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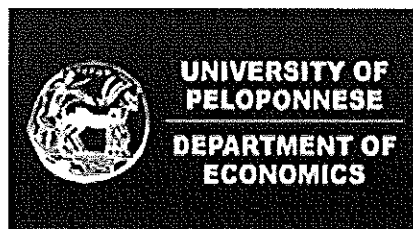
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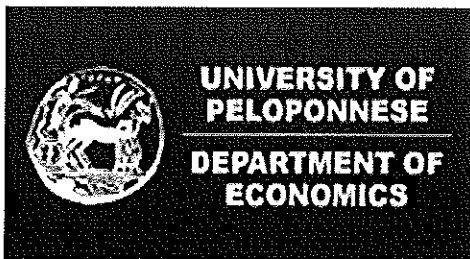
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Towards a more sustainable development model in Belgium: the role of organic farming

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During the last years, organic farming considerably developed in Belgium. In 2014, it represented 5% of the total agricultural area and 4.5% of the number of farms [1]. Organic farming is mainly developed in Wallonia where its share of the agricultural area exceeded 10% in 2014. Pastures for bovine production (meat and milk) and general crops (mainly cereals) are the most common cultivated areas. Poultry, eggs and vegetables recorded the highest increases. This success is partly the result of a strategic plan for the development of organic farming in Wallonia towards 2020 [2] and of remarkable financial support for the farmers [3]. More than 8,400 food and non-food organic products are available for the consumers. The number of prepared and processed food products is increasing. The market share of food organic products is still low, but continuously increasing: 1.3% in 2008, 2.3% in 2014. Remarkably, the expenses for organic food products still increased by 50% in 2014, while the total expenses for common food products declined for the first time since many years. The most important expenses per capita concern dairy products (5.40€), vegetables (4.74€), fruits (3.71€) and bovine and pork meat (2.84€). The main locations where food organic products are bought are supermarkets (45%) and specialized shops (31%). Families with children and high income and retired people with high income count for more than 5% of the expenses for organic food, while single persons aged over 40 are the category which spend the highest share of its income (4.1%) for organic food. In such conditions, organic farming is an important topic of the strategic plan for sustainable development presently proposed for discussion to the Walloon citizens.

KEYWORDS: organic farming, organic food consumption, Belgium, Wallonia, sustainable development.

JEL CLASSIFICATION CODES: Q01.

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