

## CONCEPTS OF ORGANIC ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEM

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### INTRODUCTION

The major aim of Animal Husbandry is production of food. Some body says we live for food, others say food is essential for life. Whatever it may be what's more important is "As the food so is the mind; as the mind so is the thought; as the thought so is the action". Life first came into existence into sea; sea contains 72 natural elements. Animals, plants and humans contain 72 trace elements. Food should contain natural elements.

Nature is the mother of human race. Life has evolved as part of the natural processes. It plays a dominant role in providing things for the survival of mankind. For sustainability, the holistic approach is needed which follows "coexisting principle". Otherwise, mother Earth will be perturbed.

Green Revolution Technology (GRT) was enthusiastically adopted in India from late sixties, which definitely rendered food security to India. GRT still is an ongoing practice. However, there has been growing awareness of hazards due to conventional chemical farming from early nineties. This gave birth to biodynamic farming from that time. Subsequently, National Organic Policy has been framed in early 2000 for sustainability. At present, there is unprecedented demand of organic food round the globe.

Organic Farming is a common sense farming which requires mind set tuning only. It is all about our realization with the nature rather, rediscovering the traditional wisdom. The most notable characteristic of organic farming is the emphasis on the production process rather than a product itself. "Organic" does not refer to the term used in chemistry. The primary aim is to find ways to grow food in harmony with nature. The term organic is "best thought of as referring not to the type of inputs used, but to the concept of the farm as an organism, in which the component parts – the soil minerals, organic matter, micro-organisms, insects, plants, animals and humans interact to create a coherent and stable whole".

The first "scientific" approach to organic farming can be quoted back to the Vedas of the "Later Vedic Period", 1,000 BC to 600 BC. The essence is to live in partnership with, rather than exploit, nature. The "Vrikshayurveda" (Science of plants), the "Krishishastra" (Science of agriculture), and the "Mrigayurveda" (Animal science) are the main works. Here agriculture was not developed just as a production system, but as a culture. Animal Husbandry was an integral part of farming practice.

Definition of Livestock is known. However, within this system "livestock shall mean any domestic or domesticated animal including bovine (including buffalo and bison), ovine, porcine, caprine, equine, poultry and bees raised for food or in the production of food. The products of hunting or fishing of wild animals shall not be considered part of this definition."

## PROCESS

To have the paradigm shift to the organic animal husbandry system, a specific conversion period is essential before being it certified. The conversion period from a conventional to an organic livestock may be a combination of three synergic types of actions, which include vegetable conversion, animal husbandry system conversion and ideological conversion of the farmer. The first two aspects are only technical passages;

the third one is mental state of mind that is linked not only to the organic choice, but also to a holistic vision of the production.

Management technique in animal husbandry should be governed by the physiological and ethological needs of the farm animals. This includes: 1) that the animal should be allowed to conduct their basic behaviour needs, 2) that all management techniques including those where products, levels and speed of growth are concerned, should be directed to good health and welfare of animals, 3) the livestock productions form integral part of many farms practicing organic agriculture.

### i) Breeding

At the time of animal breeding introduction in organic farm, it is necessary to take account of the following criteria. 1) The race and stock of animals, since the choice of animal race influences strongly the image of the organic breeding and its profit. 2) the capacity of the animals to adapt in the conditions of the environment and 3) the vitality and the resistance of the animals to diseases. Breeding goals should not be in opposition to animal's natural behaviour and should be directed towards good health. The certification programme shall ensure that breeding system are based on breeds that can both copulate and give birth naturally. However, artificial insemination is allowed but embryo transfer techniques are not allowed in organic animal husbandry.

### ii) Feeding

Feeding animals with organic method must be based upon the provenience from organic agriculture. The diet should be balanced according to the nutritional needs of the animals. Products from the organic food processing industry shall be used or prefer, if possible coming from the organic farm. However, European Union (EU) Regulations allows the use of a little percentage (10%) of conventional foodstuffs when the farmer is unable to obtain food exclusively from organic production. Colouring agents in feed shall not be used in organic livestock production.

### iii) Welfare

The aspect of Animal Welfare is important in organic animal husbandry. One of the 17 basic principles of organic agriculture stated in the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Basic Standard "is to give all livestock conditions of life with due consideration for the basic aspects of their innate behaviour". In marketing organic animal products, an important argument is that, organic livestock are allowed to express more of their natural behaviour and are provided with better welfare than livestock on conventional farms.

#### iv) Disease prevention and treatment

Management practices should be directed to the well being of animals, achieving maximum resistance against diseases and preventing infections. Sick and injured animals must be given prompt and adequate treatment. Natural medicines and methods including homeopathy, ayurvedic medicines and acupuncture, should be emphasized. When illness does occur, the aim should be to find the cause and prevent future outbreaks by changing management practices.

If despite everything the preventive measure, an animal comes to be sick or wounded, it must be immediately treated but based on phytotherapy or homoeopathy. Also, due to emergency, in organic animal husbandry, synthetic chemical drugs, antibiotics and hormones can be used in the following conditions: 1) The treatment must be prescribed by a registered veterinary medical practitioner. 2) The animal or the batch must be clearly identified. 3) The drugs used must be communicated to the organism of control before marketing of animal or its products.

The vaccination shall be used only when diseases are known or expected to be a problem in the region of the farm and where these diseases cannot be controlled by the other management techniques. Legally required vaccinations are allowed.

#### v) Certification

Shall be the procedure by which a written assurance is given by the Certification Agency that a clearly identified production or processing system has been methodically assessed and conforms to the specified requirements. To name a few, APEDA (Agricultural Products Export Development Agency), NSOP (National Standards for Organic Products) etc., are certifying agency. For Indian condition in case of small farmers, Group Certification is convenient as this step is investment intensive. Certification may be accompanied by a Logo. "India Organic" is a unique and excellent logo developed by APEDA for this purpose.

#### vi) Marketing

There is unprecedented demand of organic products globally, which is increasing, even in much higher price. Various exporters and importers are authorized in India and can be considered as marketing outlet. The list for this purpose is available to the APEDA, Government of India.

### CONCLUSION

At this stage, Organic Animal Husbandry may be an alternative (not wholly) opportunity to the farming household and can be adopted seeing market potential later.

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