

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN TURKEY

Turkey is the one of the most suitable countries for organic agriculture with its ecological and climatologically conditions. Organic agriculture in Turkey started in the 1980s with the demand from importing countries. The dried sultanas, apricots and figs were the first exported crops grown organically. So that it can be said that structure of the organic agriculture in Turkey is reverse when compared to other countries. Because it followed a path starting from the demands from importing countries to the producer (farmer). Any way with the growing interest in organic agriculture, today Turkish organic products have increased into various categories, such as dried fruits, fresh or processed fruits and vegetables, pulses edible nuts, cereals, spices and herbs and industrial crops.

When the last a few years production data has been examined, it is obvious that the organic agriculture is increasing very rapidly in Turkey. As we can see from Table 1, for the last 8 years it is seen that organic products, number of farmers, production area and production quantities have been increased. The area that is under organic management was only 6.789 hectares where this number become 15 times of this and reached to 103.190 hectares in 2003. In 1996s there were only 26 kinds of organic products where this number has increased to nearly 170 kinds in 2003 with an enormous increase rate. The production is mainly concentrated in the Aegean Region. Nearly 40% of the production is made in the Aegean Region so that the widest area in hectares the largest group the farmers are settled in that region.

TABLE 1: ORGANIC PRODUCTION IN TURKEY

Years	Number of products	Number of Farmers	Production Area (ha)	Production Quantity
1996	26	1.947	6.789	10.304
1997	53	7.414	15.906	47.602
1998	67	8.199	24.042	99.300
1999	92	12.275	46.523	168.306
2000	95	18.385	59.985	237.210
2001	98	15.795	111.324	280.328
2002	149	12.428	89.927	310.125
2003	170	13.044	103.190	291.876

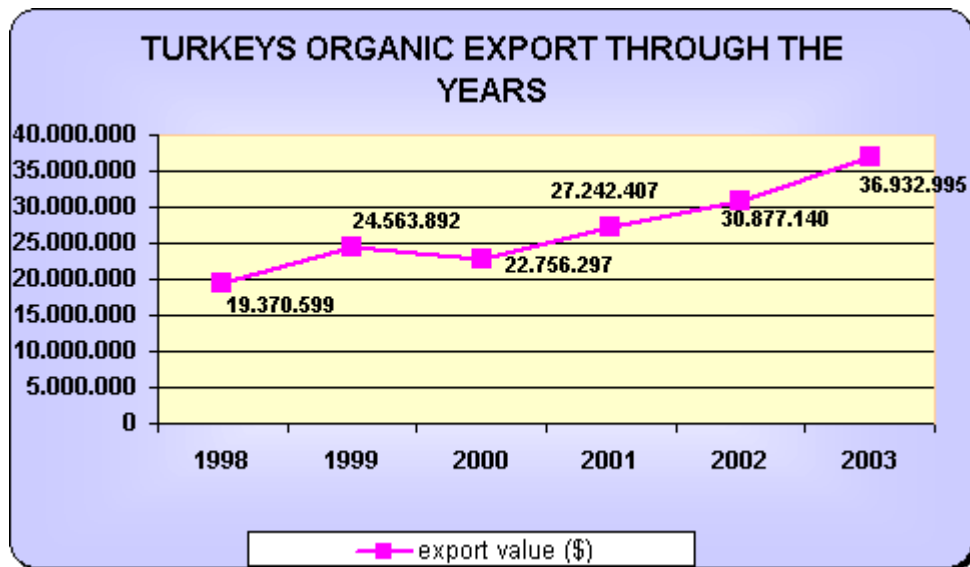
Source: MARA

However Turkey's organic producers are mainly focused on export markets. Because the domestic organic market has only a small portion of the Turkish food market although, it has been developing over the past ten years. The main reason of this small portion is the price-sensitiveness of the consumers.

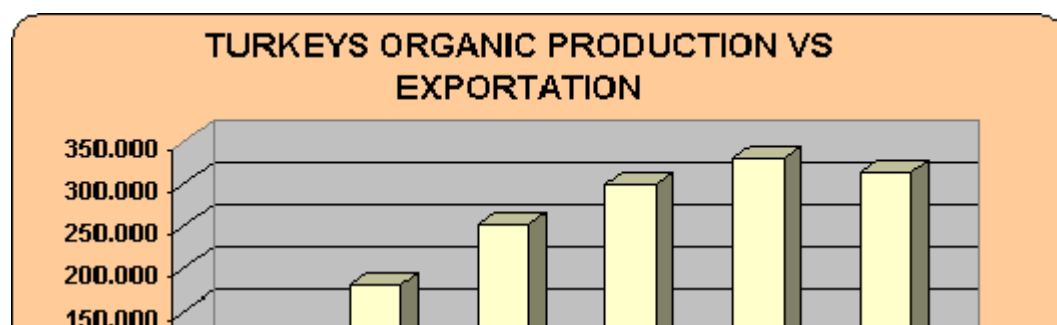
The export quantities of the organic products were only 8.617 tones in 1998. These quantities continue to grow within the years and reached 21.083 tones in 2003. The value of exportation in 1998 was 19.370.599 US\$ and increased to 36.932.995 US\$ in 2003. The dried fruits are the driving products of the Turkish organic exportation since the beginning. Raisins, dried figs and dried apricots are the first three in the list. Then comes the hazelnuts, lintel, nohut and frozen fruits and vegetables. Although traditional agricultural products play main role in Turkey's exportation the organic product range has developed over the years and increased from nearly 30 groups of commodities to 49 groups within the 2003.

TABLE 2: TURKEYS ORGANIC EXPORT QUANTITIES & VALUES

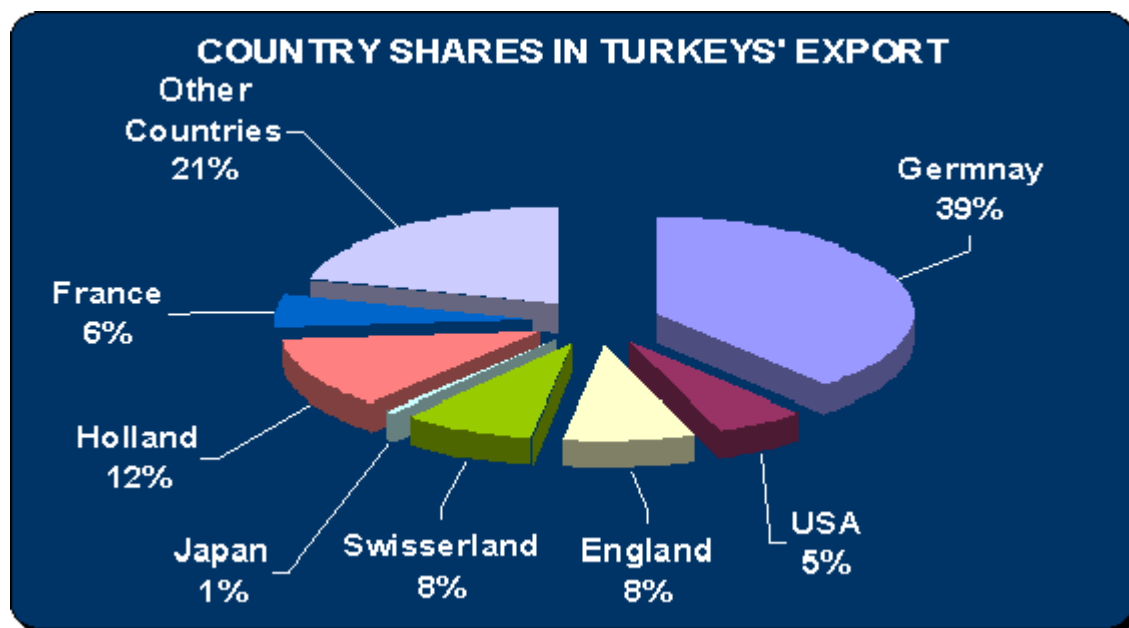
	1998		1999		2000		2001
	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V	Q
RAISINS	2.839	3.855.281	3.268	4.116.716	4.252	4.836.163	5.412
DRIED FIGS	1.570	3.717.798	1.698	3.787.806	2.193	4.074.085	2.227
DRIED APRICOTS	1.125	3.149.963	1.494	4.257.725	1.268	2.740.698	1.934
HAZELNUTS	826	4.341.085	870	3.983.546	1.102	4.197.767	1.447
LANTEL	506	466.840	666	622.684	979	806.893	1.097
NOHUT	568	501.513	944	827.096	707	636.108	1.035
FROZEN FRUITS	144	282.075	462	679.465	185	251.785	1.163
OTHER PRODUCTS	1.041	3.056.044	2.649	6.288.853	2.442	5.212.799	3.243
TOTAL	8.617	19.370.599	12.050	24.563.892	13.129	22.756.297	17.556



However when we compare the production data and export data, it is understood that, as we can see from figure 5, the exportation consists only small portion of the production. In 2003 only 7.22 % of the total production had been exported to the world. When we think that 5,23% of the total production is for the domestic market that leaves nearly 87 % of the organic products free for the world market.



In Turkey's organic export the greatest share belongs to EU countries. Germany has the first place with 39%. Then comes Holland, England and Switzerland with 12% and 8 %s. Japan has only a share of 1% in Turkey's organic products. This is a really slight pie when compared to the other countries.



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