



# ORGANIC FOOD CONSUMPTION: ATTITUDES AND ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS HEALTHINESS NOWADAYS

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## ABSTRACT

*In recent years, the quality of food has decreased, which troubles consumers to choose food sources assuring nutrition and food safety. With the outstanding advantages of the high level of food safety and nutrition, organic food has become an inevitable consumption trend of smart consumers. For a long time, organic food has been no stranger to consumers in developed countries such as the US, UK, and France. In Vietnam, this relatively new concept is expected to become a popular consumption trend in the future.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Organic food, consumer trends, health safety.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture has been around for a long time in Western countries since the 40s of the last century [1]. The term "organic food" refers to the cultivation or production of certain foods. This is the concept to refer to foods that are raised or grown without using: Synthetic chemicals (chemical fertilizers, pesticides, preservatives...); Antibiotics or genetically modified organisms; Growth hormone [2]. For processed products, it is required that there are no artificial food additives such as colorants, preservatives, artificial sweeteners, monosodium glutamate (MSG), flavorings, etc. Organic food is quite diverse from fresh foods such as meat, fish, eggs, vegetables to processed products such as cakes, cereals or pre-processed nuts.

Currently, organic food is increasingly widely used and is gradually becoming more popular. Using organic foods is good for health and the environment [3]. The benefits can be mentioned such as promoting disease prevention for humans, more nutrients, no GMOs, preserving natural flavors, increasing animal fertility, and good impacts on the environment.

## II. STANDARDS AND CLASSIFICATION OF ORGANIC FOOD

### 2.1. Standards of organic food

To be certified organic, products must be grown and produced complying with the standards in

the country in which the organic food is consumed [4].

An organic certification is a certificate issued to a product to affirm that this product is organic. Depending on how many percentages of organic ingredients are achieved according to each regulation, there will be corresponding certificates [5]. This is a certification to verify the safety and hygiene of food.

Each organic certification has its own strict requirements may consisting of saplings (originating from seeds or a vegetative part like cutting), water source, soil, fertilizer, etc., in order to meet the standards of organic agriculture.

Organic certification by the United States Department of Agriculture, National Organic Commission (USDA) is a very strict organic standard certification. Products containing 95% organic ingredients are allowed to use the logo. In addition, the processing procedure must ensure that synthetic preservatives and chemical ingredients are not added.

In Vietnam, the government has also issued regulations on organic agriculture such as no use of synthetic chemicals, toxic chemicals, as well as genetically modified technologies, radioactive technologies and other harmful technologies for organic production. The product must be certified to a national standard by a third party. "100% organic" products and "organic" products with at least 95% organic ingredients certified in accordance with Vietnam Standards on organic agriculture would carry the organic product logo of Vietnam



## 2.2. Categories of organic food

### Classification of organic foods:

+ Animal organic food: An animal species certified as organic food must meet the following criteria: Raised in separate areas; No chemicals are used in drinking water sources; The growth process does not use any stimulants except antibiotics to cure diseases (Use 90 days before slaughtering animals for human consumption).

+ Plant organic food: Plants certified as organic food have the following characteristics: Vegetables and fruits are grown completely naturally without using chemicals or chemical fertilizers (fertilizer obtained from animal carcasses or a blend of decaying organic matter), biological methods have to be applied to control pests.

+ Processed foods such as soda, cookies, cereals, etc. do not have artificial food additives (e.g. preservatives, colorants).

## III. THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT TREND OF THE ORGANIC FOOD MARKET IN VIETNAM

Organic food is the global consumer trend. In Vietnam, the trend of using organic food is also becoming popular. Organic food is a clean food source which is good for human health; Growing organic food also helps protect the environment, balance ecosystems and preserve biological diversity [6].

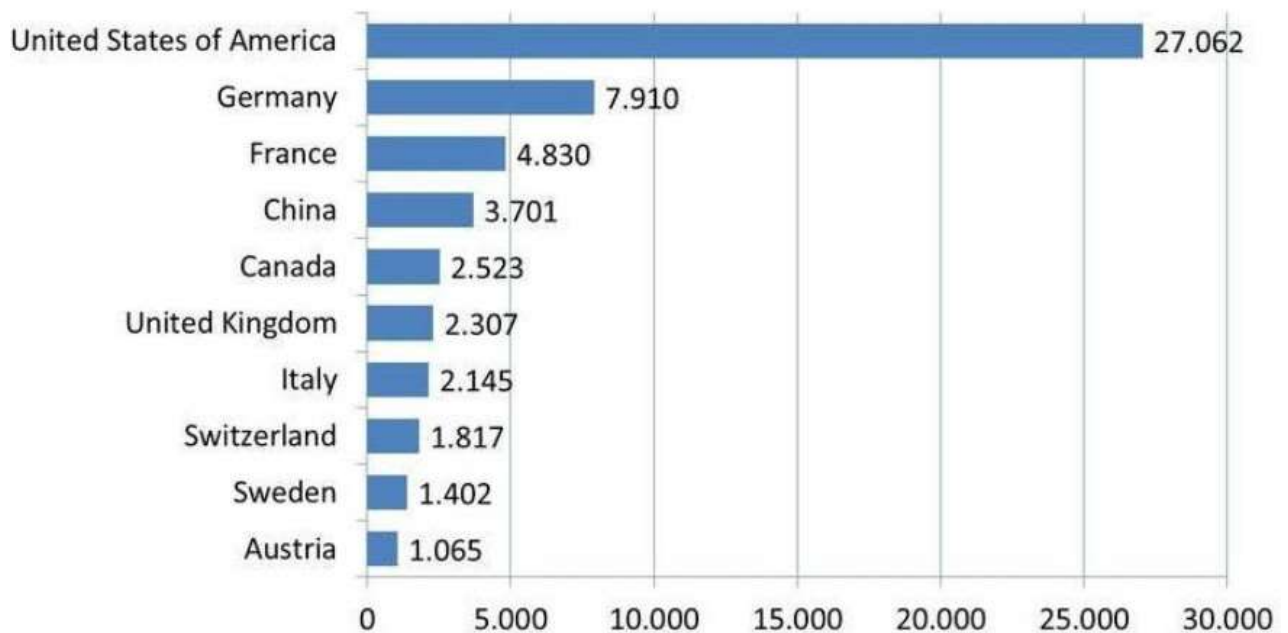
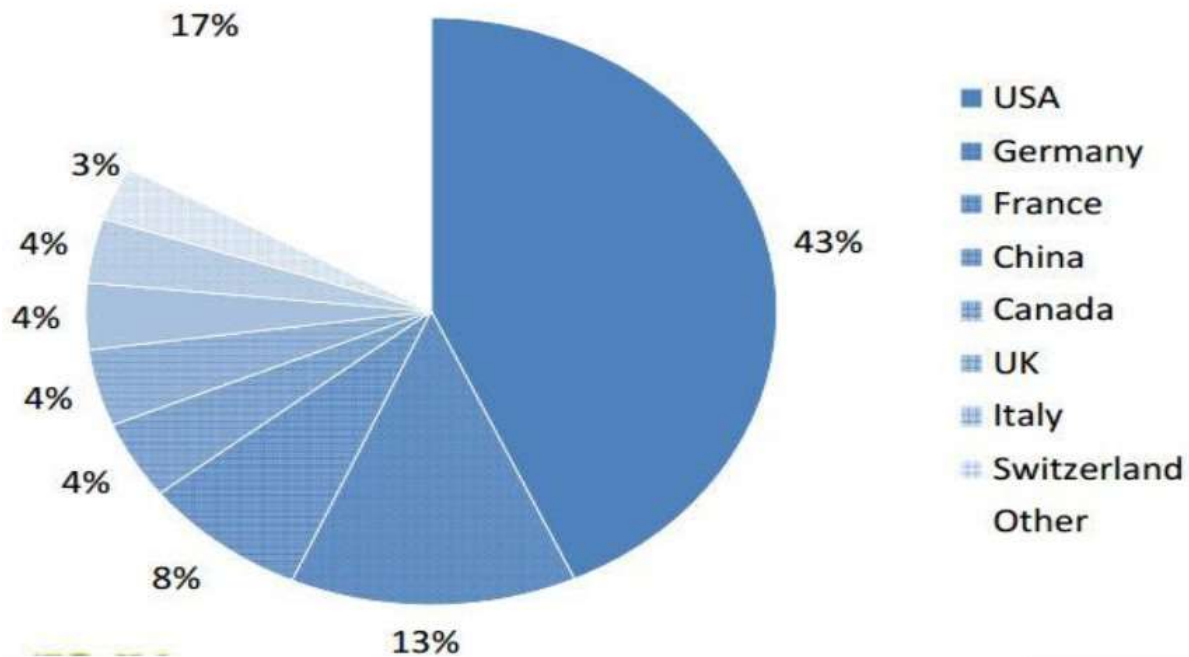


Figure 1: Top 10 countries with the largest organic food retail sales in 2014 (billion Euros)  
(Source: Statistics of FiBL and IFOAM in 2016)



**Figure 2: Market share of countries with the largest organic food retail sales in 2014 (%)**  
(Source: Statistics of FiBL and IFOAM in 2016)

In Vietnam, there are more and more organic farms growing and providing food for people in the cities. However, the production cost of the organic food would be more expensive than the normal one leading to the higher price on the market, so not everyone can afford to buy them.

According to an organic industry survey conducted by the Organic Trade Association: In 2018, in the US, organic product sales hit a record \$52.5 billion, up 6.3% from the previous year. Organic products are increasingly popular because some people find them safe and healthy; others believe that organic products help protect the environment, protect the earth ecosystem. Whatever the reason is, the fact remains that organic produce is good for both people and the environment [7].

At present, consuming organic food has begun to be a new trend in Vietnam. Even in the past few years, organic products were creating a movement for a part of consumers. Market statistics show that the organic food market in Vietnam is making significant changes.

Nearly 80% of Vietnamese consumers are deeply concerned about the long-term effects that artificial additives can cause with today's modern lifestyle, and they want to grasp the food compositions which they ingest every day [8].

They are more careful in finding and using healthy foods, preferring to use products that do not contain colorants, flavors, artificial preservatives, promoting sugar-free foods, and low fat, etc .

Eating habits focus on product quality, giving priority to green - clean - healthy products, which is creating a revolution in agricultural production, food and beverage production all over the world [9].

AC Nielsen report on the trend of organic food consumption also shows that 86% of Vietnamese consumers prefer organic products for their daily meals because of its safety, nutrition and delicious taste.

In addition, the prospect of Vietnamese F&B market is also catching up with the global F&B market with potential organic food and beverage sales reaching 320.5 billion USD by 2025. According to the research by Dublin, market research company in Ireland: The scale of the organic beverage industry could reach over \$55 billion by 2025 with an annual growth rate of up to 13.1%.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Food industry is one of the industries with great potential of Vietnam. In particular, domestic agricultural products and food are gradually becoming an important and rich source of supply for many countries around the world [10].

Food has a great influence on not only the health of one person, but also the whole society, so safe organic food in the near future will still be a product attracting more consumer interest [11]. However, in order to ramp up the development of



the safe food market, it is necessary to do several things as follows:

Firstly, propaganda campaigns should be organized to let the public have a better understanding of safe food. As consumers' understanding of safe food increases, consumers will become "wise" consumers mastering in choosing safe food, thereby creating a positive impact, that is to support manufacturers to do genuine business and limit manufacturers to do business with cheating.

Secondly, the government soon issues strict legal regulations, facilitating for the safe food market to operate.

Third, it is necessary to carefully study the conditions to support and encourage genuine manufacturers to develop. Meanwhile, a strong inspection and monitoring system should be built in order to early detect and prevent violations; along with that the sanctions must be strong enough, a major deterrent to crime, taking advantage of consumer ignorance about safe food, the loose management of the authorities to implement violations.

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