



Short Version

Agriculture at a Tipping Point

Only Ecological Farming Can Feed 10 Billion People

The system of industrial intensive agriculture as it prevails today is not capable of feeding the world population in the 21st century. To the contrary: it increasingly compromises food security because it massively damages the climate, destroys soil fertility, exhausts water reserves, and accelerates species loss. It thus threatens to destroy its own foundations within a few decades.

This polemic, authored by the World Food Institute to intervene in the current debate, fundamentally and factually illustrates that tending to symptoms will not improve this outlook, and neither will any small ecological substeps. The time for fundamental change has arrived, for an innovative agricultural and food system that adapts to biogeochemical cycles and ecological networks, that builds on social relationships and economic compensation, and that thus secures food provision for generations to come without transgressing our planet's boundaries.

This polemic promotes ecological agriculture on a global scale. It reaches beyond practices certified in Germany and focuses on an extended understanding of organic farming which also takes into account long-standing ecological practices from different parts of the world. It endorses a form of agriculture that is based on the soil's strength, crop rotation diversity, biodiversity, and the traditional knowledge of all those involved. With guidance, education, and practice-based research it can significantly increase yields, even double them. In this way, small-scale farms can become high-yielding operations, and in this way, ecological agriculture can even develop industrial features when necessary, while staying true to its principles.

This polemic vehemently objects to widespread allegations such as that extended organic farming does not produce enough yields to feed the world population, that its products are unaffordable for poor people, and that conventional agriculture is already implementing the legitimate concerns of ecological theory in its practice. None of these claims are substantiated.

This polemic calls for action because intensive industrial agriculture continues to devitalize soils, accelerate climate change, and as a consequence is already endangering food provision for the planet.



As German and European agricultural and food policies have by their own choice made themselves dependant on the market and power interests of large agricultural and food corporations, this polemic primarily counts on civil society to provide impulses. It makes a plea for overcoming the current political stalemate through civil initiatives:

- Civil society sends a signal by divesting from the agricultural and food industry's stocks.
- It sets examples by urging churches and municipalities as large landowners to only sign leases that ensure the promotion of ecological practices.
- It demands that public funding in the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union is only allocated to ecological agricultural services.
- It endorses the new food movement in Germany working on the development of ecological food concepts as elements of local and regional policies.
- It demands the ban of pesticides in agricultural production, as well as the preventive use of antibiotics in animal husbandry.

Agriculture's ecological transformation is a global challenge. On this continent, it starts as a European project. It begins in regional Europe and is championed by clear-headed citizens.