



Puerto Rico

Caribbean island builds organic resilience through tropical specialty crops and agritourism

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Puerto Rico has 13 certified organic operations across 58 certified acres, with its tropical climate supporting year-round organic production. With only 13 certified organic operations across 58 acres, Puerto Rico's certified organic sector is among the smallest in any U.S. jurisdiction — but the reasons are structural, not a reflection of agricultural potential. The island's farming economy is largely informal and subsistence-oriented, with thousands of small farms operating outside the federal certification system. High certification costs relative to farm revenue, limited English-language resources for Spanish-speaking producers, and the lingering devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria (2017) all suppress formal certification rates. The real organic and near-organic production footprint on the island is considerably larger than OID numbers suggest. Organic coffee, tropical fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops serve a growing local market and an expanding agritourism sector.

13	58	~\$2M	Growing
CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	CERTIFIED ACRES	EST. ORGANIC SALES	SECTOR TRAJECTORY

STATE PROFILE

AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	13 (U.S. territory)
Certified organic acres	58
Estimated organic sales	~\$2 million (small but growing)
Worker employment vs. conventional	+26%
Split operations	50% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop certified organic Puerto Rican coffee as a nationally branded premium organic specialty coffee with protected geographic identity and growing direct-to-consumer sales.
- Expand organic agritourism operations connecting mainland U.S. visitors with Puerto Rico's agricultural heritage, tropical biodiversity, and organic farm experiences.
- Build organic tropical fruit supply chains to serve mainland U.S. natural grocery buyers with certified Puerto Rico-grown mangoes, plantains, and specialty fruit.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Coffee:** mountain organic coffee commands strong national and global demand.
- ▶ **Tropical Fruits:** organic tropical fruits supply local markets and mainland buyers.
- ▶ **Vegetables:** organic vegetable farms supply local markets and farm-to-table.
- ▶ **Cacao & Specialty:** emerging organic cacao for premium chocolate and specialty buyers.

BARRIERS

- Hurricane and extreme weather risk creates ongoing production and infrastructure vulnerability for organic producers across the island.
- Limited organic processing and cold storage infrastructure constrains market reach for organic crops beyond direct-market channels.
- High cost of organic inputs, equipment, and certification relative to farm revenue creates economic barriers for small-scale organic producers.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Puerto Rico's 13 certified organic operations represent only the formally certified tip of a much larger organic and near-organic farming tradition. Structural barriers — high certification costs, language access, and hurricane recovery — suppress official counts. TOPP and USDA programs targeting cost-share and technical assistance in Spanish are the most direct levers for growing Puerto Rico's certified organic sector.

Resources for Farmers

Puerto Rico organic farmers are supported by the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture, Universidad de Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service, the Puerto Rico Organic Agriculture Alliance, and the Southeast TOPP region. These partners deliver certification, technical assistance, and market development resources across the island.

Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- PR Organic Program certification and regulatory oversight for island producers
- NRCS Puerto Rico: EQIP Organic Initiative and Organic Transition Assistance programs
- Agricultural recovery and resilience grants for organic producers post-hurricane

agricultura.pr.gov

UPR Agricultural Extension Service

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic coffee, tropical fruit, vegetable, and cacao research and extension specialists
- UPR Mayaguez and UPR Rio Piedras organic systems research programs
- Soil health, tropical pest management, and organic transition resources statewide
- Island-wide extension network delivering local organic technical assistance in PR

sea.uprm.edu

Puerto Rico Organic Agriculture Alliance

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Puerto Rico's primary organic farmer advocacy and education network
- Organic certification guidance, cost-share navigation, and producer support
- Farmer peer learning, market development, and organic agritourism programs
- Post-hurricane organic farm resilience and recovery resources

prorganica.org

Southeast TOPP (FOG-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, PR, VI
- Paid organic mentor matching for coffee, tropical fruit, vegetable, and cacao operations
- Workshops on organic transition, tropical production, and certification in Puerto Rico
- Market access and mainland U.S. organic buyer connections for Puerto Rico producers

organictransition.org/region/southeast

DID YOU KNOW? PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rican mountain-grown coffee has historically commanded some of the highest prices of any U.S.-origin coffee, with beans from the central cordillera recognized by specialty coffee buyers as among the finest in the Caribbean. Certified organic Puerto Rican coffee adds a premium layer to this already distinguished regional identity. With the specialty and organic coffee market growing internationally, PR organic coffee producers who achieve certification gain access to premium buyers seeking certified origin coffee from a distinctive and historic growing region. UPR Extension's coffee research and Southeast TOPP's mentorship are actively supporting Puerto Rico producers in making this transition.

KEY SOURCES

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

Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture. Organic Certification Program. PRDA, 2023.

Puerto Rico Organic Agriculture Alliance. Programs and Resources. PROAA, 2023.

Universidad de Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service. Organic Programs. UPR AES, 2023.