

ORGANIC GRAIN MARKETING IN THE MIDWEST

RESOURCE GUIDE: JANUARY 2025

This Resource Guide outlines best practices, considerations, buyer information, and further resources for navigating organic grain markets, especially for farmers located in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

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.

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 Organic Grain Market Update and Markets Sessions at the OGRAIN Winter Conference which took place in January 2025. To learn more and find events near you, visit:

www.organictransition.org/region/national/events





EVENT RECAP:

This session focused on the organic grain markets landscape and presented the opportunity to explore partnerships in the sector. Economist Alexander Schultz (Argus Media) presented current and emerging trends that are shaping organic grain markets and translated data into actionable intelligence to help farmers and buyers navigate the future of organic grain pricing. John Wepking (Meadowlark Organics) and Elia Romano (Albert Lea Seed) shared their perspectives as organic buyers before other buyers in the room introduced themselves and the crops that they purchase.

Key Takeaways/Best Practices

NEW TO THE ORGANIC MARKET?

- Reach out to existing organic farmers in your area to learn about their markets.
- Collaborate with existing organic farmers to meet larger buyer demand when possible.
- Usually, stick to your rotation even when market dynamics shift, rather than react to ever-changing pricing.
- Buyers often prefer Forward Contracts (also known as Pre-Plant Bushel Contracts or Grower Agreements) to secure sales ahead of time.
- Set up your markets plan early to understand what varieties and product specifications buyers require and the cleaning and processing steps that are required.
- Arrange back up markets in case specifications aren't met, such as feed grade markets if grain does not meet food grade standards.
- Stick with it! Organic systems and markets require a learning curve and time.

NETWORKING TIPS

- Get connected with Organizations like the [Artisan Grain Collaborative](#), that build connections throughout the supply chain.
- Selling crops directly to a buyer versus selling to brokers in bulk requires consistent relationship building and maintenance.
- After establishing a relationship with a buyer, buyers tend to remember that a certain farmer grew something for them and provided a quality product.
- Buyers will usually reach out with future market/sales opportunities after a positive experience sourcing from a farmer.



ADDITIONAL TAKEAWAYS:

- The U.S. relies heavily on imported sources of soybean meal for protein supplements. While fluctuations are constant, farmers should pay attention to the impacts of potential tariffs and restrictions on imports that could result in domestic opportunities and challenges.
- Due to lower East Coast corn yields in 2024/2025, more East Coast Buyers expressed interest and sought opportunities to purchase organic corn from farmers located in the Corn Belt.

BUYER, PROCESSOR, AND HANDLER ATTENDEE INFORMATION:

Listed alphabetically by company.

Name	Company	State	Email Address	Phone Number
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NATIONAL
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



**ORGANIC
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ORGANIC GRAIN BUYER RESOURCE LISTS:

- Find recordings of the Conference on the [OGRAIN Youtube Channel](#)
- [OGRAIN Resource Map](#)
- [Artisan Grain Collaborative Network Map](#)
- [“Understanding Processor and End-User Grain Needs” Artisan Grain Collaborative](#)
- [The Organic & Non-GMO Sourcebook](#)
- [Organic Integrity Database](#)
- [Find.Organic](#)
- [Organic Market Development Grant Recipients](#)
- [Organic Grain Hub](#)
- [Organic Market Outlook: Market Trends and Risks \(Argus Media\)](#)

*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](#)

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