

# Organic: A Different Kind of Regulation



Farmers and businesses are often compelled into environmental or animal welfare regulations where they have little say yet bear the burden of costs while creating little value in return. Although regulations around issues like food safety must be preserved, another choice is possible.



## ORGANIC IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF REGULATION THAN ANY OTHER IN AGRICULTURE:

- Organic is voluntary, never compulsory. You can opt into the standards for part of your farm/business or all. You can offer consumers an organic ketchup and a traditional ketchup. You can manage an organic dairy herd, and a conventional herd.
- Farmers and businesses have a voice, not just through associations like OTA, but through the public-private partnership with USDA.
- It adds value. For farms, for the rural communities in which they operate, and for all businesses looking to diversify their offerings based on consumer preferences.
- Organic is in demand; consumers are increasingly looking for organic and willing to pay a premium. The organic premium helps create thriving resilient farmers and invests in our rural communities. Yet many American farmers have not had the opportunity to take advantage of this demand. Our one pager, *Standing up the Organic Opportunity*, points to policy priorities that will help improve domestic production.
- We ask for regulatory updates regularly to meet evolving input from farmers, businesses, and consumers. Revisions to the organic regulations have been used to create additional markets, remove barriers, clarify language or protect business from foreign fraud.
- We want rigor in enforcement. Enforcement equals a level playing field for farmers and grows trust for consumers.

## RELATED POLICY PRIORITIES

### ➤ Red tape reduction:

- Predictable and consistent process for regulatory renovation (Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Standards Act (CIAO) – H.R. 5973 in 118th Congress)
- Sound and Sensible Certification Reform for Farmers and businesses: *Draft in process*

### ➤ An appropriately funded National Organic Program (NOP):

- \$29M request in FY25; \$31M in FY26
- Two orphan programs funded: *Organic Data Initiative* (essential market data for farmers and businesses) and *Organic Certification Trade and Tracking* (fraud prevention from imports) at \$1M/yr for each

### ➤ A level playing field for US farmers and manufacturers:

- *The Organic Import Verification Act* (soon to be released by Senator Ricketts) requires testing for imported feedstuffs. Our sector has serious concerns about fraudulent imports of organic soy and corn from overseas. This legislation is farmer developed and led. Beyond reducing fraud, we have other priorities for creating more opportunities for U.S. farmers in organic soy and corn production to U.S. farmers.

#### For more information, contact:

Ivanna Yang, Vice President of Government Affairs

iyang@ota.com • (314) 600-8749

444 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 445A, Washington D.C. 20001

OTA.com • @OrganicTrade