

Organic Systems and Ecosystem Markets: Resources for Farmers

Organicology Conference 2/11/11

Organic Farming Research Foundation

www.ofrf.org





Who is OFRF?

- **National, farmer-led non-profit organization**
- **Mission: Improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems**
- **Based in Santa Cruz, CA, plus office in D.C.**
- **Works on federal policies that affect organic and transitioning farmers**
- **Makes research and education grants**



Multiple Benefits of Organic Agriculture: overview

- **Increasing body of literature around ecological, social, and economic benefits of organic agriculture**
- **OFRF has launched an initiative to:**
 - **Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current science on the benefits of organic systems**
 - **Identify policy approaches that support organic agriculture's ability to provide multiple benefits**



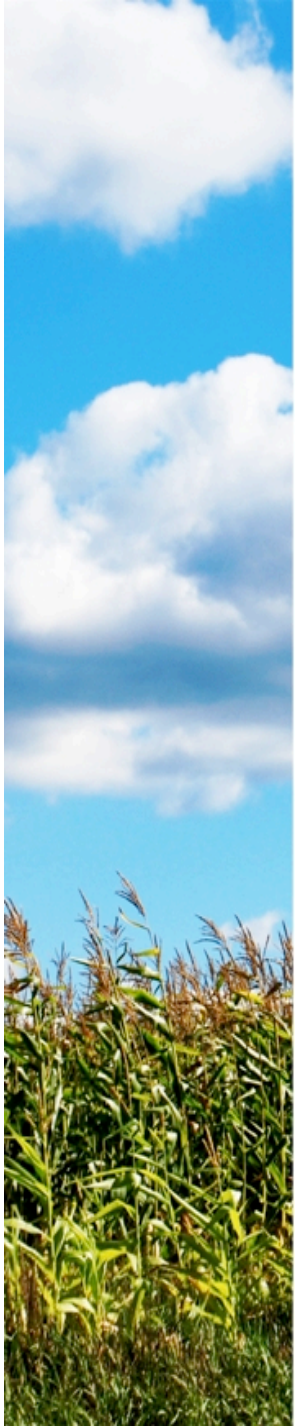
Multiple Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Themes

- **Human health/public health**
- **Wildlife and biodiversity**
- **Farmworker/community health**
- **Energy use and efficiency**
- **Rural development**
- **Farm profitability**
- **Climate change**
- **Water, soil, and air quality**



Multiple Benefits of Organic Agriculture, Outcomes

- **Report synthesizing research**
- **Annotated bibliography of research**
- **Identification of research gaps**
- **Suggestions for future research directions**
- **Policy recommendations**



Rewarding Organic Farmers for Conservation Benefits

- **Objective of integrating organic systems into USDA conservation programs**
- **Congress acknowledges conservation benefits of organic in 2008 Farm Bill**
- **Provisions in 2008 Farm Bill within:**
 - **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
 - **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**



Conservation Stewardship Program

- **Comprehensive working lands program – “green payments” program**
- **Administered by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
- **Provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers for existing and new conservation practices**



Conservation Stewardship Program

- **Nationwide, continuous sign-up**
- **Practices of interest to organic farmers – both organic specific and general practices applicable to organic systems**
- **For more information, visit OFRF's CSP Resource Page by going to www.ofrf.org**



EQIP Organic Initiative

- **Payment for the implementation of conservation practices consistent with organic systems**
- **Administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service**
- **Available to both certified organic and transitioning growers**



EQIP Organic Initiative

- **\$50 million available nationwide**
- **Offered in every state**
- **Certain states include option for planning assistance for farmers transitioning to organic**
- **Current sign-up ends March 4!**
- **For more information, visit OFRF's Organic Initiative resource page on our website (www.ofrf.org)**



Breaking the Anti-Organic Bias

- **Big learning curve at NRCS and USDA in general about organic**
- **Programs like the Organic Initiative still being improved**
- **OFRF and many partner groups across the country working to improve programs and make NRCS more organic-friendly**
- **Release of Multiple Benefits report**



What You Can Do

- **Stay informed, join the Organic Farmers Action Network for updates and action alerts (www.ofrf.org)**
- **Sign up for programs (Organic Initiative deadline is March 4!)**
- **Participate in local and state decision-making groups like State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups**

Celebrate Organic Farmers



**Join the Organic Farmers Action Network:
www.ofrf.org**

