



ORGANIC FARMING
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2022 was a high-impact year for OFRF as we strengthened and expanded our programs to respond to organic farmers' needs and provide them with vital support and resources. OFRF worked hard to ensure that the input and perspectives of farmers are at the center of our work by regularly listening to and engaging with organic farmers and ranchers.

One highlight from the year was getting to spend a lot of time talking to partner organizations and policy makers about the feedback we got from farmers in our farmer surveys, and witnessing the genuine excitement about having this direct farmer input. It was really amazing to be able to finally do some of this work in person again,

with the return of farm tours, farm bill field hearings, and conferences like EcoFarm and the Organic Grower Summit. One moment that stands out to me was a tour OFRF coordinated for our Congressman of an organic, regenerative, dry-farmed vineyard. We were joined by other non profit partners and although we faced high temperatures, we all enjoyed seeing first hand the practices being utilized by Tablas Creek. Like a large majority of organic producers, the vineyard prioritizes building healthy, living soils that build resilience in a changing climate: in their case, to the increasingly hot and dry summers of the Paso Robles region of California.

Armed with the farmer feedback summarized in our NORA Report, we are now developing significant new initiatives and programs and meaningful ways to better serve organic and transitioning farmers. In particular, our efforts translating and disseminating science-based resources, has grown significantly - smoothing the transition to more sustainable farming practices and mitigating the impacts of climate change and natural disasters on-farm.

We also deepened our collaborations with farmers, researchers, educators, policymakers, and nonprofits to support adoption of organic regenerative practices and work toward building a healthier food system. Read on for more detailed updates about how our research, education, and advocacy work grew in 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brise Tencer".

Brise Tencer
Executive Director, OFRF

OUR MISSION

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) works to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems. OFRF cultivates organic research, education, and federal policies that bring more farmers and acreage into organic production.

OUR VISION

Organic farming as the leading form of agriculture, supporting healthy and resilient people, ecosystems, and economies.

EQUITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OFRF acknowledges its privilege as a predominantly White-led organization and recognizes that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) perspectives need to be highlighted for organic farming systems to develop and thrive. Today's agriculture system is a continued product of stolen land, knowledge, and enslaved labor of People of Color to favor the interests of White people. OFRF is committed to advancing beyond the conversation of social justice as it intersects with organic agriculture, and toward an anti-racist future that holds our board members, staff, and partner organizations accountable in dismantling systemic racism in organic farming.

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Deputy Director

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Research and Education Program Director

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Communications Associate

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RESEARCH

National Organic Research Agenda

In 2022, OFRF published the 200+ page National Organic Research Agenda (NORA). This report is one of our biggest accomplishments for the year and will continue to inform future OFRF research and education programming for many years to come. The 2022 NORA report uses data from over 1,100 certified organic growers across the U.S., as well as sixteen listening sessions with organic and transitioning growers. We asked the nation's organic producers about their greatest production and non-production challenges, their concerns, and technical assistance needs and have the data broken down by commodities, SARE region, farming experience, and BIPOC status. The report serves as a roadmap for OFRF's research and education programming, as well as a policy tool to inform the USDA and Congress, leverage public investments for organic research, and advocate for expansion of organic support in the 2023 Farm Bill.

NUMBERS

7K

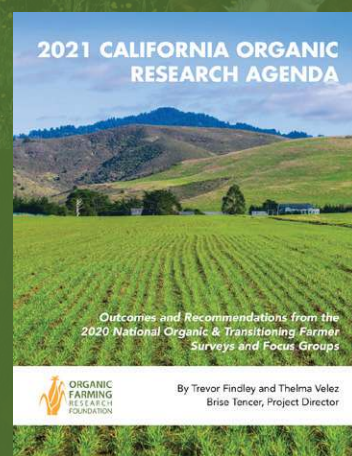
WEBSITE
VISITS

1K+

REPORT
DOWNLOADS

California Organic Research Agenda

The California Organic Research Agenda report, also published in 2022, is a companion to OFRF's 2022 NORA report and is a comprehensive examination of the current needs and challenges of organic farmers and ranchers across California. The report provides policy and research recommendations to address producer-identified issues. Production of the CORA report was supported in part by the University of California Organic Agriculture Institute (UC OAI) and the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology.



RESEARCH

NIFA Taking Stock II

OFRF undertakes its second major assessment of public research investments directed toward strengthening organic agriculture.

With funding from a cooperative agreement with the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), OFRF has engaged in a comprehensive evaluation of the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and the Organic Transitions Program (ORG) from 2015-2021 including:

- A description of OREI and ORG funded projects by commodity, region, and research topics
- An equity review of investments in 1890 Land Grant Universities (Black land-grant Universities), 1994 Land Grant Institutions (Native American tribally-controlled colleges and universities), and Hispanic Serving Institutions
- An analysis of how well OREI and ORG investments align with: legislative priorities in the RFAs, NORA research recommendations, the 2016 Taking Stock Report recommendations, and the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) priorities
- An assessment of the funding and research findings tied to climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation
- Identification of priorities for future investment in organic research

In 2023, we look forward to publishing Taking Stock II 2015-2021, a comprehensive report with our key findings and potential areas for future investments.

GRANTS

We partnered with the Foundation for Food & Agricultural Research (FFAR) for our most recent research grant cycle to support on-farm climate change mitigation and resilience research. We are thrilled that the 2022 grants prioritized early career researchers and provided two-thirds the funds to projects led by applicants that identified as Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC).

We awarded a total of \$119,817 in funding to the following six projects:

Building climate change resilience with coffee smallholder producers by extending organic practices to staple crops

Alejandra Guzman-Luna, Café Ecológico de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas S.C. (CESMACH)

IMPACT

In the South of Mexico, those dependent on coffee for their well-being are vulnerable in many ways: climate change, volatile prices, and seasonal food insecurity. This project takes a participatory research and demonstration approach to develop and integrate organic staple crop production into more sustainable organic coffee agroecosystems.

Evaluation of seeding methods and timing of cover crops interseeded into organic corn

Axel Garcia y Garcia, University of Minnesota

IMPACT

Upper Midwestern organic grain growers struggle with integrating cover crops into the corn part of their rotations. This project will evaluate various management factors, including seed selection, timing, and type of mechanical operations, to optimize cover crop integration as a part of sustainable organic corn production. Researchers will evaluate effects of cover crop species on corn yield, soil fertility and weed incidence.

Organic for All

Jennifer Taylor, Lola's Organic Farm, Georgia and Florida

IMPACT

Traditionally, socially disadvantaged farmers, BIPOC farmers, and underserved farming populations and their communities lack participation and access to opportunities, training, and education provided to medium and large-scale farmers and agribusinesses. Organic For All is a participatory capacity-building agricultural research and outreach project that will identify needs, hindrances, and barriers with BIPOC farmers and work to develop solutions that provide education, hands-on training, and technical assistance.

GRANTS

Increasing the productivity and market value of pulse crops for arid organic conditions:

Travis Parker, University of California, Davis

IMPACT

Nitrogen-fixing legumes feature prominently in many organic crop rotations. Some pulses, such as cowpea and tepary bean, also show exceptional resistance to heat, drought, and low soil fertility, making them particularly valuable in the context of climate change. OFRF awarded this grant to research dependable pulse crops for arid regions that promote the ecological and financial sustainability of organic farms.

Companion plantings for organic management of a new invasive Brassica pest:

Christiana Huss, University of Georgia

IMPACT

This project leverages agricultural diversity to mitigate the recent attack of the invasive yellow-margined leaf beetle (*Microtheca ochroloma*) on leafy brassica greens across the Southeastern United States. This project will evaluate a very innovative landscape ecology approach that involves a combination of repellent intercrops and attractant companion plants in a “push-pull” design for bio-control of the pest.

Organic Farming Systems Options for Control of Coffee Leaf Rust in Kona

Colehour Bondera, Kanalani Ohana Farm, Kona, Hawaii

IMPACT

This project seeks to identify accessible Organic Farming System options for controlling Coffee Leaf Rust in Kona coffee by increasing microbial biodiversity, using on-farm and island-made inputs, and sequestering more carbon through increased soil organic matter. This farmer-led research project takes a whole-systems approach to evaluate plant health-based options for managing the disease with organic farming practices on working organic coffee farms in Kona, Hawaii.

EDUCATION

Research Forum

In early 2022, we organized our Organic Agriculture Research Forum (OARF) in partnership with EcoFarm. The four workshop tracks within the forum included sessions showcasing: Research on Soil Health on Organic Farms in the Central Coast, a Farmer to Farmer Panel on Soil Health in English and Spanish (Grupo de Agricultor a Agricultor Sobre la Salud del Suelo), Strategies for Controlling Spotted Wing Drosophila Organically, and a workshop on findings from the 2022 NORA followed by a farmer listening session.

Southern Soil Health Course and Guidebook

860+ DOWNLOADS

With support from USDA's Southern SARE program, we developed robust soil health materials for farmers in the Southern region, including an in-depth science-based guidebook, Soil Health Strategies for the Southern Region and a free online course.

Soil Health Course and Materials in Spanish: Los Fundamentos de la Salud del Suelo

OFRF is creating a free, online soil health course in Spanish with funding from a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. The course will launch in 2023 and has been developed with support from partners at University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, Agriculture and Land-Based Training, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology. Los Fundamentos de la Salud del Suelo is designed for beginning farmers, existing organic farmers, and those in transition to organic production.



Pest and Weed Factsheets

270+ DOWNLOADS

With support from Farmers Advocating for Organics (FAFO), seven science-based, accessible materials were created that provide practical solutions to address the needs and challenges farmers voiced in our NORA report. These new short-form resources on critical topics requested by farmers, include factsheets on managing pest and perennial weeds.

In 2023 we will expand on these resources and continue to create farmer-driven materials that highlight farmer experiences and provide science-based resources requested by producers, such as crop-livestock integration.

Resources for Field Staff

In collaboration with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OFRF created educational resources including webinars and research summaries, farmer stories, and video blogs on soil health, organic tillage, and conservation practices. These resources were directed to NRCS field staff to learn about organic soil health and its role in supporting conservation goals in organic farming systems.

OFRF-delivered Resources:

10

Research Summaries

2

**Webinars attended
by nearly 2k**

**Forthcoming NRCS publication on Tillage
Tools and Practices in Organic Systems**

2022 Webinars:

Why Organic Matters

Soil Life in Organic Farming

**In 2023 we will continue to produce more
webinars that support NRCS in assisting
organic farmers and ranchers with their
conservation plans.**

ADVOCACY

Using the NORA report to inform the 2023 Farm Bill

OFRF's Executive Director Brise Tencer shared the NORA report with several Congressional offices as well as leadership within the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, NIFA, and the National Organic Standards Board. This work to educate elected and administrative officials on the NORA findings helped lay the groundwork for efforts to increase funding and support for organic farmers and organic research in the 2023 Farm Bill.

OFRF testified before the House Agriculture Committee on the importance of organic agriculture as a response to climate change

Thelma Velez, OFRF's Research and Education Program Director, was invited to testify before the full House Agriculture Committee on the importance of organic agriculture research, especially as we respond to the climate crisis.

Senate testimony on organic research in the Farm Bill

OFRF was happy to see previous Board Member Steve Ela representing farmers and their role in research in a hearing before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. As one of five witnesses invited to share their expertise, and the only farmer panelist, Ela spoke to the importance of organic systems research and extension programs to all farmers.

Showing broad support for organic agriculture to Congress

OFRF highlighted the importance of public investment into organic agriculture research in a sign-on letter with broad support from 43 partner organizations.



ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

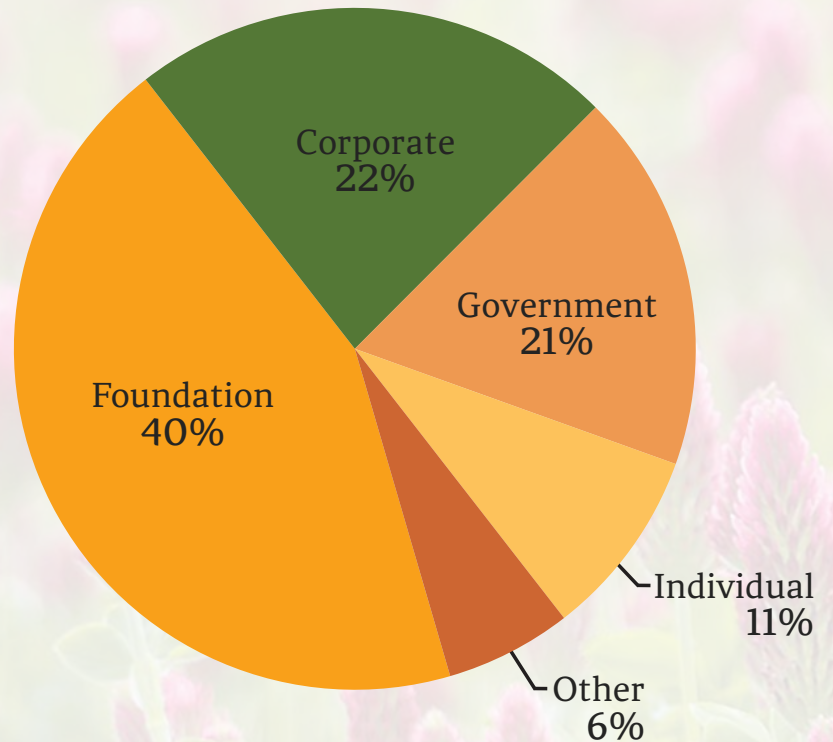
27 Meetings with congressional members

10 Meetings with senior USDA staff from NIFA, ARS, and NRCS

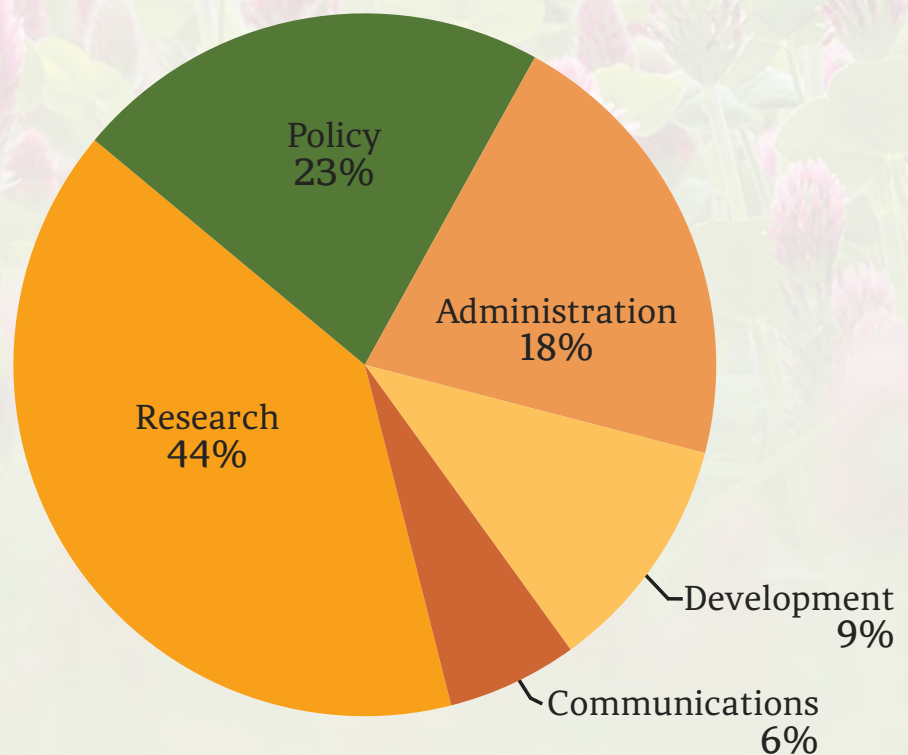
43 Organizations signing on to our letter to Congress for more investments in organic agriculture research

FINANCIALS

2022 TOTAL REVENUE



2022 TOTAL EXPENSES



COMMUNICATIONS

Join us! Our monthly newsletter is packed with farmer stories, organic research spotlights, advocacy updates and calls to action, and important news from partners advancing organic agriculture. Over 1.2K people subscribed in 2022, bringing the total reach to over 14K.

And check out these links to our work on the website: [farmer stories](#), [shared blogposts](#), [policy recommendations](#), [presentations and proceedings](#) & [farmer resources](#)

GET INVOLVED



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Eoin Jun King
A Gracious Honest King

Special Thanks to the late Eoin Jun King. Eoin left us with two extremely special gifts: his story and his financial support via his bequest of his past IRA contributions to OFRF.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Adam Swierczynski
Alania Lindquist
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Julie Bilgor
K W Stephens
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Kathleen Merrigan
Kathy Cross
Kathy Franklin
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Kay Helberg
Keith Richards
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Kind of Wild Wines
Kokoasse Kpomblekou-A
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Patricia Jenny
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Peter Mallory
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Pro Farm Group, Inc (prev. Marrone Bio)
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Steve Slinger
Steven Mikkelsen
Straus Family Creamery
Sue Wagner
Sunrise Foods International
Susan Futrell
Susan Kirshner
Susan Reiff
Sustainable Futures Fund
Suzanne Brown
Tim Schultz
Timothy and Barbara Partee
Tom Wind
True Organic Products
Victoria Rosenfield
Virginia Davis
Walt and Jill S Auburn
Warren and Ann Weber
Wesley Chuang
Whole Foods Market
William Pape
William Taylor Nahmens



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