

# **Comparison of evolutionary organic farming policies reflected on the first and second Wales and England organic action plans (OAPs) for Korean context**

## **- As a tool ensuring the sustainable development of Korean organic farming**

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### **Abstract**

*This study compares and contrasts the Wales and England Organic Action Plans (WOAP and EOAP) and a Korean regional Life-Food Development Plan (KLFDP) in order to facilitate the development of the organic sector in Korea. Early action plans, for example, the first WOAP (1999) focused support on developing the supply of organic products whereas later action plans focused on marketing and consumer. OAPs may not only provide specific issue-solving roles by proposing new policy measures but also perform a regulatory role as a controller for organic sector development as a whole. The current KLFDP seems to stick to the former role but hardly has the latter role such as setting priorities, harmonizing various conflicting policy measures and factors and performing evaluation process for further progress. To secure better harmonized and sustainable development of Korean organic farming sector, constructing comprehensive national-level organic action plan, which has policy developing, implementing, regulating, evaluating and evolving functions, might be the most efficient choice.*

### **Introduction**

The country-level legal definition of organic farming was first made in the 1980s (Padel and Lampkin 2007) and the following EU-level legislations (EC Reg. 2092/91, 2078/92, 1804/99) crucially contributed to the rapid development of organic farming since 1990s. The major policy measures of current organic farming may be explained as producer-, supply chain-, and consumer-focused support (Padel and Lampkin 2007). 'Organic Action Plans (OAP)', as inclusive and regulatory frameworks supported by state legislation, covers all aspects of organic sector including standard setting, implementation, evaluation and feedback for the next stage (Schmid *et al.* 2008). The OAP can help 1) set the clear goals/targets for the organic sector development, 2)

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integrate various organic stakeholders and public institutions in partnership, 3) enable to focus on specific issues with tailored measures and 4) integrate and modulate different policy measures (Stolze 2005). Currently, 21 of EU-27 member states have developed national and regional OAP (ORGAP 2009). However, there is no separate national-level OAP in Korea although the definition and standards of organic agriculture was defined in the legislation of the development of 'Environmentally Friendly Agriculture (EFA)' and organic farming is supported within EFA (MAF 2001).

## Materials and methods

WOAPs and EOAPs were compared with KLFDP ('The 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-year plan for 'Life-Food Development Plan' by Jeonnam provincial office)(Jeollanamdo 2009). 9 major concern areas and its organic policy measures were adopted from 'ORGAP project' (ORGAP 2009) and previous OAP analysis (Schmid *et al.* 2008). However, some additional policy measures were inserted for further specification because some Welsh and Korean measures were considered not to be fitted into the predefined categories or to explain some unique features of them. Although it is not purely OAP it is considered the closest to Korean OAP in the absence of national- and regional-level OAP at present.

## Results and Discussion

**A. Budget composition of KLFDP.** Most budget purposes of KLFDP are for producer and production support (35.2%) and marketing (31.5%). Some other features can be also found in KLFDP. Firstly, direct financial payment takes only 9.1% among producer support measures. The rests of it are for farming input aids which consist of 33% for organic fertilizer purchase, 29% for soil conditioner purchase, 12% for green manure seed and 11% for vegetables and crops for special use (Jeollanamdo 2009).

**B. Current producer and production support policy of KLFDP. a) Concerns and criticisms.** In terms of minimizing external input and maximizing internal reuse of on-farm resources for organic farming (Lampkin 2003), support for external input purchase does not coincide with organic principle. In particular, significant support on organic fertilizer purchase and soil conditioners may lead to deeper dependency on governmental supply and its excessive use of purchased fertilizer. On the contrary, farmers' efforts to attain self-sufficiency with soil nutrition management and the environmental benefits by organic farming may be hardly expected in Korean organic farming. There are several criticisms such as excessive nitrate leakage and water pollution by overuse of commercial organic fertilizer already (Sohn and Kim 1999). So, these measures need to be reviewed carefully toward promoting more internal recycling use and assisting farmers' long-term independency with soil fertility management. **b) Some differences of KLFDP from the UK OAPs.** KLFDP is contrasted with WOAP and EOAP that most common policy measures are used for direct payment on organic conversion and maintenance. These OAPs hardly contain other extensive financial support measures, either. The 2<sup>nd</sup> WOAP stresses on farmers' coordination, management efficiency for better economic performances and reducing farmers' administrative burdens rather than financial aids. These measures

of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WOAP are considered to help construct long-term sustainability. However, KLFDP seems to have strong supply-push approach by direct and indirect financial support measures for producer and production, which may help increase domestic production and supply in shorter period but may also increase future policy burdens.

**C. Issues on the measures for marketing support.** Although all OAPs and KLFDP stress marketing support measures, most of the budget for marketing support of KLFDP are for the purchase support of organic products for school meal procurement (57%) and the rest of it is allocated to infrastructure construction (35%) such as collection, storage and marketing company, sale activity (5%) and export-related activities (3%)(Jeollanamdo 2009). Securing procurement of public sectors was highly recommended by the 2<sup>nd</sup> WOAP and two EOAPs but they did not specify details with designated budget whilst KLFDP has direct substantial budget (Jeollanamdo 2009). In this point of view, KLFDP could be seen as a strongly government-driven market expansion policy because it creates school markets by governmental direct budget preparation. But this direct procurement budget may also expose the increased risk of market failure and confusion when governmental budget fail to provide at some reasons. Although the 2<sup>nd</sup> WOAP and EOAPs seem to have a strong emphasis on a market development, the approaches look slightly different. These OAPs stress more indirect measures such as data collection, training, processing and information transfer to research activities. **D. Invest on research and development.** Although R & D area is highlighted in KLFDP, actual research budget is very small (0.2%) compared to support on producer and production. Most other OAPs focus on information and knowledge transfer for R & D strategy. As for research concerns, both WOAPs focuses primarily on production techniques, extending it to processing, farming survey and other extensive fields while both EOAPs have set the research areas through further work (ACOS 2006). KLFDP has narrow concerns only on production techniques and processing and is neglecting data collection, market survey and impact analysis. **E. Approach to processing support.** KLFDP has direct support measures on processing and related actions with some budgets (4.7%) but again it allocates most of budgets to direct financial subsidy (98% of processing budgets) rather than training, research and other non-financial (2%). This is also well contrasted with other OAPs. **F. Knowledge transfer, certification, training and others.** Relatively little budgetary emphasis is put on general information (2.5%), certification (1.2%) and education and training (0.9%) area compared to other areas of KLFDP. However, other OAPs emphasize mostly consumer education, information transfer and promotion campaign, stakeholder training and research, market transparency through statistical data collection and implementation of organic farming standards and certification process (EC 2004).

## **Conclusions**

Recently developed KLFDP by a local government took significant step focusing on organic farming. However, there are some differences between KLFDP and other OAPs. Firstly, KLFDP lacks regulatory or controlling role to proceed toward further policy development by harmonizing potential conflicts among different policy measures and executing evaluation process for next stage. Second, although it has

various policy measures of organic farming, many of them are mixed under EFA concept, so it is not easy to tell the differences and to evaluate policy effect of pure organic farming at the end as presented in 'ORGAPET' (Schmid *et al.* 2008). Finally, to achieve better sustainable development of Korean organic industry, national as well as regional regulatory policy systems is required as a comprehensive OAP to lead sustainable and unbiased development of organic sector in Korea.

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