

## Brazil Wants to Grow Much More Organic than the Present 2%

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Brazil has the potential to become one of the world's largest producers of organic foods. This affirmation was made earlier this month by the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues.

Rodrigues talked June 8 at the opening of the National Seminar on Organic Farming, at the University of Brasília (UnB). According to the Minister, organic food production in Brazil remains limited, corresponding to only 2% of the total agricultural volume.

Rodrigues emphasized that, taking the Amazon region into account, the country could devote six million hectares to organic farming. Worldwide, organic production currently occupies 20 million hectares, 10 million of which are in Australia and three million, in Argentina.

"We are very far from what we could be doing. Our market and territorial potential gives us great growth prospects," the Minister pointed out. He observed that organic products in Europe cost 25% more than conventional products.

Rodrigues informed that the Pluriannual Plan includes a program for organic farming and that the theme was incorporated in the 2005/2006 Agricultural and Livestock Plan.

According to the Minister, organic production nuclei are being created in Brasília and all the Ministry's regional superintendencies.

The secretary of Family Farming in the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), Valter Bianchini, emphasized that the 2005/2006 Harvest Plan for Family Farming, for which US\$ 3.6 billion (9 billion reais) have been allocated, will assign priority to organic farming, which will be offered a special line of credit.

The MDA intends to establish partnerships with the Ministry of Agriculture in the area of certification of organic products and with the Ministry of Science and Technology in the area of agroecological research.

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