



The Issues with the National Organic Program



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MISSION and RESEARCH GOALS

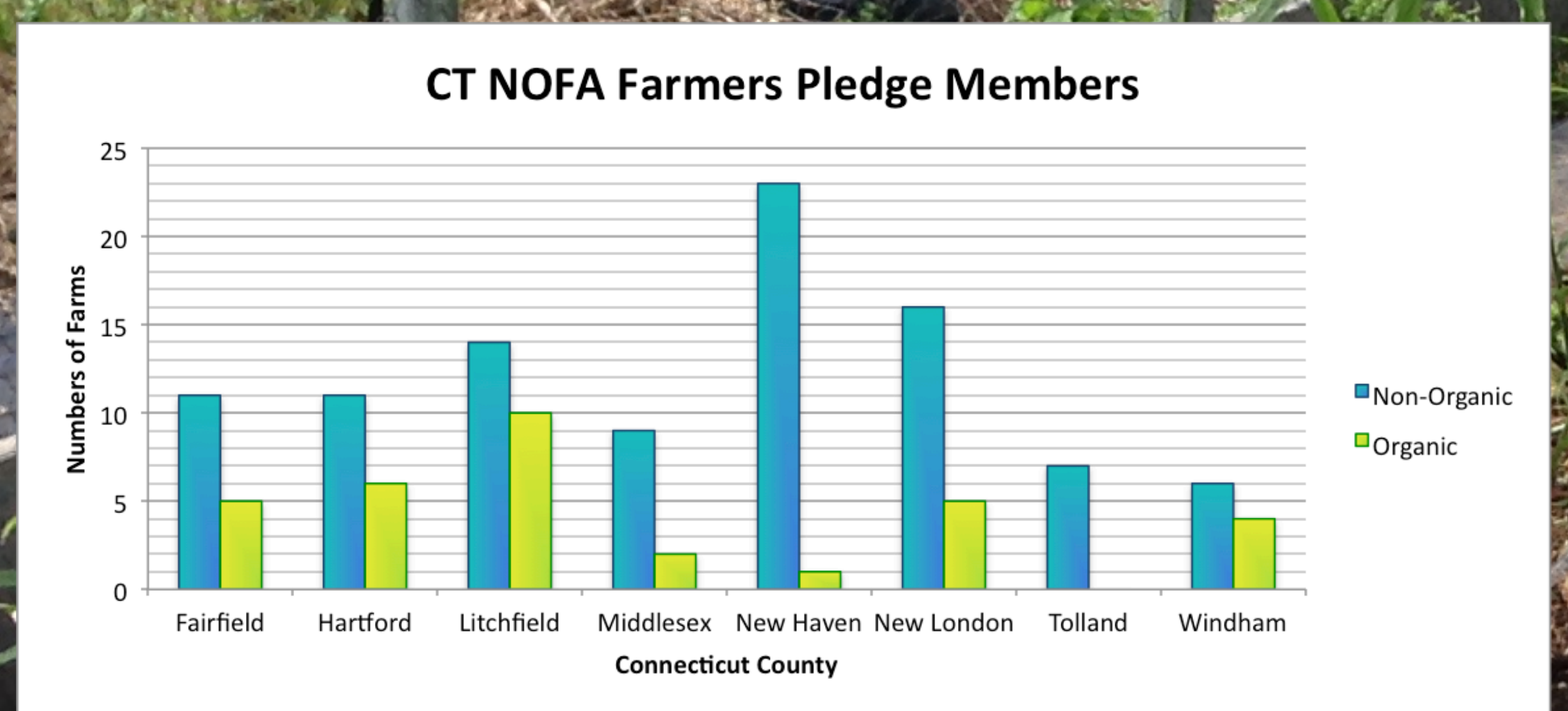
- Further understand benefits of organic farming vs. commercial farming
- Uncover barriers preventing non-organic, pesticide-free farms from becoming certified organic
- Determine flaws in the National Organic Program
- Research alternatives to organic certification
- Propose changes to the organic certification process

METHODOLOGY

- Conduct literature review on the benefits of growing organic crops in regards to human health and environmental biodiversity
- Research the organic certification process, including all fees and required paperwork
- Discuss farming practices with local NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) farmers who do not use pesticides but are not certified organic.
- Discuss ways to improve National Organic Program certification process with local NOFA farmers.
- Research current alternatives to National Organic Program, such as Certified Naturally Grown

RESULTS

- National Organic Program certification process is not accommodating to small farmers.
- Despite assumptions that costs are the main barrier preventing farms from becoming certified, it was found that paperwork is the real reason
- Small farmers do not have the time to fill out the lengthy paperwork, and many of the required information is irrelevant to farms of their size
- A few farmers only sell their produce at farmers markets and can inform their customers that they are pesticide free.
- Consumers do not mind if their produce is not certified organic as long as it was grown without pesticides



Why are many local farms going through the trouble of being pesticide-free without becoming certified organic?
➤ Costs? Paperwork? Lack of knowledge?

Farms Visited

- Yale Farm
- Kate and Mike's Naturally Grown
- Northford Farm
- Field House Farm
- Little Portion Acres
- Massaro Community Farm



PROJECT CONTINUATION

- Consult with a wider range of non-organic NOFA farmers
- Interview farmers who have not adopted pesticide-free practices
- Meet with certified organic farmers to discuss their success with the program
- Develop business model for software to help farmers fill out the paperwork for them

REFERENCES

- www.CTNofa.org
- www.naturallygrown.org
- www.ams.usda.gov

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