



Organic Cost Share Funds Still Available

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MADISON – Organic Certification Cost Share applications will continue to be accepted until December 10. Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Organic Agriculture Specialist Laura Paine made the announcement at the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council meeting on October 29.

Organic Certification Cost Share provides assistance to producers or handlers of organic agricultural products who are currently certified by a USDA/NOP Accredited Certifying Agent. All certified organic farmers and companies are eligible for reimbursement annually.

Any certification-related expenses incurred from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 are eligible for reimbursements. To apply for reimbursement, a one-page application, W-9 form, copy of the current Organic Certificate and a copy of the itemized paid invoices from your certifier are required. Reimbursements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds are exhausted or the December 10 deadline.

Application materials are available at [datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic Farming/Cost Share Program](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming/Cost_Share_Program). For questions or more information, contact Paine at 608-224-5120 or laura.paine@wi.gov.

The Organic Advisory Council's meeting on October 29 was the final quarterly meeting of 2012. The meeting included a wrap-up of this year's priorities and a discussion about the focus for 2013.

A highlight of the meeting was a report by Audra Hubbell of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (Wisconsin Field Office) on the 2011 Certified Organic Production Survey. About 70% or 870 Wisconsin organic farmers returned the survey. Wisconsin ranks first in the nation in certified organic farms producing livestock, milk, chicken eggs and grain. In 2011, Wisconsin's certified organic farms sold a total of \$132 million dollars in organically produced commodities.

Agency reports were presented at the Council meeting. DATCP reminded organic producers about available resources including [Driftwatch](http://www.driftwatch.com). A short video on Driftwatch and other instructional pieces are accessible at www.youtube.com/widatcp. Consumers can continue to learn more about organic food using the consumer materials on the website at [http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic Farming](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming).

Erin Silva of the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Science encouraged those interested to register for upcoming winter conferences. The Wisconsin Crop Management Conference will be January 15-17, and the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Conference is planned for January 20-22. The Southern Wisconsin Organic and Fresh Market Conference is January 31.

Future meeting dates of the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council will be January 7 and March 18. Agendas and minutes of the Council can be found at this website: <http://www.organic.wisc.edu/>.

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