



ORGANIC FARMING
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2022 was a high-impact year for OFRF as we strengthened and expanded our programs to respond to organic farmers' needs and provide them with vital support and resources. OFRF worked hard to ensure that the input and perspectives of farmers are at the center of our work by regularly listening to and engaging with organic farmers and ranchers.

One highlight from the year was getting to spend a lot of time talking to partner organizations and policy makers about the feedback we got from farmers in our farmer surveys, and witnessing the genuine excitement about having this direct farmer input. It was really amazing to be able to finally do some of this work in person again, with the return of farm tours, farm bill field hearings, and conferences like EcoFarm and the Organic Grower Summit. One moment that stands out to me was a tour OFRF coordinated for our Congressman of an organic, regenerative, dry-farmed vineyard. We were joined by other non profit partners and although we faced high temperatures, we all enjoyed seeing first hand the practices being utilized by Tablas Creek. Like a large majority of organic producers, the vineyard prioritizes building healthy, living soils that build resilience in a changing climate: in their case, to the increasingly hot and dry summers of the Paso Robles region of California.

Armed with the farmer feedback summarized in our [NORA Report](#), we are now developing significant new initiatives and programs and meaningful ways to better serve organic and transitioning farmers. In particular, our efforts translating and disseminating science-based resources, has grown significantly - smoothing the transition to more sustainable farming practices and mitigating the impacts of climate change and natural disasters on-farm.

We also deepened our collaborations with farmers, researchers, educators, policymakers, and nonprofits to support adoption of organic regenerative practices and work toward building a healthier food system. Read on for more detailed updates about how our research, education, and advocacy work grew in 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brise Tencer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brise Tencer
Executive Director, OFRF

OUR MISSION

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) works to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems. OFRF cultivates organic research, education, and federal policies that bring more farmers and acreage into organic production.

OUR VISION

Organic farming as the leading form of agriculture, supporting healthy and resilient people, ecosystems, and economies.

EQUITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OFRF acknowledges its privilege as a predominantly White-led organization and recognizes that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) perspectives need to be highlighted for organic farming systems to develop and thrive. Today's agriculture system is a continued product of stolen land, knowledge, and enslaved labor of People of Color to favor the interests of White people. OFRF is committed to advancing beyond the conversation of social justice as it intersects with organic agriculture, and toward an anti-racist future that holds our board members, staff, and partner organizations accountable in dismantling systemic racism in organic farming.

STAFF

Brise Tencer

Executive Director

Dominica Navarro Martinez

Deputy Director

Thelma Vélez

Research and Education Program Director

Leah Lawson

Partnerships and Development Director

Gordon Merrick

Policy and Programs Manager

Mary Hathaway

Research and Education Program Coordinator

Kelsey Grimsley

Office Manager and Program Administrator

Mark Schonbeck

Research, Education and Policy Program Associate

Elizabeth Tobey

Communications Associate

Brian Geier

Communications Associate

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT/CHAIR

Bryan Hager

Farmer/Owner

Crager-Hager Farm

VICE CHAIR/TREASURER

Keith Richards

Formerly of Southern Sustainable

Agriculture Working Group

SECRETARY

Tim Schultz

Independent Consultant

Formerly Lundberg Family Farms

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Carolyn Dimitri

Economist and Professor of Food Studies

New York University

Katrina Heinze

Independent Consultant

Formerly of General Mills Organic Division

Lou Kozma

Farmer/President

Hirzel Farms

Kokoasse Kpoblekou-A

Research Professor of Plant and Soil Science

Tuskegee University

Mary Phipps

Farmer/Owner

Orchard Pond Organics, LLC

Deborah Stinner

Retired

Formerly of Ohio State University

April Thatcher

Farmer/Owner

April Joy Farm

RESEARCH

National Organic Research Agenda

In 2022, OFRF published the 200+ page National Organic Research Agenda (NORA). This report is one of our biggest accomplishments for the year and will continue to inform future OFRF research and education programming for many years to come. The 2022 NORA report uses data from over 1,100 certified organic growers across the U.S., as well as sixteen listening sessions with organic and transitioning growers. We asked the nation's organic producers about their greatest production and non-production challenges, their concerns, and technical assistance needs and have the data broken down by commodities, SARE region, farming experience, and BIPOC status. The report serves as a roadmap for OFRF's research and education programming, as well as a policy tool to inform the USDA and Congress, leverage public investments for organic research, and advocate for expansion of organic support in the 2023 Farm Bill.

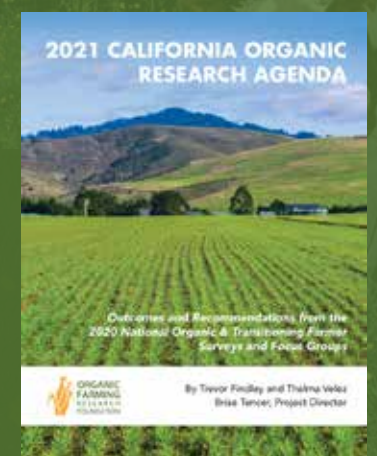
NUMBERS

7K WEBSITE VISITS

1K+ REPORT DOWNLOADS

California Organic Research Agenda

The California Organic Research Agenda report, also published in 2022, is a companion to OFRF's 2022 NORA report and is a comprehensive examination of the current needs and challenges of organic farmers and ranchers across California. The report provides policy and research recommendations to address producer-identified issues. Production of the CORA report was supported in part by the University of California Organic Agriculture Institute (UC OAI) and the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology.



RESEARCH

NIFA Taking Stock II

OFRF undertakes its second major assessment of public research investments directed toward strengthening organic agriculture.

With funding from a cooperative agreement with the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), OFRF has engaged in a comprehensive evaluation of the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and the Organic Transitions Program (ORG) from 2015-2021 including:

- A description of OREI and ORG funded projects by commodity, region, and research topics
- An equity review of investments in 1890 Land Grant Universities (Black land-grant Universities), 1994 Land Grant Institutions (Native American tribally-controlled colleges and universities), and Hispanic Serving Institutions
- An analysis of how well OREI and ORG investments align with: legislative priorities in the RFAs, NORA research recommendations, the 2016 Taking Stock Report recommendations, and the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) priorities
- An assessment of the funding and research findings tied to climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation
- Identification of priorities for future investment in organic research

In 2023, we look forward to publishing Taking Stock II 2015-2021, a comprehensive report with our key findings and potential areas for future investments.

GRANTS

We partnered with the Foundation for Food & Agricultural Research (FFAR) for our most recent research grant cycle to support on-farm climate change mitigation and resilience research. We are thrilled that the 2022 grants prioritized early career researchers and provided two-thirds the funds to projects led by applicants that identified as Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC).

We awarded a total of \$119,817 in funding to the following six projects:

Building climate change resilience with coffee smallholder producers by extending organic practices to staple crops

Alejandra Guzman-Luna, Café Ecológico de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas S.C. (CESMACH)

IMPACT

In the South of Mexico, those dependent on coffee for their well-being are vulnerable in many ways: climate change, volatile prices, and seasonal food insecurity. This project takes a participatory research and demonstration approach to develop and integrate organic staple crop production into more sustainable organic coffee agroecosystems.

Evaluation of seeding methods and timing of cover crops interseeded into organic corn

Axel Garcia y Garcia, University of Minnesota

IMPACT

Upper Midwestern organic grain growers struggle with integrating cover crops into the corn part of their rotations. This project will evaluate various management factors, including seed selection, timing, and type of mechanical operations, to optimize cover crop integration as a part of sustainable organic corn production. Researchers will evaluate effects of cover crop species on corn yield, soil fertility and weed incidence.

Organic for All

Jennifer Taylor, Lola's Organic Farm, Georgia and Florida

IMPACT

Traditionally, socially disadvantaged farmers, BIPOC farmers, and underserved farming populations and their communities lack participation and access to opportunities, training, and education provided to medium and large-scale farmers and agribusinesses. Organic For All is a participatory capacity-building agricultural research and outreach project that will identify needs, hindrances, and barriers with BIPOC farmers and work to develop solutions that provide education, hands-on training, and technical assistance.

GRANTS

Increasing the productivity and market value of pulse crops for arid organic conditions:

Travis Parker, University of California, Davis

IMPACT

Nitrogen-fixing legumes feature prominently in many organic crop rotations. Some pulses, such as cowpea and tepary bean, also show exceptional resistance to heat, drought, and low soil fertility, making them particularly valuable in the context of climate change. OFRF awarded this grant to research dependable pulse crops for arid regions that promote the ecological and financial sustainability of organic farms.

Companion plantings for organic management of a new invasive Brassica pest:

Christiana Huss, University of Georgia

IMPACT

This project leverages agricultural diversity to mitigate the recent attack of the invasive yellow-margined leaf beetle (*Microtheca ochroloma*) on leafy brassica greens across the Southeastern United States. This project will evaluate a very innovative landscape ecology approach that involves a combination of repellent intercrops and attractant companion plants in a “push-pull” design for bio-control of the pest.

Organic Farming Systems Options for Control of Coffee Leaf Rust in Kona

Colehour Bondera, Kanalani Ohana Farm, Kona, Hawaii

IMPACT

This project seeks to identify accessible Organic Farming System options for controlling Coffee Leaf Rust in Kona coffee by increasing microbial biodiversity, using on-farm and island-made inputs, and sequestering more carbon through increased soil organic matter. This farmer-led research project takes a whole-systems approach to evaluate plant health-based options for managing the disease with organic farming practices on working organic coffee farms in Kona, Hawaii.

EDUCATION

Research Forum

In early 2022, we organized our [Organic Agriculture Research Forum](#) (OARF) in partnership with EcoFarm. The four workshop tracks within the forum included sessions showcasing: Research on Soil Health on Organic Farms in the Central Coast, a Farmer to Farmer Panel on Soil Health in English and Spanish (Grupo de Agricultor a Agricultor Sobre la Salud del Suelo), Strategies for Controlling Spotted Wing Drosophila Organically, and a workshop on findings from the 2022 NORA followed by a farmer listening session.

Southern Soil Health Course and Guidebook

860+ DOWNLOADS

With support from USDA's Southern SARE program, we developed robust soil health materials for farmers in the Southern region, including an in-depth science-based guidebook, [Soil Health Strategies for the Southern Region](#) and a [free online course](#).

Soil Health Course and Materials in Spanish: Los Fundamentos de la Salud del Suelo

OFRF is creating a free, online soil health course in Spanish with funding from a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. The course will launch in 2023 and has been developed with support from partners at University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, Agriculture and Land-Based Training, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology. Los Fundamentos de la Salud del Suelo is designed for beginning farmers, existing organic farmers, and those in transition to organic production.

Pest and Weed Factsheets

270+ DOWNLOADS

With support from [Farmers Advocating for Organics](#) (FAFO), seven science-based, accessible materials were created that provide practical solutions to address the needs and challenges farmers voiced in our NORA report. These new short-form resources on critical topics requested by farmers, include [factsheets](#) on managing pest and perennial weeds.



In 2023 we will expand on these resources and continue to create farmer-driven materials that highlight farmer experiences and provide science-based resources requested by producers, such as crop-livestock integration.



Resources for Field Staff

In collaboration with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OFRF created educational resources including webinars and research summaries, farmer stories, and video blogs on soil health, organic tillage, and conservation practices. These resources were directed to NRCS field staff to learn about organic soil health and its role in supporting conservation goals in organic farming systems.

OFRF-delivered Resources:

10

Research Summaries

2

Webinars attended by nearly 2k

Forthcoming NRCS publication on Tillage Tools and Practices in Organic Systems

2022 Webinars:

Why Organic Matters

Soil Life in Organic Farming

In 2023 we will continue to produce more webinars that support NRCS in assisting organic farmers and ranchers with their conservation plans.

ADVOCACY

Using the NORA report to inform the 2023 Farm Bill

OFRF's Executive Director Brise Tencer shared the NORA report with several Congressional offices as well as leadership within the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, NIFA, and the National Organic Standards Board. This work to educate elected and administrative officials on the NORA findings helped lay the groundwork for efforts to increase funding and support for organic farmers and organic research in the 2023 Farm Bill.

OFRF testified before the House Agriculture Committee on the importance of organic agriculture as a response to climate change

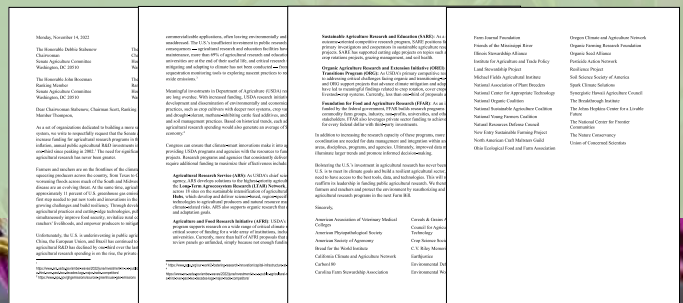
Thelma Velez, OFRF's Research and Education Program Director, was invited to testify before the full House Agriculture Committee on the importance of organic agriculture research, especially as we respond to the climate crisis.

Senate testimony on organic research in the Farm Bill

OFRF was happy to see previous Board Member Steve Ela representing farmers and their role in research in a hearing before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. As one of five witnesses invited to share their expertise, and the only farmer panelist, Ela spoke to the importance of organic systems research and extension programs to all farmers.

Showing broad support for organic agriculture to Congress

OFRF highlighted the importance of public investment into organic agriculture research in a sign-on letter with broad support from 43 partner organizations.



ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

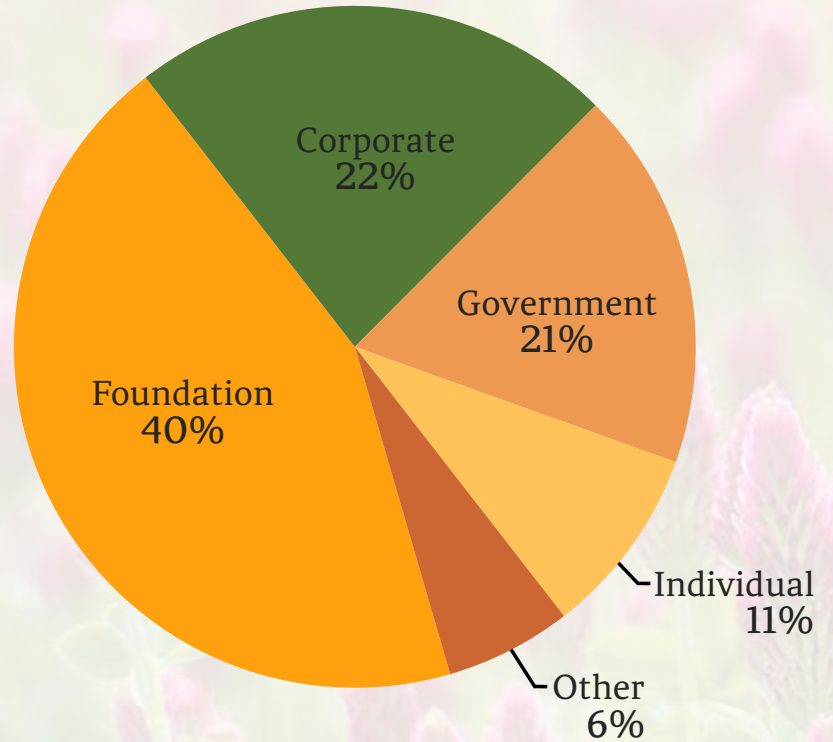
27 Meetings with congressional members

10 Meetings with senior USDA staff from NIFA, ARS, and NRCS

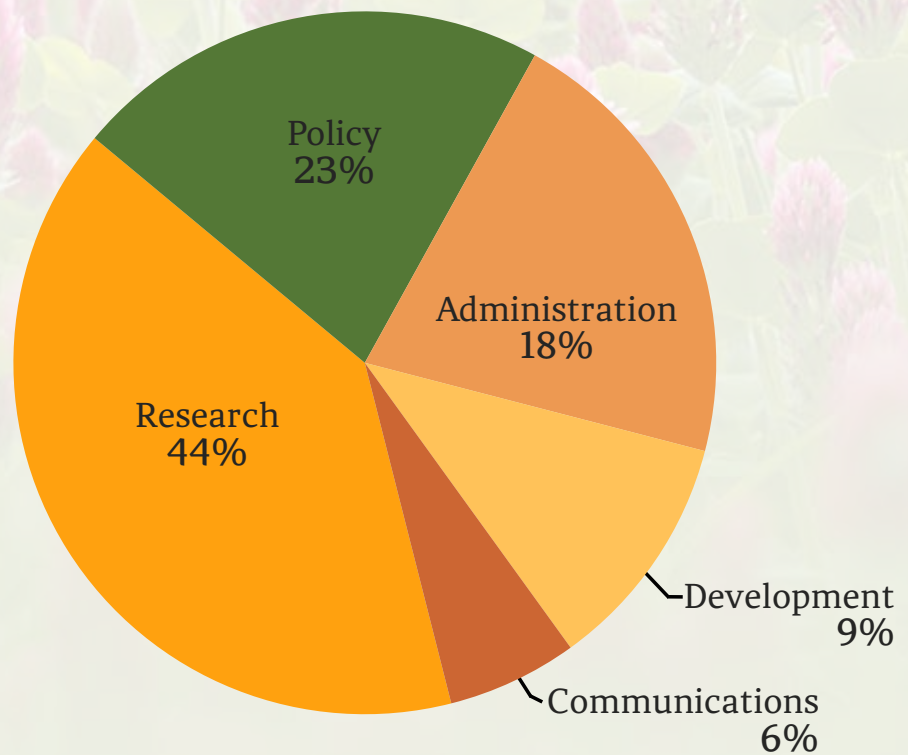
43 Organizations signing on to our letter to Congress for more investments in organic agriculture research

FINANCIALS

2022 TOTAL REVENUE



2022 TOTAL EXPENSES



COMMUNICATIONS

Join us! Our monthly newsletter is packed with farmer stories, organic research spotlights, advocacy updates and calls to action, and important news from partners advancing organic agriculture. Over 1.2K people subscribed in 2022, bringing the total reach to over 14K.

And check out these links to our work on the website: [farmer stories](#), [shared blogposts](#), [policy recommendations](#), [presentations and proceedings](#) & [farmer resources](#)

GET INVOLVED



[SUBSCRIBE TO THE OFRF MONTHLY NEWSLETTER](#)



Eoin Jun King
A Gracious Honest King

Special Thanks to the late Eoin Jun King. Eoin left us with two extremely special gifts: [his story](#) and his financial support via his bequest of his past IRA contributions to OFRF.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Adam Swierczynski
Alania Lindquist
Alessandro Giovinazzo
Alexander and Camille Rose
Alexander Herridge
Alice Young
Alyssa Clevenstine
Andrew Tornga
Ann Daly
Ann Domigan
Annette Mello
Anthony Sarmiento
Anudeva Stevens
April and Brad Thatcher
Arthur Keller
Audrey Dittberner
Barbra Bunting
Bill Wolf
Bob Scowcroft
Bob Whitney
Brenda Clarke
Bruce Connery
Bryan Hager
Cafe Mam
The Campbell Foundation
Carolyn Dimitri
Cathy Greene
Celena Morris
Ceres Trust
Charles and Barb Francis
Chatham Imports (Crop Organic Vodka)
Christine DeLapp
Claire Kozower
Clare Williams
Clif Family Foundation
Cory and Pam Ganser
CROPP Cooperative / FAFO / Organic Valley
Damon Bosetti
Dana Ford
Daniel Green
Daniel Snyder
Dannon Tabling
Darien Payne
Dave and Teresa Martinelli
David Mervis
David Vetter
Debbie Westheimer
Deborah Stinner
Dennis Lenz
Dermot Killoran
Diane Hazen
Dole Fresh Fruit Company
Donald D. Jarrett
Donna Shoemaker
Doug O'Brien
Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap
Driscoll's
Edward & Sons Trading Company
Eileen Costa
Elizabeth Brewer
Elizabeth Weber
Emily and Peter Schmidt
Emily Wendell
Eva Mui
Evan Weber
Farm Aid, Inc.
Ferd Hoefner
Forrest C. & Frances H. Lattner Foundation
Foundation for Sustainability and Innovation
Frey Vineyards, LTD

Frontier Co-Op
Gaia Fund
George and Maire Anne Bird
Gina Colfer
Globetrotter Foundation
Godfrey and Marylisa Tencer
Hal Epstein
Hannah Rose
Harrison Rohrer
Heather Glocke
Heather Marlow
Hunter Harrell
The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation
Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT
Jake Jennings
Jamie Chambers
Jan Marson
Jay Leone
JD Doliner
Jeff Vinson
Jennifer Leong
Jenny O'Connell
Jesse Voremberg
Joan Cragger
Joe Wignall
Joel and Gretchen Plotkin
John Rochfort
John Teixeira
Jordan Del pino
Joseph Herron
Julia Mintz
Julie and Mike Cross
Julie Bilgor
K W Stephens
Kathleen Bailey
Kathleen Merrigan
Kathy Cross
Kathy Franklin
Katrina and Hal Heinze
Kay Helberg
Keith Richards
Kenneth Clark
Kind of Wild Wines
Kokoasse Kpomblekou-A
KORA Organics
Laurette Lipson
The Lawrence Foundation
Leah Goodman
Leonard Chmiel
Lili Beggs
Lisa Dearden
Lisa Mauldin Johnson
Lori Ann Thrupp
Lou Ann Gurney
Lou Kozma
Lundberg Family Farms
Lydia Garvey
Mairead Reidy
Marcia Sloman
Marian Zeidler
Marisa Hormel
Marisla Foundation
Mark Philips
Mark Squire
Mary Alexander
Mary Pommerich
Mary Wolff
Maryann and Alan Snyder
Matthew Noel
Meg Moynihan Stuedemann

Meredith Cuda
Michael Magaletta
Minami Yusui
Monica Spiller
Mundher Mahir
Myra and Drew Goodman
Nancy Creamer
National Co-op Grocers
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)
Nature's Path Foods
Navakiran Chitturi
The Nell Newman Foundation
Niall King
Ogee
Organically Grown Company
Oryana Food Cooperative
Pamela Marrone
Patricia Ginsburg
Patricia Hagsten
Patricia Jenny
Paul Gepts
Peggy Backup
Peter Hellwig
Peter Mallory
Phil Foster
Pro Farm Group, Inc (prev. Marrone Bio)
Randie Bencanann
Robert Kaake
Robert Wittenberg
Robin Duryee
Roland Pesch
Ron Kroeske
Rose Kang
Rose Moore
Roy and Bonnie Reeves
Sandra Knapp
Sandra Shopes
Sandy Lerner
Sarah and Robert Meredith
Scott Jordan
Scott Park
Sherrill Pattee
Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery
Stacy Mates
Stanford and Donna Young
Steve Dagger
Steve Ela
Steve Slinger
Steven Mikkelsen
Straus Family Creamery
Sue Wagner
Sunrise Foods International
Susan Futrell
Susan Kirshner
Susan Reiff
Sustainable Futures Fund
Suzanne Brown
Tim Schultz
Timothy and Barbara Partee
Tom Wind
True Organic Products
Victoria Rosenfield
Virginia Davis
Walt and Jill S Auburn
Warren and Ann Weber
Wesley Chuang
Whole Foods Market
William Pape
William Taylor Nahmens



**ORGANIC
FARMING
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION**

P.O. Box 440, Santa Cruz, CA 95061
831.426.6606 | info@ofrf.org | www.ofrf.org