

Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Uganda

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Key food security issues for smallholder farmers:

1. Ability to produce enough food
2. Ability to buy enough food (that which they can not produce)
3. Availability of enough food at all times

1. Ability to produce enough food depends on:

- i. Knowledge and skills appropriate to the local social and ecological conditions
- ii. The maintenance of the natural resource base (soil structure, soil nutrients, sub- surface and above surface soil life, variety of habitants for beneficial fauna and flora, etc)
- iii. The diversity of the farm production to meet as much of the family's nutritional needs as possible
- iv. Farm Input-output efficiency (e.g. of energy)

2. Ability to buy enough food (Farmer's incomes) depends on:

- i. Access to markets, which is usually a function of several factors:
 - road and communication infrastructure
 - strengths of farmers' organisations
 - Tarrif and non-tarrif barriers to markets
- ii. Fairness of markets to enable farmers earn a decent return on their investment

3. Availability of enough food at all times depends on:

- i. Resilience of farm families to economic shocks
- ii. Resilience of farms to natural shocks (pest and diseases and unusual weather changes)
- ii. Nature of the road infrastructure to permit smooth movement of food to deficit areas

Genesis of Uganda's formal Organic Agric Sector

- The first segment of organic agric in Uganda aimed at empowering farmers with technologies and practices that they had control over and which were appropriate for their socio-economic and ecological conditions in order to achieve sust food security through increased and sustained food production.
- This segment was based on the philosophies of Chambers and others on participatory agriculture research and extension that puts farmer first. It was promoted by farmers associations and service NGOs.
- Sustainable agric technologies and practices were promoted in the late 1980s which later crystallized into organic agric in the early 1990s.

Genesis of Uganda's formal Organic Agric Sector

- Second segment of organic agric was founded on the idea that Ugandan farmers were organic by default and only needed the establishment of an organic quality compliance system to obtain organic certification and access the organic niche markets for a premium price
- This was introduced by business oriented development partners and business consultants

Duality of the organic sector in Uganda

- These two segments represent the duality of organic agric in Uganda
- All lead to achievement of food security
- Food security for smallholder farmers can not be secured exclusively by either production of own food for consumption or production for the market
- Both increased own production and access to the market are required for smallholder farmers to achieve sustainable food security

Duality of organic agric and food security

Food security dimension	Food security thru increased incomes from org cash crops	Food security thru Org Agric generated yield increases
Ability to produce enough food	Focus on traditional cash crops (e.g. Coffee, cocoa, cotton, cashew nuts), moderate changes in farm management and food crop yields	Focus on food crops, changed management, intensified land use with org techn and pract, exponential yield increases
Ability to buy enough food	Price premiums increase household incomes hence ability to buy food	Increased yields and variety of home grown food, moderate increases in income from local marketing of excess yields
Availability of enough food at all times	Higher incomes and reduced debt results into building of financial capital hence resilience of <u>family</u> to economic shocks	Diversity of crops and revived soil life increases results into building of natural hence resilience of <u>farms</u> to natural shocks

Challenges for the Organic sector in Uganda

- i. How do we achieve increased incomes from marketing of organic products together with increased ecological resilience of the farming systems of smallholder farmers?
- ii. How do we strengthen fairness in organic trade in light of resistance to the strengthening of social/ethical trade standards in the IFOAM norms and other organic standards?
- iii. How do we achieve nutrient balances, especially of phosphorus, in light of limited sources of organic phosphorus?

- iv. How do we mobilise adequate resources for the farmers to meet the knowledge intensive nature of organic agriculture?
- v. How can organic smallholder farmers be compensated for the public goods and services (biodiversity conservation, soil erosion control, carbon sequestration, etc) that they generate which are currently not paid for?
- vi. How can we guarantee the sustainability of international markets in light of the growing consumer concerns about foodmiles/carbon foot prints