

Brazil Has Plans to Become an Organic Food Powerhouse

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Brazil may become one of the largest organic food producers in the world. This statement was made yesterday, June 8, by the minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Roberto Rodrigues, at the opening of the National Seminar on Organic Agriculture at the University of Brasília (UnB).

According to Rodrigues, the potential of organic agriculture in Brazil is 6 million hectares. Organic production covers 20 million hectares around the world, of which 10 million are in Australia and 3 million in Argentina. In Brazil, the sector represents just 2% of the total agricultural volume.

"We are very far from what we can do. We have a potential in terms of area and market that shows great growth perspectives," pointed out Rodrigues.

In the European countries, according to the minister, prices of organic products are 25% higher than those of conventional products.

The Brazilian government is working to regulate and support the production of organic food in Brazil. The Ministry of Agriculture runs a program turned to organic farming.

There will also be actions turned to the sector in the Agriculture and Livestock Plan for 2005/2006, to be announced at the end of this month.

Apart from that, according to the minister, the Ministry site will have information about organic agriculture, mainly about the traceability and certification of the origin of the products.

Valter Bianchini, the Family Farming secretary of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, stated, at the Seminar, that the 2005/2006 Crop Plan for Family Farming, which will receive funds of US\$ 3,7 billion, will prioritize organic farming, which will receive special credit.

The ministry will work in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in the area of organic product certification and with the Ministry of Science and Technology in the sector of research turned to agro-ecology.

The minister of Environment, Marina Silva, ended the opening ceremony stating that "it is possible to bring together development with environmental protection.

"Thinking about the environment and development is the great challenge of the century. If this question is not considered, it will affect the current and future generations."

Marina Silva pointed out the effort that the government is making to promote an increases in credit for organic agriculture which, according to her, is a market niche that is growing 30% a year.

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