

Current World Status of Organic Temperate Fruits

David Granatstein,¹ Helga Willer,² and Elizabeth Kirby¹

Abstract

Consumption of organic food has steadily increased in the primary markets of the European Union and North America. However, the statistical information base to describe this growth is either incomplete or inaccessible, and sometimes inaccurate. In the US, fruits and vegetables make up 40% of organic food sales, implying that the expanding overall market has also increased demand for organic temperate fruits such as apple, grape, and strawberry. Organic fruit in several European countries comprises over five percent of all fruit sales. Data on organic temperate fruit production have been compiled by FiBL and WSU. In 2006, there were at least 360,000 ha of organic temperate fruit under production worldwide. Growth rates vary by the fruit type and geographic location. In Washington State, US, a leading producer of apple, pear, and cherry, organic production will soon comprise ten percent of all apple and pear hectares. Over five percent of the grape hectares in Italy are certified organic. Major organic temperate fruit production is spread around the globe, but often is most successful with semi-arid, dry summer climates, due to reduced disease problems. Leading producers include Turkey, Spain, Italy, Poland, the US, and Germany, which together accounted for about 80% of the global hectares in 2006.

¹ Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, Washington State University, 1100 N. Western Ave., Wenatchee, WA 98801, US.

² Research Institute for Organic Farming (FiBL), Ackerstrasse, CH-5070 Frick, Switzerland.