Ofer Levin: Austria is a Top Destination for Investments in the Organic Agricultural Sector

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Media:



Austria is the hub of organic farming in the whole of Europe. According to Ofer Levin, an expert in diversified investments residing in Austria, this is a result of the ideal climatic conditions and of the availability of large tracts of land in the Mountain areas.

While preparations for the Paris Annual Agricultural Fair are underway, Mr. Levin has noted that Austria is leading not only in agriculture in general but specifically in organic agriculture. Most farmers are converting to organic produce, which has translated to the availability of organic food at affordable prices.

In this case, organic food is not just limited to plants but also domestic animals such as pigs, which are reared for meat.

The History of Organic Farming in Austria

The adoption of organic food production dates back to 1995 when Austria became a member of EC. Earlier the Austrian government had started giving farmers subsidies in order to encourage them to adopt organic farming practices.

According to Ofer Levin: "The adoption of organic farming practices in Austria has contributed to Agribusiness's success in the region. Since the adoption, all farmers ranging from small scale to large scale have benefited from the growing demand for organic food across the globe. However, our efforts to get the figures depicting this growth have proved futile, as the farmers were not willing to share for fear of losing their competitive advantage".

The Market for Organic Produce

Retail stores are the biggest suppliers of organic agricultural products in Austria, with a market share of 66 percent. Natural food stores come in second at 22 percent of the market share, and lastly are direct marketing at 12 percent. This data is courtesy of individual researchers since the government releases no official data on this matter.

The natural food stores and direct marketers deal mostly with small scale farmers, while supermarkets target the large scale producers, who also export some of their output. The policy on selling organic foods in retail stores that deal with all other products calls for proper labeling to enable the buyers to make informed purchases.

To improve the differentiation between organic and non-organic food, the first organic-only supermarket opened its doors in 1999 in Vienna. This, according to Mr. Levin, has encouraged the intake of organic foods since the consumers can walk into the store and get their organic food supplies without being concerned that they might pick the wrong stuff.

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