Organic World Congress 2017

(Jaivik Krishi Vishwa Kumbh)

World’s biggest organic farming event comes to India, with OFAI as host

• Event will take place from November 9-11, 2017 at New Delhi
• Prime Minister being invited to inaugurate the World Congress
• Ministry of Agriculture decides to associate as “joint-organiser”
• National Centre of Organic Farming is member of Congress Steering Committee
• Organic farmers to get four separate halls to make their presentations
• BIOFACH Trade Fair will be part of the event
• OFAI members will get priority provided they act on time

The specific aim of the OWC is to showcase the organic farming practices and innovations of organic farmers from Asia, Africa and Latin America to the rest of the world, with strong emphasis on the pioneer: India.

For this reason, this Congress will be much different from OFAI’s Biennial Conventions. Only selected and registered participants who can contribute some valuable content to the world community of organic farming will be able to enter the venue.

Newcomers to organic farming, including those who are still doing chemical farming and want to get introduced to organic farming, will not be able to register for this Congress.

Only those organic farmers who have an innovation or technique which the world organic farming community would benefit from knowing about, would get first chance.

So if you are an organic farmer and fall into the category of farmers who have tried out some successful organic farming technique or any innovation connected with organic farming, and want to share it with the whole world, start work immediately.

Pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter provide all details of how you can try to get your presentation prepared and accepted for the OWC.
The Organic World Congress is being held in New Delhi from November 9-11, 2017 and will have several major components.

The main focus of the event is of course the 5 "tracks" through which the Congress is generally organised.

These 5 "tracks" will be organised independently in 8 separate halls at the Trade Expo and Mart complex in Greater Noida.

These include the Main Track (2), the Science Track (1), the Workshops Track (1), the Farmers Track (3) and the Marketing and Assurance Track (1).

The Farmers’ Track will be held in three separate halls.

One additional space for farmer experiments will be held in the grounds outside the halls.

All the farmer track events will be the exclusive responsibility of OFAI.

The marketing and assurance track will be in the hands of the National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) which will focus principally on large scale exposure to certification under PGS. The sessions will be managed by NCOF, PGS Organic Council, ICCHO, World Fair Trade Organisation, etc. Chairing the Market Track is Dr. A.K. Yadav, former Director, NCOF.

The science track will be under the general supervision of Gerald Rahman, from IFOAM. Farmers and agricultural research scientists may also present papers in the science track.

Though OFAI will ensure that all the five tracks run successfully with maximum attendance, it will focus all its organisational skills on the farmer presentations.

Considering the number of farmers wanting to make presentations, a total of 240 organic farmers from across the world may be accommodated in the three-day time-table. Of these only about 100 slots (perhaps less) may be available for Indian organic farmers, while the balance 140 will go to farmers from Africa, Latin America, Asia and other parts of the world.

OFAI is proposing to sign a MOU with Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) New Delhi which will take overall charge of copying and formatting all soft copies of farmer presentations and ensuring their ready availability during the Congress.

Besides the farmer presentations, the OWC will also see the largest possible seed exhibition in our times. A group of seedkeepers will handle the arrangements for seed display. Space for the display is being made available free of cost by the organisers.

More details about the Organic World Congress 2017

Other major events at OWC:

The Congress Steering Committee (CSC) which is monitoring the organisation of the event on behalf of both IFOAM - Organics International and OFAI, has agreed to OFAI’s suggestion to work to create a celebratory atmosphere at the Congress venue.

Nehha Bhattacharjee from Sarvan Foundation has been invited to head the team that will ensure a world class cultural show for the delegates. All cultural troupes wishing to submit items for the cultural event will send their proposals to the Sarvam Foundation which will select them from all aspects. Wendell Rodricks, one of India’s most creative fashion designers and a supporter of organic farming, will present a fashion show of organic and handwoven fabric.

In the year 2017, BIOFACH India will host its trade show on organic also at the same venue, under the overall rubric of the OWC. All those in the organic trade wishing to put up stalls for purpose of B2B promotion will sign up directly with BIOFACH.

Official pavilions of governments, both central, state and foreign will be allocated space in a separate hall, adjoining the Congress, and will sign up directly with OWC itself. A small number of pre-conferences are also being organised one day prior to the OWC event. These will be hosted at the NCOF premises in Ghaziabad and other locations.

Post-OWC, members of the General Assembly of IFOAM - Organics International will shift to New Delhi city proper, to hold the 22nd General Assembly (GA) of the organisation. The business of the association will be conducted over 12 and 13 of November, 2017. The GA will also elect a new Executive Board to manage the association for the next three years.

For delegates who wish to see and visit organic farms, OFAI will be making the necessary arrangements after the event.

Organic Farming Sourcebook Update

The first ever documentation of the organic farming community – the Organic Farming Source Book – is being updated, to be released during the OWC 2017.

We welcome you all to send in your comments or corrections about the information in the earlier edition. Some organic farmers have already left the planet. A few have even returned to conventional farmers. A veritable new army of new organic farmers is now on the horizon. Please help us with whatever information you can send us either through letter, email or even by phone.

All written or typed information should be sent to:

OFAI
G-8, St Britto’s Apts., Feira Alta,
Mapusa 403507 Goa.
Phone - 0832-2255913
Email - myofai@gmail.com

A new book called A Sourcebook on India’s Organic Seeds is forthcoming from the Other India Bookstore. It is a compilation that provides easy access to traditional folk seed knowledge for farmers, and champions the cause of their conservation.

For more information, or to buy a copy contact the Other India Bookstore.

Phone - 0832-2263305
Email - otherindiabookstore@gmail.com

Cultural events at OWC 2017

The OWC will play host to organic farmers from all over the world. To welcome them and show them the flavours and colours of India, we are organising a cultural extravaganza with song and dance from all regions of India.

Overall charge of the cultural events is with Nehha Bhattacharjee of the Sarvam Foundation and her team.

If you want to contribute to the cultural night events, please let Nehha know. She will personally visit you, so that you can present the cultural item to her and she can come to an opinion.

Her address:

Nehha Bhattacharjee
Sarvam Foundation
New Delhi

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Her address:

Nehha Bhattacharjee
Sarvam Foundation
New Delhi

More details about the
Organic World Congress 2017
Do you want to make a presentation of your innovations or techniques at the Organic World Congress? You should follow these steps. If you succeed, your travel and registration charges may be waived.

Steps to follow for getting your presentation accepted:

1. If you feel that the world organic community will benefit from a sharing of your organic farming work, contact the person appointed in your region. The list of contact people will be updated on the OFAI website.

2. All organic farmer presentations are to be made in a fixed format. Total number of slides permitted is 20. Slides must be only photographs, with space left for one sentence below the photograph.

3. If you can take the photos yourself or if you can get the help of anyone in the neighbourhood, please do so. If you cannot, contact OFAI office and sometime in the coming months, a trained person will connect with you and then help you prepare the PPT.

4. Once the PPT is done, it is despatched to the myofai email id. The Central Secretariat staff will make copies and then send it for consideration to the Presentation Approval Committee (PAC) for its decision.

5. If your proposal or PPT is accepted, the PPT will go for translation into 11 other languages. It will then be sent to Digital Empowerment Foundation in New Delhi for ensuring uniform good quality in the presentations.

6. Hindi and English are the official languages of OWC 2017. However, organic farmers are allowed to submit their presentations in any of the following 14 languages: English, Hindi, Gujarati, Spanish, French, Chinese & Portuguese, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, and Marathi.

7. Once the PPT is accepted, it will go to the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) for professional upgrade and conversion into standard format for projection at the Congress.

8. All organic farmers making presentations will be allowed to speak in English, Hindi or their mother-tongue.

9. All organic farmer presentations must be prepared before 1 October, 2016, in order to enable the process of selection and translation to be completed on time.

10. All farmers whose presentations have been approved will be informed well in advance so that they can book their tickets to New Delhi well in time.

Presentation Approval Committee (PAC)

OFAI has set up a Presentation Approval Committee (PAC). All the presentations will be sent to the committee for selection. The members are mostly organic farmers. They are listed here:

1. Sarvadaman Patel, President (OFAI)
2. Dr. Deva Kumar
3. Kapil Shah, Secretary (OFAI)
4. Debal Deb
5. S.R. Sundaraman
6. Dr. K. Natarajan
7. Ramaswamy Selvam
8. Natarajan Sarangi
9. Arun Sharma
10. Shamika Mone
11. B.N. Nandesh
12. Biju Kungra
13. Meenakshi Dhote
14. Rahul Deshpande
15. Arun Sanghvi
16. Veena Madjare
17. Chakravarty Satpati
18. Arvind Reddy
19. Varsha Dodiya
20. Shivanand Shetty
21. Nandkumar V. K. R. Nadkarni
22. G. C. Prakashan
23. Chandran Master
24. George Anthony
25. Mallika Prakash
26. Indira Kodakara
27. Rakesh Dodiya
28. Suresh J. M. K. Shankar
29. Ramesh Mehta
30. N. N. Chaudhary
31. Udhay Bhan
32. Sumita Thacker
33. Renu Seth
34. Bhawani Singh
35. Neelam Datta
36. Bhim Singh
37. Bina Chetia
38. Balakrishna Patil
39. Shubham Agrawal
40. Shobha Jagtap
41. Ramesh Chander Dagar
42. Shalini Ghorpade
43. Darshana Khare
44. Saurabh Deshpande
45. Radhakrishna Chiplunkar
46. Shri S. Deshpande
47. Balchandra Patil
48. Shankar Patil
49. Kamalakar Patil
50. Krishna Prasad

Preliminary List of Farmers Identified:

OFAI has also compiled a preliminary list of farmers who will be invited to give presentations at the Congress. If you know of anyone that we missed, please get in touch with us.


The list of contact people will be updated on the OFAI website.

Follow these steps. If you succeed, your travel and registration charges may be waived.
Sample 20-Slide Presentation (PPT) for OWC

Read the slides from left to right. This is a slide show prepared by a Goan organic farming couple. We have not used all the 20 slides because of space constraints. Please follow the guidelines on the next page when preparing the PPT.
Guidelines for making the PPT:

1. Follow the sample ppt and do not exceed number of slides (20).
2. Ensure that final ppt does not exceed the size of 10-14 MB.
3. Use only one or two line descriptions under each picture.
4. Make sure that the slides follow some order, and that they tell a logical and coherent story.

Get the whole story first, and see how to best to tell it using pictures, and only then proceed to take the pictures. The ppt should flow in such a way that the audience understands the process from beginning to end.

5. Highlight the innovativeness of the farmer’s approach to organic farming.
6. Take clear pictures, they should not be blurry.
7. Text should appear at the bottom of the slide as far as possible.
8. You can put more than one picture in one slide, and make a collage, if you feel that it is necessary.

If you have any further queries with regards to the presentation please write to OFAI at myofai@gmail.com.

You can also find and download the regional language presentations in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Oriya, Bengali, Gujarati, and Malayalam on the OFAI website.

Subjects on which you can make presentations for the congress

A. SEEDS AND BIODIVERSITY (INCLUDING FAUNA, WILD AND DOMESTICATED)
1. Conservation of indigenous seed
2. Working with Open Pollinated (OP) seed
3. Seed treatments and management solutions
4. Seed storage systems – traditional and new
5. Maintaining village level seed banks
6. Successful low-cost seed conservation
7. Maintaining seed diversity
8. Maintaining / Enhancing soil bacteria diversity
9. Wilderness areas in organic fields
10. Livestock: working with indigenous species
11. Managing troublesome animals and wildlife-farmer conflicts
12. Fodder and forage farming – traditional fodder, forage and improved varieties on organic farms

B. SOIL FERTILITY AND HEALTH, SOIL LIFE AND PLANT HEALTH
1. Mulching methods
2. Conserving, enhancing and maintaining beneficial soil bacteria
3. Dealing with insect imbalances
4. Using beneficial insects and organisms
5. Termites for organic farmers
6. Earthworms, vermiculture and vermiculture
7. Rehabilitating soils after chemical farming
8. Cover crops and green manure crops
9. Forestry principles for organic farms
10. Organic horticulture and floriculture
11. Soil nutrient preps
12. Organic dairy production (indigenous cattle and buffalo, plus goat farming)
13. Organic poultry production (indigenous chicken and duck)
14. Restoring the bee and frog to organic agriculture
15. Small equipments for small organic farmers
16. Fish production and integrated farming
17. Planning organic farms for water conservation
18. Reducing water usage for intensive cropping
19. General water conservation and use
20. Building overall farm ecology

C. ECOLOGICAL FARMING PRACTICES AND SYSTEMS
1. Biodynamic Agriculture
2. Permaculture
3. Organic farming
4. Zero budget farming
5. No tillage agriculture
6. Diversity of SRI techniques
7. Homa Organic Farming
8. Biodiversity-based farming
9. Holistic Approaches to Farm Workers on Organic Farms
10. Natural Farming
11. Insights of Traditional Agriculture
12. Non-conventional crops and wild produce
13. Non-Pesticidal Management (NPM)
14. Insect repellents and traps
15. Maintaining balance sheets (economic inputs)
16. Product harvest and storage
17. Food processing, quality assurance guarantees and upscaling (organic jams, pickles, etc)
18. Education of children and complete organic life styles

Volunteers needed for the OWC

If any of you want to volunteer with OFAI in any capacity towards making the OWC a success, do get in touch with us either by email or post. We also require young, tech savvy volunteers to go out in their states and help farmers make presentations. If this is something that excites you, we will put you in touch with local farmers.

Please note: The above topics are only illustrative of the many presentations topics that can be used. Feel free to talk about new and innovative organic practices that you use. Write to OFAI with your proposed presentation ideas and we will get back to you with feedback and help.
OFAI's 5th Biennial Convention

More than 2,000 registered delegates came to Chandigarh

For the first time, several organisations came to join OFAI in organising the event. These included ASHA, NITTR and the Kheti Virasat Mission.

The 5th National Organic Farming Convention was the largest congregation of organic farmers anywhere ever in the world. This Convention was mostly crowd-funded, with participants themselves contributing nearly one-fourth of the financial requirement, with others like the Government of Haryana, Government of Punjab, Government of India (National Centre for Organic Farming), Chandigarh administration in addition to NABARD stepping forward to support this.

The convention also attracted extensive media attention and coverage. The special features of this year convention included:

Farmer-to-Farmer sharing, learning and dialogue: Group discussions, workshops, live demonstrations and other programs for exchange of knowledge and solidarity-building were an important feature of this Convention. These were augmented by the technical expertise of NITTTR through live transmission and interactions with farmers and scientists at selected 'centres' around the country.

Live demonstrations: Special agricultural plots were prepared around Chandigarh by Dr Sarvadamani Patel, President of OFAI, who is a pioneering organic farmer. Other farmers and scientists demonstrated their skills, knowledge and innovations with ecological practices & products.

Scientific Conference on 'Mainstreaming Agro-Ecology': The Indian Society for Agro-Ecology along with the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture held a Scientific Conference which included presentation of the research papers by scientists and researchers in the field of sustainable agriculture.

Policy debates: As part of its technical deliberations, the Convention hosted debates for better policy formulation on a variety of themes like seeds, millets, certification, marketing, organic farming policies, and promotion of bio-diversity conservation.

Exhibition for innovations: An exhibition was set up to make citizens aware of the need for organic farming, various organic practices, inputs, machinery and innovations from farmers and entrepreneurs.

Kisan Haat: The Kisan Haat was a key attraction for the tri-city consumers to interact and procure authentic organic farm produce directly from farmers. It also opened up marketing opportunities for organic producers from the region and organic farmers from other parts of the country.

Biodiversity festival: The success of organic farming depends on the preservation and protection of bio-diversity. A number of farmers and organizations working for the agro-diversity conservation and revival displayed India's rich crop bio-diversity. This festival was led by Sahaja Samrudha. Similarly, uncultivated foods were on display, led by Living Farms.

Organic food festival: The delegates as well as general public experienced a first-of-its-kind organic and traditional food festival to enable them to reconnect with the healthy food traditions of India.

Urban gardening workshops: Workshops were organized for people to
take up kitchen gardening based on organic principles.

Cultural programmes: Cultural programmes were organised which included the famous singer Rabbi Shergill performing on the opening day of the Convention.

Publications: Books and CDs/DVDs were launched, displayed and sold.

Many parallel sessions were organised each day, broken up into technical and policy level themes - Organic Farming Policies & Implementation, Agro-Toxins and Environmental Health, Adivasi Agriculture, Plant Protection, Water, GMOs and Organic Farming, Biodiversity and Crop Planning, Soil, Organic Certification and Marketing, Seed Sovereignty, Livestock especially Indigenous Breeds, Women in Organic Agriculture, Smallholders and Organic Farming, Organic farming in School Education, and Crop Planning & Innovative Practices, so that all delegates could choose a topic of their interest and join a discussion on the same, for learning, for voicing their views and experience and for policy influencing.

Shri Manohar Lal Khattar, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Govt of Haryana said about the occasion, “I am happy to have people from all parts of the country here today. We have tried to create a few opportunities and have in the process also created a few challenges for ourselves. Of the issues that we have created for ourselves, one is the suffocation of the very soil. Organic farming is a solution to this problem. We need to ensure that organic farming is being promoted in Haryana. We want to get at least 10 percent of all our land under organic farming each year. Perhaps, it will be possible for us to do it in phases. Till now, our testing labs have only been testing the soil. I have asked for the produce to also be tested and for us to have the capacity to do so. This will ensure that the organic food is labeled and through this we would be able to provide better returns to our farmers.

We are creating facilities to produce good compost and also tying them up with our solid waste management programmes. We will ensure that we make a ‘Jaivik Kheti’ policy in this state. We will ensure that we foster and facilitate the local varieties of the cattle. We are looking at traditional breeds of cattle to provide better returns to the farmers.”

Shri Om Prakash Dhankar, Minister for Agriculture, Govt of Haryana added that, “The Chief Minister is himself a farmer who is sensitive to the issues of farmers. I have known Shri Umendra for three decades. In 2005, we organized a convention for farmers here and did a review of the four decades of Green Revolution. The situation of our farming was very different before 1965. We got new fertilisers followed by high yielding varieties and then came the pesticides. We could get many technologies and were able to provide food to the nation, but the by-product of this has been the cancer and other forms of illness. Today, even our elite farmers have stopped eating what they grow and instead consume food from other parts of the country where there is relatively lower usage of chemicals. Wherever there is a high usage of BT, there is also a large increase in suicide rate.

When I got visitors from Monsanto, I told them that we feed cotton oilcake to our buffaloes and this has an effect on our milk. I asked them if they have studied the impact of this. They haven’t done any such study so far. I had their representatives meet me again but there was no response from them. We need to advance, but, we need to know that the advancement and progress is not about reaching a position where we are facing destruction. Organic farming is not about learning anything new; it is about stopping all those things that we are doing which are destructive. If we can ensure that the farmer gets good returns, then we can make him adopt these ideas.

Today, the governments pay heed to the market forces when they are organised. So, we too need to get organised. As an Agriculture Minister, my biggest concern is how to organize the market for farmers. This is the challenge I face every day. When the farmers can directly reach the consumers and ensure their command and influence in the market, we will be able to do something serious.”

Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Minister for Women and Child Development, and a fervent organic farming supporter, participated for a few hours in the Convention and released a copy of OFAI’s new Organic Seed Sourcebook prepared by Shamika Mone for detailed reports including individual event reports like seed festival report, declarations by the organic farming community and scientists, discussions in each sessions along with the entire fund mobilisation, please visit the website link.

A native of Yalavatti village in Shirahatti taluk of Gadag district, D.D. Bharamagoudra was a pioneer in initiating organic farming in rain-fed areas and also motivated many to follow him.

He was the first president of the Organic Farming Association of India, and served the association for two terms. He was also a respected member of the Organic Farming Mission set up by the BJP government in the State.

He was also honoured with ‘Kamatataka Rajyotsava’ award and was known as a resource person on organic farming.

Apart from being a pioneer in growing cotton and chillis under organic farming in rain-fed areas, he had also worked towards preserving native varieties of seeds.

A few years ago, DD, as he was popularly known, found he had a serious heart problem. He submitted to a heart operation in Bangalore. He came out of it and soon gathered his strength. Very soon, he was back again at his favourite work: traveling, meeting farmers, advising those who wished to move out of chemical farming.

He had just returned from a family outing abroad, when the call came.

Bhaskarbhai Save, aged 93, left this world on Oct 24, 2015. Born on 27th January, 1922, Bhaskar Save inspired and mentored 3 generations of organic farmers. Masanobu Fukuoka, the legendary Japanese natural farmer, described Save’s farm as “the best in the world, even better than my own farm!” It is a veritable food forest and a net supplier of water, energy and fertility to the local ecosystem, rather than a net consumer.

In 2010, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) – the world-wide umbrella body of organic farmers and movements – honoured Save with the ‘One World Award for Lifetime Achievement’. Its jury declared, “He is one of the most outstanding personalities in the organic world.”

Save’s way of farming and teachings were rooted in his deep understanding of the symbiotic relationships in nature, which he was ever happy to share freely and enthusiastically with anyone interested. The farm yield – in all aspects of total quantity, nutritional quality, taste, biological diversity, ecological sustainability, water conservation, energy efficiency, and economic profitability – is superior to any farm using chemicals, while costs (mainly labour for harvesting) are minimal, and external inputs almost zero.

Since 2014, a residential Natural Farming Learning Centre (www.bhaskarsavenftc.in) has been offering 6 day long introductory courses (in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati & English) at Bhaskar Save’s farm.

- Bharat Mansata

There are hardly any words to describe the grief and sense of loss that the entire community of organic farming/ecological agriculture movement in India is experiencing after hearing the news of the sudden and tragic demise of Dr O P Rupela, a friend and guide to hundreds in the movement.

We remember him as a strong supporter in most of our endeavours. Whether it was a high-profile conference or a closed door lobbying meeting, or action research in farmers’ fields or reviewing a book being prepared, or giving his inputs in designing and implementation of a research study, or training a group of farmers or NGO frontline workers, there was not a single time when Dr Rupela turned down any request.

As a scientist, he was that rare breed who had enormous humility and ability to learn from every situation – he would keep telling again and again unhesitatingly in all fora that farmers like Subhash Sharma are his “Gurus”. His readiness in admitting that he did not know something, his eagerness to learn new things and his amazing humility with regard to the enormous knowledge that he carried are rarities amongst human beings, leave alone scientists.

He will continue to be our guide and inspiration in our work, and we hope to imbibe his values so that we may fulfill our collective dream of ecological agriculture in India, led by empowered farmers. Our greatest tribute to him would be by taking forward the mission with strength, and we need to do so.

- Kavitha Kuruganti