

LITHUANIA



Report on the Status of Organic Agriculture and Industry in Lithuania

Gefördert durch



Bundesministerium
für Ernährung
und Landwirtschaft

BÖLN

Bundesprogramm Ökologischer Landbau
und andere Formen nachhaltiger
Landwirtschaft

aufgrund eines Beschlusses des
Deutschen Bundestages

Imprint

Editor

Joachim Lenz,
Claudia Neumannn



EkoConnect e.V.
Schützengasse 16
01067 Dresden
www.ekoconnect.org

Authority

Chamber of Agriculture of the
Republic of Lithuania
www.zur.lt

Author

Ramūnas Stonkus
Head of certification department

Proofreading

EkoConnect e.V.

Layout & typesetting

www.whateverworks.biz

Gefördert durch



Bundesministerium
für Ernährung
und Landwirtschaft

BÖLN

Bundesprogramm Ökologischer Landbau
und andere Formen nachhaltiger
Landwirtschaft

aufgrund eines Beschlusses des
Deutschen Bundestages

Disclaimer

This report was funded by the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture within the framework of the project **28210E001**.

This report has been prepared to the best of our knowledge and belief. We cannot however accept any guarantee for the accuracy, correctness or completeness of the information and data provided.

Content

A Lithuania: Facts and Figures	3
Land and Soil	
Agriculture	
Trade	
Climate	
<hr/>	
B The Organic Sector in Lithuania	7
History	
National Legal Framework	
National Support System	
Organisations	
Control Bodies	
Research and Training	
<hr/>	
C Organic Crop Production	14
Certified Enterprises and Area	
Outstanding Organic Producers	
Organic Production and Export of Organic Raw Materials	
<hr/>	
D Organic Processing and Food Manufacturing	17
Certified Enterprises	
<hr/>	
E Organic Market in Lithuania	19
Market Size and Trends	
Sales Channels and Actors	
Direct Sales, Specialised Retail, Supermarket Chains	
<hr/>	
F Opportunities	21
<hr/>	
G Figures and Sources	22

Lithuania: Facts and Figures

Map

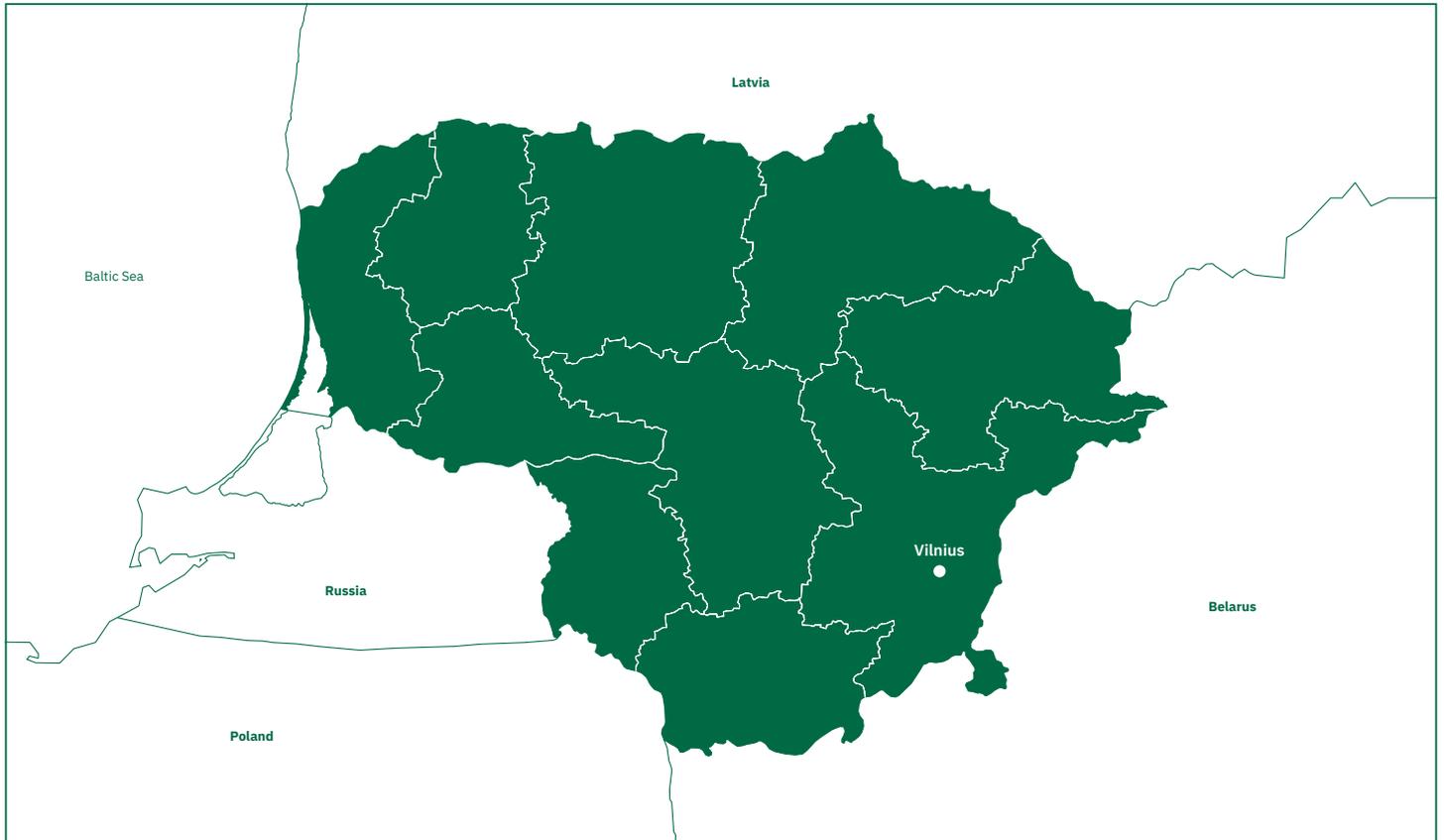


Figure 1: Map of Lithuania with districts

Country statistics¹

65,286 km²

Territory

2.79 mil.

Population (2020)

1.37 mil.

Number of households

13,890 €

GDP per Capita (2020)

8.43 %

Unemployment rate (2020)

2.17 persons

Average household size (2019)

Euro

Currency

¹ See: The Lithuanian Department of Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania January-July report of 2021.

Main Agricultural and Food Export Markets in EU-28 (2019 / mil. Eur)²

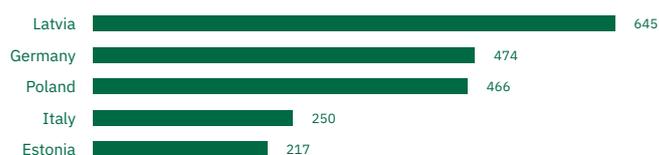


Figure 2: Lithuanian agricultural and food export markets in EU-28 (2019)

Main Agricultural and Food Export Markets in Third Countries (2019 / mil. Eur)²

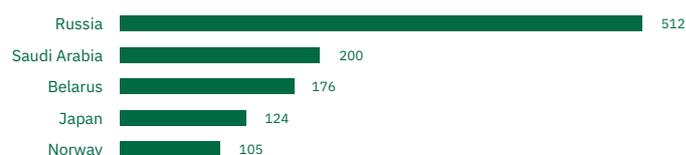


Figure 3: Lithuanian agricultural and food export markets in third countries (2019)

Most important exports (2020 / mil. Eur)³

	Export value
Cereals	969,610
Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	870,764
Milk and milk products; bird eggs; natural honey	553,357
Fish and crustaceans (molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates)	455,467
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	429,153
Oils seeds and oleaginous fruits (miscellaneous grains, seeds and fruit etc.)	338,499
Residues and waste from the food industries; prepared animal fodder	278,801
Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks products	272,410
Meat and edible meat offal*	215,748
Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	209,141

Figure 4: Most important exports Top 10 (2020)

Most important food imports (2020 / mil. Eur)³

	Import value
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	548,998
Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates	469,457
Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	369,740
Milk and milk products; bird eggs; natural honey	321,793
Meat and edible meat offal*	254,835
Miscellaneous edible preparations	218,402
Residues and waste from the food industries; prepared animal fodder	213,286
Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	206,149
Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks products	179,562
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	167,442

Figure 5: Most important food imports TOP 10 (2020)

2 See: Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (Report – Lithuanian agrifood sector, 2020)

3 See: The Lithuanian Department of Statistics

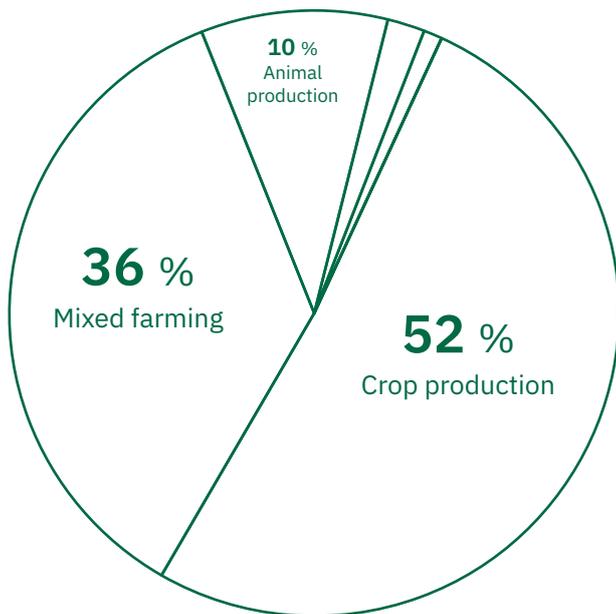
* Edible meat offal: edible internal organs of birds and animals (liver, kidneys, heart, tongue, brain, etc.).

Land and Soil

About 75 % of Lithuanian soils are on the edge of degradation, mostly because of intensive and chemically intensive agriculture. The areas of very low and low humus soils in Central Lithuania are about 20 %, and in Eastern Lithuania – as much as 74 %. With the rapid

growth in the use of nitrogen fertilizers, the imbalance between nitrogen and other trace elements, especially phosphorus and potassium, is increasing. The abundant use of unbalanced fertilizers in the long run leads to a decrease in soil fertility.⁴

Holding* distribution by economic activities (2021)⁵



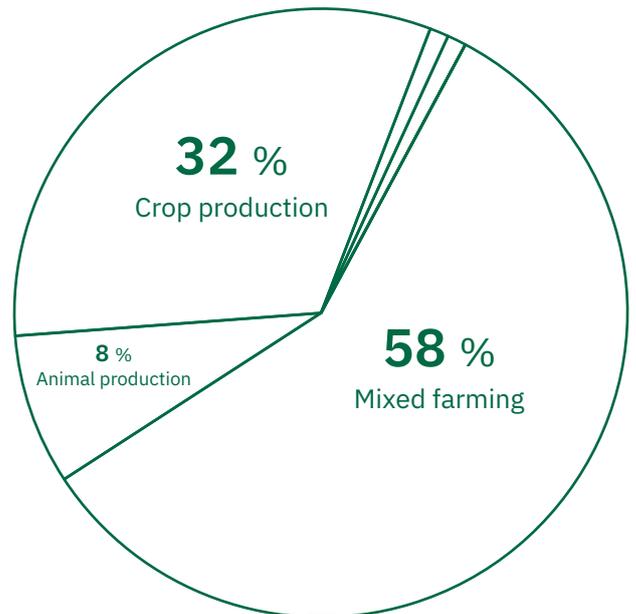
□ Forestry (2 % / 2595)
□ Alternative activities (1 % / 848)

□ Services (0 % / 233)
□ Fishery (0 % / 37)

Lithuanian land – use by economical activities is characterized by 52 % arable cropping; 36 % of land is used for mixed farming; forests cover 37 %; animal production covers only 10 %; other is 3 %.

Figure 6: Holding distribution by economic activities (2021)

Farm distribution by economic activities (2021)⁵



□ Forestry (1 % / 496)
□ Alternative activities (1 % / 968)

□ Services (0 % / 186)
□ Fishery (0 % / 88)

Farm distribution by economic activities: 58 % of farms are mixed; 32 % farms grows crop production; 8 % consists of animal production; other 2 %.

Figure 7: Farm distribution by economic activities (2021)

* Holdings – registered and eligible for EU and National support schemes.

Farms – registered as agricultural entity without necessarily applying for subsidy schemes.

4 See LAMMC Soil agrochemical research (2019).

5 See ŽŪIKVC Lithuanian agriculture semiannual statistical report (2021).

Agriculture

Utilised agricultural area (the total cultivated area under arable land⁶ used by agricultural producers amounted to 3 million hectares in 2019.⁷ Arable land accounted for the largest share (2.2 million hectares). In 2019, against 2018, the utilised agricultural area increased by 0.9 per cent.



Figure 8: Lithuanian agricultural area (2019)

Trade

Since its European Union (EU) accession in 2004, Lithuania has consistently harmonized its domestic food and agricultural regulations with EU regulations, directives and standards. Lithuania follows EU regulations

governing agricultural imports, as per the EU's single market principle, including Regulation EC / 178 / 2002 (General Food Law) which establishes general principles and requirements under the EU's harmonized food law.

Climate

According to the general classification of climate, almost the entire territory of Lithuania is assigned to the south-western sub-region of the continental forest region of the middle latitudes of the Atlantic Ocean, because its climate is close to that of Western Europe; the Baltic coast is assigned to the South Baltic sub-region. The distance of the territory from the equator (6100 km) and from the

pole (3900 km) decides the amount of the general solar energy – it is 3600 MJ / km² per year. The average annual temperature in Lithuania fluctuates from between 6.5 and 7.1° C at the seacoast and around 5.5° C in the northern part of the country. The average temperature is – 4.9° C in January and + 17° C in July, and the length of vegetation period fluctuates from 169 to 202 days.

6 Including greenhouse areas, cultivated (5 years and older) and natural pastures, meadows, permanent crops, including the area owned by households having less than one hectare of agricultural land.

7 See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lietuvos-aplinka-zeme-ukis-ir-energetika-2020/zemes-ukis/augalininkyste>

The Organic Sector in Lithuania

For a long time, organic farming was not seen as a viable option for conventional agriculture. However, as more attention is being paid to environmental pollution and human health aspects, the situation is changing for the better. The beginning of organic farming coincides with the restoration of the Republic of Lithuania as an independent State.

History

Between 1990 and 1993, the ecological movement and the organizations representing it emerged. In Lithuania, organic farming was initiated by two public organizations: the Lithuanian Organic Farming Society **Gaja**, established in 1990 on the initiative of scientists from the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture, and the **Tatula Program**, which started its environmental activities in the karst region of Lithuania in 1992. The Lithuanian Organic Farming Society Gaja drew up rules for organic farming and product processing and a commission set up by the Society started certification of the first farms. In 1993, the first 9 farms were certified and started organic farming on 148 ha of farmland. From 1997–1999, organic farming became recognised: a certification system emerged and organic farming was mentioned in legal documents. In 1997, the first and so far only certification body in Lithuania, **Ekoagros**, started its activities. National rules for organic agriculture were drawn up including labelling rules and an organic label was created. The legal documents were drafted in line



Figure 9: Farm of Vaida Jateike (Moletai Lithuania 2021)

with the then existing **IFOAM** (The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement) and EU documents. The Swedish **KRAV** certification body provided advice and support for the introduction of the certification service system in Lithuania. Since 2000, the certification body Ekoagros has been internationally accredited by IFOAM.

In 2001, LAEI (Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics) prepared and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved a strategy for the development of sustainable and organic agriculture in Lithuania, which included a plan of necessary measures. The aim was to ensure that organic farming would account for 15 % of the country's total agricultural area by 2010. The strategic objective of increasing the organic land area was not achieved.

Following Lithuania's accession to the European Union, support for organic farming has increased significantly. Between 2004 and 2006, an annual compensation payment per hectare of certified organic land was paid to farms participating in the Organic Farming Program, once the applicant met the eligibility criteria and commitments of the measure **Agri-Environment**.

The number of certified organic farms in Lithuania has grown dynamically. Since 1997, the number of organic production and certified areas in Lithuania has increased by an average of 35 % annually.

National Legal Frame

In Lithuania, as in the EU, organic farming, production and control are carried out in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 834 / 2007 and its implementing



Figure 10: National Organic Logo (LRŽŪM 2009)

rules laid down by Commission Regulation (EC) No 889 / 2008 (↪). National rules for organic farming were also adopted in 2000 to implement the regulations (↪). This label is only awarded to Lithuanian organic agricultural and food products certified by a certification body

approved by order of the Minister of Agriculture. The description of the procedure for the labelling of Lithuanian organic agricultural and food products and for the use of the organic agricultural and food product mark was approved by **Order No 3D-2** of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania of 6 January 2009 (↪).

Organic products bearing this label are grown, processed, labelled and supplied to the consumer in accordance with the strict requirements for organic farm-



Figure 11: Products with national organic logo in Lithuania (2020)

ing laid down in EU and Lithuanian legislation. The organic label is compulsory for all organic products intended for human or livestock consumption. The packaging of the organic product must bear the number of the certification body that controls the entire process of growing, preparing and producing the organic product. In Lithuania, certification is carried out by Ekoagros. Its code is **LT EKO 01** (↪).

National Support System

The main incentive for setting up organic farms comes from EU subsidies paid for organic certified areas. To compensate for the additional costs incurred on an organic farm and to ensure the profitability of organic farms, the Lithuanian government has been supporting organic farmers since 1997 by paying compensatory payments to them. Since 2004, organic farmers have been able to apply for support under the Rural Development Program's measure **Organic Farming**. Under this program, farmers have to keep their commitments for five years (2 years during the transitional period 2021–2022). Compensatory support is granted for certified and declared areas used for organic production of agricultural products and food. Payments are made to both organic and conversion farms.

Supported Activities and Amount of Support (Eur / 1 ha)⁸

Supported plant groups	Support for organic farming	Support for conversion to organic farming
Cereals	218	238
Cereals for fodder	232	247
Cereals, perennial grasses for seed	273	298
Perennial grass seed	59	59
Perennial grasses	176	182
Vegetables, potatoes	525	525
Herbs, aromatic and spice plants	487	516
Berries and orchards	518	534

Figure 12: Payments to organic farms

Organisations

The Lithuanian organic sector is run by public research and training institutions, non-governmental organisations and public bodies.



Figure 13: From the conference **Healthy food – healthy person** organized by Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (2020)

Overview of the most important organisations

The Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania



The Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Chamber) is an organisation that brings together professional, sectoral and cultural non-governmental organisations of farmers and rural population (42), and represents the interests of farmers and rural population in the country's public authorities and internationally.

It has been active in the field of the needs of farmers and rural populations and has carried out joint projects with scientific and educational institutions. Since 1994, it has been carrying out projects to improve the competences of agricultural professionals, farmers and other rural populations; since 2011, it has been carrying out projects to promote innovation, innovation deployment and dissemination of knowledge and information (a total of 19 innovation demonstration and knowledge dissemination projects in the period 2011–2019; 4 innovation demonstration and knowledge dissemination projects and 1 EIP Action Group project are currently ongoing). The Lithuanian Organic Farms Association is also a member of the Chamber.

Since 1993, the Chamber has been providing advice on organic farming and environmental issues (individual consultations, seminars, training, conferences, project activities).

www.zur.lt

The Lithuanian Organic Farms Association



The Lithuanian Organic Farms Association (LEŪA) promotes organic farming, the production and consumption of healthy food and the preservation of the living environment. The Association is the youngest organisation of the organic movement in Lithuania, founded in 2010. Currently, the association has 260 members with more than 35,000 ha of certified organic land. It is the largest organisation of organic producers, processors, politicians, scientists and other professionals in Lithuania. LEŪA regularly submits proposals to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and other responsible state institutions on environmental sustainability, food safety, industrial agricultural production, genetically modified organisms, children's and society's health, corporate social responsibility, fair trade, and other topical issues. Since 2010, the association has been an active member of the Global Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

www.ecofarms.lt

8 See Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, <http://www.zum.lt>
See National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture (NPA), <http://www.nma.lt>
See Ekoagros Public institution; <http://www.ekoagros.lt>

The Lithuanian Biodynamic Agriculture and Processing Association Biodynamics LT



The Lithuanian Biodynamic Agriculture and Processing Association **Biodynamics LT** is a young association, established in 2015. The aim of the association is to promote biodynamic farming in Lithuania, disseminate information to farmers and consumers. Organic farmers apply to the certification body Ekoagros to certify their farms according to the requirements for biodynamic farming, aiming for the status of a biodynamic farm as well as an organic one. Members include biodynamic organic farmers, processors, agricultural scientists and consumers. In 2020, 10 Lithuanian organic farms received full Demeter recognition. Around 3,400 hectares in Lithuania are farmed biodynamically. Biodynamic farms rear beef cattle and grow herbs, vegetables, fruit, berries and cereals.

www.demeter.lt

Organic Beef Cattle Breeders Association (EMGAA)



The organisation started in 2010 with the aim of promoting the development of beef cattle breeding in Lithuania by making targeted use of the available breeding resources and finding ways to improve them. The association unites organic beef cattle farms and represents the interests of its members, seeks new opportunities for the development of beef cattle farming, carries out educational work by sharing experience, organising events, trips and seminars. The association cooperates closely with the French **Aubrac Association** (UPRA Aubrac), which brings together producers of the Aubrac breed, and with the **Limousin Cattle Association**, based at Pole de Lanaud. The founders and thought leaders of the organisation are the pioneers of organic beef cattle breeding in Lithuania, which has been active in this sector for over twenty years.

<https://ekogalvijai.lt>

Public Institution Tatula Program (Lit. Tatulos Programa)



The organic sector, especially in the north of Lithuania, is supported by the non-profit organization, Tatula (**Tatulos Programa**). From 1987 to 1993, the Tatula program has been prepared in the Republic of Lithuania and approved by the government for the reconstruction into ecological farming on the national level. The program has been established in 1993, and it was first practiced in the most sensitive agrarian territory of the country – Northern Lithuania, cave region (area of 194,000 ha). Tatula program provides direct overall support to its partners for converting traditional farms into ecological ones. In 2007, a new scheme was initiated by Ministry of Agriculture: **The most advanced ecological farm contest** in Lithuania, taking many actions to encourage lobbying for ecological agriculture. It is an active social partner with the Ministry of Agriculture, operates in various working groups with active participation in social community projects. The Tatula program has 183 stakeholders (farmers, companies, etc.). Their activities (since 1995) include the organisation of eco fairs and markets. Information about events of Tatula program can be found here:

<http://www.organic.lt>

Control Bodies

On 14th of March 1997, the first organic certification body in Lithuania and the Baltic States, the Public Institution **Ekoagros**, was established in Kaunas, with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health as founders.

By **Order No 375** of the Minister of Agriculture of 28 December 2000, the public body Ekoagros was entrusted with the functions of a certification body in accordance with the approved Rules for Organic Agriculture and was given the code number **LT-EKO-001**. As the number of organic farmers and the volume of work grew, 2 branches were established in 2006 in Telšiai and Utena counties.

Since 2005, Ekoagros has been accredited by the National Accreditation Bureau. The institution complies

with the requirements of **LST EN ISO / IEC 17065:2012** standard. The institution is accredited to certify the primary production processes of organic crop production, livestock farming, beekeeping, wildlife, aquaculture and the handling and distribution of organic products of agricultural origin, as well as the primary production and handling of products produced under the national quality system for agriculture and food. Accreditation certificate **No LA.03.007** was issued by the National Accreditation Bureau on 3rd September 2020. The accreditation is valid until 2nd September 2025.

By European Commission Implementing Regulation No 2016 / 2259 of 15th December 2016 amending Regulation (EC) No 1235 / 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834 / 2007 as regards the import of organic products from third countries, Ekoagros was included in the list of

control bodies and control authorities for the purpose of equivalence determination in **Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1235 / 2008** for the purpose of certification work in **third countries** (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan). The body also carries out inspections according to national and private standards in other countries (↪).

Certification of Product Handling Activities (Recycling, Marketing, Import, Export)

The field is growing steadily year by year – Ekoagros started certifying organic product management in 2002, when 17 companies were certified in Lithuania. A decade later, in 2012, 102 companies were certified, and in 2020 the number had grown to 324 (processing, trade, import, export) operators:

- 30 operators carried out on-farm product handling activities;
- 3 operators were active in catering with organic products;
- 3 enterprises with import activities (only have import activities as there are more mixed activities – e.g. import plus wholesale – 36);
- 170 enterprises with export activities;
- 124 processing enterprises.

The number of certified handlers increased by 21 in 2020 compared to 2019.

Imported organic goods into Lithuania are diverse: cereals, beverages, cocoa, tea, sauces, sugars, etc.

Research and Training

There are many organisations in the country that carry out educational activities on organic agriculture and agri-environmental issues: The Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture, the Vytautas Magnus University, the Lithuanian Organic Farms Association, the Lithuanian Organic Agriculture Association, the Tatula Program, and the Gojalis community. Consultation, information and training activities of many institutions are not coherent, more often episodic.

Beginners in organic farming (and their authorised representatives) are obliged to comply with the Organic

Farming Rules and to follow the training program Fundamentals of Organic Farming (24 academic hours) Certificates of completion must be submitted in the first year of organic farming to the certification body before the end of the certification season for the same year. The training courses for organic farmers are administered by the **Rural Business and Market Development Agency**.

Info

Ekoagros

www.ekoagros.lt



Public Agency for Rural Business and Market Development

— Tel.: +370 616 35156, E-Mail: i.ziziene@litfood.lt

Training Institutions for Newcomers to Organic Farming:

Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service

- Stoties g. 5, Akademija, LT-58343 Kūdainių r.
- Tel.: (8 347) 37870, Faks.: (8 347) 37026
- info@lzukt.lt

<https://www.lzukt.lt/>

Public institution Mokslines paslaugos (en. Scientific services)

- Gyneles g. 15, LT-47484, Kaunas
- Tel.: +370 620 45515
- info@mpaslaugos.lt

<https://www.mpaslaugos.lt/>

Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy

- Universiteto g. 10A, Akademijos mstl., Kauno
- Tel.: +370 681 00603
- jurgita.karkaziene@vdu.lt

<https://www.vdu.lt/>

Consultants for Organic Farming in Lithuania

List of accredited consulting institutions:

https://www.litfood.lt/media/files/Akreditavimas/2021_10_Akredituotu_istaigu_sarasas.pdf

Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania

- K. Donelaičio g. 2, LT44213 Kaunas
- Tel.: (8 37) 400352
- s.svolaite@zur.lt

<https://zur.lt/>

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Continuing Education and Counselling Centre

- kodas 135144755 Tilžės g. 18, LT-47181, Kaunas
- Tel.: (8 37) 363323
- nijole.kazemekaite@lsmuni.lt

<https://www.lsmuni.lt/>

List of accredited consultants:

https://www.litfood.lt/media/files/Akreditavimas/2021_10_Akredituotu_konsultantu_sarasas.pdf

Ecological research is carried out at the following Lithuanian institutions:

Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy

<https://zua.vdu.lt>

Lithuanian Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Science

The Lithuanian Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Science has two institutions working in the field of organic farming research:

- Lithuanian Institute of Agriculture

<https://www.lammc.lt/lt/zemdirbystes-institutas/mokslo-padaliniai/2005>

- Lithuanian Institute of Horticulture and Gardening

<https://www.lammc.lt/lt/sodininkystes-ir-darzininkystes-institutas/mokslo-padaliniai/2007>

Organic Crop Production

Organic farms can specialise in a wide range of crops-cereals, fruit, vegetables, honey. Organic farming principles can also be applied to livestock farming, where the main focus is on animal welfare standards and feeding cattle with natural feeds. Today, 8.1 % of Lithuania's agricultural land is certified organic, in line with the current EU average of 8 %. The EU expects organic areas to account for 25 % of all agricultural land in the Union by 2030.

Certified enterprises and area

Despite the global organic market's year-on-year rapid growth trend, the area of certified organic land in Lithuania in 2020 decreased for the first time since 2014. In 2020, the average organic area was lower than the EU average, at 8.1 % of the total area of agricultural land declared in Lithuania last year.

In 2020, 2,566 organic holdings were certified. They have been issued with, or retained, certification documents. Of this number, 2242 primary producers have been certified, with a total certified area of 240,023.91 ha. The number of certified operators decreased by 187 in 2020, as did the area certified by 6,607.77 ha.

In 2021, the number of new entrants to organic farming increased after the Ministry of Agriculture amended the rules on support for organic production and resumed support for new applicants to organic farming. The exact figures will be known at the end of 2021, after all control and certification work has been completed. However, based on preliminary declaration data, it is expected that the increase in primary organic crop and livestock production will be around 15–16 % of applicants and around 11–12 % of certified area.

Also certified in 2020: 28 operators in beekeeping (1,265 bee colonies); 22 operators in wild collection (35,495.55 ha of collection area); 12 operators in aquaculture (4,453.58 ha of ponds certified) – main fish species: carp, pike, bream, crucian carp, white sturgeon, spotted bream, flathead minnow.

Outstanding Organic Producers

Agricultural Cooperative Ekotikslas



In 2006, on the initiative of organic farmers, the agricultural cooperative Eko tikslas was founded in Rokiškis, with 63 cooperative members. The members of the cooperative farm organically on 5000 ha of land and rear more than 1200 dairy cows, 450 suckler cows and 250 beef cattle, all certified organic. Members grow a wide range of cereals, fruit, vegetables and herbs. The cooperative currently buys organic milk from farms in ten districts of Lithuania. More than 7 million kilograms of certified organic milk are bought and sold per year from members. Organic milk is bought only from members of the cooperative. In 2016, the cooperative set up an organic milk transfer station.

<https://www.ekotikslas.lt/index.php>

Agricultural Cooperative EKO ŽEMAITIJA

The Telšiai District Society for the Development of Organic Farming started its activities in western Lithuania in 2003, and was re-registered as an association a year later. In 2006, it established the cooperative EKO Žemaitija. It is the first organic milk producers' cooperative in Lithuania, with 54 organic farmers in Western Lithuania (Žemaitija region). The main activity of the cooperative is the collection, sale and processing of organic milk. The main products are cottage cheese, sour cream, butter, natural yoghurt, smoked cheese, cheese flavoured with caraway seeds, raisins and spices. The products are made from pasteurised organic milk, fermented with lactic acid bacteria. Only organic additives such as salt, cumin, raisins, herbs and yeasts are used in the production of the products. A wide range of organic dairy products are sold in many supermarkets, markets and specialised organic outlets in major Lithuanian cities.

<http://ekozemaitija.lt/>

Agricultural Cooperative Society BIOLEŪA



In 2018, the members of the Lithuanian Organic Farms Association (LEŪA) (7 farmers and LEŪA) founded the agricultural cooperative company BIO LEUA, which has 40 full members and is expanding monthly with new candidates. The cooperative accepts farmers who are members of the Lithuanian Organic Farms Association who can supply local consumers with their produce and farmers with a crop production orientation – with a variety of cereals. The farmers' activities include not only organic crop production, but also organic dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, deer, beekeeping, poultry farming, horticulture and gardening. Cereal farmers generate about 90 % of the cooperative's total income from cereal exports, mainly to Germany and Austria. In 2020, over 7,300 t of organic cereals will be exported and around 400 t of cereals will be available on the domestic market.

Organic Production and Export of Organic Raw Materials

With only 1 % of the country's consumption of organically grown produce, the vast majority of the country's organic produce is exported to other EU countries. In Lithuania, primary organic production is dominated by crop production, with cereals accounting for the bulk of production, of which around 80 % is exported. In 2019 (August-December), more than 144,000 tons of organic cereals were

bought and exported from Lithuanian organic farms, with wheat accounting for the largest part of the total – 76,474 tons - and oats – 21,444 tons. Buckwheat (3,000 tons) and peas (13,380 tons) were significantly less exported than in the previous year (↘). Organic raw milk is exported in small quantities.

For operators exporting organic products outside the European Union and, where appropriate, to EU countries, 112 consignment validation documents or, according to country requirements, export certificates to 20 countries worldwide were issued in 2020. (↘)

Organic Crop Production

Organic Production Export

Country of export	Types of exported products	Number of consignments validated, pcs.
United States of America	Hemp products, canned vegetables, soups, etc.	31
Japan	Hemp products, soups, nut creams, etc.	23
Republic of Korea (South Korea)	Chocolate, beverages, etc.	16
United Arab Emirates	Soups, canned products, crisps	9
Australia	Hemp products	6
Republic of Turkey	Oils	3
Ukraine	Cereals	3
State of Israel	Soups, sauces	3
Malaysia	Hemp products	2
Republic of Italy	Cereals	2
Republic of Peru	Hemp products	2
Kingdom of the Netherlands	Cereals	1
Republic of South Africa	Mushroom products	1
Canada	Hemp products	1
Kingdom of Denmark	Cereals	1
Federal Republic of Germany	Cereals	1
People's Republic of China	Infusions of porridges	1
New Zealand	Hemp products	1
Taiwan - Province of China	Bread products	1
Total		112

Figure 14: Export information (2020)

Organic Processing and Food Manufacturing

Organic production – a system of farm management and food production that incorporates best environmental practices, high biodiversity, conservation of natural resources, application of high animal welfare standards and a production method that takes into account the preference of certain consumers for products made with natural materials and processes.

Certified Enterprises

Ekoagros started to certify organic product management, including processing, trade and import activities, in 2002. At that time, 17 companies were certified in Lithuania. A decade later, in 2012, 102 companies were certified, and in 2019 this number has increased to 302 (33 of them were engaged in on-farm product handling activities, 24 in import of organic agricultural products from third countries, 3 in catering with organic products). The number of certified operators involved in wholesale of pre-packaged and labelled products, grain trade, distance-selling via the internet has been increasing over the last few years. In particular, there has been an increase in the number of operators importing organic products from third countries. In 2020, 324 handlers have been certified.

Number of processing farms and enterprises by activity (2019):

- 8 Processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products;
- 7 Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and mollusks;
- 12 Processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables;
- 5 Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats;

- 13 Manufacture of milk and milk products;
- 7 Manufacture of cereal milling products, starch and starch products;
- 13 Manufacture of bakery and farinaceous products;
- 7 Manufacture of beverages;
- 50 Manufacture of other food products;
- 2 Manufacture of animal feed.



Figure 15: From the conference **Healthy food – healthy person** organized by Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (2020)

UAB DU MEDU



Since 2007, it has been operating as an organic bakery, providing customers with organic products of exceptional quality and carefully selected recipes.

The company has a production unit where it bakes 6 types of homemade bread with natural leaven, honey cakes, tree cakes (lit. šakočiai) and 8 types of biscuits. In addition to these products, cereals and other popular products such as pasta, flakes, groats, seeds, nuts and dried fruit are packaged. The range currently consists of over 100 different items, all of them organic.

Since 2015, 480 tons of organic bread have been produced and marketed. In order to offer a variety of products to their customers, some of the products are imported from all over the world: cereals and flakes are imported from Austria, spices, cereals and some types of rice are imported from India, pasta and couscous from Italy. Most of the dried fruit and nuts come from Turkey.

It exports its products to the United Kingdom. Popular products in this country are buckwheat, flakes, pearl barley, flaxseed and baked goods such as coconut butter, cranberry and Du Medu biscuits. The products are sold in the country's major supermarket chains and other specialised shops.

<http://www.dumedu.lt>

UAB MĖTA

Gražina and Mindaugas Vyskupaitis founded **Mėta** three decades ago. The company produces organic essential oils, extracts, massage honey and body scrub blends, home care products, herbal teas and natural food products. All sauna, spa, household and food products are made from natural and organic Lithuanian raw materials. Mėta UAB is not only expanding its market in Lithuania and the EU, but also increasing its product range, which today consists of more than 200 different types of products. The company's production capacity allows it to produce 12 tons of 17 types of essential oils for baths, massages, aromatic lamps and 200 tons of 13 types of organic water extracts made from organic plant material by water distillation for spa treatments, body care and steam baths. One of the most popular categories of Mėta's products is herbal teas. They are made using not only naturally occurring in Lithuania, but also medicinal plants grown by the company. Mėta is the first Lithuanian company to be awarded the organic cosmetics certificate. The company is an active participant in the European Union's Copernicus and Eureka research projects, supplying essential oils and extracts for scientific research.

<https://www.ekologiskiproduktai.lt/>

AUGA Group



Is the largest vertically integrated organic food company in Europe with certified organic land area of 39,600 hectares, of which 11.6 % is own land. The company employs 1,271 people. The company exports its products to 37 countries worldwide.

AUGA Group's Main Business Segments:

- Crop production
In 2019–2020, 30.6 thousand hectares were sown with cereals, including 11.9 thousand hectares of wheat, 9 thousand hectares of pulses and 9.7 thousand hectares of other cereals.
- Dairy farming
milk production and cattle breeding. The company has 3,471 certified dairy cows.
- Mushroom farming
the company's subsidiary Baltic Champs is the largest mushroom farmer in the Baltic region.
- End-consumer products
The group offers a wide range of end-user products, including ready-to-eat soups, canned mushrooms, packaged fresh and canned vegetables, milk and other products. The products sold by the AUGA group are under the AUGA brand. This segment is strategically important for the company and is currently the fastest growing. Sales to the USA are the fastest growing, with growth of 458 % in 2020 compared to the same period last year.

<https://auga.lt/>

The Organic Market in Lithuania

The unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for organic food: shoppers are looking for healthy, clean food for their families. The most appreciated products are those of Lithuanian origin, which are associated with naturalness and freshness.

Market Size and Trends

Healthy living is becoming more than just a fashion trend, it is a natural and conscious choice for consumers, and demand for organic and healthy products is growing. Anecdotal press reports inform about the growing annual sales of organic products in Lithuania, but no precise statistics are available. Some of the organic production, such as beef, mutton, cereals, fruit, berries and vegetables, is sold to non-organic buyers.

The number of customers with special needs – allergies, lactose intolerance, gluten intolerance, etc. – is increasing, so the range of products is being adjusted: more attention is being paid to various dietary foods and new cosmetic lines. Lithuanian organic food products are increasing on supermarket shelves.



Figure 16: Organic shelf in supermarket (2020)

In the local market, up to 5 % of organic products are sold directly from farms, up to 5 % at fairs and markets, up to 20 % in shops and 25 % in other outlets. Regular customer surveys have shown that it is not only

important to customers that a product – especially in the food category – is organic. The country of origin is an additional motivation for the buyer to buy. The most appreciated products are those of Lithuanian origin, which are associated with naturalness and freshness.

Ecological + Lithuanian is a combination of product characteristics that creates a higher demand for the organic product range. Lithuanian buyers are more likely to buy dairy products, bread products as well as fermented, salted, pickled, stewed and boiled vegetables.

According to the research company Nielsen Lithuania, the vast majority of shoppers – 50 % – say they pay attention to what they buy, while as many as 28 % say they are always on the lookout for healthy options. Among those with children aged 4–6 years, as many as 36 % say they regularly look for healthy products, while interest in healthy food in households without children is much lower. Healthy products are slightly more popular among 30–39 year olds, middle-income earners and those living in large cities. Increasing availability and decreasing prices are attracting an increasing number of buyers.

Sales Channels and Actors

Direct Sales

Seasonal organic produce is bought directly from organic farms or at mobile markets in major Lithuanian cities. There is a growing opportunity and demand for online sourcing of organic products directly from growers and producers or online shops.

Specialised Retail and Catering

The first specialised shop was established in Kaunas at DU Medu, and now it is expanding the sale of organic products in two other major Lithuanian cities. In the following years, two more specialised shop chains, Biosala and Livinn, started selling organic products. **BIOSALA**, **LIVIN** and **DU MEDU** are the largest chains of specialised shops in Lithuania selling mainly organic products. The latter stores also sell online.

Supermarket Chains

Organic products are sold in four major supermarkets in Lithuania: **MAXIMA**, **RIMI**, **IKI** and **LIDL**. Organic food products – dairy products, fruit, vegetables, bread

products and baby products – are the most popular among shoppers.

The supply of organic products in Maxima stores increased by several percent in 2018, while demand jumped by 20 % compared to 2017. Maxima's selection of organic products in 2019 is almost a quarter larger than in 2018, with sales of more than 9 million Euro almost a third more than a year ago. The range includes more than 1,000 organic products, the majority of which are food products of Lithuanian origin.

The Rimi supermarket chain has almost 800 organic products. These include not only fruit and vegetables, but also dairy products, meat products, groceries (cereals and cereal products, pasta, canned foods, coffee, tea, biscuits, jams, oil, spices), baby and children's products, cleaning and cosmetics. Some of these products are sold under Rimi's private label **I love eco label**. A survey conducted in August 2021 on behalf of the Lithuanian supermarket chain Maxima shows that 2 out of 3 shoppers consider the eco-friendliness of a product to be an important criterion in their choice of goods, but only 33 % of respondents buy eco-friendly products even if they cost more than conventional products, and 8% never buy eco-friendly products. The most common products that respondents look for are organic fruit and vegetables (reported by 72 % of respondents who buy organic products), fresh organic meat (47 %), organic dairy products (45 %), and organic bread and bakery products (38 %).

Info

Some links to online organic shops in Lithuania

www.ekoplanet.lt

www.ekomarket.lt

www.saven.lt

www.livinn.lt

www.eko123.lt

www.bionatura.lt

www.dumedu.lt

www.genutesuogaine.lt

www.rupus.lt

Opportunities

Organic goods are an increasingly common choice for Lithuanians. One of the most important factors behind this growth is that Lithuanians trust our country's producers, appreciate the freshness and quality of their products and prefer them. Another factor influencing customer choice is the growing availability of organic products.

The White Paper sets out the opportunities and strategic directions for organic farming.⁹

The White Paper on Agriculture and Rural Development is a strategic national document that is being prepared as part of Lithuania's post-2020 CAP negotiations. It is intended to outline the major challenges to be addressed by Lithuania in the future programming period, taking into account the country's past achievements in agricultural policy, the most important challenges for farmers and rural communities in the context of rural development up to 2030, and to serve as a guideline for the preparation of the documents implementing the requirements of the EU regulations for Lithuania. The White Paper should outline strategic directions for long-term national policy to support vibrant rural communities, to sustain and strengthen agriculture's ability to remain competitive in the face of global market and climate challenges through innovation, and to guarantee food security for Lithuanian society.

Target 3.5 of the White Paper aims to – Achieve a breakthrough in organic farming (aiming to double the area under organic land use to 13 % in 2027 and 15 % in 2030)

- Facilitate small and medium-sized farms to grow organic produce;
- Promote organic production and processing through EU and public investment in organic farms;
- Provide advice and training to organic farmers on how to implement EU and national requirements related to organic production;
- Develop the modernisation of animal husbandry technologies on organic farms and work to ensure animal welfare and disease prevention;
- Give national priority to organic farming in environmentally sensitive landscapes, especially in protected areas.

⁹ See „The White Paper“, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, https://zum.lrv.lt/uploads/zum/documents/files/LT_versija/Veiklos_sritys/Bendroji_zemes_ukio_politika/Baltoji_knyga_2019.pdf

Figures and Sources

Figures

1	Map of Lithuania with districts	3
2	Lithuanian agricultural and food export markets in EU-28 (2019)	4
3	Lithuanian agricultural and food export markets in third countries (2019)	4
4	Most important exports Top 10 (2020)	4
5	Most important food imports TOP 10 (2020)	4
6	Holding distribution by economic activities (2021)	5
7	Farm distribution by economic activities (2021)	5
8	Lithuanian agricultural area (2019)	6
9	Farm of Vaida Jateike (Moletai Lithuania 2021)	7
10	National Organic Logo (LRŽŪM 2009)	8
11	Products with national organic logo in Lithuania (2020)	8
12	Payments to organic farms, source: www.zum.lt ; www.nma.lt (2020)	9
13	From the conference Healthy food – healthy person organized by Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (2020)	9
14	Export information(2020), source: www.ekoagros.lt	16
15	From the conference Healthy food – healthy person organized by Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (2020)	17
16	Organic shelf in supermarket (2020)	19

References

All internet addresses used in the text are verified for november 2021.

www.ekoagros.lt

www.zum.lt

www.nma.lt

www.ekoplanet.lt

www.ekomarket.lt

www.saven.lt

www.livinn.lt

www.eko123.lt

www.bionatura.lt

www.dumedu.lt

www.genutesuogaine.lt

www.rupus.lt