

## Report on the Definition of Organic Agriculture Feedback on Second Draft - Summary of the Original Submissions -

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### I. BACKGROUND

At the General Assembly 2005 the Task Force (TF) on the Principles of Organic Agriculture (POA) was asked to formulate a Definition of Organic Agriculture (DOA). It was agreed by the World Board (WB) that the definition would adhere to the following criteria:

- Short / concise [limit in words e.g. 300]
- Positive as opposed to normative (which is the form in which the POA are formulated)
- Positive as opposed to negative (what Organic Agriculture (OA) is NOT or does NOT use)
- Covers the full diversity of OA in the world
- No specific reference to certification (in line with position on full diversity of OA)
- Based on and tested against POA

The general public and IFOAM members were invited to comment on the second draft definition which was composed of four definitions and explanatory notes. A call was then made through personal mail contact and through the IFOAM website to comment on the second draft. This report summarizes the feedback that was received on the second draft DOA.

The respondents of this second call for comments were asked to respond three questions, namely:

- 1) Do you prefer one definition over the others? Which one and why?
- 2) Based on the definitions as proposed here, could you come up with one definition that improves the proposals?
- 3) Is there a need for additional explanation in the explanatory notes?

- Method

All comments were categorized according to the following topics:

- General comments
- Missing words/ideas
- Controversial words/ideas

- Positive comments
- Improved definitions

The following plan was used to summarize the different feedbacks:

- General Comments
- Definition A
- Definition B
- Definition C
- Definition D
- Suggestion for Others Definitions
- Explanatory Notes

The categorization system served to provide an overall summary and impression of the feedback. In some cases, categorizing may have compromised the true meaning of the comment. It would thus be useful to consult the original submissions provided in the "feedback" file.

All of the original submissions are included in the "feedback" file.

## II. FEEDBACK

Feedback was received from 57 organizations or individuals. The geographical origin of the comments is:

- Africa: 7
- Europe (including non-UE Eastern countries): 21
- Asia: 16
- Latin America: 3
- North America: 4
- IFOAM staff: 4
- World Board member: 2

The majority (2/3) of the comments are "positive" (in the sense that they agree with the process and give a preference to one of the proposed definition). They appreciated the transparency of the process and to be consulted for their opinion. The "negative" comments are mostly regarding the definitions themselves: none of the proposed definitions were satisfactory in their opinion.

The respondents of this second call for comments were asked to say which definition they prefer. The results are presented below:

- Definition A: 6 votes
- Definition B: 16 votes
- Definition C: 16 votes
- Definition D: 6 votes

- None of the 4 definitions: 16 persons/organizations prefer none of the 4 proposed definition

### III. GENERAL COMMENTS [22 contributions]

#### • Positive or negative?

3 respondents don't understand why the definition must be "positive as opposed to negative". Some others mention negative statements when improving the proposals. The main arguments in support of using negative statements are:

- "It is necessary to use concrete examples (e.g. exclude the use of GMOs, synthetic fertilizers...) otherwise the definition is too general."

- "The construction of that ideal (i.e. Organic Agriculture) was done by identifying the practices which fundamentally opposed."

- "It could be a prelude to accepting the use of reasonable doses of synthetic chemicals products or reasonable contamination by them."

#### • Positive or normative?

For some respondents, it was not clear why the definition must be "positive as opposed to normative".

- An example is: "The definition should allow a reasonably intelligent person to understand immediately what organic agriculture is. This requires a description of the main objectives of organic agriculture: e.g animal welfare, soil fertility and a description of the main methods used in organic agriculture, e.g. closed cycles, no synthetic pesticides etc."

- "All four definitions are defining what we want organic agriculture to be, not what it is. The discrepancy between the definition and the reality on the ground is growing. That fact raises the question if organically certified food really is organic. (e.g. importation of organic food...)"

#### • Missing words/ideas

Several respondents mention that words or ideas are missing in the definitions.

- Diversity: this word should be included in the definition [2 comments]

- Gender: this word should be included in the definition [1 comment]

- Integrity of living being [1 comment] "the present proposition resembles a definition of sustainable agriculture but does not stake out the fundamental ethic of OA. It is not only with reference to ecological systems that OA distinguishes itself but, also in its respect for Life and for the integrity of living beings [organisms]. What is therefore missing is this basic aspect of the Organic ethic, and I would want a preliminary phrase:

"Organic Farming is based on the respect of the laws of nature and the integrity of living beings; consequently OA uses no synthetic chemical products nor any products derived from GMOs or nanoparticles.

OR

"Organic Agriculture relies on respect for the laws of nature, the integrity of living beings and of ecological systems: consequently OA promotes farm production systems that sustain and enhance the health of soils, plants, animals and people; build fair relationships that reduce social and environmental costs; and care for the long-term productivity of the living landscape.

One positive element appears nonetheless in the commentaries attached to the definitions: this very important notion of the integrity of living beings or organisms is specified in the note to the definition of "Health", thereby impeding any possibility of [so-called] "bio-technologies" in OA."

- Soil fertility: "the priority objective of Organic Agriculture is the enhancement of the biological activity and fertility of the soil." [3 comments]

- Development tool: "Organic agriculture serves as a local development tool" [1 comment]

- **Controversial words**

- *Healthy food*: 4 respondents think that organic food is not necessarily healthy (e.g. organic sweet, organic tobacco...). 1 person states that the output of healthy food is important to be mentioned.

- *System*: "The word system can be understood technically, at least not organismically. So it is better to spare it out."

- *Enhance ecology*: "I am not sure that you can say that you "enhance" ecology. You define yourself ecology as the inter-relation of all living organisms. Enhancing health and fairness is clearly a good thing, because they are positive (the more health the better, the more fairness, the better), but enhancing inter-relations, is that necessarily good? To me the term (and the definition that you give to it) does not carry the same positive meaning. In particular, sometimes the less interaction we have with the other species, the better (e.g. enhancing the inter-relation between the panda and the human beings, or between the strawberry and the jellyfish does not necessarily sound positive to me). I know that this is a problem already in the principles, in which the sentence "principle of ecology" is already using "ecology" as something good, but I find it acceptable in the context of the principles whereas in the definition I think it should be more technically accurate than that." [1 comment]

- *Fair*: "This word look very fascinating, however inclusion of it in the definition may arise several questions and IFOAM will have to give reply as a parent of definition. For example IFOAM supports the fair like BIOFACH which is commercial activity, consuming energy lavishly in packaging /processing/ transporting. The material coming from the countries where local people won't get organic and this material is exported just to get high price. How you will say this is a fair activity and based on organic principles. Organic MEAT production by slaughtering of animals just for taste and trade. This practices neither energy efficient nor scientifically justified. How much it is fair with the animal who are important part of ecological cycle. Therefore the term FAIR need to rethink if IFOAM would like to promote activities mentioned above."

- **General advice**

- "We have to be aware when drafting the new definition that people still understand the definition even if they have not understood the complexity of the Principles. The more general (sophisticated) the words are the less people will understand. The more general the definition is the more we have to put into the explanatory remarks (including the negative definition).

For those regions in the world where fights are still fundamental we need to assist with leadership and guidance to not be misinterpreted or misunderstood."

- "I would prefer starting it like "Organic agriculture is defined as an agricultural system which sustains..." This is required because the word "definition" should go with it wherever it is quoted."

- "The definition must have some practical use otherwise it will be remained as a quotation in a reference book or a judgment of supreme (apex) court that will not be complied."

- "Taking an outsiders perspective the other three (A B D) are quite cryptic in that they require the reader to have a thorough understanding of the principles, which in themselves require the reader to have an ecologically attuned psychology and moral outlook to understand, and even so it was felt that a preamble and explanation of the principles was necessary. To put it another way the words used have become jargonized in that their meanings within the context of defining organic agriculture are different to their use in other areas. For example the term sustainable has proved effectively impossible to define as it has multiple meanings."

- **Reference to the Principles of Organic Agriculture**

Several respondents were wondering whether the definition should mention the POA or not. Almost all of them said that it is not logical and it makes the definition more difficult to understand since it refers to another definition. Moreover, the people who read the definition have to be totally aware of them. However, "the main users of a definition of Organic Agriculture are people who are not familiar with organic and want to understand it better."

#### IV. DEFINITION A [13 contributions]

*Organic agriculture includes all agricultural systems that are rooted in the organic principles to sustain and enhance health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner.*

- **Reference to Principles of Organic Agriculture**

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people who read the definition have to be totally aware of them. However, "the main users of a definition of Organic Agriculture are people who are not familiar with organic and want to understand it better."

- **Controversial words**

- *Ecology*: 2 respondents would prefer ecological well-being rather than ecology as ecology is a science.

- *Includes*: "Include is in itself not a definition of what organic is. This 'includes all agricultural systems' may go to the explanatory notes as it is an important thought." [1 comment]

- *Enhance ecology*: "I am not sure that you can say that you "enhance" ecology. You define yourself ecology as the inter-relation of all living organisms. Enhancing health and fairness is clearly a good thing, because they are positive (the more health the better, the more fairness, the better), but enhancing inter-relations, is that necessarily good? To me the term (and the definition that you give to it) does not carry the same positive meaning. In particular, sometimes the less interaction we have with the other species, the better (e.g. enhancing the inter-relation between the panda and the human beings, or between the strawberry and the jellyfish does not necessarily sound positive to me). I know that this is a problem already in the principles, in which the sentence "principle of ecology" is already using "ecology" as something good, but I find it acceptable in the context of the principles whereas in the definition I think it should be more technically accurate than that." [1 comment]

- "Two set of words are not self explanatory rather discretionary. These are *Rooted in the organic farming* and *Precautionary and responsible manner*" [1 comment]

- **Improved definitions**

- 3 respondents would add to this definition part of C definition: *Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions.*

"Because this is included to especially ensure that use of local and internally generated inputs is upheld as an organic practice standard."

- 1 respondent would add the following sentence: *Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides healthy products.*

## V. DEFINITION B [15 contributions]

*Organic agriculture: A system that provides healthy food and other products through natural ecological cycles, methods that care for the environment, and fair relations with all involved.*

- **Controversial words**

- *Healthy food*: 5 respondents think that organic food is not necessarily healthy (e.g. organic sweet, organic tobacco...).

- *All involved*: Too broad, too idealistic to be credible. "All involved would mean also the homeopathic veterinary guy checking the organic animals, the agronomist who advises the organic farmer, the cooperative which lends the harvesting machine to the farmer, etc. Obviously they are involved, but I don't think you can say that OA provides them with healthy food and a good quality of life." [1 comment]

- *Natural*: "Agriculture is not natural" [1 comment]

"It is better to say natural and artificial (human) methods." [1 comment]

- **Missing ideas**

- *Integrity*: "Something like "... cycles en with respect for the integrity of each organism, methods" [1 comment]

- *Human society*: The definition should mention it [1 comment]

- *Management aspects*: "It reads as if organic farming/processing is not a very active issue more a result of nature." [1 comment]

- "Organic Agriculture not offers only products but also services and benefits (e.g. CO2 reduction, cultural conservation...)" [1 comment]

- **Positive comments**

Short, includes the social and fairness perspective in a good way, holistic and comprehensive, elegant, adheres to criteria set by the world board, includes the foods and no foods products, includes the overarching aspects of agriculture, like production and distribution, mentions "adapted to local conditions", which is important.

- **Improved definitions<sup>1</sup>**

- A (self sustained) system that provide healthy food, products and services/benefits (non tangible) on sustainable basis, through natural ecological cycle, energy efficient and ecofriendly methods (adopted to local conditions), that care for environment and fair relations with all involved, for making a society with organic lifestyle.

"Explanation of words:

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<sup>1</sup> The highlighted text is the part of the definition which has been improved by the respondent

Services /benefits: like environment improvement, aesthetic value, mitigating global warming etc. are equally important. This word is different than CARE of environment, which means not to harm environment.

Sustainable basis: long-term stability. Even chemical system sustained for 3-4 decades. Therefore an organic system should be sustainable for long term (i.e. economically viable, socially acceptable, environmentally sound) so that generations can experience the benefits.

Energy efficient and ecofriendly: typical example is use of tractor in farm operations, organic meat production or processing with high energy consuming methods. Although they are not prohibited in organic farming but are creating serious environmental problems, unemployment etc. Therefore, methods/technologies use in organic farming should be energy efficient and ecofriendly."

*- Organic agriculture is a system that produces food and other products using methods that work through locally adapted ecological cycles, enhance health, protect the environment, and promote fair relations with all involved.*

- The definition should refer to the production system and to the quality of the product itself:

A **production** system that provides healthy food and other products through **the responsible use** of natural ecological cycles, methods that care for the environment and fair relations **within the environment in a precautionary and responsible manner.**

#### VI. DEFINITION C [21 comments]

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.*

- **General comments**

- "Rich but too long for understand at once." [4 comments]
- "C is excessively positive, though it is more descriptive." [1 comment]
- "You should start with the second sentence and tune down the aspirational/promotional language in the para - that will increase the chance of a universal uptake of IFOAM's definition. Also I think it is overselling organic a bit in terms of what it actually delivers. A good quality of life is dependent on so many other things than of how we farm." [1 comment]
- Repetition of same meaning words:

"e.g. if the ecological processes are promoted than automatically (understood) nobody will apply inputs of adverse effect" [1 comment]

The first and the last sentences in C say more or less the same, so they can be rationalized [2 comments]

- **Positive comments**

- Self explanatory, complete, clearest, inclusive, meaningful
- Indirect mention about not using harmful inputs [2 comments]

- **Missing ideas**

- Reference to the soil: "maintaining or improving soil organic matter" [1 comment]

- **Controversial words/ideas**

- *All involved*: Too broad, too idealistic to be credible. "All involved would mean also the homeopathic veterinary guy checking the organic animals, the agronomist who advises the organic farmer, the cooperative which lends the harvesting machine to the farmer, etc. Obviously they are involved, but I don't think you can say that OA provides them with healthy food and a good quality of life." [2 comments]

- *Rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects* "is slightly negative and reduces the elegancy." [2 comments] "It is not true that organic inputs have no adverse effects on the ecosystem, as the input we use in agriculture for organic is not an exact replica of biomass recycling." [1 comment]

- *"Precautionary principle* is also used in assessing biotechnology and biosafety, so I would not want to use that term in defining organic." [1 comment]

- *Enhance ecology*: "I am not sure that you can say that you "enhance" ecology. You define yourself ecology as the inter-relation of all living organisms. Enhancing health and fairness is clearly a good thing, because they are positive (the more health the better, the more fairness, the better), but enhancing inter-relations, is that necessarily good? To me the term (and the definition that you give to it) does not carry the same positive meaning. In particular, sometimes the less interaction we have with the other species, the better (e.g. enhancing the inter-relation between the panda and the human beings, or between the strawberry and the jellyfish does not necessarily sound positive to me). I know that this is a problem already in the principles, in which the sentence "principle of ecology" is already using "ecology" as something good, but I find it acceptable in the context of the principles whereas in the definition I think it should be more technically accurate than that." [1 comment]

- *Provides:*" the 'provides' in the last sentence is too strong. OA does not provide fair relations this is more the vision(?); I would hope for that it does. [1 comment]

- *Good quality of life:* "I am not sure about the 'a good quality of life'. May be: Organic management provides healthy food and benefits (as protecting and benefiting are into the same direction benefits may be sufficient as you can not benefit when destroying and not protecting) society, the common environment, life and fair relations." [1 comment]

- Improved definitions<sup>1</sup>

*Organic agriculture includes all agricultural systems that sustain and enhance health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.*

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions, and limits imported inputs that may have adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.*

*Organic agriculture actively manages, sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.*

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and natural cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.*

#### VII. DEFINITION D [10 comments]

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner.*

- General comments

- Too vague [1 comment]

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<sup>1</sup> The highlighted text is the part of the definition which has been improved by the respondent

- Positive comments

- "Short, but deep enough"

- Controversial words/ideas

- *Sustains*: "it is too strong, Organic Agriculture is a tool for that but never guaranties sustainability on its own." [1 comment]

- *Precautionary principle* is also used in assessing biotechnology and biosafety, so I would not want to use that term in defining organic. [1 comment]

- *Enhance ecology*: "I am not sure that you can say that you "enhance" ecology. You define yourself ecology as the inter-relation of all living organisms. Enhancing health and fairness is clearly a good thing, because they are positive (the more health the better, the more fairness, the better), but enhancing inter-relations, is that necessarily good? To me the term (and the definition that you give to it) does not carry the same positive meaning. In particular, sometimes the less interaction we have with the other species, the better (e.g. enhancing the inter-relation between the panda and the human beings, or between the strawberry and the jellyfish does not necessarily sound positive to me). I know that this is a problem already in the principles, in which the sentence "principle of ecology" is already using "ecology" as something good, but I find it acceptable in the context of the principles whereas in the definition I think it should be more technically accurate than that." [1 comment]

- Improved definitions<sup>1</sup>

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a mutually precautionary and socially responsible manner.*

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness of living organisms in a precautionary and responsible manner.*

*Organic agriculture is a management system that sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. It provides healthy food by banning inputs with adverse effects.*

*Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner with integrity and trust.*

#### VIII. SUGGESTION FOR OTHERS DEFINITIONS

In this paragraph, you will find all the definitions suggested by the respondents which have not been considered as improved ones.

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<sup>1</sup> The highlighted text is the part of the definition which has been improved by the respondent

Healthy and vital food and other agricultural goods produced in a holistic way considering the needs of soil and the environment through building up a sustainable base for future life/living. Caring about the welfare of flora, fauna, farm animals and all humans with multi crop rotations involving farm animals to build robust “farm organisms” that reduce costs by independence from inputs and sustain financial strength through variety of production.

A nature friendly sustainable production system for long lasting living earth society

Organic production produces food and products of optimum quality and quantity by working with productive ecosystems according to a total concept. This concept aims to make the ecosystems sustainable and non-polluting of the environment and provide a sustainable income to the producer, families and communities.

Organic agriculture sustains and enhances health, ecology and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides fair relations, a good quality of life and healthy food to all involved.

Organic agriculture is a dynamic tool for the sustainability of human societies. It is designed and being constantly transformed in order to serve humans integrity and fair exchange with each other and all other natural beings whilst meeting its own needs.

1- We have used the term “tool” because this was the only way of including the whole diversity of not only organic products but also services and other activities such as eco-agri tourism or education in the definition.

2- “Dynamic” refers to the nature of organic system which is being transferred all the time according to the local-global and current needs and challenges in nature including human society.

3- We have said “human societies” because nature can sustain itself without human being in many ways whilst organic is designed to keep the cycles alive which is supportive to the human life.

My definition preferred for a good live is "Mens sana in corpore sano" And for this good live, it's necessary to have also "Agriculture sana in soils sano"! What do

you think of this definition? After, you can complete with a scientific relations between soils, agriculture, health and humans! (C, MO, CEC, etc...)

Organic agriculture is the only form of agriculture which endeavours to enage nature to its full potential in production viz; inputs, protection, products, thereby making it healthier and safer than conventional farming.

OA is a holistic agricultural production system that is based on and therefore protects and enhances ecosystem health, in particular biodiversity, biological cycles and biological activity of the soil. (other aspects like GMO's and synthetic pesticides and fertilizers)

Organic agriculture is the practice of using ecologically designed land-use methodologies, together with fair and participatory management, to produce nutritious food and enhance the environmental quality, and is held accountable for sustaining the essential well-being of communities.

Organic agriculture relies upon eco-friendly inputs and actions which in long term enhance and sustain the health of all stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Organic Agriculture is a legally defined method of food production. Organic products are grown without the use of artificial agents, such as pesticides or fertilizers. Advocates of organic farming frequently support ecological, social, and animal welfare, as well as humanitarian goals. The consumption of organic food should provide pleasant experiences; the natural quality can be sensed and enjoyed, contributing to well-being of person and planet.

Organic agriculture sustains, conserve and develops the natural healthy food industry based on original seeds, plants and animal origins

We are also attaching here a document entitled, "Prologue: Moving Toward Sustainability," drafted by USDA National Organic Program staff in 1995. This document, which was approved by the NOSB, articulates a definition of organic agriculture and a set of principles that was used as the basis for drafting the regulations; we submit it as a record of historical interest in the evolution of definitions of organic agriculture. Our suggestion for another version of the definition is distilled from that document, as follows:

*Organic agriculture is a system that promotes and enhances biodiversity and soil biological activity, through practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony. The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the*

*health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people.*

Organic agriculture includes all agricultural systems that are rooted in the organic principles to sustain and enhance health, ecological well-being and fairness in a precautionary and responsible manner. Organic production relies on ecological processes and cycles adapted to local conditions. Organic management protects and benefits the common environment and provides healthy products.

Organic agriculture is a farming system - it is the management of natural resources on and off farm so that this resources can entirely depend on each other , without the interference of unnatural resources

I would use and adapt a quote of Macfarlane:

“Organic farming is not nature unsullied but nature itself: the sheer force of ongoing inherent existence, vigorous and chaotic”.

Justification:

This reflects OF principles all in a nutshell.

“Not nature unsullied”: does not say what it is not.

“Sheer force”: no need for external assistance and “strengtheners” such as chemicals: is the essence of the outcome of ecological management.

“Ongoing”: could have added: “for ever” i.e. sustainable.

“Inherent”: which means intrinsic, organic (as in “organic growth of a company”) i.e. not growing thru outside add-ons but growing by itself.

“Existence”: in OF, it’s all fundamentally about existence, today and tomorrow. It’s about fundamental and sustainable care including social care.

“Vigorous”: which is certainly a synonym for healthy but much more “constructive”.

“Chaotic”: look to biological diversity or a vegetable field with all kind of crops or crop rotation or a living soil etc. it all looks pretty chaotic compared to a monotonous large scale sterile GMO monoculture. Nature is chaos and out of chaos comes healthy survival and evolution (as in “evolve”)

“Chaotic” may on first sight seem somewhat negative but it is not. On the other side it is thought provoking: it will encourage people to ask: “What do they mean by that?”

In any case the message you want to send to the public thru your searching for a definition is certainly not a clear rigorous “that’s it” because that would simply not be possible but rather a more open ended definition.

I thought this definition was functional, positive and attractive and comprises all 4 principles in an elegant way.

Organic agriculture is a knowledge-based approach to agricultural problem solving based on the continual adaptation of traditional knowledge and its validation by modern science. Organic agriculture regards farms as integrated systems and farmers as capable experimenters and innovators.

Do not create a single definition of Organics but have a list of options for cultural contexts.

1. Organics is surfing nature (cool)
2. Organics is jazz: collective spontaneous improvisation. (Sophisticated)
3. Organics is the ecologically safer farming method used to activate the soil and plant without the use of artificial or synthetic chemicals or fertilisers. (Boring stiff predictable).

But they all work in some context...I could go on, but if I'm talking to school kids or professors, old ladies or hip hop artists I have to have the liberty to engage!!!

#### IX. EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory notes (these would go with all of the proposed definitions)

- The definition is based upon the Principles of Organic Agriculture that have been formulated and adopted by the IFOAM General Assembly in 2005.
- *Agriculture and agricultural systems is used in the broadest sense to include processing and distribution systems as well as production systems of food and other goods, and to include pastoral and wild harvest systems as well as farming.*
- *Health is the wholeness and integrity of living systems, and the health of individuals and communities cannot be separated from the health of ecosystems. Health is not simply the absence of illness, but the maintenance of physical, mental, social and ecological well-being.*
- *Ecology is the inter-relation of all living organisms, including humans, with their environment.*
- *Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings.*
- Yes/No

About 2/3 of the respondents think that there is no need for further explanation.

- "Addition of these notes made the previous definition very ambiguous and unpopular!"

- "I think it is important that the definition is understood even without them - again I see a scenario when others quote the IFOAM definition. I doubt that they will include all these notes....So I would argue that the definition should hold even without the notes."

- "To further define a definition by footnotes does not appeal to me. I think that at least some of the words explained in the footnotes could be included in the definition itself."

- "As to explanatory notes they are well formulated and display the full essence of terms."

- "The explanatory notes cover the aspects of ecology, social aspects and economical aspects of organic agriculture and they define the main terms in the definition."

- 1st paragraph

The Principles of Organic Agriculture have been formulated and adopted by the IFOAM General Assembly in 2005 [Ref. is needed here I think] and form the basis for this definition.

- 2nd paragraph

- "The terms agriculture and agricultural systems are used in the broadest sense to include processing and distribution systems as well as production systems of food and other goods, and to include pastoral and wild harvest systems [as well as farming (perhaps excessive here)]."

- "It is confusing: the word "system" is not necessary. We suggest to re-write it as follows: Agriculture is used in the broadest sense to include processing and distribution and to include pastoral and wild harvest as well as farming."

- 3rd paragraph

- "I think the WHO definition of health (albeit human) is a fair common denominator, even if it is also not without its criticisms."

- "Living system" would be "Living organism". "Mental" would be "emotional".

- Health is the wholeness and integrity of living systems, and the health of individuals and communities cannot be separated from the health of ecosystems. Health is not simply the absence of illness, but the maintenance of physical, mental, social and ecological well-being and even the generation of health.

- "It is very important to include inside the "relations" the concept for agricultural workers and producers."

- 4th paragraph

- Does "all living organisms" (para 4) have different meaning from "living beings" (para 5)? If the two words mean the same, please use the same word.

- "We think it is a good idea to mention that "ecology" is not defined in the exact scientific way, but that the organic movement thinks there are a need and a right to make our own definition. The reason is to avoid a discussion with people in science about which definition that is "the right one".

- 5th paragraph

- "I can accept that fairness can be characterised by equity, by respect and by justice but I struggle to accept (linguistically) that fairness can be characterised by stewardship of the shared world. This needs to be reworded."

- "Does "all living organisms" (para 4) have different meaning from "living beings" (para 5)? If the two words mean the same, please use the same word."

- Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings. **The principle of fairness does not suggest that organic standards must address labor practices in places where fair labor practices are legally required.**

- Suggestions for others paragraphs

- "The explanatory notes may/should include a negative definition of what we do not do: pesticides etc. I do not see a reason why it should not go there. People need a clear message, even if the systematic approach might be broken by being negative."

- "I would not mind to see the 'precautionary principle' explained. Not all may know."

- "To address the concern expressed at the GA 2005 I would recommend to give examples for 'inputs of adverse effects'. E.G. "Inputs of adverse effects could be chemical fertilizer and pesticides, genetically modified organisms... [what else?]" This way it would not overload the definition itself, but through the explanatory notes it would be made crystal clear what does not belong to OA."