

## USDA to certify farmland switching from conventional to help increase production of organic food

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on [Jan. 11] took a step toward increasing the production of organic foods — which has not kept pace with demand — by launching a program to certify farmland that growers are in the process of switching to organic.

Obtaining certification under the program will allow farmers to sell products raised in accordance with organic guidelines for higher prices than conventionally-grown goods, according to the Organic Trade Association, an industry group. That should help growers cover the extra costs associated with transitioning to organic farming, the group said.

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Farmers must grow crops for three years without using prohibited substances, such as genetically-modified seeds and synthetic pesticides, in order to be certified as fully organic.

Those who are switching farmland to organic production must follow the same regulations as those who have already been fully certified, the trade group said. So far, however, farmers have not been able to designate their crops as being in transition in an attempt to sell the products for higher prices.

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Farmers will need to prove they have been following the guidelines for organic production for at least a year to be certified as transitioning their land, according to the trade group.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** U.S. takes step to boost organic food production