

SUBJECT: Organics Symposium Launched on the Plant Management Network

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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ORGANICS SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS CURRENT RESEARCH IN ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEMS

ST. PAUL, Minn. (May 14, 2013)—Over the past decade, organic food sales have tripled in the United States. It's projected that this fast growth will continue in the next ten years, and organic farming systems are a key component in meeting this fast-growing demand.

Recognizing this, the United States Department of Agriculture held the 'USDA Organic Farming Systems Research Conference' in Washington, DC, March 16-18, 2011, to examine the agronomic, economic, ecological, and quality-of-life performance of organic farming systems.

A written proceedings of this conference has been launched on the Plant Management Network's Crop Management journal, located at www.plantmanagementnetwork.org/pub/cm/symposium/organic/farm. This fully open-access collection of research, reviews, and perspectives provides a diverse discussion around organic farming systems in the United States. Presentation topics run the gamut of dimensions, from the agronomic and economic to the ecological and social.

"Organic farming is one approach that will be important in meeting our food security, climate and other agricultural challenges," said Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. "In this symposium, we wanted to highlight the excellent research on organic farming systems that's already underway in the U.S. and elsewhere, and also to spur dialogue, ideas, and research innovation on future ecologically-based systems."

While the information in these proceedings are primarily a benefit for researchers and agricultural practitioners involved with organic farming systems, those interested in organics and the organics industry will also find the information useful.

"This presentation will be valuable to everyone who is interested in the costs and returns of farming organically as well as the potential benefits such as reducing energy use in agriculture," said Dr. Merrigan.

The USDA Organic Farming Systems Research Conference was organized as part of USDA's commitment to growing U.S. organic agriculture.

“USDA organic research and extension and training have long lagged behind the market demand,” said Merrigan. “While there is still much more to do, this conference was a major landmark in the process of reducing that lag.”

The Plant Management Network (PMN), www.plantmanagementnetwork.org, is a nonprofit publisher of applied crop management information. Together with more than 80 partnering organizations, PMN achieves its mission: to enhance the health, management, and production of crops through quality, science-based information.

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