

Basic Steps and Components of Organic Farming

Organic farming approach involves steps like: (i) conversion of land from conventional management to organic management, (ii) management of the entire surrounding system to ensure biodiversity and sustainability of the system (iii) crop production with the use of alternative sources of nutrients such as crop rotation, residue management, organic manures and biological inputs (iv) management of weeds and pests by better management practices, physical and cultural means and by biological control system, and, (v) maintenance of live stock in tandem with organic concept and make them an integral part of the entire system.



Fig. 1 Components of Organic Farming (Source: http://agritech.tnau.ac.in/org_farm/orgfarm_introduction.html)

Principles of Organic Farming

These are the four principles of organic farming are mentioned below.

1. **Principle of health:** Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible. Healthy soils produce healthy crops that foster the health of animals and people. Health is the wholeness and integrity of living systems. The role of organic agriculture, whether in farming, processing, distribution, or consumption, is to sustain and enhance the health of ecosystems and organisms from the smallest in the soil to human beings.

2. **Principle of ecology:** Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them. This principle roots organic agriculture within living ecological systems. It states that production is to be based on ecological processes, and recycling. Nourishment and well-being are achieved through the ecology of the specific production environment. Organic management must be adapted to local conditions, ecology, culture and scale. Inputs should be reduced by reuse, recycling and efficient management of materials and energy in order to maintain and improve environmental quality and conserve resources. It should attain ecological balance through the design of farming systems, establishment of habitats and maintenance of genetic and agricultural diversity.
3. **Principle of fairness:** Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. This principle emphasizes that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties - farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products. Natural and environmental resources that are used for production and consumption should be managed in a way that is socially and ecologically just and should be held in trust for future generations. Fairness requires systems of production, distribution and trade that are open and equitable and account for real environmental and social costs.
4. **Principle of care:** Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment. Organic agriculture is a living and dynamic system that responds to internal and external demands and conditions. This principle states that precaution and responsibility are the key concerns in management, development and technology choices in organic agriculture.



Fig. 2 Principles of organic farming (Source: http://agritech.tnau.ac.in/org_farm/orgfarm_principles.html)