

# Utilizing NRCS Support on Organic Farms

Tech Note 12 provides details and updates for farmers, field agents, and technical service providers

## Background Information:

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers funding and technical assistance to help farmers enhance their farming operations, including increasing support for transitioning to organic practices. However, farmers, field agents, and Technical Service Providers (TSPs) may not always be familiar with how NRCS programs can support organic practices. To address this, the [Organic Farming Research Foundation](#) (OFRF) collaborated with NRCS to develop a document that equips farmers and field agents with the knowledge needed to effectively support the unique requirements of organic producers.

**Document Highlight:** [Technical Note 12 - Conservation Activities in Organic Farming Systems \(190 TN AG-12, TN-12, Tech Note 12\)](#)

TN-12 is a comprehensive, up-to-date guide that details how various organic practices address NRCS's resource concerns. It details how some organic practices that were not previously fully covered by NRCS [Conservation Practice Standards](#) (CPSs) are now currently covered with updates like the new [CPS-823, Organic Management](#).

## WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF TN-12?

- Aligns current and updated NRCS resource concerns with the National Organic Program (NOP) standards.
- Details how Organic System Plans (OSPs) can streamline NRCS planning.
- Provides real-world examples of the conservation benefits of organic farming systems.

## How can it help Organic Farmers?

- Provides an understanding of how various organic practices can meet requirements of specific NRCS practice standards.
- Presents a framework for articulating the conservation benefits of organic practices in the language used by NRCS field agents and TSPs.
- Showcases real-world examples of organic farmers utilizing NRCS programs like EQIP and CSP.
- Details how NRCS programs can support farmers wishing to transition land to organic production.

Viewing a printed version of this document? A PDF version with hyperlinks, along with other resources on other programs that support organic production, is available here: <https://ofrf.org/news/topp-west-resources/>



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## How can it help NRCS agents and TSPs?

- *In conducting thorough assessments of organic farming operations and identifying how the area's resource concerns interact with organic farming standards for soil fertility, habitat conservation, water quality, etc.*
- *In developing conservation plans with conservation practices that align with both NRCS guidelines and organic certification requirements.*
- *In learning how to monitor the effectiveness of conservation practices while helping to ensure farms meet both NRCS and organic certification standards.*

## Need help finding NRCS assistance?

Start by finding your [regional Natural Resource Conservation Service \(NRCS\) office](#).

Suggested questions for your NRCS office:

1. **“I’m interested in applying for NRCS Conservation Program Assistance for my farm business to help finance \_conservation project/resource concern of interest. What do you need from me to get started on my application?”**
2. **“What additional funding opportunities are available to my farm?”**
3. **“How soon can a conservationist visit my farm to help set up a conservation plan?”**
4. **“I am interested in seeing if I am eligible for the increased and [advanced payment option for Historically Underserved farmers](#). How will this change my application process?”**

Important reminder: Although deadlines for NRCS programs vary by program and state, **you can work with your NRCS district office anytime** to complete a Conservation Plan through their Conservation Desktop platform.

Learn more about federal support for organic farmers at OFRF’s [Transition to Organic Production Partnership \(TOPP\) West/Southwest page](#), including [organic certification cost-share](#) and [support for transitioning land/operations to organic](#).



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