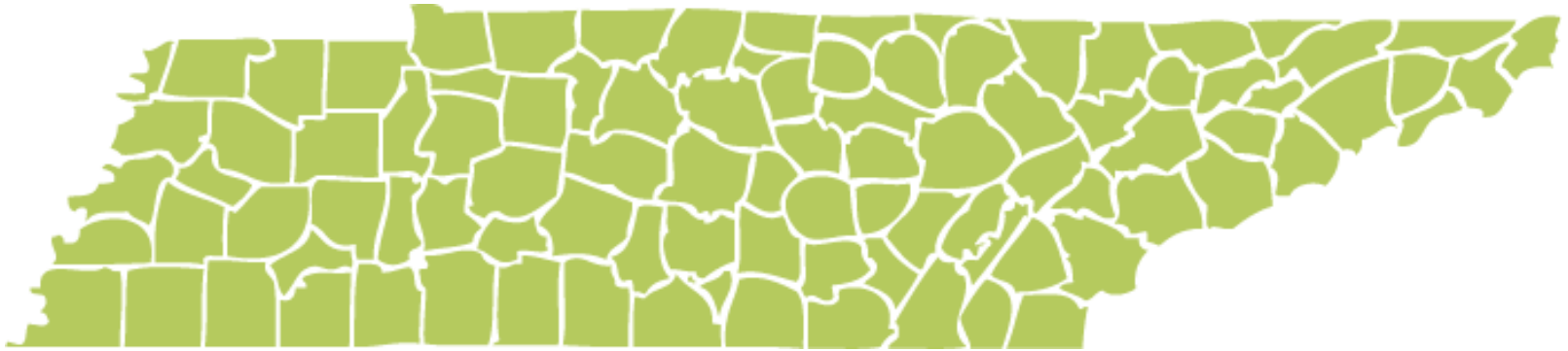


Organics in Tennessee

December 2009



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Vegetable Specialist

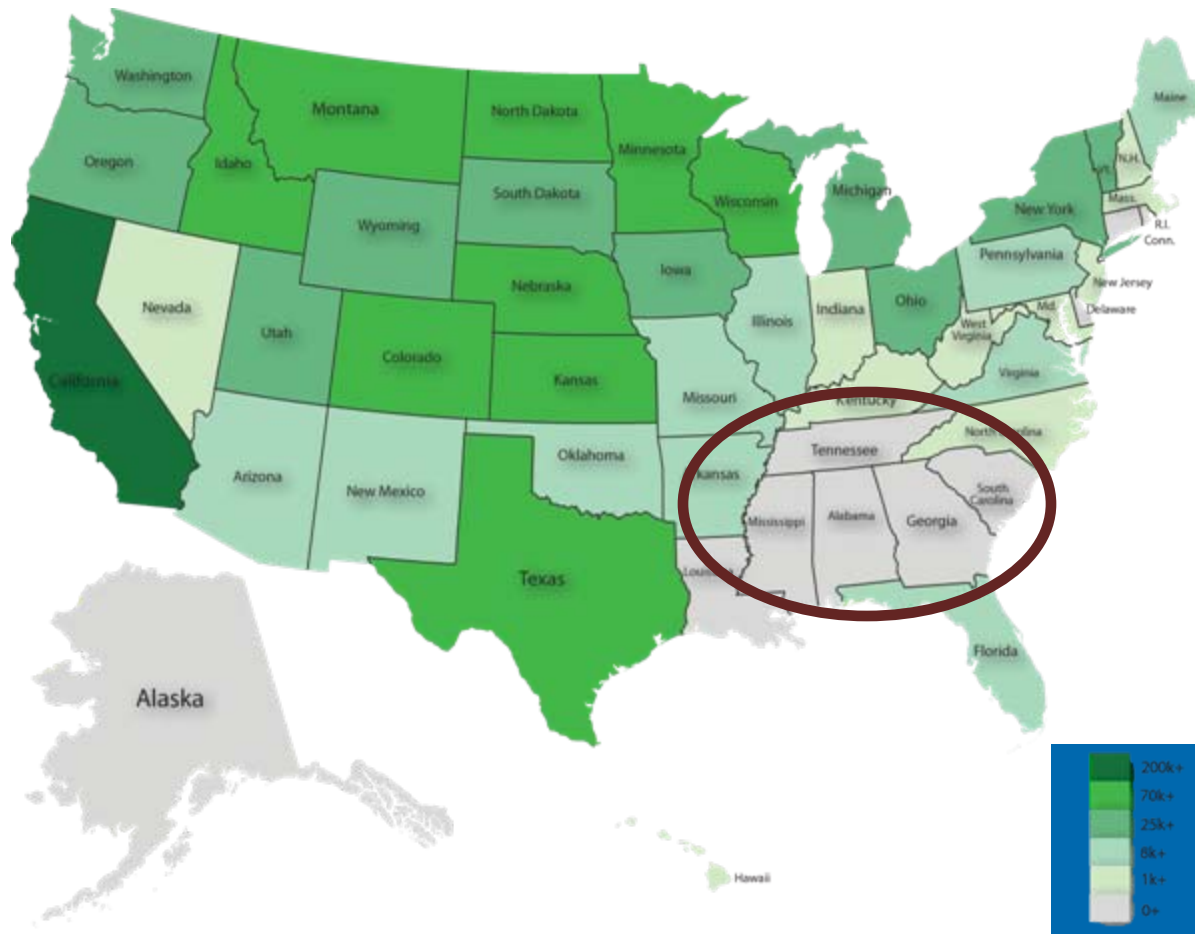
Overview

- **Review of purpose & goals of TN Organic Production Network**
- **Recap of 2008 TN OPN Meeting**
- **Highlights from 2009**

Goals of the TN OPN:

- To support, promote and advance organics in TN through networking and partnerships
- To collaborate to address the critical issues in organic agriculture in Tennessee

U.S. number of organic acres farmed per state, in thousands of acres:



**2005 Data
USDA ERS:**

**Operations:
8 farms**

**Cropland & Pasture:
727 acres**



Little variation in 2000-2006 data for TN, ranges from 8 to 12 operations

2008 Certified Organic Farms in TN

- **20** certified organic farms in vegetable & fruit production



Distribution across the state: Blount, Coffee, Davidson, Greene, Hamilton (2), Henry, Jefferson, Lincoln, Macon, Maury, Monroe, Polk (2), Robertson, Shelby, Stewart, Williamson (2)

- **2** Dairies: Chilhowee Dairy (Polk) & Skipping Rock Dairy (Loudon)
- **1** Egg Operation: Tennessee Valley Eggs (McMinn)
- Additionally, **5** certified handlers and **4** certified processors

2009 Certified Organic Farms in TN

- **22** certified organic farms in vegetable & fruit production
- **2** Dairies: Chilhowee Dairy (Polk) & Skipping Rock Dairy (Loudon)
- **1** Meat Operation: West Wind Farms (Morgan)
- Additionally, **7** certified handlers and **5** certified processors



Distribution across the state: Blount (2), Cheatham, Coffee, Davidson (3), Dickson, Greene, Hamilton (2), Hawkins (2), Henry, Hickman, Lawrence, Lincoln, Loudon, Macon, Maury, Morgan, Polk (2), Putnam, Robertson (4), Shelby (4), Stewart (2), Williamson (3)

Supply vs. Demand

- Still much more demand for organic produce than supply across the state
- Whole system issue- need supply in order to develop markets, need secure markets to recruit organic producers, need increased organic production to develop infrastructure to support organics

Need More Growers

- Difficult to find enough growers to supply organic produce
- Growers need support to successfully transition
- Local/regional success stories would help ease producer concerns about perceived risk of transitioning
- Access to land and labor are other factors that limit organic production

Organic Certification

- Producers need support with certification process
- Producers need certification to access larger scale markets
- TDA cost-share program reimburses eligible producers 75% of their certification expenses up to \$750



Wholesale Distribution Networks

- Need distribution network- opportunity for mid-size farmers to connect with large wholesale markets
- Need infrastructure to support produce movement through production and supply chain
- Market access key for getting groups of growers together- distribution network and wholesale accounts could provide catalyst

Access to Inputs for Organic Production

- Significant barrier to organic production in TN
- TN Farm Co-op system willing to work with growers- need grower feedback
- Certified organic seedlings another need within the state

Policy and Legislative Issues

- Enforcement of Organic Standards
- Need one voice in policy development process with strong, succinct points
- Keep in contact and communication with state and national legislators
- Explore opportunities to work with city and county governments
- Need support of transition program to transfer farmland from retiring to new growers
- What can we learn from other states?

Department of Agriculture Programs

- USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Payments related to organic production/ transition in Farm Bill (\$20,000/year or \$80,000/6 year limit)
- TN Department of Agriculture
 - TN Agriculture Enhancement Program (TAEP)- cost-share for specialized equipment, irrigation, greenhouses, marketing, materials, etc.
 - TN Natural Beef- marketing program to encourage producers to finish and sell beef in-state; No antibiotics, no hormones and no mammalian by-products

UT Organic Initiative



- **Funded by the TDA**
- **5 year project**
- **Statewide UT Organic Extension Program**
 - Grower consultations
 - Educational programming
 - Organic research & demonstration plots
 - Coordinate the TN Organic Production Network
- **Farm to Market Connections—Center for Profitable Ag**
 - Support networks to connect producers w/ buyers
 - Learn from successful programs in the state & region
 - Support development of programs in new parts of TN

UT Organic Research

Organic Research Farm



- 90 acres, 21 acres in production
- 14 acres transitioning to organic
- Greenhouse
- 3 High Tunnels
- Located in Knox County, off John Sevier Highway

UT Organic Initiative:

Organic Crop Production Workshop Series

- **Extension agent participation**

- **Average of 20 attended each month**

- **Grower participation in three locations across the state**

- **Average of 40 attended each month**

- ✓ **Intro to Organics**
- ✓ **Building Soils & Managing Soil Fertility**
- ✓ **Crop Rotations & Cover Crops**
- ✓ **Seed Sources & Transplants**
- ✓ **Weed Management**
- ✓ **Pest Management**
- ✓ **Disease Management**
- ✓ **High Tunnel Production**
- ✓ **Developing an Organic System Plan**
- ✓ **Marketing Organic**

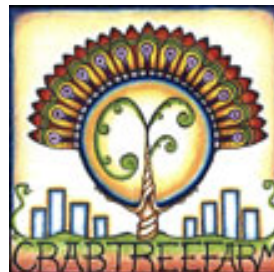
OSCP Website

- <http://organics.tennessee.edu>
- Information on organic crop production in TN
 - UT OSCP Program information
 - Educational and networking events
 - Extension publications
 - Research findings
 - Links to informational websites
- Over 4,000 visits since April from 75 countries, 47 states and 92 TN cities



Organizations, initiatives & leaders throughout TN working to support organics, locally grown & to develop farm to market connections:

- ✓ TOGA
- ✓ Appalachian Sustainable Dev.
- ✓ Jubilee project
- ✓ Center for Profitable Ag
- ✓ Cumberland Grown
- ✓ Local Table Magazine
- ✓ TN Farm Bureau
- ✓ TN State Legislature
- ✓ USDA
- ✓ And Others!!!



Format for Today's meeting:

✓ Discussion to re-assess/prioritize areas of need

Opportunity for dialogue, 20 min each:

- Producer /Industry issues
- Policy/Legislative issues
- Department of Ag Programs
- Organic Research

✓ Next Steps

✓ Adjourn at 4pm



Questions?



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