

## MODULE 5 – TRAINING

This Module assumes that you now have a clear idea about:

- the volume you need to be able to deliver;
- the requirements imposed upon your product in terms of quality;
- the requirements imposed upon your product and production process in terms of certification.

Farmers, be they members of a cooperative or outgrowers, need to be aware of and able to comply with the demands imposed upon the product and production process. Module 5 will present some of the material that was used during the project and may prove useful for other organizations too. Meanwhile, Module 6 will discuss compliance with certification requirements and present training material to establish an internal control system. Each enterprise will have its own unique training needs; it is therefore impossible to provide training material that exactly matches your specific situation.

### ORGANIC PRODUCTION



International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2004.  
*Training Manual for Organic Agriculture in the Tropics; Theory, Transparencies and Didactic Approach*  
Available at: <[http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64\\_68\\_35](http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64_68_35)>.

This manual, offering a resource basis for trainers, will help develop the structure of a training course or workshop and provide material and ideas for its organization. The manual can also serve as a handbook for those who want to get a clearer idea about the basics of organic agriculture. The manual contains the following chapters: Introduction; Principles of organic agriculture; Soil fertility; Plant nutrition; Pest, disease and weed management; Animal husbandry; Farm economy.



International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2005  
*Training Manual for Organic Agriculture in the Humid Tropics; Theory, Transparencies and Didactic Approach*  
Available at: <[http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64\\_68\\_75](http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64_68_75)>.

The main focus of this manual is on small-farm practices in developing countries located in the humid tropics, taking into account their specific geographic and climatic conditions. The manual contains case studies of organic farming systems, describes successful organic marketing initiatives and offers guidelines for the main crops of the humid tropics.



International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2005.  
*Training Manual for Organic Agriculture in the Arid and Semi-Arid Tropics; Theory, Transparencies and Didactic Approach*  
Available at: <[http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64\\_68\\_72](http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64_68_72)>.

Idem; focusing on arid and semi-arid ecosystems.



FAO/Agro Eco. 2008.  
Improve your sugarloaf pineapple production; illustrated manual for organic farmers in Ghana.  
Available at:  
<[www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/organicexports/docs/Organic\\_sugarloaf\\_pineapple\\_manual.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/organicexports/docs/Organic_sugarloaf_pineapple_manual.pdf)>.

This manual was developed for small sugarloaf pineapple producers in the Ekumfi district in Ghana in the framework of the FAO project on organic and fair-trade exports from Africa.

## FARMER FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A training approach that may be useful to train large groups of farmers is the Farmer Field School (FFS) model, a group-based learning process developed by the FAO inter-country Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme for rice in Asia in the late 1980s. Since then, the FFS model has been used worldwide on a wide range of crops including cotton, tea, coffee, cacao, black pepper, vegetables, small grains, and legumes. Contrary to earlier agricultural extension programmes, which expected farmers to adopt generalized recommendations formulated by specialists from outside the community, the FFS is a non-formal group-based learning process, stressing participatory discovery learning through field experiments; farmers' existing experiences and knowledge are integrated into the programme. Empowerment is a critical feature of the FFS. The FFS provides farmers with an initial experience in experimentation based on plant biology, agronomy and ecology, allowing farmers to learn and achieve greater control over technologies, markets, agricultural policies and agro-ecosystems and thus make better decisions at the field level.

The basic elements common to FFS organized worldwide include:

- *Location*: the FFS is organized in the community where farmers live; its primary learning material is the school's experimental field;
- *Timing*: the FFS programme is based on crop phenology; seedling issues are studied during the seedling stage, fertilizer issues are discussed during high nutrient demand stages, etc. Farmers meet on

a weekly basis over the course of a whole season; the course cycle, generally comprising between 10 and 16 training sessions, has a clear beginning and ending;

- *Group size*: most FFS are organized for groups of between 25 and 30 farmers. This group is often subdivided in smaller groups of around five farmers to allow everyone to fully participate in field observations, analysis, discussion, and presentations;
- *Facilitators*: all FFS facilitators have undergone season-long courses in growing the concerned crop "from seed to seed"; these courses also include facilitation skills and group dynamic/group building methods. The facilitator attempts to work herself out of a job by building the capacity of the group; many FFS take over the job of the extension facilitator by providing Farmer to Farmer training and organizing other local activities to strengthen the other members of the community;
- *Methodology*: IPM methods are always compared to conventional practices, and the beneficial aspects of IPM are integrated in existing practices;
- *Support group*: one of the jobs of the facilitator is to assist the FFS in developing into a support group so that participants can support one another after the FFS programme is over;
- *Evaluation*: all Field Schools include field based pre- and post-tests, allowing participants to determine follow-up activities. Follow-up activities may vary from monthly discussion sessions to farmers repeating the FFS process (e.g. on another crop) or organizing a FFS for other farmers.



## THE PROJECT

By adopting the FFS approach for the projects on cocoa in Sierra Leone and mangoes in Burkina Faso, the FAO project enhanced farmers' participation in their association's decision making structures and contributed towards the organizations' overall development. Local farmers were trained to function as facilitators, allowing them to assume leadership roles within their organizations. The FFA process was adapted to the specificities of the projects; for example, since the crops were perennial, it was impossible to provide season-long facilitator training, or compare non-FFS and FFS plots. The traditional farmer-centred approach of the FFS was shifted towards a more supply chain-centred approach, with export demands co-determining learning needs.

The project on cocoa built on the pioneering work of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), which had already developed a FFS curriculum and IPM manual for cocoa. The manual was adapted to the specific situation of farmers in Sierra Leone (e.g. focus on the rehabilitation of plantations after the war, as well as on bean fermentation and drying to improve the

quality of the cocoa); instead of focusing on IPM, the project's manual was centered on organic production methods. Meanwhile, controlling fruit flies was a key concern of the project on mangoes. In addition, a lot of attention was paid to pruning techniques, as most mango trees were relatively old, which led to problems relating fruit size and coloration. Both the cocoa and mango programmes included training sessions dedicated to certification schemes and standards. Both projects drew on the expertise of staff members of the Ministries of Agriculture of the respective countries, who had already been involved in other FFS programmes.



The FFS manuals developed for the projects on cocoa in Sierra Leone and mangoes in Burkina Faso can be downloaded from the project's website at

[www.fao.org/organicag/organicexports/oe-countries-products/oe-sierra-leone/en/](http://www.fao.org/organicag/organicexports/oe-countries-products/oe-sierra-leone/en/) and [www.fao.org/organicag/organicexports/oe-countries-products/burkina-faso/en/](http://www.fao.org/organicag/organicexports/oe-countries-products/burkina-faso/en/), respectively.

## TRAINING ON PROCESSING AND PACKAGING: HACCP

As specifications related to processing and packaging techniques and quality vary considerably from one buyer to another, each processor or exporter will need to organize tailor-made training sessions for its staff members.

The FAO Food Quality and Standards Service has developed a number of tools providing guidance and technical support to implementing agencies working on capacity building and training in the field of food safety and quality. For more information, see [www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/capacity\\_tools\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/capacity_tools_en.asp).

A widely implemented (and demanded) approach to control food risks is the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System, which controls critical

points in food handling to prevent food safety problems. The implementation of a HACCP system is a central requirement for certification against a number of food safety standards, including the BRC Global Standard, ISO 22000, etc. For a HACCP training manual, see:



FAO. 1998.  
*Food Quality and Safety Systems - A Training Manual on Food Hygiene and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System*  
[www.fao.org/docrep/W8088E/W8088E00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/W8088E/W8088E00.htm)