

**Assessing Farmer Interest in Transition to Organic Production and Barriers to Expansion
of Organic Production in New York State**

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Abstract

A survey of farmers in New York State was conducted from November 2007 through January 2008 to assess interest in organic production and transition, and to identify barriers and needs of organic and conventional producers. Survey results indicate that there is substantial interest among farmers in the state in organic production, despite the challenges and barriers they identify in both production and marketing of organic farm products. Among conventional farmers, 40% of those responding indicated a high (6%), moderate (15%) or slight (19%) level of interest in transition to organic production, while 60% indicated no interest in organic production. Among farmers identified as organic in advance of the survey, 14% indicated that they are transitioning additional acres to organic production. Perceptions about barriers to entry differed between organic, transitioning and conventional farmers. Of the conventional farmers with an interest in organic production, 39% indicated that disease-related production losses are a severe barrier to their entry. Fifty-seven percent of conventional farmers with no interest in organic production perceived losses to disease as a severe barrier, while only 6% of organic or transitioning farmers perceived this as a barrier. Conventional farmers with an interest in organic production indicated that the following information and services would be the most useful: directories of organic product buyers, organic-specific written production guidance, local/regional organic market development, organic consulting services, and university research on organic challenges. Organic and transitioning farmers indicated that the most useful information or service of all is university research on organic challenges.