

Natural farming vs Organic farming

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Introduction

Natural and organic both are chemical free and more or less poison free farming methods. Both systems discourage farmers from using any chemical fertilizers, pesticides on plants and in all agricultural practices. Both farming methods encourage farmers to use local breeds of seeds, and native varieties of vegetables, grains, pulses and other crops. Organic and natural farming methods promote non chemical and homemade pest control methods.

“Natural Farming is a farming practice that imitates the way of nature,” it was created in Japan by Masanobu Fukuoka and Mokichi Okada. It is described as “the natural way of farming” or “do-nothing farming.” (Source: *Maunakeatea*)

“Organic farming is a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people. The principal goal of organic production is to develop enterprises that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment.” (Source: *Omafra*)

Key differences between Natural farming and Organic farming

In natural farming, neither chemical nor organic fertilizers are added to the soil. In fact, no external fertilizers are added to soil or given to plants whatsoever. In natural farming, decomposition of organic matter by microbes and earthworms is encouraged right on the soil surface itself, which gradually adds nutrition in the soil, over the period.

In organic farming, organic fertilizers and manures like compost, vermicompost, cow dung manure, etc. are used and added to farmlands from external sources. Organic farming still requires basic agro practices like plowing, tilling, mixing of manures, weeding, etc. to be performed.



In natural farming there no plowing, no tilting of soil and no fertilizers, and no weeding is done just the way it would be in natural ecosystems. There are many working models of natural farming all over the world, the zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is the most popular model in India. This comprehensive, natural, and spiritual farming system is developed by Padma Shri Subhash Palekar. Organic farming is still expensive as compared to natural farming due to the requirement of bulk manures, and it has an ecological impact on surrounding environments; whereas, natural agriculture is an extremely low-cost farming method, completely molding with local biodiversity.

Advantages of Natural Farming

- Protect soil and environmental quality.
- Natural farming has a smaller carbon footprint.
- Conserves and builds soil health.
- Replenishes natural ecosystems for cleaner water and air, all without toxic pesticide residues.

Advantages of organic farming

- Reduces pesticide and chemical residues in soil.
- Efficient use of resources.
- Minimizes the external cost of farming.
- More nutritional value compared to conventionally grown products.
- Tastes better than non organic food.
- Healthier animals
- Safe guard's natural flora, fauna and natural habitat.
- Soil and the environment is a public good.

“Overall, organic farming and natural farming both tend to have better soil quality and reduce soil erosion compared to their conventional counterparts. Organic agriculture



generally creates less soil and water pollution and lower greenhouse gas emissions, and is more energy efficient. Organic agriculture is also associated with greater biodiversity of plants, animals, insects and microbes, as well as genetic diversity.

