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## **ECOLOGICAL FARMING AS THE FUTURE OF MODERN ECONOMIES**

Nowadays we are living with a mass food production system. After several dozen years, we have (especially in developed countries, most often called The Rich North) a lot of cheap food, but also a lot of health problems and civilization diseases. The current food system is broken. It needs to be replaced urgently for the benefit of all people and the planet. People need a return to the ecological farming they have known for many years. Plus, if they combine it with science, it can be much healthier and profitable for modern economies and people.

Ecological Farming combines modern science and innovation with respect for nature and biodiversity. It ensures healthy farming and healthy food. It protects the soil, the water and the climate. It does not contaminate the environment with chemical inputs or use genetically engineered crops. And it places people and farmers who are consumers and producers together. Just they want to have control over the quality of food rather than the corporations who control our food now and just think about their profit. It is a vision of sustainable development, equality and food sovereignty, where safe and healthy food is grown to meet basic human needs, and control over food and agriculture rests with local communities, not transnational corporations.

There are many local and national organizations that are trying to change this, but it's not that easy for a number of reasons, including quick profit, lack of knowledge, greed, corporate lobby.

One of them is the Greenpeace Organization. Greenpeace's vision for food and agriculture describes what organic farming means and how it can be summarized in seven overarching, interdependent principles based on a growing body of scientific evidence. They created the seven principles of the food system.

<b>The seven principles of the food system</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Food sovereignty</b> Ecological farming supports the world in which food is controlled by producers and consumers, not corporations chain. Food sovereignty concerns the way food is produced and by whom.

<b>2. Benefitting farmers and rural communities</b>	Organic farming contributes to the development of rural areas and the fight against poverty and hunger, providing safe, healthy and cost-effective livelihoods in rural communities.
<b>3. Smarter food production and yields</b>	To increase global food availability and improve living conditions in poorer regions, we must reduce the unsustainable use of what we currently farm, and we must reduce food waste, reduce meat consumption and minimize the use of land for bioenergy. It is also necessary to achieve higher yields where they are needed ecologically.
<b>4. Biodiversity</b>	Organic farming relies on the diversity of nature from seeds on the plate and all over the farmland. It is about celebrating the taste, nutrition and culture of the food you eat, and improving your diet and health.
<b>5. Sustainable soil health and cleaner water</b>	It is possible to increase soil fertility without the use of chemicals. Organic farming also protects the soil from erosion, pollution and acidification. By increasing soil organic matter as needed, we can increase water retention and prevent soil degradation.
<b>6. Ecological pest management</b>	Ecological farming enables farmers to control pests and weeds without using expensive chemical pesticides that can harm our soil, water and ecosystems, as well as the health of farmers and consumers.
<b>7. Resilient food systems</b>	Organic farming creates resilience: it strengthens our agriculture and successfully adapts our food system to changing climatic conditions and economic realities.

Source: own study based on Food and Farming Vision.pdf

**Ecological Farming:** The seven principles of a food system that has people at its heart – Greenpeace International

Ecological farming is a food and agriculture system that follows the principles of agroecology and is not only ecological but also economically viable. It respects the societies and cultures of which it is a part. The approach is fair and systemic. Organic farming is diverse. This is one of its greatest strengths, but it does mean that organic farming practices are not universal, but are locally specific. It can be used in small farms as well as in large farms. Organic farming is diverse, knowledge-intensive and poor in external inputs and fossil fuels. It requires a systemic approach to agriculture from the field to the regional level, taking into account diversity (soil, water, air and climate protection). Despite all its diversity, a set of general principles underlying the organic farming system can be identified.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that organic farming is a food and agricultural system that complies with the principles of agroecology and is not only ecological but also economically profitable. It respects the societies and cultures of which it is a part. The approach is fair and systemic. Because ecological farming is diverse (one of its

greatest strengths), this means that organic farming practices are not universal, but are locally specific. An important feature of ecological farming is that it can be used in both small and large farms. It requires a systemic approach to farming by an individual farmer to the regional level, taking into account diversity (soil, water, air and climate protection). Treating our food (good quality) as a determinant of economic and social development can also benefit the entire economy if we look at this aspect globally.

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## **BENCHMARKING OF CIRCULAR CLUSTERS FORMATION**

The pressure for a faster transition to a greener and circular economy is growing. Front-running companies are interested in making the change moving towards the new and promising business possibilities. Further, the political pressure to make circular economy a hot and dominant political topic across Europe is increasing. The good news is that clusters are already acting as catalysts and supporters of the transition towards a circular economy. It is the very nature of clusters to facilitate neutral platforms for collaboration between private companies, public stakeholders, investors and knowledge institutions with the aim of new innovation and business possibilities. The complexity and barriers for delivering new circular economy solution clusters help pave the way forward. Clusters help with changing mindsets, developing new competences, rethinking business models, supplying living labs and defining new customers and green investors. No other mechanism is more efficient in handling the complex challenges we are facing.

In contrast to evaluations and economic impact assessments, benchmarking is an efficient and effective way to identify the potential of a cluster and to develop strategic recommendations for its further development within a short time frame. Benchmarking is a comparative analysis of structures, processes, products and services. It compares an entity to peers in the same field of activity and/or to best practices from entities in other areas. The objective of benchmarking is to learn from better performing peers or other entities in order to improve own structures, processes, products and services.

For example, in Denmark clusters are working on creating synergies in the cross-field between circular economy and sustainable development. Clusters, circular, social economy and new business opportunities go hand in hand.