

Roadmap to an Organic California



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@CCOFOrganic

ABOUT ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Organic farmers and ranchers use holistic practices to conserve biodiversity and promote balanced ecosystems. Organic agriculture protects soil and water quality through practices such as crop rotation, cover crops, and managed grazing. All foods sold as organic in the United States must comply with the USDA's federally enforced National Organic Standards.

THE BENEFITS REPORT

In the *Roadmap to an Organic California: Benefits Report*, the CCOF Foundation synthesizes the well-documented benefits of organic agriculture previously spread among hundreds of peer-reviewed journals

and the scientific literature. A rigorous body of research demonstrates that organic agriculture can sustainably feed the world's growing population while promoting public health and prosperity. By increasing the amount of agricultural land farmed organically, California will realize long-term economic, environmental, and social benefits.

THE CCOF FOUNDATION

The CCOF Foundation advances organic agriculture for a healthy world by investing in education for the next generation of organic producers, assisting organic farmers in need, training organic professionals, and helping communities understand the benefits of organic.



Chris Couture tends his organic asparagus field in the San Joaquin Valley, California. PHOTO COURTESY OF Abundant Harvest Organics

What are the Benefits of Organic?

Business opportunities

Organic is the fastest growing sector of the U.S. food industry. Organic grew 6% in 2017, well above the 1% growth in all U.S. food sales. Today, organic is a nearly \$50 billion sector. Over 80% of families in the United States buy organic foods. Walmart, Costco, Target, Kroger, Safeway, and other national grocery chains make organic products available and affordable to a broad range of consumers.



Prosperous communities

Agricultural economists have found lower county poverty rates and higher median household incomes in counties with high levels of organic activity.

Highly nutritious food

Organic crops, milk, and meat have high levels of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants as well as significantly lower levels of pesticide residues. Organic processed foods must be made with organic ingredients and are limited to using fewer than 100 processing aids and additives, compared to over 3,000 permitted in nonorganic food.

Safer workplaces

Organic farms create workplaces that protect farmers and farmworkers from the adverse health effects of routine synthetic pesticide exposure, including higher risks of numerous cancers, neurodegenerative diseases, and respiratory disorders.

New jobs

Organic creates an estimated **1.4 million jobs in the United States** and **407,400 jobs in California**. 42% of organic businesses increased employment in 2017, creating a variety of jobs, from farm work to positions with national retailers and certifying agencies. Organic farms tend to create more full-time, year-round employment opportunities for farmworkers, which increases wage security and family life stability.

Synthetic Pesticides Used in Food Production



What are the Benefits of Organic?

Preventing antibiotic resistance

Organic meat and milk production satisfies demand for animal products without contributing to the global antibiotic resistance crisis because organic livestock cannot be treated with antibiotics. In addition, organic ranchers have restricted use of 22 synthetic drugs compared to over 550 synthetics used in conventional livestock production.

Conserving natural resources

Organic practices improve soil quality and structure, which reduces topsoil erosion and enhances long-term agricultural productivity. Organic soils reduce fertilizer and pesticide leaching into waterways because they have improved water-holding capacity.

A secure and sustainable food supply

Organic soil-building and biodiversity practices create farms that are resilient to extreme weather conditions such as droughts and hurricanes. Worldwide studies show that farms using organic practices experience fewer crop, topsoil, and economic losses than their conventional counterparts in the aftermath of extreme weather events.

Mitigating climate change

Organic farmers and ranchers build healthy soils that sequester carbon and release fewer greenhouse gas emissions than conventional soils across the U.S. and the world.

Safeguarding public health

Organic agriculture protects children and families from environmental exposure to synthetic pesticides associated with health issues including cognitive disorders and increased risks of autism spectrum disorders.

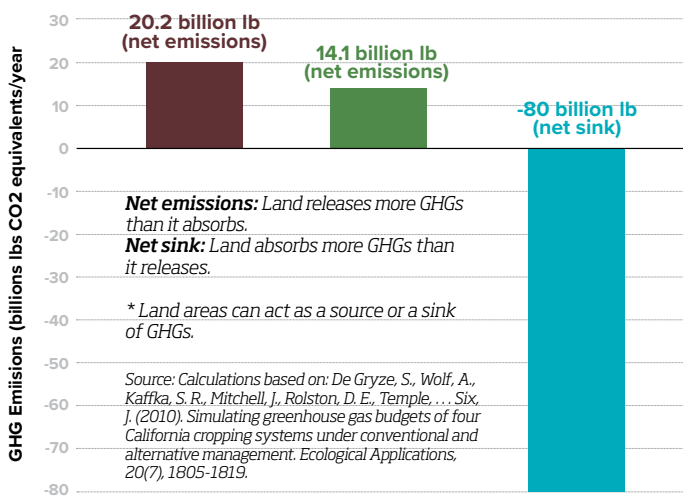
Protecting pollinators

Organic farms provide food and nesting sites for pollinators, including honey bees whose pollination services are valued at \$15 billion per year in the U.S. and \$190 billion worldwide because of their irreplaceable role in global food security.

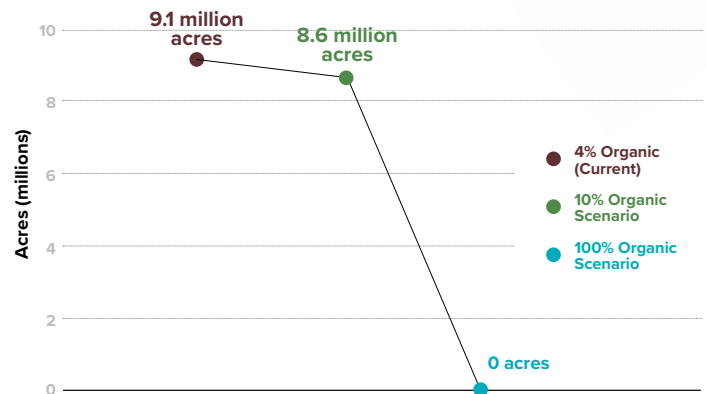
Comprehensive studies show that organic agriculture can feed 9 billion people by 2050 while also minimizing environmental harms associated with other agricultural systems such as loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, and water contamination.

What are the Benefits of Increasing California's Organic Acreage?

Reduced GHG Emissions from Crop Production*



Reduced Farmland Treated with Cancer-Causing Pesticides



Source: Calculated from data in California Department of Pesticide Regulation. (2016). Summary of pesticide use report data - 2016. Table 6. Retrieved from http://transfer.cdpr.ca.gov/pub/outgoing/pur/data/2016_PUR_report_textfiles/table6_carcinogen_acres/table6_carcinogen_acres.pdf

Increasing to 10% organic acreage would reduce emissions equivalent to **601,500 cars per year**. Going fully organic would be the equivalent of removing **7.8 million cars from the road!**