



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
2362A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chair:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

The statutory language requires that the report describe the requests, disbursements, and expenditures for each State under the program during the current and previous fiscal year, including the number of producers and handlers served by the program in the previous fiscal year. The report is enclosed.

If you have any questions regarding the report, please contact our Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to Senators Stabenow, Cochran, Pryor, and Blunt; and Congressmen Lucas, Peterson, and Farr.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas J. Vilsack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure



United States Department of Agriculture

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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Farr:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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The Honorable Mark Pryor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chair:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6000

Dear Senator Cochran:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chair:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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MAY 05 2014

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Peterson:

Section 10301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), requires the Department of Agriculture to annually submit a report to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, which describes the expenditures of each State under the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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USDA AMS NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM COST-SHARE PROGRAMS 2014 REPORT TO CONGRESS

A. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) National Organic Program (NOP) administers two organic certification cost-share programs. Each program provides cost-share assistance, through participating States, to organic producers and/or organic handlers. Recipients must receive initial certification or continuation of certification to the USDA organic regulations from a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Reimbursement is set at 75 percent of an operation's certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 per year.

The first program is the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Organic Certification Cost-Share Program, which was established in 2001 as part of the Agricultural Management Assistance Program. This program was originally authorized under Section 1524 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 1501–1524). It authorizes cost-share assistance to producers of organic agricultural products in Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. AMS allocated \$1,325,850 to States in fiscal year (FY) 2013; States are distributing these funds to producers during FY 2014.

The second program is the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program, which was initially established as a part of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3007) and then reauthorized as a part of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 6523). This program is open to producers and handlers of organic agricultural products in all States and U.S. Territories (hereafter known as "States"). To prevent duplicate assistance payments, producers participating in the AMA program are not eligible to participate in the producer portion of the National program. When the previous Farm Bill expired in 2012, the funded amount of \$22 million had been almost fully exhausted; therefore, this program did not operate in FY 2013.

The Agricultural Act of 2014, (2014 Farm Bill), H.R. 2642, Title X, Section 10004, includes a provision for both National and AMA programs. As such, producers and handlers in all 50 States will be eligible for FY 2014 organic cost-share assistance.

AMS invites State agencies to participate in cost-share programs through Federal Register Notices, Grants.gov postings, electronic communications, and phone calls to State contacts. For FY 2013 funds, a Notice of Fund Availability was published for the AMA program in the Federal Register (78 FR 52131), and the NOP posted the notice and an accompanying newsletter article on its website. The funding opportunity was also posted on Grants.Gov.

**Table 1: USDA-AMS National Organic Program
AMA Cost-Share Program
FY 2013 Allotments to States for Disbursement
Between September 30, 2013 and September 30, 2014**

State	AMA Program Allotments
Connecticut	\$29,000
Delaware	5,000
Hawaii	50,000
Maine	205,000
Maryland	36,000
Massachusetts	45,000
Nevada	12,000
New Hampshire	25,000
New Jersey	18,000
New York	450,000
Pennsylvania	202,500
Rhode Island	9,000
Utah	2,350
Vermont	245,000
West Virginia	4,500
Wyoming	14,500
TOTAL	\$1,352,850

**Table 2: USDA-AMS National Organic Program
AMA Cost-Share Fund Use by States
Disbursed between September 30, 2012, and September 30, 2013**

State	Total Start of Year Fund Allocation	Funds Used by State	Number of Operations Assisted
Connecticut	\$32,500	\$24,453	124
Delaware	10,000	3,587	11
Hawaii	65,000	41,391	58
Maine	205,000	205,000	379
Maryland	47,500	32,558	76
Massachusetts	60,000	52,097	85
Nevada	12,000	12,000	30
New Hampshire	30,000	30,000	136
New Jersey	30,000	13,604	36
New York	450,000	449,999	571
Pennsylvania	202,500	202,500	258
Rhode Island	15,500	4,348	15
Utah	Not participating		
Vermont	245,000	245,000	879
West Virginia	5,000	4,058	5
Wyoming	15,000	15,000	24
Total	\$1,425,000	1,335,595	2,687

Total fund allocation and funds used by state totals are rounded figures. All figures are current as of February 24, 2014.