FOOD IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HUMAN HEALTH.

IN FACT, WE WOULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT IT.

HOWEVER – THE WAY IN WHICH FOOD IS PRODUCED TODAY IS HAVING DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON SOIL, WATER, AIR, BIODIVERSITY, AND HUMAN HEALTH.

IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ALL PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND TURNED TO DESERT.

**So What Does the Earth Charter say about this?**

**Earth Charter Principle 5:**

PROTECT AND RESTORE THE INTEGRITY OF EARTH’S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, WITH SPECIAL CONCERN FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL PROCESSES THAT SUSTAIN LIFE.

**So Why is this Principle Important?**

SINCE 1989, WORLDWIDE PESTICIDE USE HAS INCREASED BY 8 PERCENT, OR 60 MILLION POUNDS.

165 PESTICIDES HAVE ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS CARCINOGENIC, MANY MORE UNTESTED.

PESTICIDE RESIDUES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN OVER 35 PERCENT OF FOOD TESTED.

LESS THAN 2 PERCENT OF SPRAYED PESTICIDE REACHES THE TARGET PEST.

LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF SPRAYED HERBICIDE REACHES THE TARGET WEED.

AN ESTIMATED 3 BILLION TONS OF TOPSOIL ARE LOST TO EROSION EACH YEAR.

IN THE PAST CENTURY, 75 PERCENT OF GENETIC DIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE HAS DISAPPEARED.

672 MILLION BIRDS ARE AFFECTED BY AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE USE, AND 67 MILLION DIE EACH YEAR.

**We Know That:**

WE MUST DECREASE THE USE OF HARMFUL AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES AND MAKE RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS ABOUT HOW OUR FOOD IS PRODUCED.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR PLANET, ECOSYSTEMS, AND BIODIVERSITY ON WHICH WE DEPEND.

SMARTER AGRICULTURAL DECISIONS CALL FOR LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.
### DID YOU KNOW…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE IS ONE OF THE TOP POLLUTING INDUSTRIES?</th>
<th>INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES ARE A THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH?</th>
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<tr>
<td>INDUSTRIAL FARMERS’ DEPENDENCE ON SYNTHETIC FERTILIZERS FORCES AGRICULTURE TO BE THE INDUSTRY WITH THE HIGHEST USE OF PETROLEUM-BASED PRODUCTS WORLDWIDE. SINCE 1950 PESTICIDE USE HAS RISEN MORE THAN 50% AND CHEMICALS NOW ARE 10 TIMES MORE TOXIC THAN BEFORE.</td>
<td>NON-ORGANIC FARMERS ARE 6 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO CONTRACT CANCER THAN NON-FARMERS. PESTICIDE POISONING AFFECTS AS MANY AS 39 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESPITE AN INCREASE IN PESTICIDE USE, THE PERCENTAGE OF PESTS TO CROPS HAS STAYED THE SAME. IN FACT, IN THE U.S., THE SHARE OF CROPS LOTS TO PESTS INCREASED FROM 30% TO 37% SINCE 1950. AND THEY AREN’T EVEN WORKING…</td>
<td>AND ARE DESTROYING WILDLIFE HABITAT…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE IS THE LARGEST SINGLE THREAT TO EARTH’S BIODIVERSITY. 28% OF THE EARTH’S SURFACE IS BEING USED FOR AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK. 50% OF THE WORLD’S WETLANDS HAVE BEEN LOST TO AGRICULTURE, AND 3500 SPECIES ARE CURRENTLY THREATENED.</td>
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### … ORGANIC AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL ALTERNATIVES EXIST?

ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES SUPPORT DIVERSIFIED HABITATS, WHICH RESULT IN PRODUCTIVE SOIL, REDUCING THE NEED FOR CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS.

**NATURAL PESTICIDES EXIST, MADE FROM SOAPS, OILS, AND PLANTS.**

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT GROWING ORGANICALLY CAN BE MORE PROFITABLE INTERNATIONALLY THAN INDUSTRIAL FARMING.

<table>
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<th>… THERE ARE STRONG SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR ORGANIC FARMERS?</th>
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<tr>
<td>THE TOTAL LAND UNDER ORGANIC CULTIVATION IS NOW 26 MILLION HECTARES, SHOWING ITS PROGRESS AND SUCCESS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS CAN ASSIST ORGANIC FARMERS WITH CERTIFICATION PROCESSES AND TO FIND ALTERNATIVE MARKETS FOR THEIR PRODUCTS. ORGANIC FARMERS BENEFIT FROM INCORPORATING BIODIVERSITY INTO THEIR PRACTICES BY LEARNING ABOUT AND WORKING WITH NATURAL PROCESSES.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BY CULTIVATING DIVERSE CROP VARIETIES, ORGANIC FARMERS ARE PRESENTED WITH NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES.
The Earth Charter Principle 5E states that one needs to:

**MANAGE THE USE OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES SUCH AS WATER, SOIL, FOREST PRODUCTS, AND MARINE LIFE IN WAYS THAT DO NOT EXCEED RATES OF REGENERATION AND THAT PROTECT THE HEALTH OF ECOSYSTEMS.**

**SO WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PRODUCER...**

**...TO ADOPT RESPONSIBLE FARMING PRACTICES?**

- Minimize use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers
- Diversify your crops
- Respect and value the biodiversity on your land
- Learn from others and share your practices
- Investigate organic network support
- Plant native species
- Become involved in reforestation projects
- Avoid laboratory-bred seed varieties

**SO WHAT CAN YOU DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL...**

**...TO SUPPORT RESPONSIBLE FARMING PRACTICES?**

- Buy from local, organic, and small-scale farmers
- Engage your friends and family about responsible shopping
- Lower meat consumption and avoid industrially produced meats
- Buy fresh produce
- Avoid processed foods
- Read labels to avoid purchasing foods with harmful chemicals

**LINKS**

- [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)
- [wwwifoam.org](http://wwwifoam.org)
- [www.scidev.net/zh/south-asia/policy-briefs/zh-131058.html](http://www.scidev.net/zh/south-asia/policy-briefs/zh-131058.html)