

Draft content and notes for POET Com Web page  
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Revision: 11/03/14, 01/05/14

## Landing Page

# POET Com – Home Page

## Who we are

### Our philosophy

The Organic and Ethical Trade movement in the Pacific Islands grew from the shared belief of organic producers across the region that our traditional agricultural practices which have sustained a high quality of life and food security in our islands for generations when supplemented with new innovations and technologies in organic agriculture could assure a continued quality of life and ongoing food security as well as opportunities for livelihoods development through marketing our organic produce to the world. An important aim of this movement is the conservation of the natural resources: fertile soil; clean water; rich biodiversity and also cultural diversity and traditional values. The art of organic farming is to make the best use of ecological principles and processes appropriate to needs of Pacific farming families.

The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) was born from these shared beliefs and common desire to contribute to the sustainable development of our region. POETCom is a not for profit membership organisation with active members (farmers associations, farmer support organisations, NGOs, private sector, research institutions and working with governments) in 14 countries of the Pacific Island region with the Secretariat hosted by the Land Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in Suva, Fiji.

#### OUR VISION

Organics and ethical trade: the key contributor to sustaining our cultures and communities, improving farmer livelihoods, people's health and the environment in the Pacific.

#### OUR MISSION

Through coordination, information sharing, networking, capacity building and establishing a regional certification scheme; grow the organic and ethical trade movement and contribute to a productive, resilient, sustainable and healthy Pacific Island region.

#### OUR VALUES

- We seek to be guided by spiritual principles.
- We are committed to preparing our populations for the challenges of climate change; and ensuring food and nutritional security and enhancing adapted biodiversity.
- We are guided by an understanding of Pacific approaches to decision making and take into account Pacific values, traditions and cultures.
- We seek to ensure equality of access, e.g. by people of different genders and ages and from different countries and sub regions —as well as the principles of fairness, justice and partnership.
- We recognize the value of youth for a productive agriculture sector.
- We recognize the need to support and enhance the quality of people’s life —with an emphasis on those who work on the land and future generations as well as respect for the land and broader environment.
- We are committed to networking/positive engagement and communication, and the development of increasing self reliance.
- We are committed to the principles of organic agriculture and the holistic approaches it encompasses.
- We are committed to building a more inclusive Pacific community— working together, supported by past traditions and connections with the land —to achieve our vision.

## Our History

In the Pacific region, organic production is both traditional and new. It is traditional in the sense that the majority of producers to this day use tried and tested practices handed down from generation to generation that are generally in harmony with the environment and with modern organic principles. And it is new in that Pacific countries and territories are starting to understand the benefits of certification for obtaining access to external markets, and the need for research and training to develop the sector and generate much needed livelihoods for their people. As the organic movement around the world has developed and organized, so has the interest in further developing organic farming in the Pacific.

The 2nd Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services Meeting in 2006 lent support to a request from the organics movement and asked SPC to seek support for the development of organic agriculture in the region. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM) provided support and the Pacific Regional Organics Task Force (ROTF) was established, which in turn, established the Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG), a group of four of Pacific Island leaders led by the Hon. Prime Minister of Samoa to drive the initiative.

IFAD and IFOAM provided financial and technical assistance for developing the Pacific Organic Standard (POS), which was approved during the 2008 annual meeting of the Pacific Forum Islands leaders meeting in Niue, and launched two months later by the Samoa Prime Minister at the 2nd Regional Conference of the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry in Apia, Samoa.

Further assistance was provided by IFAD and IFOAM for the development of the Pacific Regional Organic Strategic Plan, 2009-2013, work that has been completed and disseminated widely.

In 2010 the first Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) using the POS was established in New Caledonia. The PGS known as “BioCaledonia” was licensed to use the “Organic Pasifika” certification marks and was the first step in developing a regional certification and organic guarantee scheme. Also highly significant in 2010 was the support received from the Heads Of Agriculture and Forestry Services(HOAFS) and the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations(CGRA) who both endorsed the organic movements request for SPC to host the POETCom secretariat. This endorsement formalized SPCs relationship with POETCom and allowed SPC to provide ongoing support to the organic movement. Through the European Union Funded Increasing Agricultural Commodities Trade (IACT) project the POETCom Secretariat was established in Suva in 2012 and the Advisory Board was elected during first the POETCom General Assembly hosted by the Government of French Polynesia with support of the French Pacific Fund and the EU IACT project in Papeete French Polynesia.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has provided technical assistance in developing governance models and frameworks for the regional certification scheme and also in supporting the assessment of the POS for equivalence with other internationally recognized organic standards.

In 2013 the first series of POETCom organic training events was conducted with sub regional workshops in Vanuatu, and Tonga. This organic training was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and focused on building capacity of young farmers and investing in the next generation of organic leaders.

2013 also saw the first POETCom Technical Exchange. The meeting held in Noumea New Caledonia was hosted by the Chamber of Agriculture and Government of New Caledonia with support from the French Pacific Fund, IFAD and the EU IACT Project. The Technical Exchange was conducted in order for organic producers and farmer support organizations to share information and help promote organic practices and responses to some of the unique challenges faced by farmers in the Pacific.

With assistance from IFAD 3 pilot projects were established to develop models for PGS appropriate for the very diverse situations in the Pacific Islands contributing the development of relevant certification for Pacific producers and opening new market opportunities.

By early 2014 POETCom had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with three internationally accredited certifying bodies to provide third party certification to the Pacific organic standard (POS) allowing for the first time for Pacific producers to export product under our own organic standard.

## What we do

The POETCom secretariat in Fiji and focal points and members in Pacific nations work to develop the tools, education and support to make organic agricultural practices and produce an attractive and rewarding alternative to for farmers and consumers.

As POETCom develops all the stakeholders in the pacific organic community are encouraged to:

- Develop and distribute awareness and policy statements on organics, climate change, food and nutritional security and adapted agro-biodiversity.
- Encourage farming families to look at healthy organic alternatives and practices and where appropriate become members of the organic movement through POETCom.
- Advocate for organics and make political and community leaders aware of the work of POETCom and it's members.
- Conduct organic training and distribute materials to aid the use of organic technologies and climate resilient planting material that can be used by agricultural extension programs.
- Help farmers to apply the Pacific Organic Standards and where appropriate become part of a Participatory Guarantee system (PGS) or gain third party certification.
- Promote the Organic Pasifika branding and develop value chain and paths to markets for Pacific produce.
- Inform members and peak bodies such as the Heads of Agriculture in the Pacific, and IFOAM of progress in the Pacific organic movement.
- Facilitate the exchange of ideas, produce and processes between POETCom individuals, groups and nations.

## Our membership

POETCom is a membership organization. POETCom's advocacy capacity is based on having a strong membership base and the resources to publish, communicate and represent the organic community at strategic international meetings and with key influencers and international policy decision-makers.

Membership is open to any individual or organizations who endorse POETComs' mission & goals, the Principles of Organic Agriculture and ethical trade. POETCom has 3 categories of membership: Focal points, Members, and Supporters.

Requirements for membership	Focal Point	Member	Supporter
Endorse POETComs mission & goals and the Principles of Organic Agriculture and ethical trade	X	X	X
Be permanently based and registered in one or more of the Pacific Islands countries and territories	X	X	
An organisation or department of an institution	X	X	X
Individual			X
Be agreed as representing the organic movement of a Pacific Island Country or Territory by the members in that country	X		
Submit national organic movement annual report to POETcom	X		
At least three people employed or active in the organization	X	X	
Predominantly organic*	X		
Complete annual affiliates survey	X	X	X

\* Predominantly organic means: More than 50 % of the turnover/budget is related to Organic Agriculture OR More than 50 % of the activities/time investment of an organization is related to Organic Agriculture\*\*.

\*\* Related to Organic Agriculture means: The organization is following the objectives of organic agriculture, (this includes the range of organic activities, certified and not certified, local, regional and global) or the activities are positively related to organic agriculture (for example Rural development, Fair Trade, etc.)

## **Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG)**

From the outset of the Pacific Organic movement there were a small group of Pacific leaders, Prime Ministers and Presidents, who were vocally supportive of organic agriculture in their own countries. The organic movement saw the potential of galvanizing the support of leaders in terms of advocacy to support organics and in the development of supportive policy frameworks and awareness raising amongst Pacific people and so approached a group of leaders who formed the Pacific High Level Organic Group (PHLOG) chaired by the Prime Minister of Samoa the Hon. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi .

The PHLOG meets in an adhoc manner on the sidelines of regional events such as the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meetings usually supporting a side event coordinated by POETCom and taking the opportunity to raise awareness of organic developments and benefits of organics with the other leaders. The PHLOG members also raise concerns of the Pacific organic that impact on the development of the organic

industry, such as changes in international organic trade regulations, at diplomatic levels.

Since formation of the PHLOG, interest from leaders has grown and membership expanded with new leaders requesting to be involved with the group.

## **The Board; Committees and Staff**

The Advisory Board is elected by the POETCom national focal points every 2 years at the POETCom General Assembly. The purpose of the Advisory Board, on behalf of the POETCom membership is to see that POETCom fulfills its social compact with the community, including its host organization the Secretariat of the Pacific Community(SPC) and ensures POETComs' goals and objectives are met. It is to serve as a wise steward of its resources and the organizations values.

### Board Members:

Anthony Brown – Chair - Cook Islands  
Nambo Moses - Vanuatu  
Vanessa Lolohea -Tonga  
Gilles Parzy - French Polynesia  
Clement Gandet - New Caledonia

### Standards and Certification Committee:

Ludmilla Guerassimoff – BioCaledonia, New Caledonia  
Nambo Moses – Department of Livestock Vanuatu  
Peter Kaoh – Farm Support Association Vanuatu  
Teava Iro – Titikaveka Growers Association, Cook Islands  
Falaniko Amosa – University of the South Pacific  
Gilles Parzy – BIOAgricert, French Polynesia  
Sachin Ayachit – National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia(NASAA)  
Grace Leung - BioGro New Zealand

### Staff:

Karen Mapusua – coordinating officer  
Stephen Hazelman - extensions system officer.

## **Annual Reports**

The POETCom Advisory Board prepares and publishes an annual report describing progress against the Strategic Plan and information and updates about the activities and progress of the members. The first Annual Report was published in 2012.

- [Karen upload annual reports](#)

## Strategic Plan

The first Pacific Regional Organic Strategic Plan was implemented between 2008 – 2012. Sound progress was made noting that during this time the organic movement was a predominately voluntary effort. In light of the progress and learning from implementation from the first plan POETCom drafted and adopted the 2013- 2017 Strategic Plan “Growing Our Future”.

- [Karen upload Strategic plans](#)

## Our Partners

POETCom seeks partnerships with development partners, research institutions, the private sector to assist members achieve their goals and POETCom achieve our over all mission. To date the following organizations have been key partners for POETCom providing resourcing, technical assistance and collaboration on joint activities:

Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
International Fund for Agricultural Development  
European Union  
French Pacific Fund  
United Nations Development Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organisation  
Global Environment Facility Small Grants Scheme  
USAID Climate Change  
University of the South Pacific  
National Agricultural Research Institute of Papua New Guinea  
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement  
OXFAM New Zealand

## Contact List

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# What is Organics

## Organic Principals

Much more than a set of regulations about what you can and cannot do in organic production, organic agriculture is principles based and these principles are the roots from which organic agriculture grows and develops. The Pacific Organic Standard (POS) and the practice of pacific organic farmers are based on the IFOAM set of 4 internationally recognized principles; Health; Ecology; Fairness and Care. Plus one other that Pacific producers felt was central to organic agriculture in our region – Culture and Traditions.

Conventional farming puts its focus on achieving maximum yields of a specific crop. It is based on a rather simple understanding: crop yields are increased by nutrient inputs and they get reduced through pests, diseases and weeds, which therefore must be combated. Organic agriculture is a holistic way of farming: besides production of goods of high quality, an important aim is the conservation of the natural resources fertile soil, clean water and rich biodiversity. The art of organic farming is to make the best use of ecological principles and processes. Organic farmers can learn a lot from studying the interactions in natural ecosystems such as forests. The following section shows how principles of a natural ecosystem can be used for designing an organic farming system.

### **Pacific Principles of Organic Agriculture**

**Health** – The health of the soil, which enables the production of healthy plants and animals, which in turn enhance the lives of people and their environment, are one and indivisible.

**Ecology**- Organic agriculture is based on living ecological systems and cycles, works with them, emulates them and helps to sustain them.

**Fairness** - Organic agriculture builds on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. The key role of farmers and rural communities are recognised and benefits shared equitably with them.

**Care** - Organic agriculture is managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

**Culture & traditions**- Pacific organic agriculture recognises the value of contributions from traditional agricultural practices and knowledge and Pacific cultures.

These principles show that organic farming in the pacific is much more than the renunciation of agro- chemicals, but instead is a relationship of respect with the land, the micro organisms of the soil, the ecosystems and the community and it's cultural values.

## Organic Farming



"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."

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

The definition of organic farming recognises the direct connection between our health and how the food we eat is produced. Strict regulations, known as 'standards', define what organic farmers can and cannot do – and place a strong emphasis on the protection of the environment. In the Pacific organic growers are guided by the Pacific Organic Standard.

Organic farmers take a holistic, principled approach that respects and harnesses the power of natural processes to build positive health across the ecology of the farm. The Pacific Organic Standard and organic training in the Pacific encourages farming families to consider taking lessons from natural ecological systems in their agricultural practice such as how nutrient cycles maintain soil fertility in forests; soil protection and cover in forests; and how diversity and eco-balance in forests is maintained.

Organic farming methods offer the best, currently available, practical model for addressing climate-friendly food production. This is because it is less dependent on petrochemical-based fertilizers and pesticides and builds resilience in the face of climatic extremes and changes. It also stores higher levels of carbon in the soil.

In organic farming:

- artificial chemical fertilizers are prohibited – instead organic farmers develop a healthy, fertile soil by growing and rotating a mixture of crops, adding organic matter such as compost or manure to the soil and using legume plants to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere
- pesticides and weedicides are severely restricted – instead organic farmers develop nutrient-rich soil to grow strong, healthy crops and encourage natural controls such as beneficial insects to help manage pests and disease and ground covers to manage weeds
- animal welfare is at the heart of the system and a free-range life for farm animals is guaranteed
- a diversity of crops and animals are raised on the farm and rotated around the farm over several seasons, including fallow periods. This mixed farming approach helps break cycles of pests and disease and builds fertility in the soil
- the routine use of drugs, antibiotics and wormers is banned – instead the farmer will use preventative methods, like moving animals to fresh pasture and keeping smaller herd and flock sizes or using approved traditional techniques such as herbal treatments.
- genetically modified (GM) crops and ingredients are banned

## Organic Food

Food that is produced on farms or in gardens that follow organic principals and have not been contaminated with artificial chemicals are what people understand as "organic food". If a farmer or processor claim their food is organic they should be able to provide customers with evidence their claim is the truth and that they have followed a standard. The Pacific Organic Standard is tailored to the unique needs of both consumers and producers in the Pacific.

For foods to be labeled as organic under the Pacific Organic Standard, **at least 95%** of the ingredients must come from organically produced plants and animals. This means that the product must have been produced to these standards and inspected and certified by a POETCom registered certification body, or Participatory Guarantee System. These foods can carry the 'Organic Pasifika' certification mark.

Because some ingredients are not available organically, up to 5% ingredients from a list of approved non-organic food ingredients listed in the Pacific Organic Standard are allowed. There are also a limited number of non-food ingredients such as salt, water, and a restricted number of additives and processing aids which are permitted, no artificial colourings or sweeteners are allowed in organic food.

The list of permitted ingredients is extremely strict to ensure that nothing harmful or potentially harmful will be found in organic food.

## Organic Textiles

Organic textiles are based on materials grown on organic farms, and manufactured without harmful chemicals. If you're seeking environmentally friendly clothing or home ware, textiles that are certified as organic it means that both the production of the fibre on the farm, and the processing of this fibre into textiles has met organic standards. Organic textiles don't contain allergenic, carcinogenic or toxic chemicals so benefits carry through from local wildlife, animals and people through to the culture of communities and the home environment where the end products are used.

While the most common organic textiles, cotton and wool are not produced in the Pacific, Pacific Island communities have proud traditions of organic textiles made from coconut, local grasses, pandanus and various plants that are used in art, craft and everyday life. Many of these textiles make practical and attractive gifts for people who have visited pacific islands. With a little care they can be taken home to countries with tight quarantine conditions.

Tapa cloth is a popular organic material produced from the bark of paper mulberry tree and used in a range of decorative products and also clothing. Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji are some of the pacific nations that are noted for their use of Tapa.

Woven natural fibers and grasses are also durable materials that can be made into baskets and mats for both traditional household activities and customary purposes.

The Marshall Islands, Cook Islands and many other pacific countries have highly developed designs for bags and fans both from natural palm and other leaves using traditional organic processing methods. PNG has a unique tradition of bilums - a very distinctive and strong bag woven from natural fibers. Natural fibers such as coconut husk are also be spun into rope that can be used in fabrics or hand crafts.

## Organic Tourism

Part of the attraction the Pacific holds for international visitors and tourists lies in the unique untouched environments and seemingly relaxed way of life that are far removed from the pressures of industrial life in urban cities. The many high quality resorts and hotels in Pacific countries provide an easy way for visitors to Experience a taste of the pacific life. These resorts sometimes offer local organic produce on their menus however they often still rely heavily on non organic and imported products to meet the needs of guests. Some smaller bungalow and lodges particularly on the outer islands use local and organic produce.

While organic tourism is a new development in the Pacific region already in the Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia and in Fiji we have high quality resorts located on certified organic farms and more restaurants offering organic food on their menus.

POETCom will be developing a certification system for the tourism and hospitality industry so that tourists and local residents alike will be able to have confidence in any claims made by resorts and restaurants of the organic status of their offerings. We believe that organic tourist services can be developed with creativity and in a way that will help economic development while following the 5 organic principals of the Pacific Organic Standard.

Visitors and tourists to the Pacific are encouraged to ask service industry resorts and restaurants if they have organic and local produce in their menus and locally made hand crafts and products as many dishes and souvenirs and of imported industrial origins.

## Organic Standards

Organic standards help regulate how products that claim to be organic are produced and promoted and in some countries there are laws that restrict people from claiming products are organic without being certified to a standard. There are many reliable organic standards in the organic market place that growers can use to guide their production.

The Pacific Organic Standard is a standard for Pacific farmers that recognize the unique context of farming in the Pacific Islands and gives farmers, processors and consumers confidence that they are helping preserve healthy lifestyles for all the people involved in organic agriculture.

## **What is Ethical Trade \***

### **The principals**

Fair trade is an organized social movement whose stated goal is to help producers in developing countries achieve better trading conditions and to promote sustainability. The fair trade movement seeks to promote greater equity in international trading partnerships through dialogue, transparency and respect. It promotes sustainable development by offering better trading and working conditions of marginalized producers and workers in developing countries.

The organic movement in the Pacific embraced the principles of fair or ethical trade as indivisible from the aims of organic agriculture. The Pacific Organic Standard includes a section on social justice which seeks to incorporate the essence of the internationally recognized principles of fair trade as defined by the World Fair Trade Organization(WFTO).

WFTO prescribes 10 Principles that Fair Trade Organizations must follow in their day-to-day work and carries out monitoring to ensure these principles are upheld. The requirements of the Pacific Organic Standard and the aims of POETCom are consistent with these:

Principle One: Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers

Principle Two: Transparency and Accountability

Principle Three: Fair Trading Practices specifications.

Principle Four: Payment of a Fair Price

Principle Five: Ensuring no Child Labor and Forced Labor

Principle Six: Commitment to Non Discrimination, Gender Equity and Women's Economic Empowerment and Freedom of Association

Principle Seven: Ensuring Good Working Condition

Principle Eight: Providing Capacity Building

Principle Nine: Promoting Fair Trade

Principle Ten: Respect for the Environment

## **The certification ethical trade**

Fairtrade Certification

Fairtrade certification is a product certification system owned by Fairtrade International (FLO), products with this brand meet certain environmental, labour, and developmental standards and are certified by a certification body, FLO-CERT. The system involves independent auditing of marketing organizations and producers. Companies offering products that meet the Fairtrade Standards may apply for licenses to use the Fairtrade Certification Mark for those products.

The Fairtrade International certification system covers a growing range of products. In the Pacific coffee, cocoa, sugar vanilla and coconuts have been certified by FLO Cert.

[Click here for information on Fairtrade Certification](#)

### World Fair Trade Organisation Guarantee System

The WFTO Guarantee System (GS) is a new Fair Trade system that is credible, simple, and affordable, especially for small producers. It is sustainable to meet the growing demand for trustworthy Fair Trade recognition schemes.

The Guarantee System has five major components: a WFTO membership admission procedure, self-assessment, monitoring audit, peer visit, and the Fair Trade Accountability Watch (FTAW). The FTAW is a participative monitoring mechanism that allows the public to report compliance issues regarding guaranteed Fair Trade Organisations.

Products carrying the WFTO Label are made by Guaranteed Fair Trade Organisations that meet the requirement of the WFTO Guarantee System.

[Click here for information on WFTO Guarantee System](#)

## Why go Organic and Ethical? \*

Organic and ethical trade principals are the pillars on which a sustainable future is built. These principal pillars support the initiatives that will address some of the most important issues families and communities face such as:

- Climate Change mitigation and adaptation
- Protection of biodiversity
- Creating livelihood opportunities
- Provides for food and nutritional security
- Prevents land degradation and restores degraded land
- Provides opportunities for youth and women's empowerment
- Provides health benefits for our people.

## Clean Safe Food

## Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

Genetic modification or engineering is the manipulation of genes within organisms or between un-related species, producing foreign organisms that have not previously existed. It is a risk-laden technology, presenting unpredictable consequences, as the behaviours and adaptability of new, foreign species is not known.

While there is debate and arguments, both from those supporting genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and those opposed, **organic agriculture, based on the precautionary principle, prohibits genetic modification in organic farming, production and processing systems.** Some of the concerns are listed below.

- **Released GMOs cannot be recalled or controlled** – the growth of these organisms could lead to over-exploitation and contamination of fields of non-genetically modified crops.
- **Short terms negative environmental impacts** – including:
  - the disruption of the food web in the ecosystem, affecting pollinating species such as bees and butterflies;
  - acquired pest resistance to (Bt) toxin from genetically modified crops; and
  - disturbance of the food web in the soil.
- **Loss of biodiversity** – the use of GMOs reinforces genetic homogeneity and promotes large-scale monocultures, contributing to a decline in biodiversity and increased vulnerability of crops to climate change, pests and diseases.
- **Pollution of the gene-pool of cultivated crops, micro-organisms and animals** – nature's living organisms could be less competitive and less dominant over GMOs, causing them to become endangered.
- **Violation of farmers' fundamental property rights and endangerment of their socio-economic independence** – where genetically modified crops have been planted, farmers are locked into buying inputs and costly seed and can no longer save seeds.
- **Risk to human health – while discussion continues over the possible long-term effects of genetic modification on human health, some studies are emerging that demonstrate there are risks associated with it or, at the very least, great unknowns:**
  - toxins from genetic engineering introduced in seed crop genes have been detected in human blood by scientists;<sup>1</sup>
  - scientific laboratory animals exclusively fed with genetically modified food have developed cancers;<sup>2</sup>
  - higher rates of stomach and digestive inflammation have been studied in livestock fed with genetically modified food;<sup>3</sup> and
  - we humans have a complex digestive system populated with flora, fauna and enzymes that have evolved over millennia to recognise and break down foods found in nature to make nutrients available to feed our body. However, genetically modified crops and foods contain unknown genetic properties that are new to the human diet and may not be recognised by the intestinal systems as digestible food.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reproductive Technology 2011, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21338670>

<sup>2</sup> Archives of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17356802>

<sup>3</sup> Journal of Organic Systems, 8(1), 2013. A long-term toxicology study on pigs fed a combined genetically modified (GM) soy and GM maize diet.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/09/110919074242.htm>

The genetic modification industry attempts to intervene in nature by creating artificial living organisms in order to solve a particular pest or production issue but, without consideration of the whole ecosystem, these interventions could inadvertently trigger other problems.

## Climate Change

Organic Agriculture builds resilient farming systems capable of combating climate change, securing local food supplies and is highly effective in sequestering carbon.

Organic farming has significant potential to avoid or reduce production of greenhouse gases through:

- Lower use of fossil fuels – organic farming does not use energy demanding synthetic fertilisers as it focuses on maintaining soil fertility through the use of internal farm inputs.
- Reduction in the production of nitrous oxides – organic farming does not use synthetic nitrogen fertiliser.
- Reduction in methane production by promoting soil aerobic microorganisms and high levels of soil biological activity.

In addition, organic practices encourage the sequestration of carbon by:

- Maintaining tight nutrient and energy cycles through organic management of soils;
- Systematic recycling of organic waste, often by means of composting;
- Encouraging agro-forestry farming systems;
- Protecting soil from erosion and associated loss of soil organic matter.

Organic farming also provides strategies that will assist farmers to adapt to the potential impacts of climate change, for example by establishing farming systems that:

- Lessen the impacts of wind, e.g. through providing shelter for land, farms and people;
- Are drought resistant and support the conservation of water resources;
- Are tolerant of higher temperatures and fluctuations in temperature;
- Encourage use of locally adapted varieties and in situ-adaptation of crop species.

## Biodiversity

Biodiversity, the variety of life on earth, is the foundation for all agriculture - from the food we eat to the ecosystem services we rely on for production. It is the foundation of human survival in terms of:

- Supporting food and nutritional security and sustainable livelihoods
- Building well balanced and resilient ecosystems that can contribute to preventing climate impacts and recover better from climate events
- Providing plants which are the basis of many of our traditional medicines and from which new medicinal drugs may be derived.

On land, the Pacific Islands are home to approximately 5,330 native plant species, 242 native bird species, 61 native terrestrial reptiles, 15 native mammals, three endemic native

amphibians and some 4,000 snail species. The majority of these creatures are found nowhere else on earth<sup>5</sup>, are found on small specific island habitats, and are vulnerable to extinction. Climate change impacts and climate events, deforestation, invasive species, and industrial agricultural practices have greatly impacted on the Pacific's biodiversity. Traditional agro-forestry systems in the Pacific are naturally diverse but can also be improved by increasing agro-biodiversity through organic agriculture practices such as integrated crop-tree animal systems, use of microorganisms and companion or other useful plants. This, together with inter-cropping, the use of traditional and underutilized food and fodder species creates habitats, attracts pest enemies and pollinators and also reduces the risk of crop failure across the agro-ecosystem.

Organic agriculture has the potential to improve and restore the health of ecosystems by employing sustainable farming techniques that promote and sustain biodiversity – from the diversity of microorganisms and biological activity in the soil to a diverse selection of perennial, hardy and resilient crops and trees.

**Organic agriculture sustains biodiversity by promoting:**

- *Farmyard and green manuring* which restores nitrogen content of soil, building up organic matter and providing food for soil invertebrates (eg. Earthworms)
- *Minimum tillage* which reduces physical changes made to the soil that results from over ploughing and so avoids harmful impacts on soil life caused by physical destruction, drying out, erosion, depletion of food and increased exposure to predators.
- *Protection of soils* through mulching and / or ground covers which boost beneficial biological activity.
- *Mechanical weeding* which contributes to greater abundance of non-crop flora in cultivated lands and indirectly supports large population of beneficial insects.
- *Intercropping and under-sowing* which are effective in reducing/eliminating weeds, increase crop yields, increase vegetation structure and diversity therefore provide more invertebrate food resources for birds and mammals.
- *Crop-rotation* which functions as a tool for pest management and soil fertility, improving populations of beneficial insects as well as increasing crop diversity.
- *Mixed-farming* increases habitat diversity in localised environments.
- *Use of natural substances and microorganisms* instead of chemicals, preventing harm/damage to plant and animal habitat and avoids long-term negative impacts on soil, air or environment where all living things thrive.
- *Promoting 'In Situ' conservation* where agricultural biodiversity is conserved and developed through the regeneration and sharing of locally adapted species and the improvement of genotypes of many plant varieties and animal species

These practices enhance not only biodiversity, but strengthen natural cycles and improve environmental performance that in turn increases the sustainability of organic farms.

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<sup>5</sup> Donoghue, M. (2012). *Pacific Islands and Ocean Program*. Retrieved January 23, 2014, from Convention International: [http://www.conservation.org/Documents/Pacific\\_Islands\\_Program\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://www.conservation.org/Documents/Pacific_Islands_Program_Factsheet.pdf)



## Food and Nutritional Security

In simple terms food and nutritional security refers to the ease of access and availability of healthy and nutritious food to every human being at all times. Industrial or commercial agriculture currently claims itself to be the sole solution to increase food security producing more and more manufactured foods and turning towards genetically modified crops to improve yields. Due to a number of complex factors however many people still remain hungry and or malnourished. These factors include the high cost of some manufactured foods and the increasing reliance on a farming system that is dependent on external purchased inputs – including seeds. Traditionally the Pacific Islands have maintained food security through traditional mixed cropping practices ensuring diversity of crops, resilient production systems and care of the soil and environment. While Pacific small holders still provide a large degree of food security for our communities it is coming increasingly under threat due to:

- Rapid population growth is leading to increases in demand for food resources and land for residential and other purposes
- The impact of Climate Change and more extreme weather conditions such as tropical cyclones and drought on agricultural, coastal areas and fresh water quality
- Urbanization is leading to limited land in urban areas to grow healthy nutritious vegetables/foods and increased usage of frozen and processed food by urban communities
- The impact of mass media and advertising has contributed to a shift in consumption from traditional staple and fresh local foods to processed foods
- Reliance on imported foods is increasing, the sometimes poor nutritional quality is increasing the risk of 'lifestyle' or non-communicable diseases
- As increasing amount of food are purchased low incomes and unemployment reduces household access to adequate safe, nutritious food
- Economic shocks lead to increases in food and fuel costs which puts more stress on low household budgets especially in urban areas.

Therefore there is an urgent need to increase the efficiency of present resource use and at the same time conserve and where possible enhance the productive capacity of our agricultural resources. **Organic Agriculture** can play a major role in addressing food security as a means of alleviating poverty and ensuring an adequate and stable food supply for most of the population in our region. These are some of the ways in which Organic agriculture helps sustain Food security:

- Organic agriculture can increase and stabilize yields particularly in land which is less productive or marginal

- Building capacity in organic farm management can assist farmers, and producers to build resource management skills
- Increased organic production can improve availability and affordability of clean, safe local foods to our diet contributing to controlling NCD's and other diseases
- Unemployment can be reduced by providing jobs in the organic agricultural sector and enable cash poor households to obtain enough good quality food to eat well – in some settings organic agriculture can provide up to 32% more jobs per farm than conventional farms<sup>6</sup>
- Organic systems are more resilient to climate change and extreme weather events, for example organic farms survive cyclone damage much better, retaining 20 to 40% more topsoil and smaller economic losses at highly significant levels than their neighbors<sup>7</sup>
- Organic systems improve water uptake, retention and soil erosion to overcome land aridity/desertification. A 2003 study found that during drought years, organic farms can have yields 20-40% higher than conventional farms<sup>8</sup>
- Ensure availability and sustainability of resources for future generations to come

Agriculture based on organic principles has now been recognized as an important aspect in overcoming poverty and enhancing food security.

## Fair to Farmers

Organic agriculture is a system of agriculture that aims at ensuring maximum benefits to the farmer in the supply chain relationship. Many organic standards include requirements for social justice including the Pacific Organic Standard which has based requirements around international labour and human rights agreements.

The Pacific Islands are home to a wide range of societies and cultures from which have evolved diverse social structures and values. There are, however, some commonly held values including the importance of land. The people of the Pacific acknowledge land as their lifeblood and have a spiritual relationship with it that often includes recognition of many intangible values. The extended family and village, and the obligations and benefits that arise from these networks, are also a key feature of Pacific life. Family and community relationships are strengthened by a communal approach to work and life. Many traditions have been established to protect the interests of individuals and groups and these are incorporated along with contemporary approaches to ensure that the principles of social justice and human rights are an integral part of organic agriculture and processing in the Pacific. Organic agriculture also recognises the need to establish fair and sustainable trading

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<sup>6</sup> Soil Association.(2006) *Organic Works. Providing jobs through organic farming and local food supply*. Bristol; the Soils Association

<sup>7</sup> A study of 1,804 organic farms in Central America hit by Hurricane Mitch: Holt-Gimenez, E. (2000)

<sup>8</sup> Lotter, D. W., Seidel, R. & Liebhardt W. (2003). "The performance of organic and conventional cropping systems in an extreme climate year". *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* **18** (3): 146–154

relationships based on trust, transparency, equity, accountability and continuity and this is a main objective of the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community.

## **Animal Welfare**

Aspects of animal welfare are central to all organic standards. Pacific farmers have long raised pigs and chickens, while other animals are also important in some regions. Animals are an essential component of the mixed farming systems found throughout the region. They have cultural value, and also contribute to food security and soil fertility. A wider range of animals are now being farmed in the Pacific and organic agriculture in the region incorporates the best approaches from traditional experience and organic principles. Livestock husbandry is based on maintaining a harmonious relationship between land, plants and livestock, with minimum disruption to ecosystems. It will also ensure that the physiological and behavioural needs of livestock are respected and the animals are fed good-quality organically grown feedstuffs. Animals must have access to sufficient fresh air and enough clean water and nutritious feed to satisfy their needs and also access to protection from sunlight, excessive noise, heat, rain, mud and wind to reduce stress and ensure their well-being.

Traditionally, livestock were treated with great care because of their relative rarity, and cultural and intrinsic values. This aligns well with organic farming principles, which respect the welfare of animals and encourage the selection of species and breeds that do not require any sort of mutilation. The welfare of the animal is a priority - if an animal becomes sick or injured despite preventive measures, it must be treated promptly. The initial use of natural, herbal or homeopathic products or practices is recommended in preference to the use of chemically synthesised veterinary products but producers must not withhold medication if it will result in unnecessary suffering for livestock, even if the use of the medication will cause the animal to lose its organic status.

## **The Certification**

### **Organic Pasifika Certification**

'Organic Pasifika' certification arose from the belief that our traditional organic farming practices when strengthened, coordinated and shared will meet the changing needs of our region and peoples and carry us forward into the future. Products bearing the "Organic Pasifika" mark are certified to the Pacific Organic Standard by an internationally accredited and POETCom approved certifying body or through a robust, POETCom registered Participatory Guarantee System.

The Pacific Organic Standard describes the requirements for organic production. It covers plant production, animal husbandry, beekeeping, collection of wild products and aquaculture, and also the processing and labelling of products derived from these activities. This standard provides a mechanism to define the expectations for organic production. When complied with, it also enables producers to label their products as organic.

The aims of this standard are:

- to ensure that sustainable production systems are developed and maintained
- to protect consumers against deception and fraud in the marketplace and against unsubstantiated claims
- to protect producers of organic produce against misrepresentation of other agricultural produce as organic
- to ensure that all stages of production, processing, storage, transport and marketing are subject to inspection and comply with this standard
- to assist in informing consumers about the character of organic production in the Pacific.

LINK

## Other Schemes

In some countries Governments regulate what can be imported, called or labeled organic and this is defined by their own national organic standards. Producers or processors who aim to sell organically certified products into regulated markets must be certified to the appropriate national organic standard.

Examples are:

- United States Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (USDA NOP)
- Japan Agricultural Standard
- European Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007

The national organic program's of the importing countries is usually administered by the Federal Government. It delegates the operation of the national organic program to certifying agencies, and has an accrediting process to identify which certifying agencies it accepts. Not all countries have national regulations for example NZ, Australia and most Pacific Islands are not regulated for organics.

## For Farmers and Growers

### Member Profiles

### Member Blogs

### Markets

Generally the domestic markets for organic certified products are not very developed and in some cases are nonexistent. Organic products are commonly sold as conventional without premium price or any acknowledgement of the organic status of the product. Some initiatives are ongoing or are in the pipeline to promote the awareness of the consumers about organic products, in particular in linking the concept of organic with local food consumption as part of strategies to reduce non communicable diseases which are a major health issue in the Pacific Islands. Interesting opportunities are now being explored within the tourist structures of several countries that are facing a growth in the presence of tourists (e.g. Fiji, Vanuatu, Cooks and Samoa) focusing on development of Pacific cuisine and linking small holder organic farmers directly with tourist and hospitality providers. There is at least

one up market resort in Fiji who has their island organically certified and who commits to serving guests organic produce from their land.

Most of the organically certified products from the Region are for export. The following is a summary table listing the main crops which are currently organically certified and exported from the Pacific region:

<b>Products</b>	<b>Countries</b>
Vanilla, ginger & other spices & nuts	Fiji, Vanuatu, Niue, Samoa, PNG
Cocoa	Vanuatu, Samoa, PNG
Virgin Coconut Oil	Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, PNG
Coconut meal	Vanuatu
Nonu /noni (Morinda Citrifolia)	Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Niue, French Polynesia
Honey	Niue
Papaya (pawpaw)	Fiji
Dried fruit	Samoa
Fruit pulps/juices	Fiji
Coffee	PNG, Samoa, Vanuatu
Beef/lamb	Vanuatu, Fiji

The main international markets for the listed products are Australia and New Zealand representing the main destination for the export of organic products due to the proximity. Japan is a growing market and other markets include Korea, North American and the European Union.

Links to market reports

## **36. Resources – linked 8.3**

Content

## **37. Ask a farmer – linked 8.3**

Content

## **1. News and Media – Already has content**

### **1. News**

Content

### **39. Photo Gallery**

Content

### **40. Video Gallery**

Content

### **41. Download our Press Kit**

Content

### **42. Sign up for our e-news**

Content

## 43. **Headings**

Content

## **Get involved**

### **Become a member**

### **Donate to us**

Content

### **Grow organic – link to 6.4**

Content

### **Sign up to volunteer**

Content

### **Participate in our Events**

Content

### **Find contacts in your country**

Content

# **Organic Pasifika – Home Page**

## **About Organic Pasifika**

'Organic Pasifika' certification arose from the belief that our traditional organic farming practices when strengthened, coordinated and shared will meet the changing needs of our region and peoples and carry us forward into the future. Products bearing the "Organic Pasifika" mark are certified to the Pacific Organic Standard by an internationally accredited and POETCom approved certifying body or through a robust, POETCom registered Participatory Guarantee System.

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- to assist in informing consumers about the character of organic production in the Pacific.

## The Organic Pasifika Story \*

Agriculture in the Pacific is undertaken in a diverse range of environments and landscapes that host a high level of biodiversity. Traditional farming and fishing practices, many based on a mixture of agriculture and forestry, acted to protect and enhance biodiversity as a basis for stimulating the overall performance of a farm or marine environment, ensuring sustainable food security and livelihoods. These practices also protected less tangible intrinsic values, reflecting the intimate relationship between people, land and sea.

The Pacific however is facing a number of region-wide challenges, including the effects of climate change, degradation of ecosystems due to unsustainable use of both land and marine resources, and the need to generate livelihoods to maintain populations in the islands. Increased consumption of imported, highly refined foods, accompanied by decreased local food production and consumption, is also having serious effects on the health of island populations.

In the Pacific region, organic production is both traditional and new. It is traditional in the sense that the majority of producers to this day use tried and tested practices handed down from generation to generation that are generally in harmony with the environment and with modern organic principles. And it is new in that Pacific countries and territories are starting to understand the benefits of certification for obtaining access to external markets, negotiating fairer trading partnerships, and the need for research and training to develop the sector and generate much needed livelihoods for their people.

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## Pacific Organic Standard (POS)

Prior to the development of the Pacific Organic Standard Pacific producers could only be certified to external standards which did not reflect or suit the specific production systems and conditions of the Pacific Islands making the process of certification more complex and in some cases the requirements not relevant to the farmers and their situations. It was recognized that a regional standard reflecting local conditions, production systems, crops

and compatible traditional practices would assist making certification more accessible for Pacific producers.

The Pacific Organic Standard is the third regional organic standard produced worldwide, after the EU regulation 2092/91 and the East African Organic Products Standard. The provisions of the Standard take into account both local agricultural traditions and the two global organic standards, IFOAM Norms and Codex Alimentarius. The development of this Standard included an intensive regional consultation process. Feedback from these consultations, and technical comparisons with international organic standards, informed the work of the Regional Organic Task Force – a public-private sector partnership comprising representatives of national organic movements, government bodies, organic businesses and regional NGOs. Through this process Pacific stakeholders have true ownership of our regional standard, while at the same time, it is consistent with existing international standards. This consistency will facilitate future negotiations in the context of export market development.

The Pacific Organic Standard covers organic production and processing and is appropriate for the unique social, cultural, environmental and agricultural conditions of Pacific Island countries and territories. The Standard reflects the concerns and issues of the Pacific and is the first organic standard in the world to include specific requirements to mitigate the effects of climate change. It also includes a strong social justice component reflecting the Pacific's concerns with ethical and fair trading practices. The Standard does not cover conformity assessment procedures, and hence left the door open for POETCom to develop locally appropriate organic guarantee systems for serving local, national and regional markets.

## Organic Pasifika mark

Products that carry the Organic Pasifika Certified mark are certified to the internationally recognized Pacific Organic Standard. This standard is a member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Family of Standards – the global benchmark for organic agriculture and processing. This means our produce and products carry a distinct, credible identity, guaranteeing quality, the confidence of domestic and global consumers and reflecting the pristine islands from which they originate. The Organic Pasifika Certified mark also guarantees that farmers and processors are complying with strong social justice principles ensuring that products are ethically produced. The certification is achieved via respected certifying bodies BioGro, National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia and BioAgriCert as well as through robust Participatory Guarantee Systems.

### Rules on the use of the Organic Pasifika Mark

1. Only certified licensees may use the Organic Pasifika name and Mark.
2. Certified licensees are those certified to the Pacific Organic Standard by an Approved Certification Partner.
3. Participatory Guarantee Schemes using the Pacific Organic Standard as the production standard and approved by POETCom may authorised use of the POETCom PGS mark to their members.
4. The relevant Organic Pasifika Marks may be attached to certified or 'in conversion' goods, their packaging and/or sales invoices.



5. Producers and processors certified to the Pacific Organic Standard use the Organic Pasifika Mark. Producers who are members of a POETCom approved PGS use the Organic Pasifika PGS mark

6. The Organic Pasifika promotion mark can be used in association with a certifiers certification logo and other relevant labels such as USNOP, JAS if the licensee have these certifications.

## **IFOAM family of Standards**

The Pacific Organic Standard is a member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Family of Standards. The IFOAM Family of Standards draws the line between organic and non-organic standards. The Family contains all standards officially endorsed as organic by the Organic Movement, based on their equivalence with the Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards. The Family contains both private standards and government regulations.

In view of the multitude of organic standards worldwide, the IFOAM Family of Standards serves the following purposes:

1. Draws the line between credible organic and non-organic standards (and also inadequately written organic standards), while acknowledging the need for diversity and local adaptation of organic standards.
2. Improves transparency and public understanding about the differences between different organic standards.
3. Facilitates equivalence agreements between organic standards and regulations, including unilateral, bilateral and multilateral equivalence agreements.

Approval in the IFOAM Family entitles the Pacific Organic Standard to the use of a specific logo in relation to the standard.

## **The Certification**

### **Become certified**

#### **1. Third party**

Third party certification is available in the Pacific Islands through 3 accredited certifying bodies working in collaboration with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) – Biogro, National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia and Bioagricert. These certifying bodies can certify to the Pacific Organic Standard, their own private standards as well as government standards required for accessing regulated markets such as Europe, the US and Japan.

While stand alone or single entities or enterprises (producer or processor) can and do apply for certification in the Pacific region group certification is frequently used for small holders

and different forms of quality assurance systems of smallholder groups have developed across the region with respect to the nature of the operation and size, ranging from tens to hundreds of individual producers. The systems have in common the following aspects:

- A central body, this could be an NGO, a processor, an exporter or a farmer's organisation, that is responsible for marketing and the groups compliance to applicable standards.
- One single certification for all individual farms as well as processing and handling activities registered within the group. Individual operators within the group may not use the certification independently.
- Group members operate under contractual or binding membership requirements specifying the commitment to comply with applicable organic standards, permit inspection and so on.
- Presence of an internal control system (ICS), operated by the responsible central body or an external body contracted by the central body. The ICS normally maintains files on all members of the group and inspects each members operation at least once a year. Non-compliances are dealt with according to set procedures and sanctions.

Most Organic standards specify a three-year transition period to go from non-certified to certified organic. The time to certification can sometimes be shortened if the group or applicant can show sufficient evidence to prove that no prohibited substances have been used in or near the production areas and the certifying body has sufficient confidence in the systems and procedures in place by the production unit or ICS.

When you become certified you work with one of the accredited certifying bodies, you pay them to send an inspector to your operation, to audit your records and see what your procedures are, and to verify that you are following organic standards.

Your inspector will be your primary source of information on program rules and will be the person who will interpret any unclear portions of the rules for you. Should you feel that there is a misinterpretation of the rules, there is an appeals process to follow.

## Participatory guarantees

At the heart of the organic movement world wide is desire to return to a community spirit of producing healthy and safe food and products. Living in community means that consumers should have confidence in the processes used to produce the items in the market.

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) aim to provide a credible organic guarantee to consumers seeking organic produce through direct participation of farmers and consumers in the organic guarantee process and are based on recognized and publicly available standards for organic production. Key elements of PGS include:

- They are shaped by the very farmers and consumers that they serve and while the details of methodology and process vary, there is a consistency of core principles which can be adapted and specific to local conditions (communities, geographies, politics and markets).
- Transparent, systemised decision-making processes and aim to share the responsibility for the organic guarantee and to verify that farmers are consistently maintaining the standards. Trust is created through open information and peer reviews. PGS involve less administration and lower costs than export focused third party certification.

- PGS support and encourage producer groups to work together and to improve their farming practices through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Active participation on the part of the stakeholders results in greater empowerment but also greater responsibility – there is a high priority placed on knowledge and capacity building of producers and consumers, ideal for the rural communities of the Pacific.
- They can be used as a tool for improving local socio-economic and ecological conditions by encouraging small-scale production and product processing. In local markets they help smallholders to have their products recognized as organic and can open unique opportunities such as small holder links with the tourism and hospitality industries.

There are now many PGS serving thousands of small farmers around the world. While there is enormous diversity in how these programs have implemented the various functions of a PGS, the key characteristics (including inclusivity and participation of stakeholders at all levels of operation, transparency and peer appraisals of farms) just to name a few, have proven to be consistent around the world. In many cases PGS develop their own logos and marks, however it is possible for PGS using the Pacific Organic Standard as their production standard to apply to use the Organic Pasifika Mark which will be common across endorsed and authorized PGS in the Pacific.

In order for a PGS to be eligible to use the Organic Pasifika Mark the PGS must be endorsed by the Standards and Certification Committee (SCC) of POETCom and receive formal authorization to do so from the POETCom Advisory Board. The Mark can then be used under a defined set of rules.

#### **PGS REGISTRATION PROCESS**

The SCC will review all applications including documentation submitted and the completed self evaluation by the PGS (link to self evaluation questionnaire). The SCC will then independently assess the PGS against the evaluation questionnaire.

If the SCC is satisfied that the PGS application:

- Meets all requirements of POETCom;
- Has all the important characteristics of a PGS;
- Has sufficiently robust systems that the integrity of the Pacific Organic Standard will be maintained;

they will issue a formal endorsement to the POETCom Advisory Board to authorize the PGS use of the PGS Organic Pasifika Mark under the specified 'rules of use' (link to Rules of Use). The SCC may request further information or clarification from the PGS prior to making any decision.

If an application is denied the SCC will inform the PGS in writing with an explanation as to why the application was denied. A PGS may reapply at any time once the identified issues have been addressed.

If a PGS wishes to submit a complaint or appeal in writing providing evidence to support their complaint to the POETCom Advisory Board for consideration.

The PGS will be required to sign an agreement of use which agrees to authorized use of the Mark only; regular review of the PGS by the SCC at a frequency to be agreed; to inform the SCC of any substantive changes in PGS rules or procedures; and of any non compliant farms identified in the PGS and a description of the action taken.

## Approved certifying bodies

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) on behalf of the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) and three internationally-accredited organic certification bodies with the aim of promoting organic agriculture in the Pacific region through the development of organic export certification services.

The selected certification partners are: BioAgriCert; BioGro New Zealand (BioGro); and National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA).

The MOU guides the relationship between POETCom and the certification partners in their provision of certification services in the region. The partnership will provide, for the first time, an opportunity for Pacific organic producers to export under their own Pacific Organic Standard (POS). This development, along with the 'Organic Pasifika' mark that these products will carry will help consumers in export markets to become aware of and have access to organic products from the Pacific.

Information on the services provided by these certifying bodies is available at the links below:

BioAgriCert

### *BioGro New Zealand*

BioGro New Zealand and its registered trademark are owned by The New Zealand Biological Producers and Consumers Society (NZBPCS). NZBPCS is a not for profit, incorporated society and registered charity - an industry and consumer organisation supported by its members and directed by a board of councillors.

BioGro provides producers with organic certification as an assurance of organic integrity for their customers. BioGro certification also gives producers market access in NZ and to key international markets.

BioGro also promote organics at consumer and trade fairs to ensure that consumers recognise the value of your organic status. BioGro now certifies over 1000 organic producers across New Zealand and in the Pacific region.

Link

### *National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA)*

Formed in 1986, The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA) supports the education of industry and consumers on organic, biodynamic and sustainable agricultural practices. NASAA is a non-profit company limited by guarantee comprising an association of members and certified operators (over 1000).

NASAA is committed to developing and maintaining organic standards; assisting operators in gaining organic certification; and conducting ongoing compliance supervision.

NASAA Certified Organic (NCO) is a fully-owned subsidiary of The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia who provides the certification services.

[LINK](#)

## Technical information

### POS

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The aims of this standard are:

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[Link to POS](#)

## Guidelines

Queries on interpretation and application of the Pacific Organic Standard are referred to the POETCom Standards and Certification Committee (SSC) for clarification and decision. Guidelines developed by the SSC on technical aspects of the POS, interpretation and application of regulations are circulated to all relevant stakeholders including PGS and partner certifying bodies and made publically available.

[Links to Technical Guidelines:](#)

## Tourism & hospitality

Part of the attraction the Pacific holds for international visitors and tourists lies in the unique untouched environments and seemingly relaxed way of life that are far removed from the pressures of industrial life in urban cities. The many high quality resorts and hotels in Pacific countries provide an easy way for visitors to Experience a taste of the pacific life. These resorts sometimes offer local organic produce on their menus however they often still rely heavily on non organic and imported products to meet the needs of guests. Some smaller bungalow and lodges particularly on the outer islands use local and organic produce.

While organic tourism is a new development in the Pacific region already in the Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia and in Fiji we have high quality resorts located on certified organic farms and more restaurants offering organic food on their menus.

POETCom will be developing a certification system for the tourism and hospitality industry so that tourists and local residents alike will be able to have confidence in any claims made by resorts and restaurants of the organic status of their offerings. We believe that organic tourist services can be developed with creativity and in a way that will help economic development while following the 5 organic principals of the Pacific Organic Standard.

## Markets

Generally the domestic markets for organic certified products are not very developed and in some cases are nonexistent. Organic products are commonly sold as conventional without premium price or any acknowledgement of the organic status of the product. Some initiatives are ongoing or are in the pipeline to promote the awareness of the consumers about organic products, in particular in linking the concept of organic with local food consumption as part of strategies to reduce non communicable diseases which are a major health issue in the Pacific Islands. Interesting opportunities are now being explored within the tourist structures of several countries that are facing a growth in the presence of tourists (e.g. Fiji, Vanuatu, Cooks and Samoa) focusing on development of Pacific cuisine and linking small holder organic farmers directly with tourist and hospitality providers. There is at least one up market resort in Fiji who has their island organically certified and who commits to serving guests organic produce from their land.

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Honey	Niue
Papaya (pawpaw)	Fiji
Dried fruit	Samoa
Fruit pulps/juices	Fiji
Coffee	PNG, Samoa, Vanuatu
Beef/lamb	Vanuatu, Fiji

The main international markets for the listed products are Australia and New Zealand representing the main destination for the export of organic products due to the proximity. Japan is a growing market and other markets include Korea, North American and the European Union.

# **Our Producers and Processors**

## **Producer and processor profiles**

Content

# **Our Products**

## **List of organic Products**