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Assessing the Standards of Organic Farming in Bangladesh: A Comparison with European Standards

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Abstract

Bangladesh has some of the most fertile agricultural land in the world but for getting the dynamic production Bangladesh agriculture is on the way to move from subsistence to commercial farming. For this reason, farmers are using chemical fertilisers and pesticides with the increasing rate. Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) of Bangladesh and 14 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been supporting and training smallholder farmers to introduce ecological as well as organic farming methods for limiting the use of chemical inputs. Many trained farmers realise the importance of ecological agriculture and have adopted this approach on their homestead land. However, they are not always able to do it on major farming land because of the lack of consumers' trust. It is also very important at this moment to search export items from Bangladesh. So, In this regard, international standard should be followed which can give trust for the local consumer as well as earning foreign currency from export organic food items. The main goal of the study is to assess GO and NGO efforts to launch organic agriculture, what type of standards are their contact farmers maintaining, compare them with European standards, where and how can be exported their products with improving the existing standard. Information has been collected from 30 different types of key informants and qualitative analysis has been done. It is found that farmers are maintaining good standard but little below than European standard. If they can be sure that they will get high price, it is possible for them to uphold international standard. Moreover, certification is necessary for exporting products and it is costly which is not affordable for individual. The study recommends to develop cooperative marketing for organic products which will be able to support poor farmers in gaining certification and connecting them to the effective domestic and international markets.

Keywords: Non-governmental organizations, organic agriculture, Bangladesh