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AN OVERVIEW OF ORGANIC PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY

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Abstract: As a result of globalization, large and industrialized enterprises have taken the place of small and local businesses in the food sector. These big enterprises provide cheap products anywhere in the world including underdeveloped countries. They also allow consuming out of season products. Large enterprises are getting more efficient and effective than small and local businesses and are making products cheaper. Small firms that cannot compete in the market are started to give up their production. Other small business owners who do not give up prefer organizing and ensuring the continuity of natural production.

There is an increasing trend in natural, healthy and local products in the world. Organic agriculture is intended to meet the needs of consumers of these products. In addition, organic farming ensures the sustainability in agriculture. Turkey has started organic farming for some products such as dried figs and grapes with the demand of the European organic products market. Then legislation on organic agriculture was introduced in Turkey.

Developments in organic farming have also affected cooperation positively. The producers that carry out organic farming activities are organized by associations, producer associations and cooperatives. These associations are established by partners/members such as producers, consumers, industrialists and researchers. Producers' associations were established on the basis of product group in provinces and districts according to the relevant law. There are different types of cooperatives, such as consumption cooperatives and laboring women's cooperatives, which are mainly engaged in purchasing from producers and delivering to consumers.

In this study, the organization types and purposes of organic producers in Turkey were evaluated. For this purpose, the organic producer organizations were examined.

Keywords: organic farming, organic producer, Turkey, associations, producer organizations, cooperatives, organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Along with globalization, as a result of developments and innovations in the world, industrialized big farms, which produce low cost products have taken the place of small and local enterprises. These businesses get more yield per unit area when compared to small and local enterprises and make production at low costs. Although this leads to more people reaching to more food, it causes small scaled businesses in developing countries to give up on production. The presence of small scaled enterprises resolves important problems such as providing sustainability of production, preventing rural migration, producing healthier food, and destroying natural resources. Today, products, which are produced by producers who use less chemicals, and protect the environment become increasingly important. The demand for those products is also growing steadily. Organic agriculture is a method of production, which meets these demands.

Organic agriculture is a method, which rules out the use of synthetic production inputs, and replaces it with crop rotation, the use of product wastes, animal manure, green fertilizers and non-agricultural organic wastes, the use of biological pest control methods for diseases, pests, and weeds in agricultural pest control, and is a production system that increases the soil activity and the organism activities in the soil (ORGÜDER, 2018).

In other words, organic agriculture is a human and environment friendly production system which has very important advantages in terms of food safety, has traceability at a level which cannot found in any other agricultural method, protects human and environmental health, and provides sustainability of ecological system and natural resources without exploitation, destruction or pollution. It is a system that is defined by legal regulations and also a production system which is ensured and recorded by the inspection and certification institutions (Altınışli, and Aksoy, 2010).

Organic production refers to more than just a production system that covers or excludes certain inputs. The use of synthetic agricultural chemicals, fertilizers and all synthetic preservatives, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and irradiation methods are prohibited in organic agriculture (ORGÜDER, 2018).

Although adhering to organic standards in organic agriculture alone is not a guarantee for a sustainable farming system, recent research has shown that organic farms use less energy and less farm inputs than industrial farms, support richer biodiversity, and have healthier soils, plants, and animals (Heinberg and Bomford, 2016).

The benefits of organic farming are shown in Figure 1.

Parameters	Benefits
Agriculture	Increase of agricultural diversity, long term soil fertility, increase of food quality
Environment	Less pollution, less soil erosion, protection of wildlife, production in harmony with the environment
Social Conditions	Improving health conditions, better education, building a stronger community, reducing migration from rural areas, increasing workforce and creating better working conditions
Economic Conditions	Establishing a stronger local economy, providing safer income and increase in profits
Organizational conditions	Product cultivation at higher capacities

Figure 1. Useful Aspects of Organic Agriculture (Turhan, 2005)

ORGANIC FARMING IN TURKEY

Organic agricultural production in Turkey began in the 1980s after the demand for traditional products in the European organic market through the representatives of European organic farming companies. Organic production first started in the Aegean Region, the first products grown organically were raisins and dried figs.

The first organized organic farming movement started in 1992 with the establishment of the "Association for Ecological Agriculture Organizations". First, the production was in accordance with the importing countries' legislations. But after 1991 plant production and after 1999 animal production were made according to the Council Regulation No 2092/91 of the European Union. In 1990s, with the commercialization of organic products all over the world, establishing a national legislation regulating all stages of organic farming activities from production to marketing became essential. In this respect, harmonized with the EU legislation "Organic Agriculture Law" and "Organic Farming Regulation on the Principles and Implementation" is currently in force (Anonymous, 2018).

The development of organic agriculture sector in Turkey is on figure 2.

Milestones of Turkey's Organic Sector Development



Figure 2. The development of organic sector in Turkey (ETO, 2018)

Organic agriculture, which started with the demands for exports, showed significant improvements over the years. Starting with eight products, organic agriculture has over 200 products in recent years. The organic products produced in Turkey in recent years are increasingly diversified. They range from fresh fruit and vegetables to various field crops such as legumes, cotton beet, medicinal and aromatic plants and dried fruits (apples, nuts, walnuts, pistachios, dried figs, apricots and grapes) (Demiryürek, 2016).

Organic Agriculture in Turkey

Number of organic products: were increased by 58,6% from 150 to 238 between years 2002 and 2016.

Number of farmers: were increased by 5,5 times from 12 428 to 67 878 between years 2002 and 2016.

Organic Production Area: is increased by 5,8 times from 89 827 hectares to 523 777 hectares between years 2002 and 2016.

Organic Production Quantity: is increased by 7,97 times from 310 125 tons to 2 473 600 tons between years 2002 and 2016 (Anonymous, 2018a).

According to the number of organic farmers in Turkey by region; Eastern Anatolia Region, Aegean region and Black Sea region have 37%, 26% and 25% of total organic farmers respectively. The Southeast region has only a 3% share. By farming areas, Eastern Anatolia region, Mediterranean region and black sea region have 38%, 21% and 15% of total organic agriculture area (Anonymous, 2018).

In 2017 Turkey's exports of organic food production reached 21 thousand tons with 10,3% and 87 million dollars with 17,2% increase. Countries where organic products are most exported are: Germany, USA and France. The largest market is the European Union countries. Organic products are exported to 68 countries worldwide. The most exported organic products are seedless dry grape, dried fig, hazelnut and dry apricot respectively (Anonymous, 2018b).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Works and studies on agriculture, national documents, statistical information about this subject, and official internet web pages of organizations active on organic agriculture were used in this study.

ORGANIC PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY

1. Associations

1.1. Association for Ecological Agriculture Organizations (ETO)

ETO was established in 1992 in İzmir with the participation of producers, consumers, processors, traders, controllers, researchers and technical staff to ensure fast and healthy development of ecological (organic, biological) agriculture in our country under an umbrella organization.

ETO has organized numerous short courses, seminars, conferences and panels in various fields of ecological agriculture, participated in fairs and prepared educational materials and also organized four National Organic Agriculture Symposiums in Turkey in 1999, 2001, 2006 and 2010 and has undertaken several national and international projects, especially in sensitive areas, to adopt organic agriculture and to develop capacity.

In the program prepared by the new governing board, firstly, the development and dissemination of organic agriculture all over the country, the expansion of the organic product market, and the representation of our country in domestic and foreign activities related to organic agriculture were discussed first (ETO, 2018).

Purposes of ETO are:

* To promote the introduction, dissemination and liking of ecological agriculture and scientific research related to this subject.

* To organize activities among individuals, institutions and organizations in the technical and commercial areas of ecological agriculture, to encourage their work, to help them to develop their professional formations and to protect their interests.

* To provide all necessary cooperation and organization for universities, research institutes and similar institutions.

* To work and support the creation of an internal market for ecological products.

* Contribute to and monitor the healthy development of domestic and foreign markets related to ecological products; To support the organization in the stages of certification and inspection.

* To enable the association logos to be used as supervised in domestic and foreign markets.

* To be involved with the relevant domestic and foreign, private and legal persons, individuals and organizations in order to solve all the problems that arise in the stages of production, operation and marketing, to conduct investigations, to prepare reports and to inform the public.

In 2007-2010 period, ETO's branches were established in three big cities (Adana, Ankara and Istanbul). ETO Association Economic Business was established on June 2010. By 2010, the number of committees increased to 7. Institutional membership have reached 35.

1.2. Organic Product Producers and Industrialists Association (ORGÜDER)

This association was founded in Ankara by five founders on March 17, 2004 by gathering all producers of organic product and industrialists under a single roof in order to enhance occupational solidarity, contribution, and cooperation, to exchange information, to enable information and introduction of organic products by being in contact with both consumers and the public in general; in other words, to contribute to the development of organic agriculture and organic product industry in Turkey, as well as to shape the future of the policy of organic agriculture.

ORGÜDER is a member of The Federation of Food and Drink Industry Associations of Turkey (TGDF) and International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM). The number of members has reached 25.

The main scope of the association includes the following activities:

- To ensure effective control and certification mechanism in the production of organic products and organic product marketing;
- Establishment of an advisory body for the production and marketing of organic products;
- Conducting "legislation, strategy and policy-making" activities in cooperation with the mainly the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, as well as with relevant ministries, institutions organizations, and non-governmental organizations;
- Branding efforts in organic products;
- Establishment of accredited laboratories;
- Informing and raising the consumer awareness through channels such as fairs, seminars, symposiums, TV programs and press;
- Revitalization and development of the internal market by reducing production costs in organic products;
- Introduction of the members by representing them at various national and international organizations such as fairs, seminars, symposiums, conferences and meetings (ORGÜDER, 2018).

1.3. Kapadokya Organic Producers Association (KAPTAR)

The association was established in 2009 and aims to lead organic farming within the geographical region covering Cappadocia, and to increase the number of organic production as well as its producers. The aim of the association is to contribute to the promotion and spread of organic agriculture and to raise awareness about organic production and consumption, to organize activities among individuals, institutions and corporations in this area, to promote works, to assist the development of occupational formation and top secure their benefits, to support or organize every kind of cooperation with universities, research institutes, and SMEs, to contribute to the development of the domestic and foreign market of organic products and to carry out inspections, to provide organizational support in the course

of stages of certification and audit, to provide a good information flow by forming a data bank, to enable the use of logos of the association under supervision in domestic and foreign markets, to carry out all kinds of cooperation and organization, to conduct scientific research, projecting, consultancy and coordination duties in the fields of organic and good agricultural practices, to investigate all the problems that arise during stages of production, operation and marketing by forming a relationship with the related domestic and foreign natural persons or legal identities, to carry out examinations-on-site, to compile reports, and to inform the public (KAPTAR, 2018).

2. Producer Organizations

Producer associations are established at minimum district levels in terms of product or product group in terms of product or product groups in order to plan production by the producers according to the demand, to consign products, which are in conformity with the applicable market norms and standards, and to take measures to increase the marketing power of the products at national and international scale. At the district level, a maximum of one union can be established for the same product or product group (Anonymous 2018c).

Producer associations related to organic products operate in 5 different product groups in our country. The association of organic fruit producers is established in the field of general fruit growing, and product based, on strawberries, bananas, nuts, apricots and olives. In our country, there are 16 union on organic fruit production, and 910 producers are members of this association. There are 2 producer associations and 32 members on organic vegetable growing, 1 union and 19 members on organic fields, 1 union and 63 members on organic red meat, 1 union and 16 members for organic legumes, and 5 unions and 85 members on organic grain production.

Table1. Producer Organizations in Organic Products (Anonymous, 2018d)

Producer Organizations in Organic Products	Number of Producer Organizations	Number of Member
Organik Meyve Organic Fruit	16	910
Organik Sebze Organic Vegetable	2	32
Organik Tahıl Organic Cereal	6	1 310
Organik Tarla Organic Field	1	19
Organik Kırmızı Et Organic Red Meat	1	63
Organik Bakliyat		
Total	26	2 334

2.1. Çarşamba Organic Hazelnut Producers Association

Çarşamba Organic Hazelnut Producers Association was founded on July 24, 2007 with 57 certified producers' league together. By 2016, the number of farmers has exceeded 300. Total Organic Hazelnut land is about 6 000 decares. Annual unshelled hazelnut production is over 1 000 tons (Anonymous, 2018e).

2.2. Eğil Organic Grain Producers Association - Eğil Organic

The production pattern in Diyarbakır province, Eğil district, Ilgın village and its surrounding is wheat, barley, lentil, and chickpea. In addition, there is also production of pistachio, grapes, and almond in small scales. Organic farming started to be contracted in Ilgın Village in 2009 with the application of a company to Diyarbakir Provincial Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. Eğil Organic Grain Producers Association was founded in order to create a different production pattern for their village, to prevent migration from

their village and to produce organic food. Today, Eğil Organic Grain Producers Association produces annually 15 tons of lentils, 7 tons of chickpeas, and 140 tons of wheat in an area of 3 300 da, in 3 villages with 235 producers.

Within the scope of The South-eastern Anatolia Project (SAP) Organic Agriculture Set Project carried out by the SAP Regional Development Administration in 2013, "Increasing Efficiency and Emerging Value Pilot Project in Organic Production in Ilgın Village in Diyarbakır Eğil District" started to be implemented. With this project, Eğil Organic brand was created, the produced lentils and chickpeas were packaged and the products started to be marketed. Through the artesian wells opened in the region within the scope of the project, a diversification of irrigation by establishing a new system and product design is planned. Eğil Organic Grain Producers Association is a set member of SAP Organic Agriculture (Anonymous, 2018f).

3. Cooperatives

Co-operatives are people-centred enterprises owned and run by and for their members to realise their common dreams. Profits generated are either reinvested in the enterprise or returned to the members. Co-operatives bring people together in a democratic and equal way. Whether the members are the customers, employees, users or residents, co-operatives are democratically managed by the 'one member, one vote' rule. Members allow people to take control of their economic future and, because they are not owned by shareholders, the economic and social benefits of their activity stay in the communities where they are established (ICA, 2018).

The products sold in the cooperatives are cheaper than those sold in other stores selling organic products. Cooperatives prefer selling their organic products in salesrooms of their own as well as via online stores in order to reach all consumers in Turkey. This sale is also made through other online stores, which sell organic and natural products besides their own online stores.

In Turkey, the production and marketing of organic products through cooperatives is carried out by means of different cooperative types. Retail cooperatives, environmental protection, development and management cooperatives, and agricultural development cooperatives are some of these cooperative types. Examples of these cooperative types that produce and market organic products will be given.

3.1. Tire Organic Products Consumption Cooperatives

As of 2017, Tire Organic Food Products Cooperative has a capacity of 50 000 organic eggs daily production within 3 farms with 100 da farmland, and 50 000 chickens. It produces many kinds of organic products with certified producers under its control. Approximately 1 500 000 organic eggs per month are released to the markets, delicatessen and local store chains in many cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Manisa, Denizli through their business partners to meet the final consumers. Hygiene and production rules are audited by the Ministry of Agriculture and its control agency called ETKO (Ecological Agricultural Control Organization). Packaging facilities are also monitored and certified by ETKO (Anonymous, 2018g).

3.2. Ulupınar Environmental Protection, Development and Management Cooperative

Ulupınar Environmental Protection, Development and Management LLC Cooperative was founded in November 2000, mainly by producers in Ulupınar village, and Turkey Wildlife Conservation Society (DHKD), South Antalya Tourism Development and Infrastructure Management Association (GATAB), and also Kemer District Governorship.

The aim of the cooperative is to encourage and support the economic, social and cultural developments of its partners, to promote and support organic production, to market the products they produce, and to make profits by opening new business fields for the partners and to enable them live in a healthy environment. In accordance with this aim, at the end of 2000, the Ulupınar Cooperative started a Project for Sustainable Development for the People Living in Protected, which lasted 3 years. With this project, organic agriculture studies were started in Çıralı. (http://www.ulupinarkoop.org/hakkimizda_tarihce.htm)

The cooperative undertakes the following activities to realize these aims;

- Encourages partners to carry out organic production, supports and promotes their work in this area. It provides training and consulting services related to organic production, provides partners with inputs such as tools, materials, organic substances and other needs. opens salesrooms, introduces them, makes and helps them make export and import.

- Performs publicity, marketing and certification of partners' organic products. With the aim to promote organic production of partners, they use the technical and financial aid to be made by public institutions and organizations and other ministries, unions, national and international aid organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), organizations and banks, and enable their partners to use them (Anonymous, 2018h).

Today, there are 25 producers brought together under the same roof of Ulupınar Environmental Protection Development and Management Cooperative, who have received local and international trainings, and carry out certified organic production. Orange, pomegranate, lemon, avocado, and tangerine being in the first place, pepper, artichoke, tomato, pumpkin, cucumber and eggplant are among the products grown. Producers sell these products at sales points in Çıralı to local and foreign tourists, and to all consumers around Turkey via internet (Anonymous, 2017).

3.3. Vakıflı Village Cooperative

Vakıflı village, located in the East Mediterranean Region, is one of the first organic villages in Turkey. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the region, which is prominent by its historical, natural and cultural diversity. All products of Vakıflı Village Cooperative are prepared with the solidarity of women and they are completely homemade and organic. Every woman in the cooperative has a code number, and the numbers on the products of Vakıflı Village reveal the producer of the product. The village, which is 4 km far from Samandağ district of Hatay province, is still characterized as “the only Armenian village of Turkey”, sells its products, either directly, or via the internet (Anonymous, 2017a).

CONCLUSION

In order that agriculture can provide economically and ecologically expected benefits, organic agriculture has gradually become prominent along with sustainable agricultural practices coming to the forefront. The positive effects of organic farming on food safety, healthy nutrition, human health and environmental protection have increased the demand for organic products both at national and international level. (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Organic Agriculture National Action Plan, 2013-2016).

Nowadays organic farming has become a life philosophy, and besides the food products, thousands of non-agricultural products, from furniture to toys, from toothpaste to textile products or make-up materials are being produced under certification and are consumed (Altındışli, and Aksoy, 2010).

Turkey is in a very advantageous position in organic farming. In comparison with many countries, different ecological conditions and not yet polluted fertile land, rich biodiversity, especially rich local varieties, provide an advantage in agriculture. However, lack of some of the permissible inputs or lack of information, problems in information flow,

lack of information of producers and consumers, misunderstanding of organic farming, product variety in production and dependence of production amount on external demand and insufficient domestic market are among the issues that need to be developed (Altındışlı, and Aksoy, 2010).

In recent years, interest in organic products in the domestic market has also increased with the support politics and the efforts of non-governmental organizations. However, the number of organic producers receiving individual certifications except the ones certified with a 'project' being very small, the support given being insufficient and the system net being able to be established based on a contract similar to the foreign market; the development in the domestic market cannot be brought to the desired level. In addition, the high prices of organic products, the lack of information about organic products among consumers, the limited varieties of fresh organic vegetables, are among the factors that restrict the organic products and their consumption to become widespread.

However, the demand for organic products is gradually increasing among consumers, who have relatively higher income and level of education, are at middle ages, are more sensitive about environmental and health risks, and especially have a socio-economic profile (Demiryürek, 2016).

In Turkey, organic products reach the consumers through “100% ecological public markets” of some supermarkets in big cities, organic product sales offices, e-commerce channels, non-governmental organizations and municipalities. There are organizations that bring together organic producers, consumers, processors, traders, controllers, researchers and exporters. In Turkey, associations which are active in organic agriculture mainly operate on this field. These associations have also international affiliations. Another type of organisation is the producer associations. These associations ensure that these products are marketed, without taking them into their own possession. These associations are predominantly established according to the product group and in areas where the product is extensively produced. Another organization is cooperatives. Although cooperatives are not very active in organic agriculture, they contribute to their partners through production, consumption and business cooperatives. Members of cooperatives and producer associations are mostly small scale enterprises. These enterprises market their products through these organizations, contributing to the continuity of production and preventing rural migration. In these organizations, there is more solidarity and cooperation, and control mechanism works better. Associations are more likely to ensure that organic farming is carried out appropriately and meets the right standards. They also contribute to raising the awareness of consumers. In addition, they represent our country at national and international levels.

With the help of these producer organisations, it can be possible that Turkey, which is a potential market, is represented appropriately in the global market, and takes place in the market with more and various products. This allows more small scaled producers to make production and provide foreign currency inflow. Organisations on organic agriculture should be supported, and producers should be encouraged to unite under organisational framework.

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