

Development of Organic Agriculture in Korea

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Definition of organic agriculture

- Organic production indicates farming methods that don't use chemical fertilizers and pesticides for more than three years.
- Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soil, the ecosystem and people.
(International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, 2008)
- The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities including soil life, plants, animals and people.
(Codex, 1999)

Organic agriculture in Korea

- Mid-1970s: Efforts of farmers and civil groups
- 1980s: Products sold directly to consumers by consumers
- 1990s:
 - Growing demands for environmental conservation all over the world such as at the 'Liu Environmental Development Conference'
 - Environmental problems such as the phenol outflow incident in 1991 and social awareness

Promotion of EFA Policy

- 1997: *Environment-friendly Agriculture Promotion Act*
- 1998: Starting year of environment-friendly agriculture
- 1999: Concrete support actions
 1. Building a Sustainable Agriculture Zone
 2. Pilot Villages for Environment-friendly Agriculture
 3. Direct Payment for Environment-friendly Agriculture
- 2001: Revision of *EFA Promotion Act*, Five-year Plan for EFA
- 2016: *the Act on the Promotion of Environment-Friendly Agriculture and Fisheries and the Management of and Support for Organic Foods, etc,*

The 4th Five-year Plan for EFA (2016-2020)

Phased development strategy policy

- Low-pesticide certification phase
 - Non-pesticide certification phase
 - Conversion-period certification phase
 - Organic certification phase → ultimate goal of EFA
- ✓ Easy to transition from conventional farming to eco-farming

However,

- ✓ Conversion-period certification phase was eliminated in 2006 due to consumer confusion.
- ✓ Low-pesticide certification phase was eliminated in 2015 due to no differentiation between low-pesticide and conventional farming.

Subsidies of certification-based policy

- Direct payment for certification-based policy
- Subsidy scale: 25.9 billion won(2016), 23.9 billion won(2017), 26.4 billion won(2018)

- Payment in 2018

1. Eco-friendly farming(3years → 5years)

➤ Paddy field (won/ha): organic 700,000, non pesticide 500,000

➤ Dry field (won/ha):

organic 1,400,000, non pesticide 1,200,000 (fruits)

organic 1,300,000, non pesticide 1,100,000 (vegetable and horticulture etc.)

2. Organic farming(continued case after 5years, 2015)

➤ Paddy field (won/ha): 350,000

➤ Dry field: 700,000 (fruits), 650,000 (vegetable and horticulture etc.)

- Revision of direct payment policy from this year

Village or district based support

- EFA Village or district support project
 - 48 villages and 1,201 districts built until 2018
 - Subsidy scale: 31.6 billion won(2016), 25.6 billion won(2017), 20.7 billion won(2018)
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- Grouping properties over 10ha (around 10 farmers)
 - Contribute to expansion of eco farmers village-based and the marketing vitalization of eco-agricultural products

However,

- Free-rider problem, aging problem

Depends on certificate system

- Korean case mainly depends on certificates.
- Those supports were provided for farmers who get the certification, and therefore, farmers were eager to be certified.
- However, market of the certified products is becoming more competitive, and less competitiveness farmers turn to the direct relationship to local consumers.

Consumer confidence and certification

- Fake certification problem in 2013 and 2016
 - strengthening pesticide inspection
- Eco-friendly certified eggs were found to be contaminated by insecticides in August 2017
 - Food safety improvement countermeasure focused on the reinforcement of eco-friendly agriculture certifications in December 2017
- Korean government is only strengthening the certification system
- Consumer confusion and low confidence still exist.

Current situation of organic agriculture

- Growth has been decreasing after 2012 peak
- EFA farm household: 107,000(7.3%, 2012) → 59,423(4.9%, 2017)
- Phased development of organic farming has failed!

Unit: 1,000ha

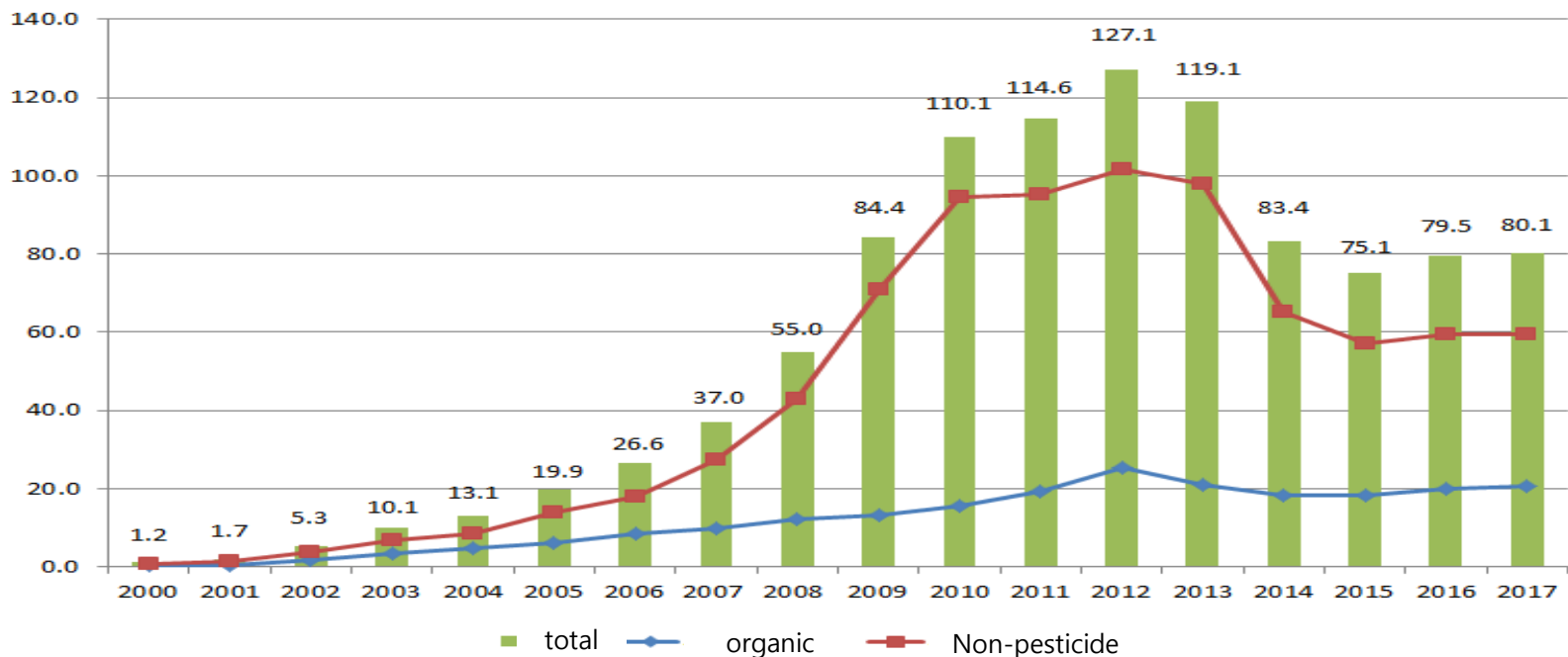


Figure. Properties of eco-friendly agriculture in Korea (2018)

Resource: National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service

Challenge 1: Young organic farmer project

- Aim to foster young organic farmers
 - National government began with local government and Lotte Super fund, 5-year plan, 2-year support, 40 farmers per year since 2017(42 farmers in 2017, 59 farmers in 2018)
 - Chung-nam province selected
 - Support items: green houses, distribution facilities, other organic materials and mentors from the community
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- Beginning course: Total 40 million won/person/year
Lotte Super fund 100%
 - Fostering course: Total 40 million won/person/year
Province 24%, local government(city or rural area) 56%,
own burden 20%

Dul-nyuk



- Non-san city in Chung-nam province
- 20 young farmers, 40 green houses (in 2017 & 2018)
- Organic vegetables and other foods
- Main distribution to school meal service in Non-san city

Challenge 2: School meal project

- Aim to support organic farmers and supply safe food to children
 - Good distribution for organic rice and eco-friendly agricultural products at the local level
 - Solidarity between farmers and consumers by locally produced products and seasonally available food
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- Korean school meal service began in 2012
 - National government had a MOU with Seoul City School and Public Meal Center in March 2017.
 - At the local level, currently there are many efforts to connect farmers and school.

Challenge 3: Social farming

- Aim to support the vulnerable such as young farmers, returning to farming, female farmers, the disabled, etc. through agricultural activities in rural areas
 - National government began this program in 2017 (20 groups in 2018, 20 groups in 2019), 3 years of support
 - Social role of organic agriculture
 - Healing and communication with community
 - Support point: depend on the community's situation
- Subsidy from government, total 40 million won/group/year

Farm with Nature



- Hwa-sung city in Gyoung-gi province
- Usually for adults with mental disability
- Healing through organic farming

Kong-se-al



- Gang-hwa county in Gyoung-gi province
- For disabled children
- Cooking classes with organic vegetables & agricultural practices

Challenge 4: Agri-environment program

- Aim to promote multi-functional activities of agriculture for rural amenity, bio-diversity, environmental protection and revitalization of community, etc.
 - National government has supported this program since 2018 (pilot program of 3 villages in 2018, 2 villages in 2019)
 - 1 village, over 20 farmers, 5-year plan
 - In the case of Chung-nam province, Jang-hyon village of Boryong city, 51 farmers, 35ha, 12 individual activities and 4 common activities (reduce pesticide, cultivation of green manure crop, rotation, cleaning of public space...)
 - Support point: agri-environmental activities depend on the village's situation
- Subsidy from government, total 150 million won/village/year

Hong-dong village



- Hong-sung county in Chung-nam province
- Birth place of organic farming since 1976
- 250 farmers
- Agri-environment program in 2019
- Many challenges like duck and catfish farming in organic paddy field



New approach of organic agriculture

- The first priority is to abolish existing policy regarding pesticide-free products.
- Korean government must create a foundation for promoting organic agriculture separately from eco-friendly agriculture.
- Organic agriculture must maintain its own identity like regional environmental protection, the safe production of food, the pursuit of biodiversity, the restoration of local communities and other similar activities.
- It is time for the organic agricultural values to be reexamined in order to convey the fundamental spirit and philosophy of organic agriculture to consumers.
- Focus on the young farmers, social role, direct relationship to consumers like school meal project!

Thank you very much!



The Tra Que organic farming village in Hoi An city