

# Organicgrowth

*for a healthy planet*

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## Charting the Organic Trail in Assam



On behalf of APPL Foundation, it gives me great pleasure to present you with the very first edition of "Organicgrowth" – the all-encompassing e-journal for the organic way of life. Designed to be an up-to-date, ready reference into the organic world, this e-journal will keep you posted about all the latest technological advances and breakthroughs in organic farming, current happenings and forthcoming events. From time to time we will also present features penned by experts in the field of organic research as well as stories and vignettes for a glimpse into the lives of pioneers who have successfully adopted organic methods for a far more inclusive and enriched lifestyle. We intend to create a community of like-minded individuals who appreciate the gifts that nature has bestowed on us

and are proactively exploring avenues to help conserve animal and plant life in their part of the world.

"Organicgrowth", while giving you a broad perspective on topics and activities from around the world, will highlight and sustain focus on efforts that are underway in the North-Eastern Frontier region of India, offering you an in-depth analysis of organic projects in the region and a perspective into the efforts of the local community to safeguard endemic plant and animal species and preserve the delicate ecological balance of the area.

So, as we begin this exciting journey of transformation, I invite you to share your ideas, thoughts and insights with the community. Do write to us with your inputs and suggestions I look forward to engaging you in a conversation; a dialogue that will help usher in a more sustainable and inclusive future for all of us.

Ranjit Barthakur, Chairman, APPL Foundation



## The true essence of nature, in a cup of tea



*The garden at Hathikuli showing new sprouted leaves, pepper creepers and the Karbi Anglong hills in the backdrop*

### **Hathikuli Tea Plantation achieves 100% organic conversion**

Flanked on one side by the Kaziranga National Park and the Karbi Anglong Hills on the other, the Hathikuli Tea Plantation finds itself situated in one of the most picturesque regions of North-East India. It is also right in the middle of a biological hotspot; one that is home to numerous species of flora and fauna, several of them endangered. Since the time of its inception and until recently, traditional tea-growing techniques were used by the planters to create high-quality produce that enjoyed good demand in both the domestic and international markets. There were no obvious reasons to change anything. But, change they did.

Because of its close proximity to the Kaziranga national park, the plantation area would be frequently visited upon by various species of birds and animals. As tea-growing is a fertiliser intensive operation, this meant that they would be exposed to the harmful effect of these complex chemicals; their impact heightened due to biomagnification. It soon became evident that continuing with traditional methods was not a viable neither a sustainable option. An alternative had to be explored. And the answer lay with organic.

### **In a tricky situation**

To maintain the balance in this highly eco-sensitive region, the management of Hathikuli Tea Estate decided to covert to an organic method of farming. This meant no pesticides, insecticides, artificial fertilisers or chemicals. Only naturally grown nutrients and biodegradable manure could be used to provide nutrition to the growing plant. Also, because no chemicals could be used, it left the crop vulnerable to pest attacks. It surely meant taking a huge risk, but it was a risk worth taking to safeguard the ecosystem, to protect the many species of animals, birds and plants that populate the area, and to secure a

sustainable future for generations to come.

The decision to turn organic was one fraught with risks; the biggest amongst them was the viability of such a large-scale transformation and its immediate impact on the business. It was apparent that the output would initially fall, but this could later be offset by higher per kg. yields. The people in charge sat down over long nights and many cups of tea; crunched all kinds of figures, projections, numbers and implications and after every possible avenue had been explored, the well-being of the community and conservation of the wildlife in the region were surmount to all other considerations.

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### Hathikuli – a genesis

The place itself draws its name from *hati* (elephant) and *kuli* (frequent) – a place frequented by elephants. Spread over 479.57 ha, the plantation runs over a 12 km narrow strip of land along NH 37. Its unique geographical location made it a popular destination for tourists, who were always heartily welcomed by the management. Some may go as far as to say that the concept of tea tourism may have had its origins in these pristine environs. Over 100 years old, it is truly a place suspended in time, punctuated occasionally by the modern automobile or the trilling of a mobile.

As evidenced, the Hathikuli Tea Estate has a rich legacy that goes back decades into time; which is what makes the transformation of

farming techniques even more remarkable. It isn't easy to suddenly give up set ways, ways that have proved successful, in favour of an idea that might not yield the same results. It is testament to the commitment of the management towards safeguarding the delicate ecological balance of the region and a clarion call for other plantations in the area to adopt similar measures.

### Tea for the soul

Organic farming methods have been in vogue for quite some time now. Essentially involving the use of only all-natural fertilisers and nutrients, it is the key to maintaining desired production levels while minimising adverse impact on the environment.

At the Hathikuli Tea Plantation, much emphasis has been placed on the creation of a chemical-free zone, to protect the endemic wildlife. The process of organic transformation was undertaken in 2008; the minimum period required being 3 years, it was desired that 100% transformation be achieved by 2011 – an objective that was successfully achieved on schedule.

Organic tea that is now being produced at the

plantation is completely free from chemical residues and is thus better for consumers. The all-natural farming practices have encouraged newer species of birds, animals and insects to thrive in the region and given the local community plenty of reasons to cheer as well. All in all, it has been a good beginning.

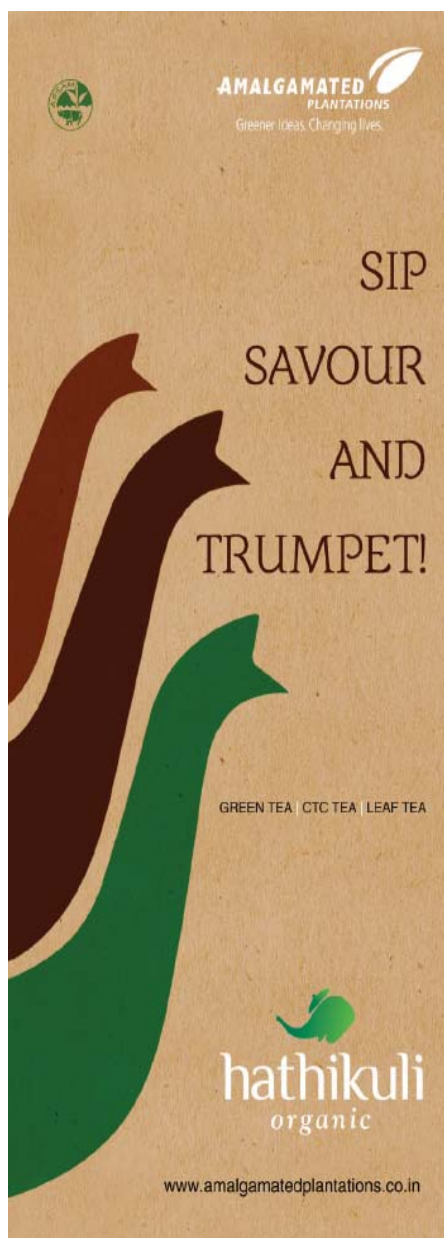
### Future in focus

Since its inception, the production team at Hathikuli Plantation has placed the greatest emphasis on ensuring excellent taste and quality in every leaf. Equipped with the best possible resources and encouraged by the support from the community, they have successfully created a high-quality product.

Tea from this region has always been in great demand, both domestically and abroad. Add to that the aspect of organic farming methods and the goodness intrinsic to the concept of organic production, what we now have is an attractive proposition for a wide customer base; one that understands the needs of the planet and is committed to conservation activities in every way possible. This means that people who choose Hathikuli as their cup of tea subscribe to a common cause, a singular premise, a shared sentiment. This



the kiosk in hathikuli with the proposed new look



Hathikuli Standy

aspect, more than anything else, goes a long way in establishing a sense of community between tea-drinkers – the brand, so to say, transcends geographical boundaries and connects people with a similar worldview. It may seem a bit much for a simple cup of tea, but the power of suggestion and connection, especially in a world increasingly coalesced through social networking and the internet, is one that can no longer be ignored.

What this means that Hathikuli now finds itself in an enviable position of being able to reach out to more people and establishing an immediate connection with them – a possibility that was nigh impossible just a few years ago. A secure future for the planet is a common ideal widely subscribed to by millions, no, billions across the world, and by virtue of going organic, Hathikuli is a part of this conversation.

#### From the leaf to a cup

These considerations plus the need to take the product to all corners of the world, is what prompted the setting up of a robust marketing and distribution team at Hathikuli Plantation. It was recognised, early on in during the transformation process, that to realise the true potential of this investment and to ensure sustainable returns in the future, ease of access and round-the-year availability were going to be key elements.

Enhanced productivity being only a matter of time, greater emphasis is now being laid on establishing strong market linkages and roping distributors into the fold. To make

the proposition more attractive for potential partners, the plantation is actively seeking out certifications and knowledge associations – aspects of the business that will ensure greater credibility and better quality of both process and produce.

At Hathikuli, the management is keen to develop an end-to-end value system – one that extends beyond the supplying of tea, encompassing every aspect of the tea-consuming experience. Which is why, plans are in the offing to create a special experiential zone over the internet as well as in the plantation itself, enabling visitors a closer look into the organic philosophy. The transformation of Hathikuli into an organic farm while being an ecologically sound step, is also an insightful business decision. Being certified 100% organic, Hathikuli is now one of the very few tea estates in the world with a unique proposition, one that is of interest to an increasingly larger group of people in the world.

The communication and other aspects of marketing the product subscribe to a philosophy intrinsic to the organic culture. The packaging is made of fully bio-degradable material. The look and feel of the pack (and all other brand elements) is that of coarse handmade paper in earthy brown colour and the "hathi" which is intrinsic to the brand story shares pride of place as the brand logo. So the next time you find yourself sipping a cup Hathikuli tea, you know you made a choice that will sustain future generations to come.



## In defence of nature

### Organic farming and the need to cultivate a sustainable planet

Working with nature rather than against it, Organic farming practices are the key to aligning our requirement for produce with the greater objective of securing the future of our planet. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) – a global umbrella unit for organic farming organisations has defined the objective of organic farming as:

“Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved...”

Organic farming encompasses a range of techniques and farming practices for the cultivation of crops and livestock rearing by eliminating the need for inorganic fertilisers and synthetic chemicals. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and crop rotation to sustain a production system that conserves the ecosystem while ensuring high-quality of crops.

### The Origins of Organic

Tracing its roots back to the 1930s and



1940s, organic agriculture was a reaction from within the farming community to an increasingly worrisome reliance on synthetic fertilisers and chemicals. An unfortunate consequence of the 18th century industrial revolution that enabled the mass production of these chemicals, artificial fertilisers initially contained superphosphates. The composition was then changed for an ammonia based formulation, developed using the Haber Bosch process during the First World War.

These chemicals were cheaply available

and easily transported. The effectiveness of these fertilisers was never in doubt and coupled with accessibility, led to mass usage by farmers across the world. Following up, similar advances were made in the area of pesticides, which led to an extended period of time referred to as the Pesticide Era.

In response to these developments, organic farming was developed and evaluated as a viable alternative. Sir Albert Howard, widely recognised as the father of organic farming practices, was a visionary, who nurtured and promoted the use of planet-friendly practices. J.I. Rodale in the United States of America and Lady Eve Balfour in the United Kingdom along with many pioneers in various other parts of the world furthered the cause of organic farming in the years that ensued.

### A study in comparison

Reliant on chemical intervention to augment produce, conventional farming practices are not ideally suited for environment conservation. Highly effective in promoting an increase in production quantities and prevention of diseases, the traditional way of farming has its merits but they are dwarfed by the negative impact on the environment. The extensive use of insecticides, herbicides, growth hormones, antibiotics and medicines



involved in conventional farming creates an unnatural state of being, one that causes irreparable damage to the surroundings.

At the other end of the spectrum, organic farming promotes an all-natural, chemical-free process to ensure healthy, disease-free produce while conserving the prevailing conditions. Crop rotation for weed management and nutrient conservation, use of natural fertilisers such as manure and compost, employing natural predators for pest and insect control are some of the key aspects of organic farming; methods that go a long way in negating the harmful effects of traditional farming.

Studies conducted over the years in various locations across the world have shown that crops produced using organic farming methods are essentially better for people. They contain significantly higher percentage of nutrients and minerals, remain fresh for a longer time and are free from any traces of harmful fertilisers and chemicals.

All factors taken into account, organic farming has no comparison when it comes to nutritive value and environmental impact. It nourishes and nurtures in equal measure, and is the way forward if we are serious about preserving a way of life in tune with nature.

### At home and in the world

Although it accounts for only 0.9% of agricultural land under cultivation worldwide, it is encouraging to know that farming communities all over the world are increasingly adopting organic farming practices to produce high-quality crops. In all, a total of 160 countries have been identified who are actively conducting research to promote organic farming.

In 2010, the organic food market was valued at USD 57.2 billion, and it is projected to double in 2015, at an estimated CAGR of 12.8%. Organic products earn a premium of 20-25% over conventional farm produce – a fact that hasn't deterred millions of consumers all over the world to switch over to a healthier and more environment-friendly lifestyle.

Closer to home, in India, the overall organic



food and beverages market is estimated to be worth USD 129.3 million and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15% over the period 2013-15. Our organic exports have increased 25 fold in the past 5 years. Currently, Madhya Pradesh leads the way in terms of area under organic cultivation, with Maharashtra, Orissa and Gujarat filling up the ranks. Across the country a total area of 2.5 million Ha is now exclusively being used to promote organic farming.

Shifting focus to the North East region of the country, it is heartening to note that fertiliser use is at its lowest in the area. It is evident that over the years, farmers have promoted and used organic ways of cultivation, preserving the environment without compromising on the quantity or quality of produce. In close

collaboration with the Central Government, the state of Assam has promoted organic cultivation of turmeric, ginger and chilli. It has also actively pursued the setting up of robust processing and exports infrastructure to support the farming community and create a market for its produce.

Casting an eye over the horizon, the future looks bright. With farming communities adopting organic practices in increasing number and consumers opting for the healthier alternative as well, it seems possible that we may yet succeed in our quest to live better and preserve our natural surroundings. The ideal state of existence is a life in complete harmony with nature, and in organic lies the key to that future.



Organic farming has no comparison when it comes to nutritive value and environmental impact. It nourishes and nurtures in equal measure, and is the way forward if we are serious about preserving a way of life in tune with nature.

## Organic Horticulture - Worthy Choice For Healthy Nation



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Organic farming is a practice that emphasizes the use of renewable resources; conservation of energy, soil and water; environmental maintenance and enhancement, while producing optimum quantities of produce without the use of artificial fertilizer or synthetic chemicals.

### Benefits of Organic Horticulture

**Eating Healthy Food:** The ability to grow and eat the healthiest fruits and vegetables free from pesticide residue is one the chief benefits of organic horticulture.

**Enhance natural ecosystem:** An organic garden enhance natural ecosystem by encouraging build up of helpful micro-flora and fauna and very often inviting helpful birds to eliminate harmful pests.

**Building soil health:** Organic gardening improves the quality of soil. Amending soil, cultivating, composting, mulching considerably alter the soil environment for better bringing and maintain a living ecosystem under the garden. A healthy living soil will support a stable ecosystem of soil- dwelling flora and fauna and will sustain them for many years. Hence the practice of preserving and improving this chief asset is one of the prime benefits of organic gardening.

**Reducing pollution:** Reduction of environmental pollution is another benefit in organic horticulture as harmful agricultural practices causing erosion of topsoil, toxic runoff resulting water pollution, soil contamination and poisoning of beneficial flora and fauna are totally eliminated in organic gardening.

**Waste recycling:** In organic gardens crop residues and other garden wastes are judiciously utilized for conversion into plant food and thereby making easy way of waste disposal as well as producing plant foods in an economic way. The same is true for organic mulches as soil covers which in the long run

are added to the soil as plant food when decompose.

### Organic Horticulture in North East Region:

The agro climatic condition of the Northeastern Region of India is suitable for growing wide array of horticultural crops. The region exhibits a great diversity of genetic resources in fruits and vegetables. In spite of all its rich and bountiful blessings as well as immense potentiality for the development of Horticultural crops, the 'Commercial Horticulture' in true sense in the region is yet to have a breakthrough. With the exception of tea plantation and to a certain extent of mandarin, banana, pineapple, coconut, areca nut plantations and a few vegetable crops, most of the horticultural crops in the region are largely grown in mixed homestead gardens called Baris. The region has tremendous potential for growing horticultural crops organically. The opportunities for growing horticultural crops organically in the region may be summarized as:

- Poor consumption of chemicals and fertilizers: The low average usage of chemicals and fertilizers in the region is indicative of the fact that large number of farmers have not used chemicals at all and that huge area of the region are chemical free. It is for this reason that the region has always been considered as Organic by Default.
- Existence of varied agro-ecological zones that offer production of a wide range of

crops.

- In the hilly areas of the region shifting cultivation to the extent of 16.72 lac ha area exists where no inorganic input ever used.
- Existence of land tenure system including small land holding pattern
- Age old traditional practices of growing horticultural crops following the wise sayings as well as rich ITKs of the production technologies where in more emphasis is on the organic cultivation utilizing the existing garden resources.
- Intercropping or mixed cropping with leguminous crops in baris and in jhum fields and thereby supplementing nutrient requirement.
- Avoiding continuous monocrop and allowing crop rotation minimize the insect-pest build up.
- Dried fallen leaves in baris largely utilized as soil cover or mulches to conserve soil moisture and in the long run on decomposition to be incorporated into the soil to increase soil organic matter.

### Constraints of Organic Horticulture

Major constraints of development of organic horticulture in the region are: inadequate thrust on conservation and exploitation of horticultural germplasm wealth, inadequate awareness programmes on growing organic crops by practice, inadequate knowledge on organic certification for export oriented organic crop production, inadequate institutional credit, insufficient government incentives for



*Large areas in the North East still use traditional farming methods and are thus "Organic by Default"*



*The North East is a land blessed with the abundance of nature's bounty*

promotion of organic farming, inadequate extension support, inadequate manpower, suboptimum R & D support, inadequate infrastructure in terms of roads, electrical power and communication, unorganized marketing and transportation network, lack of cold storage facility and refrigerated vans leading to poor post harvest management, inadequate thrust on export. In addition, lack of proper linkages amongst organic stakeholders as well as land locked situation and thin population density particularly in the hilly regions, causing shortage of labour are some other limitations standing on the way of organic horticultural development in the region.

### Step-up for Organic Horticulture in North Eastern Region:

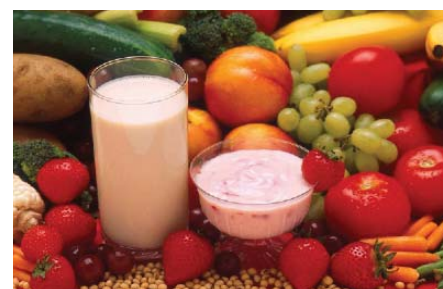
- Selection of crops: As a first step the high value crops to be given priority considering the cost involved in the production of the crops organically. In other words, organically produced crops

would fetch prime price and hence export oriented production to be given top priority. In fruits, pineapple, banana, citrus; in vegetables tomato, capsicum, cucumber, carrot, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, leafy vegetables and in spices, black pepper, ginger, turmeric should preferably be selected in the first phase.

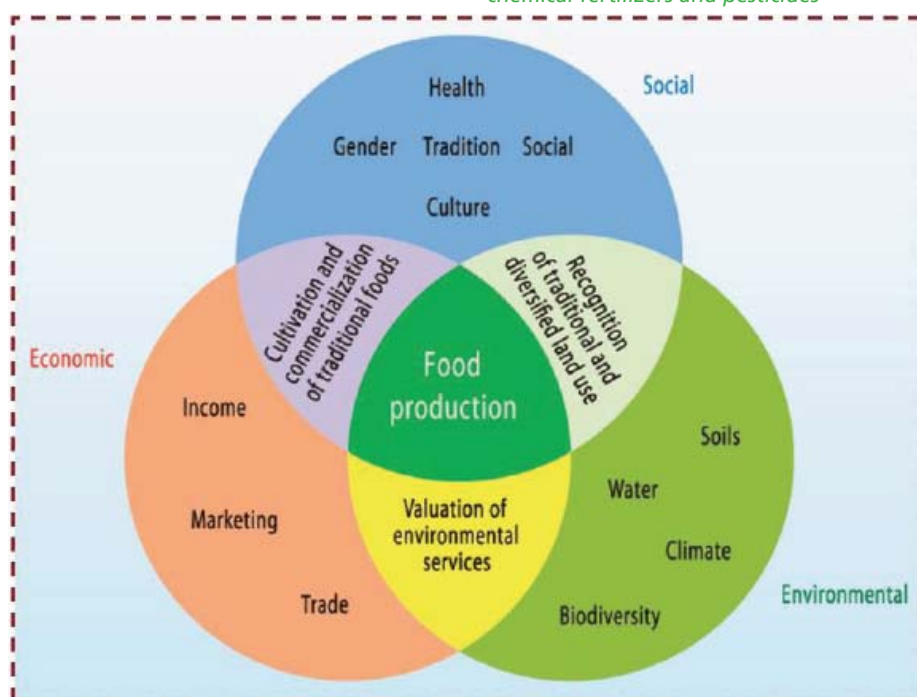
- Selection of site: Identification of the potential areas for production of fruits and vegetables organically. In the beginning, all the existing homestead gardens or baris should be converted to organic gardens and then in the later phases commercial organic gardens may be planned.
- Transform organic by default to organic by practice: Thorough technical know-how starting from organic production to organic certification at every stage of production should be made available to organic growers.
- Use of organic inputs and putting a ban on use of inorganic inputs
- Popularizing and propagating the indigenous farming system and traditional practices
- Promoting use of bio fertilizers, bio control agents, cover crops and eco-

friendly inputs

- Provision of incentives to the growers in the initial years of shifting to organic farming as well as for certification of produce
- Creating awareness among the farmers about benefits of organic farming
- Capacity building of extension functionaries and farmers through intensive training on organic horticulture
- Adoption of various organic management practices involving soil and water conservation in the garden
- Government initiative to identify appropriate certification agency for the organic growers of the region
- Establishment of effective post harvest management system of organic produce



*Food grown through organic means is much healthier than those grown using chemical fertilizers and pesticides*



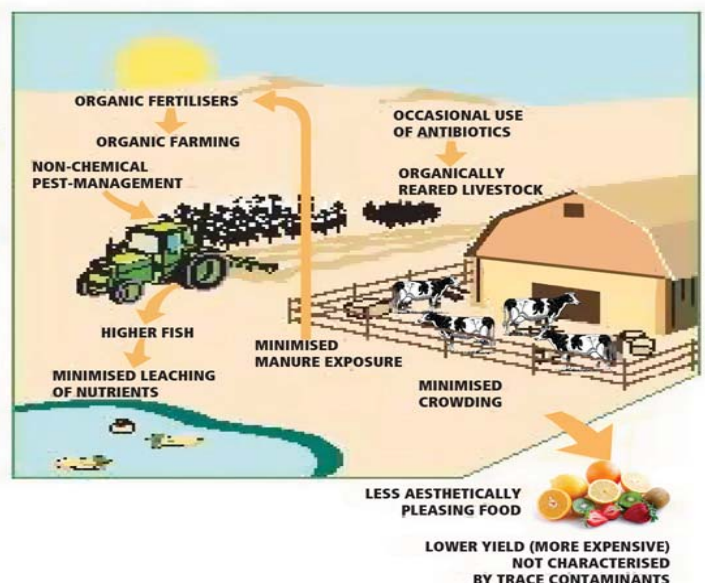
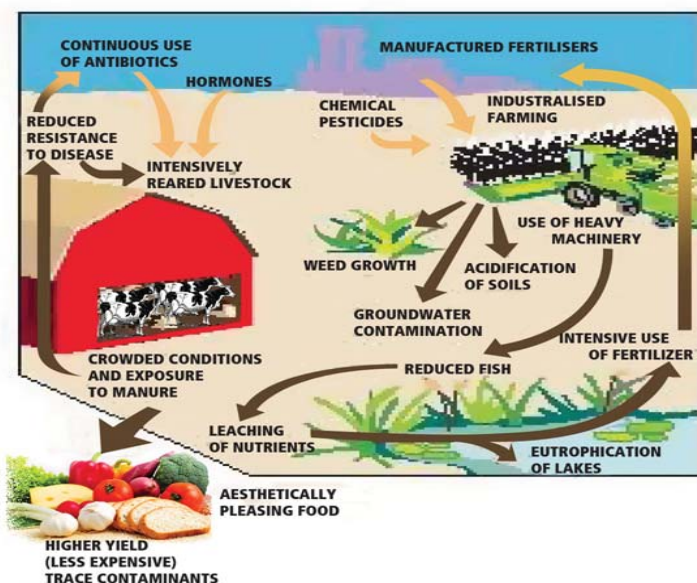
*Organic Farming – Increase Productivity in a Sustainable manner*

- Creating facilities for domestic and international markets of organic produce
- Strengthening of research back up for developing location/ commodity specific production technologies for organic cultivation. Assam Agricultural University ( AAU ) has initiated research on organic cultivation of vegetable crops involving high value crops like tomato, capsicum, cucumber, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage and leafy vegetables.
- Collaborative effort involving research, development and extension agencies for organic production.
- Facilities to be created for mass production of organic/bio inputs in government and private sectors. AAU has developed technologies utilizing indigenous isolates for production of biofertilizers like Rhizobium, Azospirillum, Azotobacter, Phosphate Solubilizing Bacteria (PSB), Vermicompost and Enriched compost.
- AAU also has generated technology for production of bio pesticides like Breveria basiana, Biofor PF, Trichogerma, Trichoderma and other bio pesticides.
- Encouraging formation of growers co-operative societies in high value horticultural crops to safeguard the grower's interest for sustainable export oriented organic production.

## Conventional Farming vs. Organic Farming



Conventional Farming	Organic Farming
Apply chemical fertilizers to promote plant growth	Apply natural fertilizers, such as manure or compost, to feed soil and plants
Spray insecticides to reduce pests and disease.	Use of beneficial insets and birds, mating, disruption or traps to reduce pests and disease.
Use chemical herbicides to manage weeds.	Rotate crops, till, hand weed or mulch to manage weeds.
Give animals antibiotics, growth hormones and medications to prevent disease and spur growth	Give animals organic feed and allow them access to the outdoors. Use preventive measures – such as rotational grazing, a balanced diet and clean housing to minimize disease.



## Organic Mythbusters



Costs more, tastes bad, inefficient – there are plenty of opinions about Organic farming and produce doing the rounds. Most of these concerns are unfounded; some of them require deeper studies and the rest are merely urban legends. Let's take a closer look at some of these widely-held beliefs and uncover the real story beneath the entire rumble.

### **MYTH NO. 1** **Organic food has no flavour**

#### **FACT:**

This may have been true of processed foods at one time but this stereotype is as outdated as alternate lifestyle argument that follows it. Today many organic snack foods taste the same as their conventional counterparts, while most people agree that fresh, locally grown organic produce does not compare to the alternative. Even organic produce that is not in season and has been shipped thousands of miles to reach our grocer's shelves cannot compare to the produce found in our own back yard or at farmers markets. Taste is certainly an individual matter, so give organic a try and see what you think!



### **MYTH NO. 2:** **Natural produce is the same as organic produce**

#### **FACT:**

Again not true! Natural foods do not contain additives or preservatives, but they may contain ingredients that have been grown with pesticides or are genetically modified. In other words, the ingredients in the ingredient panel will look familiar, but they have not been produced organically. Natural foods also do not subscribe to health and safety regulations and do not meet the same criteria that organic foods do.



### **MYTH NO. 3** **Consuming organic food will send your monthly budget for a toss!**



#### **FACT:**

While it is certainly pricier than food produced traditionally, you may find that the benefits of organic agriculture off-set this additional cost. At the same time, there are ways to purchase organic while sticking to your budget. Consider the following when regarding the price of organic:

- Organic farmers don't receive subsidies like conventional farmers do. Therefore, the price of organic food reflects the true cost of growing.
- The price of conventional food does not reflect the cost of environmental cleanups that we pay for in form of taxes
- Organic farming is more labour and management intensive.

### **MYTH NO. 4** **Eating organic is a fad**

#### **FACT:**

Isn't so! What we now think of as organic farming was practiced for thousands of years as farmers worked in partnership with the land and the elements. In the 1940s, the widespread use of synthetic chemicals was introduced into agricultural practices to boost crop growth. A backlash developed among growers and consumers and the organic food industry was born. Today, organic products have grown, on average, more than 20% per year over the last 7-10 years, making it the fastest growing segment of agriculture! In 2011, the organics market topped USD 30 billion, representing a 9.5% growth over previous years.

So, the next time someone engages you over unproven stories regarding organic farming, you know what to say to help them see the light.



Sources: [organic.org](http://organic.org), [wholefoodsmarket.com](http://wholefoodsmarket.com)

# rganic News

## WORLD SCENARIO

### Organic Food Market in United States to Grow at 14% CAGR during 2013-18

- United States is the highest demand generator for organic food in the world with continuously increasing domestic production.
- The country's domestic organic food production increased to about 240%.
- The country is home to about 17,750 organic farms.
- 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.
- With the increasing health concerns the market for meat, poultry, fish, etc., are expected to gain market share.

**Read More:** <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/12/prweb11399512.htm>

### South Sinai Farms Go Organic, Struggle with Government

- The southern third of the Sinai Peninsula, once a tourist resort surrounded by stretches of dry, lifeless desert is now dotted by world-class organic farms that continue to expand.
- Their healthy produce of vegetables and herbs caters to the demands of tourists and locals in the Red Sea towns of Taba, Nuweiba, Dahab and Sharm El-Sheikh.
- South Sinai's organic farms evolved into a bigger idea: a self-sustaining society.
- Habiba Organic Farm acts as a community-based farm to benefit the people of South Sinai.
- The farm serves as an encouragement to what can be accomplished through organic farming practices in the desert

and today agriculture is beginning to flourish across the region.

**Read more:** <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/south-sinai-organic-farming-rises-tourism-decline.html#ixzz2pzQ4u67l>

### Organic Farming and Agricultural Movements in Spain

- Spain was the number one EU Member State concerning the number of hectares dedicated to organic farming
- average national consumption of organic products is estimated at 35.4 kilos per year which indicates that every Spaniard consumes 35.4 kilos of organic products
- Organic farmers are quite diverse within the country's territory.

**Read More:** <http://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/organic-farming-and-agricultural-movements-in-spain/>

## ASIAN SCENARIO

### Hedge funds bet on organic farming in China

- Alarmed by a slew of food-safety problems in recent years, affluent Chinese are increasingly willing to spend extra on their food. This demand has now fueled the growth of the organic-food market.
- Investors in the country betting big on the organic concept have poured money into food producers and distributors.
- Some are wrestling with a conflict between scale and quality, but this has not dampened their enthusiasm.

**Read More:** <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/hedge-funds-bet-on-organic-farming-in-china-2013-03-14>

### Bhutan set to plough lone furrow as world's first wholly organic country

- Bhutan aims to become the first country in the world to turn its agriculture production completely organic, banning the sales of pesticides and herbicides and relying on its own animals and farm waste for fertilizers.
- When we use chemicals they don't stay where we use them, they impact the water and plants.
- We say that we need to consider the entire environment. Farm practices are traditional farming organic
- Some of Bhutan's farmers are reportedly unconvinced by the feasibility of an entirely organic system, saying that they are already under pressure, with a booming population, a shortage of young labor, and increasingly unpredictable weather conditions.

**Read More:** <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/feb/11/bhutan-first-wholly-organic-country>

## INDIAN SCENARIO

### A burgeoning organic market beckons to India's rural farmers

- India outnumbers every other country in terms of organic producers -- with an estimated 5,47,591.
- Organic products, which until now were mainly being exported, are now finding consumers in the domestic market.
- According to a survey of 1,000 consumers in ten cities done by Morarka Organic Foods, around 30% of Indian consumers preferred organic products and were even prepared to pay 10 to 20% more for them.
- Western, modern farming has spoiled agriculture in the country.
- An overuse of chemicals has made land

acidic and hard, which means it needs even more water to produce, which is costly.

- Chemicals have killed the biggest civilisation in agriculture – earthworms, which produce the best soil for growth.

**Read More:** <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/newdelhi/a-burgeoning-organic-market-beckons-to-india-s-rural-farmers/article1-1051468.aspx>

#### **Organic fertilisers a better option to chemicals: Experts**

- The increasing use of chemical fertilisers in agriculture has opened the window for potential environmental hazards and use of organic fertilisers need to be brought under practice.
- Organic fertilisers contain natural minerals six times richer than chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
- Basic issues like pollution-free food and water are still a challenge.
- Chemicals in fertilisers and pesticides have damaged the quality of food and land.
- Organic food is grown, handled, and processed without pesticides, chemical fertilizers, weed-killers, genetic modification, germ-killing radiation, hormones, or antibiotics.

**Read More:** [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-28/aurangabad/45651735\\_1\\_fertilisers-babasaheb-ambedkar-marathwada-university-plant-sciences](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-28/aurangabad/45651735_1_fertilisers-babasaheb-ambedkar-marathwada-university-plant-sciences)

#### **Rs.3.17-crore project to promote organic farming**

- Organic vegetable farming project, under which vegetable cultivation will be taken up on nearly 1,700 hectares of land identified in various parts of the district.
- farmers, farming clusters and students will be sought for the new venture, which will be implemented at a cost of Rs.3.17 crore
- For attracting more farmers to the venture, the department has also come up with a crop insurance scheme.

**Read More:** <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/rs317crore-project-to-promote-organic-farming/article5515660.ece>

### **NORTH EAST INDIA**

#### **Small growers for strong organization - Move to boost organic tea production**

- Small and marginal growers of organic tea in the Northeast will organise themselves into a strong association in order to improve production and marketing of chemical-free tea
- Tea growers who were growing organic tea or were in the process of setting up such farms would be able to exchange ideas and benefit from each others' experience.

- 15 growers in Assam had been identified as growing organic tea, the entire Northeast was being brought together on one platform to grow organic Tea

**Read More:** [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1130821/jsp/northeast/story\\_17251251.jsp#.Us\\_oYdlW3p8](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1130821/jsp/northeast/story_17251251.jsp#.Us_oYdlW3p8)

#### **Make Meghalaya 100% organic farming state**

- Meghalaya is a rich organic farming tradition and the central Government wants this tradition to be nurtured further so that Meghalaya can be branded as a "100 percent organic farming State."
- There is a growing demand for organically produced goods in Europe and America and these markets have turned its eye towards India which is now focusing on organically produced farm items.
- India has become as destination of organic farm produces for foreign markets in Europe and America

**Read More:** <http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/front-page/20936-make-meghalaya-100-organic-farming-state-centre-tells-state>

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