

Complete History of Organic Farming (Fresh Data)

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When it comes to organic farming, everyone thinks of it as a superior alternative to typical conventional farming.

And whether I say in favor or oppose to that, there are many facts to back the data.

Though organic farming has its benefits and flaws, the benefits usually outweigh the faults almost every time.

And one of the main reasons for the great benefits of organic farming is some of the historians, thinkers, and scientists who discovered the oldest yet the underrated way of farming namely **organic agriculture**.

The **history of organic farming** is as interesting as its benefits and so on.

If you want to learn and explore more about Organic farming history in detail, then you are at the right place.

Tighten your seatbelts and let's discover the fascinating history of organic agriculture without any further delay.

What is organic farming?

For those of you who don't know, organic farming (aka chemical-free farming) is the process of growing crops without any synthetic fertilizers, maintaining the soil's fertility for a long period, and sustaining biodiversity.

Organic farming mainly includes – use of crop wastes, compost, vermicompost, ivermectin, rotenone, pyrethrin, etc as organic fertilizers and crop rotations, green manures, etc it core principles and methods behind running a healthy organic farm.

The main aim of organic farming is largely to preserve the land, minimize pollution and increase the nutrients and quality in the food.

This is significant because according to [NCBI](#), the use of pesticides in the US alone is **over 1 billion pounds every year** and **5.6 billion pounds** over the globe.

Pesticides Use and Exposure Extensive Worldwide

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Introduction

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Worldwide it is estimated that approximately 1.8 billion people engage in agriculture and most use pesticides to protect the food and commercial products that they produce. Others use pesticides occupationally for public health programs, and in commercial applications, while many others use pesticides for lawn and garden applications and in and around the home (1,2). Pesticides are defined as “chemical substances used to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate any pest ranging from insects (i.e., insecticides), rodents (i.e., rodenticides) and weeds (herbicides) to microorganisms (i.e., algicides, fungicides or bactericides)” (1,3).

Over 1 billion pounds of pesticides are used in the United State (US) each year and approximately 5.6 billion pounds are used worldwide (1). In many developing countries programs to control exposures are limited or non-existent. As a consequence; it has been estimated that as many as 25 million agricultural workers worldwide experience unintentional pesticide poisonings each year (4). In a large prospective study of pesticide users in the United States, the Agricultural Health Study, it was estimated that 16% of the cohort had at least one pesticide poisoning or an unusually high pesticide exposure episode in their lifetime (5).

Also, the use of organic agriculture is much less than it actually should be.

Why, exactly?

Because it is difficult to practice than conventional farming.

You need to study things, plan everything, prepare your own pesticides, and so on.

Not only that, it is somehow difficult to get organic farming certification for your farm. There are steps that an organic farmer needs to follow for a year.

Despite all these challenges, organic farming is a more sustainable approach towards a healthy lifestyle and environment.

I think this data is adequate to prove that organic farming has a distinct and more significant place in this world.

With that out of the way, let's dive right into the history of organic farming and answer some of your most desired questions related to it.

History Of Organic Farming

What is the history of organic farming?

As per our history, many countries (including India and China as major ones) practiced organic farming as its tradition.

At that time, no one knew it as organic farming as there were no such rules and regulations to define the term.

As per the DDNEWS, India ranks first in the world in terms of organic farmers and around 9th in terms of the area used for organic farming.

When did organic farming start?

It was in the **early 1990s** that the true entity was given the name "organic".

Sir Albert Howard, who is also known as the father of organic farming followed by **F.H. King**, **Rudolf Steiner**, and all the other people who believed in the importance of organic farming rather than using pesticides and harming not only the soil's health but also peoples health promoted it heavily.

Countries like India were used to organic farming to serve the people with the best food possible from the early ages.

Sir Albert Howard being an agricultural scientist stayed in India for a handful of years to observe and research the type of methods Indians used for growing crops and livestock.

It is from there that he received an inspiration to transform countries in the west into being pesticide-free.

This is how the organic farming movement started.

But this was not a happy ending.

As the population in India started growing to a great extent rapidly, it was very difficult to feed the nation and countless were starving for food daily.

This was because organic crops generally yield much lesser than conventional farming.

Therefore, to meet the dead ends, **M. S. Swaminathan**, an Indian geneticist played a huge role in bringing the green revolution to the country by importing high yield seeds from other countries that used conventional farming.

This was not the best decision but this was the only option at that time.

After a couple of years, India was capable of exporting its produces to other countries and was also known for producing varieties of high-yielding wheat, thanks to M. S. Swaminathan and his approach towards the green revolution.

At this point, many countries had made the frameworks for organic farming and gave it a unique identity and sheer importance to promote wellbeing.

Rules and regulations for organic farming differed from country to country but the overall vision was to save the soil, people, and biodiversity.

Inspired by India, many countries started to adopt pesticide-free farming.

Among them, **Germany** was probably the first country to move its force towards organic agriculture under the **guidance of Rudolf Steiner's** who was also inspired by Sir Albert Howard's research.

Besides this, the book was written by **Rachel Carson** named Silent Spring also uncovered many facts regarding the vicious use of pesticides, at that time.

In fact, this book alone helped countries in controlling the use of pesticides and mainly DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane).

By now, you may have got a decent glimpse of organic farming, its history, and why it is important.

Now, let's talk about how is organic farming different from conventional farming for better understanding.

How organic farming differs from conventional farming?

Though organic farming is vastly different from conventional agriculture, there are few similarities between them.

One of the biggest is that both can use pesticides to control insects.

The only twist here is that organic farmers will have to rely on organic pesticides (as per the standards set by **USDA**) while conventional farmers are **allowed to use synthetic fertilizers** and pesticides to control harmful pests.

Besides this, here is the major difference between the two:

Organic farming	Conventional farming
Uses organic pesticides that preserve soil quality.	Uses harmful pesticides that deplete the soil quality and human health.
Requires more manpower than machines.	Requires more machines and less labor.
The cost of production and cost of labor is generally higher.	The cost of labor and production is lesser than that of an organic farmer.
The quality of crops is fresh, healthy, and nutritional.	The quality of crops is usually lower.
Organic fertilizers are cheaper to make.	Synthetic pesticides are somehow costlier.
Organic farming promotes good health and helps prevent deadly diseases such as cancer.	Conventional farming is the main reason for deadly diseases such as cancer.
Organic farmers can sell their food at a higher price due to the quality.	Conventional farmer has to sell the food at a default set price.
Though the quality of the food is great, its lifespan is shorter.	The lifespan of this food is usually higher than organic food.

These were some of the major differences between organic agriculture and conventional agriculture.

Note: If you wish to explore more, here is the definitive guide on [organic vs conventional farming](#). Have a look at it.

There may be more variances between the two yet the above mentioned are some of the most common and must-know traits.

Currently, organic farming is adopted and largely [practiced in over 187 countries](#) as per the report published by the **Food and Agriculture Organisation** of the US (FOA)

This was never possible without some ground rules and principles that define and stand by the word 'organic'.

Rules and Principles of Organic Farming

Unfortunately, you cannot claim yourself as an organic farmer without first proving it and getting yourself a badge of honor.

For example, if you sell goods worth over 5000\$ (as a US farmer) and label them under the term 'organic', you will require a certificate from the USDA accredited agency.

The same applies to organic food companies too.

For the farmers selling organic produces for less than 5000\$, it is optional to get a certificate.

Remember that the process of acquiring a certificate will be different for all the countries. I gave an example of the US but you can do the same for all the countries.

Google is your friend.

Along with that, the land used for organic farming should be free at least for **three years** before growing organic crops if the pesticides are used prior.

There is a complete prohibition of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and hormones. You cannot add any kind of fertilizers apart from the ones permitted in organic farming.

The pesticides allowed in organic farming are:

- Green manures.
- Crop and plant wastes.
- Compost and Vermicompost.
- Ivermectin.
- Pyrethrin and Rotenone.
- Copper Sulphate.
- Elemental Sulfur.
- Etc.

The animals that assist in organic farming should also be given organic food and treated accordingly.

Pests should be controlled by organic pesticides that are allowed by the USDA.

Organic waste should be recycled and not thrown away.

Techniques like crop rotation, cover cropping, intercropping, etc should be used to heal soil fertility.

Note: Not following any of these rules or breaking one of them can lead any agriculturalist to pay a civil penalty of up to 10000\$.

These were some of the main principles that every organic farmer should follow and live by.

This concludes our history of organic farming. It's not as complicated as it looks.

Conclusion

As an organic farmer, your main aim should always be to protect the biodiversity, environment and promote the good health and wellbeing of the people around you by feeding them the best food possible.

Organic farming has a substantial marketplace in this world.

And thanks to the great thinkers and authors who promoted it. Due to them and many more, consumers demand a higher quality product and are willing to pay higher for pesticide-free food.

There can be a time when there will be zero cases of cancer only if every farmer turns towards 100% organic farming.

I know it is not easy.

But always remember, nothing great is ever easy.

The history of organic farming is fascinating. But now, it's our time to make the future of organic farming mesmerizing as well.

I hope you learned something new from this article.

Now, it's your turn.

Tell me what was your biggest takeaway from this article?

Also, was there any important thing that I missed?

Either way. Let me know by leaving a comment below right now.