U.S. Demand for Organic Products Goes Global

Organic products have shifted from being a lifestyle choice for a small share of consumers to being consumed at least occasionally by a majority of Americans. While the consumption of organic food and beverages internationally is concentrated in Europe and the United States, the production of certified organic products is scattered worldwide.

In 2007, USDA-accredited groups certified 27,000 producers and handlers worldwide to the U.S. organic standard, with approximately 16,000 in the U.S. and 11,000 outside the U.S.

According to USDA, organic food sales are increasing faster than domestic producers.

**U.S. certified organic acreage and operations, 2005**

- Cropland: 1.7 million acres
- Pasture and range: 2.3 million acres

Nearly 5 percent of U.S. vegetable acreage and 2.5 percent of fruit and nut acreage was under organic management in 2005, but only 0.2 percent of corn and soybean acreage and 0.5 percent of wheat acreage was managed organically.

In 2002, USDA estimated the value of U.S. organic imports was between $1.0 billion and $1.5 billion, while the value of U.S. organic exports was $125 million to $250 million. While more recent data are unavailable, it seems certain that the gap between the value of imports and exports has widened in recent years as U.S. consumer demand for organic products has grown faster than domestic production.

Major organic imports include fresh fruits and vegetables, products not grown in the U.S. (such as coffee, tea, cocoa, and tropical produce), and raw ingredients, including soybeans.

ERS provides data and analysis on U.S. organic producers and markets.

For more information, see the ERS Website: