

Today's Speakers

Kari Cohen, Conservation Innovation Team Leader
NRCS



Greg Fogel, Policy Director
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition



David Redhage, President/CEO
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture



INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE INTO NRCS PROGRAMS



Results of Organic Focused Conservation Innovation Grants
August 1, 2017

Greg Fogel, Policy Director, NSAC



NSAC: a grassroots alliance of 118 member organizations from around the country working together to improve federal food & farm policy.

- NSAC staff and 10 NSAC member groups worked with NRCS over four years to:
 - Integrate organic, diversified, and integrated production systems into NRCS programs and procedures; and
 - Make NRCS programs more accessible to sustainable and organic farmers.

- Propose revisions to:
 - ▣ Conservation Practice Standards
 - ▣ Payment Schedules and Scenarios
 - ▣ Conservation Enhancements and Job Sheets
 - ▣ CSP Conservation Measurement Tool
 - ▣ NRCS-NOP Crosswalks
- Train NRCS staff, farmers, and potential TSPs
- Develop a national guidebook for NRCS staff working with organic farmers

Project Partners:

- Center for Rural Affairs
- Florida Certified Organic Growers & Consumers
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- Kansas Rural Center
- Land Stewardship Project
- Midwest Organic Sustainable Education Service
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
- Organic Farming Research Foundation
- Virginia Association of Biological Farming
- Wild Farm Alliance

USDA Partners:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (including DC and Tech Center staff)
- Agricultural Research Service
- National Organic Program



Project Consultants:

- Sarah Carlson, Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Fred Magdoff, Professor of Soils, University of Vermont
- Ray Weil, Professor of Soil Science, University of Maryland
- Jim Riddle, Organic Outreach Coordinator for the University of Minnesota
- Loni Kemp, Policy Analyst, Kemp Consulting
- Joyce Ford, Organic Independents, LLP
- Lynn Coody, Organic Agsystems Consulting

Summary of Actions:

- Surveyed hundreds of farmers
- Delivered recommendations on 20 existing CSP conservation enhancements and proposed three new enhancements
- Delivered recommendations on the CMT regarding transparency, thresholds, baseline inventory, and ranking and payment processes
- Delivered recommendations on the organic crosswalk

Summary of Actions:

- Proposed one new practice standard and changes to 41 existing practice standards
- Proposed changes to six payment schedules and associated scenarios across three regions (Appalachian, Mid-Atlantic, and Northern Mountain) to reflect income forgone for advanced management of organic and sustainable production systems
- Delivered recommendations organic crosswalk

Worked with 18 NRCS staff members to develop a guidebook for NRCS field staff working with organic and transitioning-to-organic farmers and ranchers.



November 2015

National Organic Farming Handbook



Summary of Actions:

- Provided trainings to farmers, NRCS field staff and professionals interested in becoming TSPs, through:
 - 10 webinars
 - Five in-person trainings

- CSP Enhancements
 - NRCS incorporated roughly 70 percent of our recommended changes into 15 CSP enhancements; created new cover crop enhancement
- Trainings
 - 1,440 people attended live training webinars; more than 14,200 viewings since 2012.
- Organic guidebook published
- Crosswalks updated
- Practice standards updated cyclically

Thank You! Questions?

