

Alaska

Building food security in America's last frontier through organic production



A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Alaska ranks 50th nationally with 14 certified organic operations and 504 certified acres. The state imports roughly 95% of its food, making local organic production a food security priority. Long summer days and clean volcanic soils support strong yields for vegetables, small fruits, and grains.

14	504	~95%	24 hrs
CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	CERTIFIED ACRES	FOOD IMPORTED	PEAK SUMMER DAYLIGHT

STATE PROFILE

AT A GLANCE

Certified operations (est.)	~70
Certified organic acres (est.)	504
Food imported (all categories)	~95%
Growing season (southcentral)	100-130 days
National organic market (2025)	\$76.6 billion

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Grow protected-ag organic production to extend the season and supply year-round institutional buyers.
- Develop local organic food systems to reduce Alaska's 95% food import dependency.
- Leverage TOPP mentorship and EQIP to support transitioning farmers in the Mat-Su Valley.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Greenhouse vegetables:** season-extended greens, tomatoes, and cucumbers.
- ▶ **Root vegetables:** cool soils yield carrots, potatoes, and turnips.
- ▶ **Small fruits:** strawberries, raspberries, and native berries for local demand.
- ▶ **Barley & grains:** Mat-Su Valley emerging organic malt and feed grain.

BARRIERS

- Extreme logistics costs for shipping inputs to and products from remote Alaska locations.
- Very short growing season (100-130 days) limits production diversity and total annual output.
- Limited in-state certifiers and processing infrastructure require distance certification navigation.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Alaska's long summer daylight, clean land, and 95% food import dependency create a compelling case for organic development. Greenhouse vegetables and root crops can strengthen food security while building a distinctive Alaska organic identity.

Resources for Farmers

Alaska's organic farmers are supported by UAF Cooperative Extension, the Alaska Division of Agriculture, USDA NRCS, and Northwest TOPP. Together they provide production guidance, certification cost-share, conservation support, and mentorship for transitioning producers statewide.

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic production guides for Alaska's climate zones
- Master Gardener and farm advisor network statewide
- High tunnel and greenhouse production support
- Annual Agriculture and Food Systems Conference

uaf.edu/ces

Alaska Division of Agriculture

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund for farm capital needs
- Buy Alaska program for state-grown organic market development
- Farm licensing and food safety support

dnr.alaska.gov/ag

USDA NRCS Alaska

FUNDING & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

- EQIP Organic Initiative: cost-share for organic transition
- High Tunnel System program for season extension
- Soil health and water management conservation planning
- Offices in Anchorage, Palmer, Fairbanks, and Soldotna

nrcs.usda.gov/alaska

Northwest TOPP (OTCO-led)

MENTORSHIP & TRANSITION SUPPORT

- Connects Alaska farmers with paid organic mentors in the region
- Organic Systems Plan development and certification navigation
- Virtual workshops accessible to remote Alaska producers
- Transition financial planning and cost-share navigation

organictransition.org/region/northwest

DID YOU KNOW? ALASKA

Alaska imports approximately 95% of its food, yet the state's long summer days create extraordinary growing conditions with some vegetables reaching record size. USDA's TOPP program and EQIP Organic Initiative are available to Alaska farmers and can help close the gap between local production and the state's strong demand for clean, locally grown organic food. UAF Extension provides hands-on guidance for producers across all climate zones.

KEY SOURCES

Organic Trade Association. "Northwest Organic Profile." OTA State Advocacy, 2025, ota.com.

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