

# Organicgrowth

*for a healthy planet*

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## Going organic is a better way to save the planet

A recent study by the Oxford University's Department of Plant Sciences and the Swedish University of Agricultural Science reveals that organic farms support 34 percent more plant, insect and animal species than conventional farms. This is particularly true for pollinators such as bees. As the largest integrated organic farm of its kind in India, we are proud and delighted that our estate is now native predator – friendly which in turn has a positive impact by helping control insects and other life forms that impact tea bushes, leaves and soils. These are the bio-pesticides that will help us produce healthy crops and reduce costs. Few people know this, but much of the tea produced in the Northeast is by smaller, independent growers. Our hope is that in the future, we extend our expertise to these small-scale farmers and encourage them to grow organically.

- Across the world, Assam is almost as famous for its teas as it is for the great Indian one-horned rhino next to whose home the Hathikuli Tea Estate is located.
- Driven by consumer demand, markets across the world are now demanding chemical-free tea, not merely for the sake of their own health, but because consumers want to disassociate from the damage caused by toxic pesticides when these leach into the environment from plantations.
- At Hathikuli, the transition from chemical to organic farming has been an incredibly challenging journey. Working with those in the know, our aim was to show that organic farming can be viable, and that the tea industry can sustain itself without destroying natural biodiversity.
- We are in the process of educating ourselves and developing organic packages and practices which will help create a knowledge base for farmers across the world and more importantly in India and specifically Assam.

We salute Mr. G Nammalvar who was both a preacher and a practitioner of organic farming in rural India and has left behind his views and wisdom indelibly marked for us to look to and learn from.

This issue has case studies and voices from the Hathikuli team where we embarked on the organic journey. We also showcased front runners and leaders in the field of organic protocols and practices.

Ranjit Barthakur, Chairman, APPL Foundation 







## Hathikuli, A 100% Organic Farm- views from team Hathikuli ☺



### Sujay Ghosh (2nd clerk)



Hathikuli Tea Estate is an Organic Garden and Hathikuli Organic farm is the largest in Asia.

I am very much happy that our garden is well known around the world for its organic status.

In my opinion the garden should remain as organic as it has many benefits such as-

1. It has gained worldwide publicity due to its organic status.
2. Being Next to Kaziranga National Park and being a tourist destination for many foreigners, being Organic helps in gaining recognition as an environment friendly farm.
3. It helps in maintaining the pristine eco-system of Kaziranga.
4. Organic tea is good for health and fetches a premium price in the market.
5. Being Organic the Garden is benefiting its consumers and the environment.

### Motilal Karmakar (Line Chowkider)



I am happy that Hathikuli is producing Organic Tea which is Beneficial for health, and the organic status has attracted many wild animals, birds and butterflies to the garden indicating a healthy environment.

But the drastic loss of crop, and the ravaging effects of Helopeltis has raised fear in the hearts of the workers as to for how long will the Garden be able to sustain itself with such less leaf being harvested compared to the other nearby gardens.

### Surjeet Singh Garewal (Dy. Manager)



1. Organic Tea is a future of tea as pesticide-residue problem is becoming a major health issue the world-over, which is specific not only to Tea.
2. All claims about the several beneficial aspects of tea are baseless if tea is not Organic. With new and resistant varieties

of pests, we are sure to lose sight public control of the ppm yard stick.

3. It is long term operating process and requires to keep a healthy patience to get the desired results.
4. Organic process unless & until it does not build-up naturally the outsourcing of the materials will not be much helpful.

### Chandan Sarma (Actg. Manager)



This is my first experience of an Organic estate and I am very much proud to be associated to the largest Organic farm in India. Though I have competed only a few days in this estate I have noticed certain points, as detailed below, which are very much different to a conventional estate.

- Various species of butterflies and insects are present in the estate in larger numbers which is not found in conventional garden.
- The weed 'bagracoat' is not as





predominant as in case of a conventional estate.

- Mother Nature has already taken care of various obnoxious pests like red spider, looper, thripsetc in Hathikuli which otherwise needs to be controlled with strong pesticides in conventional estates.

The estate has taken a heavy toll on the crop front for last couple of years but any conventionally managed estate requires 8 to 10 years' time to attain a level of sustainability when converted to organic. I strongly believe that we are in the right path in this regard.

Further, I request our principals to look into the possibilities for obtaining Fair Trade Certification also which is The Demand of the global market for tea.

#### Angna Orang (Welfare Officer)



Conversion of Hathikuli T.E into organic has been a big Challenge. The company has taken this hard decision as a commitment towards conserving Nature, and maintaining a pollution free ecosystem. Especially as the garden is an indispensable part of the entire Kaziranga eco system.

Organic has also ensured chemical and heavy metal free tea for its consumers.

But in doing so the Company has been hard hit with a fast and alarming decline in crop, Hopefully one day when the soil will become

self-sustaining the crop too will become stable.

I think Hathikuli will definitely progress as an Organic.

#### UpenGogoi (JB, Hathikuli Division)



Hathikuli Tea Estate has completed 6 years of being an organic garden. During these years many positive and negatives of being an organic were realized. Some of those points are mentioned below-

- 1) The most serious impact is on the crop, which has drastically gone down.
- 2) As we cannot use any chemicals to control weeds, they grow very fast during monsoon.
- 3) Hathikuli being one of the largest organic farm has become very popular among people, and which will help in marketing the products under Hathikuli brand.
- 4) Being next to Kaziranga National Park the organic status of the garden has really helped the eco system.

#### Sandeepan Bhattacharjee (Assistant Manager)



I have spent 1 year in Hathikuli Organic, and it's really an unique experience to work in an organic garden.

The garden has been 100%

organic since 2008. Though the crop has drastically fallen down from 10 Lac Kgs to only 3.5 Lac Kgs and which is really alarming I am sure that in the long run it will sustain us and Hathikuli will be a pioneer for Organic success in Assam.

Normally an Organic garden will take at least 10 to 15 years to stabilize, and which normally proves to be a tough time for the company.

If the loss of crop is too much to bear and unexpected by the company than in my views at least one out of the three divisions may be converted back to Inorganic.

#### Bikash Kakati (Assistant Manager)



Organic tea business is growing by 15 percent every year. Now-a-days consumers are more health conscious and prefer organically produce food products. Though the crop has reduced compared to any other conventional tea gardens but in long run as demand of organic tea or organically produced food products is increasing therefore our success in future is guaranteed.

Considering all the pros and cons in my views we should have Value Addition in tea (zinger tea, tulsi tea and other forms of flavored teas) or new product innovation initiative to foster market growth and which will have a cushioning effect and minimize the impact of crop loss.





## New earthworm species developed by IVRI to free Brahmaputra basin of wild aquatic plants

BAREILLY: This will come as good news for the natives of Assam valley and those inhabiting the banks of the Brahmaputra. A new earthworm species has been developed by the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) that can get rid of the wild aquatic plant Jal Kumbhi growing on the banks of river Brahmaputra. The plant, whose scientific name is *Pistia Stratiotes*, is a big menace in the region since it spreads its tentacles right upto the river bed and impairs the movement of fishermen besides causing widespread pollution.

IVRI has recently signed a MOU with IIT Guwahati to free the Brahmaputra basin of the plant's menace. Prof Ranvir Singh of IVRI, who is also an animal breeder, told TOI, "The earthworm - Jai Gopal - has the ability to eat wild vegetation very fast and convert it into organic fertilizer that is suitable for use in farming."

Jai Gopal, which has been given the scientific name *Perionyx ceylanesis*, can also withstand different temperature variations and survive temperatures ranging from 0 degrees celsius to 43 degrees unlike foreign species such as *Icina Fetida* and *Udilus Ujini* which are used by scientists across the globe and can only remain alive at temperatures varying from 15 degrees to 30 degrees.

## The Dragonfly: A high rise farm of the future

Can you imagine taking an elevator ride to your local apple orchard?

Belgian architect Vincent Callebaut has designed a futuristic self-sustaining, twin-towered high-rise complex that would bring organic farming right to the heart of the New York City.

The 132-floor urban farm has been aptly named "Dragonfly" for its unique glass-and-steel wings that stretch into the sky, according to AFP. Designed to be built on Roosevelt Island --a narrow strip of land in New York City's East River-- the complex would provide urban farming space with enough room to raise cattle and poultry and 28 different types of crops.

At the bottom of the complex, there would be a floating market on the East River for growers to sell their organic produce.

According to Callebaut, each building would be self-sufficient and act as a mini-power station. Energy is harvested from the sun and wind to heat and cool the building; in the winter, hot air is trapped between the building's outer wing, and during the summer ventilation and transpiration from plant growth keep it cool. Plants along the exterior of the structure would also capture rainwater and then re-circulate domestic waste as fertilizer.

"The goal is to bring agriculture and nature back into the urban core so that by 2050...we

have green, sustainable cities where humans live in balance with their environment," Callebaut told AFP in an interview from his studio in Paris. He hopes to cut down on the amount of food needed to be trucked from all over the world to feed the growing population of big urban centers like New York City, which puts a strain on natural resources and the environment.

While Callebaut's idea may seem like something out of a sci-fi flick, the concept of vertical farming is gaining traction with

increasing urbanization around the globe. Pasona Urban Farm, a nine-story office building in Tokyo, lets employees to grow their own food in specially reserved green spaces.

Callebaut, who recently exhibited the Dragonfly at an international fair in China, has yet to find a U.S. buyer for his concept. He's got another idea for a "farmscraper" in Shenzhen, China that will have food gardens, housing, offices, leisure space all mixed together in one space.







## Why is organic food still not popular despite its many merits? Farmers, retailers and users have their say.

Kavya Sridhar knows that organic fruits, vegetables and paruppu taste far better than regular fare. But, her problem is that they are not easily available in the city. Heading to an organic store means a detour of at least five km, not something she can bother with on a regular working day.

But Madhurima Kantjee, who is a recent convert to organic produce, travels 10 km to the city twice a week to buy organic vegetables and other items. She lives in the suburbs, where the organic culture is yet to seep in. Her family wonders if it is worth all the effort and whether it is sensible to guzzle fuel to follow a more 'eco-friendly' way of life!

This lack of access has been Coimbatore's bane when it comes to organic produce. This, when the city has many enlightened farmers who cultivate organic or natural vegetables, and growers who are active in the retail business.

A decade ago, fuelled by the initial boom, many stores came up. But, few survived. Some had to change locations to keep the overheads low, others kept tweaking their business model. Most pulled down their shutters. Only a few have managed to break even, that too after nearly 10 years of struggle.

One of them, K. Baskar of Arya Organic Food Store, feels awareness levels among consumers is still low. "Farmers will cultivate more organic produce if there is demand. We also do not have enough variety," he says. Baskar says that farmers are willing to go organic even with herbs such as celery, but it does not make business sense when all they can sell is a kilo. "The transportation costs are killing," says Baskar.

The best thing would be to keep overheads low, so that business is sustained even with low volumes, he says. Price is another factor,



but once the numbers come in, that will automatically come down, he adds.

N.G. Prabhuram of Mani Naidu Natural Farm is a member of the Indian Natural Farmers Association. Here, they follow a style of farming that calls for zero inputs. About 25 such farmers got together recently to set up a store in Bharathi Park to sell natural produce. Though they had patronage, they could not sustain it for long. "We could not manage enough supplies of fresh vegetables, and the rent was exorbitant," he says. Now, they have moved to Peelamedu Pudur where they sell cowdung-based products. Vegetables are no longer stocked because fewer people cultivate them.

"A change will come," says Prabhuram, if the Government provides incentives to those who farm without abusing the land. For now, he sells produce (bananas) from his farm at the R.S. Puram Uzhavar Sandhai at rates fixed by the Government. "It is still economically feasible as I don't spend any money to buy pesticides or fertilisers," he says.

For farmers, selling organic produce in the market is fraught with tension. "People find the vendaikai from my farm pale. They have come to associate freshness with the bright green colour. It's very sad," says Saravanan Varadarajan. He recently started an outlet, lyal, to reduce this gap between the farmer and consumer. There you can pick a terribly disfigured red pumpkin that yields the sweetest flesh and a wrinkled red tomato that bursts with sweet juice.

Kavya says stores should prominently display information about organic food. "I know that the stock that comes out of cooking organic arhar dal is always thicker and tastier.

I have also tried organic rajma and it cooks beautifully. If scientific details (such as gain in cooking time, nutrition benefits, etc.) are displayed boldly, you will be tempted to buy the stuff. And, once you use it and experience its benefits firsthand, you'll go back to it time and again," she says.

Some customers complain about the distance they have to travel to buy organic produce. But, Aishwarya Rajiv of Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products says her customers (many of them commercial farmers themselves) don't mind the distance or the time taken, because it is part of an effort towards a healthier lifestyle.

She says shop keepers must not expect early returns and must invest in an organic store for the long haul. "It is almost like social service. You have to open the store every day. You have stock vegetables whether they sell or not. That is how you can win the trust of customers and let them know that you are dependable," she says.

Aishwarya also says an organic shop is a fair-trade enterprise where farmers are paid their rightful price. So far, they have sold nearly a tonne of vegetables raised on their farm in their two stores. Besides this, they have a group of certified farmers from the Nilgiris from whom they buy their wares.

Another option that is growing in popularity is the setting up of roadside markets on stipulated days; that way, the farmer is assured of a ready market, says Prabhuram.

Aishwarya also feels besides educating the current generation, schools should take up the task of enlightening children. Only then will they grow into an organic way of life, a healthier way of life, she says.





# "Organic farming makes me independent and self-sufficient"

-Baliram Varma

By Sarayu Srinivasan

He grows most of the grains that are largely consumed by the Indian population, wheat, maize, and paddy, and has a major revenue in Himachal Pradesh, from his ginger plantation. All of this is organically grown all of it in his land of 5 acres.

Organic farming makes Baliram Varma independent and self sufficient and he has a tone of self assurance when he says he doesn't get much aid from the government. He is a farmer from Singdhar Village, Vialspur district in Himachal Pradesh. Like many other farmers who have changed to organic farming, his yield had initially dropped. But now he sells his product across the market, from Shimla to south of Himachal Pradesh.

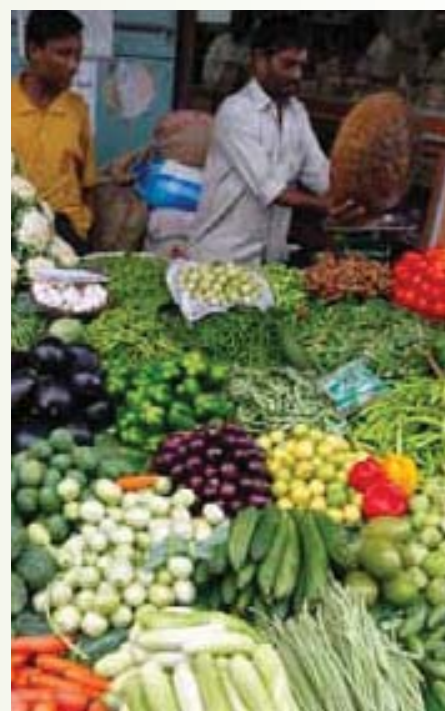
## Organic means your neighbour has to be good

The benefit of growing organic is also that land is not pillaged by chemicals. "We have again brought in cattle into the farm. The

cowdung is used for manuring. Although we use traditional methods, we also are taught by experts to use them with modern techniques using machines," says Varma.

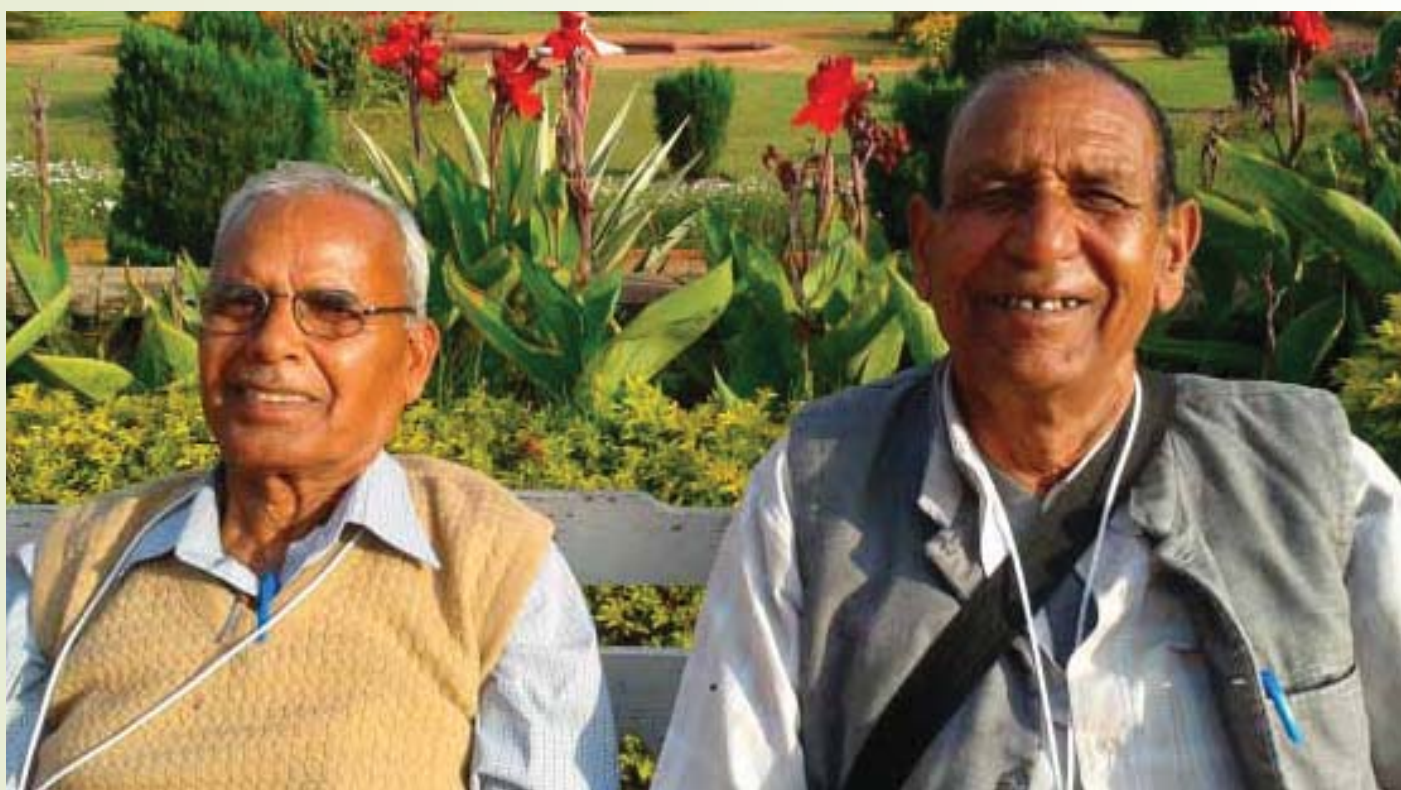
The state hosts training camps of three to four days every six months. "In these training camps, we train farmers on various techniques, from effective sowing of seeds to how to take care of them, how much water should be used and so on," says Varma. Farmer meetings are spaces to discuss issues that arise when desired results are not met by a certain techniques.

The camp also acts as an effective platform to convince more farmers to try organic. "The water from the lands of the farmers who don't do organic farming seeps into the organic farming lands. It is a big threat and has adverse effects. The chemicals kill even the friendly bacteria. We simply have to create more awareness", says Varma, underscoring why it is important for the entire community to back organic.



## Stepping outside Himachal Pradesh

Baliram Varma wants to focus on expanding his organic market in Himachal Pradesh in the near future, but if there are chances of more produce, he'd supply to the neighbouring states. "When it rains in Himachal Pradesh, it is usually heavy. Most of our crops fail then. We have a Krishi Society where we go and apply for aid, which takes about six months after we apply," he says.



## "The key to food and climate security"



My ecological journey began in childhood. My father was a Conservator of Forests and I have trekked with him through Himalayan forests long before roads were built. In the 1960s India responded to the Chinese aggression by building roads, which became conduits for timber to be taken out. The deforestation led to the women of Garhwal rising in defense of the forests against the loggers in 1972. This was the birth of the Chipko Movement, which I joined as a volunteer doing padyatras and writing reports. I call it my real education – in the *"Chipko University"*. With my eyes enriched by biodiversity, I was able to see the poverty of monocultures in both forestry and agriculture. And in 1984, the violence in Punjab and the Bhopal disaster woke me up to the fact that agriculture had become like war. I studied the Green Revolution, wrote my book *The Violence of the Green Revolution* and decided to practice and promote a nonviolent agriculture based on nature's laws and nature's ecological processes.

The dominant paradigm of agriculture based on the Green Revolution and Genetic Engineering, which by definition reduces biodiversity and rejects organic production in favour of monocultures that require intensive inputs of chemicals, water and fossil fuels. Ironically, as the multiple crises deepens, the corporations driving the Green Revolution and Genetic Engineering, seek to transform these crises into lucrative, new marketing opportunities. What we can do As

Einstein famously said: *"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."* We must therefore make a paradigm shift from reductionist approaches to ecological approaches.

- First the conservation and large scale distribution of open-pollinated varieties/ open source seeds of water-prudent crops;
- Then the promotion of organic agriculture to increase climate resilience and food and water security
- Third, incentives to shift from waterguzzling green revolution agriculture to waterconserving biodiverse organic farming. We really do not need pesticides!

Agro ecology is the only sustainable pest control system. Through my organisation *'Research for Science, Technology and Ecology, (RFSTE)'*, we launched a network of seed keepers and organic producers *'Navdanya'* across 16 states of the country and now more than 5,00,000 farmers are being trained in seed and food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture. Navdanya means both *"nine seeds"* as well as *"new gift"*. We work to save seeds as an alternative to the corporations that use the WTO to impose Genetically Modified Organisms and seed monopolies on all countries. Navdanya believes that converting seeds into private property through Intellectual Property Rights is a crime. To encourage the ancient practice

She did her Ph.D on the Foundations of Quantum Theory on Hidden Variables and Non Locality in Quantum Theory. She then abandoned academics in 1982 to start the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) and over the past 38 years has dedicated her life to the protection of nature and the defense of people's rights to nature's resources – forests, biodiversity, water and land. **Dr. Vandana Shiva** writes about the hazards of genetic engineering, biopiracy and food rights and security in the face of globalisation and climate change.

of free sharing and saving seeds, Navdanya has set up more than 50 community seed banks in 16 states of India. We work with farmers to defend seed freedom (Bija Swaraj) and food freedom (Anna Swaraj).

### Climate change is serious

Intensification of drought, floods and cyclones and repeated monsoon failures – these have already impacted two-thirds of India, especially the fertile Gangetic bread basket. The evidence of a food collapse is staring all but the very blind in the face. Climate change will eventually leave us no option but to use biodiverse organic farms to shore up our food security by increasing the resilience and reducing the climate vulnerability of farming systems. Such farms will enhance food security because they have higher production of food and nutrition per acre than Green Revolution monocultures, which only measure the yield of our commodity, not the total food output, nor the nutritional quality of food. Put simply, maximising biodiversity and organic matter production enhances climate resilience, food security and water security. It's the only way left for humanity to survive in the long run.

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## Organic Farms Support A Third More Species

Organic farms support more biodiversity, supporting 34% more plant, insect and animal species than conventional farms, according to a new paper. For pollinators such as bees, the number of different species was 50% higher on organic farms, although the authors stress that the study only looked at 'species richness'.

They looked at data from 94 previous studies covering 184 farm sites dating back to 1989 and found that this effect has remained stable over time and shows no signs of decreasing.

*"Species richness tells us how many different species there are but does not say anything about the total number of organisms,"* said Sean Tuck of Oxford University's Department of Plant Sciences, lead author of the paper in the Journal of Applied Ecology. *"There are many ways to study biodiversity and species richness is easy to measure, providing a useful starting point. Broadly speaking, high species richness usually indicates a variety of species with different functions. Taking the example of bees, species richness would tell us how many different species of bee were on each farm but not the total number of bees."*

The researchers, from Oxford University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Science, re-analyzed the data using satellite imagery to estimate the land use in the landscape surrounding each farm site to see if this had

an impact on species richness. Organic farms had a bigger impact on species richness when the land around them was more intensively farmed, particularly when it contained large tracts of arable land. Arable land is defined as land occupied by crops that are sown and harvested in the same agricultural year, such as wheat or barley.

*"We found that the impacts of organic farms on species richness were more pronounced when they were located in intensively-farmed regions,"* said Dr Lindsay Turnbull of Oxford University's Department of Plant Sciences, senior author of the study. *"This makes sense because the biodiversity benefits of each organic farm will be diluted in clusters of organic farms compared to an organic 'island' providing rich habitats in a sea of pesticide-covered conventional fields. This effect was weakest in pollinators, which may be because pollinators are likely to visit neighbouring farms and could be affected by pesticides there."*

The impact of organic farming on total species richness varied significantly across the data, with the average gain in species richness varying between 26% and 43%. This variation could be down to a number of factors relating to regional variation in farming practices and definitions of 'organic'.

*"Some conventional farms will intensively spray pesticides and*

*fertilizers whereas others will use mixed methods of crop rotation and organic fertilizers with minimal chemical pesticides,"* said Turnbull, who apparently knows of magical pesticides that contain no chemicals. There are also regional differences in farming practices, and the majority of the studies in our data were in developed nations with long histories of farming such as those in Western Europe. There, some wildlife have thrived in extensively managed farmland but are threatened by agricultural intensification. However, in developing nations there is often great pressure on the land to provide enough food for local people, resulting in the conversion of natural habitat to farmland. In such cases the benefits of organic farming are less clear, as this may require more land to achieve the same yield as conventional farming.

More research is needed on the impact of organic farming in tropical and subtropical regions. For example, there are no studies on organic bananas or cocoa beans, two of the most popular organic products found in European supermarkets.

*"At present, we simply cannot say whether buying organic bananas or chocolate has any environmental benefit."*

**Source : University of Oxford**







# Organic News

## World Scenario

### 1. Organic farming set to soar in 2014

- Organic farming is slated to generate \$707.7 million in revenue, up 13.7 percent.
- "A broader selection of organic foods in supermarkets, independent retailers and markets should assist in increasing sales and driving revenue for primary producers

<http://www.foodmag.com.au/news/organic-farming-set-to-soar-in-2014>

### 2. The elders of organic farming

- The farmers here were proud of their anti-establishment beginnings, their movement has since gone mainstream, and organic farming has grown tremendously.
- Sales of organic food in the United States reached \$31.5 billion in 2012, compared with \$1 billion in 1990, according to the Organic Trade Association
- today's organic farmers have thousands of acres of single crops, which are flown to supermarket shelves, where they are sold at lower prices than many small organic farmers can afford to sell their produce.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/25/business/the-elders-of-organic-farming.html>

### 3. 'Demand it and we'll grow it': morocco's organic conundrum

- Moroccan fruit growers say they are ready to grow more organic crops, but for many the market is not yet large enough to warrant a greater supply
- Green Morocco plan that kicked off in 2008, leading to a strong reputation in organics and year-on-year growth for the category.
- Today a third of the Moroccan pavilion is for organic products, organics still make up just a small percentage of production
- Organic production will increase slowly but it's not a high enough percent.

<http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2014/02/14/demand-it-and-we'll-grow-it-morocco-organic-conundrum/?country=india>

### 4. Developing a taste for organic farms

- Many young people with no family history or knowledge of farming are starting small-scale organic operations
- It costs \$600 a year for the organic certification,
- There's been a slight shift in terms of consumer demand and there are lots of farms that are organic but not certified organic
- There's a profit to be made in organic farming since it's held to a higher standard and farmers charge more for it. But the love of organic farming goes beyond that

[http://thechronicleherald.ca/thenovascotian/1188994-developing-a-taste-for-organic-farms?from=most\\_read&most\\_read=1188994](http://thechronicleherald.ca/thenovascotian/1188994-developing-a-taste-for-organic-farms?from=most_read&most_read=1188994)

### 5. Organic food back in vogue as sales increase

- Organic food is making a comeback. Supermarkets and food associations say that after a sustained decline, demand for organic fruit, vegetables and dairy produce is on the rise
- here is great potential in the organic sector and, in particular, a growing public demand for organic and food logos that they can trust
- Organic food offers consumers a very high standard of product integrity, as well as the use of fewer pesticides, and better animal welfare

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/09/organic-produce-sales-increase>

### 6. Bhutan seeks to become world's first 100 per cent organic country

- Bhutan is looking to become the first country in the world to turn its agriculture

completely organic by banning the sales of pesticides and relying on its own animals and farm waste for fertilisers.

- The Bhutan government believes this will enable the country to grow more food and export high quality foods to India, China and other countries.
- Speaking about the decision, Bhutan's minister of agriculture and forests Pema Gyamtsho said, "Ours is a mountainous terrain. When we use chemicals they don't stay where we use them, they impact the water and plants. Going organic will take time. We have set no deadline. We cannot do it tomorrow. Instead we will achieve it region by region and crop by crop."
- Organic food market is mainly divided into three segments: organic fruits & vegetables, organic dairy products and organic packaged food. Organic fruits & vegetables have highest demand.

Read More: <http://bit.ly/1cSXZMX>

## Asian Scenario

### 1. Taiwan aims to triple organic farming land by 2020

- Land used for organic farming in Taiwan could triple by 2020 to 15,000 hectares
- The council touted in a statement that achievements in the development of an organic industry in Taiwan include training programs and technical services that have helped organic farming expand organic farming area to 5,930 hectares, up from just 2,356 hectares in 2008
- The efforts are part of a 10-year policy to promote and expand the supply chain of organic food

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140101000077&cid=1201>

### 2. Kyrgyzstan has great potential to become a center of organic production in Central Asia

- Kyrgyzstan has great potential to become





a center of organic production in Central Asia

- that the whole world is now “turned to a green economy” that is focused on relationship of man with nature

<http://kabar.kg/eng/society/full/8050>

## Indian Scenario

### 1. Organic farming being promoted in a big way; india exporting 1.6 Lakh tonne organic products

- The Government is promoting organic farming through various schemes like National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States (HMNEH), National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility (NPMHS&F), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and also Network Project on Organic Farming of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- the cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 30,000/- per beneficiary, for adoption of organic farming @ Rs.10,000/- per hectare for maximum area of 4 hectare per beneficiary and for organic farming certification @ Rs.5.00 lakh for a group of farmers covering an area of 50 hectares.
- India exported agri-organic products of total volume of 160276.95 MT and realization was around Rs.1155.81 crores in year 2012-13.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/organic-farming-being-promoted-in-a-big-way-india-exporting-1-6-lakh-tonne-organic-products-114022500332\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/organic-farming-being-promoted-in-a-big-way-india-exporting-1-6-lakh-tonne-organic-products-114022500332_1.html)

### 2. The Organic way

- The city has many enlightened farmers who cultivate organic or natural vegetables, and growers who are active in the retail business.
- Organic Food Stores feels awareness levels among consumers is still low. “Farmers will cultivate more organic produce if there is demand

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/Food/the-organic-way/article5649148.ece>

### 3. Government promoting use of Organic Manure in India

- Government is promoting organic/chemical free fertilizers under Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme of National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) through NABARD by setting up of Fruit & Vegetable Waste/Agro Waste Compost Units under Municipalities

- National Project on Organic Fa

### 4. 'Sikkim has to overcome challenges to become organic'

- Sikkim has set for itself the goal of becoming an organic agricultural state by 2015
- “Organic agriculture, as an adaptation strategy to climate change, is a concrete, holistic and sustainable option but has challenges in terms of acceptance and the sustainability of such a move needs critical
- marketing and developing the Sikkim organic brand is also another challenge that needs great attention

<http://www.canindia.com/2014/02/sikkim-has-to-overcome-challenges-to-become-organic/#>

### 5. 'Organic farming gaining ground in India'

- Adoption of organic farming is gradually increasing and it is practised in nearly 100 countries, with the area under organic practices continually growing in India
- Organic Farming: Approaches and Applications”, he pointed out that possibly the greatest impact of organic agriculture was change in the mindset of the people

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/organic-farming-gaining-ground-in-india/article5607805.ece>

### 6. Farmers turn to organic farming to save cranes

- One of the biggest killers, which was discovered early on, was the uncontrolled use of pesticide by the farmers - especially on their vegetable crops that the birds feed on

- There was an immediate need to shift from the use of chemicals in the area, to something organic

- Goragaon village took the first leap recently that permanently shifted to organic farming. Soon 30 more farmers followed suit out of the 60 families living in the area. As per a survey, conducted by the team revealed that 80 per cent of the farmers were keen to permanently shift to organic farming

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/farmers-turn-to-organic-farming-to-save-cranes.html>

### 7. Organic Farming Awareness held in Sikkim

- An Orientation cum Awareness Programme in Organic Farming and Certification was held
- detail the Internal Control System Procedures followed, for obtaining Organic Certification of the region
- Encouraged the farmers to maintain their zeal for organic farming and explained the economic benefits from organic produces.

<http://isikkim.com/2014-2-organic-farming-awareness-held-in-sikkim-17-2/>

### 8. Growers in Assam are taking to organic green tea cultivation (Selected article)

- Tea growers in India largest tea producer Assam are gradually taking to the production of organic green tea following strong domestic demand.
- small growers in Assam and other Northeastern states have started making organic handmade green tea
- There is growing craze for green tea among the growers

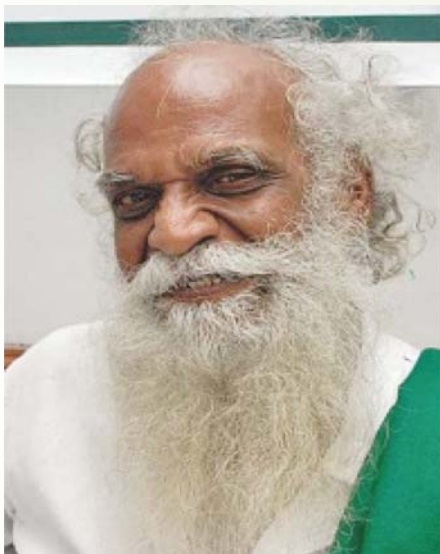
[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-02-22/news/47581677\\_1\\_orthodox-variety-assam-small-tea-growers-green-tea](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-02-22/news/47581677_1_orthodox-variety-assam-small-tea-growers-green-tea)







## In Memorium



**G. Nammalvar** (1938 – 30 Dec. 2013) was an Indian organic farming scientist. Hailing from the agro-based Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, he was involved in preaching the farmers to get an edge in organic farming.

Nammalvar born in 1938 in Elangadu, Tanjore District, and he graduated from Annamalai University with a B.Sc degree in Agriculture.

Between 1963 and 1969, he was working for the Agricultural Regional Research Station, a government organization in Kovilpatti, as a scientist, conducting trials on spacing and manure levels of various chemical fertilizers in cotton and millet crops.

For the next 10 years he was an agronomist for Island of Peace, an organization founded by the Nobel Laureate Dominique Pire. It was at this time that he realized that in order to get optimal results in farming, farmers should rely only minimally on external inputs. All inputs should come from within the farm. So called wastes should be recycled and used as input. This revelation was a turning point in his life. He completely lost trust in conventional farming practices and began experimenting with sustainable agricultural methods.

In the late 1970s, Nammalvar became greatly influenced by Paulo Freire and Vinoba Bhave and their theories on education. The purpose of education should be freedom. Freedom is essentially self-reliance.

Eager to propagate these new theories on education, specifically to aid farmers

in becoming self-sufficient, he started a Society, Kudumbham in 1979. "Participatory Development" was the way forward. There can be no education without action. Nor can there be any action without education. Nammalvar interacted with local farmers, understood their needs, and based on their input, evolved farming practices suited to the local farmers.

Nammalvar was also greatly influenced by Mr. Bernard de-Clerk of Auroville fame, whom he had worked with since 1984.

When the Tsunami hit India on December 25th, 2004, Nammalvar was actively involved in the rehabilitation process.

Nammalvar has travelled widely across the world, observed the agricultural practices in various different ecological systems and based on his findings, has trained farmers and NGO workers. He has written several books and articles in the Tamil language.

Recognizing his extensive work in the field of agriculture, the Gandhi Gram Rural University, Dindugal honored Nammalvar with a Doctorate of Science degree in 2007.

## JOYRAJ

(1941 - 8th Jan, 2014)

### THE RAJA OF KAZIRANGA AND A JOY FOREVER



Joyraj, the gentle giant was a darling of the Kaziranga National Park. The 11-foot tall male tusker was 73 years old and had retired from service with the Assam Forest Department in 2008 after serving the World Heritage Site for 65 years.

At Kaziranga, Joyraj has been actively involved in anti-poaching operations, rescuing animals during floods, ferrying tourists and officials during animal census and was chosen to lead in processions organised during elephant festivals held over the years. He had also played a major role in resolving fights among elephants during mating seasons. Joyraj had been chosen for his towering height over other pachyderms, strength and his huge pair of five feet long tusks and had served in both Kohora and Bagori ranges of the Park.

As per Joyraj's mahout, Mohan Karmakar, what made Joyraj stand out from the other elephants was his towering personality, his majestic way of walking, his body language, behaviour, alertness when carrying children and the way he flapped his ears to show he was happy.

The pride of Kaziranga National Park passed away on Jan 8, 2014.





## Comments & Feedback

Many congratulations on this excellent initiative. I've read the first issue you forwarded and was very impressed. I'm sure "Organic Growth" will make a significant contribution to the growth of the organic farming movement, and carve out an important role for itself in a national dialogue. You and your colleagues have done well.

Thanks very much for forwarding the magazine. I look forward to seeing future issues!

All the best,

**Richard W. Petree, Jr.**

Managing Director Ewing Bemiss & Co.

**New York, NY 10170**

Many Congratulations !

Fantastic Insight – better foresight .

I will circulate this article to all at Godfrey Phillips Corporate .

Warm regards

**Indraneel Mookerjee**

General Manager Tea Division

**Godfrey Phillips India Ltd Kolkata**

Seems very interesting. Congrats to you and your team.

Warm regards

**Cyrus P Mistry**

Chairman-Tata Group

Thank you so much for sending us the copy of Organic Growth. Nice if all the tea gardens would go the Hathikuli way!

**Anne Wright**

Conservationist

Chairperson of the Rhino Foundation

You're doing some sterling work that we are all very proud of.

While I think organic farming is wonderful, I do have reservations for our small growers, in mali baris, unknowingly switching to high yielding and beautiful looking GM crops.

We are in danger of losing some of our best fruit varieties simply because they are not high yielding and farmers have been shown how they can increase production (and incomes) by 400% by using GM seeds.

What's worse, even if the pollen from a GM farm strays into your Bari and cross-

pollinates your orthodox crop, the GM seed's Manufacturer/Corporation, at least in the United States (which is the way we are all headed), is within its rights to sue you for infringement of their genetic "copyright" :))

I am scared of the disappearance of Kumoliya Chaul, and the wiping out of the wild Dhekia Saak that is nature's abundant and tasty and completely free gift to us all, simply because we have more lucrative uses for our agricultural land.

Assam's laid back approach to farming, that remains largely (by and large) organic in most senses of the word, if replaced by frenetic productivity for profit, would rob us of our culture of peaceful coexistence with nature, listening to Borgeet and lighting up our skies with Maag Mejis and watching a lively Bhawnaa, Jhumur or Bihu dance, or the incredibly artistic and aesthetic Sattriyaa - our organic and genetic inheritance.

Nevertheless, I love you for all that you are doing for Assam and the Northeast.

Affectionately,

**Victor Banerjee**

Actor and activist



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