian and English (Bulletin available in paper and electronic format);
- Publication "Recommendations regarding the sustainable production of crops in the organic system in the Republic of Moldova" - version 2022, available in Romanian (Publication available in paper and electronic format).

Supporting the participation in international training of specialists from the Phytosanitary Laboratory I.P. on the determination of pesticide residues, which took place within the National Reference Laboratory of the Central Institute for Supervision and Control in Agriculture.

The trainings were organized during the period (August 30 - September 2, 2022) within the project "Institutional support in organic agriculture from the Republic of Moldova" financed by the Czech Development Agency, implemented by the Central Institute for Supervision and Control in Agriculture (UKZUZ).

MAIA, ANSA and MOVCA assistance in the process of harmonizing the draft law on organic food products.

Assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and the State Commission for the Testing of Plant Varieties through a study visit in order to finalize the implementation of the component "Establishment of a system for recommending agro-technological processes, species and varieties suitable for organic agriculture" (information sessions, discussions, practical trips).

Implementation of the Project Introduction of Organic Viticulture in Moldova (IVEM) through the development and promotion of the organic production industry of grapes and organic wine in the Republic of Moldova, using the experience of the Central Institute for Supervision and Testing in Agriculture (ÚKZÚZ) from the Czech Republic, by delivering the latest achievements in the field in the sense of technologies within the production chain and the exchange of experience obtained by operators inside and outside the subsector (training, field trips).



***Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry;
National Agency for Food Safety;
SE "State Center for Attestation and Homologation of
Phytosanitary Products and Fertilizers";
"Central Phytosanitary Laboratory";
State Commission for Testing Plant Varieties;
IP Field Crops Research Institute "Selectia".***

Main activities 2022

- **Organization of field day Visoca Testing Station 16. 6. 2022;**
- **Support of participation at the International Congress in Germany (Biofach) for ANSA and MAIA 25.-28.7. 2022;**
- **Study visit 30. 8. -2. 9. 2022 for Centra Phytosanitary Laboratory (to implement the determination of glyphosate and Dithiocarbamates);**
- **Study visit 19. – 22. 9. 2022 or State Commission for Crops Variety Testing and MAIA (FINALISATION of the project output “Established system for recommendation of organic agro-technological procedures, species and varieties“;**
- **Drafting the law to ensure that the draft is in line with EU legislation.**

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Photo source: Pixels.com

Founded in December 2015, the Organic Agriculture Value Chain Alliance (MOVCA, English acronym), public association, based on members, advocating for organic agriculture and organic agri-food products in the Republic of Moldova. MOVCA is the first and largest association in the Republic of Moldova that supports and advocates for organic agriculture. The main goal of the association is to support all operators in the value chain of organic agriculture, as well as to encourage all those who want to be active in this value chain. A non-governmental organization, MOVCA Members are: farmers, processors, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, sellers, consumers, etc..

Activity directions

- **Organic farming**
- **Lobbying and advocacy**
- **Training and seminars**
- **Promotion**

Current projects and activities:

- The "Facilitation of advocacy activity in the development of the legislative framework for the organic agriculture sector" project, financed through the East European Foundation.
- The project "Institutional support in organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova" Development of the Yearbook on organic agriculture in the Republic of Moldova for the year 2021, 2022. The donor of the project - the Czech Development Agency (CZDA).

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**ÚKZÚZ;
CNFA Moldova;
East European Foundation;
Moldova Investment Agency;
Education for Development Association;
EcoVisio
PRO DIDACTICA educational center;
MAIA;
FiBL.**

Results for 2022:

- Participation of MOVCA members in the Biofach 2022 exhibition, being the largest exhibition of organic products in Europe, which takes place annually in Nuremberg, Germany. The organization of this event was financially supported by the Investment Agency of Moldova and the contribution of MOVCA members.
- Maintaining the educational e-learning portal in organic agriculture for the training of farmers in order to achieve the general objective of the project: Popularizing the application of harmless and environmentally friendly agricultural means. The project is active, the information and modules being updated according to the needs of the users. The expected result is to inform and train future farmers and <http://studii.movca.md/>.
- Carrying out lobbying and advocacy activities in order to ensure the effective development of organic agriculture within the legal framework, including participation in meetings, working groups, submission of proposals for changes to the legal framework to the responsible institutions.
- Conducting seminars and providing support to MOVCA members, in order to carry out organic agriculture, legal aspects and principles of subsidizing organic agriculture.

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CNFA Moldova

USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Moldova



CNFA
Cultivating New Frontiers
in Agriculture



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CNFA Moldova - Combining cultural exchange visits and sustainable economic development, the USAID Farmer-to-Farmer program provides farmers, farmer groups, agricultural businesses in transition countries with technical assistance on a volunteer basis, to promote progress in food processing, production and marketing practices. CNFA has been an implementer of the Farmer-to-Farmer program for over 20 years.

Activity directions

- **Organic farming**
- **Animal husbandry / dairy cattle**

The USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program in South Africa and Moldova provides high-quality technical assistance to host organizations in Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Moldova.

The purpose of the program is to provide technical assistance to producers, processors, service providers and their associations, as well as other beneficiaries in the Republic of Moldova. Volunteer experts cover multiple aspects of the two value chains and contribute to strengthening commercial relations between different actors on a voluntary basis. At the same time, the assistance granted to educational institutions with an agricultural profile contributes to the increase over time of the competitiveness of the organic agriculture and milk/animal husbandry sectors.

Training is organized on various topics, such as: association development, internal and member communication, advocacy, marketing, extension and education, food safety and product quality, new product creation, access to export markets, pasture management and production of quality feed.

Partners

Education for Development Association (AED)

Activities implemented with the help of volunteer experts:

Volunteer missions: 7 missions

Number of assisted organizations: 7

Support areas:

- advanced financial management;
- needs assessment;
- strategic planning;
- support for the improvement of veterinary services;
- organizational development;
- support for participation in exhibitions;
- communication with members;
- development of marketing strategies;
- web page creation;
- administration of e-learning portals;
- creating pocket guides;
- good practices in growing green manures;
- good practices in creating compost platforms;
- good practices in crop rotation;
- support regarding participation in the Biofach 2022 exhibition;
- in partnership with AED and MOVCA, 3 new pocket guides were developed;
- Green Atlas Upgrade: CNFA contracted a local company to make changes and improvements to the Green Atlas.

Activities implemented outside volunteering missions:

It contributed to the development of the organizational capacities of the organizations:

- Katalyst Kitchens;
- Agrobiznes;
- MOVCA.

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Public Association - Education for Development AED



The "Education for Development" Public Association (AED) is a non-governmental, apolitical and non-profit organization, founded in 2017. AED is part of the team implementing the CONCEPT (2008 – present), EdAgri (2012 – 2018), InfOrganic Moldova (2019–2022), SECI (2019–2021) projects.

Activity directions

- **supports the development of education**
- **collaborates with public institutions**
- **collaborate with civil society**
- **collaborate with development partners**

Current projects and activities:

- InfOrganic Moldova 2020–2022, is a project implemented with the support of the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED), the intervention through non-formal education contributes to the creation of a digital community, offering open access to informative-instructive materials to develop the sector of sustainable agriculture, including organic from Moldova. Components: contribute to strengthening the collaboration of the main actors in the sector (quarterly round tables); develop informational materials (articles, brochures, infographics, videos, pocket guides) with open access on a core website (<https://agrobiznes.md/agroeco>), but also with the distribution on the websites of actors in the sector (MAIA, EcoVisio) , MOVCA etc.); provide support to national experts in capacity building and development of practical materials.
- Solar Energy Skills Development Initiatives (SECI) 2020–2021: develops continuous training programs and the training of installers for RES (Renewable Energy Sources) technologies; develops curricula, didactic materials for students and teachers; develops tools for evaluating installers of solar photovoltaic systems and solar thermal systems; supports the consolidation of partners and economic agents in the RES sector by identifying the requirements for qualifications and involvement in the development of materials; contributes to the improvement of workshops in partner institutions for the training of RES installers.

- Consolidation of the Vocational Technical Education System in Moldova (CONSEPT), phase IV, 2019 – 2021: complements the efforts of actors in the vocational technical education (VET) sector through intervention at school level (15 vocational schools, colleges), meso level (Department of Continuing Education, UTM) and macro level (MECC). Components: continuous training of VET teachers, organizational development, student participation in the decision-making process, promoting quality in evaluation, supporting teachers in the use of media and digital media, improving the situation in the dormitories.

Results for 2022

InfOrganic: A basic online platform with relevant information in the field of organic farming is available – <https://agrobiznes.md/agroeco>. Communication and information exchange is improved in quarterly roundtables organized with actors in the sector. A variety of instructive informative materials on organic farming are developed and disseminated in different forms: 5 videos and 2 brochures from the Swiss Organic Agriculture Research Institute (FiBL) translated into Romanian and Russian (basics of organic agriculture, protection in fruit growing, vegetable growing, green fertilizers, etc.); 2 pocket guides by US academic experts (F2F/CNFA, MOVCA) and local experts; 9 videos and 9 infographics (Agrobiznes, EcoVisio); 62 articles, success stories/interviews and expert answers offered online in the specially created AgroEco section. 920 people communicate and benefit from expert support in the Viber Agrobiznes AgroEco group.

SECI: The skills of teachers who train specialists in the field of renewable energy (photovoltaic systems, solar thermal systems and heat pumps) have been strengthened. Materials, course materials were developed for teachers from 2 centers of excellence (construction and energy). Equipment was installed in the training workshops, and a capacity development plan in the training of installers for RES (Renewable Energy Sources) technologies was developed.

CONSEPT: Vocational training is of a higher quality and more efficient, and the management in 15 vocational schools, colleges, centers of excellence has improved. With the support of CIIDC, school councils are stronger and advocate more actively for changes in partner institutions. AED, Department of Continuing Education of UTM, A.O. ProDidactica offers a modern training program for VET teachers and managers, including project-based and portfolio-based learning, use of digital tools (Google Suit). Classrooms were provided with equipment, media resources in 3 institutions (Centre of Excellence in Food and Processing Services, Vocational School No. 7 Chisinau and Vocational School No. 1 Cahul). The training and assessment of students is based on modern qualifications, with 3 new qualification standards being developed (electrician in construction, installer of heating systems and solar equipment, installer of ventilation and air conditioning equipment). Initiatives of sectoral committees (textiles, gastronomy) are supported, which train modern skills of foremen from VET institutions and future specialists.

PARTENERI

- Ministerul Educației, Culturii și Cercetării (MECC);
- Ministerul Agriculturii și Industriei Alimentare (MAIA);
- Ministerul Economiei,
- Ministerul Infrastructurii;
- Agenția de Eficiență în Energetică (AEE);
- Universitatea Tehnică a Moldovei (UTM);
- Institutul de Cercetare pentru Agricultură Ecologică (FiBL) din Elveția;
- Programul USAID Farmer-to-Farmer, implementat de CNFA Moldova;
- Agrobiznes;
- A.O. EcoVisio;
- Alianța Lanțului Valoric în Agricultura Ecologică din Moldova (MOVCA),
- A.O. ProDidactica;
- A.O. Centrul de Informare și Documentare privind Drepturile Copilului (CIDDC) etc.

Adresa sediului / Date de contact



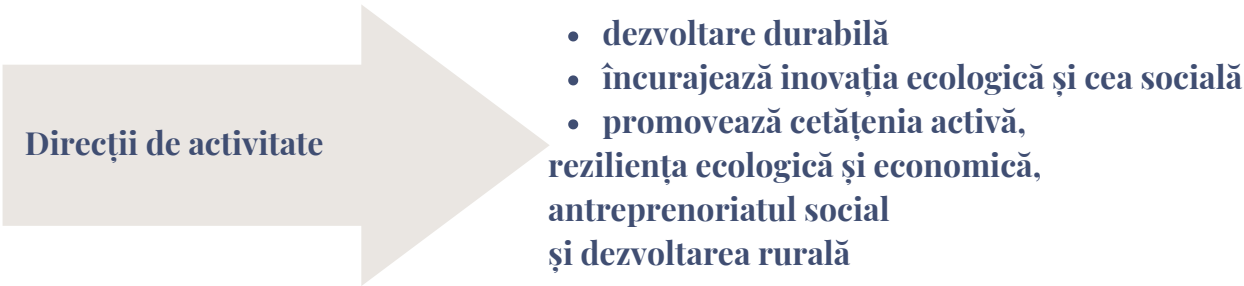
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In 1999, the Ecological Association of Children and Youth of Moldova (AECTM) was founded, through the efforts of a group of brave teachers led by Nina Strepan. Over time, they carry out creative and non-formal actions to popularize ecology in schools.

In 2013, the association had a restart and turned into "EcoVisio", led by a small group of enthusiasts from Germany and Moldova, some of them the children of the founders of AECTM. The association is working to achieve Moldova's potential as a model region for sustainable development and for the people here to multiply their potential to change something for the better.

The association's vision for the future of Moldova and the entire region means an active society, a healthy environment and a prosperous and fair economy.

The mission is to bring this future as close as possible to the present, through educational activities, the theoretical and practical promotion of sustainable living, the creation and growth of communities and the support of initiatives that share the vision.

A diagram showing a large grey arrow pointing from left to right. Inside the arrow, on the left side, is the text "Direcții de activitate". To the right of the arrow's tip is a bulleted list of activity directions.

Direcții de activitate

- dezvoltare durabilă
- încurajează inovația ecologică și cea socială
- promovează cetățenia activă, reziliența ecologică și economică, antreprenoriatul social și dezvoltarea rurală

Current projects and activities

- The "Preparation of the rural environment for climate change" project, addressing 4 basic topics for increasing the resilience of rural Moldova: water management, solar energy, afforestation, thermal insulation;
- The "Moldova on Bikes" project (August 2021 – July 2022);

- The National Media Campaign "Moldova #FărăDeșeuri", supported by the Embassy of Finland in Bucharest, aimed to raise awareness among the population about the negative impact of waste on health and well-being, as well as to disseminate information about the efficiency of the waste management system in the Republic of Moldova.

Agricultural projects:

- The Rural Agroecology Resilience Hub Project, supported by the Global Environment Facility Grants Program (2019–2021);
- Twinings for a Prosperous Organic Agri Food Sector in MD and EU, financially supported by EuroChambers (2021–2022).

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MOVCA
Asociația Educație pentru Dezvoltare,
EcoVisio,
Centrul educațional PRO DIDACTICA,
SGP/GEF
SIDA
EcoConect
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Photo source: Pixels.com



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Calendar and events

Photo source: Pixels.com



12.1 National and international events

BIOFACH, the world's leading fair for organic food, held annually in Nuremberg, Germany. During the exhibition, participants have the opportunity to meet organic producers on the organic market, conclude new contracts and get inspired with the latest trends in the organic farming sector.

Biofach 2022 took place between July 26–29, the organizers welcomed during the 4 days of the exhibition, approximately 2132 exhibitors from 94 countries and 24 251 visitors from 137 countries.

A group of member companies of the Association "Moldova Organic Agriculture Value Chain Alliance" (MOVCA) participated in the period July 26–29 at the largest exhibition of organic products in the world - "Biofach".

The exhibition took place in the city of Nuremberg, Germany, and in 2022 the MOVCA Association participated for the fourth consecutive time with a country stand.

To represent the country at "Biofach 2022", three economic agents were selected by competition - "Agroelit" SRL, "Crama Domnească" SRL and the "Prograin Organic" group of companies.



Made in Moldova

Multi-branch national exhibition-fair of domestic goods and services

The **"Made in Moldova"** exhibition was launched in 2001 and was designed to unify the forces of representatives of the public administration, the business community and public organizations in order to support the manufacture of local products and increase the demand for them.

The main purpose of the exhibition is to support domestic producers, promote competitive products on the domestic and foreign markets, attract investments, intensify the public-private dialogue.

After a two-year break, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova returned in 2023 with the "Made in Moldova" National Exhibition, which was attended by approximately 350 entrepreneurs.

By organizing the exhibition, the CCI of the Republic of Moldova proposed objectives such as: the presentation and promotion of new technologies, products and services; creating the premises for finding business partners both from the country and outside the country, holding discussions, negotiations, exchanging experience and best practices; the intensification of investment flows in the country.



Photo source: www.gov.md

MOLDAGROTECH

*One of the most requested
exhibitions on the
MOLDEXPO agenda*

After breaks, change of locations, format, etc. through which **MOLDAGROTECH** was subjected in the last three years, the exhibition returns to Moldexpo and occupies all the outdoor spaces and pavilion no. 2. The 2023 edition brought together over 100 participants – producers, dealers, agro-industrial specialists, etc. – from 8 countries: Republic of Moldova, Austria, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary.

MOLDAGROTECH (spring) is one of the most requested exhibitions on the MOLDEXPO agenda. It is explainable in a predominantly agrarian country the increased interest in agricultural techniques, seed material, means of plant protection, etc. All this, but also valuable consultations of specialists, news and the latest trends in the field, the most diverse services needed by the sector form the offer of the international specialized exhibition of machines, equipment and technologies for the agricultural sector MOLDAGROTECH, which took place between March 16 and 19, 2023, at MOLDEXPO. As usual, the exhibition is accompanied by the Fair of saplings and planting material, in which also producers from the organic agriculture sector participate.



Organizer: International Exhibition Center "Moldexpo" S.A.

Co-organizer: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of the Republic of Moldova

Subsidy support: I.P. ODA

General sponsor: B.C. MAIB S.A.

General media partner: Agro TV

Media partners: agrobusiness.md, Agroexpert, agromedia.md

IarmarEco

*Fair of Ecological
Opportunities and Social
Entrepreneurship*

IarmarEco, i.e. Iarmaroc of Ecological Opportunities and Social Entrepreneurship, is an annual event that unites the main actors in the scene of ecology and social activism in Moldova. What sets it apart from other fairs is the combination of exhibition with sales, facilitated networking and interactive presentations/lessons, as well as proximity to nature in an urban context.

Socio-cultural event that brings together people with the same values, year after year. IarmarEco aims to promote ecological opportunities, social entrepreneurship, social initiatives and a sustainable lifestyle.

The event comes with a special combination of fair, facilitated networking, workshops and interactive presentations / lessons, which makes it a unique event in the landscape of ecology and social activism in Moldova.

At the autumn 2022 edition, around 180 sellers, producers and organizations participated in the event. IarmarEco - 2022 had to propose the most diverse types of products, for everyone's tastes and needs: vegetarian food, vegetables and fruits grown in Moldova, honey, pistil, oils, desserts, pasta; cosmetic and hygiene products - organic; souvenirs and handicrafts, jewelry, toys, gifts; purses, clothes, etc.



EcoLocal

Organically grown and artisanal products

The **EcoLocal** "Farmers' Market" is founded by a group of volunteers and domestic producers who want to contribute to the well-being of the local population. The market supports local food businesses, certified organic farmers and producers, artisanal and traditional processors who market their products in an authentic format. The market takes place weekly, with free entry for visitors, with an availability of products such as: fruits, vegetables, spices, bread, cheeses, wines, juices, pastries, etc.

The EcoLocal market aims to:

- Make available organically grown products and high quality local handicrafts;
- Educate consumers and promote the benefits of local, organic food and other products that would support the local economy;
- Encourage more domestic producers to switch to certified organic farming;
- Develop as a non-profit activity, with the support of participants, partners, state institutions and through grant funding in the field.





Photo source: Pixels.com

12.2 Calendar for operators in the organic farming sector for the year 2023

International

Exhibitions

National

BioFach – February
Bio European Festival - August

Made in Moldova – January
MoldAgroTech / Farmer – March /
October

International

Conferences

National

International Conference in
Organic Agriculture - June

Moldova Business Week – November

Fairs

"EcoLocal" market - weekly
Iarmar Eco – seasonal
Bio European Festival - August

Evenimente

Farmer's Day -
November

IMPRINTS

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Photo source

MOVCA archive

www.pixels.com

Source of information

www.maia.gov.md

www.aipa.gov.md

www.agrobiznes.md

Atlas of Organic Agriculture in the Republic of Moldova 2021, 2022

Disclaimer

This Yearbook is published in 2023 withing the project Institutional support within organic farming in the Republic of Moldova implemented by the Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture and donated by the Czech Development Agency.

