

**NATIONAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE POLICY
FOR NIGERIA**

2021

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INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture entails production systems that sustain the health of soil, ecosystems, biodiversity and people. It is a system of production that emphasises the use of natural inputs, as against synthetic fertilisers, drugs, pesticides, herbicides, growth regulators, antibiotics, hormones, stimulant or feed additives in production and processing of crops, and livestock, including fisheries/ aquaculture. It involves the use of traditional knowledge, innovation, modern science, technologies and global good agricultural practices that does not compromise organic agriculture standards and principles. The scope of organic agriculture covers production, inputs use, marketing, storage, handling and development of marketing institutions and channels, processing, organic produce export and import, monitoring and evaluation of organic policy implementation and enforcement of standards and regulations.

The world market for organic food has continued to grow exponentially over the years. This is consequent upon the emerging shift in global agriculture demand from conventional to organic produce and growing advocacy, the world over, on need for safe food free of toxic residues hazardous to human health and the increasing environmental preservations consciousness. In 2019, sales of organic food and drinks amounted to over 106 billion euros (FiBL Survey, 2021) from 72.3 million hectares, out of which Africa accounted only for about 2 million hectares of certified organic agricultural land (about 3% of the global land). This development has been the trend for over a decade and has been a source of concern to the government of several African countries. The effort to address this concern by African Union has been on since 2010 when the African Heads of State and Government took a vital decision on Organic Farming which was meant to upscale the development of organic farming in the continent and improve the livelihoods of the citizens while sustaining environmental resources deployed into agricultural production - EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVII) (FAO, 2013).

This decision led to the evolution of an African Union-led Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative in Africa that started in 2011 which Nigeria has been part of since its inception. The positive impact of this initiative is evident in several African countries including Nigeria where the land under organic agriculture has increased from a little over 3,000 ha in 2009 to over 57,000 ha as at 2018 (FiBL, 2020). Presently, the global

produce market is witnessing a massive rejection of conventional agricultural produce, resulting in huge loss of revenue to the local farmers, and foreign exchange, resulting in a remarkable decline in livelihood of farmers in many countries, Nigeria inclusive. Presently, the policies and programmes for the development of agricultural sector have been dominated by support for chemical fertilizers, improved seeds and agro-chemicals, with little attention to organic agriculture practice, leading to excessive use of chemical inputs and production/sales of products containing toxic residues hazardous to human health. This, in itself, has fueled the increasing wave of massive rejection of Nigerian agricultural produce in the global market. The National Organic Agriculture Policy for Nigeria is expected to arrest this trend and boost development of organic agricultural production in the country by providing a national guide and other regulatory processes for the practice of organic agriculture, processing, marketing and other components of its value chain. It will also strengthen the Nigerian organic agriculture quality control compliance systems and standards, and enhance internal capacity for internationally acceptable good practice and productivity. The policy will be a tool to place Nigeria Organic Agriculture on a pedestal of a leading producer of organic products in Africa and in the global market.

VISION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN NIGERIA

To produce safe agricultural products based on credible organic agriculture standard, void of toxic residues hazardous to human, animal and environmental health; produced in such a manner that does not compromise biodiversity balance and the safety of the environment or accentuate the problem of climate change. Nigeria seeks to be one of the leading producers of organic agriculture in Africa and notable in the global market.

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote agricultural practices that provides for sustainable agricultural productivity and food security through regulation of organic agriculture activities in the country.
2. To promote the development of organic crops and livestock along the various value chain that will compete with other produce in the global market in line with acceptable international standard and regulations
3. To eliminate the use of hazardous inputs, additives and supplements from the food chain.
4. To regulate local production, importation,marketing, distribution and use of organic inputs and finished products in the country.
5. To generate employment opportunities for the teeming population through several components of organic value chains particularly in the area of poverty reduction and rural development
6. To sustain the fertility of the soil, environmental safety and human health for future generations in Nigeria.
7. To promote inter-governmental coordination and active private sector participation in organic agriculture development, promotion, and accessibility to financing and affordable/standard organic inputs.

PROPOSED POLICY DIRECTION

1. Production Policy

Input use policy

- Strict adherence to organic standard in relation to inputs for crop and livestock
- No use of prohibited synthetic materials
- No use of Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) seeds for crop production or for animal feed ingredients.

Farm Management and cultural practice

- Principle of care and ecology should be utmost
- Compliance to buffer zone where necessary
- Management of crops and livestock, including the wild should be more of preventive basis, instead of treatment.
- Commercial production should not engage equipment that may adversely affect the natural environment and ecosystem.
- Soil preparation should be done in a way as not to cause soil erosion and loss of top soil and organic matter.
- Establishment of standards for production and post-harvest handling of organic products.
- High animal welfare practices that improve the natural habitat of the animals shall be engaged.
- Production of livestock and breeding stock and fingerlings, seed and seedlings are to comply with organic standard.
- Proper documentation of farm activities

2. Marketing Policy

- Produce, stock or products' movement from production to consumption must not compromise organic marketing principles and standards.
- All preservation or packaging medium and equipment or vehicular equipment must not compromise the natural state of the produce and stock.

- Principle of Truth in Labeling must not be compromised. Labels should carry information that can be traced.
- Supporting development of domestic and export of organic agricultural produce/products in the country.
- Organic input market development and linkage with the end-user organic producers should be supported.

3. Processing Policy

- No prohibited additives are to be used in processing.
- Natural state of produce should not be compromised along the processing system.
- Food supplement should be graded and labeled according to percentage organic content. Percent inclusion of organic content should not be less than 50%.

4. Export and Import Policy

- Organic agriculture products export should not compromise the recommended standard and procedure
- All imports of inputs and finished products must carry the attestation or seal of certification of internationally recognized certification and regulatory bodies. Inputs or produce not certified should not be allowed into the country.

5. Quality Control Policy

- Setup a technical committee on organic agriculture for both advisory role and policy implementation
- Gazetting of Nigeria Organic Standard and Nigeria Organic Agriculture Bill/Policy as a guiding regulations for all aspects of organic agriculture practice.
- The use of 'Organic' in food and products should be regulated to ensure adherence to organic standard and government policy.

- Designation of some strategic public or private laboratories for periodic testing of organic produce and food products for compliance to quality or non toxicity.

6. Raw Material Policy for Organic Input Production

- All raw materials for use in organic fertilizer are to be naturally occurring in conformity to international standard.
- Livestock feeds or aqua feed must be compounded from certified organic materials

7. Training, Research and Innovation

- More attention to organic agriculture based research and development.
- Incorporation of organic agriculture into curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions.
- Public and private bodies related to agriculture should include organic innovations into their activities.
- Ensure regular capacity building in organic agriculture for academic and related staff of academic institutions in the country.

8. Government and its Institution

- Government should seek to mainstream organic agriculture funding in its national agriculture investment plan through the CBN, Ecological fund, Sovereign fund, MDAs budgetary allocation etc.
- Formation of inter-ministerial committee with selected members of the Private Sector as the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture Principles and Standard.
- Provision for periodical review and implementation of the organic agriculture policy.
- Transformation of the Organic Division of the Farm Inputs Support Services Department of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to Organic Agriculture Department

DEFINITION OF TERMS IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Organic agriculture has been defined in many ways which are built on the two basic definitions by FAO and IFOAM Organics International:

‘Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It utilizes both traditional and scientific knowledge, and emphasizes the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, relying on ecosystem management rather than external agricultural inputs, and taking into account that regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfill any specific function within the system’. (FAO 1999),(IFOAM Organics International, 2005).

Some components of Organic Agriculture include:

- i) Standards
- ii) Quality Control and Certification
- iii) Labels
- iv) Markets
- v) Accreditation

Below Are Some Components Of Organic Agriculture:

Biodiversity: the variety of life forms and ecosystem types on Earth, including genetic diversity (i.e., diversity within and between species), species diversity (i.e., the number and variety of species), ecosystem diversity (a total number ecosystem types)

Buffer Zone: a clearly defined and identifiable boundary area bordering an organic production site and adjacent areas that are established to avoid contact with substances which shall not be used according to this standard.

Contamination: pollution of organic product or land or contact with any material that would render the product unsuitable for organic production or as an organic product.

Conventional: any material, production or processing practice that is not organic “in-conversion”.

Conversion period: the time between the start of organic management and the time when crops and land, animal products qualify as organic.

Food additive: Enrichment, supplement, or other substance which can be added to a foodstuff to affect its keeping quality, consistency, colour, taste, smell, or other technical property.

Genetically modified organism (GMO): A plant, animal, or microbe that has been transformed by genetic engineering.

Label: any written, printed, or graphic representation that is present on a product, accompanies the product or is displayed near the product.

Organic product: a product which has been produced, processed, and /or handled in compliance with this standard.

Processing aid: any substance or material (not including apparatus or utensils) not consumed as a food ingredient itself and which is used in the processing of raw materials, food, or ingredients to fulfill a certain technical purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the presence of residues or derivatives in the final products.

Synthetic: manufactured by chemical and industrial process, includes products not found in nature, or simulation of products from natural resource (but not extracted from natural raw materials).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Principles of Organic Agriculture

Organic agriculture is based on: the principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care (IFOAM, (2011):

Principle of health

Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.

This principle points out that the health of individuals and communities cannot be separated from the health of ecosystems - healthy soils produce healthy crops that foster the health of animals and people. 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. In particular, organic agriculture is intended to produce high quality, nutritious food that contributes to preventive health care and well-being. This view of ensured the avoidance of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, animal drugs and food additives that may have adverse health effects.

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. For example, in the case of crops this is the living soil; for animals it is the farm ecosystem; for fish and marine organisms, the aquatic 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. Organic agriculture attain ecological balance through the design of farming systems, establishment of habitats and maintenance of genetic and agricultural diversity.

Principle of fairness

Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings. This principle emphasizes that

those involved in organic agriculture conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties - farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers. Organic agriculture provides everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products. This principle insists that animals should be provided with the conditions and opportunities of life that accord with their physiology, natural behaviour and well-being.

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. Practitioners of organic agriculture can enhance efficiency and increase productivity, but this should not be at the risk of jeopardizing health and well-being. Consequently, new technologies need to be assessed and existing methods reviewed. Given the incomplete understanding of ecosystems and agriculture, care must be taken. This principle states that precaution and responsibility are the key concerns in management, development and technology choices in organic agriculture. Science is necessary to ensure that organic agriculture is healthy, safe and ecologically sound. Organic agriculture, thus prevent significant risks by adopting appropriate technologies and rejecting unpredictable ones, such as genetic engineering.

The mechanism of these principles is established in the practices, standards and structure of organic agriculture.

Farmers or Companies engaging in organic agriculture shall comply with the principles, regulations and standards for organic agriculture. There shall be no use of chemical products that may endanger human health or environment. All inputs shall be organic including seeds, propagation materials, fertilizers, crop protection materials, processing and storage additives. Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) shall not be used in Nigeria.

The land for organic agriculture should be somewhat virgin or be under fallow for a minimum of three (3) years as conversion period. Where there is high presence of heavy metals in the soil or previous extensive use of herbicides and pesticides, the conversion period shall be extended to allow for degradation of chemical residues. Growers must

maintain an adequate buffer between their operation and potential sources of contamination from closeby farms.

Fertilizers and soil conditioners for use in organic agriculture shall be those certified by approved certification bodies. Composted materials of animal and plant origin as recycled nutrient substances can be used also. Farm yard manure can also be used provided it is properly cured.

Seeds, seedlings, and planting material from organic production shall be used in organic agriculture. However, where this is not available, then conventional seeds, seedlings, and planting materials not treated with chemical may be used.

For livestock production, extensive mode of livestock management may be practice on natural land. The animals shall have access to fresh air, water, feed, and handling according to the natural behavior of the animal. Intensive and battery cage method shall not be engaged in organic production. Animals shall be able to have sufficient free movement according to their natural behavior with good animal husbandry practices. Animal breeds for use in organic agriculture shall be organically raised.

Aquaponic system in fisheries is also allowed provided the ponds are not synthetic, and allow for the provision of water and nutrient sources of organic origin. The system must also show no pollution from nearby farms.

Disease control shall be by use of organically approved method and materials. Organic agricultural generally shall be base on the principle of health, ecology, fairness and care in line with the provisions of International Organic Standards.

Product handling, storage, and processing shall ensure that integrity of the organic products is maintained throughout the period of storage, processing and transportation. All products shall also be properly labeled. Ingredient use in organic storage and the processing shall be organically produced

POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Government shall undertake internal and external monitoring of the implementation of the policy for all activities among various organs and institutions and practitioners within the agricultural system to ensure compliance to the policy. There shall also be periodic impact assessment of the organic agriculture policy in line with the development goal, visions and objectives of the policy. Critical agencies/stakeholders will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. The conduct/composition of the Monitoring and Evaluation team will be determined Technical Committee. The Moni

POLICY REVIEW

The organic agriculture policy shall be subject to review periodically to capture changes in the local and international developments relating to organic agriculture and climate change. Five (5) years period is proposed for the periodic review of the policy.

Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture Principles and Standard: Technical Committee on organic agriculture principles and standards shall be constituted. The statutory membership of the committee shall include the Director or rep of FISS, Certification bodies (Third party certification and PGS certification committee), National Council on Agriculture and other relevant organization. This committee shall serve as the steering on all matters relating to organic agriculture activities in Nigeria. The Committee shall be headed by a Chairman appointed by the Ministry, Part of the responsibilities of this committee shall be to advise the Honourable Minister of Agriculture periodically on issues relating to organic agriculture. Similarly, it shall be the duty of the committee to propose for policy review when the need arises.

Funding of the operations of the Technical committee shall be from the following sources:

- i. Budgetary allocation
- ii. Intervention from players in the industry
- iii. Local and international donor agencies

TARGET GROUPS

The most unique feature of Nigeria's organic agriculture sub sector is the coordination,

involvement and commitment of all concerned stakeholders. Key stakeholders include public institutions-the political leadership at all levels; ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development; Nigeria Export Promotions Council; Research institutions and Academia; Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiatives; Private institutions- including Organic Fertilizer Production & Suppliers Association of Nigeria (OFPSAN), farmers associations and organic agriculture practitioners and growers; export companies; Certification Bodies, NGOs; and private Universities.