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Diploma thesis

Social Aspects of the Organic Food Demand in the Czech Republic

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AFFIRMATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORK

I confirm that I have the diploma thesis: “Social Aspects of the Organic Food Demand in the Czech Republic” done independently and that I have used only the sources, that are in the bibliography.

PROHLÁŠENÍ O INDIVIDUÁLNÍ PRÁCI

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma: “Sociální aspekty poptávky po biopotravinách v ČR” vypracovala samostatně a že jsem použila jen pramenů, které uvádím v seznamu použité literatury.

Prague 1. April 2011

Social Aspects of the Organic Food Demand in the Czech Republic

Sociální aspekty poptávky po biopotravinách v ČR

Summary

It is not that long ago when organic products first appeared on the Czech market in larger scale, offer and availability. This, along with different actions of the Czech Ministry of Agriculture and marketing projects of companies and groups, lead to the still increasing consumption of organic products in the Czech Republic.

Is it only the greater awareness of these products among the public that increases the consumption or are there other factors?

Is it only the advertisement that boosts up the sales? Definitely not. The more important, in this case, is the role of motives, or reasons for the purchase of these products. Because if the consumers have no reasons to buy these products, they simply would not and would continue shopping for conventional products. So what are these motives that encourage their consumption? And what is their nature?

Trying to find what these motives are and how much they influence the actions of the consumers is the objective of this work as well as finding out which circumstances, regarding the quality and production of organic products, do the consumers take into account when buying organic products. Very interesting is also the way these motives are formed and interpreted as well as connected among each other.

Keywords: organic products, quality, production, consumption, motives, connections

Souhrn

Není to tak dávno, kdy se bio produkty poprvé objevily ve větším měřítku, nabídce a dostupnosti na českém trhu. Společně s aktivitami Ministerstva Zemědělství České Republiky a marketingovými projekty společností a skupin vede ke stále rostoucí spotřebě bio produktů v České Republice.

Je zvýšení spotřeby způsobeno pouze větším podvědomím o těchto produktech mezi veřejností, nebo existují i jiné faktory? Je to jen reklama, co zvyšuje prodej? Určitě ne. Důležitější je v tomto případě role důvodů, neboli motivů, k nákupu těchto produktů. Protože pokud spotřebitelé nebudou mít důvody k nákupu bio produktů, jednoduše je nebudou kupovat a zůstanou u nákupu těch průmyslově vyráběných, konvenčních. Jaké jsou tedy ty motivy, které podporují jejich spotřebu? Cílem této práce je najít tyto motivy a zjistit, jak moc ovlivňují chování spotřebitelů, stejně jako zjištění okolností týkajících se kvality a výroby bio produktů, které berou spotřebitelé v úvahu. Velmi zajímavý je i způsob, jakým jsou tyto motivy tvořeny, interpretovány a propojeny mezi sebou.

Klíčová slova: bio produkty, kvalita, výroba, spotřeba, motivy, spojitosti

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Introduction

In the past years organic products have come a long way. From the beginning, when the first ideas appeared in the Czech Republic during the years 1985-1987, followed by the essentials of the controlled system of agriculture in 1989 (Urban, Šarapatka, 2003) until the situation nowadays, when these products are common for many consumers, can be seen in regular supermarkets and have a large number of supporters as well as enemies.

Almost up to the Czech Republic joined the European Union in 2004 organic farming and organic production was not systematically promoted. At the end of year 2007 a three year long information campaign was launched. This campaign's budget was a sum of 865, 000 Euros and most likely contributed to the increased awareness of the Czech consumers and supported the demand for organic products.

The past decade has been very fruitful in the case of organic products. Thanks to the different activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and other groups on the Czech scene (Pro- Bio) more organic producers and farms have appeared, which also meant the increase in the percentage of land used for organic farming in the total agriculture land and continuously the demand and sales of organic products have increased. (MZE, Aktuality, 2010; Asociace soukromého zemědělství, 2006)

Some of the most important activities which have enabled the Czech population to get acquainted with these products in greater scale were namely: The Action Plan of Development of Ecological Agriculture, the project "Support of the development of regional demand for organic products" which started in 10/2009 and others.

Lately the new Action Plan for the Development of Ecological Agriculture for years 2011-2015 (adopted by the Czech government on the 14th December 2010) has been

set. (MZE, Podpora rozvoje regionálního odbytů biopotravin, 2010; MZE, Akční plán ČR pro rozvoj ekologického zemědělství v letech 2011-2015, 2010)

These projects have made the wide public more aware of such products, their qualities, labelling, qualities and their role in agriculture and consumption.

Many of them have already been previously discussed in media which increased the knowledge of these products among the Czech population. According to a study, similar to the one from 2008 with 504 respondents, “Quantitative research on the awareness and shopping behaviour of organic food“ from the 22.10.2010 conducted by the Ogilvy & Mather agency, the amount of those who know about the offer of such products on the Czech market has increased from 96% in year 2008 to 98% in year 2010. As well as in year 2010 2/5 of the respondents buy organic products and 1/3 of those buys them several times a month. And if we look at the economic point of view, in 2010 more respondents spent a greater amount of money on organic products per month than in 2008.

The study was conducted on a sample of 513, aged 16-50 with a finished higher education (secondary school or university), living in a city with its population larger than 50 thousand and earning more than 15 000 CZK and 20 000 CZK, single- and multi-household, respectively.

(MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

This means that already the vast majority of our population is well aware of these products but was it really just this type of activities that improved the situation?

This is something that the researchers with their studies have not been looking at very often. If not for the information given by media or any other sources, would there still be an increment of the public awareness and spending on organic products? Why do we actually buy these products? Is it only because of the advertisements or is there some other issue? How does the promotion work, what does it mean to the consumers?

Of course it is not only the effect of marketing and promotion. Each and every one of us has his or hers motives for doing something, even buying organic products. And if these motives are strong enough, no “contra“ promotion or advertisement can change our mind. Moreover, the promotion directed on to the same goal will only support our decisions.

This is an enormous issue that yet has to be thoroughly studied and discussed, something very interesting and appealing. So here we go!

Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

This Diploma Thesis which deals with the demand and consumption of organic products in the Czech Republic should uncover the important and hidden motives of consumers for purchasing such products. Every person probably has an idea what is his or her reason for buying organic products and not the conventional ones but not everyone can think of all the reasons at once on his/her own, put the facts together and make conclusions which can be applied on to the part of society. By the part of the society, the ones who buy organic products with some regularity are meant. Therefore this work should be focused on investigating the different motives and their background, based on the information received and collected.

It is not just the discovered motives that are interesting but also the connections between them. These connections can be either based on the overall knowledge of the production systems- both organic and conventional, as well as on the information given by the consumers.

The main objective of this work would be the exploration and looking into the significances, meanings and importance which are entailed with motives of organic products purchase and how are these motives interpreted and connected between each other by consumers.

Method used

In order to attain the needed information about the different motives of Czech consumers I will refer to the Focus Group Interviews conducted in year 2010, which have been dealing with this matter.

In short, the method of a Focused Group is an innovative and evolving strategy for gathering data, which might be hard to obtain. It is an interview style designed for small groups of individuals (up to about 7 people), who are not related. The group is formed by an investigator who as a moderator also leads the group discussion on some particular specific topic or topics. (Berg, 2007)

Why exactly this method? Let me explain more thoroughly.

As a research technique, focus group interviews exist since the beginning of World War II. This is when the social scientists used this technique. In 1986 it was Robert K. Merton who first popularized this technique among the then scientists. But his only published book on this topic did not root in minds of the experts. In the 1990 's the technique re-emerges in social sciences as *group interviewing*. Recently it is more extensively used by marketing researchers in their qualitative research, who have also been developing it in the past years. With the appearance of the Internet the scientists were attracted by the possibility of securing and conducting a variety of marketing researches and creating virtual focus groups (improving the so-called *online focus group*). (Berg, 2007)

“The information obtained from focus groups provides elements of data similar to those of traditional interviewing, direct observation and even certain unobtrusive measures commonly used in qualitative research.” (Berg, 2007). but there are some differences. The depth of the obtained data is not as great as when using a semi-structured interview, thoroughly asking just one person. Also the amount of the observed data is not as large as when using strictly only the observation method in a specific occasion and for a specific goal. Clearly this method has its benefits and limitations as any other one.

Drawing form the book written by Bruce L. Berg and his view of advantages and

disadvantages of this technique:

One of the biggest benefits is the possibility to observe interactions during the session. The interactions, sharing of experience and attitudes among the participants can give much important information to the researcher. It helps to see and explore the way how the subjects might have discussed the topic and issues among themselves without the researchers presence. During the session the participants also provide spontaneous responses, based on what they hear from their colleagues and also brainstorming is frequent and can provide the researcher with different data than when using for example a face-to-face interview. Another point is that the meanings and answers arising are not individually created but rather socially constructed, which helps to get the idea of the society. In the case of this work, this is very useful, because we are not interested in the motives of each single individual but rather in what does the society state as their motives.

What is another great advantage of this technique? It is very inspirational for the participants. It allows them to hear suggestions of others, thanks to which new dimensions and nuances are created- those that an individual might not have come up with. Also by talking about a certain issue in front of other and listening to their views makes us concentrate more about what exactly our opinion and feeling is, maybe even change our mind. Therefore the data obtained should be more linked with our deep thoughts and not only “automatic“ answers to questions as in a face-to-face interview, where the asked subject answers without giving the question some extra new thought.

Focus groups are also able to provide us with deep structural elements which other techniques, like unobtrusive strategies, do not.

Another characteristic is the group dynamism this technique creates. The interaction between the interviewer and subject is replaced by the discussion between the group members. This eliminates the interviewers´ perspective and there is greater emphasis on the subject´s viewpoints.

As the last, the cost and time should be mentioned. Many people think that these focus group interviews are cheaper to conduct than individual interviews, but that must not be true. It really depends on the way the conductor wants the study to be done. It can be cheap if the researcher decides to do all the work himself but it can also be expensive if he hires people to do some of the job for him. The focus group technique is definitely time saving when compared with individual interviews. This brings us to the point of mentioning the negatives.

This technique does not provide as much detailed data as individual interviews and the researcher does not obtain such precise data. Also it cannot provide the same information as a participant observation because the group of subjects is artificially created (meaning that in real life they might have never talked to each other) and there still is some influence from the side of the moderator.

However since we are not looking as much at the behaviours and meanings and are rather concentrating on collecting data on a greater variety of interactions and, open discussion that may be easily understood and interpreted, the use of the group interview should be appropriate in this case. As Bruce L. Berg says: “..topics of more psychological, cognitive or deep attitudinal nature seem less effectively examined through participant observation however could be examined during focus group interviews.“, this just supports the choice of the technique used.

The interviews can be led by a trained and practised facilitator. But usually to save costs these interviews are conducted by the researcher himself. He prepares a series of open-ended question to be asked- they may be more or less standardized at the start of the session to open up the discussion between the group members. During the discussion it is up to the moderator if he intervenes or not, and how. This will definitely influence the out-coming data.

After the collection comes the analysing of the raw data. The researcher should first

transcribe the whole interview including any special features. Then the content should be analysed and patterns and trends should be identified. This is done by an intensive search for similar words, phrases, themes etc. in the answers of the subjects. Additionally the correspondent's comments should be taken into account with suitable emphasis. At the end an analytical statement grounded in the data collected should be written.

In order to attain relevant data which could be used for the analysis four focus groups were organized. According to the standard applications of this method each group should consist of 6 - 8 consumers. The consumers for the group discussions were recruited in Spring 2010 in small shops with organic products. There were answers of 30 different persons collected in total. For the group discussion, only those consumers were chosen who met two conditions: the recruited members had to be the ones responsible for shopping of food in the household and at the same time had to shop for organic food regularly. The two conditions were checked through recruiting interviews. Discussion with the consumers was facilitated by two moderators who put forward selected questions. The discussions were taped and afterwards literally transcribed. The transcripts and its contents were consequently analysed using qualitative methodology.

The first step of the analysis of the text was to read the transcripts of the interviews and decide on the topics into which I could divide the different parts of the responses of the consumers. This method is called the Grounded Theory Approach and can be divided into several steps. The first would be the open coding. This led to the list of 26 specific topics (keywords) which were afterwards associated together into bigger groups. This part of the method is called the selective coding. The final step, called axial coding was to draw a map of each of the groups of topics and demonstrate the links and connections between them.

These topics were the most important motives for the purchase of organic products for these four groups of consumers.

Literature overview

As already mentioned each person has certain motives that lead him or her to buy organic products.

These motives can be of different nature.

Trying to find what these motives are and how much they influence the actions of the consumers is one of the objectives of this work as well as finding out which circumstances, regarding the quality and production of organic products, do the consumers take into account when buying organic products.

First of all we should define what is a motive. *Motive* is a physiological need, desire, an emotion or similar impulse that acts as an incitement to action. (Search engine Answers.com)

Motives are based on motivation which can be defined as giving reason, incentive, enthusiasm, or interest that causes a specific action or certain behaviour. Motivation is present in every life function. There are two main kinds of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is internal and occurs when people are forced to do something out of its meaning, pleasure or desire. Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person is forced to do something by external factors.

As we can see, motivation is what propels life and plays a major role in nearly everything we do because without it we would simply not care about outcomes, means, accomplishment, success, failure etc. (Wan, P., 2008)

Basically motives concerning the purchase of organic products can be divided into two major groups. Those are the *egoistic motives* and the *altruistic motives*. The first being the ones where only the individual profits from his action therefore can be called selfish. The second group are those where the individual does not profit himself but acts to influence, change or to enable to profit the world around him- whether it is the society, the environment, the animals or the land. This would be the unselfish motive. But even with an altruistic motive self-satisfaction can arise-

based on the feeling of a higher degree of personal value. This is very of course very individual.

An easy example, linked to this topic, to show the difference would be the egoistic motive of own individual health whereas the altruistic one would be that through a certain action- purchase of organic products, the individual supports the improvement of living conditions of farm animals.

When talking about motives an interesting issue comes up and that is the question of ethics. Because all the possible motives are always linked in some way to our idea of what is and what is not ethical and how ethically we live, should live or want to live. Each individual perceives ethics or the moral philosophy in a slightly different way. Of course there are some standard ideas about what is and what is not ethical grounded in the society but when it comes to buying organic products it is a matter of the individuals idea and on how important a role do ethics play in his/hers life. Or better said, how much does he or she lives in line with ethics. There may definitely be individuals for whom ethics is an unknown word- this would be a case of those living in very poor and hard conditions as well as people, who in order to feel good about themselves need some measurement of what is right to do and what not- and ethics provides exactly this.

What actually is ethics? Ethics is usually view from two perspectives.

First, ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do. It is usually stated in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. Ethics, for example, refers to those standards that impose the reasonable obligations to refrain from stealing, murder, assault, rape, fraud and slander. Ethical standards also include those that enact or set virtues of loyalty, honesty and compassion. Also ethical standards include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom and the right to privacy. Such standards are adequate standards of ethics because they are supported

by consistent and well-founded reasons.

Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards. As mentioned above, laws, social norms and feelings can deviate from what is ethical. So it is necessary to constantly examine one's standards to ensure that they are reasonable and well-founded. Ethics also means the continuous effort of studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct, and striving to ensure that we live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based. This also applies to the institutions we help to shape. (Andre, Velasquez; Issues in Ethics, IIE V1 N1, 1987)

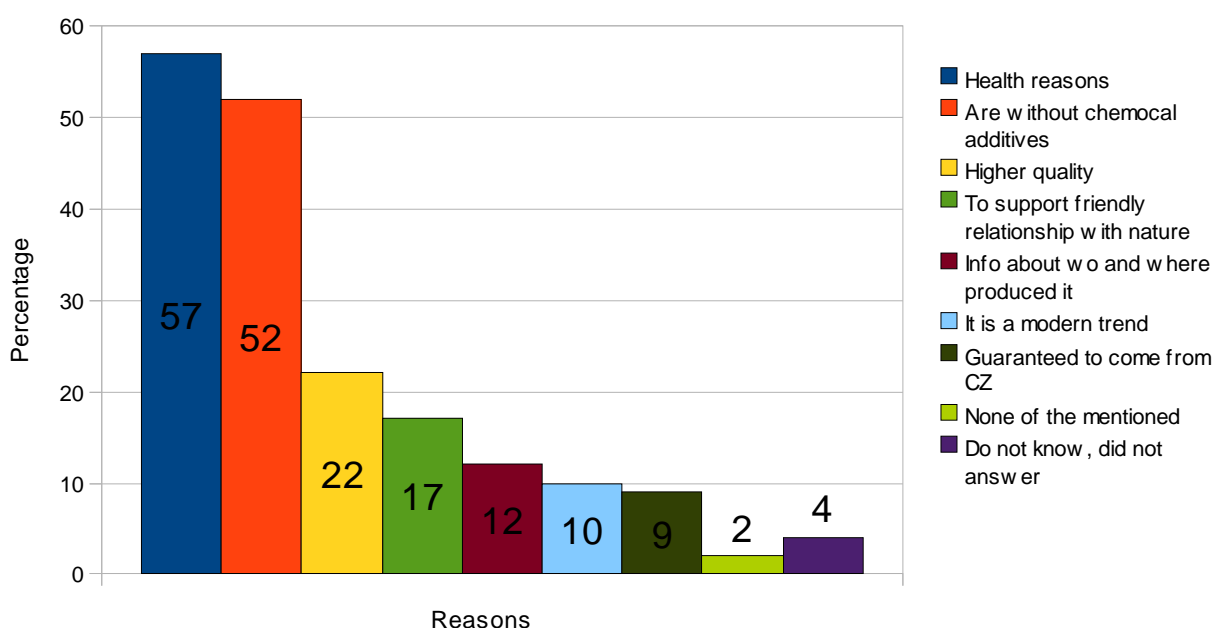
If the motives of consumers also depend on their perception of ethics and the involvement of moral philosophy in their lives how does the practice of buying organic products actually fill the idea of ethical consumption in the real world?

Motives

To demonstrate the development of different motives of the consumption of organic products among the Czech population I would like to show a graph of the situation in year 2006. The total number of respondents was 1000 and each respondent could have ticked more reasons at the same time.

Reasons for preference of organic products among the consumers

Total respondents, n= 1000



Source: Potenciál bio potravin na českém trhu, studie společnosti Synergy

Marketing a GfK Praha z 11.8.2006, staženo 15.2.2011, online na:

<http://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/zemdelstvi/ekologicke-zemdelstvi/biopotraviny/>,

own computation

When dealing with determinants and motives which lead people to buy and consume organic products we have to be very careful how we distinguish and group them because this is a very subjective matter. Let me just briefly explain the division of these determinants according to an article from the British Food Journal “Emerald Insight“.

As the first lets state the *values*.

These are more stable in time when compared with *attitudes* (see next paragraph).

Based on the work of S.H. Schwartz (Schwartz, 2006) there is a limited set of 10 values through which one can incorporate all specific values from different cultures in the world. The following values can be linked with product attributes:

1) Security

By this we mean safety, stability and harmony of the society, relationships as well as oneself.

Several studies have concluded that the strongest motive for purchasing organic products is health which is linked with the value of security.

2) Hedonism

This could be explained as pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.

Studies that have been undertaken in the northern part of Europe, in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom, good taste is a very important criterion for the purchase of organic products and that the consumers think that organic food tastes better than conventional.

3) Stimulation

Meaning excitement, novelty and challenge in life which people incorporate into their lives through their curiosity and urge to learn something, in this case about the new products available on the market, the organic products and try them out.

4) Universalism

Understanding, tolerance, appreciation and protection of the welfare of people and nature. Organic food production is more environment- friendly than conventional production for some aspects and also it is seen that way through the eyes of most consumers. A great number of studies identify a clear relation between the importance consumers attach to the environment and their attitude and behaviour towards organic products. [16] This is true especially in Germany, whereas the Greeks and British did not make the connection between organic food consumption and care for the environment.

In conclusion this values is more important to regular consumers than occasional ones.

5) Benevolence

This may be explained as the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of those that one is in contact with frequently. Unfortunately only a minority of respondents from different studies associate organic products to local production. This is one of the weak points of organic production, since currently the majority of products offered in European countries is imported.

6) Self-direction

The idea of choosing, creating and exploring in order to appear independent and different among the rest of the population. Some people are looking for a positive self-image and identity (to be, so called: “in“) which they think they attain through the purchase of organic products.

7) Conformity

It is the motivation to comply with the expectations of others through restraining actions, impulses and inclinations which could harm or disconcert others or even violate social expectations and norms.

8) Power

Surprisingly even social status, prestige, control and dominance over people and resources can be a motivator. As studies revealed, organic products were rated more positively by the more submissive ones unlike the dominant and powerful ones, who rated genetically modified food more positively.

Attitudes

One of the definitions of attitude is that it is a complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways. The researchers Fishbein and Ajzen have studied attitude in their numerous works and have concluded that attitude result from multiplication of beliefs with their evaluations. (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Attitude was also found to be a significant in the prediction of the intention to eat organic fruits and vegetables.

Cognitive and affective components of attitude

Attitudes are formed by two components: the cognitive ones (thinking) and the affective ones (feeling). Individuals can be distinguished regarding the fact whether they base their attitudes on cognition or affect. In the purchase of organic food these two are combined in a compensatory way. This shows us that people evaluate behaviour not only in terms of costs and benefits but also in terms of positive and negative feelings generated. To be more concrete, the costs uprising from the purchase of an organic product may be offset by the positive feeling the purchase produces.

The findings of the researchers give great importance to the inclusion of both cognitive and affective components of attitudes in general behaviour models and particularly in food choice models where affect is seen as an important factor in purchase intention.

Emotions

Accompanied by evaluations, moods, specific feelings they form the four broad types of affective response. Emotions are the strongest physiological response. We can distinguish many different emotions, the basic division would be: *positive* and

negative. Based on a study lead by P.C. Verhoef, emotions can determine purchasing behaviour of organic meat. He studied three emotions: fear, guilt and empathy and found out that especially “fear“ influences the consumer’s decisions.(Verhoef, 2005) This could be explained by the fact that in the past the BSE and dioxin (1995-2002) were a great problem that has affected the consumption of meat in general and has brought uncertainty into the minds of consumers as well as fear that their health is at risk.

Attitude influencing intention

From the studies conveyed it is clear that attitude is an important predictor of behavioural intention. A positive relation between consumer’s intention and purchase of organic food and their attitude toward organic food purchase has been confirmed multiple times.

Subjective or social norms

“Subjective norm is the perceived social pressure for a person to engage or not to engage in a behaviour.“ (Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers and Van Hulylenbroeck, 2009) Subjective norm is a set of normative beliefs based on the expectations of important referents for the individual person (e.g. family members or friends). It is very surprising that sometimes the desire to comply with others is so strong that it pushes the individual to purchase organic products despite his weak personal attitudes. It is assumed that people follow social norms because of the fear of what the society would think of them but also because doing so they give information about what actions and behaviour is most appropriate or beneficial. Therefore environmentally responsible behaviour is something that occurs and is accounted for by subjective or social norms. But it not only these norms. Also personal norms play an important role.

Personal or moral norms

Personal norms are based on the individual's conviction of which actions are right and which are wrong. When the individual has not yet formulated his personal norm in some specific action, he or she then uses his or her personal values to be able to decide and eventual act. Contemporary research shows evidence where variations in behaviour which is environmentally responsible links to the strength of personal norms. It is also pointed out that personal norm significantly influences the intention towards the purchase of organic food. The effect of personal norm on organic food purchase is stronger than of the subjective social norm. An individual's personal norm about buying organic food may be strengthened by the experience of past purchase and can also lead to favourable changes in beliefs about the costs, which are higher.

- *Perceived behaviour control*

This refers to the people's own perception about their ability to perform a given behaviour. We distinguish two major factors within this issue:

- *Perceived barriers*

These impede behavioural intention and the general behaviour of consuming organic food, e.g. price, availability, lack of trust and product appearance.

The studies from around the world show that the main consumption barrier is the relatively high price premium and the real or perceived lack of availability followed by uncertainty, lack of information, low knowledge and lack of trust in the organic certification process.

According to the data from the study of Ogilvy and Mather in 2010 the greatest barrier for the Czech consumers to purchase organic products is the higher price followed by the lack of trust (whether the products really are

organic, better, healthier and “without chemicals“). (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

- *Perceived abilities (Income)*

Financial resources may have a strong impact on the behaviour of consumers. Some studies reveal that income plays a positive role in explaining organic food purchases in Europe whereas in the USA it did not prove so. On the contrary in Canada a positive relationship between income and willingness to buy organic food was reported, but only up to a certain level of income. It is right to assume that with the rise of the income rises the consumption of organic food.

Socio-demographic factors

Consumers may be divided into groups according to differences in socio-demographic factors and therefore may differ in relation to attitude, intentions or behaviour. These characteristics have limited influence on organic food purchases, both the intention as well as the final decision to buy organic food.

- *Gender*

Since “soft“ values like eco-friendliness more fit female perspectives it is them who are generally more concerned about health and healthy food than men. More women also hold positive attitude towards these products and a higher proportion of women are purchasers or consumers of organic food. This is truth also in the case of the Czech Republic. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

- *Children*

Generally families with children are more likely to buy organic food. This is especially seen in the situations after the child birth when the mothers change their feeding patterns, using more organic products in their daily menu and mostly for the whole family. Their most important argument is to secure the health of children. But there is also another situation which causes the increase of organic products consumption and that is when concrete health problems appear among the family members. On the other hand the consumption can decrease after the children enter the adolescent age and develop their own food patterns and preferences.

- *Age*

Findings from many studies are unfortunately not very consistent. The only fact that holds truth in the majority of studies is that in spite of the greater interest among the young population they do not buy organic food more frequently than the elderly. In the Czech Republic the most frequent buyers of organic products are between the age of 16-29. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

- *Education*

The education factor is also contradictory. Some studies mention positive relation between education and organic food consumption while others state a negative one. Overall we can say that the influence is minimal. In the Czech Republic it is the group with finished higher education that purchases organic products the most. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

Macro-level factors

The choices of individuals may be influenced by factors in the macro environment. There are several factors that would be wise to mention, e.g. functioning of institutions, economic factors, technological factors, the environment where people live, cultural differences and general knowledge. Let me just point out some of these:

- Region

There are very strong differences between the regions in the world, based especially on the purchasing power of the given area. The majority of consumer demand (97%) for organic products is in Europe and North America. In Europe, there are also great differences concerning the expenditure on organic food per capita. The central European countries among which the Czech Republic belongs still reach only about 1 Euro per capita. But it not only the purchasing power that makes the differences. We can also look at the differences in attitudes, beliefs and understanding of consumers (e.g. knowledge of organic products, the trust in them, participation of food retailers). Other explanations are different food and eating habits as well as socio-cultural influences.

- Rural or urban area

The type of area where people live can also influence their attitude towards organic products. In the case of the Czech Republic, greater demand and sales of organic products take place in the capital and other big cities whereas in rural areas the purchase of organic products decreases significantly due to reasons like own home production and barriers like higher price and scarce availability.

- Functioning of institutions

In the past years European supermarkets chains have become the sales channel with the largest market share and are the main driver for the further growth of this sector and the countries where supermarkets sales lead both the supply and demand have been increasing.

The place where the Czech consumers buy organic products the most is a supermarket, followed by a specialized shop and the purchase right from the organic farmer at a market. (Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers and Van Hulylenbroeck, 2009)

Quality

Lets now look at the issue from the beginning. What makes the difference between organic and conventional products from the viewpoint of the consumers? It is definitely their price, availability and the most important: *the quality*. The factor of price is very simple, as well as availability but with quality, things tend to get a lot more complicated.

What exactly is the quality of organic products? How do we distinguish and measure it?

The perception of the quality of organic food is a little different to the way people perceive the quality of conventional products.

When talking about the quality of products in general we can definitely distinguish different characteristics of the products, like appearance, packaging, price etc. These apply also for the organic products but there are other characteristics that make up their „specific quality“ - let me use this term form now on.

When focusing on organic products it is not only the actual quality (i.e. concrete characteristics) of the product but also the quality of the whole agricultural system and manufacturing procedure that play an important role. This is given by the fact that people are more concerned in the whole process that precedes the final stage i.e. purchase. They want to know in greater details what they are spending their money on, eventually supporting. Among this we can count for example the way the plants have been cultivated and livestock bred- meaning in what kind of conditions and how they were treated as well as how the product was processed, stocked and distributed and other relevant information.

The reason why organic products are viewed and judged according to features mentioned above is because even if we are able to analyse and test different features and characteristics of a specific organic product, the results cannot be applied on every single case. If we look at different experiments, tests and other methods of research, sometimes the information is very misleading. Based on my own experience the results of studies mentioned in mass media sometimes even contradict each other.

So how can we be sure that the organic products are of better quality? We construct the “specific quality“ in order to help us.

This specific quality is constructed by each person individually by combining the objective qualities: sensory, nutritional, hygienic, technological and biological qualities, and the *subjective (stressing symbolic aspects)* quality.

This symbolic quality is constructed from the objective one and according to the information received from the media. It is formed by the way the experts, specialists, farmers, producers, processors, suppliers etc. speak of, write about and advertise the organic products, proving that food and eating is for them a cultural phenomenon. Each consumer constructs his own personal conception of quality, what is the most important factor for him.

The issue that arises is the issue of trust and belief. Since there is no way the consumers can be sure about the better quality of each single product. They have only the information given to them by the professionals: institutions, experts and sometimes even unofficial doubtful information sources. If they wanted to find out for themselves, it would mean visiting the farm, talking to the farmer, finding out all information about the production process, distribution and sale.

Based on these findings the consumers would decide individually whether the product really has the qualities they see as necessary or not. Of course, this process is too complicated and time consuming so the only possibility left is to believe the entrusted entities.

To summarize we could say that the quality of organic products is a specific social construction made by all those, who are incorporated or have something to do with this type of production. It does not only consist of the same aspects as the conventional one but also includes the element of the “specific, extra, unique or particular quality”, which makes up the attractiveness of all organic products, embedded in the network of symbolic meanings.

The consumer of organic products is therefore more deeply engaged and more demanding on the availability of corresponding information than the regular consumer for whom quality is not usually situated on the top position of the imaginary list of features that lead to the preference of one good to another. (Lotter, 2003)

Different types of quality

Appearance

One of the characteristics which preoccupies the consumer is the overall appearance of the produce. Here the consumer usually decides for himself, whether the product looks as it should or does not (thanks to packaging- if possible). It is a well known fact that consumers prefer those products (especially among fruit and vegetables) which look nicer- more colourful, bigger etc. because they think these will be better. But this does not apply to organic products.

Since in the organic production no chemicals, or only in very small amounts, can be used, the produce definitely does not look as “perfect” (colour, regular shape, the same size of each piece,...) as the conventional produce.

By this assumption we can say that consumers of organic products do not take into account the appearance as much. They value other characteristics more. On the other hand the consumers of conventional products might impoverish themselves of other advantages because of giving priority to the appearance.

Taste

The second and more important factor is the taste. This is another case of a very individual perception of quality because each and every one of us has different tastes as well as each single piece/product/unit may taste differently in comparison to the other pieces/products/units, without having to depend on which group, whether organic or conventional, it pertains to.

Therefore this factor of quality can change according to experience of the consumers. Let me explain on an example: if a consumer repeatedly buys carrots at a regular supermarket and they taste bitter, whereas the ones he once buys in an

organic shop taste sweet, he might begin to buy organic carrots. And vice versa.
(Singr, 2011)

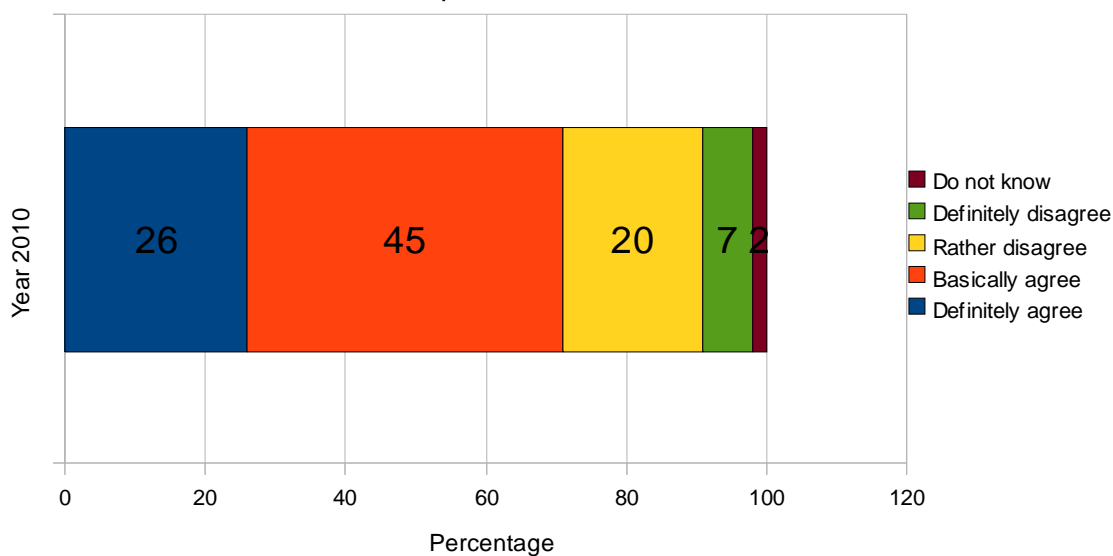
Health and nutritional issue

This is probably the most important issue concerning organic production which leads the consumers to buy them. According to the study of Synergy Marketing and Gfk Praha in 2006, the current health status and healthcare influence the purchase decisions the most. On the second rank stands the fact that these products are without chemical additives. The highest demands on quality and origin of products is expected- consumers are most demanding on products of animal origin- that is milk and dairy products and meat products, the distance is then followed by fruits and vegetables and bread.

When looking further into the study of Ogilvy and Mather from October 2010 we find that more than two thirds of the respondents agreed that the foods are healthier (71%), but there has been a decrease from the previous wave of research in year 2008. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010; MZE, Potenciál bio potravin na českém trhu, 2010)

Do you agree with the opinion, that organic products are healthier than conventional ones?

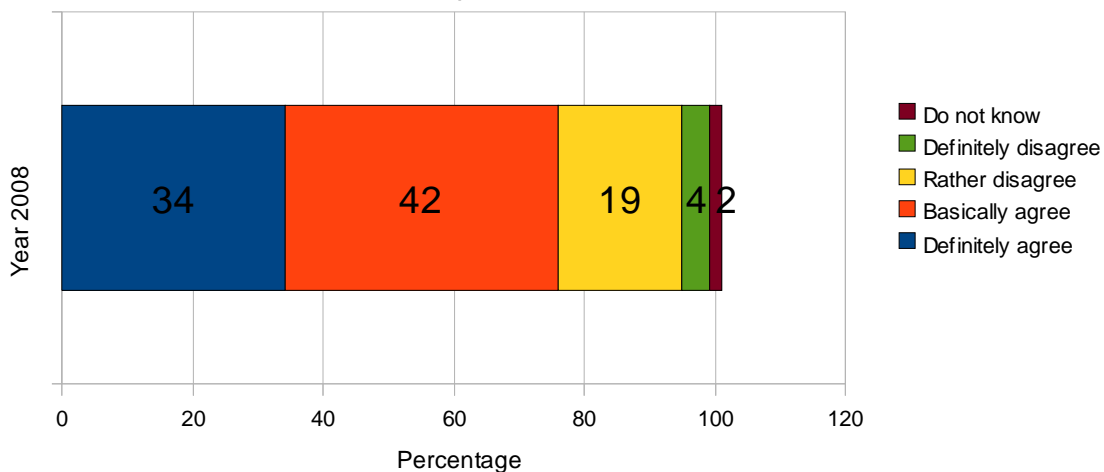
Total respondents in 2010, n=513



Source: STEM/MARK, Ekologické zemědělství a biopotraviny 10/2010, own computation

Do you agree with the opinion, that organic products are healthier than conventional ones?

Total respondents in 2008, n=508



Source: STEM/MARK, Ekologické zemědělství a biopotraviny 10/2010, own computation

Since the majority of us have no chance to find out for themselves whether it is true

that organic products have more vitamins and nutrients and therefore are healthier than conventional products we depend on the information given by experts.

There have already been done numerous studies concerning this issue, especially in the United States, where the organic movement has been practised for a longer period of time and on a much greater scale. In the Czech Republic, an investigation has been lead on organic milk and it's attributes lately. The survey was done by the Dairy Research Institute and the results clearly demonstrate increased presence of non-active substances in milk coming from organic farming in comparison with milk from conventional farms. (MZE, Bio mléko, 2010)

Why is the health and nutritional issue so important?

As we know, the eating habits of not only our nation but in all developed countries around the have been changing on the grounds of the different production systems, price of commodities and products, their offer and availability. Also with the change of our live style we have had to make changes in our diets. Who nowadays has enough time to cook himself a proper meal each day?

We all agree that either we do not have the time for cooking, buying just unprocessed food, which is a lot more complicated to prepare, eating regularly and "in peace". Therefore we resort to buying fast food in the streets, eating mainly processed food with all its additives, colourings etc.

All this implies worse health state of the population and the existence of many diseases that our predecessors did not suffer from- here belongs: obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart diseases and so on. In the past years the doctors have been trying hard to inform us about this bad trend. Some people have taken their words and have tried changing their diet and this is the point when they start to take into account organic products and take them seriously. It is the fear of having health problems in the future or even right now that pushes many people to think about organic products. This does not have to be only an individual issue. As many researches have proven, the most common consumer of organic products are

women, 25-44 years of age, with finished higher education and higher standard of living of households. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

It is very easy to explain this phenomenon. Since it is usually women who take care of the households and the family members, and are the ones who buy and prepare food, and since it is in their interest that the family members are healthy and feel well, they strive to do the best for them. So it is no wonder that many young mums buy organic products to feed their babies. They believe that by buying these products they can ensure better health of the baby,. Some can afford to buy just organic production, some only a part of the total consumers basket, some for the whole family, some only for the baby.

It is still the discouraging price as the greatest barrier in the consumption of organic products as it was in 2008. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010; MZE, Potenciál bio potravin na českém trhu, 2010) The prices of organic foods are by 40-250% more expensive, which depends on the price of conventional products, which can sometimes be very low due to subsidies on its production costs. The conventional products are also very often placed right next to the bio ones which are then in disadvantage. Therefore only those consumers with higher incomes can afford to buy it. So even if there would be a greater number of those who actually believe that they are healthier than conventional products the sales might not increase because of the shortage of money to invest into food in the total budgets of the households.

Ecological quality

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as the state of complete physical, mental and social comfort. Therefore if we want to judge the influence of foodstuff on human health, we have to take into account the social connections of the production system. In first position we should definitely put the quality (value) of the production system. This is what essentially differentiates the two systems:

organic and conventional. The conventional system is based on all the industrial and chemical farming, where the amount of inputs is not unlimited and not uncontrolled. On the other hand organic farming promotes sustainable development, tries to preserve the nature in the as much as possible same state and focuses on reusable packaging, less transportation of products and so on. This means the impact on the environment is much lower. Therefore the ecological quality of organic products is much higher.

Lets again have a look at the study by Ogilvy and Mather and summarize the data found.

Within organic farming the respondents considered these methods as the best: keeping farm animals in natural conditions, fertilization only by natural fertilizers and feeding of livestock only with feed from organic farms. Own food production without consumption of chemical additives does not saturate - only 15% of households cultivate such products in their gardens.

Adherence to the principles of environmental responsibility in particular, declare the following groups: women, higher levels of education, 40-50 years, higher standard of living of the household. Half of the respondents report that they take the principles of environmental responsibility seriously and are trying to keep them up.

Social quality

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, also social connections of the production system should be examined. The majority of organic products available on the Czech market comes from abroad. Only a small amount is produced in the Czech Republic but when it is, it is local production transported only across small and short distances. Even though this fact is not taken into account by many people it is an important feature which helps the social relations between consumers and producers in the same region. In my opinion the feeling of being able to help a local

Czech farmer through paying a higher price for his products is valued higher than spending even more money on the products that are organic and imported from France for example. Also the possibility to buy organic products right at the farms is helping these relations. And not only the relations between people but also the relations between humans, animals and nature. A visit to one of these farms will definitely influence your attitude towards organic production and impression of how it really looks like and works. This might even bring more trust into the whole system. But of course we must not forget that this all depends on the will of the consumers and if they fancy to discover and find out for themselves.

From the attitude statements that were attained in the research it is clear that there is an agreement with the fact that organic food can be bought by families with regular income only exceptionally (81%). 72% agree with the view that the extension of cultivation of organic food will lead to an overall increase in prices. Most respondents agree with the opinion that the Czech agriculture cannot do without the interference of chemistry (fertilizers, sprays, etc.) -71%. Such statements divided the respondents according to the degree of positive - open or negative - closed position to the issue of organic food. A positive attitude have mainly women, respondents with higher educational attained, people who are trying to comply with environmental principles and those who purchase more organic food. The neutral position was usually occupied by people aged 30-39. Negative approach is represented by people who do not respect environmental principles, men and respondents with lower educational level. (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

Technological quality

Compared with conventional products, the organic products have a slightly different essence of the

technological quality. It is more focused on the welfare of the animals than on the suitability, storage and endurance of the products since that makes the greatest and essential difference between the two types of production. The technology of production takes on many different appearances in the ways it influences our opinions and evaluation.

These are the basic restrictions that imply to organic products. The following information is based on the document written by J. Moudrý.

1) Basic regulations for plant cultivation in organic farming

- Crop rotation should be varied and balanced, focused on maintaining and improving soil fertility and provide nutrients for plant growth and minimize loss of nutrients.
 - Crop rotation with different competitive abilities against weeds, pests and pathogens in order to reduce their population density
 - Use of green manure, sowing and inter-cropping
 - Maintaining or increasing the humus in the soil
 - The inclusion of legumes or mixtures of them

- Land reclamation is carried out friendly, with a view to improving the physical soil-fertility and actions against soil erosion.
- Perennial grass must be harvested or grazed regularly, the organisation of grazing must not devastate the turf.
- Unused material can not be left on land, but it should be composted.
- Perennial grass sod should be treated.
- Meadows must be fertilized regularly with manure or compost.
- There are allowed physical methods, including thermal regulation.

- Control of harmful agents in organic farming is based mainly on preventive measures:
 - Optimal crop rotation
 - Mixed culture
 - Green manure mulching
 - Direct control of weeds is carried out mainly mechanically.
- Control of pests and diseases is possible through processes and products authorized by decree. These are mainly mechanical and biological control methods.
- Propagating material must come from plants that were grown organically
(until the 31.12. 2003 an exemption was allowed to use conventional seeds and seedlings, unless the eco-propagated materials are available).
- Plant nutrition is based mainly on the utilization of nutrients from the soil stocks kept up mainly by nutrients from livestock manure and green manure.
- Manure from outside of the organic farm or from the transitional period must be composted or fermented without the use of chemical starters.
- The use of manure originating from livestock farming systems with inappropriate farming, poultry cage systems and permanent housing on the grid is strictly banned.
- Sewage plants and sewage waste water, excluding sewage sludge and water from their farm, shall not be used.
- It is forbidden to burn straw and grass.
- The highest average annual dose of nitrogen in manure applied to arable land and in perennial crops is 150 kg N.ha-1 and 85 kg N.ha-1 on not restored meadows and pastures.

- Fertilizers allowed by the decree can only be used at a low or satisfactory supply of nutrients in the soil and in quantities that does not lead to increasing of the risk elements in soil (in phosphate cadmium fertilizers the content can not exceed 50 mg / kg of P205 and the total annual dose to 2 g Cd / ha).
- Harvesting and post harvest technologies and transport and storage equipment and facilities must be clean and in such conditions that do not contain any substances that may contaminate the organic products.

2) Basic regulations for animal husbandry in organic farming

- Natural breeding systems are based livestock production in organic farming.
- Organic farmer is obliged to treat only the listed species and breeds of animals adapted to local conditions, to protect animals from suffering, pain and health damage.
- The overall status of livestock on organic farm does not exceed 1.5 livestock units per 1 ha of agricultural land.
- The decree sets the maximum load and other conditions of agricultural land for farming of various species and types.
- Reproduction of livestock listed in the organic business is a priority provided by natural breeding. Priority is given to a permanent presence of a herd sire.
- Only healthy and physically well developed individuals should be used .
- Hormonal synchronization of oestrus is not allowed.
- It is prohibited to use such methods of reproduction, which would

result in damage to the foetus or female (non meat breeds hybridization, transfer embryos).

- At birth it is necessary to ensure its spontaneous course and direct contact of mother with the newborn calf.
- Animal housing must provide adequate living conditions for their behavioural and physiological needs of the species.
- Plenty of space for their movement, the possibility of natural ventilation and lighting, natural way to relax and care for one's own body and bedding from natural materials is a must.
- Permanent housing is prohibited in enclosed areas without access to a paddock or pasture, permanent tethering of animals and usage of cages, grids and heating structures (except structures for piglets).
- Animals kept without housing must be ensured adequate protection against wind, rain, sun and extreme temperatures.
- The decree sets out detailed rules for the different housing types and categories of animals (maximum herd size, surface load, the minimum area for housing, technical terms of building structure, etc..).
- Nutrition and feeding of farm animals must be secured especially by their own feed.
- Purchased food from the transitional period may not consist of more than 30% dry weight, of its own transient production up to 60% of the dry matter per ration.
- Feed from a non-organic farm (conventional feed) or the transitional period, may not exceed 10% of the annual diet of ruminants and 20% for other animals.
- The maximum allowed percentage of conventional feed in the daily ration must not exceed 25% of its dry weight.
- Ruminant nutrition is provided preferentially by feed of perennial forage crops and perennial grassland from organic farms.

- For adult ruminants roughage must represent at least 60% of the total daily intake of dry matter.
- In the summer they must be assured access to pasture or green grass.
- Sources of minerals and trace elements may be used provided they are of natural or synthetic origin -in the same form as the natural substance.
- It is only permitted feed additives and premixes mentioned in the decree.
- It is forbidden to feed young mammals feed mixtures of powdered milk and force-feeding animals.
- Health protection is ensured primarily by natural methods of breeding eliminating the negative environmental effects.
- The basic principle of organic animal husbandry is to prevent the disease.
- In case of illness or suspicion it is urgently necessary to ensure a veterinary check and according to test result preferably use natural and homoeopathic medicines.
- The use of allopathic medicines can be diagnosed on the basis of veterinarian.
- After application of drugs the protection period is twice prolonged.
- Treated animals must be identified.
- It is prohibited to use of medicinal products, feed additives (growth promoters, anticoccidial and chemotherapy) on healthy animals.
- For no reasons other than medical interventions may be changed castration and burning of beaks (some exceptions are permitted by the decree).
- The decree defines the mode of transport and slaughter of animals so as to minimize stress.

To make things a bit more clear and pin out the most important from these regulations let me just glimpse back. How do the consumers see this quality then? It is the breeding and growing system that they evaluate.

The ban of using mineral nitric fertilizers, which shows in reduced harvest and nitrate content in the soil, increased content of dry matter, mineral and aromatic substances, greater endurance against diseases and pests and also better storage ability is probably not the first thing on the mind of the consumers. But maybe the restriction of using of conventional feed in favour of feed from organic farms, which ensures that the animals did not “get contaminated“ by any chemicals or their residues from the feed is a fact that the consumer can register and take into account a bit more. As mentioned earlier, also bans on chemical additives in the feed apply. This means for example that the animals are not fed any hormones to make them grow faster and in many cases suffer. This is an issue that many consumers definitely do take into account.

It is not only the feed that is connected to the breeding of animals. It is also the conditions in which they are being bred. Here each animal species has different needs which should be respected and ensured when establishing/rebuilding a farm. The most common example would be the enhanced space issue. There are norms that set the exact minimal size of the housing for each specie as well as some extra conditions, like the possibility to go outside freely and many others (see above). When talking about animal production, the most important issue would be this and the previous one. It is a question of ethics which we will come back to later.

In order to link the theory with the real world we can state the fact that 28% of the respondents from the study of Ogilvy and Mather believe that organic products are produced without the use of chemicals. 18% think that chemical use is quite common and the idea that even conventionally grown food contains a negligible amount of harmful substances, is shared by 56% of respondents. (MZE, Bio zpráva

agency Ogilvy and Mather, 2010) This unfortunately shows that many consumers are sceptical about the organic production and do not see a big difference between the organic and conventional production.

Quality seen through ethics

When dealing with the organic farming and its products we have to take into consideration another very important feature and that is ethics. Earlier on, we have already explained what it exactly is and now let me try to apply this on the real world.

What do we mean by the phrase: “ethical consumption”? We could have in mind the consumption of organic products which are generally more environmentally friendly because they the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides is not allowed and emphasis is placed on the harmony of the agro-eco system and its biodiversity.

In the case of animal products, it is more or less looked upon the animal welfare so that it is at least partially enabled for the animals to meet their specific behavioural needs. It does not further the use of genetically modified organisms and products as well as the strictly limited use of chemicals and products from intensive farming systems. It is not only the consumption alone that counts in the idea of ethics (living a life based on ethical beliefs), but also recycling of raw materials and use of renewable resources as well as taking into account local or regional ecological balance could be seen as ethical. We could say that living environmentally friendly has become for us a part of the bubble which depicts ethical consumption- living a healthy lifestyle with the overall civic awareness of the environment, animals and humans.

It is next to the concept of the so-called voluntary simplicity, one of the main approaches, how consumers can influence the often negative effects of production, distribution and sale of ordinary goods and services daily. Simply put, this approach

is based in the targeted choice of products and services from manufacturers and service providers, who act both as a market but also consider the environment, animals and people involved directly or indirectly in the production process. (Etické spotřebitelství, 2009)

The current situation in the Czech Republic could be shown by the following data. When asked whether the person considers himself/herself to be taking the principles of environmental responsibility seriously and tries to follow them whenever possible, a half of the respondents answered that they do. But this is of course only their subjective opinion. Each individual has a different perception of what is the “right measure“ or what is “enough“.

The ethical consumption and organic production will definitely benefit with the increased number of supporters. These supporters will hopefully promote and intimate the rest of the population of the possible actions which could be taken. The growth of this movement is enabled thanks to the state allowances. When asked, with the support of organic farming by the State agree mostly women, those with finished higher education and respondents who purchase organic foods, which means that generally agree with the promotion of organic farming less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents (72%). (MZE, Bio zpráva agentury Ogilvy and Mather, 2010)

Many producers and sellers use the social justice feature to attract consumers. With the higher price they have to pay for the organic product they also buy the idea of ethical consumption. In order for the consumer to know what he or she is buying different labels have been developed to ensure the consumers trust. Unfortunately these labels are not as well known among the population as one would think because the system is not very transparent. In addition a new European logo has been designed and approved. This brings more uncertainty among the consumers and it is hard for them to trust the whole movement.



Ethical consumption

A great part of the focus of ethical consumption is on the individual, especially what and how do individuals consume. This is not only critical for the whole project of ethical consumption but also for understanding of people themselves. (Harrison, Newholm, Shaw, 2005)

But as we know, individuals consume within broader networks of social relations and cultural codes, therefore consumer behaviour is being shaped by different values of caring for other people, animals, nature, and concern for fairness.

There are two different forms of moral reasoning, theories, which privilege question of either the good or the right. They both are universally oriented.

The first theory is referred to as *consequentialist*. It takes into concern the definition of ethical conduct by reference to the outcomes and consequences of consumer practices. Whereas the second theory- the de-ontological *approach (duty based)* defines right action as if it were independent to human happiness or other favoured goals. It makes us generalise our consumer practices and therefore think from the position of others. Unfortunately these two such formalistic philosophical positions can be too demanding and abstract to be applied in everyday consumption and they also imply stringent accounts of what is required to act ethically.

Recently there has been a lot of work and research done in the area of *virtue of ethics*, which focuses on a broader and more practical field of life's considerations than the theories mentioned above. This philosophy focuses on the flourishing of the human beings and the fact that living a better life is within our reach, meaning it is only up to our will. The supporters of this philosophy are concerned with what

people should do in order to become some kind of person. According to them ethical consumers value more the sense of moral integrity in their well-being than the concern for rules or consequences. When compared to consequentialism and deontology, virtue ethics tends to imply partiality in ethics, where caring about other people and acting for their benefit is seen as morally acceptable. This slightly contradicts basic principles of ethical consumption, where people are supposed not only to care for their nearest and dearest but also for the rest of people, as well as animals and nature. (Harrison, Newholm, Shaw, 2005)

When talking about ethical consumption we should also have a look on the two senses or ways in which ethics and consumption can be related. To make it easier let us refer to the book "The Ethical Consumer" where the authors call the first option "*ethics of consumption*" where the object of moral evaluation is consumption itself. There are many environmental problems linked to this, like sustainable consumption or the slow food movement and the main goal is the reduction of the aggregate consumption. The second one is being called "*ethics of consumption*". In this case ethical consumption is not the object but the medium for moral and political action (consumer boycotts, fair trade campaigns) and it does not mean that ethical consumption implies less consumption. In the real world these two senses of ethics and consumption never stand on their own, and are linked together.

Can consumption be actually ethical?

This is a very hard question to answer. In my opinion, consumption can never be ethical because there are always more outcomes of the action and more impacts that one has to take into account and form his or her decision after evaluating, which if for them more acceptable.

Let me draw an example from the book mentioned above (The Ethical Consumer). If we look at the products made by child labour and try to apply both theories. As a deontologist a person would refuse to buy these products because a basic moral rule

would be violated- that of exploitation of children. This rule comes from the idea that this person would not want his own child to have to work like this and therefore the person universalises this rule. On the other hand by not buying these products, the person might worsen the situation for the child because the family income would decrease. On the contrary the utilitarian would buy the product as not worsen the children's situation and hope that the trade conditions would be better in the future. The last is the follower of virtue ethics who would take into account the children's situation, pay the increased price for the product, if it is appropriate and try to do something about the situation- be active in a campaign etc. if these actions would not harm or disadvantage own offspring.

So as we can see, making decisions about the ethical consumption can be very hard. Talking from own experience if I decide to buy any product I am already acting in a "selfish" manner. It does not really matter whether it is an organic product a Fair Trade product or just a conventional product. The reality is that at that moment I am thinking of how to satisfy myself, my needs- as an individual and not thinking too much about what does this action provoke and imply. Of course I can decide to buy an organic product produced locally with the vision of supporting a local farmer, being against transportation of goods from other countries and helping the environment but I think that all these ideas are secondary. My main interest would simply be just me.

Analysis

After having used qualitative methods of research for analysing the received data from the focus group interviews let me present the findings and then make some conclusions based on the analysis.

When analysing the texts I have made myself a code (number) system in order to help me discover and see the actual motives among all the information said by the interviewed consumers. I finished with 26 topics (numbered 1 to 26) which are connected to the consumption of organic products and especially the motives for their purchase. Afterwards these topics were put together into a smaller number of groups (numbered 1 to 9), based on the similarity and analogy. Finally these were drawn into a map which represents the different groups as well as the links and relationships between them. In the following text, the names of the topics will be written in italic. When quoting some of the responses from the interviews, the number of the focus group is stated, i.e. fg.1.

(Please see Appendix for more details and material.)

Now let me interpret the information received from this map in combination with the actual interviews.

When concentrating on the first topic, *quality* (n. 1), the majority of respondents mentioned this characteristic in terms of being higher or better for the organic product than in the case of the conventional ones. This topic links together many of the other topics, or motives, as we can see in the map therefore we could call it an important central point of the whole complex of motives of the consumption of organic products. It links together the basics of the organic production system with their perception of the consumers.

As we have seen earlier on, this quality is a lot different to the one of the conventional products. This difference does not refer only to the characteristics of

the product, but it is enlarged by the quality of the whole agricultural system and manufacturing procedure.

I have called this quality a “special“ one. Let me demonstrate the links between quality and other motives in the following paragraph.

After reviewing the answers concerning the quality and what does this quality mean to the consumers some mentioned the breeding system and the transportation of animals- when they are inhumanely treated and stressed it influences the quality of the product. “I think that to what meat concerns, we can tell the difference in quality one hundred percent. When animals live in stress, the meat contains bad substances and it also has a different composition in comparison to when the animal lives peacefully in good conditions.“, commented one of the respondents. (fg. 1)

When the consumers buy an organic animal product they take into account that the animal was well bred and treated and therefore they think the product should taste and look better- they actually believe this. This was mentioned as the strongest reason for buying organic eggs, meat and yoghurt.

A very nice answer received from one of the respondents well summarizes the whole idea: “It has several levels, either the person really wants to prefer just the better taste or if he also he takes into account other aspects, like ecology, transportation or the support of domestic producers.“ (fg. 2)

It was also apparent from the fact that many would prefer buying products directly from a farmer than in a supermarket or small shop. By such an action they would be able to check and see for themselves the way the farm is being lead, check the quality of the product, choose which exactly piece they would like to buy as well as financially support the actual farmer, who is in their eyes doing the “right thing“. As one of the sceptical respondents said: “Well, until I see the farm with my own eyes and eat the food there, I will not believe it one hundred percent.“ This shows one of the reasons why some consumers do not buy organic products- because they do not have the possibility, time etc. to visit the farms and do not fully trust the

certification, norms and control system.

All this makes the consumers more trustworthy towards the system and strengthens their view of the “special quality“. Some consumers also perceive the quality through the protection of the environment and sustainable agriculture. This is the other value added to the construction of the “special quality“ and we will come back to it later on. A nice example taken from the interviews would be:“...on the top shelf there was normal a carton of no-brand apple juice for 24,90 CZK and I told myself I would look more and three shelves lower there was an exactly same carton for the same price, but this one with the label of organic products and so I decided to buy the second one because that label is a guarantee of a good quality, even if it the juice tasted the same.“ (fg. 1)

This is nothing new, but in many cases the consumers referred to the term **guarantee** (num. 1) in context with quality. Therefore they believe that organic products have a certain quality which is guaranteed. This guarantee could be in the actual contents of the product, i.e. the organic cheese is made just from milk whereas an ordinary one might be treated in any way to last longer and additives and substitutes may be used in the production. One of the respondents said: “For example cheese, when I buy organic cheese I know it has been made from milk, whereas normal cheese contains additives. With organic products, we can really be sure, what we buy.“ (fg. 1)

This enables the consumers not having to study thoroughly the labels of ingredients in order to find out if the product is “good“- seen through their eyes, or if it is against their belief.

Not only to speak of positives, there is also a negative point linked to the guarantee and that is the fact that organic products do not guarantee local production. They can be organic products imported from another country, re-checked and approved of by the Ministry of Agriculture. According to some respondents, the information of the origin of each product should be made extra clear.

Sometimes there is a confusion among the respondents whether the guarantee is applied to all different brands of organic products. Those brands which are well known and are not of some supermarket product line are valued more highly and therefore the guarantee of the “special quality“ is supported.

Lets move on to the second motive, **without chemicals and without GMO** (n. 2). This characteristic of the organic products is often linked to the quality, because it is seen as something positive and “special“ and something that the conventional products do not possess. When asked about the consumer’s expectations of the organic products a very common answer was given by the majority of them. “They are not chemically modified.“, “That there is no artificial fertilization or spraying.“, “Chemical fertilizers are not used, only natural ones like manure.“, “I am without fear that the product will contain E- numbers and additives or something, that I would not want to eat.“, “What plant production concerns, I think that chemical spraying leaves some residues in the plants which I do not want to take in.“(fg. 1) or “For me the important thing is that there are no chemicals inside, in comparison to the conventional products. If I study the contents, it does not make me feel uneasy about all the additives therefore I prefer these organic products.“ (fg. 2)

On the other side, opposite opinions have been heard but in a far smaller number. Those respondents who are more deeply engaged into the whole organic system are aware of the fact that even organic products can be treated with chemicals, the norms allow some certain chemicals in permitted doses to be used or that the specific location and surroundings can influence the composition of the foodstuff. As one of the respondents said: “...without spraying and chemicals, even-though I can not imagine this, because it will be scoured from another field.“ (fg. 3)

One of the adjectives that was used to describe organic products was “clean“-speaking not only of the cultivation but also of the production process. “...that spraying is not permitted and also nothing chemical can be used during the

processing, for me it is obvious, that if it has the certificate it is clean.“ would be a helpful example here.

After getting familiar with the interviews I realized that only three respondents valued the organic products for not being genetically modified. Within this matter there have been some disputes whether all organic products are GMO free or whether some of these products, especially those imported from China, could contain GMO's.

We can also see a very important link between without chemicals and GMO s with the topic health (num. 9), therefore we will now deal with this matter.

“...we look at organic products as the source of healthy products, this means, that there is the smallest amount of harmful substances, which we do not need, like chemicals, pesticides and so on.“ (fg. 3)

Respondents believe that organic products can influence ones health both if it is the prolongation of life or improvement in the health problems. “I would definitely buy these products more if I suffered from some diseases or allergies.“, was one of the replies or another one: “They are healthier. We think that we do something for us, one has a better feeling afterwards.“ (fg. 1)

The word healthier has been repeated over and over and along with the word beneficial. Together these two form a positive impression of the organic products.

“...it should be somehow beneficial for the person, the fact that there are no chemicals included.“, “I consider the quality from the point of view of the health benefits, because organic products should primarily bring us health.“ (fg. 2) or

“Healthy, guaranteed quality without chemicals“ was heard as a description of organic products by one of the respondents and his colleague continued: “I started to replace conventional products with E- numbers which are carcinogenic with organic foodstuff, which the E- numbers does not contain.“ (fg. 3) The health aspect definitely makes consumers feel better about themselves and it is a way of compensating the other factors in our lifestyle which we cannot or do not want to change. “The products do not burden our organism and that is crucial for me.

Simply, the environment we live in is bad so at least I am doing something healthy about my diet.“ (fg. 3)

Some are not so radical in the belief of health support and see the future in the shift of the industrial production towards healthier production since the products full of aromas and thickening agents resemble some kind of half-chemical foodstuff nowadays.

Others have experience with different types of allergies and have found out that the consumption of organic products does not provoke these allergies and makes them feel better. “At the age of twelve years, I have started suffering from allergy and only with the consumption of organic products I have managed to overcome the symptoms because I realized that it was a kind of food allergy connected to additives.“ (fg. 4)

Health can be related to an individual, who buys organic products with an egoistic motive- to do good for himself, as well as with an altruistic motive- to do good for someone else.

In the second case, the majority of consumers that think in an altruistic way are women, wanting the best for their families. This includes young mothers preoccupied with the health of their babies, the mothers of kids and the last but not least even grandmothers being concerned with the health of their grandchildren. This was recorded in one of the interviews: “I believe, that organic products are not chemically treated and that they are healthy even for babies. When one buys them, he or she does not have to be worried.“ (fg. 1) and supports the mentioned assumption. Other statements shared within the female group members were: “I take these products as a part of doing something for my family, when I buy them and I think we are healthier than the people around us.“ and “I have made a switch to organic products just because of carrots. After giving birth I was interested in finding out what would be the best option of foodstuff for my baby so that I would not burden its body with additives, residues of chemicals and provoke allergies.“ (fg. 4)

Next in line is the topic origin of products, *local production and home-made/home-grown* (n. 3). The place of origin of the product plays a significant role in the decision making of the consumers. The consumers definitely prefer local production, within the region at best, or at least from the Czech Republic. Some are even preoccupied with the exact location, where the products come from within the Czech Republic, i.e. prefer yoghurt from different parts of the Czech Republic or use the possibility of buying organic foodstuffs directly from a farmer. One of the respondents stated: “I prefer to buy yoghurt produced in the Czech Republic and if possible, I choose the ones from the eastern part of the country.” (fg. 1) They look at this characteristic as something that increases the quality of the product based on the fact that the products were not transported for a long time, therefore should be more fresh than those imported from other European countries and less damaged (concerning vegetables and fruits). Another example of this way of thinking about organic products would be: “Basically what I miss is the specification of the origin, where it is grown, if in the Czech Republic or if it is imported, who is the supplier and which region is he from. I could profit from this information because for example I know that in Šumava they produce good organic yoghurt because they breed good cows there. This information would give me some background of the product.” (fg. 1)

But we must also mention here the important fact, that many consumers choose local products also because they are aware of the financial support they give to the local producers, instead of to the foreign ones.

With the origin of the product consumers would like the system to improve the information given on the labels. They are not satisfied with the current situation, when the actual certificate does not guarantee local production and when the actual place of origin is sometimes even missing on the label. Since they would like to buy local production, they experience difficulties with finding these products among the rest on offer and would appreciate if the place of origin was clearly stated.

Retrieved from the interviews: “The certificate is there because of the organic

production and not because of where the product comes from. There is space for improvement here. There is some standard that requires each product to be labelled, specifying its origin. This could be improved among organic products too.“ (fg. 1) “The disadvantage of the organic label is that it can be seen on imported products as well, it does not mean that the product is Czech.“ (fg. 3)

The support of the local farmers is seen as an important part of the whole system because many respondents showed concern about these farmers and felt like helping those, who in their eyes are trying to change the situation of the Czech agriculture and the rule of the supermarkets. A nice example here would be: “If a farmer sells his potatoes somewhere, I can be sure, that he has done it honestly and that he is has not been using pesticides. He does it for himself and he wants to earn some extra money through selling them, therefore I am certain, that buying potatoes from him and not some Polish potatoes from TESCO is better. At least one supports directly him and not some chain store.“ Another reply to the point was: “We will support the farmer. They are very low in the success chart in the society even though they are physically involved a lot. And if I had opportunity support an actual farm or more of them then I would do it. I will spend the money on the food either way. Each of us has the budget given and if I ask any reasonable person whether he wants to give the money to a supermarket or rather support a farmer, who is next to us, he will choose the second option.“ (fg. 1) The colleagues of the previous respondents all agreed that this reason for buying organic products rather on a farm than in a supermarket is one of the strongest.

The same point can be seen in this response: “And if it is a Czech foodstuff I tell myself, that I am contributing to the Czech economy. And I simply have a better feeling, when a Czech organic foodstuff is bought. I will not buy a polish potato, but a Czech one, even if it was not an organic one because it still would be a benefit for our state.“ or “...the farmers are not doing well and the only ones who rivet on this are the middleman and wholesalers and I think that buying something directly from

a local farmer is something like returning to the past normal system, where the farmer receives back what he has invested into it plus some adequate profit, so that he will not have to use chemicals in big scale, which is more or less cheap.“ (fg. 1) as well as: “Let me get back to the question of origin of organic products, because as for me I prefer yoghurt made in the Czech Republic, from the milk of Czech cows, because I want to support the Czech farmers.“ (fg. 2)

Some answers revealed that people are willing to take the time and effort to actually visit the farm and do their shopping there as the following responses show: “There are many suppliers, for example Bio life or Bio zahrada who sell products from Germany but also from the Czech Republic, so if I have the chance, I will choose the Czech one. When I am travelling I drop by the Czech farms to buy some foodstuff directly there.“ (fg. 3) and “I enjoy supporting Czech producers and because I also have a job where I travel a lot I visit the organic farms and I know, that these products come from a good place and I buy it there on purpose. I enjoy more and makes me feel happier than buying it in a supermarket, where although it is labelled as organic but it imported.“ (fg. 3)

This brings us to the question of the supermarkets and their own organic brands which are not seen as trustworthy as other brands available in smaller specialized shops.

Let me show you a very nice example which puts the whole idea of local production together. One of the respondents answered: “In my subconscious I will trust Tesco’s organic label less than the organic label in a small shop, which has some kind of soul. I do not like the products from the big stores nor do I have a good experience with them. Their own organic food is not of the same quality. There is no place of origin. It is more a question of subconsciousness. I do not really trust, where these supermarkets got the certificate because they have unfair business and take advantage of retail sellers.“ (fg. 1)

The support of local farmers and the preference of smaller specialized shops is

closely linked to the *ethical aspects* (num. 6). These were more valued by the women than the men. Some link these aspects to the handling of animals some to individuals that are engaged in the agricultural business.

“It is because the animals are living a better life that the products are better.” (fg. 1) was one of the ideas.

The product that was connected to ethical aspects the most were organic eggs. It can be called as the basic, most simple and most known example of animals being ill-treated. Some examples taken from the interviews:

“I prefer to buy organic eggs, because I just would not be able to eat the conventional ones because I know how the hens there are being treated and it is something awful.” (fg. 3) and “I buy organic eggs because I sympathize with the hens. The conditions they live in are really horrifying.” (fg. 3)

“Sometimes one does not have to see “the good“ but it helps to see for example the slaughter, where the pig has a narrow 100m long corridor and it is really terrible and there are thousands of them. And in comparison with the slaughter at an organic farm where there are only about ten killed in a day. There is a huge difference in what are the conditions the pig has before it is killed. It assures one of organic farming as being the better.” (fg. 1) This opinion was shared with other respondents who as well thought that people should go and see the slaughter for themselves and that this would change their opinion on ethical handling and organic products.

“Our family is vegetarian based on ethical reasons because it seems horrible that even if the animals are treated humanely, they have to be killed, so we only buy plant/vegetable products. Of course the price is higher but I also consider the protection of the environment, it all plays a big role there.” (fg. 3) This was the only respondent that strictly evaluates the ethical aspects and has changed her lifestyle according to her beliefs. It is an example of how far can some of us go in this question.

A part of this topic is the question of fair trade which have some respondents mentioned. They are aware of the increased quality of these products. The increased quality is seen through the ethical value added. Also these products usually support organic production and therefore satisfy all the demands and requirements of the consumers. The negative aspect here could be the transportation, because these products come from far away countries. But since the same products usually cannot be produced in the Czech Republic (chocolate, tea,...) then it seems better for the consumers to invest more money into fair trade products then less money into conventional ones which also have to be imported from the same distant countries. Regarding fair trade price was also discussed. The consumers accept the higher price because they now that it was not bought by someone for a price not under its value, but above, and it had to be transported to i.e. Germany to be processed where there are big companies processing fair trade foods.“ (fg. 1)

“I am rather interested in organic yoghurt and how they taste or I have a better feeling about organic eggs, when the hens are not kept in cages.“ (fg. 1) shows us very well that ethical aspects and the good feeling of one-self can lead to the subjective feeling of a better tasting foodstuff- therefore we will move on to the next topic: taste (num. 5)



Some consumers are sure about being capable to distinguish the organic products from conventional ones by its *taste* (n. 5), some consider this as impossible. But overall they all expect better feelings after eating organic foodstuff- whether it is the actual taste or just the feeling of having eaten something better, of a higher and better quality.

“...when it is an organic foodstuff, I know, that it is a guarantee of better quality even though we often can not tell the difference in the taste.” or “There is definitely a difference in taste between meat when the animal lives in stress or not.” both support this statement (fg.1)

The taste is especially distinguished among the fresh foodstuff like vegetables, meat and eggs. The meat was found to be incomparably better tasting than meat from a conventional production as well as the fact that it does not smell and chicken meat is white.

“It is true that when I buy a conventional and an organic tomato, there is an enormous difference in the taste.” (fg. 4)

“Better tasting are also potatoes. Since we started buying organic ones, the ones from a supermarket are worse, there is a big difference.” (fg. 3)

“I think that there is a big difference between organic and conventional tomatoes. Or chicken meat. I do not eat the conventional one because it just resembles some kind of mass. The organic one is indeed better.” (fg. 3)

The taste was also sometimes mentioned in connection with seasonal products. “If there is the season of some vegetable and the organic label is added, it resembles the guarantee of the best taste and the best quality to me. These foodstuffs will have the best taste and will be of the highest quality.” (fg.1)

Organic products were also described as real, natural and not cheated on and consumers would like the others to find out for themselves. “But you can really tell

from the taste, let people try it.“ (fg. 3)

Approximately half of the respondents are of the opinion that taste is just a secondary perception and that it is the trust that makes them feel the products taste better. The impossibility to check every foodstuff in a laboratory makes the taste a primary subjective perception which is supported by the trust of the whole system. Let me show some examples of responses received: “The quality can not be ascertained by pure taste. Therefore we have to rely on the well functioning of the controls of the farmers and producers and that what is presented in the shop as organic food has minimal content of impurities.“ (fg. 4) and “I would say that the organic products taste better to me. I do not worry that the carrot does not shine, I simply believe it and I enjoy the taste. It is probably connected to the subconsciousness, the fact that it is better.“ (fg. 3)

Even more sceptical voices could be heard: “I would say, that if they gave us the same foodstuffs and one would be organic and second one not that we would not be able to recognize it by 90%. maybe with the meat but still I think we would not.“ (fg. 1)

“But I do not think, it is only in the taste but you can also tell the difference when you buy organic milk and it goes bad. You can see that some normal processes have been happening not like some industrially produced milk or the one in carton. Those are something awful.“ (fg. 3)

Even so we can still state that this is definitely one of the most important motives that enhances the purchase of organic products among Czech consumers because nearly all respondents mentioned the taste as one of the reasons to purchase such goods.

The topic of taste is connected to the topic of *environment and transportation* (num. 4) through the fact that imported fresh products are not as good tasting as those produced locally. This would concern vegetables and fruits.

Organic production was described as good for the well being of people and animals, being considerate and thrifty to the environment. In the eyes of the consumers the organic label stands for the preservation of nature and ecology. This is one of the answers received: “In my eyes the organic label is positive and favourable because the producers and suppliers are particular about the quality and watch out for not harming the environment where they live and where they get the foodstuff from.” (fg. 4) and others said: “It is more considerate to the environment, when those procedures, which are not allowed, are not being used.” as well as: “It comes to mind later on, but organic also means that it is grown or bred regarding the environment.” (fg. 3)

In another group, a respondent said: “Health is not important for me, because I am not afraid I could poison myself or get some disease but for the more important is the friendly approach to the land.” (fg. 2)

The environment and its protection was heard less times than other motives but when it was mentioned the majority of respondents agreed that for them this is also one of the reasons for buying organic products.

One problem with the harm of the environment is the transportation. Many would not buy an organic product that has been transported from the far away parts of the world and think that due to the internationalization, products are shifted from one country to another one and that this is not a good thing.

“Organic products should be produced in the same region as sold. They have some small “utility track“ in comparison to the imported products which means that by their production the environment is not burdened by all the carbon gases.” (fg. 4) one very nice response was this one: “It is a non-sense to buy a pear from China

when we have pears growing here in the gardens and it is of course logical to buy for example tea or coffee from those regions, where they are commonly grown. Especially if they are Fair Trade, hence organic.“ (fg. 2)

”I also look at the origin of the product, because organic foodstuff is expensive and when I see, that it is imported from other parts of Europe by a truck I do not like it. It contradicts the sense of the way I look at these products. I definitely prefer organic products but if it is not tea or coffee, which we cannot grow here. I rather buy conventional products when I know that the organic ones have been signed by an ecological footprint in the form of long transportation.” (fg. 1) ”I prefer what is closer to us. Especially when I see all the trucks on the roads it influences my opinion.” (fg. 1)

The second connection would be to the health issue. Respondents have said that they do not only value the healthiness of the products but also the fact that their production is ecological, meaning better for the land and that it is a way to reach sustainable development. The environment issue was the second reason for purchasing organic products in all the cases, where respondents stated health as the most important reason.

”In many cases we cannot distinguish according to the taste, no doubt that when I buy an organic foodstuff and it has a better taste it is an advantage, but mainly I know that through this purchase I am contributing to the environmental friendliness.” (fg. 1)

”So if I have a reason to buy organic products it is that I am on this planet and I am burdening it, but at least I am doing something in order for this burden not to be bigger, than necessary. It happened to me many times, that I bought an organic banana which tasted exactly like a conventional one, but since I know that the organic one was grown the way it should- the way I consider to be good, and do not know how the conventional one was grown, this reason is important for me. When I see the organic label there then even if I can not back up for 100%, that it is of good quality, I trust it.” (fg. 1)

And when we talk about health, the fact that these products are grown or bred without the use of chemicals leads to the protection of the environment. This is an example of how complex the whole issue is and that the topics and motives are inter-connected in nearly every possible way.

At the end, let us look at one more topic: price (num. 8). Even-though it is not actually a motive for buying organic products, it has been mentioned and discussed a great many times. The majority of respondents used this term to describe what is the first thing that comes to their mind when they hear the phrase "organic products". Nearly all respondents are aware of the fact that these products are more expensive and are used to pay more for their purchase in comparison with conventional products.

Why did I choose to select price into the group of the most important motives then? It is because price is closely connected to quality. And if quality resembles a group of characteristics and topics, it means that price is also connected to the rest of the motives very. Each respondent has his or hers own reasons why he or she is willing to pay the higher price, if it is the health issue or the environmental one or any other mentioned in the interviews. Also the price is the factor upon which many people decide whether to buy organic products or not, since not everyone can afford to spend more money on foodstuffs. Another point is that some respondents admitted that the higher price is an indicator of better quality for them. Here we can say the well known phrase: "The more expensive, the better." used in many situations but not exactly correct. Applied on to organic products this actually becomes true.



Conclusions

After having analysed the transcriptions of the four focus groups let me present my conclusions.

The topics I have chosen in the selective coding have different connections among themselves. These connections were chosen on the basis of the information acquired after the study of literature and internet sources and the implementation of the knowledge gained. These selected connections are supported through the replies of the respondents, a sample can be seen in the tables of the Appendix.

As the map in the Appendix shows, the most important motive of the purchase of organic products by Czech consumers is the quality. As was mentioned and explained above, this quality resembles many characteristics and aspects of the whole production system.

Based on the interviews I selected seven other motives- those that were mentioned the most, or were of great importance for the consumers. These are all somehow connected to quality. Each of the respondents described organic products by one or more ideas and these were usually the motives and reasons, why the consumers purchase them and not conventional ones. Just to make things clear, the motives connected to quality are:

- without chemicals and without GMO's
- origin, local production, home-made/home-grown
- transportation, conservation of the environment
- taste
- ethical aspects
- health

Let us now look at the motive *without chemicals and without GMO's* and its connections. Firstly it is linked to *health* because consumers believe that the products being free of all additives, substitutes, residues, GMO's and others, are better for their body and for their health. It can be in long term, where they believe they can live longer, or in short term which implies an actual improvement of their health problems (i.e. allergies) or it is just the feeling that their body is not as burdened as when eating conventional products.

Next in line would be the link with the *taste*. Here the idea is that since these products do not contain any chemicals they are of pure and natural taste. One point of view is the actual content of the product (i.e. yoghurt- where there are no additives in order to preserve it or improve the taste) and the second one would be the environment the product/foodstuff comes from (i.e. milk- where the cows are not fed with any hormones, or bread- where the wheat was not treated by pesticides and chemical fertilizers). Even when the consumers are aware that it is hard and maybe impossible to distinguish the organic and conventional product from one another, in their mind, they have this set as a subconscious feeling of a better taste. Then we have the *ethical aspects*. Organic production does not allow GMO's therefore consumers who are concerned with ethics prefer these products because they look at the research on genetics and its application to the real world as unethical and do not want to support it. And to what animal production concerns, since the animals are not fed by any chemicals they do not suffer (i.e. chicken fed by hormones in order to grow faster can not even stand on their legs).

The following link is to the *environment*. When no chemicals or only in permitted doses are used, less residues appear in the earth and water pollution decreases. Any decrease in the amount of chemicals used in the production system improves the state of the environment and draws closer to the long past "natural". It also supports the sustainable development. This is what the consumers find as important when deciding about their shopping preferences.

The last would be the link to *home-made/home-grown* since that type of production is seen as the cleanest and preferred by consumers. Each person is responsible for

the way he or she grows or breeds his animals and usually this is done in the "old way" -like in the past when no chemicals and GMO's existed.

The third motive and its connections to investigate closely is origin, local production, home-made/home-grown. Not yet discussed was the connection to *transportation and environment* where many consumers value the organic products coming from local producers, within the region and are not being transported across long distances unless necessary (tea, coffee, etc.).

And secondly the link to *ethical aspects* where consumers brought in the idea of support of local farmers in order to help them in their hard and complicated situation nowadays. The consumers felt sympathetic with the farmer's role and would be willing to drive and visit their farms in order to do their shopping there, in exchange for the feeling of doing good and their own satisfaction.

The last connection is to the *taste*, where respondents are of the opinion that those organic products grown locally, if possible, or home-made/home-grown should be of better taste since they were not transported over long distances as well as if the foodstuffs were grown/produced by themselves, they can be sure that they taste like they should. What is another idea expressed by some consumers is that if they buy organic products that come from the Czech Republic, they can only buy them during their season. Therefore they should be of the best quality and best tasting.

The fourth motive is transportation and environment. Here the only connection not yet explained is the link to the *taste*. According to consumers, the foodstuffs should be better tasting without long transportation. Especially the fresh products like vegetables and fruits can be damaged or devalued on the long journey.

The fifth motive is the taste and the sixth are ethical aspects for these all connections have already been discussed in the paragraphs above.

The seventh motive is health, where we have to mention the connection with

ethical aspects. This can be explained by the fact that the female respondents have showed concern about the health of their children and other family members.

The last but probably one of the most important topics is *price*. In this case, we have to make clear that price is not an actual motive for the purchase and consumption of organic products but rather it is a factor that many consumers referred to as an indicator of the better quality of these products. As said earlier on, this quality is the “special“ one, which every individual perceives in a slightly different way. This explains the connection with *quality*. Seen through the eyes of the respondents: higher prices mean better quality.

As for the other connections, let me just briefly demonstrate the main ideas of the respondents. Why do organic products have a higher price than conventional products? Why are the respondents willing to pay this higher price? It is because they are aware of the farmers having to work physically a lot more when they have to compete against industrial production, because their local production is on a far smaller scale than the industrial one. The work is also a lot more complicated without the possibility to use fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, etc., which in many cases enables a faster production process and greater productivity. In connection with this, the consumers also see the preservation of the environment as important for the increased the price. Sometimes it comes out cheaper to buy chemicals and use them in order to receive greater amounts of products than not to use them. So in order for the farmer to get the same profit, he sells the smaller amount for a higher price. What has been said now can also be applied to small local farmers whose production is not of organic origin, but as we could see in the interviews, respondents perceived the matter in the same way.

From this research we can deduce that in order for the market of organic products to grow in the future it would be a good idea to implement a better system of labelling, indicating the origin as the consumers have shown great concern with local production, less transportation and better quality, when seasonal. Also more information about issues of ethical aspects should be transmitted onto the public.

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Appendix

An example of the transcribed focus group interviews

R – Já si právě myslím, že to souvisí s tím, že ty bio produkty jsou kvalitnější – ta základní surovina – takže už k tomu není zapotřebí dodávat nějaké přídatné látky, aby to mělo nějakou chuť. Prostě u těch konvenčních je k tomu třeba přidat nějaká ta éčka, aby to mělo nějakou chuť.	1	4	
R – Zdravý produkt, záruka kvality bez chemie.	1	4	6
R – Každopádně si myslím, že výrobky jsou to kvalitnější a zdravější a taky dražší.	1	6	23
R – Když je to bez chemie, tak si myslím, že už je to v tom zemědělství, že se nesmí používat postřiky, nesmí se používat určité věci snad i při tom zpracování, pro mě je to samozřejmý, že když to má certifikát, tak to bude čistý.	2	4	8
R – Já kupuji jen značky, které znám. Neznámé značky nebo bio značky, se kterými mám špatné zkušenosti, ty pak už nekupuji. Protože se mi zdají méně kvalitní nebo méně chutné.	3		
R – Já určitě ne, protože si myslím, že se to nějak kontroluje, jako ta půda, proto se ten bio certifikát také přiděluje, takže pro mě je to docela záruka, protože vím, že ČR má jedny z nejpřísnějších norem pro tu certifikaci, takže já když vidím tento certifikát, tak tomu věřím.	3	8	
R – Já si myslím, že pokud to má tu certifikaci, tak prostě ať se prodává kdekoli, je to záruka.	3	8	
R – Bez postřiků a bez chemie, i když si to nedovedu představit, protože se to na to pole stejně splaví z jiného.	4		
R – Mě to nepřijde jako alternativní, mě to přijde jako normální. Lidé uvažují, že je to nějaký nadstandard, ale mě přijde, že by to takhle mělo být, že je to normální jíst věci, kde není spousta chemických srajin. A bohužel už to nejde, celá společnost je někam posunutá a ani neexistuje velká podpora státu pro ty menší farmáře. Když to vidíte, tak v těch supermarketech jsou to všechno německý a rakouský bio potraviny – české ne – nebo jen ty trvanlivé jako třeba čočka a obiloviny.	4		
R – Spíš, že tam není ta chemie, nepřítomnost té chemie.	4		
R – Ještě mě napadá, že u bio výrobků je strašně krátká expirace,	4		

<p>takže to znamená, že nepřidávají žádné konzervační látky a pokud tam nějaké jsou, tak třeba ve formě cukru. U nějakých sladkostí bych třeba i kupovala normální čokoládu nebo sušenky, ale když srovnám obsah potravin a sušenek ne bio, tak tam jsou z 50% konzervační látky, kvůli kterým ty nebio výrobky vydrží.</p>			
<p>R – Někdy na tom výrobku ani nemusí být bio, ale stačí kupovat kvalitní potraviny a zůstává rozum stát, proč výrobce přidává do jogurtu tolik ingrediencí, když ten produkt je mlíko, bakterie a ovocná složka. A teď tam čtete dvacet ingrediencí, prostě to nekoupím kvůli tomu, protože to všechno je zbytečné.</p>	4		
<p>R – Já jsem začal nahrazovat ty běžné potraviny s éčky, které jsou rakovinotvorné téma bio potravinami, která éčka neobsahují. Hlavně ty produkty, co člověk běžně kupuje.</p>	4	6	
<p>R – Když to vidím, myslím si že je to zdravé, bez chemie a také trochu dražší.</p>	4	6	23
<p>R – Že se tam nepoužívají hnojiva a chemické postřiky nebo zvířata, že se chovají v nějakých lidských podmínkách - je to šetrnější i k tomu životnímu prostředí, když se nepoužívají postupy, které se v tom ekologickém zemědělství používat nesmí.</p>	4	12	18
<p>R – Ty biopotraviny mě více informují o tom, co se v tom produktu nachází, kolik vlákniny, kolik vitaminů, sacharidů.</p>	6		15
<p>R – Domácí výrobky, zdravé, hodnotné.</p>		6	16 19
<p>R – Určitě nejdříve, že je to zdravé. Já si myslím, že se určitě nějaká hnojiva používají, ale je to přírodní, takže jsem úplný laik a nerozumím tomu, ale mám víru v to, že to je takhle dobrý, tak to kupuji.</p>	6		17
<p>R – Akorát ty značky se najdou i na věcech ze zahraničí, ta značka neznamena, že je to české.</p>			7
<p>R – Bohužel mám pocit, že je na našich pultech k dostání víc toho zahraničního, než toho českého.</p>			7
<p>R – Také tam nejsou ty zahušťovadla, která jsou hodně v průmyslově vyráběných věcech. Škroby jsou i u bio jogurtů, ale obecně je jich tam míň, aby ty výrobky splňovali ty normy.</p>			8
<p>R – Je fakt, že ty normy a česká hygiena i třeba v nemocnicích u nás v ČR máme mnohem přísnější než někde v zahraničí. Víím, že například ve Španělsku používají nějaké pesticidy, které jsou u nás striktně zakázané a tam to používají, co to víím tak se snažím nekupovat španělské výrobky, i když Španělsko mám ráda, třeba zeleninu. Prostě víím, že u nás jsou ty normy striktnější, co jsem slyšela.</p>			8

R – To jo, ale u všeho tohohle by měla být ta značka zelená, pokud 8 tam není, tak třeba naše bio tam má i tu zelenou, tak to bez problémů kupuji. Ale jestli to má Tesco nebo ten Organic, tak to nevím.	
R – Hledám aby tam ta značka byla, protože Billa nebo Organic si 8 může napsat kdokoli.	
R – Já věřím, že dělají kontroly snad. Ne, že jen ten certifikát dají a 8 15 pak to má ten zemědělec na vždycky, ale, že opakují ty kontroly pravidelně a měří hodnotu.	
R – Je spousta dodavatelů, například Bio life nebo bio zahrada mají 10 19 spousta dodavatelů třeba z Německa, ale i spousta z Čech, tak já když můžu, tak si vyberu ty český. Ale já i když jezdím, tak se třeba zastavím u nich přímo.	
R – Já bych řekla, že mě ty bio výrobky více chutnají. Vůbec mi 11 nevadí, že mrkev se neleskne, tady tomu prostě věřím a i mi to chutná, třeba i chleba, prostě cokoli a asi je to spojené i s podvědomím, že to bývá lepší.	
R – Já myslím, že bio rajčata a obyčejná rajčata, to je velký rozdíl. 11 Nebo kuřecí maso – to obyčejné už ani nemusím jíst, protože to mi přijde jen jako hmota – to bio maso je opravdu lepší.	
R – Já si ale nemyslím, že je to jen v té chuti, ale i poznáte, že když 11 si koupíte bio mléko a zkysne vám, tak vidíte, že tam probíhají nějaké normální procesy, když si koupíte nějaké to průmyslově vyráběné mléko, tak je to něco strašného – nebo krabicové.	
R – To jsou i brambory. Od té doby co jsme začali kupovat bio 11 brambory, tak oproti těm z obchodu je to také obrovský rozdíl.	
R – Ale vždyť je to fakt poznat na té chuti, prostě na vlastnosti té 11 potraviny, tak ať si to ti lidé vyzkouší.	
R – Já to tedy nesleduji, ale vím, že když je to bio, tak ta chuť je 11 16 jiná. Např. rajčata, tam je to úplně znát ten rozdíl mezi domácími a kupovanými.	
R – No tak já určitě také raději podpořím nějakou farmářskou 12 17 výrobu, než nějaký průmysl. Radši si koupím bio vajíčka, protože ty průmyslové ani nejsem schopná sníst, protože vím jak jsou tam ty slepice chované a to je něco šíleného.	
R – Pro mě je číslo jedna podpora domácích zemědělců. A třeba ty 12 19 bio vajíčka kupuji bio, protože soucítím se slepicemi, že ty podmínky jsou jinak fakt hrozný.	
R – Také, že nejsou geneticky upravované. 13	

R – Člověk tomu musí věřit, protože jak by si to jinak vyzkoušel.	15
R – Je to o té psychice, tomu věřit.	15
R – Já jsem to takhle do hloubky nezkoumala, já se opírám o víru a prostě tomu věřím, že to tak je. Nemám čas ani energii, abych to zjišťovala, ale věřím tomu.	15
R – Tak já věřím, že ta společnost, která ty známky udílí, tak to i kontroluje. Stejně jako zemědělce, tak i zpracovatele, supermarkety už asi ne. Ale tam jde hlavně o ty čerstvé potraviny, protože když už je to jednou v balíčku tak tam už se tomu asi nic nestane.	15
R – Já důvěřuji, že když ve složení píšou, že se v těch bio produktech žádná éčka nenacházejí, tak tomu věřím a důvěřuji tomu bio.	15
R – Tak já bych šla spíše po tom označení, kde to je. Protože když to tam není, tak bych tomu nevěřila.	15
R – Mě napadla ještě jedna věc, kterou tu nikdo nezmiňoval. Ono se to vybaví až později, ale také to znamená, že je to pěstované nebo chované s ohledem na životní prostředí.	18
R – Tam je to i napsané a mě to i baví podporovat české výrobce a protože mám i profesi, kde hodně cestuji, tak navštěvuji ty bio farmy a vím, že je to z dobrého místa a schválně to kupuji i od nich. Víc mě to baví a dělá mi to radost, než to koupit někde v supermarketu, kde je to sice označené jako bio, ale je to někde ze zahraničí.	19
R – Tak asi když se budeme bavit o podpoře českého zemědělce, tak je lepší nakupovat přímo od výrobce, nemá smysl chodit do Country life s cílem podpořit zemědělce. Tímto prostřednictvím si myslím, že z toho ten zemědělec moc nemá.	19
R – V tom malém mi i poradí, když nevím co s tím, když dělám něco nového tak mi i paní poradí, v tom supermarketu není koho se zeptat.	22
R – Když srovnávám bio v bioprodejnách a bio produkty v supermarketech, tak rozdíl v cenách moc nespátřuji, ale bio je všeobecně dražší.	23

Grounded Theory Approach

1. Open coding	2. Selective coding
1 quality	1 quality guarantee
2 fraud	2 without chemicals without GMO
3 guarantee	3 origin of products local production home-made/home-grown
4 without chemicals	4 product transportation environment
5 without fear	5 taste
6 health	6 ethical aspects, morals fair trade
7 origin of products	7 health- egoism/altruism
8 certification, control, norms	8 price
9 influence by the surroundings	
10 product transportation	
11 taste	
12 ethical aspects	
13 without GMO	
14 seasonal	
15 trust	

16 home-made/home-grown
17 correct way of production and breeding
18 environment
19 local production
20 fair trade
21 availability
22 shopping, small shops
23 price
24 appearance
25 packaging
26 assortment, offer

A map of the connections between the most important motives for the consumption of organic products

