

Participatory Guarantee Systems

New Approaches to Organic Certification: The Case of Mexico

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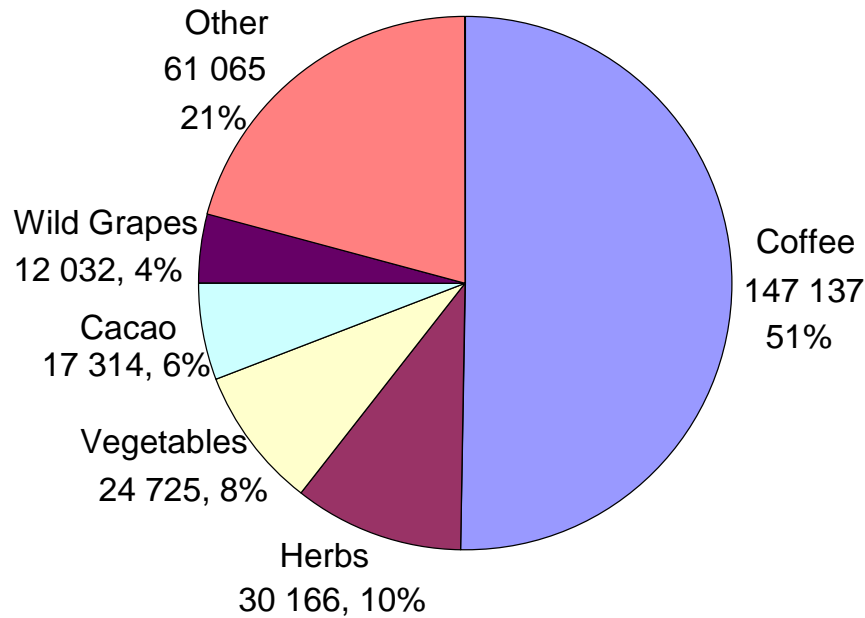
Growth of Organic Agriculture in Mexico (1996-2007)

	1996	1998	2000	2005	2007
Land (ha)*	23 265	54 457	102 802	307 692	545 000
Number of producers	13 176	27 914	33 587	83 174	126 000
Income generated (1000 USD)	34 293	72 000	139 404	270 503	430 000

*74% of the land is certified organic, while the rest is uncertified

Source: CIESTAAM, 2007

Mexico's Principle Organic Crops (hectares and percentage of land)



The Mexican Organic Sector

- 98% of producers are small scale
 - Average farm size is 3.3 ha
 - 50% Indigenous people
- 85% of production for export
 - Primarily coffee, fruits, herbs, vegetables
- Certification required by law



Challenges of Organic Certification

- High costs
- Extensive bureaucracy
- Top-down, vertical, inflexible process
- Tends to be based on input substitution model of organics
 - Not explicit about social or ecological responsibility (e.g. labour standards)



Addressing Certification Challenges

- Funding from import partners
- Assistance from NGOs
- State assistance (in Chiapas)
- Cooperativization and Internal Control Systems
- Alternative labelling and marketing options
- Participatory Guarantee Systems

Participatory Guarantee Systems in Action: The Mexican Network of Organic Markets



- 17 markets and 8 initiatives
- Focus on small scale farmers and local sale
- Primary supporter of participatory certification in Mexico

The Participatory Certification Process in Chapingo



Key Elements of Participatory Certification in Chapingo

- No costs for producer
- Minimal bureaucracy
- Ongoing education for producers and consumers
- Social interaction and relationship/trust building
- Promotion of long term producer-consumer bonds and local production-consumption networks

Challenges

- Lack of formal recognition
 - Recent legal recognition in Mexico very important
- Some documentation still necessary
 - Production and sales logs, farm maps, etc. problematic for many
- Conflicts of interest
- Reliance on volunteer labour and donated resources
 - Keeping up with demand and maintenance is difficult



**THANK
YOU!**

¡GRACIAS!

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