



ACH17-21/October 2020

Sales of certified organic commodities continue to increase, with sales up 31% from 2016, the year of the most recent survey of certified organic agriculture. The number of operations producing certified organic commodities was up 17%, and land used for certified organic production was up 9%.

16,585 farms



5.5 million acres



\$9.9 billion sales



Organic Sales

Sales of organic commodities overall rose 31%, from 2016 to 2019, but varied by sector. Livestock and poultry products, primarily milk and eggs, increased by the smallest amount (12%). Crops and livestock and poultry increased by larger amounts (38% and 44% respectively). The share of sales of organic products from crops rose slightly from 2016 to 2019. In 2019, 58% of organic sales came from crops, led by vegetables and fruits (including berries and tree nuts).

	2019 Sales (\$ million)	% Change Since 2016
Crops	5,787	38
Livestock and poultry products	2,476	12
Livestock and poultry	1,663	44
Total	9,926	31

Top Organic Commodities, 2019

	Sales (\$ million)
Milk	1,585
Broiler chickens	1,115
Eggs	887
Apples	475
Lettuce	400

Organic Farms, Acres, and Sales, 2008 to 2019



Since the first organic survey in 2008, the number of organic farms, the acres used for organic production, and the value of organic products sold have all increased, with value of sales more than tripling between 2008 to 2019.

Top States: Organic Sales and Acres, 2019

	Sales		Acres
	\$ million		thousand
California	3,597	California	965
Washington	886	Alaska	(D)
Pennsylvania	742	Montana	356
Oregon	454	New York	323
Texas	424	Wisconsin	251
North Carolina	370	Texas	246
New York	298	Nebraska	232
Wisconsin	269	Vermont	203
Michigan	231	Oregon	196
Idaho	206	Idaho	181
Arizona	203	Minnesota	173

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

California produced 36% of the total U.S. value of certified organic agricultural products sold, with more than four times the value of any other state. Eleven states sold more than \$200 million in organic products, or 77% of the U.S. total.

Commodity Sales

Milk and broiler chickens were the top two organic commodities, with more than \$1 billion each in sales, followed by eggs at almost \$900 million. Sales of broiler chickens increased sharply from 2016, up almost 50%. Sales of milk and eggs increased at slower rates. Sales of the major crop categories (vegetables, fruits, and field crops) were all up, with sales of field crops increasing by more than 50%. Among crops, the top selling commodities were apples, lettuce, grapes, and strawberries.

	Sector Total (\$ million)	Sales (\$ million)	% Change, 2016 to 2019
Livestock and poultry products	2,476		12
Milk		1,585	14
Eggs		887	9
Vegetables in the open	2,084		27
Lettuce		400	44
Spinach		179	52
Potatoes		155	3
Tomatoes		132	-24
Carrots		132	49
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	2,023		44
Apples		475	45
Grapes		332	52
Strawberries		321	33
Blueberries, cultivated		205	104
Raspberries		92	197
Livestock and poultry	1,663		44
Broiler chickens		1,115	49
Cattle		293	26
Turkeys		139	68
Field crops	1,180		55
Corn, for grain		278	70
Hay, alfalfa		154	45
Wheat		149	39
Soybeans		109	39
Mushrooms	161		45
Vegetables under protection	133		49
Nursery, propagative materials, and floriculture	115		2
Maple syrup	91		39
Total	9,926		31

\$2 billion

The amount of sales organic producers reported as being direct to retail markets, institutions, and food hubs.

Farm Characteristics

Sales Class	% of Farms	% of Sales ^a
< \$10,000	11%	0.1%
\$10,000 - \$99,999	38%	3%
\$100,000 - \$249,999	22%	6%
\$250,000 - \$499,999	12%	7%
\$500,000+	17%	84%

The largest organic farms (sales of \$500,000 or more) accounted for fewer than 20% of farms but more than 80% of sales.

^a May not add to 100% due to rounding.

Plans for Future Production

The 2019 survey asked organic farmers about their plans for organic production in the next five years. The survey also asked about any acres they may have in transition to organic production. Before becoming certified, the land used must go through a three-year transition period in which no organic-prohibited substances are applied.

	% All Farms ^a
Maintain current level of organic production	44
Increase organic production	29
Unknown future intentions	20
Decrease organic production	4
Discontinue organic production	2
Discontinue all ag production	2

Certified organic farms reported an additional 255,060 acres currently transitioning to organic production. Other farms (not currently certified) reported 60,611 acres transitioning.

^a May not add to 100% due to rounding.

About the Survey

The 2019 Organic Survey is a follow-on survey to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The survey is a census of all known U.S. farms and ranches with certified organic production in 2019, as well as those who indicated on the census that they were transitioning into organic production. Certified organic producers are certified by an approved agent of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program.

The 2019 data, as well as results of previous NASS organic surveys, are available in the NASS Quick Stats database at www.quickstats.nass.usda.gov, or as a PDF file publication at www.nass.usda.gov/organics.

Organic Production Practices

The survey asked organic farmers about a variety of organic production practices. The most common practices include maintaining buffer strips or border rows to isolate organic from non-organic crops, applying animal manures, and using water management practices.

	No. of Farms
Buffer strips or border rows to isolate organic from conventional crops	10,796
Animal manures used	9,160
Water management practices used	7,880
Green manures used	7,564
Conservation tillage, no-till or minimum till used	5,970
Mulch or compost, produced or used	5,737
Planting locations planned, to avoid cross-infestation of pests	4,962