WHAT IS ORGANIC AGRICULTURE?
Organic agriculture is defined as an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain, or enhance ecological harmony with a primary goal to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people (USDA-NOSB, 1997).

THE BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY AS ORGANIC UNIVERSITY
The Benguet State University was declared as Pro-Organic University by the University President on September 14, 2004 despite the skepticism of some sectors. This is in response to the growing concern on the ill-effects of agri-pesticides to farmers’ health, soil and water quality, and the environment. It was also in response to Global Agenda 21, and RA 8435. To carry out this declaration, a University OA Program was launched with 10 components, one of which is Education and Curriculum Development. The Cordillera Organic Agriculture Development Center was also created in preparation to the establishment of a Philippine Organic Agriculture Development Center (BOR Res. No. 1837, s. 2009).

The absence of curricular offerings in OA in the country challenged the University to package its experiences and offered various courses in 2008 such as the Certificate in Practical Organic Agriculture to train farmers, OA as major field in BS Agriculture, and Certificate in OA through distance learning in collaboration with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)(BOR Res. No. 1695).

BSU has been recognized for its initiatives. In 2008, the BSU Arabica Coffee plantation under pine trees was certified as organic by the Institute of Marketeconomy (IMO). In 2010, the Organic Demo Farm was certified by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP) and the potato selection Gloria Kamaptengan for organic production was approved by the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC). The issuance of RA 10068 (Organic Agriculture Act) in 2010 provided the legal framework of all organic agricultural programs in the country. In 2011, the University President was chosen as a member of the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) representing the academic sector as provided in RA 10068.

For more information, visit:
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
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Benguet State University
La Trinidad, Benguet
www.bsu.edu.ph
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AT BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY

The Benguet State University-Open University (BSU-OU) was established in 1997 through University Board Resolution No. 768 in fulfillment of Article XIV (Education) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution and R. A. No. 7722 known as the Higher Education Act of 1994.

WHAT IS OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING?

In an open and distance mode of learning, the students do not attend classes in classrooms regularly. At BSU-OU students are given course modules and they meet their professors and classmates once a month. Additional consultations with the professors are also done by any mode of communication, i.e. internet (e-mail, e-conference) and text messaging. With this scheme, students are able to gain new knowledge and skills wherever they are whether at work, at home or even while on travel, and at their own pace and time. For those who are far from the campus such as Sultan Kudarat or Batanes, e-learning is employed.

THE LADDERIZED MASTER IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

The program is open to teachers, extension workers, researchers, practitioners, managers of OA programs or anyone interested to enhance their skills in managing OA activities from production to marketing including product certification. It is a ladderized program to provide opportunities for those who are interested to earn only a Certificate in OA which requires the completion of at least 12 units only. Credits earned in the certificate course shall be credited for those qualified to pursue the Master in OA which requires the completion of at least 37 units.

The course enable students to enhance their skills in establishing and managing an organic agriculture enterprise, identify problems and provide appropriate solutions, and develop the passion to produce quality OA products and care for the environment.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants in the Certificate Course must have completed at least 40 units in college while for the master’s degree, a baccalaureate degree in agriculture or related fields. An experience in farming is also required otherwise they shall be required to enroll and complete first the Certificate in Practical Organic Agriculture offered by the University Extension and Training Services.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following documents must be submitted at least one week (December 7, 2013) before the last day of enrollment or start of classes:

- Duly accomplished application forms
- Certified photocopy of Official Transcript of Records
- Transfer Credential from last school attended (may be submitted later)
- Four copies of 2” x 2” latest ID picture

LIST OF COURSES

Required in the Master’s degree
OA 201 - Management Concepts and Approaches
OA 203 - Environment, Culture, Society and Climate Change
OA 206 - Research Methodology
OA 299 - Graduate Seminar
OA 300 - Master’s Project/Thesis

Options for the Certificate course
OA 210 - The Organic Agriculture Industry
OA 220 - Soil Health Management
OA 230 - Crop Health Management
OA 240 - Practicum (required in the Certificate Course)
OA 250 - Integrated Organic Farm Development
OA 260 - OA Enterprise Development and Management
OA 270 - OA Standards and Certification
OA 280 - IT in Organic Agriculture

SCHOOL FEES

The tuition per unit is PhP450. An on-line fee of PhP1,000.00 per subject is added for on-line students. The estimated total fee for a 9 unit course offering per semester without on-line fee is PhP6,836.00.

COURSES OFFERED FOR SECOND SEMESTER 2013-2014

The courses offered are as follows: OA 210, OA 220, OA 230 and OA 240 or a total of 12 units, the total unit requirements for the completion of the Certificate in Organic Agriculture.

CLASS SCHEDULE, 2ND SEM 2013-2014

The start of classes is on December 14, 2013 and every second Saturday thereafter. Students that are not enrolled in the on-line classes shall meet at 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Open University.