

# Organic Agriculture Research Act

Introduced by Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME),  
Dan Newhouse (R-WA), & Jimmy Panetta (D-CA)

## The Potential

- Sales of organic food have doubled in the last 10 years to over \$43 billion annually
- Organic farms are 35% more profitable than the average farm
- Consumer demand for organic products continues to grow

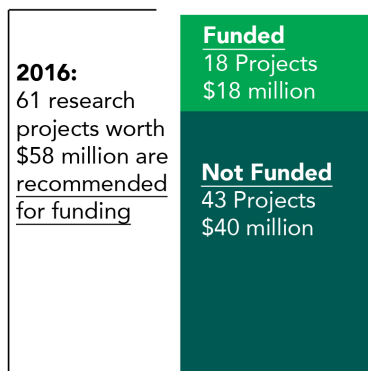


## The Problem

- Demand for organic food exceeds domestic production, a missed opportunity for farmers
- There are several organic research gaps in areas like weed control, soil health, and fertility methods
- Research funding hasn't kept up with growth in organic market and many needs are going unmet

## A Solution

- The Organic Agriculture Research Act (OARA) increases funding for USDA's flagship organic research program, the Organic Research and Extension Initiative, to \$50 million annually
- OREI supports applied research projects that solve problems and help farmers become more productive, efficient and profitable
- OARA is widely supported



**Research opportunities missed** for lack of funding in Organic Research and Extension Initiative

## Statements of Support for Organic Agriculture Research Act

**Laura Batcha, Executive Director and CEO, Organic Trade Association**

“Robust funding for agriculture research is critical for the advancement of organic, and we applaud Congresswoman Pingree, Congressman Newhouse, and Congressman Panetta for their efforts to secure additional resources for USDA’s flagship research program for organic agriculture. The future of organic farmers’ success is tied to discovering new organic crop varieties, developing breakthroughs in pest and weed control, crop rotation, and the development of effective and compliant farm inputs. The Organic Research Act of 2017 invests in the future of organic farming by ensuring that the research keeps up with the burgeoning industry.”

(Statements continued on next page)

More information available at [www.pingree.house.gov/oara](http://www.pingree.house.gov/oara)

# More Statements of Support for Organic Agriculture Research Act

## **Roger Johnson, President, National Farmers Union**

“As the organic industry continues to grow at an extraordinary pace, we’ve seen a lag in sufficient research on organic farming systems. Research on organic production systems tends to benefit all of family farm agriculture by advancing crop and seed systems, as well as animal genotypes and breeds. As such, NFU fully supports this increase in funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) to provide producers with the research and innovation they need to optimize their farming practices.”

## **Greg Fogel, Policy Director, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**

“The agricultural research supported by the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative ensures that our nation’s organic farmers have trustworthy and tested solutions for the issues they face every day in the field. As the organic market continues to grow, America will need to scale up both production and research investment in order to ensure that family farmers can meet consumer demand. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition applauds Congress Members Pingree, Newhouse, and Panetta for their leadership in calling for a much needed expansion of support for organic research in the 2018 Farm Bill.”

## **Mike Lavender, Senior Washington Representative, Union of Concerned Scientists**

“The Organic Research Extension Initiative (OREI) funds some of the most effective federal agricultural research, especially around ecologically-driven practices that have been found to both protect our natural resources and maintain farmer profits. Farmers of all kinds, and the communities surrounding them, benefit from the adoption of agroecological practices that boost soil health and protect our drinking water. It’s critical the next farm bill increases support for OREI and other programs that apply science to ensure the long-term viability of farms. We thank Representatives Pingree, Panetta, & Newhouse for their leadership.”

## **Abby Youngblood, Executive Director, National Organic Coalition**

“The members of the National Organic Coalition wholeheartedly endorse the Organic Agriculture Research Act, and thank Congresswoman Pingree and Congressmen Newhouse and Panetta for their leadership in introducing it. This is a critical piece of legislation at a critical time. As consumer demand for organic continues to skyrocket, our domestic production of organic food and fiber is growing at a much slower pace, forcing us to rely on more imports to meet that demand. More funding for organic research is one of the critical tools needed to help address production challenges faced by organic farmers, so that we can better meet demand with crops and products grown here in the United States. The economic and environment benefits of organic agriculture are many, so let’s do what’s necessary to keep that production and those benefits here at home. A robust commitment to organic research is key to that goal.”

## **Brise Tencer, Executive Director, Organic Farming Research Foundation**

“Since its inception, OREI has developed a substantial body of research-based information and tools to support the success of organic farmers across America. At a time when the demand for organic food is increasing, it is critical that we continue funding the research needed to ensure the continued growth of the organic sector.”

## **Ted Quaday, Executive Director, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association**

“A strong commitment to organic research benefits our farmers, our health, the environment and local economies. The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association applauds Congresswoman Pingree for leading the effort to answer this crucial agricultural need.”

## **Jim Gerritsen, Maine organic seed farmer and president of the national farmer-controlled membership organization, Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA)**

“From a historical perspective, agricultural progress has been the harvest from societal investment in agricultural research. In order for organic farming to prosper, it must receive its fair share of research funding. This visionary bill represents a major step forward in securing critically needed research funds which will insure the continued growth and success of organic farming.”

## **Britt Lundgren, Director of Organic and Sustainable Agriculture, Stonyfield**

“Research is critical for advancing the productivity and sustainability of organic agriculture, but for far too long organic research has been under-funded compared with the rest of agriculture. Representative Pingree’s bill will ensure that organic agriculture receives a fair portion of federal agriculture research funding. This will better position US farmers to take advantage of the rapidly growing demand for organic food and fiber.”

# More Statements of Support for Organic Agriculture Research Act

## **Dr. Jessica Shade, Director of Science Program, The Organic Center**

“The Organic Center is thrilled to see the serious investment in organic research and applauds Congresswoman Pingree, Congressman Newhouse, and Congressman Panetta for their efforts. The Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), organic’s premier competitive grants research program, has spawned a new community of scientists and infrastructure dedicated to organic systems research since it was established in 2002. The Organic Research Act of 2017 will secure long-term investment in the science of organic farming essential for the continued success of farmers.”

## **Kristina Hubbard, Director of Advocacy, Organic Seed Alliance**

“Funding provided through the Organic Research and Extension Initiative is fundamental to the success of organic farmers and the markets they serve. The return on OREI investments in the way of organic plant breeding and other organic seed research has been enormous, including new plant varieties that perform especially well in organic production systems. Organic farmers produce food differently, and that means they need different seed for the crops they grow – seed developed to thrive without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and adapted to their local climate and soil conditions. We applaud Congresswoman Pingree for her leadership in legislative action that aims to expand support for the fastest growing sector of our food industry. The potential to grow the organic industry for the benefit of farmers, rural communities, and the communities they feed is nothing short of remarkable, but that growth requires an increased investment in research.”

## **Chris Schreiner, Executive Director, Oregon Tilth**

“We recently surveyed over 600 farmers transitioning to organic across the United States. They identified weed management as a major obstacle and ranked information on weed, pest, and disease management as the top resource needed during transition. Public investment in researching organic practices can fill this knowledge gap and help farmers overcome obstacles.”

## **Harriet Behar, Senior Organic Specialist, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service**

“The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) interacts with thousands of organic and nonorganic farmers every year through educational events and publications. We hear from these constituents that they need more research into low input farming methods to build long term resiliency for both their farm’s production capabilities and their economic bottom line. Organic agricultural research offers numerous benefits to the nation’s farming community as well as consumers by providing environmentally beneficial solutions to production challenges which result in abundant, domestically produced, healthy foods.”

## **Marty Mesh, Executive Director, Florida Organic Growers**

“Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc (FOG) firmly backs an increase in support for applied research that will, first and foremost, develop practical solutions and tools for the burgeoning organic agriculture sector in the U.S. We believe this bill will benefit existing organic farmers in Florida, those growing in other subtropical and tropical climates along the Gulf Coast, and also a significant number of growers who indicate a desire to transition to organic practices but demand more research in order to do so. What we also applaud in this bill is the expected benefits for growers of all sizes, from small, independent farmers to more large-scale enterprises that are equally dedicated to our vision for an organic agriculture sector that’s data-driven and research-based.”

## **Organic Valley | CROPP Cooperative**

“Organic Valley strongly supports this bill which focuses resources on organic agriculture research. In working with 2,000 farmers across the country, from Maine to Washington, we can testify to the unique production challenge farmers face, be it the type of crops and livestock they raise or variability seen across regions. The dedicated resources in the bill can help farmers tackle those challenges and become more efficient, boosting on-farm productivity and creating economic progress and stability - that is good for organic farmers, good for rural communities and good for our nation.”

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