Dear Readers

We are happy to bring out the third IAHA Newsletter as a special Edition dedicated to Asian Countries!

Asian countries have tremendous geographical, political, cultural and agro-climatic diversity, besides variety in languages, agricultural crops grown, production & consumption patterns, terrains, plants, livestock species & breeds raised by Asians. This region has a rich tradition of local practices and indigenous knowledge, herbal medicines and natural therapies making it a naturally blessed region for development of organic agriculture. Thus, Asian countries have demonstrated significant progress in organic production & trade especially export of organic commodities from these countries have witnessed tremendous increase in last few years. Bhutan has declared itself the world’s first 100% organic nation. Yet, it is also true, organic livestock production is yet to make headway in this region.

In this Edition, we have covered some initiatives and experiences of organic animal husbandry including aquaculture & apiaries that are evolving in some countries of this continent. We also hope that this Edition will serve to motivate people to strengthen organic animal husbandry by expanding the work in this area.

We appreciate and thank all of those who contributed to this Edition, which we hope will serve as a reference and source of inspiration for many who are engaged in healthier and welfare oriented animal husbandry. We hope, in coming years organic livestock husbandry too will emerge as a success story in Asian countries.

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FOREWORD

Asia is the world's largest continent - both by area and by population. Home to over 4.3 billion people (60% of the world's current human population) and covering an area of 17,212,000 square miles (8.8% of the Earth's total surface area), the continent contains 48 countries with a huge cultural, linguistic, geographical, political, agricultural & animal diversity. With growing literacy, communication, awareness as well as the income, the region is experiencing a change in dietary preferences - from a predominant vegetarian diet to milk & meat. This change may further fuel the demand for organic products of animal origin in coming years. It is a challenge to produce good quality food in sufficient quantities for this growing number of people in Asia.

Initially, the need to take care of our soil got many to look at organic farming methods. Livestock being an integral part of farming also needed attention – to help provide an environment for animals which would be far better than in conventional farming systems. It is crucial to understand traditional livestock care practices and see how they can be integrated into modern systems. Shortage of land for grazing due to urbanization in populous countries of Asia presents a challenge.

The agriculture in Asian countries is facing many challenges, among others, climate change making it most vulnerable to risks. What is critical to understand is that our understanding of organic animal husbandry just doesn't remain as an input to our diet but enables us to see them as part of the environmental landscape which needs to be preserved and strengthened for future generations.

I hope, in the coming years, Organic Animal Husbandry makes a strong foothold in Asian countries! My best wishes to IAHA & particularly the Newsletter, for efforts in promoting Organic Animal Husbandry around the world.

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“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” - Mahatma Gandhi
Asian countries have demonstrated impressive progress in organic agriculture development in terms of area, production and export revenues and ever increasing number of certified organic producers (36% of the world’s organic producers) in these countries. Apart from NGO’s and the private sector, the government agencies in Asian countries are proactively promoting organic agriculture. The progress is clearly visible for high value commercial crops like cotton, spices, tea, Basmati & Jasmine rice, herbs, lemon grass and honey exported from many Asian countries. But, certified organic animal products are only available in a limited way in a few countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China especially organic aquaculture is rapidly coming up in these countries. Whereas, the Asian countries rear huge livestock population with species and breed diversity, also the production practices of livestock farmers in most of these countries are extensive and closely compatible with the standards of organic livestock production. The appropriate policy interventions, capacity building measures, consumer awareness and marketing support may give a much needed push to organic animal husbandry in Asian countries.

Asia has the fastest developing livestock sector among the regions of the world. Growing interest in good quality and safe animal based food products raise a number of new and evolving concerns, particularly regarding environmental issues, the provision of marketing opportunities and the need to balance feed production with demand. There is strong tradition of herbal medicines & indigenous practices having potential to replace allopathic medicines including antibiotics for animal treatments and increasing animal products quantity and quality. Such natural environment creates more space for the development of organic animal husbandry in the region. Moreover, the low input use in most of these countries and rich plant & animal genetic diversity (97% of world’s buffaloes, 36% of cattle, 64% of goats, 40% of sheep, 60% of pigs & 54% poultry) with more than 1,400 breeds has over 27% of the known farm animal and poultry genetic resources making it ideal for organic livestock husbandry.

The Asian farmers need to develop their capacity in terms of knowledge, skills, infrastructure, animal feeding, hygiene, sanitation, disease control and assured certified supply chain required for organic livestock production. The organic livestock & poultry production standards duly recognizing the local situations, available resources and indicators need to be developed to make the organic livestock production more relevant to these countries. The emerging need of the quality-conscious consumers looking for organic quality animal products is required to be met locally. The local organic milk, meat and egg production may substitute import if any, while generating employment, reducing foreign exchange demand, stimulating innovation, and making the region self-sufficient in food. Organic
livestock production may be encouraged through research & development efforts including establishment of model organic livestock farms, processing units, traceability tools and capacity building measures, besides consumer awareness on healthy foods. Consumers need to be told that the safe milk, meat, eggs and products they are looking for is the one that is ‘certified organic’, while farmers need to be made aware of this demand to enable them to translate it into the new market opportunity!

Optimistically speaking, it is quite possible that good quality organic foods of animal origin would be increasingly available to the consumers in Asian markets and they would attract consumers in other parts of the world, in not so distant future.

Local Organic Livestock Food Production Systems in Thailand

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“Organic livestock production” is in its initial stages in most of the Asian countries. This report tells us the inspiring developments in Thailand:

Tupthai village, well-known for planting Hommali rice (jasmine rice), is located in a remote area of Surin province, North-east of Thailand. This is a core village using organic fragrant rice as the major way to develop their community. The organic grower group has gradually developed organic rice production export to EU countries and USA since 2000. They got support from the private sector and NGOs and have been certified by a foreign certification body. These villagers have strong will in employing organic farming practices and sell their products at a local green market organised by an established provincial organic movement. Other activities in the village include producing and developing organic vegetables, native fruits and animal products for weekly alternative farmers’ markets in downtown Surin.

Swine deep-bedding system was the outstanding livestock production system from this village with 40 holders each raising 3-5 swine in their backyard. This system consisted of a confined pen with adequate space of not less than 1.5 m²/head and the essential part of the system was deep-bedding with 90 cm of organic rice-hulls, cow manure, rice bran composted with an effective microorganism fermented juice to absorb faeces and moisture before slowly composting. The size of farm was 3-5 finishing pigs, which is considered optimum for a villager using own labour and feedstuffs. Moreover, they encourage the younger generation to the parents’ agriculture, to adopt these practices and sell their products at farmers’ markets.
The raising of organic livestock uses a holistic approach for positive animal health. Well adapted pig and poultry from the network were used in this approach. The feeding recipes consisted of organic rice bran, broken rice, banana stems, fermented snails/fish juice, and some fresh vegetables mixed together daily while fermented herbs (Andrographis paniculata, Curcuma longa, Zingiber cassumunar and Tinospora crispa, etc.) were added to drinking water. These herbs have synergistic effects for livestock health, antimicrobial efficacy against poultry and swine pathogens, enhance feed utilization and have immunological effects.

Nutrient-cycling and ecologically friendly production

Livestock is an integral part of organic farming. The pigs attain 80-100 kg of finishing weight at 5-6 months by consumption of by-products like organic rice bran, broken rice and coarse rice hulls on own farm. They also produce a bedding of compost which can be directly applied to paddy fields (4-5 tons per group of 5 pigs). The farmers have perceived that biodiversity has resulted in increased food sources for household consumption than conventional paddy fields.

Local food movement and organic guarantee system

The villagers were organized to market organic foods at 4 weekly farmers’ markets in their own village, district, local hospital & city, and were called as “Green Market”. For the organic guarantee system, the grower group had experience in organic rice certified by a foreign certification body. Other organic products from these areas are not limited to certified organic farms and products. They include all productive agriculture systems that use natural processes, rather than external inputs, to enhance agricultural productivity to meet organic production standards, but do not apply for certification because
certification is expensive and requires a sophisticated recording system. Also, their products are directly sold to consumers at the farm gate or in farmer markets.

Otherwise, organic livestock groups establish and implement inspection and control as an internal control system. The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) that strengthens communities’ organization is supervised by the TOAF advisors of the TOAF (Thai Organic Agriculture Foundation). However these systems of quality assurance are still in the beginning stage. Some consumers wanted to buy their goods from people they knew and trusted.

*Generate income, job opportunities and diversify food*

A study of 8 villages and 127 households found that farmers reported self-sufficiency initially at the farm households and development of the communities in local areas, providing greater nutritional diversity. The farmers had an opportunity to access the market using their own resources and could generate income.

The animal products that were sold to local consumers cost 4.47 million baht per year, and the average household income from animal produce and products sold at farmers’ green markets was 4,000-6,000 baht/month (130-200US$) and 8,000-15,000 baht/month for all items (260-400 US$).

*Lessons learnt from this case study were:*

1. **Small scale organic livestock production can reduce poverty, risk and can increase food security in remote areas.** The government policy should support along the supply chain of organic agriculture and not overlook the power of small farmers to produce quality foods.
2. **Leadership** is the key to success since they build the strategies and trusting relationships within the communities and enhance strength of farmers’ organizations.
3. **Institutional support** from multi-stakeholders like extension agencies and other organizations to favour the adoption of organic agriculture by small scale farmers is needed.
4. **Market access** is the key to deliver more incentive to farmers and motivate them to adopt the systems.
5. **Innovation and participatory research** with better defined research questions for various sustainable production systems are necessary. It is difficult to establish a one-size-fits-all approach since conditions will vary in different zones.
Experiments on organic meat value chain

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The research & development efforts are necessary for continuous improvement towards sustainable organic animal husbandry anywhere in the world. But most of the research in organic livestock production is currently concentrated in temperate regions, in Europe & North America. Nevertheless, some research activity on organic animal husbandry is being initiated in developing countries too. Here is presented one such case, wherein, experiments were conducted along sheep value chain at one of the National institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under Indian Ministry of Agriculture.

Sheep are reared with minimum external inputs in India, making it closer to organic production systems. A field survey in major sheep rearing state (Andhra Pradesh) of India revealed that no feed supplementation of any type was given to sheep. Most of the nutritional requirements are met by grazing. However, production systems need to be streamlined and documented as per organic production system guidelines to reap the benefits of growing organic market. Hence, a study was conducted to standardize production of mutton from organically reared sheep by following the guidelines of National Program for Organic Production (NPOP) of Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in India.

Thirteen healthy post-weaned Deccani lambs (seven male and six female), which were not given any vaccination, were selected for the purpose of experimentation. Fodder, Hybrid Napier grass required for rearing the lambs was grown using organic manure, while no chemical fertilizers or pesticide were applied on fodder crop. Conversion certificate for the organic production was obtained from an accredited certification agency.

Concentrate mix for supplementing the lambs was produced using the certified organic ingredients (sorghum grain, Bengal gram (chickpea), kidney beans & ground nut oil). However, salt and mineral mixture used was not organically certified. Six male lambs were slaughtered, after attaining of marketable weight, at National Research Centre on Meat in Hyderabad by following all scientific and welfare protocols. Meat, fodder, soil and
water samples were analysed for presence of chemical residues by using Gas Chromatography (GC) techniques.

Lambs were reared for a period of eight months. Overall average daily gain (ADG) of lambs was 55.91 g/day. Ram lambs and ewe lambs showed ADG of 66.94 g and 44.87 g, respectively. Average weight of slaughter lambs was 22.48±3.74 Kg and average carcass weight was 10.46± 1.96 Kg. Dressing percentage was 46.55 %. Meat: Bone ratio was 3.02:1. Protein, fat, moisture and ash contents of the meat was 19.27 ± 1.13, 1.17 ± 0.24, 74.26 ± 0.39 and 3.95 ± 0.11 %, respectively. Meat produced was checked for presence of chemical residues using Gas Chromatography (GC). No trace of organo-chlorine (OC) and organophosphorus (OPC) residues could be detected in the meat. No traces of OC and OPC were found even in soil and water samples and also in feed and concentrate samples fed to lambs. It was concluded that rearing lambs can very well be practiced under organic systems to ensure sustainable meat animal production. We need to document more scientific evidences like this to make organic livestock production sustainable & thus, more acceptable to producers & consumers in Asian countries in particular.
National Integration of Livestock-crop Organic Farming Project in Thailand

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Apart from the private sector & NGOs, the government agencies too are now promoting organic animal husbandry in Asian countries. Here is a case from Thailand:

An integrated organic livestock-crop system was initiated by the Department of Livestock Development (DLD) in Thailand to assist smallholder farmers to become more self-sufficient in organic fertilizers, more efficient use of animal resources and to diversify food production. Furthermore, this project envisaged to serve farmers striving to produce high quality, healthy food proteins and increase marketing opportunities. Apart from food production, these farmers support thriving ecosystems and more resilient rural communities from unexpected external factors.

The process: How it was done?

1. Participatory learning process was offered for local officers to make them facilitators for organic movement in the selected villages.

2. Best practices were selected for sharing the experiences and later, site specific organic agriculture training was imparted for managing local natural resources.

3. Extension services were delivered along with few initial inputs such as animal breeds.

Livestock are an integral part of agro-ecological system of organic farming

Transition to organic agriculture

Any change or modification of agricultural production system to an integrated livestock-crop production system needs major changes in: 1) farmers’ attitude and trust in organic management system;
2) understanding of animal husbandry by naturally occurring processes and adopting traditional knowledge; 3) organization or institutional support and 4) opening up marketing opportunities.

More than 8,000 smallholder farmers, mainly organic crop producers, and technical staff were selected to change both attitudes and practices through extension activities like providing training, conducting field day trips, exhibitions, and distribution of literature and setting up extension services for focus groups. The trainings included site specific organic techniques for managing local natural resources and harmonizing the interrelationships between crops and animals (Fig. 1).

The farmers having best organic livestock production practices were identified to be the role models and facilitated them to share their experience with interested newcomers of organic farming. The knowledge management technique was used to link indigenous knowledge with scientific reports, particularly the use of alternative natural products for animal husbandry and health care such as locally produced feed, herbs and effective microorganisms instead of agro-chemicals.

Adoption of the system covered 3 activities which took long period of years to develop (Figure 2). The first system was organic livestock techniques which organizes the way farmers use their indigenous knowledge, encouraging them to use locally produced feedstuffs from their own by-products or from neighbours and to be observed and be in harmony with nature. The second was an internal control system (ICS) through enhancing farmer organizations and establishing participatory internal control systems and certification. The third was marketing channels through encouraging producers’ organizations to open up alternative markets, especially for local consumption.

The evidence from case studies of the 5 years project has shown the benefits of integrated livestock organic production system for different stakeholders. The organic system can be an effective risk management tool that reduce input costs, diversify their production and improve local food security for small and poor farmers. The rural communities can attain improved incomes, better resource management and more labour opportunities. Among agricultural competitiveness, it meets the increasing demands for improving food safety methods and traceability. The organic production can reduce the possibility of environmental contamination, reduce the use of chemical inputs and minimize the public health costs of pesticide poisoning and animal drug residues.
India is one of the largest producers of milk in the world which is mostly produced by large number of cattle & buffaloes owned by millions of small scale producers including landless livestock keepers. Although, dairy cooperatives of India are the finest examples of organizing milk producers, very recently, private dairies/companies are also rapidly coming up in India. One such dairy is Govind Milk and Milk Products Pvt Ltd, which came into existence in 1996 which procures half a million litres of milk every day from 600 villages and 40,000 milk producer members. Govind Milk has implemented Quality Management and Food Safety System and has got ISO 9001 certification in 2008 and achieved ISO 22000 certification in 2005 and is also well known for organic milk production.

**Organic milk production**

**Govind’s organic milk** is produced exclusively fed on organic feed and fodder grown on organic certified farms where no fertilizers/pesticides/insecticides have been used in fodder production. The cows are never treated with synthetic hormones to increase milk production, not treated with antibiotics or drugs to treat sickness. They are housed in free housing systems with adequate space taking into consideration animal welfare issues. Nutritious natural feed like sprouted grains and Azolla are fed to milk animals. And also *Vipassana* (one of India’s most ancient techniques of meditation) is regularly practiced in this farm by all the officers and staff. This practice ensures a healthy mind and body for the staff and also develops compassion towards the animals.

**Free housing farms!**

One of the major work undertaken at Govind Dairy is ‘Free Housing Farms,’ where farmers are encouraged to have small courtyards besides the existing cow
sheds of approx. 200-250 sq. ft. per animal. Out of the 700 loose housing farms managed by Govind Dairy, 60 farms have been chosen for organic milk farming. At these organic farms, the animals are healthier, happier and stress-free under free housing systems with shade and sunlight options for their comfort levels. The animals are free to roam in these farms and have access to plenty of water to drink. Each farm can accommodate 15-20 animals instead of mega farms and requires less labour. The ticks and mites are controlled by desi poultry birds by natural feeding depicting biological control, and further produce good quality organic manure for the farm and act as additional income to the farmer. This has led to multiplication of such farms eventually improving the quantity and quality of milk in the region. All these farms have been certified by ‘ECOCERT’ and “IN-Conversion Organic Farms” as well. The dairy has engaged veterinarians on contract basis for getting various services like housing, feeding, health care, etc.

**Organic feeding of cows**

The farmers are guided for preparing and preserving green fodder (silage) to avoid the use of commercially made cattle feed (as this is not organic). The organic manure produced in the farms is utilized for organic fodder production and the cow urine mixed with water is used for irrigation and spraying on the fodder crops. The dairy supplies organic fodder seeds of Lucerne (Alfalfa), Maize, Sorghum, Napier grass, etc. to the farmers to promote organic and green fodder production. The utilization of organic grains, oil seeds and homemade concentrate feeds for the animals is also promoted.

**Summary/Conclusion**

Loose housing systems and organic feeding and health care systems have improved the quality and quantity of milk production in the region. With the low cost and labour involvement in this system, farmers have observed higher benefits keeping the cattle healthy and stress free. Govind Company has recently launched its Organic milk (in-conversion) in 500ml and 1ltr packs in Mumbai and Pune. It is priced at Indian Rupee 25.00 (0.41$) for 500ml and Indian Rupee 50 (0.83$) for 1ltr. Organic Ghee (butter oil) also has been launched. This is made using traditional methods. It is available in 500ml glass jars and priced with Indian Rupee 700 (11.57$) per Kg.

The Organic Milk and Organic Ghee projects have been certified by ECOCERT India. The farmers and customers are happy and satisfied with this system creating a win - win situation for all.
The Use of Local Barley as Animal Feed to Promote Organic Animal Husbandry in South Korea
- A Case Study of the Hansalims “Saving Our Barley” Project

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Hansalim was a humble grain store in 1986, selling organic grain to consumers in Seoul, South Korea. Today it has developed into a federation of organic farmers and consumers with annual sales of over USD 300 million arising from the sale of organic food in their shops and through internet sales. It has grown into the largest organic consumer cooperative in South Korea and serves over 1.2 million individual consumers. The unique nature about Hansalim is the “direct sales between rural and urban areas” of organic food wherein farmers sell directly to Hansalim through contract farming and get back 76% from the sales price, as sales do not go through any middle-persons. Apart from marketing and sale of organic food, Hansalim promotes the concept of organic agriculture & its benefits, importance of food self-sufficiency, integrated farming with animal husbandry and cycling of natural resources as a way of preserving Korean agriculture and sustainability. Very recently, Hansalim started using local barley to replace the use of imported corn in animal feed since there was also a growing fear among the Korean public on the use of GMO-contaminated animal feed and severe price hikes due to major climatic changes.

Background of “Saving Our Barley” Project

One of the principles of the Hansalim Basic Agricultural Policy is to secure the basis of food self-sufficiency since there has been a continuous decline in the self-sufficiency in grains from 29.4% in 2009 to 26.7% in 2010 and it is estimated that the ratio will fall to 25.0% by 2015. The decline in farmland for grain production is still continuing, i.e. from 2005 to 2010, there has been an annual decrease of 1.3% and from 2010 to 2012; this amounted to a decrease of about 17,000 hectares of farmland.
Barley has been a source of additional income for farmers as it could be planted after the main harvest in autumn, surviving in the cold winter months and then being harvested in spring. Until the early 1980s, the production of barley amounted to 1 million tons but by 2010, the production level fell to 80,000 tons. The decline was further accelerated when it was confirmed that the government purchase of barley would end by 2012 (58,000 tons).

By 2012, South Korea was importing about 14 million tons of corn annually and of which, about 5 million tons were being used as feed for pigs. Hence, finding an alternative feed for pigs was vital if consumers were to get safe and non-GMO contaminated pork.

Hansalim, barley farmers, animal husbandry farmers, processors and researchers got together in July 30th, 2012, to form a cooperative to carry out the “Saving Our Barley” Project which aimed at saving the Korean barley farmers and helping to replace imported corn with safe, local barley as animal feed. In 2012, three Hansalim producers’ farms were selected for the project and the first feeding of the pigs with local barley took place in November. The cooperative bought 290 tons of barley to be used in the pig farms. By 2013, all Hansalim livestock farms chose to use local barley (700 tons) as feed for their animals. The cooperative also set up plans to secure the supply of barley by working with local farmers as shown below:

**Conclusion**

The “Saving Our Barley” Project by the organic community in South Korea serves a dual purpose of saving barley farmers and replacing imported animal feed with reliable and safe, local barley, free from GMO contamination. Animal products labelled with “Saving Our Barley” are receiving a good response from consumers at the organic cooperatives and awareness on using local and organic feed are gathering more interest among farmers and consumers alike. This project is still at the initial stages and has been undertaken as part of a movement to secure food self-sufficiency especially in grains. However, the ultimate purpose of the project is the transition of all animal feed from imported and unsafe feed to safer, local, organic feed to guarantee the livelihood of farmers and the sustainability of organic agriculture.
Organic Aquaculture in Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia

Courtesy: FAO GLOBEFISH

A three-year CFC-funded project, which ended recently, successfully produced and marketed certified organic aquaculture products from three Southeast Asian countries, sparking off interest in organic aquafarming in the region and an Asian generation of organic seafood.

As the world’s wild fish stocks decline, the need for aquaculture is rising. Under the CFC/FAO Organic Aquaculture Project, INFOFISH is helping fish farmers in the Asia-Pacific region to adapt to the new market niche for organic aquaculture products. Four shrimp farms in Thailand, one in Myanmar, and a freshwater fish farm in Malaysia have learned to produce, package, certify and market high quality organic black tiger shrimp and tilapia. The 3-year Project (2007-2010) began with market studies to determine which organic products might sell well in global and regional markets. Based on these findings, INFOFISH experts began to transfer technology: working with the farmers to adapt their operations and products to established organic standards.

Trial marketing of the certified, processed, packaged and labelled products found receptive customers in several markets. Practical lessons learned in the production, certification and marketing of these pilot project farms have been published and disseminated through information workshops in nine countries in the Asia-Pacific to enhance the sustainable development of small- and medium-scale aquaculture sectors.

Market studies revealed some interesting trends and possibilities for organic products. In recent years, the growth rate of organic and demonstrably “green” fish is higher in the Asian market than in the global market. However, until 2009, no organic shrimp or other indigenous fish were available in the Asian market. In fact, the only organic fish options for consumers were imported salmon and cod.

Today, many organic indigenous fish are available and selling well, for instance, high quality black tiger shrimp (*P. monodon*), freshwater prawns (*Machrobrachium rosenburgii*), tilapia, *pangasius* catfish and more. In China, organic fish products are no longer filling a mere niche market, and in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and
beyond, organic production is growing. At the outset of the project, the potential markets were thought to be Japan and Europe. However, national and regional markets in Asia outside of Japan were more interested and willing to pay premium prices for such high quality organic products. Although the current size of the market for organic fish products is limited, the potential is significant. The shift to organic methods and products is possible and promising – indeed. This project has initiated and successfully demonstrated it is already taking off.

**Organic Fish Products** chosen for development were based on market studies as well as the fish farmers’ capacity and experience. They included whole/cleaned/scale-less butterfly-cut tilapia, *pangasius* steaks and filets, head-on, poly-wrapped freshwater prawn. Organic sea bass, black tiger shrimp, mud crab and silver carp are now eaten in restaurants in Japan, Bangkok and elsewhere.

**Technology transfer** required at fish farms to make these products involves practical, hands-on restructuring of the facilities as well as the actual practices that go into raising, harvesting and processing shrimp and fish. To obtain organic certification, the farms had to create new flushing or filter systems for their pools to achieve certain levels of water purity, and to maintain and verifiably measure those levels. Feed – both dried fish and grain-based – must meet specific standards laid out by the different certifying entities. In fact, feed has been one of the main constraints in the project, as feed producers – for reasons of cost and economy of scale – are reluctant to run low batches of organic feed.

**Trial marketing** for organic products including promotion of organic shrimp has proven effective. Beneficiary companies have participated in trade fairs in tandem with certified organic products and market promotion. Results were concrete: contracts and sales were established and further enhanced by continuous monitoring of exports and organic aquaculture products activities were initiated in the region. Price negotiations between producers and prospective buyers have led directly to the establishment of the niche markets for organic products. As part of the project, organic products have been successfully marketed in domestic supermarkets, restaurants, retail chains, high-end hotels, as well as regionally (Malaysia, Singapore, etc.) and international markets (EU, Japan).
Investment promotion was a vital aspect of the project, as all of the beneficiary companies required upgrades to their facilities and operations. Cost-benefit analyses and feasibility studies demonstrated that the investments would be worthwhile and experience since has confirmed these projections. Further feasibility studies will likely bear out what appropriate future expansion and economies of scale should be developed. Especially as the regional and international markets grow, the farms and their production capacities will need to increase to match this market demand.

Information dissemination is a key component of the project. Comprehensive compilation of documents and data has afforded sound cost-benefit analyses and valuable techno-economic feasibility studies and manuals. Two publications, the organic aquaculture handbook and the organic aquaculture feasibility study, provide hard data and practical roadmaps for farmers who want to expand into this niche. This information has been supported at regional & national workshops/industry & investment seminars (2009-10) by presentations tailored for each country and region, and by ensuing discussions and other interactions among stakeholders, marketers, government officials, financiers, experts and consumers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Marketing efforts have been supported by regular buyer-seller meetings, international fish expositions, and the project’s website (www.organicfishery.net). Thus, organic aquaculture is gaining popularity in these regions. As a result, other member countries of INFOFISH are seeking guidance and technical know-how for establishment of organic farming including the development of national organic standards.

Potential for organic aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region and the world is promising. Although half the world’s food fish now comes from aquaculture, only 0.1 to 0.2 percent is certified organic aquaculture. However, stagnant natural fish stocks, combined with rising demand for organic fish products, is changing the perception of consumers. In addition, quality and safety concerns for food products, and the environment, including space and water constraints, as well as the need for sustainable production cycles – all point to the need for the vigorous ecosystem-based development of organic aquaculture. This project, based on sustainable practices and stakeholder involvement, has made a promising start.
According to the FiBL-IFOAM survey, approximately 33’800 hectares world-wide were used for organic aquaculture in 2012. Most of this area is in Vietnam (58 percent) and Bangladesh (28 percent). Organic Black tiger shrimp is farmed in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and...
India exported 25,780.74 MT of natural honey worth ₹356.28 crore (US$ 59’292’118) during 2012-13, mostly to United States, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Republic and Morocco. Considering it an intermediate product between crops & animals, honey comes closer to organic animal products. Similar to organic livestock standards, the standards for bee keeping cover all aspects, beginning from what the bees can be fed, to where the apiaries can be sited, making it difficult for many countries to produce certified honey. Therefore, natural honey from Asian developing countries like India, Nepal, Bhutan is popular & largely treated as “organic”, being mostly a wild harvest. Here is a case from India, wherein, organic honey bee production was attempted reflecting some of the challenges!

I took up a project, “Organic Honey Production” in Coastal Karnataka, as a part of the IFOAM Organic Leadership Course (OLC-South Asia) during 2011-12. On account of my half-baked knowledge on Apiaries; I burnt my fingers during the initial stages. I ordered 20 Apis cerana indica colonies from a contact of mine in early November 2011, assuming that bee colonies would be multiplied by early February 2012, so that I could collect honey early April onwards. The peak season for honey collection in this region is between February and early May. Unfortunately, I received only two combs with a few hundred bees per colony in early March. Many of the colonies were lost because of the TSBV (Thai Sac brood virus) and a few collapsed on account of being attacked by wasps and wax moths. The Indian bee is...
comparatively free from many infectious diseases except TSBV.

By good fortune, I was left with 5 colonies out of 20 and was able to extract 20 kg of honey. I had 10 robust bee colonies in 2013 and extracted 75 Kg of honey collected by the bees, mainly from *Kuntanjaval* (*Syzigium carophyllatum*) flower. I did not sell this honey in the local market as I could not fix a suitable price. It was priceless to me. I gave almost 50 Kgs of this honey to my friends and relatives. By 2014, the colonies increased to 15 in number.

Nature’s special gift to mankind is the “Honey bee”. Natural or organic honey with pollen is precious. I am pleased to acknowledge that the honey from my farm was free from antibiotic residues. Consumers should be able to distinguish between pollen contained pure honey and honey that is adulterated with artificial sugar. Through my practical experience, I have learnt many lessons about organic apiaries. Every kind of bee has its own role to play. Bees restrict themselves to a single source of pollen and nectar until it is available. Only if the pollen and nectar from a plant species is exhausted, they move on to the next one.

Besides honey, many crops including fodder crops & wild grasses depend on honey bees for pollination. Livestock depend upon bee-pollinated forage plants, such as clovers.

Saving honey bees thus, is an important aspect of saving the environment & producing healthy food!
News & Announcements

IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance at IFOAM Organic Word Congress in Istanbul in October 2014 with Preconference and main session at Conference

The IFOAM Animal Husbandry Alliance is organising at the Organic World Congress in Istanbul two sessions with the focus on animal husbandry.

On the Sunday the 12th of October, 13:30-17:30 h there will be a pre-conference with a workshop organised by IAHA with the goal to make a diagnostic of the Organic Animal Husbandry situation across the world, and together with the participants, discuss and identify development needs and demands concerning research, education, extension, outreach, market and public policies. This workshop is addressed to all interested in the further development of organic animal husbandry, farmers, advisors, researchers, market actors, public administrators and policy makers.

Speakers from South America, North America, Asia and Europe will give an overview about the situation in their regions. In a workshop discussion development needs and demands will be formulated as input for the IAHA session at the main conference.


At the main Conference, IAHA is organising a block with the theme “Towards an Action Plan for the development and strengthening of Organic Animal husbandry”

Basically there will be three sub-sessions:

1. General actions for the development of organic animal husbandry - presentations
2. Elements for an ACTION PLAN for the development of Organic Animal Husbandry internationally – open Space discussion
3. Recommendations for General Assembly of IFOAM summarised in the plenary session

Kingdom of Bhutan shares story on commitment to go 100% organic

Bhutan - the tiny Himalayan kingdom drew international attention a few years back for saying gross national happiness should trump gross domestic product, when measuring a nation's progress. Once again, it is in news for its pledge to become the first country in the world to convert to a 100 percent organic agricultural system. The Prime Minister including policy makers and a big majority of its 750'000 population are increasingly convinced that "by working in harmony with nature, they can help sustain the flow of nature's bounties. It’s a challenging task yet quite attainable given the natural advantages this land locked Asian country has in converting to Organic Agriculture as most of agriculture here is organic by default. The IAHA congratulates the Government of Bhutan for its decision to be the 1st 100% Organic Nation of the World, which may inspire many others to follow!

Source: http://www.organicnewsroom.com/2014/05/kingdom_of_bhutan_shares_story.html