

Viewpoint: USDA poised to spend \$300 million to help farmers transition to organic to shore up supply chains. Here's why that's a bad idea for food security and the environment

[The USDA] plans on spending \$300 million to help farmers transition to organic production. What??

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack defended this funding for organic farmers by suggesting it would somehow make farmers more profitable. In theory, organic products sell for a higher price. Vilsack believes that means farmers will see a larger portion of the sale price.

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That's a mighty big assumption that, to my knowledge, isn't supported by any research or other evidence. Even if organic products fetch a higher retail price, [organic yields are significantly lower](#) than conventionally grown food. If you have less to sell, the price has to be higher to make the same money. And if the USDA successfully adds hundreds of millions of dollars in support, all those new organic farms will flood the market and drive prices down anyway.

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Instead we need a food system that is abundant, adaptive, responsive, and progressive. Not one stuck in a marketing scheme that arbitrarily decides what's "synthetic" and what's "natural." We can achieve that by opening up new markets, reducing the cost of modern equipment and technology, stabilizing our supplies of pesticides and fertilizers, and investing in new research.

Funding transitioning farmers doesn't invest in the right things. In fact, it's so wildly random that it seems more like a pay off to special interests than a solution to our challenges.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)