



IFOAM urges FAO to develop work programs based on ecological intensification

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In 2009 the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) concluded that an ecosystem approach should be adopted in agricultural management in order to achieve sustainable agriculture. With production in over 150 countries, Organic Agriculture is the world's leading ecosystem based farming system. It is the basis on which FAO's strategy for the sustainable intensification of crop production should be built.

High yielding Organic Agriculture is based on the intensification of ecological knowledge, ecological practices and ecological functions. With greater recognition and integration into national and international policies, extension services and research programs, organic practices could benefit many more producers. Organic farming practices are the only viable option for many of the world's small producers, as they enable robust farming systems to be developed that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

IFOAM is ready to expand its cooperation with FAO and member countries to fully integrate organic practices based on ecological intensification into FAO's important sustainable intensification of crop production strategy.

IFOAM urges FAO to develop work programs based on ecological intensification rather than chemical, product, capital and fossil energy intensification; and which recognize, protect and strengthen the multi-functional role of the world's small producers. Their independence from agribusiness value chains is the very reason they have been able to develop and maintain locally adapted varieties of crop and livestock species. Strengthening them through integration into global input chains will rapidly erode their independence, risk plunging them into debt, systematically deplete the world's agro-biodiversity, reduce food accessibility, increase hunger and GHG emissions, and further deny the developing world the means to feed themselves.

IFOAM calls for the FAO Sustainable Intensification Strategy to:

- Build the long-term economic and environmental resilience and performance of farming systems based on affordable and sustainable organic practices,
- Recognize and support the rights of small producers and vulnerable indigenous people,
- Enable farmers to effectively transition out of chemical inputs through the development of biologically optimized, high-yielding organic farming systems,
- Assist small producers in maintaining the complexity and agro-biodiversity of their farming systems and with it our climate change adaptation and nutrition potential,
- Support research on sustainable intensification of crop production, especially through the Organic Research Centers Alliance (an FAO led initiative)

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