



Organic or regenerative agriculture: contributions to the discussion

Adaptation made by ROOTS of the article written by Jairo Restrepo Rivera

What is the connection of worldview and ancestry with regenerative agriculture? What is the link between colonialism and denialism? What is there in the discussion about an anthropocentric and academic view of hegemonic production models? What is the principle and objective of regenerative agriculture? During an interview in Argentina, the Colombian agronomist Jairo Restrepo, true to his style, combines these key concepts to broadly address the understanding of this form of food production.

Worldview

The worldview is understood as the way we interpret the world. Currently, this way of interpreting the world has become or has suffered a deformation or deterioration according to a series of totally anthropocentric interests.

When we relate the concept of worldview to the current model of industrial agriculture, it has lost the structure to relate to life and the entire set of myths with intention to explain in a fantastic way the origins of a world in



which we are immersed. An expression of a natural relationship of humans or societies with their different gods created by it, and a kind of hierarchical order of the universe and its environment has been usurped. This usurpation begins with denying all the structures of a community life that always grouped an imaginary set from which they always linked their existence and way of producing in peace with nature and not in conflict with it.

In the midst of rural communities that still resist or survive in the countryside, the possibility of having one's own interpretation of nature to try to explain the origin of life, as well as everything that exists and the universe itself; Gradually and systematically, agroindustry with technological imposition erodes, dehumanizes and finally destroys it, with the sole purpose of subjecting the countryside and the land to a hegemony led by capital, not only destroying and devastating agricultural lands but also of the life.

What we dream and desire with the organic agriculture that we propose, is to reconnect all the elements of the cosmos from the individual and collective, having nature as a reference, with the aim of causing the least impact to produce in a more fair and supportive way. What we need, without the need to choke and lose our sense, where we realize that to enjoy life it is not necessary to destroy it through greed and unlimited accumulation. That connection means considering the complementarity, the reciprocal, the sacred, the heart, the spiritual and sharing the basics that sustain life: a healthy diet.

Ancestry

Organic agriculture and its relationship with ancestry or the ancestral, is everything that is linked or has to do with our past or kinship and with everything that is believed to have existed and what still exists. Generally, agriculture is linked to the Neolithic, a period of human history in which agriculture and animal grazing appeared and became widespread, giving rise to agrarian societies.

The agriculture that we propose is the recognition of knowledge, respect for rituals and the cultural way of conceiving things in the environment and within the times of nature and cultural spaces. Among them the depth of ethnobotany, and the direct relationship with the use and exploitation of plants, with the development of knowledge focused mainly on herbalism or



natural medicine; and the influence of the moon on agriculture, among other activities of contemplation and imagination, of a past that has not passed and that in some places that different way of conceiving the universe is still maintained.

On the other hand, ancestrality also included the patience that people have had to transmit to us orally the knowledge achieved over hundreds of years from their direct relationship with forests, animals and the way of conceiving the protection of nature as vital elements for the continuity of life. Ancestry is the reference to a masterful wisdom, in which, on many occasions, we can find the most sensible solutions to an apparently very complex problem.

Colonialism and denialism

In this same direction or sense, we address how the colonization process denied the knowledge inherent to the people on earth, to the extent that the colonizer tried to destroy all the customs and cultures existing in the places where they arrived, without the purpose of learning to contemplate a different relationship of coexistence with nature and in peace with the inhabitants. We must not forget that the purpose of all the colonizers, who left mainly from Spain, was the subjugation of the native peoples of our America. Since they began their journey, they had a predetermined and very clear idea of what they came to look for, of course, the natural wealth of our continent. Not only was crime, subjugation, lies and looting the weapon, but subjugation was the voice that ordered the disappearance of any resistance that confronted the colonizer and opresor.

We are subjugated and totally denied by the colonizers as a pre-existing culture superior to that of the colonizer, very rich in every sense, including the culture of the natives, as well as the natural wealth of the geographical place where they were.

To understand the principles of organic agriculture, it is necessary to free us from the old academic paradigms that have stunted our understanding of what is ours, such as the climate and our culture. It is necessary to re-inhabit, nourish and address the interiority of humanity, which will allow us to nourish the hope of achieving our own face. Where it is not difficult for us to imagine what was before, a diverse nature, evolving in peace with the living environment of the universe. Respecting all forms and



biotransformations, both individual and collective, where the appropriation of knowledge on a technological scale is not for destruction, denial and submission, by a model dictated by the large colonizing corporations of the global market.

An academic and anthropocentric look at hegemonic production models

Today, the geopolitical and military objective of capitalism is to concentrate the ownership of land, no matter where on the planet you have to go to look for it, at any cost and independent of those who inhabit it or are its owners (peasant families), indigenous, Afro-descendant, national producers or the State). The rules of subjugation are clear for the ventures of international financial banking, with the approval of the corruption that runs rampant on the planet. A global domain for food production is intended.

The comparative advantages of having a multidiverse climate and having the privilege of the sun every day, all year round, to constantly sustain photosynthesis and make crop yields more efficient, make these lands more desirable, which awaken voracity of the agro-food empire. The best lands for mega-projects are between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, and a large strip covers America, sub-Saharan Africa and part of Asia, territories chosen for land grabbing and the massive displacement of people from the countryside to the periphery from urban centers, where they stop producing food to become consumers of products of poor quality.

Every year millions of hectares are vacated through violence, deception, massacres and debts, to meet the demands of these large commodity investors in rented land, at symbolic prices, sometimes with the State. Under that logic, agriculture is a true casino of speculators and the stock exchanges of Chicago or New York become chambers of crimes against humanity. They speculate and manipulate capital, needs and availability of food; like the large stores, usury centers that offer and sell what they do not produce and never show losses, pompously called food suppliers. In reality, purveyors of the wealth of food traffickers who offer and sell without taking any risk.

What is organic or regenerative agriculture?

Regardless of what you want to call it, organic or regenerative agriculture is one where each agricultural productive unit must be worked as an integral living organism and according to its limitations and abilities, its potential or carrying



capacity, the ability of its soil to recover, water, climate and local economy, without forgetting that all farmers have a traditional history of adoption for each “new” technique that they want to introduce, adapt or promote on their plots. What makes organic or regenerative agriculture different from conventional agriculture or the green revolution is the focus and roots of people in the field, not the methods and techniques applied specifically in food production.

What is the objective of organic agriculture?

It is not easy to try to define or write in a single line, or summarize with a single objective, what would be understood as organic or regenerative agriculture. The objectives are multiple and heterogeneous, but at the same time they are very flexible, nothing can be predetermined in them, in the same way that the recommendation of a technology is not an unmodifiable and precise recommendation. Since the conditions of space and time are two factors so that the objectives that can be proposed for a place are very different from those that would be proposed for another productive space, the same happens with the order or priority for the proposal of the themselves.

However, what we can propose in response to that question is some broad objectives, which should be considered or not, for the development of a proposal for organic or regenerative agriculture. General objectives for the development of Organic or Regenerative Agriculture:

- Defend life without limits of borders, from all the factors that put it at risk.
- Produce healthy foods, free of poisons, without contaminating the environment and destroying nature, eliminating all inputs and practices that harm them.
- Produce economical foods in abundance, accessible to all populations, nutritionally in harmony and at low costs.
- Reduce farmers' dependence on external inputs as much as possible, in addition to developing and appropriating technology that is appropriate, adequate and appropriable to their plots.
- Promote the stability of production in an energetically sustainable, economically viable and fair way.
- Seek economic self-sufficiency of producers and rural communities (self-management), reducing production costs, preserving and improving the basic resources they possess.



- Work with conservation, genetic biodiversity and the natural behavior of ecosystems; at no time work against them.
- Work on the integrality of biogeochemical systems and respect their interrelationships with the environment, in all production processes. Stop seeing the earth as an inexhaustible mine of mineral elements and as a pocket where there is no bottom.
- Recover, conserve and enhance plant fertility and soil nutrition.
- Work with the recirculation and evolution of mineral nutrients and conserve organic matter, since in the tropics, the task of conserving the organic matter that is produced locally is much easier than trying to replace the organic matter that is lost.
- Seek greater usefulness of the natural, productive, biological and genetic potential of plants and animals; what is translated or means, those genetics that are the closest to the local reality.
- Understand and work productive units according to their limitations and the potential of their soil, water, climate and local economy; managing to find the most efficient size of the production unit in a diversified way, seeking inner happiness.
- Ensure the competitiveness of food production, initially and preferably available in local markets, and then seek regional, national and international alliances, accompanied by the parameters of quantity, quality, transparency and honesty.
- Take advantage of all the comparative social, cultural, economic, ecological and agro-technological advantages that organic production systems offer in the face of the constant failures of conventional agriculture, to build true sustainable development focused on human capabilities in rural areas.