

Organic Certification in Michigan

Making the decision...

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Stepping Into Organic Agriculture

- What is organic
- The value to certify
- Getting certified
- Possible markets





What is Organic Production?

- Growing crops and animals using sustainable practices approved by USDA NOP
 - Follow a plan using multi-practices plan to reduce pests
 - Rotate crops wisely
 - Build soil using cover crops and compost/manure
 - Use pesticides as a last resort, not preventative
 - Organophosphate pesticides are NOT allowed

The Benefits You Ask???



- Promote a healthy environment
 - Multiple management approaches to control pests use fewer pesticides
 - Using manure reuses and reduces runoff waste
 - Maintaining ground cover increases nutrients and reduces erosion
- **Overall Goal: To produce high quality food while caring for the environment.... And fetch a premium price for your work and care**

Organic Marketing Opportunities



- Grains
 - Organic Valley-small grains, hays
 - Herbrucks poultry ranch-small grains
 - Hood Dairy
 - Sun Opta
- Assorted organic produce, eggs and meats
 - Community coops-Oryana
 - High-end restaurants
 - Whole Foods

So many possibilities...



To Certify Organic OR NOT?

A decision based on market availability

- Are markets willing and able to pay premium?
 - Is there a demand by current customers?
 - Are there customers seeking to source organic?
 - Does this emblem reflect quality for your customers?

AND personal preferences

- Family
- Environment
- Health
- Profit



Getting More Info...

- **MSU Organic Web Page** - Resources for new and established organic farmers WWW.MichiganOrganic.msu.edu
- **Farmer Mentors** - Mi organic farmers who will talk with you, you visit and gain insight and info
- **MI Organic List Serv**- Organic farmers to exchange ideas and ask questions to one another.
- **Student Organic farm and certificate program** <http://www.msuorganicfarm.com>
- **MSU Organic Outreach Specialist** -Vicki Morrone with the C.S. Mott Group sorrone@msu.edu or 517-353-3542

Steps To Get There...



- Go organic-use organic practices for 3 years
- Learn as much as you can-network, meetings, books, on-line
- Make a management plan and stick to it
- Design a farm plan to enhance your business and the environment
- Build your soil so it can provide maximum yield
- Build relationships with markets and outlets

Successful Certification



1. Select a certifier and complete transition
2. In the third year complete paperwork and application and pay fee
3. Complete farm plan of last and future 3 years
4. Have a farm inspection with selected agency
5. Make any needed changes-learn from mistakes!

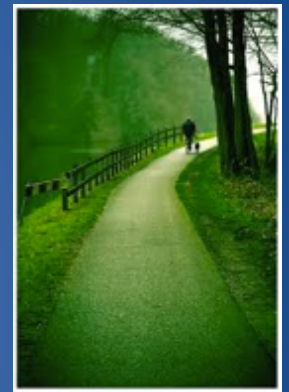
The FARM Plan

- Must have a 3 year plan to improve soil, crops and animals.
- Farm Plan includes:

| Specifics on your farm | How you monitor and manage | How do you improve |
|---|---|--|
| Land Seed Surroundings Crop types and vars Animal breeds and background Past practices Farm goals | Insects Diseases Weeds Water quality Soil quality Equipment Storage Potential drift & runoff | Soil nutrients Soil quality Variety/breed selection Barns Pastures |

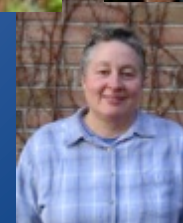
Help to Get There

- **Economics-Cost** is between \$500-\$1200 per farm per year
 - Cost share through MDA (Farm Bill)
- **Knowledge-Technical support through:**
 - Extension educators/educational meetings
 - ATTRA web site for publications
 - Organic farmers
- **Land access**
 - Farmers near retirement
 - Urban land- Michigan Land Bank



Who Can Help?

- **Your farming neighbors and/or organic farmers**
 - **Your MSU county extension educators**
 - -Rob Serrine
 - Dan Rossman
 - **MSU Kellogg Biological Station**
 - Dale Mutch
 - Sieg Snapp
 - **MSU Student Organic Farm**
 - John Biernbaum-Director of Student organic farm
 - Adam Montri-Outreach specialist for Extended Season Production
- MSU Product Center-value added ag products**
- **C.S. Mott Group For Sustainable Food**
 - Vicki Morrone -Organic Farming Outreach Specialist





E-Resources

- Michigan Organic: Michiganorganic.msu.edu
- Hoophouses: <http://hoophouse.msu.edu/>
- NOP web page National Organic Program
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexNet.htm>
- OMRI searchable data base OMRI Product List
http://www.omri.org/OMRI_products_list.html
- ATTRA is an online resource on production for organic and sustainable farming of all types
<http://www.attra.org>

Is This For You???

Organic Fresh Ready-use
Preserved Dried Vacume-wrapped
*But....Get to know your markets and
what they want*



Questions???

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