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**SOCIOECONOMIC PREREQUISITES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF  
ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTION IN SOUTHERN  
MACROREGION**

Valentina Ivashova (a)\*, Ekaterina Aboneeva (b), Tatyana Gurnovich (c), Elena Ostapenko (d),  
Elena Lapina (e)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Stavropol State Agrarian University, 67, Ayvazovsky St., Stavropol, Russia,  
vivashov@mail.ru, 89283244288

(b) North Caucasian Federal University, build. 7, 9, Marshal Zhukov St., lecture hall 324, Stavropol, Russia,  
eaboneeva@mail.ru, (8652) 23-12-45

(c) Kuban State Agricultural University, 13, Kalinin St., Krasnodar, Russia,  
gurnovich@inbox.ru, 89892622400

(d) Stavropol State Agrarian University, 12, Zootekhnichesky Lane, Stavropol, Russia,  
helen\_07-84@mail.ru, 89064618021

(e) Stavropol State Agrarian University, 12, Zootekhnichesky Lane, Stavropol, Russia,  
viklapin2013@yandex.ru, 89034170120

***Abstract***

The paper presents the sociological study “Attitude of the population of the south of Russia to organic food” conducted in Stavropol Krai in October, 2018. The survey of 235 respondents of different age groups revealed the readiness of the population and producers to develop the market of organic food in the region. The study covered the analysis of the need of local organic production and consumption by the population of eco-friendly goods for the Russian conditions in terms of regional social and economic conditions of the consumer market. According to almost a half of survey participants from among the residents of Stavropol Krai, the expansion of organic food production in Russia is quite urgent and is perspective these days. Thus, the respondents were positive about the prospects of expanding the production and sale of organic food. The survey assessed the existing mechanisms of development of the market of organic food production in Russia. Ranking of possible actions, which, according to survey participants, may positively impact the development of the market of organic food production in Russia, demonstrates that in order of importance the outright ban on the use of pesticides, stimulators, GMOs takes the first place. The government subsidies to farmers and producers of organic products take the second place. The propaganda of healthy diet holds the third place. The adoption of laws and clear norms on certification of organic products in Russia takes the fourth place. Public awareness on advantages of organic products takes the fifth place.

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**Keywords:** Organic food, social and economic prerequisites, consumers, producers.



## 1. Introduction

Modern global consumer trends in the sphere of food confirm the interest in the issue of social and economic prerequisites to develop the production of organic food. The increasing need for quality food appeared against the background of conditions and requirements to develop the modern market of food consumption: the need to expand agricultural production to the detriment of its quality, to increase the terms of storage due to development of distribution networks and transportation of goods, etc.

Traditionally the South of Russia is the territory where small producers, farmers, personal households account for a considerable share of organic food in terms of their characteristics. Therefore, the development of organic food production from the perspective of consumers and producers of these products seems quite relevant.

## 2. Problem Statement

In recent years the increased attention to healthy diet, and hence to organic food and eco-friendly agricultural products became a relevant global trend, which is confirmed by the review of publications in the Scopus database. The publications refer to the study of such issues as consumer preferences in the choice of organic food, evidence-based improvement of the quality of organic food, organic production of agricultural goods as safe raw materials for processing industry (Gerhardt, Schwolow, Rohn, Arce, & Weller, 2019; Elias, Okoth, & Smaling, 2019, Tirloni, Stella, Bernardi, Dalgaard, & Rosshaug, 2019; Siedler, Balti, & Neves, 2019).

Some publications characterizing organic food are devoted to the optimization of chemical composition of organic food that makes them more useful. Thus, the publication *Effect of organic acids on bread quality improvement* (Su, Wu, Zhang, Jin, & Xu, 2019) presents the study aimed to improve the quality of bread by adding the ingredients of acetic, dairy, apple and lemon acids. The basic mechanism was studied through changes in barmy activity. All organic acids gave bread higher specific volume, lower moisture content, lower pH value and lower hardness. The study proved that the addition of organic acids in the course of cooking positively affects the quality of bread and its flavor characteristics.

Similar comparative study of the chemical composition of organic products was conducted to define the concentration of biologically active components in organic and standard marinated red pepper. This is described in the publication *Polyphenols and carotenoids in pickled bell pepper from organic and conventional production* in (Hallmann, Marszałek, Lipowski, Średnicka-Tober, & Rembiałkowska, 2019). The experiments confirmed that fruits have different content of solids, polyphenols and carotenoids: standard marinated red pepper fruits were richer with phenolic acids, while organic samples contained much more flavonoids.

In general, it is possible to conclude that the scientific community shows a lot of interest in organic food. The publications are devoted to the attitude of the population to organic food and to their conditions and stages of production. The review of publications confirms the relevance of the study (Iweala, Spiller, & Meyerding, 2019; Petousi, Daskalakis, Fountoulakis, Stentiford, & Manios, 2019; Zahedipour, Asghari, Abdollahi, Alizadeh, & Danesh, 2019; Yin, Hu, Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2019).

### 3. Research Questions

The study covers the analysis of consumers and producers of organic food in the south of Russia, as well as their opinion on the development of the global “organic” trend in a particular region.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to define social and economic prerequisites of development of organic food in southern Russia.

### 5. Research Methods

The sociological study “Attitude of the population of the south of Russia to organic food” conducted in in 2018 via the questionnaire-based survey. In total 235 people participated in the survey.

Social and demographic parameters of respondents: by gender – 59.7% women, 40.3% men; by type of settlement – 57.9% of respondents live in a city, 34.0% – in a village, 7.2% – in urban-type settlements, 0.9% – in a farm; by education – 35.6% of respondents have higher education, 53.4% – incomplete higher education, 11.0% – general secondary education; by marital status – 63.8% of respondents represent families with 1-2 children; 10.3% belong to large families; 14.3% of respondents – representatives of incomplete families; 6.7% – belong to “young families” (one of the spouses is under 30 years old); insignificant share of respondents are unemployed pensioners – 3.6% and disabled people – 1.3%. The survey also addresses agricultural producers to define their attitude to healthy diet. Among all respondents 15.8% – agricultural producers, 84.2% – not producers.

### 6. Findings

The participants of the survey shared their opinion on the development of organic production in Russia.

Table 01 shows the distribution of answers to a question on the opportunities of local production and consumption of eco-friendly goods by the population.

**Table 01.** Distribution Of Answers To A Question: “Do You Think Russia Needs Local Organic Production And Consumption By The Population Of Eco-Friendly Products?” (%)

Answers	Place Of Residence		Education		Are You A Producer?		Total
	Village	City	Without A Degree	Higher	Yes	No	
No, This Is Not Important At All	-	3.7	1.4	3.9	3.1	1.8	2.1
Not Urgent. Maybe Later	17.2	16.4	18.7	13.0	12.5	18.3	16.7
Quite Urgent But Our Producers Will Not Solve The Issue	36.4	28.4	29.5	33.8	31.3	30.8	31.8
The State Shall Care Of The Health Of Its Nation	46.4	51.5	50.4	49.3	53.1	49.1	49.4

The majority of respondents believe that the state shall care of the health of its nation and therefore the development of organic production and consumption of eco-friendly products by the population is, first of all, the responsibility of the state. Out of all groups within the segmentation the group of producers is more in favor of this opinion. If on average 49.4% of respondents believed that the “state shall care of health of its nation”, then 53.1% of respondents within the “producers” group were up to this option.

Table 02 shows the distribution of answers to a question on prospects of increasing the production of organic food in the next 5 years by Russian agricultural producers and farmers.

**Table 02.** Distribution of answers to a question: “Do you think that Russian agricultural producers and farmers will increase the production of organic food in the next 5 years?” (%)

Answers	Place Of Residence		Education		Are You A Producer?		Total
	Village	City	Without A Degree	Higher	Yes	No	
No	16.2	6.7	8.6	12.8	9.4	10.6	10.7
Very Unlikely. Maybe Later	24.2	29.6	29.5	20.5	15.6	31.2	27.4
Rather Yes. Long Pending Issue	22.2	31.1	28.8	28.2	31.3	27.1	27.4
Yes. It Has Its Potential	26.3	23.0	22.3	26.9	28.1	22.9	24.4
Unlikely. Low Demand	11.1	9.6	10.8	11.6	15.6	8.2	10.1

According to almost a half of survey participants from among the residents of Stavropol Krai the expansion of organic food production in Russia is quite urgent (27.4% of respondents) and is perspective (24.4% of respondents) these days. Thus, the respondents were positive about the prospects of expanding the production and sale of organic food.

Besides, almost a half of respondents highlights lack of readiness to expand the Russian market of organic food: 10.7% of respondents gave “no” answer; 27.4% of respondents – “very unlikely, maybe production and sale will expand later”; 10.1% of respondents – “unlikely, low demand”.

Table 03 presents data on the opinion of respondents to the development of the market of organic food production in Russia.

**Table 03.** Distribution Of Answers To A Question: “According To Your Opinion, What Would Contribute To The Development Of The Market Of Organic Food Production In Russia?” (%)

Answers	Place Of Residence		Education		Are You A Producer?		Total
	Village	City	Without A Degree	Higher	Yes	No	
Propaganda Of Healthy Diet	26.3	26.9	26.8	23.1	15.6	27.2	26.6
Public Awareness On Advantages Of Organic Products	16.2	16.4	15.2	15.4	25.0	14.8	16.3
Government Subsidies To Farmers And	35.4	36.3	36.0	41.0	43.8	34.1	35.9

Producers Of Organic Products							
Adoption Of Laws And Clear Norms On Certification Of Organic Products In The Russian Federation	20.2	19.3	18.7	21.8	25.0	16.5	19.7
Outright Ban On The Use Of Pesticides, Stimulators, Gmos	36.4	36.3	33.8	38.5	43.8	37.1	36.3
Prohibitive Duties On Import Of Organic Food	14.1	11.1	10.8	14.1	18.8	12.4	12.4

Ranking of possible actions, which, according to survey participants, may positively impact the development of the market of organic food production in Russia, demonstrates that in order of importance the outright ban on the use of pesticides, stimulators, GMOs takes the first place – 36.3% of respondents. The government subsidies to farmers and producers of organic products take the second place (35.9% of respondents). The propaganda of healthy diet holds the third place (26.6% of respondents). The adoption of laws and clear norms on certification of organic products in the Russian Federation – the fourth place (19.7% of respondents). Public awareness on advantages of organic products (16.3% of respondents) – the fifth place.

## 7. Conclusion

Summing up the results of the study on the development of production and consumption of organic food in the south of Russia it may be concluded that the market of such products will progressively expand. Even a region where the farms already produce a lot of goods has social and economic prerequisites for the expansion of production and consumption of organic food, which is demonstrated by the answers of the population not dealing with the production of such products and by the answers of the survey participants being producers.

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