



**PERSPECTIVE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING  
IN LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP**

*Jagoda ZBOROWSKA, Maciej GAWRON, Michał BURDA, Karolina BOJKO, Małgorzata SMYK  
University of Zielona Góra  
Michał KRZESZOWSKI  
Northumbria University – Newcastle City*

**Abstract:**

The paper discusses the problem of the development of organic farming in lubuskie voivodship. Presented in it analysis of changes in this production sector in recent years and identified critical factors for growth for this area of production in the nearest term. In analysis used statistic data coming from public statistics and public institutions dealing with agricultural production sector in Poland.

**Key words:** *organic agricultural production, development of agriculture, food ecological, lubush region*

**INTRODUCTION**

The increasing awareness level of consumers and the growing interest in the issue of healthy nutrition, which has been noticeable in recent years, directly influences the rising interest for ecological products delivered by food manufacturers [4]. At the same time, the dynamic development of the trade infrastructure and the area of promotion of the healthy life style foster competition and an increased demand which rises the profitability of this area of production. The adoption of modern consumption patterns, the implementation of the EU legislation and the observed since 2004 significant influx of funds into the agricultural production area caused a dynamic development of agriculture including ecologic and organic farming. The pro-ecological trends and the increased interest in healthy organic food by the consumers and also the attractive support offered by the European Union, including the new financial perspective, may become a very important factor in the development of this area of production in the upcoming years. That is why, this article takes the issue of organic agricultural production in the Lubuskie Voivodship in the context of the most important factors of growth in the upcoming years of this important area of production.

**FROM TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE TO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is one of the oldest and basic economic sectors of the human activity. The main idea since the very beginning is to provide food products that are a result of purposeful cultivation and animal husbandry. Over the years, the agricultural activity of humans has undergone constant changes and now, in addition to producing a wide range of food, agriculture also provides a number of raw materials for industry, creates jobs, but mainly in the large scale shapes the natural environment and landscape [1].

Numerous changes in political, economic and social spheres, such as the Polish accession to the European Union and the increasing public awareness of sustainable development and its consequences, meant that "the efficiency of agricultural production is assessed not only on the basis of yield per hectare, but also through the prism of its impact on the landscape, biodiversity, water, soil, air and climate, and recreational and tourist potential" [7].

Due to the fact that agricultural activity is defined as "activities in the field of plant and animal production, including seed production, nursery, breeding and reproductive, vegetable production, ornamental plants, fungi crops, horticulture, livestock and production of mammals pedigree, birds and utility insects, industrial-type production, farm and fish breeding" [5] achieved such a high level of natural ecosystems degrade and deform the landscape people began to see the need to introduce changes in the existing 'functioning' of agriculture.

According to the principles of sustainable development a key issue in the context of agricultural production is to "set at such level of use of environmental resources, that its scope does not lead to environmental degradation" [7]. Reflecting this approach to agriculture can be seen in the Common Agricultural Policy, which seeks to introduce the European model of Agriculture.

The direction of the development of agriculture in the European Union, and thus in Poland, mainly determined the requirements of the Treaty of Amsterdam, but the rise of organic farming, which is now the fastest growing sector of agriculture, is not the result of sudden fashion for living in harmony with nature and actions of the authorities [9]. The initial development of organic agriculture was from the bottom up – it was the farmers citizens' initiative (also part of consumers) who could increasingly feel the "ecological and health impacts of industrial agriculture" [4].

The Ordinance of the Council of 28 June 2007. You can read that "organic production is an overall system of farm management and food production that combines best environmental practices, a high degree of biodiversity, protection of natural resources application of high animal welfare standards and a production method corresponding to certain consumers who prefer products made using natural substances and natural processes.

The organic production method thus plays a dual societal role, on the one hand provides for a specific market goods shaped by the demand for organic products, on the other hand, is an action in the public interest because it contributes to environmental protection, animal welfare and rural development" [12].

Due to the fact that the producers saw enormous potential in the development of its businesses towards organic farming mainly due to the economic reasons (because products derived from the production of organic products are more expensive) and consumers need to be confident that the source from which they reach for organic products is a reliable and trustworthy source, a certification of organic products produced and provided to the economy by manufacturers was introduced.

The logo (Fig. 1), which can be placed on certified organic products from July 1, 2010 functions as a Community figurative mark, which "aims to provide legal protection of the consumer and harmonize standards for organic production" [2]. The label must also show a identification number of the certification body (Fig. 2).

The list of the certifying bodies for organic products with precise information is available on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and it is supervised by the Quality Inspection of Agricultural Products.



**Fig. 1 European logo for organic food**  
Source: [11].

The identification number given in the authorization to the certification body      Name of authorized certification body to the certification body

PL-EKO-01	EKOGWARANCJA PTRE Sp. z o. o
PL-EKO-02	PNG Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-03	COBICO Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-04	BIOEKSPERT Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-05	BIOCERT MAŁOPOLSKA Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-06	Polskie Centrum Badań i Certyfikacji S.A
PL-EKO-07	AGRO BIO TEST Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-08	TÜV Rheinland Polska Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-09	Centrum Jakości AgroEko Sp. z o.o.
PL-EKO-10	SGS Polska Sp. z o.o.

**Fig. 2 List of certification bodies in organic agriculture in Poland**  
Source: [3].

**ORGANIC FARMING IN POLAND AND IN THE LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP**

Poland is 312.7 thousand. km<sup>2</sup> big, which constitutes approximately 7.1% of the total surface area of the European Union (EU). It is divided into 16 provinces, 314 districts, 66 cities with the rights of districts and 2479 municipalities. The communes consist of auxiliary units, among others, village councils, of which there are more than 40000. The population in Poland is 38.5 million people, including 23.4 million in the cities and in rural areas - 15.1 million people. Rural areas in Poland constitute 93.1% of its territory, which is home to 39.2% of total population. The average population density is about 123.2 people per km<sup>2</sup>, while in the cities it is 1084.7 people per km<sup>2</sup> and in rural areas – 51.9 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Polish countryside is characterized by a dispersed settlement network, which has approx. 52.5 thousand of rural localities, including 43 thousand villages [8]. The Figure 3, below shows the territorial division of the Polish urban and rural areas.



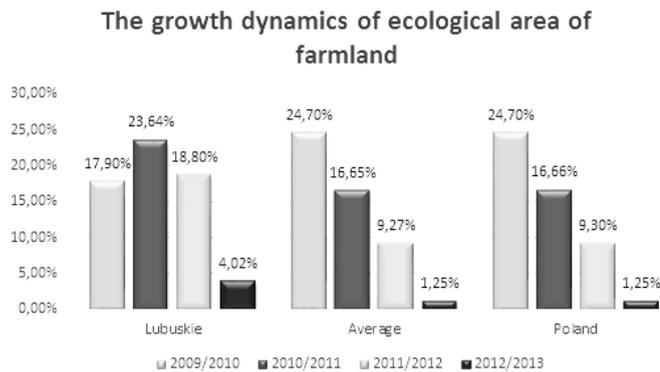
**Fig. 3 Poland division to urban and rural areas**  
Source: [10].

Lubuskie is located in the western part of the Polish country. The territory of the whole region covers an area of about 14 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, which represents 4.5% of the country. Lubuskie is administratively divided into two sub-regions (The gorzów region and the zielona góra region), 14 counties (2 townships – Gorzow Wielkopolski and Zielona Gora and 12 rural counties) and 83 municipalities (9 urban, 33 urban and rural and 40 rural – previously it was about 41 rural municipalities, but starting from 1 January 2015.

The Zielona Gora village commune was merged with the city of county rights Zielona Gora and the result of the merge, in the territory of the former municipality of Zielona Gora district, a New Town was established effecting from 2 January 2015 it operates as part of the administrative city of Zielona Gora). The Lubuskie's region (according to the actual place of residence) has 1.2 million inhabitants, which represents about 2.6% of the Polish population (last place in the country). The population living in cities is 63.1% of the total population in the region (as of December 2014) [9].

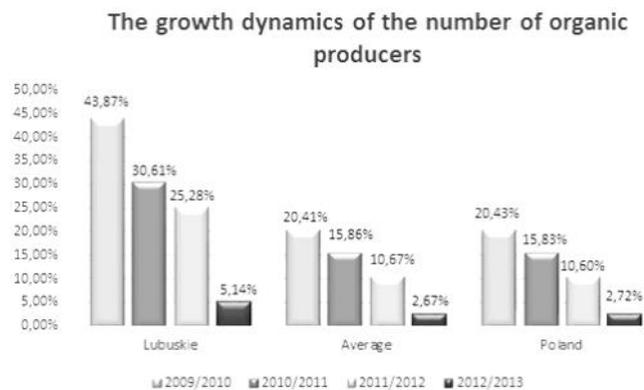
Lubuskie is one of the smallest regions in Poland (13<sup>th</sup> place) that is why in the publication of presenting the data

it is presented in the form of the growth rate of each category in order that you get a better picture of the comparison. The expression reflecting the real image of organic agriculture and its development in the regions is as follows: the area of organic farmland and the number of organic producers (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4 The growth dynamics of ecological area of farmland**  
 Source: Own work basing on the report of the Chief Inspector of Trade Quality and Ecological Agriculture and Food regarding the condition of organic farming in Poland in years 2009-2013.

At the turn of 2009 and 2010, the rate of growth of ecological area of agricultural land was higher across the country than in Lubuskie by 6.8%. In turn, the turn of the years 2010 and 2013 indicates a much higher growth rate in the province of Lubuskie than in the whole country and the national average (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5 The growth dynamics of the number of organic producers**  
 Source: Own work basing on the report of the Chief Inspector of Trade Quality and Ecological Agriculture and Food regarding the condition of organic farming in Poland in years 2009-2013.

In the years 2009 and 2010 we could see the highest increase in organic producers compared to the analyzed years – in the Lubuskie province, the relative dynamics gain was 43.87%, and in Poland 20.43%. The following years represent a continuous growth, but its growth rate is lower and at the turn of 2012 and 2013 in the Lubuskie voivodship stood at 5.14%, and in Poland at the level of 2.72%.

#### PERSPECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN THE LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP

Organic farming is growing worldwide and in Poland for many years, and the statistical data Lubuskie indicates that the inhabitants of the region are aware of global trends and are investing in this branch of the economy. Over the years analyzed in the publication high levels of growth were recorded, both at the surface of organic area of agricultural land and the number of organic producers. The continuous growth of the above elements is associated with a growing awareness of the public about sustainable development

and, above all, the need to reduce environmental impact and to provide healthy and nutritious products, which beneficially affect the humans' health. The decreasing growth rate in the case of the organic area of farmland and the number of manufacturers, due the fact that organic production is highly expensive, requires modern solutions and more jobs than traditional solutions and not every entrepreneur/farmer wants to undertake such projects.

The ecological system creates great opportunities for development also due to the fact that it supports small local producers, which affects the development of rural areas. It creates better working conditions and ensure appropriate treatment of farm animals by providing them a decent existence.

With all the positive reasons of organic farming, the best chance for the Lubuskie region is the issue that inadequate nutrition is the cause of many diseases and the consumers see it necessary and desirable to have access to organic products. Another most important issue that affects the growth of public interest in the Lubuskie province is that organic production is an issue that the production of organically grown food is an opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of processors and agricultural producers and alters the manner of competition from the quantitative to the qualitative. An important advantage and direction of development of the Lubuskie province is also the development of the transport infrastructure and close proximity to the German border, which is successively used by organic producers from the region.

#### SUMMARY

Currently, the world is growing importance of organic production. Polish agriculture is appealing and has many advantages, from the point of view of opportunities for development of ecological way of farming, particularly in regions where natural conditions and a low level of industrialization, and thus low environmental pollution are conducive to organic production. A significant limitation for the development of the Polish organic farming is the overall economic condition of the country and the ensuing number of consumers willing to pay more for eco-friendly product of high quality.

The spectrum interest in products from organic farms in Poland is constantly increasing, but in the long term it may also encounter a barrier to growth without reaching the level of Western Europe, mainly due to the relatively higher price of organic products forming a barrier of capital among Polish consumers, and also because of the relatively good advantages of traditional Polish fetuses with conventional farms. However, with increasing production efficiency, competition and the supply of eco-foods you can expect a drop in prices of these products in the long run.

The analysis of the Lubuskie region presented in this article shows that in the Lubuskie province people saw more interest in organic production, which is an opportunity to increase the competitiveness and economic development of the region. Among other things, increasing demand, proximity to the border, appropriate infrastructural conditions, and financial support measures mean that the development of this sphere of production can in the coming years gain more and more importance and become an important development impulse also for industries serving agriculture, thus contributing to increase the number of jobs in the region and the total number of entities operating in the sphere of production.

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Jagoda Zborowska, Maciej Gawron, Michał Burda,  
Karolina Bojko, Małgorzata Smyk  
University of Zielona Góra  
Faculty of Economics and Management, Eco-Management Academic Circle  
ul. Podgórna 50, 65-001 Zielona Góra, POLAND  
e-mail: z.jagoda@poczta.fm, mgwr.gawron@gmail.com,  
michal.burda3@gmail.com, karolina.bojko@op.pl, m.smyk@wp.pl

Michał Krzeszowski  
Northumbria University – Newcastle City, GREAT BRITAIN  
email: michal.krzeszowski@northumbria.ac.uk