



**ORGANIC
FARMING
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION**

A close-up photograph of a hand wearing a brown and white work glove holding a bunch of fresh beets. The beets have dark, earthy roots and vibrant purple stems with green leaves. The background is a soft-focus green field.

**ANNUAL REPORT
2021**

STAFF

Executive Director
Brise Tencer, M.A.

Deputy Director
Dominica Navarro Martinez

Partnership & Development Director
Haley Baron, M.A.

Research & Education Program Manager
Thelma Velez, Ph.D.

Policy & Programs Manager
Gordon Merrick, J.D.

Communications Manager
**Caroline Baptist, Farmer
River Valley Country Club**

Office Manager & Program Administrator
Kelsey Grimsley

Research & Education Fellow
Mary Hathaway

Research Program Associate
Mark Schonbeck, Ph.D.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Bryan Hager
Farmer/Owner
Crager-Hager Farm

VICE CHAIR & SECRETARY

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Independent Consultant/Farmer
Former COO - *Lundberg Family Farms*

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Formerly of *Southern Sustainable
Agriculture Working Group*

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April Joy Farm

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New York University

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Former Research Scientist
Ohio State University

Katrina Heinze, Ph.D.
Independent Consultant
Former Director - *General Mills Organic Division*

Kokoasse Kpombrekou-A, Ph.D.
Research Professor of Plant and Soil Science
Tuskegee University

Lou Kozma
Farmer/President
Hirzel Farms

Mary Phipps
Farmer/Owner
Orchard Pond

HONORARY OFFICER

Heather Darby, Ph.D.
Agronomic and Soils Specialist
University of Vermont Extension

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we look back on 2021, I feel proud of all we have accomplished as an advocate for organic farmers, research, and as a partner in the regenerative organic farming movement. It has been 32 years since our founding; while our mission of fostering improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems continues to guide all of our work, we have been growing and refining the way we serve farmers and have greatly expanded our programs and work.

Despite another challenging year living through the COVID pandemic, OFRF expanded its staff capacity. We brought on three new staff members by implementing a nationwide staffing search — our most diverse and competitive process to date. We opened our offices to a 100% remote environment, which addresses the changing needs and technology of today. As an organization striving to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, we re-wrote our value statement and evaluated our strategic plan – line by line – to ensure our work advances these principles. We are committed to bringing this focus to existing and future projects and partners.

We dug in deep to analyze feedback from over a thousand farmers about their farming operations, opportunities, and challenges. We have always been guided by the voice of farmers and the input we gathered over the last two years has laid the groundwork for publishing our most robust and nuanced National Organic Research Agenda yet.

Last summer, we launched our 2021-2022 research grant cycle which focuses on climate change mitigation and resilience. We continued our focus on on-farm research and narrowed the eligibility to applicants who are early career researchers and prioritized Black, Indigenous, and People of Color applicants. Half of our grants were awarded to these groups in spring 2022.

OFRF continues to advocate for USDA resources and programs that support organic and transitioning farmers and ranchers and climate-friendly practices. We also worked to advance policies that can advance organic as an increasingly meaningful part of the climate solution, such as promoting Agricultural Resilience Act, H.R. 2803 and successfully securing new co-sponsors of the Bill.

This past year, we have felt the urgency of climate change more acutely than ever. Our staff and board are more committed to helping reverse that trend by helping growers reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon, and build resiliency by advancing and supporting adoption of regenerative organic practices.

I am grateful to work among this incredible community of farmers, researchers, policy makers, activists, and change makers. Together we can work toward building a more just and healthy food system.

Brise Tencer
Executive Director, OFRF



RESEARCH

National Organic Research Agenda

In 2021, OFRF completed analysis and writing for the 200+ page National Organic Research Agenda (NORA) report. 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 SARE region, agro-ecoregion, farming experience, and race/ethnicity. In addition to helping OFRF and other organic sector organizations continue to serve organic producers, the NORA report will also serve as a roadmap to inform the USDA and Congress, leverage public investments for organic research, and advocate for expansion of organic support in the 2023 Farm Bill.

NORA

National Organic Research Agenda



[VIEW 2022 NORA](#)

California Organic Research Agenda

OFRF's 2021 California Organic Research Agenda (CORA) report is a comprehensive report that examines current needs and challenges of organic farmers and ranchers across California and provides policy and research recommendations to address producer-identified issues. The CORA report is a companion to OFRF's 2022 National Organic Research Agenda. The report highlights the top production and non-production challenges cited by California's organic farmers and ranchers. Production of the CORA report was supported in part by the University of California Organic Agriculture Institute (UC OAI), a new statewide program within the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), as well as the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology.

[VIEW THE 2022 CORA](#)

Organic Research Grant Program

OFRF's Research Grant Program is an exciting funding opportunity for farmers and researchers to collaborate on scientific research projects that will help answer some of the most pressing challenges in organic farming. In 2021 we were excited to conclude the previous research grant cycle which resulted in 12 final reports highlighting the findings of the great projects we funded. These reports are available for free on our online database.

[VIEW THE RECENT AWARDS](#)

For the 2021-2022 grant cycle, OFRF prioritized early career researchers, and reserved half of the grant program funds for applicants identifying as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). We believe it is critical to foster the next generation of researchers and support historically underserved and marginalized communities, while also ensuring all farmers have the most up-to-date and science-based information. Projects this cycle are funded in part by the Foundation for Food & Agricultural Research (FFAR) and focus on building on-farm resilience to a changing climate.

[VIEW THE OFRF GRANT PROGRAM](#)

BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH

12

completed reports for the 2020/21 organic research grant cycle.

6

awards announced for for the 2021/22 cycle.

361

total grants awarded to date.

OVER \$3M

invested since 1990.

NORA

National Organic Research Agenda

16

listening sessions.

1100+

participating farmers and ranchers.

144

respondents for CORA.

[VIEW NORA AND CORA REPORTS](#)

[VIEW RESEARCH GRANT DATABASE](#)

EDUCATION

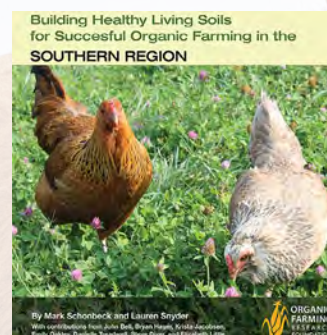
Natural Resources Conservation Service

As part of a 3-year agreement, OFRF has consulted with farmers and researchers alike to create useful and effective resources for NRCS staff to use in the fields. Our training tools range from webinars and summaries, to farmer stories and video blogs – covering soil health, organic tillage, conservation practices and other climate-mitigating techniques.

[READ ABOUT THE NRCS AGREEMENT](#)

Soil Health for the South

Coming in Fall of 2022! OFRF and SSARE will offer a free, self-directed training program designed for beginning farmers, existing organic farmers, and farmers in transition to organic production. This course is based on a comprehensive guidebook, *Building Healthy Living Soils for Successful Organic Farming in the Southern Region*. The course will focus on strategies and practices to build and maintain soil health in the South, with interactive exercises to relate soil principles to specific grower circumstances and goals. While the course highlights the specific challenges of growing in the South, the course is based on foundational, organic principles that are relevant to growers far and wide.



[VIEW GUIDEBOOK](#)

California Department of Food & Agriculture Spanish-language Training

In the works for early 2023! A free, online Spanish language training course for organic farm workers and operators in California. The course will be used in partnership with Agriculture and Land Based Training (ALBA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as a training program for specialty crop farmers focusing on organic farming methods to build soil health and increase sustainability.

This course will help train and equip the next generation of young, beginning, veteran, and urban socially disadvantaged farmers in agronomic, economic, and environmental stewardship skills. It will provide professional development opportunities for farms and businesses to use whenever convenient, and expand access to and resources on how to build and maintain soil life in Spanish.

ADVOCACY

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) had a busy year advocating for policies that benefit organic farmers. We welcomed a new Administration and continued building advocates on Capitol Hill.

Top 5 Policy Events in 2021

- [OFRF Attends USDA Briefing with Under Secretary Moffitt and Rep. Panetta](#)
- [OFRF Asks Congress to Increase Funding for Organic Research](#)
- [OFRF Meets with Under Secretary Lester Moffitt to Ask USDA to Prioritize Support for Producers Transitioning to Organic](#)
- [OFRF Tours USDA Agricultural Research Service, Rep. Jimmy Panetta to Co-Sponsor ARA](#)
- [OFRF Staff Participates in Virtual Fly-In to Ask Congress to Bolster Organic](#)

BY THE NUMBERS

13

policy recommendations focused on

- organic research
- conservation practices
- equity
- climate change mitigation, and more

6

programmatic building blocks of the ARA

- increasing investments in agricultural research
- improving soil health
- supporting the transition to pasture-based livestock
- ensuring farmland preservation and viability
- promoting on-farm renewable energy
- reducing food waste

[VIEW OFRF ADVOCACY EFFORTS](#)

The Agriculture Resilience Act

OFRF, along with many other groups, endorsed the introduction of the Agriculture Resilience Act of 2021 (ARA) when the bill was introduced in April by Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME), herself an organic farmer, and Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM).

The ARA is a farmer-focused, research-driven path to net zero agriculture. The legislation establishes ambitious yet achievable goals for the agriculture sector to reach net zero by 2040.

[LEARN ABOUT THE ARA](#)

Our Mission

Organic Farming Research Foundation 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.

[LEARN ABOUT OUR VALUES](#)

Communications



followers on social media.

150K



increase in website users since 2020.

7%



newsletter subscribers.

16K

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 all organic farming systems to develop and thrive. Today's agriculture system is a continued product of stolen land and enslaved labor of People of Color to favor the interests of White people.

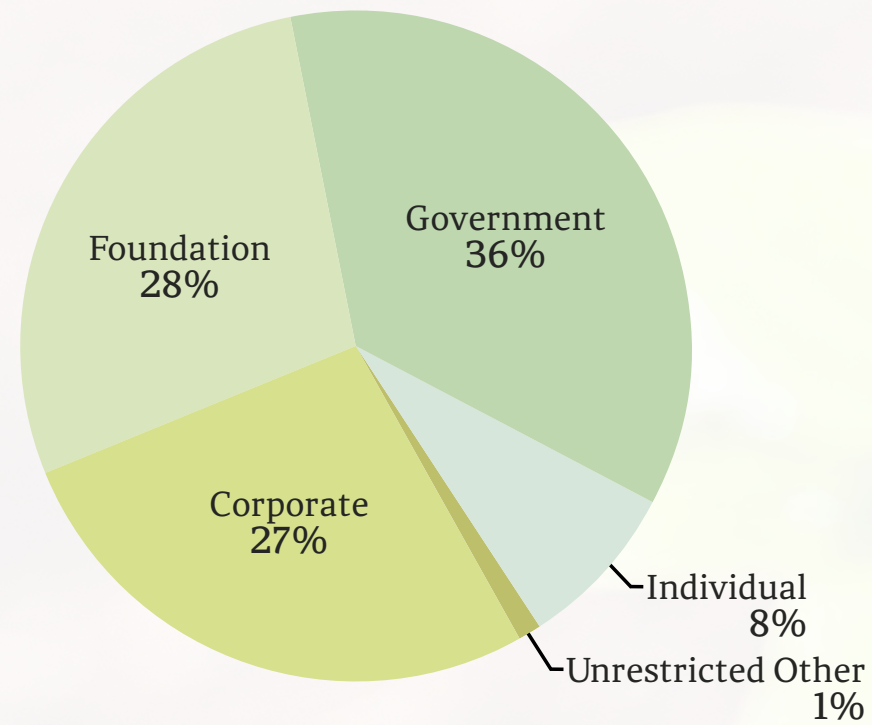
OFRF is committed to advancing beyond the conversation of social justice as it intersects with organic agriculture, and toward an anti-racist future that holds our board members, staff, and partner organizations accountable in dismantling systemic racism in organic farming.

GET INVOLVED

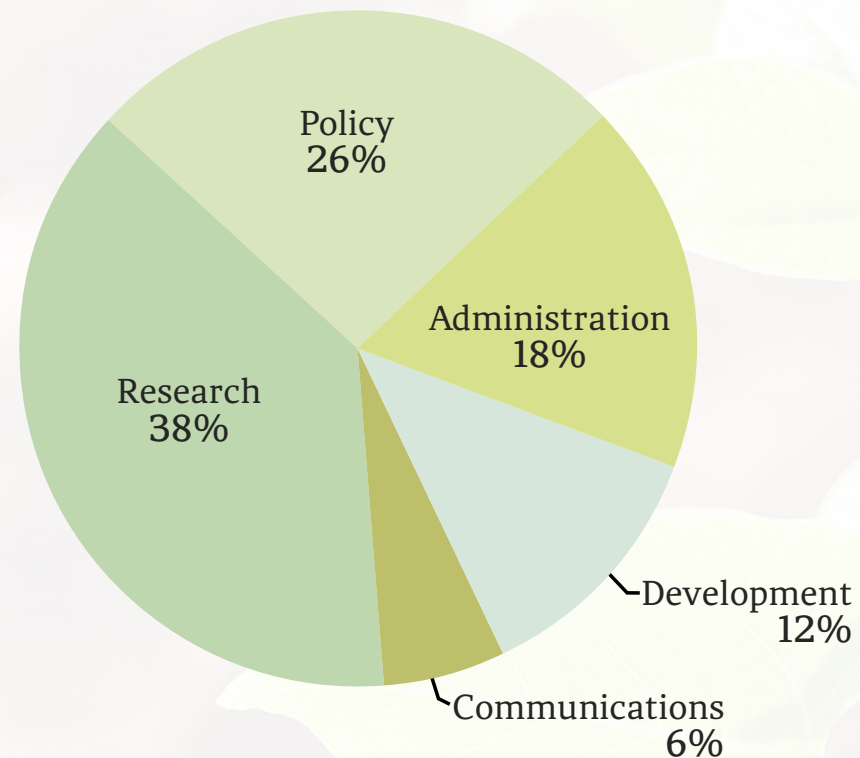


FINANCIALS

2021 TOTAL REVENUE



2021 TOTAL EXPENSES



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

\$50,000+

California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant
 Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR)
 General Mills
 United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

\$25,000+

Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation
 Clif Family Foundation
 Globetrotter Foundation
 Marisla Foundation
 Natural Resources Conservation Services
 National Co+op Grocers
 Whole Foods Market

\$15,000+

Ceres Trust
 Driscoll's
 Forrest C. & Frances H. Lattner Foundation
 Lundberg Family Farms
 Nature's Path Foods
 Patagonia Works
 Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
 Sustainable Futures Fund

\$5,000+

Ardent Mills
 Dole Fresh Fruit Company
 Elizabeth Weber
 Farm Aid, Inc.
 Frey Vineyards, LTD
 Gaia Fund
 Independent Natural Food Retailers Association (INFRA)
 Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT
 Jane Kobayashi
 KeHE Distributors
 Kind of Wild Wines
 Marrone Bio Innovations
 National Philanthropic Trust
 Ogee
 Oliver Bock
 Organically Grown Company
 Pam Marrone
 Soil Health Institute
 Stonyfield Organic
 Sunrise Foods International
 The Nell Newman Foundation
 Vitalis Organic Seeds

\$1,000+

Alice Young
 Amy's Kitchen
 Cafe Mam
 Carol Katz Connelly
 Ciranda, Inc.
 Cory and Pam Ganser
 Dustin James
 Emily and Peter Schmidt
 Godfrey and Marylisa Tencer
 Grain Place Foods
 Jeff Vinson
 Kamut International
 KORA Organics

Marisa Hormel
 Mercaris
 Neil Rudolph
 Roland Pesch and Kathy Rosskopf
 RSF Social Finance
 Spottswode Estate Vineyard & Winery
 Summer Gerard Foundation
 The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
 The Organic Wine Store
 Tonya Antle
 True Organic Products
 Warren T Weber

\$500+

Christopher Mendola
 Dave and Teresa Martinelli
 David Voremberg and Fran Snyder
 Deborah Stinner
 Doug O'Brien
 Edward & Sons Trading Company
 Good Eggs
 Heath and Lejeune
 Joan Sarnat and David Hoffman
 John Teixeira
 Kathleen Merrigan
 Kathy Franklin
 Katrina Heinze
 Klaas U. Martens
 Laurette Lipson
 Mary Phipps
 Phil Foster
 Randie Bencanann
 Rick Lejeune
 Scott Jordan
 Stanford and Donna Young
 Susan and Paul Ballinger
 The Porter Family, in memory of Stephen J. Porter
 Timothy Schultz

\$250+

April and Brad Thatcher
 Barbra Bunting
 Bob Bansen
 Carolyn Dimitri
 Eric Newman
 Eugenie Doyle
 Ferd Hoefner and Diane Curran
 Gina Purl and David Lively
 Harn Soper
 Jan Marson
 Joseph Herron and Patricia Baird
 Mac Leif
 Macauley Hughes
 Margaret Wittenberg
 Mary Slade Morrison
 Michael E. Menes
 Patricia Ginsburg
 Pete Sisti
 Robert Kaake
 Rodrigo Ungaretti
 Ryan Bruno
 Scott Silverman
 Stacy Mates
 Tom and Denesse Willey
 Walt and Jill Auburn



**ORGANIC
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