



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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# ORGANIC PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE



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Are you an established organic operation, exempt from certification, or even thinking about transitioning to organic?

Organic agriculture uses cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. USDA can provide resources to start, expand, and operate your organic farm, market what you grow, and help you recover in case of disaster.

## Transitioning to Organic

Before land can be certified organic, farmers must carefully manage their land without using prohibited inputs like synthetic pesticides for 36 months. During this transition period and during the first years after certification, farmers often face many technical and market challenges. The Organic Transition Initiative (OTI) is a \$300 million multi-agency USDA effort to support this transition and build and strengthen organic markets. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service both have a major role in the Organic Transition Initiative.

## Getting Certified

The National Organic Program, managed by AMS, sets and enforces the national standards that protect the integrity of the USDA Organic Seal. They also publish a database of certified organic farms and businesses, and USDA accredited certifiers. Learn how to get certified or locate a certifier at: [ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification](https://ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification).



## What is Organic Agriculture?

Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods.

These methods integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.



## USDA Agencies and Offices with Organic Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

Rural Development (RD)

# FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## Cost-Share for Certification Costs

PROGRAM	AGENCY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCERS	PROCESSORS AND HANDLERS
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (OCCSP)	FSA	Cost-share	OCCSP reimburses 75%, up to \$750 per category of certification costs. Categories include crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling, and California state organic program fees.	❖	❖

## Training and Mentoring

PROGRAM	AGENCY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCERS	PROCESSORS AND HANDLERS
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (TOPP)	AMS	Training	Part of the Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), TOPP offers regionally-based farmer training and education. Partnering organizations in six regions connect farmers transitioning to organic with local certified organic mentors and provide education and technical assistance on organic certification, record keeping, writing an Organic System Plan, and meeting the organic regulations.	❖	



## Conservation

PROGRAM	AGENCY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCERS	PROCESSORS AND HANDLERS
CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP) – ORGANIC BUFFERS	FSA	Conservation	CRP assists organic farmers with the cost of establishing conservation buffers and other practices on and near farms that produce organic crops.	❖	
CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)	NRCS	Conservation	Financial assistance is available to help producers increase their level of existing conservation on their land by additional activities.	❖	
CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CTA)	NRCS	Conservation	Technical assistance is available at no cost to help producers with conservation plans, which can help producers comply with organic regulations.	❖	
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)	NRCS	Conservation	Financial assistance is available to help producers implement conservation plans. <i>The EQIP Organic Initiative</i> is a separate fund pool specifically for organic, transitioning, and exempt producers. Ranking competition may be lower due to the smaller applicant pool. <i>The EQIP Organic Transition Initiative</i> is a fund pool for producers in transition to become certified organic, and participation requires the completion of Conservation Practice Standard 823 Organic Management and/ or Conservation Planning Activity 138 and/ or Design and Implementation Activity 140. These practices help producers identify and address resource concerns as they transition to organic, while also meeting NOP requirements for certification.	❖	



## Risk Management

While Federal crop insurance and disaster assistance programs are available to all producers, certain programs offer special provisions for organic producers.

PROGRAM	AGENCY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCERS	PROCESSORS AND HANDLERS
NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)	FSA	Disaster assistance	For commodities not covered by crop insurance, NAP helps producers manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters.	❖	
ORGANIC DAIRY MARKETING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 2024 (ODMAP 2024)	FSA	Cost share	FSA will make a one-time payment, cost-share to certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from dairy cows, goats, and sheep. One-time payments will help organic dairy producers sustain operations and continue milk production as they are faced with significantly increased marketing and operational costs such as increased feed and transportation and the unavailability of organic commodities.	❖	
MICRO FARM	RMA	Crop insurance	Micro Farm is a new option through WFRP designed for small-scale producers, including smaller organic operations.	❖	
MULTI-PERIL CROP INSURANCE POLICIES	RMA	Crop insurance	Crop insurance provides coverage that reflects the premium price producers receive for over 80 crops.  <i>The Contract Price Addendum</i> allows producers to qualify for a federal crop insurance guarantee that more closely reflects the actual value of the certified organic or transitional crop. RMA's Actuarial Information Browser provides contract pricing and availability for a particular commodity type or practice.  <i>New for 2025</i> , RMA has expanded the availability of enterprise units to more crops, including the ability to have enterprise units by organic practice.	❖	
WHOLE-FARM REVENUE PROTECTION (WFRP)	RMA	Crop insurance	WFRP provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy and is available in all counties nationwide. This crop insurance policy is highly important to organic producers. In 2022, RMA increased expansion limits and added reporting flexibility for producers.	❖	

## Loans, Grants and Financing

PROGRAM	AGENCY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCERS	PROCESSORS AND HANDLERS
FARM LOAN PROGRAMS	FSA	Loans	Provide access to capital, either directly from FSA or through a third-party lender. Marketing assistance loans provide interim financing to help organic producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell crops during harvest when market prices are low. Deficiency payments are also available to producers who forgo the loan in return for a payment on the eligible commodity. Low-interest Loans (including microloans and conservation loans) to transition to organic production, help purchase or enlarge real estate, construct or improve buildings, soil and water conservation, routine operating expenses, fuel, insurance, equipment, repairs, and more.	❖	
FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS	FSA	Loans	Farm Storage Facility Loans provide low-interest financing to build or upgrade storage facilities for organic commodities, including cold storage, grain bins, bulk tanks and drying and handling equipment.	❖	
VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS	RD	Grants	Value-added producer grants provide financial support for agricultural producers to adopt value-added activities and generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income.	❖	
RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM (REAP)	RD	Loans/Grants	REAP provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems such as solar, wind, or biogas; or to make energy efficiency improvements to grain dryers, refrigeration, irrigation motors and more.	❖	❖





## More Information

For more information about USDA assistance for organic production, visit [farmers.gov/organic](https://farmers.gov/organic).

USDA Service Centers are locations where you can connect with Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Rural Development employees for assistance. To find yours, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator). For other USDA agencies, check the agency and program website for contact information.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](https://rma.usda.gov).



*This document should not be used to determine eligibility for programs. Program requirements can be complex and may be applied differently at the state and local level. Please check with each agency to determine you or your organization's eligibility.*



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