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Question1: Re: The National Organic Program (NOP)...an unintended consequence of the NOP is that most if not all of the professional organic farmer assn's have become USDA certifying agenst and can no longer directly support their organic farmer members due to conflict of interest rules. This has left the entire nation with virtually NO organizations which represent organic farmers and their issues. Recommend USDA provide funding to restart a few organic farmer assns (eg in Hawaii)to develop a set of protocols to serve as example to other groups of organic farmers to restart their ass'ns.

Question2: no comment

Question3: small vs large: I'm a small farmer (7 acres)in Hawaii and may be the only new farmer in the state in the past 4 years and I went zero for 5 grant requests; all of which went to large farms. I was specifically told by a state DoA mgr that they "get more bang for the buck" by funding large operations. There is a bureaucratic mind set favoring large farms and even so called peer review groups are manned by large farmers so small farmers are greatly disadvantaged.

Reccomend USDA specifically fund for small farmer initiatives and institute organizational changes to foster small farmer grant proposals.

Question4: My small organic farm is surrounded by large plantation style operations such as Dole and Delmonte. These plantations have operated under the same wastful conditions for not generations but centuries. Their soil and chemical runoff devastates our small streams and the ocean. They do not even use contour planting to alleviate soil erosion.

Recommend USDA consider legislating establishing an enforcement policy at NRCS or other state offices to inspect and enforce Clean Water Act and other environmental laws on all farms. Also any farm requesting aid or fed grant money must be inspected for compliance w/ those laws.

Question5: no comment

Question6: The NOP was an excellent start towards focusing attention on organic farm methods and products - thank you. However, conventional and GMO farming practices get the lion's share of the USDA farm assistance budget. Organic farming is becoming more widespread and there needs to be more funding for starting and operating organic farms.

Recommend USDA earmark funds specifically for the organic community; that USDA organize organic offices; that USDA require an organic component be attached to all grant requests.