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OATS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST

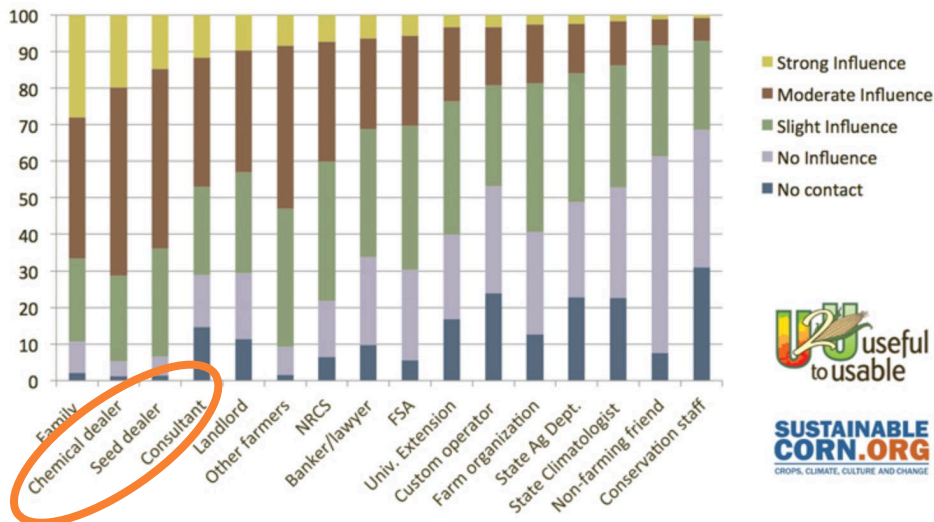
Mallory Krieger | National Program Director

Nate Powell-Palm | Organic Grain Agronomy & Training Specialist

MOTIVATION

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Q: Please indicate how influential the following groups and individuals are when you make decisions about agricultural practices and strategies



Influence of groups and individuals on farmer decision making about agricultural practices and strategies. Results from a 2012 survey of Midwestern corn producers conducted by Useful to Usable (U2U) and SustainableCorn.org



US Organic Grains
Collaboration
research identified a
shortage of advisors
with sufficient
knowledge of
organic practices

Source: US Organic Grain – How to Keep It Growing, Feb. 2019

MOTIVATION

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\$55.1 billion

2019 sales of
organic products

70% Soybeans

30% Corn

Imported to fill demand

SURVEY OF CCA's, 2018

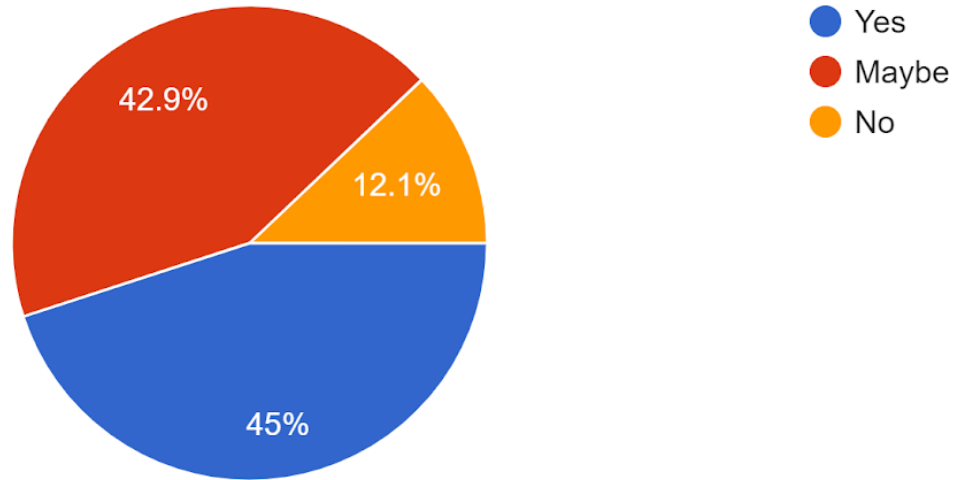
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- Summer 2018 – sent to CCA lists in all Midwestern states
 - 241 respondents
- 55% advise more than 10,000 acres
- 63% have clients requesting information on organics
 - 1/3 get inquiries every couple of months or more frequently
 - 1/3 get a few inquiries per year
- 54% are currently advising organic and transitional clients

SURVEY OF CCA's, 2018

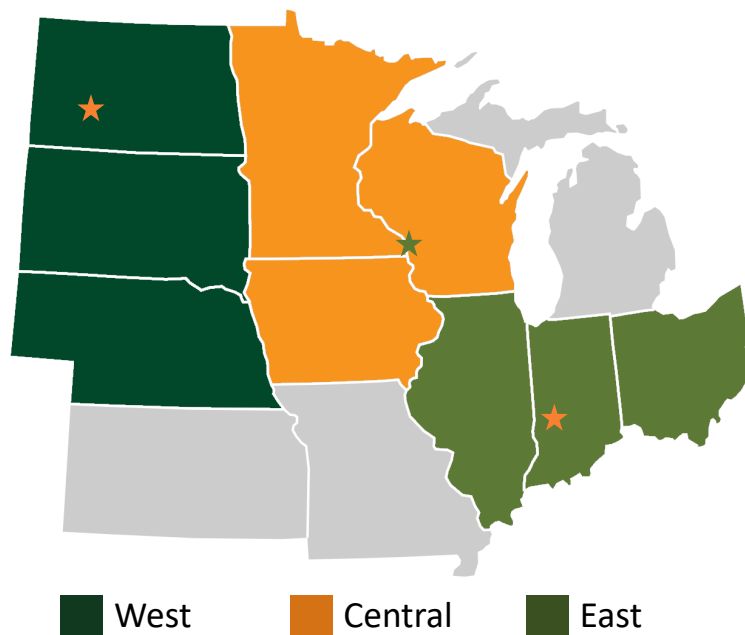
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Would you be interested in attending training/continuing education opportunities about grain production and specifically organic agronomy?



2019 PILOT TRAININGS

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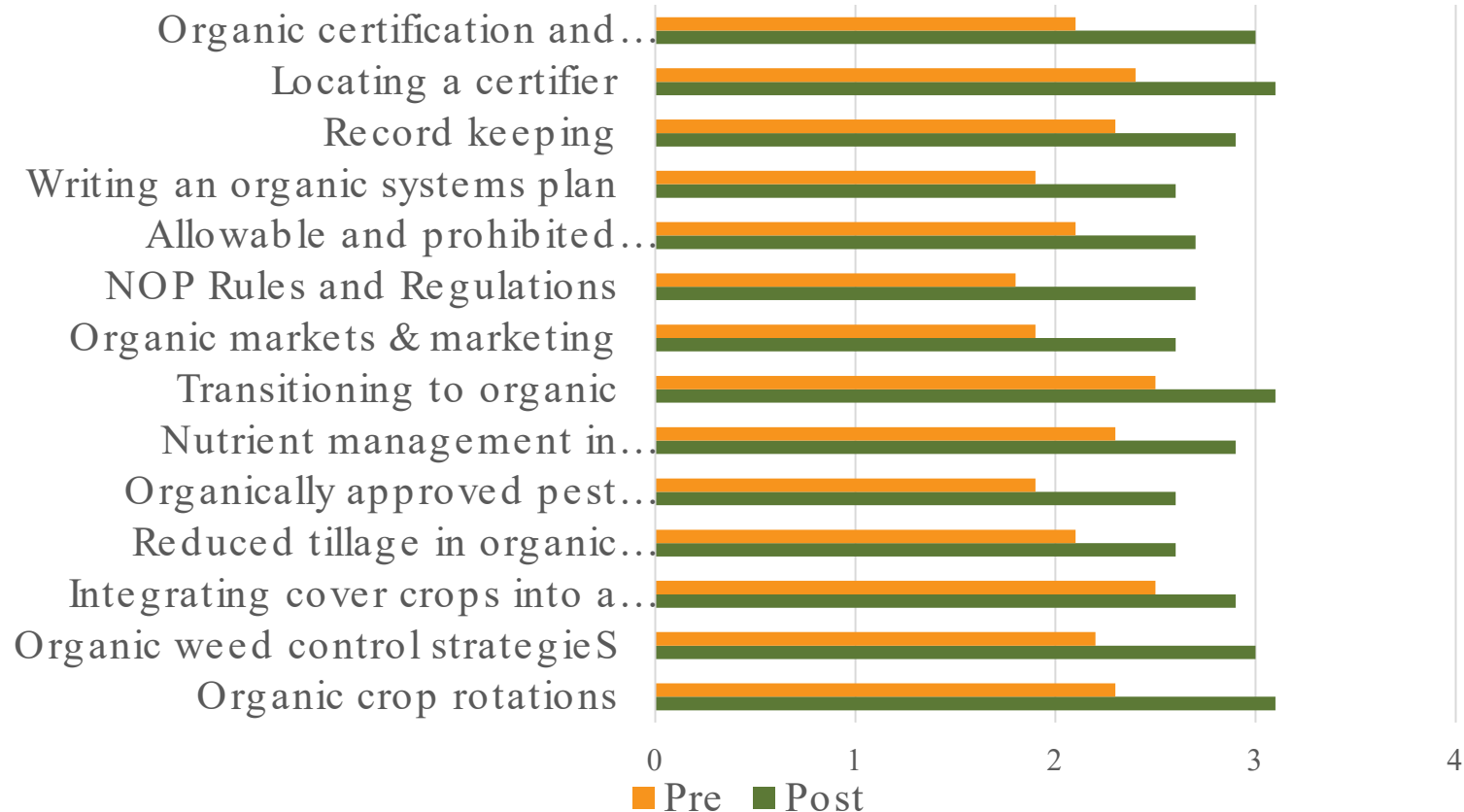
West in Bismark, ND
March 26–27

East in Crawfordsville, IN
July 24-25

Central in La Crosse, WI
August 14-15

Average Confidence PILOT, Pre and Post

(1 = not at all confident and 4 = very confident)



HIGHLIGHTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

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“As a consultant I feel much improved on Organic Production concepts and methods so as to discuss with clients”

“The most valuable part is growing my network of industry experts so rapidly. OATS will help me field questions from farmers who are considering organic.”

“Take this information to other agronomists across the US”

“There's a great opportunity and there's a lot of strategy for success. [This training] changed my opinion on a lot of things.”

LESSONS LEARNED

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What worked?

- Farm tour / in-field components
- Small group transition / consulting activities
- Farmer presenters and panelists

What didn't?

- Content was too dense for two days
- Need more interaction and hands-on learning
- More practical – less technical
- Highlight more farmer speakers/panelists

STRATEGIC PLANNING – 2019/2020

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- Formalized the consortium
- Crafted 3 year Strategic Plan for program development
- Hired National Program Director
- Add 2 new regional advisory committees
- Entered into fiscal sponsorship agreement with the Organic Trade Association



SEED FUNDING

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OATS is supported with funding from the Organic Trade Association's industry-invested [GRO Organic](#) research, promotion, and education program.



To train agricultural professionals in the practices and principles of organic crop production so that every farmer has access to science-based agronomic support.

GOALS

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1. Increase the number, geographic spread, and effectiveness of agricultural professionals trained in organic production methods;
2. Increase the credibility of agricultural professionals trained in organic production methods;
3. Farmers can find agricultural professionals qualified to advise on organic crop production.

TARGET AUDIENCE

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Primary

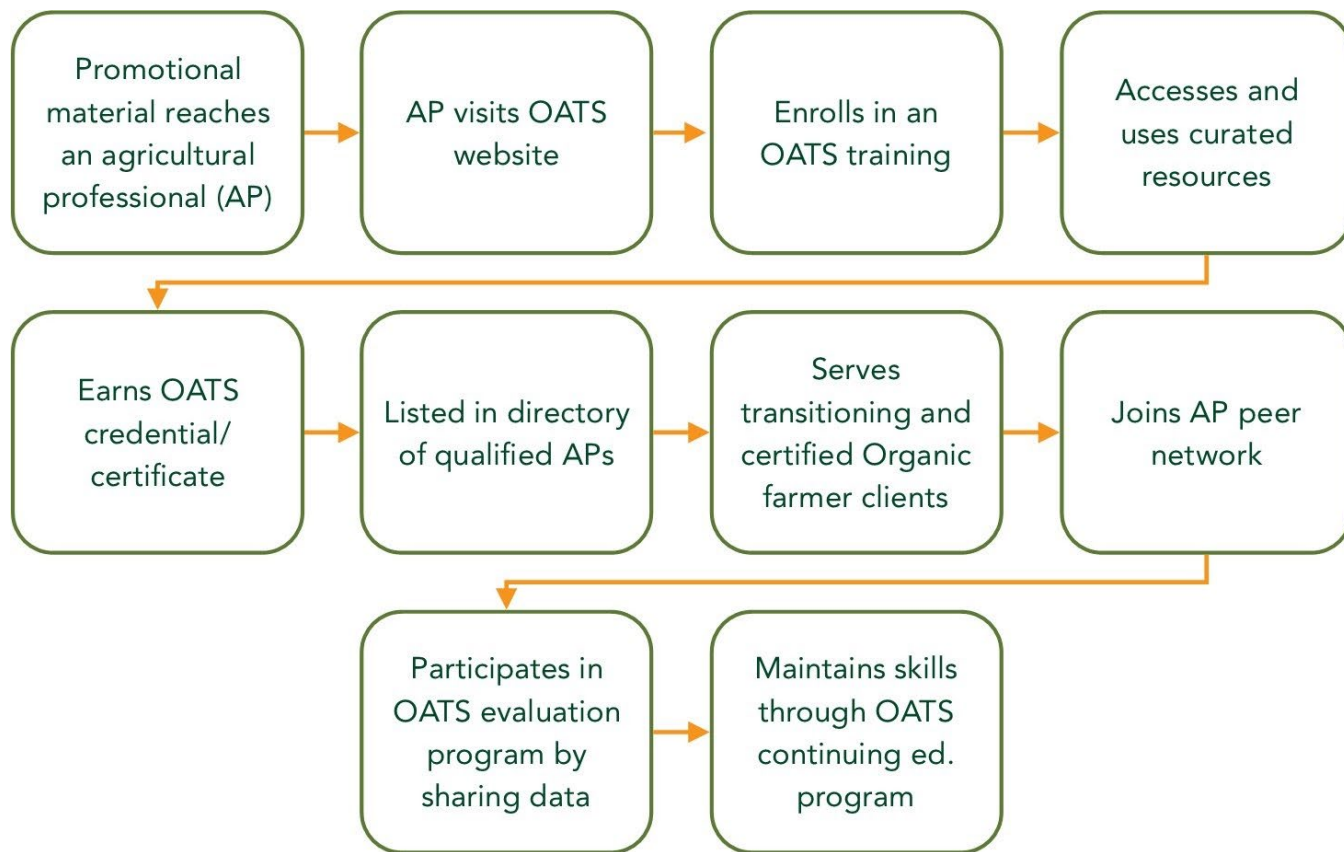
- Agronomists
- Certified Crop Advisors
- Agri-Business/Retail Service
- Independent Consultants
- University Extension

Secondary

- Lenders
- Buyers
- Landowners
- Government Agencies
- Non-profits
- Universities

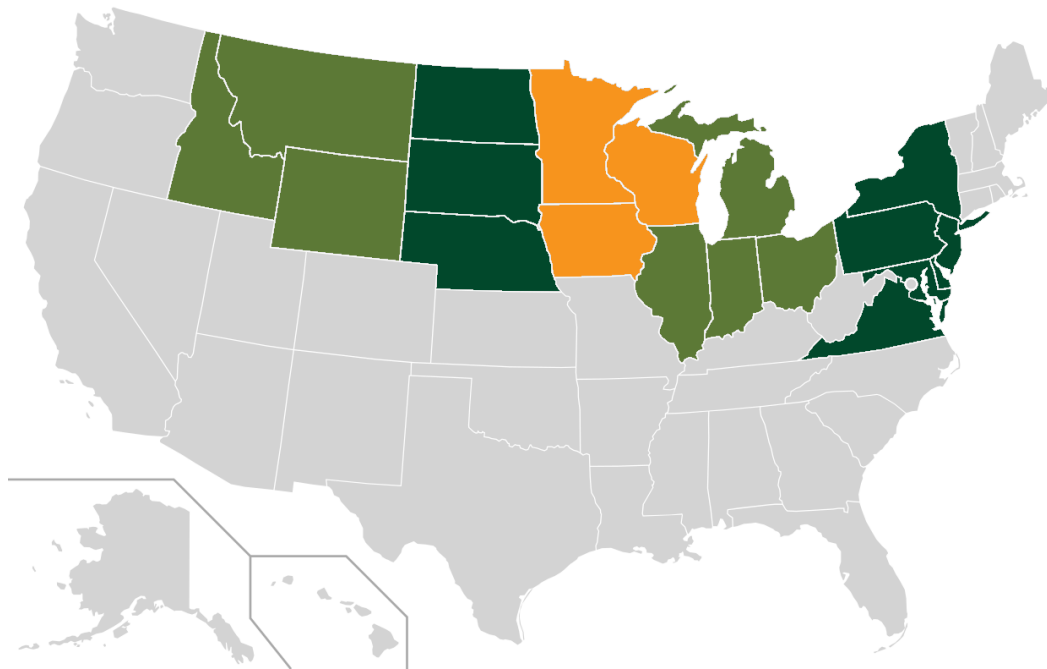
ENGAGEMENT MODEL

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TRAINING REGIONS 2020

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Rocky Mountain West

Midwest West

Midwest Central

Midwest East

Mid-Atlantic

COMING IN 2021

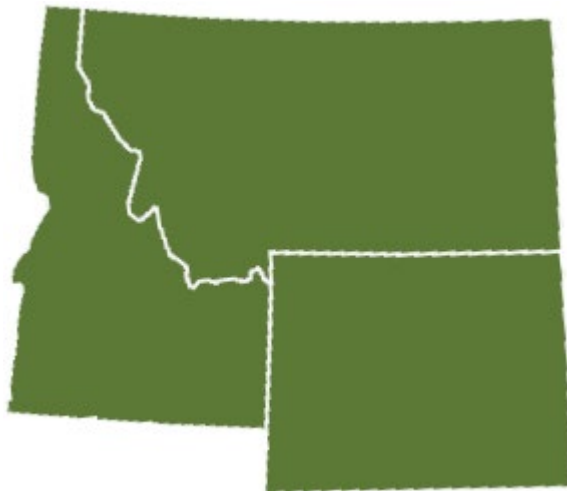
Training in the time of COVID

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- Podcast for skeptical agronomists
- Hybrid training course
 - 7 online, video-based modules
 - Virtual meetings with cohort and instructor
 - 3 in-person field days

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

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- Jamie Ryan Lockman, Montana Organic Association (chair)
- Patrick Carr, Montana State University
- Jo Clark, Columbia Grain
- Doug Crabtree, Vilicus Farms
- Tarrance Gourneau, Fort Peck Community Col.
- Lance Lindbloom, 406 Agronomy
- Randy Olstad, Columbia Grain
- Jeff Schahczenski, NCAT
- Sam Schmidt, Montana Milling
- Timothy Seipel, Montana State University
- Georgana Webster, Montana Dept. of Ag.

WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

Short introductions

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Name

Location

Primary role in agriculture

Crop types

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Help us make this course meaningful.

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Farmers

- **Do you use consultants?**
- **Do you have access to as much technical advisory support as you need?**

Agronomists/CCAs

- **Do you serve organic clients?**
- **What trainings could be helpful to your work?**
- **How do you like to learn?**
- **What would make an online training program useful to you?**



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CONTACT US

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