

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 9,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others.

POLICY PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Future of Organic Workshops: In the lead up to the 2023 farm bill, OTA has engaged with members and stakeholders to gain insight and feedback on key policy priorities for the organic sector. OTA partnered with Arizona State University's Swette Center for Sustainable Food Studies to host a series of four workshops on the future of organic.

The topics covered include:

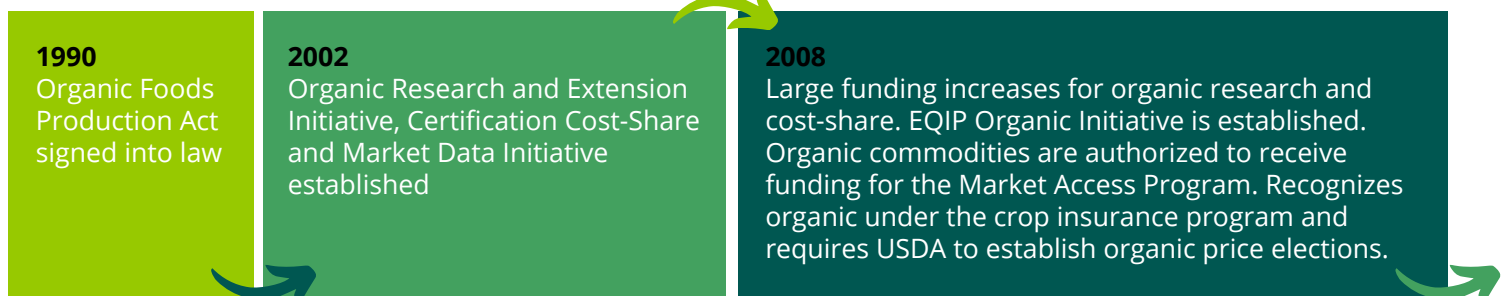
- Structure of the public-private partnership
- Continuous improvement
- Certification, inspection, enforcement, and accreditation
- The future of marketing claims and their relationship to organic

Nearly 300 people participated in the workshops representing the breadth and diversity of the organic sector and stakeholder landscape. Participants included certifiers and inspectors, farmers, large consumer brands, retailers, non-profits and advocacy organizations focused on food and farming issues. The culmination of these workshops will result in the publishing of a report this spring.

OTA's Farmers Advisory Council: OTA's Farmers Advisory Council (FAC) has a unique mandate to elevate the voice of small and mid-sized farmers in OTA's policy priorities with a special focus on the OTA's farm bill priorities. FAC is one of the largest coalitions of organic farmers and organic farming organizations in the United States. It represents nearly 8,000 organic livestock, poultry, grain, and specialty crop producers in all regions of the U.S.

FAC Farm Bill Working Sessions: Over the last several months FAC has had a series of working sessions to help inform OTA's farm bill priorities. Topics have included organic transition, crop insurance and risk management, conservation, certification cost-share, market development, processing infrastructure and supply chain challenges. The outcomes of the working sessions will inform the base of OTA's farm bill platform ensuring that OTA's policy priorities are driven by organic farmers.

HISTORY OF ORGANIC IN THE FARM BILL



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PREVIEW OF POLICY PRIORITIES

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ORGANIC STANDARDS

- Restructure the public-private partnership
- Invest in enforcement and oversight
- Prioritize continuous improvement

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- Provide funding, support and incentives for transition to organic
- Providing funding for market and processing infrastructure to address supply chain constraints and increase domestic production of organic crops

CLIMATE AND CONSERVATION

- Establish and provide funding for a technical assistance program for organic and transitioning farmers.
- Provide more conservation assistance for organic farmers to improve environmental outcomes such as fostering soil health, increasing biodiversity and natural resource conservation.
- Integrate organic certification into new climate-smart agriculture programs at USDA and modernize the Organic label to capture the environmental benefits of organic production

CORE FARM BILL PROGRAMS IMPROVEMENTS

- Maintain robust funding for the Organic Research and Education Initiative and Certification Cost-Share Program
- Include programmatic changes to streamline and improve access for organic farmers for cost-share, crop insurance, conservation, risk management and other farm bill programs

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Increase funding for the Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops

HISTORY OF ORGANIC IN THE FARM BILL, cont.

2014

National Organic Program (NOP) receives funding to modernize and upgrade technology systems. Gives USDA more tools for investigations and enforcement by requiring more record-keeping of organic operations and increasing civil penalties for violations. Authorizes the creation of an organic commodity research and promotion order aka "check-off program."

2018

Organic research program receives baseline funding of \$50 million per year. Increases authority for USDA to conduct global oversight and enforcement actions to combat fraud in organic and provides funding for NOP to utilize blockchain technology and require electronic import certificates. Raises the payment limit for EQIP OI from \$80,000 to \$140,000.