Agro-ecology, organic agriculture & AET in southern Africa

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Concepts & debates

- Agro-ecology ≠ organic agriculture
- Agro-ecology has some association with food sovereignty
- Organic agriculture can replicate some industrial agricultural practices
- Some consumers will pay for organic products
- Few consumers will pay for AE products
- Little discussion of AET
- Some discussion concerning greenwashing and ‘conservation agriculture’
Practice & policy

- Permaculture, green manure, zero tillage, mulching, food forests, cover cropping, holistic grazing management
- Value chains of organic culminating in high income supermarkets, AE culminating in city markets
- Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are associated with AE, but have been systematically undermined
- Dualistic agricultural systems have emerged, with a commercial sector existing alongside a subsistence sector
- In South Africa, incomes from subsistence sector largely replaced by social protection policies
- Few countries with strong government support for OA and a well-developed National Organic Agriculture Movement (NOAM)
- 15/45 countries have very little institutional capacity, no government support and no exports
- Agricultural policy appears to favour ‘Transitions from AE’
Research interests

• Yield, soil health, nutrition, sensory and ‘sense of responsibility’ attributes of alternative food systems
• The development of plants, technologies and methods to regenerate soil health
• Space based approaches, local government planning and territoriality
• Democratising science, including GE, to support AET
• IKS and underutilised plant species
• AET/organic agriculture and large scale land acquisition by foreign governments and enterprises
• Agro-logistics and food data science for AET
THANK YOU

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