

This summary compiles **the main results** of a study carried out on behalf of Agence BIO, Intercéréales and Terres Univia, aimed at **characterising the organic soybean sector** within the European Union (EU - 25 countries, **excluding Cyprus and Malta**) and in 15 non-EU countries. The aim of the study was to **characterise production, use by the processing sector, trade flows and prices over the last 5 years, as well as** the regulatory and political environment in non-EU countries. A full report is available, presenting the detailed results of the study via a cross-sectional analysis and country-by-country data.

The methodology was based on **literature searches, interviews with experts and an online survey** of industry operators. **A total of 156 contacts were made.** The study was carried out between January 2023 and May 2024, in conjunction with a study on organic wheat worldwide.

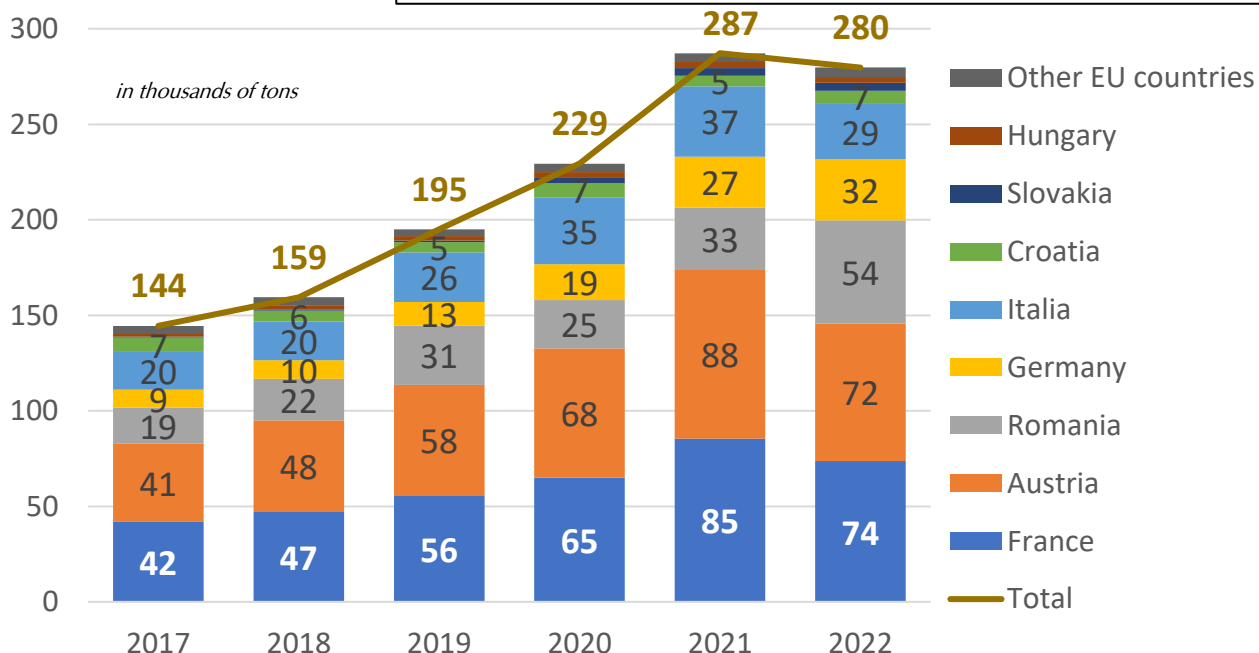
Organic soybean in the European Union

Organic soybean

Organic soybean acreage in the EU has increased by 158% between 2017 and 2022, from 60 kha* to 155 kha. Organic soybean production has almost doubled (+ 94%) in the EU in five years, rising from 144 kt* in 2017 to 280 kt in 2022. It should be noted that, in 2022, production suffered from a significant drop in yield as a result of the drought experienced in the summer. Three countries accounted for nearly three-quarters of the growth : France, Austria and Romania.

In 2022, five countries accounted for more than 90% of EU organic soybean production: France and Austria accounted for 26% of EU production, followed by Romania (19%), Germany (11%) and Italy (10%).

Volumes of organic soybean produced in the EU between 2017 and 2022

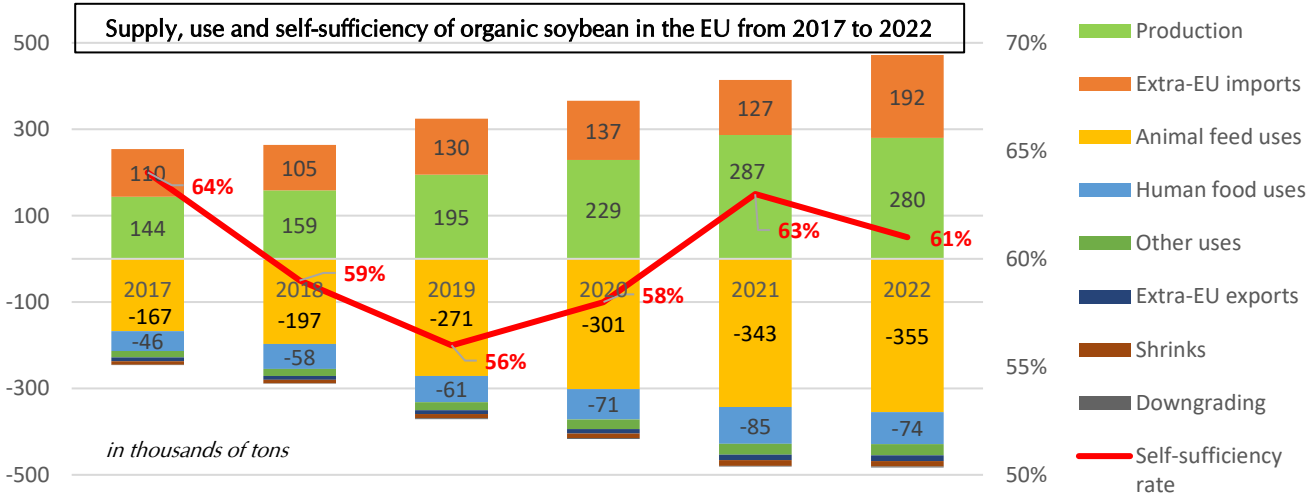


Uses doubled between 2017 and 2022, rising from 236 kt to 470 kt. Germany, Austria, France and Romania accounted for 84% of this growth. Animal feed accounted for almost three-quarters of total use in 2022, and contributed to 81% of the growth (+ 188 kt). Crushing accounted for 86% of feed use. Human food uses accounted for 15% of total uses in 2022, with an increase of 28 kt compared to 2017 (+ 62%).

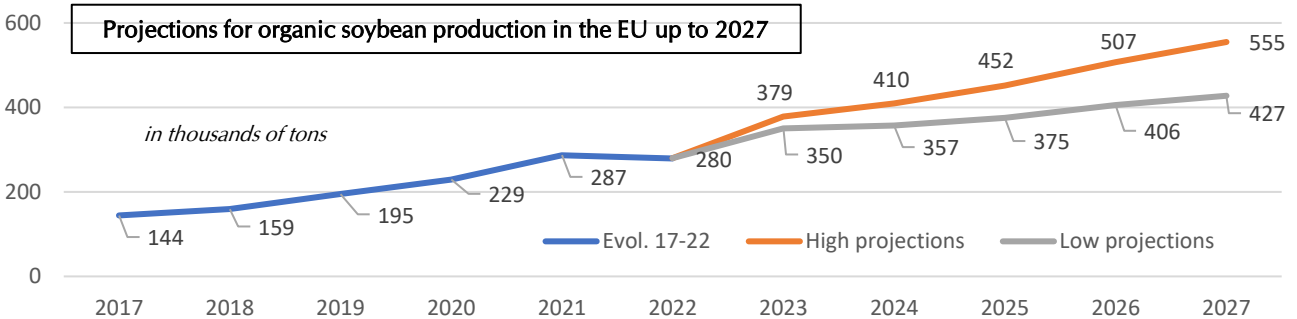
*kha = 1 000 ha; kt = 1 000 t

Imports of organic soybeans from non-EU countries rose sharply over the period 2018-2022, from almost 105 kt to 192 kt (+83%). Some countries have seen sharp increases, such as Germany with +250% (9 kt in 2018 and 32 kt in 2022), France +167% (28 kt to 74 kt), Austria +1700% (0.9 kt to 15 kt), Italy +67% (14 to 23 kt) and the Netherlands +31% (14 kt to 18 kt). In 2022, the main countries exporting to the EU were Togo with 120 kt (63% of imports), Ukraine (31 kt -16%), Benin (14 kt - 7%) and Kazakhstan (12 kt - 6%).

The self-sufficiency rate (= production / domestic market) fell slightly, from 64% to 61%. The European market for organic soybean remains heavily dependent on imports.



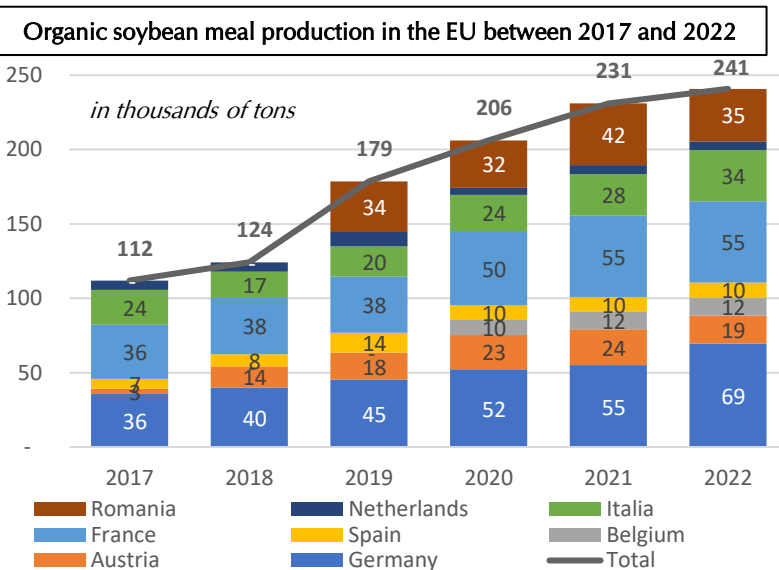
Projections have been made for production in the 25 EU countries studied up to 2027, generally on the basis of the countries' organic development targets (which are sometimes ambitious and hardly achievable), past trends, expert opinion, etc. This production would be between 427 kt (+53% on 2022) and 555 kt (+98%) in 2027. The countries whose production is expected to increase the most are Romania (+89 to 149 kt), Austria (+83 to 103 kt), Italy (+55 to +71kt) and Germany (+55 to 66 kt), while French production is expected to stabilise at around 115 kt.



Soybean meal

Soybean meal production has more than doubled, rising from 112 kt in 2017 to 241 kt in 2022. The most significant developments have taken place in Romania (+35 kt), Germany (+33 kt), Italy (+10 kt) and France (+19 kt).

Globally, imports of organic soybean meal from non-EU countries fell over the period 2018-2022, from almost 243 kt to 209 kt in 2022 (-14%). They reached their highest level in 2019 with 288 kt.



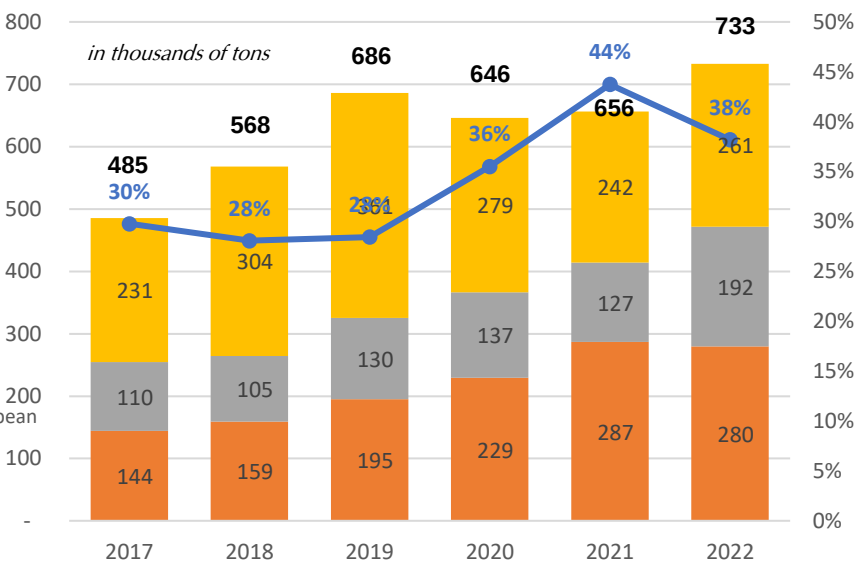
In 2022, the main countries importing organic soybean meal into the EU were the Netherlands (62% of imports), France (11%), Denmark (9%), Spain (6%) and Sweden (6%). The main countries exporting to the EU were China (120 kt - 57% of imports) and India (69 kt - 33%), which together accounted for 90% of European imports of meal. While China's exports to the EU fell from 223 kt in 2018 to 120 kt in 2022 (-46%), India's exports rose from 14 kt to 69 kt in 2022 (+393%). Resources of organic soybean meal increased by almost 52% over the period 2017-2022, thanks to a significant increase in European production, replacing imports. The rate of self-sufficiency in meal (= production, irrespective of the origin of the soybean/usage) reached 58% in 2022, an increase of 19 points compared with 2017.

Total resource

Total resources expressed in soybean equivalent* have risen by 53%, from nearly 485 kt in 2017 to 733 kt in 2022. The share of European production has risen until 2021 to reach 44% of total resources (+14 points), before falling back to 38% in 2022 (+8 points compared to 2017).

- Extra-EU soybean meal imports in eq soybean
- Extra-EU soybean imports
- EU soybean production
- Share of EU production in total resources

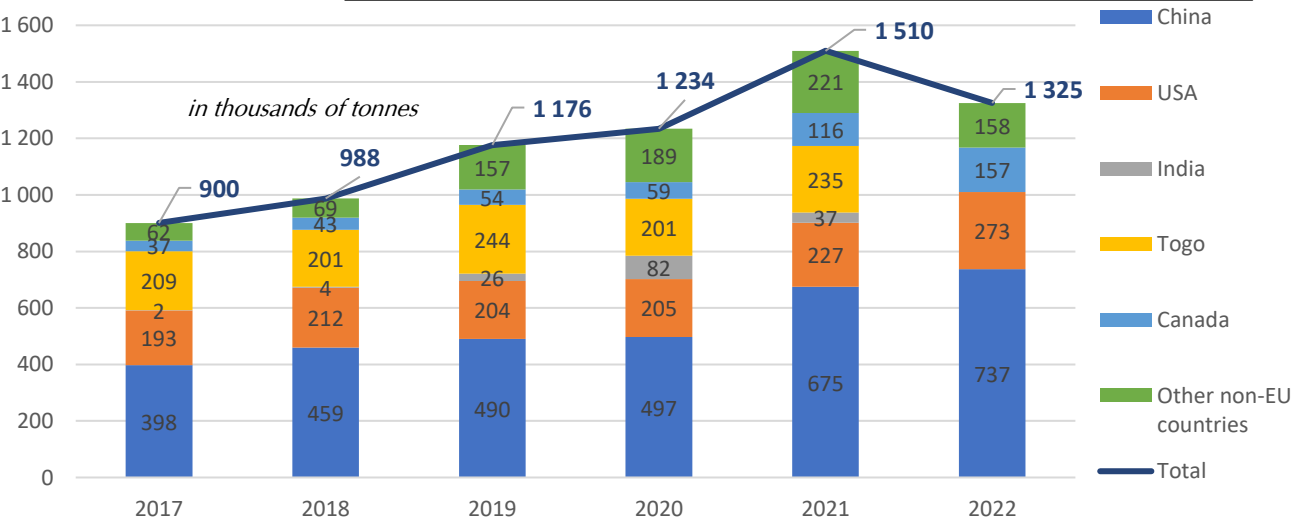
Total resources of soybean and equivalent for the EU market between 2017 and 2022



Organic soybean in non-EU countries studied

Among the non-EU countries studied, the area devoted to growing organic soybean increased by 66% between 2017 and 2022 (excluding India for this year), rising from 721 to 1 201 kha. The main non-EU countries that produce soybean are China (737 kt in 2022), the United States (273 kt) and India (235 kt in 2021). Togo is the fastest-growing country, quadrupling its production of organic soybean between 2017 and 2022. Canada increased its production by 111% between 2017 and 2022, China by 85% and the United States by 42%.

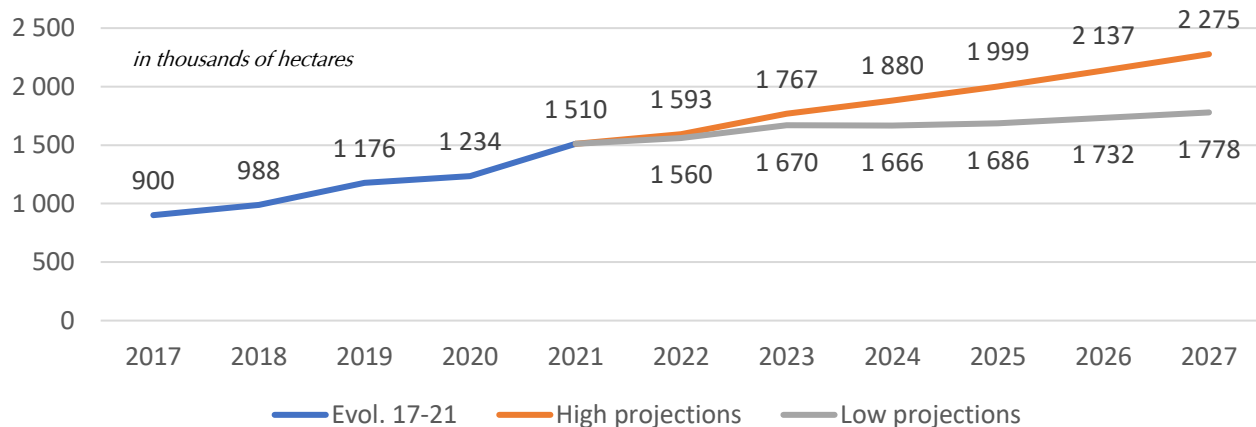
Organic soybean production in several non-EU countries between 2017 and 2022



* Ratio of 1t of soybean for 0.8t of meal

Between now and 2027, between 1 342 and 1 714 kha of land in the non-EU countries studied are expected to be used to produce organic soybean, representing an increase of between 12% and 39%. Togo is expected to see an increase in its organic soybean acreage of between -20% and + 56%, and the USA by +31% (average projection, + 35 kha). China's acreage would increase by between 5% (low projections) and 43% (high projections), putting its production area in 2027 at between 397 and 541 kha.

Comparison of high and low projections for organic soybean acreage in several non-EU countries up to 2027



Conclusions

This work has highlighted **an increase in organic soybean production over the period 2017-2022, both in the EU and in non-EU countries**. The market and uses have also grown, both for food and feed uses. The European market lacks transparency and operates at several speeds. Some countries have a large number of producers and processing plants (Germany, Austria, France and Italy), while others have processing facilities but are mainly dependent on imports (Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Slovakia). Others have a limited domestic market under development, but export a significant proportion of their raw soybean (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and the Czech Republic), while some have embryonic production and processing facilities (Croatia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia). **The EU's dependence on total soybean imports (beans and meal) remains high, but is tending to decrease**. Medium-term forecasts predict a substantial increase in organic soybean production, which could continue this trend.

This work has made it possible to carry out an analysis of total production and the various uses between 2017 and 2022, using a 'balance sheet' approach common to all EU countries and to a sample of non-EU countries. This approach is relevant for measuring market balances on different scales and for characterising market development dynamics. It comes up against **a number of difficulties linked to the lack of data on soybean (both organic and conventional), the small size of the market and the small number of players, particularly for crushing, and the absence of statistical tools, particularly for soyfood**. A number of recommendations were put forward, aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the market and, secondly, broadening the scope of the analysis:

- **To deepen the analysis of the EU organic soybean market** by updating this work within 2 to 3 years; by promoting the balance sheet approach, improving certain estimates for animal feed and human consumption via a closer approach to the main user countries; by continuing to establish contacts with counterparts and by improving the monitoring of export flows at EU level.
- **To explore the dynamics of distant markets** by studying production, use, trade and markets parallel to the EU (e.g. America and Asia), and by strengthening the balance sheet approach in the non-EU countries studied, and to update the analysis within 2 to 3 years in order to measure developments.

Sources: AND-I/Ecozept based on Eurostat sources, TRACES, national sources and expert