Climate change and coffee rust

Challenges at the coffee production

Agricultural policy
TTIP – strange partnership

Organic and Fair
Naturland at trade fairs

Naturland commenting
Recent publications
Dear Naturland members and partners all around the world!

The organic farming industry introduces the term “organic 3.0” - after pioneering work and professionalisation phase, it is the departure into a new organic age. New questions and challenges get discussed in order to shape a successful path in the organic future. Naturland launched an internal vision, which was introduced under the concept of “ÖkuhVision”. Animal welfare, regionalism, biodiversity, natural resources, social responsibility: all highlights of Naturland Assembly of Delegates.

Society as a whole is more and more committed to organic farming. Germany is the second largest organic market worldwide – in 2013, a growth of 7.2% with an annual turnover of 7.55 billion Euro, (followed by France 4.0 billion Euro), the UK 1.95 billion Euro, Italy 1.84 billion Euro and Switzerland 1.5 billion Euro. Leading the statistics are the USA with sales in the organic sector of 22.5 billion Euro. Fair trade is also becoming more important and gains significance – a constant momentum!

Growth and thematic development belong together; the strengthening of organic farmers with their contributions to society has to be increasingly implemented in the worldwide political consciousness. Sometimes “good intentions” are the opposite of “good”. This includes a draft of total revision of the EU Regulation on Organic Farming. Renunciation of the ‘polluter pays’ principle, high analysis costs charged to smaller enterprises and much more have led to massive confusion in the organic industry.

Naturland lobbied that a “revolution of the governmental offices in Brussels” may not turn the entire legal framework upside down.

The currently negotiated agreements on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) also shake the very foundations of civil self-determination and environmental safety. The need to question meat consumption as well as international agricultural programs is shown in various publications. Naturland – as a community of farmers worldwide – constantly sensitizes media representatives, politicians and society to all these issues. The connection of Organic and Fair, organic cultivation of coffee, chia seeds believed to be forgotten, special organic companies in South Africa and Greece, maple syrup certified Naturland organic from Canada – all this in brief on the following pages as a snapshot of our work together!

Let’s develop an “Organic 3.0” from challenges according to Naturland – organic agriculture will continue to grow!

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Dr. Mathew Hubby and Eduard Mulondo at the Assembly of Delegates (more on page 13)
IGW – Naturland at the world largest food and agricultural trade fair

Over a period of ten days in January, visitors from all over the world attended the International Green Week Berlin (IGW). From foodstuffs to homes and every type of handicraft everything is on display. A relatively small portion of the trade fair was occupied by the organic farming pavilion, in which Germany’s major organic associations had their exhibition booths. Of this group, Naturland is the largest international association, and the only one with its own fair trade certification. It was this special feature which drew the crowds to the Naturland booth – and was the topic of discussions with politicians as well as with consumers and Naturland partners.

Berlin – the hub of Germany’s federal politics

At the same time as the IGW took place, the cabinet members of the new German government which had been elected in 2013 were being appointed. The new representatives of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and of the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development used the trade fair to establish and reinforce their contacts with various organisations. Naturland was able to meet representatives of both ministries as well as others active in state and federal politics and inform them first hand of the Naturland position on important topics of current interest.

Parallel to the exhibition, a demonstrati

tion for more equitable agricultural policy took place

Thirty thousand people demonstrated in Berlin against genetic engineering and for a genuine paradigm shift in agricultural policy on the occasion of the International Green Week Berlin. As the year before they demanded a change of direction towards an agricultural policy which is consistent with its responsibility towards consumers and farmers, animals, the environment and the climate alike. This was the tenor of numerous speakers, including Dr. Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein, chairman of the German Federation of the Organic Food Industry (BÖLW) and member of the Naturland board of directors, at the start of the rally on the Saturday at Potsdamer Platz. Naturland is one of the sponsors of the Green Week, the largest agricultural trade fair in the world. At the head of the protests was a procession of 70 tractors driving through the city, in which several Naturland farmers took part. (For further information: http://www.naturland.de/detall_2013a-M53369df1bfaa.html)

See, show and inform

A special attraction for exhibition visitors was a quick reflex game which Naturland designed to show the particular capacity of organic soil to hold water, store CO2 and resist erosion. The slogan was “Organic soil – lots of life, dazzling diversity”.

Well informed school children turn into competent consumers

Naturland is in the vanguard of the struggle for a more equitable agricultural policy

Naturland presents a comprehensive data bank of the European organic industry

The organic industry in Europe continues to expand. Germany is the biggest market for organic products but the area cultivated is increasing more slowly than demand. The greatest growth in the latest member states of the EU and the other candidate countries is in arable land. This is a summary of just some of the findings of the book “Organic in Europe. Prospects and Developments”, which was presented at the International Green Week Berlin.

Continuous growth

In the past ten years, the countries of the European Union have shown steady and dynamic growth both with respect to the area cultivated and to the size of the organic market. In 2013, too, the market has continued to develop in many European countries. Consumers are still extremely interested in organic produce, despite the fact that organic products are experiencing increasing competition from various labels advertising sustainability and local produce.

Today 5.6% of the area used for agricultural purposes in the European Union is managed to organic principles. This corresponds to an area of 9.98 million hectares. The countries with the greatest area percentage are Austria, Sweden and Estonia. In Austria the area cultivated organically in 2012 was 19.7%.
In the countries belonging to the European Union land use is primarily for pasture and arable land. 38.9% of the organically managed agricultural farmland is used for arable crops and 47.2% as pasture. Only 9.8% is used for permanent crops. However, since 2004 the fastest growth has been in the area devoted to permanent crops. In the new member states, it is pasture which produces the highest percentage.

Many eastern and central European countries have shown rapid growth in their organically managed farmland since accession to the European Union. In these countries the areas cultivated and the number of growers has almost tripled. Since 2004 the area in the European Union which is managed organically has grown by 72%, from 5.8 million hectares to 10 million hectares in 2011.

Different rates of market growth
With a turnover of 20.8 billion euros (2012), the European Union is the second largest market for organic foodstuffs after the USA. Despite economic crises the market continues to grow steadily, in the European Union at a rate of approx. 6% in 2012.

Domestic markets, especially in the new member states, have not developed with the same momentum. Although there has been a significant increase in the area farmed, the proportion represented by the processing industry and per capita consumption in the new member states is minimal. The poor processing infrastructure means that most processed products have to be imported. These countries need to develop their processing facilities gradually so that they are no longer dependent on imports; another benefit would be an increase in the value of their own goods for export.

The “old” EU member states are the major importers
The greatest number of importers of raw goods is situated in the countries with the most rapidly developing markets: Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy and Switzerland. 93% of all companies active in the import of raw organic goods have their head offices in the old member states. It is mostly raw goods and monoproducts that are imported. The vast majority of processing plants (over 37,000) is situated in the old member states of the European Union, whilst there are only 700 in total in the new member states. This is an unmistakable indication of a clear divide within the European Union which is also reflected in the production of raw goods.

Demand not satisfied
There are many countries in which the increasing demand for organic produce exceeds the actual supply of goods. This is particularly true of the large markets such as Germany and France. Germany is not only the largest market for organic produce, but also one of the major producers. Nevertheless, between 2009 and 2010 up to 95% of individual types of organic produce was imported, products which Germany would have been capable of producing itself. For example, almost 50% of its apples are imported. From a global perspective, the growth of organically used farmland is markedly slower than in Europe. In comparison to the rest of the world, the organic sector in Europe is well developed. A relatively high proportion of agricultural farmland is managed organically there, whilst the number of businesses active in the organic sector is growing continually and the market has shown a steep upward curve for years. At the same time, however, there are wide differences between individual countries.

Comprehensive work of reference

Huge success for Naturland, numerous prizes for farms and partners
Lots of exhibitors, a rich program and numerous prizes and awards for members of Naturland. There was a lot going on at the Naturland booth at the BioFach in Nuremberg, Germany, which this year took place from 12th to 15th February. The focus this time was on certification by Naturland to its fair trade standards, “Naturland Fair”.

“Fair comes close – worldwide” at the BioFach 2014
Under the motto “Fair comes close – worldwide” Naturland created a great atmosphere held by a vegan television cook, Björn Moschinski, who prepared an organic, vegan, fair trade dish, with quinoa noodles that GEPA is now marketing together with Terra Bio, Italy, an organic co-operative certified by Naturland, and ANAPQUS, a Bolivian quinoa co-operative. The show took place on the Naturland stage at the start of the “World Cooking” campaign initiated by GEPA, a partner of Naturland. Four years after the introduction of the “Naturland Fair” logo, the range of goods it is applied to now comprises a wide range of over 650 products. To show that certification to standards which the concepts organic and fair trade is a value-added strategy which can create benefits for the whole value chain, from grower to shelf, a well-attended press conference on certification to “Naturland Fair” standards of Mani Blaüel olive products was held. Besides this, 13 “Naturland Fair” partners exhibited their wares at the joint Naturland booth.

Great demand by Naturland partners for exhibition space
The number of Naturland partners at the joint booth is also indicative of the degree of success the Naturland presence at the...
Meat Atlas 2014 – facts and figures about the animals we eat

Globally speaking, over 1,383 billion pigs, 5.110 million chicken and 517 million sheep are slaughtered every year. In the USA alone, over 42 million animals are slaughtered every week.

These masses of meat – produced mainly in conventional and industrialised manner – are the cause of enormous problems: the voracious consumption of new land to grow fodder, the extensive use and misuse of antibiotics, hormone residues in meat, and greenhouse gases. The damage done to mankind and the environment is taking on worrying proportions.

This is evident from the figures shown in the “Meat Atlas 2014” published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Friends of the Earth and the magazine Le Monde diplomatique. It includes reports on the envisaged free trade zone (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – TTIP) between the EU and the USA, the increasing demand for meat in emerging nations and other topics pertaining to agriculture.

The Meat Atlas is a series which has so far been published twice in German (2013 and 2014) and once in English. It focuses on our consumption of meat and reports on the consequences. There is a growing body of people who accept responsibility for what they consume and who need background information to base their decisions on. It is precisely this group of conscientious buyers for which the Meat Atlas is designed, to provide them with the necessary information in a comprehensive manner.

Naturland welcomes the publication of this work of reference which delivers the unravelling truth about the negative impact of our excessive meat consumption. For years now, Naturland has been campaigning to limit our meat consumption to the traditional Sunday roast and appeals to the general public to adopt a responsible and conscientious approach to its meat consumption. For further information and to download the Meat Atlas itself, see http://www.boell.de/de/node/281053
We are grieving for Romeo Robles Capalla

La Selva, a member of Naturland, hosted the Leading Organic Alliance (LOA) from 28th – 30th October, 2013, on its premises in Italy. Karl Egger, the general manager of La Selva and a founder member of Naturland, was honoured to be able to welcome this association of European organic organisations. The purpose of the meeting was to aim at adjusting various policies of the associations. In particular the associations’ representatives discussed joint approaches to be adopted in the spheres of animal welfare and packaging, to set the ball rolling for important developments. The following are members of LOA: Bio Austria (Austria), BioForum (Belgium), BioneX (Netherlands), Ecovida (Spain), De- bio (Norway), ISEA (Italy), KRAV (Sweden), Naturland (Germany), Bioland (Germany), Soil Association (UK), EKO-keurmerk (Netherlands), ECOA (Austria), BioForum (Belgium), Bi- oneX (Netherlands), Ecovida (Spain), De- bio (Norway), ISEA (Italy), KRAV (Sweden), Naturland (Germany), Bioland (Germany), and Worldshops, “Organic + Fair. More food to share!” in the Philippines.

It is largely due to Romeo Robles Capalla that Panay Fair Trade Center is today able to do this work. From his youth onwards he campaigned for social justice, democracy and autonomy. Despite receiving numerous threats and being arrested, he always stood up for the weak in his country. He devoted his life to the poor and needy, and especially the oppressed, said his older brother, Emeritus Fernando Capalla, archbishop of Davao, in his first obituary. Romeo Robles Capalla had a talent for radiating confidence. He is often described as level-headed and modest. In him we have lost an enthusiastic campaigner for social justice and fair trade in the Philippines. The murder of Romeo Robles Capalla is not a unique occurrence. The murder of Romeo Robles Capalla is the eleventh in a series – in the year 2014 alone. According to local human rights organisations about 170 human rights representatives, political activists, journalists and farmers have been killed in the past four years. In not one single case, according to the information available, has anyone been brought to justice. The facts of this case must be brought to light. The murder of Romeo Robles Capalla has shaken the work of the co-operative to the foundations. It is now all the more important to support PFTC in its struggle for social justice, democracy and autonomy. Naturland has addressed a letter to the president of the Philippine government and to the Philippine embassy in Berlin. Besides this, Naturland has joined dip e.g. the German National Association of Worldshops, the World Fair Trade Orga- nisation (WFTO), GEPA and Forum Fairer Handel in sending an open letter (http:// www.naturland.de/kampagne_oekos_fair_ html - in german) to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to ask for its support.

The USA and the EU together make up half of global economic power. Since July, 2013, Washington and Brussels have been negotiating the terms of a Transatlantic Trade and Invest- ment Partnership (TTIP). The conclusion of this agreement would mean that the USA and the EU would dismantle almost all existing trade barriers between them. Once negotiations have been termi- nated, the earliest date envisaged being late 2014, this could mean the realisation of the greatest free trade zone in the world. The hurdles to be removed include customs and what are known as non-tariff trade barriers such as limitations imposed on the import of certain products, or their prohibition. The champions of this agreement see the alignment of norms as holding greatest poten- tial. It would mean that manufacturers would be able to place their wares on both the US and the European markets without being subject to complicated licensing procedures. The effects of the TTIP would be felt far beyond the borders of the USA and Europe. In concluding such an agreement, the USA and Europe intend to strengthen their roles as global players long term in the field of agriculture, too. With this agreement the USA and Europe would define the rules and standards applicable for the remainder of the 21st century. The TTIP holds potential as a blueprint for similar agreements throughout the world. However, farmers and consumers in Europe will derive hardly any benefit as well from the TTIP. We only need to look at what such free trade agreements have done for their partners in similar cases. Take, for example, the NAFTA agreement between the USA, Canada and Mexico. In Mexico an enormous number of small scale farmers had to give up because of cheap imports of maize from the USA. The purpose of most such agreements is not necessarily to remove trade barriers by reducing customs charges, the intention is prima- rily to set global standards in the field of agriculture, to encourage investments and thus to stimulate a wave of global liberalisation in all fields. Global trade has seen the liberalisation of numerous fields, especially where trading in goods and services is concerned. In many such agreements, an exception is made for the food industry because it is such a sensitive area. In this way large agricul- tural corporations have only limited access to the market. An agree- ment such as the Euro-American TTIP is intended to liberalise the last trade barriers, including trading in agricultural produce. This is of especial concern since in many fields of the food econom- ic different standards exist in the USA and Europe. In the USA, the consumption of meat from cloned animals and hormone-trea- ted meat as well as milk from high-yielding cows which have been doped with genetically produced growth hormones is permitted. In this “land of opportunity” genetically modified plants are neither subject to a consistent and water-tight licensing procedure nor do they need to be labelled as GMO. Another critical difference is, for example, the treatment of poultry meat with chlorine. All this would then be placed on the European market if the agreement were signed. TTIP also opens the start of farming export wars at dumping prices. European farmers would be placed under even greater competitive pressure. This would give further encouragement to the unwelcome policy of “expand or be damned”, instead of providing backing to local farmers and protecting the agricultural and cultivated landscape. On both sides of the Atlantic strong resistance is being formed to combat further liberalisation of the agricultural markets. Naturland is not against free trade in principle; in the organic industry free trade plays a big role. Last year Europeans and North Americans recognised each others’ standards for organic footstuffs (see Naturland News International 1_2012). How- ever, in such negotiations it is always the “best” standard which should form the basis of any agreement. It is at the least not in the interests of society, customers and agricultural growers – indepen- dently of whether they farm organically or conventionally – if the negotiations are designed to establish the lowest common denomi- nator as the standard norm. This would primarily meet the needs of large multinational corporations. In this connection the USA and the EU should commit to adopting the highest standard of the two partners wherever this is feasible and justifiable in the sense of a holistic approach.

Naturland expects the negotiations to be transparent and for civil society to have a say in them. All relevant groups of society must be included in the TTIP discussions in all spheres affected by the negotiations. The agreement must not be allowed to deteriorate into a conspiracy behind closed doors between global corporations and governments.

Since the societies of the US and Europe have widely differing atti- tudes towards farming and food, they should initially be excluded from the regular negotiations. In separate proceedings solutions designed to promote equitable transatlantic trade in farming produce must be devised. If one considers the global potential of the TTIP, it is all the more important to make the public aware of the global implications. The USA and Europe would be setting standards for the rest of the world with this agreement, standards which would in particular have direct impact on global farming and food industries.
Wake up before it is too late – The United Nations calls for a rethinking of Agriculture

“Wake up before it is too late: Make agriculture truly sustainable now for food security in a changing climate” under the headline UNCTAD released its Trade and Environment Review 2013 in September last year. The first announcement in Europe was at the conference „Auf die Kleinen kommt es an!“ from Naturland and the German National Association of Worldshops (Weltladen-Dachverband). The report is a result of the new challenges and issues on sustainable agriculture and food security emerging after the food crisis in 2008. In order to compile a comprehensive analysis on these challenges and issues the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – UNCTAD – gathered over 60 international experts for this report. The aim was to find a holistic approach handling “the inter-related problems of hunger and poverty, rural livelihoods, social and gender inequality, poor health and nutrition, climate change and environmental sustainability.”

A rise of food prices of almost 80% between 2011 and 2013 related to the period of 2003 to 2008 was one of the problems the authors identified. Another problem was found in the increase of nitrogen fertilizers by 8 times in the last 40 years, a period in which the global cereal production hardly doubled. The increased amount of nitrogen in the earth’s natural cycles has an enormous impact on its ecosystems and thus, on the humans worldwide. Furthermore, the authors warn especially against poverty and starvation on the southern hemisphere as it will partly be more afflicted by climate change then the northern hemisphere. Already today, 90% of the starving live in Asia and in the sub-saharian regions of Africa. Of those, 50% are small scale farmers. Simultaneously, small scale farmers feed 70% of the world’s population and play a major role in rural development. The low degree of specialization within the peasant growing systems is an important component of sustainable land-use and thus, contrasts the monoculture growing systems of large-scale farmers. Therefore, the authors claim for a change of the current agricultural model to more diversified agriculture truly sustainable now for food security in a changing climate, making use of the multifunctional character of agriculture and its ability to foster closed natural cycles. They identify the implementation of this reorientation particularly in the reinforcement of local economic cycles and peasant structures. The UNCTAD points out this change in agriculture being one of the biggest challenges of the international conference in the 21st century concerning all parts of policy including international security. The UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was founded in 1964 with the aim to “maximize the possibilities in trade, investment and development of developing countries and to support their endeavor of integrating in the global economy on a fair basis”.


Comparable to the national level, the number of international delegates is defined by the amount of member companies and co-operatives. The 393 international Naturland members voted for their favourites out of six candidates by letter or mail. All three elected members can show years of experience in organic farming: Since 1996, Frauke Weissang, representing Europe, owns a farm in Italy, which is a member of the cooperative Terra Bio. In 1999 she also took on responsibilities for the international marketing of Terra organic products (pasta and legumes). The representative for Asia is Dr. Mathew Hubby. He is the general manager of PDS Organic Spices in India, an association which produces different teas, as well as spices such as pepper, cardamom and turmeric among others. Edward Mulondo is the founder and general manager of the BioUganda project in Uganda and represents Africa. His company mainly export dried fruits like pineapples, mangos and papayas. All three companies are certified Naturland Fair.

Besides their participation in the Naturland Assembly of Delegates, the international delegates are automatically members of the World Advisory Board. This board – consisting of up to five people – advises Naturland on issues related to the promotion of organic agriculture and the worldwide fair trade and social standards. Additionally to the international delegates, further experts may be elected into the World Advisory Board, in order to have representatives from all continents, as well as the field of aquaculture. For America, Silvia Arispe Cardozo from Peru was appointed by the delegates. She has been employed by the certifier OCIA and the inspection body IMO Control Latin America. For the past six years she was a manager of a consulting firm for small farmer organizations growing and marketing coffee. Nowadays, she is returned to the coffee farmers cooperative COCLA for which she had also worked from 1999 to 2005. The concerns of the international organic aquaculture will be represented by Peter Niedermeier of the Nguyen Thi Dung Farm, a Vietnamese producer of organic Pangasius. The World Advisory Board will meet again next year in the spring during the Assembly of Delegates. In the meantime, the exchange of professional expertise will be via telephone and video conferences.

International delegates visiting in Germany

The newly or re-elected international delegates Frauke Weissang, Dr. Mathew Hubby and Edward Mulondo met in Gräfelfing for the first time. Throughout the Naturland Assembly of Delegates on 15th May, they exchanged views on the current situations and challenges in their countries and represented their regions in front of the Assembly. In this most important Naturland committee, they stand for the international interests of Naturland and more specifically embody Africa, Asia and European countries abroad from Germany.
Coffee rust was first discovered in 1868 on cultivated coffee trees in Sri Lanka. This disease is caused by the fungus Hemicelula vastatrix. It attacks arabica strains and causes the trees to shed their leaves and even whole plantations to die off. About 150 years ago, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) was a world leader in the production of coffee, the plantations covering an area of over 162,000 hectares. Within five years this new disease had spread throughout the whole island and caused the total harvest to fall by up to 50%. This led to the end of coffee production in Sri Lanka and its replacement with tea and rubber.

This fungal disease has caused the production of coffee to stagnate in many countries in South-East Asia. As a result Latin America is now one of the world’s major coffee producing areas.

For many years thereafter, coffee rust almost disappeared from memory. However, this fungal disease returned to importance in 1970, when coffee plantations in Brazil became infected with coffee rust. Within ten years, this fungal disease had spread to almost all Latin American coffee producing areas. Coffee rust appeared in Central America in 1974 for the first time. The harvest worst affected in this region was that of 2012/2013.

The diagram below shows the area affected as a percentage of the total area cultivated (including plantations managed to organic principles) in various countries in Central America for the harvest of 2012/2013. The worst affected, with two thirds of the total area cultivated infested, were the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Guatemala, followed by Costa Rica (64%), Nicaragua (37%), Jamaica (28%), Honduras (25%) and Panama (24%).

Coffee rust epidemic in 2012 in Central America cannot be attributed to one single cause. On the contrary, a wide range of factors has contributed to the spread of the disease. At a conference called “Let’s talk Roya” (www.letstalkroya.org), organised by “Sustainable Harvest”, a non-profit organisation, in November 2013 in El Salvador, four theories were propounded as possible causes of the epidemic spread of this fungal disease.

Climate change:
Rising nocturnal temperatures, falling average temperature during the day, and fewer hours of sunshine in previous years have created conditions more favourable to the spread of this fungus. Besides this, the number of extreme weather events in Central America increased markedly in the period 1990 – 2008 as compared to the years 1970 – 1989, having a detrimental effect on the general condition of the coffee trees.

Poor infrastructure:
In recent decades many research bodies and coffee institutes have had to cut down their services ladderservice, financial approval to the coffee farmers because of reduced access to financial assistance from the government.

More aggressive fungal strains:
The possibility that a new, more aggressive strain has occurred has not been excluded but is still hotly disputed.

Organic collapse:
Dr. Peter Baker referred to Professor John Vandermeer who attributes the coffee rust problem to intensive monocultures where the coffee is grown without the shelter of shade trees. He claims that growing coffee as a monoculture without shade trees, the resulting higher density of the coffee trees, and the use of agrochemicals all lead to poorer soil fertility, a reduction in biological diversity and thus to the disappearance of natural enemies.

Many organic coffee growers are affected by coffee rust, too. Many Naturland farmers have successfully adopted various methods of inhibiting the coffee rust. A Naturland questionnaire in October 2013, addressed to 19 coffee experts in Latin America and to 15 Naturland coffee growers and grower groups which comprise a total of 6,161 coffee farmers, produced the following result:

According to organic coffee experts and Naturland coffee growers, the following measures promise the greatest success in combating coffee rust in organic agriculture:

- Shade trees in various forest strata: coffee plants require a temperate climate. Shade trees level out differences in temperature. This reduces stress for coffee shrubs during arid periods. Shade trees shed considerable amounts of foliage which reduces soil degradation and is the basis for the creation of humus (soil fertility). An agro forestry system with a good variety of trees, different age structures and a multiterry structure helps maintain the organic balance between pests and beneficial organisms.

- Organic coffee growers obtain good soil fertility by using the leaf litter from the shade trees and applying organic fertilisers which considerably reduce soil degradation and increase the proportion of humus. The amount of humic matter contained in the soil results in greater water-retention capacity and thus makes ground water available to the coffee plants for a longer period. Nutrients, too, can be fixed in situ more effectively by a higher ratio of humus and it also stops them being washed out so easily. (Humus acts like a sponge.)

- Well nourished coffee plants: Naturland coffee growers fertilise their plants with composted coffee pulp, vermicompost, compost and organic liquid fertiliser made from cow dung and vegetable residue. Lime and stone meal are often added to the organic fertilisers. In order to break down the soil more effectively and to provide nitrogen, legumes such as the Inga genus are suitable.

- Organic foliar fertilisers rapidly provide the plants with important nutrients. As a result, new shoots reappear more quickly on infected coffee trees.

- Regenerating coffee plantings: new trees: old coffee plants are particularly susceptible to coffee rust. By pruning the bushes regularly, new growth is encouraged, which reduces infection with coffee rust.

- Coffee varieties: planting new, more resistant but nevertheless high quality strains can be recommended. However, many of these resistant strains are significantly poorer in taste and are more susceptible to other diseases.

- Application of copper compounds permitted in organic coffee growing: lime sulphur and copper sprays (“caldo berde” : “caldo sulfurico-co”, “oxidoruro de cobre”) are used. Naturland permits 3 kg maximum of cuprous salt per hectare and year. The copper compounds only have a pre-ventative effect and must be applied in a professional manner before any infection breaks out.

- Application of bacterial preparations and preparations made from natural enemies: Naturland farmers make use of effective microorganisms (sometimes abbreviated to EMT) and Lecanicium tecanicum (Lecanicium). Many farmers are currently experimenting with various natural compounds and often mix them to make organic fertilisers enriched with lime and stone meal.

There are as many measures available to combat this fungal disease as there are reasons for its occurrence. Coffee rust can only be dealt with effectively by implementing a strategy tailor-made to local conditions.
Sustainable coffee growing in times of changing climate

Hurricanes and torrential rain, rising temperatures and shifts in rain cycles: coffee farmers in the south are becoming increasingly aware of the effects of climate change. It does not just have an impact on their buildings and roads; coffee harvests have also suffered in recent years too. Yields from the sturdy robusta coffee tree as well as the high quality arabica coffee bean, which is of a high quality but also more climate-sensitive, have been lower and the bean quality poorer. As such extreme weather occurrences become more frequent with the advance of climate change, the situation in the years to come will be aggravated and thus also pose problems for coffee farmers.

As long ago as 2009, in an article entitled “Climate change brews up trouble for coffee growers”, Dr. Peter Baker of Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI) stated that any measures adopted to assist the 20 million coffee-growing small scale farmers throughout the world can only be successful if international policy-leaders join in shouldering their responsibility and take a determined stand to contain climate change by pursuing innovative long-term research into specific fields of application and by drafting appropriate laws.

A survey published by Oxfam in 2013 describes the current problems in Uganda. There, the farmers are struggling with falls in yield and having to resort to planting their coffee trees in less suitable areas. The arabica bean requires a cool tropical climate to thrive, so it can only be grown at greater elevations. Since these now also are becoming warmer, the coffee trees are being planted at ever greater heights, where they have to compete for space with other crops and nature reserves.

In countries such as Mozewi and Peru, world champions in the cultivation of organic coffee, the problems incurred by the changing climate are felt even more keenly. Mexican farmers, for example, can no longer dry their coffee beans in the sun in January and February because of the shift in the rainy periods. This results in a drop in yields. Organisations such as “Calidirex”, a British fair trade entity, have decided to do something about this problem. In 2007 they joined forces with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to German company specialising in international co-operation in initiating a three-year project called “AdapCC – Adaptation for small scale farmers to Climate Change”. The project focuses on principles to be applied and proceedings adopted to cope with this new climate. It encourages the development of agro-forestry systems, product diversification to supply the farmers’ own needs too, educational measures, the introduction of more resistant crops, forest protection and re-afforestation. Besides their project in Mexico, there is also a third pilot project in affected regions in Kenya, Peru and Nicaragua, were initiated.

In Oxfam’s survey, too, mixed cultivation under shade trees was found to be a suitable way to cushion the effects of climate changes. By using shade trees, it protects the coffee trees from the sun and complements the farmers’ diets with, for example, bananas, bananas, citrus fruits and avocados. Besides this, they help to stabilise the water balance and absorb carbon dioxide, and can compensate for climatic extremes. The numerous and varied ecological niches which such a system provides create biodiversity. Beneficial organisms are offered different habitats and the coffee trees grow more resistant. This is an important feature which enables them to withstand changing climatic conditions and resist diseases.

Coffee farming to Naturland standards not only makes an active contribution to protection of the climate and ecological systems, but also forms the basis for the long-term management of coffee growing areas. It helps the Naturland coffee farmers, of which there are about 25,000, to plan better and gives them greater security with respect to income and climate protection. These are some of the positive sides for the creation of the long-term ecological and socio-economic systems which are the pillars of the Naturland mission statement.

Maple syrup certified by Naturland

Canadas maple syrup production

Canada supplies about 90% of all the maple syrup produced in the world, with the USA coming in second place. Maple syrup is sent from Canada to every corner of the world, its main customers being the USA and the second most important Germany. Roughly 80% of the total Canadian production of maple syrup comes from the province of Quebec. Here there are some 7,000 conventional growers, whilst 200 growers harvest the syrup organically. All of them are members of the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers.

Steffen Rein, general manager of Naturland, visited two Naturland operations which produce organic maple syrup in Quebec.

Maple syrup is harvested by farming woodlands in which a high proportion of sugar maple trees (Acer saccharum) grows. By carefully thinning out the wood, young maple trees are encouraged to grow. In order to avoid monocultures, there must be at least 10% of other mixed crops making up the total composition of an organic operation. The percentage was even higher at the Naturland operations visited.

In order to encourage biodiversity, the requirement is to retain 10% of other mixed crops making up the total composition of an organic operation. The percentage was even higher at the Naturland operations visited.

Maple trees can grow to an age of 200 to 300 years. It is not only the operator who decides on whether diseased or dead trees may be removed, but also the forestry authorities. The foresters mark the trees and a second expert confirms the markings. Both Naturland operators set store on retaining deadwood and coarse woody debris. This provides habitats for much useful flora and fauna, such as woodpeckers.

Few management activities are required in both the conventional and organic woodlands. No irrigation or drainage is required, no pesticides are applied, and no fertilizer is used except for occasional liming.

The harvesting method in both organic and conventional operations is a sophisticated tubing system. Secondary tubes collect the sap (known as xylem) from between 15 to 20 trees and carry it to the main tubes and from there to the collection points. This is done all naturally by gravity since the woodlands are on hillsides, which is why such locations are chosen. The xylem is then pumped through to the front of collection point. In order to tap the xylem, 1 to 4 holes (for organic farms more likely 1 to 2) are bored in the trunk, depending on its radius, and closed with taps. Negative pressure causes the xylem to flow out of the tree.

The operators try to ensure that this vacuum removes only about 1% of the xylem from the tree. Although the tubing system can remain in the wood between ten to twelve years, the taps are only inserted during the harvest season, between February and May.

The syrup collected on the Naturland operations is processed and marketed by Alleghanys Maple Farms Inc., another partner of Naturland. Alleghany has a total of 300 suppliers, 17 of which are organic. The syrup is certified to the standards not only of Naturland, but also according to the requirements of the EU organic regulation, which is why this syrup is certified by Alleghanys Maple Farms Inc., another partner of Naturland. All of them are members of the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers.

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The sweet maple woodlands are farmed on hillsides

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DDT was formerly hailed as saviors without any hesitation (Photo: Los Angeles Times)

Controlling Malaria and protecting livelihoods of farmers

- The story of DDT and better alternatives -

Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane or DDT, as it is commonly known, is an insecticide that has been widely used in malaria control programmes since the 1940’s. Although it was initially successful and continues to be used in current programmes, many malaria transferential insects are now resistant against DDT. The extremely harmful effects of the insecticide on the environment and human health are also well documented. Among humans, these effects include early pregnancy loss, fertility loss, leukemia, pancreatic cancer, diabetes and breast cancer. DDT is known to be a persistent molecule that binds to fatty tissues of organisms, leading to bio-accumulation. This happens especially towards the top of the food chain where humans and other charismatic species are situated. Besides detrimental effects on human health, DDT is highly toxic to shrimp and fish and decreases the reproduction of birds through thinning of their egg shells. These are only some of its direct impacts, not to speak of the effects on a myriad of other organisms and interactions with other chemical malaria controls such as pyrethroid insecticides. Another problem is the half-life time of DDT of up to 12 months in tropical and subtropical soils. This means that negative impacts of the chemical can continue for up to 30 years after application.

Since its introduction for mosquito control in 1944, DDT resistance has been reported for more than 50 species of anopheline mosquitoes. Many of these are vectors for malaria. This means that although the negative effects of DDT on people and the environment continue, the positive effect of targeting malaria incidence is not achieved anymore. Other chemical insecticides such as pyrethroids are also used in malaria control. However, these are suspected to increase resistance to DDT through cross-resistance, besides themselves being toxic to people and the environment. Already, the main African vector Anopheles gambiae s.s. is showing DDT resistance in most tests, similar findings were made for other African vectors such as A. gambiae s.l. and A. arabiensis and vectors in India. The use of DDT not only affects the health of people and the environment but also reduces farmer income and negatively impacts their livelihoods. For example, in Uganda 11 000 organic farmers had their licenses removed due to the build-up of insecticide residues in their products after government indoor residual spraying of DDT. They therefore could not continue marketing their products as organic and therefore lost out on the premium price they usually received. This severely threatened not only their own but also the livelihoods of all people immediately associated with agriculture in their communities.

In the insecticide DDT has been used since the 1940s in the fight against malaria.

DDT was formerly hailed as saviors without any hesitation (Photo: Los Angeles Times)

DDT resistance in most tests, similar findings were made for other African vectors such as A. gambiae s.l. and A. arabiensis and vectors in India. The use of DDT not only affects the health of people and the environment but also reduces farmer income and negatively impacts their livelihoods. For example, in Uganda 11 000 organic farmers had their licenses removed due to the build-up of insecticide residues in their products after government indoor residual spraying of DDT. They therefore could not continue marketing their products as organic and therefore lost out on the premium price they usually received. This severely threatened not only their own but also the livelihoods of all people immediately associated with agriculture in their communities.

It is therefore evident that DDT is not sufficiently effective in the fight against malaria and in reality causes more harm than good. Luckily however, alternatives to chemical controls of malaria vectors are emerging. Most notable is the development of an approach known as “Integrated Vector Management” (IVM). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) IVM is a rational decision-making process that optimizes the use of resources for vector control. It is based on evidence and integrated management, promoting the use of a range of interventions selected on the basis of their likely benefit to the local population as well as on the major vectors, diseases and disease determinants. In effect, IVM emphasizes the use of techniques that are independent of chemical insecticides. These consist of environmental management, mechanical and biological methods (see Table 1).

IVM focuses on being appropriate to local conditions and using resources more wisely. It also averts poisoning the environment and people and ensures that farmers can continue marketing their products as organic. IVM has been found to be effective in controlling malaria morbidity and mortality in an increasing number of countries such as Kenya and Zambia. Overall, to control malaria vectors, IVM is more effective and beneficial than DDT. In 2008 Naturland supported a campaign to motivate the Ugandan government to stop using DDT in its vector management programme. This was in direct response to the problems with DDT residues experienced by afore mentioned 11 000 Naturland farmers. The control of malaria should have enhanced the livelihoods of these farmers and their communities and not threatened them. Therefore, in an effort to prevent further damage to rural livelihoods in Uganda, the plea to stop using DDT was communicated to the president and several key ministers. Besides its efforts in Uganda, Naturland is advocating IVM through its membership of the pesticides action network (PANI) Germany.

This is a non government organization (NGO) which provides information on the adverse effects of pesticides and promotes environmentally friendly and socially just alternatives. In October 2013 PAN Germany published the handbook ‘Framework for strengthening Integrated Vector Management in malaria control programmes’. It details how IVM works and provides decision makers and project managers tangible tools on how to implement it. Naturland therefore urges decision makers and project managers to stop using DDT and to turn to IVM instead. This shift will significantly improve local livelihoods by reducing malaria and safeguarding the livelihoods of countless farmers.

The Handbook can be downloaded at the site of PAN Germany (in English): http://www.pan-germany.org/download/ddt/malaria_framework_131031.pdf

Table 1 Methods implemented in the IVM approach

<table>
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<th>1. Environmental management methods</th>
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<td>3.4 Botanical pesticides (pyrethrum)</td>
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Rooibos tea and Honeybush tea are popular drinks in South Africa, the home of both plants. Whether they are drunk hot or cold, with or without milk, the domestic market is an important distribution channel for these teas. However, a lot of Rooibos tea is drunk as well in Europe, and Honeybush is gradually becoming better known.

In Germany, which is Europe’s prime market for organic products, top quality organic teas are available under the Naturland logo. In South Africa, organic produce is gaining in importance. Although Naturland is largely unknown there, the association is still providing support to the local market. TopQualiTea South Africa, a partner of Naturland, runs education advertising campaigns, for example by publishing informative flyers. Members of the Naturland International Division have visited producers and processors and regularly exchange information with them. The Rooibos tea from Wupperthal and the Honeybush tea from Eriquale, each available in six different flavours, are the only products there bearing the Naturland logo and are thus considered as pioneering products on the South African market.

Although this range of teas in organic quality has only recently been available on the domestic market, the use of Rooibos tea has a long-standing tradition in South Africa. The natives of South Africa, the Khoisan, were familiar with its medicinal properties. Aspalathus linearis, a bushy plant and a member of the pulse family, grows only in the Cape Province of western South Africa. Heiveld Co-operative, which has 56 members, is active both in the fields of cultivation and wild harvesting and is a distributor for organic, fair-trade Rooibos tea. Heiveld has been a member of Naturland for almost ten years. Wupperthal Original Roobos Cooperative, another co-operative of small scale farmers certified by Naturland, was established in 2009 by its 84 members. Honeybush Cyclopiaflorishes in the western and eastern Cape regions of South Africa. Eriquale, a growers’ group, has 84 members. All the growers cultivate this bushy member of the legume family on communal ground. Both, the leaves and the tips of the twigs are used to make the tea. Honeybush and Rooibos are free of theaflavins and caffeine. Their taste is pleasing, they are easily digestible, rich in antioxidants, and some beneficial effects to the health have been attributed to them.

The seeds of the chia plant (Salvia hispanica) were already held in high esteem by the Mayans and Aztecs. These ancient Indian civilisations believed that chia would endow them with supernatural powers and help them conquer their foes. Messengers consumed chia to increase their energy. This natural food supplement does indeed enhance strength and stamina, the metabolism and digestion, regulates the blood glucose level and increases awareness. The word “chia” is derived from the Nahuatl word “chain”, meaning “oily”. The black and white seeds of this plant resemble linseed and are real powerhouses, even though they look so unspectacular. Chia seeds are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, proteins, essential amino acids, antioxidants, roughage and mineral nutrients. Since the Spanish conquistadors suppressed the cultivation of chia, this food plant almost disappeared from the memory of the descendents of the indigenous peoples. In Mexico chia was only consumed as an additive to “agua fresca de chia” (lemon water with chia). Today the plant and its seeds are experiencing a comeback. Growth is most pronounced in the North American market. In Europe chia has the Novel Food Regulation which was passed in 2013 to thank for its popularity with consumers. After inclusion in this regulation, chia can now be traded as a foodstuff. Today chia is mixed, for example, into bakery produce, soups, smoothies and mueslis and the demand is growing daily. As long ago as 2005, “Naturkost Übelhör” started advocating the idea of promoting this useful ancient plant. In Mexico a network of farmers and scientists was created and a cleaning station established with the aid of a public-private partnership (IPPP) project. In 2008 a local company was set up, called “Naturkost de Mexico” (www.organic-mexico.com), to provide advisory services and take care of processing and the sale of the chia seeds. The largest chia field to date, 250 hectares, is to be found in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. Here this herbaceous annual, a member of the mint family, has been cultivated since 2008. “Naturkost de Mexico” has also been certified for compliance with the Naturland standards since 2013/2014.

Sowing takes place in July. By the end of November the blossoms have produced schizocarps containing the chia seeds. In contrast to conventional cultivation, which applies herbicides, the organic farmers of “Naturkost de Mexico” eradicate weeds by hand between two and three times during the growing period. Every stage of production, from the harvest, to transport, cleaning, storage and marketing of the seeds, is monitored by a quality inspection system and the flow of goods recorded. Two years of cultivation are followed by one year lying fallow so that the soil can recover. In the fallow years the areas are used as pasture by cows. In order to maintain and enhance soil fertility, “Naturkost de Mexico” is considering adopting crop rotation with legumes to fix nitrogen, and with maize.

Local conditions in Jalisco are ideal for the cultivation of chia. However, the farmers have been aware for some years now of an increase in extreme weather conditions such as early frost, aridity and continual rainfall. Crop shortfalls, in conjunction with an exponential increase in demand, lead to price increases of up to 300% in 2013. However, the expansion of chia cultivation both in Jalisco and in other regions and countries has caused the market prices to fall again.

Alejandro Palacio, the general manager of “Naturkost de Mexico”, says that, whilst the farmers are interested in prices which give them attractive earnings and in maintaining a secure market, they are also aware that only an affordable price will lead to increased demand by the consumer and help the product become mainstream. What can be said with certainty is that the chia seed is already enjoying increased popularity as a healthy foodstuff.
About 35 years ago, Friedrich Bläuel founded a company of the same name on the Mani peninsula in the Peloponnese, Greece. Together with his wife, Burgi, Fritz persuaded the local olive farmers to go organic and then established a network of olive-growing farmers under contract as well as an olive processing plant. The company started with olive oil but today sells various olive products and Greek appetizers known as meze. Their son, Felix, is a member of the general management. One of the latest challenges and aims of Bläuel is to have their products certified to the organic and fair-trade standards of Naturland, “Naturland Fair”, Alexander Koch of the Naturland Association and Michael Stienen, general manager of Naturland Zeichen GmbH, visited the company and had an opportunity to interview father and son in Greece.

Fritz, you came to Greece originally as a drop-out, and ended up as an organic pioneer. What were the most difficult challenges facing you at the time?

Fritz: When we came to the Mani peninsula 35 years ago, the local farmers were selling their olive oil ridiculously cheaply as a no name product to Italy, where it was combined with their olive oil. We were motivated by the idea of helping the small scale farmers to sell their top quality natural products themselves. We were convinced that organic cultivation would enhance the quality even further and that the farmers and the local communities would benefit from it. The challenge was therefore on the one hand to win over the farmers and official bodies – primarily the ministry of agriculture – to our plans. On the other hand we first had to create a market for organic olive oil from Greece in other European countries. Whatever we do, our primary objective is to keep a balance between new avenues of approach and traditional values.

Felix: My father decided almost from the beginning to include the next generation and to hand the business over to us in the future. His idea was to ensure that the values inherent in the company be transmitted and preserved. It is my task first and foremost to ensure that we continue to be as successful as before and to see that the fundamental idea of a firm set of values as a key point of reference is maintained.

Another project is to expand our product range and to adapt to market requirements with innovative ideas.

Fritz: I would like to achieve sustainable success, it is crucial to continue to develop. You have to take the initiative and be prepared to improve the quality of your products in every aspect. Challenges to be met in the immediate future are, among other things, to improve the cultivation of the soil and of the olive trees – a project for which we regard Naturland as the perfect partner. Besides this we want to establish the Mani Bläuel brand beyond Germany’s borders in other European countries. Whatever we do, our primary objective is to keep a balance between new avenues of approach and traditional values.

Felix: On the other hand, the company has also decided to include the next generation. What will be kept as it was and what will change?

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Another project is to expand our product range and to adapt to market requirements with innovative ideas.

You have been members of Naturland for about 20 years now. Why did you choose Naturland as your partner at the time? And what do you regard as particularly valuable in this partnership?

Fritz: We are of the conviction that organic agriculture and the processing of produce in accordance with organic principles are crucial to sustainable interaction with our environment. It is this conviction which we share with Naturland, as well as our realisation that organic management can only be successful if the products are also bought. In order to win the consumers’ trust, certification to EU standards is the basic requirement, but certification to Naturland standards is something extra. Besides which, we appreciate the co-operative, personal relationship we have with the people at Naturland.

You are currently applying for certification to the Naturland Fair trade standards. What reasons do you have for this, and what do you think is so special about this certification?

Felix: Progressing from certification to the EU standards to the organic and fair trade standards of Naturland seems a logical development to us. Thirty five years ago, my parents introduced the first Greek organic olive oil to German health food stores, and now we are proud to be able to present the first Greek olive oil products bearing the Naturland Fair logo this year at the BioFach. Naturland Fair is the only logo which testifies to compliance both with organic and fair trade criteria. A respectful attitude towards and the fair
treatment of our environment are our prime principles. Our work is based on our love of the world, in this world, humankind and nature are inextricably linked. Right from the start we accepted both organic and social responsibility. With certification to the Naturland Fair trade standards, we make this commitment visible and regulated. Our mid-term goal is to have our whole range of olive oil and olive products certified to the “Naturland Fair” standards. Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview.

Editor’s note: Since this interview, the first Bläuel produce has been certified to the “Naturland Fair” standards.

What has changed since then? What challenges do you have to face today?

Fritz: Today we are the most important employer in this area and as such have taken on great social responsibility for its inhabitants and for the Mani as a cultural region. Since the farmers cultivate the olive groves in the traditional manner, they and we are helping to maintain a culture which has existed for a thousand years. Over the years we have succeeded in establishing active partnerships between the farmers, our employees and the Mani inhabitants in general. This partnership extends far beyond economic interests.

On the contrary, we are nurturing the culture of a whole community. Even in difficult times, this community can be relied upon and also it gives the young people in the area prospects for the future, which will keep the cultural region of Mani alive.

With the harvest from October to March the pruning of trees is done

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