



Mississippi

Emerging southern organic sector building on warm climate and direct-market growth

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Mississippi ranks 49th nationally with 28 certified organic operations and 6,640 certified acres. Mississippi's organic sector is developing steadily, driven by small diversified farms, CSA operations, and direct-market producers serving Jackson, Gulfport, and Hattiesburg. The state's warm climate and long growing season enable extended vegetable production windows and growing interest in organic sweet potatoes, pecans, and specialty crops. Mississippi State University Extension and the Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network are the primary anchors of organic technical support statewide.

28 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	6,640 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$18M ORGANIC SALES	Growing SECTOR TRAJECTORY
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STATE PROFILE AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	28 (49th nationally)
Certified organic acres	6,640
Organic sales value	\$18 million
Worker employment vs. conventional	+22%
Split operations	41% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop organic sweet potato production as a signature Mississippi organic commodity with strong national market demand and climate-fit soils.
- Expand farmers market and CSA infrastructure in Jackson and Gulf Coast cities to absorb growing small-farm organic vegetable supply.
- Leverage Mississippi State University research capacity to build regionally specific organic production knowledge for Gulf South conditions.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Vegetables:** organic vegetable farms supply Jackson and coastal direct markets.
- ▶ **Sweet Potatoes:** sandy loam soils well-suited for organic sweet potato production.
- ▶ **Pecans:** organic pecan orchards tap premium nut markets statewide.
- ▶ **Poultry & Livestock:** small-scale pastured poultry and livestock statewide.

BARRIERS

- Limited local organic certification infrastructure and relatively few accredited certifiers serving rural Mississippi producers.
- Weak organic distribution and aggregation networks make it difficult for small producers to access retail and institutional buyers.
- High summer heat and humidity create pest and disease pressure that requires intensive organic management without established regional protocols.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Mississippi's long warm growing season, climate-matched organic sweet potato potential, and growing urban direct-market appetite combine to make it one of the South's most promising emerging organic states, with strong university support accelerating the transition.

Resources for Farmers

Mississippi organic farmers are supported by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Mississippi State University Extension, the Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network, and the Southeast TOPP region. These partners provide certification, technical assistance, and market connection resources statewide.

Mississippi Dept of Agriculture and Commerce STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Mississippi Market Maker connecting organic producers with wholesale and retail buyers
- NRCS Mississippi: EQIP Organic Initiative and Organic Transition Assistance programs
- Specialty crop block grants supporting organic vegetable and fruit market development

mdac.ms.gov

Mississippi State University Extension RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic vegetable, small fruit, pecan, and livestock production research and extension
- Gulf South-specific pest and disease management protocols for organic systems
- Soil health and cover crop programs for organic transition on Mississippi soils
- 82-county extension network delivering local agricultural technical assistance

extension.msstate.edu

Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Mississippi's primary network for sustainable and organic farmer education and advocacy
- Annual Mississippi Organics Conference and farm tour programs
- Organic certification guidance and cost-share navigation for new applicants
- Farmer peer learning networks and mentorship for beginning organic producers

msan.ms

Southeast TOPP (FOG-led) MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, PR, VI
- Paid organic mentor matching for vegetable, livestock, and specialty crop operations
- Workshops on organic transition, Gulf South pest management, and certification
- Market access and supply chain development for Mississippi organic producers

organictransition.org/region/southeast

DID YOU KNOW? MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi's southern sandy loam soils and warm climate are among the best in the nation for organic sweet potato production, a crop with consistently strong consumer demand and premium organic price premiums. With organic sweet potato sales growing at double-digit rates nationally, Mississippi farmers who transition acres to certified organic sweet potatoes gain access to premium buyers ranging from natural grocery chains to national food brands. MSU Extension's sweet potato research program and Southeast TOPP mentorship are building the knowledge base to make Mississippi a recognized organic sweet potato destination.

KEY SOURCES

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

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Organic Certification Program. MDAC, 2023.

Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network. MSAN Programs. MSAN, 2023.

Mississippi State University Extension. Sustainable Agriculture Resources. MSU Extension, 2023.