

**EEA Core Set of Indicators - CSI 026**  
**Area under organic farming**  
**May 2005 assessment**

working draft

**About this document**

Generated on: 17 Jun 2005

CSI contacts: [http://ims.eionet.eu.int/IMS/About/contacts\\_for\\_csi](http://ims.eionet.eu.int/IMS/About/contacts_for_csi)

Online: <http://ims.eionet.eu.int/IMS/ISpecs/ISpecification20041007132106/IAssessment1116845979277>

If you would like to see further background information about this indicator, you can see the published specification at:

<http://www.eea.eu.int/coreset>

**About this service**

This PDF has been generated online by IMS (Indicator Management Service) at <http://ims.eionet.eu.int>.

This service is part of Reportnet at <http://www.eionet.eu.int/rn/click>.



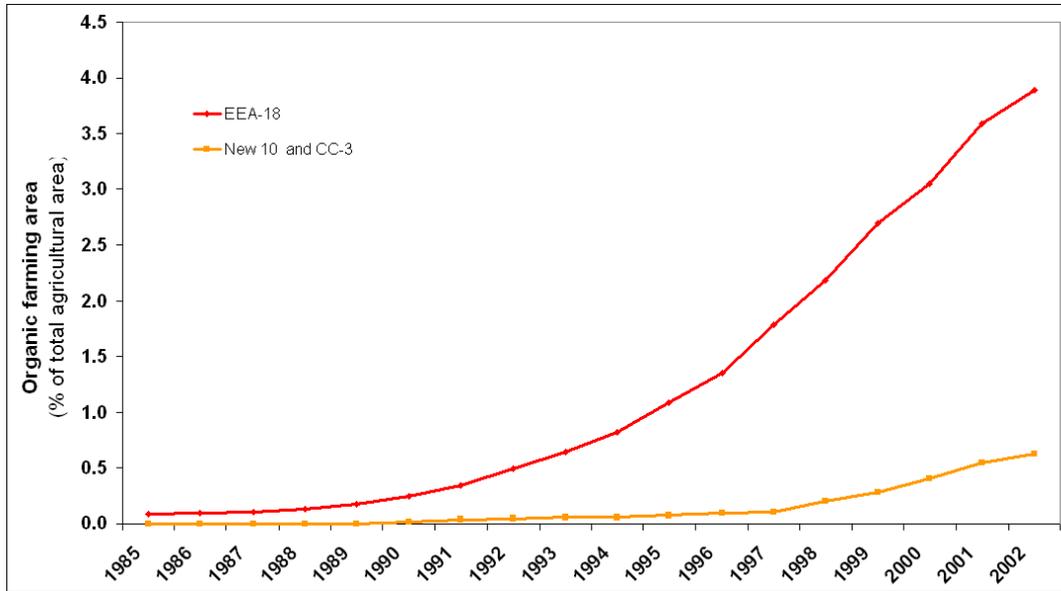


## Key policy question: What are the environmentally-relevant key trends in agricultural production systems?

**Key message:** The share of organic farming is increasing strongly and now stands at about 4 % of agricultural area in the fifteen older EU Member States and the EFTA countries. EU agri-environment programmes and consumer demand have been key factors for this strong increase. The share of organic land remains far below 1 % in most of the ten new Member States and the accession countries.

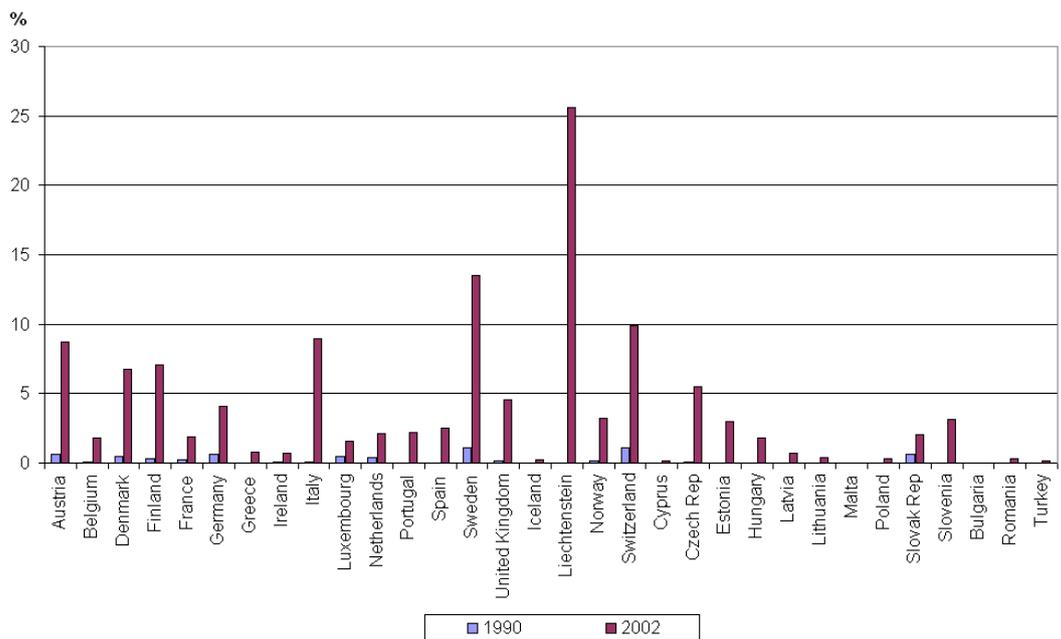
- The share of organic farming is far higher in northern and central European countries than in other parts of Europe - with the exception of Italy. Furthermore, there is considerable regional variation of this share within individual countries. In contrast, the share of organic farming is particularly low in most new EU Member States and the accession countries. The overall distribution seems to be influenced by the presence of consumer demand for organic products and government support in the form of agri-environment schemes and other measures.
- Recent literature reviews provide information on the environmental impacts of organic agriculture compared to conventional management systems but results are not always unambiguous. The environmental benefits of organic farming are most clearly documented for biodiversity as well as for water and soil conservation. However, there is no clear evidence for reduced greenhouse gas emissions. It needs to be taken into account that organic agriculture is likely to have a more positive environmental impact in areas with highly intensive agriculture than in low-input farming systems. However, so far the regional uptake of organic farming is concentrated in extensive grassland regions, where fewer changes are needed to convert to organic farming than is the case in intensive, arable farming dominated regions, where the benefits would be higher.

Fig. 1: Organic farming area in Europe



Data source: Institute of Rural Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth

Fig. 2: Share of organic farming area in total utilised agricultural area



Data source: Institute of Rural Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth