

Current situation and future capacity of organic grapes production in Moldova

1. Legal base for organic viticulture

Organic viticulture represents a production way which takes in consideration traditional knowledge combined with scientific progress in all agriculture sectors according to the Legal frame, "Law n.115-XVI from 09.06.2005, regarding the organic agriculture products"

Organic Viticulture products are obtained according to production technology stipulated in „Government decision nr.149 from 10th of February 2005, regarding implementation of the law nr.115_XVI regarding organic agrifood products;
Technical Regulation of the organic viticulture

2. Organic grape production in Moldova

Because of the demand on the international market on organic products and appropriate legal frame work, with the support from the Ministry of Agriculture and support from international donors was possible in the last years that essential surfaces of vineyards have been converted to organic production and today the total surfaces of organic grape are 10 500 ha placed in the south and center of the country. Historically Moldova was producing mainly wine varieties of grapes and table grapes varieties have been ignored or not receiving sufficient attention to become important part on the vineyard plantations and the same situation have today, from total area of 10500, only 650 ha are covered with organictable grape surface and the rest 9850 ha are cultivated with wine organic grape varieties.

3. Good conditions to expand organic grape production

Moldova has a number of advantages in organic horticultural production. Those advantages include Moldova's mild moderate climate, excellent soils, availability of water resources, age-old experience in the industry and the good image enjoyed by the Moldovan fruits and vegetables at export markets (and in particular in the CIS countries) owing to their especially good taste. Nevertheless, to succeed at the global or European markets, the Moldovan producers should improve the product quality and select the exported products very carefully. Organic product – does not only refer to "primary products", which are produced by using listed chemical, but also includes "secondary products" etc., which are processed after the production. The areas on hillsides with the Southern, South-Western, Western and South-Eastern exposition (layout) are most favorable for organic viticulture; such areas total around 380 thousand ha; and currently only 10.5 thousand ha of those areas are used to grow organic grapes. Thus, there is an extensive possibility to expand the organic vine plantations and to increase the production of grapes, because the natural ampelo-ecological reserves are used at only 1/4-1/3 of the existing potential.

Moldova's climatic resources (the total of active and actual temperatures above 10C) permit growing of the early organic vine varieties in all grape growing zones, even including the northernmost ones.

The range of altitudes, the total and minimum temperatures are presented for each zone in conformity with the hillside orientation, furthermore, the conclusions for each sub-region describe the most appropriate organic grape varieties.

4. Main companies which produced and process organic grape

The main companies decided to convert to organic grape production are :

- Cricova Acorex
- Asconi
- Bas-vin
- Ever-Vin

Certification is done by SGS Moldova and annually 24 000 wine deca/liters are exported to Germany, UK, Norway, Finland.

This companies planted significant surfaces of vineyards and do processing as well.

5. Main varieties of organic table grape and surfaces -650 ha

The fact that is that cultivated are with organic table grape is not so impressive, it is important that new plantation have been established in the last years with good potential:

- Aleppo -125 ha
- Vineyards Queen – 180 ha
- Cardinal -190 ha
- Chish-miss Moldovschi -60 ha
- Presentabil- 95 ha

For the first time, in 2008 have been organized exported to Moscow and Sank-Petersburg of the 3750 tones of certified organic table grape. That gives good perspective for the future.

6. Needs of the organic table grapes production sector

To utilize in full the potential of the organic table grapes production sector, we need to implement a number of organizational, economic and technological measures, and in particular:

- To improve the cultivation technologies for the improvement of quality and competitiveness of table grape varieties;
- To increase the productivity of vine plantations with table varieties through the implementation of virus-free clones of the traditional and new varieties;
- To improve the range of table varieties in line with the international market demand and requirements. To cultivate new table varieties (in particular seedless varieties) in order to increase exports;
- To implement the advanced achievements of science and latest scientific developments in the field;
- To develop and improve the storage infrastructure, ensuring long-term storage of table grapes, etc.

7. Main varieties of grape for organic wine production and surfaces- 9850ha

- Cabernet-Sovinyon
- Merlot
- Rara Neagra
- Feteasca
- Sovinion
- Dnestrovskoie

8. Aspects of establishing new organic vine plantations

The establishment of a organic vine plantation represents a system of closely correlated measures, which include the selection of a site and its assessment in terms of its soil and agri-phytotechnical characteristics. The organic vine plantation is a long-term investment, which can be operated for 35 – 40 years. The length of the efficient operational life depends on the correctness of the organic vine plantation establishment and care after it in the first years after planting. Therefore any mistakes should be excluded at the stage of site selection, plantation project development, and preliminary land treatment for the new organic plantation.

9. Future of organic viticulture in Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova the varieties of table vine occupy limited areas, whereas the existent by geographical demarcation varieties according to the agro biological and technological indices don't correspond entirely to market demands.

Among the seedless varieties only one is homologated in the republic – Moldovan Kishmish. That is why, at present, the necessity to complete and renew the assortment of table vine varieties occurred and, at the same time, realization in practice of production and industrial processing of non-standard fraction of tinned food, wines and raisins.

The experiences were fulfilled on the State Experimental Sector in Cahul in the South zone of Moldova viticulture beginning with 1998 and up till 2007. The meteorological conditions and the peculiarities of the development phases were studied; the agro biological and technological qualities of the varieties, as well as the processing economical effectiveness were evaluated.

The studied varieties were grouped in 4 groups: with a very early term of ripening; early; medium-early; seedless.

The analysis of the obtained results permitted the formulation of the conclusions: under the criterion of agro biological and technological peculiarities the variety "Muscat Jemciujnyi" was highlighted in the first group, which is homologated in all the zones of wine cultivation. In the second group – "Codreanca" and "Drujba", which are already geographically demarcated. In the third group the variety "Frumoasa Alba" was highlighted, being homologated in the Central and South zones of Moldova organic viticulture.

With a view to increasing the weight of table vine varieties for utilization in a fresh or dry way, it is recommended to cultivate in Moldova the following varieties: "Siurpriz", "Kishmish OSHI", "Bessemanyi Melnica".

The non-standard fractions of table vine varieties are recommended to utilize for drying (kishmish and raisins), obtaining grapes in alcohol (chocolates), production of tinned food (jam, marmalade, marinade), juices (homogenized and clear) and wines (table dry wines and with residual sugar).

On the basis of seedless varieties of grapes is recommend the production of produces with an increased content of active biological compounds for children food and curative treatment; the new varieties of vine can be the basis of more pure from the ecological point of view wine-making production.

In organic viticulture it is necessary to plant resistant varieties to diseases and illnesses, varieties witch are characterized with high immunity.

For plant protection in organic viticulture MA homologated 2 biological products:

-Coralite

-Timorex, both products are to prevent oidium and mildium. The results are excellent!

Feromoni, for insects

Conduct Awareness Campaign on organic viticulture

This should be on-going process and it should be accomplished through seminars and field days presentations, articles in national and regional magazines.

Disseminate existing general information on organic viticulture in the Republic of Moldova

In this activity our ProRuralInvest specialists actively will participate combining different instruments to disseminate as widely as possible existing material and information on the organic viticulture; exhibitions, national seminars, regional seminars, round table, mass media publications.