

Achieving the expectations set by the Green Deal on organic aquaculture production

Background

Commission Regulation (EC) No 853/2008, laid down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 853/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control. A new Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products has been adopted and will be applicable as from 1 January 2022.

The Farm to Fork Strategy of the European Commission for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, published in May 2020, established the objective to increase organic farming in the European Union. This strategy considers the positive impact on biodiversity of organic production, while creating jobs. At the same time, the market for organic food is expected to continue growing. The aim of this strategy is to reach the objective of at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture.

Published at the same moment, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives also places organic production high in its scope.

Both strategies are part of the European Green Deal that aims to transform the European Union into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

In addition to measures to be included in the next Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy, the Commission put forward in March 2021 an Action Plan for the development of Organic Farming for 2021-2026.

In May 2021, the European Commission published its Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030. This document promotes the development of organic aquaculture and other aquaculture systems with low environmental impact.

Situation of organic aquaculture in the European Union

The European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA) published a report on Organic Aquaculture in May 2017 that informed that organic aquaculture represented 5,7% of the total aquaculture production, for the six major species covered in the study. This proportion was slightly inferior to the share of organic agriculture in the total agriculture (total organic area made up 6,2% of total for 28 utilized agricultural areas in 2016). Although EU organic agriculture has experienced an increase in recent years for certain species and certain countries (salmon in Ireland, and mussel in Denmark and Ireland), the economic performance of EU organic aquaculture is far from being satisfactory everywhere and all growth percentages start from very low ground.

EUMOFA also published a report on fresh organic salmon in the EU in March 2020.