

2017 Transitioning to Organic Grain Workshop

Organic Crop Improvement Association
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 USA

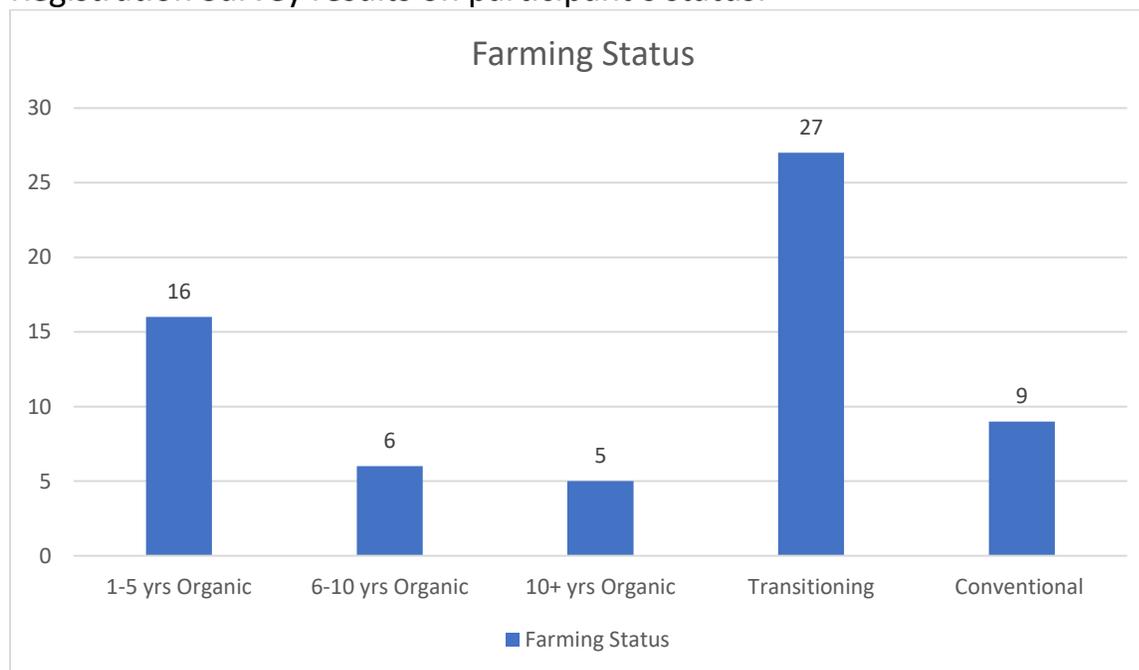
Final Report

Re: 2016 OCIA Research & Education, Inc. Micro Grant

I. Project Description

Type:	Workshop
Name:	Transitioning to Organic Grain
Location:	La Crete, AB, Canada
Venue:	La Crete Heritage Center
Date:	Friday, April 7, 2017
Time:	1:00 pm – 4:15 pm
Purpose:	To give support & recourses for farmers interested in transitioning to organic grain.
Description:	This introductory workshop provided information to help farmers navigate the transition and certification process, learn about growing and marketing organic grains and getting the industry contacts they need to start transitioning.
Participants:	63

Registration Survey results on participant’s status:



II. Optional workshop evaluation for participants:

**Notice: some participants checked off a few answers for each question.*

Q 1. Rate the workshop:

Categories	Scale /13				
	1	2	3	4	5
Material useful			4	3	6
Met my needs			3	7	3
Implement concepts			4	7	1
Workshop affordable		1		6	6
Satisfied overall			1	9	3

Q 2. What information did you find the most relevant and helpful?

- explanation of seeding ratio to control weeds (2/13)
- cover crop for green manure (2/13)
- weed management (2/13)
- marketing (2/13)
- certifying bodies requirements (2/13)
- meeting people & talking to others
- crop rotation discussion
- grain buyers speaker panel
- all presentations had tidbits that were helpful
- shelter belts

Q 3. What other training would you like to help you transition to organic agriculture production?

- Growing strategies in La Crete area under dry conditions
- Compost teas
- Equipment operations
- Raw land development

Q 4. Describe your current situation:

Categories	Yes	Overlap
Certified organic farmer	6 answers / 13 individuals	2 answers / 13 individuals
Currently transitioning to organic production	9 answers / 13 individuals	

Interested in organic farming but haven't started		
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	<30 yrs	30-55 yrs	55+ yrs
Farmer's Ages	1/13	11/13	1/13

Main obstacle to becoming an organic grower:

Categories	Applicable
Land isn't ready	3/13
Costs too much to certify	3/13
Transition period risky	1/13
Don't know how	1/13
Amount of paperwork	1/13
Marketing my product	4/13
Other:	1/13
	- Not an organic farmer

How much land would you consider transitioning?

- 600 acres
- Plan to transition all land overtime
- Will transition all
- 300 acres
- 400 acre
- 220 acres
- 900 acres

III. Workshop Summary & Analyse:

In recent years the number of organic farmers in Mackenzie County has been rising. The Mackenzie County region comprises of the highest density of organic farmers in all of Alberta, and now makes up approximately half of all organic producers in the province. We have identified the need for more organic agriculture support due to these rising numbers and OCIA's support for the transition workshop has helped this happen.

Thanks to Organic Crop Improvement Association's Micro Grant and your support, we were able to have the following presentations:

- Organics: Farm Production & Management Overview with Dr. Steve Shirtliffe
- Organic Weed Management Level 1 with Dr. Steve Shirtliffe
- Organic Producer Panel with local organic farmers
- Organic Certification with various Certifying Bodies
- Grain Market Update through various Grain Buyers

As you can see in the registration survey, we had an ideal turnout of 63 participants, 27 of which were transitioning to organics and 9 of which were conventional farmers, interested in organics. The other 27 participants were already certified organic. According to the optional workshop evaluation form, we received a positive response about the presentations and resources provided as well as the workshop in general. The most impactful topics for participants were explanation of seeding ratio to control weeds, cover crop for green manure, weed management, marketing, and certifying bodies requirements. We received some great recommendations for next future topics such as growing strategies in La Crete area under dry conditions, compost teas, equipment operations, and raw land development.

Thank you, Organic Crop Improvement Association, for supporting Organic Alberta's work in advancing organic production and providing the support that is needed for farmers to transition into organics.