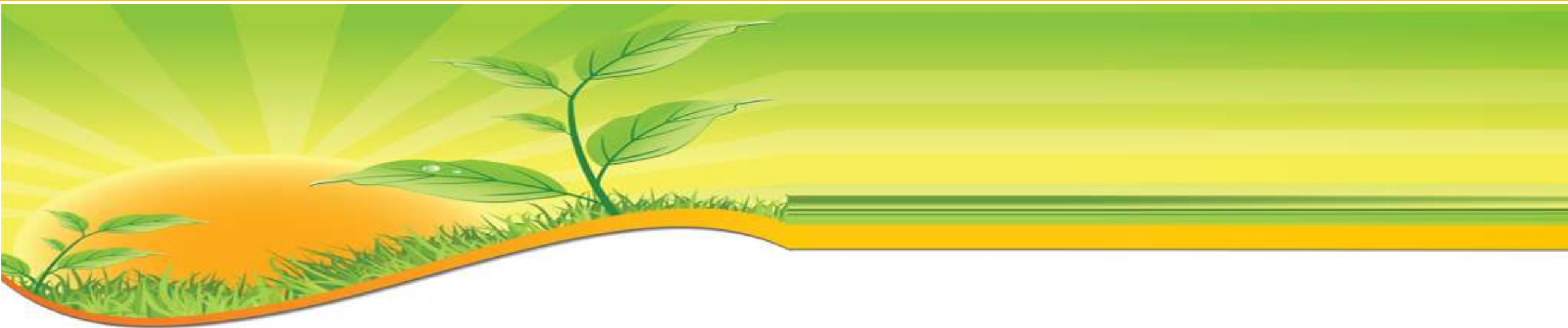


'Testing Times' for Organic/Safe Food Markets– & many names of Sustainable Agriculture!

India Case Study 2024

*Consultative Workshop, ICRIER, 21 May 2025, New Delhi
(& IFOAM OWC, Taiwan, Dec 2024)*



Global trends in Sustainable Agri/Food Sector

Sustainable Agriculture

– FAO, UN

- *"The **management and conservation of the natural resource base**, and the orientation of **technological and institutional change** in such a manner as to ensure the **attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs** for present and **future generations**".*

Agroecological Farming

– FAO, UN

- *"Agroecology is a **holistic and integrated** approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of **sustainable agriculture and food systems**"*

Organic Agriculture

– FAO/ WHO

- *"OA is a **holistic production** management **system** which promotes & enhances **agro-ecosystem health**, incl **biodiversity**, biological cycles & **soil biological** activity. Emphasizes use of management practices in preference to **off-farm inputs**, taking into account **locally adapted systems**, by using agronomic, biological & mechanical methods, instead of synthetic materials.*

Regenerative Agriculture

– FAO, UN

- *"Describes **holistic farming systems** that, among other benefits, improve **water & air** quality, enhance **ecosystem biodiversity**, produce nutrient-dense food, and **store carbon** to help mitigate the effects of climate change"*



Organic Sector – Defined standards since 1970s...

EU Standards since 1991; USDA since 2000; NPOP since 2001



Organic 2.0 (1970s)

1970s – IFOAM as an umbrella organization
 - OA codified into standards, and
 - to legally mandated regulatory systems

OA- Three pillars of Sustainability

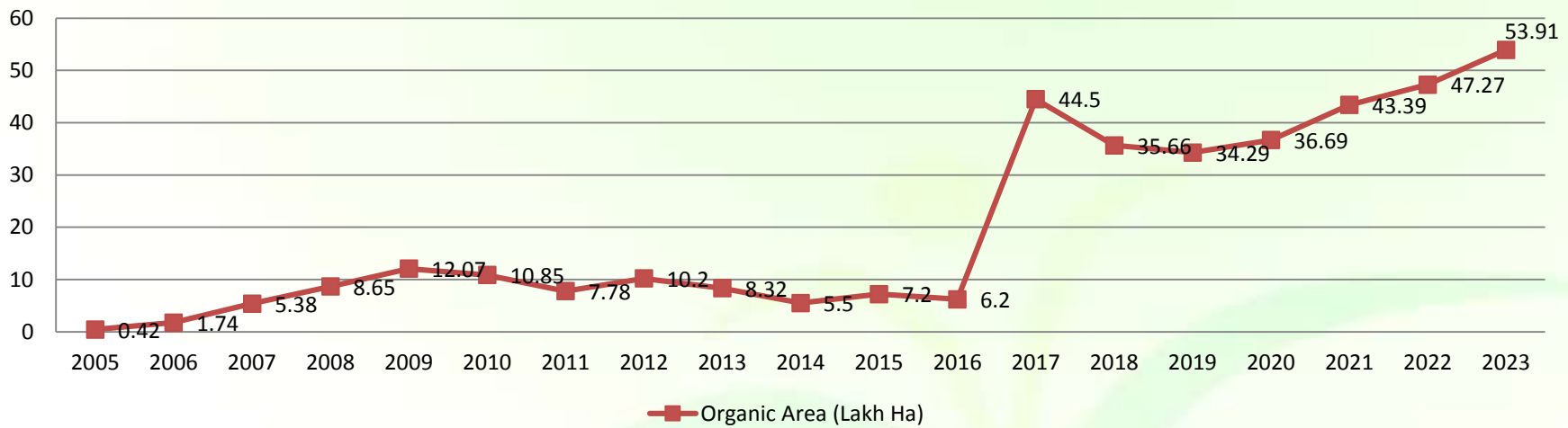
4 Principles of Organic Farming by IFOAM

1. Principle of Health
2. Principle of Ecology
3. Principle of Fairness
4. Principle of Care



India Organic Update – Third Party & PGS – Area, Growth – 20 years

Organic Area (lakh Ha) - TPC



Organic Area (lakh Ha) - PGS



What is ICCOA!

ICCOA is a not-for-profit 'knowledge & learning center' promoting organic agriculture & agribusiness. It is also an interface organization for all stakeholders in the sector



370,000 +

Farmers



146,000 +

Hectares



268 +

FPOs



FiBL, Switzerland

IFOAM Organics
International, Germany

Nuremberg Messe,
Germany

IFOAM Asia,
South Korea

Organic Trade Association,
USA



FiBL



IFOAM
ORGANICS
INTERNATIONAL



NÜRNBERG MESSE



IFOAM asia



Organic
trade association



AccessAgriculture
www.accessagriculture.org



giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



HELVETAS



Be in Organic
BiO Reporter International

Access Agriculture,
Belgium

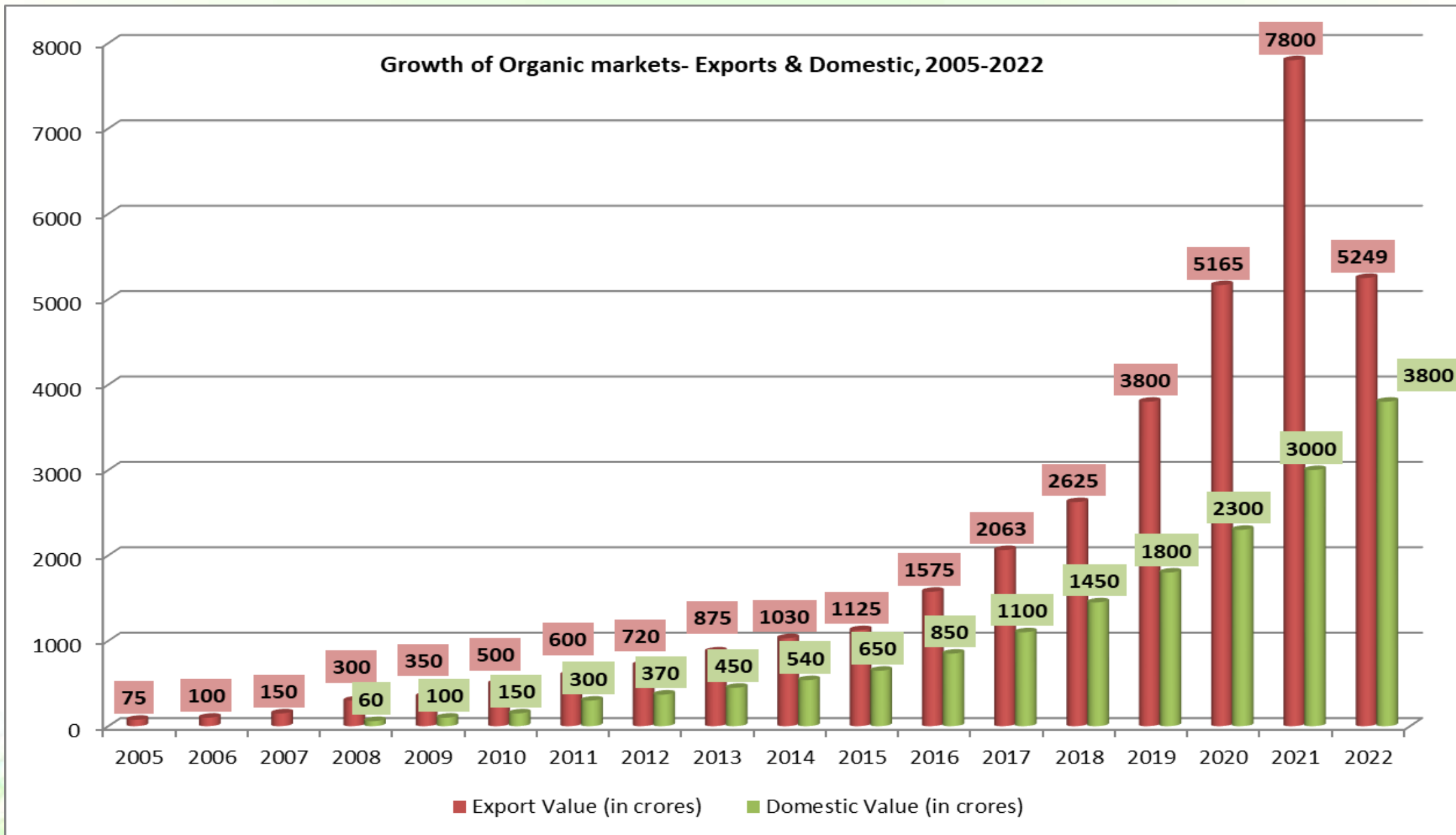
GIZ, Germany

HELVETAS, Switzerland

Bio Reporter
International, Germany



Markets for Organic Certified, 2005-2023



NPOP Equivalency with NOP – Ceases from Jan 2021

- India's (APEDA) certification system had equivalency with USDA-NOP since 2006
- On January 11 2021, USDA-NOP ended its recognition agreement with APEDA
- CB's offering NOP significantly reduced, and costs grew by 2.5X

NPOP Equivalency with EU – Ceases from 2022

- India's Certification had 'Status of equivalency' with EU since 2006
- By 2021 India had 33 CBs with NPOP and EU equivalence, and 1.25 mn ha certified
- 2021-22 EU delisted 5 CB for EU-A & F category; APEDA- India suspends 09 CBs in Jan 2022
- 2023: No. of CBs with EU Cat- A & F equivalency are 23; Area is 1.4 mn ha
- Category-D (Processing needed to export) - India left with only 04 CBs, costs goes 3x (300%)



'Testing Times begins' – Organic is no more a 'process' ?

- Residue testing regime – All CBs demand each lot testing in labs
- Costs go north, Time and resources wasted, ICS struggles
- If lab-tests are the litmus, then organic is 'food tested for safety'!

And the tests ?

Accredited lab results are inconsistent. Lab to lab; sample to sample

Labs under cloud over accountability

Jeopardising exports worth millions even after consignment reached destination countries

Safe & Healthy Foods- is that the ask ? Or Organic?

Traceability – India was the fore-runner – APEDA -TRACENET since 2010

Tracenet - A digital platform for Organic certification, ensures traceability of organics across the entire 'chain of custody' as per NPOP standards for export



The screenshot displays the Tracenet website interface. At the top left is the Tracenet logo with the tagline "Traceability System for Organic Products from India". To the right is the APEDA logo. Below the header, there are two main sections: "Organic Traceability System" featuring a large image of a vineyard, and "USER LOGIN" which includes a sign-in form with fields for "User ID" (containing "ZKHDBG"), "Password" (masked with asterisks), a CAPTCHA image showing "inMbw7", and a "Sign In" button. Below the login form is a link for "Can't access your account?". At the bottom, the "Certification Bodies" section lists logos for TROLNION, USOCA (NPOP/NAB/0011), a globe logo, the Indian Society for Certification of Organic Products (ISCO), TQ Cert, and two other circular logos. The Windows taskbar at the very bottom shows the date as 19-05-2025 and the time as 13:10.

NPOP new guidelines – sync with EU Revision 2026

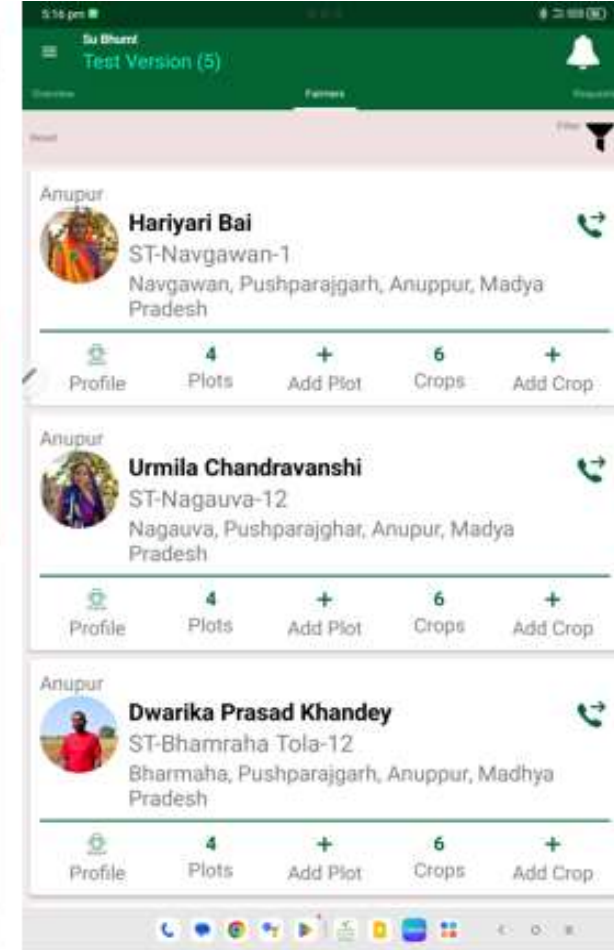
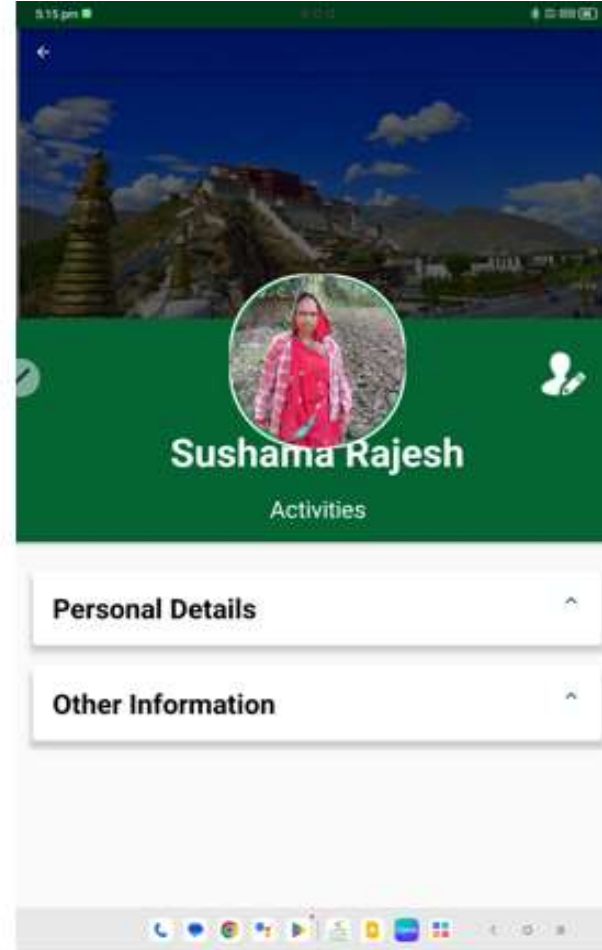
Farmers- < 500; 50 kms diameter, legal entity, higher scrutiny

Tracenet 2.0 – More adherence, GPS, forward and backward traceability data



The screenshot displays the Tracenet 2.0 web application interface. At the top, the header includes the Government of India emblem, the APEDA logo (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority), and the text "Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India". The Tracenet logo, "Traceability System for Organic Products from India", is prominently displayed. A "Login" button is visible in the top right corner. The main content area features a map with a red line indicating a path or boundary. Two smartphone screens are overlaid on the map: one on the left labeled "REGISTRATION" and one on the right labeled "FARM INSPECTIONS". The text "Advanced Geolocation, Product Traceability and NPOP Compliance in One System" is centered at the bottom of the map area. A "Show desktop" button is located in the bottom right corner.

- ICCOA developed, thru a GIZ funded project, an app (*Su-Bhumi*) with web and mobile application
- Helps farmers in farm management, track crop progress, and access expert advice, including a crop advisory service for field issues
- The app includes, plot registration, data collection on farming activities, and economic analysis to support better decision-making and productivity



Traceability initiation by ICCOA – Su-Bhumi

Su-Bhumi of

- ✓ online training modules and extension advisories,
- ✓ providing farmers topic-based literature & videos
- ✓ provides technical support,
- ✓ Farmers sent images/videos/audio of pests/diseases
- ✓ Diagnosis and solutions recommendations



The Storm impact

- Loss of the 'Organic brand image' - Organic integrity, process under cloud
- High cost of Certification for ICS/Farmers – Good ones suffer more!
- High cost of Certification + Testing – CBs imposes unreasonable rules
- Waste of time, resources, money and energy- Exports of Organic, especially to EU becomes a very tedious and complicated thing to do from India!

Sector appeals –

In these Testing times- lets **NOT** throw the baby with the bath water!

Lets clean up the water, save the baby 😊

Thank you for your Attention



Manoj Kumar Menon
Executive Director – ICCOA
manoj.menon@iccoa.org