



HISTORY

Since 1998 the Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) program has provided science-based information to Ohio's organic farming community. The program was established in response to requests by organic producers and supporters to provide science-based information to Ohio's existing organic farmers and to newcomers to organic production and marketing. About 40 acres of land near The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences' (CFAES) Wooster campus were originally allocated to the program. Today, CFAES organic land resources include land on three farms near Wooster and at the North Central Agricultural Research Station in Fremont.

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ORGANIC RESEARCH LAND



HIGH-QUALITY, APPLIED ORGANIC RESEARCH

Organic agriculture seeks to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals, and people. It is based on minimal off-farm inputs and on management

practices that restore, maintain, and/or enhance ecological harmony.

CFAES has nearly 70 acres of certified organic land available at the Wooster campus and the North Central Station to conduct organic research. This research is maintained by organic farm managers and farm staff with equipment dedicated solely to organic crop production as well as 3,400 bushels of grain storage for organic crops.

Researchers in a variety of disciplines are studying concerns applicable to organic growers of vegetables and field crops during and after transition. Organic research both at the research stations and on cooperators' farms includes grains, vegetables and fruits, cover crops, soil quality, weed control, tillage, variety trials, fertility, and rotation studies.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

cfaes.osu.edu

OFFER PROGRAM

The Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) program consists of a team of CFAES scientists, Ohio State University Extension educators, Ohio farmers, and others who share the goal of enhancing the vitality of organic agriculture in Ohio. This interdisciplinary team works together to develop research initiatives to better understand the principles behind organic agriculture, particularly in terms of underlying crop-soil relationships, pest control, economics, and system management.

OFFER's mission is to provide research and educational support for producers, processors, and marketers of organic foods with the goal of expanding the abundance, quality, and variety of certified organic foods available to consumers.



ORGANIC RESEARCH FARMS

WEST BADGER FARM

Most of CFAES' organic agronomic research is conducted in the silt loam soils at West Badger Farm. The farm is located on Apple Creek Road between Apple Creek and Wooster, and it consists of about 51 acres of certified organic land. West Badger Farm is the site of a decommissioned swine unit. As a result of years of swine manure application, phosphorus and potassium levels remain high in some fields.

FRY FARM

Fry Farm, located off Oil City Road between U.S. 250 and Secrest Road near Wooster, encompasses approximately 10 acres of certified organic land for agronomic and organic vegetable systems research. Fry Farm has irrigation potential and four fields with 15 years of compost/no-compost history.

When not actively involved in research, fields at West Badger and Fry farms are managed in four-, five-, and six-year rotations. Research includes weed management, cover crops, rotation studies, crop variety trials, soil balancing, and more. One set of fields at West Badger has been fenced for organic livestock trials.

HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH UNIT 1

Organic vegetable production was initiated here when six permanent, high-tunnel structures were constructed on this 1-acre site on Selby Road for use in organic vegetable research. In addition, a Rimol greenhouse system that is moved between two plots has been added.

Current research includes vegetable grafting, organic amendments and fertility, microbial-based biostimulants, microclimate management, and a soil balancing project.

NORTH CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

The North Central Station is located west of Fremont in Sandusky County in the central Lake Erie plains. Here, 5 acres of land have recently transitioned to certified organic production, providing additional research opportunities in the Hoytville silty clay loam soil typical in northwestern Ohio.

Research at the station includes soil balancing, cover crops, transition strategies, and perennial grains, with more studies in the works.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Field Days provide opportunities for the public to tour our field plots and learn about the organic research being done at CFAES. Stakeholder meetings provide valuable opportunities for us to strengthen ties with our stakeholders, provide research-based education, and receive feedback on the future research needs of growers.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIC RESEARCH

To be eligible for certification, each field and greenhouse must be managed using organic practices and must avoid all prohibited inputs for a period of at least three years. Once certified, all the fields go through an annual certification process and inspection. Certification ensures an audit trail, which allows any item marketed as organic to be traced back to the field from which it originated. That means that everything that is done with the organic crop must be documented and tracked, from preparation of the field to planting to harvest and finally transporting the crop to market.