

## Extended Abstract

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<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Technical advisors and technical inspectors for the development of organic agriculture: professional profiles and job issues</b>
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<b>Abstract</b>	<b>200 words max</b>
<p>The development of organic farming is one of the drivers for the green transition envisaged by the European Union. To achieve this objective, it is necessary to strengthen the network of technicians and dissemination services along the chain. However, preliminary interviews have shown that the work of consultants and technical inspectors is not always associated with adequate satisfaction levels. Considering the scientific literature, we conducted an empirical online survey about the level of satisfaction of technical consultants and inspectors with their work. In this paper, we used data relating to respondents' characteristics, work activities, and job satisfaction. Finally, we developed a frequency analysis related to the different selected variables and measured the degrees of association between satisfaction levels and other variables. Results showed positive satisfaction levels with remuneration, the possibility of bringing out personal and professional qualities, and work autonomy, except for high-stress conditions and excessive responsibility. In addition, the measurement of the degree of association between variables made it possible to identify the variables that influence satisfaction levels. The deepening of the developed analyses could bring to identify strategies to promote technicians' work.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	Organic Agriculture, Extension Services, Job Satisfaction
<b>JEL Code</b>	Labor and Demographic Economics: Job satisfaction J28 see: <a href="http://www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q">www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q</a> )
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>The development of organic farming is one of the drivers for the green transition envisaged by the European Union. To achieve this objective and increase the number of companies entering or operating in the organic agri-food chain, however, it is necessary to strengthen the network of technicians and dissemination services that professionally support farms and companies along the chain (European Commission, 2019; Cerf M. &amp; Hemidy L., 1999; SCAR, 2019 Van Oost I.; 2019). However, preliminary interviews carried out as part of the planned research activity have shown that the work of consultants and technical inspectors is not always associated with adequate satisfaction levels. Therefore, we realised that this could be a bottleneck holding back the development of organic farming. In a long time scientific literature, papers that analyse job satisfaction (e.g. Yadav et al., 2022; Sverke et al., 2002; Rhodes, 1983; Bakker &amp; Demerouti, 2017; Hackman &amp; Lawler, 1971) are mainly in the corporate or social services field. In the case of the organic sector, further factors to be analysed are indeed represented by the multiplicity and characteristics of the</p>	

companies involved in the entire supply chain, from farm to fork, and by the contractual relationship that binds consultants and technical inspectors with companies in the organic sector. As a result, we considered it necessary to carry out an empirical online survey about the level of satisfaction of technical consultants and inspectors with their work.

**Methodology**

*100 – 250 words*

An online interview was adopted for the research through a questionnaire. The investigation involved two professional figures, i.e. technical inspectors and consultants. Operationally, we benefited from the support of a national association (ATBio) to which numerous technicians of the reference population adhere. The connection with ATBio has allowed us to repeatedly contact the technicians to solicit their participation in the survey. In addition, the participating technicians were asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to other technicians, even if they did not belong to ATBio. Thus, we further expanded the number of interviews through a snowball process. At the end of the data collection, we had 117 respondents. The questionnaire included 42 questions (open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, and Likert scale) organised into 12 specific sections. In this work, however, we have focused the analysis on only a part of the information. We used data relating to the characteristics of respondents and their work activities (professional position, specialisation of work activities and types of companies assisted, variation and sustainability of workloads over time) and data relating to the declared levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the work activity itself. Finally, we developed a frequency analysis related to the different selected variables and measured the degrees of association between satisfaction levels and other variables.

**Results**

*100 – 250 words*

Many respondents perform two or more activities. The technical inspector is the most widespread activity, carried out by 92 respondents (78.6%). Among the interviewees, the consultants were 58 (49.6%), those working as trainers 22, and 30 worked in other professions, e.g. teachers or farmers. Just over 50% of technicians focus their activities on specific industries, and the companies that most frequently represent their customers are those specialised in arable crops, fruit growing, viticulture, olive growing and food processing companies. More than 50% of respondents complain about a considerable workload increase due to the burden of bureaucratic procedures and customer increase. In addition, about 30% of technicians define workloads as unsustainable in the long run. Questions relating to levels of satisfaction showed substantially positive opinions. Somewhat or fully satisfied technicians are 66.7% if we refer to remuneration, 78.6% to the possibility of bringing out personal and professional qualities, and 79.5% to the degree of work autonomy. However, 50.4% of technicians work under high-stress conditions and 57.3% work with excessive responsibility. The association between variables is significant if we consider ties between levels of satisfaction about remuneration and the degree of specialisation of the activities carried out by technicians. Moreover, the specialisation of activities is significantly linked to low-stress levels. The deepening of the developed analyses could bring to identify strategies to promote technicians' work.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

*100 – 250 words*

In order to achieve all the predetermined national goals, it is essential to detect all the potential improving opportunities and to convert the possible weaknesses in strength points. This can be achieved thanks to the knowledge of the operational reality and an

understanding of the working problems of technicians. Some of the daily issues that consulting and inspecting technicians have experienced have been highlighted by the scientific literature and analysis concerning their working activity and their work satisfaction. Lastly, we have identified some strategic areas of action to furtherly invest in for the enhancement of the technician figure. These concern in-depth and reorganization actions regarding:

- the design of training activities (training and refresher courses) and the reorganization of services, both to address the current workloads and to facilitate the growth of the organic sector;
- the evolution of professional practices of technicians, once again with a sustainable perspective, protecting the environment, the producers and the consumers;
- the development of methods for optimizing the work done by technicians, coping with the problems found in the survey;
- the identification of more efficient and relevant tools to enable technicians to define with farmers their needs and translate them into results;
- the identification of tools to improve farmers' response to the technical and procedural directions made by technicians and in accordance with the needs of the organic system.