

PRESS KIT



RODALE
INSTITUTE™



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

WHAT IS RODALE INSTITUTE?

As a prestigious agricultural research and education nonprofit, Rodale Institute advances world-class scientific research, trains the next generation of farmers and inspectors, and guides the transition of farmland and global supply chain operators. This work enables farmers to transition to regenerative organic agricultural practices more easily, which will improve the health of the world's soil and secure the global food supply. In addition, the Institute's roster of experts scientists, agronomists, and specialists advise business leaders, policymakers, and the public on critical issues affecting agriculture.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Rodale Institute confronts one of the world's greatest challenges: creating a resilient global food system that improves human health and the environment.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

By revolutionizing our approach to farming, we hold the power to fix what is broken in our food system.



SEE • SPARK • GO



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS



Our **Renew the Earth** campaign will upgrade our PA headquarters to provide state-of-the-art facilities.



OUR MISSION AIMS TO DRIVE GLOBAL IMPACT

- **10M+ people** engaged and inspired through in-person and digital channels
- **25,000 farmers and inspectors** trained in regenerative organic and protocols
- **1M acres** in transition across **1,000 farms**
- Top food companies are actively **transitioning their supply chain**
- **Top healthcare systems** in the US offer regenerative healthcare services and programs
- **50** Certified Organic Partners



SEE • SPARK • GO



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

OUR REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS



Rodale Institute Headquarters

Kutztown, PA



Rodale Institute Southeast Organic Center

Chattahoochee Hills, GA



Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center

Marion, IA



Rodale Institute California Organic Center

Ventura, CA



Rodale Institute Pacific Northwest Organic Center

Skagit Valley, WA



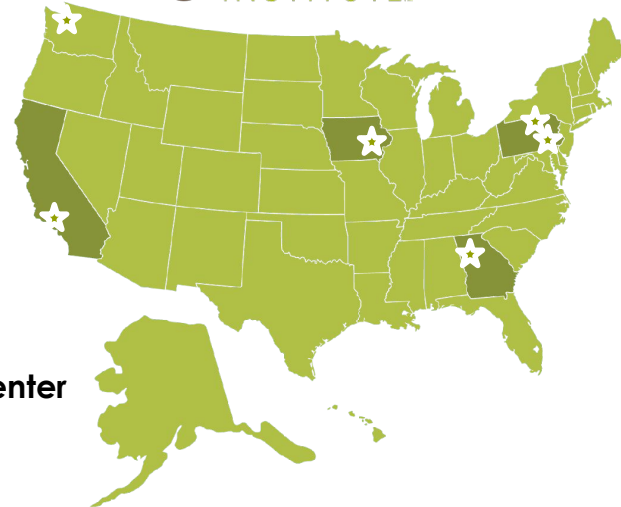
Rodale Institute Pocono Organic Center

Long Pond, PA



Davines Group-Rodale Institute European Regenerative Organic Center

Parma, ITALY



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

SCIENCE

For 77 years, Rodale Institute has been putting science behind the best practices in organic agriculture. With dozens of active research projects across 7 sites, Rodale Institute has been the leading voice in regenerative organic. The Institute conducts long-term research on a variety of topics to support organic farmers and improve the health of people and the planet.

EDUCATION

Rodale Institute invests heavily growing America's pipeline of expert regenerative organic farmers. As part of our nonprofit's efforts to meet the nation's growing and diverse agricultural needs, we offer rigorous farmer training programs through the Veteran Farmer Training program (VFT) and Rodale Institute Farmer Training program (RIFT). In addition, the Institute is rapidly expanding its partnerships with American colleges and universities to broaden access to its practical scientific research and regenerative organic farmer training programs that result in students being workforce-ready in under 12 months. The Institute also provides educational courses through our Virtual Campus, which has the capacity to reach farmers in every community in America and around the world.

CONSULTING

Launched in 2019, Rodale Institute offers hands-on consulting services for farmers interested in transitioning to organic. Our trained agronomists assist farmers with everything from crop plans, equipment, and soil sampling to certification preparation. For a limited time, these services are offered at no cost to PA and Midwest farmers. In the program's first two years, our consultants helped transition nearly 58,000 acres to organic, working with 200 farmers growing everything from grain and hemp to livestock and dairy, and the program is growing every day.



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

OUR PROGRAMS

Farmer Systems Trial (FST)

The Farming Systems Trial was launched in 1981 with a clear goal: Address the barriers to the adoption of organic farming. For more than 40 years, the Farming Systems Trial (FST) at Rodale Institute has applied real-world practices and rigorous scientific analysis to document the different impacts of organic and conventional grain cropping systems. The scientific data gathered from this research has established that organic management matches or outperforms conventional agriculture in ways that benefit farmers and lays a strong foundation for designing and refining agricultural systems that can improve the health of people and the planet. [Learn more here.](#)

Vegetable Systems Trial (VST)

The Vegetable Systems Trial is a side-by-side comparison of conventional and organic methods for growing vegetables. Located at Rodale Institute's main campus near Kutztown, Pennsylvania, the Vegetable Systems Trial (VST) was launched in 2016 with a global scope. This unique long-term study explores a novel approach to link soil health to crop nutrient density to human health, by comparing side-by-side the impact of cropping systems and management practices on changes in soil health indicators and nutritional quality of vegetables, all within the same set of environmental conditions. [Learn more here.](#)

Climate-Smart Research Projects

The Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart project, led by Rodale Institute and funded by the USDA, tests the environmental and socio-economic benefits of cover crop termination and planting into residue vs plasticulture. We are also looking at consumer messaging strategies at farmers markets and beyond to better understand how to market and promote climate-smart produce. [Learn more here.](#)



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

OUR PROGRAMS

Rodale Institute's Farmer Training (RIFT)

The Institute's farmer training initiatives have historically met the need for skills-based agricultural training that's accessible to individuals of all socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The RIFT program gives aspiring farmers the knowledge and experience they need to start their regenerative organic career. Students will experience the entire life cycle of an organic diversified crop and vegetable farm, and learn what it takes to maintain a profitable business, all while caring for the soil and ecosystem. [Learn more here.](#)

Veteran Farmer Training (VFT)

Through the Institute's Veteran Farmer Training Program (a paid workforce development program), our nonprofit prepares entrepreneurial former U.S. servicemembers to own and run agricultural businesses in the certified organic sector. For former service members, the training is particularly meaningful: farming allows them to continue to serve and protect our country and pass the skills they learn onto the next generation. In the years to come, Rodale Institute will invest to further grow America's pipeline of expert regenerative organic farmers. [Learn more here.](#)

Regenerative Healthcare Conference

Started in 2022, the Regenerative Healthcare Conference is a groundbreaking conference connecting agriculture and healthcare. This unique educational event brings together doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals, farmers, and other change-makers in the food system for an immersive, retreat-style learning experience connecting soil and human health. [Learn more here.](#)

The Organic Compliance Specialist Registered Apprenticeship

Launched in response to growing demand for certified organic goods, this public-private partnership will provide workers with comprehensive training and grow a diverse pipeline of highly-skilled professionals to serve the certified organic industry in the Commonwealth and across the nation. [Learn more here.](#)



SEE • SPARK • GO



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

Our founder, J.I. Rodale, was an entrepreneur from New York City who struggled with health problems all his life.

**One day he wrote these words on a chalkboard:
“Healthy Soil=Healthy Food=Healthy People.”**

In 1940, in response to the introduction of chemicals in farming after WWII, J.I. Rodale decided to buy a rundown farm in Pennsylvania and experiment with a way of growing food without chemicals that he coined “organic.”

There, he founded the Soil and Health Foundation in 1947—what is known as Rodale Institute today. In the 1970s, Rodale Institute moved to its current headquarters in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. J.I.’s son, Robert Rodale, took over the operation and started using the word “regenerative” to signify a method of farming that didn’t only sustain resources, but improved them. Since then, Rodale Institute has grown exponentially, expanding throughout the United States, and sharing scientific findings about regenerative organic agriculture with farmers, policymakers, and others around the world.

Our organization also trains first-generation farmers for careers in organic agriculture, educates consumers about how to make informed food choices, and moves the needle on the connection between soil health and human health.



ABOUT
FOCUS AREAS
FOUNDING STORY
KEY LEADERSHIP
BIOGRAPHIES
FACTS & FIGURES
PARTNERSHIPS
FAQS
ASSETS/CONTACTS



Jeff Tkach 
Chief Executive Officer



Andrew Smith 
Chief Science Officer



Renée Baran 
Dean of Education



Jessica Student 
Chief Impact Officer



Sam Malriat
Director, Organic Consulting

To learn more about the **full leadership team**, visit [this](#) link.

ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

JEFF TKACH

Chief Executive Officer

Jeff Tkach, Rodale Institute's Chief Executive Officer, is on a mission to reconnect humans with the earth. Tkach is responsible for leading the organization's growth, impact, and strategic planning, and is committed to advancing the Institute's world-renowned research and education on regenerative organic agriculture. In this role as CEO, Tkach leads a global workforce dedicated to advancing innovations in regenerative organic agriculture. His management portfolio includes strategic planning, overseeing the Institute's twelve campus operations in the U.S. and Europe, directing research investments, and supervising the organization's education programs.

ANDREW SMITH

Chief Scientific Officer

Dr. Andrew Smith oversees the research and farm operations at Rodale Institute and is passionate about growing the organic movement by providing science-based solutions to farmers and facilitating opportunities to expand the number of organic farmers and farmland across the globe. He has over twenty years of experience working in the organic industry as an agronomist, researcher, and farmer. While trained as an entomologist, his motive for entering the organic industry was to reduce the use of chemicals for food production that end up in our environment, food, and bodies. He now has the opportunity to support an amazing group of dedicated people working diligently on many projects to transform the food system and the way we farm to improve the lives and health of all people and the planet. He also continues to live and work on his own organic family farm.

For full bios, please email: rodaleinstitute@seesparkgo.com



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

RENÉE BARAN

Dean of Education

Renée Baran serves as Rodale Institute's Dean of Education, advancing the Institute's efforts to educate the next generation of regenerative organic farmers and agricultural professionals to meet the increasing demand in the organic market. Baran has spent her career building and managing educational programs. She couples this experience with a strategic mindset, deep commitment to student learning and love of the environment. Through on-site farmer training programs, university partnerships, consumer education workshops, online courses and webinars, as well as regenerative healthcare education, she leads the effort to teach regenerative organic practices across the US and abroad.

JESSICA STUDENT

Chief Impact Officer

Jessica Student serves as Rodale Institute's Chief Impact Officer, leading the Institute's Development, Marketing, and Communications divisions. She also oversees the Institute's capital campaign. Student is an accomplished non-profit marketing and strategy executive and in her previous roles at both nonprofit and for-profit organizations, she was recognized for intersecting strategic thinking and effective execution. Her expertise in developing innovative brand strategies and robust marketing campaigns advances Rodale Institute's efforts to broaden the successful adoption of regenerative organic agriculture in the United States and abroad.

SAM MALRIAT

Director, Organic Consulting

Sam provides on-site technical assistance to farmers, landowners, and businesses that are interested in transitioning land to certified organic and regenerative production systems. He earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences from Cornell University, and has over 12 years of practical farming experience in Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland, specializing in vegetable and grain production. Sam is a Certified Crop Adviser and is IOIA Certified in Crops and Livestock. He also serves as a board member for Pennsylvania Certified Organic, PA FarmLink, and sits on the Governing Council for the Organic Farmers Association.

For full bios, please email: rodaleinstitute@seesparkgo.com

ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

FACTS & FIGURES

Science and Research

- The **Farming Systems Trial (FST)** has over **42 years** of research on organic and conventional agriculture systems
- **30+ active research projects** at the Institute's farms and education centers
- **16 PhD scientists** across 10 campuses

Farmer Education

- **2,400+ participants** in Institute educational webinars
- **1,200 + farmers, students, educators and professionals** hosted for tours, workshops, seminars, farm walks and field days
- **15 organic farmers** trained in 2023

Consulting and Technical Assistance

- **33,000+ acres** in transition to, or already certified, organic
- **236 farmer clients** transitioning to, or already certified, organic
- Transitioning farms and supply chain actors in **30 states**



SEE + SPARK + GO



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

FACTS & FIGURES

FARMING SYSTEMS TRIAL (FST)

Decades-long research shows:

ORGANIC PRACTICES

- **increase soil organic matter** microbial biomass, diversity, and activity while reducing soil compaction
- **results in 30% higher yields** during times of extreme weather

ORGANIC YIELDS

- **match conventional yields** for cash crops, such as corn and soybean

ORGANIC MANAGEMENT

- **increases water infiltration** and does not contribute to the accumulation of toxins in waterways

ORGANIC MANURE

- **is the most profitable system**, even without the premiums paid for organic crops

ORGANIC SYSTEM

- **operation cost is significantly lower** than conventional management



SEE • SPARK • GO



RODALE
INSTITUTE™

ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

FACTS & FIGURES

FARMING SYSTEMS TRIAL

The Systems:



ORGANIC LEGUME

This system represents an organic cash grain system. It features a mid-length rotation consisting of annual grain crops and cover crops. The system's sole source of fertility is leguminous cover crops, and crop rotation provides the primary line of defense against pests.



CONVENTIONAL SYNTHETIC

This system represents a typical U.S. grain farm. It relies on synthetic nitrogen for fertility, and weeds are controlled by synthetic herbicides selected and applied at rates recommended by Penn State University Cooperative Extension.



ORGANIC MANURE

This system represents a diversified organic dairy or beef operation that includes a long rotation of annual feed grain crops and perennial forage crops. Fertility is provided by leguminous cover crops and periodic applications of composted manure from livestock. A diverse crop rotation is the primary line of defense against pests.

ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

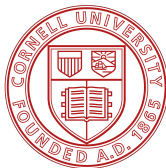
FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

KEY PARTNERSHIPS



SELECT COLLABORATING UNIVERSITIES



SEE • SPARK • GO



ABOUT

FOCUS AREAS

FOUNDING STORY

KEY LEADERSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES

FACTS & FIGURES

PARTNERSHIPS

FAQS

ASSETS/CONTACTS

SELECT PARTNERSHIPS

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- The USDA awarded Rodale Institute a **\$25 million** grant as part of the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities initiative.

Organic Trade Association (OTA)

- Rodale Institute partnered with the Organic Trade Association (OTA) as part of the **Transition to Organic Partnership Program** helping to foster organic agriculture and make technical assistance available to transitioning and existing organic farmers.

Patagonia and Dr. Bronner's

- In 2018, Rodale Institute joined Patagonia and Dr. Bronner's to form the **Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA)** and the **Regenerative Organic Certified™ (ROC)** standard.
- Today, ROC is a global product seal that fills a critical need in the industry: a way to verify a brand's commitment to the major pillars of regenerative organic agriculture, such as social fairness for farmers and farm workers.

Davines

- In 2021, Rodale Institute partnered with The Davines Group for its **first international Regional Resource Center** to provide that education, research, and support to farmers in Italy, Europe, and beyond.
- The Davines Group – Rodale Institute European Regenerative Organic Center serves as a hub for regenerative organic farmer training, while expanding the sustainable beauty brand's supply of regenerative organic ingredients and sustainability research.

General Mills

- Rodale Institute has partnered with General Mills to form a multi-year strategic alliance to advance GM's 2030 regenerative agriculture goal while **supporting American farmers**.

To learn more about Rodale's partnerships, please view [this](#) link.



WHAT IS REGENERATIVE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE?

Right now, the term “regenerative agriculture” has no collective meaning. As it stands today, a farmer can label their product “regenerative” even if they use pesticides on their crops. In stark contrast to that is the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC certification) authorized by the Regenerative Organic Alliance. ROC uses USDA Certified Organic as a baseline, so a product must be USDA Organic to be considered for a ROC label. But ROC goes above and beyond USDA Organic and takes into account soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness. It represents the highest standard for organic agriculture in the world, and Rodale Institute helped found the certification.



HOW DOES RODALE WORK WITH LOCAL FARMERS AND GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE REGENERATIVE ORGANIC FARMING?

Rodale Institute and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture worked collaboratively with the passage of the PA State Farm Bill to start an Organic Consulting service. This provides organic consulting services to support farmers who want to transition from conventional farming to certified organic production. This division within the Institute has expanded its capacity to offer services across the country. By offering a variety of farmer training programs and consumer education, the Institute is answering the question “Why Organic” – and how it relates to issues like human health and a changing climate.

CAN YOU POINT ME TO RESEARCH ABOUT RODALE’S PRACTICES AND LEARNINGS ABOUT REGENERATIVE ORGANIC FARMING?

- [Farming Systems Trial](#) Results and Findings
- [Farming Systems Trial 40-Year Report](#)
- [Additional Research Articles](#)

ABOUT
FOCUS AREAS
FOUNDING STORY
KEY LEADERSHIP
BIOGRAPHIES
FACTS & FIGURES
PARTNERSHIPS
FAQS
ASSETS/CONTACTS

WEBSITE

www.rodaleinstitute.org

PHOTOS

[Selections in Dropbox](#)

VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/@rodaleinstitute>

PRESS PAGE

<https://rodaleinstitute.org/about/media-and-press/>

PRESS INQUIRIES

rodaleinstitute@seesparkgo.com

SOCIAL MEDIA



LIKE



FOLLOW



WATCH



CONNECT



SEE • SPARK • GO

