

UN calls for eco-friendly farming to boost yields

June 13 2011



A woman checks maize crop on a small farm in Chinhamora, Zimbabwe, in February 2011. The United Nations food agency on Monday called for greater use of environmentally sustainable techniques by poor farmers in order to increase crop intensity to feed the world's growing population.

The United Nations food agency on Monday called for greater use of environmentally sustainable techniques by poor farmers in order to increase crop intensity to feed the world's growing population.

"The new approach calls for targeting mainly smallholder farmers in developing countries," the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said in a statement accompanying a report entitled "Save and Grow".

"Helping low-income farm families in developing countries... economise

on cost of production and build healthy agro-ecosystems will enable them to maximise yields and invest the savings in their health and education," it said.

"In order to grow, agriculture must learn to save," it said, pointing to lower [crop yields](#) in recent years despite an increase in environmentally unsustainable farming practices aimed at increasing [intensive farming](#).

The eco-friendly techniques recommended by FAO include using plant residues to cover over fields, rotating cereals cultivation with soil-enriching legumes, more precise irrigation for fields and better use of fertilizers.

"Such methods help adapt crops to [climate change](#) and not only help grow more food but also contribute to reducing crops' water needs by 30 percent and [energy costs](#) by up to 60 percent," the report said.

"In some cases crop yields can be increased six-fold, as shown by trials with maize held recently in southern Africa," it said.

"Average yields from farms practicing the techniques in 57 low-income countries increased almost 80 percent," it added.

FAO called on governments both in the developed and in the developing world to increase investments in order to provide incentives for poor farmers to adopt the new, more environmentally friendly [farming techniques](#).

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: UN calls for eco-friendly farming to boost yields (2011, June 13) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-eco-friendly-farming-boost-yields.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.