

Dung factor: Why organic farming yields can never match conventional farming

In the last year or so the claim that organic farming methods can feed the world has come up several times. The regular news media are not enabling their readers properly assess the credibility of such claims when they emerge because they are failing to ask the most relevant questions.

So that regular journalists and readers will be better prepared next time the “organic farm yields match conventional tech” claim surfaces in the media, the Pundit poses some of those necessary questions below.

The bottom line is this.

It's the performance of the whole farming system over time that is most relevant, not just the output of any one farm field in one particular harvest season. We could call this relevant practical performance factor “farm system yield”, as opposed to “single season unadjusted yield”.

Some key questions about the “organic crop yield” issue to help focus on system performance are:

Where does the manure come from?

Does the quoted organic farm food yield factor in the land area allocated to green manure, and there any nitrogen subsidies provided indirectly by synthetic fertilisers to organic operations via animal manure inputs?

Can China do it?

Read full, original article: [Can organic farming feed the world? It's the system yield that matters — including hidden manure subsidies and off balance sheet accounting.](#)