

Figure 1. Per bushel returns to management. Source: Illinois FBFM.

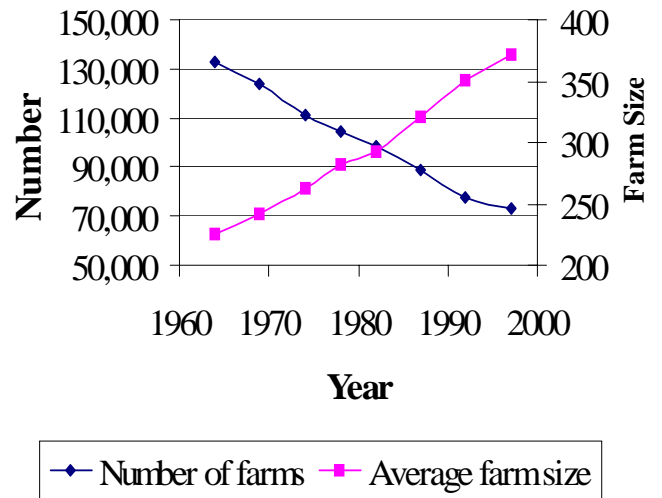


Figure 2. Number of farms and average farm size in Illinois. Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, NASS.

Producer Profiles

Twenty-two of the 145 organic farmers mailed the survey responded, resulting in a 15 percent response rate. The crop rotations utilized varied widely depending on geographic region, however, all producers met the rotation requirements of the OCIA. These results are based upon the 22 producers responding and the interviews with the handlers. The number of acres that producers farm organically ranges from 46 to 850 with an average of 200 acres farmed organically. Forty-five percent of the producers strictly farm organically, while the other 55% farm both organically and conventionally.

In assessing producers' reasons for producing organically, they were asked to rank each factor on its' importance in their decision to produce organically. These items included: concern for the environment, lower input costs, diversifying the farming operation, and premiums for organic crops. The responses were quite varied, however, over half of the respondents ranked concern for the environment as the most important reason for the switch.

Yields & Prices

Yields of organic commodities varied greatly among the organic producers. The factors affecting yield include weather, location, varieties and hybrids planted, tillage practices, soil

