

Organic Certification for the Namibian and International Markets



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Why go organic?



- Environmental considerations
 - Long term production
 - Mitigation of climate change
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Resilience
 - Biodiversity
 - Working with Nature's powerful forces

Why go organic?



- Promotion of health
 - Of farmer family and workers
 - Consumers
 - Environment
- Economically justifiable
 - Farmer's viability

In short - Sustainability

The Organic Approach to Sustainable Agriculture



The International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements has drafted a “Best Practice Guideline for Agriculture and Value Chains” aimed at generating an understanding of the organic movement’s vision of a sustainable society.

The Organic Approach to Sustainable Agriculture



- Best Agricultural Practices:
 - Social – people live in equality
 - Ecological – common resources are used sustainably
 - Economics – trading leads to prosperity
 - Culture – inspiration, innovation, leadership
 - Accountability – for our actions in a transparent manner with stakeholder participation
 - See <http://www.ifoam.org/en/value-chain/ifoam-best-practice-program>

What is Organic Agriculture?



- Agricultural systems that promote the **environmentally, socially and economically sound production** of food and fibres.
- **Soil Quality, Health and Fertility** are key to successful production.
- It aims to optimise quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment by **respecting the natural capacity** of soils, plants, animals and the landscape.
- Dramatically **reduces external inputs** by working with the powerful laws of nature to increase yields of high nutritional value and disease resistance while refraining from the use of synthetic agro-chemicals.
- Adheres to **globally accepted principles**, which are implemented within the local social, economic and environmental context.
- **Positively contributes to the environment, food security and sovereignty and the economic status** of farmers practicing the system and their region.

A system of production which



- Requires active promotion of soil quality, health and nutrition
- Produces crops and livestock which are appropriate to the local environment
- Deals with pests and diseases in a natural manner
- Is concerned with social, animal and environmental welfare
- Has exploding international demand, led by the USA and Europe

Consumers create the demand, voting with their purses and in so doing demand assurances relating to the production methods

... And so organic certification is needed

Organic Certification



- Farmers, packers and processors must be certified to a set of standards
- Logo and labelling indicate certification
- However there is no international agreement on standards
- > 50 sets in use or being prepared by different countries
- But fortunately:
 - In essence they don't differ much, though approaches are different
 - Many are based on IFOAM and EU standards
 - IFOAM is working hard to encourage standardisation

Organic Certification



- An absolute requirement for good retailers and exports
- Must be “third party” certified for long value chain and exports - independent verification
- To the organic standards of the importing country – and they all vary a little
- Most important standards for Southern Africa are EU, COR, US-NOP, especially for the export market
- IFOAM constantly strives for the improvement of standards and leads the way through innovation of different assurance systems

Participatory Guarantee Scheme - PGS



- For short value chain, domestic markets only
- Annual peer group assessment
- Assessments can incorporate teaching and consultation (unlike 3rd party certification)
- Low cost – except in terms of time and organisation
- Must do annual training
- Must have notices explaining the system at points of sale – *transparency* is the key
- Increasingly recognised by Governments

Elements of a certification system

- Standards
- Contracts
- Annual inspection / assessment
- Certification / approval
- Labelling
- Management
- Information updates
- Export documentation



Organic farm certification



1. Farmer draws up a description of the farm indicating organic practices and implementation of the requirements of the standards – the Organic Management Plan
2. Auditor goes over the farm, checking
 - the description,
 - adherence to the organic standards
 - And record-keeping (vital!)
3. Auditor writes a report
4. The Certifying Body (CB) reviews the report.
5. The CB sets conditions for organic certification
6. After the conditions have been met, a 12 month certificate is awarded

On condition that any change in the production system is reported to the CB during the year, and the client continues to stick to the standards

So you want to go organic – what are the steps?



- Start at the end – identify your
 - Market
 - Distribution channels
- These determine the
 - Certification system – Third party or PGS?
 - Thus the standards you need to consider
- Acquaint yourself with the standards
- Read, talk, look, listen, experiment – often conversion of the mind is the most challenging aspect

Going organic ...

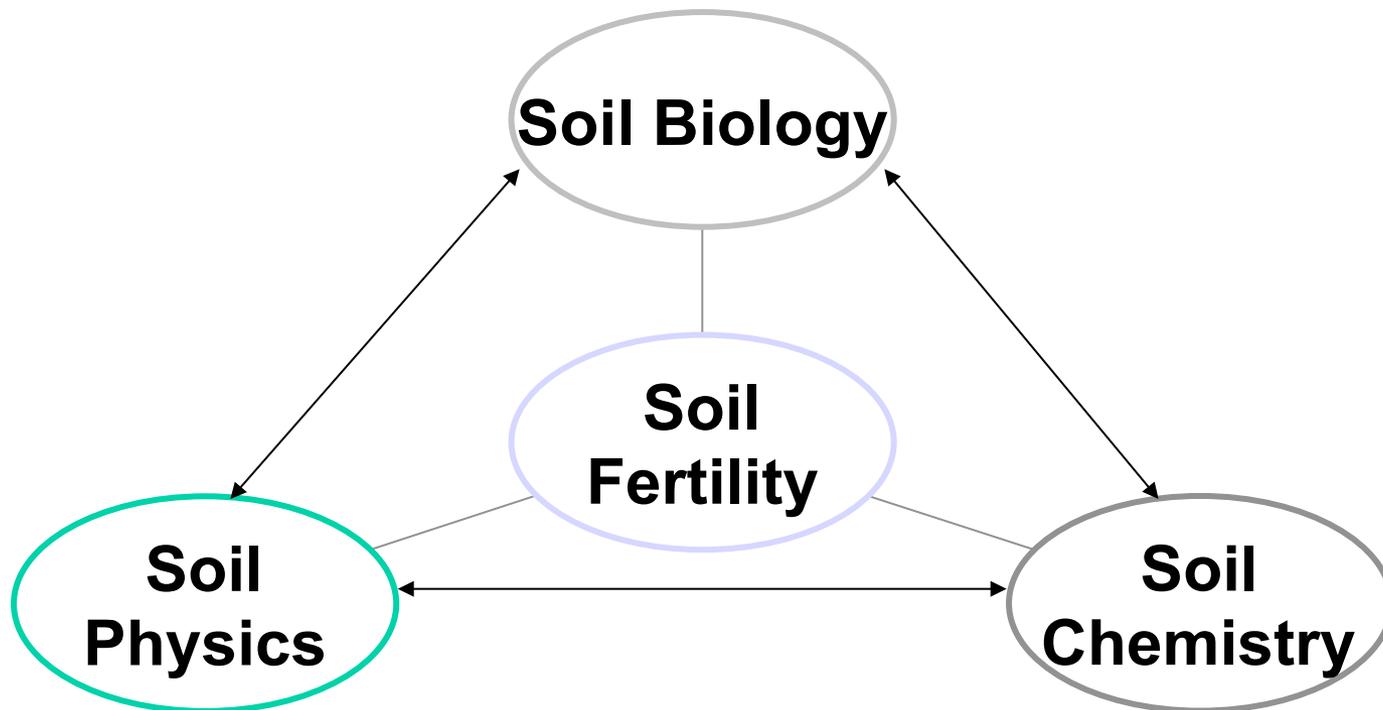
Principles



- Gain an appreciation of the principles of organics:
 - Difference between
 - Input substitution
= chemicals out, “organic substitutes” in
 - **Management** of the soil’s *quality, health* and *nutrition* = a healthy, productive system
 - Pests and diseases are indicators of problems in the soil or other system stresses => reach for the solutions, not a “bottle of spray” (a pill for every ill)

Going organic ...

Soil Fertility – the three legged pot



Going organic ...

Preparing for certification



- Gain an appreciation of the principles of organics certification:
 - Difference between organic by: default / neglect / claim / verification = certification
 - Need for conversion
 - “Working out” chemical residues
 - Implementation of organic management practices and systems
 - Documentation and record **keeping**

Going organic ... Certification



- “Playing by the rules”
- Risk assessment exercise
- Verification process –
 - What the producer says they do
 - What the producer actually does
 - Compliance with the standards

Crop audits

what we look at



- Farmer's knowledge and commitment
- Production system – what's happening in the fields
- Soil management practices
- Crop management practices
- Pest, weed & disease control
- Use of off farm inputs - fertility, seeds, pest control
- Environment, contamination
- Packing, processing, storage, distribution, marketing
- Documentation
- Traceability
- Sales

Plant material issues



- No GMOs
 - Obtain letters from suppliers of plant material
- Seeds –
 - You MUST try to get organic seeds
 - If not, get letters from seed suppliers saying why you can't
 - You may not use treated seed unless there is a government law to that effect

Inputs



Best to make your own compost

- No manure from factory farming (depends on animal conditions)
- Assess potential contamination of materials
- Make sure it's composted properly
- If buying, be careful of labels and claims
 - Remember – NO synthetic chemicals make be added

Commercial inputs



- Act 36 “organic” has no bearing on organic certification
- Beware of manufacturer’s claims
 - Products should display CB logo and statement to the effect that is an acceptable input into certified organic agriculture
- Difference between mined materials and synthetic “equivalents”
- Always check with the Certification Body

Where to get help

- Afrisco Certified Organic

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Namibian
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PGS Pioneers

- Krumhuk - dairy, beef, veg, fruit
- Greenspot Organics - veg, herbs, eggs
- Eichenbach - maize, sorghum, sunflowers
- Farm Belissima - vegetables, herbs, eggs
- Farm Rogers - beef, dairy



**Questions?
Answers!
More questions!**

Thank you