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“Solidarity in a competing world —  
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## Identifying the Barriers of Organic Crop Production in Hamedan, Iran

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### Abstract

Organic farming was originally known as a form of agriculture that mainly relies on traditional production techniques, that is, without use of fertilisers and pesticides. However Organic farming has now evolved to mean that it can combine traditional knowledge, innovations and modern techniques that are backed by scientific research. It has also recently been introduced as one of the most sustainable and reasonable alternatives to conventional agriculture that can effectively improve food security and provide additional benefits. Nevertheless, farmers are reluctant to take up organic farming. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to determine the factors that are hindering the growth of the organic production sector in the Hamedan province. We employed qualitative methods to gather data from key informants that were made up of experts and extension workers. A sample of 28 cases was determined using purposive sampling method. The interviews administered were guided by open-ended questionnaires. We also held two (2) separate focus group discussions each having eight (8) certified organic farmers. A total of 25 barriers were identified and put into five categories namely; financial, government support, technical and managerial, cognitive and emotional. The results from expert opinions also showed that lack of government support has the greatest importance in motivating conventional farmers to convert to organic farming. Other critical barriers included lack of experience in technology and management of weeds, pests and disease, lack of information, farmers' beliefs and attitudes, more resources in terms of time, energy and labour, the absence of specific markets, lack of special insurance services and uncertainty about economic returns when implementing organic farming practices. Understanding these barriers is critical for better policy and planning development in the country.

**Keywords:** Barriers, development, Hamedan province, Iran, organic crop production