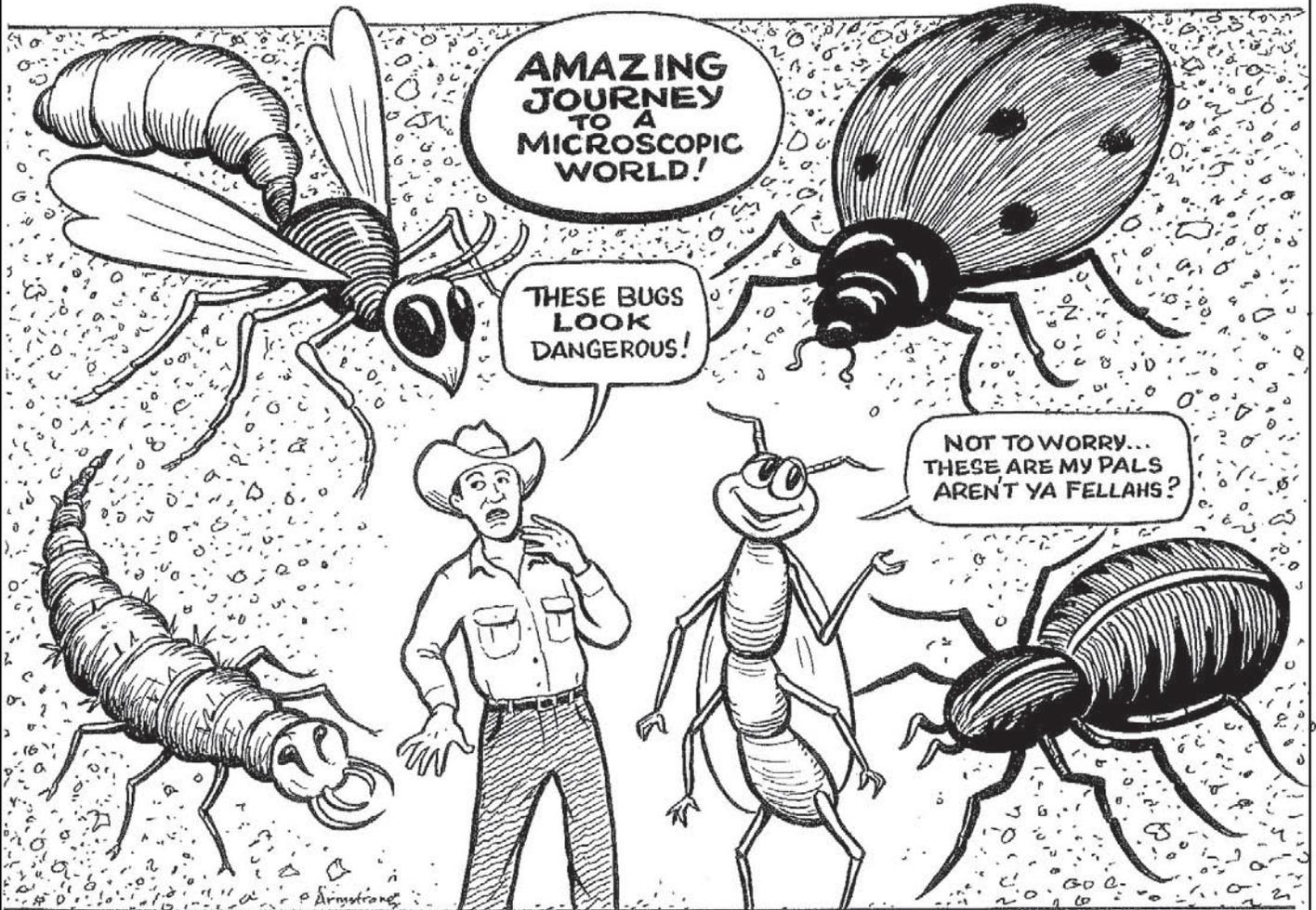




LOADS OF RESOURCES FOR ORGANIC FARMERS!



# THE ORGANIC Chronicles <sup>#1</sup>



**MYSTERIES OF ORGANIC FARMING REVEALED!**

ATTRA—National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service is managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and is funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service. Visit the NCAT website, [www.ncat.org/agri.html](http://www.ncat.org/agri.html), for more information on our sustainable agriculture projects.

ATTRA offers more than 240 publications on organic and sustainable agriculture topics, including crop production, rotational and multispecies grazing, intercropping, composting, ecological soil & pest management, weed control, and agroforestry.



All of these publications, including a catalog that lists all materials, can be downloaded free of charge at ATTRA's website, [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org). Paper copies can be ordered by calling the toll-free telephone line, 1-800-346-9140.

## ATTRA Publications for Organic Producers

The following publications about organic production can be found at [www.attra.org/organic.html](http://www.attra.org/organic.html)

### **Organic Farm Certification & the National Organic Program**

ATTRA's basic guide to the organic certification process. Provides a brief history of organic certification, steps in the certification process, how to evaluate a certifier, and how fees are assessed.

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/organiccert.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/organiccert.pdf)

### **Organic Certification Process**

Discusses in more detail the organic certification process—purposes and benefits of organic certification, steps to organic certification, and the role of the inspector.

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/organic\\_certification.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/organic_certification.pdf)

### **Documentation Forms**

These forms are tools for documenting practices, inputs, and activities that demonstrate compliance with the National Organic Standard. They are intended to make record keeping easy and should be shown to the inspector during annual inspections. There are four separate packages: "Field Crops," "Livestock," "Market Farm" and "Orchard, Vineyard, & Berry Crops."

[www://attra.ncat.org/organic.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html)

### **National Organic Program Compliance Checklist for Producers**

A tool to assist farmers, ranchers, inspectors, and certifiers in assessing compliance with the National Organic Standard. The document reformulates the Regulations into "yes" and "no" questions and reflects the requirements of the Organic System Plan.

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/compliance.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/compliance.pdf)

### **Opportunities in Agriculture: Transitioning to Organic Production**

ATTRA has a special relationship with the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) and distributes many of their publications. We are especially pleased to provide this publication on transitioning to organic production. *Print only: 1-800-346-9140.*

### **Organic Crops and Livestock Workbooks**

NCAT's *Organic Crops Workbook* and *Organic Livestock Workbook* are the result of collaborative effort with many leaders from the organic community. Both publications reflect the perspective of organic inspectors and give the user a clear picture of all the details that must be considered in developing a system that is compliant with the National Organic Standard. Unresolved issues are highlighted and discussed. Excellent tools for anyone making the transition from a convention operation.

**Crops:** [www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/cropsworkbook.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/cropsworkbook.pdf)

**Livestock:** [www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/livestockworkbook.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/livestockworkbook.pdf)

### **Organic System Plan (OSP) Templates for Certifiers**

Contains template forms that are in common use by U.S. certifiers. Provides prospective organic producers with an insight into the kinds of information they will need to provide when applying for certification.

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/osp\\_templates.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pdf/osp_templates.pdf)

### **Special Organic Resources**

#### **Information on Organic Production of fruits, vegetables, field crops, livestock & marketing.**

[www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html)

#### **Organic Seed Suppliers Search**

Organic growers must use organic seed if commercially available. Web only. [http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/altseed\\_search.php?](http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/altseed_search.php)

#### **Organic Pest Management**

This site has a range of information about organic management of insect, weed, and disease pests. [www.attra.ncat.org/pest.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/pest.html)

#### **Organic IPM Field Guide**

This is a full-color pictorial guide about the concepts of organic IPM, outlining how to promote beneficial organisms. It includes life cycle pictures of important beneficials and pests. Presented in four sections, online or CD-ROM only.

- Beneficial Organisms, Beneficial Habitat and Insect Pests
- Plant Disease Management
- Weed Management
- Vertebrate Pest Management

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/organic\\_ipm.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/organic_ipm.html)

#### **Organic Soils & Fertilizer Issues**

[www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html#soils](http://www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html#soils)

#### **Spanish Language Materials**

ATTRA offers many publications and resources about organics in Spanish. <http://attra.ncat.org/espanol/index.html>

## IN THIS ISSUE:

**Page 3 - 9**—"Going Organic"

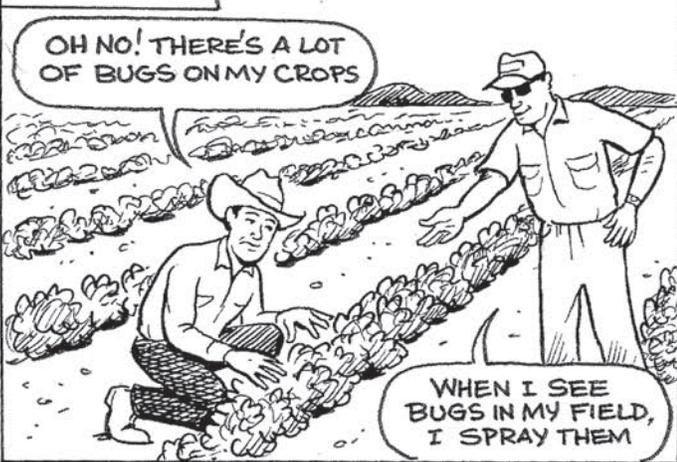
**Page 9**—Myths & Realities about Going Organic. Tips from Organic Inspectors on Transitioning Your Farm.

**Page 10 - 12**—Where to Learn More about Organic Agriculture, Certification, and Marketing

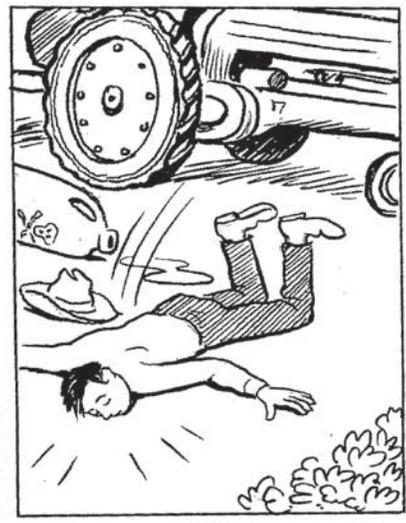
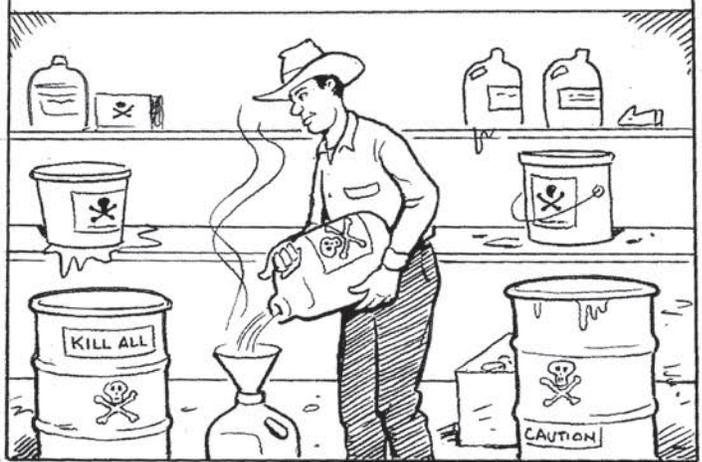
# The **ORGANIC CHRONICLES**

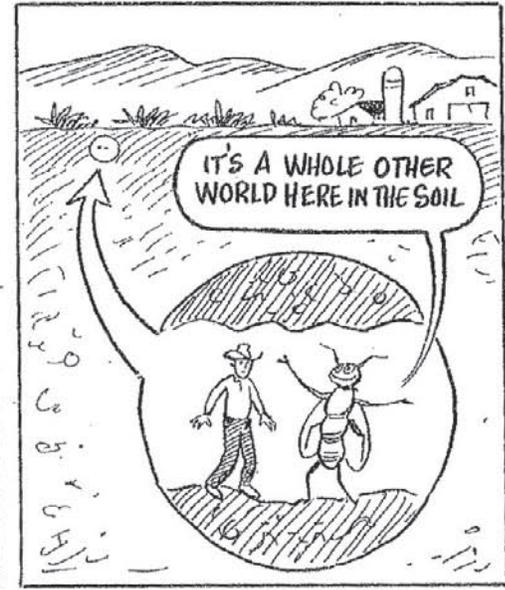
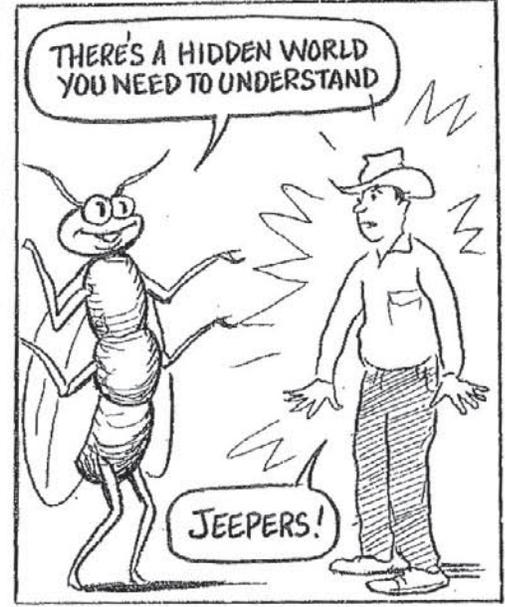
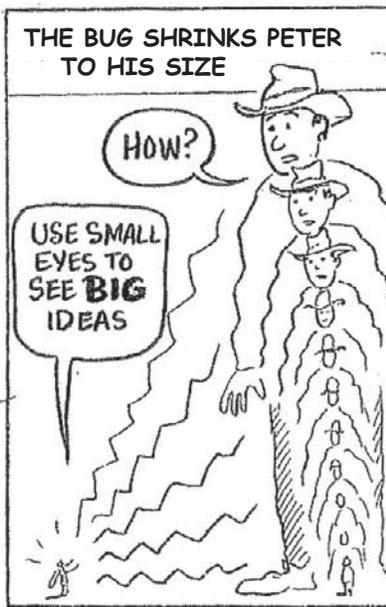
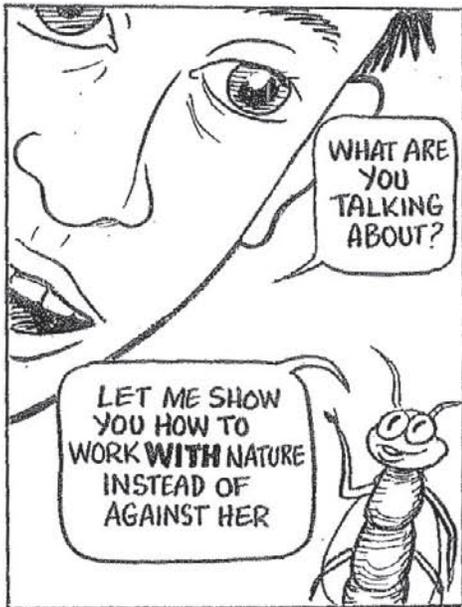
## Nº 1 "Going Organic"

ONE DAY OUR FARMER PETER IS OUT INSPECTING HIS FIELDS



HE CARELESSLY MIXES PESTICIDES WITHOUT WEARING PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT





THE SOIL IS TEEMING WITH ORGANISMS THAT CYCLE NUTRIENTS FROM SOIL TO PLANT AND BACK AGAIN. THINK OF THESE ORGANISMS AS "SOIL LIVESTOCK" THAT NEED ORGANIC MATTER (COMPOST, MULCHES, COVER CROPS, GREEN MANURES AND MANURES) AS BOTH FOOD AND HABITAT

**BACTERIA- AND FUNGI- GRAZERS**

**SHREDDERS**

**BACTERIA AND FUNGI**

MAGNIFIED 1000X

WOW! THE SOIL REALLY IS ALIVE! AMAZING!

THIS DIVERSITY OF LIFE IS THE SOIL FOOD WEB, WHICH KEEPS PLANTS HEALTHY BY PROVIDING NUTRIENTS, COMPETING WITH PESTS, AND IMPROVING SOIL QUALITY

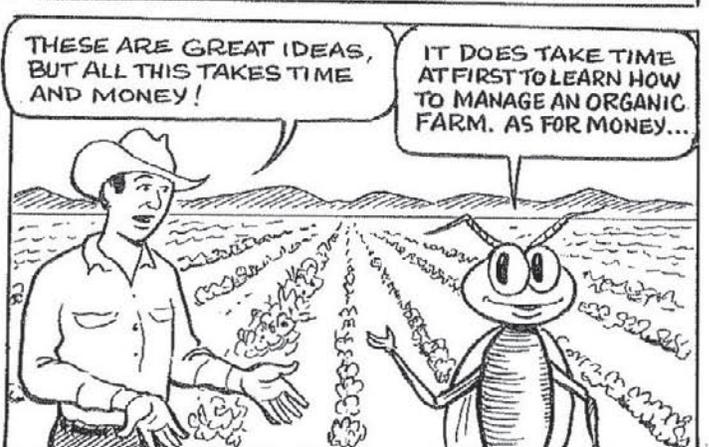
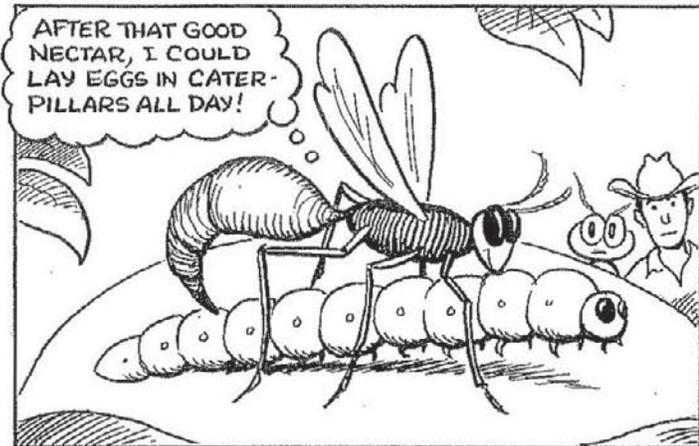
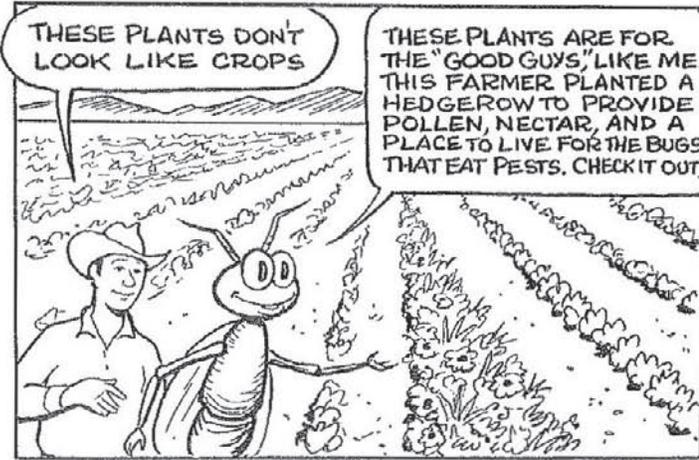
ONE GRAM OF HEALTHY AGRICULTURAL SOIL CONTAINS:

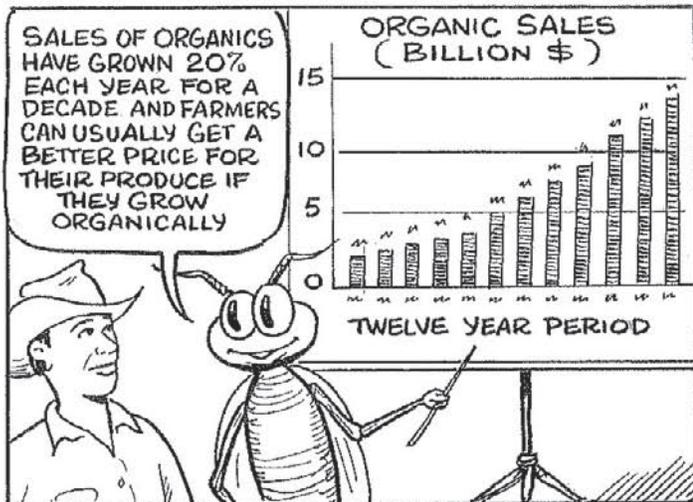
- 100 MILLION TO 1 BILLION BACTERIA
- SEVERAL YARDS OF FUNGI
- SEVERAL THOUSANDS OF PROTOZOA
- 10 TO 20 BACTERIA- AND FUNGAL-FEEDING NEMATODES

THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT IN THE SOIL, BUT ALSO ABOVE GROUND. LET'S TAKE A LOOK....

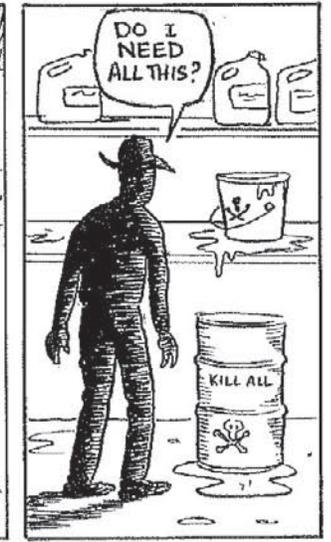
THIS SURE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MY FARM

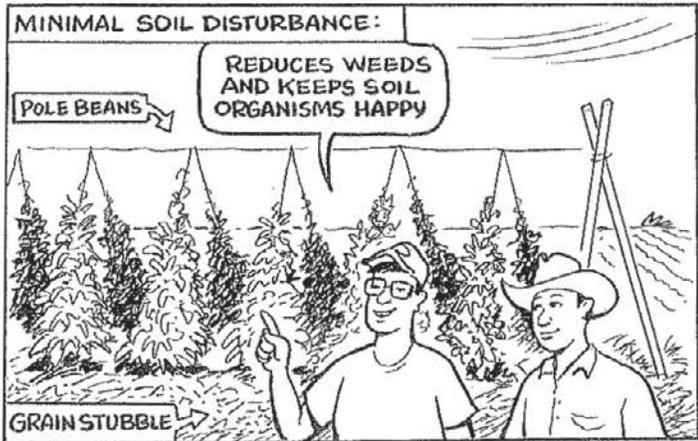
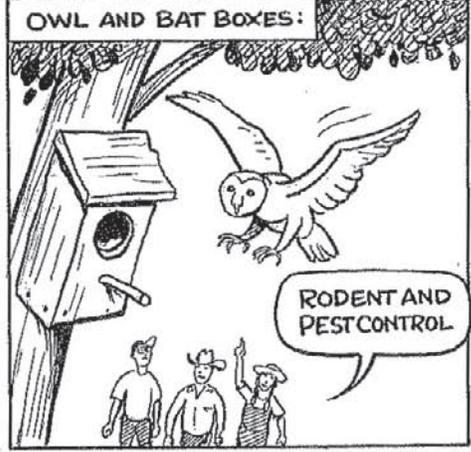
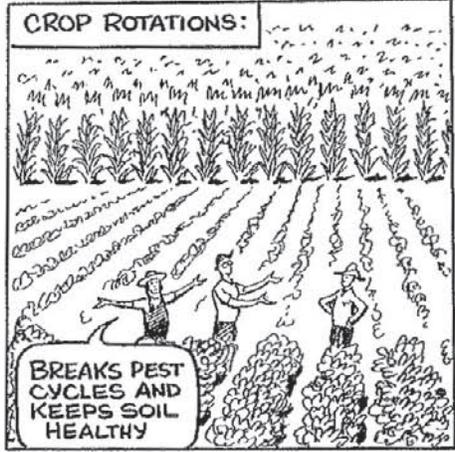
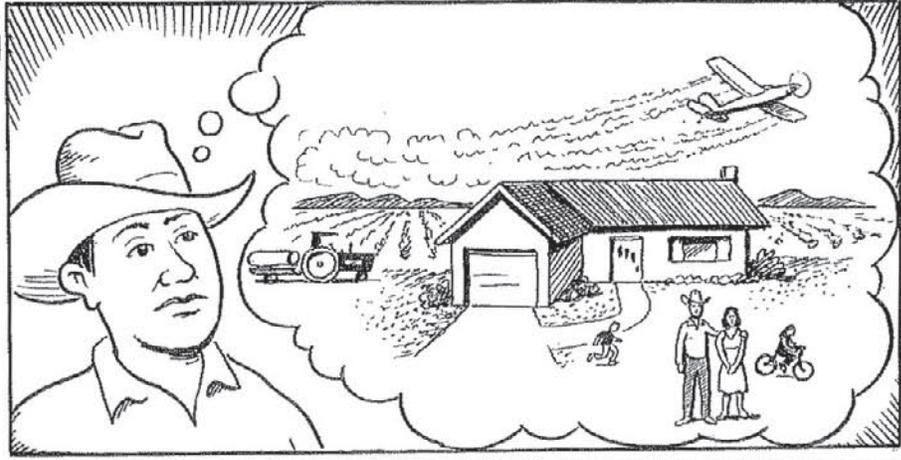
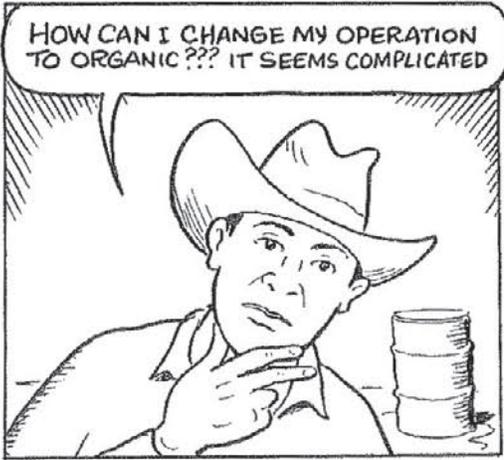
THIS FARM HAS MANY CROPS WHICH REDUCES RISK FROM PESTS AND DIVERSIFIES THE FARMER'S PRODUCTS





- ... AND THERE ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES TO ORGANICS
- HIGHER PRICES TO GROWERS
  - EXPANDING MARKET
  - SAFER FOR FARMER, FARM WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
  - LESS PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN PRODUCE
  - BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT







## Tips from Organic Inspectors on Transitioning Your Farm to Organic Production

You don't have to go hook, line, and sinker into organics. You can start with a field or parcel. Keep separate records for the parcel and document all inputs, practices, etc.

You don't necessarily have to apply for certification at the beginning of the 36-month transition period. Consult your certifier to learn what will be required. You can generally wait until about six months before the first harvest that will occur after the transition period. The timing may depend on what you grow as your first crop, so allow plenty of time.

You must be able to document land use history.

The greatest risks for transitioning producers are record keeping, human resource management, budgeting, and coping with the economic transition.

You will need a marketing plan for the crops you grow during your transition period. Even though you are managing the crops as organic during the transition, you will not be able to sell these crops as organic. The transitional label does not carry legal status. Since it is possible that your yields might drop initially, you need to carefully consider your markets and cash flow.

While some crops may produce lower yields without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, organic growers often have relatively low input costs, so your bottom line may be steady. However, management costs may be higher, at least initially while you are learning to manage a system differently. The organic premium may increase your profits after certification is complete.

It takes time for your farm's ecology to adjust to organic management. The natural processes will continue to develop as the farm becomes more balanced.

Not all growers find the transition difficult. Producers who are already rotating crops and using sustainable practices will likely have an easier time.

## Myths and Realities about Going Organic

by Ann Baier, NCAT Program Specialist

Myth	Reality
Yields will be miserable.	Yields are comparable under well managed systems.
Pests will eat you up.	Most pest problems can be prevented using integrated approaches.
Weeds will take over your farm.	Weed management requires constant attention.
Transitioning is impossible.	Transition can be challenging: plan cash flow with budget projections.
The paperwork will kill you.	Recordkeeping can help your operation in many ways in addition to organic compliance.
You'll never make any money.	Organic certification expands your market options and often gives premium prices.
It can't be done.	It can be done if you plan, persist, and ask for help when you need it.

# Where to Learn More about Organic Agriculture, Certification, and Marketing

## Organic Certification and Education

### National Organizations

*ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: 800-346-9140*

ATTRA provides a wide range of information about all aspects of organic certification, practices, record keeping, and documentation forms.

*[www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html#overview](http://www.attra.ncat.org/organic.html#overview)*

#### National Organic Program (NOP)

This website has information on: Certifying Agents, Consumer Information, NOP Regulations (Standards) & Guidelines for Producers, Handlers, Processors & Retailers, State & Cost Share Information, and the latest news from the National Organic Program.

*[www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)*

For a complete list of certifiers accredited by the USDA's National Organic Program, see this page of the website: *[www.ams.usda.gov/nop/CertifyingAgents/Accredited.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/CertifyingAgents/Accredited.html)*

#### Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)

OFRF offers farmer research grants, advocates for organic public policy, and provides education and networking initiatives about organic farming.

*[www.ofrf.org](http://www.ofrf.org)*

#### Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)

For organic certifiers, growers, manufacturers, and suppliers, OMRI provides an independent review of products intended for use in certified organic production, handling, and processing. Acceptable products appear on the OMRI Products List.

*[www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)*

#### Independent Organic Inspector's Association (IOIA)

This group offers trainings for organic inspectors and resources related to organic certification.

*[www.ioia.net/](http://www.ioia.net/)*

### Universities with Organic Programs

An increasing number of land grant colleges and state universities offer training and research in organic agriculture methods. These include Cornell, Tufts, and the universities of Arkansas, California, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, North Carolina, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and many more. The Organic Agricultural Consortium has compiled information about organic research projects.

*[www.organicaginfo.org](http://www.organicaginfo.org)*

### Midwestern Organizations

*Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) 715-772-3153; [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)*

*Minnesota Organic Farmers Info Exchange Program 320-212-3008; <http://mofie.coafes.umn.edu>*

*Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association 614-421-2022; [www.oeffa.org](http://www.oeffa.org)*

### Northeastern Organizations

*Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association 207-568-4142; [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org)*

*Northeast Organic Network (NEON) 518-583-4613; [www.neon.cornell.edu](http://www.neon.cornell.edu)*

#### Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)

NOFA is a collaboration of seven states, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. The website has links to each state chapter. [NOFA-NY is especially useful regarding certification: *<http://nofany.org/index.html>*]

*203-888-5146; [www.nofa.org](http://www.nofa.org)*

### Find Organizations Across the Country

NCAT's Sustainable Agriculture Organizations and Publications Database lets you search for the groups near you that deal with organic and sustainable farm production. Online only:

*[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/susagorg.php](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/susagorg.php)*

## **Southern Organizations & Resources**

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
919-542-2402; [www.carolinafarmstewards.org](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org)

Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldsboro, NC—established by NC State Univ., NC A&T Univ., and NC Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
919-513-0954; [www.cefs.ncsu.edu/organic.htm](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/organic.htm)

Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers  
352-377-6345; [www.foginfo.org](http://www.foginfo.org)

Georgia Organics, Inc  
770-993-5534; [www.georgiaorganics.org](http://www.georgiaorganics.org)

NCAT & IOIA's Southern Organic Resource Guide  
Organic resources in the South including Ark., Ky., La., Miss., and Tenn.. [www.attra.ncat.org/sorg](http://www.attra.ncat.org/sorg)

Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
540-745-4130; [www.vabf.org](http://www.vabf.org)

## **Western Organizations & Resources**

Alternative Energy Resources Organization  
406-443-7272; [www.aeromt.org](http://www.aeromt.org)

California Certified Organic Farmers  
831-423-2263; [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org). Going Organic program:  
[www.ccof.org/goingorganic.php](http://www.ccof.org/goingorganic.php)

Colorado Organic Producers Association  
970-588-2292; [www.organiccolorado.org](http://www.organiccolorado.org)

Montana Organic Association:  
406-887-2869; [www.montanaorganicassociation.org](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org)

New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission  
505-841-9065; <http://nmocc.state.nm.us>

Oregon Tilth: 503-378-0690; [www.tilth.org](http://www.tilth.org)

Organic Farmer's Guide to OSU  
[www.extension.oregonstate.edu/catalogue/pdf/em8835.pdf](http://www.extension.oregonstate.edu/catalogue/pdf/em8835.pdf)

Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
877-326-5175; [www.tofga.org](http://www.tofga.org)

Washington Producers Tilth  
206-442-7620; [www.tilthproducers.org](http://www.tilthproducers.org)

Washington State Dept of Ag Organic Food Program  
360-902-1805; <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic>

## **Organic Crop Production and Marketing Information**

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ATTRA's *Resource Guide to Organic & Sustainable Vegetable Production*

These educational materials support the needs of organic and sustainable vegetable farmers.  
[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/vegetable-guide.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/vegetable-guide.html)

**Cornell University**

Look here for links about various aspects of organic production of fruits, vegetables, field crops, dairy, cover crops, and rotations specific to the Northeast.  
[www.organic.cornell.edu](http://www.organic.cornell.edu)

**Growing for Market**

Monthly magazine about small-scale farming, sustainable agriculture and farm-direct marketing, with a focus on organic production. For growers of fresh produce and cut flowers.  
[www.growingformarket.com](http://www.growingformarket.com)

**Organic Trade Association**

OTA's website provides extensive links on specific crops and topics such as soil and pest management.  
[www.howtogoorganic.com/index.php](http://www.howtogoorganic.com/index.php)

**New Farm**

This website offers detailed stories about organic practices on specific farms as well as many other features. It sponsors half a dozen email discussion forums on topics such as no-till, organic certification, and new farmers.  
[www.newfarm.org](http://www.newfarm.org)

*Sustainable Vegetable Production: Start-up to Market* by Vernon Grubinger. NRAES, Ithaca, NY, 1999  
A wealth of practical information on such essential concerns as where to farm, how to steward your soil, what types of equipment to consider, when to start crops, how to protect and handle them, and how to market them. Includes profiles of individual growers. 607-255-8770, [nraes@cornell.edu](mailto:nraes@cornell.edu), [www.nraes.org](http://www.nraes.org)

**University of California**

Website with links to several UC publications about organic production, including detailed organic cost production studies for many crops.  
[www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/Organic/index.htm](http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/Organic/index.htm)

# Organic Livestock Production

## Organic Small Ruminant Production

*Langston Univ. Organic Meat Goat Production Module*

This site has short paragraphs on each section of the organic standard that applies to organic goat production, and gives the reader a couple of assignments appropriate and useful for small scale goat producers.

[www.luresext.edu/goats/training/organic.html](http://www.luresext.edu/goats/training/organic.html)

**MOSES Fact Sheet—Transitioning to Organic Sheep or Goat Dairy Production**

This is a summary of the do's and don'ts of organic sheep or goat dairy production.

[www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/sheep-goatdairy.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/sheep-goatdairy.html)

## Organic Cattle Production

**MOSES Fact Sheet—Transitioning to Organic Beef Production**

This site provides an outline of the important points of organic beef marketing, production, record keeping, feeds, and health management.

[www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/transtobeef.pdf](http://www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/transtobeef.pdf)

**MOSES Fact Sheet-Transitioning to Organic Dairy Production**

This outlines the important points of organic dairy production systems, including feeds, transitioning a herd, housing, and medical treatment.

[www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/transtodairy.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/factsheets/transtodairy.html)

**Organic Dairy Farming**

Edited by Jody Padgham, MOSES

<http://mosesorganic.cmiregistration.com/ProductDetail.aspx/f0601df1-afa6-4af4-b07c-41f512c145fb>

## Organic Livestock Healthcare

**Treating Dairy Cows Naturally**

by Hue Karreman

[www.acresusa.com/books/closeup.asp?prodid=1252&catid=12&pcid=2](http://www.acresusa.com/books/closeup.asp?prodid=1252&catid=12&pcid=2)

**Alternative Treatments for Ruminant Animals**

by Paul Dettloff

Hands-on reference by a large-animal veterinarian with nearly four decades of experience. How to move from conventional practices to a holistic and sustainable approach to animal health; provides farmers with

methods of care that are practical, acceptable for organic operations, and have been proven to work.

<http://mosesorganic.cmiregistration.com/ProductDetail.aspx/7aeaa484-533d-497e-852a-35c4060287c9>

**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance site**

A good resource for organic dairy producers, this site provides technical production information, organic dairy news, and links to other resources.

[www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com)

### ATTRA Organic Farming Publications

The list of ATTRA publications about organic agriculture is too long to print in this space. These publications cover many different crops, techniques, and issues in the following categories:

- Organic Certification & Transition
- Organic Field Crops
- Organic Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, Herbs, Greenhouses
- Organic Livestock
- Organic Marketing
- Organic Pest Management
- Organic Soils & Fertilizers

In addition, many other ATTRA publications address sustainable farming methods that are compatible with organic farming. All these publications are available free of charge. You can order them or request a complete list of titles by calling 1-800-346-9140. You can also download them from ATTRA's Organic Web pages, [www.attra.org/organic.html](http://www.attra.org/organic.html).

### Organic Chronicles No. 1: Going Organic

By Rex Dufour and Martin Guerena

NCAT Agriculture Specialists

© 2007 NCAT

Robert Armstrong, Illustrations

Karen Van Epen, Production

This publication is available on the Web at:

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/chronicles.pdf](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/chronicles.pdf)

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