

Expanding Organic Agriculture Production

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The Council of Agriculture gives full support to the development of organic farming in suitable regions while integrating production, lifestyle, and ecology together. Moreover, organic agriculture should be expanded to more consumers and extend its value chain. It can be integrated into food and agricultural education along with the catering service system in campuses. The authorities must work harder to provide good organic products for students' nutritious lunch meal so as to create a healthy younger generation, while transforming Taiwan into a vigorous, sustainable, and healthy island.

Agricultural product's safety has always been everyone's vital concern in Taiwan. Health and safety are what most people look for in agricultural products when purchasing them. Therefore, it has become the government's core objective to look after its people's health as the purpose of Taiwan's agricultural development. Organic agriculture respects the ecology by rejecting the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It yields safe and healthy quality produce with emphasis on "health" and "sustainability", which also integrates three classic sectors: production, life, and ecology. It meets people's demand for safe food and LOHAS lifestyle, which is a modernized new agricultural model being developed all over the world.

The COA pointed out that in recent years, the government has been promoting organic agriculture actively by offering incentives, subsidies, educational trainings, technical services and other guidance measures to assist farmers to transform into organic producers. Certified organic farmland acreage has increased from 2,356 hectares in 2008 to 5,930 hectares in November, 2013 with a growth rate of 1.5 times. In the mean time, 14 designated organic agriculture areas, 12 organic villages, 17 organic farmer markets, 120 organic product counters and 140 organic E-stores are set up to form the supply chain for 280 secondary and primary schools totaling 346,000 students in New Taipei City. Once a week, they are able to eat organic vegetables which will gradually create diverse retailing channels of organic products.

The COA further indicated that organic agriculture had been adopted into the Golden Decade National Development policy. Future implementations include: intensification of counseling efforts for farmland transformation and encouragement more of civilian sectors to begin organic production, expansion of organic food supply chain, assistance in remote regions or aboriginal villages to make the most of their natural geographic advantages in developing organic farming, promotion of organic food and agricultural education, cooperation with academic and research institutions in setting up organic courses (curriculum), training of

technical manpower, and subsidy for the procurement of production equipment in order to encourage more young people to join organic agriculture business. All the aforementioned objectives will be promoted and implemented in 2014. Moreover, a target increase of organic farming acreage to 15,000 hectares is set to be reached by 2020, gradually transforming Taiwan into a healthy, sustainable and LOHAS island.

(Data Source: Council of Agriculture)

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