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 of 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.

Farmers sold **$17.8 million** in organic products in 2015, up 3 percent from 2014.

86 = number of organic farms

54,208 organic acres operated

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

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

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.