

# Idaho

*Potato country pivoting to organic with one of the West's strongest grain, vegetable, and specialty seed sectors*



A FARMER'S TOOLKIT  
State Module | August 2026

Idaho ranks 23rd nationally with 352 certified organic operations and 381,575 certified acres. Idaho's organic sector is anchored by a paradox: the nation's largest potato state has a growing organic potato sector, but grain, vegetables, and specialty seeds are where organic acreage is expanding fastest. With \$9.1M in OREI/ORG funding and University of Idaho Extension's statewide reach, Idaho is positioned to become a Northwest organic powerhouse beyond its conventional identity.

|                                    |                                   |                                     |                                                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>352</b><br>CERTIFIED OPERATIONS | <b>381,575</b><br>CERTIFIED ACRES | <b>\$9.1M</b><br>OREI / ORG FUNDING | <b>+21%</b><br>MORE WORKERS VS.<br>CONVENTIONAL |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|

## STATE PROFILE AT A GLANCE

|                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Certified operations               | <b>352 (23rd nationally)</b> |
| Certified organic acres            | <b>381,575</b>               |
| OREI / ORG funding (cumulative)    | <b>\$9.1M</b>                |
| Worker employment vs. conventional | <b>+21%</b>                  |
| Split operations                   | <b>47% of farms</b>          |

## OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand organic potato production to capture premium retail and food service demand for a recognized Idaho brand.
- Transition Snake River Plain grain acres to organic wheat and legumes for food processing and export supply chains.
- Grow organic specialty seed production for the certified organic seed market as demand outpaces supply.

### TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Potatoes:** Idaho's potato expertise transfers directly to organic systems.
- ▶ **Grains & Legumes:** organic wheat, barley, and dry beans for food processors.
- ▶ **Vegetables & Onions:** Treasure Valley organic onions and specialty vegetables.
- ▶ **Specialty Seeds:** southern Idaho organic vegetable and cover crop seed production.

### BARRIERS

- Irrigation-dependent agriculture faces water scarcity and allocation pressures in drought years.
- Limited organic processing and cold storage infrastructure for organic potatoes and root vegetables.
- High conventional potato contract values create transition income risk for potato-dependent operations.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Idaho's combination of agricultural diversity, large farm scale, and water-access infrastructure creates a premium organic opportunity across potatoes, grains, and specialty seeds. Northwest TOPP mentorship and UI Extension's applied research are the key supports for an organic sector that has only begun to tap Idaho's full potential.

## Resources for Farmers

Idaho organic farmers are supported by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, University of Idaho Extension, the Idaho Organic Alliance, and Northwest TOPP. Together they deliver certification support, transition research, and market connectivity for Idaho's diverse organic sector.

### Idaho State Dept of Agriculture

#### STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Idaho Preferred branding program for state-produced organic products
- NRCS Idaho: EQIP Organic Initiative and Transition Assistance programs
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher development loan and grant resources

[agri.idaho.gov](http://agri.idaho.gov)

### University of Idaho Extension

#### RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic potato, grain, vegetable, and seed crop production specialists
- Irrigated organic systems research at Twin Falls Research and Extension Center
- Soil health, cover cropping, and integrated pest management for organic systems
- 44-county extension network delivering statewide organic outreach

[extension.uidaho.edu](http://extension.uidaho.edu)

### Idaho Organic Alliance

#### FARMER ADVOCACY & MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- Statewide organic farmer advocacy and networking organization
- Organic market development and buyer-seller connection programs
- Annual Idaho Organic Conference and producer education events
- Certification guidance and organic transition planning support

[idahoorganic.org](http://idahoorganic.org)

### Northwest TOPP (OTCO-led)

#### MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY, and Pacific Northwest territories
- Paid organic mentor matching for grain, potato, and vegetable farms
- Workshops on organic transition in irrigated and dryland Western systems
- Market access support for organic potatoes, grains, and specialty seeds

[organictransition.org/region/northwest](http://organictransition.org/region/northwest)

#### DID YOU KNOW? IDAHO

**Idaho produces more conventional potatoes than any other state, yet organic potato demand far exceeds domestic supply.** Premium organic potatoes command retail prices two to three times higher than conventional, yet certified organic potato acreage represents less than 1% of Idaho's total. The state's deep expertise in potato agronomy, cold storage, and logistics makes organic transition more economically viable here than almost anywhere else. Northwest TOPP mentorship and UI Extension research on organic potato production are actively de-risking the transition for Idaho growers.

#### KEY SOURCES

Organic Trade Association. "Idaho Organic Profile." OTA State Advocacy, 2025, [ota.com](http://ota.com).

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