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Bernhard Freyer
Jim Bingen *Editors*

Re-Thinking Organic Food and Farming in a Changing World

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Re-Thinking Organic Food and Farming in a Changing World

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Foreword

I met Bernhard Freyer at a coffee shop on Michigan Avenue in Lansing about 6 years ago. He came with his friend and my Michigan State University colleague Jim Bingen (who I have known for a long time—too long to recall). Bernhard and I hit it off at once, engaging in a very stimulating philosophical conversation that probed the ontological conditions that give rise to that phenomenon we call "ethics." I would like to think that our conversation was (in some way or another) the impetus for this fine collection of essays on ethics and organic farming, though I am confident that my influence was too insignificant to deserve recognition as a contributing cause. Organic farming has almost always been conceptualized in light of ethics and the philosophy of agriculture. Some view it as an outcrop of Rudolf Steiner's metaphysical reconstruction of human rationality, while others see it as the fruit of Sir Albert Howard's ecological understanding of the relationship between soil health, on the one hand, and the health of plants grown in that soil and of animals that eat the plants, on the other. Still others have an ethic grounded in place-based social relationships that emerge among small, diversified farms and the localities of merchants, tradesmen, and professionals that they support—a vision now promulgated by the American poet Wendell Berry. Perhaps the main thing that all such advocates of organic farming would agree upon is that the version of organic food derived from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's organic standard and its various global equivalents fails precisely because of its lack of responsiveness to the ethical commitments articulated in any of these founding statements of the organic creed.

But I would also say that proponents of organic farming have themselves failed to engage in the kind of critical and reflective conversation about ethics that is necessary to give life to ideas. I understand this. Farmers are, in part, venerated by moral philosophers precisely because they are few in words but rich in deeds. Their ethics are embodied in their actions. Yet, there needs to be an ongoing conversation—an ethical discourse—that subjects the implied norms or

moral commitments of organic farming to periodic reevaluation and assessment. It is not enough to simply presume that one's own vision is the ethical one or that the practitioners of industrialized farming are venal and lacking in ethics of any kind. Not only will visions and practices of organic farming flourish in response to dialogue and exchange of ideas among the various philosophical strands that have contributed to the organic ethos, it will also challenge the more utilitarian, efficiency-based ethics that continue to rationalize the development of technologically intensive methods of agricultural production. Such conversations and debates are the venue in which ethics are constructed and performed, as much or possibly more than in organic farming practices.

I commend the essays in this volume to a new generation of farmers, eaters, and readers. They exemplify the conversation all of us should be having.

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Paul B. Thompson

Acknowledgment

We are grateful to the organizers of the 2011 Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society Conference in Missoula, Montana, for the opportunity to bring diverse researchers from around the world together in a workshop on "Rethinking Organic." The presentations and discussions gave us the idea to create this book. We thank the contributing authors for their great input and patience with the publication process. In addition, we thank the two anonymous reviewers who gave us profound and constructive feedback that helped us to improve the text and the structure of the book. We especially want to thank Valentin Fiala for his editing assistance. Finally, we thank Dr. Helene Murray and the committee of the Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, University of Minnesota, that offered the financial and ideal background for this transatlantic collaboration. We also want to express our greatest appreciation to the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna for supporting the sabbatical of Bernhard Freyer and to the Fulbright Austrian-American Education Commission for the fellowship to Jim Bingen that allowed us to launch our collaboration in Vienna.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACB	IFOAM Accredited Certification Body
ACO	Australian Certified Organic
AFHVS	Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society
Agrexco	Agricultural Export Company Ltd. (trading as Carmel *Agrexco*)
AOFGS	Australian Organic Farming and Gardening Society
AQIS	Commonwealth Government Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ARGOS	Agricultural Research Group on Sustainability
ASFS	Association for the Study of Food and Society
BOKU	(Universität für) Bodenkultur
CFP	Corporate Financial Performance
CIW	Coalition of Immokalee Workers
CLA	Conjugated linoleic acid
CoMoRe	Corporate Moral Responsibility
COROS	Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EC	European Commission
ELLS-NA	Euro-League for Life Sciences and North America
EPOPA	Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FLO	Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International
GMO	Genetically modified organisms
IAR	IFOAM Accreditation Requirements
ICO	Indiana Certified Organic
ICS	International Control System
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IMO	Institute of Market ecology

IOAS	International Organic Accreditation Service
IPM	Integrated pest management
IS	IFOAM Standard
ISOFAR	International Society of Organic Agriculture Research
ITC	International Trade Center
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MRL	Maximum Residue Level
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NASAA	National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIS	New Israelian Shekels
NOP	National Organic Program
PA	*Perlindungan Alam*
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Systems
RA	Rainforest Alliance
rBST	recombinant Bovine Somatotropin
SAFN	Study of Food and Nutrition social movement organizations (SMOs)
SN	Sustainable Network
SOAAN	Sustainable Organic Agriculture Action Network
STS	Science and Technology Studies
TOAM	Tanzanian organic agriculture movement
TPC	Australian Trade Practices Commission
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Part I
Overview and Foundations

Chapter 1
Introduction

Bernhard Freyer and Jim Bingen

1.1 Foreword

As we witness the continuing growth in organic food production and markets around the world, we join with many others in our concern that "organic has lost its way" or, lost sight of its first or fundamental philosophical principles and assumptions.

The discussions that led to this volume started in June 2007 during a short visit by Jim Bingen to the Division of Organic Agriculture, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria in order to explore of teaching and research exchanges between Michigan State University and BOKU under the auspices of ELLS-NA.[1] Based on shared concerns discussed during this visit, we organized an open roundtable to explore these concerns with other researchers at the Second Scientific Conference of ISOFAR[2] in Modena, Italy from 18 to 20 June 2008. At this meeting, Bernhard Freyer invited Jim Bingen to apply for a Fulbright Distinguished Chair position at BOKU. During this incredibly rich and stimulating 4-months (October 2009–January 2010), we jointly offered a seminar on Organic

[1]ELLS-NA, the Euro- League for Life Sciences and North America; June 2007.

[2]International Society of Organic Agriculture Research.

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Agriculture, Politics and Society, co-advised students, and prepared several conference presentations that explored trans-disciplinary approaches to organic issues.

Bernhard Freyer's appointment as Senior Fellow at the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Minnesota from late 2010 to June 2011 offered us a special opportunity to continue our Vienna conversations largely by Skype. We proposed a panel discussion on the principles and fundamental assumptions of organic practices for the 2011 annual meetings of AFHVS, ASFS, and SAFN Societies.[3] In response, the conference program committee invited us to organize five sets of panel discussions to addressed organic issues.[4]

In our call for papers for these meetings, we asked for empirically grounded discussions that focused on core principles and practices of organic food and farming. We specifically sought papers that drew upon clearly articulated and well-defined conceptual frameworks that might offer new insights into organic practices. Given the quality of the submitted papers, we decided to select some of them to be used for our proposal to Springer for this collection of original papers that offer several different perspectives on, and issues in the worldwide organic movement.

1.2 The Broader Idea of This Book

The explosive growth of organic food and farming in recent decades has raised numerous challenges throughout the organic sector (Willer and Kilcher 2011). Some of these include: a new generation of young organic farmers and others converting to organic; government subsidies for organic; the development of numerous new processed organic products; the emergence of diversified market opportunities that range from grass root food coops, to several types of farmer-consumer collaborative arrangements, farmers markets as well as other local markets, and organic supermarkets. Several revisions in the organic regulatory framework e.g., in Europe and in North America have accompanied this expansion and diversification of markets. Finally, several private and public sector groups and agencies have been established to deal with organic certification and control, to provide advisory services to farmers and processors, to carry-out organic research, and to publicize activities in the organic sector.[5]

All of these changes have been occurring within the context of a wide and diverse number of macro-level changes in food and farming in Europe and North

[3]Joint annual meetings of the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society, the Association for the Study of Food and Society, and the Society for the Study of Food and Nutrition, "Food and Ag Under the Big Sky" held in Missoula, Montana.

[4]Challenges of Standardization; Between Diversification and Holism; Social and Gender Dimensions; Differentiations in Products, Markets and Consumers; and, Values and Ethics.

[5]http://www.isofar.org/

America. Some of these that affect both organic and non-organic farmers (albeit somewhat differently), include: increasing land prices; increasing extreme weather events; energy costs; international trade regulations; genetically modified crops; the power of large retailers; and, the creation of consumer demand for new food products.

In response, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM 2012), representing over 100 country member organizations around the world, undertook far reaching revisions to the IFOAM Norms. These norms provide the foundation for the organic movement, and they include: the IFOAM Principles, the Standards and guidelines for certification agencies and firms.

The IFOAM Principles (Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care) represent the cornerstone of the organic movement (Luttikholt 2007). They offer the normative, ethical framework on which all the IFOAM regulatory instruments practice along the organic agrofood chain.

However, over the last two decades many in the organic movement have started to raise critical questions and concerns about the apparent loss of influence, and popular awareness of the IFOAM Principles on organic practices (IFOAM 2009). Instead of discussions related to the ethical ideas of the IFOAM Principles, more popular discussions of organic tend to focus on a different set of largely sociological or business-related features of organic such as: "professionalization, industrialization, conventionalization, bifurcation, competition, internationalization" and other socio-organizational features of organic. At the same time, many "pragmatic" organic actors, driven by ideas of a healthy and environmental friendly future, seek to keep alive ethically oriented organic practices through numerous forms of localisms and farmer-consumer relationships that embody the IFOAM Principles.

Confronted by these developments, we felt that it would be important to rethink the role of the IFOAM Principles and their potential to orient the future development of the organic idea. Three guiding questions helped us to select and organize the chapters in this volume: What was, is and could be the future role of an ethically based organic agriculture? What are the challenges of an ethically driven organic future? And what are the conditions for establishing an ethically driven organic agriculture for the future?

Our underlying premise is: solving the social, environmental and economic challenges of the future cannot be served only with a techno-economic approach or procedural, technical or social regulations. The absence of a more ethical orientation in future decision making, for food, feed, fiber and energy production and consumption will jeopardize future sustainable and resilient problem solving.

We are aware that this volume only addresses a selected number of the issues raised above. Nevertheless, we hope that we have assembled thoughtful and insightful reflections on several of the critical issues and ethical concerns in the organic movement. As such, we hope this volume offers a solid starting point for a reinvigorated debate on the development of an ethically centered organic future.

1.3 Structure of the Book

In Chap. 2, we introduce the IFOAM Principles and their ethical foundation. We provide an overview on the history of ethics in the organic movement starting in the 1920s (Part I, Chap. 2) and discuss the diverse streams of organic ethics that arose until the 1990s.

The following ten invited chapters discuss and explore different dimensions of organic ethics. These papers are presented in three parts. Each part includes a summary discussion that provides overview comments and highlights the ethical issues raised in the chapters. The parts are: Part II Standards and Certification (Chaps. 3, 4, and 5); Part III Markets and Consumers (Chaps. 6, 7, and 8); Part IV The Interplay of Conventional and Organic (Chaps. 9, 10, 11, and 12).

Our final Part V "Framework for Re-thinking Ethics in the Organic Movement," first raises questions about the current role of ethics based on a typology that is sensitive to the different ethics that currently characterize the organic movement (Chap. 13). In doing so, we seek to shed light on the environment of organic that influences the organic future and to review the challenges for an ethically driven organic future. Chapter 14 summarizes and concludes our discussion and offers our reflections on "Positioning Organic Ethics".

The following provides a brief overview of contributed chapters.

Part I Overview and Foundations

Chapter 2: The history of organic is not a homogeneous one, but is build on a colorful development based on different thinkers and societal movements over now approx. 100 years. Beginning with the current IFOAM Principles and their ethical foundations, Bernhard Freyer, Jim Bingen and Milena Klimek summarize and discuss the ethical foundations of the organic approach from their origins in the 1920s and follow the development of the different ethically/value driven streams until the 1990s.

The IFOAM Principles Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care, developed in a participatory process and with scientific support, serve as an ethical framework for the IFOAM Standards and certification issues. They are based on a normative ethic, grounded on an ecocentric/holistic approach, a moderate deontology and a virtue approach to human-nature relationships. Current ethical thinking about organic can trace its European origins to primarily in German-speaking countries and was heavily influenced during the 1920s by the life reform movement and by and the Philosopher Rudolf Steiner. Both introduced notions of a "circular agricultural economy" and nineteenth century Christianity that were at the foundation of many organic discussions. Since this time, organic has been characterized by diverse trends, largely in the UK, the US, New Zealand, Australia before becoming more "mainstream" through the establishment of IFOAM and its acceptance in more than 100 countries (see for details Chaps. 10 and 11). However, over this time, organic has been characterized by a remarkably consistent set of values that were embodied in the first set of IFOAM Principles and Standards in 1972.

Part II Standards and Certification

The maturing of the organic movement in recent years has brought significant pluralism to organic. Do government or other (e.g., IFOAM) regulations define organic, or are these simply official guidelines? What does organic certification mean, and what political and ethical principles does it embody? The three chapters in this part offer different, but complementary, responses to these questions and on the meaning of certification.

Chapter 3: Using a longitudinal study of a sustainable shrimp project in Indonesia, Maki Hatanaka examines how organic certification affects the principles, practices, and goals of the project. Her findings indicate that the emphasis on objectivity, calculability, and expert knowledge that characterize certification constrained both farmer and consumer participation in the governance of the sustainable shrimp project. Building on the case study, Hatanaka argues that certification may be producing alternative agrifood initiatives that are highly rationalized and embody shallow forms of social justice and environmental sustainability.

Chapter 4: Allison Loconto and Maarten Van der Kamp draw upon their separate research in Tanzania and in the UK to explore how context influences the way in which 'organic' is defined through its practices. Using the notion of performativity, they examine the organic standard as a calculative device that defines how organic tea is grown in Tanzania and how organic cereals are grown in the UK. They argue that while organic certification renders these products 'singular' in the UK market, the products embody 'multiple' production practices. They conclude that despite the use of standards to create a singular organic market, the practice of organic farming remains diverse. This tension between singularity and multiplicity is necessary for organic markets to develop and be maintained.

Chapter 5: Instead of being preoccupied with the mechanistic supply and demand formulation of world food security issues, Bernhard Freyer, Jim Bingen, Milena Klimek and Rebecca Paxton ask, what would happen if we started to focus on the idea of ethical values in the agrofood system? Their main thesis is: strengthening the discussion of the ethical values in the agrofood system should play a key role in our assessments of world food supply and demand in the future. This paper offers some preliminary reflections on selected ethical values raised by concerns with food supply, food demand and food access. The paper does not offer calculations of food and human nutrition, but instead discuss the critical relationships between ethical values and their quantitative influence on food security. The authors argue that a value-centered discussion is essential to explicating many of the issues related to organic practices and the question of how "to feed the world." More specifically, they suggest that the ethics embodied in the IFOAM Principles offer a framework for identifying how organic agrofood systems might contribute to a sustainable food future. This has also consequences for standard and certification procedures.

Part III Markets and Consumers

For years, many academics have critically discussed how organic is advertised, and how consumers react to diverse marketing strategies. The three chapters in this part

offer insights into market and consumer issues raised by organics. They discuss the broad range of farmer-retailer-consumer chains and how consumers perceive, react and are affected by market strategies.

Chapter 6: Ginevra Adamoli explores the concept of organic marketing in terms of compliance marketing and green selling. In light of the growing organic products and the rise of the hybrid citizen-consumer, defined by Johnston (2008) as a concept that implies a social practice, she studies the connection between consumer's agency and organic packages of food products. She examines the concept of organic marketing based on King (1984) and Peattie and Crane's (2005) discussions of compliance marketing and green selling. Through a qualitative textual and visual analysis of the organic egg carton by *Esselunga*, one of the largest Italian chain supermarkets, she argues that these forms of textual and visual communication are consistent with practices of marketing, rather than serving to empower the buyer through valuable information. She concludes with a discussion of the implications of her findings for the citizen-consumer.

Chapter 7: Kristin Getter, Bridget Behe, Philip H. Howard, David Conner and Lia M. Spaniolo present the findings of their innovative research on the attributes and images that consumers prefer with respect to pasture-based dairy. They discuss the result of their research that created and tested promotional messages with potential consumers, while also investigating current consumer perceptions and attitudes about milk and its attributes. Their research asked participants in six focus groups around Michigan to create hand-drawn milk labels that represented attributes they sought when purchasing milk. Research participants also answered oral questions about their milk purchases and evaluated images designed by a graphic artist. The most common themes to emerge in the hand-drawn images included cows in pasture, blue skies, and sunshine. Words appearing on these same drawings indicated that participants generally wanted organic, local, and grass-fed milk products. By looking at the themes and concerns of milk drinkers, the authors identify the need for effective communication to consumers in order to improve profitable sales of pastured milk.

Chapter 8: Ralf Grosglik raises important questions that will command increasing analytic and policy attention as organic production and marketing spreads beyond North America and Western Europe. Based on his research in Israel, he examines the appearance of politicized organic practices in tandem with the globalization that Israel underwent. Grosglik points that the emergence of Israeli organic food is essentially a part of the economic and cultural globalization in Israel. Furthermore, he describes how a variety of production and distribution methods have responded to the increased demand for organic food by Israeli consumers. These new methods embody a variety of symbolic and materialistic aspects of globalization and anti-globalization. As these new activities emerge, they help us consider the political dimensions of a range of alternative organic practices.

Part IV The Interplay of Conventional and Organic

The four chapters in this part allow us to gain fresh perspectives on the enduring questions related to the "conventionalization" of organic and to debates over the "co-existence" of conventional and organic production.