BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARISON, LYNDON C., APRIL 2013. Assessmnet on Farmers' Acceptability of Organic Farming in Atok. Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.

Adviser: Evangeline B. Cungihan, MSc.

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted for the following objectives: to determine if organic farming is acceptable in the place; to determine the farmers' awareness on organic farming in the place; and to identify the reasons of farmers for practicing organic farming or not practicing organic farming in the area.

One hundred (100) respondents were interviewed randomly using a questionnaire through personal interview. Data were organized and subjected to statistical computation using frequency and percentage.

As to the awareness of farmers in Atok about organic farming almost all of the respondents were aware of organic farming and the source of their information was in the radio. Organic farming was also acceptable to the farmers of Atok but with different levels of acceptability, twenty (20) respondents claimed that organic farming is strongly acceptable to them; seventy (70) respondents acceptable and only ten (10) respondents claimed that organic farming is less acceptable to them. Even though organic farming is acceptable to the farmers of Atok, some of them were not practicing. The reasons of some farmers of Atok for practicing organic farming were: beneficial to health, lesser capital,

higher price, better quality, successful experiment, good effects to the environment and one practitioner mentioned that she likes to revive the fertility of the soil. The reasons of the respondents in not practicing or not adopting organic farming were the following: they have inadequate knowledge about organic farming and because of this problem they cannot go into it and for the external reasons for the farmers in not adopting is the limited market outlet, and it takes time to revive the fertility of the soil.

From the result of this study, it was recommended that since organic farming is acceptable to the farmers of Atok, government and other concerned agencies must assist them in their needs especially through seminars and trainings which should be held in their locality. Furthermore, affordable credit should also be provided and more market outlet for the organic vegetables.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Pablo (2004), cited that organic is not new in the country and a number of technologies and strategies have been well studied and adapted in some areas of Benguet already. In fact, a number of specialized farms have been stabilized and profitability growing organic vegetables and other crops and livestock. However, there is no single package of technology in organic farming for farmers to use or to refer to.

According to Pablo (2004), vegetable production has remained as the major source of income of highland farmers, particularly in the province of Benguet and Mountain Province. In the Philippines, the early rice and vegetable farmers were basically organic farmers using indigenous methods. These indigenous methods were coupled with cultural tradition such as thanksgiving harvest and "*bayanihan*" and other farming activities were strongly linked with religious and indigenous practices of the rural folks. With the emergence of the Green Revolution, farmers turned their back to organic farming in exchange for higher productivity.

Organic farming does not mean going back to traditional methods. However, many of the farming methods used in the past are still useful today. The method today combines these traditional methods with modern scientific knowledge. Organic farmers do not leave their farms to be taken over by nature; they use all the knowledge, techniques and materials available to work with nature. In this way, the farmer creates a healthy balance between nature and farming, where crops and animals can grow and thrive (Rodale, 1971).

The farmer would use a range of organic methods at the same time to allow them to work together for the maximum benefit. For example, the use of green manure and careful cultivation, together provide better control of weeds than if the techniques were used on their own.

To be a successful organic farmer, the farmer must not see every insect as a pest, every plant out of place as a weed and the solution to every problem in an artificial chemical spray. The aim is not to eradicate all pest and weeds, but to keep down to an acceptable level and make the most of the benefits that they may provide (Rodale, 1971).

Organic production takes into account the minimum reliance on artificial inputs, feeding of soil and not the plants, food safety practices, non-use of hazardous chemicals, non-use of artificial growth applied in vegetable and non-use of genetically modified organisms. It also promotes biodiversity if the use of pesticide and synthetic fertilizer are minimized if not avoided (Adonis, 2005).

Benefits of eating organically grown vegetables are evident. Their greatest strength lies in minerals and vitamin content though many have appropriate percentage of dietary fiber, and practically have high water content. The nutritional values of organic vegetables are also good source of protein and minerals. It contains C, K, P (Pro-vitamin A) as well as B vitamins. In the case of organic vegetables grown in the Cordillera region, it was found out that the produced are not only tastier but have nutritional value higher than conventionally grown vegetables (Almonte, 2006).

Atok is a 4th class municipality of Benguet province. According to the 2007 census, it has a population of 19,253 people in 3,397 households. The name of the municipality was derived from its location. It is a short term of the phrase ‘‘nay patok shi chontog” which

means “on the mountain top”. Atok has a land area of 22,385 hectares or 223.85 square kilometer. A great portion of the land is mountainous hence the highest point in the Philippine Highway System (Halsema Highway) is located in the municipality at 7,400 ft. above sea level. Organic vegetable farmers in Atok form an organization, “Atok Organic Practitioners Association” (ATOPA) through the help of the Atok municipal government. This association is helping the farmers in marketing their products and assisting them in terms of technical support.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Organic Farming

Organic farming is not a new idea as it was being practiced since the start of farming. Before the advent of chemical fertilizer and pesticides, whatever was being grown can be called as an organic product. However the official, credit of fathering Indian organic farming goes to Albert Howard agronomist stationed at Indore in 1931 along with Yashwant Bal.

Classic organic production research during the 1960's and 1970's at America's land grant colleges revealed the importance of philosophy. The Ph. D's took test plots that for decades had been subjected to all sort range of compound, including DDT and planted corn. On some, they added chemical fertilizers, pesticides and etc. those they called the conventional chemically fertilized plots. At the end of the season, they measured the production from two plots and found that the organic one's did not do well. These conclusions were replicated and promulgated all around the world to prove the unacceptability or organic farming (Deshmukh, 2010).

The organic movement began in the 1930's and 1940's as a reaction to agriculture's growing reliance on synthetic inputs. Artificial fertilizers had been created during the 18th century, initially with super phosphates and then ammonia derived fertilizers mass produced using the Haber-Bosch process developed during World War I. These early fertilizers were cheap, powerful, and easy to transport in bulk. The 1940's has been referred to as the pesticide era. Sir Albert Howard is widely considered to be the father of organic

farming. Rudolf Steiner, an Australian philosopher, made important strides in the earliest organic theory with his biodynamic agriculture.

Organic farming techniques were pioneered in the early twentieth century by small groups of farmers concerned about the effects of mechanization, fertilizer use and other forms of intensification on the biological health of the soil (Halpin *et al.*, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted in all the eight barangays of the municipality of Atok, Benguet namely; Abiang, Topdac, Poblacion, Caliking, Naguey, Pasdong, Paoay, and Cattubo on December 2012 to January 2013. The study site is shown in Figure 1.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 100 farmers obtained through random sampling.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data of the study was gathered with the use of interview schedule containing the necessary questions to answer the objectives of the study through personal interview.

Data Gathered

The data gathered included the demographic profile, awareness on organic farming, level of knowledge, level of acceptability on organic farming, reasons why farmers practice or do not practice organic farming and the farmers' interest.

Data Analysis

The data gathered was evaluated and interpreted by the researcher according to the objectives of the study. Frequency and percentage were the statistical tools used in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents according to their gender, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, source of income, type of farming engaged in, and number of years in farming.

Age. The respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 75 years old wherein 20% were 20-30 years old, 16% 31 - 40, 34% 41 - 50, 26% 51 -60, and only 4% 61-75 years old. The finding shows that the respondents were distributed between the young and old farmers.

Gender and marital status. There were more male respondents (69%) than the female (31%).Most of them were married (83%), 13% single and 4% were widow/widower.

Educational attainment. The respondents vary in their educational attainment. There were 26% elementary, 46% High School, 26% college, and 2% had vocational course.

Occupation. As expected, the most dominant occupation was farming (95%) followed by self-employed/laborer (12%) and government employee (5%).The data showed that farming is the common occupation of the respondents.

Source of income. As to the source of income, result shows that farming is the common source of income with 88%, wages with 15%, business with11% and lastly salary with 5%.

Type of farming. Majority of the respondents were practicing conventional farming (67%), organic farming (12%), and 21% were practicing both organic and conventional farming. The data implies that conventional farming is more dominant in the municipality of Atok.

No. of years engaged in farming. The respondents vary according to the number of years engaged in farming. Fifteen percent had been farming for less than five years, 19% 5-15 years, 31% 11-20 years, 28% 21-30 years, 6% 31-40 years, and lastly, only 1% for 41-50 years. This implies that some of the respondents have just started farming while some have already been farming for a long time.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was conducted last December, 2012 to January, 2013 in the eight Barangays of the Municipality of Atok. It was conducted for the following objectives: 1) to determine if organic farming is acceptable in the place; 2)to determine the farmers' awareness on organic farming in that place, and 3) to identify the reasons of farmers for practicing or not practicing organic farming in that area.

One hundred respondents were interviewed through guide questions. As the result of the data gathered 97% of the respondents were aware and only 3% were not aware of organic farming. For the acceptability, 100% of the respondents said that if all the needed support would be available or provided they are willing to adopt or accept organic farming. As for the reasons of adopting and not adopting organic farming in Atok, the main external factor or reason that affect the adaptation of organic farming is it takes long time to revive the fertility of the soil (65%) and the limited market outlet. The main internal factor or reason that affects the respondents of not adopting organic farming was inadequate knowledge (69%). Respondents are asking for more seminars and trainings to be conducted in there locality so that they can attend easily and learn more about organic farming specially for the components of organic farming. And for the factors or reasons of the respondents in practicing organic farming were the following: beneficial to health, lesser capital needed, higher price, better quality, successful experiment and lastly it have good

effects on the environment. One organic practitioner also mentioned that she adopt organic farming because she like to revive the fertility of the soil of her farm.

Conclusions

Base on the findings of the study the following conclusions were formulated:

1. Farmers in Atok, Benguet are generally aware of organic farming and that component of organic farming known by most of the farmers is the use of compost in the farm; and

2. Organic farming is acceptable to almost all the farmers in Atok and they are willing to go into organic farming as long as technical, financial, material inputs, and marketing supports would be provided to them since majority of those not adopting organic farming is due to limited market outlet and their problem on reviving the fertility of the soil.

Recommendations

Since farmers of Atok are willing to shift and some were already practicing organic farming, government and other concerned agencies must provide all of their need specially seminars and training respectively to their place in order for them to understand more what organic farming is. Affordable credit should also be provided and more market outlet for organic products should be established so that farmers would not be discouraged to go into organic farming.

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