

# How to change mindsets towards the benefits of ecological and equitable models of sustainable food production and consumption in the UK?

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# Industrial versus Ecological Paradigms

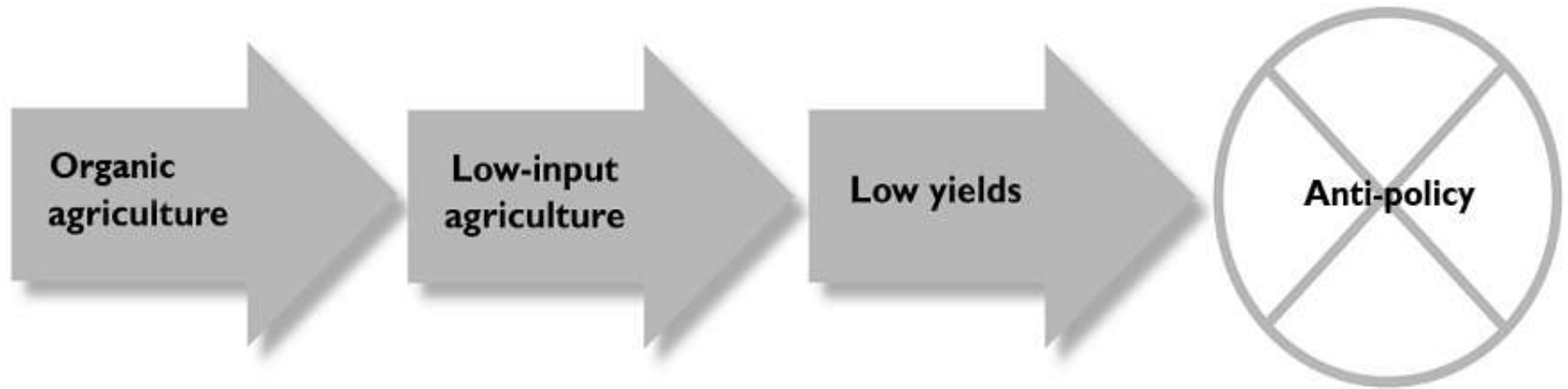
## *Industrial*

- Focus on individual farm components
- Intensive use of external inputs
- Monocultures
- Simple uniformity
- Yield maximisation over the short term

## *Ecological*

- Focus on whole farm system
- Knowledge intensive, on-farm synergies
- Polycultures, agro-biodiversity
- Location-specific complexity
- Yield optimisation over the long term

# The challenge of moving from the industrial to the ecological paradigm



- The need for “ecological literacy”
- Beyond agribusiness – underlying fears of the industrialised mindset

# Ecological literacy – simply a matter of education?

Ecological literacy is the ability to understand the natural systems that make life on earth possible. To be ecoliterate means understanding the principles of organisation of ecological communities (i.e. ecosystems) and using those principles for creating sustainable human communities.

This means a need for:

1. More evidence and information
2. An educational paradigm focussing on holism, systems thinking, sustainability and complexity
3. Bringing ecological economics to the fore. “All education is environmental education... by what is included or excluded we teach the young that they are part of or apart from the natural world.” (David Orr).

## ...or a lack of separation? (agriculture v. environment)

# Understanding the fears behind the industrialised mindset

The goal of ecological literacy is “built on the recognition that the disorder of ecosystems reflects a prior disorder of mind”. David Orr

Research and interviews with over 400 Cubans in the food and farming sector (Wright, 2009) revealed:

- No private sector in Cuba therefore NO CORPORATE INTERESTS
- High level of industrialisation – obsessive focus on increasing yields
- Misperceptions and lack of logic around the ability of ecological production to perform (in the face of scientific evidence)
- Underlying fears around a lack of food/starvation, and around loss of control over nature/farmers and subsequent chaos.

“The industrialised mindset is the underlying psychological state that drives the development of technologies – including GM - in the absence of evidence of their efficacy”

# Using eco-psychology as a tool for change

- Using the metaphor of oil addiction
- Treating the industrialised mindset – abusive or fearful?
  - They realise that they are not alone
  - They are respected as human beings with the potential for change
  - They recognise what they have done and are held responsible for it
  - They develop empathy for that which they have harmed
  - Guidance comes from someone they respect/look up to
  - They learn to understand and control their fears in other ways
- No “us” and “them”

# Mainstreaming an Agroecological Approach: Implications for Farming and Food Systems Worldwide: Policy Briefing Paper based on a Review of the Literature, by Marco Wibbelmann.

- Of all production approaches, agroecological systems hold the highest potential to be robust, regenerative and productive
- We already have the knowledge to mainstream agroecology
- Reticence to mainstreaming agroecology is ideologically or politically driven

# Examples of Priority Areas for Change, from the Briefing Paper

## ***Economic Restructuring:-***

- Tie agricultural production to stewardship of ecosystem function
- Avoid certification as a basis for agroecological production
- Develop international agreement on the valuation and incorporation of externalities into markets

## ***Research:-***

- Achieve greater clarity and consensus across the definitions of , and indicators for, agroecology
- Assess best practice for scaling up agroecology in developed and developing economies
- Develop cross disciplinary research between the agroecological, economic and health sectors

## ***Institutions, Support and Extension:-***

- Develop regional agroecological information resources and networks
- Develop agroecological design approaches for locally appropriate strategies
- Incorporate agroecology into education at all levels

## ***Practice – Scaling and Intensification of the Food System:-***

- Scale up the small farm agroecological model and adapt compatible and supportive post harvest systems
- Regionally integrate related non-food sectors such as recycling, sewage processing, to close resource cycles
- Facilitate the mobilisation of local labour and resources to meet the requirements of the agroecological sector