

# EAST AFRICA ORGANIC CONFERENCE

## KENYA ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PAPER

### a) Status of Organic Agriculture in Kenya

- Organic agriculture started in 1980 with the establishment of organic training institutions
  - Few horticultural companies started growing organic vegetables for export
  - Promotion of organic farming was mainly done by NGOs and faith based organizations – to address decline in soil fertility and resources for purchase of agric inputs – low-in-put agriculture as we know it!
  - This stigmatized organic farming as poor man way of farming!
- Organic sector is growing rapidly being led by civil society organizations and private sector
  - Goals is to diversify food production at household level in a sustainable way and increase access to market through access to markets
  - Organic products include mainly, vegetables, fruits produced on large scale farms. Others include dried herbs and spices, and products for cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries
  - Small scale organic farmers formed a national representative organization; the Kenya Organic Farmers Association (KOFA)
  - Larger companies and commercial farmers who are in the export market have formed an association known as Kenya Organic Producers Association.
- Kenya Organic Agriculture Network
  - was formed in 2004 following a consultative process “dubbed Grow for future”.
  - It is the national coordinating body for organic agriculture activities in Kenya.
  - It has 154 members

- KOAN main goal is to develop key competencies, skills and strategies in the areas organic agriculture production, marketing certification and standards, training extension and information, networking, policy and advocacy.
- Certification of organic products
  - Mainly driven by private sector
  - There are four main agricultural certifiers in Kenya; the Soil Association, EcoCert International, Institute for Marketecology (IMO) and Bio Suisse.
- Training Institutions on organic agriculture
  - 36 in number e.g. Kenya Insitute of Organic Farming, Baraka Agricultural College, SACRED
  - They offer short courses in Organic Agriculture
- Organic products as health food in Kenya
  - Two restaurants in Nairobi and one in Kisumu
  - 13 organic product outlets in Nairobi

#### **b) Government's support through the Ministry of Agriculture to Organic Agriculture**

- Organic agriculture regarded as a strategy among others which offer a wide range of environmental (biodiversity, soil fertility), social and economic benefits to communities in rural areas and urban centers ==> contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- The agribusiness department of the Ministry of agriculture is responsible for coordinating organic agriculture in Kenya
- A concept paper for development and promotion of organic agriculture has been developed
- The national soil fertility policy contains an elaborate section on organic farming – organic sources of soil nutrients; the value of organic fertilizers in rehabilitating heavily degraded soils etc
- Food and nutritional draft policy paper

#### **c) Areas in OA requiring urgent attention**

- Research – Practical recommendations on the use of organic inputs e.g. for pest control, amelioration of soil fertility etc.
  - o Document the contribution of organic products to the total export volume of agriculture produce in Kenya. This will help place OA products in the position it deserves.
- Extension – Dissemination of relevant information to farmers on AO with the same zeal as for the conventional agriculture
- Marketing – More promotion work in field days, trade fairs, ASK shows etc. Export promotion council to include promotion of organic products as one of its key agenda. Participation in the International Trade Fair on organic agriculture
- Policy to guide production and promotion of OA