

ISAN

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IFOAM Southern African Network

*Supporting the growth of food grower
networks in Southern Africa*

10 OF 11 POLITICAL PARTIES IN DENMARK SUPPORT ORGANIC FARMING

Paul Holmbeck

YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS

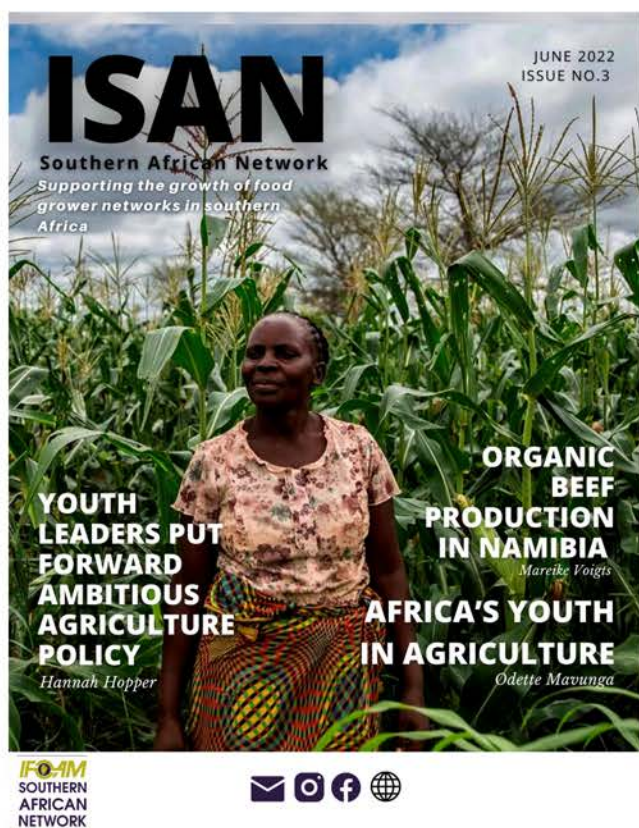
Getrude Chambati

IFOAM CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY





Read our past issues by clicking [here](#).



ABOUT ISAN

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC MOVEMENTS (IFOAM) SOUTHERN AFRICAN NETWORK

ISAN is a regional network of organisations and individuals actively supporting the development of a sustainable, ecological organic agricultural sector in southern Africa. Its values align with IFOAM–Organics International's (IFOAM_OA) principles of Health, Fairness, Ecology and Care.

ISAN was formed during the second Africa Organic Conference held in Zambia in 2012 to represent Southern Africa Development Community countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Kingdom of Eswatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date, the following countries are active in ISAN: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ISAN aims to develop and coordinate programmes and networks of common interest at the regional level working through National Organic Agriculture Movements (NOAMs), the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers' Organisations (INOFO) and the Network of Organic Agriculture Researchers in Africa (NOARA), all of which have chapters in the region.

For more information, contact: chair@isan.ifoam.bio

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IFOAM
SOUTHERN
AFRICAN
NETWORK



This publication is a collaboration between ISAN and the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa

EDITOR'S NOTES

By Fortunate Nyakanda, ISAN chair

Christmas greetings to all our readers. It is our pleasure to bring you the fifth issue of the ISAN magazine. Our gratitude goes to all the contributors of articles, it also goes to those who read and share. This magazine seeks to unite the organic sector in Southern Africa as platform to educate, provide information, inspire and share best practices on organic agriculture as well as sustainable production practices across Southern Africa and beyond.

This issue features IFOAM _OI's 50th year celebrations in South Korea, in which the commemorative conference reminisced on past achievements and envisaged the future of the global organic sector. This issue also enlightens readers on how organic principles are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rio Convention on Biodiversity and how in recent years organic and agroecological farming systems' contribution to building food security and addressing climate and biodiversity crises has been recognised by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

From beyond our borders, we are inspired by the organic sector in Denmark and reminded that multi-stakeholder approaches and inclusiveness is the key to mainstreaming organics at the national level

As always, we profile our IFOAM Ecological Organic Agriculture Leaders and Southern African farmers who share their knowledge with our readers. In this issue we turn our attention to food waste and using vermicompost as a solution and explore the use of rock rabbit manure as a soil fertility agent.





It is critical that we attract youth to farming in Africa. Majestic Africa profiled in this issue shows the potential for agro-processing as a sustainable livelihood in Africa.

The traditional food and seed festivals held in Zambia and Zimbabwe this year showcase how to celebrate traditional customs, practices and farming outcomes, and how this acknowledgement can help develop a market for organic produce.

If you have inspiring projects and innovations that you want us to share with the region, do not hesitate to contact us at: secretariat@isan.ifoam.bio.

Yours in organics,

Fortunate Nyakanda
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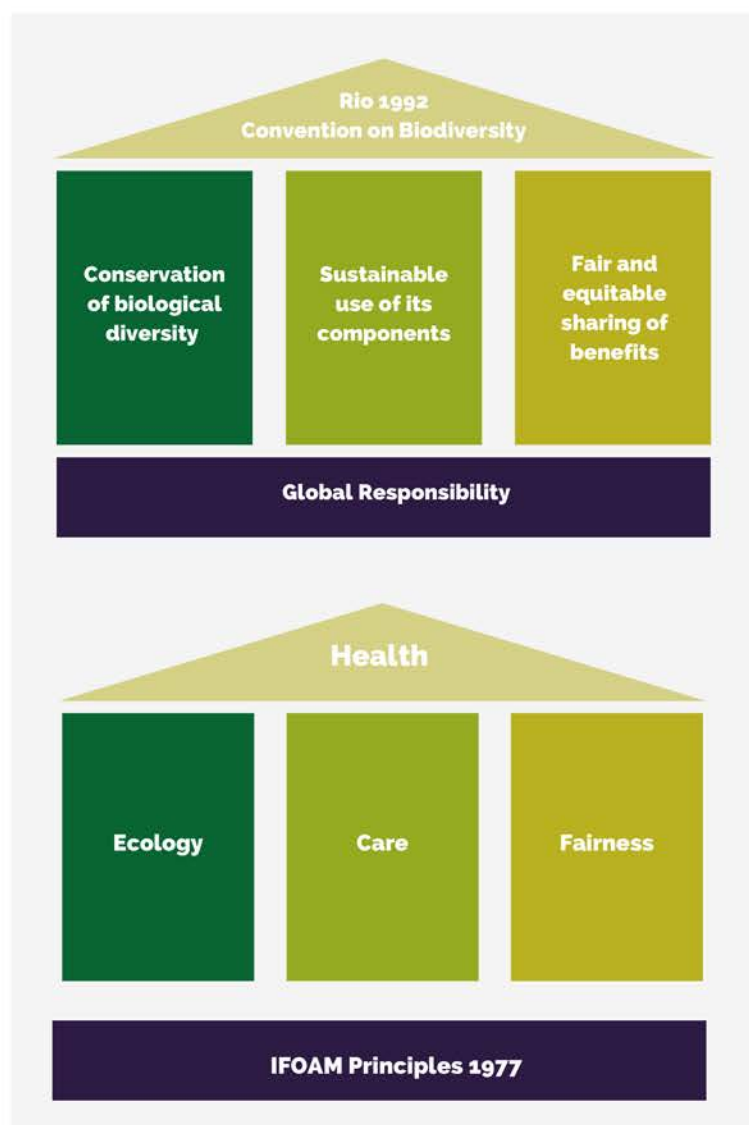
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ORGANIC 3.0

IFOAM Principles: Link to Convention on Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals

By Prof. Hardy Vogtmann, IFOAM general secretary 1976-1982, IFOAM Honorary President from 1982

Conventional food production has led to the culmination of the following problems: soil degradation, biodiversity loss, water pollution and climate change, among others. In a bid to fight these challenges, the global community converged in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and launched a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This meeting is known as the Rio Summit. The agenda for the Rio Summit aimed to enhance the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources and support the Convention on Biological Diversity to guarantee that life in the next millennium would change substantially for the better.



While biodiversity loss is mainly due to human activity and it conversely affects human livelihoods, the recommended strategy was to strike a balance between the needs of today's generation and the life prospects of future generations.

The IFOAM-Organics International principles of organic agriculture formulated in 1977 have the same aims related to global responsibility as crafted at the Rio Summit of 1992.

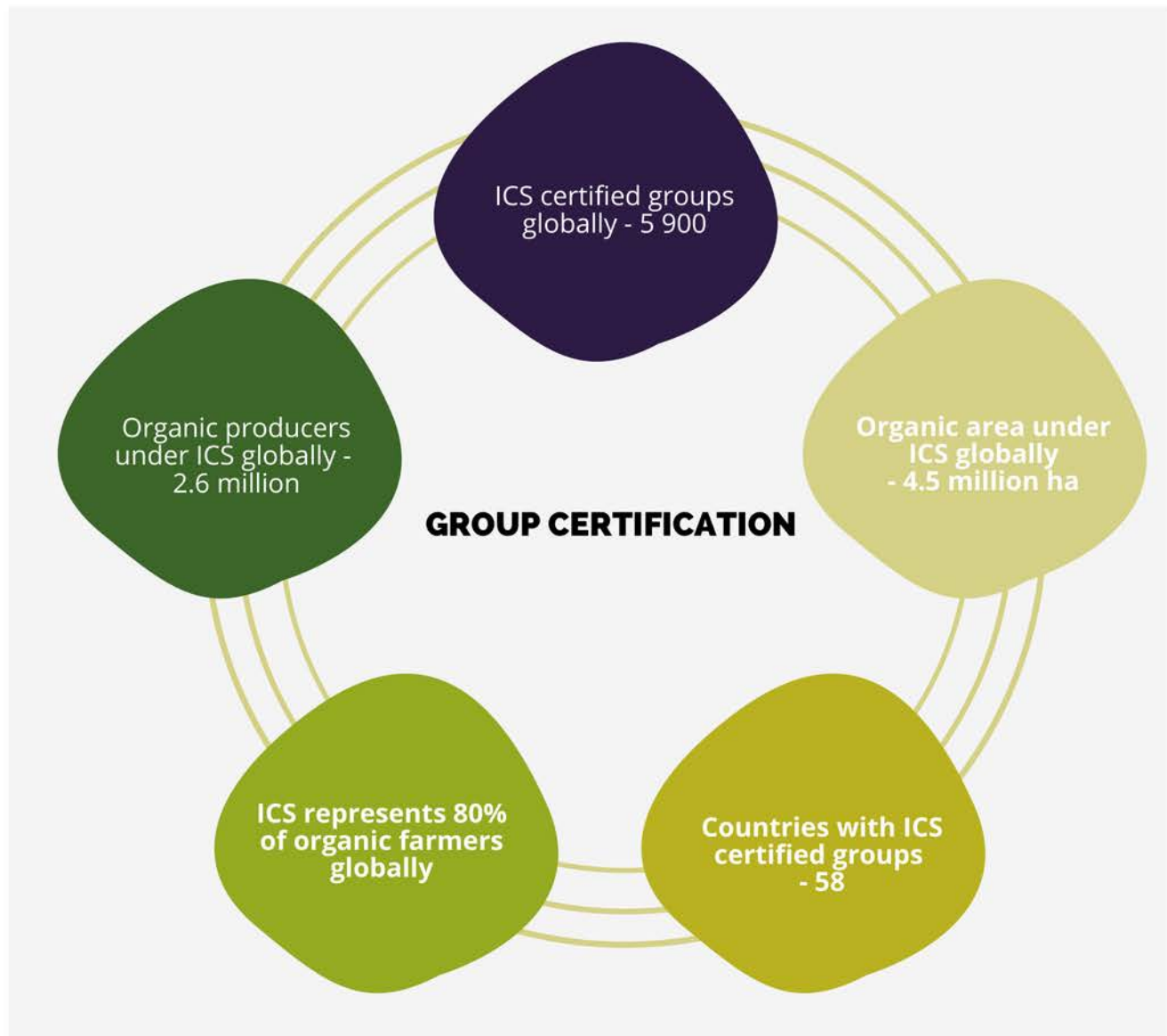
IFOAM's role is to stress the importance of the health of our planet as our global responsibility; initiate a value discussion at all levels; create partnerships from farm to fork through consent in objectives, norms, values; make SDGs accepted as the underlying principle of all human activities using organic farming as an example; and guide science to a transdisciplinary approach.

This article is taken from Prof. Hardy Vogtmann's presentation at IFOAM-Organics International's 50th year celebration.

Statistics and Trends

There are different ways in which smallholder farmers can gain organic certification. They can apply for third-party certification, which is normally too expensive and can be administratively burdensome. They can join a participatory guarantee system (PGS) in which farmers, consumers, retailers and other interested parties provide certification based on assessment against agreed upon organic standards. See more on PGS [here](#). Or they can attain organic certification as a group using internal control systems (ICS). In this system, a central body makes sure that the smallholder farmers in the group comply with organic standards and the whole group is certified organic - not the individual farmer.

IFOAM_OA defines ICS as "a documented quality assurance systems that enables an external certification body to delegate the periodic inspection of individual group members to an identified body or unit within the certified operator. This means that the third-party certification bodies only have to inspect the well-functioning of the system, as well as to perform a few spot-check re-inspections of individual smallholders. More can be found on ICS [here](#).



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

By the Organic Farming Academy

The Organic Farming Academy (OFA) hosted an Open Day 2022 on the occasion of the European Union's Organic Day on 23 September 2022. The celebrations served to raise awareness about the wide range of benefits that organic farming generates, including:

- Health benefits for the planet (the produce is farmed in a more sustainable way).
- Health benefits for humans as organic produce is rich in nutrients (vitamin C, iron, magnesium and phosphorus) and grown with less exposure to nitrates and pesticide residue.
- Support to local farmers at community level as it provides low entry barrier to farming.

The OFA was launched during these celebrations. It is supported by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through the project 'Organics4Zim' to improve the living conditions of rural smallholder farmers and wild plant collectors in Zimbabwe. Invited guests included the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Zimbabwe, the Representative of Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Development and an IFOAM_OI board member and Zimbabwe Organic Producers and Promoters Association director.

Speakers shared messages that organic farming is a way to address climate change, save the ecosystem, and reduce food systems disruption. Zimbabwean agriculture has been premised on conventional production methods but the negative impacts these have caused over the years have shifted perceptions to a broader understanding that farming can no longer be taken as business as usual. The Zimbabwean government has begun to borrow from organic principles, building sustainability and self-sufficiency in farmers in such programmes as Pfumvudza where water harvesting is encouraged together with use of manure for building soil fertility and use of mulch to conserve moisture. The Ministry fully acknowledges the impacts of climate change and supports farmers in tree planting programmes to build resilience. It also acknowledged the importance of organic farming and said that the Ministry is actively working towards facilitating, promoting and expanding this farming system Zimbabwe.

"Organic farming is the future. It can be a pathway to addressing not only hunger and malnutrition but also other challenges including poverty, water use, climate change, and unsustainable production and consumption."

Organic agriculture improves livelihoods as the growing global organic market offers opportunities to improve livelihoods with low entry barriers. Entry to the formal and export organic market calls for organic certification. The OFA's role was applauded and was envisaged to contribute to the growth of Zimbabwe's local and export organic market share.

Several organizations working in the Zimbabwean organic sector showcased their products and services including Fairtrade Support Network Zimbabwe, Dairibord Zimbabwe, which showcased its new dairy drink made from organic wild harvest baobab, and National Foods that showcased its porridges made of organic small grains as well as organic wild harvested baobab. SAP Rural Sourcing Management solution showcased a digital traceability system that manages sustainability data through digitally recorded information on producers, their farms, and their communities and ensures compliance with food safety requirements for the export market at every level of the value chain.

A lovely display of Baobab fruit, termed 'The African super fruit' were on display at the B'Ayoba stand. B'Ayoba is a leading producer of baobab products, ethically and sustainably harvested in the wild under strictly monitored conditions. KaZa Oil is a leading specialist producer of selected natural African plant products that works with rural producer communities in Southern Africa to supply high-quality organic oils, extracts and plant products to the global cosmetics and ingredients market. Organic Africa, together with outgrowers, showcased a range of herbal teas such as Calendula, Melissa, Peppermint and Stinging Nettle that they export to Europe.

For more information email admin@organicfarmacademy.com or visit their [website](#).

The OFA supports smallholder farmers and wild plant collectors in Zimbabwe by offering practice-oriented qualification programmes leading to external certification of organic products for the export market. It offers certification trainings that enable participants from marginalised groups to achieve sustainable income generation from sustainable use of natural resources.



IFOAM CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY



IFOAM_OI and her partners in South Korea hosted a commemorative conference to celebrate her 50th anniversary from 1-3 October 2022 back-to-back with a 17-day IFOAM Goesan International Organic Expo and Industrial Fair that started from 30 September running to 16 October 2022, which was attended by about 750 000 visitors. About 1 900 experts from 36 countries held 18 symposiums during the event to exchange information on organic farming, with 514 000 visitors signing a pledge for the realisation of carbon neutrality.

The conference was a reflection of the past, present and future of IFOAM_OI. Current and past global board members and presidents, representatives of regional bodies and sector platforms as well as organic pioneers and youth leaders attended and took the opportunity to help develop a new strategy for the organisation.

There was so much to celebrate in South Korea. The IFOAM journey started in 1972 in Versailles, France, defining the first principle of organic agriculture (Principle of Health) in 1974 and the other three principles (Care, Ecology and Fairness) in 1977. In recent years, organic and agroecological farming systems' contribution as part of the solution for food security, climate and biodiversity crises has been widely recognised by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and at the United Nations Food Systems Summit. Declarations from the 50th IFOAM_OI conference can be found [here](#).

Today, the organic sector has recorded more than 3 million organic farmers, US\$120 billion in sales, and an unmatched certification system guaranteeing a whole range of sustainable practices.

NOAM UPDATES

Namibia Organic Association (NOA), Namibia

NOA has had a busy year. It is celebrating the launch of a booklet undertaken in collaboration with Colin Nott on regenerative livestock farming practices. The booklet contains 16 case studies on Namibian livestock farmers and highlights the importance of protecting and building soil health in the country. NOA contributed four case studies on organic livestock farms, which will be released separately in 2023. The booklet was launched in October at the Namibian Agricultural Union's Agri-Outlook Conference focused on 'Farmers, Food, Future'. The conference was attended by farmers and stakeholders from across the country, with the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Calle Schlettwein, invited as a keynote speaker.

NOA also collaborated this year with Women in Agriculture Namibia (WIAN) to celebrate female farmers who use organic principles in their farming techniques as part of WIAN's **Female Food Heroes Campaign**. Women farmers submitted a picture or video showing what they farm and post it on their social media pages. The winner was Janessia Beukes, a backyard gardener who improves her soil by adding compost and practicing crop rotation.

The Namibian Multiplier Support Programme (MSP) designed in partnership with the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa kicked off on 11 October 2022. The MSP will work with 15 women and 15 men to build capacity around organic agricultural knowledge and practice in the Zambezi Region through an in-depth one-year training programme.

The MSP is working with those who have an interest in cascading organic and agroecological agricultural knowledge. They will be trained in a range of technical skills - such as compost production and making and using biochar to build soil fertility, as well as gaining support in building their capacity to disseminate knowledge to others.



Credit: Tanaka Muradzikua

South Africa Organic Sector (SAOSO) and PGS SA, South Africa

SAOSO and PGS SA are leading on Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) capacity building through their PGS Pollinator Programme, the first of its kind in Africa. The programme is funded through the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa, part of the bigger GIZ-funded Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa. The PGS Pollinator Programme started in 2020 and is supporting the establishment and maintenance of more than 20 PGS groups in Southern Africa. To provide additional support to the Pollinators, Co-pollinators are being trained to act as mentors and to alleviate the current heavy workload carried by Pollinators in managing their PGS groups, including organising farm assessments.

The first Co-pollinator training of 25 participants from 7 provinces took place in November at Goedgedacht - an olive farm - in South Africa's Western Cape province. Co-pollinators were trained on how PGS works, how to set up a PGS, how to conduct farm assessments, the South African organic certification landscape and how to use the SAOSO Organic Standards. There was also a focus on technical skills, including making compost and practically undertaking a farm assessment for certification purposes. The training session was also used to activate and validate knowledge products - different types and formats of knowledge. PGS SA believes a sustainable PGS group is a shared responsibility of all.



Caption: Co-pollinator training, Goedgedacht, November 2022

Credit: (L) Matt Purkis (Pollinator); (R) Colleen Anderson (SAOSO Secretariat)



www.saoso.org



PGS | SOUTH AFRICA

www.pgssa.org.za

Mozambique

Solidaridad Southern Africa in partnership with the National Institute for Standardization and Quality and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development organised a conference in November 2022 to get input into the Draft Regulation for the Production and Certification of Organic Agricultural Products. It is hoped that if key stakeholders are aware of the relevant organic standard it will make adoption of the regulations more widespread. The conference also aimed to publicise Mozambique Boas Agricultural Practices.



Caption: Stakeholders meet to discuss draft organic standard, Maputo Mozambique, November 2022

Credit: Image provided by Sabine Lydia Muller



ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (EOA) LEADERS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

In 2021, IFOAM_OI in association with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH hosted an Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Leadership Program in Africa. The aim was to support agricultural leaders in broadening their networks, promoting EOA, honing their advocacy skills and sharing their knowledge and experiences. Participants in the training were drawn from 25 African countries. In Southern Africa, our EOA Leaders are Kanangwa Newlove and Wilfred Miga from Zambia, Peter Kaniye from Malawi, Busiswe Mgangxela from South Africa and Mareike Voigts from Namibia. All are actively building EOA networks and calling for policy change to support the growth of sustainable food and farming systems in the region.

In this issue, we profile the ongoing work of Kanangwa Newlove, a passionate advocate for organic farming who has spoken on various national and regional platforms about the need for food production that is good for both people and planet.

Raising awareness of the need for organics

By Kanangwa Newlove nee Hamuyamba

I'm an organic farmer, founder and CEO of Loctaguna Organics in Lusaka Zambia. At the young age of 5 years, I experienced a traumatic event that made me dislike meat. For a long time, I tried in vain to eat meat. My parents did not understand how a small event as it appeared to them could make me want to give up meat altogether but finding out by chance that one has eaten ones' pet cow is not a small issue by any measure. It was from this experience that I saw the need to decide for oneself what one wants to eat.

Why am I telling this story? Well, this was the beginning of my journey with food. At 13 years, I grew more vegetables at my parent's backyard than my family could eat. My parents were very kind-hearted people and so they distributed the vegetables to our neighbours. My love for planting and growing food grew stronger as the years went by. I went to the University of Zambia and qualified with a BA, married Tony Newlove in 2002 and had a daughter in 2004. After living for some years in Europe I moved back to Zambia where we bought a 10-acre smallholding.

I started to grow food for sale in 2008 experimenting with various types of regenerative farming methods until I settled for organic farming. My brand grew in popularity and reputation and eventually we began supplying shops and restaurants. In 2021 I got accepted into the EOA Leadership Course, which opened up both life and business opportunities. My farm is now a model farm for Kasisi Agriculture Training College and about 50 farm visits happen each week. I take part in talks with government ministries regarding agriculture policies and I speak at various conferences and seminars including those initiated by SAFCEI and Hohenum University. I'm also one of the coordinators of a new organic PGS group in Zambia hoping to help scale organics in Zambia. **Find Loctaguna Organics on [Facebook](#).**



"I believe in the principles of organic farming particularly the way that they work together to bring fairness, healing and restoration."

FARMER TIPS

Tips on growing tomatoes

By Paulus Nghixulu, Namibia

- **Tip 1: Variety selection**

Select the appropriate tomato variety that is drought resistant and suitable for your climate. It is highly recommended that farmers grow determinate varieties because they are best suited for open fields, require less attention and give high yields in a short period of time.

- **Tip 2: Seedlings Preparation**

For those in hot climates, grow seeds in seed trays and harden them before planting, this will avoid shock when transplanting.

- **Tip 3: Planting**

Plant deep enough so that it can develop additional roots from its stems, which will help the plant grow thicker and stronger. Spacing is dependent on the variety, but 60cm row spacing is generally recommended.

- **Tip 4: Cover the ground to preserve moisture**

Mulch the tomatoes to conserve soil moisture and prevent ground disease from reaching the plants. Mulches can be shredded leaves, grass clippings, straw and peat moss, etc.

- **Tip 5: Trellising**

Use straight sticks to trellis tomatoes to support plants during the growing period and as they bear fruit.

- **Tip 6: Pruning tomatoes**

For improved yields prune tomato plants by pinching off the first appearing leaves from the stems to allow easy air flow between plants. Make sure the leaves do not touch the ground as bacteria spot can affect the leaves and eventually kill the plant when it rains.

- **Tip 7: Watering routine**

Stick to a fixed time for watering to avoid stressing the plant as this can result in a lower yield.



ORGANIC POLICY AND NGO ACTION: THE CASE OF DENMARK

By Paul Holmbeck, Denmark

Paul Holmbeck is the former CEO of Organic Denmark and current World Board Member of IFOAM – Organics International and director of Holmbeck EcoConsult, where he advises governments, businesses and NGOs around the world in organic policy and market development

Organic farming and food are firmly mainstream in Denmark today. The country has the highest market share for organic food in the world (13%). And for many basic daily foods like eggs, milk, flour and many vegetables and fruits, the organic market share is 30-50%. About 95% of all prepared baby food is organic in the country. Meals in schools, hospitals, government canteens and even military barracks are going organic, with many at 60% and in the largest city of Copenhagen at 90% organic.

The organic farm area doubled between 2007 and 2020 and the new national goal is to double again, reaching the European Union's goal of 25% organic by 2030. Farmers are more and more positive about organic farming, as organic farmers are earning more and are increasingly seen as really good farmers, because organic farming requires good management skills.

Political support for organics has grown steadily. Today 10 of 11 political parties in the Danish Parliament support organic farming. We convinced politicians one-party-at-a-time to use organic farming to solve problems and seize opportunities: rural job creation and incomes, greater biodiversity, climate benefits, protection of drinking water and food from pesticides, and increased exports.

**"10 of 11
political
parties in
Denmark
support
organic
farming."**

Politicians are also opinion drivers—people listen to them. I have experienced again and again that a good dialogue that dispels myths and shares facts changes the way these opinion makers communicate. We hear less about organics as part of the problem for climate or world hunger, and more about organic farming as part of the solution.

None of these breakthroughs happened on their own. In the early 1990s, organic enthusiasm in the market, in farming, in research and in politics was very limited. So, what happened?

Unite! Organic NGOs as change agents

The organic sector got organised merging eight different organisations representing organic milk, vegetables, processors, etc. into one: Organic Denmark. This organisation now represents organic farmers, processors, traders, consumers and food professionals offering one voice in politics, the media and the market. We then built competencies and capacity in the critical areas of farm advising, innovation, market development, advocacy, public procurement and communications. Step-by-step. Year after year. I was employee number 7 in 1995 and we have grown to 70 employees since then, with strong support from producers and government.

"Organic Denmark became a change agent in the market, in the fields and in politics."

Collaboration and solidarity are key

But we can't make change on our own. We built partnerships with retail actors and government agencies. And we created alliances with NGOs working for environment, consumers, climate, healthier food, animal welfare and better working conditions for workers in farming and the food industry. Together we are a transformative infrastructure more and more positive towards organics—because we help with their agendas—and work together to develop organic farming, organic markets and organic policy. We also collaborate intensively with conventional farm organisations on policy and innovation and avoid direct criticism of conventional farming or farmers as much as possible. Researchers call it 'constructive conflict' because we do battle each other on GMOs and compete for policy and resources, but we also collaborate and try to be good colleagues. Because every farmer is a potential organic farmer (and one day they all will be!).

Organic policy builds capacity and drives growth: both push and pull

Denmark has had a lot of firsts. First organic law in the world. First organic standards. First national organic logo, first National Organic Action Plan and first GMO law that protected organic farmers. There is still a lot of work to do! One lesson is that organic policy works! It can train farmers, drive market development and accelerate innovation in organic farming. Another is that the best policies come from close dialogue with policymakers and collaboration with the organic sector itself, about their needs and challenges. A third lesson is that organics gets a boost when it is used as a policy measure in broader national strategies for rural development, water and nature protection, export promotion and climate. Organic farming has long been a part of Danish Rural Development Programmes and most recently the Danish goal of doubling the organic area is a pillar of Denmark's Climate Strategy. A fourth lesson is that a balance of push policies (upscaling organics in farming) and pull policies (market and supply chain development) makes a powerful combination. And it creates balanced development avoiding the worst of overproduction or underproduction of organics.

Upscaling organic farming (PUSH)

Among the push policies driving organic transition in farming are:

- Organic education in agricultural schools.
- Free conversion "checks" (advice to farmers about organic conversion).
- Demonstration of best practices.

Upscaling organic farming (PUSH), cont...

- Research Centre and Innovation Centre for Organic Farming.
- Conversion payments assisting in the 2-year conversion period.
- Ecosystem payments for organic farming.
- Support for advisory services in the early years.

Among the pull policies driving market and supply chain development are support for:

- Collaboration with supermarkets.
- Export promotion.
- Stronger skills among organic entrepreneurs.
- Product development team.
- Public procurement agreements and consumer awareness campaigns.

Denmark's work with organic public procurement really highlights the power in working with both policy and organic sector mobilization at the same time. After years of demonstrating organic conversion in public kitchens at the institution and city level, the Danish government set a goal of 60% organic in all public kitchens, established an 'organic cuisine label' for 30, 60 and 90% organic and invested in organic conversion in public kitchens. At the same time the organic sector brought farmers, processors and wholesalers together to collaborate on ensuring supply (motivated by the new political goals) and establish an organic school to motivate staff in wholesale companies and capacity to train kitchen workers in the 'new meals' that were not only organic, but also healthier and more climate friendly with less meat, less waste and purchasing in season. Together, policy and action from the organic sector and allies has created a strong momentum. Lessons from the Danish public procurement are found in a case study [here](#).

Organic NGO as an implementer of policy

Worth noting is that, with the exception of farm subsidies and free inspection/certification (both coordinated by government directly), almost all of the above policies are implemented by organic NGOs and allies, not by government. This is an important difference in Denmark. And it works. Organic policymakers have actively used Organic Denmark as a tool to drive organic transition in farming and the market. This change agent is missing in most nations because government has not invested in their organic sector.

Partnerships and consumer motivation drive market growth

Another almost unique feature is the close partnerships that Organic Denmark has built with supermarket chains. Working with retail leadership to motivate them to go all-in on organics, because these are the most interesting consumers to get into their stores. Then helping supermarkets to expand organic product assortments, position organics better in stores and communicate much more actively 'the why' of organics, both what organics 'can do for you' but also what organic farming does for the planet. And this is perhaps the most important lesson from Denmark. Making organics for all means communicating how organics protects our nature, climate, and creates new climate-resilient opportunities for farmers, while keeping pesticide residues out of our food, nature and drinking water. And information is not enough. We invite consumers out on organic farms to see for themselves. Every year 5% of the entire population of Denmark is out on an organic farm at one of our events. This memory, and meeting dedicated organic farmers, stays with them. In their hearts and minds. Winning their loyalty to organic food and farmers!

YOUTH & INNOVATION

YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS

By Getrude Chambati, Zimbabwe

The world is suffering from overconsumption of over-processed and refined products that have pesticides residues because of the way they are grown. In Zimbabwe and the rest of Africa, the last decade has witnessed a sharp rise in non-communicable diseases such as cancers, heart disease, strokes and diabetes. Research shows that organically grown food is healthier than conventionally grown food because it has more antioxidants, is low in heavy metals and has no pesticide residues. See more [here](#). Against this background, farmers continue to produce food using conventional pesticides and fertilisers and the market-driven production approach led to the abandoning of traditional crops grains, pulses vegetables etc. As a result, markets are flooded by foods that have chemical residues and are refined. Food is medicine and the benefits of traditional crops as well as organically produced foods has been lost.



My company, Majestic Africa, specialises in agroprocessing, packaging and selling of traditional foods and superfoods sourced from smallholder farmers (mainly women) practising agroecology and organic farming. Majestic Africa creates a market for the organic farmers while processing, packaging and selling to health-conscious consumers in Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans in the diaspora.

Majestic Africa sources some of its raw materials from the marginalised and often termed 'forgotten farmers', those without any form of assets or less active in the economic value chains. It does this as a way of giving back to the community and empowering them. This has seen a number of poverty-stricken households (often elderly widows) getting financial rewards for their labour. A mentorship programme is linked to these farmers to ensure an uninterrupted supply of quality produce. These products are carefully processed and feedback from customers is taken serious for continuous product improvement. As I embarked on this business journey I became more interested in organic farming and took steps to acquire more knowledge in this field through participating in organic farming courses, conferences and activities. This will help me to advise the farmer groups that supply my business from an informed position as well as to grow the business in a sustainable way.

I was selected by the Australian embassy in Zimbabwe for a programme that empowers women trading globally. This training shaped my vision and got me inspired as I interacted with other young women who are already trading globally. I was trained on marketing, branding, financial discipline and presenting a business pitch. The training helped me in branding products that then opened opportunities to export products to Zimbabweans living in other countries, such as Canada, South Africa, and United Kingdom.

Operating in a shop in Harare central business centre, I started the business four years back with just a single bucket of one product (millet). Today, Majestic Africa processes and sells the following products:

- Brown rice and brown rice meal (1kg; 2kg and 5kg including bulky orders)
- Rapoko meal (1kg; 2kg and 5kg including bulky orders)
- Pearl millet meal (1kg; 2kg and 5kg including bulky orders)
- Sorghum meal (1kg; 2kg and 5kg including bulky orders)
- Peanut butter (500ml, 1litre and bulky orders)
- Round nuts (roasted/cooked/raw, packed according to orders)
- Groundnuts
- Wheat meal (1kg; 2kg and 5kg including bulky orders)
- Mopane worms (500g/1kgs or packed to orders)
- Dried mushroom (packed to orders)
- Dried okra (packed to orders)
- Dried vegetables (solar dried packed to orders)
- Beans (packed as per orders)
- Moringa (healthy tea packed to orders)
- Cooked and dried green mealies and indigenous poultry products.

My business is growing albeit at a slow pace because proceeds that could be ploughed back in the business are being used to finance my education programme as well as helping my widowed mother with upkeep of siblings. My next step is gaining organic certification to open other opportunities, such as the organic niche market.

For more information about Majestic Africa, email: getrudechambati@gmail.com



ORGANIC YOUTH MEETS IN SOUTH KOREA

By Julia Lernoud

In the midst of IFOAM's 50th anniversary celebration, organic youth had its day! Organic pioneers and local young organic actors got the opportunity to meet and learn from each other at a half-day event organised by IFOAM Organics Asia and Young Organics Global Network. It was held at the impressive International Organic Expo that took place between September 30th and October 16th, 2022. Surrounded by the history of organic agriculture, young people and organic pioneers discussed what kind of leadership the organic movement, and the world needs right now. Reflecting over the last 50 years of IFOAM, Hardy Vogtmann, IFOAM honorary president, shared the energy that started this whole movement and highlighted that it does not matter where we are, and when we are, we always need to stick to our principles and fight for them, saying that "you will always find equally committed people to help you transform the reality around you."

Bablu Ganguly, vice president of IFOAM-OI, and Mathew Johns, President of IFOAM Organics Asia, took us through their experience in India, saying to never give up and that all actors at the table are equally important. Matthew said that "a good leader is the one that doesn't want to be a leader and leads by example." Cho Whan-sheock, President of Hansalim Cooperative and winner of the 2014 One World Award shared the history of Hansalim and how important it is for them to work closely with the producers and consumers. Young organic farmers from the Goesan region shared their beautiful and challenging experiences of growing organic. They highlighted the importance of a community and network of friends and family for support during the transition. The road might be bumpy at some point, but the destination is tasty and healthy food. For young people, the challenges to start farming seem to be the same all around the world. Access to land, technical knowledge, financial support and a supporting network are key issues that need to be addressed to encourage more young people to choose farming. The day ended with a farm visit to two young farmers producing organic soybeans and very sweet organic sweet potatoes, something South Korea is well known for. A colourful and tasty organic lunch was had from Hansalim, a pioneering community supported agriculture scheme in Korea, an example for all of us around the world. All the attendees were extremely grateful for the opportunity to have these exchange between generations, and hope this will become part of all our events.

Young Organics Global Network is currently planning for the next global organic youth summit, which hopefully will take place in 2023. Hope to see you there!

For more information on Young Organics Global Network, click [here](#).



TRADITIONAL FOOD AND SEED FESTIVALS

Zimbabwe's Good Food Festival turns 10!

By Caroline Jacquet, Bio-Innovation Zimbabwe and Coordinator Good Food Festivals

The Zimbabwean diet was historically highly diverse and nutritious. However, over the past 5 or 6 generations, people have moved away from traditional foods to a heavy reliance on processed foods. This change has taken a toll on both ends of the malnutrition spectrum: 26.6% of children under 5 years of age suffer from stunting linked to poor dietary diversity while 35% of adult women and 12% of men are overweight or obese. Over a third of all deaths in Zimbabwe are now attributed to lifestyle diseases.



At the same time, Zimbabwe continues to promote industrial agriculture and food systems that are heavily reliant on crops (particularly maize) that are agroecologically ill-suited for most regions of the country. Smallholder farmers struggle to produce them, and as rainfall patterns and distribution become an increasingly limiting effect of climate change, yields continue to decline, and crop failures become more and more common. A shift to drought-resistant, locally adapted crops (such as small grains and local legumes) helps smallholders diversify their production and ensure a more reliable, nutritious food supply for their families and the country.

We started the Good Food Festivals in response to these twin problems: limited markets for the traditional crops and plants that grow best for local producers and a shortage of healthy foods made from local ingredients available to Zimbabwean consumers. The Zimbabwe Traditional and Organic Food Forum, a network of (inter)national NGOs, community-based organisations and farmer groups, United Nations agencies, private sector, universities (departments) and some ministries, has organised the festivals since 2013, coordinated by Bio Innovation Zimbabwe.

The event comprises a seed fair day during which farmers exchange seeds and related knowledge and a festival day. The festival day has stalls selling a wide range of local produce and products; a food court offering diverse cuisines and dishes all made with local ingredients; cooking demonstrations and chefs' battles; activities for kids; and traditional dance, music, stories, games and crafts; and live music. The event has been taken to the districts starting 2021 with 6 districts having mini-festivals 2 weeks before the main festival.

In 2020, we launched a new [website](#) to carry the festival's key messages throughout the year. We have now published 7 [booklets](#) highlighting traditional crops, with nutritional information, farmer and processor stories, and recipes. The Food Forum also holds regular talks, to further raise awareness, inform and educate throughout the year.

This year, we celebrated our 10th anniversary! From July, Taf -DeAnkarra Chef- Anifasi toured the country to learn about local foods from farmers, markets, youth and elderly people. Watch this tour [here](#). On 23 September 94 farmers came together at the Harare Botanical Gardens to swap an incredible variety of seeds and discuss addressing biodiversity and climate change issues through seed, farmer seed rights, seed and food sovereignty. On 24 September we celebrated the best of Zimbabwe's food and seed with the general public: 45 carefully selected exhibitors in the market section, to promote greatest diversity; a colourful, novel plants' and seeds' fair (13 stalls); 16 stalls in the food court, highlighting local dishes and a range of other cuisines preparing their traditional dishes using Zimbabwean ingredients; a kitchen pavilion for cooking demonstrations and battles with celebrity chefs; and great live music and lots of fun and learning at the kids' zone all day. On the cards are plans to grow the festivals into increasingly bigger events and introduce a road trip that will end up at the Harare event. The road trip will expose participants to activities by farmers who are leading the way to increase production of traditional and organic. A virtual event will continue to cater for those who cannot attend physically, in particular the very large Zimbabwean and African diaspora, as well as the wider world.

Zambian 2022 Traditional Seed and Food Festival

By Rebecca Mwila, PELUM Zambia Communications Officer

The Zambian Traditional Seed and Food Festival is an annual event organised since 2019 by a civil society organisations championing Agroecology, Climate Change, Farmers' Rights and Social Accountability. The festival celebrates local seeds and foods and appreciates farmers for their contribution to the food and nutrition security in the country. The 2022 Zambian Traditional Seed and Food Festival held at Chilanga's Mundawanga Botanical Gardens on 14/15 October was themed 'Food Sovereignty Through Indigenous Seeds and Food' was a hive of activities. The festival was graced by the Director of the Ministry of Agriculture. More than 500 people attended, including 100 farmers drawn from the 10 provinces of Zambia attended the festival. The farmer dialogue session, which was a platform for farmer interaction preceded the exhibition.

During the exhibition, a variety of indigenous seeds and food were displayed, and awards given to the deserving exhibitors. PELUM Zambia in collaboration with KHASA won the best Organic Display award and the best Seed Diversity award.



THE USE OF ROCK RABBIT MANURE FOR HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTION

By Never Mujere, Zimbabwe, Environmental Management Trust

Most peasant farmers in Zimbabwe are poor and have few or no livestock hence use chemical fertilisers to enhance soil fertility and plant growth. Annually, they receive hybrid seeds and synthetic fertilisers together as free agricultural inputs from the government and non-governmental organisations. But the use of artificial fertilisers causes harm to human health and environment in various ways. In the long run, synthetic fertilisers reduce crop yields when the law of diminishing returns takes course. Given this backdrop, most rural farmers are developing an interest in organic agriculture to improve productivity. Organic agriculture is a nature-based farming approach requiring farmers to shift from the conventional environmentally unfriendly industrial farming model.

This story focuses on Mr Long Nose (not his real name but a pseudonym) who resides in a drought-stricken Chabata Village of Bikita District in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. He provides a practical example of using organic manure from rock rabbits for growing vegetables in a garden. As a poor rural farmer, he has transitioned from industrial farming to organic horticulture. In his rural area, formal employment opportunities are hard to come so he has decided to venture into vegetable growing for subsistence and sale. Due to poverty, he has no livestock for draught power, manure and income generation. Nevertheless, to Mr Long Nose, nature is full of products to make a living and enhance household food and nutrition security. His village is surrounded by mountains inhabited by a variety of wildlife including rock rabbits. The photograph shows one of the caves from which Long Nose obtains his rabbit manure.



*Caption: Ezie Mujere sitting at the cave entrance
Credit: Tadie Mujere*

Besides climbing mountains to hunt and harvest wild fruits and mushrooms, Long Nose visits the mountains with a sack and small shovel to collect rock rabbit manure. Customers from the village and beyond frequently visit Mr Long Nose's garden to buy cabbages, onions and tomatoes. Proceeds from the garden have enabled him to send his children to school, buy groceries, purchase farm inputs, pay labour and lobola among other needs and wants.

"Rock rabbit manure is cheap, locally available, lasts longer and is highly fertile with lots of nitrogen. I use a smaller quantity per plant station compared to cattle or goat manure."

Using rabbit manure does have its own challenges. The footpaths in mountains are not wide and smooth enough to allow for the use of a wheelbarrow or bicycle to carry manure. Hence, Mr Long has to carry the load on his head. To this he said: "To collect manure in the mountains, I face problems including travelling long distances in rugged mountain terrain, rabbits live in places which are inaccessible, it is timeous, rabbit populations are declining due to hunting and shortage of food caused by vagaries of climate change, some caves are habitats of leopards and dangerous snakes such as especially cobras."

In conclusion, there is high potential in using wildlife manure in organic farming by rural communities. Community-based environmental conservation efforts should include the protection of game animals and their habits. In this regard, participatory wildlife management institutions should actively participate to enhance sustainable hunting and utilisation of mountain ecosystems.



THE FOOD WASTE CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND VERMICOMPOSTING AS A SOLUTION

By Hannah Hopper, South Africa

Food waste is a global challenge that is also impacting South Africa, according to the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa. An estimated 10 million tons of food goes to waste in South Africa each year says WWF South Africa, which accounts for one third of the total food produced in the country every year. The WWF 2017 report on Food Loss and Waste notes that fruit, vegetables, and cereals account for 72% of food waste, most of which happens early on in the food chain: on the farm, in storage, transport, processing and retail. This level of food waste is unsustainable and has significant environmental and social implications.

Environmental and social impacts

Some of the environmental impacts of food waste includes greenhouse gas emissions, the landfill crisis and resource wastage. The WWF report also notes that in South Africa, 90% of waste ends up in landfills, where it decomposes releasing methane gas and carbon dioxide. Methane gas has 28-36 times more impact on the environment than carbon dioxide over 100 years. In addition, landfills are filling up at a frightening rate with South Africa's cities only having 10 years of landfill space left.

When looking at food waste, we must also account for the waste of other valuable resources along the value chain. Some of these resources include energy, water and packaging. According to the WWF report, about R1 billion of energy is wasted in the production of food that is never consumed, which is enough energy to power Johannesburg for 16 weeks. This is a lot of energy, specifically in the context of a country amid an energy crisis. It goes onto note that about a fifth of water in the country is lost: equivalent to 600 000 Olympic swimming pools[2]. This is a huge amount of water waste for the 30th driest country in the world! The packaging associated with food waste must also be considered. In South Africa, 91% of plastic is not recovered and ends up in landfills or unmanaged waste streams.

Food insecurity levels are high in South Africa with about 26% of households experiencing hunger and 28.3% at risk of hunger. Covid-19 deepened this reality. Addressing the food waste crisis could be a way to tackle environmental challenges and mitigate food insecurity in South Africa.

Composting as a solution for households and local farmers

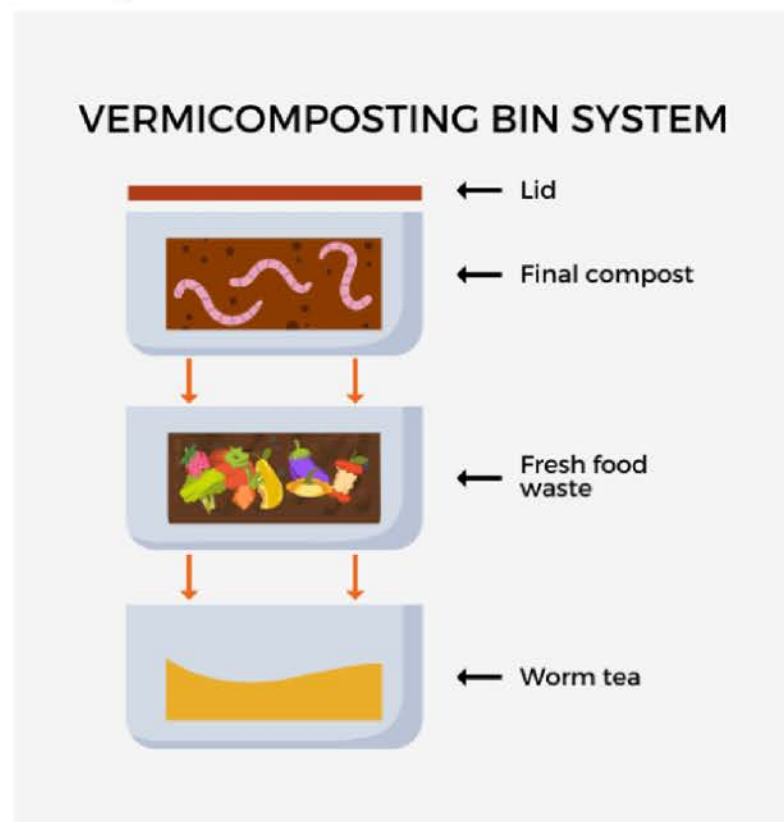
The ideal situation is for food to be consumed as intended, meaning that people eat it. This, however, is not always a possibility. Some food is not fit for human consumption, such as food scraps or food that has gone bad. Composting is a simple solution to divert inedible food from landfill. It can reduce the production of greenhouse gases and our dependency on landfills. When added to soil, compost also:

- Improves soil structure and texture.
- Improves plant resilience from pests and disease.
- Lowers the need for toxic pesticides and herbicides.
- Improves food nutrients.
- Improves soil biodiversity.

There are many types of composting. Vermicomposting is a common composting method that is simple, low-cost, low-maintenance and can fit various scales.

Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting uses a specific type of worm to process food waste. This worm is commonly known as the 'red wriggler' and has adapted to eat decaying organic matter. They turn organic waste into high-quality compost called 'castings'. A pound of red wigglers can eat up to half a pound of food waste every 4 days. Worm bins are easy to construct and can fit varying scales. It is therefore a great solution for households as well as farms. Vermicomposting generally consists of three bins fitted on top of one another with small holes at their bases, as shown in the image below.



The top bin will consist of processed compost, the middle will consist of unprocessed food waste, and the bottom bin will be used to collect 'worm tea'. Worm tea is a high-quality liquid fertiliser that can be diluted with water and poured over crops

The purpose of the top two bins is to make extracting the compost simple. When the compost is ready to go into your garden or farm you do not want to take all your worms with you. It is fine if the worms enter your beds, but you want to keep most of them for your next cycle of composting. Therefore, when the top bin is ready, the worms will move into the middle bucket to feed on the 'fresh' food waste. You can then take the top bin and place it straight into the soil and start the cycle again.

Benefits and considerations

Vermicomposting has many benefits for households and farms. In this system, the worms do most of that hard work. Depending on the number of worms and amount of food waste added the process can take roughly three to six months. No flipping is required! As the system is contained it does not attract rats and other rodents, which is a common challenge with other composting systems. If the system is cared for it also should not stink. The bins can therefore be kept in your kitchen.

Although this system is very low maintenance, it does require some care. It is important to ensure the matter in the top two bins is not too wet or too dry – it must be moist (like healthy soil). If the system is too dry, you can simply add more food waste. If the system is getting too wet you can add paper, newspaper, or cardboard. Though red wigglers eat most things, there are some things you should not add to a vermicomposting system. These include:

- Meat and dairy products.
- Cooked food.
- Onions and garlic.
- Citrus.

This is just one of many composting methods. Choose a system that suits your needs!

Happy composting!



EVENTS AND READINGS

Upcoming Events

1. How nematodes and insects can improve smallholder yields

This is a not-to-miss presentation for those who directly work with farmers in pest and disease management and soil fertility management. One of the presentations will be on the potential of nematodes and insects to protect plants against pests or to improve soil fertility. In another presentation a new bio control solution for farmers against the fall armyworm is shown. The other presentation will show the influence of residues from black soldier fly larvae rearing on soil fertility.

Date: 15 December 2022, 16:15 – 18:40 CET

Register here: [SFIAR Award Ceremony 2022 - Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research \(SFIAR\)](#).

2. BIOFACH 2023

Country: Nuremberg, Germany

Venue: Messe Nuremberg

Dates: 14-17 February 2023

Apply now to secure your stand: <https://www.biofach.de/en/exhibitors/participation/application>

This link gives information of admission criteria for both exhibitors and products. It also guides applications giving specific information to first time exhibitors. For those interested in exhibiting at Biofach 2023, this is the site to visit and be encouraged to please apply and register early.

Suggested reading

1. Regenerative Agriculture for Livestock Farms

A case study of a farmer in Mpumalanga South Africa who has been practising regenerative agriculture. Here the farmer is sharing on the benefits of this practice. This is a good read for multipliers to increase knowledge and content for dissemination. For more information click here: [Regenerative Agriculture for Livestock Farming - Zylem SA](#)

2. COP 27 Opinions

Learn why community voices need to be heard at Conference of Parties–UNFCCC. Read more here:

[https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6999702940051505152/?commentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Acomment%3A\(ugcPost%3A6999702867385155584%2C7000937109079347200\)&dashCommentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afsd_comment%3A\(7000937109079347200%2Curn%3Ali%3AugcPost%3A6999702867385155584\)](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6999702940051505152/?commentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Acomment%3A(ugcPost%3A6999702867385155584%2C7000937109079347200)&dashCommentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afsd_comment%3A(7000937109079347200%2Curn%3Ali%3AugcPost%3A6999702867385155584))

3. Organic and Regenerative farming message

Let not the two terms confuse you anymore. [Here](#) is more information on the two terms and how they are related. This information gives practitioners clarity in articulating the organic agriculture and regenerative agriculture subjects, which in some cases might seem different yet it is one and the same thing.

4. Boosting Innovation in Organic Fruit production through stronger Networks (BioFruitNet)

Presents a summary of its November seminar on organic fruit production. Sharing presentation and speakers. One of main problems around organic production is lack of knowledge on agronomic practices especially as they pertain to pest and disease and soil fertility management. The seminar shares new innovation on citrus production among other classes of fruits. This is a good resource for practitioners and agronomists as it provides technical knowledge on the production of fruit trees. Presently organic production in Southern Africa has been focused on crop production because there is more technical knowledge available for this. Click [here](#) for more information.



KNOWLEDGE HUB SOUTHERN AFRICA (KHSA)



The Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa (KHSA) is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA), a collaborative country-led partnership funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and non-governmental organisations across Africa. The KCOA aims to scale up adoption of organic farming practices through five knowledge hubs in Africa. The South African-based Sustainability Institute supports project implementation in southern Africa. Activities are focused in Zambia, led by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Zambia; in Namibia led by the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) in collaboration with the Namibian Organic Association (NOA); and in South Africa led by the South African Organic Sector Organisation (SAOSO). The project extended to Malawi in 2022 working with Kusamala and Soils, Food and Healthy Communities. The other hubs are implemented by GIZ in North, West and Eastern and Central Africa.

KHSA uses two approaches to supporting the uptake of organic agriculture in the region. The first is a sector-wide approach in which it works with groups of stakeholders, such as farmer organisations, policymakers, media and other groups to identify knowledge gaps. It also works through multiplier support programmes in each country working with lead farmers over a longer period of time to support them in identifying what knowledge is needed, in what form and languages.



For more info about the KHSA, visit www.khsa.online



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