

Summary of follow-up report 2010/11:RFR1

Committee on Environment and Agriculture

SVERIGES 
RIKSDAG 

THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT

Follow-up of organic production and public consumption



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Preface

On 17 June 2009, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture decided to initiate a follow-up on organic farming. The follow-up aims to give the Committee more in-depth background information for its consideration of the Budget Bill for 2011 and ahead of possible amendments to legislation concerning organic production, as well as its consideration of private members' motions. On 14 October 2010, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture confirmed the decision to carry out the follow-up.

The follow-up has focused on surveying various central government measures designed to encourage organic production and public consumption of organic foods, the results of these measures and the problems and opportunities as regards continued developments.

The follow-up was conducted by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture's follow-up and evaluation group, comprising the following members of the Riksdag: Irene Oskarsson (Christian Democrats), Christine Jönsson (Moderate Party), Per Åsling (Centre Party), Nina Lundström (Liberal Party), Jan-Olof Larsson (Social Democratic Party), Åsa Romson (Green Party), Jens Holm (Left Party) and Josef Fransson (Sweden Democrats). **At the request of the group, the background materials were prepared in the Riksdag Administration by the Research Service Evaluation and Research Function, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment.**

The report of the follow-up and evaluation group has been published in the series *Reports from the Riksdag* (Report 2010/11:RFR1). The fol-

low-up was presented to the Committee in November 2010 and was considered in Committee Report 2010/11:MJU2. The Committee proposed that the Riksdag approve the Committee's findings. In December 2010, the Riksdag adopted the Committee's proposals.

This brochure provides a summary of the findings of the follow-up and the Committee's position as regards the follow-up.

Introduction

On 17 June 2009, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture decided to initiate a follow-up on organic farming. The follow-up aims to give the Committee more in-depth background information for its consideration of the Budget Bill for 2011 and ahead of possible amendments to legislation on organic production, as well as its consideration of private members' motions. On 14 October 2010, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture confirmed the decision to carry out the follow-up.

The follow-up has focused on surveying various central government measures designed to encourage organic production and public consumption of organic foods, the results of these measures and the problems and opportunities as regards continued developments. During the course of the follow-up, visits have been paid to Jämtland, Jönköping and Skåne counties in order to study measures taken at regional and municipal level to increase organic production and public consumption of organic foods. The follow-up has been limited to organic primary production, which means that food-processing activities have not been included.

The position of the Committee

The goals have not been fully achieved

The Committee has found that consumer demand for organic foods has increased considerably in recent years. Developments in the field of organic food production have also been very positive. The Committee notes that the goals for organic production of milk, eggs, beef, pork and poultry have been achieved. However, the goal that 20 per cent of agricultural land should be certified as organic and the goal that 25 per cent of public sector food consumption should be organic by 2010 will not be achieved. There are good preconditions for a continued increase in organic food production, provided that consumer interest persists.

New goals after 2010

The issue of formulating new goals for organic production and public sector consumption of organic foods after 2010 should, in the opinion of the Committee, be further analysed. Until such an analysis has been conducted, the current goals can remain in place. The Rural Development Programme for 2007–2013 contains goals for organic production until 2013, that largely correspond to the production goals for 2010. Most of the funding for stimulation of the environmental effects of organic production is allocated through the Rural Development Programme. There is thus a strong link between new goals for organic production and preparation of a Rural Development Programme for 2014–2020.

The Environmental Objectives Council has proposed that goals for organic production be incorporated into the environmental objectives system. The proposal has several advantages. If goals for organic production are included in the environmental objectives system they will reach many actors with an important role in environmental work. Continuous follow-up of environmental objectives is carried out at both the national and regional level. Further, if the goals for organic production are incorporated into the environmental objectives system, it will be

easier for these goals to contribute to the achievement of the environmental objectives system. The issue of incorporating goals for organic production into the environmental objectives system could, for example, be examined by the cross-party commission of inquiry established with the task of submitting a proposal to the Government on how the environmental quality objectives and the generation objectives can be achieved.

In the opinion of the Committee, it is important that the Riksdag receives ongoing information about developments in the field of organic production and about various central government measures to achieve increased production and greater public consumption of organic foods. This information could, for example, be included in the Budget Bill.

Supervision and application of regulatory frameworks

The Committee has found that the rules for organic production are extensive and in some parts inaccessible. In recent years, it has been made easier for organic farmers to get an overview of the rules that apply to organic production. In order to further improve the conditions for organic production it is, in the opinion of the Committee, important that the responsible authorities continue their work to clarify the EU's regulatory framework and to ensure that initiatives are taken to simplify the regulatory framework within the EU. Further, the Government should continue to support work that has been initiated to draw up guidelines for the sector. As regards supervision of organic production, it is important to make use of opportunities to coordinate supervision by certification bodies of organic farmers with supervision by county administrative boards.

Environmental compensation for organic production

The conditions for receiving environmental compensation for organic production were changed both in 2007 and 2010. The conditions have

been based on the findings of evaluations and have aimed to improve the environmental impact of the compensation. The organisation of the compensation should continue to be adapted on the basis of findings from evaluations carried out as part of the Rural Development Programme. At the same time it is important to safeguard the economic conditions of organic farms so that they are given time to adapt before changes come into force.

Greater knowledge of organic production

The Committee notes that the Government finances and implements measures aimed at developing and enhancing the efficiency of organic production. Measures include research, development, advice and dissemination of knowledge. These measures have contributed to the development of organic production. Progress made in this field as regards achieving increased productivity without the use of chemical pesticides or artificial fertilizers can help to develop sustainable production methods in conventional production. In the opinion of the Committee, the Government should continue to invest in knowledge development in the field of organic production. The development of species and crops that are adapted for organic production in the Swedish climate is, for example, important.

The Committee has identified a need for the development on statistics on organic food production. The Swedish Board of Agriculture has prepared background materials showing various possible development measures. To some extent, these involve greater costs for the authorities responsible for producing statistics and food-producing companies. The Committee considers it desirable for the Government to make an assessment of which development measures are warranted with regard to the increased costs that improved production of statistics will involve.

Public sector consumption of organic foods

Increased public-sector demand for organic foods has contributed to an increase in the volume of sales of organic produce. This has helped to stabilise the market for organic products, thus contributing to a broader range of products and better availability of organic foods. The goal that 25 per cent of public food consumption should be organic by 2010 has helped to stimulate efforts in the public sector to increase the share of organic foods. Many municipalities and county councils are working actively with this issue and a few have achieved the goal. An increasing number of municipalities and county councils have also set their own political goals for the procurement of organic produce, thus improving the potential for achieving a greater share of organic foods.

In 2009, organic foods were estimated to make up approximately 10 per cent of the share of total municipal and county council food consumption. This means that considerable development efforts are needed for the goal to be achieved. For example, none of the central government agencies that have been studied have decided that a certain percentage of the food procured should be organic. It is important that activities carried out in project form to disseminate knowledge about procurement and use of organic foods in the public sector can continue. The experience acquired through these projects should be collected in some form of national knowledge bank. Further, it is positive that measures to achieve more sustainable food consumption have been extended to encompass such factors as transport requirements, climate impact and seasonal adaptation. Consumers have an important role to play in influencing supply in and demand for organic foods. There is reason good to continue efforts that make it easier for consumers and for the public and private sectors to make choices with a positive impact on the environment.

Action plan to boost organic consumption and production

An Organic Forum has gathered a number of different actors who help to support the Forum's activities. Central government funding makes it possible to coordinate the work of the Forum. The assignment from the Government of drawing up an action plan has boosted the status of activities. By focusing on the entire food chain, areas of special importance for the development of organic production have been identified and highlighted. It is of value for the continued development of the market for organic products that there continues to be a meeting place for various stakeholders in organic production.

Follow-ups (in Swedish) by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture (MJU)

Thematic follow-up

- *Förutsättningar för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion – En uppföljning [Conditions for small-scale food production – A follow-up]* (Report 2005/06:RFR3, Committee report 2005/06:MJU8)
- *Uppföljning av de fiskepolitiska insatsernas resultat och konsekvenser för företag inom fiskeområdet [Follow-up of the results and consequences of fishing policy measures for companies in the fisheries sector]* (Report 2007/08:RFR3, Committee report 2007/08:MJU2)
- *Uppföljning av statens insatser inom havsmiljöområdet [Follow-up of government measures in the field of the marine environment]* (Report 2008/09:RFR3, Committee report 2008/09:MJU1)
- *Uppföljning av statens insatser för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion [Follow-up of government measures in the field of small-scale food production]* (Report 2009/10:RFR1, Committee report 2009/10:MJU2)
- *Uppföljning av ekologisk produktion och offentlig konsumtion [Follow-up of organic production and public consumption]* (Report 2010/11:RFR1, Committee report 2010/11:MJU2)
- *Uppföljning av statens satsning på hållbara städer [Follow-up of central government efforts concerning sustainable towns]* (Report 2010/11:RFR2, Committee report 2010/11:MJU1)

Ongoing follow-up

- *Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för utgiftsområde 20 [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's annual report for expenditure area 20]* (annually, most recently in Committee report 2010/11:MJU1)
- *Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för utgiftsområde 23 [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's annual report for expenditure area 23]* (annually, most recently in Committee report 2010/11:MJU2)

The follow-up reports are available in Swedish on the Riksdag website (www.riksdagen.se) and can also be ordered from the Riksdag Printing Office (Postal address: 100 12 Stockholm, Sweden, tel.: +46-8-786 58 10, fax. +46-8-786 61 76 or e-mail ordermottagningen@riksdagen.se). Summaries in English of a number of the reports are available on the Riksdag website.



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