

A photograph of two men in a field of green crops, likely broccoli. They are both wearing hats and plaid shirts. One man is holding a head of broccoli, and the other is looking at it. The background is a vast field of similar crops under a bright sky.

Stepping Up to the Organic Research Challenge

The 2023 Farm Bill Must Grow Investments to Meet Growing Demand

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Organic Farmers Association partners with a number of allies for Farm Bill work. Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) leads our coalition work on organic research priorities and strategy.

Organically managed lands help build our nation's resilience in adapting to climate change through increasing ecological vitality, but also provide safe, high-quality food. Expanding public investments into solving organic agricultural management challenges will help to continue growing domestic organic production to match the growing demand for organic goods, while also moving us closer to climate goals. As demand continues to outpace domestic production, we are increasingly relying on organic imports resulting in missed opportunities for our producers to build resiliency, both ecological and economic. What is needed now is continued commitment to meet the persistent production-related challenges that face organic and transitioning producers. The USDA itself

has made historic investments into financially supporting and providing technical assistance to transitioning growers with the \$300 million committed to the Organic Transition Initiative. Ensuring that assistance is backed by high-quality scientific, economic, and cultural research is imperative and a goal OFRF will be bringing to the Capitol this Farm Bill season.

To do that, OFRF, in collaboration with our allies, will work to make sure that the 2023 Farm Bill:

1 INCREASES THE ORGANIC RESEARCH FUNDING AT ARS TO ORGANIC'S MARKET SHARE

ARS has an annual budget of nearly \$1.7 billion. Though it is hard to find exact numbers, organic agriculture gets approximately \$12 million a year of that \$1.7 billion. Organic agriculture now makes up over 6% of the total market share of food sales in the United States, with an increasing proportion of sales being imported products. The Farm Bill is an important opportunity to send a clear message to ARS that they must increase the amount of funding going to organic agriculture to at least its market share to help producers meet the opportunity of increasing demand for organic products.

2 INCREASES INVESTMENT INTO NIFA'S RESEARCH INTO ORGANIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and Organic Transitions Program (ORG) are incredibly effective at producing high-quality organic agricultural research that answers the questions of organic producers. But, these programs cannot be a

silos in that all organic research is placed. OFRF is calling for widespread investment across all NIFA research programs to meet the increasing need as more producers transition into organic production, especially given that there is no research component supported by the USDA's historic Organic Transition Initiative. Increasing NIFA funding for organic research across all competitive grant programs, from OREI to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), would provide continued support for developing the technical service and institutional knowledge necessary to meet the needs of producers nationwide.

3 FULLY FUNDS AND EXPANDS THE ORGANIC DATA INITIATIVE

The Organic Data Initiative (ODI) is a multi-agency initiative that collects information vital to maintaining stable markets, creating risk management tools, and negotiating equivalency agreements with foreign governments. There has not been a full, systematic USDA review of the organic market since 2014, funding the ODI would allow the USDA to provide that service. In addition, the initiative should also charge the Economic Research Service to conduct an economic impact analysis of organic certification and management on rural communities.

OFRF is excited to work with our partners on Capital Hill and across the United States to make sure that the 2023 Farm Bill provides the research policies, funds, and programs necessary to answer producers' questions that don't just affect their crops or their livestock, but also their livelihoods and the communities they support. 

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