



**Extension**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **UW ORGANIC GRAIN WINTER PROGRAMMING ANNOUNCED**

UW–Madison’s Organic Grain Resource and Information Network (OGRAIN) has announced multiple virtual winter programs starting this month and continuing through March. Open to all farmers and agricultural professionals, these sessions cover a wealth of topics critical to designing, implementing, and marketing a productive and profitable organic grain rotation, whether you’re already farming organically or just starting to think about transitioning some acres.

Organic agriculture continues to be an exciting and expanding sector of the agricultural industry, with the latest USDA Organic Survey showing organic field crops sales at \$1.18 billion (up 55% since 2016) and organic corn grain sales at \$278 million (up 70% since 2016). This year’s OGRAIN programs – two workshop series and one virtual conference – will support farmers in keeping their operations strong and resilient in the face of shifting market dynamics.

“As winter approaches and we’re all more isolated than we might want to be, OGRAIN is excited to continue building community and providing impactful educational experiences for farmers across the Midwest,” says OGRAIN program leader Erin Silva, a UW–Madison associate professor and extension specialist in the Department of Plant Pathology. “Even with the cancelation of in-person events, we are committed to providing opportunities for farmers to learn from both researchers and practitioners, despite some of the challenges we’ve seen this year.”

Farmers or others interested in organic grain production can participate in one or all of OGRAIN’s winter 2021 offerings:

- 1) A weekly workshop series titled “How to stay afloat in stormy waters – Managing for low organic grain prices.” Sessions will be offered every Friday from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., mid-November through March. All sessions are free and will be hosted via Zoom with a phone-in option. Each week will feature an engaging topic, expert speaker, and open discussion related to organic grain production, including production, marketing, and economics. Workshops are free, with preregistration required for each session you’d like to attend.
- 2) Two monthly virtual Information Exchanges, one track titled “Building carbon-positive organic systems with reduced tillage and cover crops” and the other “Organic food-grade cereal grain production,” hosted in conjunction with the Artisan Grain Collaborative. These one-hour sessions will be discussion-based and are the perfect place for farmers to get to know one

another, have meaningful discussions, and learn from each other's experiences. Participants can register for one or the other track, or both, and are asked to commit to attending all four sessions in each track. Sessions are free and will be hosted via Zoom with a phone-in option. Registration required.

3) OGRAIN is excited to be partnering with MOSES and several other organizations to collectively host "Growing Stronger: Collaborative Conference on Organic and Sustainable Farming," with workshops spanning Feb 22-27. Stay tuned for more information on the organic grain sessions at this event. More information about this "5-in-1" event can be found at <https://mosesorganic.org/conference/>.

For more information and to register for any or all of the programs, visit the OGRAIN website at <https://ograin.cals.wisc.edu/events/learning-opportunities-winter-2020-21/>.

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