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Regional Conference on Organic Agriculture in Asia

Bangkok, Thailand, 12-15 December 2007

Country case study of Bhutan

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Status of organic farming

- Over 70% are involved with farming, majority organic by default
- Average land holding – 0,8 Ha per HH
- Generally subsistence farming- limited by land holding, market, access,
- Collection of NWFP a integral part of rural food and economic system
- Shortage of labour and appropriate technology and markets
- About 1500 acres under organic production with intent but not certified
- 150 acres under certified production of lemon grass oil and cheese.



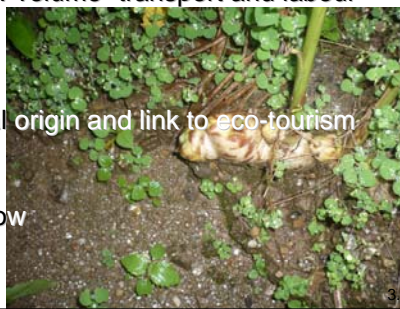
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Market development

- Little but a growing awareness of organic food
- Lemon grass oil and cheese certified
- Red rice exported,
- Marketing of Natural wild collection and (MAP and NWFP)
- Need to focus on high value and low volume- transport and labour costs high
- Export market research and trials
- Develop local market based on local origin and link to eco-tourism
- Brand development needed
- Certification not a high priority for now



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Development of the organic agriculture sector

- 2000- first discussion at ITC workshop in Thimphu
- 2002- REDP(UNDP/SNV) project- organic component for rural development.
- 2003- Bio-label- pilot study through Helvetas- pilot project- Bio- Bhutan
- 2003- MOA workshop what it takes to be organic
- Development of National Framework for Organic farming in Bhutan- June, 07
- National Organic Programme established within MOA
- Coordination of all activities related to organic



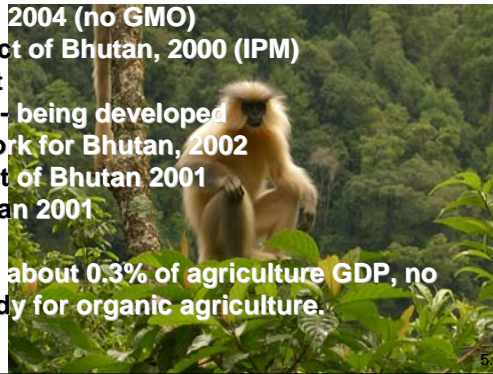


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Organic agricultural policy

- No policy on organic farming
- National Framework for Organic Farming in Bhutan, MOA
- Other policies that favour organic agriculture are:
 - The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan, 2000
 - The Biodiversity Act, 2004 (no GMO)
 - IPM- The Pesticide Act of Bhutan, 2000 (IPM)
 - The Water Act – draft
 - The Food Safety Act - being developed
 - The CBNRM framework for Bhutan, 2002
 - The Cooperatives Act of Bhutan 2001
 - The NGO act of Bhutan 2001

Subsidy for agriculture is about 0.3% of agriculture GDP, no specific support or subsidy for organic agriculture.



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Organisation and structure of the organic sector

- MOA is the driving force behind organic development
- Growing public interest among producers and consumers
- Research, extension and marketing coordinated through the NOP and linked to all possible stakeholders
- Need for organised community and sector to streamline development
- In the process of making functional the Technical Working Group and Empowered Committee





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Regulatory framework

- Food safety standards in place
- National Organic Standard has to be developed
- Third part certification –EU regulation used by Bio-Bhutan
- Interest in group certification and PGS with grower registration and voluntary use of standards.
- Registration of certifiers with the BAFRA
- Use of local system and development of support system needs to be developed.
- GAP and PGS will be focus area for validation of organic production for local markets



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Supporting structures: research, education, extension

- MOA has four regional research centres
- Extension agents at every block, many with basic training on organic agriculture
- College of Natural (RUB) developing organic module for undergraduate course.
- School agriculture- SOAP Resources
- NOP- coordinated research, extension, production and marketing support by facilitating with other relevant stakeholders.
- Private sector and NGOs

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