

FACT SHEET:

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN IOWA:

CONSUMER DEMAND AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR IOWA FARMERS

Organic farming is an important sector of Iowa's agricultural economy. Organic agriculture is a viable model for economic growth and stability for many Iowa farmers. In some cases, the extra income from producing and selling organic products can allow family farmers to stay on their land. Read on to learn about organic agriculture and production in Iowa.

MARKET GROWTH CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR IOWA FARMERS

Consumer demand for organically produced goods continues to show double-digit growth, and organic sales account for more than 4 percent of total U.S. food sales. In fact, demand for organic food is growing so fast that consumer demand is outstripping some domestic supplies. The U.S. spends more than \$1 billion per year to import organic food, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and imports of organic corn and soybeans increased 216 percent and 30 percent, respectively, in 2015. This leaves much opportunity for Iowa farmers to enter the organic market and benefit from the increased price points.¹

IOWA FARMERS ARE
BENEFITTING FROM
TWO TO THREE TIMES
HIGHER PRICES THAN
CONVENTIONAL FARMERS.²



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ORGANIC?

In 1990, the Organic Foods Production Act was passed, which defined standards for organic farming. Although many different production practices and products were labeled “organic” before this law was passed, today a product can only carry the “USDA Certified Organic” label if the farmer has followed specific production practices, including:



No synthetic pesticides or fertilizers or genetic engineering used in growing crops;



No antibiotics or growth hormones used in raising livestock; and



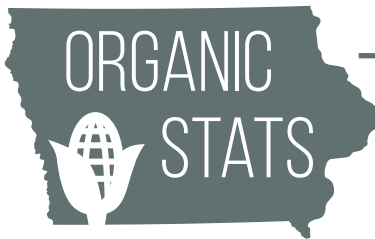
Third party certification of farm validity by an accredited certifying agent to be USDA certified.

In addition, “USDA Certified Organic” label does not guarantee any healthy, safety, or taste qualities in the product. Visit usda.gov/organic to learn more.

¹ Farber, Scott. “Demand for Organic Food Growing Faster than Domestic Supply.” Organic Consumers Association, organicconsumers.org/news/demand-organic-food-growing-faster-domestic-supply, Accessed Nov. 15, 2017.

² Love, Orlan. “Organic farmers sprouting up across Iowa.” The Gazette, Iowa Ideas, Sept. 20, 2017, thegazette.com/IowaIdeas/stories/agriculture/organic-farmers-sprouting-up-across-iowa-2017082.





Iowa is ranked
5th nationally
in largest number of
organic farms³

In the past five years,^{4 5}
the number of organic
producers in Iowa
has increased by
56 percent

Iowa has seen
a 81 percent increase
in the value of organic
commodities produced,
from **\$72 million** in 2008
to **\$131 million** in 2016⁶

The top four organic
products in Iowa⁷ are
chicken eggs, corn,
milk, and soybeans

Number of organic
farms in Iowa:⁸
732

HOW DOES THE FARM BILL SUPPORT IOWA'S ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ECONOMY?

Several farm programs stimulate Iowa's organic agriculture economy:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Organic Initiative:** Supports Iowa farmers in starting specific conservation practices.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program:** Offers tailored conservation plans and practices for organic producers to enhance conservation on their farm.
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – Transition Incentives Program:** Allows beginning and other eligible farmers to rent or buy land expiring from CRP. They must develop a management plan, which can incorporate organic production.
- **Organic Certification Cost Share Programs:** Offers farmers cost share for organic certification.
- **Whole Farm Revenue Protection and organic crop insurance:** Helps organic producers manage risk with crop insurance.
- **Value Added Producer Grant Program:** Supports rural entrepreneurs in developing value-added operations. Organic production is one eligible value-added activity.



“I switched to organic eight years ago because I was tired of the ups and downs of the conventional market, and I saw how stable the organic milk market was.”

- Marvin Lynch, Cascade, Iowa

3 “The 2016 Certified Organic Survey.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/Publications/Other_Surveys/2017/IA_Certified_Organic_09_17.pdf. Accessed June 2018.

4 “2011 Certified Organic Production Survey.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, October 2012, usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/nass/OrganicProduction/2010s/2012/OrganicProduction-10-04-2012.pdf. Accessed June 2018.

5 “Certified Organic Survey 2016 Summary.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, September 2016, usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/OrganicProduction/OrganicProduction-09-20-2017_correction.pdf. Accessed June 2018.

6 “The 2016 Certified Organic Survey.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/Publications/Other_Surveys/2017/IA_Certified_Organic_09_17.pdf. Accessed June 2018.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

