

# Yogic agriculture reaping rewards in India

**Increasing crop sizes and potential returns is not always about financial investment. Dr Tamasin Ramsay explains how the practice of ‘Yogic farming’ works in India.**

The thought-child of the Rural Wing of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) in India, Sustainable Yogic Agriculture is a unique form of farming that combines thought-based meditative practices with methods of organic agriculture and is bringing clear economic and social benefits to smallholder agrarian communities in India.

For more than 75 years, the BKWSU has been teaching methods of personal empowerment based on techniques of Raja Yoga meditation. These methods include understanding the self as a soul, managing the energy of the mind, becoming cognizant of the relationship between thoughts and behaviour, maintaining a thought-union with the Divine and experiencing transcendental states that fill the mind and character with strength. The BKWSU continually seeks ways in which to apply the benefits of spiritual practice in a way that responds meaningfully to people’s lives and daily circumstances.

It is now widely acknowledged that to sustain agricultural production, healthy environments, and viable farming communities there must be a whole-systems approach to agriculture incorporating traditional knowledge and organic agriculture that links ecology, culture, economics and society. Sustainable Yogic Agriculture utilises a systems-wide approach, recognising all elements of farming: humans, animals and bird, flying and crawling insects, micro-organisms, seed, vegetation and surrounding ecosystems, and the natural elements of sun, soil, air, water and space.

These methods are engaging more than 400 farmers in India with a cooperative of scientists from India’s leading agricultural universities, G.B. (Gindh Ballabh) Pant University of Agriculture and Technology and S.D. (Sadarkrushinagar Dantiwada) Agricultural University. Early data indicate statistically significant effects on crop quality and crop yield. Further, meditative practices designed for each phase of the agrarian cycle, from seed to harvest, are increasing farmers’ self-esteem and so reducing the frequency of farmer suicides and social violence in families and villages. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered so far, using laboratory based experiments and participant observation, have provided valuable baseline information that endorse the importance of continued research.

## Research Methods and Data

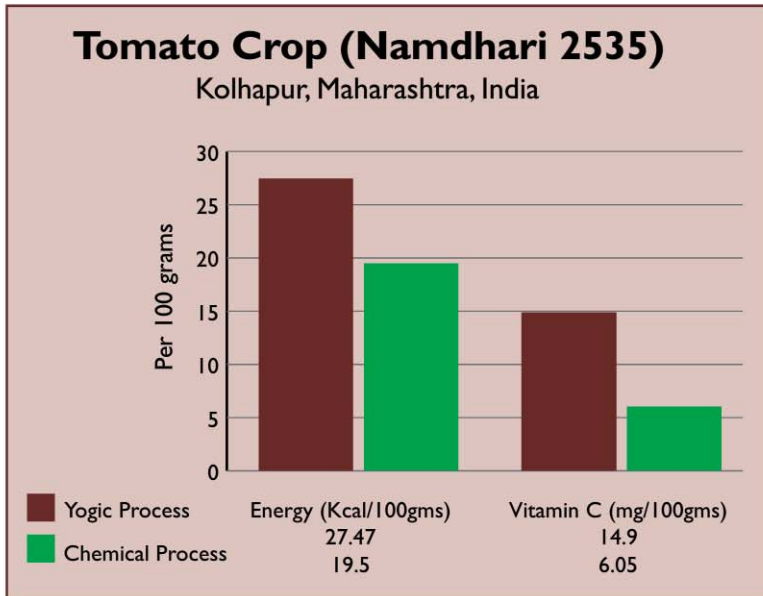
The experimental land is divided into three parcels: OFM-1 (organic farming techniques), OFM-2 (organic farming techniques + meditation), and CIM (standard chemical farming using fertilizers and pesticides).

## Quantitative

Preliminary findings indicate that OFM-2 (organic + meditation) has the greatest soil microbial population, the seeds germinate up to a week earlier. Subsequent crops reveal higher amounts of iron, energy, protein and vitamins compared to OFM-1 (organic) and CIM (chemical).

Local farmers determined that the yogic process saves a total of Rs. 14769.00 (\$USD 330) per acre as compared to chemical farming, offering low-cost high-benefit methods for local communities.

See below for sample data of a tomato crop indicating levels of Vitamin C and Energy.



#### Yogic Methods

Seeds are placed in the BKWSU meditation centre where practised meditators focus thoughts of peace, non-violence, love, strength and resilience on the seeds for up to a month before sowing. Regular meditations are conducted remotely and in the fields with specific thought practices designed to support each phase of the crop growth cycle, from empowering seeds and seed germination, through sowing, irrigation and growth, to harvest and soil replenishment.

#### Benefits for Business

Our goal is to create a more resilient society and a greener economy, while supporting sustainable agrarian practices and strengthening vulnerable communities. In light of this, we offer opportunities for businesses to:

- Support further independent research into Sustainable Yogic Agriculture.
- Disseminate the principles and methods of Sustainable Yogic Agriculture to new audiences.
- Support the production of organic seed and organic agricultural practices.
- Dialogue with us to consider ways this study may be adapted and replicated, to bring benefit to more communities around the world.

In the last few years, businesses that support green, sustainable, and ethical endeavours have garnered significant public interest and support, yet many local and indigenous innovations still such as this remain un-mapped. We invite businesses to work with us to ensure that this important study finds a place in global conversations. Tours within the participating farming communities and research universities in India can be arranged.

**The Author:** Dr Tamasin Ramsay is an environmentalist and anthropologist, and researches the interrelationship between consciousness, human activity and the physical world. Tamasin is NGO Representative of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University to the United Nations and resides in New York. The BKWSU is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) of the UN, in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council. It is also affiliated to the UN Department of Public Information and has Observer Status with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. For more information about this study please contact: [tamasin@bkun.org](mailto:tamasin@bkun.org).

