

FACT SHEET

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN KANSAS:

CONSUMER DEMAND AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR KANSAS FARMERS

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

MARKET GROWTH CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR KANSAS 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. 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 2015.¹ This leaves much opportunity for Kansas farmers to enter the organic market and benefit from increased price points.

KANSAS ORGANIC FARMERS BENEFIT 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, defining 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 a “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 health, safety, or taste qualities in the product. Visit usda.gov/organic to learn more.

¹ “Organic Trade.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, January 2018, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/natural-resources-environment/organic-agriculture/organic-trade/>. Accessed February 2018.

² Love, Orlan. “Organic farmers sprouting up across Iowa.” The Gazette, Iowa Ideas, Sept. 20, 2017, <http://www.thegazette.com/iowaideas/stories/agriculture/organic-farmers-sprouting-up-across-iowa-2017082>. Accessed February 2018.



STATE ORGANIC STATS

Farmers sold
\$17.8 million
in organic products
in 2015, up 3 percent
from 2014³

86 = number of
organic farms⁴

54,208
organic acres operated⁵

Top three organic
crops are
**corn, wheat,
and soybeans**⁶

HOW DOES THE FARM BILL SUPPORT KANSAS' ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ECONOMY?

Several farm programs stimulate the state's organic agriculture economy:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Organic Initiative:** Supports farmers in starting specific conservation practices
- **Conservation Stewardship Program:** Offers tailored conservation plans and practices for organic producers to enhance conservation on their farms.
- **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.



“The lower production costs and higher profit margins of organic farming have allowed us to farm with low debt and greater financial security. By marketing with an organic marketing cooperative, farmers can tap into existing knowledge and experience of the cooperative to capture the value added of organic grain without a huge investment of time dedicated to marketing.”

– Edward Reznicek, Goff, Kansas,
Kansas Organic Producers general manager

³ “Kansas Organic Agriculture.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Sept. 16, 2015, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights/2015_Certified_Organic_Survey_Highlights.pdf. Accessed February 2018.

⁴ “Certified Organic Survey, 2016 Summary.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, September 2017, http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/OrganicProduction/OrganicProduction-09-20-2017_correction.pdf. Accessed February 2018.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

