EU: Spain confirms leader in organic farming

According to the first data of the organic production in our country, facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAPAMA), **Spain is confirmed the first** EU **country by surface, *surpassing two million hectares*. It is also among the top five producers in the world.**

The advance of organic production data 2016 confirms the trend towards sustained growth and consolidation of the sector.

> The area devoted to this type of production has increased by 2.5% compared to 2015, reaching almost 2,019,000 ha

Half of it goes to permanent pastures, one-quarter to arable land crops and the other quarter to

permanent crops.

> Noteworthy is the area under conversion, which has tripled compared to the previous year, which shows its potential

In terms of operators, the total number of operators increased by 5.3% to 39.744, with the number increasing in all categories: producers (4.4%), industrial (9%), importers (23%), Exporters (17%). These data highlight the increase in the number of operators in the later stages of the food chain, due to the increase in demand.

In plant production stands out the increase of hectares dedicated to cereals, tubers, vegetables, fruit trees, nuts, citrus and vineyards.

> In terms of animal production, the number of farms increases, especially those of beef cattle whose number doubles

It increases, to a lesser extent, the number of holdings of bovine and sheep meat, and poultry. *The number of heads of cattle is also increasing, highlighting the poultry they have seen multiplied by two figures*, and a smoother increase in the number of heads of cattle, goats and laying hens.

> As far as the agro-food industries are concerned, they have registered positive growth (9%), reaching 5,663 those related to vegetable production and 952 those related to animal production

While the number of the former has increased in all categories, the latter has diminished the dairy industries and increased the rest.

Official Control

Organic products, also called organic or organic, are subject to an official control system regulated by Community legislation, within the framework of the National Plan for the Official Control of the Food Chain. The ecological agricultural production program has, among other requirements, to carry out at least one annual visit to the different operators of organic production (producers,

processors or traders).

Thus, the total number of official controls carried out in 2016 was 46,632. In the course of these controls, 4,473 samples were analyzed, accounting for 11% of the total. Of these, only 7% had an unfavorable analytical result

> The number of defaults (irregularities or infractions) amounted to 942 in 2016, compared to 965 in the previous year

These data show that the level of compliance is very high, with only the percentage of operators with non-compliances remaining at 2%.

Source: MAPAMA