Chapter 2

Organic Farming Practices and Research in Europe

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Industrialized forms of agriculture do not build their productivity upon a cyclic farming system, but rather are dependent on large inputs of fertilizers and pesticides from industry. These industrialized farming systems tend to be unstable ecosystems in which the potential for maximum yield is inevitably associated with a risk due to ecosystem instability.

The development of industrialized farming paralleled technological advances, and was especially encouraged by improved analytical methods and advances in the biological sciences. This tandem development led to the belief that modern agricultural developments were progressively inevitable and must be beneficial from a socio-economic standpoint. The quantitative viewpoint brought to bear on agriculture was important, but in the process, quality was overlooked. Negative environmental side effects associated with industrial farming were considered to be unimportant.

National agricultural policies took on the focus that only the amount of farm production was important. This policy decision was not made initially by farmers. The focus on yield alone led to consequences which threatened nature and the landscape, but few people realized that danger. Soil fertility and the sustainability of agricultural production in general was also threatened.

The farmer who was caught in a difficult situation, had to continuously cope with a decreasing margin between costs and product prices; costs rose quicker than produce prices, especially the cost of labor. The

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