

Louisiana

Gulf Coast organic emerging through sugarcane transition, crawfish, and subtropical specialty crops

Louisiana ranks **46th nationally with 51 certified organic operations and 6,771 certified acres**. Louisiana's organic sector is small but growing, anchored by a subtropical climate that enables year-round production and unique crops unavailable elsewhere in the U.S. With \$3.8M in OREI/ORG funding and LSU AgCenter's statewide reach, Louisiana is building organic supply chains around sugarcane transition, specialty vegetables, and Gulf Coast aquaculture crops.

51 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	6,771 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$3.8M OREI / ORG FUNDING	+21% MORE WORKERS VS. CONVENTIONAL
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STATE PROFILE

AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	51 (46th nationally)
Certified organic acres	6,771
OREI / ORG funding (cumulative)	\$3.8M
Worker employment vs. conventional	+21%
Split operations	38% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Transition conventional sugarcane acres to organic to capture the only U.S.-grown organic cane sugar market.
- Expand organic vegetable production for New Orleans' strong farm-to-table and culinary tourism economy.
- Develop organic sweet potato and pecan supply chains for national retail and food processing buyers.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Vegetables & Herbs:** subtropical climate enables year-round organic produce.
- ▶ **Sugarcane:** Louisiana's unique sugarcane commands strong organic premiums.
- ▶ **Pecans:** organic pecan orchards supply premium gift and export markets.
- ▶ **Sweet Potatoes:** central Louisiana organic sweet potatoes supply national retail.

BARRIERS

- Extreme heat, humidity, and hurricane risk create significant pest, disease, and infrastructure challenges.
- Sugarcane transition is agronomically complex and requires multi-year planning and capital investment.
- Limited organic processing and cold chain infrastructure outside the New Orleans metro area.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Louisiana's organic opportunity is unique: it is the only U.S. state capable of producing organic sugarcane at scale, and its subtropical climate enables year-round specialty crop production. Building the processing and market infrastructure to capture organic premiums for sugarcane and specialty vegetables is the defining near-term challenge.

Resources for Farmers

Louisiana organic farmers are supported by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture, LSU AgCenter Extension, Louisiana Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, and Southeast TOPP. Together they address Louisiana's unique subtropical production context with certification, technical research, and market development.

Louisiana Dept of Agriculture

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Louisiana Certified branding program for state-produced organic products
- NRCS Louisiana: EQIP Organic Initiative and Transition Assistance programs
- Agricultural Finance Authority loan programs for organic transition investment

ldaf.state.la.us

LSU AgCenter Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic vegetable, sugarcane, sweet potato, and pecan production specialists
- Subtropical organic systems research at multiple LSU research stations
- Soil health, cover crop, and integrated pest management for humid Gulf Coast conditions
- 64-parish extension network delivering statewide organic outreach

lsuagcenter.com

Louisiana Sustainable Ag Working Group

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Louisiana's sustainable and organic agriculture coalition since 1989
- Annual Louisiana Sustainable Agriculture Conference and farm tours
- Farmer-to-farmer peer learning and organic transition mentorship networks
- Organic certification guidance and cost-share navigation support

lsawg.org

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, sugarcane, and specialty crop farms
- Workshops on organic subtropical production and Gulf Coast pest management
- Market access and supply chain development for Southeast organic producers

organictransition.org/region/southeast

DID YOU KNOW? LOUISIANA

Louisiana is the only U.S. state that produces commercial sugarcane, making it the sole domestic source of certified organic cane sugar. U.S. consumers spend over \$1 billion annually on organic sugar, virtually all of which is imported. Louisiana's conventional sugarcane industry processes 14-16 million tons annually, yet certified organic sugarcane acreage is minimal. The premium economics are compelling: organic raw cane sugar commands 40-60% above conventional. LSU AgCenter research on organic cane management and Southeast TOPP mentorship are beginning to make that transition viable for Louisiana producers.

KEY SOURCES

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

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