Iowa Organic Conference to Help Producers Meet Growing Demand for Organics

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Abstract
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Keywords
Agronomy, Horticulture

Disciplines
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Iowa Organic Conference to Help Producers Meet Growing Demand for Organics

By Kathleen Delate, Departments of Agronomy and Horticulture

The nation caught a glimpse of Iowa organic farming when President Barack Obama visited Morgan Hoenig and MogoOrganic last April as part of his Main Street Tour. Now, participants of the 10th Annual Iowa Organic Conference will learn even more about organic farming on Nov. 21-22 as Hoenig, other producers and experts from across the country speak at the Iowa State University conference at the Scheman Building on the ISU campus in Ames.

The world market for organic products reached $35 billion in 2009 and the demand for organic grains and produce continues to exceed supply. Growers everywhere are encouraged to consider the potential for organic production. Organic farmers, those transitioning to organic and those interested in learning more about organic production are encouraged to attend the Iowa Organic Conference. It is the largest University-sponsored organic conference in the country. Despite the challenges of flooding this year, we anticipate successful organic yields with organic soybean prices averaging $17 per bushel.

Bob Quinn, a fourth-generation Montana farmer recently selected for the Organic Leadership Award by the Organic Trade Association, will kick off the conference with his keynote address Monday morning. Quinn converted the family farm to organic production in 1988 and now produces 100 percent organic crops on the 2,400 acre farm. He speaks with great enthusiasm about his efforts in sustainable agriculture and soil conservation, work that has been recognized by USDA-SARE. The conference agenda includes information on vegetable, fruit and livestock production and related topics – soil and water quality, crop insurance, diversifying marketing opportunities, government programs, the new pasture rule and transitioning issues. A pre-conference social on Sunday, Nov. 21, is planned for exhibitors and sponsors, but anyone can purchase a ticket to attend.

Conference registration can be made online. The cost of the conference is $105 on or before Nov. 1 and $125 after Nov. 1. Non-vendors must purchase a $15 ticket for the Sunday reception. Visit the conference website for additional conference information and directions to the conference, or contact Delate at kdelate@iastate.edu.

Conference partners include Iowa State University Extension, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Educational Services, Organic Valley and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

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