

National Organic Specialists: An expanded agreement with NRCS



Who are we?



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) support for organic farms and their conservation needs is part of the Organic Transition Initiative (OTI).

NRCS is expanding their 14 year-long partnership with Oregon Tilth to establish six Organic Specialists who hold joint positions with NRCS and organic partners, including:

Oregon Tilth, Marbleseed, California Certified Organic Farmers Foundation (CCOF), Organic Agronomy Training Service (OATS), and the Organic Trade Association (OTA).



West Region



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Oregon Tilth



West Region

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California Certified Organic Farmers
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What are our overall objectives?

The Organic Specialist agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will increase conservation planning and implementation on organic and transitioning-to-organic farms to address resource concerns.

What are our overall objectives?

- Developing knowledge within NRCS about organic systems and their unique needs.
- Instilling comfort and confidence in NRCS staff working with organic farmers.
- Supporting the certification of more Technical Service Providers (TSPs) to work with organic farmers.

What are our overall objectives?

- Building more relationships between the organic community and NRCS.
- Building awareness within the organic community regarding opportunities for support from NRCS programs.



What are some specific objectives and activities we are working on?

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- At least 24 training sessions provided each year throughout the the country driven by NRCS state and staff requests:
 - Working Effectively with Organic Producers (WEWOP)
 - ICPS 823: Organic Management
 - CPA 138/DIA 140 and the Organic System Plan (OSP)
 - Technical Service Providers (TSPs) - host regional TSP trainings and conduct outreach to prospective TSPs
 - Organic pest, nutrient, livestock, and pasture management
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What are some specific objectives and activities we are working on?

- Work to ensure that every state has a designated NRCS Organic Champion. Regional networks will be developed for Organic Champions to provide Champions with training and resources needed to successfully achieve their goals and create a forum for sharing challenges, opportunities, and feedback.



What are some specific objectives and activities we are working on?

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- Coordination and outreach with Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).
 - Mentorship Program - connects producers transitioning with experienced organic producers who serve as mentors.
 - Technical Assistance - workshops, field days, events, educational resources, advising.
 - Community Building - organize conferences, workshops, field days, events.
 - Workforce Training and Development - targeted training and education for organic workforce.
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What are some specific objectives and activities we are working on?

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- Provide bi-weekly national organic office hours for NRCS staff.
 - Seek out opportunities for NRCS to have a presence at organic conferences and host workshops for organic and transitioning-to-organic producers.
 - Conduct outreach to State Technical Advisory Committees and help facilitate organic representation on these committees.
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Questions?

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- Have a question about working with organic producers or organic regulations?
 - Interested in getting involved in organic conferences, workshops, or events?
 - Interested in conducting outreach to organic producers or helping organic producers make connections with NRCS?

Contact us!



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