

Utah

Beehive State organic sector built on heritage grains, rangeland beef, and SLC urban market demand



WEST/SOUTHWEST
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Utah ranks 31st nationally with 196 certified organic operations and 137,922 certified acres. Utah's organic sector spans arid rangeland beef operations in the west and south, irrigated vegetable and specialty crop farms in the Wasatch Front valleys, and a growing urban direct-market scene in Salt Lake City. The state's strong pioneer agricultural heritage and ethic of land stewardship align naturally with organic principles. Utah State University Extension and the Utah Department of Agriculture provide technical and organizational support for the state's diverse organic producers.

196 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	137,922 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$32M ORGANIC SALES	Growing SECTOR TRAJECTORY
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STATE PROFILE AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	196 (31st nationally)
Certified organic acres	137,922
Organic sales value	\$32 million
Worker employment vs. conventional	+21%
Split operations	44% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand certified organic rangeland beef supply chains leveraging Utah's extensive low-input rangelands and growing premium direct-to-consumer and regional retail demand.
- Develop urban organic agriculture and direct-market infrastructure in the Wasatch Front to serve Salt Lake City's growing and health-conscious consumer population.
- Build organic heritage grain supply chains connecting Utah's specialty grain producers with regional artisan bakers, mills, and natural food ingredient buyers.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Beef Cattle:** Utah's rangelands support certified organic and grass-fed beef.
- ▶ **Vegetables:** organic farms in Wasatch Front valleys serve SLC and Provo markets.
- ▶ **Alfalfa & Hay:** Utah irrigated valleys supply western organic dairy feed markets.
- ▶ **Grains & Seeds:** organic heritage wheat and seed crops for specialty grain buyers.

BARRIERS

- Severe water scarcity and ongoing drought conditions limit irrigated organic production potential and create ongoing yield risk for Wasatch Front vegetable operations.
- Arid climate and limited growing season in most of the state restrict organic vegetable production windows without season extension investment.
- Limited organic processing and distribution infrastructure constrains market access for rural Utah organic producers beyond direct-market channels.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Utah's organic sector is uniquely positioned by its combination of vast low-input rangelands for organic beef, Wasatch Front urban market access, and a pioneer agricultural heritage that aligns naturally with organic stewardship values.

Resources for Farmers

Utah organic farmers are supported by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah State University Extension, the Utah Farm Bureau organic programs, and the Southwest TOPP region. These partners deliver certification, technical assistance, and market development resources across the state.

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Utah's Own branding and marketing support for certified organic products
- NRCS Utah: EQIP Organic Initiative and Organic Transition Assistance programs
- Agricultural development grants for organic market and value-added processing projects

ag.utah.gov

Utah State University Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic rangeland beef, vegetable, alfalfa, and grain research and extension specialists
- USU organic systems research and Wasatch Front urban agriculture programs
- Water conservation, soil health, and dryland organic management resources
- 29-county extension network delivering local organic technical assistance statewide

extension.usu.edu

Utah Farmers Union

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Utah farm advocacy organization supporting organic and sustainable producer interests
- Farmer peer learning, networking, and market development programs statewide
- Organic certification guidance and cost-share navigation support for producers
- Beginning farmer programs and organic transition mentorship resources

utahfarmersunion.org

Southwest TOPP (CCOF-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AZ, CA, HI, NM, NV, TX, UT
- Paid organic mentor matching for rangeland beef, vegetable, and grain operations
- Workshops on organic transition, arid-climate management, and certification in Utah
- Market access and Wasatch Front food hub connections for Utah organic producers

organictransition.org/region/west-southwest

DID YOU KNOW? UTAH

Utah's pioneer agricultural tradition, rooted in cooperative land stewardship and sustainable resource management, has created a cultural foundation that aligns naturally with organic farming values. Many Utah farms have operated with low chemical inputs for generations, reflecting pioneer-era values of careful resource stewardship that reduce the cultural and practical barriers to organic transition. USU Extension's organic research programs and Southwest TOPP's mentorship network are helping Utah producers formalize these traditional practices into certified organic operations that access premium market channels.

KEY SOURCES

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

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. Organic Program. UDAF, 2023.

Utah State University Extension. Organic Agriculture Resources. USU Extension, 2023.

Utah Farmers Union. Producer Programs and Advocacy. UFU, 2023.