

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Greece

**Post:** Rome

### Using ‘Sustainability’ to Market U.S. Foods In Greece

**Report Categories:**

Market Promotion/Competition

Retail Foods

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**Report Highlights:**

This report provides information and analysis for U.S. food and agricultural exporters on the topic of ‘sustainability’.

## Greece

### Sustainability Fact Sheet for U.S. Food and Agricultural Exporters

#### Overview

In Greece, sustainability is synonymous with organic. The shift to organic farming as well as biological husbandry, fisheries, and forestry constitute important priorities in the sustainable development of Greece. However, other than codes on Good Agricultural Practices, sustainability standards have yet to be fully developed. Greece's implementation of EU Regulations 2092/91 and 2078 /92 have fostered organic farming, but it is on a smaller scale than some other EU countries.

#### Government Initiatives

As mentioned above, most of the efforts relate to organic production or environmental controls. In compliance with article 4 of the EU Directive 91/676 on nitrate pollution, Greece established in the 2004 Codes of Good Agricultural Practice:

- Limiting on the periods when nitrogen fertilizers can be applied on land in order to target application to periods when crops require nitrogen and prevent nutrient losses to waters;
- Limiting the conditions for fertilizer application (on steeply sloping ground, frozen or snow covered ground, near water courses, etc.) to prevent nitrate losses from leaching and run-off;
- Providing guidance to farmers on proper water management practices (i.e. irrigation schemes and water conservation);
- Providing guidance to farmers on proper and safe use of pesticides.

As in all European Union countries, organic farming in Greece is supported by the European Union's rural development program. The Greek Action Plan for Organic Agriculture and Organic Products was launched in 2004, aiming at the establishment, reinforcement, and development of the Organic Market. AGROCERT (Agricultural Products Certification and Supervision Organization) is a Private Law Legal Entity operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food (Law 2637/98). AGROCERT is responsible for the implementation of national policy objectives regarding quality assurance and control in agriculture, including the safeguarding of the environment.

#### Greek accredited Organic Certification bodies are:

- DIO NET

- BIO-HELLAS S.A.
- QWAYS S.A.
- A-CERT S.A.
- IRIS
- GREEN CONTROL
- GMCERT
- QMS-CERT
- TUV HELLAS
- FILIKI CERT S.A.

## **Retailers**

There has not been a ground swell for sustainability labeling, but Greek consumers are sensitive to products labeled as organic. With Greece's current economic woes, there has been a shift towards cheaper private label organic products introduced by the large retailers (i.e. Dia and Lidl). Dairy products are the most consumed organic products in Greece (24% in 2010), followed by olive oil (18%) and bakery products (14%). The price difference between organic and conventional products remains high (almost 20 percent) and for animal-based products the difference may be up to 100 percent. This is not only because of production issues, but also because the majority of organic products available in Greece are imported. Due to the difficult economic situation consumers are resisting paying premiums for additional certification. The large retailers have effectively introduced recycling programs for paper, glass and aluminum and generally endorse waste prevention.

## **Environment**

In Greece, the responsible authority for developing, monitoring, and reporting on sustainable development indicators is the National Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD), under the supervision of the Ministry for Environment, Physical Planning, and Public Works. The General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (G.F.S.P.S.D), approved by the Greek Parliament in 2008, constitutes one of the most important structural changes over the last decades. G.F.S.P.S.D's goal is to determine the strategies for commercial development of land in a sustainable way, emphasizing cultural heritage, history, and natural environment as tools for development.

## **Promising U.S. Products**

- Almonds
- Beans and lentils

