

Assessment on the Level of Development of Macedonia and Iran Organic Agriculture as Compared to Nigeria: A Review

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Abstract : With the rising global threat of food security, cancer, and related diseases (carcinogenic) because of increased usage of inorganic substances in agricultural food production, the Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey organized an International Workshop on Organic Agriculture between 8–12th December 2014 at the International Agricultural Research and Training Center, Izmir. About 21 countries, including Nigeria, were invited to attend the training workshop. Several topics on organic agriculture were presented by renowned scholars, ranging from regulation, certification, crop, animal, seed production, pest and disease management, soil composting, and marketing of organic agricultural products, among others. This paper purposely selected two countries (Macedonia and Iran) out of the 21 countries to assess their level of development in terms of organic agriculture as compared to Nigeria. Macedonia, with a population of only 2.1 million people as of 2014, started organic agriculture in 2005 with only 266ha of land and has grown significantly to over 5,000ha in 2010, covering such crops as cereals (62%), forage (20%) fruit orchard (7%), vineyards (5%), vegetables (4%), oil seed and industrial crops (1%) each. Others are organic beekeeping from 110 hives to over 15,000 certified colonies. As part of government commitment, the level of government subsidy for organic products was 30% compared to the direct support for conventional agricultural products. About 19 by-laws were introduced on organic agricultural production that was fully consistent with European Union regulations. The republic of Iran, on the other hand, embarked on organic agriculture for the fact, that the country recorded the highest rate of cancer disease in the world, with over 30,000 people dying every year and 297 people diagnosed every day. However, the host country, Turkey, is well advanced in organic agricultural production and now being the largest exporter of organic products to Europe and other parts of the globe. A technical trip to one of the villages that are under the government scheme on organic agriculture reveals that organic agriculture was based on market-demand-driven and the support of the government was very visible, linking the farmers with private companies that provide inputs to them while the companies purchase the products at harvest with a high premium price. However, in Nigeria, research on organic agriculture was very recent, and there was very scanty information on organic agriculture due to poor documentation and very low awareness, even among the elites. The paper, therefore, recommends that the government should provide funds to NARIs to conduct research on organic agriculture and to establish clear government policy and good pre-conditions for sustainable organic agricultural production in the country.

Keywords : organic agriculture, food security, food safety, food nutrition

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