

A blue-tinted background image showing a large, classical-style building with a pediment and columns. In the foreground, there is a garden with various plants and a person's head and shoulders visible on the left side, looking towards the building.

Organic Agriculture Spans 21st Century USDA



National Organic Program Regulatory Arm of USDA Organic

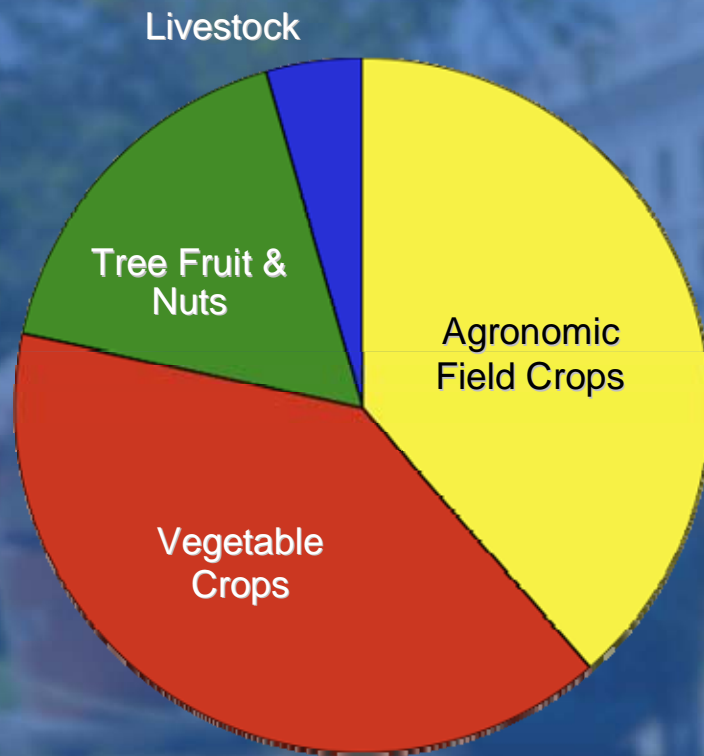
NOP Moving Forward

- Explore organic equivalence with trading partners.
- Strengthen enforcement: increased audits and reviews.
- Broaden NOP integration into other USDA programs.
- Provide on-line training for certifying agents, 24/7.
- Build outreach and education program components.

AMS Market News *Farm Bill Jump-Starts Organic Data Collection*

- Current Market News covers organic dairy products, fruits & vegetables, grain, poultry & eggs.
 - Farm Bill authorizes up to \$3.5 million/year for enhancements.
 - Segregate organic and conventional data.
 - Add new reports, commodities, other information products., for example:
 - FV Market News to add regional/wholesale organic distributor price report; national organic fruit and vegetable summary.
 - New Cotton reporting as needed.
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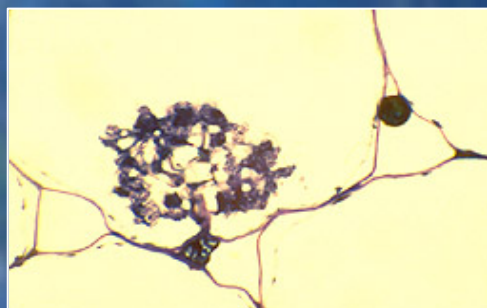
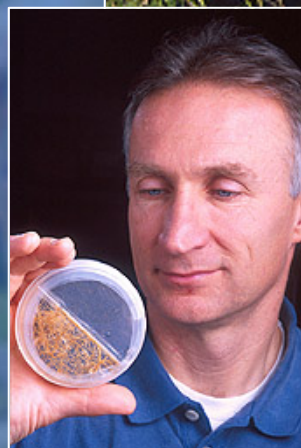
Growth in ARS Organic Agriculture Research



- FY 2009 budget: \$16,868,000.
- The budget has increased 91% since 2002.
- National organic strategic plan.
- Scientists are responsive to needs of local customers.
- The science is applicable to both organic and all other producers.
- Contact: Jeffrey Steiner, National Program Leader, Agricultural System Competitiveness and Sustainability

ARS Research Overcoming Limitations to Organic Productivity

Combining plant growth efficiency
mechanisms and with soil fertility
management strategies.



Farmer-friendly mycorrhizae
culturing methods.

ARS Developing Special Varieties for Organic Growers



Special early-flowering hairy vetch has been bred as a winter cover crop for farmers in the mid-Atlantic region.



Special corn varieties are being bred that are selected for yield with organic amendments as the source of nitrogen.

CSREES Integrated Organic Program

- The 2008 Farm Bill increased funding for the Organic Research Extension Initiative from \$15 million over five years to \$78 million over four years
- The 2009 OREI competition was recently completed and award recommendations are being processed.
 - 131 applications requesting over \$98 million were reviewed
 - 27 awards to 17 states and territories and one USDA/ARS lab are being recommended
- Personnel investments are also being made.
- In August, 2009, Dr. Mary Peet will join the CSREES National Program Staff
- A Program Specialist position to support agency activities in organic agriculture is also being filled

ERS Organic Activities

- Expands USDA's Producer Survey
- Conducts U.S. Organic Handler Surveys
- Conducts research and analysis on specific markets

ERS Organic Activities

“Emerging Issues in the U.S. Organic Industry”

- A new ERS report, issued June 3rd, includes findings from a broad spectrum of the agency’s organic research.
- Can be accessed at: www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB55
- Presents overview of the rise in consumer demand for organic food in the past decade.
- Shows significant price premiums, fluctuating market conditions and fast-paced growth characterizing the U.S. organic sector in this decade.
- Outlines impact of weaker U.S. economy on organic food sales and challenges ahead.

EQIP Organic Initiative Sign-up Deadlines

- A total of 38 States elected to extend the EQIP Organic Initiative sign-up beyond May 29. Current State deadlines are as follows:

May 29 – 15 States, including Puerto Rico

June 5 – 5 States

June 12 – 21 States

June 15 – 4 States, including the Pacific Basin

June 26 – 5 States

June 29 - 1 State, US Virgin Islands

June 30 – 2 States

EQIP Organic Initiative Applications

- As of June 16, 2009, a total of 2,200 applications had been entered into NRCS' Program Contracts System (ProTracts) by NRCS offices nationwide. These applications are in two funding categories, as outlined below:
 - Transitioning to Organic - 1,041 Applications
 - Certified Organic - 1,159 Applications

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- NRCS will ensure that technical assistance is available and program specifications are appropriate so as not to limit producer participation because of size or type of operation, or production system, including specialty crop and organic production.
- NRCS will assist potential applicants dealing with the requirements of certification under the National Organic Program and CSP requirements concerning how to coordinate and simultaneously meet eligibility standards under each program.
- Where a participant wishes to pursue organic certification, their stewardship plan information will document the participant's transition to or participation in the National Organic Program.
- In providing technical assistance to specialty crop and organic producers, NRCS will provide appropriate training to field staff to enable them to work with these producers and to utilize cooperative agreements and contracts with nongovernmental organizations with expertise in delivering technical assistance to these producers.

Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Programs

- Through the farm loan programs, FSA finances organic production or transition to organic production
- FSA provides or guarantees financing when conventional credit is not available
- The 2008 Farm Bill created a new FSA conservation loan program
- Conservation projects essential to continue or transition to organic production are one of 4 priority categories for this new program
- FSA is developing regulations and procedures for implementation

Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Transition Program

- The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes \$25 million for the CRP Transition Program through 2012.
- The Transition Program requires retiring landowners to sell land enrolled in CRP to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers on contract termination date. Provisions include:
 - New farmers and ranchers are permitted to make land improvements and begin the **organic certification** process beginning one year prior to retiring landowner's CRP termination date.
 - Retiring landowners may receive up to two years of additional CRP payments.

Evaluation of crop insurance prices and surcharges for organic crops

The 2008 Farm Bill requires an evaluation of the organic crop surcharge and organic pricing.

- RMA awarded a contract in February 2009 to:
 - Review availability of organic pricing data, and if warranted, develop price methodology.
 - Review actuarial appropriateness of the organic surcharge
 - Evaluate the differences between organic and conventional practices – including yields, risks, prices.

 - The final report is due November 2009.
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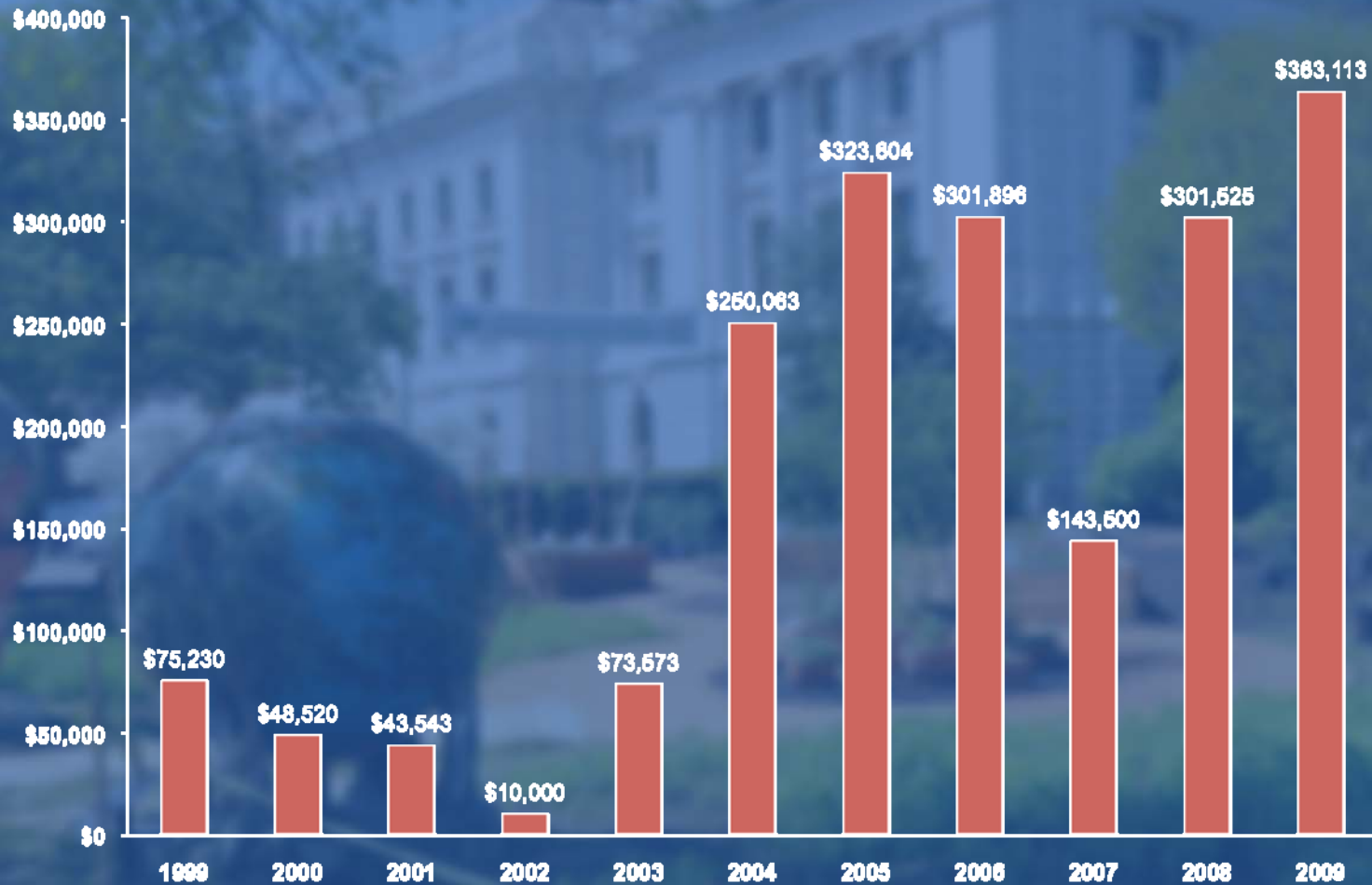
NASS Organic Production Survey

- USDA's first major survey of organic agriculture
- Purpose is to show how organic farming is changing the face of U.S. agriculture
- Helps shape future decisions regarding future policy and funding allocations

Examples of FAS Organic Market Access Tasks 2008/09

- Negotiated US-Canada Organic Equivalence Agreement
- Coordinated with NOP to achieve equivalence determination from Taiwan for USDA organic products
- Gathered comments on Korea's proposed processed organic standards and raised concerns with Korea at bilateral meeting
- Negotiated improved access for USDA organic products to Japan through Regulatory Reform Initiative

OTA Market Access Program (MAP) Allocations



OTA Funding: Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops

Year	Allocation	Activities
2008	\$750,000 over 3 years	Technical Support & GAP Analysis
2005	\$174,000	Technical Support & GAP Analysis: Taiwan & Japan
2004	\$185,000	Technical Support & GAP Analysis: Canada
2003	\$175,900	Technical Support & GAP Analysis: Japan

Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant Program

Purpose: The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Program is intended to provide grant funds to agricultural producers for planning activities and working capital expenses to assist them in receiving a greater share of the consumer's dollar for value-added agricultural products