



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Organic Coffee Production and Sustainable Agriculture: A Socio-Ecological Analysis

ASFAW TIHUNE¹, SAHLE TESFAI²

¹*NECOFA-Ethiopia, Ethiopia*

²*International Centre North South Dialogue (ICNSD), NECOFA International, Germany*

Abstract

Coffee used to be the main agricultural commodity of Ethiopia for long period. The last thirty years have experienced repeated fall in price at the global market. This has affected the country's foreign exchange earnings in general and smallholder producers in particular. Moreover, the repeated price fall has negatively impacted the livelihood of about 25% of the country's populations who directly or indirectly depend on coffee industry. This makes it recommendable for the country to search for another alternative means of being competitive. Oromiyaa Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union Ltd. is engaged in the production and marketing of Organic and Fair-trade coffee since the last four years.

This case study is conducted at Limmuu Koossaa District. Three coffee producing sites were selected. Each site is sampled with characteristic attributes relevant to organic coffee production, cooperative membership, non-organic coffee production and non-cooperative membership.

The study employed a socio-ecological analysis of organic coffee production in contrast to non-organic way of coffee production. The impacts of these components on environmental sustainability, optimal production and equity are measured. The study utilised both primary and secondary data. The indicators for these performances were identified as the state of resources and the management efficiencies of these resources in each sample site. A series of variables are identified for investigation under each indicator, whose impacts on environmental sustainability, productivity or equity are evaluated in each site.

The study disclosed that organic coffee production is ecologically sound and economically rewarding when compared to non-organic way of coffee production. Social and institutional performances, as examined for transparency and benefit sharing of primary producers, of the system of production in the study area are found to be as poor as in non-organic system of production. The results show that organic coffee production, as implemented in Baabboo, did not attain social justice and equity. It has not yet attained a 'break-away' from similar constraints of non-organic system of production.

The study concludes that sustainability of organic coffee production at Baabboo is confronted with potential dangers. The study, thus, provides signals of policy implications of the challenges and opportunities of organics.

Keywords: Socio-ecological analysis