



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB3240

Introduced 2/17/2023, by Rep. Sonya M. Harper

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Organic Transition Pilot Program Act. Provides that on or before July 1, 2024, the Department of Agriculture shall develop and oversee, for a period of 5 years, the Organic Transition Pilot Program. Provides that the pilot program shall support the economic viability of farmers and ranchers, prioritizing limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, by providing incentives, including, but not limited to, grants, research, technical assistance, and educational materials and outreach, to farmers or ranchers who intend to transition land to organic certification under the federal Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. In providing incentives under the pilot program, the Department shall: (1) provide incentives to socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher applicants who self-certify their intent to farm or ranch organically; (2) if there are moneys available after providing incentives, provide incentives to those limited resource farmer or rancher applicants who self-certify their intent to farm or ranch organically; and (3) If there are moneys available after providing incentives, provide incentives to any farmer or rancher applicants who self-certify their intent to farm or ranch organically. Provides that on or before July 1, 2024, the Department shall conduct a comprehensive statewide market analysis of the total economic impacts of Illinois' organic products sector. Provides that the Act is repealed on January 1, 2030.

LRB103 25599 RLC 51948 b

1 AN ACT concerning agriculture.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Organic Transition Pilot Program Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

7 "Department" means the Department of Agriculture.

8 "Director" means the Director of Agriculture.

9 "Limited resource farmer or rancher" has the meaning
10 ascribed to it in 7 CFR 760.107.

11 "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer
12 or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

13 "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members
14 have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice
15 because of their identity as members of a group without regard
16 to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the
17 following:

18 (1) African Americans.

19 (2) Native Indians.

20 (3) Alaskan Natives.

21 (4) Hispanics.

22 (5) Asian Americans.

23 (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

1 "Urbanized area" as used by the United States Census
2 Bureau, refers to a population of at least 50,000 people.

3 Section 10. Organic Transition Pilot Program.

4 (a) On or before July 1, 2024, the Department shall
5 develop and oversee, for a period of 5 years, the Organic
6 Transition Pilot Program. The pilot program shall support the
7 economic viability of farmers and ranchers, prioritizing
8 limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers or
9 ranchers, by providing incentives, including, but not limited
10 to, grants, research, technical assistance, and educational
11 materials and outreach, to farmers or ranchers who intend to
12 transition land to organic certification under the federal
13 Organic Foods Production Act of 1990.

14 (b) The Director shall appoint a Farmer Equity Advisor to
15 administer the pilot program and ensure that the pilot program
16 meets the objectives of this Act.

17 (c) In providing incentives under the pilot program, the
18 Department shall do all of the following:

19 (1) Provide incentives to socially disadvantaged
20 farmer or rancher applicants who self-certify their intent
21 to farm or ranch organically.

22 (2) If there are moneys available after providing
23 incentives under paragraph (1), provide incentives to
24 those limited resource farmer or rancher applicants who
25 self-certify their intent to farm or ranch organically.

1 (3) If there are moneys available after providing
2 incentives under paragraphs (1), provide incentives to any
3 farmer or rancher applicants who self-certify their intent
4 to farm or ranch organically.

5 (d) (1) Applicants with year-to-year leases may participate
6 in the pilot program.

7 (2) Repeat applicants may participate in the pilot
8 program.

9 (3) If selected to receive an incentive, an applicant may
10 receive advance payment of that incentive.

11 (4) The Department shall prioritize the provision of
12 incentives to new applicants.

13 (e) The following expenses are eligible for incentives
14 under the pilot program:

15 (1) Organic seeds and starts.

16 (2) Organic livestock, poultry, and related expenses.

17 (3) Organic feed.

18 (4) Soil building supplies.

19 (5) Compost.

20 (6) Compost building or generating supplies.

21 (7) Compost structures supplies.

22 (8) Organic fertilizer and pest control.

23 (9) Organic integrated pest management supplies.

24 (10) Hedgerow and ecosystem enhancement planting and
25 design.

26 (11) Hiring consultants for translation services,

1 certification, business planning, and agronomic practices
2 as they pertain to organic farming and ranching
3 certification.

4 (12) Inspection and certification fees.

5 (13) Educational materials on organic certification
6 and production.

7 (14) Development of an organic system plan.

8 (15) Farm supplies and repair.

9 (16) Other expenses deemed necessary by the Director
10 that further the pilot program.

11 (f) The Director shall make available not less than 15% of
12 the moneys appropriated to the Department for purposes of the
13 pilot program to technical service providers with organic
14 expertise, including, but not limited to, the University of
15 Illinois Extension, conservation districts, and nonprofits for
16 any of the following purposes:

17 (1) Providing organic-specific technical assistance as
18 defined in 24 CFR Part 570, training, organic
19 certification support, financial and farm planning,
20 communication support, program recruitment, recordkeeping
21 support, support with the application process, and
22 translation support to limited resource and socially
23 disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

24 (2) Establishing a mentorship program for organic
25 farmers and ranchers to support transitioning farmers and
26 ranchers.

1 (3) Supporting annual information sharing for the
2 continuous improvement of program guidelines, application
3 processes, and relevant organic research.

4 (4) Developing capacity and expertise of technical
5 assistance providers to support limited resource and
6 socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers to transition
7 to organic farming.

8 (g)(1) On or before January 1, 2025, and annually
9 thereafter until a report has been submitted that covers the
10 conclusion of the pilot program, the Department shall submit a
11 report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the outcome
12 of the pilot program.

13 (2) The report shall include, but is not limited to, all of
14 the following:

15 (A) The number of grants awarded, including the number
16 of grants awarded to socially disadvantaged farmers or
17 ranchers.

18 (B) The amount of funds awarded.

19 (C) The number of grant awardees who obtained organic
20 certification.

21 (D) The names of the technical assistance providers
22 that received grants, and a summary of the technical
23 assistance they provided.

24 (3) The Department shall post the reports submitted under
25 paragraph (1) on the Department's website.

1 Section 15. Comprehensive market analysis.

2 (a) On or before July 1, 2024, the Department shall
3 conduct a comprehensive statewide market analysis of the total
4 economic impacts of Illinois' organic products sector.

5 (b) The market analysis shall, at a minimum, do all of the
6 following:

7 1) Compile employment and wage data connected to
8 production, distribution, and sales of organic products in
9 Illinois.

10 (2) Assess the economic impacts of Illinois's organic
11 trade sectors.

12 (3) Evaluate revenues that the Illinois State
13 government derives from the Illinois organic products
14 sector.

15 (4) Identify and assess economic and growth
16 opportunities related to Illinois organic products and
17 trade.

18 (c) The Department shall post the market analysis on its
19 website.

20 Section 20. Repeal. This Act is repealed on January 1,
21 2030.