Definition: organic farming from Dictionary of Energy

Consumption & Efficiency. a system of agriculture in which organic products and techniques are used; e.g., the use of natural animal and plant products, such as manure, compost, or bone meal, instead of chemical fertilizers, or the control of plant pests by means of insects or birds that prey on them rather than by chemical pesticides. Thus, organic foods, organic fertilizers, and so on.

Summary Article: organic farming from The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide

Farming without the use of synthetic fertilizers (such as nitrates and phosphates) or pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides) or other agrochemicals (such as hormones, growth stimulants, or fruit regulators). The use of any form of genetically modified crops, animals, or ingredients is also banned. Organic farming uses techniques commonly used in agriculture before the development of synthetic chemicals, drugs, and genetic modification, including frequent crop rotations with periods of fallow; natural fertilizers; free-range farm animals; smaller herd sizes; encouraging beneficial insect population growth; and increasing the diversity of crop species.

In place of artificial fertilizers, compost, manure, seaweed, or other substances derived from living things are used (hence the name ‘organic’). Growing a crop of a nitrogen-fixing plant such as lucerne, then ploughing it back into the soil, also fertilizes the ground. Some organic farmers use naturally-occurring chemicals such as nicotine or pyrethrum to kill pests, but control by non-chemical methods is preferred. These methods include removal by hand, intercropping (planting with companion plants which deter pests), mechanical barriers to infestation, crop rotation, better cultivation methods, and biological control. Weeds can be controlled by hoeing, mulching (covering with manure, straw, or black plastic), or burning off. Organic farming methods produce food with minimal pesticide residues and greatly reduce pollution of the environment. They are more labour-intensive, and therefore more expensive, but use less fossil fuel, mainly due to the lack of synthetic chemicals. Soil structure is greatly improved by organic methods, and recent studies show that a conventional farm can lose four times as much soil through erosion as an organic farm, although the loss may not be immediately obvious.

Following the 1996 scare over bovine spongiform encephalopathy (‘mad cow disease’), a considerable case for the restructuring of UK agriculture along organic lines was made, following proof by existing organic farms that production could be viable. In 1995, around 70% of organic produce in the UK was imported, indicating that demand exceeded supply. The amount of agricultural land dedicated to organic food production has increased steadily to fill this gap. In 2012, over 600,000 hectares of land were dedicated to organic farming in the UK.

In the USA, there were 18,513 certified organic farmers in 2013, representing 0.84% of the total farming population. In 2011, organic farm products accounted for 4% of the US farm market.

https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/organic_farming
Organic Farming

weblinks
International Federation of Organic Farming Movements

images
cabbage field

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA


© RM, 2018. All rights reserved.

https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/organic_farming
APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA