

Media Release

Can organic agriculture improve yields and incomes for smallholder farmers in Africa?

Organic agriculture has the potential to improve both crop yields and incomes of smallholder farms in sub-Saharan Africa substantially – this is shown in a unique collaborative study from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and its partners that has just been published in the renowned journal *Global Environmental Change*. This study further demonstrates that in real smallholder farm setting, the potential mentioned is difficult to exploit fully and requires sound implementation.

(Frick, 06.09.2021) There is a controversial on-going debate about whether organic agriculture can contribute to food security and rural development in Africa. The now published study delivers new scientific evidence on the potential of organic agriculture. The study is ground breaking as it:

- assesses different kinds of organic agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in different real farm settings.
- has enough sample size (1645 farms), detailed data over a two-year time horizon and a scientifically sound comparison with a comparable conventional control group.

Therefore, for the first time this study clearly showed how different forms of organic agriculture performed in different real farm settings in SSA and to what extent they can contribute to sustainable development.

In conclusion, organic agriculture has the potential to substantially boost productivity and farm incomes while contributing to sustainable development in Africa if implemented well. But organic agriculture is certainly not a silver bullet for solving food insecurity issues in SSA. In particular, the implementation of organic agriculture in smallholder settings is complex and might fail if farmers don't have the capacities to implement good organic management practices like crop rotations, compost making, mixed cropping systems.

This study revealed the many different forms of organic agriculture practices in sub-Saharan Africa and will help to develop policies and targeted support for sustainable agriculture and food security in SSA.

Download the paper

The open access version of the article *How is organic farming performing agronomically and economically in sub-Saharan Africa?* is now available online:

[https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S0959-3780\(21\)00104-7](https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S0959-3780(21)00104-7)

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Links

This study online:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378021001047>

Research projects ProEcoAfrica:

<https://www.proecoafrika.net/pea-home.html>

Video

Short version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9t-1-OZHIA>

Long version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JbfkXf4DKs>

References

Schader, C., Heidenreich, A., Kadzere, I., Egyir, I., Muriuki, A., Bandanaa, J., Clottey, J., Ndungu, J., Grovermann, C., Lazzarini, G., Blockeel, J., Borgemeister, C., Muller, A.,

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This media release online

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Partners

Project Farmers, Enumerators, and Field Staff in Ghana and Kenya

Implementing Partners



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About FiBL

The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL is one of the world's leading research institutions in the field of organic agriculture. FiBL's strengths are interdisciplinary research, joint innovations with farmers and the food industry as well as rapid knowledge transfer. The FiBL Group currently includes FiBL Switzerland (founded in 1973), FiBL Germany (2001), FiBL Austria (2004), ÖMKi (Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, 2011), FiBL France (2017) and FiBL Europe (2017), which is jointly supported by the five national institutes. Around 280 employees work at the various locations.

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