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THE PROSPECTS FOR THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING IN UKRAINE AND POLAND

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle to improve its duration and quality is a strategic goal in many countries, including the EU. This leads to a shift towards safe and eco-friendly food products, which increases demand for organic farming. However, implementing organic farming is challenging, making research on the topic important. Recent research and publications show that scientists in both Poland and Ukraine are actively studying the formation and development of the organic market, as well as the need for state support for organic plant production. In Poland, ecological agriculture is seen as the basis for sustainable development in rural areas, and researchers discuss the prospects of this direction in the context of the EU strategy. The aim of this research is to assess the state and prospects of organic farming in the EU using Poland as an example.

Currently, the European Union countries have a total of 16.5 million hectares of organic farms, with Spain, France, and Italy leading the way with 2.4 million hectares, 2.2 million hectares, and 2 million hectares respectively. On average, organic farmland makes up about 8.1% of the available agricultural land in the EU, but the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 aims to increase this to 25%. Austria, Estonia, and Sweden have already surpassed this goal with 26%, 22%, and 20% respectively. Ukraine has significant potential for expanding its organic farming, but it lags behind the progress made in the EU. In Poland, organic and transitional farmland makes up only 2.7% of its total land, which is significantly lower than the EU average. To

catch up, Poland needs to increase its organic farming area by 1,012.4 thousand hectares or 3 times its current level.

The area of land with organic and transitional status in Poland in recent years has remained almost constant at an average level of 500-510 thousand hectares. Figure 1 demonstrates that from 2016 to 2020, Poland's transitional lands comprised 25–33% of their total volume, which could have contributed to up to +10% of yearly growth in organic lands. However, this was not the case as these lands were gradually being converted into agricultural land. The Zachodniopomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, and Lubuskie voivodeships had the highest level of business activity in this agricultural sector. These regions accounted for up to 49.8% of all available organic and transitional lands in the country in 2020, despite only having 16.1% of agricultural land. In comparison to other European Union countries, the particle index in these voivodeships. The assessment of the areas indicates that there is no clear leader in terms of organic production indicators. However, based on the overall ranking, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie, and Dolnośląskie provinces seem to have a more favorable situation compared to Śląskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, and Lubelskie provinces which are performing poorly. Currently, Poland is lagging significantly behind the average level of organic land in the European Union which is 8.1%. Reaching this level by 2030 would require an average annual growth rate of at least +11.2% for organic and transitional lands, with transitional lands making up 25.1% of these lands. However, the EU's strategic goal of converting a quarter of all agricultural land into organic by 2030 requires a higher annual growth rate of +22.8% for organic lands in Poland.

Organic farming has the potential to bring numerous benefits, including increased soil fertility, better biodiversity, and improved food safety. However, the transition to organic farming requires significant investments in infrastructure and knowledge, as well as a shift in the mindset of farmers and consumers alike. Governments play a crucial role in supporting the development of organic farming, both through financial incentives and education programs. Additionally, consumers can contribute to the growth of organic agriculture by choosing to purchase organic products and supporting local organic farmers. By working together, we can help build a more sustainable and resilient food system.

Based on the analysis of recent research and publications, it can be concluded that organic farming is a relevant and important topic in many countries worldwide, including the European Union. Popularizing a healthy lifestyle to increase its duration and quality is one of the key strategic goals of national development in many countries. However, the widespread implementation of organic farming is associated with certain technological

difficulties and limitations. In regards to the countries of the European Union, Spain, France, and Italy are the leaders in terms of the area of their organic farms. The average proportion of organic farmland from the available agricultural land is about 8.1%, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 aims to increase this indicator to 25%. Some EU countries, such as Austria, Estonia, and Sweden, have already reached high levels of organic farmland. On the other hand, Poland lags significantly behind the progress achieved in the EU, although it has significant potential for expanding its organic farming. In 2020, the area of organic and transitional farmland in Poland was only 2.7%, significantly lower than the EU average. To reach the EU average level, Poland needs to increase its organic territories by 3 times. Achieving these targets would require state support and the creation of additional financial incentives, given the relatively low level of productivity. Overall, the development of organic production in Poland requires significant efforts, and it remains to be seen whether the country can catch up with other EU members in this regard.

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