

TOOLS FOR TRANSITION INTAKE SURVEY: CUMMULATIVE RESULTS

This survey is administered to all new participants in the *Tools for Transition* project in order to learn about motivations for transition and transition experiences and future expectations. This summary is updated periodically as new participants join the project.

Number of survey respondents: [25](#) Number of possible respondents: [30](#) Survey response rate: [83%](#)

A. Background Information

1. What is your age? [43 years](#) (median)

2. What is your gender? [88%](#) Male [12%](#) Female

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

[16%](#) Some high school or high school graduate

[32%](#) Some college

[40%](#) College graduate

[12%](#) Some postgraduate education or graduate/professional degree

4. How do you learn best? (Choose only one answer)

[20%](#) Individual one-on-one setting (e.g. with instructor or other farmer)

[20%](#) In a small group setting (e.g. in a class with other farmers)

[8%](#) Reading newsletters, newspapers, publications, etc ...

[12%](#) Researching on the Internet

[32%](#) Attending workshops and field days

[12%](#) Other: [All of the above](#)

5. Do you live on the farm that you manage/operate? [84%](#) Yes [16%](#) No

→ If YES, how long have you lived on the farm? [18 years](#) (median)

6. How many years have you been farming? [14.5 years](#) (median)

7. Is farming currently your primary occupation? [84%](#) Yes [16%](#) No

8. Have you ever had a full-time job outside of farming? [72%](#) Yes [7%](#) No

→ If YES, for how many years? [4.5 years](#) (median)

9. In the past year, did you or any adult in your household work off-farm (Please check)?

[28%](#) Yes, full time

[28%](#) Yes, part time

[44%](#) No

10. Are there multiple generations currently involved in your farming operation (eg. parents, children)?

48% Yes 52% No

11. When beginning your transition to organic management, did you (Check all that apply):

<u>24%</u> Purchase land	<u>28%</u> Purchase cows	<u>32%</u> Increase use of hired labor
<u>0%</u> Sell land	<u>4%</u> Sell cows	<u>4%</u> Reduce use of hired labor
<u>16%</u> Increase rental acreage	<u>72%</u> Purchase equipment	<u>28%</u> Hire contract/custom services
<u>8%</u> Reduce rental acreage	<u>4%</u> Sell equipment	<u>36%</u> Hire consultants

B. Business Management

12. How do you keep financial and production records? (Check all that apply)

Financial records:

56% Paper and pencil
76% Computer
44% Prepared by consultant or accountant
16% Other: (listed below)

Production records:

76% Paper and pencil
52% Computer
28% Prepared by consultant or accountant
12% Other: (listed below)

“Other” Financial Comments:

- [FINPACK software](#)
- [Farm Business Management program](#)

“Other” Production Comments:

- [FINPACK software](#)
- [Farm Business Management program](#)
- [GPS yield monitor](#)

13. What strategies do you use to conduct whole farm and enterprise analyses? (Check all that apply)

36% Personally designed or adapted paper and pencil analysis
20% Personally designed or adapted spreadsheet (i.e., Excel)
32% Analysis that is a part of a computerized recordkeeping system
60% Computerized annual analysis from the Center for Farm Financial Management (U of MN)
12% Computerized annual analysis from local bank
0% Computerized annual analysis from another university

C. Transition Motivations and Expectations

14. Based on your experience and that of other people you know, how do you think organic farming compares with conventional farming?

Profitability:

64% More profitable
28% About the same
4% Less profitable

Productivity:

8% More productive
32% About the same
56% Less productive

Labor:

88% More labor intensive
8% About the same
4% Less labor intensive

15. Why are you interested in farming organically? (Check all that apply)

- 80% Price premiums
- 72% Health/safety reasons
- 84% Environmental/conservation reasons
- 72% Personal satisfaction – I enjoy farming this way
- 20% Important to other family members
- 12% Think it will increase the value of my farmland
- 48% Philosophical/ethical reasons
- 12% Other: (listed below)

Other comments:

- *“Do not approve of GMOs”*
- *“Convenience of selling crops to neighboring organic dairy.”*
- *“When we control input costs it just makes sense.”*

16. What has given you the confidence to farm organically? (Check all that apply)

- 56% Attended conferences and/or field days
- 72% Spoke with certified organic farmer(s) who answered questions
- 36% Family member or neighbor made the transition
- 16% Met with a certifier who answered questions
- 12% Met with consultant who answered questions
- 12% Met with buyer who gave advice
- 36% Consulted resources (print or internet)
- 12% Other (listed below)

Other comments:

- *“We tried it and the first year did amazing.”*
- *“MOSES organic farming conference in LaCrosse, WI.”*
- *“I grew up doing many of these practices - not what is considered conventional.”*

17. Prior to joining the *Tools for Transition Project*, were you aware of and/or have you used any of the following resources (publisher, organizer in parentheses)? (Check all that apply)

	<u>Knew About</u>	<u>Used</u>
Minnesota Guide to Organic Certification (MISA)	<u>48%</u>	<u>28%</u>
Directory of Organic Farmers (MDA)	<u>44%</u>	<u>4%</u>
Directory of Organic Buyers (MISA, MDA)	<u>32%</u>	<u>12%</u>
Organic Farm Performance in Minnesota (CFFM, MDA, MnSCU)	<u>12%</u>	<u>8%</u>
SWROC Organic Ecology Website (U of MN)	<u>4%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Upper Midwest Organic Grain and Feedstuffs Report (AMS)	<u>20%</u>	<u>8%</u>
Minnesota Organic Conference, St. Cloud (MDA)	<u>56%</u>	<u>36%</u>
OFARM marketing agency (co-op)	<u>16%</u>	<u>12%</u>
MOFIE information exchange, mentor program (SWROC, MDA, RMA)	<u>4%</u>	<u>0%</u>
National Extension Service Organic website (www.eOrganic.info)	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Other: (listed below)	-	<u>4%</u>

Other comments: *Midwest Organic Services Association*