

Missouri

Gateway state bridges organic grain, Ozark livestock, and two booming metro markets



MIDWEST
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Missouri ranks 17th nationally with 684 certified organic operations and 62,157 certified acres. Missouri's organic sector runs from the fertile grain plains of the north, through the diversified Ozark Highlands livestock country, to robust direct-market scenes in Kansas City and St. Louis. The state's position at the crossroads of the Midwest grain belt and the Southeast livestock tradition gives it unusual commodity breadth, supported by strong farmer advocacy through the Missouri Rural Crisis Center and growing organic processor interest.

684 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	62,157 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$97M ORGANIC SALES	Top 20 U.S. ORGANIC STATE
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STATE PROFILE AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	684 (17th nationally)
Certified organic acres	62,157
Organic sales value	\$97 million
Worker employment vs. conventional	+24%
Split operations	46% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop organic grain aggregation and storage infrastructure to supply Midwest organic processors and reduce dependence on imports.
- Expand Ozark organic beef and pork supply chains to reach Kansas City and St. Louis premium food markets more efficiently.
- Build regional food hub capacity to connect rural organic producers with urban consumers in both major Missouri metro areas.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Soybeans & Corn:** northern MO loam soils suit organic grain production.
- ▶ **Beef Cattle:** Ozark pastures support certified organic and grass-fed beef.
- ▶ **Poultry:** organic pastured poultry serves KC and St. Louis metro markets.
- ▶ **Vegetables & Fruits:** KC and St. Louis farms supply farmers markets and CSAs.

BARRIERS

- Conventional commodity grain infrastructure and cash rental market create economic pressure against organic grain transition.
- Rural processing and cold storage gaps in the Ozarks limit perishable organic product market reach.
- Long distances between Ozark farm clusters and metro markets increase distribution costs for small organic livestock producers.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Missouri's breadth of organic production from northern grain plains through Ozark livestock country to two major metro direct markets gives it a diversified organic sector that is resilient, growing, and well-positioned to supply national processors and regional consumers alike.

Resources for Farmers

Missouri organic farmers are supported by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, University of Missouri Extension, the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, and Midwest TOPP. These organizations deliver technical assistance, certification support, and market development resources across the state's varied agricultural landscape.

Missouri Department of Agriculture

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Missouri Grown branding and marketing support for certified organic products
- NRCS Missouri: EQIP Organic Initiative and Organic Transition Assistance
- Value-added agriculture grants supporting organic processing and market development

mda.mo.gov

University of Missouri Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic grain, beef, poultry, and vegetable production specialists statewide
- MU Center for Agroforestry supporting organic and sustainable multi-crop systems
- Soil health, cover cropping, and integrated pest management for organic producers
- 114-county extension network delivering local organic technical assistance

extension.missouri.edu

Missouri Rural Crisis Center

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Missouri's leading farm advocacy organization with deep organic and sustainable roots
- Farmer-to-farmer peer learning and organic transition support networks
- Policy advocacy for organic and sustainable agriculture at state and federal levels
- Annual conference and educational events connecting organic producers statewide

morural.org

Midwest TOPP (MOSA-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AR, IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH, TN, WI
- Paid organic mentor matching for grain, beef, poultry, and vegetable operations
- Workshops on organic transition, certification, and market development in Missouri
- Supply chain and food hub connection services for Missouri organic producers

organictransition.org/region/midwest

DID YOU KNOW? MISSOURI

Missouri sits at a unique crossroads where Great Plains grain agriculture, Ozark livestock traditions, and two of the Midwest's most food-forward metro markets all converge within a single state. This geographic diversity means Missouri organic farmers range from large-scale grain operations in the north to small-scale Ozark diversified farms to intensive urban-edge market gardens near Kansas City and St. Louis. The result is one of the broadest organic commodity mixes in the Midwest, with strong growth potential in both grain supply chains and metro direct markets.

KEY SOURCES

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2022 Census of Agriculture. USDA NASS, 2024.

Missouri Department of Agriculture. Organic Agriculture Programs. MDA, 2023.

Missouri Rural Crisis Center. Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Resources. MRCC, 2023.

University of Missouri Extension. Sustainable Agriculture Programs. MU Extension, 2023.