

Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPTool

Title: State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems

Creator: Thelma Velez

Affiliation: Organic Farming Research Foundation (ofrf.org)

Principal Investigator: Brise Tencer

Data Manager: Thelma Velez

Project Administrator: Thelma Velez

Funder: United States Department of Agriculture (usda.gov)

Funding opportunity number: USDA-NIFA-ICGP-008621

Template: USDA-NIFA: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Project abstract:

OFRF will conduct an assessment of agricultural Extension across the United States with respect to organic farming systems. Given the complexity of organic farming systems and the consistent growth of the industry, it is critical to assess the national capacity of Extension professionals, gain insight into how Extension currently supports organic farmers, and identify opportunities to increase capacity. To successfully do so, we must first understand the current state of Extension's knowledge of organic farming systems and better understand how stakeholders, including nonprofits, industry, researchers, USDA agencies, and Congress can help expand technical support of organic farming and ranching within the Extension system. As part of this project we will produce a final report identifying areas where Cooperative Extension is meeting the needs of organic and transitioning farmers and areas where more support is needed. The report will include a roadmap to build future capacity in key states and regions.

Start date: 09-01-2022

End date: 09-01-2025

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State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems

Expected Data Type

Describe the type of data (e.g. digital, non-digital), how it will be generated, and whether the data are primary or metadata.

- **Research examples include:** lab work, field work and surveys.
- **Education examples include:** number of students enrolled/participated, degrees granted, curriculum, and training products.
- **Extension examples include:** outreach materials, number of stakeholders reached, number of activities, and assessment questionnaires.

OFRF will gather secondary data from public institutions which will be digitally organized and stored in Word, Excel, and PDF formats. This online research of Extension and exploration of all 112 U.S. Land-Grant University (LGU) websites will include the number of Extension agents in each state and how many are working in organic agriculture, their focus areas, and previous assessments conducted within different states or special projects currently underway in organic. This data will be verified via phone calls with program coordinators.

We will also gather primary data using the survey instrument focused on Extension professionals' engagement in organic agriculture. The survey will collect data on Extension professionals': (1) existing experience and knowledge of organic production systems, (2) current engagement with organic farmers, (3) interest in further engagement and education, (4) topics in organic agriculture they want more information about, and (5) how they want to receive that information. The survey instrument is digital and will be conducted in Qualtrics. Qualtrics allows data files to be exported in various formats including: CSV, XML, SPSS, and Google Doc format. Additional qualitative data will be collected through twenty 40-60 minute one-on-one interviews (four per Extension region). Audio files of the interviews will be recorded using Zoom. Audio files will then be transcribed and de-identified using a professional transcription service which provides final transcripts in Word and PDF formats. Transcripts will be analyzed using NVIVO software to examine themes and emergent patterns.

Data Format

For scientific data to be readily accessible and usable it is critical to use an appropriate community-recognized standard and machine readable formats when they exist. If the data will be managed in domain-specific workspaces or submitted to public databases, indicate that their required formats will be followed. Regardless of the format used, the data set must contain enough information to allow independent use (understand, validate and use) of the data.

OFRF will digitally organize all data for the assessment of existing Extension resources in Word, Excel, and PDF formats. The survey instrument is digital and will be conducted in Qualtrics. Qualtrics allows data files to be exported in various formats including: CSV, XML, SPSS, and Google Doc format. We will download the data to our secure password-protected Drive in CSV format, Excel, Word, and Google Docs. For additional analysis, we will create an Excel database with a codebook and access instructions. Audio files of the interviews will be recorded using Zoom. Audio files will then be transcribed and de-identified using professional transcription service which provides final transcripts in Word and PDF formats.

Data Storage and Preservation

Data must be stored in a safe environment with adequate measures taken for its long-term preservation. Applicants must describe plans for storing and preserving their data during and after the project and specify the data repositories, if they exist. Databases or data repositories for long-term preservation may be the same that are used to provide Data Sharing and Public Access. Estimate how much data will be preserved and state the planned retention period. Include any strategies, tools, and contingency plans that will be used to avoid data loss, degradation, or damage.

De-identified transcripts as well as survey data and all metadata in connection with this project will be indefinitely hosted and curated for long-term preservation in OFRF's password-protected research file server which is maintained and updated quarterly by OFRF research staff. Digital audio files used to produce de-identified interview transcripts will be destroyed at the conclusion of this project to protect the privacy of the interview participants.

Data Sharing and Public Access

Describe your data access and sharing procedures during and after the grant. Name specific repositories and catalogs as appropriate. include a statement, when applicable, of plans to protect confidentiality, personal privacy, proprietary interests, business confidential information, and intellectual property rights. Outline any restrictions such as copyright, confidentiality, patent, appropriate credit, disclaimers, or conditions for use of the data by other parties.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Who will ensure DMP implementation? This is particularly important for multi-investigator and multi-institutional projects. Provide a contingency plan in case key personnel leave the project. Also, what resources will be needed for the DMP? If funds are needed, have they been added to the budget request and budget narrative? Projects must budget sufficient resources to develop and implement the proposed DMP.

During the grant period, OFRF Research & Education Program Manager, Thelma Vélez Ph.D., and the OFRF Research Coordinator will be responsible for the capture, quality, and storage of the data and will ensure the data management plan is implemented. If key personnel leave the project, they will pass this responsibility to the other co-PI/PIs (Brise Tencer). Currently, resources needed for the DMP for this project are already in OFRF's possession or have been included in the budget narrative.

Planned Research Outputs

Data paper - "State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems "

The final report and roadmap will be publicly available on the OFRF website and shared widely with USDA Administration and Program Leaders. It will include state-by-state descriptions of Extension support for organic agriculture, including case studies of programs that are successfully supporting organic producers in their region. The report will identify gaps, future priority areas, and opportunities for further investment.

Audiovisual - "Webinars - State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Reporting on Agricultural Extension for Organic Farming Systems "

We will present the findings via 5 webinars and 3 conference presentations. The webinars will be presented via e-Organics and directed to USDA Extension Directors and admin in each SARE region, including the 1890 region. The conferences will be the Organic Agriculture Research Forum (OARF), the National Association of County Agricultural Agents NACAA, and the final venue is pending.

Planned research output details

Title	Type	Anticipated release date	Initial access level	Intended repository(ies)	Anticipated file size	License	Metadata standard(s)	May contain sensitive data?	May contain PII?
State of the States: Assessing, Analyzing and Repo ...	Data paper	2025-02-28	Open	None specified		None specified	None specified	No	No
Webinars - State of the States: Assessing, Analyzi ...	Audiovisual	2025-04-30	Open	None specified		None specified	None specified	No	No