

On the situation of organic aquaculture in the EU and an outlook for the future

Background

The Farm-to-Fork Strategy¹ is at the heart of the Green Deal². It faces the challenges of sustainable food systems and recognises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet. This strategy, and also the Biodiversity strategy³, address organic production and consider that the market for organic food is to continue growing and that organic farming needs to be further promoted. For EU Action Plan on organic farming⁴ has been proposed by the European Commission in 2021 to help Member States stimulate both supply and demand for organic products. Commission Regulation (EC) 809/2008 laid down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) 854/2002⁵ on organic production and labelling. A more recent regulation was then adopted (Regulation (EU) 2018/848)⁶ addressing inconsistencies.

'The challenge of 25% of European agricultural land becoming organic in 2030: what about our waters?'

A growth objective for organic production has been set by the European Commission. It aims to dedicate at least 25% of EU agricultural land to organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic expenditure. The European Commission's 2021 aquaculture strategy guidelines⁷ also encourage Member States and stakeholders to support increases in organic aquaculture production.

By 2020 organic farming in general accounted for 9.5% of agricultural land at EU 27 level. Consumption of organic products is steadily on the increase, having reached EUR 44.8 billion at EU 27 level, accounting for 4.7% of EU food consumption (including aquatic foods). The total organic aquaculture production at EU 27 level in 2020 was estimated at 74,692 tonnes, representing only 0.4% of the total EU aquaculture production. Based on data collected by a EUROPA study⁸, the main aquatic species produced as organic in the EU in 2020 were mussels (71,995 tonnes, 10 % of total

¹ The Farm-to-Fork strategy for a fair, healthful and environmentally friendly food system https://ec.europa.eu/farm2fork/en/key-messages_en

² The European Green Deal: Setting out the first climate-neutral continent https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/environments/eu-green-deal_en

³ EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/environments/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

⁴ Action plan for organic production in the EU https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/environments/organic-production-action-plan_en

⁵ Regulation (EC) 854/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2002 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 2091/90 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32002R0854&fromDoc=32002R0854-01&fromDoc=32002R0854-01>

⁶ Organic production (EU) 2018/848 and implementing it: expenditure for the period 2015 to 2020 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/environments/organic-production-action-plan_en

⁷ 2021-2024 organic expenditure in the EU

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/environments/organic-production-action-plan_en