NOAP

National Organic Action Plan

FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Advancing Organic Agriculture in the U.S.

The NOAP Project is a collaborative project, led by RAFI-USA, which provides overall programmatic development and organizing support for the Project. Michael Sligh and Liana Hoodes lead this effort on behalf of RAFI and the NOAP Planing Team listed below. Our team of dedicated volunteers, active in organic food and farming movements, came together to plan the NOAP Project and to organize and facilitate Dialogue Meetings and the National NOAP Summit. Some members also contributed to the drafting of the NOAP document (*denotes NOAP drafting Team Members).

Liana Hoodes (liana@hvc.rr.com)
Michael Sligh

*Lisa J. Bunin, Editor
*Roger Blobaum, Editor
*Harriet Behar
Zachariah Baker
Lynn Coody
Steve Gilman
Steve Etka
*Elizabeth Henderson, Editor
*Faye Jones
*Mark Lipson
Cynthia Hayes
*Jim Riddle
Brise Tencer
Madeleine Morley, Intern

Published By: Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA
PO Box 640,
Pittsboro, NC 27312
www.rafiusa.org
(919) 542-1396

For more information or additional copies, contact:
Liana Hoodes (845) 744-2304
Liana@NationalOrganicCoalition.org

RAFI-USA
The Rural Advancement Foundation International

National Organic Action Plan

From the Margins to the Mainstream—
Advancing Organic Agriculture in the U.S.

By
Liana Hoodes, Michael Sligh, Harriet Behar,
Roger Blobaum, Lisa J. Bunin, Lynn Coody , Elizabeth Henderson,
Faye Jones, Mark Lipson, Jim Riddle

January, 2010

We dedicate this NOAP to the family farmers who laid the foundations of organic agriculture and to those who continue to forge innovative systems of organic production in this country and throughout the world.

We also dedicate this to the hundreds of people across the country who freely offered their time, talent, and expertise to make the creation of this National Organic Action Plan possible. We are forever grateful for their collaboration in constructing this vision and plan for the future of organic food and agriculture in the U.S.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This National Organic Action Plan (NOAP) represents the culmination of five years of meetings that engaged diverse stakeholders in envisioning the future of organic and in building strategies for realizing our collective vision. It calls for the creation of an expanded organic policy agenda for the next decade and beyond that reflects the broad social, environmental, and health values of the organic movement and the associated benefits that organic food systems afford society. The goal of the NOAP Project is to *establish organic as the foundation for food and agricultural production systems across the United States.*

Grassroots Lead the Development of a National Organic Action Plan

Motivated by the growing realization that the grassroots must regain and redirect the vision of organic or risk it being compromised by those without a commitment to organic integrity, the NOAP Project embarked on a five-year, nationwide, dialogue on the future of organic. NOAP organizers wanted to create a proactive, organic action plan similar to National Organic Action Plans in the European Union and elsewhere. But in contrast to the many government-derived plans, we wanted our plan to emanate from the grassroots organic community so that the broadest range of stakeholders would share in its development and take responsibility for its implementation.

Organic Agriculture Affords Multiple Benefits to Society

At this critical moment in history when concrete solutions are so desperately needed to address integrated global social, environmental, and economic crises, organic agriculture provides multiple solutions and benefits. Its system of production can produce high yielding crops, enhance food security and independence, reduce the adverse impacts of agriculture on the environment and climate change, and contribute to the development of food self-sufficient and sustainable communities. The largely untapped potential of organic to provide concrete and long-lasting solutions to a variety of persistent problems of modern, industrialized society has inspired farmers and non-farmers alike to join grassroots movements to strengthen the integrity of organic, grow markets for organic products, and facilitate universal access to healthy, organic food.

Time is Ripe for Government to Forge a Comprehensive Organic Agenda

The U.S. government lags well behind many other governments in terms of its commitment to enhancing and promoting organic food and agriculture and it remains one of the last industrialized countries to develop a national organic action plan. It has yet to acknowledge the multitude of health and environmental benefits associated with moves away from chemical-intensive agriculture and towards more environmentally and socially responsible methods of food production.

In surprising contrast to its predecessors, the Obama Administration has demonstrated early public support for organic not only in the White House garden and kitchen, but also in the U.S. Department of Agriculture where it has doubled the budget and staff of the National Organic Program (NOP). Clearly the time is ripe for the government to forge a comprehensive organic agenda, created in partnership with the wide range of stakeholders in the organic community, as envisioned by the drafters of the founding U.S. organic legislation — the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA).

It is also worth noting that the NOAP Project has already made some progress towards reaching its goals. In June of 2009, USDA elevated the status of the National Organic Program (NOP) to a stand-alone program within the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). It was formerly buried as a project of AMS's transportation program. And, in September 2009, USDA hired the first NOP Deputy Administrator who has extensive experience running a statewide organic program and assisting other states in the development of their organic programs.

NOAP Reflects Broad Social, Environmental and Health Values Embedded in Organic

The NOAP recommends adoption of an expanded U.S. organic policy agenda that reflects the broad social, environmental, and health values embedded in OFPA and espoused by the organic community. It identifies concrete objectives and timelines for the future growth of organic food and agriculture and for achieving the associated social and environmental benefits by articulating objectives and benchmarks for tracking and measuring accomplishments. The NOAP empowers the grassroots to engage in public policy debates on organic by providing a detailed plan of action that can be adapted to meet community and statewide needs and conditions.

NOAP Establishes Concrete Benchmarks for Expanding Organic Production

Although the purpose of the NOAP goes beyond simply establishing production targets, it does make some specific recommendations with respect to expanding organic production. In particular, it calls for:

- Doubling the amount of organic products and the number of farms, acreage, public lands, and animals under organic management every five years through 2020.
- Expanding local organic seed production capacities, with a benchmark of meeting 50% of all local organic seed needs by 2020.

- Increasing local organic production and processing by 50% by 2020, by increasing the infrastructure of organic regional food systems with government financial assistance.
- Increasing organic supplies to ensure the commercial availability of all agriculture-based organic ingredients contained in processed foods by 2014, including minor ingredients, seeds, and livestock feed.

To protect the integrity of organic and to prevent contamination from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Plan recommends the adoption of legislation that shifts the responsibility and liability for buffering against GMO contamination to the manufacturers and/or patent-holders of GMO seeds by 2012. NOAP recommendations also include rBGH labeling on all products by 2010 and GMO labeling by 2012 to protect organic integrity.

NOAP Advances Agriculture Policies Beyond Marketplace Goals

We call upon the U.S. government to use the recommendations contained in this NOAP as a guide for the development of a broader framework for policies that support the growth and improvement of organic food and agricultural systems. This framework will help advance organic policies beyond narrow, market-based goals to include incentives for transitioning to organic, technical assistance, research, and other programs aimed at maximizing organic's social, environmental, economic and health benefits.

We also call upon state governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and community activists to use the NOAP as the basis for developing State Organic Action Plans (SOAPs) that will contribute to the realization of these vision and goals.

The NOAP Project agreed upon the following overarching principles to advance organic food and agriculture in a manner that supports our shared values and furthers our vision of the future of organic:

1. **Maintain and continuously improve organic quality and integrity;**
2. **Increase domestic organic production by supporting farm and market diversity;**
3. **Ensure a fair marketplace for small, medium-sized, and family farmers and workers;**
4. **Maximize organic production potential by increasing the U.S. produced share of organic products in the domestic marketplace;**
5. **Safeguard the environment and conserve biodiversity;**
6. **Enhance access to healthy, organically grown, fresh food for all people of all income levels; and**
7. **Move society towards more socially just and humane food and agricultural production systems.**

It is our hope that the vision and plan for collective action that is embodied in the NOAP will unite people across the country in their efforts to **establish organic as the foundation for U.S. food and agricultural production systems.**

INTRODUCTION

An organic farm, properly speaking, is not one that uses certain methods and substances and avoids others; it is a farm whose structure is formed in imitation of the structure of a natural system that has the integrity, the independence and the benign dependence of an organism.

--Wendell Berry, Farmer, Author, Poet, 1982

History will not only judge us by how well we managed our resources but also by how well we defended opportunities of future generations. Now is the time for us to set the course.

--Michael Sligh, RAFI-USA & Founding Chair, USDA National Organic Standards Board

The Vital Role of NOAP

Organic agriculture is poised to play a vital role in addressing some of the world's most pressing environmental, social, and economic challenges. As the scope and breadth of these problems grow and change, organic agriculture offers direct, positive, and long-lasting solutions that benefit communities across the globe. Present and future contributions of organic agriculture include reducing world hunger, increasing food security and food self-sufficiency, sequestering carbon and adapting to climate change: and improving human health, nutrition, and the quality of life for farmers, farm workers, and rural communities. Yet, nearly two decades after Congress passed the Organic Food Production Act (1990) organic agriculture accounts for only 3.47%[1] of the total U.S. food production. This National Organic Action Plan (NOAP) calls for the creation of an expanded organic policy agenda that not only accelerates organic production but that also reflects the broader social, environmental, and health values of the organic movement for the next decade and beyond.

The largely untapped potential of organic to provide a variety of integrated solutions to persistent problems of modern, industrialized society and agriculture has inspired farmers and non-farmers alike to join grassroots movements to strengthen the integrity of organic agriculture, grow markets for organic products, and facilitate universal access to healthy foods. This NOAP represents the culmination of five years of meetings that engaged diverse stakeholders in envisioning the future of organic and in building strategies for realizing our collective vision. **The goal of NOAP Project is to establish organic as the foundation for U.S. food and agriculture production systems.**

Central to the creation of the NOAP has been an ongoing, participatory and democratic process that enlists civil society and organic allies in the creation of an organic plan of action for the next decade and beyond. This document presents the findings of the NOAP process and articulates a shared vision for the growth and improvement of organic food and agriculture. The NOAP recommends organic policy initiatives at the federal, state, and local levels, and outlines actions to be taken by diverse communities across the country to enhance organic opportunities. It concludes by presenting objectives and benchmarks for increasing, measuring, and achieving the social and environmental benefits of organic agriculture.

1 Organic Trade Association. 2009. Organic Product Sales Rise 17% in 2008. http://www.marketingcharts.com/topics/financial/organic-product-sales-rise-17-in-2008-9027/(accessed November 12, 2009).

One of the key challenges of the NOAP process has been determining how best to continue to grow organic agriculture and markets while preserving organic integrity and retaining farmer and consumer confidence. To that end, we have identified seven overarching principles that are essential to advancing U.S. organic food and agriculture in a manner that supports the shared values and vision of NOAP participants:

1. **Maintain and continuously improve organic quality and integrity;**
2. **Increase organic production by supporting farm and market diversity;**
3. **Ensure a fair marketplace for small, medium-sized, and family farmers and workers;**
4. **Maximize organic production potential by increasing the U.S.-produced share of organic products in the domestic marketplace;**
5. **Safeguard the environment and conserve biodiversity;**
6. **Enhance access to healthy, organically grown, fresh food for all people of all income levels; and**
7. **Move society towards more socially just and humane food and agricultural production systems.**

This NOAP is intended to promote a better understanding of the state of organic in the United States, not only in terms of existing production and markets for organic, but also in terms of the experiences and vision of farmers and grassroots movements engaged in strengthening the integrity of organic agriculture, promoting greater access to organic foods, and growing markets for organic products. It recommends objectives and benchmarks to serve as a guide for policymakers and industry to prioritize actions consistent with the priorities set forth by farmers and grassroots food and farming movements. For state governments and NGOs, it provides a solid foundation for the establishment of State Organic Action Plans (SOAPs) to advance organic production systems across the country.

It is our hope that this vision and plan for collective action will unite people across the country in their efforts to **establish organic as the foundation for food and agricultural production systems.**

Setting the Context—History of U.S. Organic in Brief

The organic movement emerged in response to the growing industrialization, centralization, and chemicalization of our agriculture and food systems. As early as the 1940s, the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, began its pioneering work on the use of compost in agriculture systems to build healthy plants and soils by enhancing nature's fertility capabilities. In direct opposition to post-World War II pressure from chemical companies to "modernize" agriculture through the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides formulated out of war munitions, the Rodale Institute began publishing *Organic Farming and Gardening Magazine*. It became the handbook for farmers wanting to increase yields by supporting rather than destroying nature's ecological systems. The Rodale farm remains fully operational today and it

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM)

In 1972, advocates and practitioners of organic agriculture established the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), which has grown to include over 700 organizations from over 100 countries. A central purpose of IFOAM was to write standards for organic farming and processing in a democratic and participatory manner. The IFOAM Basic Standards are organized around four basic principles: 1. health, 2. ecology, 3. fairness, and 4. care; they have served as the template for many organic standards in use today.

More than 50 countries now have national organic policies and/or regulations and while organic standards have not been harmonized globally, there is an increasing movement in that direction.

IFOAM's Definition of Organic (adopted March 2008)

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.

is home to the nation's longest-running, 30-year field trial comparison of organic and conventional agriculture.

Motivated by Rachel Carson's warning that prolific pesticide spraying was silencing song birds, and based on their own experiences with pesticide use, pioneering organic farmers from the Northeast, Upper Midwest, and California Coast began conducting organic field trials on their farms.[2] Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they shared their knowledge, addressed market and technical problems, organized conferences, set standards, and formed the first organic farming organizations such as California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), and the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA). During that time, growers predominantly sold their harvests at local farmers markets and farm stands, at health food stores, to buying clubs, and directly to consumers. Under these conditions, the authenticity of organic was based upon trust and consumers knowing their farmer rather than upon federal regulations. But, as organic markets expanded and the distance between buyers and sellers of organic food widened to satisfy national and eventually international market demands, a need arose to define and certify the authenticity of organic commodities in the absence of face-to-face relationships.

Questions regarding the costs and benefits of developing a national organic standard remained a subject of intense controversy among organic growers, commodity producers, consumers, and NGOs throughout the 1970s and '80s. This tension, heightened by the spread of unsubstantiated label claims and strong public and market pressure, forced the government to take action. Congress adopted the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) as a way to legitimize, standardize, and codify the term "organic" into law.

Despite strong public interest, the government has been slow to embrace organic. As early as 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its *Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming*[3] in response to substantial public pressure for the government to encourage and support organic. A new administration highly unreceptive to organic, allowed the document to languish without federal action for nearly a decade. It was not until 1990 when discernible international markets for organic products emerged, that the OFPA was finally passed. The National Organic

2 Carson, Rachel. 1962. Silent Spring. Boston: Houghlin Mifflin.

3 USDA Study Team on Organic Farming. 1980. Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming. United States Department of Agriculture. http://naldr.nal.usda.gov/NALWeb/Agricola_Link.asp?Accession=CAT80742660.

Standards Board (NOSB),[4] a voluntary citizen's board mandated by OFPA, was convened in 1992 and spent five years crisscrossing the country building widespread support for its recommendations for the final Organic Rule. It took nearly another decade for the Final Rule promulgated by the National Organic Program (NOP) to be published in December 2000.

Not surprisingly, given the history of organic in the United States, the Organic Rule was not adopted without controversy and it contravened many of the original NOSB recommendations. Substantial disagreement about the substance of the Rule pitted the organic community against large agribusinesses, that wanted to allow the "big three" emerging technologies in organic production — genetic engineering (GE), sewage sludge, and irradiation. After the USDA received more than a quarter of a million comments from people across the country demanding that the Rule reflect the intended meaning and practice of organic, many details were fixed. GE, sewage sludge, and irradiation were eliminated from the Rule and a relatively transparent and participatory NOP was created within the USDA.

Until recently, the government has been slow to acknowledge organic as little more than a niche marketing scheme. This position has been reinforced through OFPA, which establishes national standards for marketing organic products, for growing, processing, and handling of organic food, and for facilitating interstate commerce.[5] Moreover, the government's lack of support for organic is evidenced by its minimal funding of all types of organic

USDA Definitions of Organic

National Organic Program Definition — Final Rule (2000)[1]

"*Organic production*. A production system that is managed in accordance with the Act and regulations in this part to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity."

USDA National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) definition of *Organic*
*(*April 1995)

- Organic agriculture is an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony.
- Organic' is a labeling term that denotes products produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act. The principal guidelines for organic production are to use materials and practices that enhance the ecological balance of natural systems and that integrate the parts of the farming system into an ecological whole.
- Organic agriculture practices cannot ensure that products are completely free of residues; however, methods are used to minimize pollution from air, soil and water.
- Organic food handlers, processors and retailers adhere to standards that maintain the integrity of organic agricultural products. The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people.

1 (7 CFR § 205.2 Subpart A — Definitions.) http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards/DefineReg.html

4 The mission of National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is to assist the Secretary in developing standards for substances to be used in organic production. The NOSB also advises the Secretary on other aspects of implementing the national organic program. Appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, based upon a public application process, the NOSB is comprised of four farmers/growers, two handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist, three consumer/public interest advocates, three environmentalists, and one USDA accredited certifying agent who sit on various committees." Source: http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop

5 "Purposes," Title 7 US Code, Part 6501. Chapter 94. 2009 ed. http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode07/usc_sec_07_00006501----000-.html.

research and of technical assistance for farmers wanting to transition to organic.[6] Things are gradually changing in this regard as the steady annual growth in the organic industry of approximately 20% has forced the government to dedicate more research dollars to organic.[7]

The 2008 Farm Bill contains numerous provisions that directly and indirectly expand support for organic agriculture such as:

- Re-authorized and expanded funding for the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program;
- Expanded funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI);
- Created a conservation incentive program for organic and transitioning farmers;
- Expanded support for organic data collection;
- Authorized removal of surcharges placed on organic farmers for federal crop insurance, based on market research; and
- Authorized funding for beginning farmers, farmers markets, value added grants, breeding research, farm-to-school, specialty crops, and conservation assistance programs, all of which are open to organic producers.

For a complete description of these programs, go to: http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org.

In the present globalized food economy, a focus on marketplace value does not necessarily translate into the growth of U.S.-produced organic foods. This is particularly true in cases where low-cost imports have undermined domestic product development. Moreover, in the absence of reciprocal and equivalent organic programs between countries and regions, there is no way to assess whether an imported organic product or ingredient meets the stringent production standards required by U.S. law. Focusing on market growth also ignores the wide range of urgent environmental and social changes needed to achieve a sustainable food and agriculture production system that supplies fresh, affordable, organic food to all and in a manner that is socially just across the supply chain and is protective of human health and the environment.

Fortunately, passage of the U.S. 2008 Farm Bill[8] (see Box)has helped broaden the focus of organic through the introduction of new federal programs that acknowledge some of the conservation benefits of organic agriculture. It also increases funding for organic research for farmers transitioning to organic and for technical assistance. Yet, without the thoughtful development of a government-based vision for the future of organic, piecemeal programs will be slow to advance a comprehensive organic policy agenda. And, if organic has taught us anything, it is about the importance of whole, integrated systems of production. Organic is about farming systems that thrive in union with the ecological systems within which they are embedded. It is not simply about a system of agriculture that allows or omits a list of inputs or practices.

The other piece of hopeful news about organic is that since the election of President Obama, the government has taken steps to elevate the profile and support of organic agriculture with renewed vigor. In March 2009, Obama appointed Kathleen Merrigan,

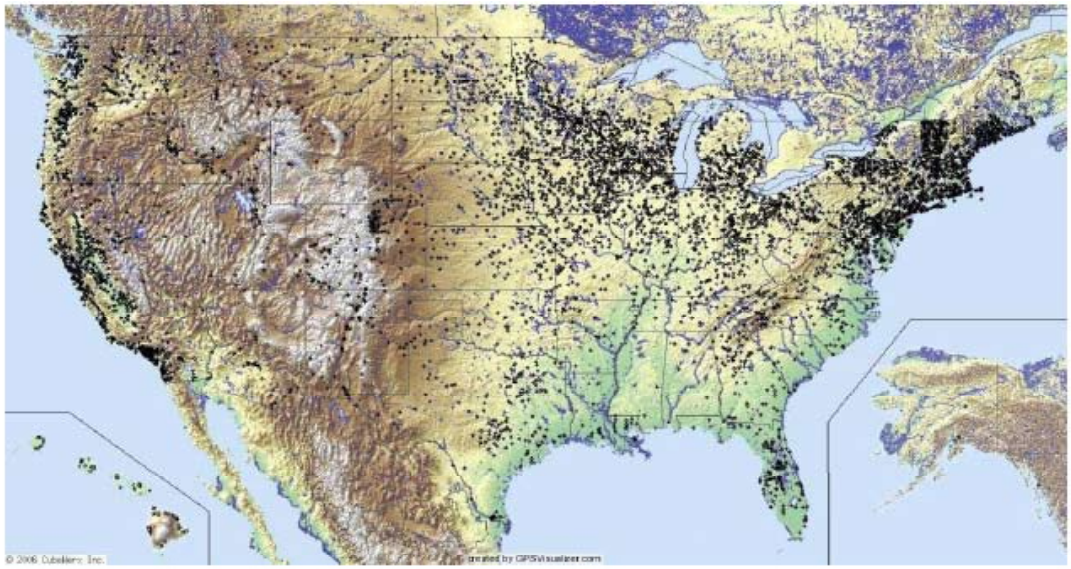
6 These publications that evaluate the national research agenda are available free online at http://ofrf.org/publications/pubs/nora2007.pdf.

7 Dimitri, Carolyn and Catherine Greene. 2002. Recent Growth Patterns in the US Organic Foods Market. USDA Economic Research Service. [Italicized: Agriculture Information Bulletin] No. AIB777 (September). http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib777/.

8 U.S. Congress. House. Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. H.R. 6124. 110th Cong., 2nd sess. (May 22, 2008.) http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h6124eh.txt (accessed November 24, 2009).

one of the primary authors of OFPA, as the Deputy Secretary of USDA. During the 1990s, she was brought in to "fix" the unacceptable Rule after the original draft which included the big three technologies and caused massive public outcry, required the rule to be withdrawn and re-drafted. In October of 2009, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack officially established the National Organic Program (NOP) as a stand-alone program within the Agency's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), a move intended to elevate its status and visibility within USDA.[9] The new NOP Deputy Administrator, Miles McEvoy, has budgeted for 16 new staff in 2010, doubling the number of existing staff to 31. The NOP operating budget has also doubled to nearly $7 million. Both of these actions will undoubtedly contribute to better organic regulatory development and enforcement.[10]

Geographic Distribution of Certified Organic Producers and Handlers in the U.S., 2006



AK = 6	DE = 7	IN = 117	MI = 357	NE = 152	OK = 38	UT = 55
AL = 8	FL = 179	KS = 127	MN = 567	NH = 94	OR = 408	VA = 90
AR = 27	GA = 80	KY = 86	MO = 165	NJ = 112	PA = 432	VT = 444
AZ = 70	HI = 201	LA = 37	MS = 3	NM = 110	RI = 43	WA = 708
CA = 2300	IA = 627	MA = 135	MT = 203	NV = 49	SC = 11	WI = 960
CO = 270	ID = 194	MD = 106	NC = 129	NY = 508	SD = 125	WV = 29
CT = 79	IL = 279	ME = 377	ND = 199	OH = 370	TN = 43	WY = 36
					TX = 260	DC = 2

Source: Organic Farming Research Foundation, 2007, by Jose Torres, from USDA National Organic Program Data, using Google Earth software.

As organic becomes more widely accepted as the preferred mode of agricultural production grassroots involvement in shaping the future of organic will become increasingly important. The grassroots organic movement encompasses farmers and ranchers, farmworkers, homesteaders, backyard gardeners, educators, researchers, and food, nutrition, consumer, sustainable agriculture, social justice, and environmental activists. It also includes everyone who buys, sells, and eats organic food or in some way participates in the organic food supply chain, including inspectors and certifiers of organic farms and products. We are all part of the continuously evolving organic movement and the source and the keepers of the organic vision and the NOAP.

9 Vilsack, Thomas. September 25, 2009. Letter to Herb Kohl, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development; Food and Drug Administration; and Related Industries.

10 McEvoy, Miles. 2009. PowerPoint presented at the National Organic Standards Board meeting, November 3-5, in Washington, DC. http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5080769&acct=nosb.

Growth and Evolution of U.S. Organic Agriculture

As one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture for over a decade, organic sales and acreage have shown surprisingly consistent growth since the passage of OFPA in 1990. In that year, there were just under one million acres (935,450) of certified organic farmland in the U.S. "By the time USDA implemented national organic standards in 2002, certified organic farmland had doubled, and it doubled again between 2002 and 2005."[11] Between 1992 and 2005, organic acreage more than quadrupled to 4,054,429 acres. California has led the nation in both organic cropland acres (223,263 in 2005), and certified organic operations (2,026 in 2007). The 2007 Census of Agriculture further notes that California also produces the most organic vegetables and fruit — 58,327 acres and 56,667 acres respectively.[12] Wisconsin farmers have the largest number of certified organic milk cows, 16,793; and Montana produces the largest quantity of certified organic grain on 63,559 acres. In 2007, there were 20,437 organic farms plus 11,901 farms and 616,358 acres transitioning to organic.[13]

Small organic farms have maintained their share of the organic market despite rapid sector growth and the increase in larger organic farms.[14]

Organic has remained the fastest growing U.S. agriculture sector for nearly a decade. Fruits and vegetables comprise the largest portion of organic food sales, representing 37% in 2008. Beverages and dairy represent the second largest portion of organic food sales at 14% each. The strongest growth in an organic product category is organic beverages, which grew by 40% between 2007 and 2008. Grains and breads are a close second, increasing 35% between 2007 2008.[15]

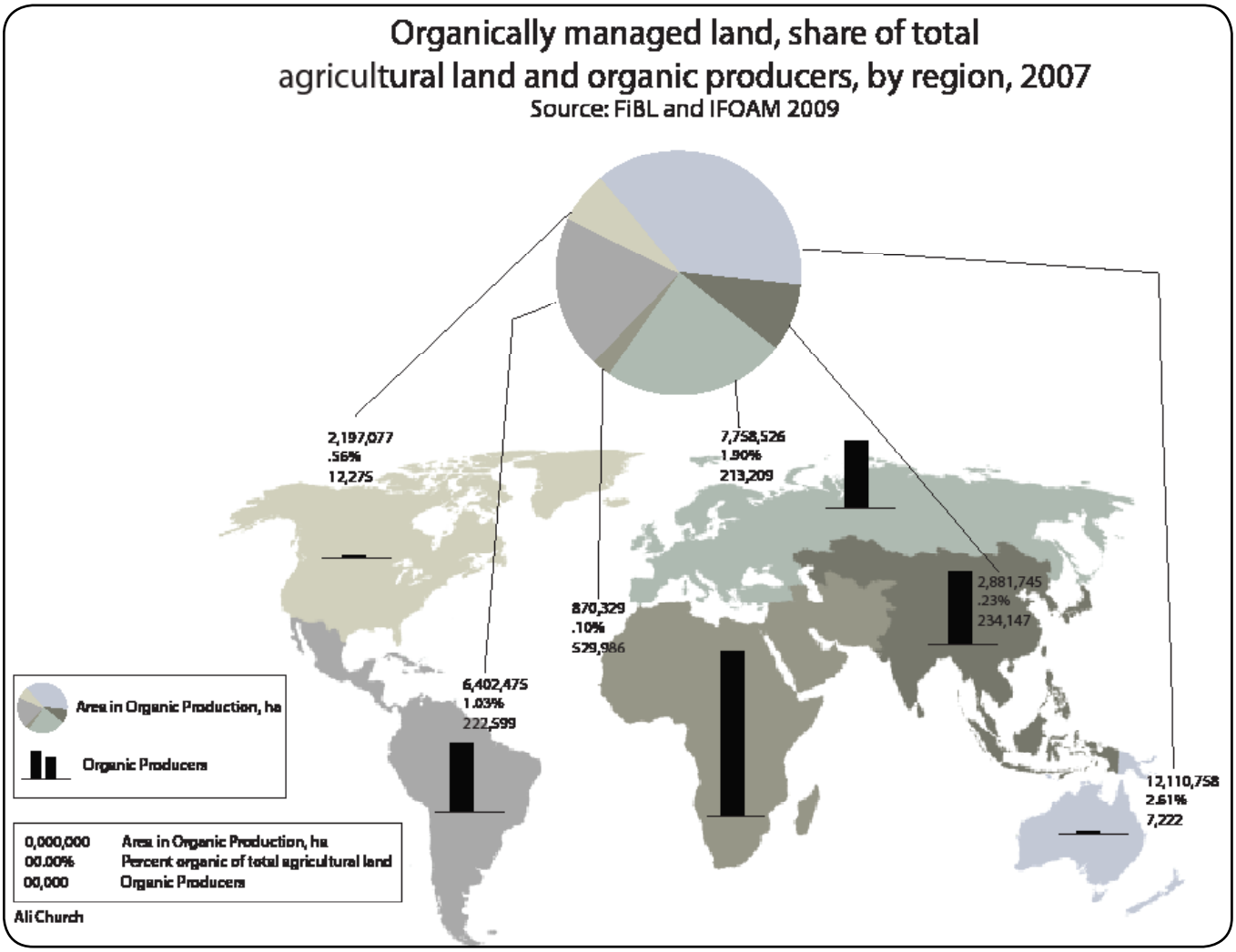
U.S. ORGANIC FOOD SALES[16]

	2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Organic Food Sales ($ Million)	13,831	16,718	19,807	22,929
Growth Rate*	---	20.9%	18.5%	15.8%
Total U.S. Food Sales ($ Million)	566,791	589,136	628,219	659,012
Organic Penetration**	2.48%	2.80%	3.15%	3.47%

* Increase in sales, year 1 to year 2 (e.g. 2007 to 2008)
** Organic food as a percent of total U.S. food sales

11 USDA, Economic Research Service. Organic Production Statistics. http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/organic (accessed November 20, 2009).
12 USDA, Economic Research Service. Organic Production Statistics. http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/organic/#statedata (accessed October 26, 2009).
13 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture. Table 48: Organic Agriculture.
14 Greene, Catherine, Carolyn Dimitri, Biing-Hwan Lin, William McBride, Lydia Oberholtzer, and Travis Smith. 2009. Emerging Issues in the US Organic Industry. USDA Economic Research Service Economic Information Bulletin No. 55 (June). http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib55/.
15 Organic Trade Association. 2009.
16 Organic Trade Association. 2009.

Organic food currently accounts for 3.47% of all food product sales in the United States (see table above) and it accounts for 4.9% of the total growth of U.S. food sales.[17]



A little less than half of the respondents to the U.S. Organic Trade Association's 2009 *Organic Industry Survey* said they are involved in export sales. According to the survey, larger companies with more than $5 million in annual revenue are twice as likely as smaller companies with less than $500,000 in annual revenue to export organic products.[18] The United States continues to import a major portion of its organic food from Europe, Asia, Canada, and Latin America to meet growing consumer demand. USDA sources estimate that the ratio of organic imports to exports is approximately 10 to 1 and, therefore, a major opportunity exists for U.S. farmers to produce a much greater portion of organic food destined for domestic consumption.

In terms of shortfalls in domestic supplies of organic products, organic dairy producers and soy food processors lack sources of domestically produced organic feed grains and soybeans. More than 41% of producers say that undependable

17 Organic Trade Association. 2009.

18 Organic Trade Association. 2009. 2009 Organic Industry Survey: Executive Summary. http://www.ota.com/pics/documents/01a_OTAExecutiveSummary.pdf (accessed on November 12, 2009).

supplies of organic raw material limit their ability to generate sales.[19] Organic feed corn remains in short supply both nationally and internationally, as GMO (genetically modified organisms) contamination makes non-GMO corn increasingly hard to find.[20] Conversely, U.S. organic dairy farmers are currently faced with an oversupply of milk in the marketplace, which has led to falling prices and forced some small and medium-sized dairy farmers out of business.[21]

According to an annual industry survey conducted by the Hartman Group,[22] 69% of U.S. consumers purchased organic products in 2008. More than two-thirds of U.S. consumers buy organic products at least occasionally and 28% buy organic products weekly. Growing consumer demand has taken organic products from their traditional place in natural food stores to more mainstream venues such as Wal-Mart and Costco. The percentage of consumers buying organic products has remained stable since 2006, despite increasing food prices.[23] Even during the most recent economic downturn, regular organic consumers are not changing their purchasing habits. However consumer surveys suggest that less frequent organic buyers may be limiting their organic purchases.[24]

U.S. Organic in the Global Context

Worldwide certified organic acreage has reached more than 79 million acres. Global organic markets are estimated to have reached $46 billion in 2007, with Europe and the United States consuming the majority of organic products. As the existing data suggest, organic agriculture can meaningfully contribute to the sustainable growth and development of countries across the globe.[25] Even in an economic downturn, this growth appears to be continuing.

The largest geographic area of organic production, as the illustration demonstrates, is in the Oceania region with its large expanse of pasture-based organic acreage.

The United States remains the single-country market leader with an estimated $22.9 billion in organic sales in 2008 and with projected, continued growth.[26]

---

19 Greene, Catherine, et. al. Emerging Issues.

20 Personal Communication. Lisa J. Bunin, (Center for Food Safety) and Kazuhiro Shirai, (Seikatsu Club Spirits Co. Ltd. -- Japan's largest Natural Foods Cooperative), September 11, 2008, San Francisco, CA.

21 See: Zezima, Katie. 2009. Organic dairies watch the good times go bad. New York Times, May 28, US section. and Hallenback, Terri. 2009. Organic lull down on the dairy farm. Burlington Free Press, September 6.

22 The Hartman Group. 2008. Organics Today: Who's Buying and What's Next. July 23. www.hartman-group.com/hartbeat/2008-07-23

23 Stevens-Garmon, John, Chung L. Huang, and Biing-Hwan Lin. 2007. Organic Demand: A Profile of Consumers in the Fresh Produce Market. *Choices* 22(2): 109-115. http://www.choicesmagazine.org/2007-2/grabbag/2007-2-05.htm (accessed November 12, 2009).

24 Greene, Catherine, et al. Emerging Issues.

25 Willer, Helga and Kilcher, Lukas, (Eds.) (2009) The World of Organic Agri*culture - Statistics and Emerging Trends 2009*. IFOAM, Bonn; FiBL, Frick; ITC, Geneva.

26 Organic Trade Association. 2009.

Why NOAP Now?

As U.S. organic agriculture expands and matures, civil society must assert itself in policy discussions about what is and what is not organic or risk having the definition and practice undermined by those without the commitment to socially and environmentally responsible organic development. We believe that a successful, transparent, and participatory NOAP process can provide a way to periodically evaluate the role and performance of the government and to update and strengthen organic regulations. NOAP Project participants agreed to call upon the federal government to use this NOAP as a basis for the creation of a broader framework for government and marketplace policies to support and advance organic agriculture and its associated social values.

We initiated this NOAP Project for a number of pressing reasons:

- Our government's failure to provide leadership or a vision for increasing the capacity of the organic sector in the face of rising consumer demand and continued exponential growth of U.S. organic food and agricultural production.
- Mounting evidence from the European Union (EU) and elsewhere that when governments support the development and spread of organic agricultural knowledge and technology, and provide financial assistance for transitioning to organic, far greater growth in organic acreage and production occurs, especially in countries with organic action plans.
- Failure of the U.S. government and food and agriculture industry to develop social and environmental goals associated with the growth of the organic sector beyond retail/market- based goals.
- Desire to create an expanded policy agenda that reflects the broader environmental, social, health, and economic goals and benefits of organic agriculture.
- Desire of the organic community to be better heard in federal, state and local policy arenas.
- Desire to ensure that small, medium, and family farmers have a say in the future development of agriculture and that the integrity of organic is not weakened in order to accommodate large-scale farming practices and food processing interests that are antithetical to organic.

NOAPs Elsewhere

The U.S. government lags well behind others in terms of its commitment to promoting organic food and agriculture. It has yet to acknowledge the multitude of health and environmental benefits associated with the move away from chemical-intensive agriculture and towards a more environmentally and socially sustainable methods of food production.

In contrast, many EU member countries and the EU as a whole[27] have developed some type of government-supported organic action plans. EU countries that have adopted organic action plans include Spain, Italy, Norway, France, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom (UK). Thailand, the Pacific Islands, Tasmania, and Victoria (Australia), have also produced plans calling for substantive government action to be taken to support the expansion of their domestic organic sector. In general, the plans focus on specific goals to increase organic acreage, production, and commerce. The intent of these plans is for nations to capitalize upon their ability to grow the organic sector of their economy and, subsequently, to reduce organic imports.

For example, in the UK, low cost organic imports have inhibited local organic production. In 2002, the country was importing 70% of the organic foods consumed there. In response, their NOAP set the goal of reversing that percentage so that 70% of the country's organic food would be UK- grown by 2012. "When the [UK] plan was published in 2002 only 30% of all organic products were supplied by the UK. By 2005, the Soil Association estimate[s] that approximately 66% of all organic primary produce sold by multiple retailers was sourced in the UK…"[28]

In its initial 2004 NOAP, the EU sought to "ensure the ongoing development of the organic sector in the Community and also, through this development, to facilitate

27 The European Action Plan for Food and Farming, completed in June 2004 lists 21 action items for supporting and improving the EU's organic farming standards and increasing public support for organic. Commission of the European Communities. 2004. European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming. Brussels (June). http://www.orgap.org/european-action-plan.html.

28 Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs. 2002. Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England. http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/organic/policy/actionplan/pdf/actionplan2year.pdf; Organic Action Plan. http://www.orgap.org/documents/action_plan_targets.pdf; Soil Association. Organic Market Report 2006. Bristol, England. http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=UO0%2bMJSy0%2fI%3d&tabid=116 (accessed November 24, 2009).

imports of organic produce from developing countries."[29] Early on, the EU recognized the environmental value of organic and eco-agricultural practices in its plan which states that: "where farmers provide services to the environment beyond the reference level of good agricultural practices, these should be adequately remunerated."[30] Examples of this include payments for the creation of specific habitats for targeted species and support for documented water quality protection.

The EU's 2008 Plan has begun to incorporate organic principles that acknowledge the greater societal benefits of organic agriculture as well. In an EU Seminar in 2008, the French EU Presidency (2008) suggested in a paper that these four objectives should be met by the future EU Common Agriculture Policy (CAP):[31]

- "Ensure food safety, including public health aspects;
- Contribute to global dietary health to participate in world food safety;
- Preserve the equlibrium of rural areas; and
- Participate in the fight against climate change and for environmental improvement."[32]

29 Commission of the European Communities. 2004. file://localhost/about/blank - _ftnref3#_ftnref3European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming, Commission Working Document. (June) Page 3. http://www.orgap.org/european-action-plan.html.

30 Commission of the European Communities.

31 The EU's CAP includes conventional as well as organic agriculture.

32 IFOAM EU Group Press Release, "Experts call for organic farming to be the future model for European agriculture." Brussels/Horotbagy, 19/09/2008

U.S. NATIONAL ORGANIC ACTION PLAN

In this country we still have a lot of work to do to persuade our government to become as vocal as the EU in its endorsement of organic and in its acknowledgment of the multiple benefits of organic for agriculture and society as a whole. This presents a particular challenge in this country, given the strong pressure and influence wielded by the inextricably linked agrochemical and seed industries not to do so. Nonetheless, the times are changing and we believe that the time is ripe to insert our grassroots-derived NOAP into U.S. policy debates about the future of food and agriculture.

Inspired by the growing realization that the grassroots must regain and redirect the vision of organic or risk it being compromised by those without the vision or commitment to organic, the NOAP Project embarked upon a five-year dialogue process. It was designed to facilitate conversations about people's visions and ideas for the future of organic. Frustrated by failed attempts to make U.S. farm policies more sustainable, facilitators of the NOAP Project decided to create their own, proactive, organic action plan similar to national organic action plans developed in the EU and elsewhere. But, in contrast to some government-derived plans, we wanted our plan to come from the grassroots so that we all share in its development and take responsibility for facilitating the Plan's implementation.

The intent of the NOAP process was to:

- Create an expanded organic policy agenda that reflects the broader social, environmental, and health values of the organic movement for the next decade and beyond;
- Formulate proposals for the future growth of U.S. organic food and agriculture and for achieving the associated social and environmental benefits;
- Articulate a set of objectives and benchmarks for tracking and measuring accomplishments; and
- Empower the grassroots to influence public policy by articulating organic food and agriculture's future potential and current contributions to enhance the welfare of society.

To that end, NOAP organizers arranged 11 dialogue sessions across the country (see Appendix A) with 300 people attending the meetings and countless others sending comments via e-mail. At the onset of each session, NOAP participants agreed to put aside their individual and organizational differences and remain open-minded for the sake of enabling a fruitful group process. Although a common agenda set the parameters for discussion at each dialogue session, (Appendix B), participants were free to raise issues or concerns they felt were missing or not emphasized to their satisfaction in the conversation. Heated discussions often ensued as the agenda moved from identifying the positive and negative attributes of the organic sector as it exists today to envisioning in what ways participants would like to see organic food and agriculture grow during the next decade and beyond.

As the NOAP process unfolded, meeting facilitators identified the following shared values that commonly emerged in discussions about the future of organic:

- Stewardship of the natural environment and its regeneration;

- Conservation of healthy soils and the recognition of their central importance in sustaining life;
- Humility about the role of humans in nature and our role as stewards of ecological systems when growing food;
- Protection of the rights of all people to eat and grow organic food;
- Protection of animal welfare in all stages of production;
- Fairness in pricing farm products;
- Preservation of diverse farm ecologies, food crops, animal breeds, seed varieties, scale, workers, and ownership;
- Attainment of U.S. food sovereignty,[33] food security, and food self-sufficiency;

- Respect for historical farmer and indigenous knowledge;
- Respect for cultural, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity; and
- Ethics in organic trade, working conditions, and wages across the supply chain.

Admittedly, tensions exist between organic as a broad social movement and organic as a fast-growing industrial sector. While there are many situations in which the industry and movement share interests and can work together, there are also instances where interests diverge and conflicts arise over the desire to grow the market in the short-term and still maintain organic integrity in the long-term. Such tensions pivot around one central challenge:

How can we facilitate the growth of organic food and agriculture while preserving organic integrity, maintaining diverse farms and agricultural systems, retaining farmer and customer confidence, and furthering broader social and environmental values?

Other concerns related to this central question that repeatedly emerged during dialog sessions include:

- Which strategies are best for growing the market?
- Does mainstreaming organic food allow for the continuation of alternative marketing structures such as direct sales, purchasing and marketing cooperatives, and community supported agriculture?

33 The phrase *food sovereignty,* as coined by the Via Campesina transnational peasant and farm movement, encompasses "the rights of all peoples to define their own food and agriculture policies; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives…" (http://viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php).

- Can these alternative modes of marketing continue to co-exist with more conventional social relations of production once organic becomes a greater percentage of the overall food market?
- How can the livelihoods of small, medium, and family farmers be assured as the market grows?
- How can access to organic food for people of all income levels be assured?
- How can organic food producers continue to be the leaders of "health food" markets and resist the "twinkie-ization" of our organic food system?
- Do the lowest priced organic ingredients drive buying decisions of organic processors, and if so, how do we prevent uncertified, untested, and unregulated imported organic ingredients from becoming the norm at the expense of certified organic, domestically-grown food, and farmers?

These tensions will only be resolved if all stakeholders and civil society work together to hold both the marketplace and the government accountable for maintaining the integrity of organic. The challenge is agreeing to the terms of engagement among these unevenly organized and resourced groups. All players must own up to their need for an ethical code of practice and be willing to equally adhere to behaviors for which they can be held accountable and sanctioned.

The ideal goal is to create a situation where the organic industry and movement clearly define their mutual roles and, together, seek appropriate governmental oversight. This is what was imagined by the organic community as it participated in framing the founding OFPA legislation. Now is the time to renew, re-evaluate, and establish on-going mechanisms to ensure our future.

The NOAP process and document serve a critical need at this point in the evolving history of organic. Our vision for the future of organic includes the establishment of an ethical code of conduct to preserve and protect organic integrity, driven and monitored by the grassroots. To realize this vision, we need a network of community based organizations and stakeholders to provide the glue that brings the information and practices of the grassroots to the policy-making table and to be the center for sharing knowledge and experience, inspiring vigorous debate, building consensus, and acting collaboratively.

The NOAP Drafting Team consolidated the issues into eight major categories:

A. Environmental Stewardship
B. Health
C. Cultural and Social Change
D. Research
E. Education
F. Organic Integrity- Standards, Enforcement, and Compliance
G. Marketplace
H. Organic Transition and Incentives

Then, they drafted objectives and benchmarks for each category, based upon discussions that transpired in each of the dialogue meetings.

The next step in the process was to organize a National NOAP Summit to review and discuss the draft NOAP, to set priorities, and to agree upon benchmarks and timelines for the next decade and beyond. NOAP organizers publicized the Summit meeting, held in LaCrosse, Wisconsin (February 25-26, 2009), and circulated the Draft NOAP to all of its networks. We raised funds to subsidize attendance at the Summit so that no one would be excluded because of financial constraints. In preparation for the meeting, Summit participants were asked to read the *Draft NOAP Plan* and be prepared to discuss the objectives and benchmarks distilled from the dialogue meetings.

SMART Objectives

⇨ **S**pecific:
Objectives should be precise and concrete enough not to be open to varying interpretations.

⇨ **M**easurable:
Objectives should define a desired future state in measurable terms, so that it is possible to verify whether the objective has been achieved or not. Such objectives are either quantified or based on a combination of description and scoring scales.

⇨ **A**chievable:
If objectives and target levels are to influence behavior, they must be accepted, understood and interpreted similarly by all who are expected to take responsibility for achieving them.

⇨ **R**ealistic:
Objectives and targets should be ambitious while realistic – setting an objective that only reflects the current level of achievement is not useful.

⇨ **T**ime-dependent:
Objectives and target levels remain vague if they are not related to a fixed date or time period.

The EU "ORGAP" Project [European Action Plan for organic food and farming – Development of criteria and evaluation procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture] summarized a common framework for evaluating objectives – making sure that objectives should be SMART – [ORGAP, No. CT-2005-006591]

Summit organizers facilitated discussions to refine, evaluate, and build agreement for prioritized objectives that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely (See SMART Objectives). Participants divided into small groups, organized under the eight categories, and by the end of the first day each group posted its top ten objectives for review, comment, and discussion. On the second day, groups further refined their objectives and participants voted for their five top objectives in each category.

Participants agreed that actions to advance organic food and agriculture should not solely be limited to targeting the federal government, but should also be directed towards fortifying and expanding the foundation of organic at the state and local levels of government and in the marketplace. In addition, objectives, benchmarks,

and actions outlined in our recommendations represent the range of actions that can be taken by a variety of stakeholders in the organic community.

A signature element of the NOAP Project has been to keep the conversation going and to keep the NOAP open to refinement. We agreed to continue our democratic process during periodic evaluations of the NOAP and to expand and strengthen our collaborations with diverse stakeholders in the organic movement. It is essential that we periodically review the progress of NOAP implementation to ascertain where actions, objectives, or benchmarks may need to be re-adjusted.[34]

NOAP FINDINGS

At the beginning of each NOAP regional dialogue, we posed key questions to assess the current state of organic, using a variation of the "SWOT" analysis (strengths; weaknesses; opportunities; threats) to facilitate meaningful discussions:

- What is working with organic?
- What are the existing challenges or problems?
- What are the specific challenges in a changing and growing the marketplace?
- What are the specific challenges of reinventing regional organic food systems?
- What federal reforms are needed?
- What are the best ways to strengthen farmer and consumer voices?

Each dialogue session provided a full brainstorming opportunity and led to discussions aimed at defining specific organic challenges and opportunities.

The following sections synthesize the rich conversations that took place at the dialogues and summit and summarize the major successes, challenges, and opportunities that lie ahead.

What Is Working With Organic?

Organic agriculture has maintained impressive domestic and international growth in terms of total acres, sales, supply, consumer demand, public awareness, and number of farms and farmers. It also has received notable institutional recognition and support from businesses, government, universities, the medical profession, and civil society. The ever-widening range of benefits, successes, and promising new business opportunities in organic are also rapidly expanding in many different ways and in multiple directions. These advancements range from improved health to increased social justice; from protection of soil and water quality to biodiversity enhancement; from the mitigation of global warming impacts to addressing the energy crisis; from raising consumer awareness about organic to the incorporation of organic education into school curricula, and from all sectors of civil society from the local to the international.

Organic agriculture has also reached a major international milestone as an accepted system of agriculture. It is recognized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture

34 In the UK, the DEFRA produced a report called "Two Years On" evaluating the achievements reached, and setting benchmarks for the future. DEFRA, 2004. *Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England: Two Years On*. http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/organic/policy/actionplan/pdf/actionplan2year.pdf.

Organization (FAO) as an important contributor to addressing world hunger and local food security challenges by increasing farm yields and ensuring the long-term sustainability of essential community resources.[35]

Organic production methods are suitable for all types of farms regardless of scale or diversity of crops and animals. Whether certified or not, organic production systems decrease dependence on petroleum-based products and for farm inputs produced offsite.

Improvements in certification processes and compliance capacities have increased consumer confidence, raised organic farmer status, provided a basis for research funding, and helped expose more potential customers to organic products. Political arenas have endowed organic with increased political clout and recognition, as exemplified by inclusion of significant organic provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill.

There has also been notable growth and development in the organic infrastructure and in economic opportunities to service the production sector. This is demonstrated by the emergence and expansion of such diverse groups as the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), Organic Trade Association (OTA), National Organic Coalition (NOC), National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF), International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA), Organic Consumers Association (OCA), Cornucopia Institute, Organic Center, Congressional Organic Caucus, Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA), National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP), and eOrganic. These groups and many others, including state and regional organic farmer, consumer, and environmental sustainable food, and agriculture organizations, research institutes and certification agencies, provide information and services to meet the ever-expanding demand for information to support organic farmers, markets, and their customers.

The availability of organic food has expanded, along with the quality, quantity, variety, and access to organic foods. There has been major growth in the scope of organic with the development of non-food and non-farm organic products and services (e.g. personal care products, pet food, and landscaping).

As organic agriculture is mainstreamed in the marketplace, it affords greater access to a greater diversity and number of consumers, and a greater variety of marketing opportunities for producers. For example, organic dairy products serve as a gateway to organic food for new mothers, opening up the door for them to purchase additional organic products.

The health benefits of organic production are now being more widely researched, identified, and recognized. Organic foods have been shown to have significantly

35 Sligh, Michael and Carolyn Christman. 2007. Issues Paper: Organic Agriculture and Access to Food. *Rural Advancement Foundation International.* Presented at the international conference on organic agriculture and food security, May 3-5, at the Food and Agriculture Organization in Italy. ftp://ftp.fao.org/paia/organicag/ofs/OFS-2007-2.pdf.

lower levels of pesticide residues, higher levels of nutrients, and improved taste and nutrition when compared with non-organic foods. Expanding educational outreach to families, nutritionists, and health care providers is seen as crucial, due to the many recognized health and developmental benefits of organic food for children as well as adults. [36]

There is widespread recognition of the benefits of organic agriculture for increased soil organic matter, carbon sequestration, moisture retention, and drought tolerance. Organic is now being recognized as a 'climate and environmentally friendly' way to farm. Emerging research demonstrates that organic systems also protect water quality and filter pollutants before they reach surface and ground waters.[37]

Farmers are attracted to organic farming because it allows them to be good stewards of their land, not only for themselves but also for those who will follow them. Organic agriculture offers farmers the tools and knowledge needed to enhance crop yields, worker health, and animal welfare while preserving the environmental quality and ecosystems where they farm.

Improved quality of life for farmers, workers, their families, and rural communities, as well as increased prices and the promise of additional market-based solutions to social justice and animal welfare concerns, are hopeful signs that the organic sector can provide much needed market protections for farmers and workers.

There is an emerging recognition of the broad-based societal contributions of organic production, including a growing awareness that organic agriculture contributes to an increased sense of community and a re-kindling of basic social values, including a better understanding of where our food comes from. This leads to the restoration of closer farmer/buyer relationships and the development of creative new market chains, enabling U.S. organic farmers to remain profitable in the face of global sourcing. Because of these new opportunities, organic agriculture helps draw both new and younger farmers either back to family lands or as new entrants into agriculture from suburban, urban, immigrant, and non-agricultural backgrounds.

Many view the growth of organic agriculture as a hopeful contribution to restoring the culture and values that have been lost due to the rapid industrialization of conventional agriculture. Organic contributes to a return to a systems approach to agricultural production and to a critical shift from reductionism to holistic problem solving in agriculture.

Organic production is attractive to agriculture researchers who are looking to expand the scope of their research from input-based studies to more long-term, applied

36 See the work of the Organic Center (www.organiccenter.org)
37 See the work of the Rodale Institute (www.rodaleinstitute.org)

research that allows them to examine natural systems and use their findings for the improvement of crop and livestock production, yields, and biodiversity conservation.

Increasing consumer demand for organic foods and the subsequent increase in the presence of organic products in the marketplace has shown that regional organic producers can supply a significant portion of the food needs of local communities. This includes everything from fresh and processed fruits and vegetables to grains, beans, meats and dairy products. Organic consumers want to know more about the farmers who grow their food and local, farm-to-consumer direct marketing schemes allow for the building of bridges of knowledge and understanding between producers and consumers.

Finally, organic agriculture builds upon the historic contribution of entrepreneurial farmers who have led the charge to grow and sustain the U.S. economy and its diverse immigrant population, regardless of existing economic conditions.

What Is Not Working?

Many of the concerns about the state of the organic sector mirror the successes and progress highlighted in the previous section. Concerns about the "industrialization" and "mainstreaming" of organic agriculture, and the pressures and threats from the marketplace and government to the integrity of the organic label, were strongly expressed by NOAP participants. Examples include large confinement dairies being certified as organic, the Congressional rider allowing "organic" chickens to be fed non-organic feed (which was subsequently overturned before being implemented), and the overall lack of consistent NOP oversight, compliance, and enforcement all illustrate recent and on-going threats to organic integrity and consumer confidence.

Questions regarding how close we are coming to a "tipping point" where organic will no longer be viewed as the "gold standard" of the food system are now being openly discussed, with the media increasingly willing to challenge organic food's superiority. The development and implementation of a functioning organic system as envisioned in OFPA is sometimes viewed as an impossible achievement despite the recognition that this is the only way to truly have vibrant organic farms where weeds, pests, and diseases are well managed and nutrient-dense foods are produced. The lack of practical, transparent, and participatory mechanisms to continually improve OFPA and NOP regulations, and to enforce the law, represent major challenges and needs.

The NOP, as the only federally mandated accreditation body for organic, has yet to produce an accreditation manual for organic inspectors, implement the required peer review of the NOP, or address the long list of outstanding NOSB recommendations. Moreover, the NOP, as an accreditor, is not in compliance with internationally accepted accreditation norms, such as 1SO 17011. These deficiencies are all indicative of growing pains, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and lack of political will.

Despite progress made in the 2008 Farm Bill, the overall low level of federal support for organic agriculture and the lack of federal recognition of the multiple benefits of organic production to health, environment, and society remain major barriers to sustained growth. In fact the continued resistance of the government, both within and outside USDA, to articulate any vision for the growth of organic beyond the

marketplace or to acknowledge any advantage of organic for the public good are major stumbling blocks to significant organic policy advancements. In U.S. government parlance, organic must never be seen as better than conventional agriculture—it is only a "niche market."

Concerns about farmer and farmworker rights, migrant labor, changing organic contracts, and farmer and worker wages and benefits are now being challenged. The need to find ways to institutionalize fair prices, wages and benefits; to build bridges with the worker community, and to address scale, ownership, and control of the organic sector are all viewed as critical to the long-term success and sustainability of organic agriculture.

Organic market concentration and corporate appointments to the NOSB represent new concerns for civil society and organic supporters.

The lack of continuous quality improvements in organic standards and the difficulties in tightening federal organic regulations remain common concerns. So does the fear of organic becoming an "input substitution" approach, where farmers and processors receive certification to the lowest enforceable standard.

People in all dialogue sessions, as well as significant numbers of those who submitted written comments, underscored the problems of an under-funded and under-staffed NOP, its poor enforcement record, and the lack of clarity in standards development. The failure of the NOP to write a pasture standard, for example, has the potential to destroy the integrity of the organic label. While these issues may eventually be addressed by the current Administration, they have the potential to limit the success of the organic industry.

Start-up costs and access to markets for small and medium-sized organic farmers and the need for additional technical assistance and education for new farmers curtails organic expansion. There is a strong need for knowledgeable, fully-funded, and empowered organic extension specialists who are organic farmers, non-government experts, or others with specific organic knowledge. This has been repeatedly identified as a central component of the organic infrastructure that must be added to facilitate farmer conversion to organic.

An urgent need also exists for the development of strategies to address and balance the pressures between market/pull and supply/push and the unmet national need to reinvent our regional food systems and infrastructure. Concerns about unfair organic imports and trade are also increasingly heard.

The public misconception that organic food fills a "niche market" limits organic demand and reinforces the myth that it is available only to those who can afford high food prices. This contributes to blocking access to organic foods by people of all income levels, compounding the injustice of the current *cheap food* system.

Failure to adequately address animal welfare and food safety concerns or to respond to the growing number of "eco-labels" and "buy-local" campaigns also poses major challenges for the organic community and government regulators. The lack of sophisticated measurements and standards for soil quality, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration has increased the push for private "eco-labels" and has become a barrier to increased support for certified organic production.

The perennial call for a research system that is more participatory, and meets farmers' needs and demands to expand the current scope of organic standards remains as compelling as ever. There is also the broad-based concern that the absence of holistic or systems research leads toward more "input substitution."

An absence of an organized political base for organic farmers is a growing concern and so is the undue influence and dominance of agribusiness in policy debates and decisions about agriculture.

GMO contamination and threats to our seed and food supply, along with the need for real GMO liability mechanisms, remain major threats to the future of organic foods and markets.

Many view USDA's regulation that prohibits organic farmers from sitting on their own organic certification boards as having "decapitated" organic farmers and stifled their meaningful participation in the organic regulatory process. This has led to the loss of an organized organic farmers' voice, despite the fact that it was the organic farmers themselves who launched and developed many of the organic certification programs that currently exist.

Finally, establishing full-cost accounting systems to better quantify and promote the real benefits of organic agriculture, and to highlight the real costs associated with so-called "cheap foods," stands out as a major challenge with great potential payback.

NOAP CONCLUSIONS

Organic agriculture provides multiple benefits to society at this critical moment when solutions to address the global environmental and economic crises are desperately needed. One resounding conclusion that emerged from the NOAP process is that the U.S. government must no longer delay its support for organic agriculture and in its recognition of organic's contributions to addressing the major health, environmental, and social challenges facing the world today. The United States remains the last developed country to make a public commitment to organic and the time is ripe to do so now under the Obama Administration.

Participants in the NOAP process urge the government to take immediate action to create an expanded organic policy agenda that enhances the broad environmental, social, health, and economic benefits of organic agriculture. We call upon the government to use the recommendations contained in this NOAP as a guide for the development of a broader framework for government policies that support the growth and improvement of organic food and agriculture systems. This framework will help advance organic policy beyond narrow market-based goals to include incentive programs for transitioning to organic, and providing technical assistance, research, and other programs aimed at maximizing organic's multiple benefits.

"Organic Proves there is an agriculture beyond the industrial model." *Washington, DC Dialogue Meeting, 2007*

The outcome of the NOAP process was intended to inspire action at the state level as well by providing compelling arguments and policy recommendations to use to influence state agencies and legislators to take a lead in supporting organic food and agriculture expansion. Through the development of State Organic Action Plans (SOAPs), local and regional initiatives can be developed to create innovative mechanisms for growing both the availability and accessibility of organic products. Central to that effort is the creation of organic food procurement programs at public and private institutions and the planting of gardens in public and private spaces to enhance community food security. In addition, the marketplace itself can be encouraged to respond to consumer demands for "better" organic with the incorporation of social values that provide both higher integrity and greater accessibility to organic foods.

As organic agriculture expands and matures, decisions about what constitutes organic must be decided by the federal government with meaningful and transparent input from state and local governments and all sectors of the organic community. The founding organic legislation, OFPA, called for a public/private partnership between government and the broader organic community and, to that end, it is imperative that we all remain active as the market expands and more people produce and consume organic foods. Our ongoing NOAP Project will continue to engage the grassroots in discussions and reassessments of organic policy, values, and markets and to create opportunities for the periodic review of the government's performance with an eye towards improving organic regulations, statutes, and policies.

KEY NOAP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Key NOAP Policy Recommendations

Environmental Stewardship

In acknowledging the environmental value of organic production, we call upon the government to enhance the environmental value of organic agriculture and to protect existing organic operations from contamination.

Organic agriculture contributes to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, sequesters significant amounts of carbon, enhances biodiversity conservation and watershed health, and reduces toxic pesticide use, exposure, and the associated adverse health effects. To ensure that these positive effects are not lessened, it is imperative that USDA issue a policy statement acknowledging the importance of the environmental benefits of organic and its commitment to take aggressive action to ensure organic agriculture is protected from GMO and pesticide contamination. The Polluter Pays Principle should serve as the foundation for establishing liability and responsibility for environmental damages. This should be based on a full accounting of damage, cleanup, and compensation for harm to the environment and organic operations.

The NOP must be consulted on all federal permit applications for the outdoor release of novel materials and the production of substances using novel technologies including, GMOs, nanomaterials, animal cloning, and transgenic animal production. This necessitates conducting a full environmental and economic impact assessment, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that no harm occurs to organic farmers, public health or the continued growth of organic markets.

Health

Organic positively contributes to health both in terms of its system of agricultural production and in terms of the quality of food produced. The inherent safety of food produced without the use of harmful, synthetic agrochemicals in conjunction with the required documentation of the food handling process mandated in organic systems means that farm workers, consumers, and the communities where organic food is grown are protected in ways that are not afforded by the conventional food industry.

Scientific research has repeatedly shown that food without synthetic pesticide and herbicide residues is healthier particularly for the cognitive and physical development of children. Food and agriculture policies that include recognition of this aspect of food safety must be established to help secure our nation's safe food supply. This requires product labeling and the full disclosure of ingredients and production methods on ingredient labels. It is imperative that the government adopt the precautionary approach when evaluating the approval of all new and novel techniques used in food production and all new and novel food products. This includes conducting a comprehensive health, environmental, and economic assessment of potential impacts across the commodity chain. Organic agriculture's contributions to improved public health must be thoroughly researched and rewarded.

Cultural and Social Change

From the beginning, organic regulations set a high bar for advancing cultural and social values in agricultural production. We propose a return to this foundation by re-dedicating organic to an ethical food and agriculture system that honors the values of fairness and basic rights. Fairness includes fair trade; fair pricing (and contracts); fair access to land (and credit), and fair access to quality, organic food and seeds. These basic rights also encompass the rights of all people to follow their our own cultural and traditional knowledge systems and the rights of farmers and farmworkers to have an empowered voice in the continued improvement of an ethical food system. This should apply directly to both domestic and foreign agricultural policies with the recognition of organic agriculture's contributions to local food security and the alleviation of hunger both nationally and internationally.

Education

The lack of resources devoted to formal and informal education on organic agriculture and the creation of career opportunities in organic creates a formidable barrier to the expansion of organic opportunities. It limits the ability of farmers, researchers, nutritionists, and others to increase their knowledge about food systems, and inhibits land grant universities from generating original research on organic systems. This dearth of organic education also stifles the training of individuals for careers in organic agriculture extension services, government agricultural agencies such as USDA, and organic on-farm research. In the absence of both sound scientific, technical, and practical information, it is difficult to make significant advancements in organic food and agriculture. Our educational systems need to prioritize teaching and training new farmers and farm workers how to be successful organic growers.

Research

The historic lack of fairness and balance in federal funding of research for organic systems has created a serious backlog in needed research on agricultural systems that are beneficial to both the expansion of organic agriculture and to the greater incorporation of ecological/organic methods for all agricultural systems (e.g., the ability to increase soil organic matter, release appropriate public cultivars, and reduce the use of toxic inputs). Research is urgently needed to examine the multiple benefits of organic production and the inherent risks posed by untested new and novel technologies when released to organic systems. A comprehensive assessment of the potential socioeconomic and environmental impacts on organic systems and markets must be conducted as a prerequisite to evaluating the risks of introducing new, novel, and emerging technologies, (e.g., pesticides, GMOs, animal cloning, nano-technology) into the marketplace. Federal research dollars allocated for organic must be proportional to its current and future overall benefits to society. This will require a major increase in federal funding commitments to organic research with a new focus on participatory, multi-disciplinary, and collaborative approaches, that draw on the experience of seasoned organic researchers and farmers.

Funding for agriculture research projects must be assessed in terms of the project's demonstrated contributions to moving society towards more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable agricultural production systems. All USDA agencies and their personnel must continue to receive ongoing training to increase their understanding of the conservation and economic benefits of organic systems and to facilitate the incorporation of organic systems knowledge into the delivery of agricultural services.

Organic Integrity

Organic represents significantly more than a USDA marketing label. Therefore it is imperative that the label maintain its integrity and advance the values that underpin the NOAP. Results from NOAP dialogues around the country call for improvements in the functioning of the NOP, from its compliance with international accreditation practices to more effective leadership and oversight. To that end, consistent development and transparent enforcement of standards must be implemented and strict sanctions brought to bear on those who violate the law.

Marketplace

The time has come to take advantage of existing and future U.S. market demand for organic and to expand U.S. organic production. To do so requires reducing governmental barriers to organic market growth (e.g. lack of local processing), increasing research to facilitate this growth (e.g. localized seed production), taking advantage of federal programs to support a U.S. organic market growth goal, and tracking U.S. imports of organic foods. National and regional goals to maximize local organic production to meet local organic demand should be established as part of any USDA marketing and promotion of regional food system initiatives. New mechanisms must be created and/or recognized to ensure the ongoing sustainability and fairness of the organic marketplace for farmers and all food system workers.

Organic Transition and Incentives

To expand organic agriculture, there must be a broad program of support for farmers and other land managers who choose to transition to organic methods. This includes government and market growth stimulation of organic agricultural products such as feed, seeds, and breeds, so that this growth is sustainable in both supply and demand. Such growth must include USDA support for, and access to, untapped institutional markets such as public schools, private companies, health institutions, and government agencies.

NOAP recommendations and benchmarks must be used as a basis for evaluating existing USDA policies, for establishing new benchmarks, and as a roadmap for inclusion in future USDA policies. This should be applied to all areas of USDA responsibilities including research, education, marketing, and regulatory functions for both domestic and foreign arenas.

Government Incorporation of this NOAP

We call upon USDA to immediately implement the following short-term actions:

- Designate a point person and/or organic policy coordinator within the Secretary of Agriculture's office to ensure follow-through and ongoing coordination and the solicitation of public input and feedback.
- Establish and fully fund a cross-agency organic coordination hub whose role will be to facilitate the integration of these NOAP recommendations into government policies. The integration process must include broad-based leadership from all organic stakeholders whose interests are reflected in the *Key NOAP Policy Recommendations.* The integration process must also include a mechanism for updating OFPA through a participatory and transparent review, analysis, debate, and adoption process.
- Provide resources to develop SOAPs and to ensure full inclusion of organic stakeholders into all USDA-funded local and regional organic food system initiatives and research projects. This includes encouraging expansion of the *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Program,* recently initiated by USDA, which promises to mobilize new resources for local organic production improvements and expansion.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

By focusing on the strategic vision embodied in NOAP, grassroots energy can mobilize the government and its resources to strengthen and enhance organic.

- Organize your local or statewide organic-minded organizations to develop a State Organic Action Plan (SOAP) designed to maximize local consumption of local organic foods.
- Attend your local school board meetings and push for local and organic foods in the schools (meats, milk, vegetables, grains).
- Become a member of your local USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) county or local committee, or the NRCS State Technical Committee to encourage organic agriculture and conservation in your region.
- Learn who are your local, state and federal representatives. Attend and speak at their listening sessions, visit their offices, and call and write them letters specifically addressing issues that promote the organic agriculture agenda.
- Join citizen advisory boards of universities, their extension agencies, community and technical colleges and primary education institutions where you can promote the NOAP agenda. Encourage and participate in dialogue – it can be a rewarding experience and truly make a difference. You may be surprised how much common ground there is between organic advocates and people from diverse political and social backgrounds.
- Financially support other individuals and organizations doing this work and offer your ideas when brainstorming about how the various NOAP objectives can be implemented both locally and nationally.
- Keep in touch to share your experiences and help us understand the local, regional, and state resources that are available, how you influence federal policies and how we can best utilize existing federal programs.
- Evaluate progress on reaching NOAP objectives and benchmarks (2011).
- Become engaged in the devlopment of the next Farm Bill in 2012.

Above, NOAP Summit, February 2009

NATIONAL ORGANIC ACTION PLAN GRASSROOTS AGENDA

GOAL:

To establish organic as the foundation for U.S. food and agriculture production systems.

VALUES:

- Stewardship of the natural environment and its regeneration;
- Conservation of healthy soils and the recognition of their central importance in sustaining life;
- Humility about the role of humans in nature and our role as stewards of ecological systems when growing food;
- Protection of the rights of all people to eat and grow organic food;
- Protection of animal welfare in all stages of production;
- Fairness in pricing farm products;
- Preservation of diverse farm ecologies, food, animal and seed varieties, scale, workers, and ownership;
- Attainment of U.S. food sovereignty and food self-sufficiency;
- Respect for traditional farmer and indigenous knowledge;
- Respect for cultural, ethnic, gender and geographic diversity; and
- Ethics in organic trade, working conditions, and wages across the commodity chain.

PRINCIPLES:

- Maintain and continuously improve organic quality and integrity;
- Increase U.S. organic production by supporting farm and market diversity;
- Ensure a fair marketplace for small, medium-sized, and family farmers and workers;
- Maximize U.S. organic production potential by increasing the U.S.-produced share of organic products in the domestic marketplace;
- Safeguard the environment and conserve biodiversity;
- Enhance access to healthy, organically grown, fresh food for all people of all income levels; and
- Move society towards more socially just and humane food and agricultural production systems.

The remainder of this document outlines recommended objectives, actions, benchmarks, and timelines for advancing our goal. Our recommendations do not target any one group or agency but rather they represent the range of actions to be taken by a variety of stakeholders in the organic community. A signature element of the NOAP Project is that we will open the NOAP for discussion and refinement within the next five years. Essential to this effort is a process to conduct periodic evaluations of the implementation of NOAP recommendations and to stimulate action on benchmarks that are either failing to be achieved or where certain objectives and/or benchmarks may need to be re-adjusted.

NOAP – PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS

A. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The U.S. government remains one of the last of the industrialized countries to recognize the "public goods" delivered by organic agriculture. The environmental and public health values of organic production are often the values understood most clearly by the public in and outside of the organic community, yet they have not been comprehensively recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Worldwide, nearly every government with any focus on organic agriculture lays out the environmental values of organic alongside its marketplace value, and most distinguish organic farmers' "services to the environment" as major public contributions beyond what the organic farmers may receive in the marketplace. Governments often acknowledge the need to pay for or reward those services as public goods delivered.

As increasing amounts of data demonstrate the quantifiable, long-term environmental benefits of organic agriculture, as well as its unique ability to mitigate some of the negative effects of global climate change, the U.S. government needs to acknowledge and embrace these benefits. In fact, organic agriculture needs to be encouraged and advanced as an environmental benefit.

In the development of goals, mechanisms, and benchmarks during the dialogues and at the Summit, the environmental category spurred the deepest and broadest discussion and detail. Implementation will require coordinated efforts often with unlikely partners and through diverse public agencies, to better define the issues, delineate the values, and formulate the strategies needed to incorporate these values into both marketplace rewards and governmental policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Global Climate Change: Acknowledge the positive effects of organic agriculture in mitigating global climate change by using and measuring organic practices.
   a. Use organic practices to contribute to U.S. greenhouse gas emission reductions to 350 ppm by 2020.
   b. Measure carbon sequestration contributions from organic production and increase carbon sequestration through organic farming, organic forest management, and increases in grassland and pasture by 2012.
   c. Establish organic food chain energy audits with goals of measuring and balancing energy produced vs. energy consumed by 2020.
   d. Establish organic farmer carbon credit incentives and rewards by 2012.
2. GMO Contamination: Protect organic farms from GMO contamination.
   a. Adopt legislation that protects organic farms by shifting buffer responsibility and liability for GMO contamination to manufacturers and/or patent–holders, to be implemented by 2012.
   b. Provide public funding for scientific studies on contamination potential and consequences of GMOs by 2012.
   c. Establish a national GMO reporting system by 2012.
3. Polluter-Pays Principle:
   a. Establish the polluter-pays principle as federal policy by instituting taxes on synthetic fertilizers, GMOs, xeno-biotics, and other synthetic substances by 2020.
   b. Use proceeds from these taxes to fund organic research and market incentive programs by 2018, replicating the successful Danish program.
   c. Establish a national pesticide and synthetic fertilizer reporting system by 2012.
   d. Establish a measurable pesticide and synthetic fertilizer reduction goal: beginning in 2013 a reduction of 5% per year.

4. Biodiversity: Address the biodiversity crisis by establishing organic agriculture as a leading strategy to promote biodiversity conversion on the farm and the larger landscape by 2020.
   a. Track by measuring key biodiversity indicators such as seed and livestock breed variety, native populations diversity, and impacts to native species and ecosystems.
   b. Create a baseline to track and increase biological system health on organic farms and aquatic systems by establishing measurements of biodiversity (such as seeds and breeds variety, soil microbes, beneficial insects, pollinators, birds, and wild fish populations), habitats, ecosystems, watersheds, and foodsheds on the local and regional levels by 2020.

5. Watershed Health: Track and improve health in the nation's watersheds.
   a. Target 10% of nation's environmentally sensitive watersheds by converting farms to organic by 2015.
   b. Reduce runoff into rivers and protect groundwater quality through a significant increase in organic farming plus reduction of chemical use in municipal areas by 2015.

Additional Priorities and Benchmarks:

* Sustainability and Life Cycle Analysis: Establish baselines with sustainability and life cycle analysis targets by 2015 for:
  - Packaging
  - Distribution
  - Transportation, food miles, and costs of transport
  - Energy use – electric, water, manufacturing
  - Recycling of agricultural and packing plastics

* Soil Health: Identify soil health measures for organic systems, including a soil food web health measurement to use as index. Include existing soil assessments (e.g., NRCS, ARS soil tilth lab, etc.) for organic farm plans by 2012.

"Organic as 'climate friendly' farming" *California Dialogue meeting, 2007*

* Nitrogen: Track the amount of nitrogen fixed from organic techniques and track the reduction and application of synthetic nitrogen, as organic farming expands its contributions to the environment by 2020.

* Land Use Planning: Implement land use planning techniques that place high value on agricultural lands for organic use in all regions and create buffer zones around metro areas by 2012.

* Marketplace Incentives: Implement marketplace incentives for the eco-system "services" and stewardship practices of organic production by 2020.

* Conservation Stewardship Program: Implement enhanced farm payments by assigning points to raise organic farmer applications, in recognition of the environmental benefits delivered by organic management practices.

* Conservation Set-Asides: Move conservation set-aside lands, such as land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program, into working organic agricultural lands through 2010, except when marginal land is better suited as a permanent set-aside.

* Composting: Create municipal green waste composting programs in all major cities and identify best management practices to be implemented by 2015.

* Mitigation Plans: Establish mitigation, monitoring, and maintenance plans for projects that interfere with organic certification and/or organic plans (such as pipelines, transmission lines, and road construction) for all states by 2012.

B. HEALTH

Organic contributes to health in both its agricultural production practices as well as in the actual food that is produced. The inherent safety of food that is produced without harmful chemicals, in a systematically traceable system, means that both farm workers and consumers are protected in a manner that does not exist in the rest of the food supply.

In addition, study after study proves that food without residues of synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides and herbicides, is necessary for the healthy development of our children. Therefore, policies must be put in place to recognize and advance this broadened definition of food safety, including full product labeling disclosure of ingredients and methods of production, as well as instituting the precautionary principle for new and novel production techniques. Finally, full cost accounting criteria should be instituted to provide rewards for organic agriculture's contributions to improved public health.

HEALTH OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Full Cost-Benefit Accounting: Change farm policy so it is based on full cost-benefit accounting including rewards/incentives for activities that improve the public health, environment, and community (e.g. organic production).
    a. Policy changes on Congressional and Administrative levels should include:
        i. an increase in conservation funding by 2012,
        ii. an increase in the number of transitioning/beginning farmers by 2012,
        iii. an increase in funding for environmental services (carbon /water protection) by 2012, and
        iv. inclusion of full cost-benefit language in Farm Bill 2012.
    b. Provide organic food in Senate, House and USDA cafeterias by 2012.
    c. Surgeon General proclamation to publicly recognize the positive contributions of organic food to public health and safety by 2015.

2. Precautionary Principle: Use the precautionary principle in government regulatory agencies by 2020.
    a. Reverse the burden of proof in research by using long term studies, considering risks of vulnerable populations, and evaluating cumulative exposures.
    b. Health research should include evaluation of technologies such as: antibiotics, nanotechnology, GMOs, cloning, hormones, pesticides, and packaging.

3. Food Safety: Food safety regulation should include appropriate strategies for diverse systems (e.g., organic) and diverse scales of operations by 2010.
    a. Evaluate all risk factors in food and agriculture systems, including pesticide residues in food and soil, transgenic organisms, water contamination, and microbial contamination -- (e.g., organic vs. conventional)
    b. Combine required food safety certifications with organic certification by 2010.
    c. Develop common sense/ scale-appropriate food safety plans:
        i. develop materials/resources,
        ii. train people and develop infrastructure by 2010, and
        iii. have certification process in place by 2011
        iv. participate in debates with Congress, agencies, Trade Associations, Industry
    d. Design proactive proposals.

4. Full Disclosure: Food labels should have full disclosure of ingredients, methods of production (including GMOs) and processing by 2020.
    a. Protect rBGH-free labeling.
    b. Require GMO labeling by 2012.

5. Health Research: Commit federal research dollars to support ongoing public studies on the nutritional, health, and safety benefits of organic production and consumption by 2012.
   a. Include on-farm research with organic farmers.
   b. Ensure transparency in both the research development process, and the results.
   c. Include health professionals.

"Access to good food is limited to those who can afford it."

Georgia Dialogue meeting, 2008

C. CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

From its beginnings, organic has held a high bar for cultural and social values. We propose a return to this foundation in the re-dedication to an ethical food and agricultural system that honors the values of fairness and basic rights. Fairness includes fair-trade; fair pricing (and contracts); fair access to land (and credit); and fair access to quality, organic food. These Basic Rights include the rights to food and land, but also encompass the right to our own cultural and traditional knowledge systems, and the rights of farmers and farmworkers to have an empowered voice in an ethical food system. This should apply directly to both domestic and all U.S. foreign agriculture policies, especially recognizing organic agriculture's contributions to local food security and the alleviation of hunger.

A variety of mechanisms will be needed in order to achieve these goals. Some mechanisms are clearly definable, while some are more difficult to quantify. Regardless, all will need ongoing assessment to evaluate the best mechanisms for success.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Fair Trade: Lay the basis for incorporating fair trade principles into organic standards on the federal level.
    a. Support legislation that improves workers' rights, especially the rights of farmworkers and immigrants, and align with the labor and immigrant rights movements.
    b. Establish mechanisms for setting fair pricing for food:
        i. The price to the farmer and throughout the organic food chain must cover the true costs of production;
        ii. Include living wages and benefits for farmers, all labor on the farm, and processing, distribution and retail sectors; and
        iii. Include production costs and maintenance of the farm in pricing structures (including continuing education for farmer and staff.)
    c. Measure the movement toward fair pricing and improved benefits for farmers and food system workers. Establish baselines by 2010.
    d. Establish an ethical code of conduct to facilitate fair pricing as a cultural norm of the marketplace.
    e. Strengthen fair contract legislation by 2010, including a framework for negotiations between farmers and buyers.
    f. Compel the Department of Justice to enforce laws against excessive monopolization of markets through agricultural mergers and acquisitions in the organic sector. Call for hearings by 2010.

"We need to grow cultural crops – crops our communities are used to eating."

Georgia Dialogue meeting, 2008

2. Right to Food: Commit to policies that ensure fair (organic) food access for all.
    a. Quantify the diversity of race, ethnicity, and classes of people growing and buying organic foods by 2010.
    b. Create baseline data to measure fair access. Track diversity of organic enterprises in terms of scale and ownership by 2012.
3. Organic Values: Educate about the broader values of organic agriculture.
    a. Target community understanding to include our educational system, agricultural educators, state and local agricultural agencies, farmers and consumers.

4. National Organic Farming and Gardening Association: Create a National Organic Farming and Gardening Association.
   a. Federate the existing state and regional organizations, with regional chapters by 2012.
   b. The National Organic Farmers Association will rekindle the process of organic standards creation in the public arena, provide pressure for continuous innovation and improvement, and lobby on behalf of the organic movement.
5. Traditional Knowledge: Preserve traditional agricultural practices and indigenous/cultural knowledge.
   a. Create policies that support food and seeds of native and minority cultures.
   b. Support immigrant and underserved communities.
      i. Implement Small Farm Commission policy goals by 2012.
      ii. Utilize the USDA office of Advocacy and Outreach.
6. Land and Credit Access: Improve access to land and credit.
   a. Encourage long term tenure through private ownership, community ownership, or land trusts that preserve agricultural lands and encourage sustainable organic production.
   b. Establish a partnership of NGOs, universities, government agencies, and others to implement this by 2015.

D. RESEARCH

The historic lack of fairness and balance in the funding of federal research dollars for organic systems has created a serious backlog of needed research of agricultural systems that are beneficial to both the expansion of organic agriculture and to the greater incorporation of ecological/organic methods in all agricultural systems (e.g., the ability to increase soil organic matter, release appropriate public cultivars; and reduce the use of toxic inputs). Research is urgently needed to examine the multiple benefits of organic production and to understand the inherent risks that new and novel technologies present to organic agriculture.[1]

The federal research structure must appropriate research dollars for organic systems proportional to its current and future overall benefits to society. This will require a major increase in federal resource commitments to organic research with a new focus on participatory, multi-disciplinary, and collaborative approaches.

In addition, the potential socioeconomic and environmental impacts on organic systems and markets must be incorporated as a prerequisite in the pre-commercialization risk assessment and evaluation of new and emerging technologies, (e.g. pesticides, GMOs, animal cloning, and nano-technology).

Finally, all agricultural research funding should be evaluated for its demonstrated contributions towards more sustainable agricultural production[2] *(environmental and economic). Additionally, all USDA agencies and their personnel must continue to receive ongoing training in the conservation and economic benefits of organic systems so organic production is fully incorporated into agricultural service delivery.*

---

[1] The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) tracks government funded research of organic and its 2007 National Organic Research Agenda contains national research goals and objectives on the topics of Soil Management, Systemic Pest Control, Organic Livestock, and Genetics, available online at http://ofrf.org/publications/pubs/nora2007.pdf

[2] The privately funded Rodale Institute has conducted the longest-running comparative study of organic and conventional farming methods . Its 30-year study has yielded the largest historical data set on organically managed cropping systems and the Institute's research is increasingly integral to understanding the role of organic farming in sequestering carbon and reducing green house gasses. [see www.Rodaleinstitute.org]

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Federal Research Dollars: Increase federal organic research dollars and base them on fair share targets for organic research so budgets for organic research are at least proportional to the percentage of organic food sold by 2012. This includes ATTRA, SARE, eOrganic, & NAL AFSIC and OREI.
2. Organic Research Plans: Develop national organic research plans, for use by all agencies, to address the following main goals by 2010.
   a. Document and describe the environmental, social, and economic performance of organic systems (i.e. establishing the facts to evaluate the value and legitimacy of organic farming).
   b. Provide the basis for improving and sustaining organic farm performance (agronomic, economic, social, environmental, food quality).
3. Organic Farmers Research Network: Create an Organic Farmers Research Network outside of traditional institutions to provide research, technical assistance, and mentoring to meet the real-world needs of farmers by 2013.
4. Interdisciplinary Research: Increase interdisciplinary research to meet the real-world needs of organic producers by 2012.
5. NRCS Resources: Direct resources to the NRCS so that staff, supervisors, and technicians in every state receive training in the conservation benefits of organic agriculture and the implementation of organic "conservation systems" by 2012.

Additional Priorities and Benchmarks:

* Professional Associations: Establish national and regional professional associations (including producers, scientists and others) for all aspects of organic research that are built on the OFRF-SCOAR and USDA-SARE models. The functions of these associations would be communicating research results, discussing research needs of producers, and coordinating research activities.
* Address Agrochemical Loss: Target research funds to help farmers address the loss of certain agrochemicals due to implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), focusing on the development and adoption of organic practices to replace toxic inputs by 2010.
* Assess Emerging Technologies: Require USDA, EPA, and FDA to conduct an objective assessment of new and emerging technologies (e.g. GMO, animal cloning, nano-technology) to determine their impacts on organic agriculture prior to approval, by 2012.
* National Agricultural Library database: Create a centralized, searchable, fully funded, organic research database at the National Agricultural Library by 2012

For a list of Specific Research Topics identified by the NOAP Process, see Appendix C

E. EDUCATION

Organic agriculture relies on both the wisdom of past generations and the latest technologies and innovations. Since everyone in society, as consumers of food and fiber, has a stake in agriculture, education about organic production is needed at every level— from kindergarten to high school; technical colleges to doctorate programs; farmers to chefs; and food scientists to consumers.

Organic education is the key to expansion of the organic marketplace, as it stimulates the growth of the next generation of organic supporters, activists, policy makers, processors, and farmers. Widespread understanding of organic practices leads to knowledgeable consumers and producers who can effectively advocate for organic integrity, and support increased organic food choices.

The success of urban school gardens has demonstrated that even those with no family ties to farming are attracted to working with the soil and understanding food production. Agricultural research stations have begun transitioning a portion of their land to organic agriculture. Food science laboratories are developing food processing systems that do not rely on synthetic inputs. Conventional farmers are asking their neighboring organic farmers to help them transition to organic production. The opportunities to integrate organic learning into every age group, economic class, and walk of life are unlimited.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Education of Policy-Makers: Increase the understanding and positive perceptions of the multiple benefits of organic agriculture through public influence of Federal and State policies and policy-makers by 2012.
2. Marketplace: Increase point-of-purchase information regarding the benefits of organic and seasonal food and farming systems by 2012.
3. Consumer Education: Increase consumer clarity regarding the meaning and integrity of the organic label by 2010.
4. Mass Media: Develop and promote positive articles and consumer information through mass media to increase demand for organic products by 2012.
5. Organic Training: Provide incentives for agriculture professionals and government employees to be trained in organic production and to provide outreach materials and activities for organic producers by 2012.

Additional Priorities and Benchmarks:

* Land Grant Universities: Encourage land grant universities and other educational institutions to teach organic agriculture and in undergraduate, Graduate, and organic Master Gardener programs.
  - Institutionalize academic rewards for organic interdisciplinary and systems research, education, and outreach by 2012.
* Organic Education Programs: Develop nationwide locally-based organic education programs by 2012.
  - Including: new farmer recruitment; farmer-to-farmer mentoring, apprenticeship and intern programs, and farmworker training programs.
  - Make resources available to underserved, disadvantaged, beginning, and immigrant farmers and farmworkers.

"The best protection for organic integrity is an educated consumer" *Wisconsin Dialogue meeting, 2007*

* Organic Extension Service: Create an Organic Extension Service by 2012.
  - Incorporate a National Organic Research and Education program with the mission of:
    · improving technical assistance for farmers;
    · increasing technology transfer and improving synergy on paperwork among programs; and
    · providing education on farm business management, local food systems, and access to government programs.
* Increased Training for a Variety of Sectors: Train bankers, economic development authorities, policymakers, service providers, and investors in organic agriculture and food systems in all regions by 2016.
* Organic Curriculum: Establish organic curricula to teach children and adults to grow and cook organic food for 4-H, FFA, vocational agriculture, and adult education programs in all regions by 2012.
* Organic Training Programs: Conduct intensive organic training programs for NRCS staff, Technical Service Providers, and qualified NGO staff to prepare them to provide technical assistance to farmers utilizing the Organic Initiative program under EQIP.

F. ORGANIC INTEGRITY - STANDARDS, ENFORCEMENT, AND COMPLIANCE

In many ways, it was the need for consistent and enforced standards that led to federal involvement in the organic sector through enactment of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. In fact, family farmers and their customers continue to feel that high standards, which represent the foundation of organic agriculture, will keep the playing field relatively level as they increasingly compete with large-scale producers. Prior to the implementation of federal regulations, the claim "organic" represented continuous quality improvements of standards as producers found increasingly better ways to farm in harmony with nature. This category represents both a desire to "hold the line" on standards as well as a need to find ways to continue the upward innovation of standards, both within and outside of government. This also lays out strategies for addressing the need to improve and periodically update organic regulations, statutes, and enforcement mechanisms.

ORGANIC INTEGRITY OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Compliance with Accreditation Standards (ISO 17011): Standardize the work and oversight of the National Organic Program (NOP) by requiring compliance with ISO 17011. Components of an ISO-compliant system include:
    a. Publish an NOP Quality Manual by 2010.
    b. Implement a peer review system for the USDA accreditation program.
    c. Ensure that an adequate number of NOP staff members have organic expertise, training and/or experience.
    d. Clarify the complaints and appeals process:
        i. Establish an appeals process to allow for certifier and citizen appeals to the NOP with regard to organic integrity with an on-line tracking system;
        ii. Strengthen the use of mediation by certifiers and certified operations;
        iii. Establish a "1-800" number for NOP complaints;
        iv. Clarify conflict-of-interest issues for certifier board and review committee level;
        v. Appoint an NOP Director who demonstrates commitment to accreditation and is knowledgeable about accreditation.

2. Proper Functioning of USDA/NOP:
    a. The NOP must create a policy manual for consistent interpretation of standards.
    b. Make NOP a stand-alone program with its own deputy administrator.
    c. Issue public annual reports about the NOP including transparent budget and finance information.
    d. Provide adequate funding for a professional materials review process for petitioned substances and sunset reviews of materials on the National list.
    e. Make NOSB appointments represent OFPA categories using a transparent nomination process (e.g. posting nominees on NOP website).

    And NOP must:
    f. Acknowledge/reject/accept NOSB recommendations in a timely manner;
    g. Provide consistent annual certifier training;
    h. Publish final rules for Pasture standards and Origin of Livestock in 2010;
    i. Clarify and enforce NOP biodiversity/natural resources standard 205.200;
    j. Issue final rules limited to group certification for farmers by 2010; and
    k. Develop databases for commercial availability of seeds and minor ingredients, by 2012.

3. OFPA Review and Improvement: Institute periodic review and improvement of OFPA in a transparent and participatory process in order to protect and assure continuous improvement of the program by 2012.

4. International Equivalency Agreements: Establish international equivalency agreements with Canada and the EU by 2012 in order to protect integrity and foster international trade in a transparent fashion.

5. Provide federal funds for soil, crop, and organic product testing for prohibited substances and GMOs to ensure continued integrity and enforcement, compliant with OFPA and NOP requirements by 2012.

Additional Priorities and Benchmarks:

* Animal Identification Equivalence: Require that the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) acknowledge equivalence of organic animal identification required by the certification standards of the National Organic Program.
* Origin Labeling: Implement state and country of origin labeling of organic dairy products by 2012.
* Organic Supporters in U.S. Government: Populate the ranks of government agencies that deal with organic agriculture with bureaucrats who understand and are supportive of organic agriculture.
* Scale-Appropriate Health and Safety Regulations: Establish scale-appropriate health and safety regulations for organic farms and small-scale processors by 2010.

Specific Standards Objectives:

Summit participants prioritized additional areas for future development of the national organic standards:

High priority

a. Real pasture standard
b. Dairy replacement standard
c. Aquaculture standards
d. Humane animal standards for all species
e. Biodiversity
f. Fertilizer standards – prohibit use of "organic" on fertilizers that are not allowed for organic production
g. Clarify recommendations for cloned animals, progeny, and products
h. Clarify crop rotation requirements
i. Pet food standards
j. Nanotechnology review

Medium priority

a. Revised compost standard
b. Ecologically-sound packaging
c. Real grass-fed
d. Organic pharmaceutical/nutri-ceutical personal care products
e. Clarify non-organic manure use/testing requirements

Low priority:

a. Lawn care/landscape management
b. Soil mineralization
c. Nutritional quality
d. Prohibit UHT milk

Suggested OFPA Revision Topics

- Open source system for multiple accreditation choices by 2012
- Certifier right to appeal
- Citizen suit rights and procedures
- GMO prohibition, including placing liability for GMO contamination on manufacturer
- Cloning prohibition
- OFPA NOSB selection process
- Whistle blower protection
- More transparency in selection of NOSB members
- Mandatory certification for retailers and brokers
- A closed positive National List

G. MARKETPLACE

Stimulated by the limitations of the federal definition of "organic" as merely a marketing claim based on specific production and handling practices, innovators have viewed the marketplace as the primary arena for both development in organic agriculture and the reclamation of the full range of organic values. The blooming of the organic label in the nearly two decades since the passage of OFPA has created both enormous opportunities and pitfalls. Marketplace goals and mechanisms have run the gamut from encouraging globalization and industrial scale organic production to building local innovative marketing systems. Yet adequate over-arching systematic objectives, assessments, and direction have been lacking. New mechanisms must be created and/or recognized to ensure the ongoing sustainability and fairness of the organic marketplace for farmers and all food system workers.

The goals in this category, more than the others, may only require independent innovators to move forward. To achieve success, they will adopt new models of cooperation not necessarily dependent on government actions. Implementation of these goals will require a deepening of regional and state alliances and coalitions with greater communication and linkage to related activities in other areas.

MARKETPLACE OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. National Organic Farmer Organization: Establish a national organic farmer organization.
   a. Ensure a fair and sustainable price for farmers' products using tools such as supply management, price discovery, and bargaining units.
   b. Rekindle organic standards creation in the public arena.
   c. Dialogue and build coalitions with existing organic farmer groups by 2010.
2. Organic Meat Processing Capacity: Expand local organic meat processing capacities including organic mobile slaughter units, and livestock processing facilities by 2012.
   a. Develop public and private sector funding, federal and state tax credits, and state and local economic development incentives.
3. Local Organic Seed Production: Expand localized organic seed production capacities.
   a. Focus on improved nutritional, taste and disease-resistance qualities.
   b. Goal of meeting 50% of localized organic seed needs by 2020.
   c. Expand USDA's AFRI program to fund local seed projects.
   d. Shift Farm Bill funds from GMOs to local seed projects and target Federal and private money for this initiative.
   e. Federal support for independent organic seed companies and regional organic crop variety trials.
   f. Legislation (in Patent Law) to assure that seeds remain in the public domain.
4. Local Organic Production and Processing: Achieve 50% of local organic production and processing by increasing organic regional food systems infrastructure and financing support by 2020.
   a. Support across-the-board funding, federal and state tax credits, health care reform funds, climate change carbon credits and all available development tools through the public and private sector.
5. Access to Organic Products: Improve access to and availability of organic products to rural and urban poor by 2012.
   a. Expand access to organic foods by WIC recipients and direct payment to farmers.
   b. HMO Premium reductions.
   c. Incorporate into Medicaid and school breakfast programs and all government food purchases.

6. Balance of Trade: Establish a positive balance of trade in organic products.
   a. Conduct research on organic food imports (quantity and products). Activities in this arena would include:
      i. USDA/ERS research on tracking organic imports;
      ii. Expansion of U.S. Department of Commerce Federal import code system to include organic by 2012;
      iii. Expansion of organic food sales data collection by USDA; and
      iv. Establishment of USDA research on the potential to grow crops not currently grown in the United States for which there is domestic organic market demand. Use mechanisms to expand domestic organic production to meet market needs.

Additional Priorities and Benchmarks:

* Organic Procurement: Increase organic institutional procurement goals by 2012.
- 5% procurement of local organic food in schools, military, and hospitals;
- 5% of restaurants selling organic food;
- 1% of USDA budget to local organic processing; and
- 1% of schools with organic school gardens.
- Change in procurement policy should be implemented across the board at all levels. Community Food Security Coalition should be involved as well as general purchasing organizations and food service providers.

"Organic is making the connection– 're-localize, re-regionalize, and include justice.'" *Boston Dialogue meeting, 2008*

* Reorganize and fund our existing systems to form a comprehensive national marketing and communications infrastructure for ongoing communication and education by 2012. USDA-AMS should serve as lead source of funding for organic promotion and advocacy activities.

H. ORGANIC TRANSITION AND INCENTIVES

To expand organic agriculture in the U.S., there must be a broad program of support for farmers and other land managers who choose to transition to organic methods. This includes the growth, supported by both government and marketplace, of organic agricultural products such as feed, seeds, and breeds, so that this growth is sustainable in both supply and demand. This should include USDA support for and access to untapped institutional markets like public schools and government agencies.

Some issues to be dealt with include consistency of the transition process and standards, as well as the following questions:

- *Should transition standards be government mandated and federally defined?*
- *Should transition labels bring a premium in the marketplace?*
- *Should federal, state, or local units of government provide financial and/or technical assistance to help farmers to transition to organic production?*
- *Should buyers establish incentive programs to help farmers transition and, if so, should those buyers have a "captive supply" from the farms that they help transition to organic?*
- *Should any initiative that promotes the transition to organic in a particular sector include a governor mechanism to control unanticipated growth that could threaten to harm both existing organic and transitional farmers?*

Given a broad goal of "increasing organic production in the United States," there are many mechanisms available to facilitate this growth.

ORGANIC TRANSITION AND INCENTIVES – OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS:

1. Beginning Farmers: Fully implement the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program by 2012 to encourage beginning farmers and ranchers to use organic practices. Include:
   a. Access to loans, credit, and technical assistance;
   b. Debt forgiveness;
   c. Mentorship programs;
   d. Commercial community gardens and processing centers;
   e. CSA training programs; and
   f. Domestic grower groups.
2. Cost Share: Retain, strengthen, and adequately fund the National Organic Certification Cost Share (NOCCS) program to help farmers and processors become certified.
   a. Implement oversight to monitor the disbursement of funds and continuously improve the performance of the program.
   b. State Departments of Agriculture must actively engage in sourcing and dispensing Cost Share program funds.
   c. NGOs and certifiers must actively facilitate and promote the availability of cost share funds to all eligible operators.
   d. Farmers and processors must access the funds with a goal of full participation by all eligible operators.
3. EQIP: Implement and fully fund a National Organic Conversion Incentive Program (NOCIP) within the larger Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), with financial and technical assistance targeted at crop and livestock products with high market demand, including a system to compensate experienced organic producers

for providing technical assistance to transitioning producers.

a. USDA-NRCS must fully implement the NOCIP, through establishment of a Transition to Organic Production Practice Standard to achieve the objectives cited above.
b. The grassroots community and advocacy groups must actively engage in the rule-making process.
c. The grassroots community must participate in the NRCS' local working groups, county committees, and state technical committees to ensure fair and consistent access to this program in all counties.
d. Experienced organic producers, NGOs, state units of government, and institutions of higher learning, where appropriate, must offer services for technical support and mentorship opportunities with compensation and support from the USDA.

"Organic is building regional and local food systems from the seeds up" *Pennsylvania Dialogue meeting, 2007*

4. Expand Organic Production: Based on 2007 Agricultural Census data, double the amount of organic products and the number of farms, acreage, public lands, and animals under organic management every five years through 2020.

a. Grassroots organizations need to adopt and promote the NOAP and support producers and processors to expand production of organic crops, animals, and acreage.
b. Units of government at all levels (i.e. U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, universities, tribal governments, municipal utilities, watershed districts, and others), need to prioritize organic management of their land-based resources.

5. Expand Organic Supplies: Ensure a commercially available organic supply of all agricultural products, including minor ingredients, seeds, and livestock feed by 2014.
   a. Processors must invest resources to expand the production of products deemed not commercially available per NOP 205.606.
   b. Producers must consistently demand and purchase regionally adapted high quality organic seeds.
   c. Certifiers must enforce existing organic seed requirements.
   d. Public breeding programs must be fully funded at the federal and state level to focus on the development of varieties that are well adapted to organic production systems.
   e. Seed companies must contract with existing conventional seed producers to transition to organic and contract with organic producers to expand the variety and quantity of organic seeds offered for sale.

6. Expand Public Purchases: Create, promote, evaluate, and continuously improve a program of incentives for hospitals, schools, prisons, and other public institutions to serve transitional and organic foods nationwide by 2012.
   a. State and national organizations must identify and work to remove barriers and create specifications that favor organic and transitional procurement by public institutions at every level.
   b. The grassroots community must advocate for including preferences for the purchase of organic and transitional products in the Child Nutrition Act.
   c. Publicly funded institutional food procurement programs must give preference to the purchase of organic and transitional products at the local, state, and federal level.
   d. Public institutions must document, analyze, and evaluate the success of their organic and transitional food procurement programs and address identified deficiencies.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

A

ACA: Accredited Certifiers Association

AFSIC: Alternative Farming Systems Information Center

AMS: Agricultural Marketing Service

ATTRA: Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural areas

C

CAP: European Union's Common Agriculture Programme

CCOF: California Certified Organic Farmers

CRP: Conservation Reserve Program

CSP: Conservation Stewardship Program

E

eCFR: Online Code of Federal Regulations

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

EQIP: Environmental Quality Incentives Program

ERS: Economic Research Service

EU: European Union

F

FAO: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

FiBL: Research Institute of Organic Agriculture

FQPA: Food Quality Protection Act

G

GE: Genetically Engineered

GMO: Genetically Modified Organism

H

HMO: Health Maintenance Organization

HTST: High Temperature/Slow Time (pasteurization)

I

IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

IOIA: International Organic Inspectors Association

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

N

NAIS: National Animal Identification System

NAL: National Agricultural Library

NASOP: National Association of State Organic Programs

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NOAP: National Organic Action Plan

NOC: National Organic Coalition

NOCCS: National Organic Certification Cost Share

NOCIP: National Organic Conversion Incentive Program

NOFA: Northeast Organic Farming Association

NOP: National Organic Program

NOSB: National Organic Standards Board

NRCS: National Resources Conservation Service

NSAC: National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

O

OCA: Organic Consumers Association

OFPA: Organic Foods Production Act of 1990

OFRF: Organic Farming Research Foundation

OMRI: Organic Materials Review Institute

OREI: Organic Research and Extension Initiative

OTA: Organic Trade Association

R

rBGH: Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone

S

SARE: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely objectives

SOAP: State Organic Action Plan

SWOT: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

U

UHT: Ultra-high temperature (processing)

UK: United Kingdom

US: United States

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

W

WIC: Women, Infants, and Children

APPENDIX A: DIALOGUE MEETINGS

Beginning in the Summer of 2006 and continuing through 2007 and 2008, National Organic Action Plan dialogue meetings were held in 11 venues, engaging over 300 participants from 36 states in structured discussions about the current state and future vision for organic food and agriculture. Nearly 100 participants attended the NOAP Summit in February, 2009.

DIALOGUE VENUES

Massachusetts — Northeast Organic Farming Association Meeting, Amherst, August 2006

Oregon — Oregon Tilth Annual Meeting, Salem, October 2006

North Carolina — State Dialogue Meeting, Pittsboro, November 2006

Kentucky — Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Meeting, Louisville, January 2007

California — Ecological Farming Association Conference, Pacific Grove, January 2007

Pennsylvania— Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture Meeting, State College, February 2007

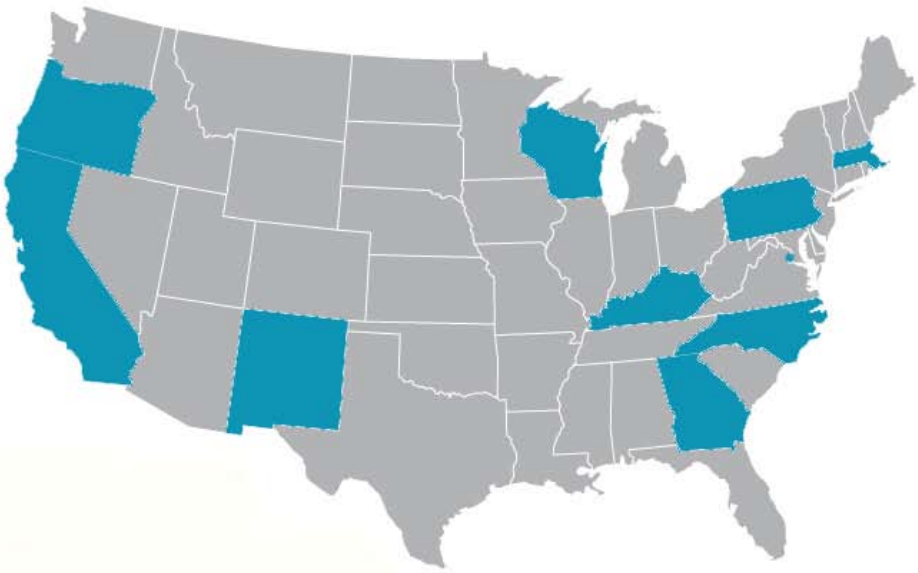
Wisconsin — Organic Farming Conference, LaCrosse, February 2007, 2008; NOAP Summit, February 2009

Washington, DC — Environmental groups meeting, June 2007,

New Mexico — Organic Farming Conference, Albuquerque, February 2008

Georgia — Southeast African American Farmers Organic Network, Savannah, April 2008

Massachusetts – Expo East Industry groups meeting, Boston, October 2008



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE AGENDA

NATIONAL ORGANIC ACTION PLAN

DIALOGUE MEETING AGENDA

PASA Conference

Thursday, February 1, 2007 8:30 – 5:30 pm

8:30 – 9:30 ..... Welcome, Introductions and Meeting Goals

9:30 – 10:15 .....What is currently working well in organic?

- Federal Program
- Other regulatory systems
- Marketplace
- In general, with organic agriculture

10:15 – 11:00 .....What are the current problems?

- Federal Program
- Other regulatory systems
- Marketplace
- In general, with organic agriculture

11:00 – 12:30 .....Overview of the Farm Bill and other Federal Proposals

- Which of the above problems are addressed by these proposals?
- Which ones remain unresolved?
- Organic transition program – How best to do this and how best to reward existing farmers while transitioning needed farmer recruits?
- Overview of setting National and State growth goals for organic
- What should the goals be?

12:30 – 1:30 LUNCH

1:30 – 2:30 ..... Strengthening farmer and consumer voices

- Farmer Political Action Organizing – Lessons learned from past and present
- What are the best ways to strengthen farmer and consumer organic voices?
- National Organic Coalition
- Other initiatives

2:30 – 3:30 .....How best to address the changing Organic Marketplace?

- Challenges in marketing: from "WalMarting of organic" to "buy local" campaigns
- Re-inventing regional organic food systems
- Organic and beyond – making additional marketplace claims

3:30 – 5:15 .....Developing a National Organic Action Plan

- What do we want organic to look like in 10 years?
- What is needed to get there?
- How do we measure success?
- What is best done at the state-level?

5:15 – 5:30 .....Next steps, Summary statements and Meeting Evaluation

APPENDIX C: SPECIFIC RESEARCH TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY THE NOAP PROCESS

- Research that better differentiates the qualities of organic and conventional products in regards to production practices.
- Full-cost accounting to determine the true cost of food.
- Research into nutritional differences in dairy processing methods for dairy (UHT, HTST, raw).
- Value of carbon sequestration in organic.
- Quantify nutritional and environmental benefits and link them with existing benefits research.
- Create and/or identify strategies, practices, and equipment to better manage weeds in various organic cropping systems.
- Public plant and animal breeding.
- Research food safety connections.
- Impact of organic practices on soil health, climate change, and other environmental benefits.
- Benefits of organic practices on various aquatic ecosystems and water resources.
- Safe, effective, and farmer-friendly composting systems.
- Organic no-till research.
- Alternatives to the internal combustion engine.
- Assess efficacy and impacts of approved fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, parasiticides, and livestock medicines.
- Comprehensive economic analysis of organic production, processing, and markets in U.S.
- Measurement of the amount of carbon sequestered in organic vs. conventional soils at depths up to 18 inches.
- Contamination potential, consequences, and liability of GMOs.
- GMO reporting system.
- National pesticide and synthetic fertilizer reporting system.
- Measuring key biodiversity indicators such as seed and livestock breed variety, diversity of native populations', and impacts on native species and ecosystems.
- Establish measurements of biodiversity (such as seeds and breeds variety, soil microbes, beneficial insects, pollinators, birds and wild fish populations), habitats, ecosystems, watersheds, and foodsheds on the local and regional levels.
- Establish baselines for sustainability and life cycle analysis targets by 2015 for packaging, distribution, transportation (food miles, costs of transport), energy use (electric, water, manufacturing), and recycling of agricultural and packing plastics.
- Identify soil health measures for organic systems, including a soil food web health measurement to use as index.
- Track the amount of nitrogen fixed from organic techniques and track the reduction and application of synthetic nitrogen as organic farming expands its contributions to the environment.
- Reverse the burden of proof in research. Use long term studies, consider risks of vulnerable populations, and evaluate cumulative exposures.
- Health research should include evaluation of technologies such as: antibiotics, nanotechnology, GMOs, cloning, hormones, pesticides, and packaging.
- Evaluate all risk factors in food and agriculture systems, including pesticide residues in food and soil, water contamination, and microbial contamination (e.g. organic vs. conventional).
- Commit federal research dollars to support ongoing public studies on the nutritional, health, and safety benefits of organic production and consumption by 2012.
- Include on-farm research with organic farmers.
- Ensure transparency in research development process, as well as results.
- Include health professionals.
- Measure the movement toward fair pricing and improved benefits for farmers and food system workers. Establish baselines by 2010.
- Quantify the diversity of race, ethnicity, and classes of people growing and buying organic foods by 2010.
- Create baseline data to measure fair access. Track diversity of organic enterprises in terms of scale and ownership.
- Conduct research on organic food imports (quantity and products).
- Establish USDA/ERS research on tracking organic imports.
- Expand organic food sales data collection by the USDA.
- Establish USDA research on crops not currently grown in the United States for which there is domestic organic market demand and on the potential to grow them here.

National Organic Action Plan Dialogue/Summit Participants

Mike Adams
Karen Adler
Jeanne Aguerre
Maria Aguiar
Maria M. Aguiar
Will Allen
Art Ames
Isaura Andaluz
Bob Anderson
Karen Anderson
Nick Andrews
Rachel Armstrong
Caralea Arnold
Kathie Arnold
Richard Arnold
Robert Arnold
Tony Azevedo
Alexis Baden-Mayer
Dan Bair
John Bakea
Brian Baker
Zach Baker
Owusu Bandele
Donna Batcho
JoAnn Baumgartner
Dan Beachy
Carmela Beck
Harriet Behar
Curtis Bennett
James Bernau
Terry Betts Young
DeEtta Bilek
Jane Bindley
David Bingaman
George Bird
Melvin Bishop
Roger Blobaum
Gary David Bloss
Troy Bogdan
Philip Botwinick
Jaclyn Bowen
Cissy Bowman
Zoe Bradbury
Caroline Brock
Valerie Broussard
Perry Brown
Yvette Brown
Emily Brown-Rosen
Kevin Brussel
Julia Brussel
Lisa J. Bunin
Deborah Burd
Ben Burkett
Don Bustos
Samantha Cabaluna
Linda Calvey
John Caputo
Hannah Carey
Lynne Carpenter-Boggs
Danielle Carro
Dave Carter
Melissa Chavis
Rick Christianson
Cheri Clark
Carol Clarke
Jim Cochran
Darlene Coehoorn
Jen Colby
Beverly Collins-Hall
Ashley Colpaart
Lynn Coody
Marc Cool
Sandra Corlett
Rocky Cowie
Deane Craine
Joshua Cravens
Nancy Creamer
Tracy Crockett
Vernon Crockett
John Culbreath
Joe Cummins
Lili Cummins
Ronnie Cummins
Steve Daily
Doug Delling
Diane Dempster
Woody Deryckx
Richard deWilde
Kimberly Dickey
Rocky Dickson
Kim Dietz
Atina Diffley
Matthew Dillon
Katherine DiMatteo
Maureen Doyle
Bruce+Mari Drinkman
Bill Duesing
Kate Duesterberg
Rex Dufour
Jim Dyer
Dennis Eaton
Gwendolyn Ellen
Tina Ellor
David Engel
Deb Eschmeyer
Steve Etka
Earcine Evans
Mark Evans
Dag Falck
Will Fantle
Jay Feldman
Helen Fields
Larry Flournoy
Peggy Fogarty-Hainish
John Fonteyn
Joyce Ford
John Foster
Laura Fredan
Darrell Frey
Andy Friedberg
Sam Fromartz
Yvonne Frost
Caron Gala
Molly Garvey
Mel Gehman
Steve Gilman
Holly Givens
Zelig Golden
Jim Goodman
Gregory Gould
Hilton Graham
Robbie Graham
Jennifer Green
Tynesha Green
Ben Grosscup
Ken Haines
Beverly Hall
Kari Hamerschlag
Margot Ann Hamilton
Jammy Hammer
Eveline Hartz
Jim Hartz
Cynthia Hayes
Terry Hayes
Melinda Hemmelgarn
Elizabeth Henderson
Annette M. Higby
Josh Hinerfeld
Clare Hinrichs
Janine Hofmann
Liana Hoodes
Greg Horner
Charles Houston
Janna Howley
Kiki Hubbard
Melissa Hughes
Julia Hundt
Mary Ann Ihm
Marsha Ishii-Eiteman
Mary James
Michael James
Nelson James
Darron "Farmer D" Joffee
Dave Johnson
Louise Johnson
Faye Jones
Larry Julson
Doris Kaberia
Patricia Kane
Mark Keating
John Kiefer
John Kinsman
Jonathan Kirschner
Dan Kittredge
Jack Kittredge
Tony Kleese
Sammy Koeningsberg
Robin Kohanowich
Jill Krueger
Shane Labrake
Rick Lakin
Gary Lambert
Laurie Lange
Jylle Lardaro
Tawnya Laveta
Peter LeCompte
Craig Lee
Sally Lee
Tracy Lerman
Russ Lester
Kim Leval
Russell Libby
Mark Lipson
David Lively
Patty Lovera
Felice Lucero
Gene Ludiveker
Laurie Lundgren
Harry MacCormack
Chris Malek
Ed Maltby
Ron Maribett
Reginaldo Marroquin
Andrew Marshall
Adan Martinez
Andre Matthews
Dave Mattocks
Marisa Mazzotta
Jerry McGeorge
Jason McKenney
Roland McReynolds
Dahinda Meda
Margaret Mellon
Brett Melone
Joe Mendelson
Kathleen Merrigan
Marty Mesh
Peggy Miars
Mike Moon
G. Michael Moore
Joel Morton
Carolyn Mugar
Tom Nielsen
Clara Nunez
Brian Obach
Kevin Ogorzalek
Keith Olcott
Patti Olenick
Vic Ormsby
Jackie Ostfeld
John O'Sullivan
Steve Pahacek
Laura Paine
Loretta Palmer
Fawn Pattison
John Peck
Birdie Perkins
Kurt Peterson
Jim Pierce
Noah Pinck
Susan Ponsolle
Kim Pophal
Ted Quaday
Christine Rasmussen
Torrey Reade
Chris Reberg-Horton
Horst Rechelbacher
Judith Redmond
Natalie Reitman-White
Deb Rettig
Sara Reynolds
Eric Rice
Reba Richardson
Jim Riddle
Pam Riesgraf
Bill Robinson
Jose Rodriguez
David Rogers
Christina Romero
Paul Romero
Debbie Roos
Mari Roseman
John Roulac
John Rowland
Mickey Roy
Shauna Sadowski
Janet Sala
Robert Sala
Jeff Schahczenski
Susan Schechter
Chris Schreiner
Amanda Schweogler
Margaret Scoles
Yvonne Scott
Judith Scoville
Richard Sechrist
Robin Seydel
Kelly Shea
Diane Shivera
Robynn Shrader
Eric Sideman
George Siemon
Erin Silva
Sandra Simone
Ruffin Slater
Michael Sligh
Evan Smith
Johnny Smith
Kathy Soder
Dorothea Sotiros
Julie Spandow
Rebecca Spector
Steve Sprinkel
Bob St. Peter
Hilde Steffy
Molly Stentz
Pooh Stevenson
Susan Stewart
Daniel F. Stoltzfus
John F. Stoltzfus
Alex Stone
Martha M Stone
Kim Stoner
Ron Strochlic
Barbara Sullivan
Micholas Syaro
Mike Tabor
Mike Taft
Sylvia Tawse
Brise Tencer
Francis Thicke
Bill Thomas
Brian Tokar
Craig Tomera
Harold Trujillo
Charlotte Vallaeys
Peter Varley
Chela Vazquez
Katy Vigil
Gunta Vitins
Chris Waldrop
Nick Walters
Steve Warshawer
Eugene Washington
Rose Welch
Eric Werbalowsky
Sarah West
Patricia Whetham
Bonnie Wideman
Caren Wilcox
Caitlin Winans
Morgan Wolaver
Bill Wolfe
Enid Wonnacott
Kalthleen Wood
Carla Wright
Cecil Wright
Glenda Yoder
Timothy Young
Serafina Youngdahl
Ed Zimba
Leslie Zuck

Acknowledgements

The National Organic Action Plan project would not have been possible without the generous support of many individuals and organizations, including the following foundations and corporations:

Agua Fund
Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation
Cornerstone Campaign
CROPP Cooperative (Organic Valley/ Organic Prairie)
Farm Aid
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
John Merck Fund
Lawson Valentine Foundation
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Newman's Own Organics
North Pond Foundation
Nutiva Corporation
Patagonia

Numerous farm and community organizations from across the country have assisted RAFI-USA with financial resources, staff time, technical assistance, and outreach to create this project. These organizational partners include:

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES)— *without whose significant financial and administrative help the Summit would not have been possible.*
National Organic Coalition
National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
Beyond Pesticides
Center For Food Safety
Ecological Farming Association
Food and Water Watch
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
New Hope Communications
New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission
Northeast Organic Farming Association -Interstate Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association -Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association -Vermont
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Oregon Organic Coalition
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Southeast African American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON)
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Otto Schmid – *Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) — Thanks for his patience and generous contribution of expertise*

Photographs by: Harriet Behar, MOSES; Terry Hayes, SAAFON; Liana Hoodes; Leslie Zuck PCO; Reba Richardson; Sally Lee; and Elizabeth Henderson.

Cover & Layout Design
ALI CHURCH

NOAP Logo Design
PATRIC SHAW, SCAD




This document is printed on sustainably forested paper

ISBN: 978-0-615-36412-4