

## Associations between nutritional composition and farming type of organically and conventionally grown cereals

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To determine the nutritional composition including the health beneficial dietary component  $\beta$ -glucan of different cereals grown by organic and conventional farming, and to find out the influence of the cereal kind and farming method on their values, as well as the possible associations between particular nutritive components in cereal samples and farming type.

**Material and Methods:** 27 different cereal samples grown at three locations were analysed by standard AOAC methods of analysis for their nutritional composition. A mixed-linkage  $\beta$ -glucan assay kit (Megazyme Ireland) was used for determination of the health benefit dietary component  $\beta$ -glucan value. Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot analysis was done within R 2.9.0 program environment for investigation of associations between average value of cereal nutrients and farming type.

**Results:** A significant increase in the content of ash, dry matter, protein and fat in organically produced cereals was noticed in comparison with those which were produced either by conventional or in conversion method. Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot revealed existence of positive and negative associations between the average value of particular cereal nutrient and farming type.

**Conclusion:** Based on the cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot the possibilities are derived that could be used for agronomic practice, breeding and food processing industry at improving the important properties-dry matter, protein, fat, ash, moisture and  $\beta$ -D-glucan in cereal crops. Organic farming method proved to be effective for oat for the all examined chemical-technological traits except moisture and ash, and for barley for dry matter, beta-glucan, ash and protein contents.

**Keywords:** cereals, organic farming, conventional farming, nutrition,  $\beta$ -glucan, associations

### Introduction

Food is essential to life and wellbeing of the population. A food system operates on the basis of the following stages: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, and disposal of food and food-related items. Food systems are either conventional or alternative according to their model of food lifespan from origin to plate (1).

According to the EU platform for an action on diet, physical activity and health, changes in diet must be done because recent decades have been seen a trend towards less sustainable and less healthy diets, with European citizens consuming too much energy, too many calories, too much fat and sugar, and salt. As a consequence wide-spread diet-related diseases are: obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, osteoarthritis, and cancer. Many studies have proved that cereals are naturally rich with health benefit components such as dietary fibre components (2).

There is evidence that the soluble dietary compound (1 $\rightarrow$ 3)-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)-  $\beta$ -D-glucan has health claim related to cereal-derived  $\beta$ -glucan that may significantly reduce the risk of diseases and strengthen the immune system (3-10).

Organic food systems in comparison with the conventional ones, are characterized by a reduced dependence on chemical inputs and an increased concern for transparency and information (11, 12). Principles of organic food production are: biodiversity, ecological balance, sustainability, natural plant fertilization, natural pest management, and soil integrity. Organic food products are grown or raised by a producer who uses practices in balance with the natural environment, using methods and materials that minimize negative impact on the environment. They are produced on land that has been free of known and

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perceived toxic and persistent chemical pesticides and fertilizers for at least three years prior to certification,

and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are not used in production. Organic foods are planted on a rotating basis within the farm system. Crops are rotated from field to field, rather than growing the same crop in the same place year after year. Cover crops such as clover are planted to add nutrients to the soil and prevent weeds. Organic meat, poultry and egg products come from farms that use organic feed, do not administer added hormones to promote growth or any antibiotics and they allow animals the space and freedom to behave naturally.

In 1992 the European Community developed organic standards and a certification scheme (13). The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) also has a set of organic principles which were the basis of the guidelines for organically produced foods of the internationally recognized Codex Alimentarius (14) of the World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WHO/FAO food standards). Codex Alimentarius is the internationally accepted food safety standard for all food products traded worldwide. There is a set of standards within the Codex Alimentarius that covers organic food.

In October 2002, the production and marketing of organic food came under regulation by the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Program. The National Organic Standards Board, a federal advisory panel to the USDA for developing organic legislation.

The law for organic agricultural production, food products and food in Republic of Macedonia was introduced in 2009, and the changes and supplements in 2011 (15).

## Material and Methods

The content of nutritive components (moisture, ash, dry matter, crude protein and crude fat) in 27 different cereal samples: wheat, rye, barley, oat, and millet, grown at three locations during 2013 was analysed by standard AOAC methods of analysis.

### Determination the content of $\beta$ -glucan

A mixed-linkage  $\beta$ -glucan assay kit (Megazyme Ireland) was used for determination in the analysis of the health benefit dietary component  $\beta$ -glucan value, based on the method published by McCleary and Codd 1991 (16). The method has been accepted by the AOAC (Method 995.16), AACC (Method 32-23.01) and ICC Standard Method (No.166).

The principle of the method in brief is that cereal samples (1 g in duplicate) were suspended and hydrated in sodium phosphate buffer pH 6.5 for hydrolysis with highly purified lichenase enzyme and filtered, than hydrolysis with  $\beta$ -D-glucosidase.  $\beta$ -D-glucan is specifically hydrolysed by lichenase to

oligosaccharides, which are quantitatively cleaved to glucose by  $\beta$ -glucosidase. Glucose is measured using glucose oxidase - peroxides - buffer mixture.

The results have been shown as a mean values  $\pm$  standard deviation. The value of  $\beta$  content was calculated on dry weight basis.

### Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot analysis

In order to find out the existence of associations between average value of cereal nutrients and farming type, cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot analysis was done within R 2.9.0 program environment (17).

### Statistical analysis

Data were tested for significance using analysis of variance, the F-test using the software package Statgraph 3.0 (Statistical Graphics, Warrenton, Virginia, USA).

## Results

### Determination the content of cereal nutrients

The results obtained from the investigations on the content of cereal nutrients: ash, protein, fat and dry matter are presented in the Figures 1-8.

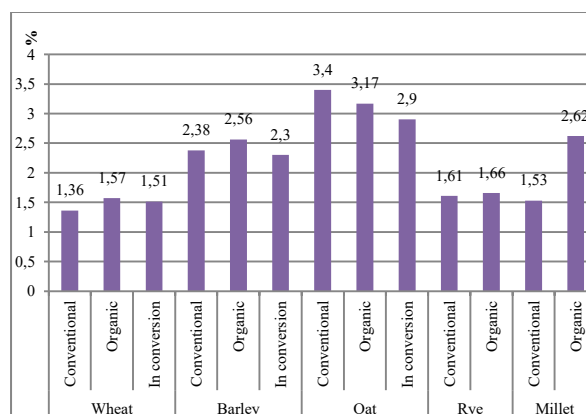


Figure 1. Content of ash in cereal samples cultivated conventionally and organically

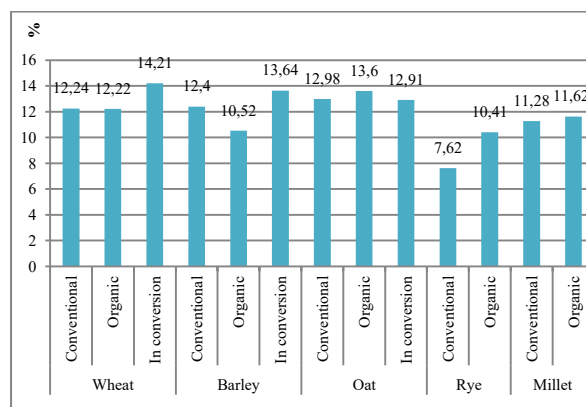


Figure 2. Content of protein in cereal samples cultivated conventionally and organically

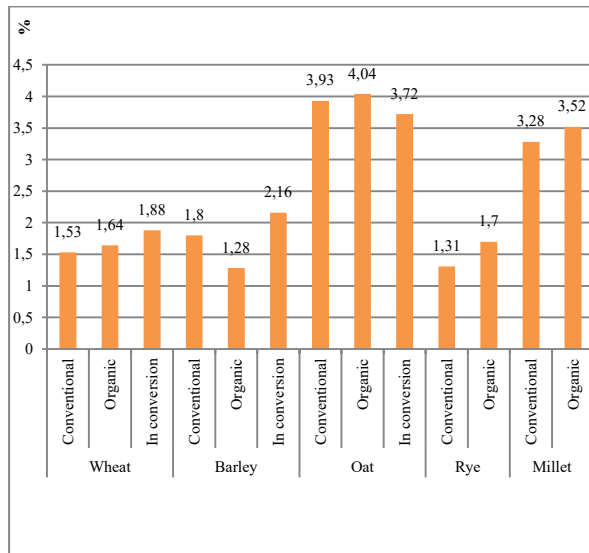


Figure 3. Content of fat in cereal samples cultivated conventionally and organically

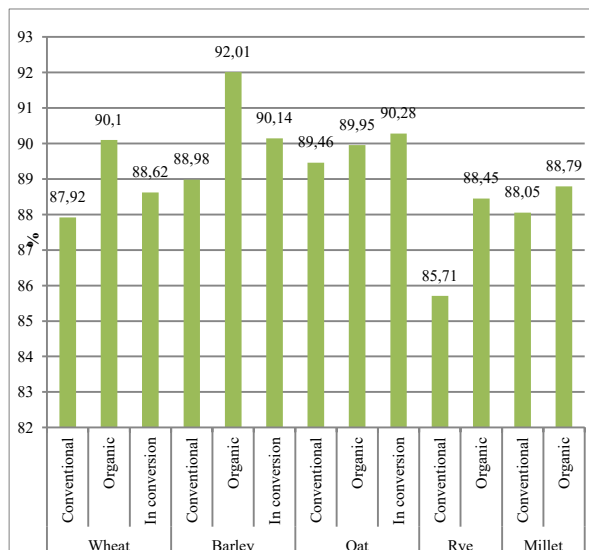


Figure 4. Content of dry matter in cereal samples cultivated conventionally and organically

From the Figures (1-4) can be seen that there was a significant increase in the content of ash, dry matter, protein and fat in organically produced cereals in comparison with those which were produced either by conventional or in conversion method: the increase of ash content was 15% with wheat, 7% with barley, and 71% with millet, the increase of protein content was 37% with oat and 3% with rye, and the decrease of 15% with barley, and the increase of crude fat content was 15% with wheat, 3% with oat, 29% with rye and 7% with millet.

**Determination the content of  $\beta$ -glucan content in cereal samples**

The results obtained from the investigations on  $\beta$ -glucan content in cereal samples are presented in Figures 5.

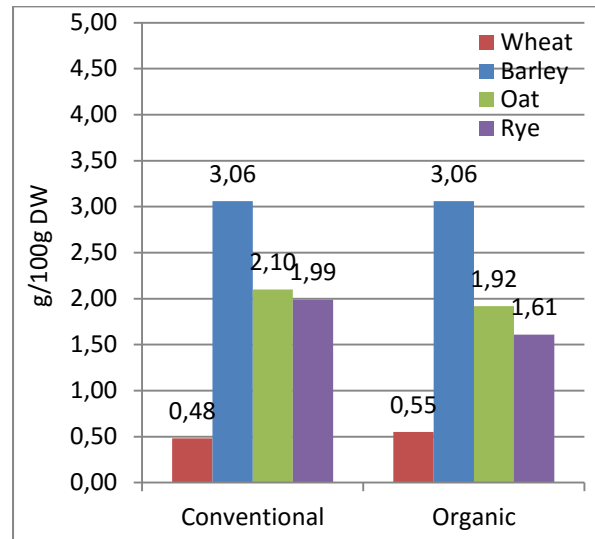


Figure 5. Content of  $\beta$ -glucan in wheat, Barley, oat and rye cultivated conventionally and organically.

Comparing the values of  $\beta$ -D-glucan in organic and conventional cereals (Figs. 5-8), it was noticed the following: slight increase in organic wheat (9.84%), and slight decrease in oat (2.91%), and small decrease in rye (18.06%).

**Associations between average value of nutrients and cereal farming type**

Figure 6 re-present the associations between average value of nutrients: ash, dry matter, crud protein, crud fat and  $\beta$ -glucan in cereals investigated, and the farming type.

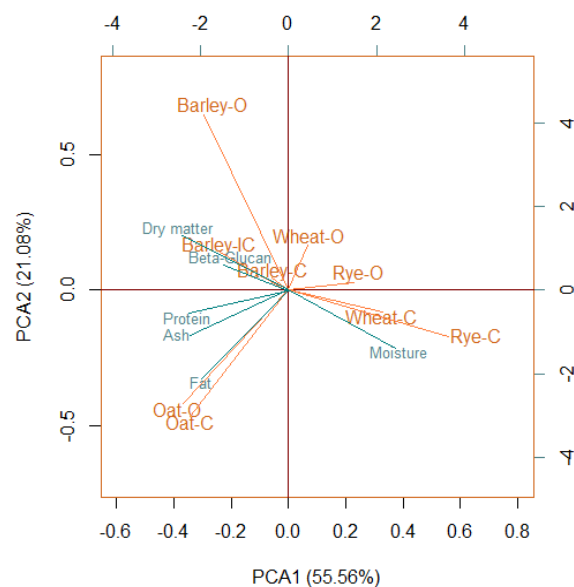


Figure 6. Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot. (dry matter, protein, ash, fat, moisture,  $\beta$ -glucan)

Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot (Figure 6) revealed existence of negative associations between: average dry matter content and average beta-glucan content

and wheat and rye conventionally farmed; average fat content and wheat and rye organically farmed and to lesser extent for wheat and rye obtained from conventional farming method; average protein content and average ash content and wheat and rye produced with the conventional farming method; average moisture content and barley produced with the in conversion farming method and little weaker for barley obtained from conventional farming method.

## Discussion

Our research has revealed that barley grown by either conventional or in conversion farming method proved to have the highest content of dry matter. Oat obtained from organic farming method exhibited the highest fat, protein and ash content. In comparison of the organic to conventional farming method, there was no change in the content of  $\beta$ -D-glucan value for barley which was grown either by organic or conventional farming.

Cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot explained high proportion of G + GE variance of 76.64% and revealed existence of positive associations between: average dry matter content and average beta-glucan content and barley produced from the in conversion farming method and also little weaker for barley produced with the conventional farming method; average fat content, average protein content and average ash content and oat produced with the organic farming method and also little weaker for oat produced with the conventional farming method; average moisture content and wheat and rye conventionally farmed.

A phenotype by trait bi-plot can help understand the associations among breeding objectives and identify traits that are positively or negatively correlated, traits that are redundantly measured, and traits that can be used in indirect selection for another trait (18). It also helps to visualize the trait profiles of phenotypes (19), what is of particular importance for selection programs, agronomic practice and food processing industry.

## Conclusion

Based on the cereal kind-farming method by chemical-technological trait bi-plot the possibilities are derived that could be used for agronomic practice, breeding and food processing industry at improving the important properties-dry matter, protein, fat, ash, moisture and  $\beta$ -D-glucan in cereal crops.

As contents of protein, dry matter,  $\beta$ -D-glucan, fat and ash were positively associated the same-directional breeding for these traits would be possible, while due to negative association with moisture the co-breeding for moisture content in the same direction would not be possible.

Barley grown by either conventional or in conversion farming method proved to have the highest content of dry matter and  $\beta$ -D-glucan content when compared to

other cereals investigated, whereas oat obtained from organic farming method exhibited the highest fat, protein and ash content.

Organic farming method proved to be effective for oat for the all examined chemical–technological traits except moisture and ash, and for barley for dry matter, beta-glucan, ash and protein contents. Average ash content and average moisture content were positively associated leading for the possibility of the same-directional breeding for these traits.

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**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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