

CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIC FOOD CONSUMERS IN URBAN REGIONS OF LJUBLJANA AND OSTRAVA

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Abstract

The paper presents key factors influencing the organic food purchases with special emphasis on characteristics of urban consumers. Brief explanation of conventional and especially organic agriculture development is followed by the theoretical and methodological starting point of research. Based on two case study areas (Ljubljana, Slovenia and Ostrava, Czech Republic), the survey focused on urban consumers. It was possible to analyze socio-economic characteristics of customers, reasons for purchase and purchase habits regarding organic food.

Key words: organic farming, organic food, organic food consumers, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Ostrava, Czech Republic

ZNAČILNOSTI POTROŠNIKOV EKOLOŠKO PRIDELANE HRANE V MESTNIH REGIJAH LJUBLJANE IN OSTRAVE

Izvleček

Prispevek predstavlja ključne dejavnike, ki vplivajo na nakupovanje ekoloških pridelkov ter značilnosti potrošnika ekološko pridelane hrane. Uvodoma so predstavljene izbrane značilnosti razvoja kmetijstva in ekološkega kmetijstva v Sloveniji in na Češkem ter teoretično-metodološka izhodišča raziskave. Na primeru dveh skupin urbanih potrošnikov (v Ljubljani in Ostravi) smo izvedli primerjalno raziskavo o socioekonomskih značilnostih obeh skupin kupcev, navadah in značilnostih nakupovanja ekoloških živil ter najpomembnejših razlogih za nakup ekološko pridelane hrane.

Ključne besede: ekološko kmetijstvo, ekološka živila, potrošniki ekoloških živil, Ljubljana, Slovenija, Ostrava, Češka

I. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of organic agriculture has been intensively introduced by the EU Rural Development Programme (2007–2013) with special subsidies for organic food producers (organic farmers). An important issue of this policy is the response of organic food suppliers and consumers. In the last few years the production of organic food and also interest of consumers for organic food have increased significantly. Market supplies have been increased and dispersed from specialized shops and organic food markets to shopping malls. Despite the growth of the organic food demand on the large EU markets, the organic sector does not represent more than 2% of total food expenses in the EU-15 (in 2007), in the new member states (EU-12) the organic food consumption registered even lower levels (Internet 1).

Special emphasis of the presented paper is on inclusion of two case study urban areas, Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Ostrava (Czech Republic). For decades, both countries had practiced communist socio-economic system. Since 2004 they are members of EU, they both face similar modest conditions for intensive agriculture, but also very different agricultural policies over the last 60 years resulting in important dissimilarities in agrarian structure as a consequence.

The fact that in the EU organic farming has been an economic activity with the positive development trend for the last 15 years was the basic frame of our study¹. Comparing the organic farmland structure in the EU, Slovenia and Czech Republic, both have above the average percentage of permanent grassland (around 90%) and rather insignificant share of arable land. As Slovenia and Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004, our research focused on the dynamic of organic farming development in both countries in the last 10 years, therefore similarities and differences of organic farming structure were analyzed. Historical and political circumstances have influenced the formation of numerous structural differences amongst organic farming and processing in compared countries. Secondly, we focused also on essential factors that influence organic food purchases of urban consumers, i.e. comparatively the capital city of Slovenia (Ljubljana, 280,000 inhabitants; Internet 3) and regional old industrial centre in Czech Republic (Ostrava, 314,000 inhabitants; Internet 2). Comparative study included altogether nearly 200 coincidental consumers in noted urban areas.

Organic farming and organic food have been introduced in both countries in 1990. After the introduction of subsidies for organic UAA in 1998, consequently also the assortment of organic food in shops has increased. The issue of the sufficient quantities, quality and healthy organic food has not been addressed properly yet. The heterogeneity of organic food supply has been intensified over the last few years. Evident is also the enlargement of market channels: they have been developed from organic markets to malls; flourishing internet marketing, developing 'agricultural partnership' (upgraded traditional form of co-operation between farmer and consumer etc.).

¹ The study is a result of bilateral co-operation between University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography) and University of Ostrava (Faculty of Science, Department of Human Geography and Regional Development). The project »Organic farming as development potential for rural areas (The comparison between the Czech Republic and Slovenia)« was carried out in 2008 and 2009.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The study of organic food behavior is difficult due to the fact that usually organic food is available on the market (supermarket, open-air market, small shops and other purchase sites, at farmer's door) together with conventional ones and the purchase decision depends on many factors that can vary sharply across individuals (Gracia and de Magistris 2007). The individual purchase is shaped by visual organic food characteristics (general appearance, smell, visual quality, price etc.) and also unobservable ones (individual's attitude towards organic food, awareness of environmental protection, care for health etc.). Some studies have been involved in this issue over the last two decades. Von Alvesleben (1997; cited in Gracia and de Magistris 2007) proposed a general model on food consumer behavior that indicates three driving forces (product information, product perception, attitudes). Bigné (1997; cited in Gracia and de Magistris 2007) established a conceptual model where 'green' behavior is determined by exogenous (such as consumers' socio-demographic characteristics and lifestyles) and also endogenous variables (level of knowledge and environmental attitudes). Gracia and de Magistris (2007) established the model of consumer behavior (purchase) for organic food that had been used as a starting-point for our research as the aims and scope of the research were quite similar to ours. In this context, a consumer-oriented analysis of organic food is of huge importance not just to farmers and food merchants, but also to policy makers. Relevant analysis using a multivariate limited dependent variable model was used in survey of consumers in Naples, Italy. Following this model, organic food purchase behavior depends on endogenous variables (intention to purchase, organic food purchases, organic product knowledge) and also includes exogenous variables (lifestyles, information, socio-demographic characteristics).

Supply and demand of organic food and factors influencing the purchases of organic food (in shopping malls) are the central research objective in Slovenia and Czech Republic: therefore our bilateral survey was oriented towards observing the present conditions in Ljubljana and Ostrava. The field survey of consumers in two shopping malls in Ljubljana (Eurospar in City Park and Mercator Center in Šiška²) and three in Ostrava (Tesco, Penny Market and Billa) was focused on:

- relevance and the level of recognition of the terms 'organic farming' and 'organic food';
- evaluation of reasons for non-purchasing organic food;
- main reasons for purchasing organic food;
- consumers' attitudes to organic food purchasing;
- consumers' socio-economic characteristics (educational structure, family income, etc.);
- frequency of purchasing organic food;
- duration of purchasing organic food;
- modes of obtaining information on organic food.

Available and relevant statistical data in both countries were analyzed and compared, additionally in-depth interviews with organic farmers, merchants of organic goods and consumers (of organic food) were undertaken. The survey concept is based on prior literature

² Additionally some questionnaires were completed in Maximarket in Ljubljana.

(especially Ajzen 1991). Analysis of quantitative data provided by mentioned questionnaire used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). Both groups of customers were compared by Mann-Whitney's test of mean ranks ($P < 0.05$). It was applied because of non-normal data distribution proved by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test with Lilliefors' correction ($P < 0.05$), usually used for relatively small samples.

A total of 193 questionnaires were completed (101 in Ljubljana and 92 in Ostrava), but only 141 (71 from Ljubljana and 70 from Ostrava) were used for data analysis. The reason for the exclusion of 52 respondents from the analysis was their 'ignorance' of the concept of organic agriculture or organic food. This suggests their lack of awareness or interest for organic food. One of the important reasons is the price: in the Czech Republic it is about 25% higher than the price of other food (Urban and Ščasný 2007); in Slovenia organic food reach from 30 to 150% higher price than conventional food (Analiza stanja in potencialov... 2010). It was considered that the person (usually woman), responsible for purchasing at supermarket would, arguably, represent the perception/behavior of the whole family about organic food. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered on the field survey in October and November 2008.

Although there are some similarities among the above-mentioned features between Ljubljana and Ostrava, there is a fundamental difference between consumers in mentioned cities: Ostrava is an example of old industrial city in the region, affected by the restructuring and the decline of traditional industries, whereas Ljubljana is the capital city of Slovenia.

2. ORGANIC FARMING STRUCTURE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND CZECH REPUBLIC

In general, the organic farming development in Slovenia and Czech Republic was quite similar despite the different agricultural development in the socialist period which still has important consequences, especially for the structure of agricultural land. Therefore the most relevant similarities are presented.

- Both countries face quite unfavorable structure of organic farmland with extremely high share of permanent grassland (approx. 90%);
- The above mentioned land use structure of organic farmland generates the organic farm specialization where organic stock-breeding farms prevail;
- The production of crops, vegetable and fruit is limited in both countries which reflects in the domestic organic market supply (invasive assortment of organic food from foreign countries).

With 6,2% of organic farmland (in 2009) Slovenia is ranking at the EU-27 average; respecting only the new EU member states (together with Czech Republic and Estonia) Slovenia is forming the group that has been able to develop organic farming, adapt agricultural legislation and introduce rural development programs already during the accession period. Three important facts, (1) Slovenia is facing extremely high share of LFA (more than 80% of total territory), (2) former Slovenian agricultural policy that had allowed family farms

and (3) extensive farming practice in comparison to Czech Republic, should lead to more significant organic farming development in Slovenia. Actually, we argue that Slovenia has not been able to recognize its natural advantages and develop them into widely recognizable sustainable mode of agriculture at the 'right' time (Klemenčič et al. 2008). In 2009, there were 2096 farms included in organic control system (representing modest 2,6% of all farms in Slovenia) with 29,388 ha of organic UAA. Out of this figure, 1853 farms have already received organic certificate. The increase of organic producers and the extent of organic UAA in Slovenia were extremely high right after the introduction of environmental subsidies for organic farming, and the pace has been slower in the last year: the number of organic farms was increased by 29 in period 2008–2009. The described dynamics is totally opposite to the one in the Czech Republic where the growth of organic farms and organic UAA is still significant (see Table 1).

Table 1: Development of organic farming in Slovenia and Czech Republic (in the period 1998–2008)
Preglednica 1: Razvoj ekološkega kmetijstva v Sloveniji in na Češkem (v obdobju od 1998 do 2008)

Year	Slovenia		Czech Republic	
	Organic farmland (ha)	Number of organic farms	Organic farmland (ha)	Number of organic farms
1998	400	41	71,621	348
1999	2400	343	110,756	473
2000	5440	600	170,919	563
2001	10,828	1000	217,155	641
2002	13,828	1160	234,744	717
2003	20,018	1415	254,336	810
2004	23,023	1582	263,299	836
2005	23,533	1718	256,796	829
2006	26,831	1876	281,535	963
2007	29,322	2000	312,890	1316
2008	29,836	2067	341,632	1946

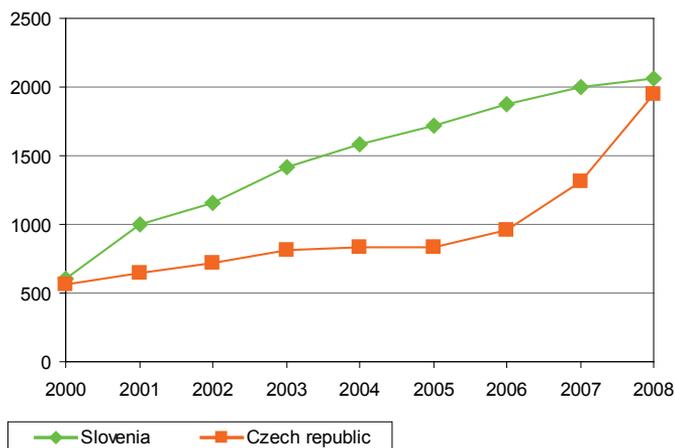
Sources/Vira: Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, 2009; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, 2008

The first organic farms in **Czech Republic** were set up in 1990s after the political changes and with the introduction of financial support for alternative farming systems. Period 1992–1997 was characterized by stagnation, which was mainly due to the government's decision to cancel funding for organic farming. Enforcement of reintroduction of financial support in 1998 had significantly positive impact on the development of organic farming as evidenced by the high annual additions of new farms and farmland in period 1998–2004. Integration into the EU and a significant increase in support for organic farmers has further extended organically cultivated land and the number of organic farms, especially small

family farms with mixed production. The main stimulus in this period was not only state financial support, but also the increasing awareness and consumer demand for organic food. The final result was an expansion of processors network and additional export possibilities for agriculture.

Figure 1: Numerical growth of organic farms in Slovenia and Czech Republic (1998–2008)

Slika 1: Rast števila ekoloških kmetij v Sloveniji in na Češkem (1998–2008)



Sources/Vira: Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, 2009; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, 2008

In Czech Republic, there are different legal forms of enterprises, i.e. companies, private farmers, agricultural co-operatives and other entities (public enterprises) that are dealing with organic farming. Here we meet the key difference between Slovenian and Czech organic farms/‘farm organization’. In Slovenia traditional family organic farms prevail with few exceptions.

Notable differences are also in **organic farm size structure**. Organic farms in Czech Republic are significantly different from the average organic farm size of the EU, where in most countries typical form is the family farm with the small area of agricultural land. This difference is due to historical developments in Czech Republic: the nationalization of agricultural land, collectivization and the destruction of traditional structures and ownership in the post-war period. The average size of organic farms in 2007 was 235 ha. There are large farms with acreage of 500 ha, accounting for over 60% of the total area of organic farmland. These are mostly agricultural co-operatives and commercial companies. Large companies are more specialized, particularly in animal husbandry. Small farms have the greatest representation in the size category of 10 to 50 ha, their share of agricultural land increases every year. Smaller family farms have mixed production of crops and animals.

Table 2: Size of organic farms in Slovenia and Czech Republic in the year 2008

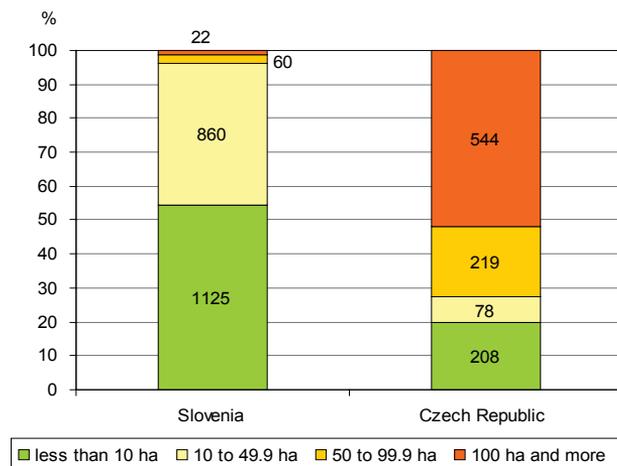
Preglednica 2: Velikost ekoloških kmetij v Sloveniji in na Češkem leta 2008

Organic farm size category (ha)	Slovenia				Czech Republic			
	Number of organic farms	%	Total area of land (ha)	%	Number of organic farms	%	Total area of land (ha)	%
0 to 5.00	418	20.2	1102.7	3.7	130	9.9	246.7	0.1
5 to 9.99	707	34.2	5292.1	17.7	78	5.9	579.2	0.2
10 to 49.99	860	41.6	15,735.1	52.7	345	26.2	9368.2	3.0
50 to 99.99	60	2.9	4104.4	13.8	219	16.6	16,201.1	5.2
100 to 499.99	22	1.1	3602.1	12.1	335	25.5	80,888.6	25.9
500 to 999.99	0	0.0	0	0.0	130	9.9	95,647.2	30.6
1000 to 1999.99	0	0.0	0	0.0	61	4.6	84,386.4	27.0
2000 and more	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	1.4	24,013.7	7.7
Total	2067	100.0	29,836.4	100.0	1316	100.0	312,890.0	100.0

Sources/Vira: Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, 2009; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, 2008

Figure 2: Size structure of organic farms in Slovenia and Czech Republic

Slika 2: Velikostna struktura ekoloških kmetij v Sloveniji in na Češkem



Sources/Vira: Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, 2009; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, 2008

The size structure of Slovenian organic farms is completely different. The average organic farm size is in comparison to the average Slovenian farm relatively big (14.4 ha in the year 2008), but if we compare them with average Czech organic farm, they are extremely

small. Only 22 organic farms (1.1%) have acreage over 100 ha (in Czech Republic over 40%), with prevailing of small organic farms up to 10 ha (54.4%)

In the **structure of organic farmland** the category ‘permanent grassland’ is dominated in both countries. From the aspect of organic food production and purchasers demands this structure is very unfavorable. In mountainous and foothill areas (LFA) the share of organic land markedly increased, the proportion of arable land was reduced and vice versa greater proportion of permanent grasslands is present.

In connection with the decline in milk consumption and limiting the possibilities of exporting the majority of Czech agrarian products and foodstuffs in Europe, Czech farmers from hilly regions significantly changed their specialization into a resilient breed of meat cattle and subsequent utilization of mountain pastures. Due to some undemanding care (organizational, technical and financial) of permanent grassland in organic farming, their dominant presence in the structure of agricultural organic land seems logical.

Table 3: Structure of organic farmland in Slovenia and Czech Republic

Preglednica 3: Primerjava strukture ekološko obdelanih zemljišč v Sloveniji in na Češkem

Year	Arable land		Permanent grassland		Permanent crops	
	Slovenia (%)	CZ (%)	Slovenia (%)	CZ (%)	Slovenia (%)	CZ (%)
2000	6.40	9.48	92.80	90.25	0.80	0.27
2001	6.66	8.78	92.35	90.77	0.99	0.45
2002	4.71	8.31	94.41	91.31	0.89	0.38
2003	6.83	7.70	92.42	91.68	0.75	0.60
2004	7.48	7.50	90.83	92.10	1.69	0.40
2005	4.60	8.10	93.53	91.60	1.87	0.30
2006	6.28	8.30	91.16	91.20	2.57	0.40
2007	8.23	9.40	88.79	90.00	2.98	0.60
2008	6.48	10.30	90.44	88.85	3.08	0.91
2009	7.15	11.38	89.33	87.54	3.52	1.08

Sources/Vira: Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, 2009; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, 2008

It is important to emphasize the distinction in the share of permanent crops (orchards, vineyards and olive trees): we are able to observe a significant increase of organic permanent crops in Slovenia in last few years, it is gradually reflected also in the Slovenian market offer of organic olive oil, assortment of fruits etc.

3. SURVEY RESULTS: CONSUMER HABITS OF URBAN ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASES

The knowledge on and awareness of organic farming and organic food has recently become more evident among the consumers. Parallel to this process, the profile of organic

food consumer is being slowly formed, containing various factors influencing the purchase decisions. Some papers (Torjusen, Millock, Padel and Foster; Kuhar and Juvančič etc.) conclude that the most important motives to buy organic food are consumer's attitudes towards health and environmental issues: the more favorable health (usually more influential) and environmental attitudes consumers have recognized, the more likely they would buy organic food.

Through the results of the survey on organic food consumers in Ljubljana and Ostrava, we were able to define motives influencing the purchase of organic food. The motives are listed according to the importance to the individual consumer: the care for health, the price, diversity, quality and accessibility of organic food, consumers' awareness, socio-economic characteristics of a consumer (age, level of education, income and lifestyle), environmental care.

In the first step of the survey all consumers who are not purchasing organic food were excluded from further evaluation but the reasons for **not purchasing organic food** were evaluated.

Looking at particular reasons why the consumers were denying the organic food the higher price was the main reason the respondents (95% in Ljubljana and 80% in Ostrava) pointed out. The other two reasons were the unavailability of the supply as well as the respondent's mistrust about the health benefits and higher safety of organic food offer.

Among the organic food consumers in Ljubljana and Ostrava we compared the following issues:

1. sources of information about organic food;
2. frequency and location of organic food purchase;
3. assortment of organic food to purchase;
4. purchase motives;
5. time dimension of organic food purchasing.

1. Information on organic food is an important factor, representing the only instrument that consumers have to differentiate the attributes of organic products from those of the conventional ones, and to form positive attitudes and quality perceptions towards these products. The knowledge on organic food is determined by socio-demographic variables (education level, income, values, lifestyle), but it is also affected by information provided by public administration, mass media, environmental associations and shopping site (Gracia and de Magistris 2007).

In the presented survey, the **obtaining information on organic food** from leaflets is most important in Ostrava (23%) but in Ljubljana only for 14% of consumers. Second most common information source in Ostrava is television (17%) but only about 3% in Ljubljana. Following sources are magazines (Ostrava 15%; Ljubljana 19%) and newspapers (14% in Ostrava and 10% in Ljubljana). More than 10% reach the information through the internet (10% in Ostrava and 6% in Ljubljana), between 5–10% by the literature and the 'word of mouth' (7% in Ostrava, but this way is the most important for consumers in Ljubljana with 23%). Less than 5% of the respondents get information from the radio (5% in Ostrava and

2% in Ljubljana) and other sources (2% in Ostrava and again a high percentage in Ljubljana with 13%).

To detect differences in the structure of obtaining information on organic food by respondent's age the data were analyzed through the method of multidimensional scaling (MDS) based on analysis of relative frequencies of multiple responses. The results show that age group under 30 years prefers (more than 50%) the internet and leaflets, but they completely ignore professional literature, which is more typical for other age groups. Age groups 31–40 years and 51–60 years prefer leaflets and television (both around 40%). The age group 41–50 years mostly relies on leaflets (60%) and magazines (46%). Finally, the age group over 61 years is seeking information from 'a stable and traditional' source, therefore the television represents the dominant source of information (67%), followed by newspapers (47%) and leaflets (41%). Significant difference compared with previous age groups is also gathering information from the radio (23%).

2. In the case of the **frequency and location of organic food purchase** a direct comparison between Ljubljana and Ostrava is not possible due to great differences in the organization of organic food sale. While in Slovenia the offer of organic food in the open air markets as well as direct sale on farms is very common, this kind of supply structure is absent in Czech Republic.

Table 4: Organic food purchasing at different locations (Slovenia)

Preglednica 4: Lokacije in pogostost nakupov ekološko pridelane hrane v Sloveniji

Location	% of consumers	% purchase weekly	% purchase once per month	% purchase occasionally
Shopping mall	87	17	65	4
Open air market	56	14	33	9
Specialized organic food shop	44	10	27	7
Organic farm	56	1	7	38

Source/Vir: Field survey, Ljubljana, 2008

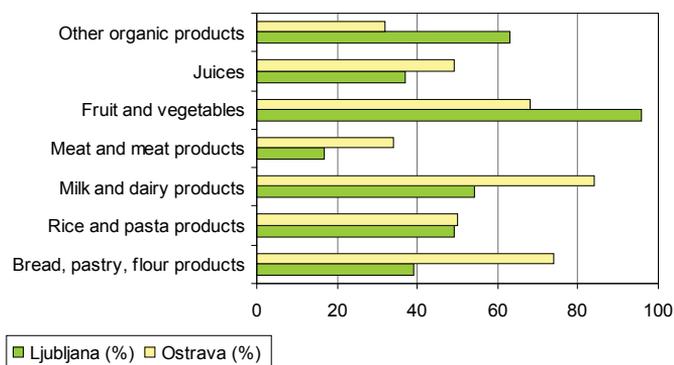
In Slovenia (the interviewees were able to use multiple reply choice), the majority of consumers purchase organic food in shopping malls (87%) but we need to emphasize that the survey was conducted in supermarkets and therefore the high percentage is partly the result of the survey location. More than 50% of consumers regularly (mostly monthly) purchase organic food at specialized market places as well as directly on organic farms but these purchases are done only occasionally.

3. Analyzing the **assortment of organic food purchasing** we observed some similarities but also important differences between the consumers in Ljubljana and Ostrava. The results are reflecting the organic food supply and purchase localities as already mentioned in the previous segment. Therefore, in Ljubljana purchase of organic fruit and vegetables is the most frequent (96%) whereas in Ostrava this kind of purchases are on the third place of purchasing frequency (68%). In Ostrava the most frequent purchased organic goods are milk and dairy products (84%) whereas in Ljubljana this is the third most frequent purchase (54%).

The second most frequent purchases in Ljubljana are other organic products (i.e. olive oil, spices, spreads etc.; 63%) which in Ostrava represent only 32% and are the least frequent purchase.

Figure 3: Purchase of organic food in Ljubljana and Ostrava

Slika 3: Nakup ekološko pridelanih živil v Ljubljani in Ostravi



Sources/Vira: Field survey, Ljubljana, 2008; Field survey, Ostrava, 2008

Table 5: Frequency of organic food purchases in Ljubljana and Ostrava

Preglednica 5: Pogostost nakupov posameznih skupin ekoloških živil v Ljubljani in Ostravi

Organic product	Ljubljana			Ostrava		
	% of purchases	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	% of purchases	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)
Bread, pastry, flour products	38.6	14.3	17.1	73.7	31.6	36.8
Rice and pasta products	48.6	5.7	31.4	50.0	7.9	34.2
Milk and dairy products	54.3	12.9	35.7	84.2	39.5	28.9
Meat and meat products	17.1	1.4	11.4	34.2	2.6	15.8
Fruit and vegetables	95.7	27.1	64.3	67.6	37.8	21.6
Juices	37.1	8.6	24.3	48.6	13.5	27.0
Other organic products	62.9	11.4	27.1	32.4	2.9	26.5

Sources/Vira: Field survey, Ljubljana, 2008; Field survey, Ostrava, 2008.

Regarding the frequency of organic food purchases, the consumers in Ljubljana regularly buy fruits and vegetables (27,1% of purchases is obtained weekly) and similarly milk and dairy organic products are bought in Ostrava (nearly 40% of purchases is performed weekly).

4. Among the **purchase motives** 'care for health' was indicated as the most important reason of purchasing organic food in Ljubljana (97%) as well as in Ostrava (64%). Almost 31% of respondents in Ostrava regarded it as the second most important reason. The second most important purchase motive in both cities was the 'higher quality of organic food' (87%

in Ljubljana and 46% in Ostrava). The ‘environmental care’ is most important purchase motive for 48% of consumers in Ljubljana and 12% of consumers in Ostrava. The obtained results suggest the overriding personal interest (health!) over social interest related to environmental protection, or even the lack of information about the environmental benefits of organic farming compared to conventional agriculture.

5. The issue of **time dimension of organic food purchasing** was also analyzed through the survey, revealing important differences between consumers in Ljubljana and Ostrava. 60% of consumers in Ljubljana purchase organic food more than 6 years (only 20% in Ostrava), 16% from 3 to 6 years (61% in Ostrava) and 23% less than 3 years (19% in Ostrava). The results reflect the increasing purchasing power, which supported the introduction of organic food on the retail market. The results of comparison with consumers in Ljubljana show a significant difference in the duration of purchasing organic food in favor of Slovenian consumers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The geographical aspect on characteristics of organic food consumers in urban regions of Ljubljana and Ostrava pointed out that the economic cycle (production, procession, consumption, recycling) of organic food is not functioning as a complete system, i.e. some relations in this cycle are being performed sufficiently, some are still under-developed.

The close up research of the characteristics of urban consumers of organic food in the two urban areas in two different countries is relatively unique. Although results are highly influenced by the specific characteristics of each society and country, the common methodological approach enables definition of similarities on one and the diversity on the other hand.

The main defined **similarities in organic food production** in Slovenia and Czech Republic are the following: the increase of organic farming activities with subsidies and other financial support, concentration of organic farmers in the areas with less favorable conditions for agriculture, high percentage of meadows in terms of land use, similar percentage of organic arable land and the number of organic farms. Main **similarities of some characteristics in organic food purchasing** in Ljubljana and Ostrava are in motives – mainly in both cities respondents pointed out the ‘health care’ as the main motive, followed by the quality of food and the care for the environment. In both cities for the respondents who deny purchasing the organic food, the high price is the main reason.

The main **differences in organic food production** in both countries are in the size structure of organic farms (and other farms as well); higher percentage of permanent cultures in Slovenia; stagnation of number and extent of organic farms in Slovenia and still gradual increase in Czech Republic. The research revealed important **differences** among the urban consumers from Ljubljana and Ostrava especially in means of obtaining the information on organic food, in variety and popularity of purchased products as well as in the tradition in purchasing organic food.

To obtain a general image of urban consumers of organic food in whole Slovenia and Czech Republic, a further research proved to be necessary. Inclusion of various other urban

areas in both countries would add important data on other urban areas in both countries as well as it would prove (or deny) regional differences. Finally, one should also keep in mind urban consumers who deny purchasing organic food. Thorough research on their characteristics could contribute to measures for improvement of overall organic food consumption.

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ZNAČILNOSTI POTROŠNIKOV EKOLOŠKO PRIDELANE HRANE V MESTNIH REGIJAH LJUBLJANE IN OSTRAVE

Povzetek

Obseg ponudbe in povpraševanje po ekoloških živilih ter dejavniki, ki vplivajo na njihov nakup (predvsem v veleblagovnicah), so na področju uveljavljanja trajnostnega razvoja med slabše raziskanimi področji tako v Sloveniji kot tudi na Češkem. Zato smo bilateralno sodelovanje Oddelka za geografijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani in Oddelka za družbeno geografijo in regionalni razvoj Univerze v Ostravi usmerili v raziskavo potrošnje ekološko pridelane hrane v dveh primerljivo velikih mestih, Ljubljani in Ostravi. Na podlagi teoretičnih in metodoloških izhodišč primerljivih študij v tujini in z obsežnim terenskim anketiranjem potrošnikov v treh veleblagovnicah v obeh mestih smo se osredotočili na ugotavljanje:

- relevantnosti in stopnje poznavanja pojma ekološko kmetijstvo in ekološka živila;
- razlogov za nakup ekoloških živil;
- odnosa potrošnikov do nakupovanja ekoloških živil;
- socioekonomskih značilnosti potrošnikov ekoloških živil (izobrazbena struktura, starost, dohodek gospodinjstva ipd.);
- pogostosti nakupovanja ekoloških živil po skupinah;
- načinov pridobivanja informacij o ekološko pridelani hrani;
- in drugih značilnosti.

Ekološko kmetijstvo in ponudba ekološko pridelane hrane je v obeh državah prisotna od začetka 90. let 20. st., pogosteje pa se na policah trgovin pojavlja od leta 1998, ko so bila uvedena plačila za ekološko obdelana kmetijska zemljišča. Vendar se po več kot desetletju subvencioniranja okolju in človeku prijazne pridelave zdrave hrane še vedno srečujemo z vprašanjem dejanske vključenosti ekoloških živil v prehranski trg. Predvsem ostaja odprto vprašanje obsega in zadostne ponudbe zdrave in kakovostne ekološko pridelane hrane.

Raznolikost ponudbe zdrave hrane in obseg ponudbe ekoloških živil se je v zadnjih letih v Sloveniji zelo okrepila. Ponudba na ekoloških tržnicah je najdlje in najboljše uveljavljena. Programe ekoloških živil so pričele ponujati tudi veleblagovnice, vendar sta njihov obseg in raznovrstnost ponudbe zelo različna. Poleg specializiranih trgovin velja omeniti tudi vse bolj uveljavljeno ponudbo ekoloških živil prek svetovnega spleta, začenja se uveljavljati sistem 'partnerskega kmetijstva', torej sodelovanja med kmetom in kupcem, ki pravzaprav predstavlja nadgradnjo in formalno bolje urejeno neposredno nakupovanje pridelkov pri pridelovalcih – kmetih, kar je v Sloveniji že uveljavljena praksa.

Razvoj ekološkega kmetijstva v Sloveniji in na Češkem je šel zelo podobno pot. Kljub specifičnemu razvoju kmetijstva na Češkem v obdobju socializma, ki ima vpliv na strukturo kmetijskih posesti še danes, lahko povzamemo nekatere najpomembnejše skupne poteze:

- V obeh državah je struktura ekološko obdelanih kmetijskih zemljišč s pridelovalnega vidika in raznovrstnosti pridelkov razmeroma neugodna. Visok delež travinja (okrog 90 %) obe državi uvršča na rep evropskih držav glede pridelovalne usmerjenosti;
- Struktura kmetijskih zemljišč pogojuje tudi usmeritev ekoloških kmetij: v obeh državah izrazito prevladujejo živinorejske kmetije;
- Obseg pridelanih poljščin, zelenjave, sadja je v obeh državah omejen. To se odraža tudi v ponudbi ekoloških živil na domačem trgu, kjer prevladuje ekološko pridelana hrana iz drugih držav.

Slovenija se s 6,2 % ekološko obdelanih kmetijskih zemljišč (leta 2009) uvršča v evropsko povprečje, med novimi članicami EU pa skupaj s Češko in Estonijo v skupino držav, ki so v pristopnem obdobju razmeroma hitro in uspešno prilagodile kmetijsko zakonodajo in z izvajanjem ukrepov programov razvoja podeželja že uspele razviti in uveljaviti tudi ekološki način kmetovanja. Hkrati pa bi Slovenija glede na manj ugodne naravne možnosti za visoko produktivno (in visoko donosno) kmetijstvo, naše pretekle kmetijske politike in zaradi razmeroma ekstenzivnega kmetijstva v primerjavi s Češko lahko na tem področju naredila še bistveno večji napredek. Trdimo lahko celo, da Slovenija ni uspela pravočasno prepoznati svojih naravnih prednosti ter jih pravočasno razviti v širše prepoznavno sonaravno naravnano obliko kmetovanja (Klemenčič in sod. 2008).

Naraščanje števila ekoloških pridelovalcev in obsega ekološko obdelanih zemljišč v Sloveniji je bilo prva leta po uvedbi okoljskih plačil za ekološko kmetijstvo izjemno hitro, zadnja leta pa se nekoliko umirja. Tako se je število ekoloških kmetij leta 2009 v primerjavi z letom 2008 povečalo le še za 29. Povsem drugačna situacija je na Češkem, kjer je porast števila ekoloških kmetijskih gospodarstev pa tudi ekološko obdelanih površin še vedno velik. Seveda pa obstajajo tudi nekatere pomembne razlike; največje so v velikostni strukturi ekoloških kmetij, kjer je povprečna slovenska kmetija velika 14,4 ha, češka pa kar 235 ha.

V zadnjih letih poznavanje ekološke pridelave, pa tudi vedenje o prednostih ekološko pridelane hrane med potrošniki narašča. Tako se postopoma tudi vse bolj oblikuje profil ozaveščenega potrošnika ekoloških živil.

V okviru raziskave med potrošniki v veleblagovnicah Ljubljane in Ostrave, kjer smo se predvsem osredotočili na vse tiste, ki so v zadnjem letu vsaj enkrat opravili nakup kateregakoli ekološkega živila, pa velja izpostaviti predvsem sledeče dejavnike, ki bistveno

vplivajo na nakup ekoloških živil pri anketiranih kupcih:

- skrb za zdravje;
- cena;
- raznolikost ponudbe, kakovost in dostopnost ekoloških živil;
- potrošnikova ozaveščenost;
- socioekonomske značilnosti potrošnika (starost, izobrazba, dohodek, življenjski stil);
- skrb za okolje.

Raziskava je nakazala pomembne razlike med obema mestoma, saj npr. pri potrošnikih v Ostravi pomembno vlogo pri informiranju predstavljajo zloženke (23 %) in televizija (17 %), medtem ko ljubljanski potrošniki največ tovrstnih informacij dobijo povsem neformalno, z medsebojno izmenjavo informacij in izkušenj (23 %) ter iz revij (19 %).

Neposredna primerjava pogostosti in lokacij nakupovanja ekološko pridelane hrane med potrošniki Ljubljane in Ostrave ni bila mogoča zaradi velikih razlik v sami organiziranosti prodaje ekoloških živil med državama. V Sloveniji sta v ospredju dva načina prodaje – na tržnicah in neposredno na kmetiji, ki ju na Češkem praktično ne poznajo oziroma je ta način prodaje zelo omejen. Tako lahko za slovenske potrošnike ugotovimo, da večina vprašanih nakupuje ekološka živila v veleblagovnicah (87 %), poleg tega jih več kot 50 % nakupuje še na tržnicah in neposredno pri kmetu. Večina vprašanih opravi nakup ekološkega živila razmeroma redko, enkrat mesečno. Govorimo o povprečnem kupcu, tako da so takšni rezultati pričakovani.

Pomembne razlike med obema skupinama potrošnikov so se pokazale tudi pri primerjavi skupin ekoloških živil, ki jih kupci najpogosteje nakupujejo. V Ljubljani je tako najpogostejši nakup sadja in zelenjave (kar 96 % vprašanih), medtem ko je ta delež v Ostravi komaj 68 %. Tu prevladuje nakup mleka in mlečnih izdelkov (84 %), prek 70 % pa predstavlja tudi nakup kruha, testenin in drugih izdelkov iz žit. Pomembna je tudi pogostost nakupa živil: v Ljubljani tedensko zelenjavo in sadje nakupuje kar 27 % vprašanih, mleko in mlečne izdelke v Ostravi pa celo 40 %.

Glavni razlog za nakup ekološko pridelane hrane je nedvomno skrb za zdravje (na prvem mestu pri 97 % anketiranih v Ljubljani in 64 % v Ostravi), na drugem mestu pa je večja kakovost ekoloških živil (87 % v Ljubljani in 46 % v Ostravi). Bistveno manj pomemben dejavnik odločanja pri obeh skupinah potrošnikov je skrb za okolje, kar kaže na prevladujoč osebni interes povprečnega potrošnika.