



8th Edition of the National Programme for Organic Production

For Prelims: [National Programme for Organic Production](#), [Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority](#), [Bio-fertilizers](#), [National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture](#), [MOVCDNER](#), [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India](#), [Unified India Organic](#)

For Mains: Organic farming in sustainable agriculture, National Programme for Organic Production, Organic and Natural farming

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The 8th edition of the [National Programme for Organic Production \(NPOP\)](#) was launched in New Delhi, highlighting India's potential in organic farming. The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry announced that [organic farming](#) exports could reach Rs 20,000 crore in next three years.

What is the National Programme for Organic Production?

- **About:** The NPOP, launched in 2001 implemented by [Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority \(APEDA\)](#) under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industries**, focuses on **accreditation, organic production standards, and promoting organic farming**.
 - It enhances India's global competitiveness in organic farming. NPOP standards for production and accreditation are recognized by the **European Commission** and **Switzerland**, allowing Indian organic products to be accepted internationally.
- **Key Highlights of the 8th Edition NPOP:** The event highlighted new initiatives and **technological advancements** aimed at boosting organic farming, streamlining operations, and strengthening India's position in the global organic market.
 - **Recognition for Organic Grower Groups:** Simplified certification requirements, **granting legal status to grower groups**, replacing the previous **Internal Control System (ICS)**, which was a quality assurance system used for group certification.
 - **Technological Advancements:**
 - **NPOP Portal:** Provides visibility and ease of operations for organic stakeholders.
 - **Organic Promotion Portal:** Connects farmers, [Farmer Producer Organisations \(FPOs\)](#), and exporters with global buyers, offering trade leads, training, and events.
 - **TraceNet 2.0:** An upgraded system for transparency, traceability, and compliance, ensuring farm-to-market compliance and streamlining operations to meet global standards.
 - **AgriXchange Portal:** Facilitates data analysis and connects international buyers and sellers.

What is Organic Farming?

- **About:** Organic farming is an agricultural system that emphasizes the **health of soils, ecosystems, and people by avoiding synthetic chemicals** and focusing on natural processes.
 - It relies on **ecological cycles, biodiversity, and combines tradition, innovation, and science** to promote environmental benefits and fair relationships.
 - While generally Organic farming avoids external inputs, certification systems allow the use of **organic, biological, and mineral supplements** when needed.
- **Status of Organic Farming:** India's rank **2nd in terms of World's Organic Agricultural land**.
 - **Sikkim** became the **world's first fully organic state**, and North East India has traditionally practiced organic farming with lower chemical use.
 - India has the **largest number of organic producers** in the world, with 2.3 million farmers.
 - As of 2023-24, around **4.5 million hectares** (2.5% of total agricultural land) are under organic certification.
 - The top four states Madhya Pradesh (26%), Maharashtra (22%), Gujarat (15%), and Rajasthan (13%) account for nearly 76% of India's total organically cultivated area.
- **Key Organic Products in India:** Major organic exports from India include flax seeds, sesame, soybeans, tea, medicinal plants, rice, and pulses. **India is a global leader in organic cotton production.**
- **Types of Organic Farmers in India:**
 - **Traditional Organic Farmers:** Located in **low-input zones** like **North-Eastern Region farmers**, these farmers have practiced organic farming as a tradition, **typically without certification**.
 - **Reactive Organic Farmers:** These farmers have switched to organic practices in response to issues like **soil degradation, food toxicity**, and rising costs. This group includes both certified and uncertified farmers.
 - **Commercial Organic Farmers:** These farmers and enterprises adopt organic farming for market opportunities and **premium prices**. Most are certified and focus on both domestic and global markets.
- **Progress of Organic Farming in India:**
 - **National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF):** Introduced in **2004** to promote organic farming through training, capacity building, and development of organic inputs like **bio-fertilizers** and **bio-pesticides**.
 - **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS):** Introduced in **2011** to simplify certification procedures and reduce costs, making certification more accessible to farmers.
 - **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):** The **PKVY** was launched under the **National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture**, aimed at promoting traditional organic farming practices through **farmer clusters**, financial assistance, training, and certification support.
 - **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for Northeastern Region (MOVCDNER):** The **MOVCDNER** is focused on creating a value chain for organic farming in Northeastern states to enhance market access and income for farmers.
 - **FSSAI Organic Foods Regulation:** In 2024, **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** and APEDA launched the **"Unified India Organic"** logo replacing the **India Organic and Jaivik Bharat logos**, to standardize and streamline the implementation of India's organic regulations under the NPOP.

Note: **Natural farming** is a **chemical-free, traditional farming system** that integrates crops, trees, and livestock with biodiversity.

- It focuses on **on-farm biomass recycling**, cow dung-urine formulations, and soil aeration while excluding synthetic chemicals.
- Natural farming aims to reduce reliance on **purchased inputs (organic or chemicals)**, making it cost-effective and promoting rural development and employment.

Organic Vs Natural Farming

Organic and natural Farming

- Both are non-chemical systems of farming
- Based on diversity, on-farm biomass management and biological nutrient recycling
- Diversity, rotation multiple cropping and resource recycling is key

Organic farming

- Open for use of off-farm organic and biological inputs
- Does not allow Genetically modified seeds or products
- Also open for micronutrient correction through use of minerals
- Widely popular, Global market at 132 billion US\$

Natural farming

- No external inputs
- On-farm inputs based on Desi Cow (Jeevamrit, Beejamrit, Ghanajeevamrit)
- Biomass recycling through mulching
- Use of compost/ vermicompost and minerals are not allowed
- Evolving, markets are yet to be developed

What are the Challenges in Organic Farming in India?

- **High Certification Costs:** Obtaining organic certification (e.g., NPOP, PGS) is expensive, deterring small and marginal farmers.
 - Additionally, the **EU's non-recognition of the PGS** limits market access for Indian producers compared to those with NPOP certification.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Inadequate **cold storage**, processing facilities, and supply chain infrastructure lead to **post-harvest losses**.
- **Limited Awareness:** Lack of knowledge about organic certifications and misleading labels like "**natural**" and "**chemical-free**" erode consumer trust and unfairly compete with genuine organic products.
 - Organic products are seen as expensive, limiting appeal to lower-income groups, while lack of consumer education hampers demand growth.
- **Low Productivity:** Organic farming **often yields lower during the transition phase**, with limited availability of **bio-inputs like fertilizers and pest control agents**.
- **Market Access and Premium Pricing:** Organic products face **competition from cheaper conventional goods**, and small-scale farmers struggle to access **organized markets and earn premium prices**.
- **Global Trade Barriers:** Non-tariff barriers, such as differing organic standards and regulations across countries, complicate exports.
 - Withdrawal of trade agreements, like the **US Organic Recognition Agreement in 2021**, hampers growth.
- **Climate and Pest Challenges:** Organic farming is more vulnerable to climate variability and pest infestations due to the limited use of chemical interventions.
- **Lack of R&D and Training:** Insufficient research on organic farming techniques and suitable crop varieties.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Certification Systems:** Simplify **NPOP and PGS certification to reduce costs for small farmers**. Digitalize certification for efficiency and transparency.
 - Offer subsidies or financial aid during the conversion from inorganic to organic farming.
- **Promoting Market Linkages:** Strengthen FPOs and **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** to create **direct market linkages** and develop platforms for organic farmers to connect with retailers, exporters, and consumers.

- Establish dedicated **organic marketplaces or e-commerce platforms** for better visibility and accessibility.
- **Research and Development:** Invest in R&D to develop **high-yield, pest-resistant, and climate-resilient** organic crop varieties. Develop **region-specific solutions** for soil fertility and pest control to support farmers.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Leverage **influencers and sports personalities** to promote the **India Organic brand**. Ensure widespread use of the Unified India Organic logo to build trust and distinguish organic products.
- **Policy Support:** Introduce risk mitigation strategies and insurance schemes for organic farmers to protect against yield losses.
 - Provide tax incentives or reduced **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** rates for organic products to encourage both production and consumption.

Drishti Mains Question:

Organic farming in India has seen substantial growth. What are the challenges faced by organic farmers, and what steps can be taken to address them?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. How is permaculture farming different from conventional chemical farming? (2021)

1. Permaculture farming discourages monocultural practices but in conventional chemical farming, monoculture practices are predominant.
2. Conventional chemical farming can cause an increase in soil salinity but the occurrence of such phenomenon is not observed in permaculture farming.
3. Conventional chemical farming is easily possible in semi-arid regions but permaculture farming is not so easily possible in such regions.
4. Practice of mulching is very important in permaculture farming but not necessarily so in conventional chemical farming.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 1, 2 and 4
- (c) 4 only
- (d) 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide an opportunity for crop diversification? (2021)

Q. How has India benefited from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? (2019)

