



Michigan Technical Note

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

AGRONOMY #8

Subject: Transitioning to Organic Resources

Date: February 2006

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program (USDA)

10300 Baltimore Avenue
BARC West, Building 046
Beltsville, MD 20705

Telephone: (301) 504-5230

Email: san@sare.org

Website: www.sare.org

Description: SARE studies and disseminates information about sustainable agriculture via a nation-wide grants program. See specific research findings at: www.sare.org/projects.

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)

USDA National Agricultural Library, Room 132
Beltsville, MD 20705

Telephone: (301) 504-6559

Email: afsic@nal.usda.gov

Website: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic

Description: AFSIC provides on-line informational resources, referrals, and database searching.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

P.O. Box 3657
Fayetteville, AR 72702

Telephone: (800) 346-9140

Website: www.attra.ncat.org

Description: Managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) with a grant from USDA, ATTRA is the national sustainable agricultural information service providing information and technical assistance, free of charge, to farmers and other agricultural professionals on sustainable agriculture.

USDA's National Organic Program (NOP)

USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP
Room 4008 South Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0020

Telephone: (202) 720-3253

Website: www.ams.usda.gov/nop

Description: NOP establishes national standards for the production and handling of organically produced products including a national list of substances approved for and prohibited from use in organic production and handling. The website has many resources including the national list of allowed and prohibited substances.

BOOKS

Chelsea Green Publishing Company

The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener, by Elliot Coleman.

- Presents simple and sustainable ways of growing top-quality organic vegetables and provides practical information on marketing, small scale equipment, and farming and gardening for the long-term health of the soil.

Organic Weed Management and *Organic Soil Fertility Management*

- The first two booklets, in a series of ten, on organic production topics.

Telephone: (800) 639-4099

Email: info@chelseagreen.com

Website: www.chelseagreen.com

Description: Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) produces the Hands-on Organic series designed to present a comprehensive view of key farming practices from the organic perspective.

Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Publications (Beltsville, MD)

1. *Building Soils for Better Crops, 2nd Edition*. This 240-page book contains detailed information about soil structure and the management practices that affect soil.
2. *Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 2nd Edition*. Explores how and why cover crops work and provides all the information needed to build cover crops into any farming system.
3. *The Real Dirt*. Farmers tell about organic and sustainable farming in the Northeast in the 1990s. Based on real interviews with more than 60 farmers, *The Real Dirt* provides a vivid snapshot of organic and sustainable farming.

4. *Steel in the Field*. A farmer's guide to weed management tools. Shows how today's implements and techniques can control weeds while reducing or eliminating herbicides.

Telephone: (802) 656-0484

Email: sanpubs@uvm.edu

Website: www.sare.org/htdocs/pubs

Description: SAN disseminates information for SARE through electronic and print publications.

BOOKLETS/NEWSLETTERS

1. *The Organic Decision: Transitioning to Organic Dairy Production*. Cornell University, Department of Applied Economics and Management Bulletin #2002-02 [FarmNet & FarmLink Publication EB 02-02 (\$12)]. Order form available at Website: <http://aem.cornell.edu/order/online.htm>.
2. Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) Publications. OFRF sponsors research related to organic farming practices and then disseminates those research results to organic farmers and growers. Website: www.ofrf.org/publications/. Telephone: (831) 426-6606.
3. *The Transition Process: Making the Transition to Sustainable Agriculture*. Rodale Institute. Email: ribooks@fast.net. Website: www.rodaleinstitute.org. Telephone: (610) 683-6009.
4. *A Case Study Report: Farming Without Chemicals in Ohio*. Report based on in-depth interviews with certified organic grain and soybean farmers in Ohio. Contact: Innovative Farmers of Ohio, 3083 Liberty Road, Delaware, OH 43015. Telephone: (740) 368-8552. Websites: www.ifoh.org or www.ifoh.org/Publications/publications.html.
5. *Upper Midwest Resource Directory (UMOR Directory) 5th Edition*. Directory of resource groups; certification agencies, brokers, suppliers, processors, and consultants; and publications in seven states: IL, IA, MI, MN, ND, SD, and WS. Free online at Website: www.mosesorganic.org/directory.htm.
6. *Manual for Organic Farming in the Upper Midwest*. Practical information for converting and sustaining organic production. Based on research with organic farmers. Available from Southwest Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota (Website: www.umn.edu).

VIDEOS

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)

411 Sheldon Road
Barre, MA 01005

Telephone: (978) 355-2853

Email: nofa@nofamass.org

Website: www.nofa.org/conference/video/index.php

Description: The NOFA Video Project is a collection of VHS audio/visual videos on all aspects of organic growing. There are a handful of introductory videos, a large collection of expert videos, and a few “organic greats.” Nearly all the videos were taped at NOFA summer conferences over the past fifteen years and are available for rent or sale.

Cornell University Resource Center

Organic Grain: Another Way.

Telephone: (607) 255-2080

Email: resctr@cornell.edu

Website: www.cornell.edu

Description: Educational package of three videotapes, two 200-page books, and assorted reprints can serve as a framework for study and discussion groups evaluating alternative methods of grain production. Tapes can be ordered separate from package.

ORGANIZATIONS

1. **The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance:** Member organization that provides a business directory, industry news, free classifieds, a member directory, and other organic dairy resources. Website: www.organicmilk.org.
2. **The Northeast Organic Network (NEON).** A consortium of farmers, researchers, extension, and nonprofits working to improve organic farmers’ access to research and technical support. Website: www.neon.cornell.edu.
3. **Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI).** Maintains the Brand Name Products & General Materials lists on-line and in print. OMRI conduct scientific research and education on the use of materials by the organic industry. Website: www.omri.org.
4. **Northern Plains Sustainable Agricultural Society (NPSAS).** Grassroots organization that works to develop and promote ecologically and socially sound food production and food distribution systems in the northern plains. Also helps northern plains farmers to convert to organic production. Focuses on GMO issues affecting organic growers. Website: www.npsas.org.
5. **Organic Trade Association (OTA).** Membership-based business association for the Organic Industry of North America. Website: www.ota.com.
6. **University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (USCAREP).** California-based program with good information of organic and research programs in California, and list of publications for organic production. Website: www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/organic.

WEBSITES/ON-LINE MATERIALS

All organic links Website: www.allorganiclinks.com

1. **Minnesota Organic Farmers Information Exchange (MOFIE) Program.** Through MOFIE, producers can connect with experienced organic farmers, access information about certifying agencies, and link up with organizations that specialize in organic research and outreach. Website: <http://mofie.coafes.umn.edu>
2. **Missouri Alternatives Center.** See the “O” list in the Extension Information on Alternatives section for information on certification and farming. Website: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/>
3. **The New Farm.** Organic magazine from the Rodale Institute that provides an Organic Price Index (updated weekly), online training programs, and various forums. Website: www.newfarm.org. See “*Making the Transition to Organic Farming: It May be Easier Than You Think.*” Website: www.newfarm.org/depts/midatlantic/Fact%20Sheets/transition.shtml
4. **Biological Control: A Guide to Natural Enemies in North America.** On-line guide to controlling pests biologically. Website: www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/biocontrol.
5. **Organic Ag Info.** Provides current information about organic agriculture research. Website: www.organicaginfo.org.
6. **Transitioning to Organic.** Rodale Institute’s 5-hour on-line training course that walks farmers through the transition process, including record-keeping requirements and the farm plan. Website: www.newfarm.org/training.
7. **Organic Farming Cost Studies.** A number of cost studies for organically grown products are available from University of California-Davis. Each publication contains an overview of production practices and sample budgets for producing the crop. Website: www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/pubs/Costs.htm.
8. **Crop Rotational Budgets for Three Cropping Systems in the Northeast United States.** An index of crop budgets for conventional, integrated, and organic production systems prepared by Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Website: <http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~farmmgmt/ne-budgets/nebudgets.html>.
9. **Organic Crop Budgets for the Upper Midwest.** Website: <http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/agecon/ecguides/2003org.pdf>.

REFERENCE: Friedman, D., 2003. *Transitioning to Organic Production*. Sustainable Agriculture Network. Website: www.sare.org/publications/organic.htm.