

HISTORY & MISSION



J.I. Rodale (1898 – 1971)

J.I. was passionately devoted to organic agriculture and healthy living. To promote his ideas, he wrote numerous books, such as *Pay Dirt*, and launched magazines, including *Organic Gardening*, and published them through his

company, Rodale Press. In 1947, he founded the Soil and Health Foundation (later the Rodale Institute) to scientifically show that biologically restoring soil quality with organic matter was essential for human and environmental health. He is widely credited with popularizing the term “organic” as we use it today.



Robert Rodale (1930 –1990)

J.I.’s son, Robert, carried on the mission of bringing organic agriculture to the world. Under his leadership the Rodale Institute began the Farming Systems Trial® in 1981, which is now the longest running study on organic versus chemical agriculture. J.I. Rodale asserted

“healthy soil = healthy food = healthy people®” and today, multi-disciplinary research convincingly supports this common sense equation.



Ardath Rodale (1928 – 2009)

In 1972, Robert’s wife Ardath found a 333-acre farm near Kutztown, Pennsylvania, which is now the home of the Rodale Institute, and launched an era of on-the-ground organic research. She served as chairman of the Institute from 1990 and was an

active board member and inspiration to many until her death in 2009.



Anthony Rodale (1965 –)

Anthony became chairman of the Institute in 1999. With his wife, Florence, he developed many notable outreach programs,

particularly focused on educating future generations about the food they eat.

For details, click on [About Us](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org) at www.rodaleinstitute.org

1940 — J.I. Rodale buys a farm near Emmaus, PA to test his theories on organic farming and gardening.

1947 — The Soil and Health Foundation (forerunner of the Rodale Institute) is founded by J.I.

1972 — Robert Rodale and his wife Ardath buy a 333-acre farm in Kutztown, PA to expand the research started on their small farm in Emmaus.



Rodale Institute

1981 — Rodale Institute works with the USDA to start the Farming Systems Trial® (FST) to study the transition from conventional to organic farming methods. This is now the longest running side-by-side comparison of these two systems.



Farming Systems Trial®

1992 — The Rodale Institute farm becomes certified organic.

2002 — The organic systems in the Farming Systems Trial® are shown to match its conventional yields, and outperform them in years of drought and environmental duress.



Farming Systems Trial®

2007 — Our latest research projects focus on carbon sequestration, cover crops, and weed control in organic agricultural systems, as well as continuing FST.

The Rodale Institute Farming System Trial® (FST)



A view of FST in July

Founded in 1981, the **Farming Systems Trial (FST)** is America's longest running, side-by-side comparison of conventional and organic agriculture. The project shows the feasibility of making a transition to organic production and its multiple economic, environmental, and energy conservation impacts. FST has shown the potential of organic agriculture to improve our soil and water, while at the same time produce crop yields and net returns that are comparable (or better) than conventional systems.

About the trial

Throughout its long history, the FST has contained 3 core farming systems, each of which features diverse management practices including: a manure-based organic system, a legume-based organic system, and a synthetic-based conventional system. Our research focused on corn/soybean production, as most farmland in the US is dedicated to these crops.



Some key findings include:

Yields

Organic yields matched conventional yields, and in 4 out of 5 years of moderate drought, organic systems had significantly higher corn yields (31% higher) than the conventional system.

Soil

Soil carbon and nitrogen have increased significantly in the organic systems, but not in the conventional system.

Water

Organic systems showed reduced runoff and less nitrogen leaching. Herbicides were only detected in water samples collected from the conventional system, and in concentrations that sometimes exceeded the maximum contaminant level set by EPA for drinking water.

Energy

- Total energy use in the organic systems was less than in the conventional system.
- Energy use in the conventional corn-soybean system was dominated by the production of nitrogen fertilizer and herbicide inputs, while seed and fuel use generated the greatest energy demands in organic systems.

Economics

- Seed inputs and equipment costs were higher in the legume system whereas fertilizers and pesticides were the most costly inputs in the conventional system.
- Even with the inclusion of the transition costs (such as potential loss of yields in start-up years) and family labor costs, the organic price premium required to equalize the organic and conventional returns was only 10% above the conventional product.



Corn in the organic-legume (left) and conventional (right) system during the dry summer of 1995. Both were planted on the same day, with the same variety but only the conventional corn is showing signs of water stress. Organic corn yields that year were 29% higher than those of the conventional corn.

For more information, please contact:

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NO-TILL ROLLER-CRIMPER

Breakthrough technology
saves time, fuel and money.



The no-till roller-crimper is a simple tool that brings the conservation benefits of no-till planting to organic farming. It rolls down, crimps and terminates a nearly-mature stand of an over-wintering cover crop, such as grain rye or hairy vetch.

The rolled-down residue becomes a thick, weed-suppressive vegetative mat that SAVES time, fuel, soil and moisture... REDUCES field passes, herbicides, nitrogen fertilizer use and runoff... BOOSTS soil life, water quality and profitability.



The No-Till Revolution page includes farmer stories, research results and featured videos

Click on: New Farm at www.rodaleinstitute.org
then **No-Till Revolution**



The no-till roller crimper—developed at the Rodale Institute—is a bridge technology that brings no-till planting to organic farmers to reduce erosion and field operations. It also helps conventional no-till farmers to incorporate cover crops to reduce their use of N fertilizer and herbicides.

These changes have great potential to improve water quality over large areas and reduce petroleum-based agricultural inputs.



USDA-funded research continues at the Institute and in seven collaborating locations. Results document the effectiveness of using the roller—mounted in front of the tractor—with a rear-mounted precision no-till planter (for large-seeded crops) or transplanter (for tomatoes, peppers or cabbage) in a single pass.

Click on: New Farm at www.rodaleinstitute.org
then **No-Till Revolution**

ONLINE ORGANIC FARMING TOOLS

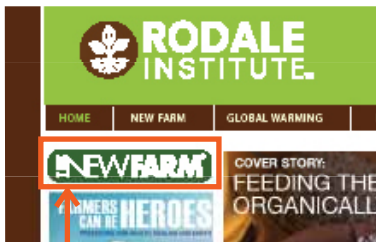
Our **Organic Transition Course** lays out the essentials of going organic, while the **Organic System Plan** tool lets you apply these principles to your farm. Estimate economic shifts with the **Crop Conversion Calculator**, and use the **Organic Price Report** to compare organic and conventional wholesale prices.

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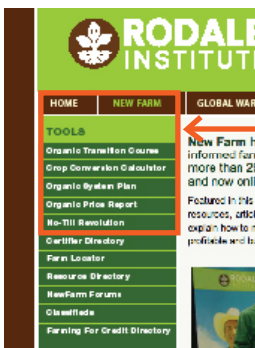
Go to www.rodaleinstitute.org

2



Click on "The New Farm" logo

3



Select from the online tool menu

Organic Transition Course



The Organic Transition Course covers the basics of how and why to go organic. Jeff Moyer, the Institute's farm manager, hosts the self-paced course, available without cost. Jeff's decades of experience combined with research insights and farmer case studies provide interesting instruction.

Sections on soils, crops and livestock outline positive changes in production, while certification and marketing modules show how to document and receive greater value for organic products.

Crop Conversion Calculator™

Changing to organic practices usually requires more crops and always requires new marketing. The Crop Conversion Calculator lets you estimate how changes in your fields may change your income, using input data you select paired with organic premiums.



Organic System Plan (OSP)

An Organic System Plan is a farmer's organic roadmap, field by field, year to year. Our online OSP form is easily edited and updated with data on fertility, yield, inputs, soils, harvest and handling. Designed to complement the transition course, the OSP can also be used alone.

Organic Price Report

The Organic Price Report compares organic and conventional wholesale prices for a range of grains, fruits and vegetables. This free online price-discovery tool is updated weekly from USDA terminal markets and major organic wholesaler reports.





The benefits of **ORGANIC**

FOR CONSUMERS

ORGANIC is healthy

Chemicals found in agricultural pesticides and fertilizers impact human health as they are inhaled, ingested and touch our skin. Studies have linked conditions affecting millions of people such as asthma, autism and organ failure to chemical exposure. Additionally, research supports the nutritional benefits of organics.

ORGANIC protects our planet

By using natural inputs that avoid environmental pollution and help store carbon in healthy soils, organic farming protects our planet.

ORGANIC is safe

By cutting out virtually all synthetic pesticides, organic farmers greatly limit toxic exposure risks to farm workers, families and consumers.

ORGANIC can feed the world

Rodale Institute's Farming Systems Trial, a study that compares chemical versus organic agriculture, shows that our organic yields match those of nonorganic crops. During dry years, Rodale's organic production is often greater than conventional.

ORGANIC supports farmers

We don't have food without farmers and we rely on each and every one of them. Supporting organics supports an agricultural system that has many benefits for farmers and their families. Supporting your local farmers also supports your local community.



FOR FARMERS

ORGANIC is economical

Organic farms were, on average, more profitable than the average of all farms in the U.S., according to results of the first-ever federal census of organic agriculture. A total of 14,540 organic farms had sales of \$21.1 billion from more than 4 million acres of farm and rangeland.

ORGANIC is marketable

The global market for organic products has been increasing over the last decade, and purchases of organics total billions of dollars in the United States. Demand for organic produce and products is expected to grow in the future.

ORGANIC is safe

Organic farming strategies result in less water and air pollution, and protect the health of both people and the environment.

ORGANIC improves land

Organic agriculture uses a mixture of cover crops and compost to add natural nutrients back into the soil, improving soil health and aiding crop growth. Rejuvenating soils also decreases soil erosion and the loss of cropland taken out of production.

ORGANIC is the future

Not only is consumer demand for organic growing, but growing our food organically is becoming more and more necessary for our future on this planet.

Find out more at www.rodaleinstitute.org



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