ABSTRACT

Organic animal husbandry in Croatia has been regulated by National organic agricultural legislative since 2001, but due to lack of knowledge and irrational fear farmers are usually undecided to convert to organic animal keeping. The way how BIOPA association for organic agriculture can improve organic production through education and advisory service is described.

Key words: organic animal keeping, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs.

INTRODUCTION

Organic animal husbandry in the Republic of Croatia has been regulated since 2001 by the National organic agricultural legislative\(^1\), and since then subsidised not only by the regular agricultural subventions, but also by

\(^1\)Talk given at 2\(^{nd}\) Mediterranean Conference on Organic Agriculture – Contribution to Sustainable Ecosystem, Dubrovnik, April 2-4, 2008
special subvention program for organic agriculture\textsuperscript{[2]}. Still, farmers are usually undecided to convert to organic animal keeping due to lack of knowledge, irrational fear, more complicated administration and irregular subsidy payments, and in spite of positive effects of organic production\textsuperscript{[3]}. "Biopa" farmers association for organic agriculture, can improve organic production through education, advisory service and other ways of assistance.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The number of animals within the "Biopa" association was recorded by "Biopa" advisory service personnel for the purpose of preparation for inspection and certification by "Bioinspekt" inspectors for years 2006 and 2007. The data for seven main species of animals use were sorted out: cattle (both milking and meat cows), sheep, goats, pigs, horses, poultry (mainly hens, but also ducks and geese) and bees. Two years data were compared, and differences were expressed as percentage of the category growth.

RESULTS

Table 1: Number of domestic animals within "BIOPA" association, years 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Goats</th>
<th>Pigs</th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Poultry</th>
<th>Bee-hives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>2808</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of growth</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A large growth of the cattle category from year 2006 to 2007 was mainly an outcome of the decision of "Belje" agricultural business to dedicate several hundreds of hectares for suckling cows – calves production. Horses growth was also very large, due to the enrolment of regional horse breed keepers associations into the organic agriculture register. Pigs and sheep keeping growth was also very large, especially in counties where local governments decided to
help with certain contribution for inspection and certification costs. The small growth of bees and even stagnation of goats and poultry are not really worrying, being mostly yearly variation of experienced growers of given animals.

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