Differentiation in Farm Labor Complement Profiles of Organic and Conventional Farms in the Southeast: Coping with a Changing Farm Labor Market

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Poster prepared for presentation at the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association 2010
AAEA, CAES, & WAEA Joint Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado, July 25-27, 2010

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In its 2009 Organic Industry Survey, the Organic Trade Association (OTA) reported that sales of both food and non-food organic products were growing. However, mean year-over-year sales growth for food organic products had slowed to 46.57% in the last few years, while non-food products grew by 0.409%. The slower growth is due to the limited supply of organic products available for consumers. Higher wages do not affect seasonal employment levels, i.e. higher wages could attract prospective workers but do not lead to increased hiring of seasonal farm labor. This study's findings also suggest that when non-family members work in the farm labor market, the extent of involvement of family members can be influenced by the level of wage rate prevailing in the county where the farm operates; and the degree of difficulty related to seasonal farm work.

**DIFFERENTIATION IN FARM LABOR COMPLEMENT PROFILES OF ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL FARMS IN THE SOUTHEAST:**

Coping with a changing farm labor market

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**REFERENCES**

The study focused on the labor market of organic and conventional farms located in the Southeastern United States. The survey covered a total of 523 farms, representing a response rate of 16%. The study findings indicated that hiring decisions in the farm labor market are influenced by family members' involvement in farm work; whether such motivation is guided by the desire for financial gain or other factors; and the degree of difficulty related to seasonal farm work.

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