



CCOF

Organic Certification

Education & Outreach

Political Advocacy

Promotion

CCOF Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill

National Organic Program (NOP)

Increase authorized funding from \$15 million to a minimum of \$20 million annually.

The success of organic depends upon consumer trust in the organic seal, which is achieved through strong national organic standards and rigorous enforcement. In an increasingly global marketplace with growing demand for organic products, NOP will need enough funds to oversee the entire organic marketplace.

Funding for the NOP is especially important for California producers. California is fortunate to have strong state-level enforcement through the State Organic Program (SOP). However, California producers are arguably not receiving their due when it comes to enforcement resources because they fund their own enforcement through fees paid to the SOP in addition to their certification fees. The SOP currently operates at a budget of about \$1 million annually. The NOP should absorb these costs and fund enforcement across all states.

The NOP is a low-cost program with a significant return—the organic sector returns \$200 for every \$1 spent on the NOP. Research shows that areas with high levels of organic production have higher household median incomes and lower poverty rates. Investing in organic now will ensure that U.S. rural and agricultural economies leverage the economic benefits of organic production.

National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCS)

Protect funding \$11.5 million annually and ensure a workable program.

The National Organic Cost Share Program (NOCS) is a critical Farm Bill program because it ensures that organic certification is affordable and accessible for all California producers. NOCS reimburses organic farmers, ranchers, and handlers 75 percent of their certification-related expenses up to a maximum of \$750 per certified scope. It is a federally-funded program administered at the state level, primarily by state departments of agriculture. In California, CDFA administers the program and distributed \$1.5 million to 1,900 producers in FY 2015-16. CDFA's successful administration of NOCS funds continues to support a wide range of California producers in meeting the strong consumer demand for organic products.

Protection of NOCS funds is especially important in the coming years because SOP fees are now eligible for reimbursement. The eligibility of SOP fees supports California's diverse agricultural community because it helps relieve the impact of state-level organic fees, especially for small to mid-scale producers. Moreover, it creates the opportunity for even stronger



oversight of the organic label through additional state-level enforcement in states with high volumes of organic production.

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

Increase funding from \$20 million to \$50 million annually.

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) is crucial to organic farmers and ranchers who rely on biologically-based inputs and management practices that require stable funding for long term studies. The funding increase would provide baseline funding for organic research programs, bringing much needed stability over the next 10 years to research for domestic organic crop and livestock production. More OREI funds for researchers at California land grant institutions will not only help California's organic producers but the study of organic management practices will also contribute to CDFA's work to improve soil health on farms and ranches.

Organic Data Initiative

At a minimum, maintain funding at \$1 million annually.

The Organic Data Initiative (ODI) publishes valuable organic data trends and information at a low cost. Historically, organic farmers and ranchers did not have routine access to organic price data. Now, the Agricultural Marketing Service uses ODI resources to regularly issue price reports for organic produce, grains, and dairy. Additionally, the National Agricultural Statistics Service conducted a series of national organic surveys in 2014, 2015, and 2016. These data sources help producers determine trends in production and sales as well as provide useful information for producers considering certification.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program

Protect funding, include succession planning as a grant purpose, and ensure grant availability for organizations providing training and technical assistance.

The Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) is playing an increasingly important role in the organic agricultural economy. Many of California's organic farmers started farming 30 to 40 years ago. In fact, CCOF was founded in 1973 by these farmers and is seeing long time members begin planning for or entering retirement. Government-backed programs that provide direct support as well as funds for organizations providing training and technical assistance are necessary to meet the wide range of needs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Specialty Crop Research Initiative

Protect funding and improve program administration.

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative is valuable to California organic producers because the majority of organic crops grown in California are specialty crops (vegetables, fruits, and nuts). Programs such as the Specialty Crops Block Grant Program fund important projects related to food safety, research, marketing and other specialty crop needs. It is important that the funds



are available to address each state's unique market and research needs and to ensure reporting requirements are not overly burdensome for grant recipients.

Whole Farm Revenue Protection

Improve Programs for Organic Producers.

Risk management options for California producers have improved with the increase of organic price elections and the availability of Whole Farm Revenue Protection. However, organic producers continue to need additional organic price elections to ensure coverage for the full value of their crops. Although Whole Farm Revenue Protection is one of the few crop insurance options available for small, diversified farms, insurance agents have been unwilling to work with producers to use this program because it is overly complicated.

