



ORGANIC FARMING

"THE BASICS WE SHOULD KNOW"

BY

Vincent, B. Sebukyu

Tel: 256 414 370 203 [OFF] / 256 772 723 806 [MOB]



DEFINITION

Organic means things that come from the soil, plants, poultry and animals. Organic farming maximizes farm resources, putting emphasis on soil fertility and natural processes.

In organic farming, farm plants are used to feed animals / birds, and animal / bird manure is used to feed plants.

Organic farmers avoid inorganic fertilizers and pesticides which are harmful to the environment and humans. Organic products fetch higher prices than conventional products.



CONTROL OF PESTS & DISEASES



Organic farmers control pests and diseases by using a combination of natural methods.

We can stop pests and diseases by making pesticides using local plants like; chili, onions, lantana, marigold and papaya leaves. We can then add cow urine and wood ash to make stronger pesticides.

We also plant repellants like onions and neem. We can rotate crops regularly to stop pests and diseases. Organic farmers remove sick plant material as soon as they see it. They clean tools and their boots regularly to stop diseases from spreading in their farm. This mix of practices is sometimes called Integrated Pest Management [IPM].



SOIL & WATER



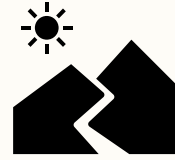
All farmers should stop soil erosion and conserve water in order to grow crops well. Organic farmers use terraces and bunds to stop water run off, which eventually carries away the useful top soil.

Terraces and bunds help to increase the soil's ability to absorb water, and which helps plants to access both water and nutrients from the soil.

Organic farmers can also plant trees to bind soil together and stop wind erosion. We can use mulch to add organic matter, stop splash erosion and conserve water.



SOIL FERTILITY



Soil fertility is the capacity of the soil to supply plants with nutrients. We improve soil fertility by adding organic matter, preventing nutrient loss, and adding the lost nutrients.

When we plant legumes, such as: beans, ground nuts or calliandra and use green manure or improved fallows, we are adding nitrogen to the soil. When we plough crops into the soil, their nutrients used by the next crop in the field.

And, when we use liquid manure, we are adding nutrients to the soil. When we dig in compost, we are giving our crops the best food they can get from the soil.



BIODIVERSITY



Biodiversity refers to the variety of life in an area. Organic farmers keep a large number of species of plants, animals, birds and insects on their farm. Each has a role it plays on the farm: birds eat the insects; hedges provide shelter for useful insects that help organic matter to decompose and pollinate plants.

Indigenous local species are helped not to become extinct, while burning is avoided as it destroys life on the farm, and each crop has several uses or by-products.



QUALITY



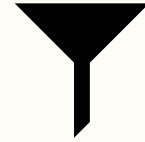
Quality starts right from the seed. Planting healthy seeds and using nursery beds gives a farmer healthy plants or animals right from the beginning. Later, good careful harvesting ensures that a farmer gets the best price from the organic produce.

After harvesting - proper drying adds value; careful storage stops any loss of produce. Buyers pay different prices for different grades. For example: bigger and clean coffee beans fetch a higher price.

The higher the grade of the produce, the better the price for the organic farmer.



SEPARATE HANDLING



Organic farmers protect their produce from contamination. Both organic and conventional fields must be separated by buffer zones or natural barriers of grass or a live hedge of shrubs.

Processing and storage of produce must be separated to avoid contamination.

Buyers of organic produce check regularly for traces of inorganic chemicals in the organic produce, and their discovery of non permissible chemicals can easily result in a shipment returned to its exporter and a sale contract terminated.



DOCUMENTATION



In organic farming, we use documents to help with organic certification. Inspection forms are used to ensure farming remains organic. These also help the organic field officer to show the farmer how s/he can improve:

- ✓ The organic growers' list is used to record information about the fields of all the farmers in the village.**
- ✓ The farmer contract is a guide for farmers to ensure high standards in organic farming.**
- ✓ Maps are used to show fields, boreholes, roads and houses in a village.**



CERTIFICATION



A certificate is a written guarantee that the product meets the required organic standards. Independent agencies certify organic farmers to ensure neutrality. Most farmers convert to organic over a period of 2 – 3 years, although this can be shortened to 1 year.

Internal Inspections and trainings for a producer group are part of an Internal Control System. The system keeps the organic farming group in line with the expected organic standards.

External inspections occur when individual farmers are checked to ensure their Internal Control System is working and that the farmers' group is indeed practicing organic farming.



MARKETING



Certified organic products earn a premium price for their unique quality and safety to humans from poisonous chemicals. The price is higher because organic farmers consider several environmental factors on their farms. This is emphasized in the process of marketing their organic products.

Good packaging is also used to add value, and goods are mainly exported to get a higher price.

Organic farmer groups often encourage training and monitoring of farmers, this helps to produce big quantities and ensures a constant supply of products for the export market.



ROLE OF THE FAMILY



Buyers choose organic products because they believe that the farmers are looking after the land in a sustainable way. They want the extra money they pay for the organic produce to benefit the lives of the families of the organic farmers.

Husbands and wives are expected to work together to manage the farm better. Children are expected to be educated, and the family should have good health care, and live in a clean environment.

These should eventually improve household income, food security, family health and avoid any form of violence in the family.



ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY



Buyers choose organic products because they believe that the efforts of the individual organic farmers on their farms supports the land in entire community to be managed well. They want that extra money they pay for the organic produce to benefit the farmers and develop the whole community.

Organic farmers should consequently avoid forced labor on their farms. Instead farmers in the community should work together to share information and encourage each other.

Community members are expected to respect each other, especially the vulnerable people, such as children, the elderly and those with physical and mental challenges.



MEMBER ORGANISATION

EMAIL : vsebukyu@pvcommodity.com

**TEL : +256 414 370 203 [office]
+256 772 723 806 [mobile]**