

## BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSITIONING TO ORGANIC

AgriSecure has over 30 years of combined experience in growing organic crops – our team has learned how manage challenges and capture opportunities. AgriSecure partners with Clients at each step of the process to deploy best practices, as well as continuously learn together to push the boundaries of organic productivity.

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### GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

- Be proactive – when you see an issue it can be too late.
- Get in balance – It's easier to start balancing soils prior to your transition. Start early.
- End Rows/Borders – plan on planting a field border as end rows typically don't canopy as quickly due to heavy tillage traveling.
- Your crop can be certified organic if you are 3 years post your last pesticide/synthetic fertility application, it doesn't have to be 3 calendar years.
- Ditches and field borders can no longer be sprayed using conventional methods
- Think about your field layout so tillage can be performed, and borders can be managed.
- Stay in conversation – have your neighbors alert you 24hrs in advance prior to spraying
- Transition your best acres first. Fertility and balance are key.
- Spread litter, if possible, in fall / winter. Spring applications, could lead to hot spots and excess compaction.
- Crop Rotations are important, however to improve field management, exceptions can be made for a back to back rotation of crops.
- Document, Document, Document – or let AgriSecure take care of your documentation.
- Spraying – there are many organically approved crop protection and fertility enhancers.
- Guidance Systems with sub-inch accuracy (i.e. RTK) to offer repeatability is key.

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### PLANTING

- Planting population – increase populations as you will lose some plants through tillage.
- For corn planting – reduce cross pollination with neighboring fields by planting at different times.
- Consider planting slightly later than normal - soil is warmer, and emergence is quicker, we are limited when it comes to seed treatments and biotech.

## **TILLAGE**

- Be aggressive! When performing tillage, plan on being WAY more aggressive than you thought.
- Prior to Canopy on row crops, plan on some form of tillage on your fields every 3-5 days.
- For row crops – early on, if you can see the weeds, a rotary hoe will not help you.
- For row crop tillage – there is not a hard cut off between your rotary hoe, tine weeder, and cultivator. You will be interlacing these tillage applications.
- As much as possible match tillage width with your planter width for better accuracy

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## **BIN MANAGEMENT & OFF-SEASON WORK**

- Cover crops – plan on incorporating cover crops into your off-season plans – this can help reduce weed pressure, improve fertility, and improve drainage.
- Bin storage is generally critical - most markets will require storage of crops ranging from 1 month to nearly 10 months.
- Bin storage is helpful to remove the core out of the bins, once they are full.
- Bin storage is important that the grain is level in the bin and not peaked – shoveling is necessary
- Bin storage – be advised that some crops need to be air-dried. Therefore, maximum airflow is beneficial as this will permit earlier harvest under higher moisture conditions.