

Conversion in China boosts global organic area

A major global boost to organic farmland area has been clocked at the annual world organic food fair – Biofach – in Nuremberg, Germany.

According to the figures from an IFOAM survey, currently more than 31 million hectares of farmland are under organic management worldwide, a gain of around five million hectares in a single year. The major increase in organic land has taken place in China, where nearly three million hectares of pastoral land were recently certified.

In terms of organic land, excluding wild collection, Australia leads the pack with 12.1 million hectares, followed by China (3.5 million hectares) and Argentina (2.8 million hectares). Most of the world's organic land is in Australia / Oceania (39%), followed by Europe (21 %), Latin America (20%), Asia (13%), North America (4 %) and Africa (3 %).

The countries which have the largest percentage of organic farmland in comparison with the total agricultural area are Austria, Switzerland and much of Scandinavia. In Switzerland, for example, more than ten percent of the agricultural land is managed organically.

In 2004, the market value of organic products worldwide was reckoned at 27.8 billion US\$, (23.5 billion EUR), the largest share of organic products being marketed in Europe and North America.