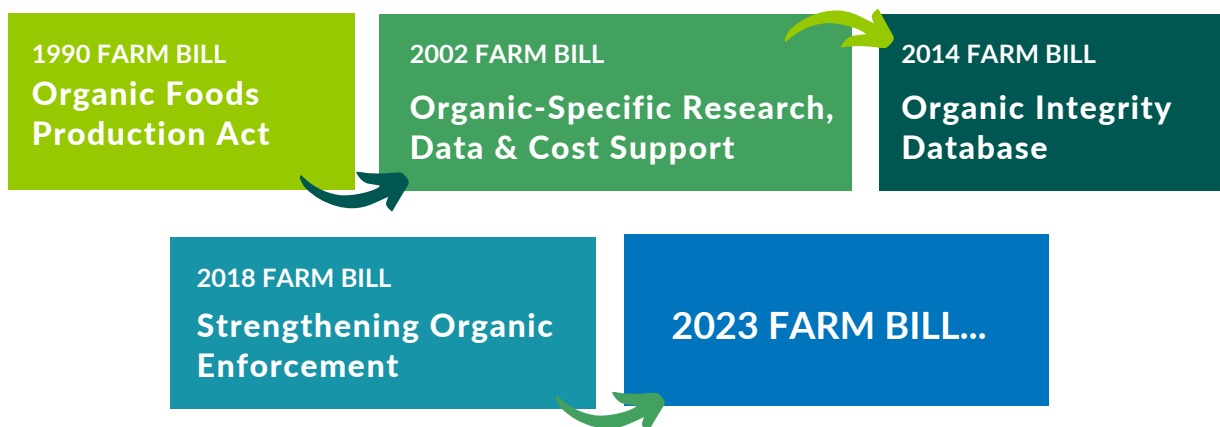


## WHAT IS ORGANIC?

Organic refers to the way agricultural products are grown and processed. It includes a **system of production, processing, distribution and sales that assures consumers that the products maintain the organic integrity that begins on the farm.**

U.S. organic agriculture requires that products bearing the USDA Organic label are produced according to strict guidelines. A federal advisory committee, the National Organic Standards Board, approves the use of non-organic minor ingredients, and farm and livestock inputs approved for use in organic production and handling.

The organic industry is a bright spot in the U.S. farm economy. U.S. organic sales have grown substantially from when the organic law was first signed, reaching \$67+ billion in 2022. **The organic industry's growth has been sustained and supported by critical Farm Bill funding and programs.**



## WHAT IS ORGANIC CERTIFICATION?

The organic certification process is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is monitored by the National Organic Program (NOP). **Organic certification is designed to certify every step of the organic chain, in strict accordance with federal guidelines.** From the land on which the product is grown, to the producers growing the product, from the post-harvest facilities preparing the product, to the processing and handling facilities transforming the product the certifying agents job is to verify that organic integrity is maintained. Guided by these and other standards, organic is the most heavily regulated and closely monitored production system in the U.S.





## HOW ARE ORGANIC CROPS GROWN?

Organic crops are produced without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, antibiotics, synthetic hormones, genetic engineering or other excluded practices, sewage sludge, or irradiation. Organic farmers rely on practices such as hand weeding, mechanical control, mulches, cover crops, crop rotation and dense planting. Land must be handled without prohibited materials for at least three years. Organic farmers must develop an organic operating farm plan, which is overseen by their certification agency with annual third-party inspections.



## HOW IS ORGANIC LIVESTOCK RAISED?

Animal welfare is a top priority for organic farmers. By law, U.S. organic farmers are required to raise animals without antibiotics or synthetic growth hormones. Organic farmers must provide animals with 100% organic feed and safe, clean, cage-free living conditions. In addition, organic farmers must provide their animals with access to the outdoors and pasture.



## HOW IS ORGANIC FOOD MADE?

Organic foods are minimally processed without artificial ingredients, colors, or synthetic preservatives to maintain the integrity of the product that began with practices on the farm. For example, the use of GMOs is prohibited during the production and processing of certified organic products. Organic food must be processed in an operation that has been certified to organic standards, with special steps taken to make sure the organic ingredients are not co-mingled with non-organic materials.



## WHAT ABOUT AGRICULTURALLY BASED NON-FOOD ITEMS

There is a wide diversity of other organic products available, including organic apparel and beds/bedding, cleaning and household products, nutritional supplements, organic flowers, and even organic pet food. All organic non-food products are produced without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides, as well as synthetic fertilizers.

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