

CZECH REPUBLIC

GOOD LESSONS ON ORGANIC FARMING

Definition of organic farming: *Farming in harmony with nature respecting natural cycle, natural land fertility, animal welfare, landscape features and rural development.*

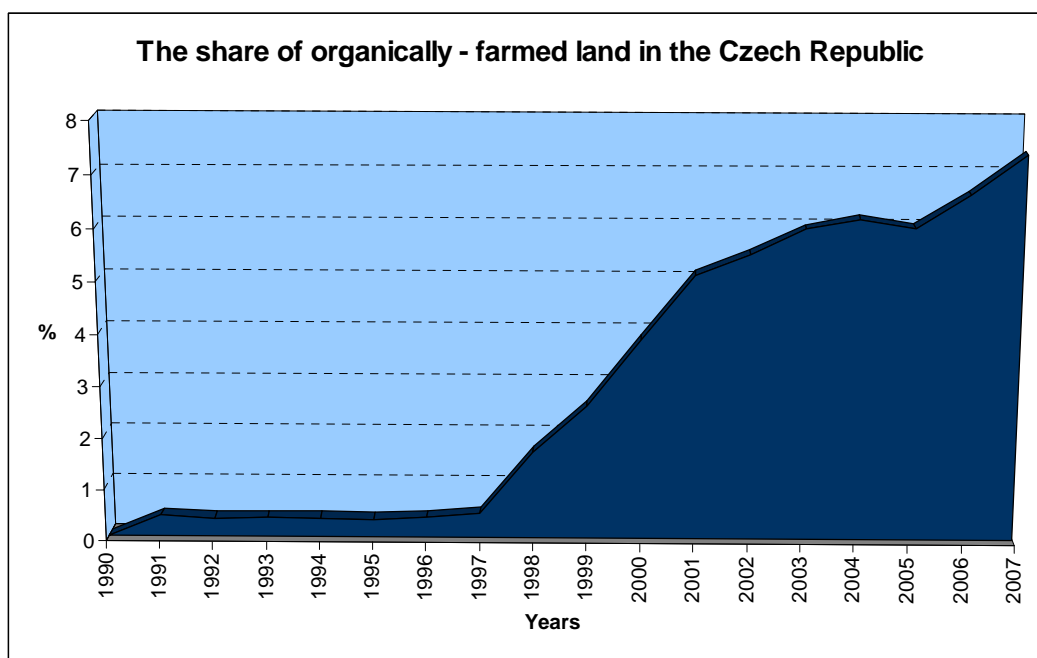
Organic farming contributes to maintaining landscape feature, sustains biodiversity and quality of both groundwater and surface water, and protects against water and wind erosion.

Legal sources:

- *Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products*
- *Organic farming Act No 242/2000 Coll.*

Organic farming has been successfully increasing in the Czech Republic. On 31st December 2007 the share of organically-farmed land was **7.35 %** of the total agricultural acreage. The current number of organic farms in the CZ is about 1300.

According to the ambitious goal of Action plan for the development of organic farming adopted by the government in 2004, there is to be achieved a 10% level of organically-farmed land by 2010.



Source: The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

The reasons for Czech organic farming success lie in:

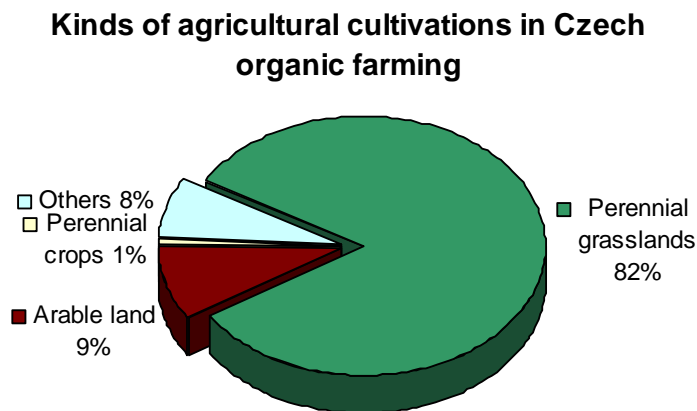
1. effective state support (well prepared legal framework, legal certainty and the scheme of financial payments – mainly from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)
2. targeted marketing
3. consumer demand

Necessary steps to underpin organic farming:

1. Adopt legal framework;
2. launch control system of bioproduction;
3. create national logo for bioproducts;
4. implement state support for organic farming;
5. back up goals set in conceptual material on organic farming (e.g. education, marketing)

Among main weaknesses of organic farming in the CZ, we rank an insufficient organic food production. Consumer demand is satisfied from national sources by one third, the rest is imported.

The fact results from an inappropriate allocation of certain kinds of agricultural cultivations. Perennial grasslands represent 80 % of organic farming, whereas the share of arable land is not higher than 10 %. Organic farms are focused mostly on perennial grasslands rather than arable land.



Source: The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic (Organic farming report 31.12.2007)

Within the frame of development assistance, the Czech Republic supports several projects of organic farming e.g. in Peru (investment and counseling project, *years of realization 2007 - 2009*).