



South Carolina Department of Agriculture **Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner**

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Organic Cost Share Funding Now Available to Farmers

COLUMBIA, S.C.- The South Carolina Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the availability of cost share rebate funds for certified organic farmers and producers.

The funds, made available through the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), will reimburse up to 75 percent of certification costs, or up to \$750 per year per certification category. The rebates are available to cover certification expenses incurred between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016.

“Organic agriculture is a fast-growing market in South Carolina, from only 2 farms in 2002 when the National Organic Program was implemented to 80 farms in 2015,” said Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers. “The cost-share program makes it easier for organic businesses throughout the supply chain to achieve the popular USDA Organic certification, helping them meet growing consumer demand in the domestic and international marketplace.”

USDA AMS provides approximately \$11.6 million in funding through state departments of agriculture to make organic certification more affordable for organic producers and handlers across the country. More information about this nationwide program is available at www.ams.usda.gov/NOPCostSharing.

Reimbursements will be on a first-come, first-served basis, based on receipt of the completed application packet, until available funding is exhausted.

The application for the cost share rebate, as well as other information about the program is available on the SCDA website, agriculture.sc.gov. Questions regarding cost share funds for organic certification may be directed to Amy London at 803-734-7209 or alondon@scda.sc.gov.

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