

University of California Organic Agriculture Institute



Background and Formation



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Organic Agriculture Institute

Organic is a key sector of agriculture!

California Leads in Organic

- Early CA efforts led to USDA National Organic Program (NOP)
- Total production, value and number of farms – 2x more than any other state
- Even so, organic is <10% of agricultural landscape

Growing Importance of Organic Agriculture

- Continuously expanding markets and consumer interest
- Innovative organic practices becoming core management across agriculture
- Statewide strategic plans identify organic agriculture as central to sustainable foods systems, reducing greenhouse gases, and limiting pesticide pollution

Need for UC Institutional Support to Accelerate Organic

- Increased interest and demand requires targeted resources and support
- Lifting up work currently being done, identifying gaps in resources, and coordinating current and future efforts
- UC now dedicating resources specifically for organic agriculture

However, there are many challenges...

Lack of Technical Information

- Need for more crop-specific practice
- Dynamic management considerations across unique contexts – crop nutrition, weed control, pest and disease mgmt., soil health, microclimates, etc.

Inconsistent Extension Support

- Need to aggregate/develop current outreach material, guidelines, training opportunities
- No coordination and support of state-wide programmatic activities
- Scale-specific supports - unique challenges of large + small scale production

Insufficient Institutional Support

- Research/extension funding – need to increase amount of funding opportunities
- Targeted personnel – Additional UCCE Specialists/Advisors with focus on organic to support current network and expand coverage
- Educational programs – training next generation of research/extension personnel

Scope and Mission



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UC Organic Agriculture Institute

Background



**UC Organic Ag Institute found January 2020
Endowed by Clif Bar & Co. / UC Office of President**



**2020-2022 Building partnerships and identifying funding:
Contracts with CDFA State Organic Program,
CCOF Transition to Organic Partnership Program, etc.**



**2023 Filling out staff roles and starting programming:
Policy work, extension events, online resources, and more!**

UC Organic Agriculture Institute

Mission Statement

- The UC OAI serves as a hub for farmers, researchers, technical assistance providers, advocates, and support industries to advance research, extension and education for certified, transitioning, and aspiring for organic farmers across California.

Research

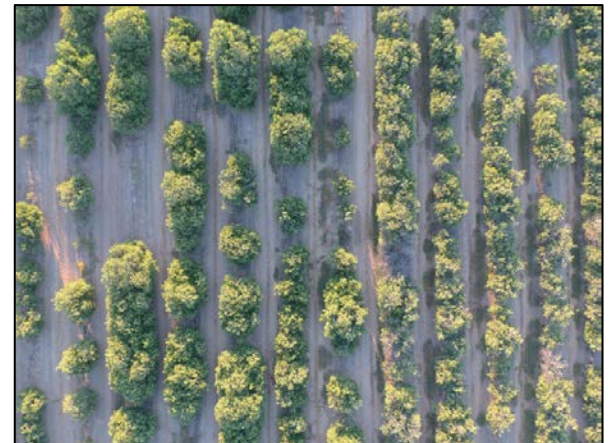
Facilitate contextually relevant organic production strategies, as well as economic and policy analyses.

Extension

Provide appropriate and timely technical support and training opportunities.

Education

Prepare the next generation of organic farmers, scientists et al. – with emphasis on students from underserved and marginalized backgrounds.



UC Organic Agriculture Institute

Staff

Personnel

Houston Wilson

Director

Krista Marshall

Policy and Partnerships Coordinator

+Liaison with UC ANR Small Farms Network

Rob Straser

Extension and Outreach Coordinator

Shriya Rangarajan

Postdoctoral Scholar

TBD (Winter 2023)

Education and Mentorship Coordinator

TBD (Winter 2024)

Technical Assistance for Organic Production

Current Activities



Research

Extension and outreach

Education

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Current Activities

Research

- **Statewide Needs Assessment for Organic Agriculture**

- 2021 “California Organic Research Agenda”
 - Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)



Building on past efforts and identifying extension and outreach areas of support

- Currently analyzing large, in-depth survey of organic growers, advocates, consultants etc.
- Dr. Shriya Rangarajan @ UC Davis

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Needs Assessment Survey
We want to hear from you!

Background

- The UC Organic Agriculture Institute was recently established to provide research and extension support for organic agriculture.
- Findings from this statewide needs assessment will be used to prioritize efforts in the coming years.

How to Participate

- Volunteer for an interview
- Take the online survey

Questions?
Contact the Survey Team

- Shriya Rangarajan, Postdoctoral Researcher, UC Organic Agriculture Institute | shriya@ucdavis.edu
- Houston Wilson, Director, UC Organic Agriculture Institute
- Mark Lebell, Director, UC Davis Center for Environmental Policy and Behavior
- Joji Muramoto, Organic Production Specialist, UC ANR

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Current Activities

Research

- Organic Acreage and Trends
 - Summary of 2021 organic acreage and trends
- Where do we grow organic crops in California?
 - Do certain areas trend more/less organic overall?
 - What about for specific crops?
 - Visualization/maps and recommendations to improve the accuracy of organic acreage across CA



| CITRUS | Total (ac) | Organic (ac) | Organic % Share |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| California | 414,700 | 19,049 | 4.6% |
| Kern Co. | 38,970 | 4,734 | 12% |
| Kern % Share | 9.3% | 24.8% | |

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Current Activities

Research

- Organic Acreage and Trends
- Summary of 2021 organic acreage and trends
- Organic Market Opportunities
 - How much growth is expected in key markets?
 - Focus on dairy, carrots, berries and almonds
 - Dr. Dan Sumner, Dept. Agricultural Economics @ UC Davis

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Current Activities

Research

- Organic Acreage and Trends
- Summary of 2021 organic acreage and trends
- Organic Market Opportunities
- **Life-Cycle Assessment of Organic Agriculture**

- Relative to conventional - how does organic management compare in carbon emissions and energy use?
- Dr. Alissa Kendall, Dept. Civil Engineering @ UC Davis

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Current Activities

Research

- Organic Acreage and Trends
- Summary of 2021 organic acreage and trends
- Organic Market Opportunities
- Life-Cycle Assessment of Organic Agriculture
- Policy barriers and solutions to meet statewide strategic goals for organic transition (2024)



Identify barriers
and present
solutions



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Current Activities

Extension and Outreach

- Guidelines for certification, management, marketing etc.
- statewide resource map
- Field days, extension events, training
- Mentorship and farm demo network

News Release
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Media Contacts: Steve Lyle (CDFA), 916-654-0462, officeofpublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov



Release #22-075
Print This Release

CDFA PARTNERS WITH UC ANR FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Español

SACRAMENTO, July 6, 2022 – The California Department of Food and Agriculture is announcing that \$1.85 million will be awarded to the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) to increase technical assistance for California's organic farmers.

CDFA's State Organic Program is executing a \$850,000 in contracts with UC ANR to run through September 2024, and CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation separately is awarding a \$1 million grant to run from July 2022 to June 2025.


"California farmers provide 36 percent of all organic production in the United States," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "This funding expands technical assistance to growers transitioning to certified organic agriculture and supports our strong California community of organic farmers and consumers by conducting field trials and demonstration projects with farmers to improve organic practices."

UC ANR project objectives include:

- Conduct peer-reviewed research on topics including soil health management, carbon sequestration in

Organic Ag Institute begins forming knowledge network, assessing needs

Nov 15, 2021 | Agriculture Food Innovation



The Organic Agriculture Institute is conducting a statewide needs assessment for organic agriculture and forming the California Organic Agriculture Knowledge Network. Photo by Evett Kilmartin

Cal OAK Network to build on, grow connections between UC and organic community

After pioneering the organic movement in the 1970s, California now leads the nation in number of organic farms, total organic acreage and

UCANR: Safeguarding abundant and healthy food for all Californians

Organic farmers to get technical assistance from CDFA and UC ANR

Author: Pamela Kan-Rice | Published on: July 7, 2022



California's organic farmers will receive production and marketing assistance from CDFA and UC ANR.

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Current Activities

Extension and Outreach

- **Online resources for certification, training programs, management, marketing etc.**

- **Aggregate existing information and create new resources where there are gaps**

Themes

- **General Practices (“soil management” etc.)**
- **Administrative (“how to become certified” etc.)**
- **Commodity specific (“IPM in organic carrots” etc.)**

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Current Activities

Extension and Outreach

- Online resources for certification, training programs, management, marketing etc.
- **Statewide Resource Mapping and Navigation**

- Summarize who is out there, what they are working on and offer, where and how to access it, who to contact etc.
- Interactive map/database on the UC OAI website

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Current Activities

Extension and Outreach

- Online resources for certification, training programs, management, marketing etc.
- Statewide Resource Mapping and Navigation
- Field Days, Extension Talks, Training Events
- Mentorship and Farm Demonstration Network

- In-person events organized by OAI
- Participating and supporting other extension presentations, grower panels etc.
- Mentorship Program through California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)

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Current Activities

2023 recap

Supporting, organizing, and attending events across the state!

SoCal, Central Coast, North Coast, Sac Valley, North Bay



IN PERSON EVENT
SOIL TESTING FOR ORGANIC
 NOV 15, 2023 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 STONY POINT FARM
 735 STONY POINT RD, PETALUMA, CA 94952

FREE REGISTRATION & LUNCH
tinyurl.com/OrganicPetaluma



JOIN US!

LEARN ABOUT THE WHY, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW OF SOIL TESTING FOR ORGANIC OPERATIONS!

WHO IS PRESENTING?

Ellie Andrews
 Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension
Emilie Winfield
 Working Lands Scientist, Marin RCD
Kelsey Brewer
 Soil and Water Specialist, Sonoma RCD
Keith Abeles
 Policy & Partnerships Coordinator,
 UC Organic Agriculture Institute

ANY QUESTIONS?
CONTACT

ELLIE ANDREWS
 UCCE FARM ADVISOR
 EANDREWS@UCANR.EDU



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Current Activities

Education

- Collaborating on the development of a cross-campus undergraduate training program

- Cross-campus training
- Applied research/extension
- Work with organic growers, processors, certifiers etc.

[Home](#) / [2022](#) / [September](#) / Partnership across UC campuses will prepare the next generation of leaders in organic agriculture

Partnership across UC campuses will prepare the next generation of leaders in organic agriculture

September 23, 2022

By Allison Arteaga Soergel

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A grant of more than \$700,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will support a University of California collaboration to improve and expand undergraduate education in organic agriculture, with an emphasis on supporting underrepresented students. The project will be led by UC Santa Cruz, in partnership with UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR).

The grant award demonstrates the educational leadership of this group of UC campuses, which are among the most well-established and widely respected university-based organic agriculture programs in the country. Each partner campus and UC ANR will bring unique academic strengths and distinct regional knowledge and networks to the collaboration, in an effort to broaden the student educational experience beyond what any one campus could offer.



UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology student staff share their knowledge of organic agriculture with first-year students. Photo: Damian Parr

Long Term Goals



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Agriculture and Natural Resources

Organic Agriculture Institute

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Expanding Our Capacity to Support Organic

Establishing the Basic Framework

- Strategic Plan, Advisory Comm., Needs Assessment etc. – foundational elements
- Currently leveraging existing UC resources – structural limits to this
- Identifying new and additional resources – addressing limits and building long term structural support
- Creating work flow that meets the long-term and changing needs of the organic community – ability to adapt our approach and focus

Creating Long-term Infrastructure

- Dedicated Staff Support – Dedicated staff for our different efforts
- UC farm advisors and research specialists – more on-the-ground research
- Upgraded Facilities – new lab spaces, organic demo plots, and extension event sites

Resources to Sustain This Effort

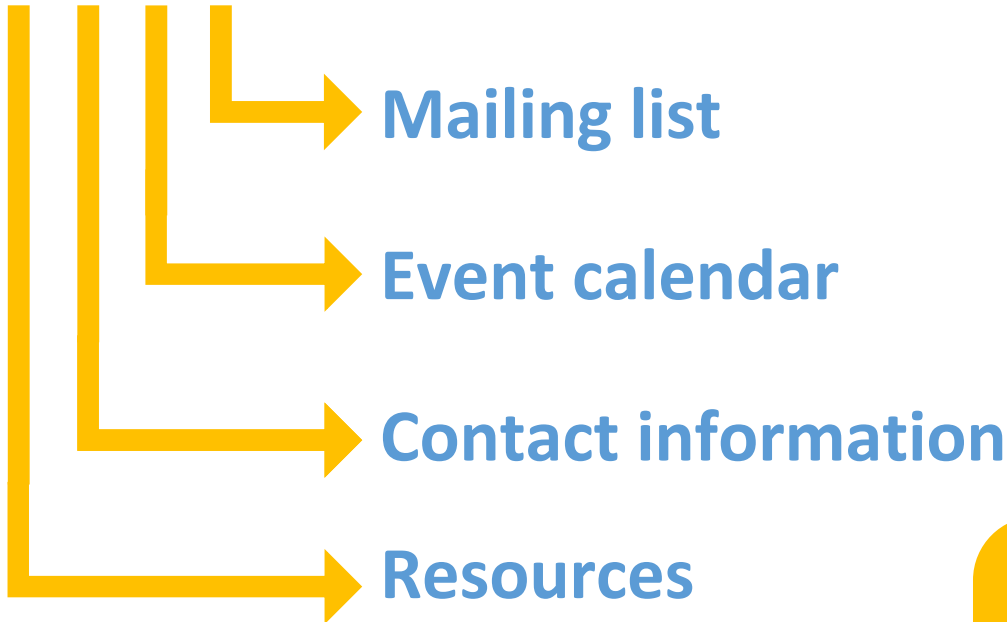
- Public/private partnerships – Clif Bar & Co. + UCOP were the catalyst
- CDFA / USDA – funding and program coordination/partnership
- UC ANR – Leveraging current staff/resource and creating new opportunities

UC Organic Agriculture Institute

Thank You!

Organic Agriculture Institute

<http://organic.ucanr.edu/>



**We want to hear
from you! Help
inform our 2024
activities**

University of California

Agriculture and Natural Resources