



U.S. to Survey Organic Practices

The USDA is conducting a survey of organic farming to determine and help shape future decisions.

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Organic has gone beyond being a buzz word. We raise our livestock organically. We look for organic labels when we shop. And many of us grow organic crops for the health of ourselves, our customers and the land. And if we're not, we're thinking about starting.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, more than 20,000 U.S. farms engaged in organic production.

But will organic farming receive the kind of policy attention and funding allocations that other practices receive?

To help determine the answer to these questions and others, the U.S. Department Agriculture is conducting the first survey of organic agriculture.

"The Organic Production Survey is a direct response to the growing interest in organics among consumers, farmers and businesses," said Vilsack. "This is an opportunity for organic producers to share their voices and help ensure the continued growth and sustainability of organic farming in the United States."

Starting in May, the USDA will mail the survey to all known organic producers in the United States. Participants have until June 17 to return the survey, and the results will be published in winter 2009.

The survey will consider many aspects of organic farming from the 2008 calendar year, including production and marketing practices, income and expenses. It will focus on current operating organic farms as well as those making the transition to organic production.

The survey results will not only help producers make informed decisions regarding their own farming operations, but also help shape future decisions regarding current farm policies, funding allocations, availability of goods and services, community development and other key issues.

For more information about the Organic Production Survey, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 800-727-9540.