



RODALE
INSTITUTE™

PRESS KIT



The Global Leader *of* Regenerative Organic Agriculture



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OUR MISSION

Rodale Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to growing the organic movement through rigorous research, farmer training, and consumer education. Widely recognized as the birthplace of the organic movement in the U.S., Rodale Institute has been the global leader in regenerative organic agriculture for over 70 years.



RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS



Growing organic agriculture by helping farmers transition to organic practices and identifying the best methods to fight pests, weeds, and disease without synthetic chemicals



Mitigating and adapting to climate change with resilient farming systems



Solving food insecurity by growing nutrient-dense foods



J.I. Rodale

OUR STORY

Our founder, J.I. Rodale, was an entrepreneur from New York City who struggled with health problems all his life. One day he wrote these words on a chalkboard: “Healthy Soil = Healthy Food = Healthy People.” In 1940, in response to the introduction of chemicals in farming after WWII, he decided to buy a rundown farm in Pennsylvania and experiment with a way of growing food without chemicals that he coined “organic.” There, he founded the Soil and Health Foundation in 1947—what is known as Rodale Institute today.

In the 1970s, Rodale Institute moved to its current headquarters in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. J.I.’s son, Robert Rodale, took over the operation and started using the word “regenerative” to signify a method of farming that didn’t only sustain resources, but improved them.

Since then, Rodale Institute has grown exponentially, expanding throughout the United States, and sharing scientific findings about regenerative agriculture with farmers, policymakers, and others around the world.

Our organization also trains beginning farmers for careers in organic agriculture, educates consumers about how to make informed food choices, and moves the needle on the connection between soil health and human health.



TESTIMONIAL

At Lundberg Family Farms, our relationship with Rodale runs deep, to the roots of organic. J.I. and Robert Rodale defined the very word by starting a movement and developing a third-party organic certification program, which paved the way for farmers like us. Today, the Rodale Institute continues to forge ahead, furthering the organic movement through research, farmer training, and consumer education so we can keep growing together for generations to come.

— LUNDBERG FAMILY FARMS

Organic & eco-farmed rice producer

BY THE NUMBERS

Founded in

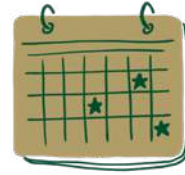
1947



HEADQUARTERS:

333

acres of experimental farmland in Kutztown, PA



30+

events per year with

3,200+

participants



25+

active research projects



350K+

visitors per year at RodaleInstitute.org



3

intensive farmer training programs with

35+

participants per year

7

locations in

4

states



SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

@RODALEINSTITUTE



53K+

FACEBOOK LIKES



38K+

TWITTER FOLLOWERS



30K+

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



43K+

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



WHAT IS REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE?

Regenerative organic agriculture is a farming system that goes beyond sustainability—it’s a holistic system that works with nature to improve resources, instead of just maintaining them.

WHY “REGENERATIVE?”

In the 1970s, our founder’s son, Bob Rodale, realized that the word “sustainable” didn’t go far enough to describe the power of organic agriculture to heal people and the planet. Sustainable means maintaining—which, with the current state of soil health and industrial agriculture around the world, simply isn’t good enough. Bob knew that what we really wanted was continuous improvement—making the soil and our land better every time we grew crops. That’s when he coined the term “regenerative organic.”

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Our current industrial, conventional agriculture system is putting us all in danger. According to the United Nations, we only have 60 years of farmable topsoil remaining under current practices, which will continue to degrade if we don’t change the paradigm. Despite this threat, only 1% of U.S. cropland is certified organic. Our food system needs a drastic overhaul to improve the health of people and the planet—before it’s too late.

[Learn more at RodaleInstitute.org/why-organic](https://RodaleInstitute.org/why-organic)



TESTIMONIAL

Rodale Institute is a powerful and critical partner for those working on 21st century regenerative, organic food systems. The organization leads with deep integrity, expertise and insight making them a trusted partner for farmers, policy makers and capital that is investing in regenerative, organic agriculture. I am proud to work with them and even more proud to call them friends.

— **ROBYN O’BRIEN**
Founder of rePlant Capital
Author, *The Unhealthy Truth*

DIFFERENT APPROACHES *to* FOOD *and* FARMING

Conventional

Generally, conventional farming relies on the use of chemical intervention—pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers—and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to grow crops.

Regenerative

Regenerative farming aims to enrich the soil, but lacks any standards prohibiting the use of conventional pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, and GMOs.

Organic

Organic farming does not use chemical intervention or GMOs because it prioritizes building healthy soil. Instead, natural methods such as composting are relied upon, for the growth of healthy food.

Regenerative Organic

Regenerative organic farming is rooted in organic farming. It abides by a high standard of land management to sequester carbon in the soil, and prioritize welfare of farm animals and fairness for farmers and workers.

Common Tools



Pesticides and Herbicides



Synthetic Fertilizer



GMOs

Common Tools



Compost



Crop Rotations



Cover Crops



No GMOs

TESTIMONIAL

Rodale Institute is where the organic food movement began in the U.S. in the 1940s, so it is no surprise that it is one of the country's most important and prominent organic organizations. The organic farming research it conducts is cutting-edge, and Rodale Institute has spearheaded some of the movement's most important initiatives. Needless to say, Rodale Institute is an incredibly valuable resource for me and my reporting.

— **MAX GOLDBERG**

Founder/Editor, "Organic Insider" & "Living Maxwell"



Rodale Institute's Farming Systems Trial has been comparing organic and conventional grain systems in a side-by-side model for nearly 40 years.

RESEARCH

For over 70 years, Rodale Institute has been putting science behind the best practices in organic agriculture. With over 25 active research projects across 7 sites, Rodale Institute has been the leading voice in developing solutions for the regenerative organic movement.

Rodale Institute conducts long-term research on a variety of topics to support organic farmers and grow the health of people and the planet.

SOME OF OUR TRIALS INCLUDE:



FARMING SYSTEMS TRIAL (FST)

The longest running side-by-side comparison of organic and conventional grain cropping systems in North America. In operation since 1981, FST represents 70% of U.S. farmland, making this research into grains critical to America's agricultural future.



VEGETABLE SYSTEMS TRIAL (VST)

Started in 2017 and planned to run for over 20 years, VST is specifically designed to compare nutrient density in organic and conventional vegetables. Focusing on plants like potatoes, winter squash, green beans, and sweet corn, VST is critical to helping organic farmers fight pests and weeds to grow the most nutritious food possible for their customers.



WATERSHED IMPACT TRIAL (WIT)

A collaboration with Stroud Water Research Center, WIT studies the impact of farm management on watershed health. Studying issues like runoff, erosion, nutrient leaching and chemical contamination, WIT underscores the ways in which how we grow our food directly impacts not only our health but our environment.



INDUSTRIAL HEMP TRIAL

Industrial hemp was legalized as an agricultural commodity in 2018, returning this once important cash crop to farmers' fields. Our four-year trial aims to determine the ways in which this crop can boost profitability and suppress weeds for organic farmers that have been without research into industrial hemp for over 80 years.

KEY RESEARCH RESULTS



After a transition period, organic crop yields are competitive with conventional, showing that ***organic can feed the world.***
(Farming Systems Trial)

Organic systems perform ***up to 40% better*** in times of extreme weather like drought, while using ***45% less energy*** and releasing ***40% fewer carbon emissions*** than conventional systems.
(Farming Systems Trial)

Reducing tillage has been shown to ***improve nutrient concentration*** of beta-carotene, lutein, calcium, and phosphorus in winter squash.
(Vegetable Systems Trial)

Organic soils have ***over 3x the water infiltration capacity*** of conventional soils, leading to less runoff and erosion in extreme rainfall events.
(Watershed Impact Trial)

Organic grain farmers are ***3-6x more profitable*** than conventional grain farmers.
(Farming Systems Trial)

A lifetime analysis of soils in FST (> 40 years) shows soil organic matter ***increased 17% more*** in organic soils than in conventional.
(Farming Systems Trial)

Industrial hemp has been identified as a ***viable weed suppression*** cover crop in organic systems.
(Industrial Hemp Trial)

Learn more at RodaleInstitute.org/Science



FARMER TRAINING

In the United States, organic sales have topped \$55 billion annually, and continue to grow. Yet, only 1% of U.S. cropland is certified organic. We have a need for more organic farmers, as well as beginning farmers. Today, there are 6x as many farmers over 65 as under 35.

The time is now to invest in the future of organic agriculture. That's why Rodale Institute is helping farmers transition to organic, while training the next generation of organic pioneers.



HELPING FARMERS TRANSITION

Launched in 2019, Rodale Institute offers hands-on consulting services for farmers interested in transitioning to organic. Our trained agronomists assist farmers with everything from crop plans, equipment, and soil sampling to certification preparation. In 2019 and 2020, these services were offered free to PA and Midwest farmers.

In the program's first year, our consultants helped transition over 3,700 acres to organic, working with 66 farmers growing everything from grain and hemp to livestock and dairy, and the program is growing every day.



GROWING CAREERS, GROWING FOOD

Every year, Rodale Institute welcomes dozens of beginning farmers to our campuses to train for careers in organic agriculture. Our farmer trainees can participate in several programs focused on growing their skills in farming.

VETERAN FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM (VFTP)

Military veterans can take part in this paid program to train for a new career in organic agriculture. In a hands-on, collaborative, outdoor working environment, veterans learn diverse farming skills including vegetable production, livestock management, tractor safety, beekeeping, and more.

AGRICULTURE SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES (ASC)

This multiple-track internship allows anyone to begin a career in small-scale organic vegetable production. From field work and processing to farmers market procedures, ASC provides a real-world learning environment that is rooted in providing food access to underserved communities. ASC interns travel with Rodale Institute's Mobile Market, a portable farm stand, to food desert and low-income communities to sell affordable organic produce to those who need it most and focus on marketing to families using SNAP benefits.

ORGANIC FARMING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (OFCP)

A year-long, accredited program offered through a partnership with Delaware Valley University, the OFCP offers both in-classroom education and in-field instruction. This Certificate can stand on its own or be used towards a four-year degree in Sustainable Agriculture Systems.

[Learn more at RodaleInstitute.org/Education](https://RodaleInstitute.org/Education)



TESTIMONIAL

My relationship with Rodale Institute has given me a more holistic understanding of the connection between people and planet. Being able to visit the farm, observe the research and work conducted there, and get my hands — and shoes, and pants — dirty helps me create more relatable, human-centered stories that demonstrate how global issues can be tackled at a community level. Working with Rodale Institute is that rare collaborative, creative and unconventional experience that goes beyond “likes” to create lasting influence and impact.

— **JOHNNIE GALL**

Writer, Photographer, and Environmentalist





REGENERATIVE ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

This new, holistic agriculture standard raises the bar for how food is produced. Led by the Regenerative Organic Alliance, which includes organizations and brands like Rodale Institute, Dr. Bronner’s, and Patagonia, the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC) helps consumers make informed choices about their food purchases.



WHY?

The USDA Certified Organic seal continues to be a rigorous standard and represents some of the best farmers around the world. However, even the organic standard has gaps in soil health requirements, animal welfare rules—and most importantly, completely omits the treatment of farmers and farm workers. Many brands, farmers, ranchers, and nonprofits felt there was room for a more holistic standard that went above and beyond the organic label.

HOW IT WORKS

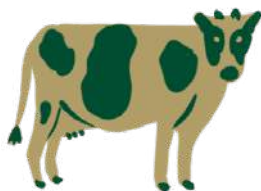
The ROC uses the USDA Certified Organic standard as a baseline, adding important criteria and benchmarks that serve to incorporate three major pillars of regenerative organic agriculture into one certification.

THE THREE ROC PILLARS



SOIL HEALTH

Use of regenerative practices like cover crops, crop rotations, and conservation tillage. Builds organic matter and promotes biodiversity with no synthetic inputs.



ANIMAL WELFARE

Protects the “Five Freedoms,” grass-fed & pasture-raised, no CAFOs or extensive transport, suitable shelter.



SOCIAL FAIRNESS

Ensures fair payments and living wages for farmers and farmworkers, safe working conditions, capacity building and freedom of association.

PRODUCTS & PARTNERS

The pilot program of the ROC included farms in 9 countries around the world, and the first Regenerative Organic Certified products hit shelves in Spring 2020.

A FEW ROC-LABELLED PRODUCTS INCLUDE:



Dr. Bronner's Coconut Oil



Grain Place Foods Popcorn



Nature's Path Regenerative Organic Oatmeal



Patagonia Provisions Chile Mango

The Regenerative Organic Alliance is comprised of organizations and brands that are committed to a regenerative organic future for the planet and their customers.

A FEW PARTNERS INCLUDE:



See the full list of partners and learn more at [RegenOrganic.org](https://www.RegenOrganic.org).

TESTIMONIAL

Rodale Institute is the go-to resource for the regenerative organic movement—they are the experts for making groundbreaking changes needed to improve the food system. Food Tank continues to value the work of the Institute as a resource for innovative science, trailblazing educational initiatives, and a commitment to improving the health of our soil and our food at a critical time in human history.

— DANIELLE NIERENBERG

President & Founder, Food Tank

PRESS

Samples of press coverage include:

FORBES

“Earth’s Rapidly Degrading Soil Is Bad News for Human Health” (June 24, 2020)

MINDBODYGREEN

“How to Support the Food Industry Right Now, According to Those in the Front Lines” (April 9, 2020)

FAST COMPANY

“How to Grow a Vegetable Garden, According to Legendary Chef Alice Waters” (April 7, 2020)

PATAGONIA

“Rebels in the Dirt” (April 2020)

MARTHA STEWART LIVING

“Four of the Most Common Composting Myths, Debunked” (March 20, 2020)

FOODPRINT

“The Real Climate Impact of Organic Farming” (Feb 18, 2020)

HUFFPOST

“Thousands of People are Growing ‘Climate Victory Gardens’ to Save the Planet” (Feb 6, 2020)

FORBES

“This New Food Label Will Mainstream Whole Foods’ Biggest Trend for 2020” (Dec 20, 2019)

ORGANIC INSIDER

“Why Claims That Organic is Worse for the Environment Do Not Hold Up.” (Nov 6, 2019)

WELL + GOOD

“Why Regenerative Organic Agriculture is the Future of Sustainable Food” (Oct 21, 2019)

FOOD TANK

“We Can Stop the Climate Crisis” (Aug 2019)

THE GUARDIAN

“From Chickens to Tomatoes, Here’s Why American Food is Hurting You” (May 28, 2019)

CNN

“Reckless Farming is Destroying the Planet. This Could Save It” (April 17, 2019)

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

“Why Don’t We Have Enough Organic Farms?” (Nov 20, 2018)

WOMEN’S HEALTH

“This Place is Changing the Game When it Comes to Organic Food—Here’s How” (Oct 4, 2017)

PODCASTS

- The Robcast
- Take Out with Ashley & Robyn
- Food Talk with Dani Nierenberg
- UNDP Learning for Nature Podcast
- The Joe Gardener Podcast
- Green Dreamer Podcast
- Sustainability Matters Today
- Y On Earth
- Lancaster Farming Industrial Hemp Podcast



GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES

Rodale Institute is committed to growing the organic movement and educating consumers, farmers, policymakers, and more about the promise of a regenerative organic future.

Rodale Institute staff, scientists, and campuses are available for a variety of media opportunities, including but not limited to:

- Print, radio, & TV interviews
- Photography, documentary & video projects
- Podcast appearances

Please contact us with the outlet, topic for your piece, and its intended audience, and we will connect you with the most appropriate staff person.



TESTIMONIAL

Today it's essential to monitor and regulate the quality and quantity of information, to ensure we have what we need but aren't overwhelmed or mis-directed. That's why Rodale Institute stays at the top of my resource list to support me as a practitioner, educator, media expert, consultant and activist. I rely on Rodale Institute for the caliber of research as well as staff to help me interpret and share critical messages about the history, present and future of better agriculture.

— **ASHLEY KOFF RD**

CEO, The Better Nutrition Program

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