

Sustainability and usage of Organic Food Markets and its Growth in Different Countries

Suan Sen*

Department of Food and Information Technology, Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea

Commentary

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***For Correspondence:** Suan Sen, Department of Food and Information Technology, Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea

E-mail: suan.sen@gmail.com

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Organic markets have revealed enormous potential, and they now show a consistent annual positive growth in all countries that invest in production. The organic market in the EU grew by 7.4% in 2014, led by Germany with 7,910 million Euro retail sales and a 4.8% growth rate, followed by France, the United Kingdom, and Italy. (FIBL-AMI 2016 survey based on national data sources). The United States leads the organic market with 43% of global retail sales, followed by the EU (38%), China (6%), Canada (4%), and Switzerland (3%).

Consumption

Organic food consumption in the EU has nearly doubled in the last decade, with consumers spending an average of €22.4 per capita on organic food in 2005, rising to €47.4 in 2014. In this case, Switzerland consumes the most, followed by Luxembourg, Denmark, and Sweden.

Organic food consumption is also increasing in the United States. Organic food consumption reached approximately \$35 billion per year in 2014, and it is estimated that organic foods have become more commonplace since then. When it comes to organic foods, produce is the most popular, but dairy, snacks, and beverages are also growing in popularity. Millennials are thought to be the most frequent purchasers of organic products. They account for more than half of all buyers and generally persuade their families to purchase organic products.

Distribution

While organic products were initially sold primarily by specialized retailers, by the end of the 1990s, sales had begun to cross over into mainstream retailers. Today, general retailers are the most important distribution channels, followed by organic retailers and direct sales, though their importance varies by country. In the United States, 93% of organic foods are sold in regular or specialized supermarkets, with the remaining 7% purchased through alternative channels such as farmers markets.

One criticism of organic products is that their distribution consumes the same amount of energy as conventional food. In this regard, eating locally is thought to be more environmentally friendly than eating organically.

Retailers and marketing approaches

Organic food retailers and marketing agents have had to adapt to the ever-increasing and conscious flow of demand. Organic products are perceived as premium products, so the market must handle them in order to create, maintain, and possibly enhance this perception. Because organic product consumption is embedded in a larger system of beliefs, buyers are highly involved when purchasing these types of products, and the activity itself involves mental and emotional processes. As a result, the marketing approach to this type of consumption is said to be more cognitive than behavioral, because its primary goal is to understand how consumers associate a product's characteristics with a healthy and socially conscious lifestyle. Consumers typically associate the taste, texture, and odor of food with various hedonistic achievements, and organic production is associated with a healthy lifestyle and thus wholesomeness, physical well-being, and eventually happiness and a general inner harmony.

Organic restaurants

Organic and green restaurants are an additional food service associated with the growing awareness of organic sensitivity. They have recently gained popularity and used market segmentation to attract customers who are interested in maintaining a healthy diet. Restaurants of this type typically stock up on local products and serve clients dishes prepared with fresh and local ingredients. Organic restaurants have recently received certification. In Italy, for example, the ICEA, Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification, has established a certification system that allows for greater control and standardizes requirements for organic recognition. In addition to organic food certifications, gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan menu standardization has been implemented. Another example is the American nonprofit Green Restaurant Association, which broadens the requirements for "green" certification to include broader environmental concerns. The organization considers water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, energy use, and pollution reduction. Their system is based on 80 "green points," which are given to restaurants that follow certain environmentally friendly procedures. A restaurant is considered GRA certified in most cities in the United States if it receives a score of 62 or higher.