

Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: [The U.S. Organic Handling Sector in 2004 Baseline Findings of the Nationwide Survey of Organic Manufacturers, Processors, and Distributors](#)

Type of Report: EIB
(ERR, EIB, EB) Influential Scientific Information

Agency: Economic Research Service Highly Influential Scientific Assessment
USDA

Agency Contact: Elise Golan, egolan@ers.usda.gov

Subject of Review: **The organic sector has expanded rapidly over the last decade, as retail sales of organic food increased to \$15.7 billion in 2006. As sales have grown, so have the number and types of outlets selling organic products. A USDA, Economic Research Service survey of certified organic intermediaries in the U.S. collected information on basic characteristics of the sector, as well as their marketing and procurement practices, for 2004. This report uses the survey findings to present a baseline view of the organic handling sector. A large proportion of organic handlers are mixed operations, handling both organic and conventional products, and most began as conventional firms that converted to handling organic products. Most organic products are sold domestically, with nearly three-quarters sold nationally or regionally. More than three quarters of the firms are independent, and most are small firms. Handlers seek suppliers with a reputation for providing high quality products. Most transactions between handlers and suppliers occur under contract, reportedly so that handlers can procure ingredients essential for their business.**

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: Panel Review Individual Reviewers
 Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 07/09/07 End: 02/07/08 Completed: 02/07/08

Number of Reviewers: 3 or fewer 4 to 10 More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: Agency Designated Outside Organization
Organization's Name:

Opportunities for Public Comment? Yes No
If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:
How:
When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? Yes No
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? Yes No

