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## **Agriculture Secretary Announces \$1.8 Million to Grow Market Opportunities for Organic, Recognizes Progress in Organic During the Wolf Administration**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today at the 107th Pennsylvania Farm Show, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding announced \$1.8 million in targeted investments over three years to help Pennsylvania farmers and processors voluntarily transition to growing and producing organic products, building on momentum gained through the [PA Farm Bill](#).

“Pennsylvania is leading the way in organic agriculture, ranking third in the nation for sales of local, organic products, contributing more than \$1 billion to the commonwealth’s economy,” said Secretary Redding. “Innovation and partnerships in organic are ensuring we meet the needs of consumers now and well into the future. Governor Wolf and the General Assembly’s support of the only state-based Farm Bill was instrumental in getting us to this point, and I’m looking forward to continued growth in organic.”

Rodale Institute was awarded \$750,000 for three years, and Team Ag, in partnership with Pennsylvania Certified Organic and Kitchen Table Consultants, was awarded \$1,041,604 for three years. These organizations will offer free on-farm technical assistance for Pennsylvania producers and processors seeking to transition and become USDA-certified organic. This effort expands on the work of the PA Farm Bill’s [PA Preferred® Organic](#) initiative to grow market opportunities for Pennsylvania farmers and keep PA a national leader in organic production.

Pennsylvania consumers are increasingly interested in purchasing a greater quantity and variety of organic foods. By producing more organic products in-state, Pennsylvania farmers can meet the demands of this rapidly expanding market opportunity by diversifying their farm, generating greater income, and strengthening an already robust PA agriculture industry.

Since the inception of the PA Farm Bill in 2019, Governor Wolf has bolstered the PA Preferred program by more than \$10 million (\$2.6 million annually) and created the PA Preferred Organic Initiative. As part of this effort, the department has continued to grow opportunities in organic and offer service to organic producers, including:

- Administering an organic cost share program
- Funding the development of more organic study circles through Penn State and peer-to-peer mentoring
- Launching a new [PA Preferred website](#) where consumers can find organic, local PA products
- Developing consumer campaigns to raise awareness of PA Preferred
- Funding Rodale Institute technical assistance/organic consultation to assist producers

The department has also engaged Econsult Solutions to conduct an economic impact study on organic agriculture, helping to guide the industry and department. The study will:

- Guide the direction and priorities of the PA Preferred Organic Initiative
- Recommend costs to be covered and funding structures to be created through the PA Preferred Organic Initiative
- Advise policy decisions
- Propose a role for a statewide network of organic agriculture stakeholders

The USDA National Agriculture Statistics Services recently [released organic data](#) for 2021, and there has been a staggering 48 percent increase in the production and sale of organic commodities since 2019, totaling \$1.09 billion.

Pennsylvania continues to reign supreme in organic mushroom sales, leading the nation with \$95.4 million in sales in 2021.

To learn more about the department's organic initiative and other programs, visit [agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov).

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