ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN BY THE NUMBERS

Wisconsin has experienced dramatic growth in organic agriculture since the National Organic Program was enacted in 2002. The number of organic farms in Wisconsin grew 157 percent from 2002 to 2007.[1]

Wisconsin's growth in organic farming mirrors global and national growth in this sector. Organic production in the U.S. is a small but rapidly growing part of worldwide organic production. Globally, 87 million acres were farmed under organic management in 2008, representing almost 1.4 million producers in 154 countries. This represents a nine percent increase in the acreage in organic production over 2007.[2] U.S. certified organic acreage reached more than 4.1 million acres and 14,540 producers in 2008.[3]

The National Agricultural Statistics Service collected in-depth 2008 data about organic agriculture in the U.S. as a follow up to the 2007 agricultural census.[4] The survey included farms that were certified organic, transitioning to organic and exempt from certification.[5] The 2008 USDA Organic Agriculture Census illustrates that Wisconsin has a well-rounded organic portfolio, ranking highly in number of farms and sales for a diverse range of agricultural products.

Number of organic farms

The 2008 USDA Organic Agriculture Census ranks Wisconsin second in total number of organic farms (Figure 1). The census reports 2,714 organic farms in California, which is the top-ranked state, and 1,222 organic farms in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is also in the top five states for organic acreage, with a total of 195,603 acres. In addition, Wisconsin ranks second after California in the number of farms transitioning to organic farming, positioning the state well to grow its future capacity for organic agriculture.

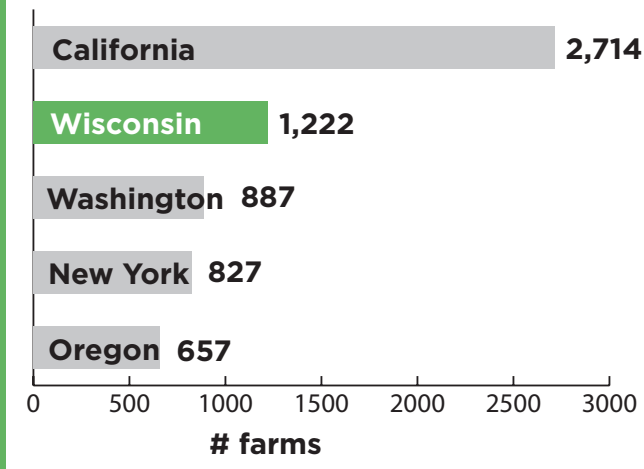

Figure 1. Top five states in number of organic farms, 2008
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 1.

[1]USDA. 2002, 2007. *Census of Agriculture.* (www.nass.usda.gov/index.asp). Accessed 11/28/11.

[2]Willer, H. and L. Kilcher (Eds.) 2010. *The World of Organic Agriculture — Statistics and Emerging Trends 2011.* IFOAM, Bonn, and FiBL, Frick.

[3]USDA. 2008. *2007 Census of Agriculture: 2008 Organic Production Survey.* (www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/organics.pdf). Accessed 11/28/11.

[4]USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey Wisconsin.* (www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/WI_Organic_Release.pdf). Accessed 11/28/11.

[5]Some farms are exempt because their sales total less than $5,000 per year. The 2008 census data used in this report covers the certified and exempt farms.

Top states in number of farms producing organic products, 2008

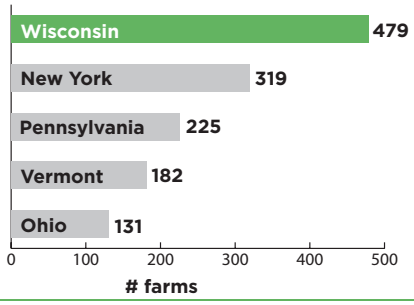

Figure 2. Dairy farms
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 10.

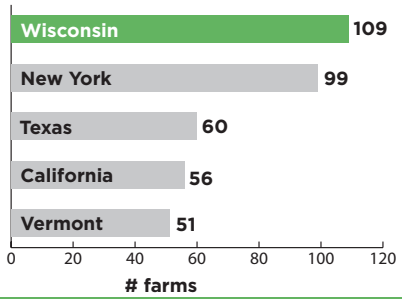

Figure 3. Beef farms
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 10.

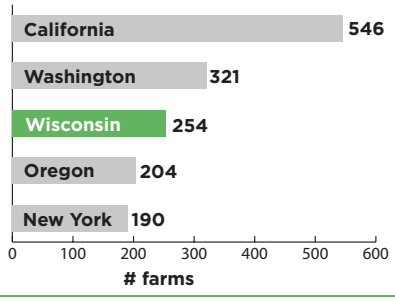

Figure 4. Vegetable/ melon farms
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 4.

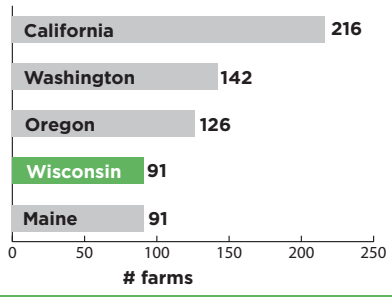

Figure 5. Berry farms
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 6.

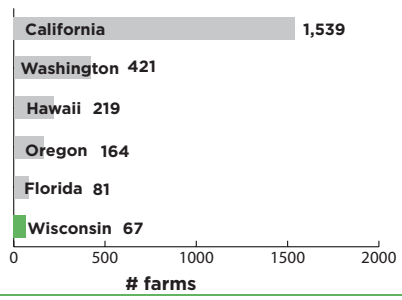

Figure 6. Fruit/ tree nut farms
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 5.

Wisconsin leads the nation in the number of organic dairy and beef farms (Figures 2 and 3), with a total of 479 dairy farms and 109 beef farms.

Wisconsin also ranks first for the number of farms raising organic hogs and pigs, layer chickens, and turkeys, and second in broiler chicken farms and sheep/lamb farms.

Wisconsin ranks third in the number of organic vegetable and melon farms (Figure 4). The census reports 254 farms in the state growing organic vegetables and melons. Wisconsin ranks in the top five states for organic berry farms, with 91 farms, and in the top six for organic fruit/tree nut farms, with 67 farms (Figures 5 and 6).

Wisconsin ranks first in the number of farms raising several organic field crops including barley for grain or seed; corn for grain or seed; corn for silage or greenchop; hay; haylage, other silage and greenchop; oats for grain or seed; rye for grain or seed; and winter wheat for grain or seed. Since these crops are often consumed by livestock on the farms where they are raised rather than sold, there can be a significant difference between the number of farms raising these crops and the number of farms selling them in organic markets (Figure 7, page 3). These home-grown organic feed grains and forages help make Wisconsin organic dairy farms more profitable than their counterparts in other parts of the U.S., where more of these inputs are purchased.[6]

[6]Blazek, K., E. Silva, L. Paine and T. Atwell. 2010. *Organic Agriculture in Wisconsin: 2009 Status Report.* UW-Madison CIAS, p. 14.

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) provides more recent data on the number of certified organic farms and businesses/processors in Wisconsin. While the USDA Organic Agriculture Census figures include certified and transitioning organic farms, as well as those exempt from certification, the NOP data only includes certified farms. 2011 data from the NOP show 170 certified organic businesses/processors in Wisconsin and 1,159 certified organic farms. Figures 8 and 9 (pages 4 and 5) show where these farms and businesses are located in Wisconsin. Certified organic farms are particularly dense in the area closest to the headquarters of Organic Valley in southwestern Wisconsin. Figure 10 (page 7) shows the steady increase in the number of organic farms in Wisconsin, as reported by the NOP.

Organic product sales

The 2008 USDA Organic Agriculture Census shows significant sales of organic agricultural products in Wisconsin. The state ranks sixth in the nation for total organic product sales[7] at $132.8 million, capturing 4.2 percent of total organic sales in the U.S. (Figure 11, page 7). California leads the nation with $1.15 billion in total organic sales, or 36.3 percent of U.S. sales, followed by Washington, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Texas.

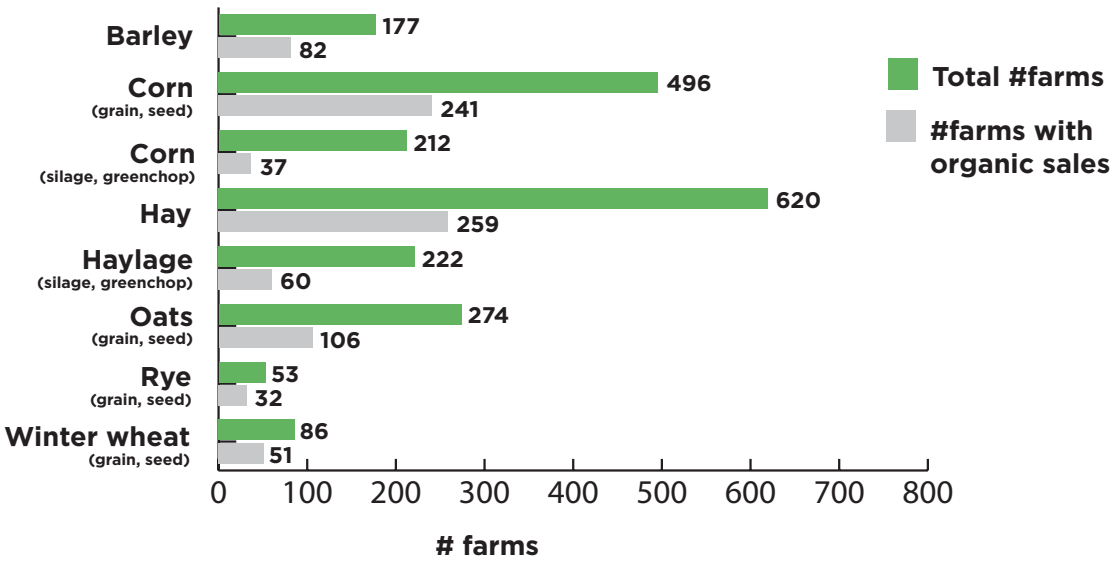

Figure 7. Field crops for which Wisconsin ranks first in total number of farms, showing total number of farms and number of farms with organic sales, 2008

Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 7.

[7]This includes sales from all categories of products and markets.

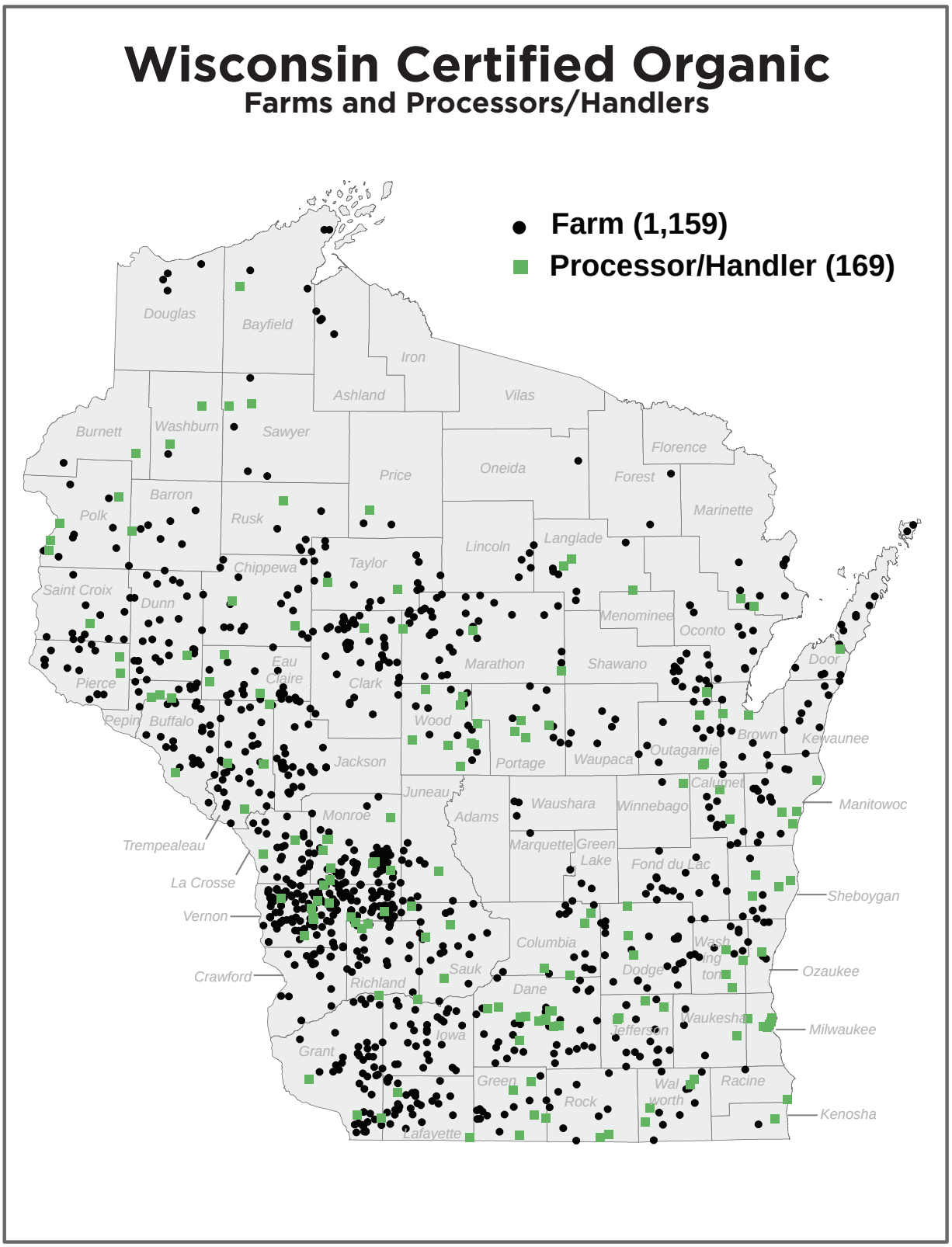

Figure 8. Wisconsin Certified Organic Farms and Processors/Handlers

Source: USDA NOP data, 2011, unpublished.

Map by Lisa Morrison, DATCP, 12/19/2011.

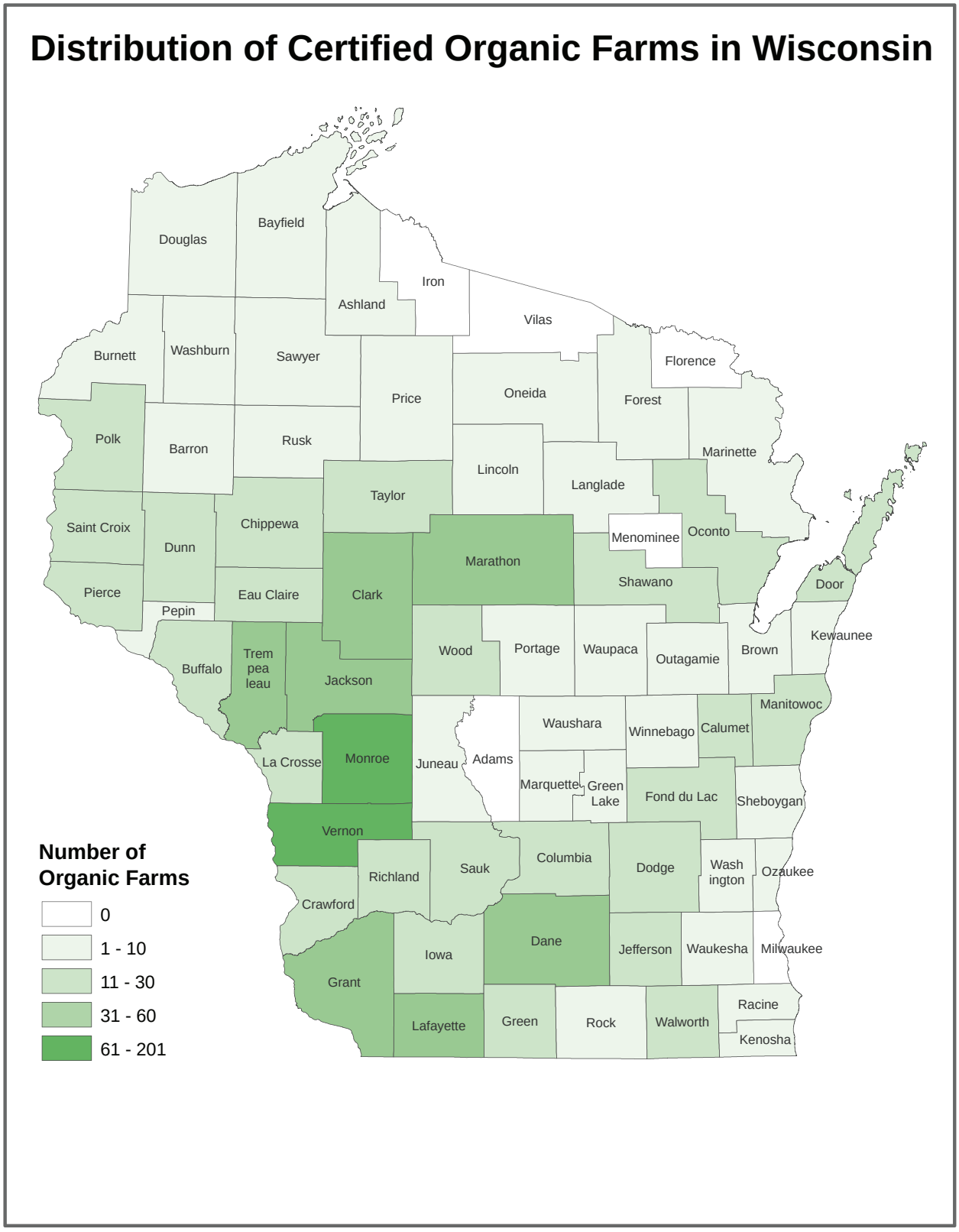

Figure 9. Distribution of Certified Organic Farms in Wisconsin.

Source: USDA NOP data, 2011, unpublished.

Map by Lisa Morrison, DATCP, 12/19/2011.

Dairy comprised the largest share of organic sales in Wisconsin (64 percent) at $85 million (Figure 12, page 7). Crop sales, including $18.1 million from field crops, $6.5 million from vegetables, $2.7 million from berries and $282,000 from fruit made up 23 percent of organic sales in Wisconsin. Organic cranberries made up 88 percent of Wisconsin's organic berry sales. The remaining 13 percent of organic sales were livestock and poultry (seven percent) and other livestock and poultry products (six percent).

Wisconsin ranks second in organic milk sales, with its $85 million in sales accounting for 11.4 percent of the U.S. total (Figure 13, page 7). California leads organic milk sales with 17.8 percent of the U.S. total.

Wisconsin ranks first in the nation in sales of organic beef brood cows and all other organic cattle and calves, a category that includes organic bulls, beef calves and replacement dairy heifers.

Wisconsin ranks fourth in both total organic livestock and poultry sales and organic egg sales. It had $6 million in organic livestock and poultry sales, or 2.2 percent of total sales in the U.S., and $7.5 million in organic egg sales amounting to 4.8 percent of the U.S. total.

Wisconsin ranks tenth in organic vegetable and melon sales, with 0.9 percent of the U.S. total (Figure 14). In organic berry sales, Wisconsin ranks fourth (Figure 15, page 7), with 3.2 percent of the U.S. total. Wisconsin ranks fifteenth in organic fruit and tree nut sales (0.7 percent of the U.S. total) and thirteenth in organic field crop sales (3.6 percent of the U.S. total). Taken together, these figures indicate that Wisconsin has a well-rounded, diverse organic agricultural portfolio that draws income to our state.

Figures 16 and 17 (page 8) show the leading states in number of farms and the value of sales for all organic products and organic milk. Why are the rankings for number of organic farms and organic sales so different? Several explanations are possible. States ranking high in the number of farms do not necessarily have top sales

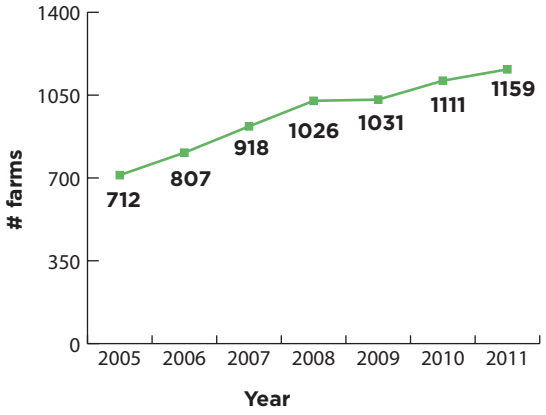

Figure 10. Growth in number of certified organic farms in Wisconsin, 2005-2011
Source: USDA NOP data, 2005-2011, unpublished.

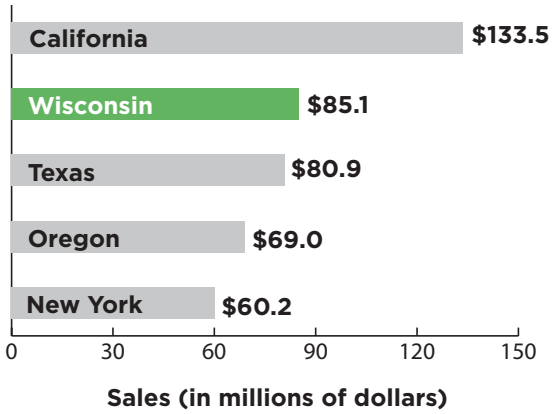

Figure 13. Top five states in organic milk sales, 2008
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 11.

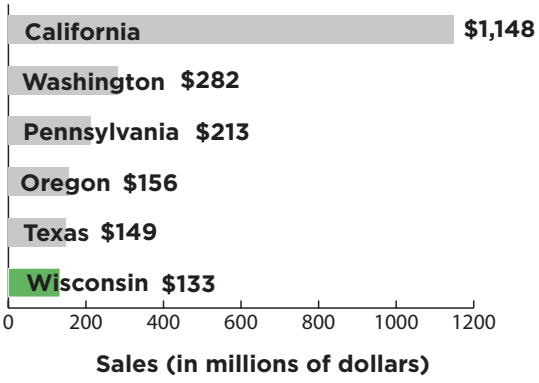

Figure 11. Top six states in organic sales, 2008
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 1.

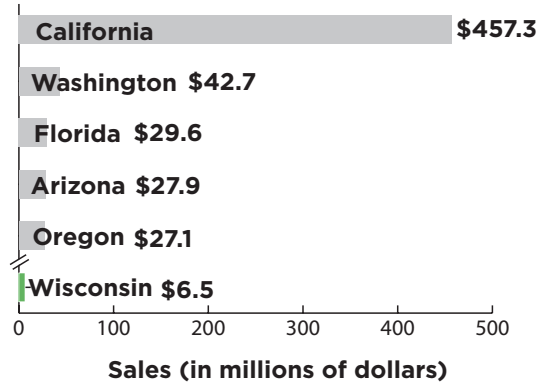

Figure 14. Top five states in organic vegetable/ melon sales plus Wisconsin (#10), 2008
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 4.

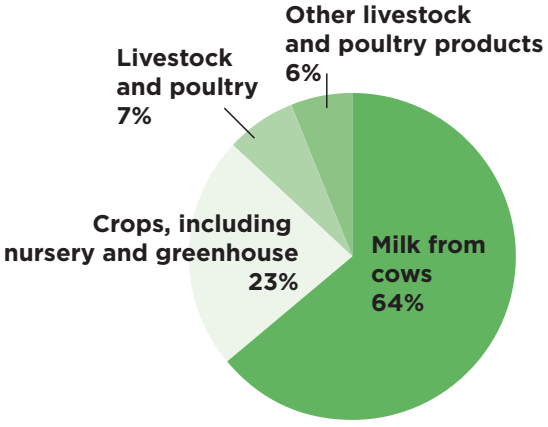

Figure 12. Wisconsin organic sales by product, 2008
Source: USDA. 2008, *Organic Production Report.*

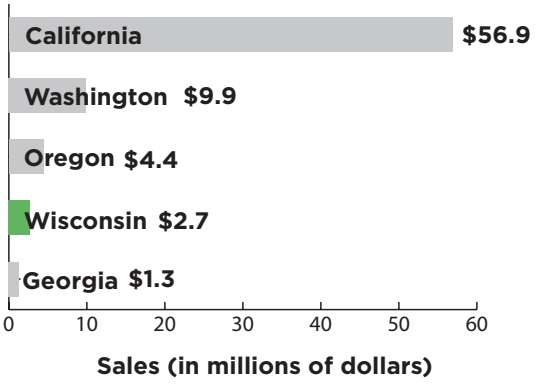

Figure 15. Top five states in organic berry sales, 2008
Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 6.

figures because the farms or herds are small and not producing large volumes of product. Product values can differ greatly; one state can have fewer farms selling high-value products and show greater total sales than another state with many farms selling lower value products.

Marketing

The 2008 Organic Census counted how many farms market their products through local sales within 100 miles of the farm; regional sales 100 to 499 miles from the farm; national sales 500 miles or more from the farm; and international sales. Three states ranked among the top at all of these scales: California, Wisconsin and Washington (Figure 18, page 9). A common characteristic of each of these states is market diversity, which is crucial for the industry's economic and market resilience.

Figure 16. Top states in total number of organic farms and total value of organic sales, 2008

Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 1.

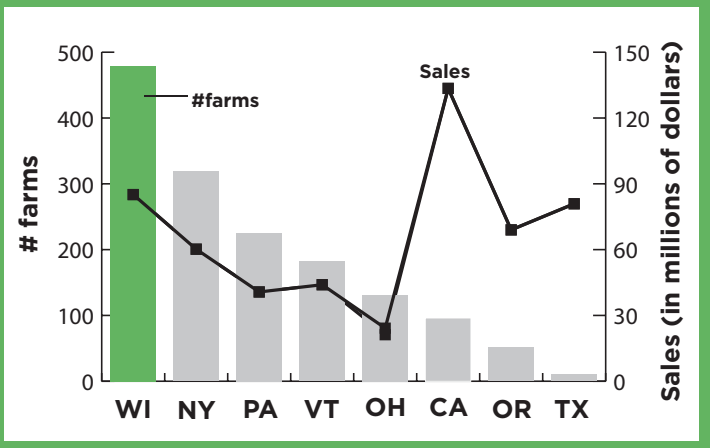

Figure 17. Top states in number of dairy farms and value of organic milk sales, 2008

Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Tables 10 and 11.

Over 10 percent of organic sales in Wisconsin were either made directly to consumers or through retail channels, such as grocery stores. Most organic product sales in Wisconsin were through wholesale markets, with 33.5 percent of sales made to processors, mills or packers, and 34 percent made to grower cooperatives. Many organic products are sold as value-added products. Wisconsin ranks seventh in organic, value-added product sales, with $2.1 million in sales or one percent of the U.S. total (Figure 19).

Economic impacts of organic agriculture

Agriculture is an economic engine in Wisconsin, creating jobs and generating other economic activity. In 2009, Dr. Steve Deller calculated production agriculture's overall impact on Wisconsin's economy.

Every job in agriculture supports an additional 0.89 jobs elsewhere in the state economy, and every job in dairy farming and processing supports an additional 1.23 jobs elsewhere (Deller 2009).[8]

Agriculture has an multiplier effect on income as well as employment. Deller found that for every dollar of agricultural income, an additional $1.24 of economic activity occurs elsewhere in the state economy through the purchasing of inputs and other spending.

A study comparing the economic impact of organic and conventional crop production was conducted at Iowa State University in 2007.[9] The study compared a conventional corn-soybean rotation to an organic corn-soy-oats-alfalfa rotation. Although results would probably differ for organic dairy, vegetable and livestock farms in Wisconsin, the study suggests that organic systems in general may contribute more economic activity to local economies, primarily as a result of their more labor-intensive nature. For every $100,000 of direct farmgate income, conventional farms generated a total economic impact of $139,500 with 1.4 total jobs created; organic farms generated a total economic impact of $157,834 with 1.7 total jobs created. While conventional farming created more economic activity related to purchased inputs, organic farming created more economic activity around labor and local spending.

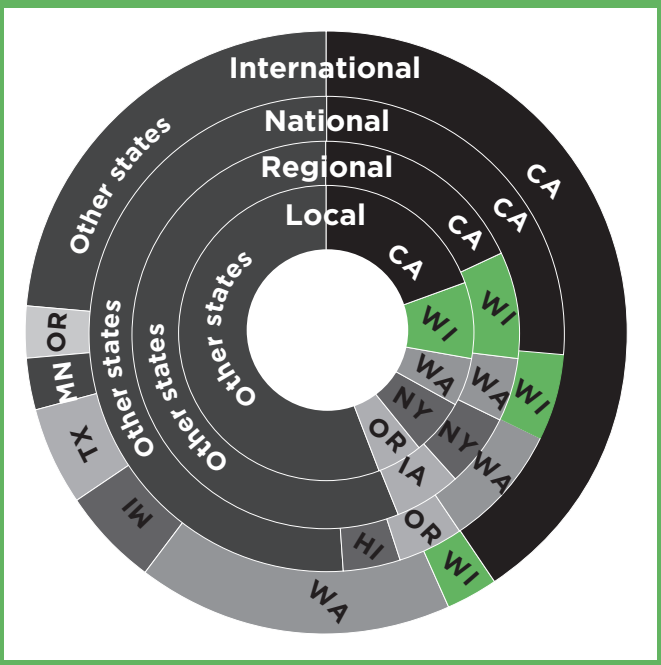

Figure 18. Top states in number of farms selling at the local, regional, national and international scales, 2008

Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 14.

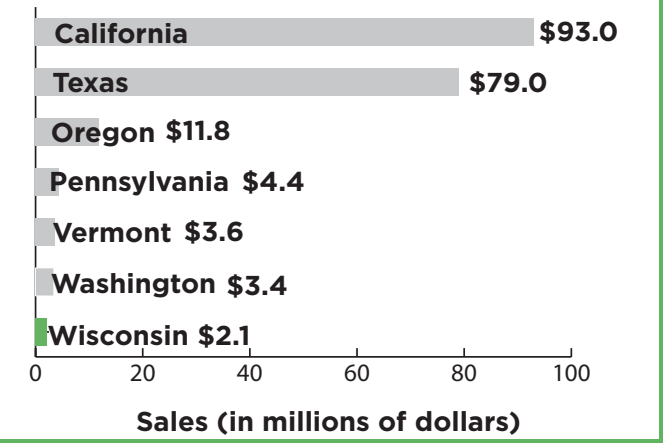

Figure 19. Top seven states in dollar value of value added organic sales, 2008

Source: USDA. 2008. *Organic Production Survey*, Table 3.

[8]Deller, S. and D. Williams. 2009. *The Contribution of Agriculture to the Wisconsin economy*. (www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/wisag). Accessed 01/03/12.

[9]Swenson, D., L. Eathington and C. Chase. 2007. *Determining the Methods of Measuring the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Associated with Organic Crop Conversion in Iowa.* (http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/2007-03-determining-methods). Accessed 01/03/12.