

# USDA- NIFA support for organic agriculture research, education & extension

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## Abstract

The U.S. Organic Industry has maintained significant growth over the last decade, with organic products accounting for over four percent of total U.S. food sales. Despite this sustained growth, organic farmers and conventional farmers interested in transitioning to organic production continue to face multiple technical and scientific constraints. The needs of the organic industry are diverse. Within crop and animal management systems producers need research-proven methods to manage weeds, pests and diseases; to improve nutrient management and enhance ecosystem services; to improve product quality and reduce postharvest losses; and to improve their marketing and increase market access. They also need access to enhanced crop cultivars and livestock breeds specifically developed to thrive under organic management. Since 2001 NIFA has provided funding for many projects in organic agriculture research through two key programs: Organic Transitions (ORG) and the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). Together, the programs have supported 1,115 projects with total funding of over \$162 million. The FY2016 deadlines for application to the two programs are March 10, 2016 and April 15, 2016 for OREI and ORG, respectively. Details on the request for applications are available at <http://nifa.usda.gov/> under the “Grants” tab. Other NIFA programs that have supported projects in organic agriculture include: Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Specialty Crops Research Initiative (SCRI), Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), in addition to those supported at Land Grant Universities under the Hatch Act.

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