

Tropentag 2005

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Poster presentations

Opportunity or “Eco-Colonialism”? Export Oriented Organic Food Production in Tropical Developing Countries (A Socio Economic Evaluation)

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For developing countries, organic farming is a concept to ensure the environmentally friendly production of food and its distribution. In a worldwide context, organic farming is defined on the basis of IFOAM Basic Standards (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements 2002) and on the basis of the codex alimentarius of the FAO/WHO (1999). Organic farming has extended beyond the niche it established in developed countries. It continues to grow, and is now practised in about 100 countries on about 26 million hectares of land.

At the same time, the market value of organic products has grown continually. From a value of ten billion US dollars in 1997, it increased to a value of 30 billion US dollars in 2004. A continued rate of growth of 10 to 20 % is expected over the next decade. More and more large scale traders and retailers (including discounters) have started to import and sell organic products.

Due to the boom of the global organic market, many developing countries are trying to gain a share of this premium market – especially for tea, coffee, cocoa, tropical fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts, vegetable oils, cosmetic ingredients and fibres (textiles).

The import of organic products is described in the EU Reg. 2092/91/EEC. The inspection and certification procedures have to meet EU standards. Many countries have no own inspection and certification bodies and depend on officially accredited European, US American and Japanese certification bodies. There has been an enormous increase in demand. The developing countries also rely strongly on infrastructure, know-how and marketing information from the organic sector of the developed nations.

Although fair trade is a principle of IFOAM, in reality most of the production is business as usual — low prices for producers, high gains for traders. On the one hand, they have a chance to participate a premium market, on the other hand there is a risk to internal development and of eco-colonialism. The impact of the changing global markets for organic products on developing countries in the tropics needs to be discussed.

Keywords: Developing countries, fair trade, organic farming, organic trade

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The Global Food & Product Chain – Dynamics, Innovations, Conflicts, Strategies

Book of Abstracts

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Preface

The Tropentag is the International Conference on Research for Development in Agriculture and Forestry, Food and Natural Resource Management - an annual event alternately organised by the Universities of Berlin (Humboldt), Bonn, Göttingen, Kassel (Witzenhausen) and Hohenheim in co-operation with the Council for Tropical and Subtropical Agricultural Research (ATSAF), the GTZ Advisory Service on Agricultural Research for Development (BEAF) and the German Forum on Research for Development (DFOR).

The Tropentag 2005 is the seventh annual meeting providing a forum for scientists, experts and students involved in research for development. The Tropentag 2005 conference theme is The Global Food & Product Chain - Dynamics, Innovations, Conflicts, Strategies.

Sustainable use and conservation of natural resources are priorities of the international community. Land, freshwater, energy, and biodiversity in natural and agricultural ecosystems are resources increasingly at stake. With view to the growing world population, the supply with agricultural commodities and food, food security, -quality and -safety must be achieved through an ever more efficient use of resources rather than through extending resource use. Achieving the United Nations Millennium Goals requires a considerable rise in overall food production, in which many international stakeholders take an interest. This leads to a global use of local resources, with global actors increasingly dominating the competition for access to these resources. The globalisation of food markets and the regulation of production through certification as means of consumer and market protection favours food industries rather than smallholder agriculture. With increasing globalisation, local food chains are articulated into a global food web, in which large scale agriculture serves the world market whereas smallholder agriculture rather serves domestic demands. In this context, not only industrialised agricultural production but also post harvest and food processing industries gain importance. A multitude of new issues arise in the field of resource definition, allocation, and use.

The Tropentag 2005 addresses the dynamics of the above processes, conflicts arising there from, strategies to overcome these conflicts and contribute to attaining food security and food safety and innovations that could form part of these strategies.