

# Organic Hotspots

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In collaboration with the Ecological Agriculture and Natural Foods Promotion Association of the Republic of China (EANFA), the Council of Agriculture (COA) has successfully nurtured eight regions across the nation to become "organic hotspots." These eight designated areas, which are located in the counties of Miaoli, Yilan and Taoyuan, participated in a federal program that aimed to revitalize regional economies through the promotion of local souvenirs and keepsakes, the establishment of leisure farms and plantation resorts, as well as the creation of organic communities in line with six key features – namely the sophisticated use of technology, the efficient consumption of energy, the reduction of carbon emissions, the quick adoption of green energy, the provision of educational opportunities as well as the availability of leisure and sightseeing activities. The results of the two-year process were formally announced in a press conference on Sept. 26, in which COA Minister Chen Bao-ji lauded 14 Taiwanese enterprises for their support and endorsement of the organic hotspot transformation program; the event ended with performances by several rural representatives in gratitude for the business community's support.

## **Six-sector organic hotspots to kick-start rural economies**

Citing the three-sector hypothesis, the COA explained that organic hotspots can be viewed as a six-sector economy, a fusion of raw-material extraction, manufacturing and services, for the presence of all three — primary, secondary and tertiary — sectors will allow organic communities to benefit from synergy and the transfer of knowledge. With the input from the Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD) and the county governments of Miaoli, Yilan and Taoyuan, the eight regions were selected to be part of the nation's "organic hotspot" pilot program.

Under the joint supervision of the civic group EANFA and the COA, residents from the eight designated communities spent two years establishing organic farms, designing regional logos, refining local specialties and constructing tourism packages. The adoption of the six-sector economic program has not only resulted in substantial returns, it has also contributed to the retention of younger generations in rural regions, thus breathing new life into many of these traditional farming societies.

## **Business endorsements and corporate social responsibility**

The COA pointed out that the organic hotspot transformation program would not have been possible without solid support from the nation's business community. Fourteen Taiwanese enterprises and organizations in particular, were recognized for their substantial contributions. Praising them for their outstanding sense of corporate social responsibility, the COA hopes more enterprises will demonstrate their love for Taiwan by actively supporting the domestic agricultural sector and endorsing organic communities.

## **Buy local, buy organic**

Noting that it will introduce more regions to the organic hotspot transformation program in the future, the COA urged the public to purchase locally grown organic products. A little support for organic farming goes a long way towards securing a healthy and non-toxic future for Taiwan.

(Data Source: The Council of Agriculture)

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