



Deutscher Tropentag, October 9-11, 2002, Witzenhausen  
“Challenges to Organic Farming and Sustainable Land Use  
in the Tropics and Subtropics”

**Impact of Organic Farming Courses for Small-Holder Farmers at  
Bakara Farmer’s Training Centre on their Agricultural and  
Socio-Economic Development in Lake Nakuru Catchment Area,  
Kenya**

ULRIKE ZDRALEK<sup>1</sup>, PHILIP WANDAHWA<sup>2</sup>, BERNHARD FREYER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*University of Agricultural Sciences (BOKU), Institute of Organic Farming, Austria*

<sup>2</sup>*Egerton University, Kenya*

**Abstract**

In a survey carried out in the year 2000 the situation of organic farming in Lake Nakuru Catchment area in Kenya was analysed. Basic information concerning the role of agriculture in general and organic farming in Kenya in particular were studied by literature. Based on this review three topics were formulated:

1. To explore factors for the spread of organic farming or reasons for farmers to use organic farming techniques
2. To find out the importance of organic farming techniques as a solution for production problems
3. To assess the impacts of organic farming on nutrition, household economy, employment, plants and soil

Seven experts, involved in organic farming in research and extension were interviewed and 33 small-holder farmers (22 men and 11 women), who had attended at least one one-week course on sustainable agriculture at Baraka Farmer’s Training College, Molo, between 1994 and 1999.

The most important factors for the spread of organic farming were: **experts:** good and suitable education, governmental support; **farmers:** economic motives (self-sufficiency in food, monetary income), production factors (soil fertility, higher yields).

The most important problems that influence not only organic farming but agriculture as a whole were: water scarcity, transport possibilities (streets in bad condition, no motorised means of transport), collection of firewood.

The most important techniques found were: soil conservation techniques (terracing, agroforestry), crop rotation and intercropping, composting, double digging. Agroforestry shortens the time that is needed for wood collection, which creates free capacities for other tasks and innovations.

The economic situation of farmers, who had practised organic farming techniques for at least 4 years (17 of 33), had increased. In this group also self-sufficiency in staple food had increased from 23 % to 71 %, self-sufficiency in vegetables from 12 % to 94 %, as well as food diversity and the use of firewood from on-farm agroforestry trees, while labour did not increase. Eight of nine farmer families, who had no other source of income, belonged to the group of farmers experienced with organic farming techniques. In 5 of 33 cases adult children had found full-time employment on their parents’ farms.

**Keywords:** Economy, experts, interviews, Kenya, labour, motivation, nutrition, organic farming, production, small holder farmer, training center