

Colorado Organic Industry Overview

Colorado's Organic Certified Industry			
	Total	CDA	Other Certifiers
Farms (Crops)	176	133	43
Handlers/Processors	158	89	69
Livestock	14	11	3
Total	348	233	115

In 1989 the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) was the first state agency to begin a certification program for organic farmers. In 2002, with the completion of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program (NOP), the [Colorado Department of Agriculture](#) became a USDA approved certifier to the new [USDA NOP standards](#). Today organic certification can be processed by state agencies such as the Colorado Department of Agriculture, and independent, "third party" certifying agencies.

The most recent report from the USDA indicates that Colorado is a leader in key production categories. Colorado's over 57,600 acres of certified organic wheat leads the nation. Colorado's millet and lettuce national leadership (1st and 3rd, for all millet and lettuce) carries over to organic production. CDA's organic certification program reports that organic certifications increased over 6 percent in 2009 and continues to rise.

Colorado's organic industry combines both the farm and ranch production with processing, helping bring organically grown crops and livestock products to the consumers in innovative foods. Colorado's food processors are creating exclusively organic products as well as others who expand their product line with organic options. Other elements of this dynamic category include retail and distribution of natural and organic products, dietary supplement and sports nutrition products and health care products.

Colorado's National Ranking in Organic Acreage
1st - Wheat
3rd - Millet
3rd - Lettuce
4th - All Cropland
4th - All Grain
6th - All Vegetable Acreage

Colorado has been identified by some industry groups as an emerging powerhouse in the organic products market. Colorado's farmers, ranchers and food processors account for an estimated \$2.5 billion in organic sales, or approximately 10 percent of overall U.S. sales of organic products. Established national organic brands such as Rudi's Organic Bakery, Silk Soymilk, Horizon Organic Dairy, Aurora Organic Dairy, Earth Balance, Gaiam, Chocolove, New Belgium Brewery, Celestial Seasonings and others are based in Colorado. Colorado is also a center for new emerging companies creating a national reputation for innovative products with companies such as NextFoods, Justin's Nut Butter, Pangea Organics, Third Street Chai, Seth Ellis Chocolates, Evol Burritos, Madhava Honey, Cooper Tea, Fresca Foods, and other who call Colorado home as they expand their distribution nationally and internationally from Colorado.

Colorado has also developed an industry of support for this growing sector. The Naturally Boulder group, established in 2005 is a unique public-private partnership to help natural and organic companies grow in Colorado. This brings together the specialists in law, promotion, product development, advertising, trade publications and trade show management that are the leaders in the U.S. marketplace. They all call Colorado home.