The advance of data on organic production in 2017 marks a trend of sustained growth

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food already has the data on organic production in Spain for the year 2017. These data confirm the trend of sustained growth and the consolidation of organic production, which keeps Spain as the first country in the world. European Union on agricultural land dedicated to this farming system, and one of the five most important in the world.

Thus, the area devoted to this type of production has increased by 3.1% compared to 2016, exceeding 2,082,000 hectares. Half is devoted to permanent pastures, a quarter to arable land crops and the other quarter to permanent crops. Highlights the qualified area in production, which has increased by more than 280,000 hectares over the previous year. Therefore, a trend of average annual growth of the total ecological area of ??3.7% in the last 5 years is confirmed.

Increase in operators

With regard to operators, their total number has increased by 5.3% to 43,984, with the number increasing in all categories: primary (4.2%), industrial (12.8%), importers (28%), exporters (49%) and wholesale traders (22%). These data highlight the growth in the later stages of the food chain, due to the increase in demand. The tendency of the average annual growth in the last 5 years has been of 4.7% in agricultural producers, 15.2% in industries and 17.5% in marketers of organic products

In vegetable production highlights the increase of hectares dedicated to vegetables, fodder, fruit, nuts, citrus and berries, maintaining vineyards and olive groves, and decreasing cereals and legumes.

In terms of animal production, the number of holdings of bovine and ovine milk increases, in beekeeping and in laying and meat poultry. The number of head of cattle also increases in cattle, laying hens, rabbits and hives. Aquaculture has been another subsector with strong growth this year in production of more than 29%

As far as the industries are concerned, they have registered a very positive growth, reaching 6,662

those related to vegetable production, the main ones being the fruit and vegetable and beverage manufacturing industries; and to 1,151 those related to animal production, highlighting the meat and dairy industry. This increase has occurred in all activities.

All these data disaggregated by Autonomous Community and by provinces are already available on the Ministry's website.

Official controls

Organic agri-food products, also called biological or organic, are subject to a control system, regulated by community regulations, and included in the National Official Control Plan of the Food Chain. The program of organic production requires at least one annual control visit to the different operators of organic production (producers, processors or marketers).

The total number of official controls carried out in 2017 was 48,166 and 1,633 in imports at the border. In the course of the same have been analyzed 4,736 samples, of which only 8.2% have had an unfavorable result. The number of non-compliances amounted to 1,512, representing 3.4% of the operators.

In addition, the competent authorities of the Autonomous Communities have supervised the public and private certifying entities, leading to the withdrawal of the authorization to a control body.

UNE standards

On the other hand, the three UNE standards of inputs for use in organic agricultural production are already available for consultation on the Department's website. These are voluntary private standards that, by demand of the sector, were promoted by this Ministry and are:

- UNE 142500. Products Fertilizers, amendments and growing substrates.
- UNE 315500. Products for the management of pests and plant diseases.
- UNE 66500. Minimum requirements for the certification of inputs usable in organic production according to UNE 142500 and UNE 315500.

Its elaboration during more than two years of work, has been of great technical complexity and has involved: experts from Autonomous Communities and from different Subdirections of the Ministry, ENAC (National Accreditation Entity), Representative Associations and Manufacturers and marketers of inputs (AEFA - Spanish Association of Manufacturers of Agronutrients, AEFISA-Spanish Association of Phytosanitary and Environmental Health, ANFEE-National Association of Manufacturers of Fertilizers); representatives of the ecological producer sector and certification bodies for organic production and inputs.

The publication on the Ministry's website is the culmination of this work and marks an important

moment for the development of Spanish ecological agriculture. These three standards, voluntary and pioneering, are a valuable tool that provides solutions and provides certified inputs with a distinction valued positively by the market.

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