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**University of Natural Resources
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Summary: **Organic, Sustainable, Happy?**

Environmentally sound, socially acceptable, economically feasible - organic agriculture promises much, but can it guarantee food supply? Mitigate climate change? And does it add to a nation's happiness?

We invited **Sonam Tashi** (Royal University of Bhutan), PhD in organic agriculture and specialist of medicinal and aromatic plants, and soil scientist **Richard Onwonga** (University of Nairobi), who investigates how conservation agriculture affects soils, to discuss with us.

WE NEED TO SHIFT FROM EXTRACTIVISM TO CIRCULAR RESOURCE FLOWS

Frequently adversaries of organic agriculture question whether it has the potential in terms of yield to feed the world; but this might be the wrong question to ask. Often calculations of potential yield neglect the amount of inputs needed in different management schemes. Likewise, the risks of monocropping (e.g. loss of biodiversity, increased susceptibility to pests) are too often not reflected in comparisons.

The prolonged use of chemicals, e.g. pesticides, in conventional agriculture comes at the cost of environmental impacts, said Richard Onwonga. Cycling nutrients to increase productivity is a promising strategy, especially as populations are growing and mineral fertilizer is out of reach for many smallholder farmers in the Global South.

DO NO HARM

Organic agriculture is more than simply producing without artificial inputs. Sonam Tashi presented evidence from Bhutan to illustrate that organic farmers feel happier than their conventionally producing counterparts. In his opinion, Buddhist tradition has much to do with the beneficial conditions for organic agriculture in Bhutan: because farmers are supposed not to harm other organisms and the earth, they feel better and more connected if they produce organically. "It makes people happy", he said.



"Organic farming is a source of happiness", argued Sonam Tashi.



"Increase productivity by integrating legumes in your cropping system and cycle nutrients on your farm by using your livestock's manure", advised Richard Onwonga.

BHUTAN GOES ORGANIC

2003	official launch of campaign
2008	officially declared fully organic production
Area	~ 38.400 km ²
Population	~ 700.000
Farmers	56 %
Agriculture to GDP	~ 17 %

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