

## **Organic Agriculture and Fair Trade – Two Sides of One and the Same Coin**

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Worldwide about 46.000 farmers cultivate an area of more than 275.000 hectares in accordance with Naturland standards for organic agricultures. The call for the social sustainability of organic products is nothing new and for Naturland it has been part and parcel from the very first.

### **Organic Agriculture and Fair Trade make a good team**

Any agricultural system no matter how organic it is can only be called sustainable, if it allows farmers to live on their agricultural activity, either self-sufficiently or by selling their produce. Fair and organic are thus the two sides of one and the same coin.

It is therefore that the cooperation with the Fair Trade partners is of great importance to Naturland.

The Fair Trade price premium has enabled a significant number of Naturland small scale producers to move into organic production. Organic agriculture conserving the natural resources and Fair Trade relations offering an economic alternative and future perspective to the farmers guarantee sustainable living conditions for farming families throughout the world. Thus Fair Trade organic produce is doing justice to both the farmer and the environment. Naturland has been involved in Fair Trade since 1987 when the Fair Trade company Gepa was seeking the Naturland expertise in converting the worldwide first teagarden in Sri Lanka to organic production. Fair Trade has come a long way and has developed a global network of farmers, traders and consumers.

### **Organic agriculture and fair partnerships in Germany**

In Germany the conversion to organic farming has for a long time been securing farmers' existence. Only recently organic farms in Germany have been confronted with a fall in prices paid to the producer and a rise in operating expenses. More and more organic producers cannot meet the regular overheads of their organic farming activities. In November 2005 the farmer delegates in Naturland thus decided that the organisation needs to set standards for fair partnerships in Germany too. Fair Trade relations are an important element in securing the livelihood of organic farmers, whose work in turn helps to conserve the very basis of human existence.

The loss of one's livelihood is a big threat to any farmer. Neither the small organic dairy farmer in the South of Germany nor the small-scale coffee farmer in Chiapas, Mexico has a future, if we do not succeed in safeguarding their crucial interests.

### **The Naturland criteria on fair partnerships**

The Naturland fair criteria describe the most important elements of a fair partnership. They are not compulsory but are an option for Naturland processors or those who trade in merchandise certified by Naturland. The criteria focus on social responsibility, long-term trade relations, fair producer prices and quality assurance.

At the BioFach Trade Fair 2006 three distinguished processors of organic products were presented with the Naturland fair partnership award. These partners have fully complied with the Naturland criteria for fair partnership. Naturland thus set a new benchmark in the organic market and put the topic on the agenda, but there is still a long way to go.

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### **1. Social responsibility**

Social responsibility is an important element of Naturland standards, both in production and in processing. In 2005 Naturland has put into force social standards. The social conditions under which Naturland organic produce is produced and processed is consequently checked during the organic certification process.

### **2. Long-term trade relations**

A real partnership is governed by a trustful cooperation with a long-term perspective. Thus the farmer and the buyer of the farmers produce reach a mutual agreement on the extent of their cooperation.

### **3. Fair producer prices**

Besides covering production costs fair producer prices must include an adequate margin for the farmer, e.g. to allow further investments in the future.

### **4. Acquisition of raw materials from within the region**

At least an 80% of the agricultural produce comes from within the region (provides that the produce is locally available).

### **5. Joint quality assurance measures**

Measures for quality assurance are worked out jointly between the processor and the farmer.

### **6. Promotion of projects**

Fair Trade partnerships rely on a social co-operation at local level. In this sense the trader/processor supports projects serving the public good.

### **Acknowledgement:**

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