

# Organic Dairy Farming – Opportunity and Challenges

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Organic dairy farming concept is a relative newcomer. Interestingly it is showing a rising trend with time due to its beneficial effects in human life, to environment and mainly awareness among people. Lot more people lack the knowledge of organic farming and its uses. Therefore, this article gives much information about organic dairy farming, to enlighten the lives of human kind.

Organic dairy farming is a method of raising dairy cattle that highlights natural and sustainable practices while avoiding the use of chemical products, antibiotics and genetically modified organisms. Organic dairy surged into the organic marketplace in the 1990s, establishing itself as a major category. In organic farming animals are raised on pastures cultivated organically without using fertilizers and pesticides and there is restricted usage of antibiotics and hormones. The products obtained from Organic dairy farm are the organic dairy products. The primary aim of the organic dairy farming is to produce good quality milk and dairy products along with promoting the health and wellbeing of human, animals and environment.

The main principle of organic movement is healthy soils lead to healthy crops, healthy animals, healthy humans leading to healthy planet. Organic farming aims in increasing soil organic matter and biology in order to provide a long-term, dynamic environment for generating nutritious food and feed.

## Key features of organic dairy farming

**Organic feed:** Cows and calves are fed with 100% organic feed. Organic feed is one which is grown without the use of synthetic chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and genetically modified organisms. Organic crops must be grown on land that has been free of all prohibited elements for at least three years prior to the first organic harvest.

The use of non-natural feed additives and supplements, like vitamins and minerals, is also approved for use. Organic dairy animals should have access to pasture and graze outdoors. Prohibition of slaughter by-products is followed in organic dairy farming.

## Restriction of synthetic chemicals

Synthetic chemicals such as antibiotics, hormones and synthetic growth factors etc should be prohibited. Antibiotics usage is restricted and are used only when cows are ill. Approved health care products can be used.

Additionally, calf should not be fed with synthetic milk replacers. Instead of usage synthetic chemicals natural remedies should be used and calves must be fed organic milk only.

**Animal welfare:** Organic dairy farming gives more importance to humane treatment and welfare of animals. Certain harmful procedures such as tail docking should be prohibited. Whereas, activities such as grazing animals outdoors, providing proper shelter, dehorning to minimize stress and meeting

proper feed and water to animals are given importance.

**Genetically modified organisms:** Use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited strictly.

**Impact on environment:** Organic dairy farming aims at minimizing environmental impacts by reducing chemical input, water conservation and promoting sustainable soil health through practices such as cover cropping, crop rotation and usage of organic fertilizers.

**Record maintenance:** farming who is maintaining organic dairy farming should keep all records to verify his/her compliance with the standards. Organic farms are inspected and audited every year.

**Certification:** Organic dairy farms are required to abide by stringent requirements for organic certification set by the government or independent certifying agencies. These criteria guarantee that farms adhere to the established organic best practices and regulations.



### Advantages of organic dairy farming

Organic dairy products are strictly from animals that are maintained under organic management. The milk and milk products obtained

from this system of rearing are superior in quality of products.

Organic milk is better for health. Whereas, conventional milk may contain residues of antibiotics, pesticides, hormones etc which have serious impact on health of animals as well as humans. Conventional milk is inferior in its quality. Its consumption may cause hormonal imbalance, early puberty, hypersensitivity and certain types of diseases such as cancer in humans. Therefore, organic dairy products are having superior quality and health benefits and its usage helps in good health status.

### Limitations of organic dairy farming

Agriculture and dairy farming is mostly occupied by small and marginal farmers. Because so many small farms supply milk and other products, traceability is a challenging alternative.

In organic production system animals are most vulnerable to incidences of diseases because they are raised outdoors and preventative treatment is not allowed. Therefore, parasite infection in organic dairy systems is the biggest problem for animal health and, subsequently, for consumer product quality. Production concern and cost drop is also a major drawback of organic dairy production. Additionally, lack of knowledge and training among farmers and people is causing fall in production and utilisation of organic dairy products.

### Conclusion

Organic dairy farming is expanding quickly and strictly prohibits the usage of synthetic chemicals, hormones, pesticides and other harmful chemical which cause hazardous health issues. Additionally, the organic dairy farming is strictly monitored by regular inspection, certification and verification of organic practices to protect consumers

who choose organic product. In general, organic dairy farming represents an effort to develop a more holistic and sustainable method of producing dairy products that puts the health of animals, consumers, and the environment first.

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