



Organic IS Right for Me

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Bangor, Michigan
BLUEBERRY SESSION II
GREAT LAIKES EXPO
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Who Are We?



- Growers of “Joe’s Blues” since 2009
- 4.5 Acres of jerseys in Organic Transition
- Work with 6 other blueberry farms, about 35 Acres
- Currently selling frozen berries in Chicago, Kalamazoo markets
- Have used organic methods since 2010
- Received SARE Grant to help other farmers transition



Why We Are Going to Organic

- Because I was getting married and was planning to have children...and, hopefully, a long life and was worried about using chemicals
- Because it's so common sense that a fruit that's supposed to be so healthy, ought to be grown that way
- Because it is a way for the smaller farmers to get more money for their berries
- Because retail buyers really want no-spray berries

How you can go organic

STEP 1 - Start in your field:

- Give your bushes a good trim
- Get a serious soil test
- Next spring, follow our Guidelines
- Get MAEAP verified



How you can go organic (cont'd)

- STEP 2 - Look for New Markets
 - The good news - there are lots of possibilities
 - The bad news - you have to hustle more
 - Options:
 - U-pick
 - Farmers Markets
 - CSA's



Getting help



- Talk with NRCS - organic transition funds available.
- Moss Funnel Farms has created a “transitional market” for non-certified organically grown blueberries via “Joe’s Premium Frozen Blueberries,” which it is selling in retail and institutional settings.
- Contact us at sales@joesblueberries.com.

Keep in mind...

- Going organic means staying on your toes. Example - get your berries out early and into the fridge to minimize SWD.
- Focus seriously on “soil health.” Example -you’ve got to get the N levels up.
- Keep in mind that you are not alone - Lots of people out there to help you. GET HELP!
- **THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY!**

Final thoughts on going organic...

- Trim
- Weed
- Feed
- harvest early
- harvest early
- harvest early

