



Since its inception in 1985 as the Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFPANA), the Organic Trade Association (OTA) has reached a position of national and global leadership beyond what its founders ever imagined. Together, OTA members, Board and staff have achieved tremendous gains towards the promotion and protection of organic agriculture and trade. As we look ahead to the next 25 years, here are 25 milestones and accomplishments to remind us how far we've come. OTA:

1. Created the first "Guidelines for the Organic Food Industry" in 1986, which were later updated to become the *American Organic Standards*. These helped shape the final National Organic Program (NOP) adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
 2. Advocated for the adoption of the Organic Foods Production Act as part of the 1990 Farm Bill.
 3. Hired Katherine DiMatteo in 1990 as its first Executive Director.
 4. Helped establish September as Organic Harvest Month™ in 1992 as an annual celebration, and later partnered with Taste For Life on special *buy organic!* issues to increase consumer awareness.
 5. Changed the organization's name in 1994, from OFPANA to OTA, to better reflect the broad scope of association membership.
 6. Honored Senator Patrick Leahy with the first Organic Leadership Award in 1997. Awards have since been given annually to individuals who show leadership and vision in furthering the goals of the organic movement.
 7. Produced its first *OTA Manufacturers Market Survey* in 1998. Updated surveys over the years have provided valuable data on the industry for the media, organic businesses, and government representatives.
 8. Released its first draft of standards for the processing and labeling of organic cotton, wool, hemp, and other fibers in 1999.
 9. Organized its first Congressional Education Day in Washington D.C. in 1999 to help educate U.S. lawmakers about organic. Policy Conferences and Hill Visits have since become annual member events.
 10. Converted the membership directory, *The Organic Pages*, to an online searchable directory in 2000.
 11. Held the first All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade show in 2001, North America's largest conference and trade show focusing exclusively on the organic trade.
 12. Developed a *Good Organic Retailing Practices Manual* in 2001 to train small and large retailers.
 13. Published a multi-language brochure *Buying Organic Products from the United States* and converted the *Organic Export Directory* to an online directory in 2002. Translations include English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese.
 14. Obtained grants from the Martin-Fabert Foundation, beginning in 2004, to educate consumers about the benefits of organic cotton, and to boost demand for North American organic cotton production and processing.
 15. Began exclusive management of the Organic Export Initiative in 2004, funded by USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service Market Access Program.
 16. Launched Go Organic™ for Earth Day in 2005, a nationwide campaign conducted by MusicMatters in supermarkets, schools and the press to increase consumer use of organic products.
 17. Created Member Forums and Task Forces in 2006 in order to involve a greater number of members in OTA's work.
 18. Realized its long-term goal of having full-time staff in Canada, and named Matthew Holmes as Managing Director for Canadian operations in 2007.
 19. Established HowToGoOrganic™.com in 2007 as an online resource for farmers and processors seeking to transition to organic methods.
 20. Developed an organic textile standard in 2007 as one of four partners in the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) International Working Group.
 21. Influenced 30 provisions directly related to organic production and trade in the final 2008 U.S. Farm Bill under the leadership of OTA's second Executive Director Caren Wilcox.
 22. Added the *NOSB Report* and *Blog Watch* to the roster of exclusive member publications that include the *News Flash* and *The Organic Report* news magazine.
 23. Worked with government officials to help reach a Canada-U.S. Equivalency Agreement, and helped shape the Canadian Organic Products Regulations that went into effect in 2009.
 24. Introduced the **Organic. It's Worth It.** consumer education campaign in 2009. This was followed by a new consumer web site, and an **Organic. It's Worth It in Schools.** initiative.
 25. Opened a Washington, D.C., office in 2010 under the leadership of OTA's third and current Executive Director Christine Bushway.
- OTA will commemorate its 25th anniversary through a variety of events, special projects, and celebrations throughout 2010. Visit ota.com/25years.html for updates.