



STATUS AND VISIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTION IN RN MACEDONIA

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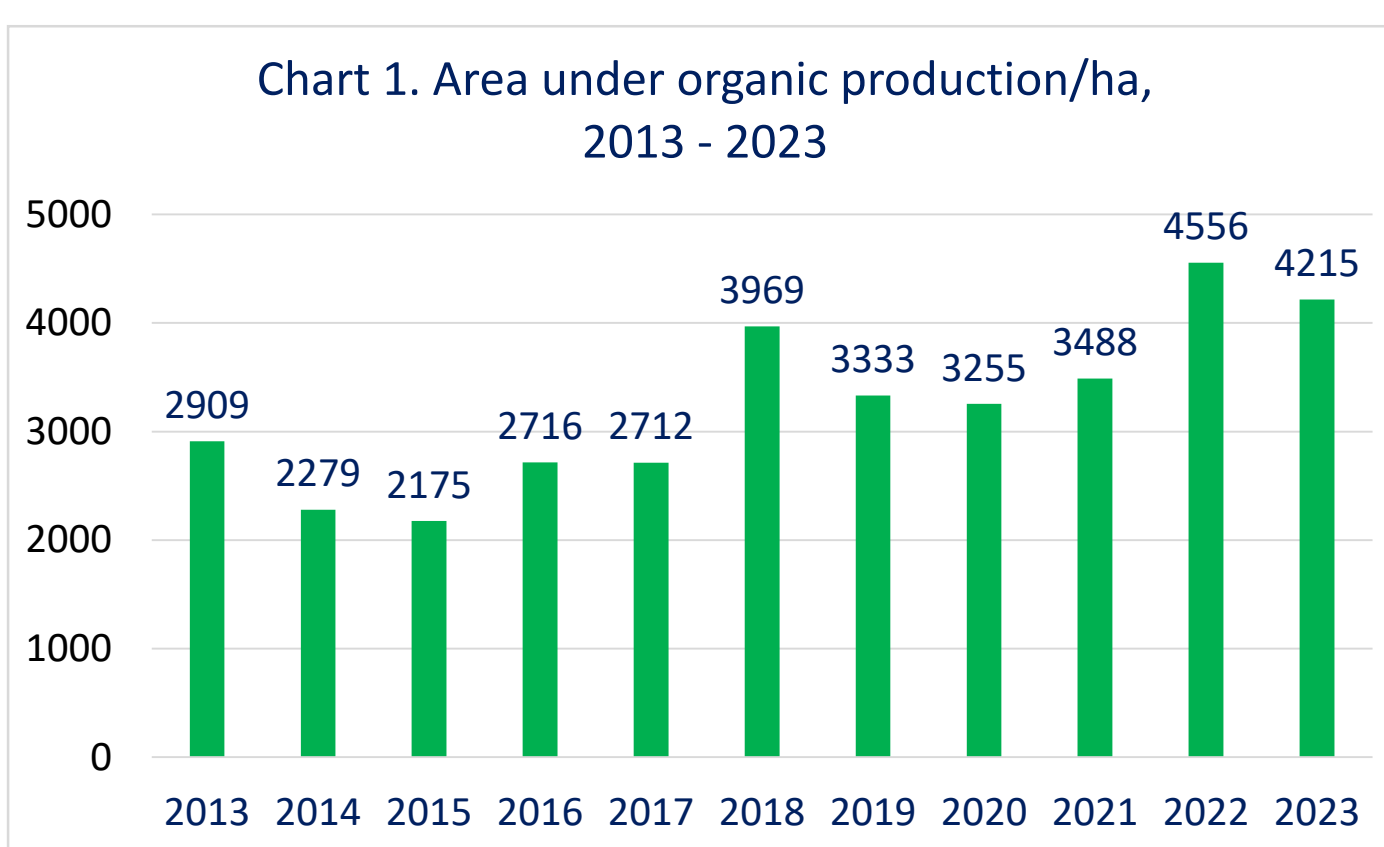
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INTRODUCTION

The European Commission published its 'Farm to Fork' strategy, where 25 % of the EU's agricultural land should be under organic farming by 2030. The plan is quite ambitious and means that by 2030 the EU should triple its organic land area (compare with 2019), and increase its overall CAP expenditure.

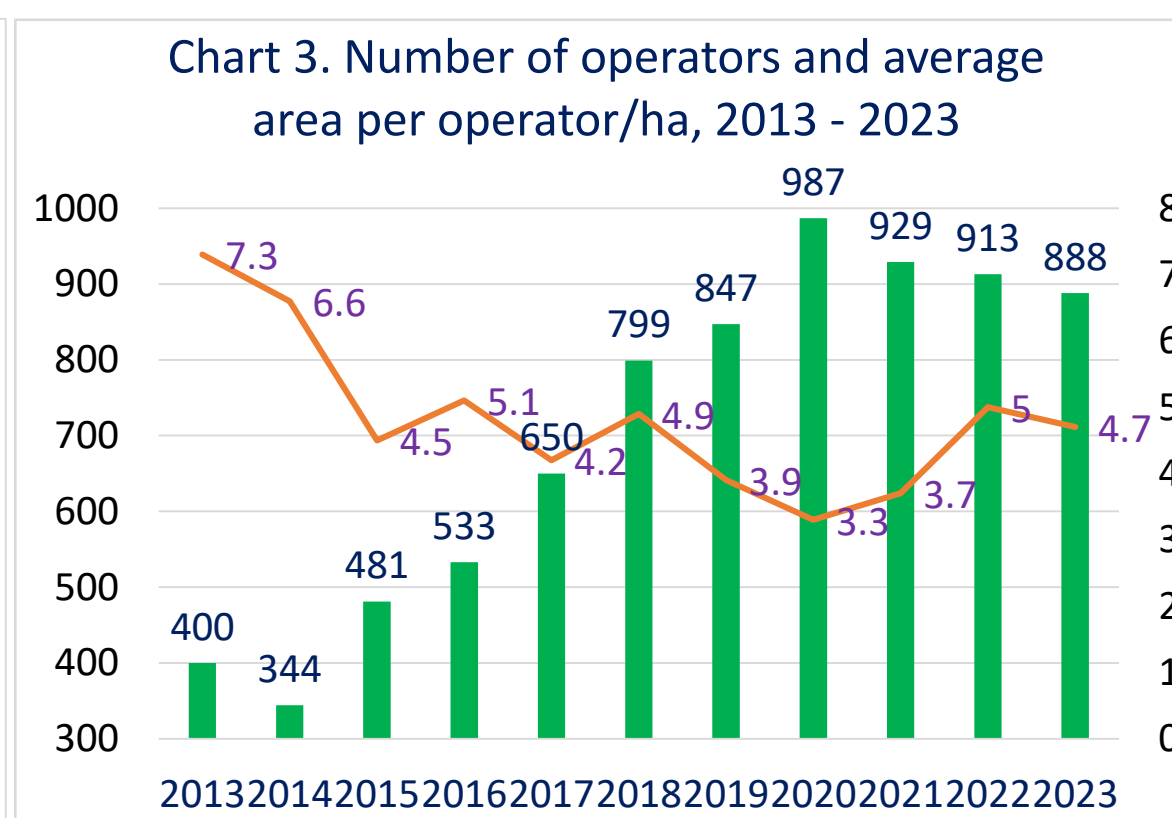
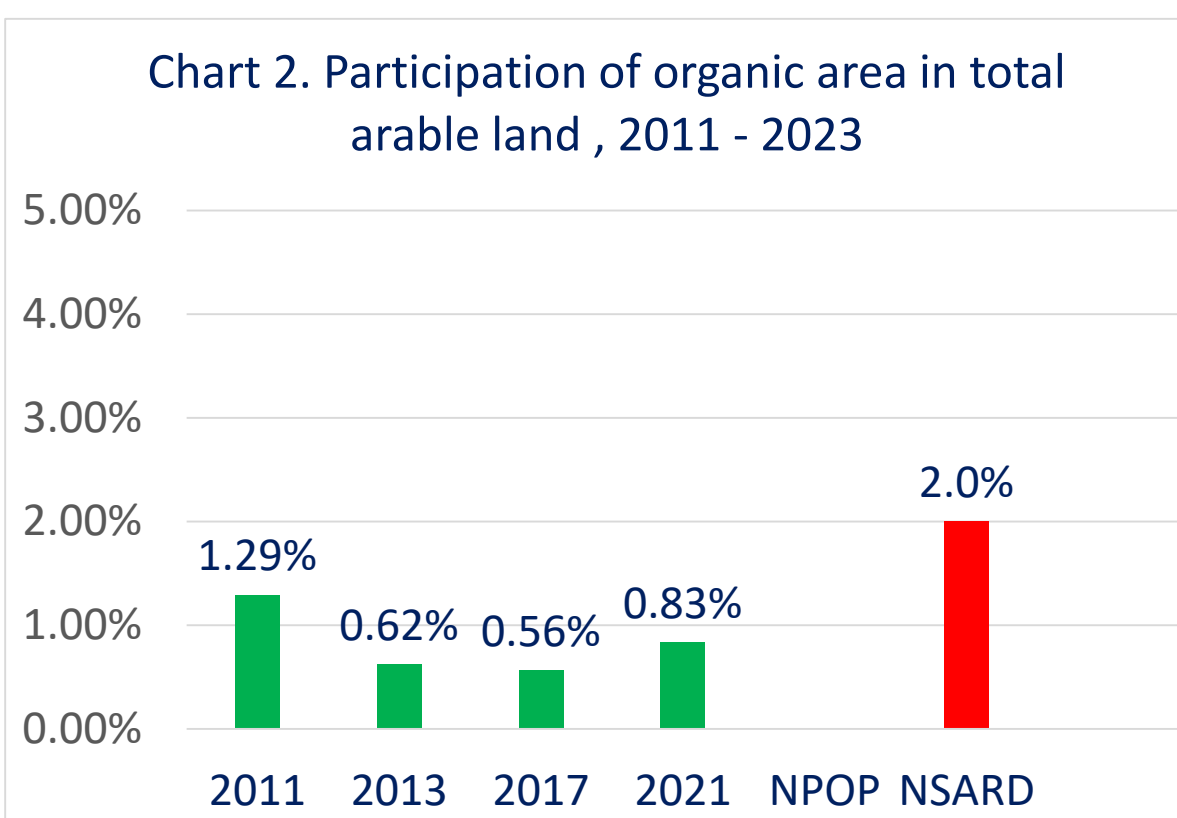
ORGANIC CROP PRODUCTION IN RN MACEDONIA, PERIOD 2013 – 2023

According to the data from SSO (2023), there were 4215 ha of certified organic production (which does not account for some categories, such as fallow land), representing 0.83% of the total arable land (514,375 ha). This figure still falls short of one of the specific goals outlined in the National Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021 –2027), which aims for the share of total organic area in total arable land to reach 2% (Chart 2). The number of certified organic operators has been



gradually increasing, with the highest total recorded in 2020 at 987 operators. However, the number has decreased over the past two years, standing at 913 in 2022 and 888 operators in 2023, with an average area per operator of 5.0 and 4.7 hectares, respectively (Chart 3)

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Cereals occupy the largest share of the total certified organic area (51%), followed by fodder crops (21%) and fruit (20%). (MAFWE, 2023; SSO, 2023)

SPECIFIC GOALS FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA UNTIL 2027

1. Primary Agricultural Production:

- Organic production should cover 2% of total agricultural land in the Republic of North Macedonia and 2% of the total certified livestock in organic farming (including beekeeping and fishing) of the total livestock population in the country;
- To identify and support strategically important organic products;
- To improve the availability of approved raw materials for use in organic production.

2. Processing Industry:

- Contract Farming:** Collaborate with organic farmers through long-term agreements to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality organic raw materials;
- Adopting Sustainable Processing Practices** that preserve the natural integrity of organic ingredients, such as cold-pressing, freeze-drying, or fermentation.
- Waste Management:** Develop systems to minimize waste and recycle by-products into organic compost or animal feed.

3. Trade:

- To increase the assortment and quantities of organic agricultural products;
- To increase demand and consumption of organic agricultural products;
- To raise public awareness of organic food;
- To exploit the potential for organic product consumption through the development of rural tourism;
- To increase the placement of Macedonian organic agricultural products in export markets.

4. Control and Certification:

- To increase competition in the supply of control and certification services;
- Institutional strengthening of the monitoring system in organic production.

5. Education and Science:

- To increase the share of education in the field of organic production (both formal and informal education); to intensify research on organic agricultural techniques;
- To intensify and expand research on the potential of natural resources;
- To begin market research.

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DYNAMICS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFIC GOALS, PERIOD 2024 – 2027

Year 2024:

Research and Development:

- Start of developing a strategic document on current practices in organic farming, yields, and market conditions.

Training and Education for Farmers:

- Develop a questionnaire for farmers covering general and specific topics on organic farming;
- Begin developing training programs for farmers on methods and best practices for organic farming (based on responses from the questionnaire);
- Organize workshops and online lectures in collaboration with agricultural faculties/institutes in the country and experts in the field of organic production.

Policy and Regulatory Framework:

- Collaboration between government and non-government institutions to find additional initiatives for supporting organic farming.

Year 2025:

(continuation of the goals outlined in 2024)

Improvement of Farm Productivity:

- Promotion of crop rotation, green fertilization, and other sustainable measures (to increase yields and soil fertility).
- Intensify cooperation between the scientific community and organic producers to adopt new technologies and skills.

Increase of Areas under Organic Farming:

- Encourage farmers from conventional agriculture to transition to organic farming through demonstration trials and involving farmers who already practicing organic production to promote the economic profitability of organic farming.

Market Development:

- Develop partnerships with traders, supermarkets, and e-commerce platforms to increase the visibility and accessibility of organic products.
- Organize "Organic Farming Day" 3 - 4 times a year in major cities across the country.

Public Procurement Policies:

- Encourage the use of organic products in public institutions such as kindergartens, schools, and hospitals through procurement policies that favor the supply of organic food.

By the end of 2025, the area under organic farming should reach 1.0% of the total arable land.

Year 2026:

(continuation of the goals outlined in 2024 and 2025)

Certification and Quality Control:

- Strengthen certification bodies to use group certification instead of individual certification for farmers.
- Implement regular inspections and quality control measures to maintain consumer trust.

Adoption of New Technologies:

- Develop mobile applications to provide farmers with real-time advice and market information on organic products.
- Introduce modern farming practices (soil sensors, drones, and data analysis programs) to optimize organic farming.

Biodiversity Improvement:

- Initiate programs for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity on organic farms through the cultivation of indigenous populations and varieties of agricultural crops.

By the end of 2026, the area under organic farming should reach 1.5% of the total arable land.

Year 2027:

Annual Evaluations:

- Conduct annual evaluations to assess progress towards the set goals by monitoring the following indicators: (increased) area under organic production, (increased) yield per hectare, (increased) number of operators with organic certification, (increased) level of awareness and consumer satisfaction, etc.

Communication among Stakeholders in the Organic Production System:

- Regular meetings with stakeholders in the organic production chain, including farmers, consumers, policymakers (MAFWE), researchers/educators, and the industry, to review and monitor progress.

By the end of 2027, the area under organic farming should reach 2.0% of the total arable land.