

Deliverable 2.2.1 Promotion materials

FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS OF EVROS

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Market Control

In Greece today there are 15 organic product certification bodies that meet the strict requirements of European and national legislation, have been evaluated and approved by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food (YPAAT).

The HELLENIC AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (ELGO) DIMITRA is responsible as a control authority for the supervision of certification bodies by carrying out administrative and on-site checks on an annual basis. In addition, ELGO staff carry out labeling and traceability checks on organic products at market level.

All certification bodies in the field of organic agriculture are accredited by the National Accreditation System (ESYD) in accordance with the ISO 17065 international standard for bodies providing product certification services.

The entire Greek certification system is supervised by the Food and Veterinary Office's (FVO) of the Commission, while at the same time there is also the information notification system (OFIS) for cases of non-compliance for organic products within the European Union.

All businesses involved in the production, processing and distribution of organic products throughout the chain from field to shelf contract with an approved control and certification body of their choice.

Product inspections and sampling are conducted by independent inspectors according to documented procedures. During the inspection, all findings are recorded on inspection forms and documented with appropriate evidence (photos, copies, etc.).

The agencies employ qualified inspection and evaluation personnel with higher education with a geotechnical orientation (agriculturists, veterinarians, food technologists) and with experience in the subject being inspected.

The analyzes of the products for the detection of residues are done only in laboratories that are accredited according to the international standard ISO 17025 covering a wide range of analyses. Laboratory tests are performed at the lowest possible limits of determination.

In addition to the annual scheduled inspections, the agencies carry out extraordinary and unannounced inspections in the field of production or processing of the products, at least in 10% of the registered companies.

In the event that irregularities or violations are found, the producer-entrepreneur commits to the corrective measures he will take in order to meet the requirements of the certification. The measures to be applied in cases of non-compliance, including the sanctions and fines to be imposed, are provided for in the national legislation (KYA 245090/10-2-2006).

The inspection and sampling programs as well as the cases of non-compliance identified by the certification bodies and leading to sanctions are immediately notified to ELGO and the FSAAT.

The impartiality, integrity and independence of the certification bodies is ensured by the collective body of each body in which representatives of all involved parties participate (from consumer, commercial, productive scientific, environmental bodies).

As a result of this network of legal requirements and assurance procedures, the products end up on the market shelves with the label "product of organic farming". For the consumer, the only and simple way to recognize organic products is the certification mark from an approved body on the product label or the demonstration of the certificate by the producer/entrepreneur.

Certified organic products gain the trust of the consumer who realizes their contribution to healthy nutrition, environmental protection and good living conditions for animals. Today, organic farming covers more than 430 million hectares worldwide, corresponding to more than 2 million agricultural holdings.

Organic products are inspected from field to shelf.

From the moment the producer enters into a contract with one of the approved Organizations for the Control and Certification of Organic Products, he is controlled by him on his estate and receives a corresponding Product Certificate for the products he produces. The products for which he has a product certificate are the only ones he can bring to the markets.

The producers at the Organic Growers' Markets are controlled by the competent Control and Certification Organizations as well as levels of the Prefectures (Directorates of Agriculture and Market Control).

THE PROJECT IS CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) AND BY NATIONAL FUNDS OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME INTERREG V-A "GREECE-BULGARIA 2014-2020". THE CONTENTS OF THE DOCUMENT ARE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS OF EVROS AND CAN IN NO WAY BE TAKEN TO REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES THE MANAGING AUTHORITY AND THE JOINT SECRETARIAT.

Certification is necessary

When we refer to organic products, we always mean certified ones, i.e. those - in bulk or packaged - that bear the mark of one of the fifteen (15) approved by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. certification organizations of our country. In other words, when buying organic products your main concern should be to look for the certification mark. If it is bulk fruit and vegetables and there is no relevant indication on the counter, you have the right to ask the producer for the documents proving that his products are organic and he must show them to you.

The identity of an organic product

A certified organic product must include: | The name of the company that produces, packages or markets the product, as well as its certification code. | Also, that it is an "organic agricultural product" or an "organic agricultural product in conversion" (when the field is in transition). | The code of the certification organization, mandatory (e.g. GR-01-BIO) and its mark (optional). The certification organizations of our country are the following: DIO (GR-01-BIO), Physiological (GR-02-BIO), BIOEllas (GR-03-BIO), A CERT European Certification Organization (GR-05-BIO), IRIS-A, Hatzidakis and Co. E.E. (GR-06-BIO), Green Control (GR-07-BIO), the Geotechnical Institute (GR-08-BIO), GMCert, Parianos – Souyoutzis O.E. (GR-10-BIO), Q-Cert Ltd. (GR-12-BIO), TUV HELLAS S.A. (GR-13-BIO), the OXYGEN – Greek Certification Body – Tsiasioti St. and SIA O.E. (GR-14-BIO), TUV AUSTRIA HELLAS M.E.P.E. (GR-15-BIO), Q-Check-Migos S. and SIA E.E. (GR-16-BIO), the EuroCert European Audit and Certification Company S.A. (GR-17-BIO) and CosmoCert Certification Services S.A. (GR-18-BIO) . The certification mark of a Greek organization is valid throughout the European Union. | The mandatory national logo (which is still under development), as well as the European logo, which is currently optional, but will be mandatory from 2009.

How certified organic products are tested

The certification mark on an organic product proves that a series of tests - in the field, in the laboratory and on the shelf - have been carried out before it reaches our hands. In fact, certified organic products, which represent just 4% of our total agriculture, are controlled 25 times more than the remaining 96% of conventional agriculture. Let's see what checks they undergo:

- On-site inspection of the field. The regulation provides that the control of the plot of land must be done at least once a year. However, the Greek certification and control organizations set the bar higher, carrying out regular and extraordinary controls 2-3 or more times a year, emphasizing the dangerous seasons for each type of crop, i.e. the periods when fertilizers or herbicides are expected to be used. Controls are carried out by experienced agronomists, who can detect traces of pesticides and chemical fertilizers on a farm even months after their use.
- Laboratory control. If the inspector-agronomist deems it necessary, he takes a sample from the field (soil, fruits) and requests its laboratory analysis for traces of fertilizers and pesticides.

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The analysis is always done in an accredited laboratory, where the sample is sent anonymously. Sampling can be done, for example, in fields adjacent to conventionally cultivated plots, so there is a risk of contamination – one of the biggest risks facing organic farmers today, and one that reminds us that organic products are not produced in glass containers. The law provides for annual sampling of at least 5% of organic farmers. However, the Greek certification organizations set higher goals, carrying out more checks, doubling or even tripling the above percentage. The interesting thing is that the organic growers themselves, as well as the sellers of organic products, often carry out their own laboratory tests, in order to make sure of the purity of their products and to maintain the trust of their consumers.

- Check on the shelf. Audits of certificate organizations are not limited to the field. They also extend to the shelf. It is possible, for example, to take a sample from the store where a producer's organic products are sold (the certification bodies know where each producer has his products), but also from the processing plant, and even from the olive oil tank (in case of oil, which is the basic biological product of our country, which is mainly exported).
- Document control. Every organic grower must keep a diary and record of all documents (invoices, receipts, etc.) related to his production. The examination of the documents is important and complements the picture formed by the auditor from the on-site inspection of the field.
- Control of state agencies. The organic product certification organizations are controlled by the state bodies (ELGO DIMITRA) on an annual basis. The controls concern the files of the organic farmers which are kept by the certification organizations. However, checks (on-site and sampling) are also carried out on the producers themselves, as well as on the trading sites (wholesale and retail) of organic farming products.
- Sy.V.A.A. respecting the consumer has hired an experienced and specialized agronomist to carry out daily checks at the Organic Farmers' Markets.

The results of the audits

- What do the multitude of audits carried out on organic producers reveal? The evidence shows that our organic farmers are among the most consistent in Europe. In fact, it is estimated that the percentage of problematic samples in our country is below the European average, which amounts to 2%.