

Ready for the future—renewed Aims and Scope

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Why new Aims and Scope? The development needs of Organic Agriculture

During the last two decades Organic Agriculture has undergone a remarkable development throughout the world. Today (2018), organic production is done in more than 130 countries. More than 2.7 million farms produce on about 50 million hectares certified organic products with a market value of nearly 100 billion US Dollar. But, organic production is not only a market issue. Various governments consider organic farming as an option, or “Plan B”, to satisfy consumer and public expectations for sustainable food production chains.

Particularly in Europe, significant public support is given to further develop Organic Agriculture. This innovative production system is the paradigm for multi-

functional agriculture such as climate mitigation and adaptation, clean water, conservation of biodiversity, agro-ecology, animal welfare, healthy soils, income generation for small scale farming and entrepreneurs, attractive landscapes and rural cultures.

The principles of Organic Farming—subsumed by the organic agriculture movement under the terms of ecology, health, care and fair—are the lodestar and give guidance for a fruitful development. So far, everything looks fine.

But, Organic Agriculture cannot exist in isolation and ignore global food challenges. Forecasts for 2050 and 2100 show the need to produce more food for a growing population in a sustainable way. The United Nations have described the challenges in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Simply spoken: sustainable intensification of farm land use is necessary to produce more food for more people on limited space. Additionally, food processing, storage, trading, and consumption as elements of the food chain have to become more efficient and sustainable. Organic food production has to contribute to solve these challenges and SDGs. To do this, changes are needed in Organic Agriculture as well.

These challenges are increasing productivity per hectare, reduced losses throughout the food chain, improved renewable nutrient cycles, higher resource efficiency (nutrients, energy, water, etc.), fair prices for consumers and producers.

If Organic Agriculture is considered as a “tool box”, and not only as a certified production pattern for premium markets, it has the option to contribute significantly to the global food challenges, particularly for

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smallholder farmers. Most of the world's farming systems are low input—low output driven. Organic “methods” can help to create “low external input—medium output” para-organic systems. The scaling up of these “methods” is a promising approach to reconcile food production and environmental protection. There is no general need for certification of para-organic systems. They may deliver higher income and create significant numbers of jobs, particularly for women and youth.

After several years of discussion with stakeholders, informants, politicians, and scientists, all these arguments and development needs have been described and assessed in our journal *Organic Agriculture*, special issue 2017, “Innovative Research for Organic 3.0” and finally assessed at the 19th Organic World Congress 2017 in Delhi, India.

As a result of this procedure, ISOFAR has decided to design new *Aims and Scopes* for our journal *Organic Agriculture*, announced in March 2018, to strengthen the scientific support for the development of Organic Agriculture worldwide.

What is the journal of *Organic Agriculture* for?

The journal *Organic Agriculture* is a multidisciplinary journal aiming to publish outstanding research papers on Organic Agriculture and related food systems. The journal also includes invited critical reviews on topical issues and concept notes. The journal covers the principles and practice of Organic Agriculture and food systems encouraging papers that provide a systemic, participatory, and interdisciplinary approach to the subject and those proposing innovations beyond current standards or practices. Early-career studies of high scientific quality are particularly welcome.

According to the definition given by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (March 2005; <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-landmarks/definition-organic-agriculture>), “organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.”

The journal *Organic Agriculture* takes IFOAM's definition of organic agriculture stated above as the focus of its Aims and Scope, and consequently will accept papers which report studies that are carried out within organic farming systems, where the system uses the methods of Organic Agriculture based on the IFOAM principles (<https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-landmarks/principles-organic-agriculture>) and strategy (<https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-policy-guarantee/organic-3.0-next-phase-organic-development>).

To address the challenges of developing sustainable food and farming systems, the journal seeks contributions covering the whole supply chain from farm to fork.

The journal scope ranges from technical and socio-economic constraints to productivity, food processing and quality, market development, consumer research, to animal and human health and welfare, and ethical, policy and governance issues.

High-quality papers focusing on innovation at technical, social, ecological and economic levels, and constant improvement of best agro-ecological practices, as well as all cutting-edge topics in the development of organic agriculture and food systems are specifically encouraged.

What are the new Aims and Scopes of Organic Agriculture?

Organic Agriculture provides a platform for the sharing of knowledge on all aspects of Organic Agriculture and Food Systems. The journal features scientific articles on a range of topics, including, but not exclusively:

- Soil
- Plant production
- Animal husbandry
- Farming system research and development
- Resource management
- Agro-ecology
- Value chains
- Processing
- Product qualities
- Socioeconomics
- Consumer research and marketing
- Ethics
- Novel research methodologies
- Innovations in Organic Agriculture
- Food and Nutrition

Drawing on value chain and systems approaches within *Organic Agriculture* context, the journal welcomes original inter-, intra-, and trans-disciplinary papers alongside the reports of focused disciplinary studies that accord with the principles of organic agriculture. We also welcome papers which take a critical approach to one or more aspects of organic agriculture and/or initiate critical discussions of the principles on a scientific basis.

Papers with farming system comparisons are welcome. The journal does also cover scientific reviews, science-based concept notes, and invited papers on specific topics.

ISO FAR is happy to receive your papers.