ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN 2015 STATUS REPORT

Prepared by the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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February 2015

This report is a joint effort of:

The **Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems** (CIAS) is a research center for sustainable agriculture in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison. CIAS fosters multidisciplinary inquiry and supports a range of research, curriculum and program development projects. It brings together university faculty, farmers, policy makers and others to study relationships between farming practices, farm profitability, the environment and rural vitality. For more information, visit www.cias.wisc.edu or call 608-262-5200.

The **Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection** (DATCP) works to make Wisconsin a world leader in agriculture, food safety and consumer protection. DATCP is responsible for food safety, animal and plant health, protecting water and soil, and monitoring fair and safe business practices. The DATCP Organic Agriculture Program is housed in the Division of Agricultural Development and provides individual technical assistance and education to organic farmers and those wishing to begin farming organically, as well as to businesses processing organic products. For more information, visit datcp.wi.gov or call 608-224-5095.

The findings and policy recommendations in this resource are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

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Publication design and layout by Ruth McNair, CIAS.

Editorial review provided by Paul Mitchell, Logan Peterman and Trisha Wagner.

This report is printed on recycled paper. It is available online at www.cias.wisc.edu.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN: 2015 STATUS REPORT

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FOREWORD

Agriculture is a driver of Wisconsin's economy, generating $88 billion for the state annually and contributing nearly 12 percent of Wisconsin's jobs. While organic production is a small part of this industry, it is a critical means of tapping into a rapidly growing agricultural market. The Organic Trade Association reports that organic sales are increasing at a rate of nearly 12 percent per year, and 81 percent of U.S. families are choosing organic food at least sometimes.

Organic Agriculture in Wisconsin: 2015 Status Report provides a snapshot of our state's organic industry and shows that we are well-positioned to meet this growing demand for organic food. Wisconsin has 1,180 organic farms, which is more than any other state in the Midwest and second only to California. Wisconsin continues to rank first in the nation for the number of organic dairy and beef farms, and falls in the top five states for organic vegetables, melons, grain and oilseeds. Wisconsin is fourth in the nation for organic commodity sales, valued at $122 million. The number of organic farms in our state has grown 77 percent since 2005.

Just as important, opportunities in organic agriculture are bringing new talent into farming. Twenty-nine percent of Wisconsin's organic farmers are younger than 45, and nearly one in four have been operating a farm for fewer than ten years. With the average U.S. farmer close to 57 years old and only 17 percent of all Wisconsin producers under the age of 45, organic farming infuses vitality and diversity into Wisconsin's agricultural industry.

Organic grain production is a documented bottleneck in organic supply chains, with the U.S. importing nearly $200 million worth of organic soybeans, corn and wheat in 2012-13 to meet the demand for organic livestock feed and food ingredients. While organic grain fetches premium prices, a complex blend of ecological, economic and social barriers hinder the transition of new farmers and acres into organic grain production. This report details some of those barriers and suggests research, education and policy needs to help overcome them.

We wish to thank the contributors to this report, as well as the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council, for shining a spotlight on the importance and status of organic agriculture in Wisconsin. We are also grateful to all of Wisconsin's farmers, whose commitment, vision and passion for their work lie at the heart of our state's leadership in agriculture.

Sincerely,

Ben Brancel
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

Kathryn VandenBosch
Dean and Director
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Wisconsin-Madison

STATEMENT BY THE WISCONSIN ORGANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Organic agriculture in Wisconsin continues to grow at a steady and gratifying pace. Consumer demand, an important impetus for new organic production, is strong and represented in all age groups and income levels. In many ways, however, organic agriculture is challenged by its own success. Growth in organic production has not kept pace with rising consumer demand. The lack of available organic raw commodities, as well as the processing facilities to prepare them for the marketplace, could stifle innovation and expansion. The clearest example of this is the great need for more organic livestock feed, including all types of small grain, corn, beans, forages and pasture. The growth and vibrancy of Wisconsin's organic livestock sector could be negatively affected by feed shortages, as well as appropriate livestock processing facilities.

The strength of Wisconsin's food industry is rooted in diverse agricultural production and food processing. All types of dairy processing, from milk bottling to cheese, dried milk, butter and yogurt production, provide employment and add value to raw commodities. Fresh market and processing vegetables strengthen Wisconsin's economy and leadership in agriculture. Organic farms and other businesses make good use of Wisconsin's processing infrastructure. However, Wisconsin and adjoining midwestern states have a shortage of livestock slaughter and processing plants, making it hard for farmers to add value to organic livestock through processing. Organic has always been attractive to innovative entrepreneurs who find Wisconsin a great place to either start new or expand current businesses. While processing challenges to the growth of organic are real, they also represent business opportunities.

Farmers are growing older, and bringing new faces to the profession is an important focus of the agricultural community. Many young and beginning farmers are enthusiastically entering organic agriculture and seeking support from educational, financial and governmental institutions. Wisconsin's technical schools, colleges and universities offer courses in organic production and conduct cutting-edge research to further Wisconsin's organic industry. Accessing capital is a continual barrier for farmers, including organic, and working with traditional and nontraditional funders will be critical in growing organic supply. Governmental institutions at city, county, regional and state levels continue to create innovative programming to support young and beginning organic farmers.

The Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council, a standing committee under the Wisconsin Agricultural Board, seeks to develop solutions and identify opportunities to enhance and expand Wisconsin's organic industry. Its membership of organic producers, certifiers, processors, consumers and nonprofits, along with its state and federal partner agencies, focuses on economic development through improvements to infrastructure, education, funding and regulations for organic farmers and businesses.

This report, produced biennially with the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, provides information on the current status of organic agriculture and future opportunities. The Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council's quarterly meetings are open to the public, and we encourage you to contact us with your comments, suggestions and concerns.

Organically yours,

Harriet Behar
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
Organic Advisory Council Co-Chair

Jennifer Casey, RD, CD
FONDY Food Center
Organic Advisory Council Co-Chair

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The $35 billion U.S. organic industry continues to expand at a brisk pace, with 11.5 percent sales growth in 2012-13. Wisconsin is well positioned to tap into the growing market for organic dairy, livestock, produce and other foods. However, organic grain production is not keeping up with the growing demand for organic livestock feed and food ingredients. In 2012-13, the U.S. imported over $150 million worth of organic grain.

Organic Agriculture in Wisconsin: 2015 Status Report provides data on organic production, markets and farmer demographics. This report also includes a special section on organic grain, including possible strategies to increase organic grain production in our state.

Wisconsin is a top state for organic production and marketing: The USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture ranks Wisconsin second in the nation for the total number of organic farms, with 1,180 farms. This represents approximately eight percent of the organic farms in the U.S. According to data from the USDA National Organic Program, the number of certified organic farms in Wisconsin grew 77 percent from 2005 to 2013.

Wisconsin continues to rank first in the nation in number of both organic dairy and beef farms, with 466 dairy farms and 69 beef farms. While the presence of organic beef farms remains strong in Wisconsin, the number of organic beef farms in the state has dropped 36 percent since 2008.

As for horticultural and agronomic crops, Wisconsin is fourth in the nation in total number of organic vegetable and melon farms, and ranks second among organic oilseed and grain farms.

The number of farms with acreage in transition indicates growth in organic agriculture. Wisconsin ranks second in the nation in this area, with 240 farms transitioning land into organic production. These farms represent both conventional operations moving toward organic certification and organic farms adding more certified acres.

Wisconsin is fourth in the country in terms of organic commodity sales, valued at $122 million and accounting for about four percent of the nation's organic sales. Wisconsin's lower ranking in organic sales versus organic farm numbers is due to the high value crops produced in the top states.

More young and beginning farmers grow organically: Organic growers tend to be younger and are more commonly female than the general population of farmers. In Wisconsin, 17 percent of farmers are under the age of 45. However, when it comes to organic farmers, 29 percent in Wisconsin are under 45. Twenty-three percent of Wisconsin's organic growers have been operating a farm for less than ten years. Nationally, organic farms tend to have a higher percentage of women as principal operators. In Wisconsin, women as principal operators on conventional and organic farms are more comparable, with women farmers representing approximately 11 percent of primary operators on organic and all farms.

Challenges impede organic grain production, despite strong demand: Although organic grain premiums are strong, significant barriers prevent the transition of farmers and acreage to fill the existing need for more organic grain. These include:

Competitive prices for conventional grain: Although organic grain prices have historically been higher than conventional prices, recently there has been a great deal of volatility in both markets. Conventional prices spiked in 2008, followed by further increases from 2010 to 2013. Organic grain prices, on the other hand, hovered barely above conventional rates in 2009-10 and hit bottom in 2010. 2014 prices for organic grain were significantly higher than conventional prices. However, it is uncertain how market dynamics may change, both in the short and long term.

Significant start-up costs including a three-year transition: There are various expenditures associated with the adoption of organic management prac-

tices. Some are infrastructural, such as equipment purchase or redesign, while others are agronomic, including reduced yields during transition. Social costs such as intergenerational conflicts about farm management decisions are no less important.

Organic land must go through a three-year transition period during which no chemical fertilizers or pesticides can be used, but the crop can't be sold as organic. During transition, farmers can experience the double blow of lower yields without access to the organic premium. For farmers, getting through this transition period isn't always easy. Reduced yields during transition can be particularly problematic for grain operations, where profit per acre is generally much lower than in other enterprises, such as dairy or vegetable farming.

Lack of training on organic farming practices: Organic farming is not simply abandoning conventional farm inputs and hoping for sufficient yields. It requires careful observation, adaptation and, above all, a management focus on preventative and systems-based solutions. Most farmers making the switch to organic production benefit from education, training, mentoring and networking with other organic growers. Conversely, lack of knowledge and training can lead to low yields and, in some cases, abandoning organic production.

High rent and purchase prices for farmland: As fertile as Wisconsin's soils are, and as ripe as the organic grain markets appear to be, appropriate and readily certifiable land is not always available and accessible to organic farmers. With historically high land prices and rents, returns per acre need to be as high as possible for farming to pay. The complex crop rotations used in well-managed organic grain production systems inevitably include years with less profitable crops, like small grains and alfalfa. Rented land often isn't worth the investment in transition, as there is no guarantee of continued tenure.

Marketing and farm program hurdles: In Wisconsin, there are a limited number of organic grain buyers and they are unevenly distributed. This makes getting grain to a certified buyer difficult, and it also finds the buyers unable to fill their bins with local grain. Larger organic feed mills often need to look outside the state to fulfill their contracts.

In grain production, there are advantages to reaching a certain scale. But what about farmers who don't have the capital or labor required to scale up? Creating networks of organic grain farmers not only benefits small producers looking to pool their resources (e.g., machinery, drying bins), but also creates conduits for exchanging information about markets.

"Split operations," or farms producing both conventional and organic crops, is one strategy to grow the amount of land under organic management in Wisconsin. Growing both conventional and organic grain lets farmers diversify their markets. The vast majority of small-scale, organic grain operations are fully organic, however.

For organic farmers, there are no proxies for the Chicago Board of Trade or the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. All crops are traded privately, and farmers obtain price information by calling other farmers, brokers, elevators and mills. While there are a few subsidy and crop insurance programs for organic farming in the U.S., the offerings lag behind programs for conventional agriculture. Recent farm policy victories include increased options for organic crop insurance.

Meeting the challenge

With the U.S. importing significant amounts of organic grain to satisfy growing market demand, opportunities exist for farmers to transition to organic practices and grow organic products. However, this transition is not without its challenges. Multiple avenues of support involving organic farmers and suppliers, nonprofit organizations, state and federal agencies and others can create a vital and vibrant network to continue to grow this sector of Wisconsin agriculture, and maintain Wisconsin as a national leader in the organic industry.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN BY THE NUMBERS

Number of organic farms

The diversity of agriculture in Wisconsin strengthens the state's economy. A vital organic industry is an integral part of this diversity. Continuing a trend demonstrated over the past decade, Wisconsin maintains a strong position as a national leader in organic agriculture. According to the USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture, Wisconsin ranks second in the nation for the total number of organic farms, with 1,180 farms that make up approximately eight percent of the total number of organic farms in the U.S. This figure includes both farms that are certified organic and those that are exempt from certification but following the federal organic standards, with sales under $5,000. Wisconsin is behind only California, the state ranked first with 3,008 certified organic and exempt farms (Figure 1).

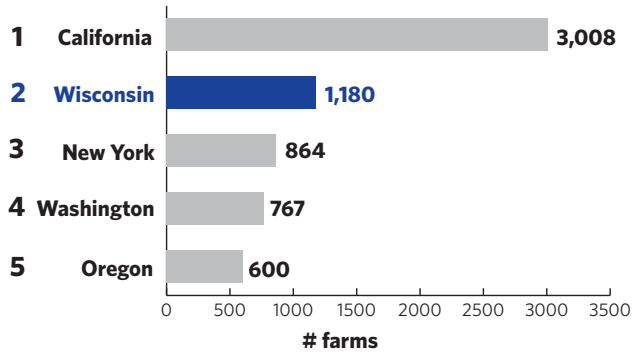


Figure 1. Top five states in number of organic farms, 2012
Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Special Organic Tabulation.*

Data on 2013 organic farm numbers obtained from the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) demonstrates further growth in organic operations in Wisconsin. Despite the exclusion of exempt operations (which are included in the USDA Census figures), 2013 data from the NOP shows 233 certified organic handlers (businesses and processors) and 1,257 certified organic farms. These figures indicate a 77 percent growth in the number of Wisconsin organic farms since 2005 (Figure 2). The distribution of Wisconsin organic farms by county from NOP data is shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 maps out organic farms and processors in the state from NOP data.

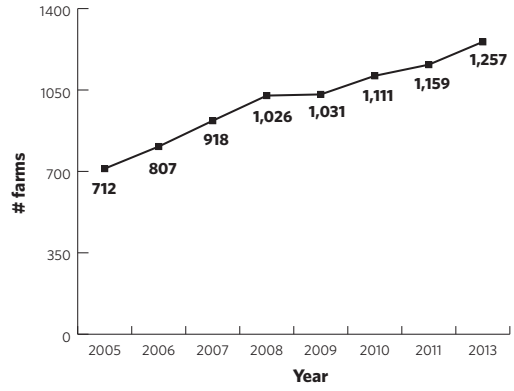
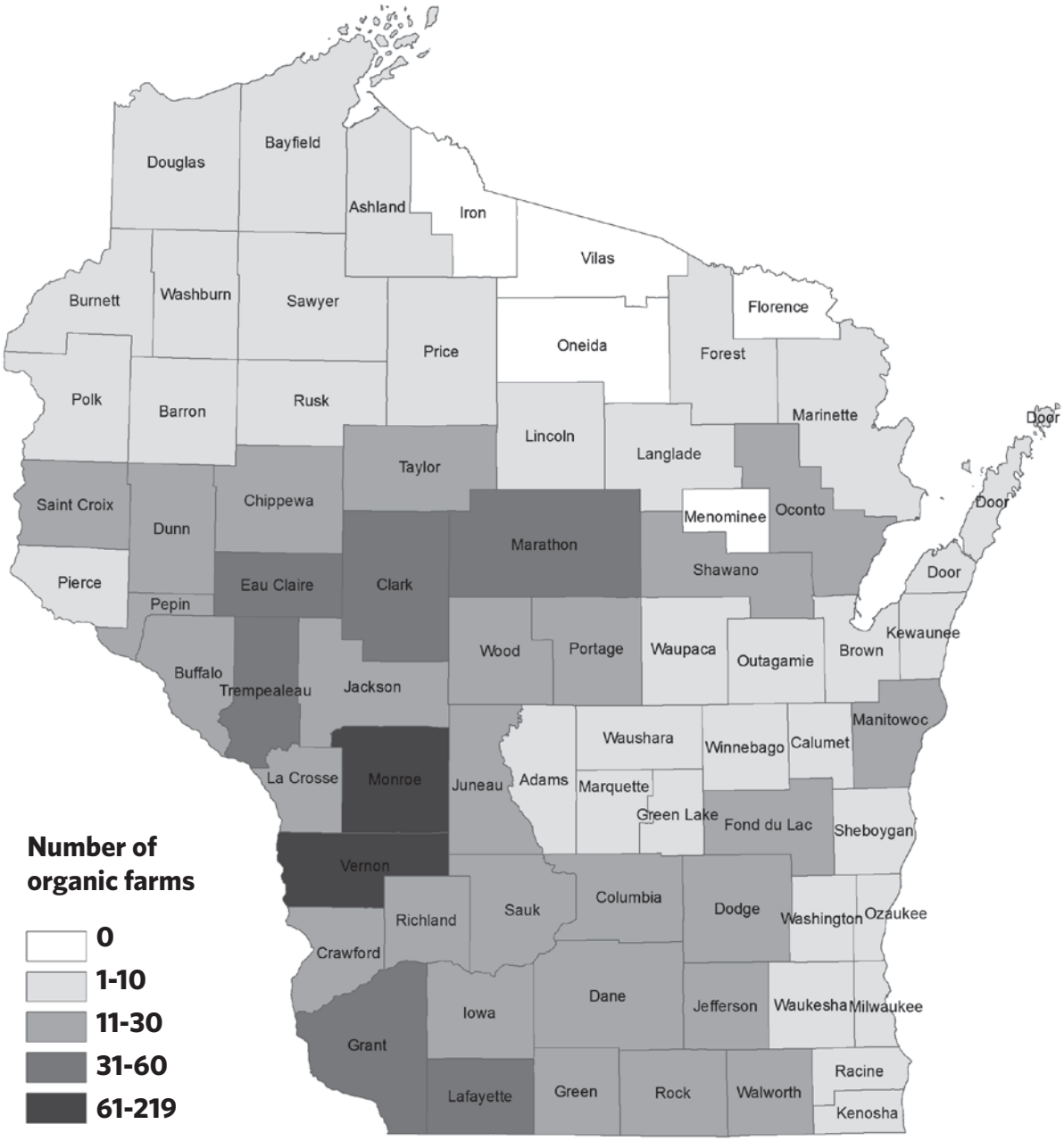


Figure 2. Growth in number of certified organic farms in Wisconsin, 2005-2013
Source: USDA NOP data, 2005-2013, http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop/

Distribution of certified organic farms in Wisconsin, 2013

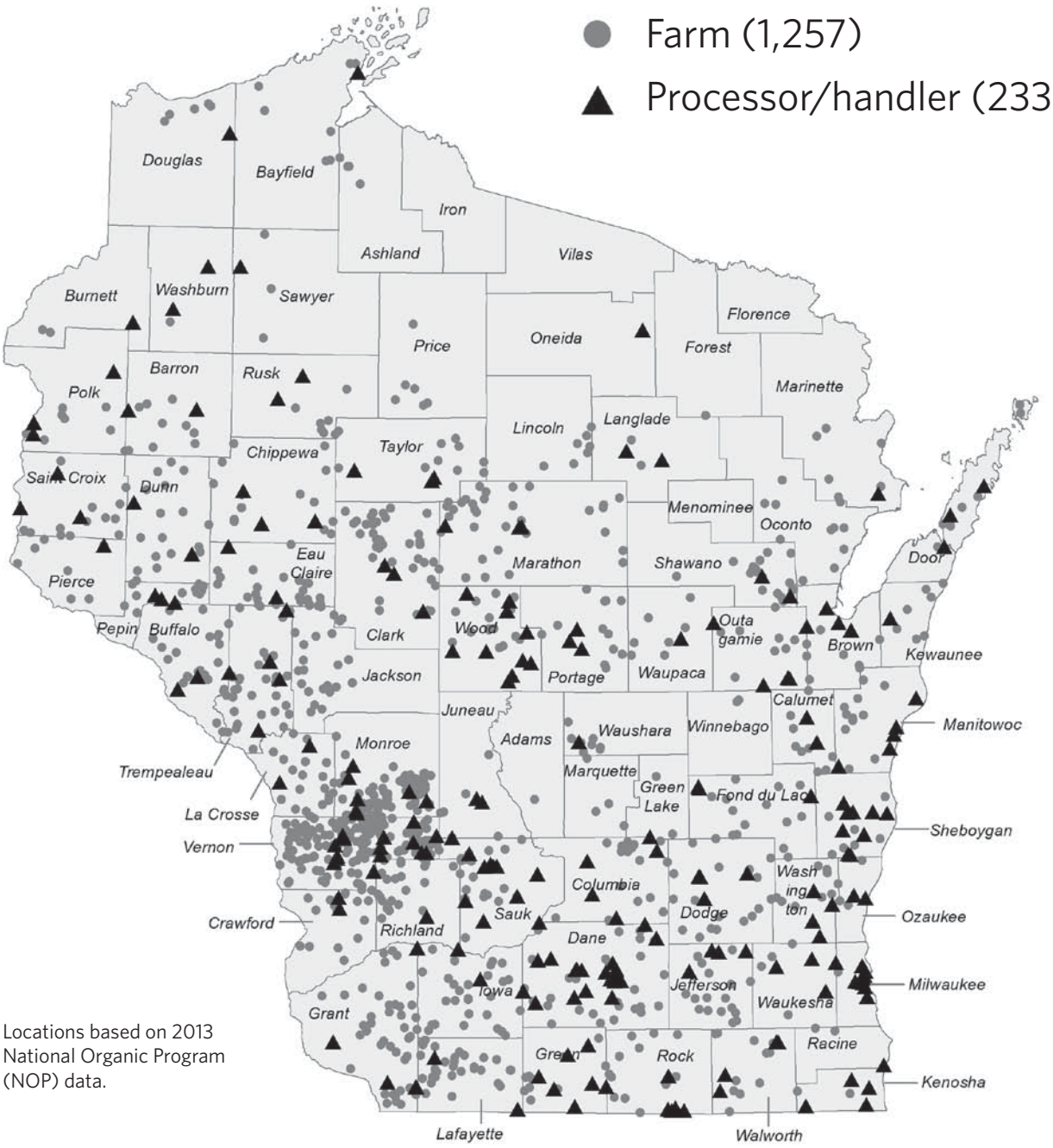


Map by Larry Cutforth, DATCP, 1/9/2015

Figure 3. Distribution of certified organic farms in Wisconsin, 2013

Source: USDA 2013 NOP data, http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop/

Wisconsin certified organic farms and processors/handlers, 2013



Locations based on 2013 National Organic Program (NOP) data.

Map by Larry Cutforth, DATCP, 1/8/2015

Figure 4. Wisconsin certified organic farms and processors/handlers 2013

Source: USDA 2013 NOP data, http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop/

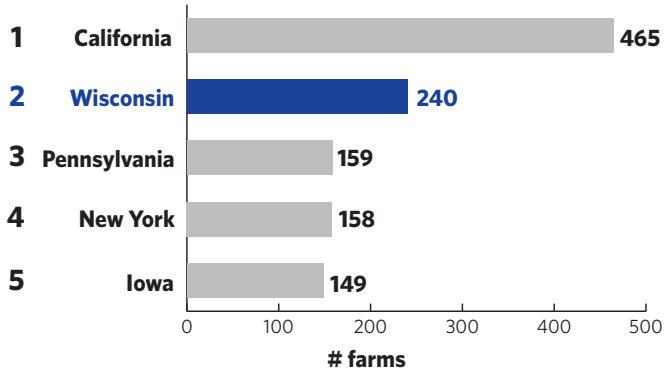


Figure 5. Top five states in number of farms with land transitioning to organic, 2012

Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Table 42.*

The 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture also includes data on farms transitioning land from conventional to organic production. Wisconsin ranks second in the nation in the number of farms with transitioning acres (Figure 5). These farms represent both conventional operations moving toward organic certification and organic farms adding more certified acres. The number of farms with acreage in transition indicates continued growth in Wisconsin organic agriculture, in response to the strong market opportunities for organic products.

Wisconsin continues to rank first in the nation in number of both organic dairy and beef farms, with 466 dairy farms and 69 beef farms (Figures 6 and 7). While the presence of organic beef farms remains strong in Wisconsin, the number of organic beef farms in the state dropped 36 percent since 2008, reflecting the cost of finishing beef on expensive organic grain, good prices for conventional beef and high demand and premiums for grass-fed beef.

Nationally, Wisconsin ranks high in the number of farms producing several horticultural crops, as well. The state is fourth in total number of organic vegetable and melon farms, with 161 farms; ninth in number of organic greenhouse, nursery and floriculture farms, with 35 farms; and eighth in total number of organic fruit and tree nut farms, with 36 farms (Figures 8-10). Many of these farms are small and midsize operations marketing directly to consumers and retail outlets, which offer accessible avenues for young and beginning farmers. However, Wisconsin's organic vegetable farms also contribute more widely to produce supply chains, including wholesale distributors, larger processing operations and value-added products.

The top organic oilseed and grain farms are all located in the Upper Midwest. Among these states, Wisconsin ranks second with 198 farms, closely sandwiched between first-ranked Iowa, with 206 farms, and third-ranked Minnesota, with 192 farms (Figure 11). The supply of organic feed that these farms provide is essential to the region's organic dairy and livestock industry, which must feed 100 percent organically produced grain and forages.

State rankings: number of organic farms by farm type, 2012

Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Special Organic Tabulation.*

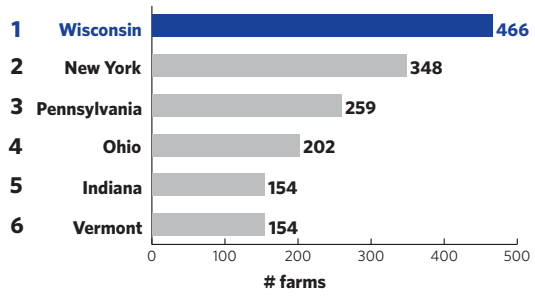


Figure 6. Top six states in number of organic dairy farms

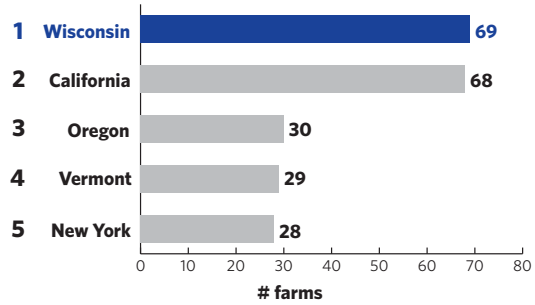


Figure 7. Top five states in number of organic beef farms

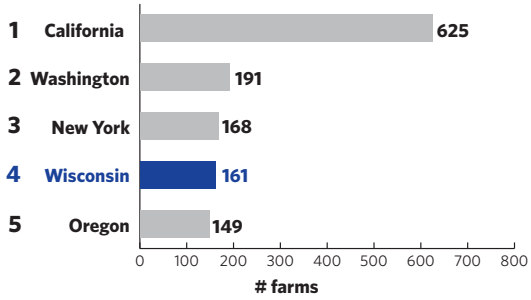


Figure 8. Top five states in number of organic vegetable/melon farms

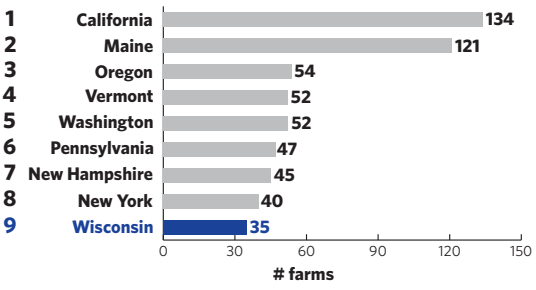


Figure 9. Top nine states in number of organic greenhouse, nursery and floriculture farms

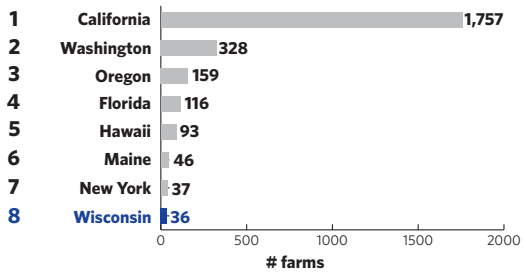


Figure 10. Top eight states in number of organic fruit and tree nut farms

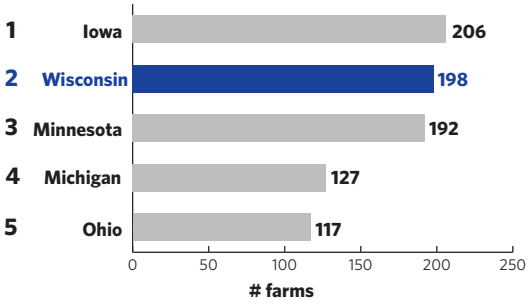


Figure 11. Top five states in number of organic oilseed and grain farms

Organic product sales and marketing

Wisconsin is fourth in the country in terms of organic commodity sales, valued at $122 million (Figure 12). This accounts for one percent of Wisconsin's total agricultural sales and about four percent of the nation's organic sales. Wisconsin's lower ranking in organic sales versus organic farm numbers (where it ranks second) is a result of the high value vegetable, fruit and nut crops produced in the top three states, California, Washington and Oregon (Figure 13).

Organic sales, 2012

Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Special Organic Tabulation.*

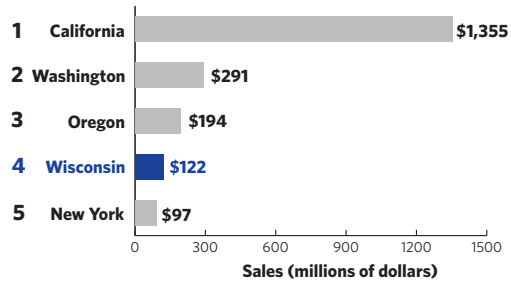


Figure 12. Top five states, value of organic commodity sales

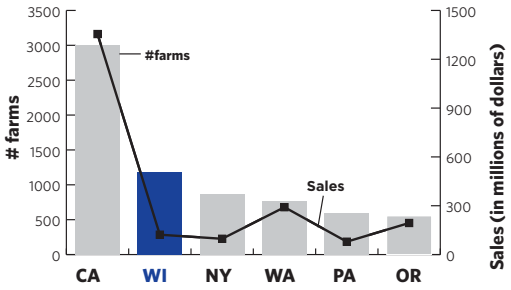


Figure 13. Top states in number of organic farms and value of organic commodity sales

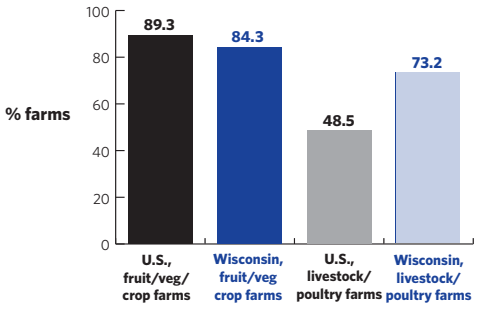


Figure 14. Percent of organic farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, with fruit/vegetable/crop sales and livestock/poultry sales

A closer look at Wisconsin's organic sales illustrates the contribution of organic farms to Wisconsin's status as "America's Dairyland." Wisconsin's organic farms demonstrate proportionally higher sales in livestock and poultry, including milk sales. Wisconsin's organic dairy farms are bolstered by the strong organic processing and marketing infrastructure throughout the state. As the number of organic livestock and dairy farms grows in the state, the farming inputs and resources necessary for successful organic production become more readily available. This helps support the further transition of more organic dairy and livestock operations.

In Wisconsin, 73 percent of organic farms market livestock and poultry products and 84 percent market fruits, vegetable and crops, as compared to the national average of 49 percent of organic farms marketing livestock and poultry, and 89 percent marketing fruit, vegetables and crops (Figure 14). (Many organic livestock and dairy operations also certify acreage in field and forage crops, explaining the overlap in categories.)

Although below the national average, a significant number of organic farms in Wisconsin use direct-market and value-added marketing strategies. These farms often are those producing vegetables, fruits and nuts as well as other specialty crops. Wisconsin's organic farms produce a higher percentage of value-added commodities than

farms overall, contributing broadly to Wisconsin's farm economy. Slightly less than 13 percent of Wisconsin organic farms produce and sell value-added products, compared to less than four percent of overall Wisconsin farms. This aligns with national trends, where 16 percent of organic farms produce value-added products, compared to five percent of all farms (Figure 15).

Wisconsin's organic farms take greater advantage of direct sales to individuals compared to Wisconsin farms overall (Figure 16). Eight percent of overall Wisconsin farms and seven percent of overall U.S. farms sell directly to individuals; in contrast, 34 percent of Wisconsin's organic farms and 42 percent of U.S. organic farms fit this description. Similarly, more organic farms use Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) channels (Figure 17) to market their products: both nationally and in Wisconsin, 0.6 percent of overall farms sell products through CSA, while nine percent of Wisconsin's organic farms do so.

Wisconsin's organic farms are increasingly selling directly to retail outlets and grocery stores as compared to other Wisconsin farms, again mirroring a national trend. Approximately two percent of overall farms in the nation market to retail outlets (Figure 18); in comparison, among organic farms, 30 percent nationally and 20 percent in Wisconsin sell directly to retail outlets.

Marketing on organic farms, 2012

Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Special Organic Tabulation.*

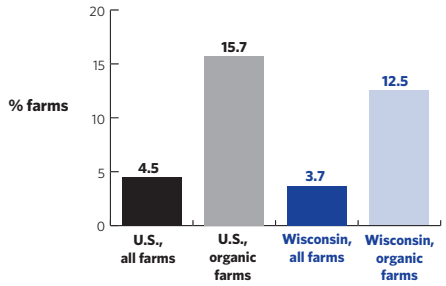


Figure 15. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with value-added sales

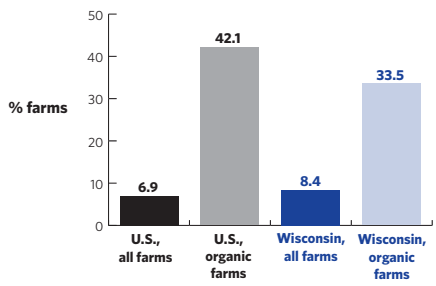


Figure 16. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with sales direct to individuals for consumption

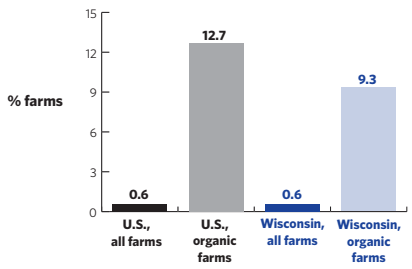


Figure 17. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with sales through CSA

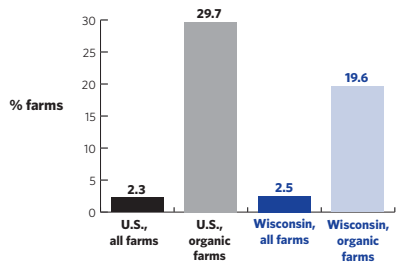


Figure 18. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with sales to retail outlets

Organic farmer demographics

Looking at the demographics of organic farmers, the impact of the organic agriculture sector in bringing new farmers to Wisconsin's agricultural economy is evident. Organic growers tend to be younger and more commonly female than the general population of farmers. Sixteen percent of farmers nationally and 17 percent of overall Wisconsin farmers are under the age of 45 (Figure 19). However, among the organic farming population, 26 percent nationally and 29 percent in Wisconsin are under 45.

Organic farmers also tend to be newer to farming. In the general farming population, 18 percent nationally and 15 percent in Wisconsin have been operating a farm for less than 10 years (Figure 20). Organic farmers tend to more heavily represent the beginning farmer population: twenty-seven percent of organic farmers nationally and 23 percent in Wisconsin have been operating a farm for less than 10 years.

Organic farming also tends to offer women more opportunities to engage in agricultural enterprises. However, gender gaps exist across all types of farming operations. Nationally, organic farms tend to have a higher percentage of women as principal operators than all farms: 14 percent of overall farms have a female principal operator compared to 18 percent of organic farms that are primarily operated by a woman (Figure 21). This trend toward more women organic farmers does not exist in Wisconsin, with women farmers representing approximately 11 percent of primary operators on organic and all farms.

Minority farmers are underrepresented in all types of agriculture, both across the U.S. and in Wisconsin. Nationally, 92 percent of all farmers and organic farmers report their race as white, with 3 percent of all farmers and 4 percent of organic farmers reporting that they are of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin. In Wisconsin, this racial disparity is even more pronounced, with 99 percent of all farmers and 98.5 percent of organic farmers reporting their race as white.

Organic farmers show a strong commitment to renewable energy, integrating a variety of these systems into their farming operations. Across all farms, three percent of U.S. farms and two percent of Wisconsin farms have renewable energy systems (Figure 22). Both nationally and in Wisconsin, a greater proportion of organic farms have renewable energy systems when compared to all farms.

Demographics on organic farms, 2012

Source: USDA. 2012. *Census of Agriculture, Special Organic Tabulation.*

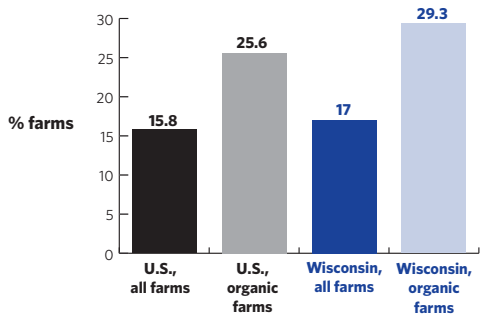


Figure 19. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with a primary operator under the age of 45

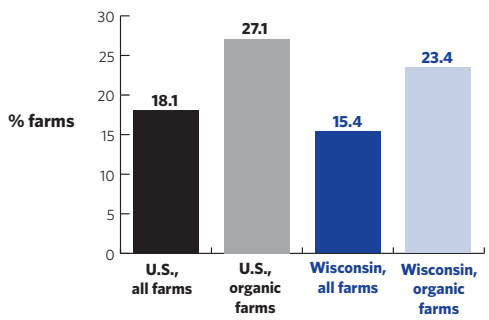


Figure 20. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with a primary operator who has been operating a farm for less than 10 years

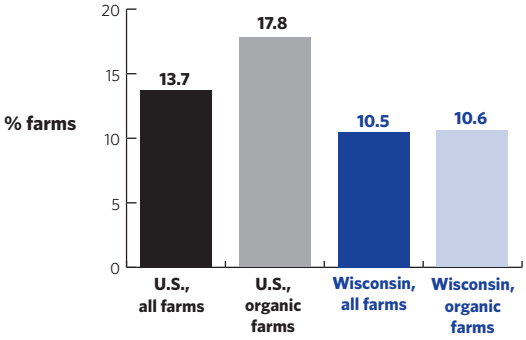


Figure 21. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with a primary operator who is a woman

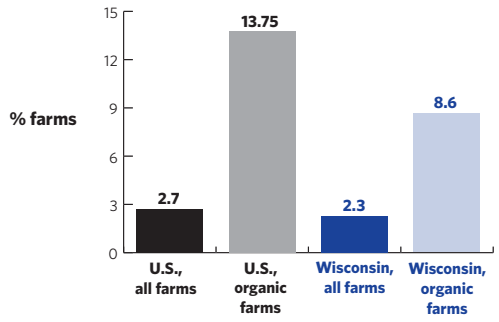


Figure 22. Percent of farms, U.S. and Wisconsin, all farms and organic farms, with a renewable energy system

SPECIAL SECTION

ORGANIC GRAIN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WISCONSIN FARMERS

The organic market has expanded rapidly since the implementation of the National Organic Standards in 2002. Consumer interest in organic products pushed sales from $3.6 billion in 1997 to $35.1 billion in 2013, with an 11.5 percent growth in sales from 2012 to 2013. Recent market research forecasts a 14 percent compound annual growth rate in the U.S. organic food market through 2018 (TechSci Research 2013, Watson 2014).

Despite strong consumer and market demand, however, supply of organic product is lagging, particularly in the areas of organic grain and feed. With eleven-dollar per bushel organic corn and markets hungry for organic feed and food, at first glance it might appear mystifying that there aren't more organic grain producers in Wisconsin. Yet U.S. production of certified organic grain doesn't meet demand from the $35 billion organic industry (Organic Trade Association 2014). In 2012-13, the U.S. imported $119 million worth of organic soybeans, $42 million in organic corn and organic wheat valued at $10 million (Mercaris Company 2014). Increased domestic production of organic grain is both possible and potentially good for the U.S. economy.

Although organic grain premiums are strong, significant barriers prevent the transition of farmers and acreage to fill the need for more organic grain. These barriers include relatively good prices for conventional grain, significant start-up costs for organic operations including a three-year transition period, lack of training in organic farming practices, high rent and purchase prices for farmland, an unpredictable and opaque market, and lack of federal farm program support.

Researchers, policy makers, extension educators and other agricultural professionals are increasingly turning their attention to the organic sector, noting continued strong growth in the market and organic agriculture's role in maintaining diversity and resilience in agricultural systems.

In an effort to increase understanding of organic grain production and marketing in Wisconsin, UW-Madison researcher Anders Gurda interviewed five people involved in the production, processing or distribution of organic grain in Wisconsin. Through these interactions, he explored possible strategies to overcome obstacles and grow both the number of farms and overall acres producing organic grain in our state. These interviews are by no means representative of all organic grain growers in the state. They reflect the perspectives and opinions of a small number of individuals intimately familiar with organic grain production. That said, these five business people offer insight into a nascent market and a community of forward-thinking entrepreneurs.

Several themes emerged from these interviews, highlighting some of the challenges related to increasing the number of farmers producing organic grains

Business owners interviewed

We interviewed five organic business owners for this special section on organic grain. The three farmers capture some of the diversity of scale, crops grown, marketing strategy, region and motivation for organic grain production in Wisconsin. The grain marketer and feed mill owner were interviewed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the supply chain through which organic grain moves. While the number of business owners interviewed is too small for a representative sample, we feel that these conversations increase general understanding of organic grain production, as well as some of the opportunities and challenges in this market.

Bob Stuczynski, Amherst, Wisconsin (organic farmer): Stuczynski farmed conventionally with his family until he convinced his father and grandfather that there were opportunities in organic. His farming operation has been certified organic since 1999 and he farms part time. Stuczynski and his dad, Ed, farm 330 acres (40 percent owned, 60 percent rented) of corn, barley, oats, and hay, with 45 more acres currently in transition to organic production. Most of the barley is sold to a local microbrewery. The corn and oats are sold to feed mills or directly to organic farms, while the hay gets sold as either organic or conventional depending on market demand. The rest of the grain is marketed through the Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance (WOMA), through word of mouth or directly to cooperatives in Westby and Marathon.

Paul Bickford, Ridgeway, Wisconsin (organic farmer): Bickford began his farming career with a 300-cow conventional, confinement dairy in 1978, but went to a rotationally grazed, pasture-based system when he saw his operation's profitability decreasing. After 15 years of pasturing his animals, he recently sold the cows and transitioned to organic grain production. His farm has been certified organic since 2011 and he is a full-time farmer. Bickford farms more than 900 acres of corn, soy, barley, oats and alfalfa. His grain is mostly sent to brokerages—usually Organic Valley and Cashton Farm Supply—while the remainder is sold directly to end-users, often an Amish farmer. He also has numerous "farm to table" customers: small farmers who buy his grain in small volumes to feed their livestock, the meat from which is direct marketed to consumers.

Randy Hughes, Janesville, Wisconsin (organic/conventional farmer): Hughes converted a portion of his land to organic production in 1991 and has slowly grown his organic acreage, in addition to starting the Blue Farm organic tortilla chip company. Hughes farms around 4,000 acres, with 1,000 certified organic and the rest conventional. On the organic acreage, he has a diverse rotation that includes corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, and canning vegetables like sweet peas or green beans, in addition to green manure crops. He focuses on identity-preserved crops like food-grade white corn on his conventional acreages, and all crops on his farm are non-GMO. He ships his grain both domestically and internationally through various brokerages. All of his canning vegetable production goes to Seneca Foods Corporation.

Ernie Peterson, Cashton, Wisconsin (Cashton Farm Supply feed mill owner/operator): Peterson certified his feed mill organic in 1997. Cashton Farm Supply buys organic corn, wheat, barley, oats, and soybeans from all over the Midwest and processes the crops into feed, 80 percent for poultry and 20 percent for dairy. Peterson has further diversified his business to include sales of fertilizer, seed, deicer, poultry equipment and custom-raised pullets.

Mike Schulist, Custer, Wisconsin (Marketing Director, Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance): WOMA, a member organization of the umbrella group OFARM (Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing) links grain producers with livestock producers, ensuring Wisconsin's leadership in organic grain management while protecting the organic price structure. WOMA was started in 2004 by a group of midwestern farmers who decided to pool their grain harvests to get a better price. The focus is on farmer-to-farmer sales, though this currently only accounts for 10 percent of all business, with the rest going to feed mills and other more predictable markets. WOMA includes six member co-ops that have conference calls every two weeks to discuss market and weather conditions, the results of which are distributed to members of the association.

as well as organic acreage on existing grain farms. These themes relate to finances (primarily start-up costs and the relative profitability of organic versus conventional production), resources and markets. Identifying these challenges allows for the creation of solutions and progress.

Finances

Start-up costs

There are various expenditures associated with the adoption of organic management practices. Some of these costs are infrastructural, such as the purchase of tillage and cultivation equipment or redesign of existing equipment. Other costs are associated with agronomic factors related to transition, such as yield drag and fertility investments. Additional, less tangible costs, like intergenerational conflicts about farm management decisions, may be harder to quantify but are no less important.

Cost of the three-year transition to organic production

Federal organic standards require that, when a farmer decides to transition to organic grain production, he or she go through a three-year transition period during which no chemical fertilizers or pesticides can be used, but the crop can't be sold as organic. Getting through this transition period can be difficult.

Conventionally managed crops rely on synthetic fertilizers for plant nutrients and chemical pesticides for weed, insect and disease control. As a farmer begins to use organically approved nutrient sources, many of which are more slowly released and require time for nutrients to become available, land transitioning to organic production will often experience a 'yield drag' while farmers work to increase soil fertility and decrease weed and pest pressures. "During the three years, it's always a challenge to get your soil up and going organically," organic farmer Randy Hughes explains.

University of Wisconsin-Madison research demonstrates that, in typical years, organic grain can yield 90 percent of conventional production (Baldock 2011). Organic corn and soybean yields ranged from 92 to 99.6 percent of conventional yields in long-term agroecological research at Iowa State University (Delate 2013). In years when organic yields are lower, the premium price usually makes up the difference. During transition, however, farmers can experience the compounded effect of lower yields without access to the organic premium, challenging new organic farmers to make difficult economic decisions. In organic farmer Paul Bickford's words: "For someone to go from clean and pretty rows to accepting weeds, and then having to sell that as transitional crop [as conventional] for three years, that's a huge subsidy he has to pull off of his other farm operations in order to get that accomplished."

Research bears out farmers' experiences with the transition to organic production. The Rodale Institute, an organization that has been doing independent agricultural research for decades, found that growers may experience reduced

yields during transition. Rodale researchers attribute this yield reduction to the time it takes "for necessary changes in chemical, physical and biological properties of soil" to take place, changes that "enhance nutrient cycling, enrich soil life, and restore soil organic matter and water holding capacity." After this transition, however, they found that yields will approach or equal conventional production (Rodale Institute 2011).

In some places, subsidies are available for producers during transition. Advocates for organic agriculture have long encouraged increased subsidies and services for both transitioning and certified growers. Recent victories for supporters of organic agriculture include increased options for crop insurance; however, there are still many opportunities to further support the expanding organic industry.

For many in the organic industry, however, answers to the question of organic subsidies are not clear-cut. Some, including Bob Stuczynski, wonder if subsidies have much of a place in organics at all. "One of the allures of organic farming," he explains, is that you can "create an economically viable farm without heavy reliance on subsidies." There is also a sentiment among some growers that advocates have to be careful what they wish for. Subsidies would likely come with a Chicago Board of Trade-type pricing structure, which some don't desire. Stuczynski worries that subsidy support will benefit processors and retailers more than farmers. "The answers are never easy," he says.

Reasons for making the transition to organic

When asked if organic premiums could encourage more conventional growers to make the switch, every person interviewed had the same response: the lure of premiums is not a solution to create stable, long-term organic acreage. Some of the interviewed farmers were concerned about producers transitioning to organic purely for the premium prices, without the necessary knowledge and skills to manage an organic farm. Others used phrases like "philosophical commitment" and "doing it for the right reasons" to emphasize that transitioning to organic production needs to be motivated by more than just a premium. Some suggested supporting a more stable organic grower base comprised of farmers committed to organic growing practices who won't "jump ship" when conventional prices increase and organic premiums decline.

Farmers are drawn to organic production for a variety of environmental, economic, civic and personal reasons. It is possible for a farmer initially drawn to organic production for the price premium to embrace a deeper philosophical commitment, or an ideologically inspired farmer to become more focused, over time, on price (Rosin 2009).

The interviewed farmers stressed that, when considering barriers to transition, it is important to think broadly about what motivates farmers to make the switch to organic grain production. There are challenges beyond the bottom line, and opportunities in organic farming that go beyond a grain check.

"I can make you more money farming organically than what you're making now, but I'd hate to see someone get into it just for that reason because they'd be in it for the wrong reason. When it [the premium] disappears, so do they, and they would never come back."

— Randy Hughes

Financial stability

The success or failure of an operation is borne out on a farmer's balance sheet. If an operation is not reliably profitable, farmers are less apt to experiment with new technologies or cropping options. On the other hand, often those who take risks reap the largest rewards. The potential of a new practice to positively impact farm finances is an important driver of willingness, or refusal, to try new things.

Although organic grain prices have historically been higher than conventional prices, recently there has been a great deal of volatility in both markets. A spike in conventional grain prices in 2008, followed by further increases from 2010 to 2013, supported further growth and aggregation of conventional production. The organic grain market experienced the opposite trends. According to Mike Schulist, WOMA Grain Marketer, "Back in 2009 and 2010 and even 2011, organic corn was selling at prices barely above conventional." By July 2010, the price of organic feed corn hit bottom, selling for $4.24 per bushel in the Des Moines market (USDA AMS 2010). The relatively higher margins of conventional grain production during this time, the unpredictability of prices in both markets, and the substantial investment required when transitioning to organic production became major barriers to starting, or staying in, organic grain production. Additionally, the time required to complete the paperwork necessary for certification is a common reason for farmers abandoning organic production, though some of the interviewees do not feel the documentation is burdensome.

"I think the limiting factor comes when we had five and six-dollar corn. Conventional guys can make a living by planting the stuff, just calling the co-op and letting them spray it, and it's going to be harvested. They don't have the risk. Why would they change?"

— Ernie Peterson

The 2014 crop insurance base price at planting time for

conventional corn was $4.62/bushel, and $11.36/bushel for soybeans. The actual harvest prices were even lower, at $3.49/bushel and $9.65/bushel (Thiesse 2014). In comparison, organic corn and soybean prices at the end of 2014 were $11.82/bushel and $24.53/bushel respectively (USDA AMS 2014). This is more typical of the premium pricing in the organic market. However, it is uncertain how market dynamics may change, both in the short and long term.

Resources

Equipment

One of the hallmarks of organic production is the highly restricted use of pesticides, including herbicides. Organic farmers rely heavily on cultivation, crop rotations and other cultural and mechanical forms of weed control. "You need to learn the art of cultivation. Eventually you'll have more cultivators than you probably should," jokes Stuczynski.

The initial investment in equipment can go beyond weeding implements, especially if a farmer is producing a new commodity. Bickford transitioned from a pasture-based dairy operation to grain production three years ago, and when asked about equipment, he had a laundry list. "I had to go buy a corn planter and a combine, and a moldboard plow and cultivators and a roller crimper. It's just a ton of steel. And then you realize you need a tine harrow, or a newfangled whatever is invented next year." Equipment doesn't have to be purchased new, however. Stuczynski and a neighbor shared equipment and revised and adapted implements they already had, saving money and working collaboratively.

> "A lot of our land is non-irrigated and it has the potential to only yield 90 or 100 bushel; well, if that's all I'm going to get, why not do it with organics and do a whole lot more? But our irrigated land can get 200 bushel, and we have to pony up on the rent there because it's so productive. I don't know if I could pay that rent and do the rotations needed for organics, like wheat." —Randy Hughes

Suitable land

As fertile as Wisconsin's soils are, and as ripe as the organic grain markets appear to be, appropriate and readily certifiable land is not always available and accessible to organic farmers. There are three land-related obstacles to organic transition that were identified by the farmers with whom we spoke:

1. **Rental risk:** Rented land often isn't worth the investment in transition, as there is no guarantee of continued tenure. With approximately 60 percent of the agricultural land in Wisconsin under rental agreements, this may restrict the growth of certified organic land in our state. Long-term rental agreements are recommended for farmers interested in certifying land not under their ownership.
2. **Contamination risk:** Conventional farms using chemicals or GMO crops in close proximity to a potential organic operation might discourage

organic production, as there is a risk of contamination that could disqualify crops from organic premiums.

3. **Economic risks:** With historically high land prices and rents, especially near population centers, returns per acre need to be as high as possible for farming to pay. On prime farm land, farmers maximize production of high-value cash crops like corn and soybeans. The complex rotations used in well-managed organic grain production systems inevitably include years with less profitable crops, like small grains and alfalfa. This may lead to organic grain producers farming less expensive, more marginal land, limiting the total number of acres suitable for organic grain production.

Education

Most would agree that farming involves an enormous learning curve. Once a farmer figures out what works on their farm and in their markets, a new challenge arises that requires further research, communication and experimentation. By learning from predecessors' mistakes and preempting challenges, farmers interested in making the switch to organic production can soften this often-intimidating learning curve. Organic farming is not simply abandoning conventional inputs and hoping the fields will provide sufficient yields, no matter what crops a farmer is raising. It requires change, adaptation and good management.

"If you're a poor manager conventionally and you try to go organic, guess what? You're still a poor manager, and now you don't have the tools you had before. But if you're a good conventional manager, then you'll likely be a good organic manager." —Ernie Peterson

Every farmer interviewed identified a lack of organic farming knowledge as one of the initial challenges they faced when transitioning to organic grain production. Further, this was often cited as a reason for farmers not to pursue certified organic production and for transitioned farmers to go back to conventional management. "People decertify," explains Hughes, "because of crop failure due to not quite understanding—without education you might have a weedy, ugly mess and a horrible crop, and you're not going to make any money." If a producer isn't making money, they're likely going to blame the recent adoption of organic production practices, and not

"Understanding organic fertility is kind of like learning another language, and I'm sure that it's a detriment to those who want to transition. Who do you trust for good advice? And how do you go about doing it?" —Mike Schulist

their lack of education. The farmers unanimously recommended finding an agronomist with organic experience or seeking out the services of companies serving organic farmers. See Appendix C for organizations that offer a variety of technical support for organic farmers. Organic certification agencies also help educate new clients.

> "For the people who are conventional, they need to find a good organic producer and spend some time with him to learn it."
>
> — Ernie Peterson

Finding a mentor who has already gone through the transition can help a new organic grower avoid common pitfalls. Every farmer interviewed has attended the annual MOSES (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service) conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin, which is a nexus for organic farmers seeking networking and education opportunities. Stuczynski warns that "If you go into it cold turkey and you don't have good information on it, it's gonna be pretty tough for you."

For all of these growers, there was clearly a learning curve. Though there are many skilled educators and forums for information exchange in the state, there's also an apparent need for more education and research specific to organic grain production in Wisconsin.

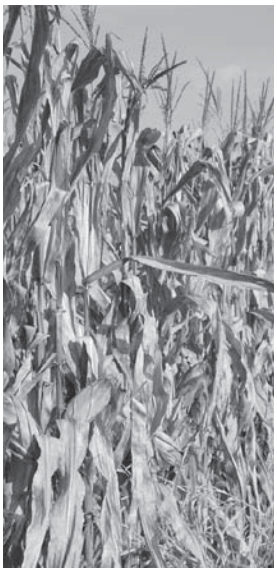
> "My knowledge base was always a concern—you don't feel comfortable going into new things all the time, and I questioned myself along the way."
>
> —Paul Bickford

Social considerations

A farmer's work is visible to anyone walking or driving by a field. The condition of a crop in a farmer's fields reflects directly on the farmer, effectively acting as a public face for the person. So it makes sense when farmers identify community or public perception as something worth considering, and a challenge to overcome, when transitioning to organic production.

Stuczynski says, "If they [conventional growers] witnessed poorly grown organic crops in their neighborhood, they're probably turned off to the whole idea. The key is for other organic farmers to set a good example."

Bickford notes a lack of respect for organic farmers: "People thought I was nuts when I went to grazing—that worked out terrifically for us. Now they think I fell off the dumb farmer truck *again* with organics." In the end, though, it's Bickford who gets the last word: "People might laugh, but they shut up in a hurry when I say 'that load of soybeans you just saw was twelve thousand bucks.'"



Another challenge results from the intergenerational nature of farming operations. As the younger generation comes into a managerial role, they often want to reinvigorate the farm business by changing the status quo. One way to do this is through shifting part, or all, of an operation to organic production. Stuczynski did just this, starting with 17 acres of soybeans in 1999, and eventually transitioned the entire farm to organic. "My dad and my grandpa thought I was nuts," he remembers. "I think it took them a while to see that it was a possibility." While growing his organic acreage and his market came with some family growing pains, he recalls, "They eventually came around, and now they're very supportive."

Marketing

After navigating the uncertain terrain of transition, investing in education, buying equipment, building soil and raising a certified organic crop to harvest, farmers next have to chart and explore the field of organic grain marketing.

Brokerage vs. end user

Organic grain producers can sell their crops to a grain buyer who purchases grain at current prices and markets it themselves, or to an end-user: generally a farmer in need of feed or seed.

There are a limited number of organic grain buyers throughout Wisconsin (see Appendix B), and they are not evenly distributed, making shipping difficult and expensive. Organic Valley in La Farge, the nation's largest cooperative of organic farmers, is one. Their grower pool contracts with organic feed growers and offers them a price range with both a floor to protect feed producers when prices fall, and a ceiling to protect livestock producers from excessively high grain prices. With connections such as those facilitated by WOMA (see Mike Schulist's bio for details), farmers can also seek out other farmers to whom they can sell their grain directly. Other buyers include Cashton Farm Supply and The DeLong Co., where Hughes often sells his crop.

Many of the large Wisconsin-based purveyors of organic grain look outside of the state to fill their bins and fulfill their contracts. "We put a lot of fuel underneath this organic industry," explains Ernie Peterson of Cashton Farm Supply. "I had two loads sitting here this morning from Missouri, and three in from South Dakota, plus the local ones." The number of mills and elevators catering to organic growers is on the rise, but many organic farmers prefer to forgo contracts with grain buyers in favor of maximizing their profits and minimizing their transportation costs by selling to local farmers, or other end users.

Stuczynski forged a relationship with Central Waters, a local microbrewery, many years ago, and sells a large portion of his barley to them every year. "It's a niche for me," he says, "and it really helps with the rotation—having a grain that you know is marketed before you even plant it definitely helps." Many organic

growers aim to diversify their markets: Stuczynski has also marketed through WOMA for a decade, sells high moisture corn, oats and hay to local farmers, and dries and stores the rest of his crop to sell through the spring and summer when prices are higher than at harvest when the market is flooded with grain. While small to midsized organic grain operators like Stuczynski generally don't have trouble selling their crops, achieving economies of scale, diversifying their markets and getting good price information are perennial issues.

"If you're gonna grow organic, you have to be able to grow in truckload quantities to be efficient. If you have a half load of soybeans you'll still have to pay for the price for moving a full load."

— Bob Stuczynski

Economies of scale

In grain production, there are advantages to reaching a certain scale. For a large-scale 'split' (conventional and organic) producer like Hughes, there are seemingly limitless market opportunities. He can ship conventionally grown specialty grain to Japan, organic feed corn to Peterson and vegetables to Seneca. With his own trucking fleet, transportation isn't an issue, and the consistency of his crop is attractive to a buyer who would rather have one large, predictable shipment than many smaller ones. Hughes relates a story about dairy producers in the Northeast who were struggling to get enough corn for their herds. "So they'd go around and buy twenty acres from one guy and it's sopping wet, and another guy has a different variety, or a different test weight," he explained, "and one day the cows are milking like a son of a gun, and the next day they're sick."

Economies of scale work in Hughes's favor and allow him to grow a consistent product, but what about farmers who don't have the capital or labor required to scale up? Peterson has seen many small producers find innovative ways to get their smaller harvests into the larger market. "These people are creative," he says. "They have a half a load, and a neighbor has a half a load. They weigh the truck locally and split it up when they get here."

Farmer networks are not new, especially in Wisconsin, but among grain producers, this kind of collaboration seems to be the exception and not the rule. Creating networks of organic grain farmers would not only

"If you're farming 500 acres conventionally, it's going to take a lot more time to do that organically. It takes at least twice as much time to cover the same acres with cultivation as it did to take care of weeds before."

— Bob Stuczynski

Crop rotations and cash flow in organic grain production

Without the use of easy-to-apply and readily available inorganic fertilizers, organic and transitioning growers must be diligent and proactive in managing soil fertility. Some organic farmers use materials approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), such as rock phosphate, gypsum and potassium sulfate, while others place more emphasis on carefully planned rotations and cover crops to build organic matter and provide nutrients to crops.

Organic farmers thoughtfully develop diverse crop rotations to build soil, suppress weeds, break disease and pest cycles, and diversify and stabilize income streams. Most organic crop rotations will include corn, soybeans, small grains (wheat, oats, barley), hay (alfalfa or alfalfa/grass mixtures) and sometimes a vegetable crop. Kathleen Delate of Iowa State University has found, through ISU's Long-Term Agroecological Research (LTAR) trials, that a diverse rotation including a small grain and alfalfa can increase economic returns per acre compared to conventional corn and soy rotations (Delate et al 2013).

A complex rotation can be a huge shift in thinking and practice for someone who has been farming corn and beans for a generation. In Bickford's words, "I don't focus on one crop in one year giving me the most income. It's what combination of crops together makes you the maximum income. You have to look at the whole picture of a five-, six-, seven-year rotation."

Hughes has found a lucrative niche growing green beans and sweet peas for Seneca, a national canned vegetable processor. He likes that these are short season crops, allowing him to build soil fertility through green manure crops and manure application. "The peas come off in July, and then I get my land back and there's so much that I can do."

Seneca is trying to increase its organic production, as confirmed by Ray Schueth, Director of Agriculture for Seneca's eastern and midwestern operations: "Last year we tripled our acres, and we're still looking for farmers." With 2,700 certified acres, they've grown their organic production substantially, but it still only amounts to a small portion of total business.

Having a predictable market for a crop adds security to a sometimes volatile business, and selling canning vegetables to an outfit like Seneca can not only cash flow part of a rotation, but also allows time and space for more intensive management, or even another crop, after the vegetables comes off.

A vegetable crop or a small grain in a farmer's rotation can benefit both the soil and the bottom line, but some crops will always be more profitable than others. Cash flow can be frustrating when the cash crop is only planted every three to six years and a premium isn't always available in the other planting years, as is often the case with hay or alfalfa. "My hay doesn't sell for any more than conventional hay," Bickford explains. "I've come to see my alfalfa as a necessary evil, kind of a sacrifice crop, to make a profit on corn and soybeans."

With Wisconsin having the most dairy farms in the nation, it follows that many organic dairy farmers grow their own hay and winter feed. Understanding marketing options for organic hay and alfalfa would greatly benefit organic grain farmers who may look at these soil building crops as a lost opportunity for a more lucrative planting.

benefit small producers looking to pool their harvests, but would also create conduits of information exchange for an otherwise isolated group of growers. WOMA is doing this work, and there's more to do.

> "When a guy runs 2,000 acres, he's probably not going to be able to do that organically. Probably about 200 or 300 acres of organic per person is the maximum."
>
> — Ernie Peterson

Diversification, split operations and niche markets

Organic agriculture may already be a niche in the larger commodity grain universe, but carving out further niches seems to be a common strategy among these farmers. Stuzcynski found a local microbrewer looking for organic barley to malt, while Bickford found a receptive market of small Amish producers in central Wisconsin. Bickford points out that he "has to compete with every other hay jockey out there that wants to sell organic, or non-organic, hay." Working with the Amish has given him a captive market of farmers happy with his high-quality product and has diversified his income stream, further insulating him from the vulnerability of depending on a single market.

Because of his diverse production, Hughes has a wide range of market opportunities: grains and vegetables, organic and conventional, value-added and commodity. He sees diversification as one of the keys to his success: "A guy with 300 acres in Wisconsin thinks he can grow corn as good as a guy from Nebraska with 24 rows and 800 horsepower? No way! You *have to* do something specialized." He sees organic production as being that specialization. If "every person with a corn planter is your competitor and you don't set yourself apart in some way, then you're just another farmer," and one who might struggle to make ends meet on a small acreage growing #2 corn, or corn for livestock feed. Hughes insists that it's about resilience in the face of fickle markets and consumers: "When times get tough, all the farmers are going to have trouble except the guys that are doing something a little bit specialized—you get good at that thing and you'll do well."

The idea of "split operations," or farms producing both conventional and organic crops, is one strategy to grow the amount of land under organic management in Wisconsin. Hughes is happy with his decision to begin transitioning his land in 1991, but even at 1,000 organic acres, he has only about a quarter of his land certified organic. He insists that there are years that his conventional operation pays for the organic, and vice versa. Hughes is a financially resilient farmer who has used diversification to keep himself afloat.

Hughes advises new organic grain farmers to start slow, something he learned the hard way. "We did 500 acres the first year, and I just about overwhelmed myself," he remembers, "I didn't have the cultivators or the knowledge." The blunder cost him money and didn't impress his dad or his banker, but he was determined to make it work, and has increased his organic capacity to twice this initial number of acres.

Split operations may work for a large-scale producer like Hughes, looking to attract buyers across the spectrum, but the vast majority of small-scale, organic grain operations are fully organic, says Schulist. Peterson insists that there's no way to have a split organic and conventional feed mill, citing the hassle of cleaning between mixes as reason enough to go either all organic, or not at all. Instead of being a goal in itself, split operations may be a temporary, explorative state for small- to mid-size farmers interested in transitioning their operations.

Price discovery

For conventional grain producers, the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) defines the landscape of national grain futures and the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) gathers current grain prices. For organic farmers, there are no proxies for the CBOT or the AMS. All crops are traded privately and price discovery is an inexact science, with numbers aggregated from large-scale buyers specializing in organic. Since 2006, the USDA has used these numbers to put out a bi-weekly report detailing price ranges for organic grain and feedstuffs, but this means that buyers and sellers are working with historical data rather than current prices. Regularly described as 'opaque' and 'volatile,' the organic market is still seen as the wild west of food marketing. George Siemon, CEO of Organic Valley, explains in a *Businessweek* interview, "In the conventional world, [growers] don't tell a local feed mill, 'It's great that the Chicago Board of Trade says it's $3, I want $4.' That's literally what goes on in the organic world." (Tozzi 2014).

Because of the lack of a robust price discovery mechanism and lagging price indicators, farmers end up getting price information by calling other farmers, brokers, elevators and mills. It's a slightly more localized and scaled down version of what the USDA does. "There's no good protocol in this market to try to figure out what organic grain is really worth," Peterson complains.

Peterson also bemoans that reporting by both the government and independent operators is insufficient; a deficiency that often finds him becoming a point of reference for the state. "People call here a lot for benchmarks, but I don't know where to go either," he says. Two of the three farmers we interviewed mentioned calling Peterson for current grain prices. The lack of standardization and solidity in the organic market can be frustrating for growers, and having to leave a carefully calibrated market may be another reason conventional grain farmers are hesitant to transition to organic.

Risk and crop insurance

With a library of historical yield and price data, conventional buyers and sellers have the ability to forecast future prices, an integral part of risk management. These futures dictate price floors and revenue guarantees for crop insurance programs and allow farmers to adapt their management to potential shifts in

their industry. Organic grain growers can enroll in the same crop insurance programs as conventional growers and, as of a couple years ago, have been given planting time base prices (projected guarantees for the coming harvest season) and harvest prices (actual price at harvest from the CBOT) that reflect the organic premium. Producers establish a revenue guarantee using their Actual Production History (multi-year average) and the crop insurance planting time base price. For the purpose of determining indemnities, their actual revenue at harvest time is their actual yield multiplied by the crop insurance harvest price. If their actual revenue is below their guarantee, then they are given an indemnity according to the level of coverage they elected. Crop insurance is more complex than this, and there are multiple types of insurance, but, in general, this is how the process works.

Two ways farmers receive subsidy payments are as commodity support payments and as premium subsidies when buying crop insurance. Congress sets maximum payment limits for how much a farmer can receive annually from commodity support programs, but does not limit crop insurance premium subsidies. The 2014 Farm Bill does limit or remove crop insurance premium subsidies if farmers do not satisfy conservation compliance and/or wetland compliance requirements. However, Paul Mitchell, a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at UW-Madison, notes that the current cap on subsidy payments is not a full accounting of the total subsidies received, something that proponents of increased organic subsidies should note.

Meeting the challenge

With the U.S. importing significant amounts of organic grain to satisfy growing market demand, opportunities exist for farmers to transition to organic practices and grow organic products. However, this transition is not without its challenges; in order to reduce risk for farmers switching to organic production and create a stable organic marketplace, challenges related to financial stability, resource identification, and market dynamics must be addressed.

Multiple avenues of support involving organic farmers and suppliers, nonprofit organizations, state and federal agencies, educational institutions and others can create a vital and vibrant network to continue to grow this sector of Wisconsin agriculture, and maintain Wisconsin as a national leader in the organic industry.

> "Time is money, especially this time of year [harvest], so it's never going to be as cheap as producing regular grain, but if there's a market and people are willing to do it and they're concerned about what they're eating, why not?" — Randy Hughes

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APPENDIX A: THE WISCONSIN ORGANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

The 12-member, private-sector Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council includes organic farmers and businesses, as well as certifier, non-profit and consumer representatives. The purpose of this council is to provide Wisconsin agencies with guidance on educational, market development, policy and regulatory issues as they relate to organic farming, food production and marketing. The council meets regularly with an interagency team including representatives of agriculture-related state and federal agencies. It is a standing council of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Background

The state's support for organic agriculture started in 2004, when Governor Doyle set a goal for Wisconsin to "lead the nation in organic agriculture." In 2005, the governor's office held an organic summit and convened a task force to develop recommendations for fostering growth in the organic agriculture sector.

Priorities identified by the task force included creation of an educational and promotional program for Wisconsin organic products; establishment of programs that facilitate networking among organic farmers; development of coursework, degree programs and research on organic agriculture at University of Wisconsin campuses and the state's technical colleges; and support and technical assistance for enhancing organic processing capacity. The task force's report to the governor can be found at www.organic.wisc.edu.

In 2006, DATCP created an organic agriculture specialist position in its Division of Agricultural Development. The same year, the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences created a position for an organic research and education coordinator.

The Advisory Council membership includes three organic farmers, three organic business representatives, a certifier, a representative of a non-profit educational organization, a consumer representative, and three at-large members. Members are appointed by the DATCP Agriculture Board to three-year, staggered terms. The Advisory Council was initially seated in February 2007 and has since met three to four times annually. The Interagency Implementation Team working with the council includes representatives from DATCP, the Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, UW-Extension and the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Council members and agency staff work together to support and promote organic farming. Their activities can be divided into several broad categories, including projects undertaken under the auspices of the Organic Advisory Council and the council members' participation in the efforts of outside organizations and agencies. The Organic Advisory Council also provides input, recommendations, and support for a efforts and decisions made at the state and federal levels. Recommendations are made either verbally or in written white papers or letters of support.

You can learn more about the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council at www.organic.wisc.edu.

Current Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council Members

Organic farmers

Craig Dunnum
(term ends 4/30/2015)
Dunn-Hill Farms
Westby, WI

Steve Pincus
(term ends 4/30/2016)
Tipi Produce
Evansville, WI

Rebecca Goodman
(term ends 4/30/2017)
Northwood Farm
Wonewoc, WI

Organic business representatives

Jerry McGeorge
(term ends 4/30/2015)
Organic Valley
La Farge, WI

Elena Byrne
(term ends 4/30/2016)
Organic Processing Institute
Middleton, WI

Ken Seguine
(term ends 4/30/2017)
Hay River Pumpkin Seed Oil
Prairie Farm, WI

Non-profit representative

Harriet Behar
(term ends 4/30/2017)
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services
Gays Mills, WI

Consumer representative

Jennifer Casey, RD, CD
(term ends 4/30/2016)
Fondy Food Center
Milwaukee, WI

Certification representative

Steve Walker
(term ends 4/30/2015)
Midwest Organic Services Association
Viroqua, WI

At-large members

Bill Stoneman
(term ends 4/30/2015)
W.F. Stoneman Company LLC and Biopesticide Industry Alliance Inc. (BPIA)
McFarland, WI

Inga Witscher
(term ends 4/30/2016)
St. Isidore's Mead Organic Dairy
Osseo, WI

Ron Mason
(term ends 4/30/2017)
Midwestern BioAg
Blue Mounds, WI

Interagency team

Pat Murphy
NRCS State Office

Laurie Makos
Iowa County FSA Office

Kevin B. Shelley
UW Nutrient & Pest Man. Program

Jed Colquhoun
UW-Extension

Molly Jahn
UW-CALS

Lisa Schultz
DATCP-ARM

Christine Lilek
WI DNR

Cate Rahmlow
WI Economic Development Corporation

Randy Zogbaum
WI Technical College System

Amy Kox
Northeast WI Technical College

Val Dantoin Adamski
Northeast WI Technical College

Dan Smith
WI DATCP-DAD

Coordinators

Theresa Feiner
Ag Market Development Specialist
WI DATCP-DAD

Erin Silva
UW-Madison Plant Pathology

APPENDIX B: GRAIN BUYERS IN WISCONSIN

For an interactive map with additional information about each location, visit: www.maptive.com/ver3/wisconsinorganicgrainbuyers/

All Star Trading
Crops: corn, wheat, barley, soybeans, oats, hay, triticale, rye, other
Barb Barcal
847-375-8675
barb@allstartrading.com
www.allstartrading.com
2100 Clearwater Drive #320
Oak Brook, IL 60523
Organic grain and feed merchandising firm that buys and sells organic commodities

Andersen Feeds
Crops: corn, oats, soybeans
608-582-2595
andersenfeeds@centurylink.net
www.andersenfeedsinc.com
19775 East Mill Road
Galesville, WI 54630

Boyd Feed and Supply
Crops: corn, oats
Gerry Gully
715-667-3898
PO Box 148
Boyd, WI 54726

Briess Malt & Ingredients Company
Crops: barley
Vince Coonce
920-849-7711
www.briess.com
625 S Irish Road
PO Box 229
Chilton, WI 53014

Cashton Farm Supply
Crops: corn, soybeans, small grains
Ernie Peterson
608-654-5123
www.cfspecial.com
300 State Hwy 27
Cashton, WI 54619

CROPP Cooperative (Organic Valley)
Crops: corn, soybeans, oats, barley, wheat, field pea, other
Jim Neidel
888-809-9297
feed@organicvalley.com
https://www.farmers.coop/
One Organic Way
La Farge, WI 54639
or Cashton, WI (drop-off)
The coop primarily picks up grain from a seller's farm.

DeLong Company, Inc.
Crops: IP and non-GMO primarily, some organic
Joe Taft
608-676-2255 ext. 255
jtaft@delongcompany.com
www.delongcompany.com
601 Delco Dr.
Clinton, WI 53525
DeLong is buying little organic grain currently, but may increase purchases in the future.

Golden Grains
Crops: any certified organic grain
Ed Knoll
608-269-5150
8244 Jack Rabbit Avenue
Sparta, WI 54656

Grain Millers Inc.
Crops: corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley, rye, other
800-328-5188
www.grainmillers.com/suppliercontactus.aspx/
10400 Viking Drive Suite 301
Eden Praire, MN 55344
There are buyers for each commodity. Either call the 800 number or visit the website to find the right buyer for your product.

Great River Organic Milling
Crops: wheat, corn, barley, rye, spelt, buckwheat, other
Rick Halverson
608-687-9580
rhalverson@greatrivermilling.com
www.greatrivermilling.com
P.O. Box 185
Fountain City, WI 54629
Grain must be cleaned and ready to mill—no cleaning facility on site.

Heartland Cooperative Services
Crops: corn, barley, oats
Paul Berg
715-443-2241
800-996-2441
pberg@heartlandcooperativeservices.com
www.heartlandcooperativeservices.com
800 4th St.
Marathon, WI 54448

La Crosse Milling Co.
Crops: oats
Glenn Hartzell
608-248-2222
ghartzell@lacrossmilling.com
www.lacrossemilling.com
PO Box 86
Cochrane, WI 54622

Meadow Creek Enterprises
Crops: corn, soybeans, barley, wheat, oats
Jeremy Hinderman
608-568-7564
110 North Ave.
Dickeyville, WI 53808

Mt.Tabor Feed Mill
Crops: corn, barley, rye, wheat, oats
Gordon Johnson
608-489-2241
mtmill@mwt.net
S765 County Road V
Kendall, WI 54638

Nature's Organic Grist
Crops: wheat, corn, beans, barley
Eric Fast
651-253-5292
naturesorganicgrist.com
20405 Everton Trail N
Forest Lake, MN 55025
Large portion of buying is for milling wheat, often requiring FOB contracts to the Dakotas

Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM)
John Bobbe
920-825-1369
johnbobbe@gmail.com
www.ofarm.org
9896 Co. Hwy. D
Brussels, WI 54204
Umbrella organization for WOMA with many useful resources for farmers

Premier Co-op
Crops: corn, barley, oats, and wheat
Ed Achenbach
608-634-7309
pcedachenbach@mwt.net
www.premiercoop.com
405 South Main Street
Westby, WI 54667

S&S Custom Grain Roasters
Crops: corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, oats, sometimes rye and peas
Craig Shoemaker
920-960-9118
shoeandsals@gmail.com
W8088 Chapel Rd.
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
S&S specializes in small load purchases and milling, even "half of a semi load or a gravity box or two."

S&S Grains
Robert Scharlau
608-323-7297
800-657-4412
S1761 Lewis Valley Road
Arcadia, WI 54612

SunOpta
Crops: corn, soy, and occasionally small grains
Tony Schiller
507-451-6030 ext. 127
tony.schiller@sunopta.com
www.sunopta.com
PO Box 128
3824 SW 93rd Street
Hope, MN 56046

Super Soy LLC
Crops: soybeans
888-897-2114
www.cfspecial.com
N3503 Highway 104
Brodhead, WI 53520

Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance Corp. (WOMA)
Crops: corn, barley, oats, wheat, hay, silage, soybeans, others
Paulette Bradley and Mike Schulist
608-542-0204 (Paulette)
715-572-3671 (Mike)
mschulist@msn.com
organicmarketingalliance.org
Farmer-owned and -managed nonprofit cooperative marketing grain and hay

APPENDIX C: RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

College and university resources

Lawrence University, Appleton
Jeff Clark
jeffrey.j.clark@lawrence.edu
www.lawrence.edu/sorg/slug/index.html

Lawrence University offers a course in sustainable agriculture that addresses the state of modern agriculture in the U.S. and the world. Students identify social, economic and environmental problems with current systems of agriculture, and explore viable solutions to these problems. The course includes hands-on instruction at the university's organically managed garden.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Green Bay
Valerie Dantoin, faculty, Sustainable Food & Ag Systems
valerie.dantoin@nwtc.edu
920-498-5568
www.nwtc.edu/academics/ProgTeamSites/OSAFE/Pages/Home.aspx

NWTC offers a certificate in Organic and Sustainable Agricultural Practices comprised of eight different courses developed by professional educators and farmers. Individuals can choose among the courses.

Northland College, Ashland
academics.northland.edu/growing-connections/

Growing Connections is a nine-course sequence that focuses on the history, theories and practices of sustainable agriculture. Student participants work closely with faculty mentors and regional farmers in classrooms, labs and fields to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role that agriculture plays in the lives of individuals and their communities.

UW-Extension
Erin Silva, State Specialist,
Organic and Sustainable Agriculture
emsilva@wisc.edu
608-890-1503
www.uwex.edu
www.uworganic.wisc.edu

University of Wisconsin-Extension provides education and resources to students, business owners, farmers, community leaders, youth and families in our state. The University of Wisconsin Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension program strives to support organic farmers through its research and outreach efforts.

UW-Fox Valley, Menasha
Gregory Peter, Sociology
greg.peter@uwc.edu
920-832-2655
1478 Midway Road, Menasha, WI 54952
www.uwfox.uwc.edu

UW Fox Valley's experiential learning opportunities provide students with opportunities to get involved in local and organic food events and resource preparation, community garden projects and school food and waste management, as well as a number of non-agricultural sustainability projects.

UW-River Falls, Sustainable Agriculture Program
Juliet Tomkins
juliet.tomkins@uwrf.edu
715-425-3176
William Anderson
william.anderson@uwrf.edu
www.uwrf.edu/PES/SustainableAgOption.cfm

UW-River Falls offers a sustainable agriculture option within its Crop and Soil Science degree. Courses developed for the program address environmental sustainability, organic agriculture, rural sociology, integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture law and sustainable animal production. The University of Wisconsin-River Falls also has an online Sustainable Management program geared toward providing participants with a broad understanding of the intersections among business, natural science and social systems. Students may secure a professional certificate and a bachelor of science degree, as well as a fruit and vegetable sustainable systems option within the horticulture major.

UW-Stevens Point, Students for Sustainability
800 Reserve Street, Stevens Point 54481
stuorgs.uwsp.edu/Pages/default.aspx

The purpose of the Students for Sustainability is to create a means for UWSP students to experience, explore, share, and learn about issues relating to sustainable agriculture and community development.

UW-Stevens Point, Global Environmental Management Education Center (GEM)
Victor Phillips
vphillip@uwsp.edu
800 Reserve St., Stevens Point WI 54481
www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/gem/

GEM programs on Permaculture Solutions to Climate Change and Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainability infuse organic agroforestry and regenerative landscape practices through permaculture short courses, hands-on service learning projects, and applied research worldwide.

UW-Madison, Agroecology Master's Program
Alan Turnquist
alturnquist@wisc.edu
608-890-3917
364A Moore Hall,
1575 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706
www.agroecology.wisc.edu

Agroecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison aims to train analysts and researchers in a broadened vision of the possibilities of agriculture, including organic agriculture. Students can choose a public practice (project oriented) or research (thesis oriented) option for their master's degree work.

UW-Madison, Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
Michael Bell
michaelbell@wisc.edu
608-262-5201
1535 Observatory Dr., Madison, WI 53706
www.cias.wisc.edu

CIAS creates flexible, multidisciplinary research and education/training projects with the goal of learning how particular integrated farming systems, including organic, can contribute to environmental, economic, social and intergenerational sustainability.

UW-Madison, F.H. King Students for Sustainable Agriculture
www.fhkingstudentfarm.com

F.H. King Students for Sustainable Agriculture is focused on establishing the connection between the land, food and community. The organization has a one- acre, organically managed, student-run farm where volunteers and students gain hands-on experience in small-scale sustainable agriculture. F.H. King also holds free educational workshops and events for the UW-Madison campus community.

State and federal agencies

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
Theresa Feiner
Agricultural Market Development Specialist
theresa.feiner@wi.gov
608-224-5140
Angie Sullivan, Agricultural Program Specialist
angie.sullivan@wi.gov
608-224-5095
datcp.wi.gov

The DATCP's Division of Agricultural Development provides farmer, business, and market development support to grow and improve Wisconsin's position as a competitive player for organic products. DATCP's Organic Agriculture program administers the USDA organic certification cost share program, coordinates the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council, and provides technical assistance to businesses across the agricultural supply chain interested in organics.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
State office: 608-662-4422
www.fsa.usda.gov

FSA administers federal farm commodity, crop insurance, credit, environmental, conservation and disaster assistance programs to both organic and nonorganic producers nationally. FSA's Non Insured Assistance Program, for which organic farmers are eligible, provides insurance for a wide range of crops.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
State office: 608-662-4422
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

Wisconsin NRCS provides technical assistance to land users and managers to assess environmental risk and develop conservation plans. NRCS provides cost sharing for conservation practices, including organic transition plans and a special sign-up for organic farmers, through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and offers incentive payments to farmers who have installed a high level of conservation protection through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Nonprofit Organizations

American Pastured Poultry Producers Association (APPPA)
grit@apppa.org
888-66-APPPA (2-7772)
www.apppa.org

The American Pastured Poultry Producers' Association (APPPA) is a nonprofit educational and networking organization dedicated to encouraging the production, processing, and marketing of poultry raised on pasture. Membership in APPPA includes a bi-monthly mini-magazine dedicated to pastured poultry. Producer Plus members receive access to exclusive online resources and support network.

Agriculture and Energy Resource Center (AERC)
www.wisconsinaerc.org

AERC formed out of a community's desire to protect a piece of its cultural heritage from private development. AERC's efforts include field research to help identify new crop and market opportunities; on-site demonstration projects to give the public a first-hand look at sustainable practices; educational workshops and seminars for both farmers and consumers; and the promotion of cooperative agribusiness models.

Central Rivers Farmshed
www.farmshed.org

Central Rivers Farmshed members are committed to making central Wisconsin a renowned local food community. Farmshed works to expand the connection between local residents and their food, and provides opportunities for participation, education, cooperation and action to support a local food economy in central Wisconsin.

Community Groundworks (Troy Gardens)
Jake Hoeksema
jake@communitygroundworks.org
608-213-5309
www.communitygroundworks.org

Community GroundWorks manages 26 acres of open space. Their programs fulfill the goals of developing the land in a sustainable manner, improving food security for Madison's north side residents and providing educational programs on gardening, natural areas restoration, food preparation, nutrition and environmental education. They offer internships in sustainable and organic agriculture.

FairShare Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Coalition
info@csacoalition.org
608-226-0300
www.csacoalition.org

FairShare Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Coalition supports and connects CSA farmers and eaters and works to create a sustainable, just and locally based food system in southern Wisconsin. Through education, outreach, community building and resource sharing, we are working to raise the bar on quality and accessibility of CSA shares in our region.

Fondy Food Center—Fondy Farm Project
Stephen Petro
spetro@fondymarket.org
414-562-2282
www.fondymarket.org

The Fondy Farm Project plans to create a secure, economically viable farm cooperative for small-scale, local immigrant and limited resource farmers providing fresh food for residents of Milwaukee's north side.

Farley Center
info@farleycenter.org
608-845-8724
www.farleycenter.org

The Linda and Gene Farley Center for Peace, Justice and Sustainability created a farm incubator that supports new farmers with land, tools, education, and marketing assistance. Training takes place while maintaining full respect for the cultural crops and practices of the growers involved. All production is organic.

GrassWorks, Inc.
info@grassworks.org
www.grassworks.org

GrassWorks is expanding the practice of managed grazing throughout Wisconsin and creating a thriving market for grass-fed products. GrassWorks organizes workshops, pasture walks, mentoring relationships and seminars, as well as an annual grazing conference. GrassWorks also participates in on-farm grazing research projects in order to advance the science of grazing.

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI)
dandrews@michaelfields.org
www.michaelfields.org

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute's applied research and breeding efforts benefit the organic agricultural community. MFAI offers a wide range of workshops, taught by farmers, of interest to organic farmers. MFAI is also involved in activities important to the continued vitality of the organic industry, including national and local policy, local food systems and urban agriculture.

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)
info@mosesorganic.org
715-778-5775
www.mosesorganic.org

MOSES is a nonprofit that provides education, resources, and expertise to help farmers grow organic. MOSES puts on the country's largest organic farming conference each February in La Crosse, provides on-farm field days, and answers farmers' questions through Ask a Specialist (715-778-5775 or www.mosesorganic.org/ask). Publications include the Upper Midwest Organic Resource Directory, Guidebook for Organic Certification, and bi-monthly Organic Broadcaster newspaper. Projects include the Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring Program, Rural Women's Project, and New Organic Stewards.

Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)
Anton Ptak
info@organictreefruit.org
612-387-2205
www.organicfruitgrowers.org

The OFGA is dedicated to serving the interests of organic fruit growers and advancing the organic fruit industry through education, research and advocacy.

Organic Processing Institute
Carla Wright
carla@organicprocessinginstitute.org
888-635-0411
organicprocessinginstitute.org

The Organic Processing Institute assists food processors with making connections, accessing information and gaining expertise about organic processing to grow and strengthen their businesses. OPI facilitates technical assistance for sourcing, co-manufacturing and developing Organic System Plans. Online resources include fact sheets, commercial kitchen listings, training opportunities and news updates, as well as free classifieds for ingredients and equipment.

REAP Food Group
info@reapfoodgroup.org
608-310-7836
www.reapfoodgroup.org

For more than 15 years, REAP Food Group has been working throughout Southern Wisconsin to build and sustain a local food system that supports small family farms and locally owned businesses, promotes sustainable agriculture practices, and provides access to fresh, healthy food for the entire community.

Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance (WOMA)
mcdonald@mwt.net
608-542-0204
organicmarketingalliance.org

WOMA's mission is grain producers helping livestock producers to put Wisconsin as a leader in organic grain management, while protecting the organic price structure. WOMA is a proud member of the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM).