

# Summary and Resources

## Conservation for Organic and Organically-Managed Farms

### February 18, 2026 | Webinar

**Valley Spirit**

- NRCS Relationship - 2016
- EQIP
  - Interior Fencing
  - Livestock Waterers
  - Pollinator Habitat
  - Forage Establishment

**Organic Transition and Management**

- Organic Transition Initiative
  - Organic Conservation Planning
  - 823 Organic Management Practice
- Transition to Organic Partnership Program\*
- National Organic Program\*

## Webinar Summary

### Overview

This February 2026 webinar shared current USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) services and programs for organic, organic-transitioning and organically-managed farms in Kentucky. Facilitated by OAK staff and featured guest presenters: Adam Jones (NRCS-KY State Grazing Specialist), Logan Duke (Henry County District Conservationist) and Joseph Monroe (Valley Spirit Farm, Henry County), the presentation walked participants through the beneficial assistance available to those with current and previous NRCS contracts, and those who are new to USDA Programs, including:

- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#)
  - [Organic Transition Initiative](#)
    - Organic Conservation Planning Activity
    - Design and Implementation Activity
  - [823 Organic Management Practice](#)
- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#)
- [National Organic Program](#)

OAK's Conservation Outreach Coordinator, Mad Marchal, shared OAK's related and complementary programs for Kentuckians exploring and implementing conservation on their land:

- [Conservation Outreach](#)
- [Conservation Funding](#) through the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- [Organic Transition/Certification Support](#) through USDA Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program

## Organically-Managed Working Lands

Organically-managed farms can benefit from conservation planning and technical assistance from NRCS programs such as EQIP or CSP.

Through EQIP, farmers address resource concerns like water quality, erosion, drought or volatile weather by using conservation practices like cover crops, prescribed grazing, riparian buffers or hedgerows. Farmer contracts with NRCS provide financial assistance to implement conservation practices. The amount and terms of financial assistance vary based on the practices included in the farmer's conservation plan. NRCS or OAK staff can help break down these details to help farmers understand the most beneficial EQIP plan for their land and operations.

Within CSP, farmers build on the conservation work they've done previously (through EQIP) for an annual base amount of \$4,000 plus additional payments based on the selected conservation practice(s) and the number of practices. Eligibility requirements for five-year CSP contracts are based on a "Stewardship Threshold," in which at least two resource concerns must be addressed. After receiving a farmer or landowner's CSP application, NRCS makes site visits to working lands as part of the ranking process to determine eligibility.

Common conservation practices in EQIP for organically-managed farms are shown here:

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program**  
Common Practices for Organic Farms

- Cover Crops - [340](#)
- Pollinator Stands - [327](#)
- No Till / Residue Mgmt - [345](#)
- Prescribed Grazing - [528](#)
- Wildlife Habitat - [420](#)
- Livestock Watering Facility - [560](#)
- **New!** Soil Carbon Amendment - [336](#)
- Interior Fencing - [382](#)
- Riparian Buffer - [391](#)
- Hedgerow - [422](#)
- Tree / Shrub Establishment - [612](#)
- High Tunnel System - [325](#)
- Water Catchment - [558](#)
- Micro-Irrigation - [441](#)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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## Certified Organic and Transitioning Farms

Adam Jones explained the Organic Transition Initiative, which supports farmers and landowners in the process of organic certification by pairing their transition efforts with conservation planning and implementation. Often, farmers will turn to conservation practices such as establishing buffer zones or developing a grazing plan or crop rotation to support their transition to organic

certification. Additionally, the Interim Conservation Practice (823) supports organic, transitioning or exempt organic producers by providing financial assistance for a suite of practices (not just one!) that enhance the organic production systems on the farm.

OAK's [Organic Transition Program](#) supports farms interested in organic certification through one-on-one assistance tailored to the farm's unique goals and needs. Contact [Kenya Abraham](#) to learn more.

### Conservation on Valley Spirit Farm

Joseph and Abbie Monroe run a 118-acre vegetable and grass-fed and -finished cattle farm in Henry County, Kentucky. With a start in vegetable production, the Monroes learned the benefits of incorporating cattle onto the land for farm diversification and conservation, and explored assistance with their local NRCS office. In 2016, they applied for an EQIP contract to help them to install watering systems, fencing and improved forage for their new and growing cattle operation.

With a successful relationship established, Joseph continued to work with NRCS to expand and enhance the farm's ecology. Logan Duke assisted Joseph with a CSP contract, which supports farmers in building upon their existing conservation efforts. With CSP, Joseph established a pollinator stand and wildlife habitat and increased cover crop use in his vegetable fields. **All of these practices have led to an increase in wildlife and in crop yields!** Valley Spirit Farm now nourishes its cattle with rich, established forage in rotationally-grazed pastures.

### Reach out!

If you have additional questions about the webinar and conservation for any farm, including NRCS conservation practices and programs, please reach out to [OAK's Conservation Outreach Coordinator](#). You can also directly contact NRCS by finding your [local NRCS office](#).

### Gratitude

OAK is grateful to Joseph Monroe for sharing his farm story, to Adam Jones and Logan Duke for providing their time and conservation expertise and to the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service for supporting the event.

*This event was supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).*

### Summary Resource Links

**View the [Webinar Recording](#) and Review the [Webinar Slides with Interactive Links](#)**

### OAK Resources

- [On-Farm Conservation](#) - This program provides outreach and education for farm-based conservation on owned or leased land. Eligible participants are Kentucky farmers and

landowners with production or subsistence farms, urban or rural growing spaces, community-run projects or privately managed lands. OAK's Conservation Outreach Coordinator, Mad Marchal, is available to connect Kentuckians to local NRCS field staff, to reduce barriers to entry into NRCS programs and to offer logistical support and conservation education. Contact Mad at [mad@oak-ky.org](mailto:mad@oak-ky.org) or (502) 509-9839 or [schedule a free call](#)

- **NEW! [Conservation Funding Opportunity](#):** Eligible Kentucky farmers can now apply for financial and technical assistance with on-farm conservation practices through funding from a new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). [Grow Appalachia](#) and OAK are stewarding this new partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that will advance soil health, conservation and weather-resilient practices for Kentucky farmers and landowners.
- [OAK Farmer Field Days](#) - Hosted on working farms, these events highlight organic crop and livestock systems and best practices in production, marketing, business and resilience on Kentucky farms. Watch OAK's newsletters and website for the 2026 Field Day calendar!
- [Organic Production Assistance Program](#) - Organic production consultation services provide dedicated technical assistance to Kentucky farmers who are currently using or interested in adopting or expanding organic practices.
- [OAK Transition Program](#) - Organic transition specialists assist farmers interested in transitioning to USDA-certified organic production. Organic specialists are available for one-on-one consultations, providing a personal level of service and technical assistance on-site, at the farmer's convenience.
- [Soil Health Project](#) - OAK and partners are working with farmers and buyers in Kentucky to promote the adoption of organic farming practices and to develop markets for commodities grown and raised in ways that improve whole-farm resilience, soil health and ecosystem services. This project is part of the USDA's Advancing Markets for Producers initiative and runs through August 2028.
- [OAK Conference](#) - OAK's annual conference includes a growing audience of hundreds of Kentuckians and neighbors active in the region's food systems: farmers, researchers, nonprofit professionals, federal and state agency partners, technical service providers and conscious consumers working collectively to build a resilient local food system for all. Collaboration among these diverse voices, grounded in the connection to Kentucky farms, soil and communities, provides a rich foundation for learning and growth. Mark your calendar for the last weekend of January, and keep an eye out for more details in summer 2026.
- [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#) (KYFSC) creates market opportunities for Kentucky farms growing for community supported agriculture (CSA), a weekly box subscription of the farm's harvest. KYFSC partners with farms and employers to facilitate workplace CSA programs that incentivize employees to purchase CSA. Learn more today!
- [Join OAK today!](#) The organic and sustainable farming network in Kentucky is growing. Together, we are creating a thriving regional food and farming network. Your support and participation help provide resources to farmers, inspire community members and enhance organics across KY!
- [Sign up for OAK newsletters](#)—For farmers and consumers, OAK offers a variety of regular communications to stay connected to Kentucky food and farming news, research and events.

## Funding /Technical Assistance Resources and Service Providers

- Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development ([KCARD](#))
  - Free [business planning](#) for Kentucky farms and agribusinesses
  - [Funding assistance and grant information](#) (Kentucky and beyond)
  - Sign up under “GET UPDATES” on the [KCARD website](#) to receive e-newsletters
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
  - Read this first! [A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers](#)
  - USDA [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)-Kentucky](#)
    - [How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers](#)
    - Find your county’s office in [West Kentucky](#) or [East Kentucky](#)
    - [Four Steps to FSA Assistance](#) (including what to take to your first visit!)
  - [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)-Kentucky](#)

## USDA-NRCS and Other Conservation Resources

- [USDA National Organic Program](#)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  - [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)
  - [EQIP Funding for Organic Farmers](#)
  - [EQIP Homepage](#)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - [CSP Homepage](#)
  - [“Is CSP Right For Me?”](#)
- Organic Management Plan (823)
  - [2024 Organic Farmers Association 823 Factsheet](#)
- ‘Historically Underserved’ Farmers
  - [“Get Started! A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers”](#)

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