



## Organic farming (org)

Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata

Structure (ESMS)

Compiling agency: Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union

### Eurostat metadata

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For any question on data and metadata, please contact: [EUROPEAN STATISTICAL DATA SUPPORT](#)

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### 1. Contact

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<b>1.1. Contact organisation</b>	Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union
<b>1.2. Contact organisation unit</b>	E1: Agriculture and fisheries
<b>1.5. Contact mail address</b>	2920 Luxembourg LUXEMBOURG

### 2. Metadata update

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<b>2.1. Metadata last certified</b>	25/06/2020
<b>2.2. Metadata last posted</b>	25/06/2020
<b>2.3. Metadata last update</b>	10/06/2022

### 3. Statistical presentation

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#### 3.1. Data description

Organic farming can be defined as a method of production which places the highest emphasis on environmental protection and, with regard to livestock production, on animal welfare considerations. It avoids or largely reduces the use of synthetic chemical inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, additives and medicinal products. The production of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their use in animal feed are forbidden. It is as a part of a sustainable farming system and a viable alternative to the more traditional approaches to agriculture.

Organic farming differs from other agricultural production methods in the application of regulated standards (production rules), compulsory control schemes and a specific labelling scheme.

The collected statistics cover the following data:

1. Number of organic operators such as producers (agricultural holdings, aquaculture production units), processors, importers, exporters and other operators (wholesalers, retailers, etc.)
2. Organic crop area under conversion and fully converted
3. Organic crop production from fully converted area
4. Number of organic livestock
5. Volume of organic products of animal origin
6. Volume of organic aquaculture production
7. Number of operators processing products issued from organic farming (based on NACE classification)

Organic farming statistics started to be collected, processed and disseminated by Eurostat for the reference year 1997 on the basis of gentlemen's agreements (voluntary data transmission agreements). From the reference year 2008 and until 2020 included, the data collection was based on the Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 implementing the Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products. This data was collected as summary tables to display an overview of the uptake of organic farming within the European Union, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway. Switzerland and some candidate countries (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) also provide data on a voluntary basis.

In order to better fit the legal requirements imposed by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, a new version of the questionnaire for the data collection of organic farming statistics has been drafted by a task force organised by Eurostat in 2011 on organic farming. The new structure of the questionnaire which includes qualitative and quantitative improvements to the data collected, became effective from the 2012 data collection and was used until reference year 2020 included. Since 2012, the [questionnaire](#) (available in the section '**Methodology**' and composed of 4 different tables) has been updated every year to take into account the different needs and improvements in the data collection.

Data collected between 2012 and 2020 are disseminated via 7 datasets:

1. Organic operators by status of the registration process (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_coptyp](#))
2. Organic crop area by agricultural production methods and crops (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_cropar](#))
3. Organic crop production by crops (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_croppro](#))
4. Organic livestock (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_lstspec](#))
5. Organic production of animal products (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_aprod](#))
6. Organic production of aquaculture products (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_aqtspec](#))

7. Processors of organic products by NACE Rev. 2 activity (C) (from 2012 onwards) ([org\\_cpreact](#))

Datasets containing data until 2011 are disseminated under a folder with historical data:

1. Organic operators by status of the registration process (until 2011) ([org\\_coptyp\\_h](#))
2. Organic crop area by agricultural production methods and crops (until 2011) ([org\\_cropar\\_h1](#))
3. Share of organic crop area out of the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) (until 2011) ([org\\_cropar\\_h2](#))
4. Organic crop production by crops (until 2011) ([org\\_croppro\\_h](#))
5. Organic livestock (until 2011) ([org\\_lstspec\\_h](#))
6. Organic production of animal products (until 2011) ([org\\_aprod\\_h](#))
7. Processors of organic products by NACE Rev. 2 activity (C) (2008-2011) ([org\\_cpreact\\_h](#))
8. Processors and importers of organic products by NACE Rev. 1.1 activity (D) (until 2007) ([org\\_cpreact\\_nrl](#))

An indicator for sustainable development is calculated to provide information on the share of organic area in the total area (Utilised Agricultural Area - UAA). The data on the UAA are provided by crop production statistics ([apro\\_cpsh1](#)).

In datasets listed above, the flag 'n' can be combined with the statistical value 0. In this case, it means that the value reported by the country is not equal to 0 (the statistical value is between 0 and 0.5 of the unit of measure used in the dataset).

Detailed information on the indicators provided in this collection can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.2. Classification system

Information on the classification used for each indicator can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.3. Coverage - sector

Information on the sector coverage of each indicator can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

Farming is considered to be organic if it complies with 'Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91'.

Organic farming differs from other agricultural production methods in the application of regulated standards (production rules), compulsory control schemes and a specific labelling scheme.

More information can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.5. Statistical unit

Information on the statistical unit of each indicator can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.6. Statistical population

Information on the statistical population of each indicator can be found in the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

### 3.7. Reference area

European Union Member States, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway.

On a voluntary basis, Switzerland, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey are also covered.
<b>3.8. Coverage - Time</b>
Data are available from 1997 onwards.
<b>3.9. Base period</b>
Not applicable.

<b>4. Unit of measure</b> <a href="#">Top</a>
Information on the unit of measure of each indicator can be found in the document ' <b><u>Organic farming - additional information</u></b> ' ( <i>please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page</i> ).

<b>5. Reference Period</b> <a href="#">Top</a>
Calendar year.

<b>6. Institutional Mandate</b> <a href="#">Top</a>
<b>6.1. Institutional Mandate - legal acts and other agreements</b>
Up to reference year 2007 data were delivered to the Commission on the basis of 'Gentlemen's agreements' (no obligation to deliver statistical data). From reference year 2008 and until 2020 included, data have to be provided according to <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007</a> of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 <u>and</u> <a href="#">Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008</a> of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007
<b>6.2. Institutional Mandate - data sharing</b>
Not applicable.

<b>7. Confidentiality</b> <a href="#">Top</a>
<b>7.1. Confidentiality - policy</b>
<a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics</a> (recital 24 and Article 20(4)) of 11 March 2009, stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those confidential data with due account for technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.
<b>7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment</b>
Most data for organic farming statistics are not confidential. Confidentiality issues are treated individually with the respective reporting countries due to very small number of operators. These data are not disseminated and flagged with 'c' on Eurostat's dissemination database.

<b>8. Release policy</b> <a href="#">Top</a>
<b>8.1. Release calendar</b>
There is no release calendar for this data collection. Data are disseminated as soon as they are available and after validation.
<b>8.2. Release calendar access</b>

Not applicable.

### 8.3. Release policy - user access

In line with the Community legal framework and the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) Eurostat disseminates European statistics on Eurostat's website respecting professional independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. The detailed arrangements are governed by the [Eurostat protocol on impartial access to Eurostat data for users](#).

## 9. Frequency of dissemination

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Data are annual. Eurostat receives and disseminates data after reception and validation.

## 10. Accessibility and clarity

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### 10.1. Dissemination format - News release

News releases on-line (no regular press release calendar).

### 10.2. Dissemination format - Publications

Statistics Explained: [Organic farming statistics](#)

Statistical book: [Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics - 2020 edition](#)

### 10.3. Dissemination format - online database

The organic farming statistics can be found in Eurostat's dissemination database under [Organic farming](#).

### 10.4. Dissemination format - microdata access

Individual information is handled by the Control Bodies and no access to micro data is foreseen.

### 10.5. Dissemination format - other

Not applicable.

### 10.6. Documentation on methodology

Harmonised questionnaire including definitions and explanatory notes.

See also the document '[Organic farming - additional information](#)' (*under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page*). This document contains information for each dataset such as data description, classification system, sector coverage, statistical concepts and definitions, statistical unit, statistical population and unit of measure.

### 10.7. Quality management - documentation

None.

## 11. Quality management

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### 11.1. Quality assurance

- Harmonised questionnaire on organic farming with explanatory notes. The questionnaire has been developed in cooperation with European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (mainly the Regulatory Committee on Organic Production), the unit E1 of Eurostat (responsible for statistics on agriculture) and the Task Force on 'Organic Production statistics'. The questionnaire can be revised annually.
- Systematic data validation, including comparisons with data from other sources.

## 11.2. Quality management - assessment

The Member States and the other reporting countries are requested to provide information on methodology and quality issues relating to the organic farming statistics they report. The questionnaire used for this purpose focuses on the statistical process and on the information needed to ensure the quality of the organic farming data. The purpose is to collect information on key quality and methodology aspects from each reporting country. The questions are divided in 2 distinct parts:

- General questions on the collection and methodology of organic farming data;
- Specific questions relating to each of the four domains on organic farming statistics (operators, crop area and production, livestock and animal production, and processors by NACE classification). These questions focus on key issues related to the respective domains.

The information collected is analysed with a view to identify discrepancies, best practices, quality issues and aspects limiting comparability across countries. It could furthermore be used to update metadata disseminated by Eurostat together with the organic farming data, improve the questionnaire and guidelines, definitions and methodologies issues, the regulation, etc.

Overall, there is currently a certain heterogeneity in practices in the reporting countries. Discussion is ongoing regarding possible actions needed to harmonise the data collection process in all reporting countries. In most countries, a large share of the data comes from the responsible national control bodies. Thus, a special focus is on the methodologies and practices applied to convert these data into official statistics, coherent with the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Implementing Regulation (EC) No 889/2008.

## 12. Relevance

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### 12.1. Relevance - User Needs

The main users are DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), DG Environment (DG ENV), European Environment Agency (EEA), Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FIBL) and the general public.

### 12.2. Relevance - User Satisfaction

No official user satisfaction has been carried out.

### 12.3. Completeness

Completeness for reporting countries (including confidential and not-significant values):

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 <sup>1</sup>	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Mandatory variables	57%	80%	82%	88%	88%	89%	86%	87%	90%
Voluntary variables	20%	27%	29%	25%	22%	25%	24%	22%	22%

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary information

## 13. Accuracy

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### 13.1. Accuracy - overall

The legislation foresees an annual control of every operator and therefore no sample is required. Double counting of operators and processors is possible where several control bodies are involved, but should not concern the products or production factors.

Data are requested on the basis of a harmonised questionnaire (composed of 4 different tables). In case of uncertainties, data providers are directly contacted to check the data and to confirm

or to correct them.

Data which have been corrected by the data providers are subject to an immediate revision in the dissemination database (and flagged with a flag 'r').

### 13.2. Sampling error

Not applicable.

### 13.3. Non-sampling error

Not assessed.

## 14. Timeliness and punctuality

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### 14.1. Timeliness

The transmission deadline is laid down in the Implementing Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. The data are due 6 months after the end of the reference year i.e. before 1<sup>st</sup> July each year.

### 14.2. Punctuality

Most data deliveries are on time. Most of the delayed data transmission are late by some weeks only.

## 15. Coherence and comparability

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### 15.1. Comparability - geographical

The harmonised questionnaire intends to guarantee a certain geographical comparability between Member States. The national practices, based on the principle of subsidiarity, can have a limiting effect on the compatibility.

### 15.2. Comparability - over time

The comparability over time within reporting countries is mostly ensured. For the majority of the countries, data are available for at least the past 5 years.

Regarding the dataset 'org\_cpreact', the definition for '**Manufacture of food products**' differs starting with the reference year 2018. Since 2018, only manufacturers of food products are included under this variable (following NACE classification). From 2012 to 2017, '**Manufacture of food products**' includes manufacturers of food products and beverages.

### 15.3. Coherence - cross domain

Comparison with data from other data sources should be performed with caution. This is because the organic data set is based on largely on administrative data, supposed to cover all production units certified and under conversion to organic.

### 15.4. Coherence - internal

Data validation is performed by Eurostat to eliminate possible consistency errors. Coherence amongst the various tables and within the tables is thoroughly checked.

## 16. Cost and Burden

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The data are collected by the reporting countries mainly via administrative data provided by national Certification and Control Bodies. The exact cost of the data collection is not known by Eurostat.

## 17. Data revision

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### 17.1. Data revision - policy

There is no systematic revision of the data. Data are revised whenever better and more accurate



figures are available at national level.

### 17.2. Data revision - practice

- After data validation, the reporting countries are asked to check incoherent figures or/and outliers and possibly to revise their data when no satisfying explanation is provided.
- The reporting countries are asked to update their data in line with the national revisions.
- The Eurostat's dissemination database is updated as soon as the data are revised (with a flag 'r').

## 18. Statistical processing

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### 18.1. Source data

Administrative data provided by national Certification and Control bodies.

### 18.2. Frequency of data collection

Annual data collection.

### 18.3. Data collection

Data are collected by national Certification and Control bodies and reported through the harmonised questionnaire (composed of 4 different tables).

### 18.4. Data validation

Coherence and completeness checks lead to requests for data revision or explanation by the data providers.

### 18.5. Data compilation

EU-aggregates are calculated as far as national data are available for all Member States. For historical data (from 1997 until 2011), EU-aggregates are available for 2 datasets:

- Organic crop area by agricultural production methods and crops (until 2011) (org\_cropar\_h1)
- Share of organic crop area out of the total utilised agricultural area (until 2011) (org\_cropar\_h2)

From 2012 data onwards, EU-aggregates are available for 3 datasets:

- Organic operators by status of the registration process (from 2012 onwards) (org\_coptyp)
- Organic crop area by agricultural production methods and crops (from 2012 onwards) (org\_cropar)
- Organic livestock (from 2012 onwards) (org\_lstspec)

### 18.6. Adjustment

Not applicable.

## 19. Comment

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For all additional information on the single indicators (operators, area and production, livestock or products of animal origin), please consult the document '**Organic farming - additional information**' (please see under 'Annex' at the bottom of this page).

## Related metadata

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