
Introduction

BACKGROUND

The 2014 Organic Survey is a Census Special Study conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in conjunction with USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). This is the third organic production and practices survey NASS has conducted on the national level; the previous data collection efforts were the 2011 Certified Organic Production Survey and the 2008 Organic Production Survey.

This year's survey follows the 2012 Census of Agriculture, which reported that total organic product sales by farms in the United States increased 83 percent between 2007 and 2012.

USE OF SURVEY DATA

The primary purpose of the 2014 Organic Survey was to collect sales data information at the commodity level along with acreage and production data for a variety of organic crop and livestock commodities. Information was also collected on marketing and agricultural practices, insurance practices, production expenses, and value-added products. The 2014 survey collected data from U.S. farms and ranches that were certified organic, exempt from organic certification, or transitioning to organic certification.

The information obtained from the survey is used by the agricultural industry and all levels of government to prepare a wide variety of organic agriculture-related programs, economic models, legislative initiatives, market analysis, and feasibility studies. These programs directly affect the life and communities of producers and help improve agriculture production technologies and practices. Specific examples of benefits to producers include:

- Agencies such as USDA's RMA, use the data to evaluate and establish crop insurance programs for organic producers.
- Farm organizations use the information to lobby Congress or state legislatures for funding and support of organic production programs.
- Government, extension, and university scientists use the information to determine research needs.
- Suppliers to the organic industry use the data to plan production and marketing of new products.

AUTHORITY

This census of agriculture is required by law under the "Census of Agriculture Act of 1997," Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct surveys deemed necessary to furnish annual or other data on the subjects covered by the census. The 2014 Organic Survey was conducted under the provisions of this section.

ORGANIC DEFINITION

The USDA National Organic Standards Board in 2000 determined a national standard that "organic" food must be produced without the use of conventional pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers, sewage-sludge-based fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, genetic engineering (biotechnology), antibiotics, growth hormones, or irradiation. Animals raised on an organic operation must meet animal health and welfare standards, not be fed antibiotics or growth hormones, be fed 100-percent organic feed, and must be provided access to the outdoors. Land must have no prohibited substances applied to it for at least three years before the harvest of an organic crop. The National Organic Standard states

that all farms and handling operations that display the “USDA Organic” seal must be certified organic by the state or by a private agency, accredited by the USDA, to ensure the National Organics standards are followed. Farms that follow the National Organic standards and have less than \$5,000 in annual sales can be exempt from certification. These exempt farms may use the term “organic” but may not use the “USDA Organic” seal. The 2014 Organic Survey did not include organic handlers and processors.

ORGANIC DATA COMPARABILITY

The 2014 Organic Survey results reflect the industry as of the time the list was built and the 2014 production year. Comparisons with other NASS publications and other non-NASS sources must allow for differences in reference periods, organic definitions, and weighting methodologies. Comparisons to data from the 2012 Census of Agriculture (COA) must allow for differences in reference periods. The 2012 COA provided information on the number of farms and value of sales. The weighting methodology for the 2012 COA and the 2014 Organic Survey included adjustments for nonresponse, coverage, and misclassification. The 2011 Certified Organic Production Survey only included certified production while the 2014 Organic Survey includes certified, exempt, and transitional organic farms. The 2008 Organic Production Survey did not include misclassification adjustments which were performed for the 2014 Organic Survey.

REFERENCE PERIOD

Crop, livestock and poultry production, production expenses, production practices, insurance practices, and marketing practices are measured for January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

TABLES AND APPENDICES

Chapter 1. Tables 1 through 27 indicate combined data for certified and exempt organic farms at the U.S. and state levels.

Chapter 2. Tables 28 through 54 indicate data for certified organic operations only at the U.S. and state levels.

Chapter 3. Tables 55 through 80 indicate data for exempt organic operations only at the U.S. and state levels.

Chapter 4. Tables 81 through 92 indicate data for transitioning operations at the U.S. and state levels.

Appendix A. Provides information about data collection and data processing activities and discusses the statistical methodology used in conducting and evaluating the survey. Table A provides the sample counts and response rates for the United States and for each state. Table B indicates the total organic farm counts on the 2012 Census of Agriculture and the total organic farm counts and total organic acres from the 2014 Organic Survey. Table C provides statistical precision estimates for the number of farms and acres and the total value of sales for the United States and for each state.

Appendix B. Includes definitions of specific terms and phrases used in this publication. It also provides an example of the report form and instruction sheet used to collect data.

RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

In keeping with the provisions of Title 7 of the United States Code, no data are published that would disclose information about the operations of an individual farm or ranch. All tabulated data are subjected to an extensive disclosure review prior to publication. Any tabulated item that identifies data reported by a respondent or allows a respondent’s data to be accurately estimated or derived, was suppressed and coded with a “D.” However, the number of farms reporting an item is not considered confidential information and is provided even though other information is withheld.

SUBJECT SERIES REPORTS AND CUSTOM TABULATIONS

The 2014 Organic Survey data, as well as the 2012 Census of Agriculture Volume 1 Geographic Area Series and related reports, are available on the NASS website at www.nass.usda.gov. If you would like to learn more about the statistics available from NASS or have questions concerning this report, send an

email to nass@nass.usda.gov, or call the Agricultural Statistics hotline at 800-727-9540.

Custom-designed tabulations may be developed when the data are not published elsewhere. NASS will develop these tabulations to individual user specifications on a cost-reimbursable basis and then share them with the public. Before requesting a custom tabulation, spend time with Quick Stats (http://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats), NASS's online database that allows data users to build customized queries.

All NASS publications and custom tabulations are subject to a thorough disclosure review prior to release to prevent the disclosure of any individual respondent data. Requests for special tabulations can be submitted online from the NASS home page (www.nass.usda.gov) or to the NASS DataLab by mail or by email:

USDA
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
Room 6061 - Mail Stop 2017
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250
or
Datalab@nass.usda.gov

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
- (Z) Less than half of the unit shown.
- (NA) Not available.
- (X) Not applicable.
- Cwt Hundredweight.