

Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPTool-Stage

Title: State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems

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Project Administrator: Thelma Velez

Funder: United States Department of Agriculture (usda.gov)

Funding opportunity number: USDA-NIFA-ICGP-008621

Template: USDA-NIFA: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Project abstract:

OFRF will conduct an assessment of agricultural Extension across the United States with respect to organic farming systems. Given the complexity of organic farming systems and the consistent growth of the industry, it is critical to assess the national capacity of Extension professionals, gain insight into how Extension currently supports organic farmers, and identify opportunities to increase capacity. To successfully do so, we must first understand the current state of Extension's knowledge of organic farming systems and better understand how stakeholders, including nonprofits, industry, researchers, USDA agencies, and Congress can help expand technical support of organic farming and ranching within the Extension system. As part of this project we will produce a final report identifying areas where Cooperative Extension is meeting the needs of organic and transitioning farmers and areas where more support is needed. The report will include a roadmap to build future capacity in key states and regions.

Start date: 08-31-2022

End date: 08-31-2025

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State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems

OFRF will gather secondary data from public institutions which will be digitally organized and stored in Word, Excel, and PDF formats. This online research of Extension and exploration of all 112 U.S. Land-Grant University (LGU) websites will include the number of Extension agents in each state and how many are working in organic agriculture, their focus areas, and previous assessments conducted within different states or special projects currently underway in organic. This data will be verified via phone calls with program coordinators.

We will also gather primary data using the survey instrument focused on Extension professionals' engagement in organic agriculture. The survey will collect data on Extension professionals': (1) existing experience and knowledge of organic production systems, (2) current engagement with organic farmers, (3) interest in further engagement and education, (4) topics in organic agriculture they want more information about, and (5) how they want to receive that information. The survey instrument is digital and will be conducted in Qualtrics. Qualtrics allows data files to be exported in various formats including: CSV, XML, SPSS, and Google Doc format. Additional qualitative data will be collected through twenty 40-60 minute one-on-one interviews (four per Extension region). Audio files of the interviews will be recorded using Zoom. Audio files will then be transcribed and de-identified using a professional transcription service which provides final transcripts in Word and PDF formats. Transcripts will be analyzed using NVIVO software to examine themes and emergent patterns.

OFRF will digitally organize all data for the assessment of existing Extension resources in Word, Excel, and PDF formats. The survey instrument is digital and will be conducted in Qualtrics. Qualtrics allows data files to be exported in various formats including: CSV, XML, SPSS, and Google Doc format. We will download the data to our secure password-protected Drive in CSV format, Excel, Word, and Google Docs. For additional analysis, we will create an Excel database with a codebook and access instructions. Audio files of the interviews will be recorded using Zoom. Audio files will then be transcribed and de-identified using professional transcription service which provides final transcripts in Word and PDF formats.

De-identified transcripts as well as survey data and all metadata in connection with this project will be indefinitely hosted and curated for long-term preservation in OFRF's password-protected research file server which is maintained and updated quarterly by OFRF research staff. Digital audio files used to produce de-identified interview transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of this project to protect the privacy of the interview participants.

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During the grant period, OFRF Research & Education Program Manager, Thelma Vélez Ph.D., and the OFRF Research Coordinator will be responsible for the capture, quality, and storage of the data and will ensure the data management plan is implemented. If key personnel leave the project, they will pass this responsibility to the other co-PI/PIs (Brise Tencer). Currently, resources needed for the DMP for this project are already in OFRF's possession or have been included in the budget narrative.

Planned Research Outputs

Data paper - "State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems "

The final report and roadmap will be publicly available on the OFRF website and shared widely with USDA Administration and Program Leaders. It will include state-by-state descriptions of Extension support for organic agriculture, including case studies of programs that are successfully supporting organic producers in their region. The report will identify gaps, future priority areas, and opportunities for further investment.

Audiovisual - "Webinars - State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems "

We will present the findings via 5 webinars and 3 conference presentations. The webinars will be presented via e-Organics and directed to USDA Extension Directors and admin in each SARE region, including the 1890 region. The conferences will be the Organic Agriculture Research Forum (OARF), the National Association of County Agricultural Agents NACAA, and the final venue is pending.

Planned research output details

| Title | Type | Anticipated release date | Initial access level | Intended repository(ies) | Anticipated file size | License | Metadata standard(s) | May contain sensitive data? | May contain PII? |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Repo ... | Data paper | 2025-02-28 | Open | None specified | | None specified | None specified | No | No |
| Webinars - State of the States: Assessing, Analyzi ... | Audiovisual | 2025-04-30 | Open | None specified | | None specified | None specified | No | No |