



**THE ECONOMIC  
POTENTIAL OF  
ORGANIC  
AGRICULTURE IN  
JAMAICA**



# Economic Models

## The view from the Farm

### Organic

- Sustainable growth model
- Reinvests in fertility
- Value chain emphasis
- Social investment in producers, farm families and communities

### Conventional

- Extractive model
- Dependent on short term soil enhancements
- Supply chain model
- Little investment in producers and low wage workers

# Overall

## Organic

- Higher labour costs
- Approx 15-20% higher cost of seeds but can save seeds and replant
- Costs for certification

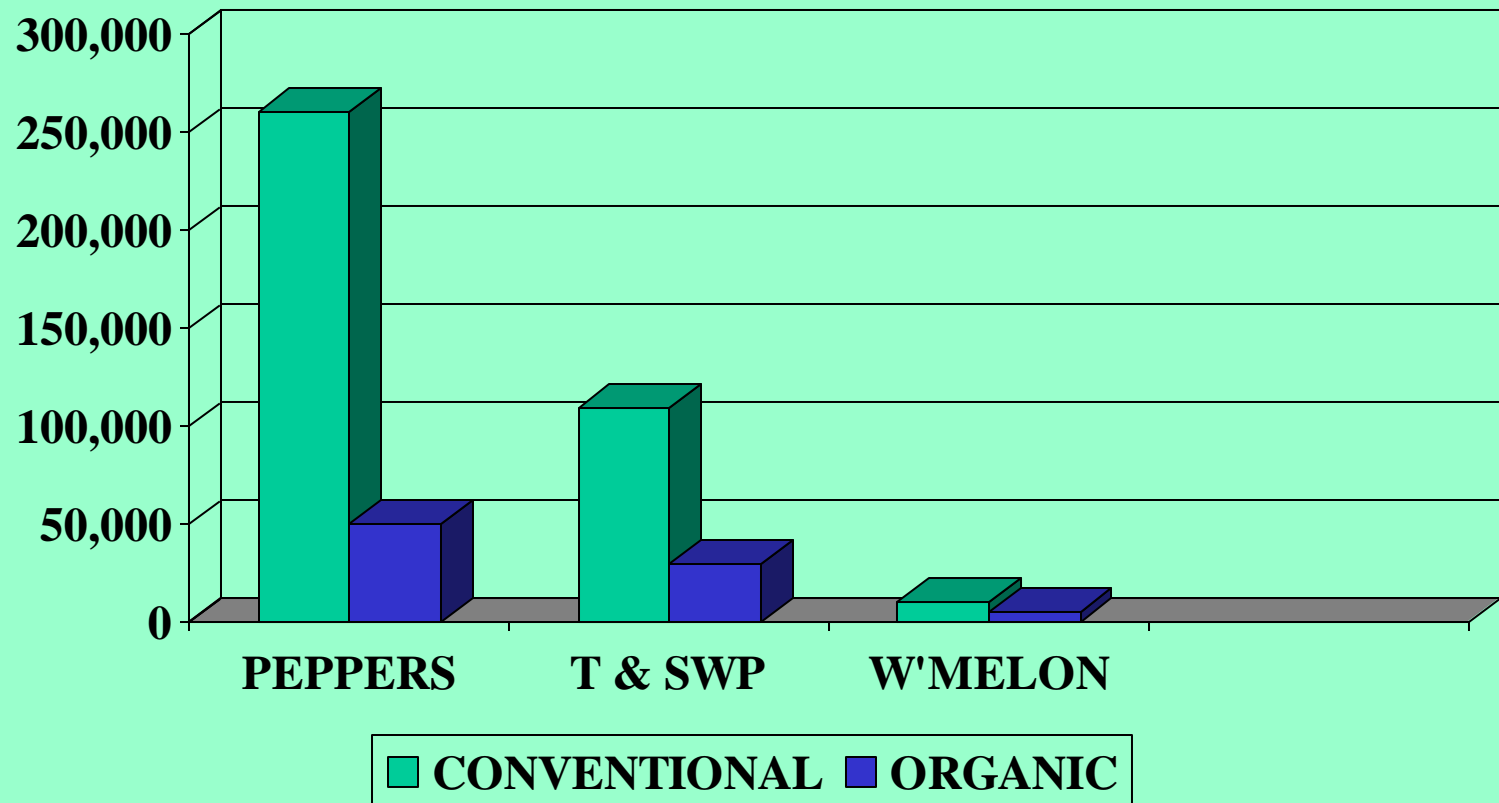
## Conventional

- Higher input costs for fertilisers, pesticides and fungicides
- Use a higher level of hybrids which can not be saved

# Rainbow Farm

- 7 Hectares
- 2 hectares of hot peppers
- 1 hectare of Tomatoes and Sweet Pepper
- .5 hectare Watermelons

# Comparison of some Production Costs



# On Production Myths

- Despite coffee rust (2013) a 2 acre organic coffee farm produced 30+ boxes per acre compared to a conventional farm of 7 acres which produced 5
- A five acre organic farm has consistently, over 20 years, increased annual output. Average 7000 + lbs of greens



Most Organic produce costs at least 5% more than Conventional

Consumers are paying for the assurance that:

- their food is safe and healthy
- it will last longer without refrigeration
- by buying it they are making a contribution to protecting the environment
- they are supporting farmers who are fair to their workers and their community

# Demand Driven Huge Opportunities for Niche Markets and Economic Growth

- Hotels report increased demand from
- visitors
- Under served agri-tourism opportunities, farm stays, visits and farm to table meals
- Private Jets
- Chefs

# Opportunities Exports

- Processed organic products
- Traditional exports, coffee, cocoa, ginger turmeric, pimento
- New products Bamboo charcoal
- Dried fruits
- Nutraceuticals
- Teas
  
- *Us imported \$1.4b 2013*

Paying It Forward

# Organic Agriculture provides Ecological Services

- Pollinators, insects and micro organisms are more abundant than on conventional farms
- Promotes and protects Biodiversity
- Protects, nurtures and improves soil quality

# Combating Climate Change

- FAO and world scientists maintain organic is the system best able to prevent, mitigate and assist with adaptation to climate change
- “Co2 emissions per hectare of organic agriculture systems are 46% to 66% lower than in conventional systems”
- Farms must be highly treed which captures carbon
- More efficient use of water

# Contributes to Disaster Risk Reduction

- **“ORGANICALLY MANAGED SOILS HAVE A HIGHER POTENTIAL TO COUNTER SOIL DEGRADATION AS THEY ARE MORE RESILIENT BOTH TO WATER STRESS (Flooding and Drought) AND NUTRIENT LOSS”**

FAO Environment and Natural Resources Series #4.  
2008

- Prevention of soil erosion and landslides

# Organic and Small Economies

- ‘**Caricom** appears to be the only organised group of countries in the world to have rejected organic agriculture even as a possible policy option’
- However 7 of the top 10 countries with highest % of land in organic production are small economies, suggesting that Caribbean island states would find the system an appropriate fit



# Opportunities Missed

## Jamaica

- Began organic odyssey 1st
- CARICOM standard 2014/ National 2015
- 2014 9 farms with international certification, 2 with local certification

## Pacific Community

- Began 2005
- By 2009/10 had a Pacific Standard
- 2013 8,000 certified farmers
- Branded Organic Pacific

# **Offers the nation a blueprint for developing a Green Economy**

- The UNDP defines the Green Economy broadly as one that results in 'improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.' In its simplest expression, a Green Economy is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive and care oriented.

# And That sums up Organic

- 1<sup>st</sup> Principle of Organic is Care
- Production system is low carbon
- Resource efficient
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle is that of fairness and inclusiveness

# Moving Forward

Needs a dual track approach

- Systemic and infrastructure investments
- Human Capital investments

(including ensuring that farm workers become actual farmers and understand the soil, seasons and need for adaptation to climate change)

+ National Management System – Competent Authority for Organic