

## India's consumers rejecting state's experiment to produce 100% organic: Food too expensive, less appetizing

[Amrit] Pradhan is one of 66,000 farmers from Sikkim [a state in northeast India] who are part of a far-reaching experiment. Since last year, the state's farmers have become 100% organic – their produce is free of [synthetic] chemical pesticides or genetic modification [Editor's note: there are no approved genetically modified fruits or vegetables approved or grown in India, anywhere].

It also means their fruit and vegetables are smaller, less colourful, and more expensive than the imported, non-organic produce from the city of Siliguri in the neighbouring state of West Bengal.

Last year, prime minister Narendra Modi lauded Sikkim for its organic farming, a programme that had gradually been [rolled out across the state since 2003](#).

The farming techniques [in India's Green Revolution] produced dramatic increases in yield, and new prosperity for farmers, especially in northern states such as Punjab and Haryana. India went from being a food-deficient country to a leading agricultural power. [Food prices fell, but the farming methods took their toll on the environment](#) – increased water use, soil degradation and chemical run-off – raising questions about the sustainability of such practices.



Amrit Pradhan

In 2016, Sikkim's state government made the use of chemical pesticides a criminal offence, carrying a heavy penalty of 100,000 rupees (£1,170) and up to three months in jail.

In India, where at least [half of the country's 1.25 billion population rely on farming](#) as a primary source of income, and [more than 15% of inhabitants are undernourished](#), according to the global hunger index, experiments with organic farming could come at a huge human cost.

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In Sikkim, years of failed crops could affect tens of thousands of families while the land adjusts to the new

methods....

[Farmer Amrit] Pradhan says the organic crop he produces does not sell well in Sikkim. Pradhan supports the government's organic initiatives, but fears the project will fail unless Sikkim's residents start buying into the idea.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Sikkim's organic revolution at risk as local consumers fail to buy into project](#)**