

ORGANIC GRAIN MARKETS IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

RESOURCE GUIDE: MARCH 2025

This Resource Guide outlines best practices and considerations for navigating organic markets for organic grain.

As demand for organic products continues to rise, understanding the unique dynamics of these markets is essential for growers looking to maximize their opportunities and profitability. Whether you're new to organic farming or looking to refine your approach, this resource serves as a companion on your journey towards successful market navigation for organic commodities and livestock markets.

The National Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) supports transitioning and organic farmers with Market resources including Buyer/Seller discovery events to facilitate meaningful connections between organic sellers and buyers and Market Development Workshops. The key takeaways and resources in this guide emerged from the State of Organic Grain Markets Panel at the Mid-Atlantic Grains Conference which took place in March 2025. To learn more and find events near you, visit:

www.organictransition.org/region/national/events.



EVENT RECAP:

This organic market session featured a panel of industry professionals discussing the state of organic grain in the Mid-Atlantic. This interactive panel moderated by Kyle Pletcher from Tuscarora Grain Company featured Kellee James from Argus Media, Michael Chapman from Fieldcraft and Scott Morgan from Morganics Family Farm. A networking session followed to allow folks to connect and build meaningful relationships.

Listen to the panel recording [here!](#)

Key Takeaways/Best Practices

NEW TO THE ORGANIC MARKET?

- It is important for farmers to always have backup markets, such as animal feed and the mushroom industry, where grains can serve as raw materials for both livestock nutrition and as substrates for growing spawn backup markets. Feed grade markets are great alternatives if food grade grains do not meet specs.
- Dedicated organic storage allows a farmer to hold onto the product longer allowing the farmer to hold off for a better price.
- Investing time in developing relationships with buyers is worth the time.
- Infrastructure, certification, and storytelling are key components of success in specialty and organic markets.
- Smaller-scale regional approaches offer resilience and flexibility for growers outside the commodity grain model.
- Organic grain demand remains strong but there is significant market uncertainty (weather, tariffs, input costs) that push growers to diversity and build strong relationships with buyers.

MARKET TRENDS

- The U.S. Organic Food Market is \$60 billion and still growing. More than 82% of U.S. households stock organic food in their kitchens. It is one of the fastest growing sectors in U.S. Agriculture ([Precedence Research](#)).
- Half of all organic feed demand is driven by the dairy sector, highlighting the importance of feed access. Regionally, the cost of organic feed can be high. While organic animal protein sales are growing, the growth is concentrated in chicken. Meanwhile, organic dairy is just beginning to rebound after years of depressed sales due to the pandemic and rise of plant-based milk (Argus Media Presentation).
- The U.S. remains heavily dependent on soybean imports, which presents an opportunity for domestic growers, particularly those interested in organic production. In contrast, the U.S. is nearly self-sufficient in corn. This dynamic suggests that product diversification, especially in soybeans, could be advantageous for U.S. farmers looking to tap into unmet demand (Argus Media Presentation).
- Tariffs are complex and it is difficult, if not impossible, to prepare for their impacts on the marketplace. The ultimate driver of the market is the consumer and so adapting to consumer demand is essential.

- There is growing interest from buyers and manufacturers in soy/corn-free animal feed. Brands and manufacturers are looking for alternative food grain growers/suppliers to reduce freight costs and build more direct and resilient supply chains. This trend reflects a shift toward more resilient sourcing.

ADDITIONAL TAKEAWAYS:

- Fieldcraft has observed increasing demand for sorghum, oats, rye from distillers and brewers as well as regional specialty grains.
- Fieldcraft has noticed that new B2B buyers are increasingly demanding greater convenience and traceability and would encourage farmers to share their products and story better ([Digital Commerce](#)).
- Buyers often prefer Forward Contracts (also known as Pre-Plant Bushel Contracts of Grower Agreements) to secure sales ahead of time but still need a spot market to cover shortages.
- Farmers are encouraged to consider utilizing all parts of a crop like hulls, screenings and meal, especially in markets between certified Organic growers and livestock producers. This aligns with the need to “sell the whole farm,” where farmers must find value and fair pricing for all outputs, similar to the “whole animal” challenge in livestock production.
- Certifications like Naturally Grown were discussed, but panelists shared that they still view USDA Certified Organic as the gold standard.

ORGANIC RESOURCE LISTS:

- [Fieldcraft](#)
- [Fieldcraft Presentation](#)
- [Organic Integrity Database](#)
- [Find.Organic](#)
- [Argus Media – Organic Grain Markets Overview](#)
- [Growing Grain for Malting: Truths, Lies, and Considerations for Diversification](#)
- [Nosing & Tasting Masterclass 101: Discovering the Flavors of Virginia’s Grains in Spirits](#)
- [Organic Grain Hub](#)
- [Organic Market Development Grant Recipients](#)
- [The Organic & Non-GMO Sourcebook](#)
- [“Understanding Processor and End-User Grain Needs” Artisan Grain Collaborative](#)
- [Grain Chain Connections Artisan Grain Collaborative](#)
- [Additional Artisan Grain Collaborative Resources](#)
- [Growing Grain Handbook](#)
- [Additional Common Grain Alliance Resources](#)

*Please note that some buyer information included in these listings may be outdated. Rodale Institute does not manage these lists and can support with navigating these



clearinghouses, vetting lists, and connecting producers directly to buyer contacts in our network.

CONNECT WITH US

If you're a producer looking for deeper markets access guidance, organic crop rotation support, or to get connected with buyers, contact [Rodale Institute's Consulting Markets Team](#): **Email:** Markets@RodaleInstitute.org **Phone:** [\(610\) 683-1416](tel:(610)683-1416)