

Organic farming methods may outproduce conventional during droughts

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It turns out that organic crops are better suited for farmlands subjected to drought conditions, [according to a study published today in the the journal *Nature Plants*](#).

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Organic farmers can't rely on synthetic fertilizer to enrich their soils so they use other methods, like mixing in compost, manure and plant debris to fertilize soil. That added organic material locks in moisture and nutrients more effectively than soil that has been conventionally farmed and contains less organic material, [John Reganold, the lead author of the paper] says.

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And while conventional agriculture does yield more produce per acre, in drought conditions, some research suggests the tables have turned.

"There have been a number of studies that show that organic farming can produce the same amount and sometimes more in a drought condition because of the water being held in the soil," Reganold said.

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Organic farming methods have trickled into mainstream agriculture. . . Techniques like planting cover crops, rotating crops and spreading manure and compost instead of relying heavily on synthetic fertilizers are all hallmarks of organic farming. Those methods also date back to a time before large-scale agricultural operations took hold.

Reganold says for many conventional farmers today, getting the organic certification is too expensive and complicated, but that doesn't mean they aren't adapting their practices to be more environmentally sustainable, and limit chemical use, erosion and nutrient runoff.

"I think it's going to be no single approach for safely feeding the planet, it's going to be a blend of these organic and other innovative systems that are needed. . . ." Reganold said.

Read full, original post: Organic Farming Better Suited To Climate Change, Study Finds