

NRCS EQIP Technical and Financial Support for Organic Farmers

Sarah Brown, Organic Conservation Specialist,
Oregon Tilth

March 29, 2012

http://www.extension.org/organic_production



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Presented by Sarah Brown

Organic Conservation
Specialist

Oregon Tilth
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Outline

- NRCS and EQIP
- The Organic Initiative
- Sign-up Process
- NRCS Conservation Practices
- Case Study: Pie Ranch Conservation Plan
- Additional Resources



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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

United States Department of Agriculture



- NRCS Services
 - Soil Survey
 - Technical Assistance
 - Farm Bill Programs
 - Emergency Assistance
 - Conservation Partnership Efforts
 - Information & Outreach



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Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Technical and financial assistance to help plan and implement **conservation practices that address natural resource concerns** and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.



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EQIP Organic Initiative

- Eligibility-certified organic, transitional, and exempt producers
 - Submit OSP or Self-Certification
- Support for Transitioning producers
 - Conservation Activity Plan Supporting Transition to Organic (CAP 138)
 - Not required
 - Technical Service Providers



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Self-Certification Worksheet

2. Transitioning to Organic

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that in order to receive technical and financial assistance through EQIP Organic Initiative as a Transitioning to Organic producer, I agree to develop and implement an organic system plan to standards established in the National Organic Program (NOP) Act (7 U.S.C. Sections 6501-6522), and I have contacted the following certifying agent to begin the process of transitioning to organic according to requirements of the National Organic Program (NOP):

Certifying Agent: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

I understand that if I do not meet this requirement during the period while transitioning to organic production, my EQIP program contract may be subject to termination.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

3. Exempt from Certification (Organic Producers selling less than \$5000 organic products annually)

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that in order to receive technical and financial assistance through EQIP Organic Initiative as an Exempt producer, I agree to develop and implement an OSP that meets standards established in the National Organic Program (NOP) Act (7 U.S.C. Sections 6501-6522), and my application will be ranked with certified organic producers provided I meet eligibility requirements. I certify that I sell less than \$5,000 in organic products annually and I have provided the required documentation as specified in CAP 440. I agree to implement practices that are consistent with an OSP. If practices are not consistent with an OSP, the contract may be subject to termination.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

D.C. Approval: _____ Date Approved: _____



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EQIP Organic Initiative

- \$50 million annually nationwide
- Producer payment limit- \$20k annually / \$80k entire contract



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Ranking

- Competitively ranked (but not against conventional producers!)
- Priority given to applicants with largest conservation impact
- Year-round sign-up period
- 2012 ranking deadlines are:
 - February 3
 - March 30
 - June 1
- Clear eligibility BEFORE these dates



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Conservation Assistance Sign-up Process

- Contact NRCS
 - Develop Conservation Plan with NRCS
 - Identify resource concerns
 - Identify needed conservation practices
- Contact FSA
 - Establish eligibility to Participate in Farm Bill Programs
 - Establish official USDA farm records including farm/tract #



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Farm Services Agency (FSA) Farm Bill Program Assistance

- FSA will require
 - Copy of Deed
 - Entity Documents
 - HEL Determination
 - AGI Documentation
 - Proof of Identity
 - Signature Authority
 - Possibly Other



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Sign-Up Process

- NRCS Responsibilities:
 - Provide/Accept Application
 - Determine Land Eligibility
 - Gather Irrigation History
 - **Develop a Conservation Plan**
 - Screen and Rank
 - Develop conservation plan specifications



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Poll Q1



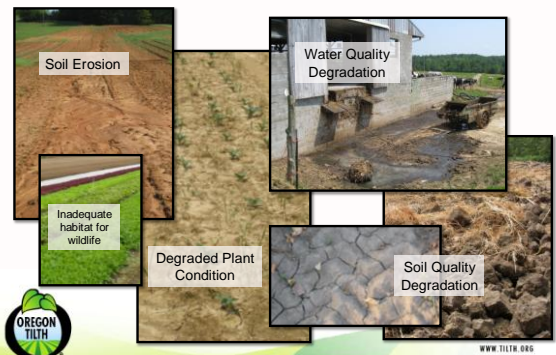
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Developing an NRCS Conservation Plan



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What are NRCS resource concerns?



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What are NRCS 'conservation practices'?



Available Practices vary by State

Management Practices

- Irrigation Water Mgt
- Nutrient Management
- Wildlife Habitat Mgt
- Pest Management/IPM
- Prescribed Grazing
- Residue Management
- Crop Rotation
- Deep Tillage



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Vegetative Practices



- Cover Crop
- Hedgerow
- Critical Area Planting
- Windbreak
- Grass Waterway
- Filter Strip
- Conservation Cover



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Irrigation Related Practices



- Drip Irrigation
- Sprinkler Irrigation
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Water Harvesting
- Irrigation Reservoir
- Water Control Structure-Flow Meter
- Pumping Plant
- Tail Water Recovery
- Spring Development



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Structural Practices

- Compost Facility
- Access Road
- Underground Outlet
- Subsurface Drain
- Sediment Basin
- Diversion
- Fence
- Roof Runoff Structure
- Stream Crossing
- Water Control Structure



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Other Practices

- Mulching
- Seasonal High Tunnel
- Wetland Restoration
- Fish/Wildlife Structure
- Pond Sealing
- Invasive Weed/Plant Control
- Energy Mgt Practices
- Forestry & Range Practices



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How do you implement conservation practices?



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Cover Crops Planning Considerations

- Seed Selection
 - Purpose/Use
 - Native or Non-native
 - Grass, Legume, or Mix
- Planting
 - Drilled or Broadcast
 - Seedbed Preparation
 - Planting Time
 - Irrigation/Fertilization
 - Weed Control
 - Incorporation



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Pollinator Hedgerows Planning Considerations

- Purpose/Use
- Plant selection
- Beneficial Insectary
- Pollinator/Timing
- Height/Spread
- Irrigation
- Wildlife
- Screening/Aesthetics
- Monitoring & Maintenance
 - Weed & Gopher Control
 - Irrigation



Photo: Katharina Ullmann, Xerces Society



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Compost Facility Planning Considerations

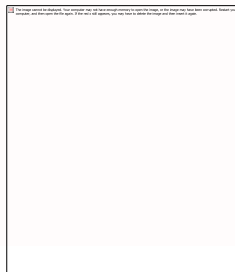
- Purpose
- Location, Size, Shape
- Source: On-site, Imported
- Facility Type
 - Structure or Field
 - Cover Type
- Equipment
 - Stockpiling/Turning
 - Spreading/Incorporation
- Water Supply
- Building materials in organic systems



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Financial Assistance Cost Lists

- EQIP payments based on typical costs for implementation
- Beginning Farmer, Limited Resource Producer, and Socially Disadvantaged are eligible for an increased payment rate of 25%- ASK!
- Many practices have multiple payment scenarios/rates-ASK!
- Some states have organic and/or small farm payment 'rates'-ASK!



*Sample practice costs from OR. Costs will vary. Contact your local NRCS office to inquire on actual costs.



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Additional Details

- NRCS certifies installed practices before payment to producer
- See USDA FSA or ShadeFund (www.shadefund.org) for loans
- Program payments may be taxable
- May sign up for multiple Farm Bill Programs on same farm
- Can have more than one active EQIP contract at a time on the same farm



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Poll Q2



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Pie Ranch Conservation Plan

*Used with landowner permission

NRCS USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Kathie Cameron
300 West Avenue, Suite 120
Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 475-6100

Conservation Plan
This plan will be used on landowner's land to manage system health and sustainability to improve range quality and quantity for livestock and protect grazing from wildlife hazards. Ranch management will be completed according to NRCS standards and specifications for practice #214.

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This plan will be used on landowner's land to manage system health and sustainability to improve range quality and quantity for livestock and protect grazing from wildlife hazards. Ranch management will be completed according to NRCS standards and specifications for practice #214.

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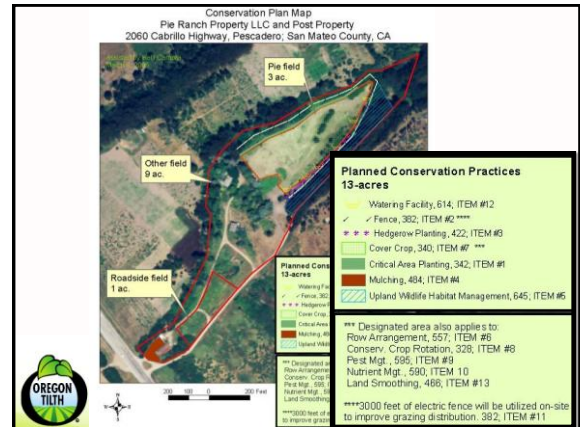
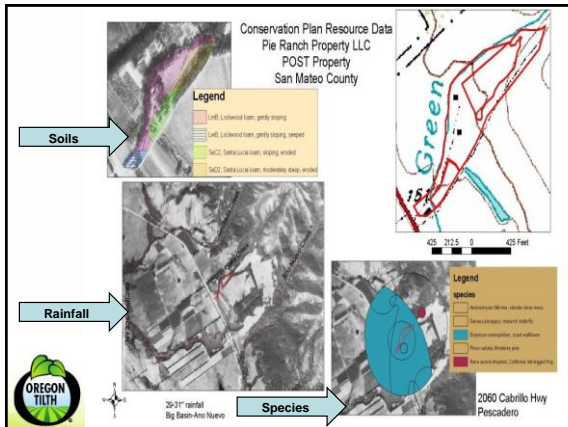
Field	Amount	Month	Year	Applied	Date
1.0 AC		9	2009		
Total	1.0 AC				

Conservation Plan
This plan will be used on landowner's land to manage system health and sustainability to improve range quality and quantity for livestock and protect grazing from wildlife hazards. Ranch management will be completed according to NRCS standards and specifications for practice #214.

Field	Amount	Month	Year	Applied	Date
4.0 AC		9	2009		
Total	4.0 AC				

10/2009 Page 1 of 1





Pie Ranch Conservation Plan

Cover Crop

A winter cover crop of small grains, grasses, or legumes or any combination of these will be grown when strawberries are not grown to reduce soil erosion during the critical period and then incorporated into the soil to improve soil tilth, water infiltration, and aeration. It will be planted by October 15 and seeding rates adjusted to provide a dense stand. Adequate time will be allowed for decomposition or the fertilizer rates adjusted for the next crop.

Field	Planned Amount	Month	Year	Applied Amount	Date
Pie	3 ac	9	2008	3 ac	4/29/2008
Total:	3 ac			3 ac	



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Cover Crop Practice Specifications

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
340A - COVER AND GREEN MANURE CROP

For: Business Name: _____
Site Location: _____
County: _____
Subcounty: _____
Project ID: _____
Date: _____

IT SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER TO OBTAIN ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM ALL AGENCIES AND LOCAL PERMITS TO THIS DEVELOPMENT.

Practices shall be installed in accordance with the following standards, specifications and other requirements. (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) (H) (I) (J) (K) (L) (M) (N) (O) (P) (Q) (R) (S) (T) (U) (V) (W) (X) (Y) (Z) (AA) (AB) (AC) (AD) (AE) (AF) (AG) (AH) (AI) (AJ) (AK) (AL) (AM) (AN) (AO) (AP) (AQ) (AR) (AS) (AT) (AU) (AV) (AW) (AX) (AY) (AZ) (BA) (BB) (BC) (BD) (BE) (BF) (BG) (BH) (BI) (BJ) (BK) (BL) (BM) (BN) (BO) (BP) (BQ) (BR) (BS) (BT) (BU) (BV) (BW) (BX) (BY) (BZ) (CA) (CB) (CC) (CD) (CE) (CF) (CG) (CH) (CI) (CJ) (CK) (CL) (CM) (CN) (CO) (CP) (CQ) (CR) (CS) (CT) (CU) (CV) (CW) (CX) (CY) (CZ) (DA) (DB) (DC) (DD) (DE) (DF) (DG) (DH) (DI) (DJ) (DK) (DL) (DM) (DN) (DO) (DP) (DQ) (DR) (DS) (DT) (DU) (DV) (DW) (DX) (DY) (DZ) (EA) (EB) (EC) (ED) (EE) (EF) (EG) (EH) (EI) (EJ) (EK) (EL) (EM) (EN) (EO) (EP) (EQ) (ER) (ES) (ET) (EU) (EV) (EW) (EX) (EY) (EZ) (FA) (FB) (FC) (FD) (FE) (FF) (FG) (FH) (FI) (FJ) (FK) (FL) (FM) (FN) (FO) (FP) (FQ) (FR) (FS) (FT) (FU) (FV) (FW) (FX) (FY) (FZ) (GA) (GB) (GC) (GD) (GE) (GF) (GG) (GH) (GI) (GJ) (GK) (GL) (GM) (GN) (GO) (GP) (GQ) (GR) (GS) (GT) (GU) (GV) (GW) (GX) (GY) (GZ) (HA) (HB) (HC) (HD) (HE) (HF) (HG) (HH) (HI) (HJ) (HK) (HL) (HM) (HN) (HO) (HP) (HQ) (HR) (HS) (HT) (HU) (HV) (HW) (HX) (HY) (HZ) (IA) (IB) (IC) (ID) (IE) (IF) (IG) (IH) (II) (IJ) (IK) (IL) (IM) (IN) (IO) (IP) (IQ) (IR) (IS) (IT) (IU) (IV) (IW) (IX) (IY) (IZ) (JA) (JB) (JC) (JD) (JE) (JF) (JG) (JH) (JI) (JJ) (JK) (JL) (JM) (JN) (JO) (JP) (JQ) (JR) (JS) (JT) (JU) (JV) (JW) (JX) (JY) (JZ) (KA) (KB) (KC) (KD) (KE) (KF) (KG) (KH) (KI) (KJ) (KK) (KL) (KM) (KN) (KO) (KP) (KQ) (KR) (KS) (KT) (KU) (KV) (KW) (KX) (KY) (KZ) (LA) (LB) (LC) (LD) (LE) (LF) (LG) (LH) (LI) (LJ) (LK) (LL) (LM) (LN) (LO) (LP) (LQ) (LR) (LS) (LT) (LU) (LV) (LW) (LX) (LY) (LZ) (MA) (MB) (MC) (MD) (ME) (MF) (MG) (MH) (MI) (MJ) (MK) (ML) (MM) (MN) (MO) (MP) (MQ) (MR) (MS) (MT) (MU) (MV) (MW) (MX) (MY) (MZ) (NA) (NB) (NC) (ND) (NE) (NF) (NG) (NH) (NI) (NJ) (NK) (NL) (NM) (NN) (NO) (NP) (NQ) (NR) (NS) (NT) (NU) (NV) (NW) (NX) (NY) (NZ) (OA) (OB) (OC) (OD) (OE) (OF) (OG) (OH) (OI) (OJ) (OK) (OL) (OM) (ON) (OO) (OP) (OQ) (OR) (OS) (OT) (OU) (OV) (OW) (OX) (OY) (OZ) (PA) (PB) (PC) (PD) (PE) (PF) (PG) (PH) (PI) (PJ) (PK) (PL) (PM) (PN) (PO) (PP) (PQ) (PR) (PS) (PT) (PU) (PV) (PW) (PX) (PY) (PZ) (QA) (QB) (QC) (QD) (QE) (QF) (QG) (QH) (QI) (QJ) (QK) (QL) (QM) (QN) (QO) (QP) (QQ) (QR) (QS) (QT) (QU) (QV) (QW) (QX) (QY) (QZ) (RA) (RB) (RC) (RD) (RE) (RF) (RG) (RH) (RI) (RJ) (RK) (RL) (RM) (RN) (RO) (RP) (RQ) (RR) (RS) (RT) (RU) (RV) (RW) (RX) (RY) (RZ) (SA) (SB) (SC) (SD) (SE) (SF) (SG) (SH) (SI) (SJ) (SK) (SL) (SM) (SN) (SO) (SP) (SQ) (SR) (SS) (ST) (SU) (SV) (SW) (SX) (SY) (SZ) (TA) (TB) (TC) (TD) (TE) (TF) (TG) (TH) (TI) (TJ) (TK) (TL) (TM) (TN) (TO) (TP) (TQ) (TR) (TS) (TT) (TU) (TV) (TW) (TX) (TY) (TZ) (UA) (UB) (UC) (UD) (UE) (UF) (UG) (UH) (UI) (UJ) (UK) (UL) (UM) (UN) (UO) (UP) (UQ) (UR) (US) (UT) (UU) (UV) (UW) (UX) (UY) (UZ) (VA) (VB) (VC) (VD) (VE) (VF) (VG) (VH) (VI) (VJ) (VK) (VL) (VM) (VN) (VO) (VP) (VQ) (VR) (VS) (VT) (VU) (VV) (VW) (VX) (VY) (VZ) (WA) (WB) (WC) (WD) (WE) (WF) (WG) (WH) (WI) (WJ) (WK) (WL) (WM) (WN) (WO) (WP) (WQ) (WR) (WS) (WT) (WU) (WV) (WW) (WX) (WY) (WZ) (XA) (XB) (XC) (XD) (XE) (XF) (XG) (XH) (XI) (XJ) (XK) (XL) (XM) (XN) (XO) (XP) (XQ) (XR) (XS) (XT) (XU) (XV) (XW) (XX) (XY) (XZ) (YA) (YB) (YC) (YD) (YE) (YF) (YG) (YH) (YI) (YJ) (YK) (YL) (YM) (YN) (YO) (YP) (YQ) (YR) (YS) (YT) (YU) (YV) (YW) (YX) (YZ) (ZA) (ZB) (ZC) (ZD) (ZE) (ZF) (ZG) (ZH) (ZI) (ZJ) (ZK) (ZL) (ZM) (ZN) (ZO) (ZP) (ZQ) (ZR) (ZS) (ZT) (ZU) (ZV) (ZW) (ZX) (ZY) (ZZ)

PRACTICE APPROVAL:
Site Description: _____
Map: See listing sheets for this job. This job is classified as: Other _____
Listing reference: _____
Date: _____

- Seedbed prep
- Materials
- Seed(s)
- Fertilizer and/or inoculants
- Seeding rate
- Seeding method
- Planting date/time period
- Special requirements
- NRCS approval
- Landowner acknowledgement

Pie Ranch Conservation Practices

Hedgerow Planting

A living fence of shrubs, and/or trees will be established and maintained adjacent to Pie Field. The hedgerow will provide insectary benefits for crop pest management and provide wildlife food and cover. Practice will be installed according to NRCS Standards and Specifications #422.

Field	Planned Amount	Month	Year	Applied Amount	Date
Other	500 ft	9	2010	350 ft	12/27/2010
Total:	500 ft			350 ft	



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Poll Q3



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Additional Opportunities



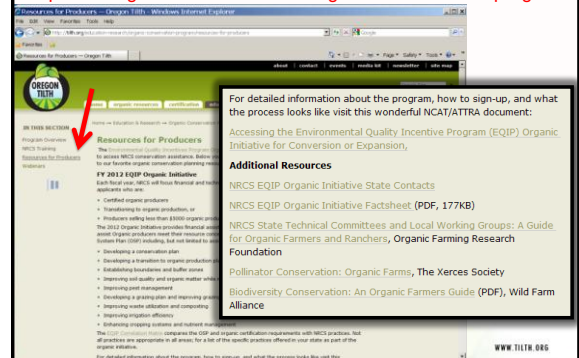
- State Technical Committees & Local Working Groups
 - Provide Input on:
 - Local Resource Concerns
 - Screening/Rank Criteria
 - New Practices and Costs
- Host a tour
- Attend a listening session
- NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants



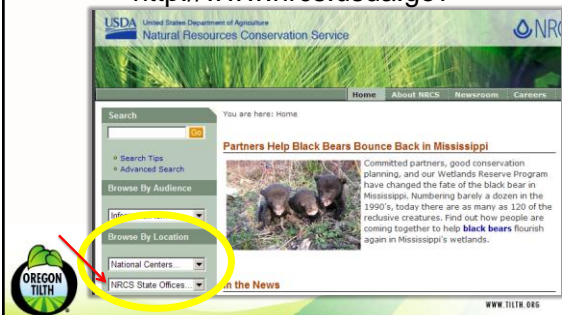
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For More Information:

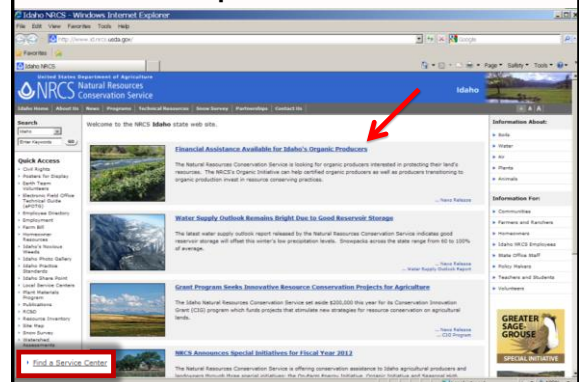
<http://tilth.org/education-research/organic-conservation-program>



Farm or state specific questions?
Find your local NRCS office:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>



Sample state website:



Questions?



Sarah Brown
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Oregon Tilth
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<http://tilth.org/education-research/organic-conservation-program>



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Find all upcoming webinars and archived eOrganic webinars at <http://www.extension.org/pages/25242>

Find the slides as a pdf handout and the recording at <http://www.extension.org/pages/63100>

Additional questions about organic farming?
<http://www.extension.org/ask>

We need your feedback! Please fill out our follow-up email survey!

