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ORGANIC CROP PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT IN NORTH MACEDONIA: FOCUS ON REGULATION AND STANDARDS

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ABSTRACT

Organic plant agriculture production is a complex system of regulation, preparation, production and management, which is firmly connected with protection of environment. It performs by using of best available environmentally friendly substances and process in all phases, such as certification, controlling, storage, transport, trading and consumption. Organic crop production is more sustainable alternative than conventional production. In the same time a food production is faced with the numerous of challenges to provide food for population growth. It is estimated that by 2050, demand for food will be increased by 60 to 90 %, adequately growing of population. Can organic production be profitable? This is a big challenge, and the question is how to make a balance between the cost and environmental benefits? Organic plant farming has developed rapidly in the last two decades, through increase of land areas, organic operators, quantity of organic production and sale. This production significantly prevents damages from pesticides, artificial fertilizers and other harmful chemicals and contributes to the environmental protection. The early beginning steps of organic production in North Macedonia started in 1997 by production of organic tea and significantly organic crop production began in 2004 when was adopted a first Law on organic production. N. Macedonia, as a candidate state for membership of European Union has an obligation to implement EU regulations and standards in the field on environment and agriculture, which covers also organic crop production. In 2005 was adopted first program for support organic production that enabled farmers to receive financial support for costs of control and certification. Since then it has started slowly, but gradually growth of organic production. Today from total cultivated agriculture land which is about 560.000 hectares, organic production is organized on 3, 2% of that land. In the near future in N. Macedonia there is a need of improvement of all aspects of system of agriculture for further development of organic production. The main aim of this paper is to analyze the relation between crop organic production and environment in North Macedonia and to give some recommendations. Also within research for this paper, it is made a SWOT analyze.

Key words: organic production, agriculture, environment, standards, regulation.