

**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 good quality of life for all involved.

Source: IFOAM General Assembly, 2008

## Principles of organic agriculture

There are common principles in organic agriculture. Many of these are the same as those for permaculture, agroecology and biodynamics.



**Principle of Health:** Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible. It is intended to produce high quality nutritious food that contributes to preventive health care and wellbeing. It should avoid the use of fertilisers, pesticides, animal drugs and food additives that may have health adverse effects.



**Principle of Ecology:** Organic agriculture should attain ecological balance through the design of farming systems establishment of habitats and maintenance of genetic and agricultural diversity. Those who produce process or trade or consume organic produce should protect and benefit the common environment including landscapes, climate habitats, biodiversity, air and water.



**Principle of Fairness:** Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. Fairness is characterised by equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings. This principle emphasises that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties.



**Principle of Care:** Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and wellbeing of current and future generations and the environment. Organic agriculture is a living and dynamic system that responds to internal and external demand and conditions. Science is necessary to ensure that organic agriculture is healthy, safe and ecologically sound but science is not enough. Practical experience, accumulated wisdom and traditional and indigenous knowledge offer valid solutions, tested over time.

Source: IFOAM. n.d. The four principles of organic agriculture. [Online] Available: <https://www.ifoam.bio/why-organic/principles-organic-agriculture/principle-health>.



## STATISTICS ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

**Number of producers:**  
**3.4 million**  
certified farmers around the world

**Land use:**  
**75 million hectares**  
of land under organic production globally

In Africa, only 0.2% of agricultural land is under certified organic production but many people practice organic agriculture without certification, this includes those who collect from the wild and undertake beekeeping.

Source: FiBL. 2021. Organic world 2021. [Online] Available: <https://www.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1150-organic-world-2021.pdf>.

*The organic movement in Africa is growing fast as more knowledge becomes available on how to produce, process and market organic products.*



## ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE HUB

The Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA) project. The KCOA project is 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) and non-governmental organisations. The project aims to scale up adoption of organic farming practices in Africa. GIZ is also implementing this project in north, east, west and central Africa. It focuses project activities in Zambia, Namibia, South Africa and Malawi. Project activities are led in Malawi by Kusamala and Soils, Food and Healthy Communities. For more information about the KHSAs in Malawi please contact Rose Bell at [rose@kusamala.org](mailto:rose@kusamala.org).