

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FARMING IN KOREA IS NOT TRUE ORGANIC FARMING

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The worldwide shift from conventional chemical farming to organic farming started in the 1960s. This organic trend was introduced to Korea in 1970s and several organic farming organizations such as

JungnongHoe, Korean Association of Organic Farming, Organic Producer and Consumer Federation, and Korean Society of Organic Agriculture (1991) were established. Since then, the organic farming movement with the environment and the consumer have been actively developed.

The government formed an Organic Farming Development Task Force with 20 government officials and 10 civilian experts and held the first meeting to discuss, "What is organic farming?" in March 1995. There was a conceptual difference between the two and they had a long and heated debate about the concept of organic farming at the meeting. Government officials insisted that it is impossible to move back to old, unscientific farming.

I explained the concept of organic farming described in the IFOAM Charter under which using chemical fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, and additives is strictly prohibited and using compost, manure and mineral powder is highly recommended.

But, Government officials kept insisting that "it is impossible to cultivate crops without chemical fertilizer and pesticide in Korea."

Finally, Both sides agreed to establish Organic Farming Act at the end of the meeting and the meeting was closed.

However, only government officials had follow-up meetings to draw up the draft of a promotion of Environment Farming bill and the bill passed the National Assembly in 1997. Until then, there was no prior explanation or notification about the bill to the civilian representatives. I raised some problems about the Act and openly asked to fix the problems. In 1998 the Act was renamed Promotion of Environmentally Friendly Farming Act and revised Article 2 from "a little" to "minimum" regarding chemical fertilizer and pesticide use.

Here are the problems:

1. The name of the Act does not match the agreement;

The government formed an Organic Farming Development Task Force and agreed to draw up an organic farming bill, not the Promotion of Environmentally Friendly Farming Act. In addition, it is not right that only government officials had the follow-up meetings, eliminating all civilian experts.

2. Identity issue;

In line with the first point, environmentally friendly farming and organic farming are not the same. Putting organic farming and low-pesticide farming at the same level makes the identity of organic farming vague. The Act misguides people about using chemical materials, regardless of amount, in organic farming.

3. "Environmentally friendly" is not truly Environmentally friendly;

It is common sense that protecting the environment and following the law of nature is environmentally friendly, while damaging the environment is anti-environmental. Using chemical materials, regardless of whether the amount is "a little" or "minimum", anti-environmental since it damages nature. In that sense, allowing the use of chemical materials under the Promotion of Friendly environmentally Farming Act constitutes a reversal of the concept of environmentally friendly farming.

It is great shame that officials in the government organizations and elected politicians in the National Assembly have turned blind eye to the serious impact of using chemical materials and pesticide for 14 years. Under such circumstances, I renewed my resolution of fight against the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and wrote newspaper column on environmental farming three times after the Act was passed.

4. Horrifying high incidence of cancer and malformed children ;

It is common sense that the chemical material used in agriculture can cause cancer and pesticides are one of the reason to give birth of malformed child. It is no secret that using chemical fertilizers and pesticides is closely associated with the horrifyingly high incidence of cancer and malformed children in Korea. Recently, the government allocates a helicopter to each city to spread pesticides. It clearly shows that the government's campaign on environmentally friendly farming is just lip service, since the government leads environmental disruption and ecosystem degradation.

5. All farmers insist that produce environmentally friendly crops;

The current status as measured by promotion level shows there is no improvement after the introduction of the Act considering that low-pesticide accounts for 6.8%, pesticide free for 4.1%, and organic for 0.8%. Using customized fertilizer is not environmentally friendly since it includes 60-70% of chemical fertilizer. However, there is no rule to regulate farmers who declare that their products are organic, while using customized fertilizer. In addition, the government recommends the use of customized fertilizer by giving incentives and supports, saying customized fertilizer can be used in environmentally friendly farming. It reflects the reality that government officials stick to the old idea that farming is impossible without chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The government wants to upgrade Korea's image as a successful environment friendly farming country. To do this, the Korean government should keep in mind that all members of organic farming countries thoroughly conduct organic farming without chemical materials, except Korea.

6. chemical farming could cause mad cow disease and foot-and-mouth disease ; "Agricultural Testament" and " Soil and Health" Sir. A. Howard presented a solution for the current disaster now plaguing Korea. He urged farmers to change to organic farming, giving up chemical materials over the past 50-70 years could cause the current disaster. I warn that the Korea is not bright if it sticks to the old thinking of agriculture. Current environmentally friendly foods are not qualified as school meal; Chemical fertilizer an pesticides can cause cancer and herbicides and pesticides can cause malformed children. Believing that environmentally friendly foods are safe is a misguide perception, and it is my duty to let people know that the current environmentally friendly foods are not true ones; We should not use chemical materials in farming.

Conclusion;

In organic farming, the philosophy of organic farming is "respect for Life". This method is mycorrhiza co-existence, and farming material is matured compost. with the balance

of three important things, people, animals, and microorganisms, we can have a healthy life together. Organic farming is now our duty.

Dr. Franklin H. King, author of "The Farmers of Forty Centuries", (1911) He suggested that permanent agriculture in China, Korea, and Japan, were leading countries of organic farming, and the U.S. should get rid of chemical farming and return to organic farming in his report after visiting korean farms in the early 1900s. However, if he saw our current farming practicies, he would have said "not to follow korea."

Since 1982 I have attended the IFOAM Organic World Congress as a Korean representatives and have learned a lot. In particular. I met Jerome Irving Rodale and became fascinated by the ideas of Albert G. Howard, I decided to fight against the use of chemical fertilizer, following the idea of Howard and Rodale translated their three books ; "Pay Dirt", "Soil and Health", " Agricultural Testament". and I have written another 8 books over a period of 40 years.

Finerly, I ask you for advice about how to restore the identity of organic farming in Korea from you all participants.

Thank you very much! God Bless you!

by Dr. Choe, B. C.