

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION 2023 FARM BILL RECOMMENDATIONS

The \$67+ billion annual U.S. organic food and fiber sector is integral to today's American agriculture and represents one of the country's fastest-growing food production and processing categories. **The benefits of organic go far beyond the farm gate, supporting the protection of soil, water, air, and livestock as well as human health and boosting local rural economies buoyed by job creation and entrepreneurship.**



The Organic Trade Association's 2023 Farm Bill recommendations are centered on extensive consultations with our Farmers Advisory Council, one of the largest coalitions of organic farmers representing more than 9,500 growers as well a series of policy focused workshops with nearly 300 certifiers, growers, consumer-facing brands, retailers, and non-profit organizations.

RESPONSIVE ORGANIC STANDARDS

Consumers expect the U.S. organic standards to evolve and remain fresh. Congress must ensure the organic standards continuously improve over time and hold USDA accountable for moving at the speed of the marketplace.

- Authorize a **10% yearly increase** in annual funding **for the National Organic Program** (NOP) to match the growth of the organic sector and continue mandatory funding of **\$5 million for NOP technology systems** to deter fraud and increase transparency.
- As integrity and consumer confidence is key to the success of organic, **strengthen NOP's authority to take enforcement actions** against false or misleading organic claims.
- Update the Organic Foods Production Act to establish a preplanned, predictable timeline to review and **update the organic standards to encourage future investment** as market dynamics change. This will allow for continuous improvement and accountability in organic standards.

PROTECT THRIVING AMERICAN FARMERS

Organic farming creates jobs and provides farmers with greater stability. Organic farmers need equitable and appropriately tailored support through USDA programs to thrive.

- **Require USDA to adapt crop insurance** offerings to adequately meet the unique needs of the organic sector so organic producers can fully access existing programs.
- Require USDA to **integrate organic system plans required for certification into current and future USDA conservation, pollinator, and climate-smart verification programs**, recognizing relevant organic agricultural practices and cutting red tape and reducing paperwork burdens on producers for compliance with those programs.

BUILD RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS

Over the last decade, U.S. organic food sales grew at an average pace of 9% per year, outpacing the 5% annual growth rate for non-organic food. Congress must invest in building domestic organic production and local supply chain capacity.

- **Codify and fund** key elements of USDA's **Organic Transition Initiative** to assist farmers in sustaining their farms as they move from conventional to organic production:
 - Technical assistance for organic and transitioning farmers;
 - Market development and infrastructure grants to expand domestic organic production and processing capacity;
 - Organic and transitional commodity purchases for USDA procurement programs.

The **Organic Trade Association** (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. Founded in 1985, OTA grows and protects organic with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace. Today, the trade association is the voice of the \$66 billion organic industry, representing more than 10,000 businesses across 50 states through direct membership and its Farmers Advisory Council. OTA members come from across the industry and supply chain, including growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, consultants, retailers, and beyond.

