



ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

FY 2011 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is a national farmer-directed, non-profit organization fostering the improvement and widespread adoption of organic agriculture. The multiple benefits of organic production and market systems make organic agriculture a highly cost-effective investment for achieving national economic and environmental goals. OFRF FY 2011 appropriations requests emphasize research, data collection, and information dissemination, all significant limiting factors for the growth and improvement of organic agriculture. Our requests represent a step towards achieving the “fair-share” benchmark¹ for organic agriculture, specifically within the USDA-REE mission area.

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Bob Scowcroft

CA OFFICE:
P.O. Box 440
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
Tel: 831-426-6606
Fax: 831-426-6606
info@ofrf.org
www.ofrf.org

DC OFFICE:
110 Maryland Ave. NE
Suite 209
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 202-821-2760
Fax: 202-547-1837

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

➤ **Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI)**

FY 11 Request: Protect mandatory funding + \$10.0 million discretionary = \$30.0 million

OREI is USDA's flagship competitive research and education grant program specifically dedicated to the investigation of organic agriculture and the delivery of its outcomes. The program is consistently oversubscribed and in FY 09 could only fund 17% of the funds requested. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized \$25 million annually in discretionary funds. In addition to the \$20 million in mandatory funding available in FY 11, OFRF requests \$10 million of the \$25 million in discretionary authority in FY 11.

➤ **“Organic Transitions” Integrated Research Program (ORG)**

FY 11 Request: \$5.0 million

We reject the President's cut to ORG and request \$5 million for FY 11 to maintain the funding level established in FY 10. Beginning in FY 09, this program was combined with the Water Quality integrated program to fund multi-year projects addressing critical water quality problems. This program consistently receives funding requests that are several times more than it can accommodate. We oppose merging this program into the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

➤ **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE)**

FY 11 Request: \$30.0 million

We strongly support the President's 2011 request of \$30 million for SARE. SARE is a farmer-driven, regionally-led, and outcomes-oriented competitive research grants program that complements the outcomes of the two dedicated organic research programs.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

➤ **Direct Organic Projects**

FY 11 Request: “Fair-share” for organic research, report language resulting in appx. \$42 million

USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has an organic research portfolio and a work plan to guide further organic research objectives. The current total for direct organic projects is \$16.9 million, about 1.4% of the ARS budget. We urge the growth of the agency's organic portfolio to reach an ARS fair-share objective of approximately \$42 million.

¹ The fair-share benchmark compares the U.S. retail market share of organic products to the percentage of USDA-REE spending on activities explicitly directed towards organic agriculture.

➤ **National Agricultural Library (NAL)**

FY 11 Request: Increase of \$1.5 million for sustainability information

We strongly support the President's FY 11 request for an increase of \$1.5 million for NAL to develop a framework for information access and databases focused on sustainable agricultural practices and systems.

AMS/ERS/NASS

➤ **Organic Market and Production Data Initiatives (ODI)**

FY 11 Request: \$5.0 million (Split between AMS, ERS, and NASS at the discretion of the Secretary)

ODI provides funds for the collection and analysis of data about organic production, prices, and markets. This information is crucial to the growth and transparency of the organic sector, e.g. for business planning and credit, fairness in crop insurance and disaster payments. The 2008 Farm Bill provided \$5 million in mandatory funds with an additional authority for \$5 million annually. Those mandatory funds have been applied to important projects, but there is still an increasing backlog of information needs.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

➤ **National Organic Program (NOP)**

FY 11 Request: \$10.1 million

We support the President's FY 11 request of \$10.1 million for NOP.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

➤ **Mandatory Conservation Programs**

FY 11 Request: No cuts to mandatory Farm Bill funding

The cuts proposed in the President's FY 11 budget to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs would rob over \$1 billion from the conservation baseline, or nearly a quarter of the conservation increases in the 2008 Farm Bill. These programs lead to cleaner water, erosion reduction, carbon sinks, improved wildlife habitat, and other essential environmental services.

➤ **Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)**

FY 11 Request: \$932.7 million

We strongly support the President's full request for CTA, which is funded through yearly appropriations for NRCS to provide conservation technical assistance to farmers and ranchers. CTA also funds assessment of conservation practices and systems that underpin the conservation programs, as well as NRCS collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information on the status and condition of the nation's soil, water and other resources. This information is used by farmers and by federal, state and private natural resource managers who are charged with managing and protecting natural resources.