

What is Organic?

October 2019

History

- Many standards and certifiers
- Organic Foods Production Act of 1990
- Implemented in 2002
- *Only 1 standard; "organic" = USDA*



USDA National Organic Program

- Regulations
- Enforcement
- Audit Accredited Certifying Agents (ACA)




National Organic Standards Board

- 15 member
- Material review
- Development of standards Public




Step 1: Application

Pick a certifier: 17 options in IA, many with Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship.

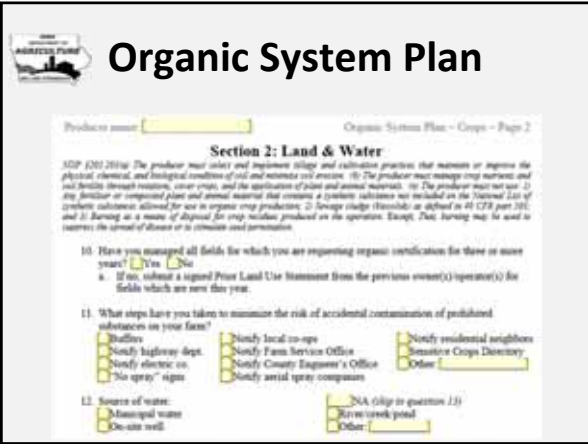
Others with:

- Midwest Organic Services Assoc (MOSA)
- Organic Crop Improvement Assoc (OCIA)
- Global Organic Alliance (GOA)



Step 1: Organic System Plan

- Land history
- Buffer zones
- Seeds, planting stock
- Fertility
- Pest management
- Harvest, storage, transportation
- Labeling
- Materials
- Recordkeeping



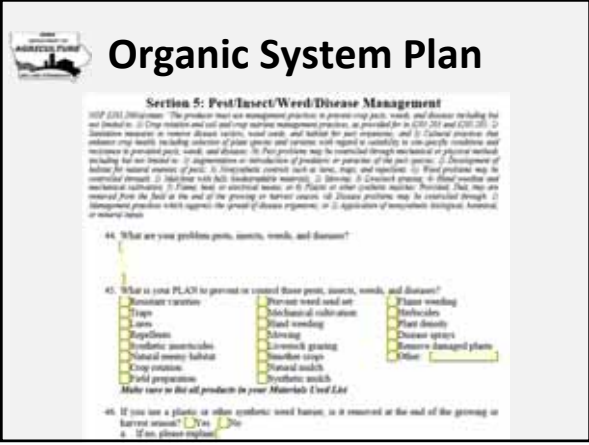
Organic System Plan

Section 2: Land & Water

10. Have you managed all fields for which you are requesting organic certification for three or more years? Yes No

11. What steps have you taken to minimize the risk of accidental contamination of prohibited substances on your farm?

12. Source of water:



Organic System Plan

Section 5: Pest/Insect/Weed/Disease Management

44. What are your problem pests, insects, weeds, and diseases?

45. What is your PLANT to prevent or control these pests, insects, weeds, and diseases?

46. If you use a plastic or other synthetic weed barrier, is it secured at the end of the growing or harvest season? Yes No

Fees



- Vary by certifier!
- IDALS example:
 - Base: \$125
 - Inspection: \$300 (crop)
 - Certification fee: \$125+ (varies, ex: \$6/ac corn; \$27/ac vegetables)



USDA Organic Certification Cost Share Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service

Making Organic Certification Affordable

You're Certified...Now Get Reimbursed!

1 Contact Your FSA Office

2 Submit Information

3 Get Reimbursed

Step 2: Review OSP



PART 205—NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM

Subpart B—Definitions

Subpart P—Applicability

Subpart C—Organic Production and Handling Requirements





Step 3: Inspection

- Inspection cost often hourly = be prepared:
 - Field maps
 - Crop rotation plan
 - Field records (planting, inputs, pest control)
 - Harvest records
 - Input documentation (purchase of seeds, fertilizers, etc)
 - Sales documentation (products, quantities, etc)



Step 5: Decision


Certification

- Annual update & inspection
- Ongoing updates
- Unannounced inspections
- Residue testing



Record Keeping

- Maintain records concerning the production, harvesting, and handling of organic agricultural products
- Flexible, just sufficient to show compliance
 - be maintained for 5 years
- Lots of templates (ATTRA, certifiers)



EcoCert Seed Search Documentation

Name and Contact of Information of Source	Method of Contact	Date Contacted	Reason Organic Equivalent is unavailable
1. <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Does this supplier carry organic seeds (Y/N)? <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Mail	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	Please check at least one reason and provide further justification here: <input type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Quantity <input type="checkbox"/> Form/Variety Explanation: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
2. <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Does this supplier carry organic seeds (Y/N)? <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Mail	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	Please check at least one reason and provide further justification here: <input type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Quantity <input type="checkbox"/> Form/Variety Explanation: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
3. <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Does this supplier carry organic seeds (Y/N)? <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Mail	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	Please check at least one reason and provide further justification here: <input type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Quantity <input type="checkbox"/> Form/Variety Explanation: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

EcoCert Documentation Forms

ECOCERT ICO

AUDIT TRAIL FORMS

EQUIPMENT CLEANOUT LOG

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This sheet should be kept on or near the equipment.

Name of certified operation:

Machine or Piece of Equipment:

Crop Year:

Cleanout date	By	Condition of equipment Note any repairs or maintenance needed	Cleanout performed as per protocols? Y/N

*Protocols are the routine, step by step procedures established to make certain that equipment is properly and completely cleaned each and every time cleaning is required.

EcoCert Documentation Forms

ECOCERT ICO

AUDIT TRAIL FORMS

FIELD INPUTS LOG

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A record of the materials you use for each field

Name of certified operation:

Field ID: Acres: Crop: Year:

Seeds/Transplants	
Date	Crop/variety - Planted/transplanted

Fertilizers/Pest Control			
Date	Material applied - Brand or Source	Rate/Amount	Notes

Additional Notes and Observations

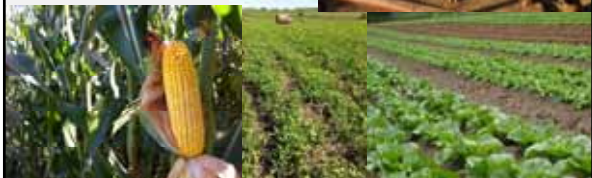


Certifier	Location	State	Country	USDA	USDA ID	USDA Status	USDA Notes
2 & 4 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database
20 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database
4 & 4 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database
4 & 4 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database
4 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database
4 Farms	10001 10001 Farms, Illinois, Inc.	Illinois	USA	2017-10-10	2017-10-10	United States of America	USDA: Recertification required. US Organic Integrity Database

Iowa Organic

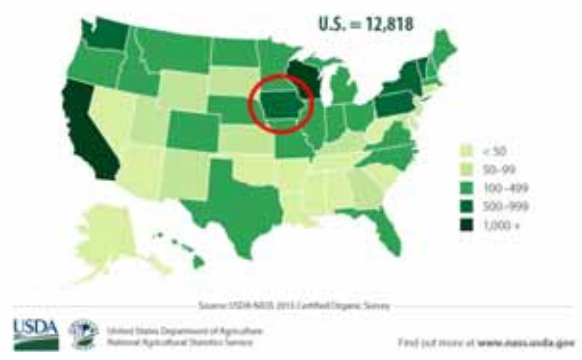
~1,015 certified operations

- ~865 in crop
- ~255 in livestock
- ~150 handling



Number of Certified Organic Farms, by State, 2015

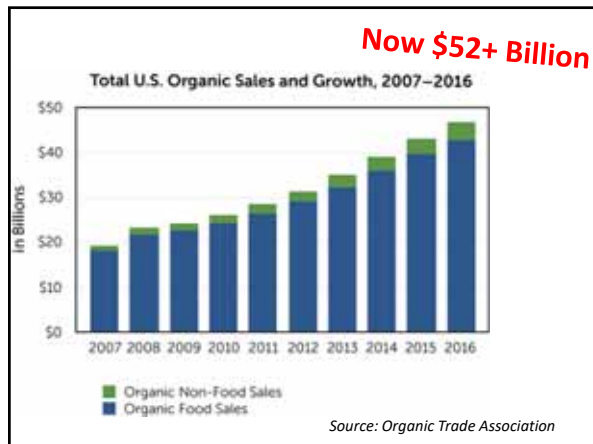
California and Wisconsin had more than 1,000; South had few



What are the benefits of certification?

Organic Trivia

Which percentage of US households purchase *some* organic food?




Value of Certification

- Profitability – ~30% premium despite lower yields (WSU analysis 45 studies)
- *Some* market data available
 - USDA AMS “Organic Grain and Feedstuffs Report” (farm gate: \$10.29/bu organic corn & \$18.28/bu organic soybeans in recent report)
 - Mercaris



Why Transition to Organic?



2016 *NATIONAL* survey to 1,829 farms, 615 replies (34%)

Transition

MOTIVATION		% YES
VALUES-BASED	Fits me and/or my family's values	71.3
	Concerns about environment	66.7
	Potential enhancement of farm sustainability	66.5
	Concerns about human health	66.3
MARKET/PROFIT	Access the expanding market for organics	43.6
	Potential increase in profit	40.8
	Specific market opportunity or contract from a buyer	32.7

Value of Certification




- Communication
- Universal & regulated standard
- Counted
- Records ready



Barriers

- Cost
- Paper work
- Support, resources?
- Local market, know farmer
- *more on production barriers/challenges later*



Transition

TABLE II. OBSTACLES: TRANSITIONING V. 100% CERTIFIED ORGANIC

OBSTACLES	TRANSITIONING (%)			100% CERTIFIED (%)		
	MAJOR	MINOR	NOT AN OBSTACLE	MAJOR	MINOR	NOT AN OBSTACLE
MAJOR OBSTACLE						
Wired infrastructure	43.8	33.6	16.5	34.7	28.4	17.3
Cost of organic certification ¹	47.5	35.5	16.8	19.5	43.3	37.2
Excess/lengthy requirements of organic certification ²	44.8	41.2	14.1	30.8	46.1	23.3

Imports

- 2008-2016 organic livestock industry tripled, but only 20% increase in US organic grain acres
- Imports increase to meet demand (\$42m in 2011-\$401m in 2016)
- Organic grain premiums decreased (~25%)



The labels said 'organic,' But these massive imports of corn and soybeans weren't.



Stop procurement fraud in its tracks with AG (2019) \$5,000

Organic farmers head to hill to ensure Congressional support for anti-fraud and other measures in the Farm Bill

In the largest prosecution of organic fraud in U.S. history, Iowa grain seller sentenced to 10 years in prison

Organic Trade Association launches Organic Fraud Prevention Solutions program

Streamlining program represents major step by organic industry to fight fraud



Imports

- 2018 – organic corn imports half of 2017 volume; soybeans down ~25%
- Turkey previously top supplier, big drop as leading supplier lost organic certification



Barriers

Erosion of federal standards?

Can Hydroponic Farming Be Organic? The Battle Over The Future Of Organic Is Getting Heated

“This is like Soylent Green in the shape of a vegetable.” Is it though?



Barriers

Crop insurance available?

- ~80 crops have an organic price election, but not all available in every county.
- Multi-Peril Crop Insurance includes yield and sometimes revenue-based coverage.
- Whole-Farm Revenue Protection available



<https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Topics/Organic-Crops>

Other barriers?
(aside from production ones)



Questions?
Comments?



NRCS

Resources



The screenshot shows the USDA website's National Organic Program page. The header includes the USDA logo and navigation links. The main content area features a large image of a green field with the title 'National Organic Program'. Below the image, there is a brief description of the program and a list of 'Key Activities' including:

- Increase the list of certified organic operations and help new farmers and business learn how to get certified.
- Develop regulations and guidance on organic standards.

 There are also buttons for 'Get USDA Organic Insider updates!' and 'Org Chart'.

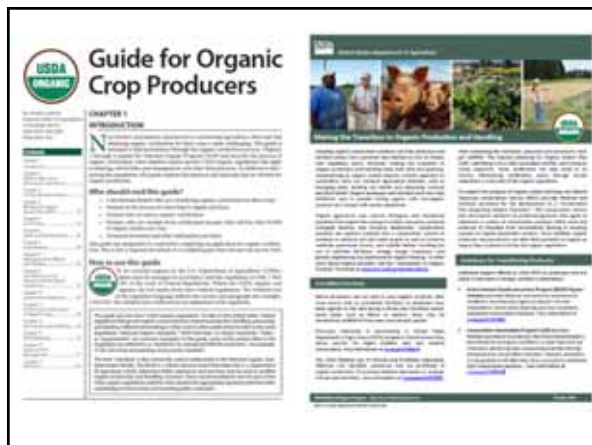
The screenshot shows a USDA brochure titled 'Is Organic An Option For Me? Information on Organic Agriculture for Farmers, Ranchers, and Businesses'. The brochure includes a table of contents:

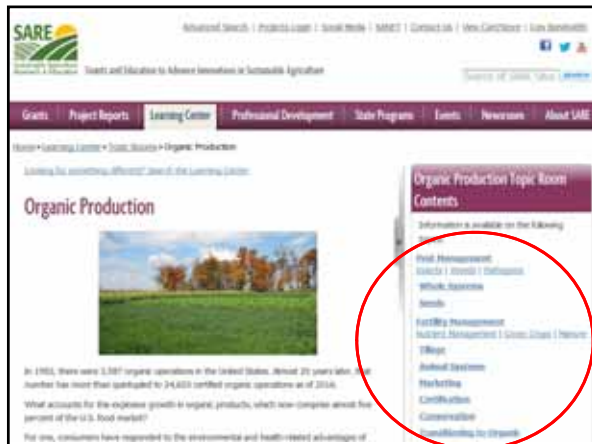
What is Organic?	1
USDA's Role: Oversight and More	3
Certification	7
USDA Resources for Organic Producers	14
When Can I Learn More About Nests, Grants, and other USDA resources?	17

 The brochure also features an image of fresh green beans in bamboo baskets and a date of 'April 2018'.

NOP Sound & Sensible

- Videos, how to guides, self assessments, etc.
- Developed with partners like WSDA, Tilth, and many more





NRCS Support for Organic

- The transition to organic plan/CAP 138
- Practices can help comply with organic regulations
- EQIP (inc Organic Initiative)
- CSP (inc organic bundles)