

VOICE OF THE FARMER

ORGANIC FOR ALL



Organic for All has developed a participatory, in-depth educational experience for underserved, small-scale farmers and the communities they support.

Our program promotes the indigenous knowledge and voices of farmers by respecting their unique culture and rich historic connections to the land. We assert that the inclusion of all farmers is critical for the growth of agroecology-organic farming practices, with wholistic benefits to our farmlands, environments and food sovereignty systems—all essential elements of the health and wellbeing of our farming communities.

Organic for All offers a range of capacity building programs dedicated to using a systems-approach centered around building community, growing healthy people, and truthfully sustaining our nation's economic equality. This newly implemented training and education project is designed to build capacity within underserved farming communities to increase opportunities for offering a path to organic farming systems and certification.

Voice of the Farmer is our report on *Organic For All* participatory learning sessions to support strengthening capacity with all farmers.

WELCOME TO



BENEFITS OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

W.B. Brown from Brown's Place Certified Organic Farm tells you some of the tricks of his trade.

My father worked a 500-acre farm and raised 8 children who all helped. After serving time in the Army I bought 20 acres in Georgia and cleaned up the woods little by little every year to create farmland.

I now grow vegetables and raise New Zealand goats.

I sell 90% of the vegetables that I grow. All my inputs are approved by my certifier, and

all my goats are raised organically. I sell my goats for a reasonable profit and I only grow enough for me and my wife to take care of.

When you make a career out of organic farming, it's going to require you to do some work. My own learning curve took about three years to figure out how to grow organic well.

"You can make money selling organic. There are always buyers for it."

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Agencies that can help you grow organic:

NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services) helped me buy my high tunnels, but you have to qualify for them. NRCS also assisted me with my irrigation system. They advised me on what kind of system I needed, what kind of pump and helped with the payments. All the fencing for my goats were provided with help from NRCS.

Georgia Organics helped to maintain my organic status, paying me to stay organic. My costs were around \$1,200-\$1,300 per year for certification, and 75% of those costs are covered by this service.

All you have to do is put in a little sweat and time and effort to get this assistance. Organic farmers often qualify for more NRCS funding than conventional.

Watch the guided tour of Brown's Place: <https://uacus.com/learning>

Planning. In order to sell all the time, you have to plant all the time. Each 60-90 day growth cycle needs planning and you need to plant every three weeks. Success comes from managing these cycles.

Marketing. All of you are going to run into this eventually. When I first started organic farming, someone came up to me and mentioned 'market' and I wondered what the heck are they talking about? Once you've established a good product, marketing is about getting people to know you and buy from you. My organic tomatoes taste differently from those you find in the grocery stores. And they're better for you! When people eat just one, they buy the whole package.

These are the kinds of messages that organic farmers need to get the word out with.

Cooperate with other organic farms. Organic farming is not 'cheap' and inputs not always

available at local feed supply stores, so I cooperate with three other organic farmers to buy our fertilizers, seeds, plants and organic pesticides together. The supplier ships it to us in one place and it offers us big savings to buy in bulk.

We ordered five tons of organic fertilizer this year and the shipment was free because of the quantity.

Last year we cooperatively grew ten rows of watermelon and they sold well. Our buyers said they will buy all the watermelons we can grow this year. Now we've planted three acres of watermelon, and our buyers will deliver pallets and take them away.

"Any individual who wants to make some money being certified organic can do that. Instead of raising a whole bunch of quantity, raise quality vegetables and that will help society tremendously. That's why I do what I do."

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We invite you to work with us to create healthy pathways around healing our food, environment, and community through Indigenous, Agroecology-Organic farming systems practices and their benefits for all communities.

This report is provided with the generous financial support of SARE.

For more information, visit our website: www.uacus.com