Integrating Organic In USDA

National Organic Standards Board Meeting
October 25, 2010
Madison, WI
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USDA “Every Way Every Day”

- Organic agriculture continues to grow its footprint and legitimacy within USDA
- Still many challenges
- External contention around organic has effects within USDA
- NOP efficacy and trust of the USDA organic seal is essential to everything else organic in the department
Organic USDA Beyond the NOP

• Farm Bill programs implementation

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• New Organic Policy Advisor Position
  June ’10
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- Inter-agency Projects

- Dept.-wide Organic Working Group
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• Inter-agency Projects
• Dept.-wide Organic Working Group
• USDA 2010 Strategic Plan: Performance Objective for 25% increase in certified operations by 2015

Farm Bill Implementation

• Research, Extension & Data
• Certification Cost-Share
• Conservation Programs - EQIP
• Crop Insurance
Organic Research & Extension FY2010

- OREI: $19+ Million (mandatory Farm Bill)
- Org Transitions: $5 Million (discretionary)
- USDA Ag Research Service: $16+ Million
- eOrganic electronic extension program
- SARE program grants: $5-10 Million
- Research Symposium: March 16-18, 2011, Washington DC

Organic Data Initiatives

- $5 Million mandatory Farm Bill $ for ODI
- Continuing Econ. Research Service series of studies
- NASS 2008 Organic Production Survey, 80+% return!
- Ongoing expansion of price collection program; AMS Organic Price Portal marketnews.usda.gov/portal/fv
Certification Cost-Share

- $22 Million allocated for national program, FY09-12
- Less than half $ used through FY10
- 49 states and two territories signed up for FY11
**EQIP Organic Initiative**

- Farm Bill conservation program for financial and technical assistance.
- $100 Million reserved by NRCS 09 & 10
- $63 Million in contracts
- Significant learning curves & structural obstacles

**Organic Conservation Upgrades**

- Internal NRCS training initiatives
- ~$1 million Conservation Innovation Grant to ATTRA & others to revise NRCS Practice Standards for organic
- New NRCS Deputy Chief for Science & Technology, Wayne Honeycutt, organic researcher from ARS (Orono, Maine)
- Clearing way for organic inspectors to also be NRCS Tech. Service Providers
Crop Insurance

- Farm Bill mandate for technical analysis on premiums and payouts
- Reports completed early 2010
- 5% surcharge removed for initial set or crops
- Organic “Price Election” implemented for several field crops
- Data highly problematic; RMA funding more studies and data collection

Organic Policy Advisor

- Position authorized for two years, renewable for four more
- Direct report to Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Edward M. Avalos
- Serves the Office of the Secretary (i.e., available to leadership of all Mission Areas)
- Coordinates the USDA Organic Working Group
Organic Policy Advisor

- For public, provides default first-stop for non-regulatory/enforcement needs
- For agencies, provides cross-program troubleshooting and coordination
- Serves on “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” Task Force

Inter-Agency Projects

- Request accepted Oct. 15. Codes available January 1.
Inter-Agency Projects

- Organic “Cooperation Arrangements” document for AMS/NOP and Foreign Ag Service: Details cooperative activities dealing with offshore compliance issues, NOP foreign travel, international trade information, cross-training of personnel, trade delegations, etc.
- Document nearly finalized.

USDA Organic Working Group

“The OWG is an informal, information-sharing network open to all USDA agencies. Its purpose is to facilitate inter-agency coordination and communication about policies, programs, data and research results pertaining to organic agriculture, products and markets.”
**OWG Activities and Outputs**

- Baseline organic program information for all USDA agencies. (December 2010)
- Directory of agency contacts for organic issues. (November 2010)
- Web portal(s) for easy access to organic USDA program sites and publications
- Training and education for USDA personnel
- Shared outreach to customers & stakeholders

**USDA Strategic Plan**

- Strategic goal 1- “Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.”
- Objective 1.3 – “Support A Sustainable And Competitive Agricultural System.”
- Performance Objective 1.3.1 – Certified organic agricultural [production and handling] operations increase from 16,564 (2009) to 20,655 (2015).
Organic Integration Onward

- Focus on USDA-SP Performance Objective w/ focus on both, organic transition and retention, integrating:
  - research & extension
  - conservation support programs
  - risk management
  - market services
  - farm credit
  - value-added
  - co-op development

Organic Integration Onward

- Analysis and ideas for 2012 Farm Bill
- Stakeholder Input Session(s)
- Outreach to other Fed. departments
NOSB-NOP Foundation

- Momentum of organic policy and programs efforts rests on the success of the NOP and respect for the USDA organic seal
- Intensive period of NOP program improvement for integrity and coherence
- Success of NOP upgrades requires high-performance NOSB

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
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