

Wisconsin

America's Dairyland leads Midwest organic dairy with 900+ certified farms and strong cooperative tradition



MIDWEST
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A FARMER'S TOOLKIT
State Module | August 2026

Wisconsin ranks 4th nationally with 1,617 certified organic operations and 241,080 certified acres. Wisconsin is the dominant Midwest organic dairy state and one of the nation's top three organic states overall. Its concentration of certified organic dairy farms is unmatched in the region, anchored by the Coulee Region, Door Peninsula, and central Wisconsin landscapes that have built organic dairy as a cornerstone of rural farm family economics. Marbleseed (formerly MOSES, the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service) is headquartered in Wisconsin and serves as the organizational heart of Midwest organic agriculture.

1,617 CERTIFIED OPERATIONS	241,080 CERTIFIED ACRES	\$335M ORGANIC SALES	#3 U.S. ORGANIC RANK
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STATE PROFILE AT A GLANCE

Certified operations	1,617 (4th nationally)
Certified organic acres	241,080
Organic sales value	\$335 million
Worker employment vs. conventional	+27%
Split operations	52% of farms

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand organic feed grain production to reduce Wisconsin organic dairy farms' dependence on imported organic feed, keeping more organic value within the state.
- Develop organic vegetable and specialty crop supply chains connecting Wisconsin producers with Milwaukee, Madison, and Green Bay institutional and wholesale buyers.
- Grow organic egg and berry production as high-value diversification options for Wisconsin organic farms seeking revenue beyond dairy.

TOP ORGANIC COMMODITIES

- ▶ **Dairy:** Wisconsin is the top Midwest organic dairy state supplying co-ops.
- ▶ **Grains & Corn:** organic corn, oats, and grain on Wisconsin soils supply dairy feed.
- ▶ **Vegetables:** organic vegetable farms in Madison and Milwaukee serve strong markets.
- ▶ **Fruits & Berries:** organic orchards and berry farms supply specialty buyers.

BARRIERS

- Organic dairy farmgate price volatility and processor consolidation have created economic uncertainty for Wisconsin organic dairy farmers in recent years.
- High organic feed grain prices due to insufficient domestic organic grain supply increase costs for Wisconsin organic dairy operations.
- Cold winters and relatively short growing seasons limit organic vegetable production windows and increase season extension infrastructure costs.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Wisconsin's organic dairy leadership is national in scope and economic significance: the CROPP Cooperative alone represents hundreds of Wisconsin farm families, and Marbleseed's annual Organic Farming Conference in Delavan is the largest organic farming event in the Midwest. Wisconsin is the organizational and dairy production center of American organic agriculture.

Resources for Farmers

Wisconsin organic farmers are supported by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, University of Wisconsin Extension, Marbleseed (formerly MOSES), and the Midwest TOPP region. These organizations deliver a world-class ecosystem of certification, research, technical assistance, and market development resources.

WI Dept of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS

- Organic Certification Cost Share: federal pass-through, up to \$750/yr
- Wisconsin Grown and Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin branding for organic product promotion
- NRCS Wisconsin: EQIP Organic Initiative, RCPP, and Organic Transition Assistance
- Agricultural development grants supporting organic dairy, grain, and market infrastructure

datcp.wi.gov

University of Wisconsin Extension

RESEARCH, EXTENSION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Organic dairy, grain, vegetable, and fruit research and extension specialists
- UW organic systems research and on-farm demonstration programs statewide
- Soil health, cover crops, and integrated pest management for organic producers
- 72-county extension network delivering local organic technical assistance across WI

extension.wisc.edu

Marbleseed (formerly MOSES)

FARMER ADVOCACY & PEER LEARNING

- Hosts the nation's largest organic farming conference annually in Delavan, WI
- Organic farmer education, peer networking, and technical resources for the Midwest
- Organic certification guidance, cost-share navigation, and producer support
- Farmer peer learning networks and mentorship programs across Wisconsin and the Midwest

marbleseed.org

Midwest TOPP (MOSA-led)

MENTORSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Serves AR, IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH, TN, WI
- Paid organic mentor matching for dairy, grain, vegetable, and fruit operations
- Workshops on organic transition, dairy management, and certification in Wisconsin
- Market access and supply chain development for Wisconsin organic producers

organictransition.org/region/midwest

DID YOU KNOW? WISCONSIN

The Marbleseed Organic Farming Conference (formerly MOSES), held annually in Delavan, Wisconsin, attracts over 3,500 organic farmers, researchers, and advocates, making it the largest organic farming gathering in the United States. This extraordinary annual convergence of organic expertise in Wisconsin reflects the state's role as the organizational center of Midwest organic agriculture. The conference provides Wisconsin's and the region's organic producers with cutting-edge research presentations, hands-on workshops, peer networking, and market connections that accelerate organic adoption and success across the Midwest.

KEY SOURCES

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

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Organic Program. DATCP, 2023.

Marbleseed (formerly MOSES). Annual Report. Marbleseed, 2023.

University of Wisconsin Extension. Organic Agriculture Resources. UW Extension, 2023.

Find additional resources at:
organictransition.org/region/national

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