

## 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](http://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’  
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’**

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’**

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

**‘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?
2. Do you like to add other connected keywords? This might be of help in the stage of formulating the principles.
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?

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.

IFOAM, Louise Lutikholt, 040517



Annex

## **Draft Preamble to the Principles of Organic Agriculture**

We hold these Principles as the foundation of the Organic Movement. The Principles of Organic Agriculture are also the roots from which the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) grows and develops. As such they are relevant for the development of positions, programs and standards. They express the potential contribution that Organic Agriculture can make to the world, and the vision of how all agriculture should function in the larger context, recognizing that the desirable future cannot always be realized today.

Agriculture is one of humankind's most basic activities, since we need to nourish ourselves daily. Through agriculture we prepare the world to be eaten, we organize it so it can become part of us, so it can transform us. Furthermore, it expresses the way people relate to the soil and landscape. History, culture and community values are embedded in agriculture. The Principles are not limited strictly to agriculture; however, agriculture is both the starting point and the main focus of the Principles.