

Vermont

The most organically dense state in the nation, led by dairy, maple, and diversified farms



NORTHEAST/ MID-ATLANTIC TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Vermont leads the Northeast in certified organic operations with 797 operations and 200,989 certified acres, ranking 13th nationally. Despite ranking second-smallest in land area, Vermont's organic density reflects a deep agricultural culture built by NOFA-VT, UVM Extension, and Organic Valley's cooperative infrastructure over five decades. With \$14.3M in OREI/ORG funding, Vermont punches well above its weight as a national model for state-level organic ecosystem development.

797 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	200,989 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$14.3M OREI / ORG FUNDING	+31% MORE WORKERS VS. CONVENTIONAL
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STATE PROFILE

AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	797 (13th nationally)
Certified organic acres	200,989
OREI / ORG funding (cumulative)	\$14.3M
Worker employment vs. conventional	+31%
Split operations	38% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build on existing dairy cooperative infrastructure to support the next generation of organic dairy transition.
- Expand organic maple certification to meet rising international and specialty channel demand.
- Connect diversified vegetable farms to institutional buyers, food hubs, and school food programs.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Dairy & Milk:** Vermont organic dairy cooperatives anchor national milk supply.
- ▶ **Maple Syrup:** Vermont produces over 50% of U.S. maple; organic certification grows.
- ▶ **Vegetables:** diversified farms supply direct-to-consumer and co-op channels.
- ▶ **Apples & Orchard Crops:** Champlain Valley orchards lead Northeast organic apple expansion.

BARRIERS

- Small farm sizes limit economies of scale and make organic input sourcing and logistics costly.
- Dairy margin pressure from national commodity markets compresses the economics of organic transition.
- Aging farmer demographics and farm succession gaps put established organic operations at risk.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Vermont's organic density, 50-year NOFA-VT network, and UVM research infrastructure make it a national model. The state's critical challenge is succession and scale: keeping legacy organic farms in production and supporting the next generation of operators to access land, capital, and markets.

Resources for Farmers

Vermont organic farmers are supported by NOFA-VT, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, University of Vermont Extension, and Northeast TOPP. Together they offer one of the nation's most integrated state-level organic support ecosystems, spanning peer mentorship, certification, technical assistance, and market access.

NOFA-VT

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Vermont's leading organic farming organization, established 1971
- Farmer-to-farmer mentorship and peer learning networks statewide
- Annual Winter Conference, farm tours, and technical workshops
- Organic certification assistance and cost-share navigation support

nofavt.org

Vermont Agency of Agriculture

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Fund for farm business development
- Vermont Farm Viability Program: business planning and financial assistance
- Vermont Grown branding program for state-produced organic products

agriculture.vermont.gov

UVM Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Center for Sustainable Agriculture: organic research and outreach hub
- Organic dairy, vegetable, and maple production specialists
- Intervale Center partnership for beginning farmer organic training
- Soil health, compost systems, and cover crop research programs

uvm.edu/extension

Northeast TOPP (PCO-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, WV, MD, DE
- Paid organic mentor matching for dairy, vegetable, and diversified farms
- Workshops on organic dairy transition, composting, and cover crops
- Beginning farmer certification navigation and transition support

organictransition.org/region/northeast-mid-atlantic

DID YOU KNOW? VERMONT

Vermont has more certified organic farms per capita than any other state in the nation. With nearly 650 organic operations serving a population of just 645,000, Vermont's organic density reflects 50 years of investment in farmer networks, university research, and consumer culture. NOFA-VT's grassroots model, UVM's Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Organic Valley's cooperative infrastructure have created a replicable blueprint for how states can build organic ecosystems at scale. The challenge ahead is transition: ensuring Vermont's next generation of farmers can access land and capital to continue the legacy.

KEY SOURCES

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