

Alabama

Growing organic sector anchored by dairy, cattle, and warm-season vegetables



SOUTHEAST
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Alabama ranks 48th nationally with 38 certified organic operations and 869 certified acres. Organic dairy and cattle anchor production, while a 71% household buying rate reflects strong consumer demand. Auburn Extension, SSAWG, and USDA NRCS provide accessible support for farmers considering transition.

38 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	869 CERTIFIED ACRES	71% HOUSEHOLDS BUY ORGANIC	28% FARMS WITH SPLIT OPERATIONS
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STATE PROFILE

AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	38 (48th nationally)
Certified organic acres	869
Household organic adoption	71%
Split operations	28% of farms
National organic market (2025)	\$76.6 billion

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Leverage Alabama's year-round warm growing season for Gulf Coast and Southeast organic markets.
- Transition cattle operations to organic systems using NRCS EQIP and Southeast TOPP mentorship.
- Build peer mentorship networks through TOPP to accelerate organic transition statewide.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Milk:** small-scale farms serve regional processors and direct markets.
- ▶ **Cattle:** extensive pastureland suits low-input systems with premium appeal.
- ▶ **Tomatoes:** warm-season vegetables; organic tomatoes lead certified produce.
- ▶ **Specialty crops:** sweet potatoes, peppers, herbs, and blueberries statewide.

BARRIERS

- Small operation count limits peer network density and market aggregation capacity.
- Subtropical pest and disease pressure requires management knowledge during 3-year transition.
- Limited in-state certifiers increase logistics costs and timelines for new applicants.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Alabama's 71% household organic buying rate reflects strong demand that local production barely serves. With TOPP mentorship, NRCS support, and Auburn Extension's statewide reach, Alabama is positioned for growth anchored by cattle, vegetables, and dairy.

Resources for Farmers

Alabama's organic farmers are supported by Auburn University Extension, the Alabama Department of Agriculture, the Southeast TOPP region, and USDA NRCS. Together they provide technical assistance, certification cost-share, peer learning, and market development access statewide.

Auburn University Cooperative Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic production guides for vegetables, livestock, and row crops
- County-level Extension agents for on-farm consultation statewide
- Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference and on-farm field days
- IPM resources tailored for organic transition

aces.edu

Alabama Dept of Agriculture & Industries

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Alabama Farmers Market Authority supports organic market access
- Beginning Farmer and Ranching program resources and state loans
- State inspection and licensing for organic processors

agi.alabama.gov

Southeast TOPP (FOG-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, and Caribbean territories
- Paid organic mentor matching for vegetable, cattle, and specialty crop farms
- Workshops on organic transition, certification, and subtropical pest management
- Beginning farmer organic market access and supply chain development support

organictransition.org/region/southeast

USDA NRCS Alabama

FUNDING & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

- EQIP Organic Initiative: cost-share for organic transition practices
- Organic Systems Plan development from local NRCS staff
- Conservation contracts for cover crops, soil health, and pasture
- Local NRCS offices serving every Alabama county

nrcs.usda.gov/alabama

DID YOU KNOW? ALABAMA

Alabama has a 71% household organic purchasing rate, yet only 34 certified organic operations to serve that demand. That gap is a direct economic opportunity for Alabama farmers. The U.S. organic market reached \$76.6 billion in 2025, growing at 6.8%, more than double the overall food market rate. TOPP provides free peer mentorship for transitioning farmers, and EQIP cost-share can offset the financial risk of the 3-year transition period.

KEY SOURCES

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