

A Brief Retrospective on US Organic Agriculture: 1997 vs 2003

Carolyn Dimitri
US Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service

October, 2005

The Organic Retail Market

	1997	2003
Sales	\$3,561	\$10,381
NP Stores	~2,000	20,823
NP Share	63%	47%

Notes: NP= Natural product stores; NP Share is for 1998; sales in \$1,000
Sources: Natural Foods Merchandiser; Organic Trade Association; NBJ

Top Five Organic Categories

1997

2003

Fruit and Vegetables
Packaged/prepared
Beverages
Breads and Grains
Dairy

Fruit and Vegetables
Beverages
Dairy
Packaged/prepared
Breads and Grains

Source: Nutrition Business Journal, 2004

Top Organic Categories by Venue: 2003

Conventional stores

nondairy beverages	<i>86 percent</i>
packaged fresh produce	<i>75 percent</i>
baby food	<i>74 percent</i>
milk, half and half, and cream	<i>74 percent</i>

Natural product stores

baked goods	<i>65 percent</i>
soup	<i>60 percent</i>
yogurt and kefir	<i>59 percent</i>

Source: Natural Foods Merchandiser, 2004.

Percent of organic farm output volume by channel: vegetables

Channel	1997	2004
Direct to consumer	22.8%	12.9%
Direct to retail	18.9	53.2
Wholesale	62.0	33.9

Source: Walz, 1999 and 2004.

Percent of organic farm output volume by channel: Fruit

Channel	1997	2004
Direct to consumer	18.5%	4.7%
Direct to retail	21.6	12.2
Wholesale	50.9	77.2

Source: Walz, 1999 and 2004.

US Certified Organic Acreage

	1997	2001
Cropland	850	1,300
Pasture	496	1,000
Dairy cows	13	49
Broilers	38	3,000
Layer hens	500	1,600

Note: number of acres, cows, broilers, hens in thousands.
Source: Greene and Kremen, 2002.