



ORGANIC NEWS

ISSUE 7 | JAN/FEB 2025

Welcome to our first
2025 newsletter!

A new year, fresh
ideas, and more
ways to grow
organically. Stay
tuned for insights
and inspiration as we
build a healthier food
system together!

In this issue:

- SAOSO Foundation Board
- IFOAM Agroecology Promotion Programme
- SAOSO AGM
- National Agroecology Framework
- 21st Organic World Congress
- PGS farm visit Sunset Organics
- Events
- News
- Ways to get involved



PGS | SOUTH AFRICA

SAOSO FOUNDATION BOARD



At SAOSO's 2023 AGM, the launch of the SAOSO Foundation was announced. As a newly established non-profit company and Public Benefit Organisation, the SAOSO Foundation will drive the development of a sustainable food system through organic production and agroecology. Serving as a fundraising vehicle, it will support initiatives that advance the sector's work into the future.

The newly appointed SAOSO Foundation Board brings together a wealth of expertise

and passion for organic agriculture. The board members in alphabetical order are Colleen Anderson, Gavin Andersson, Raymond Auerbach, Lauren Carlyle, Angela Coetzee, Hans Klink, Sicelo Kunene, Busisiwe Mgangxela, Butshabelo Mabunda, Alan Rosenberg, Henry Sabata and Dr Hendrik Smit. With their combined experience in research, farming, sustainability, policy, and community development, the Foundation is well-positioned to lead transformational change in South Africa's agricultural landscape.

LAUNCH OF IFOAM AGROECOLOGY PROMOTION PROGRAMME

SAOSO will be leading the implementation of the Agroecology Promotion Programme (APP) in South Africa, a global initiative by IFOAM – Organics International aimed at transforming food systems through agroecology. The programme, supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation, focuses on policy advocacy, capacity building, youth and women empowerment, and financial mechanisms to drive sustainable agricultural practices. By strengthening local networks and engaging policymakers, SAOSO will play a key role in ensuring agroecology



gains greater recognition and support.

Through this initiative, SAOSO will collaborate with key stakeholders to enhance agroecological knowledge, improve market access, and influence policy at national and regional levels. Training, research, and participatory learning will be central to the programme,

equipping farmers, researchers, and decision-makers with the tools needed to advance organic and regenerative agriculture. This marks an exciting step forward in building a resilient and sustainable food system for South Africa.



SAOSO AGM



The SAOSO AGM, originally scheduled for early this year, has been postponed to a later date to allow for greater participation and alignment with key sector developments.

We appreciate your patience and will share the new date and details soon.

NATIONAL AGROECOLOGY FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH AFRICA



SAOSO chairperson, Alan Rosenberg, and SAOSO management committee member, Prof. Raymond Auerbach, presented at the

“Advancing Agroecology and Organic Production for Sustainable Agriculture: Sharing Experiences and Future Directions” webinar initiated by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC). The event was a key lead-up to the 21st IFOAM Organic World Congress in Taiwan (December 2024), themed “Cultivating Organic Solutions for True Sustainability”.

The demand for sustainable agriculture is gaining ground across the globe as many communities face environmental problems such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and soil degradation. Agroecology

organic farming supports holistic and integrative approaches based on principles that are ecologically, socially, and economically sound to achieve productivity in a more sustainable manner. They represent an important pathway for more climate-resilient food secure systems with a greater focus on biodiversity, soil health and reduced use of inorganic chemicals, as well as sustainable use of natural resources. Under agroecological systems the livelihood needs of communities make an integral part of the agroecosystems together with connectivity between consumers and farmers.

The webinar formed part of the ARC-Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) Agroecology Framework Project, which is shaping South Africa's transition from conventional to agroecological farming. The National Agroecology Framework

for South Africa (NAFSA) aims to transform agriculture by embedding agroecological principles across the value chain to enhance food security, rural development, and environmental sustainability. Currently in draft form, the framework is under review and will soon be open

for public input. Its vision is "An Agroecologically Transformed Agriculture with Secure Livelihoods", and its mission is to create a sustainable, diverse, and resilient agricultural sector that supports a healthy society.

21ST ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS, TAIWAN 2-4 DECEMBER 2024



Technology and Innovation Platform of IFOAM (TIPI) President, Prof. Raymond Auerbach, was in attendance at the Organic World Congress in Taiwan in December and reported back on the "Organic Farming and the Developing World" workshops.

The first session presented an overview of world organic development, and then various regional perspectives, while the second session presented researcher insights.

Dr. Tanveer Hossain presented a world overview of organic agriculture, highlighting the contrast between large-scale organic farms in Australia and small-scale, intensive farms in Asia and Africa. **In 2023, global certified organic land expanded to 99 million hectares, with 4.3 million certified farmers.** While Europe leads in certified organic land percentages, many African and Asian farmers practice agroecological farming without formal certification.

Total trade in certified organic products reached Euro 136.4 billion, with 99 million ha certified organic and 4.3 million organic farmers certified.

Certified organic agriculture grew from less than 0.3% of agricultural land (about 15 million hectares) in the year 2000 to 2.1% (about 99 million hectares) in 2023. The three biggest increases in areas certified organic were in Uruguay, China and Spain. **Africa grew from less than 0.01 million hectares in 2000 to 3.4 million hectares in 2023.** Globally, producer numbers grew from 200,000 in 2000 to 4.5 million in 2023, half of them in India.

Prof. Raymond Auerbach reported on Africa's organic progress, classifying countries into five development stages: Advanced (4 countries), Active (11), Infant (12), Nascent (10) and Awaiting Inspiration (18 countries). His team also developed strategies for each of the five types of country.

Auerbach developed a typology based on seven factors:

1. Domestic market
2. Export market
3. Are farmers organised and trained?
4. Is there a government organic policy?
5. Is there financial support from the government for organic farming?
6. Is there an organic standard?
7. Is there a National Organic Agricultural Movement?

The second session showcased research findings from Costa Rica, Tanzania and the U.S. Dr. Yasy

World Overview (of only certified organic production) as at 2022

CONTINENT	ORGANIC CERTIFIED AREA	NUMBER OF ORGANIC FARMERS
Asia	9%	48%
Africa	3%	30%
Europe	23%	12%
Latin America	13%	8%
North America	5%	1%
Oceania	47%	1%
Total	100%	100%

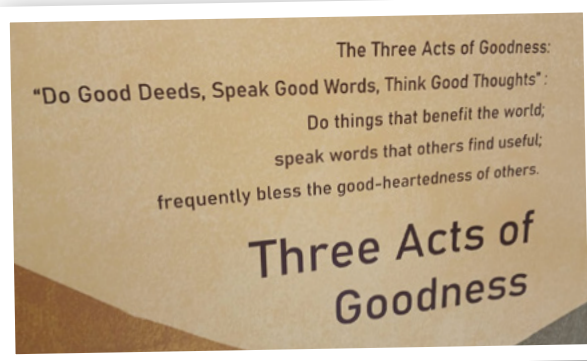
Morales highlighted how women in Costa Rica use solidarity networks and agroecology to enhance food security, while Nandayure Studt discussed the need for improved post-harvest management and farmer empowerment in the cocoa industry. Dr. Rosemary Mubezi from Tanzania emphasised the importance of institutional governance, advocating for policies that support smallholder farmers through formalised structures like Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). Dr. Sciligo concluded the session by discussing how social capital and ecosystem services can enhance organic trade opportunities in the Americas, citing the U.S. government's substantial investment in climate-smart and organic farming initiatives. What was clear is that from the southeastern United States, down to Latin America and across Africa, problems are similar, and communities are mobilising!



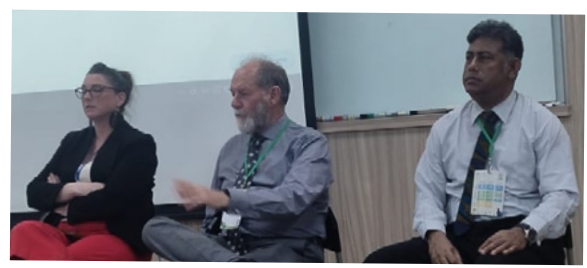
The new IFOAM World Board, with (2nd from the left) Dr Amber Sciligo, TIPI Board Member.



The African Caucus at OWC in Taiwan, calling for African representation on the IFOAM World Board.



The OWC was held at Nanhua Buddhist University in Chiayi, Taiwan. The university promotes these three acts of goodness.



Amber, Raymond and Dr Tanveer Hossain at the TIPI Workshop.



Qimeng Yan's farm in Taiwan, KKF Natural Rice Farming.

PGS FARM VISIT SUNSET ORGANICS, GAUTENG

In December, Sunset Organics in Lammemoor, Centurion, hosted its PGS farm visit. A member of the iGoli PGS group since 2022, this marked the farm's second assessment. Managed by Tanya Spangenberg and her team, Sunset Organics has grown over the years, with Tanya taking on a key role as the administrator of farm visits for the iGoli PGS group in Gauteng until 2023.

In Tanya's words: *"The best place to start a story is at the beginning."*



Long, long time ago in a place far, far away there was a gardener who loved to play in the sand and collect seeds. I enjoyed

experimenting with heirlooms and loved the black tomatoes and purple potatoes. One fine day at a plant swap I met a kindred spirit in Princess Jay. She invited me to her PGS farm audit and that is where the seed was planted. It grew and grew and I dreamed of the day I could say in a deep throaty voice "I have a farm in Africa". After searching high and low and throughout the Kingdom of Gauteng we found it. Our place in the sun."

Flash forward a couple of years, and Tanya's farm is a hive of productivity and diversity. The farm's design is based on permaculture principles and includes abundant fruit trees, vegetables, and a flock of chickens referred to as "my girls," who are showered



with love from their mother and, in return, produce the most delicious eggs.

Sunset Organics eggs are on their way to being the first farm in the iGoli PGS group with PGS certified eggs.

Sunset Organics was certified organic for over twenty different products, from artichoke to asparagus, potatoes to pak choi and a variety of fruits. Tanya describes the operation as an *"organic small farm where we grow soil and the plants are an added bonus."*



EVENTS

ORGANIC & NATURAL
PRODUCTS PORTAL AFRICA

sponsored by
Joburg

GOOD LIFE
SHOW

RegenAg SA
Regenerative Grazing Farm Tour
Graaff Reinet, Cradock, Molteno
15, 16 & 17 May 2025

- Organic & Natural Products Expo Africa, Cape Town, 28 – 30 March 2025, Cape Town International Convention Centre

Designed as a hybrid event that caters to trade buyers, while at the same time allowing retail sales directly to consumers, the expo is set to showcase local and international manufacturers, suppliers, importers and exporters. <https://www.organicandnaturalportal.com/expo/>

- The Good Life Show, Cape Town, 30 May – 1 June 2025, Cape Town International Convention Centre
Africa's premier food, drink and conscious living event! It's where you'll discover hundreds of plant-based, free-from, natural, organic, wellness and sustainable products to sample and buy. The Show is also open to trade, including the retail, hospitality sectors and to local distributors and exporters, and will appeal to any industry that is looking for innovative, high-quality products. <https://goodlifeshowafrika.com/>

- Regenerative Grazing Farm Tour
The Regenerative Agriculture Association of Southern Africa (RegenAg SA) in conjunction with Regenerative Graziers James Brodie, Paul Collett and Rowan Stretton are hosting a Regenerative Grazing Farm Tour on 15, 16 & 17 May 2025 in Graaff Reinet, Cradock and Molteno in the Eastern Cape. <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/303894-regenerative-grazing-farm-tour/>

The Western Cape Bee Industry Association (WCBA) has reported a significant rise in honey bee poisonings across the province, primarily due to the misuse of agricultural chemicals like fipronil. This trend poses a severe threat to biodiversity and food security, as bees are essential pollinators for many crops.



“Without healthy and thriving honey bee populations the agricultural output of the Western Cape will face severe challenges, potentially leading to reduced crop yields and economic losses for the province”

– WCBA chairperson,
Chris Nicklin

The researchers focused on wildflowers and the importance of biodiversity, revealing that chemical-free plots had more than nine times more bees compared with those with the highest levels of fertiliser.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-02-20-spike-in-honey-bee-poisonings-threatens-w-cape-biodiversity-food-security/>

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Here's how!

You have the power to drive change! Start by asking your local retailers about the origins of their food and encouraging them to stock certified organic products.

Get involved with your local PGS group—visit farms, meet the farmers, learn about their growing practices, and discover where their produce goes. Find a group near you using this PGS map: <https://www.pgssa.org.za/pollinator-map/>

If you'd like to support SAOSO, consider becoming a member or making a donation to help further our mission. Every action counts!



Become a member!



Donate today!



Future Newsletters: Please share with us your news or topics that you'd like to read in our newsletter. Send us an email at info@saoso.org.

**The Principle
Of Health.**

**The Principle
Of Ecology.**

**The Principle
Of Fairness.**

**The Principle
Of Care.**