



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Role of Organic Agriculture in Natural Resources Management and Food Safety: Case Study in Vietnam

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate the role played by organic farming system in protecting nature resources, especially land and water, and enhancing food safety for population in Hanoi the capital city of Vietnam. Vietnam, as one of the most populous countries in Southeast Asia, depends economically mainly on agriculture. Hence, to improve crop yields and therefore ensure food security and economic development, Vietnam promoted the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Increasing the use of agrochemicals in agriculture without proper management had negative effects on the environment and human health issues. Food safety is an important component of food security, which is currently of critical world-wide concern, particularly in Vietnam. Therefore, the adoption of organic agriculture was tried in order to prevent food safety threats and improve environmental pollution. This research was carried out in 2013 in Hanoi, Vietnam. In total 300 respondents (organic and non-organic customers) were interviewed for information about their intention to buy organic vegetables. Three group discussions with 34 farmers, 3 responsible people from organic organisation and 5 organic sellers were conducted to collect the ideas about actual situation of organic vegetable production in Hanoi region and the obstacles for the establishment of organic agriculture in this location. Qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used. Our main findings suggest that consumers tended to purchase organic vegetable because of their concern about food safety; after buying organic products their perception about environmental protection was raised. Organic farming system still could not cover the demand of the consumers. Although the organic system significantly improved the food safety situation, farmers had trouble implementing organic agriculture mainly due to lack of finance. We suggest that state support should play an important role in developing organic farming systems.

Keywords: Environment pollution, food safety, organic farming system, Vietnam