



National Organic Coalition Organic in the 2014 Farm Bill

Organic Certification Cost Share	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
<p>The annual process of organic certification is a necessary step for ensuring that all organic operations meet stringent organic standards, to ensure the integrity of the USDA organic seal and meet consumer expectations. But annual certification costs can be prohibitive, particularly for small and mid-sized operations. A modest level of assistance is essential in helping organic operations become and remain certified as organic, a critical step if we are to meet growing consumer demand for organic products and maintain diversity in scale of organic operations. Two programs—the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Act and the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) – provide certification cost share assistance. Under NOCCSP, Certified organic farmers and handlers have access to a reimbursement of 75% of total annual certification costs up to a cap of \$750/year. This program was unfunded in 2013. Under the AMA, farmers in 16 “underserved” states receive the same reimbursement.</p>	<p>Maintains two separate programs for organic certification cost share assistance – the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Act. The AMA program provides \$1M annually for certification cost share assistance to farmers in 16 states. NOCCSP is funded at \$11.5M annually, available until expended.</p>
Public Plant and Animal Breeding	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
<p>Farmers need access to a diverse toolbox of plant cultivars and animal breeds to meet the needs of their farms and cropping systems. Conventional breeding is designed to ensure that seeds and breeds used by farmers are adapted to specific soil, climate and pest conditions of each region. Since these conditions are constantly changing, local breeding programs must assure adaptation. Food security and resilience is compromised when the diversity of seeds and breeds used on farms is narrowed, a trend that is accelerating in the U.S. The 2008 Farm Bill required USDA to make conventional plant and animal breeding a priority within the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). USDA has fallen short on this mandate. NOC requested that this Farm Bill require a dedicated source of AFRI funding for public cultivar and breed development through conventional breeding, and should clarify the term “public cultivar.”</p>	<p>Not addressed in final Farm Bill.</p>
Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI)	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
<p>OREI is USDA’s flagship competitive research and extension grants program dedicated to organic agriculture. The program funds research and extension projects to help meet the production, marketing, and policy needs of the growing organic industry. NOC requested that OREI be funded at \$30 million in mandatory funds annually. The program received \$20 million annually under the 2008 Farm Bill, but rapid growth of the organic sector has greatly expanded the demand for this program. Many research outcomes benefit conventional agriculture as well.</p>	<p>The final Farm Bill provides \$20 million annually in mandatory funding for OREI.</p>

Organic Production and Market Data Initiative (ODI)	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
ODI is a small multi-agency initiative that ensures that USDA collects organic statistics, conducts organic price reporting, and releases organic economic reports. The Economic Research Service, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service all collaborate on this data collection initiative. Access to segregated organic data is critical to help organic farmers and handlers make wise business decisions, and to policymakers' efforts to assess market trends and implications of policy decisions. NOC requested that ODI receive \$5 million in mandatory funding over the life of the farm bill, and retain its authorization for appropriations.	The final Farm Bill provides \$5 million in one-time (not annual) mandatory funding for the Organic Data Initiative.
Organic Crop Insurance	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
USDA does not provide appropriate risk management tools for organic producers. The 2008 Farm Bill required the agency to eliminate the unjustified 5 percent surcharge for organic farmers who participate in federal crop insurance programs, and to provide specific "price elections" for organic crops so that organic farmers can be paid at the organic price after a loss. Despite years of delay, USDA has started to make significant progress on this issue in recent months, including the full elimination of the 5 percent surcharge, and actions to approve new price elections for organic crops. But more work remains to remove unnecessary barriers for risk management for organic farmers. NOC requested that this Farm Bill include additional language to require price elections for all organic crops. In addition, USDA does not provide adequate risk management tools for farmers (organic or conventional) with diversified farming operations, NOC advocated for reforms to the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) crop insurance provisions in the Farm Bill.	The final Farm Bill requires USDA to offer price elections for all organic crops by 2015 to reflect the actual retail or wholesale prices received by producers of organic crops.
National Organic Program	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
USDA's National Organic Program enforces the national organic standards and ensures the integrity of the USDA organic seal. NOP is in need of a capital investment in innovative technologies that will position the program to be able to grow with the organic sector, providing improved domestic and international oversight, transparency and streamlining of systems, data and information. NOC sought a one-time capital investment of \$5 million in mandatory funding to address this concern.	The final Farm Bill provides \$5 million in one-time (not annual) mandatory funding for NOP database modernization and upgrade.
USDA Conservation Programs	
NOC Position	2014 Farm Bill
The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) are critical to organic farmers. Both programs need reform to address concerns unique to organic farms, such as the unfamiliarity of NRCS staff with organic systems, duplication between organic certification requirements and NRCS program requirements, and payment limit inequities.	The final Farm Bill does nothing to address the payment limit inequities for organic farmers participating in the EQIP program.