Adoption of organic agriculture: An exploration of the factors influencing the conversion to organic farming in the light of the conventionalization debate

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Abstract

Statement of the Problem

A considerable body of research has emerged in organic agriculture literature to better understand how farmers choose between two alternatives, 'adopt' or 'do not adopt, by focusing on the classical comparison of conventional and organic farmers. Although new research suggests that the motives of farmers who are under conversion should be taken into account, the corresponding literature in research is underestimated. The importance of analyzing the differences in the groups is twofold. First, the motives for conversion might change during the time. While current studies provide outcomes on the characteristics, motives for conversion and adoption, the proved findings in this respect are to have been fundamentally altered by developments in the organic sector. Second, there has been a rapid growth in organic farming. Laterally, some researchers have argued that the growth of organic farming may diminish its sustainability because of the incorporation of more elements of conventional agriculture to the organic practices. The 'conventionalization' dilemma which is the argument for this paper, has thus been hypothesized for the accelerated organic movement. In the study , we investigate whether the *newcomers* support weakening some of the distinctiveness of organic vis-à-vis conventional farming, by presenting either business-oriented characteristics or idealistic attributes.

Methodology and theoretical orientation

The face-to-face interview surveys of 432 farmers were conducted. Following descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis, the logit model, binomial and multinomial logit analyses were employed for the purpose of the study.

Findings

The individual responses on adoption between the groups and the significant charatecristics of the potential converters show the growth and changing tendency of conversion in the light of the conventionalization hypothesis.

Conclusion & Significance

The early findings suggest that, for more effective policy measures, the current state of diffusion has to be taken into consideration. Our findings make an empirical contribution to the current literature by assessing the conversion characteristics of the *newcomers*. The implications help to improve manifold development and extension activities promoted by policy makers on organic farming.

Recent Publication

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3. De Wit J., Verhoog H., (2007) Organic values and the conventionalization of organic agriculture. *NJAS-Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences*. Vol. 54, 449-462.
4. Flaten O., Lien G., Ebbesvik M., Koesling M., and Valle S. (2006) Do the new organic producers differ from the 'old guard'? Empirical results from Norwegian dairy farming. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems.* 21(3). 174-182.
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Biography



Nuray Cakirli is a PhD candidate at the University of Göttingen, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Germany. She received her Master's degree at the TU of Munich –in Sustainable Resource Management- where she continued to have an interest in sustainable agricultural practices. Her current research focuses on organic agriculture conversion and adoption. She is broadly interested in food quality and safety management and certification, food quality certification schemes, changing economic, social and ecological conditions at the agricultural practices, the processes of adoption and diffusion of the agricultural innovations, agricultural extension, and organizational theories and resource management.
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Notes&Comments: Since the statistical tests are not completely finalized at the time of abstract submission, the abstract contains limited statements regarding results, conclusion and significance.