

## **How to Mainstream Agroecology: Policy Implications**

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Agroecology as a science is almost a century old and can trace its history as far back as organic. In recent decades agroecology has also become a farming practice (some argue it always has been one). In addition, agroecology has become a powerful social movement especially in Latin America where poor farmers use it as a rallying cry for their rights and livelihoods. However, agroecology concepts and ideas had little impact on policy yet. Why is this?

In the UK research and farming policy, in the devolved governments, at the EU policy level, on a global scale or in urban city planning nowhere is agroecology and ecological thinking part of the mainstream argument. Admittedly things are changing and agroecology makes an entry on a global scale with the UN's special rapporteur on the right to food: "agroecology has proven results for fast progress"... "advantages over conventional approaches such as breeding high yielding varieties"... "strongly contributes to broader economic development". All powerful messages delivered to the UN General Assembly in New York 2 years ago. We discuss is agroecology a science, a practice and a movement? And if so, should it also become a policy and a lifestyle option?

Why should agroecology become mainstream and what problems could this solve? Does it create new ones? Which problems have to be solved by science, by practical "do-it", by social and political change or by personal lifestyle options?

We open the discussion with a recent review done by CAFS, a joint venture of Coventry University and the research charity Garden Organic (working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association) at Ryton Gardens, Coventry.