

U.S. Organic Farming in 2000-2001: Adoption of Certified Systems. By Catherine Greene and Amy Kremen, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Resource Economics Division, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 780.

Abstract

U.S. farmland managed under organic farming systems expanded rapidly throughout the 1990s, and that pace has continued as farmers strive to meet consumer demand in both local and national markets. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented national organic standards on organic production and processing in October 2002, following more than a decade of development, and the new uniform standards are expected to facilitate further growth in the organic farm sector. USDA's organic standards incorporate an ecological approach to farming—cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, ecological balance, and protection of biodiversity. An increasing number of U.S. farmers are adopting these systems in order to lower input costs, conserve nonrenewable resources, capture high-value markets, and boost farm income. This report updates USDA estimates of land farmed with organic practices during 1997 with estimates for 2000 and 2001, and provides new estimates on the number of certified organic operations in each State.

Keywords: organic farming systems, organic certification, certified organic acreage and livestock, price premiums, national organic rules, specialty agriculture, farmers' markets.

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