



Media release

Helping smallholders farm sustainably

Swiss institute presents a training manual for Africa

(Frick/Namyangju, September 29th). Switzerland's Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) today presented its African Organic Agriculture Training Manual at the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) World Congress in South Korea.

FiBL created the manual to support smallholders in implementing organic farming techniques and in improving long-term agricultural productivity, with the ultimate goal of reducing poverty and hunger in Africa. The manual is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA)*.

"Experts from our institute worked with African specialists to produce a manual of agricultural practices for growers, farmer groups and extension workers", explains FiBL project leader Lukas Kilcher. "Together, we designed the training materials to strengthen communication between extension staff and smallholders. The aim is to encourage application of a wide range of techniques in sustainable agriculture."

The manual covers techniques for protecting and enhancing soil and plant health, as well as water and energy resources, improving farm management and accessing markets for farm produce. Materials include illustrated booklets, fact sheets, videos and a comprehensive directory of organic agriculture contacts throughout Africa.

Implementation in Africa

"This publication's goal is to increase the sustainable agriculture options for African smallholders, and to help them become more successful farmers", says FiBL Director Urs Niggli. "Our project contributes to food security in Africa by promoting improved production methods and strengthening market-driven farming systems."

African training organizations will now test and further develop the materials. "Pilot training sessions with selected modules to farmers will provide vital feedback to ensure the materials' quality and relevance", says Getachew Tikubet of the training organization BEA

EXCELLENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Das FiBL hat Standorte in der Schweiz, Deutschland und Österreich
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from Ethiopia. FiBL will officially launch the manual at this November's "The Agricultural Alternative for Africa" Conference in Kenya.

FiBL contact

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Further information

- > The manual and additional information are available on www.organic-africa.net

*FiBL's African Organic Agriculture Training Manual is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture. The manual's findings, conclusions and recommendations are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of either Foundation.

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