

Environment

An eco-farming revolution

Canada

Canada is one of the largest agricultural producer and exporter in the world. But its conventional agriculture has negative consequences. Canada has experienced numerous negative consequences like those of most industrialized countries that follow the conventional agricultural model. Environmental problems, particularly soil and water degradation, have become a major concern since the early 1980s. Soil degradation alone has been conservatively estimated to cost over \$2 billion per year. These concerns have been magnified by Canada's limited supply of high quality agricultural land.

The soil and water degradation is obviously caused by agricultural activities. Chemical utilization has gone up tremendously since technology provided us with modern pesticides and fertilizers. They are full of chemicals that are not produced in nature and cannot be broken down by it. As a result, they seep into the ground after they mix with water and slowly reduce the fertility of the soil. Other chemicals damage the composition of the soil and make it easier to erode by water and air. Plants absorb many of these pesticides and when they decompose, they cause soil pollution once they become a part of the land. The industrial compound is another cause of the soil and water degradation.

Canada has decided to develop the organic farming. For a long time, organic farming in Canada was limited to small groups of producers, processors and consumers; however, substantial growth has occurred over the past few years. The recent interest in organic products has been heightened by consumers' increased expectations regarding their food and the environment, especially following several crises involving conventional agriculture.

What are the expectations of Canadian organic consumers? The expectations obviously are always the same: to have a healthier planet, because it's better not only for us humans, but also for our environment, our nature, our place to live. In what is organic food healthier? Well, this type of food doesn't contain any type of pesticides, fertilizers, industrial compound or chemicals. "Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved." The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)

Canada reported 3590 organic producers in 2012. The latest data shows that in 2014, a total of 3780 organic producers were operating in Canada. This is a 5% increase since 2012. So, we can easily see that the organic farmers have increase in our country. In Canada, our largest producer of organic field crops is Saskatchewan, next to Alberta and Ontario. Saskatchewan is the largest grower of organic pulses in Canada, and together with the Prairies, produce 99% of this category. Thanks to this, in 2014, Canada was ranked the 3rd largest producer of organic pulses in the world.

Is the organic food affordable? We all know that organic food is more expensive than normal food, but organic does matter, organic soils provide a better carbon sink than conventionally managed fields. Each year, organic farms keep thousands of pounds of chemicals out of streams, soil tables, animal habitats and rivers. When you consider the big picture, what we get from organic, it's amazing we don't spend more! The more we produce organic food, the lower the cost will be.

In conclusion, we can say that Canada is working very hard on organic food. Our country wants the best for the world; but to make a big change, we have to first make a little change, so... why don't we start producing organic food for a better place to live? Canada started with small producers of organic food, and now we have big companies of organic food, that have made us the third country of organic food producers. And maybe organic food is expensive, but it is definitively worthy.