

# **Organic Agriculture: The logical sequence to modern chemical agriculture in the Philippine context**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Organic agriculture, which is also described as less fossil fuel-dependent and agrochemical-free agriculture, is now perceived as the logical sequence to the food production systems which are dependent on fossil-fuel based agro-chemical inputs from production to processing. This paper discusses the situations and factors that should be considered in the crucial process of shifting approaches to food production systems to achieve food security in the new millennium.

In the past, farmers shifted with government support to chemical agriculture to produce the food requirements of the burgeoning population. Soils are badly degraded from the use of chemical fertilizer and pest populations are so complex and crop failures associated with no application of pesticides are widely known. Withdrawal from agro-chemical use will mean huge yield reduction without soil fertility restoration and any further yield decline is unacceptable both to the farmers and the consumers. The shift to organic agriculture requires soil fertility restoration, breeding/selection of seeds for organic agriculture, adoption of cultural management practices as in tillage, planting patterns, season-based crop planting, and shifting monocropping to diverse planting, integrated nutrient management and ecological pest management systems, among others.

Farmers need full government support to shift to organic agriculture. Moreover, the society or the consumers need to realize that the shift to organic agriculture is for their own benefit, hence, they need to appreciate, understand, cooperate, patronize and put premium value to organic agriculture products. The superior quality of organic products should be appreciated and should be translated to higher price. Organic agriculture production should be complemented with a change in consumer preferences or consumption patterns. It should be translated into a demand that will lead to changes in the supply side thereby changing the agricultural production systems that our Filipino farmers currently adopt.

*Key words:* Organic agriculture, chemical agriculture, monocropping, biodiverse farming, fertilizer, pesticides, agroecosystems

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