

Compilation feedback second questionnaire

Contributions in no kind of order

Dear Louise

here is some comment.

There is some inconsistency in the formulation of the thematic areas. The paper speaks about 'thematic areas on which principles may be formulated' and later (Questions to consultative group) it is asked whether the themes 'reflect the principles'. Some thematic areas are themselves formulated as principles, for instance the precautionary principle. This is a little confusing to me. What is called thematic areas could as well be called values; the role of values is to contribute to a better world. When values are formulated in such a way that they say what you should do we get normative principles, for instance: to protect biodiversity, or the welfare of animals; to maintain soil health, etc..

I would call values: holistic health, equity, biodiversity, cyclical systems, soil health, animal wellbeing. Soil as such, or animals, is no value.

As to the identified thematic areas:

-holistic health. Why not holism? It is a much broader concept. Health is just one aspect of it (to heal, to make whole again). If 'holistic health' is maintained, I would also mention the concept 'self-regulation' or stimulation of self-regulation (for instance with natural medicines). I do not understand why history, practice and memory are mentioned here, or part of where we come from. I do not see the connection with holistic health -livelihood. I understood that this area mainly deals with the socio-ethical ideals of organic agriculture. To include ecological justice is okay for me, but then we speak about the whole ecological community, including man. Man as a participant of nature and plants and animals as partners. This to me is an important value for OA. Is transparency the same as what is called 'nearness' by DARCOF? Somewhere I would like to mention the importance of the human life-world and our immediate perception and experience of nature as an important area. This also explains the importance of holism. The reductionistic world of DNA for instance is beyond human experience. This is an important value in connection with the rejection of GGOs. Also the importance of experiential knowledge of farmers (connected to a locality or region) is in this category. But I do not find it in the thematic areas.

-biodiversity. I would like to add regional diversity. Organic agriculture wants to integrate nature and culture. Therefore cultural diversity or agrodiversity is also important. What about mentioning the 'on-farm management of genetic resources'. Neither plantbreeding, nor animal breeding are mentioned in one of the areas. These are very important areas, especially in connection with the use of modern (bio)technology.

-cyclical systems. We can notice increasing interest in closed glasshouses in OA for energy reasons. But is this still organic. Will the value of cyclical systems help us here?

-animals (why not plants?). The concept of animal (and plant) integrity is missing. I do not agree that the use of this concept is not specific for



OA. The application of this concept to plants and animals is very specific (see dissertations of Edith Lammerts and Ton Baars). Without this concept it is difficult to reject certain biotechnologies. The precautionary principle looks only at the consequences, not at the technology itself. We need some values or normative principles which have impact on the technology choice itself, independent of the consequences (the risks).

Finally: I think that the value of 'naturalness' when properly understood is of great importance for OA (see my publications about this), also in explaining why OA rejects genetic engineering. In short: OA integrates nature and culture, but by respecting the relative independence (autonomy, self-ordering principles) of nature. That is why natural substances are used, why we stimulate self-regulation and respect the intrinsic value (inherent worth) of plants and animals.

I hope this is of help to you

Henk Verhoog



Just one contribution to the principles for now. As I looked at the themes I notice that may be we could arrange our themes and principles in our three categories of sound systems ie: Economic, Social and Environmental.

If we did this then we would try to compress all the principles falling under, for example, the economic category into one or two very strong statements. The list of 15 principles as they stand now is quite long. I tried to present them one time on power point - and the comment from participants was that they are simply too long yet very critical.

In terms of the themes you have now I seem to be missing two critical ones: **Development and Food Security**. I think OA has a big potential for holistic development. Holistic has only been captured in the context of ecosystem health. I also missed OA as a basis for Food Security.

Fred Kalibwani
IFOAM staff member, IFOAM Africa Service Centre

Second request for input at the Consultative Group on Principles Organic Agriculture (TF POA) 040517

Input Diane Bowen

IFOAM staff member, Organic Guarantee System Manager

In its meeting at the beginning of May 2004 the Task Force appreciated and analyzed the first input from the Consultative Group (you can find the full minutes under via www.ifoam.org under principles). In a consensus process the Task Force agreed to the following regarding purpose, function and form:

Purpose:

- To set the framework for Organic Agriculture
- To give guidance (in standards, policies, in general)

Work the principles are going to do / function:

- Lead and unite the organic movement
- Inspiration (internally for the movement, externally for change)
- Universal principles that are regionally applicable
- Identity

What about standards development? They still function as foundation for standards.

Form:

- Simple
- Ethical

Short rather than long list!

They will function as our definition of OA, so they should be structured in a way that is easy to communicate them to media and public. In fact, it would be very nice, and maybe even essential to have some kind of heading statement that could be used as a one or two sentence definition. It is a little embarrassing that even the US government publishes a basic definition of OA whereas IFOAM has none. It is very important to keep in mind the needs for our media and lobbying work – to have something that is vivid and compelling and easy to digest. It is difficult to have a “media –friendly answer to the question of how IFOAM defines OA. For example, when the Nature person called me, she asked me for the definition. I could answer from my own experience, but if we need to train our members on lobby and media for OA, then for sure we need a short and attractive definition in addition to a list of principles.

As a second step the Task Force identified ‘thematic areas’ on which principles may be formulated, keeping in mind:

- That the WB gave a preamble that set the scope (see Annex)
- That the exercise of grouping as such is more important than the ‘heading’ / ‘title’ given to each group of cards. The wording for the heading still can change, however the set of cards together in one group should point out what the ‘thematic area’ or ‘sphere’ is about.
- That the thematic areas identify the contribution of OA to a better world (as being the OA-specific subset), but cannot be goals on their own for the OA movement. Or in other words: it is through the ‘OA glasses’ that we have to look at these areas. OA cannot cure all worlds’ injustices, but makes a contribution to a better world. **Strongly Agree!**
- That the principles individually cannot distinguish what OA is about. Only together they can identify OA. It is possible the one is more important in a specific situation or location than the others and therewith gets more attention. However if we want to have them as guideposts they should be considered in their common working. Taken together their effect is synergetic

Identified thematic areas:

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UNITING THE ORGANIC WORLD

'Holistic health'

Connected keywords:

Ecosystems, 'health of soil, plant, animal and human is one and indivisible' [don't leave out the women!](#) [By the way, do you have any women on this task force?](#)

History, practice and memory

Part of where we come from

'Livelihood – equity'

Connected keywords:

Fair

Justice

Right livelihood

Stewardship

Transparency

'Ecological justice'

Inter-generational

'Biodiversity'

Connected keywords:

Protection

Enhancement

Functional diversity

Natural diversity

Genetic diversity

Local application

'Soil' in my opinion this one is of primary importance and maybe should have some special status.

Connected keywords:

Maintain and enhance soil fertility

Living soil

Fertility

Soil organisms

OA is based on long-term fertility through biologically active soil

Manifestation of health in soils

'Cyclical systems' this one also feels of primary importance and maybe should have a special status.

Connected keywords:

Appropriate technologies / low impact

Minimal / responsible use of finite resources

Re use

Recycle

Regeneration

Working with nature

Incl. role of animals in the agro eco system

'Animals'

Connected keywords:

Production

Keeping

Welfare
Natural behavior
Physiology
Not excluding any animal

[Linked to the soil \(this one is very important for me and I am surprised that it did not come up.\)](#)

'Local markets / accessibility'

does this leave out all other markets? I think a better way to think about this is inclusiveness of all markets. How is the full diversity of OA represented in the task force? Are there any traders?

'Precautionary principle'

Connected keywords:

Impact of unforeseen consequences
Relation to new technology
Possible danger in future
Burden of proof

Questions to the Consultative Group:

1. Are the themes presented comprehensive enough to reflect the principles of organic agriculture? Do you feel a need for addition to the individual themes? Are there themes or areas you'd like to suggest to be included? [Delete local markets.](#)
2. Do you like to add other connected keywords? This might be of help in the stage of formulating the principles. [See above.](#)
3. Do you see a possibility to simplify the identified themes? Do you see two or more common themes that can be combined in a single theme? Or do you e.g. see a kind of hierarchy or order in the themes? [Soil and cycling should have some kind of special importance.](#)

Dear Louise, dear members of the Task Force,

I beg your pardon for being one day late.

Thank you very much for the work on the principles which is already done.

The "Purpose" for the principles (p) you chose seems to me ambitious – framework *and* guidance at the same time – moreover, if "the work the p. are going to do" is even "leading" and "uniting" the Organic Movement (OM). Still, taking the Draft Preamble of the Board in advance where there are words to be found like "foundation", "roots", "development of positions" and "vision" the p. should be carrier of such elements.

Last week I met Patrick Holden, he gave on talk on the 80th anniversary of the biodynamic movement in Botton Village (GB). He quite frankly pointet out some needs of the OM on ideas and motives of the bd movement. If we leave away all emotions one can have about "Steiner`s said...", and that the bd movement does not feel like giving advices, if we look quite frankly what could those elements be I today recognise at least one: Development – of man and nature. One does not need to be an Anthroposophist to feel the lack in nowadays OA motives: Where do we head for in the future? Nature protection – yes. No exploitation of nature and ourselves – yes. Cyclical management systems – yes, of course (that is all a short cut of course) – but, to put it in other words, what will be reasons of the OM against GM when the risk debate is ever over? Surely there are the social impacts as well.

Just take as one outcome of the development thought the question of breeding. - Pityfully until now it is mostly practiced only by bd farmers and gardeners.

So I put some examples to the key words. Take them ore leave them whether they suit from your point of view the whole OM.

So far for today

best regards!

Nikolai

Second request for input at the Consultative Group on Principles Organic Agriculture (TF POA) 040517

In its meeting at the beginning of May 2004 the Task Force appreciated and analyzed the first input from the Consultative Group (you can find the full minutes under via www.ifoam.org under principles). In a consensus process the Task Force agreed to the following regarding purpose, function and form:

Purpose:

- To set the framework for Organic Agriculture
- To give guidance (in standards, policies, in general)

Work the principles are going to do / function:

- Lead and unite the organic movement
- Inspiration (internally for the movement, externally for change)
- Universal principles that are regional applicable
- Identity

Form:

- Simple
- Ethical

As a second step the Task Force identified ‘thematic areas’ on which principles may be formulated, keeping in mind:

- That the WB gave a preamble that set the scope (see Annex)
- That the exercise of grouping as such is more important than the ‘heading’ / ‘title’ given to each group of cards. The wording for the heading still can change, however the set of cards together in one group should point out what the ‘thematic area’ or ‘sphere’ is about.
- That the thematic areas identify the contribution of OA to a better world (as being the OA-specific subset), but cannot be goals on their own for the OA movement. Or in other words: it is through

the 'OA glasses' that we have to look at these areas. OA cannot cure all worlds' injustices, but makes a contribution to a better world.

- That the principles individually cannot distinguish what OA is about. Only together they can identify OA. It is possible the one is more important in a specific situation or location than the others and therewith gets more attention. However if we want to have them as guideposts they should be considered in their common working. Taken together their effect is synergetic

Identified thematic areas:

'Holistic health'

Connected keywords:

Ecosystems, 'health of soil, plant, animal and man is one and indivisible', where illness is part of it to be cured (not abolished)

History, practice and memory – and future(?)

Part of where we come from – and go to (?)

'Livelihood – equity'

Connected keywords:

Fair

Justice

Right livelihood

Stewardship

Transparency

'Ecological justice'

Inter-generational

Chances (?)

'Biodiversity'

Connected keywords:

Protection

Enhancement (- Bio development?)

Functional diversity

Natural diversity

Genetic diversity

Local application

plant breeding

'Soil'

Connected keywords:

stop erosion; anti-desertification?

Maintain and enhance soil fertility

Living soil

Fertility

Soil organisms

OA is based on long-term fertility through biologically active soil

Manifestation of health in soils

'Cyclical systems'

Connected keywords:

Appropriate technologies / low impact

Minimal / responsible use of finite resources

Re use

Recycle
Regeneration
Working with nature
Incl. role of animals in the agro eco system

development of higher degrees, e.g. “ripening processes” (?)

‘Animals’

Connected keywords:

Production
Keeping
Welfare
Natural behavior
Physiology
Not excluding any animal

Breeding

Adaption to individual farmsites

‘Local markets / accessibility’

‘Precautionary principle’

Connected keywords:

Impact of unforeseen consequences
Relation to new technology
Possible danger in future
Burden of proof

Questions to the Consultative Group:

1. Are the themes presented comprehensive enough to reflect the principles of organic agriculture? Do you feel a need for addition to the individual themes? Are there themes or areas you’d like to suggest to be included?
Development (e.g. Breeding, Landscape development, ...)
2. Do you like to add other connected keywords? This might be of help in the stage of formulating the principles. (see above added keywords to each chapter)
3. Do you see a possibility to simplify the identified themes? Do you see two or more common themes that can be combined in a single theme? Or do you e.g. see a kind of hierarchy or order in the themes?

I like the hierarchie as it is. I would just put “Animals” before “Biodiversity”)

Please send your feedback by June 7th

The Task Force will use your input to draft a first very rough draft, according to the following scheme:

1. *Simple statement (the principle)*
2. *Meaning / purpose*
3. *Linkage to other principles*
4. *Sub themes that may flow from it*
5. *Items for discussion*
6. *Background (history, consultative input)*

You will be consulted on this draft at the beginning of July.



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES MOUVEMENTS D'AGRICULTURE BIOLOGIQUE
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE MOVIMIENTOS DE AGRICULTURA BIOLÓGICA
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG BIOLOGISCHER LANDBAUBEWEGUNGEN

IFOAM, Louise Lutikholt, 040517

Second request for input at the Consultative Group on Principles Organic Agriculture (TF POA) 040517

Feedback Gunnar Rundgren

In its meeting at the beginning of May 2004 the Task Force appreciated and analyzed the first input from the Consultative Group (you can find the full minutes under via www.ifoam.org under principles). In a consensus process the Task Force agreed to the following regarding purpose, function and form:

Purpose:

- To set the **framework** GR: “framework” is not the right word. Should maybe be “foundation” or for Organic Agriculture
- To give guidance (in standards, policies, in general) (this could of course also be seen as a “function”).

Work the principles are going to do / function:

- Lead and unite the organic movement
- Inspiration (internally for the movement, externally for change)
- Universal principles that are regional applicable
- Identity

Form:

- Simple
- Ethical (what does an “ethical” form mean?)

As a second step the Task Force identified ‘thematic areas’ on which principles may be formulated, keeping in mind:

- That the WB gave a preamble that set the scope (see Annex)
- That the exercise of grouping as such is more important than the ‘heading’ / ‘title’ given to each group of cards. The wording for the heading still can change, however the set of cards together in one group should point out what the ‘thematic area’ or ‘sphere’ is about.
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- That the principles individually cannot distinguish what OA is about. Only together they can identify OA. It is possible the one is more important in a specific situation or location than the others and therewith gets more attention. However if we want to have them as guideposts they should be considered in their common working. Taken together their effect is synergetic

I wonder if there should be “thematic areas! + “principles” and then under each thematic area the relevant principles apply. E.g. “sustainability” is a principle that can be applied on most thematic areas.

Identified thematic areas:

‘Holistic health’

Connected keywords:

Ecosystems, ‘health of soil, plant, animal and man is one and indivisible’
History, practice and memory ??
Part of where we come from ??

‘Livelihood – equity’

Connected keywords:

Fair
Justice
Right livelihood
Stewardship
Transparency
'Ecological justice' Does this refer to "ecological space" issues? Or other kinds of justice to other species?
Inter-generational

'Biodiversity'

Connected keywords:
Protection
Enhancement
Functional diversity
Natural diversity
Genetic diversity
Local application

'Soil'

Connected keywords:

Maintain and enhance soil fertility
Living soil
Fertility
Balance
Natural processes
Soil organisms
OA is based on long-term fertility through biologically active soil
Manifestation of health in soils

'Cyclical systems'

Connected keywords:

Appropriate technologies / low negative impact (think organic systems can be high impact systems)
Minimal / responsible use of finite resources
Re use
Recycle
Cycles in the field, on the farm and in the agro-food system
Regeneration
Working with nature
Incl. role of animals in the agro eco system

'Animals'

Connected keywords:

Production
Keeping
Welfare
Natural behavior
Physiology
Not excluding any animal ??? what is meant with that? Wild life

‘Local markets / accessibility’

Don't think this qualify as a thematic area in itself. Local markets (whatever that means), could be seen as part of “cyclical systems”. Accessibility seems to be a more generic principle and not a thematic area.

‘Precautionary principle’

Maybe this is more a principle (as indicated by the name) rather than a thematic area. Similar to Connected keywords:

- Impact of unforeseen consequences
- Relation to new technology
- Possible danger in future
- Burden of proof

Dear Louise & All, If no quick response comes from all, it may be that this document has confused us. It is easy to make a list of isolated keywords look like consensus. The fashionable brainstorming techniques are not good enough if a list is all they produce. Nobody is going to trust a process that forgets to show how it progressed from A to B, if indeed it did so. And some clarity is needed about Aims & Normative Principles & Values... How do they differ and which do we want in our document ? Is there a philosopher in the house to explain these ?

1= There is no apparent **correlation between this document and the *Principal Aims*** that we were thinking of revising or not revising, whichever we decide. Such a correlation might also in due course become visible via annotation but, today at this stage, I can see nothing emerging yet that looks cogent enough to justify any change to the present *Principal Aims* document. I intend to inform my French colleagues of that fact at our meeting Thursday 10th of June, where the question of the IFOAM Principles is on the agenda.

2= Whatever method was used to produce the thematic lists that came with this "*Second Request for Input*", there is not yet any visible **correlation between these lists of isolated words and our first input**. By annotating it or by some other way, it might be possible to make any such correlation visible. You might have done your sums but we need to see how.

You wrote that the "*Task Force appreciated & analysed the first input from the Consultative Group*" but they seem to be very reticent about it. What was their appreciation, and has there really been a comparative analysis ? A list of words is not an analysis of anything if it is not correlated to something. Either a little more transparency is called for, or just more time to rethink everything in the light of our first & second input.

3= This list of "*Identified thematic areas*" is a list of words that reveals none of the substantial thought that we hope went into it. As it stands, the substance is too superficial. The 8 themes might fall into 3 main aspects, with naturally some key words in the interface between them, and I'd like to explore that, while we await answers to my questions 1 & 2. I'm not sure we need retain these 3 aspects in the final version, but they or something similar might help as a sorting tool and leave it with an underlying structure.

These 3 aspects could be the BIOLOGICAL, the ETHICAL & the ECONOMIC, though of course our **ethos of respect** for biosphere & humanity underlies all aspects of the organic agriculture movement in the first instance. But seeing some few of these principles as more specifically ethical than others, **for public purposes**, need not detract from that.

An overall ethical principle (like N°2) could indeed be found that specifies just this and leaves both *Biological & Economic* aspects distinctly minding their own business, the former for agronomical or research purposes (pure) the latter for professional, commercial or social purposes (applied).

They could just as well be described as *Natural* Economy and *Human* Economy, and in this context the relevant distinction, that helps us sorting out the principles & values, may be that the Biosphere is Godgiven, whilst the Economy is our own doing & undoing. And both are a collective human responsibility. We adapt to the Biosphere, indeed we belong to it, but the Economy is something that is supposed to belong to us. Since half a century though, the Economy ("it") seems quite hopelessly uncontrollable and incapable of serving the common interest of the humanity whose hard labour allows it to grow in such strangely useless ways. Food & fibre & timber production being practically the only essential human activity after childbearing, no farming method can ignore this dilemma of how to handle (or ignore) the disembodied powers masquerading as economy. We have to face up to them, precisely

because of their terrifying effects on both nature & culture, on the Godgiven & the Man-made world.

Incidentally, the remarks about "*contribution to a better world*" do not quite make sense as written. The test is, can it be translated without the translator getting a headache or inventing a meaning? If not, then either it needs rewriting or the thinking was fuzzy.

Meanwhile, it might help if we considered grouping both the "old" *Principal Aims* and the newly identified "*thematic areas*" under these 3 aspects (or an improved version of them). This might shed light on some underlying structure and on some forgotten things.

Here is my grouping of the original *Principal Aims* under my 3 suggested aspects, and some are essentially identical, like 3=14 and 5=6. Moreover, numbers 7 (water!), 10 & 12 are nowhere to be found within the 8 themes.

I. BIOLOGICAL : 2, 4, 5=6, 7, 10,

II. ETHICAL : 11, 15,

III. ECONOMIC : 1, 3 (partly I.), 9, 12, 13, 14 (partly I.),

I have tried & found it quite impossible in practice to understand your 8 *themes* entirely in terms of the 3 aspects, because the key words then start raising all sorts of questions about how they are meant. But, for what it is worth, here is the attempt. This arrangement would result in the contents of some of them needing to be shifted about :

I. BIOLOGICAL aspect : Holistic Health (title misleading), Biodiversity (partly under Ethics), Soil, Cyclical systems (partly under Ethics & Economics), Animals (idem).

II. ETHICAL aspect : Precautionary principle.

III. ECONOMIC aspect : Livelihood, Equity, Local markets.

Anton Pinschhof, FRABBrittany