



OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION 2023 FARM BILL PLATFORM

INVESTING IN ORGANIC AND SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH

OEFFA members believe a transformative investment in organic and sustainable research in the 2023 Farm Bill is necessary to address our nation's most urgent food, agriculture, climate, and public health challenges.

Organic and sustainable farming practices should receive a fair share of federal research dollars and farmers should have access to research that helps them farm responsibly and profitably. Supporting good farming through science enhances the health of our land, air, water, and communities.



Research Needs to Support Ecological Farming Systems

Publicly funded agricultural research has led to the advancement of countless innovative techniques and practices that have helped farmers across the country. Unfortunately, these **investments have declined by about one-third since 2002**, putting the U.S. well behind other countries.



Organic agriculture has grown despite little investment in public research. **Less than 2 percent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual research budget is spent on organic production topics, although the organic market has grown to more than 6 percent.** As a result, many organic and diversified growers have lacked access to seeds, breeds, and management practices designed for their systems and organic research has not been available to benefit the broader farming community.

For the U.S. to sustain long-term food security for all, the farm bill must also greatly expand **investment in research on agricultural climate solutions** that work with nature to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon in the soil. There has been a lack of investment in this area, despite organic and regenerative agriculture's potential to aid climate change mitigation and adaptation. We can do better!



Every \$1 invested in publicly funded agriculture research generates \$20 in economic activity.



Abbe Turner operates Mushroom Harvest Provisions, a local food distribution business serving about 50 restaurants in central Ohio. "Small farming... can be very challenging at times. But the method of production matters. It matters to the health of our soil and water. It matters to the nutrition of the products we produce."

Research is also needed on organic nutrient density and wellness and to support food system equity, food safety, and supply chain resiliency.



Farm-Tested Research

For 20 years, Abbe Turner has been involved in farming, including goat and mushroom production. She received a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant to try to improve farm profitability by collecting commercial food waste to use as an animal feed for her pigs, goats, and chickens.



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“Research for small farms... is particularly important because we operate on smaller margins, and we have higher risk when we try new things,” said Turner. “We learned a lot of lessons and we wouldn’t have been able to explore that and share the information with other farmers without that SARE grant.”

All farmers need access to high quality research that is relevant to their specific region and type of operation, but this is particularly critical for organic, beginning, BIPOC, and other traditionally underserved and undercapitalized farmers.

Donnetta Boykin of Endigo’s Herbs and Organics in Montgomery County, Ohio has been farming vegetables since 2003 and plans to create food boxes specifically tailored for elderly, disabled, and low-income community members.

In 2022, she received a SARE grant to compare different powdery mildew treatments to compare effectiveness, cost, and yield. In addition to helping her better tackle a key challenge on the farm, Boykin will help other farmers when she shares her findings at conferences, demonstrations, and online.



Rebuilding Publicly Funded Agriculture Research

The 2023 Farm Bill should invest in public research, including ATTRA (one of Turner’s favorites), the Economic Research Service, the Agricultural Research Service, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which includes SARE, the Organic Transitions Program, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, and the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

OEFFA members want long-term research on cover crops, organic no-till, natural fertility, and food nutrition and disease to be widely accessible to farmers.

Organic and sustainable research can support good farming practices that help ALL farmers mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, protect our natural environment, and support healthy communities.



THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

The farm bill shapes virtually every aspect of the U.S. food and agricultural system. The 2023 Farm Bill is our single greatest opportunity to realize our vision for a future where sustainable and organic farmers thrive, local food nourishes our communities, and agricultural practices protect and enhance our environment.

Democracy belongs to all of us, and it’s up to us to advocate for strong policies that benefit our whole community and the Earth. Your voice is needed to make sure government and public institutions are accountable and exercise their responsibility to protect our health and well-being and support natural ecosystems.

To join us in calling for farmer-focused solutions in the 2023 Farm Bill, including investments in NIFA and other agricultural research programs, go to action.oeffa.com/farm-bill.

