



State Organic Program



2015 Survey Results

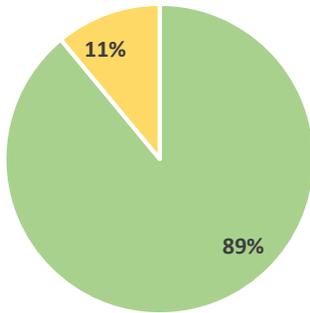


The California Department of Food and Agriculture, State Organic Program (SOP), is committed to continued improvement of its service to the California Organic Community. In November 2015, the SOP conducted a survey of organic producers, handlers, retailers, and processors. The survey was conducted by means of both online and postal system medium. Of the 3,962 registrants, the SOP received 652 responses. The purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding of the types of services with the most value to both certified and non-certified organic operations in California, and to identify potential areas for improvement. The following is a synopsis of the data collected in the survey.

State Organic Program Survey Results

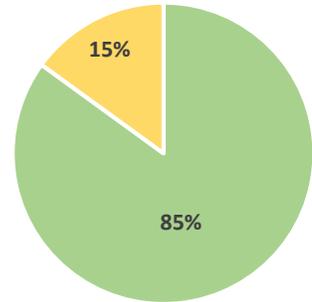
All Operations

Respondent Demographics



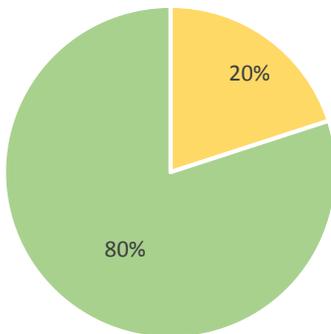
■ Certified Operations ■ Non Certified Operations

How Does That Correlate to CDFA's Registrants?



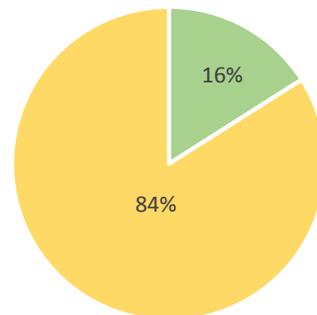
■ Certified Operations ■ Non Certified Operations

How Many Producers Responded?



■ Handlers, Processors, Retail Facility

How Does That Compare with State Organic Program Registrants?



■ Other ■ Producers

**State Organic Program Survey Results
All Respondents**

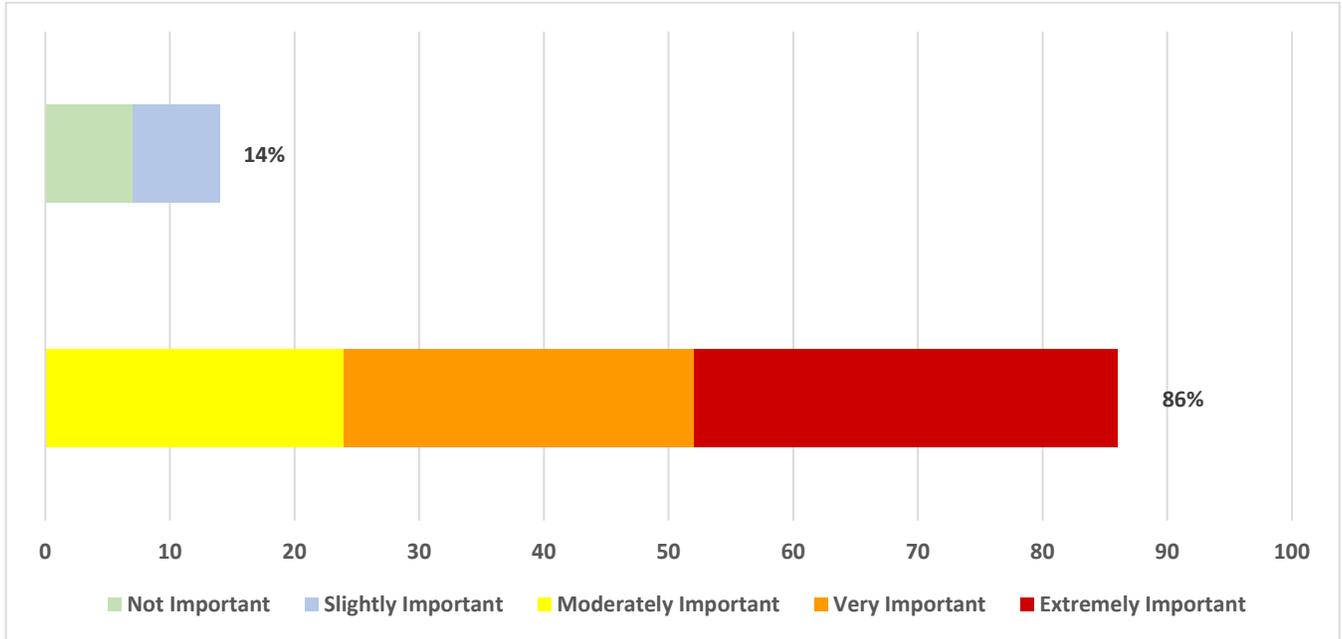
Section I

Subsection A

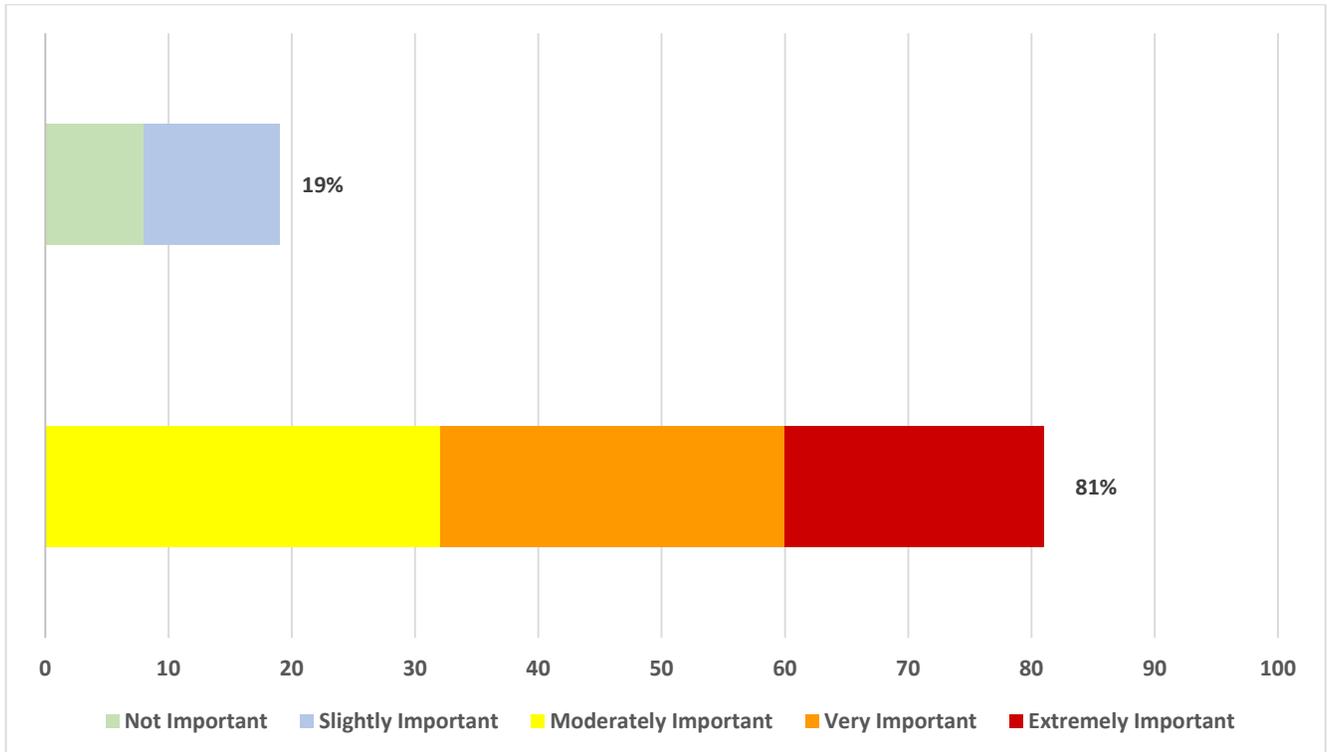
This section represents current activities of the SOP.

State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Pesticide Residue Testing



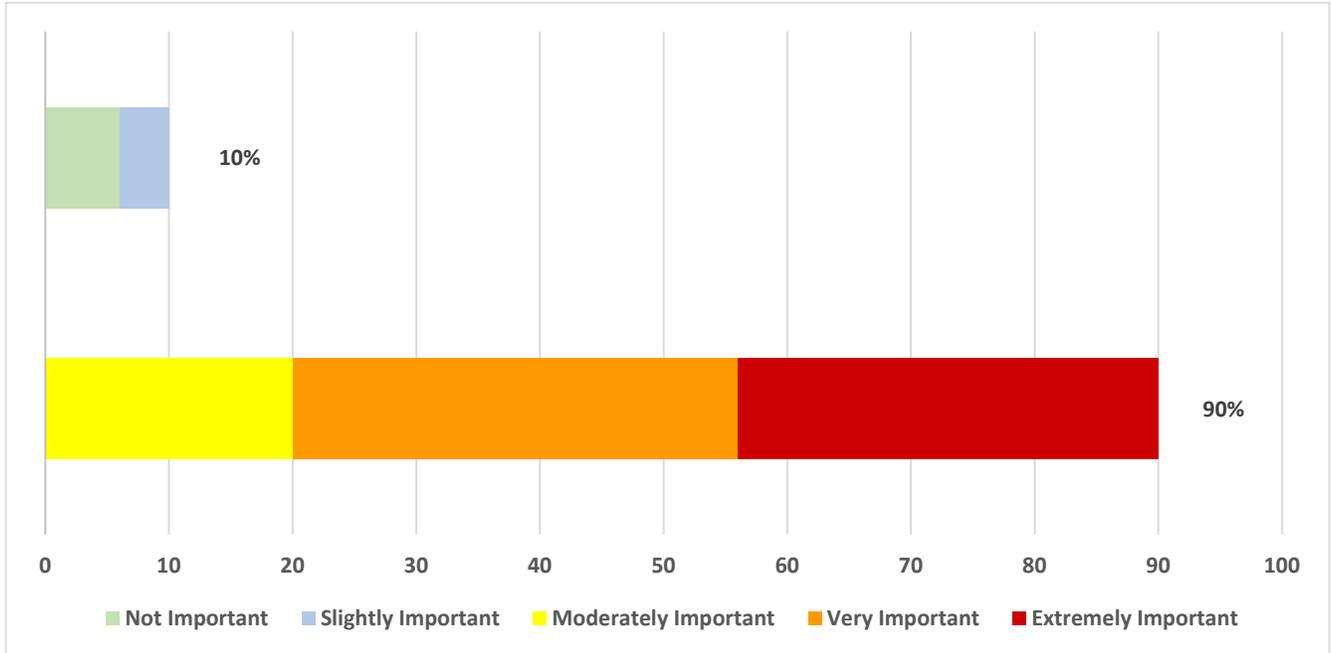
Spot Inspections



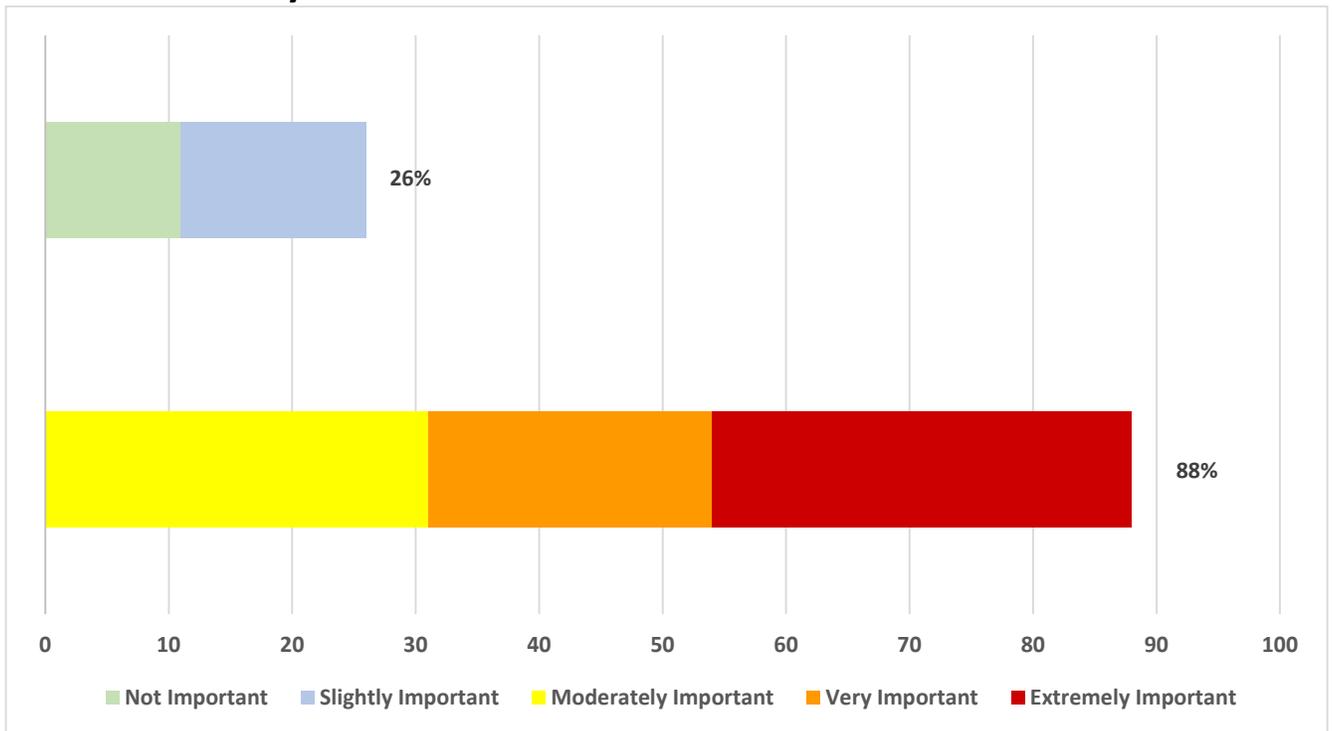
State Organic Program Survey Results

All Respondents

Complaint Investigations



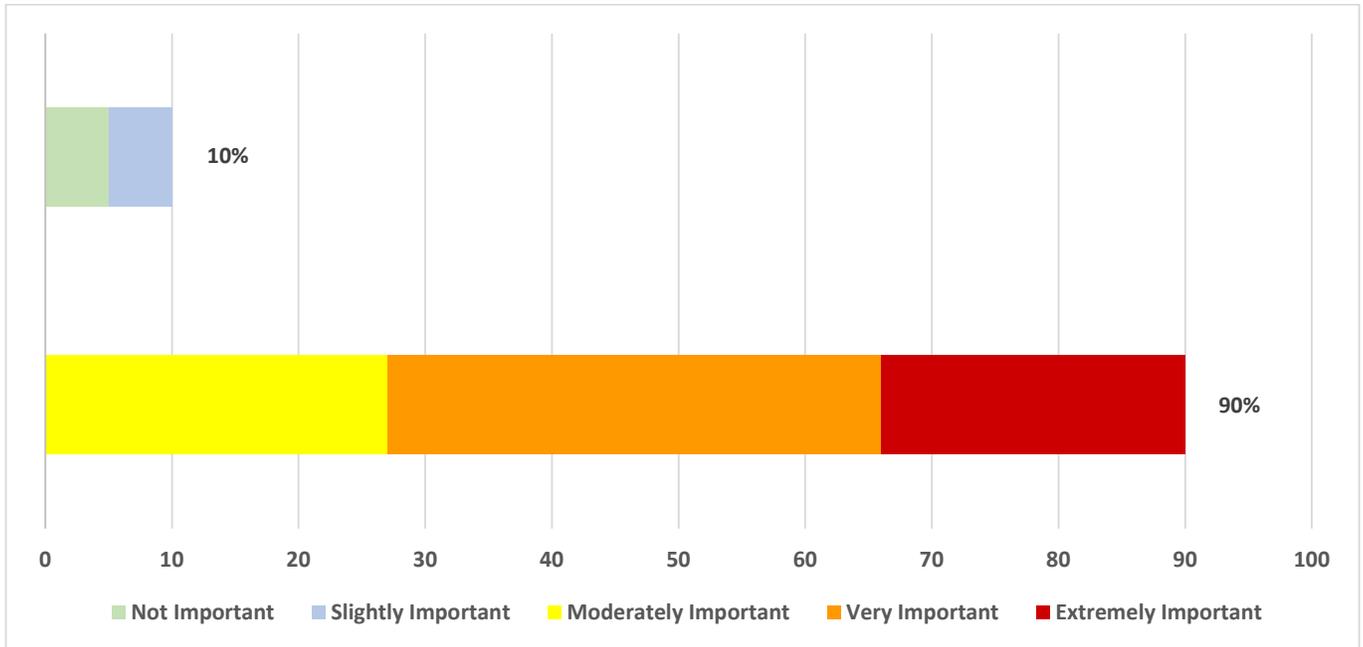
Assess Monetary Penalties



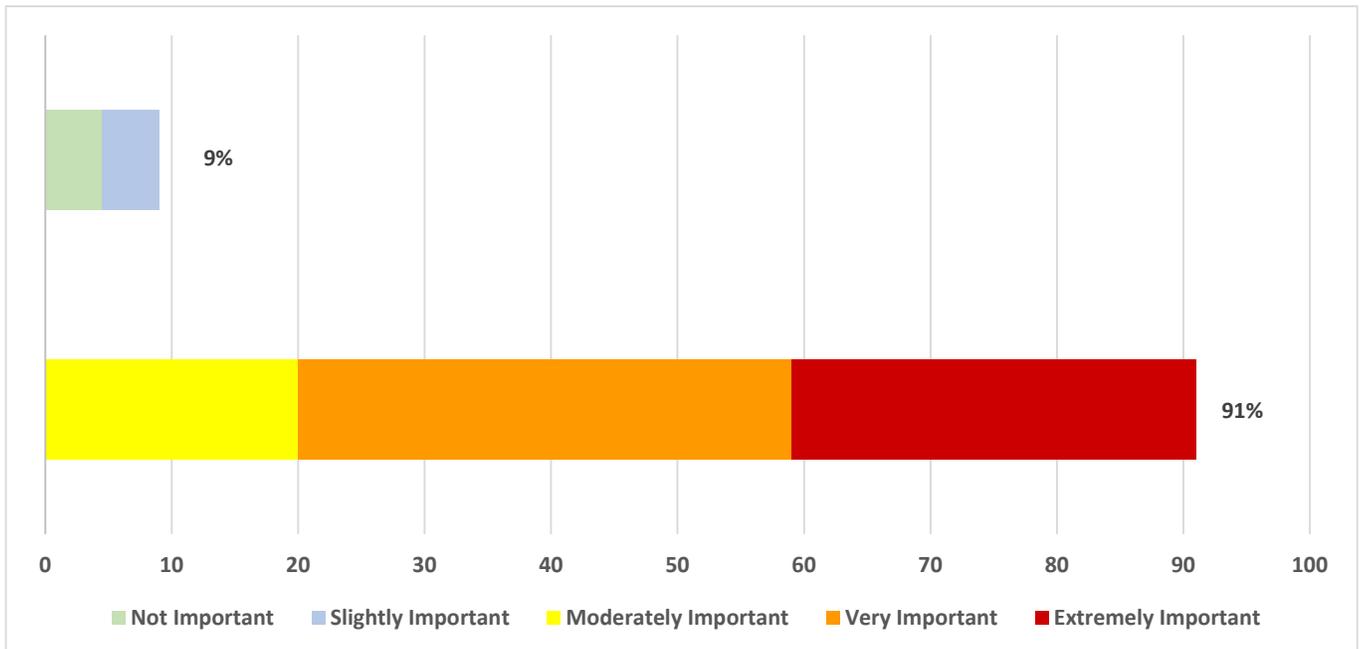
State Organic Program Survey Results

All Respondents

Grower Mediation Option on Actions by Certifiers

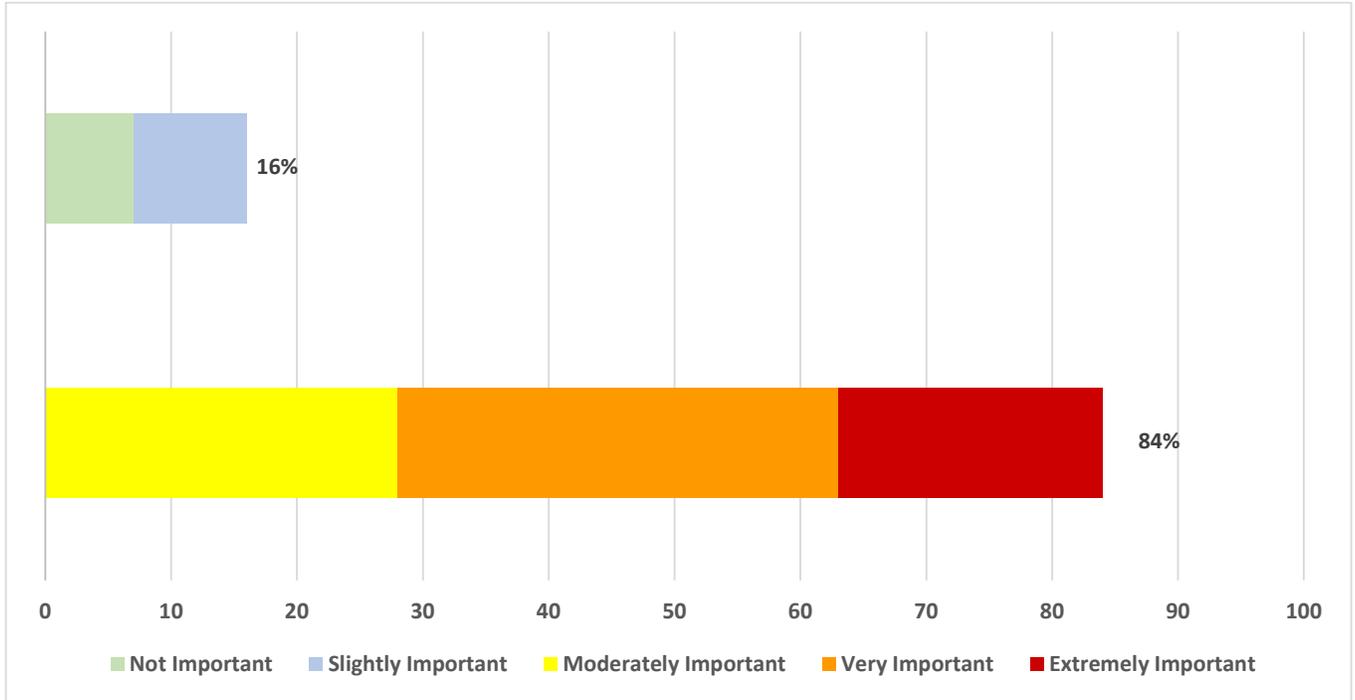


Due Process Upon Denial or Revocation of Registration/Certification

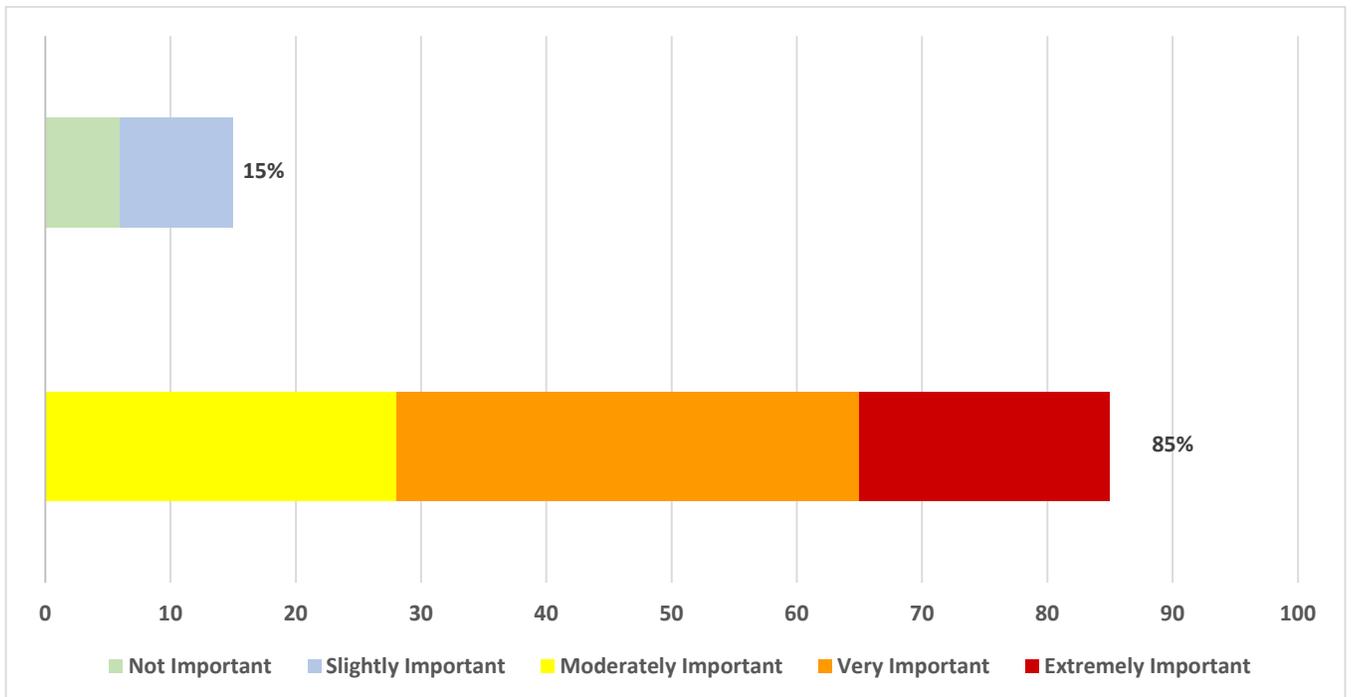


State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Providing Statewide Outreach

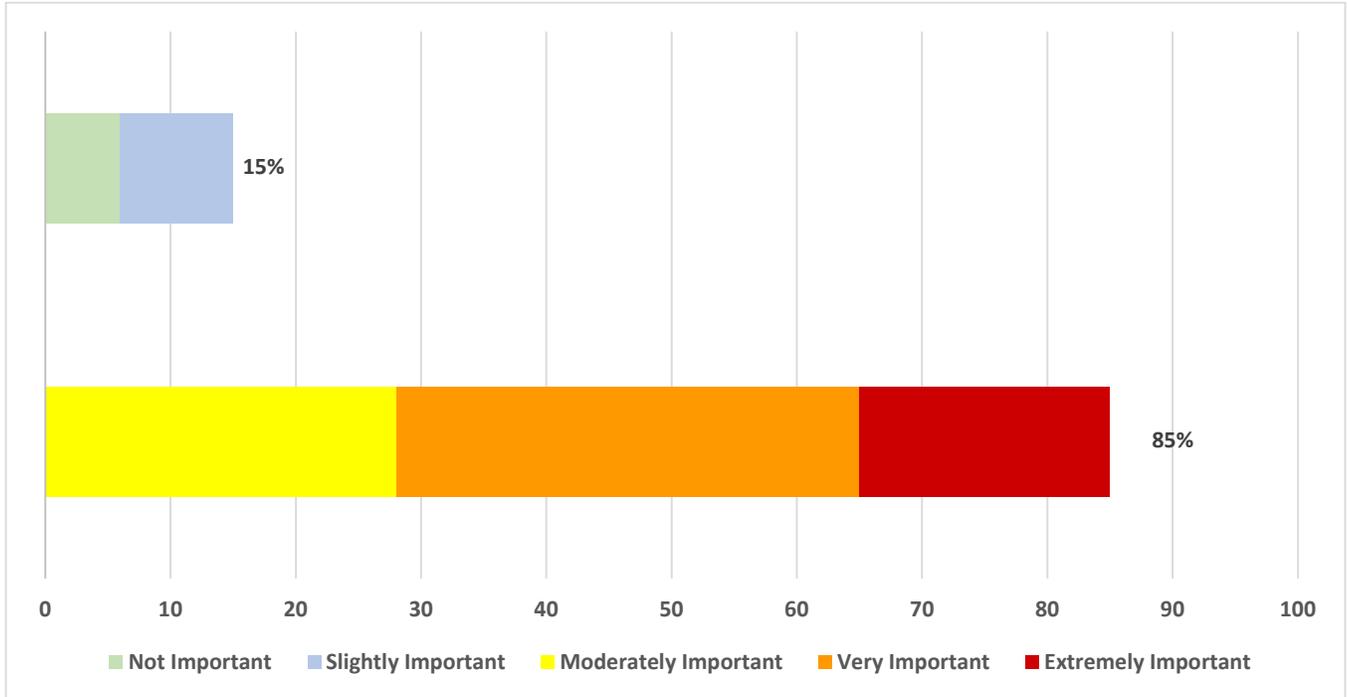


Providing Published Data Reports



State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Providing Training to Stakeholders



**State Organic Program Survey Results
All Respondents**

Section I

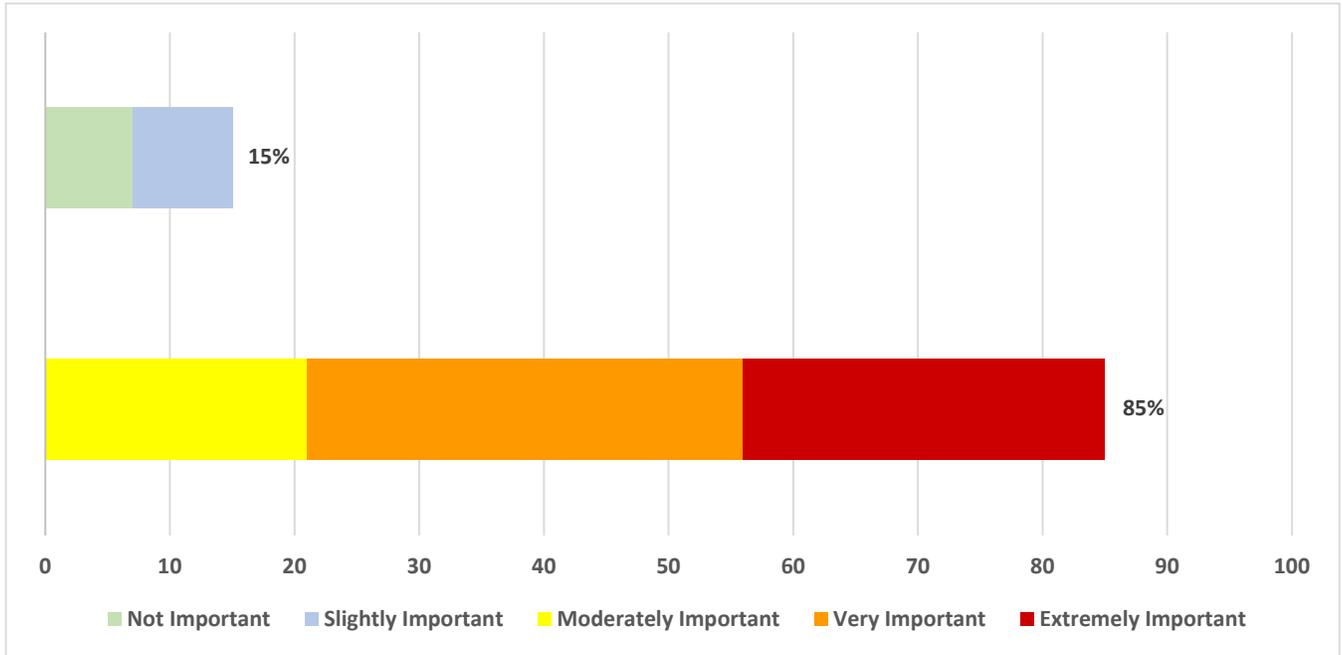
Subsection B

This section represents potential areas of activities that could be undertaken by the SOP.

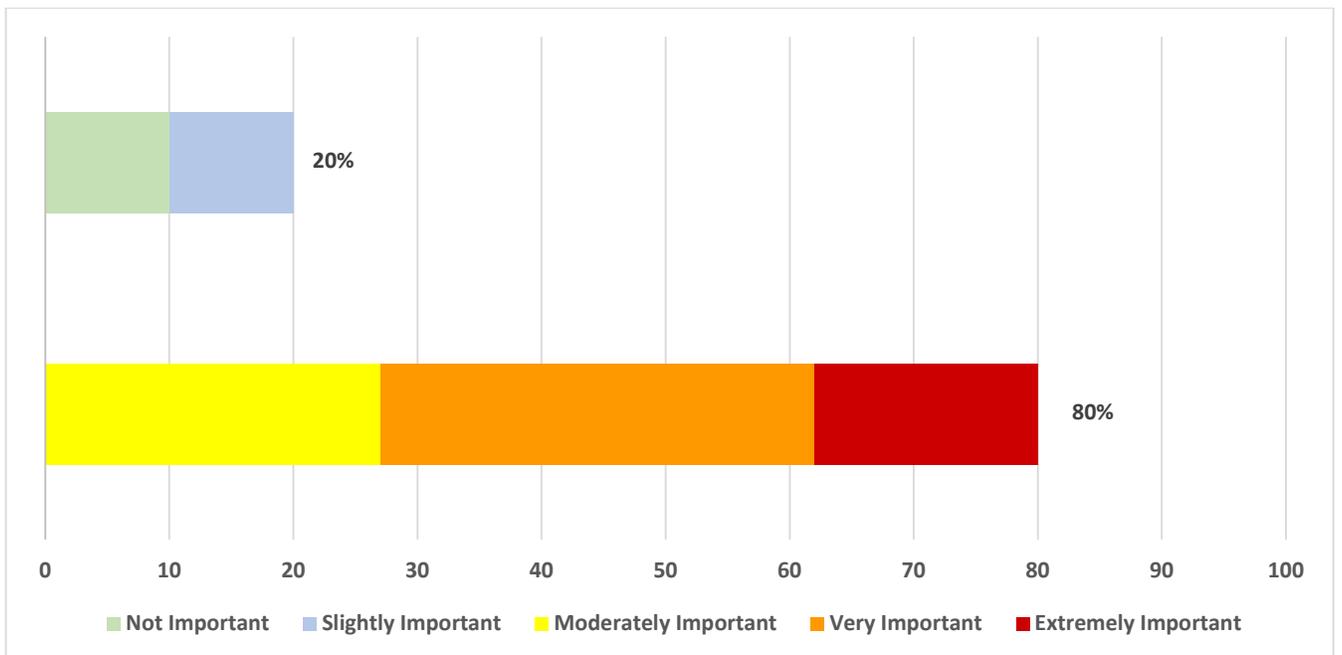
State Organic Program Survey Results

All Respondents

Establish Framework That Allows Organic Farmers to Receive Technical Assistance and Information

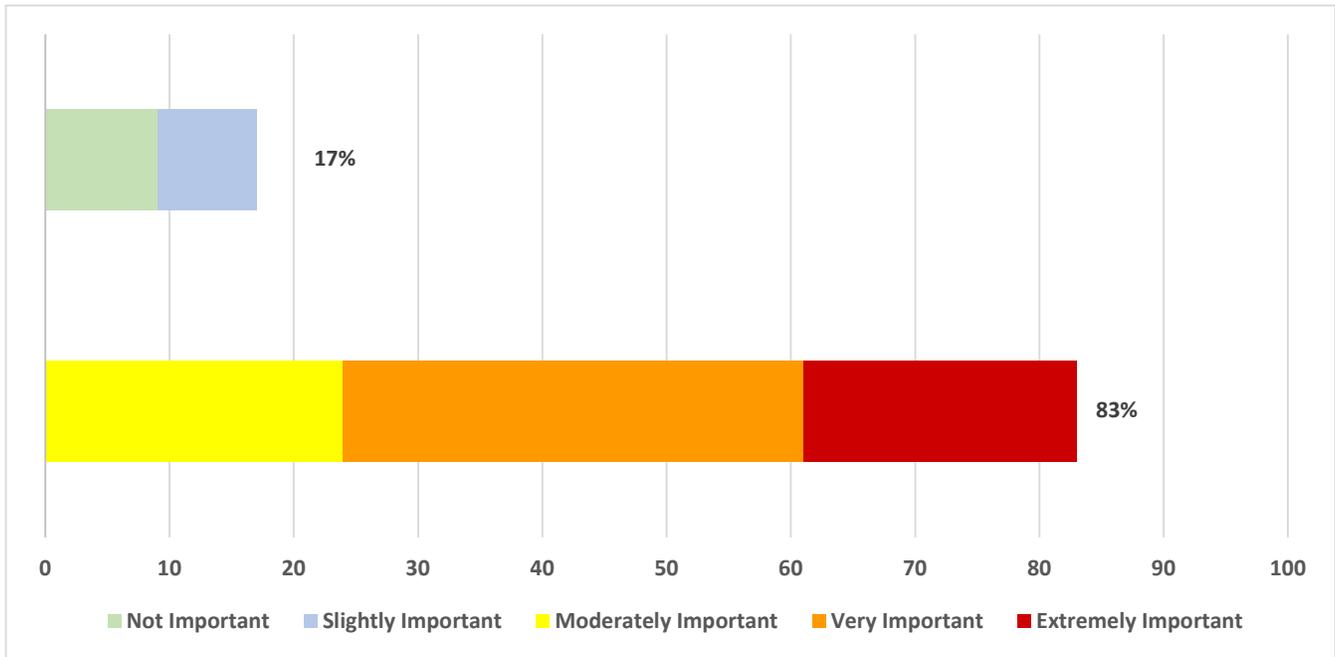


Identify Areas for Organic Research Priorities

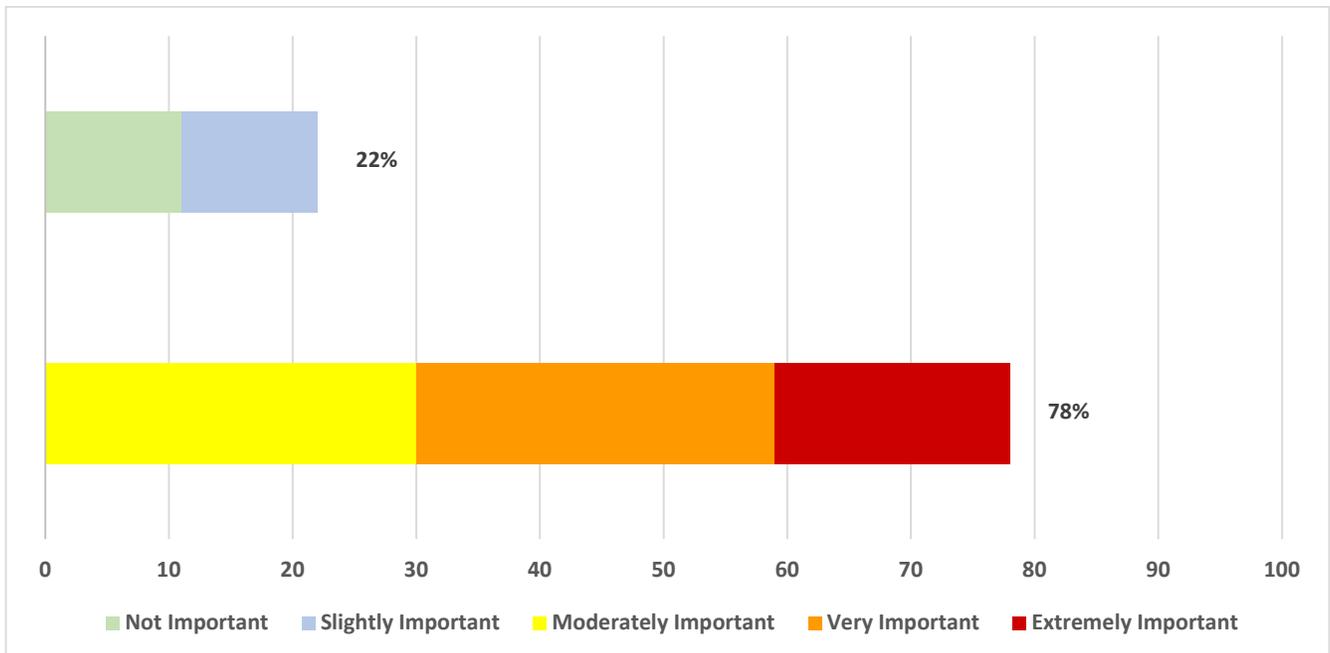


State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Provide a Clearing House of Information, Research Findings, Practices, and Techniques



Create a Forum for Exchange of Grower Practices



**State Organic Program Survey Results
All Respondents**

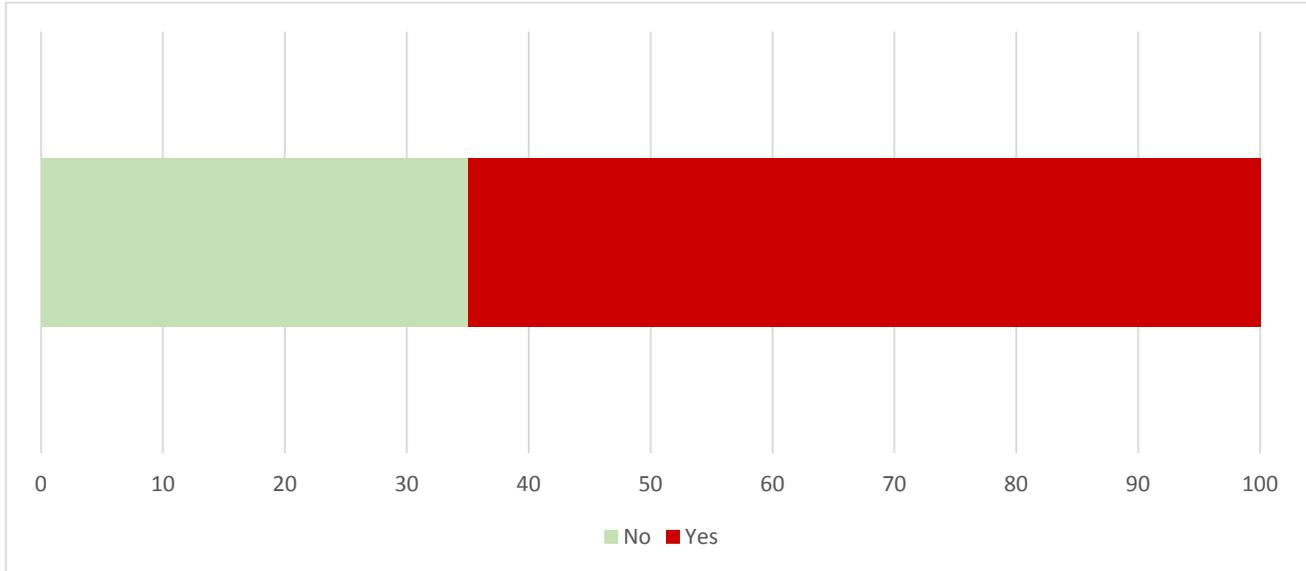
Section I

Subsection C

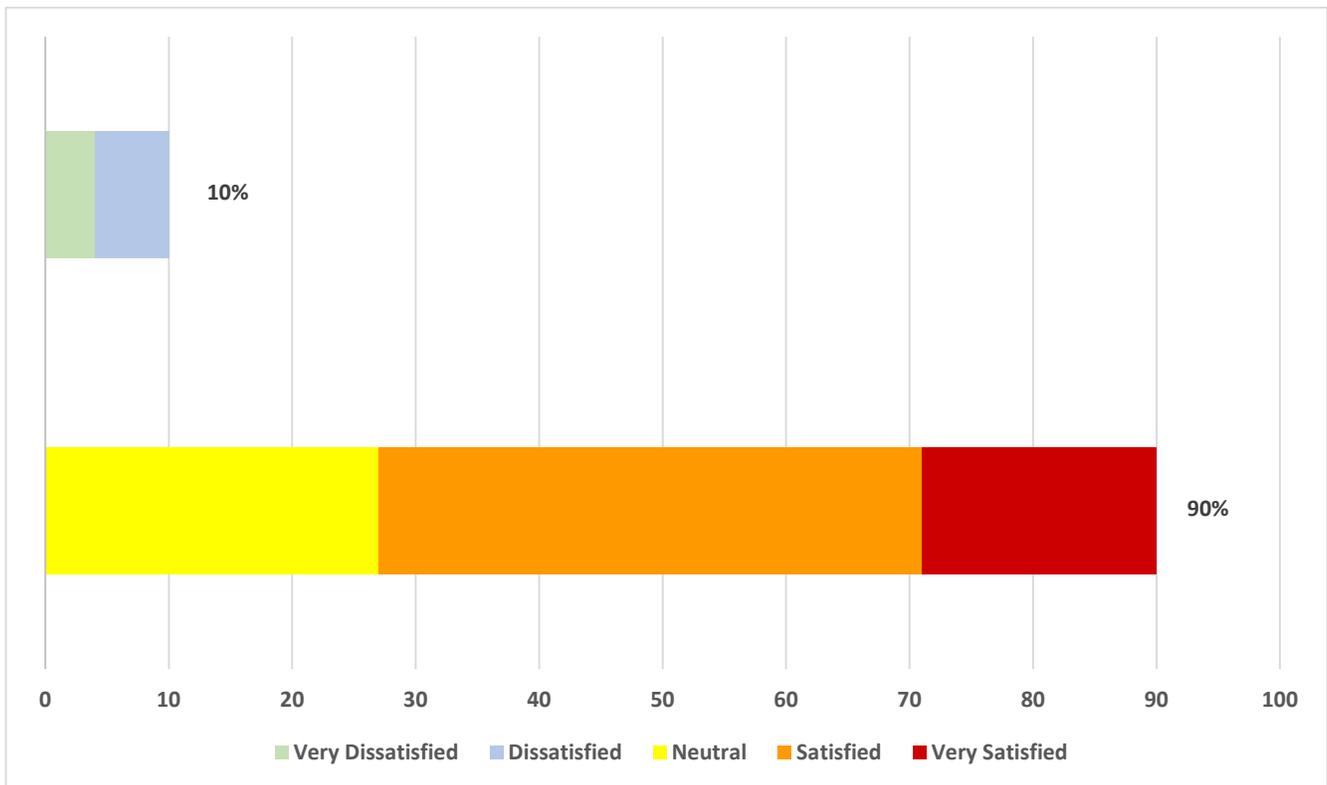
This section represents results of the registration process and data collection.

State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Do you Currently Utilize the Online Registration Process



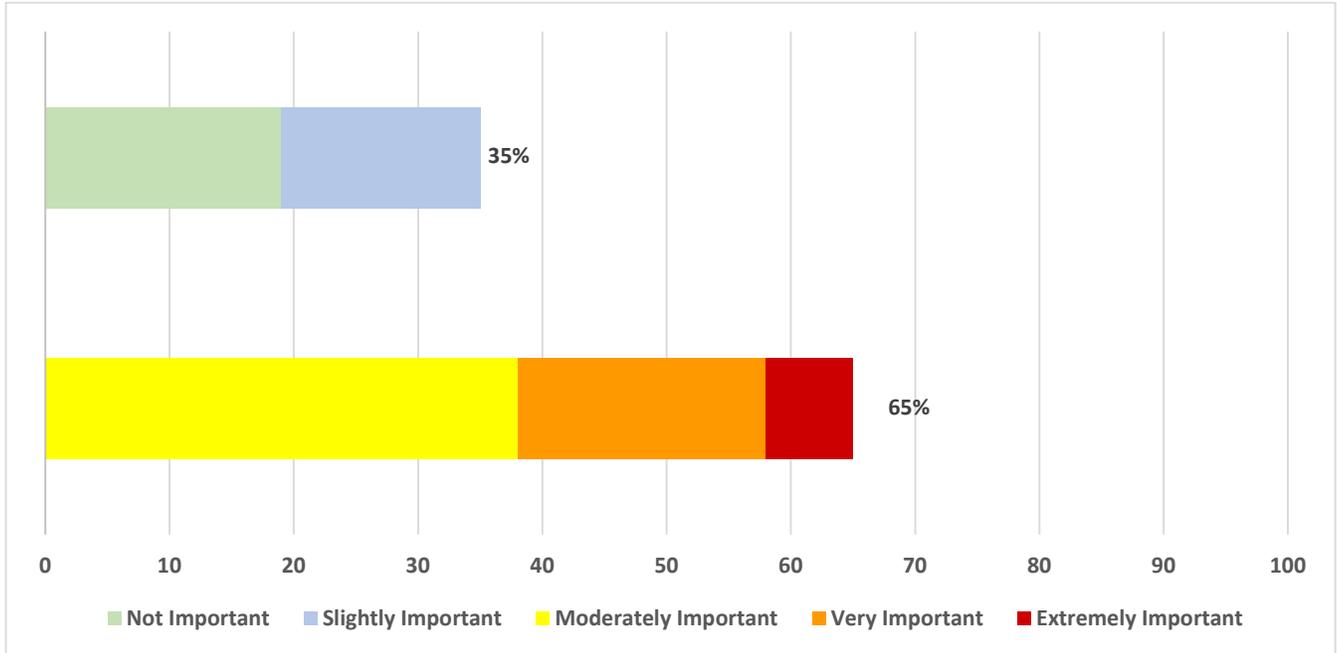
Satisfaction with Overall Experience Using the Online Registration Process



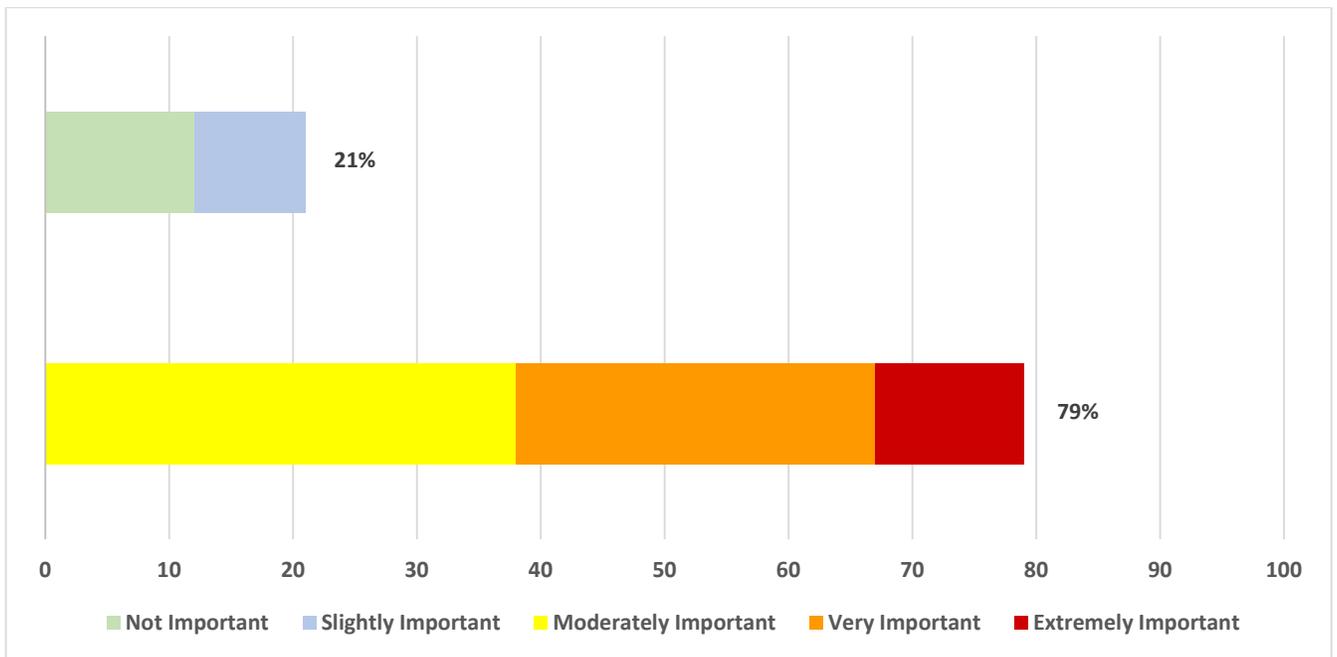
State Organic Program Survey Results

All Respondents

Gross Sales Data

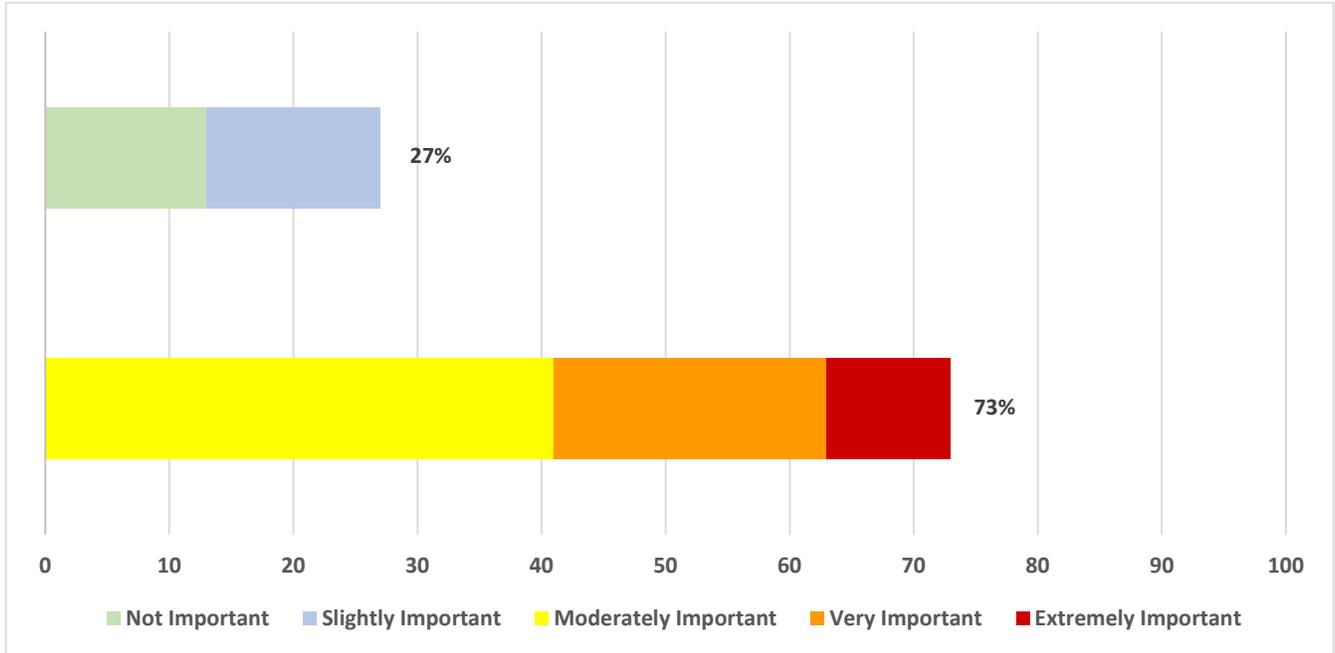


Commodity Information

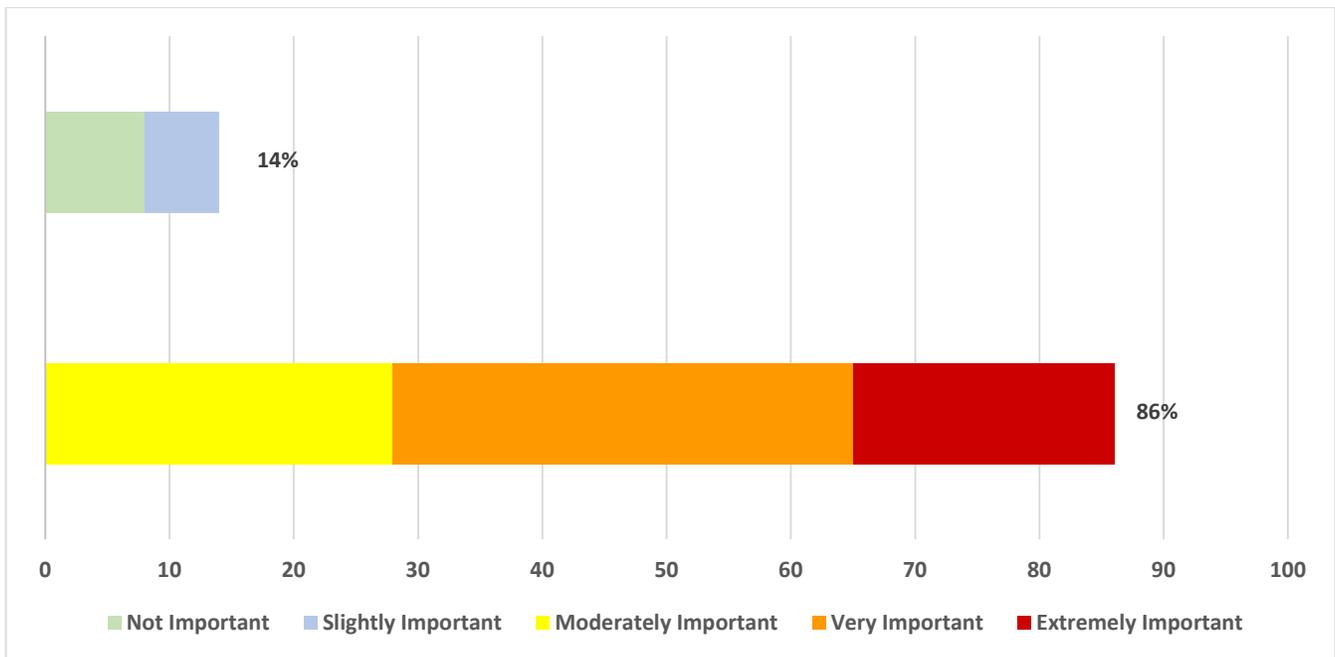


State Organic Program Survey Results All Respondents

Site/Parcel Information



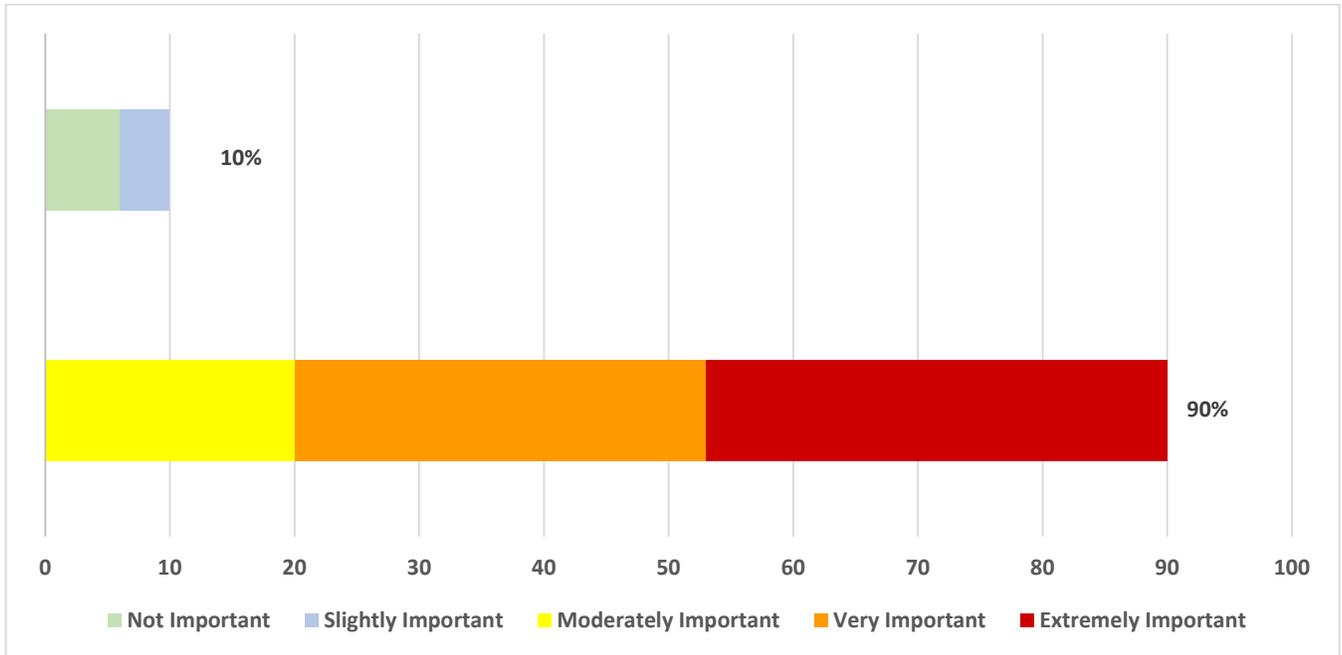
Registration Status Update



State Organic Program Survey Results

All Respondents

Print Valid Certificates



State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

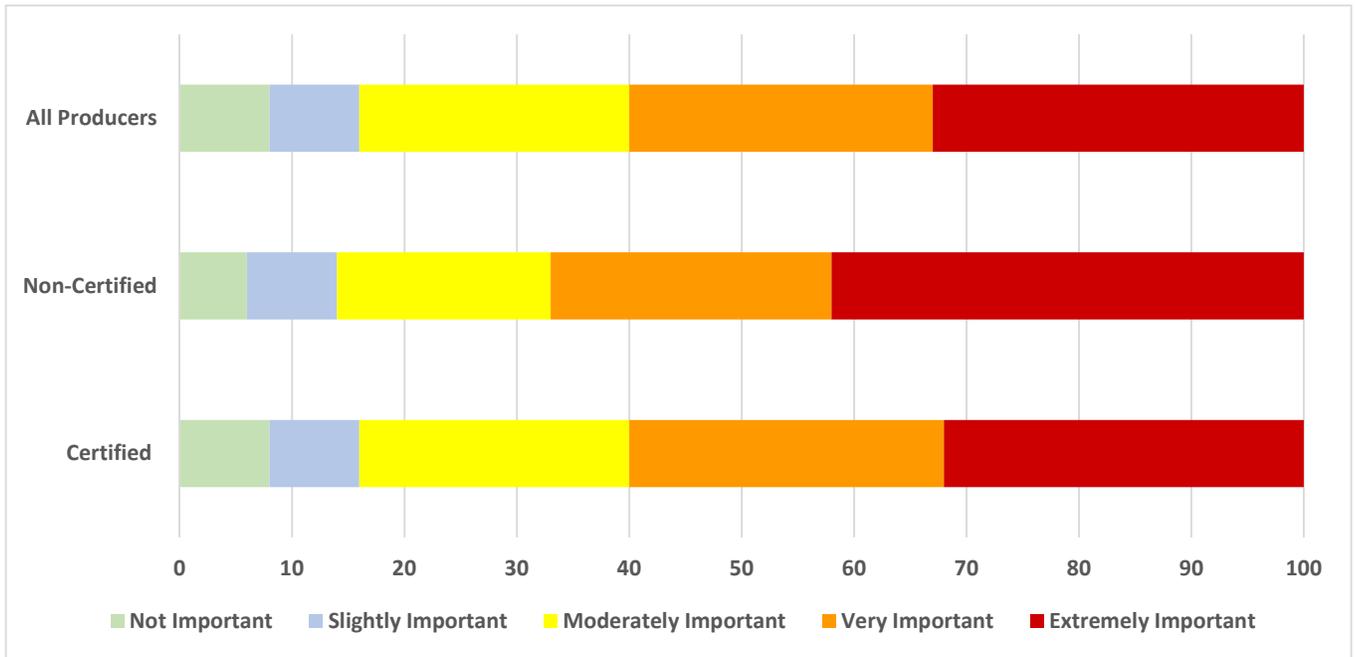
Section II

Subsection A

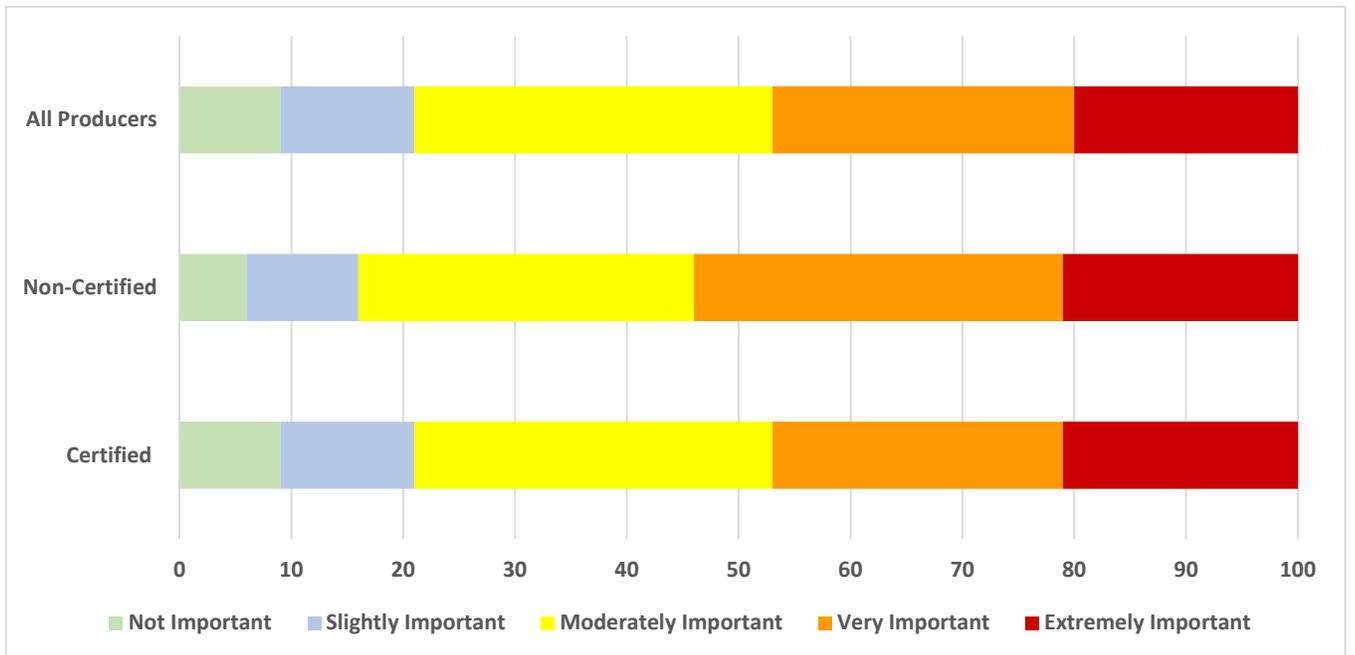
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State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Pesticide Residue Testing

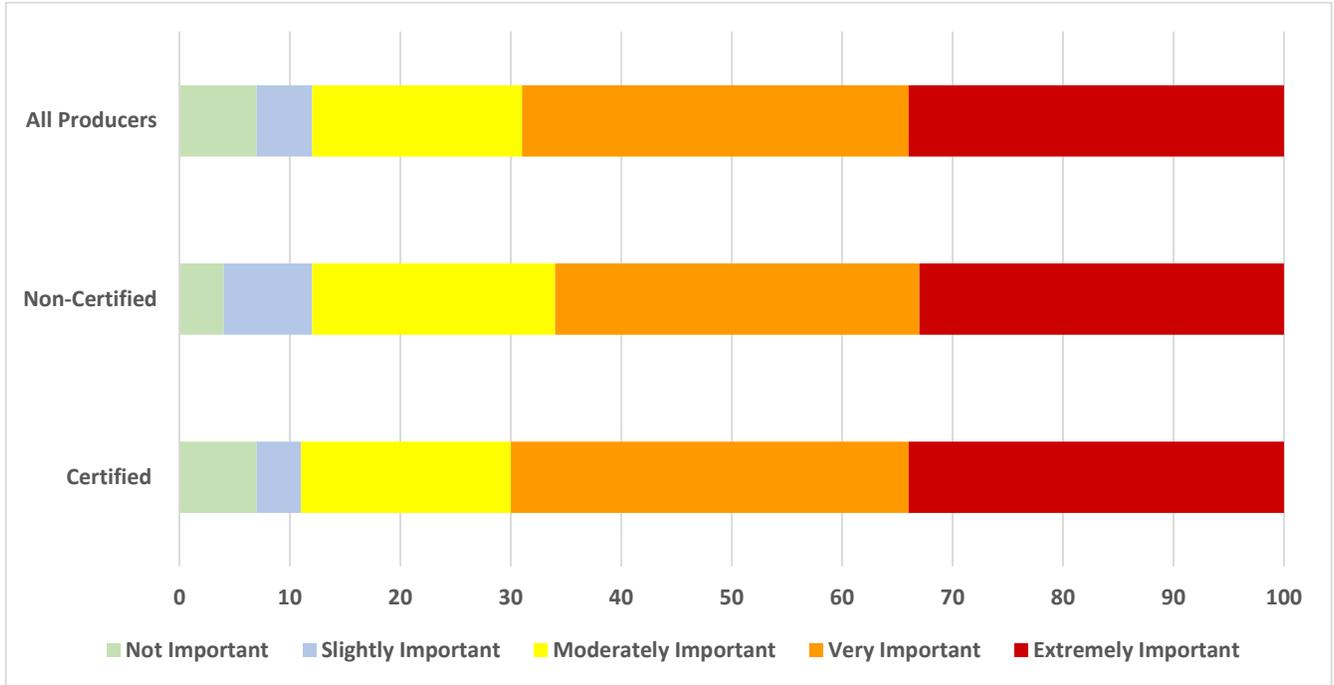


Spot Inspections

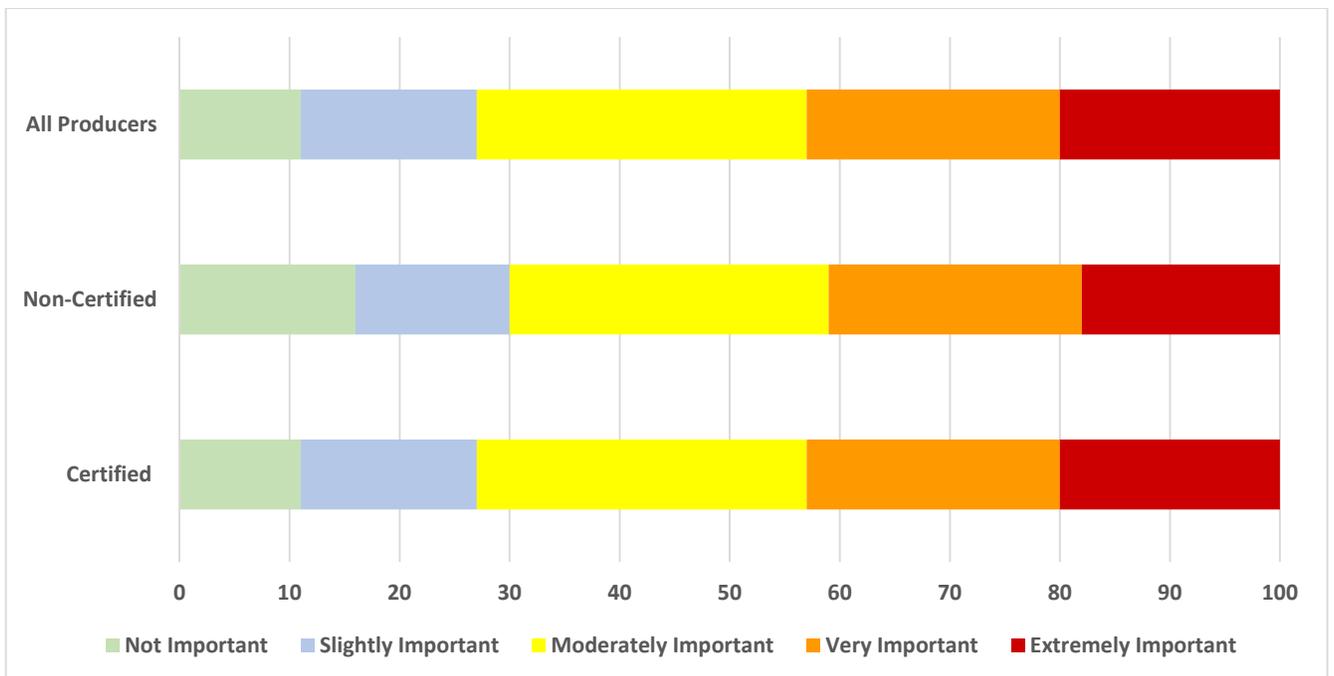


State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Complaint Investigations

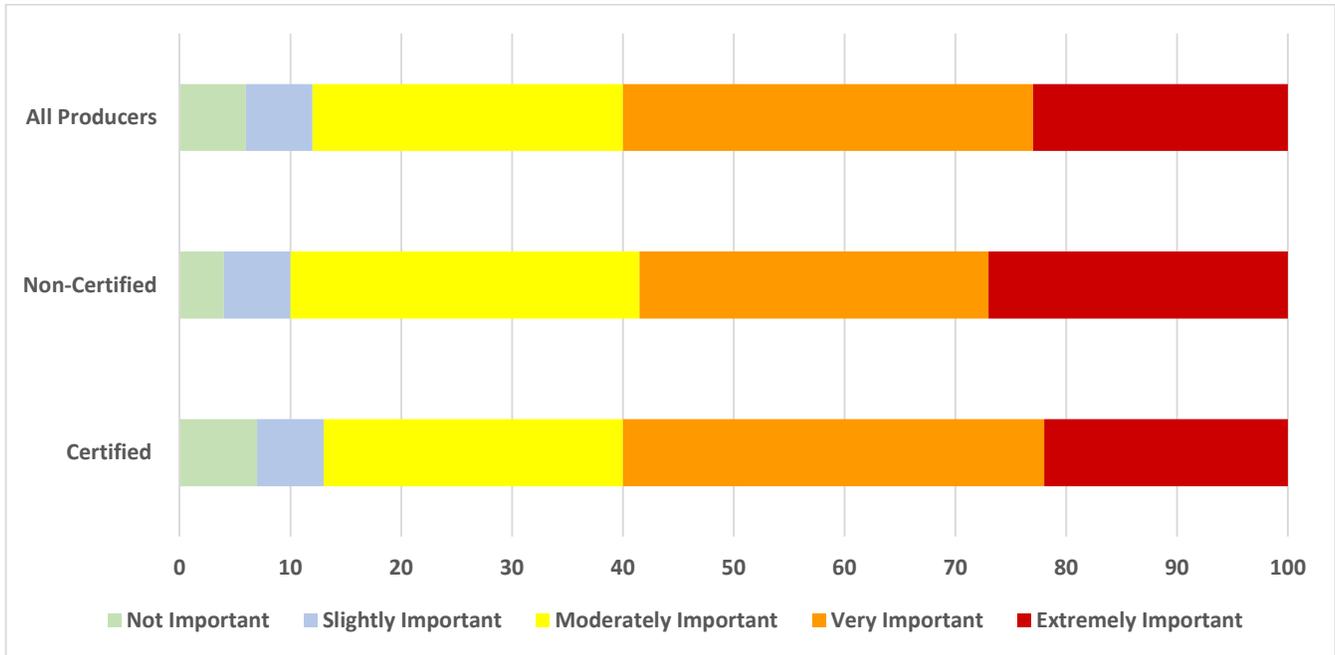


Assess Monetary Penalties

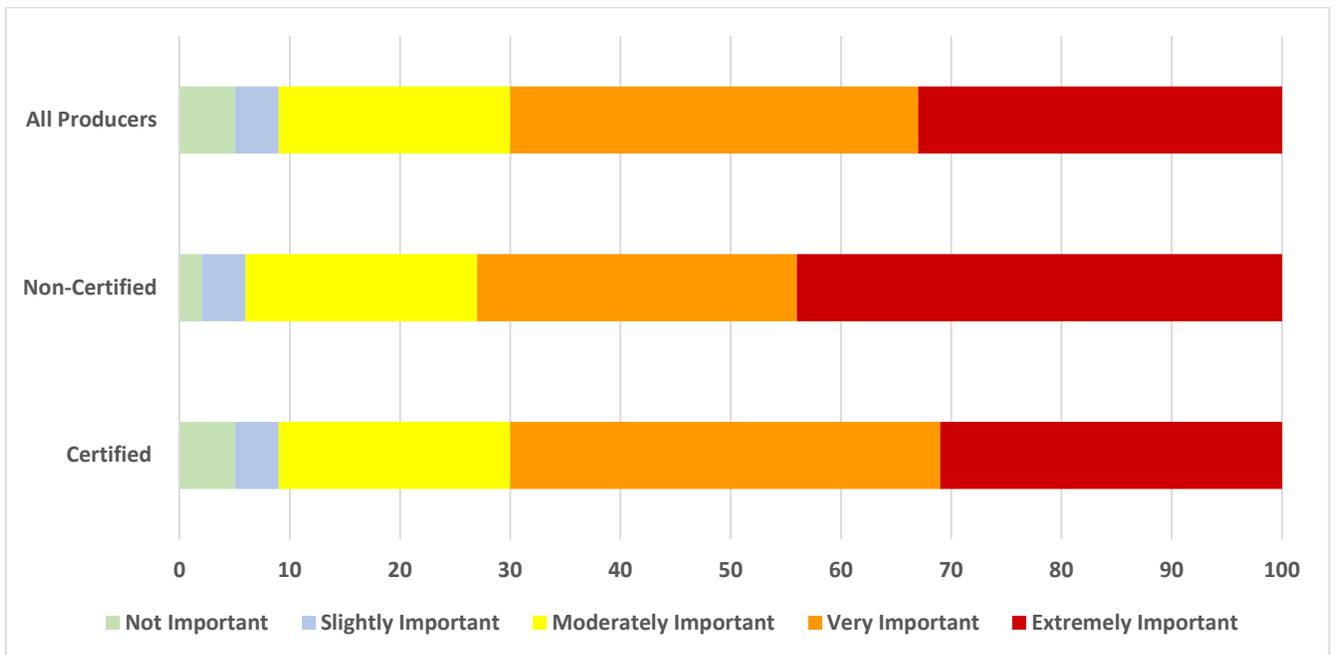


State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Grower Mediation Option on Actions by Certifiers

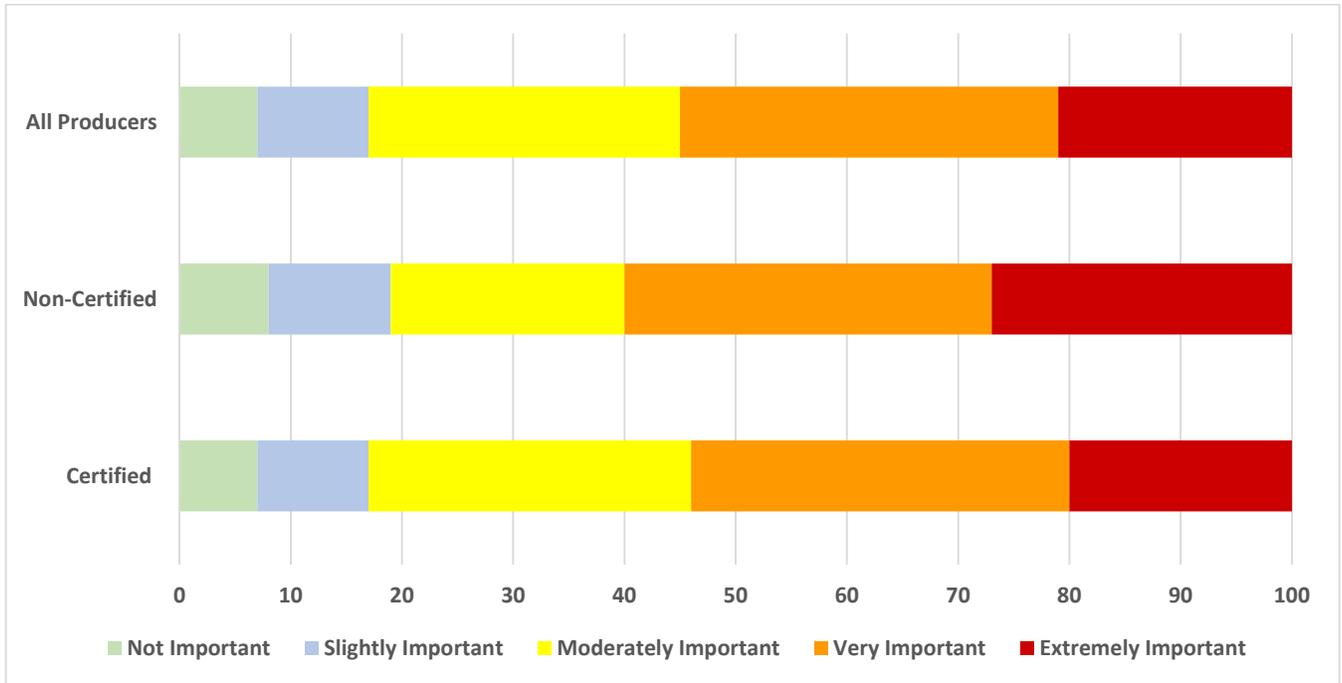


Due Process upon Denial or Revocation of Registration/Certification

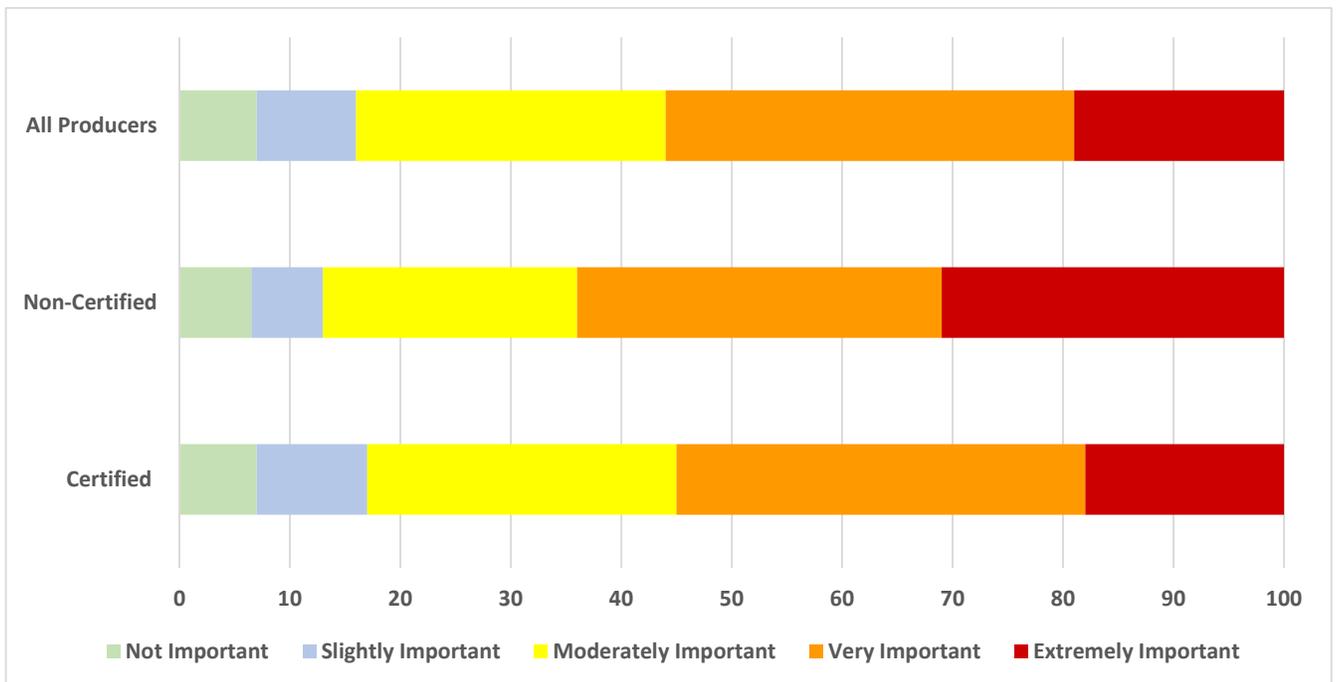


State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Providing Statewide Outreach

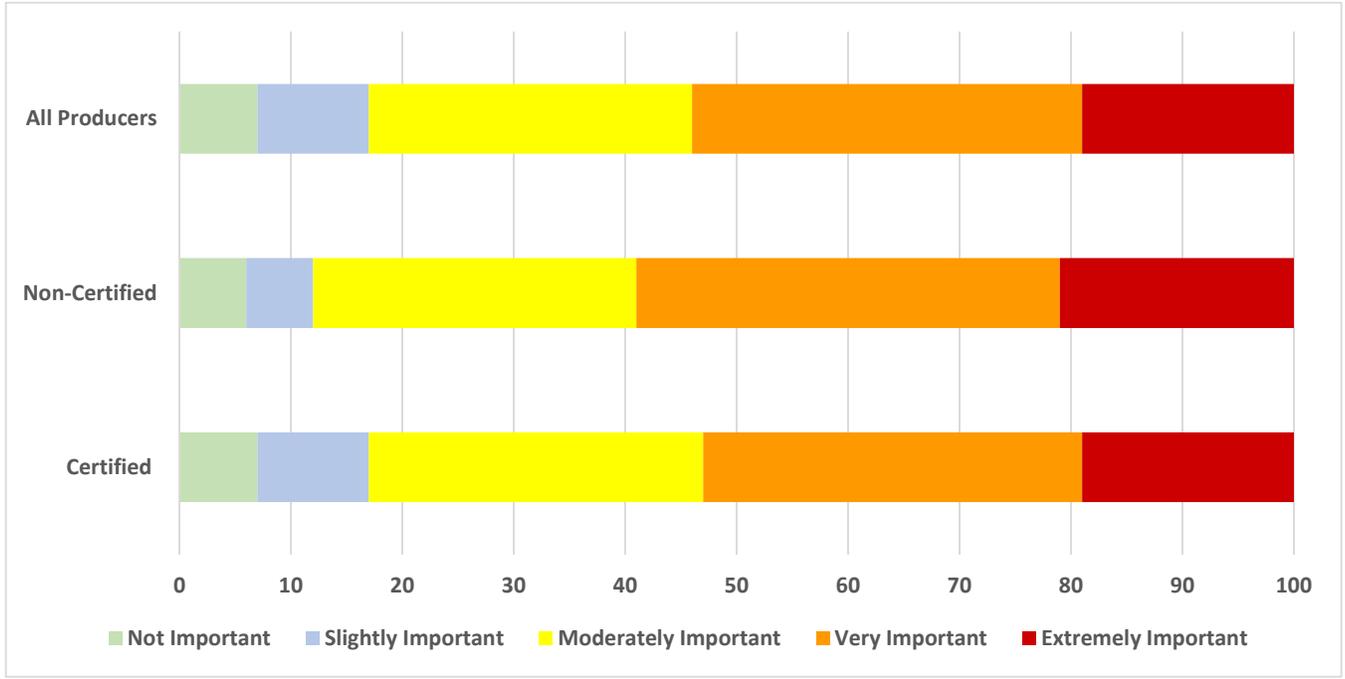


Providing Published Data Reports



State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Providing Training to Stakeholders



State Organic Program Survey Results

Producers

Section I

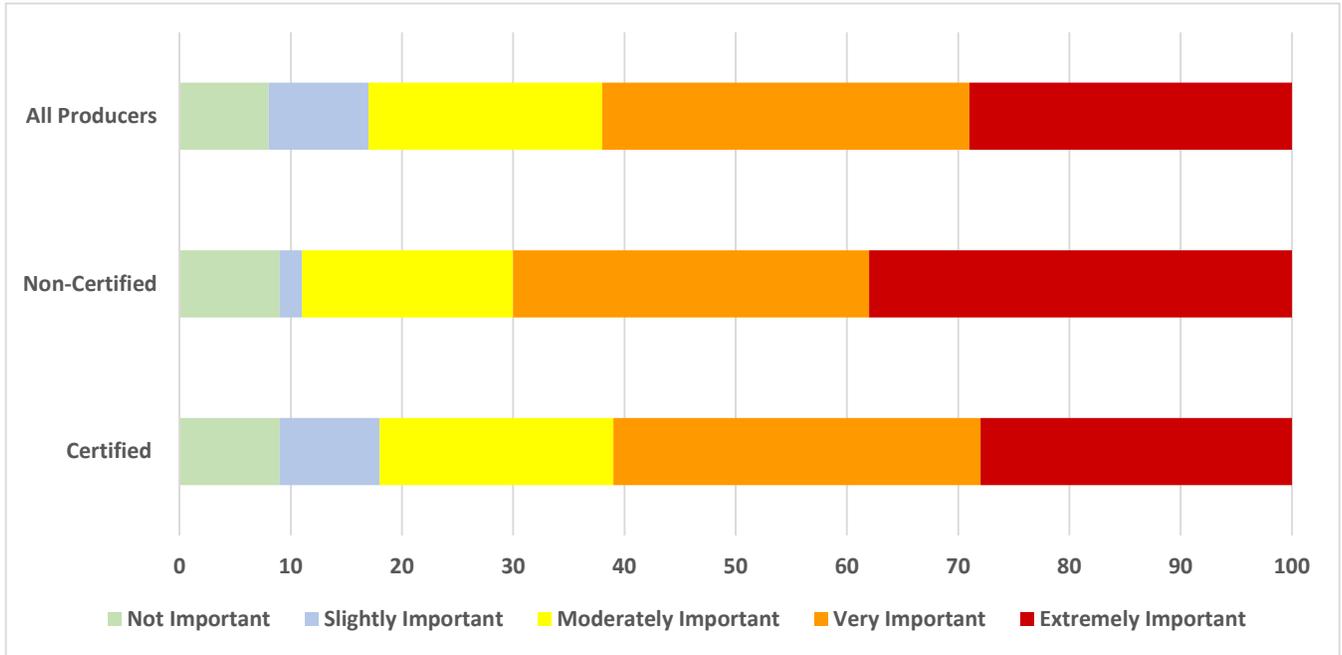
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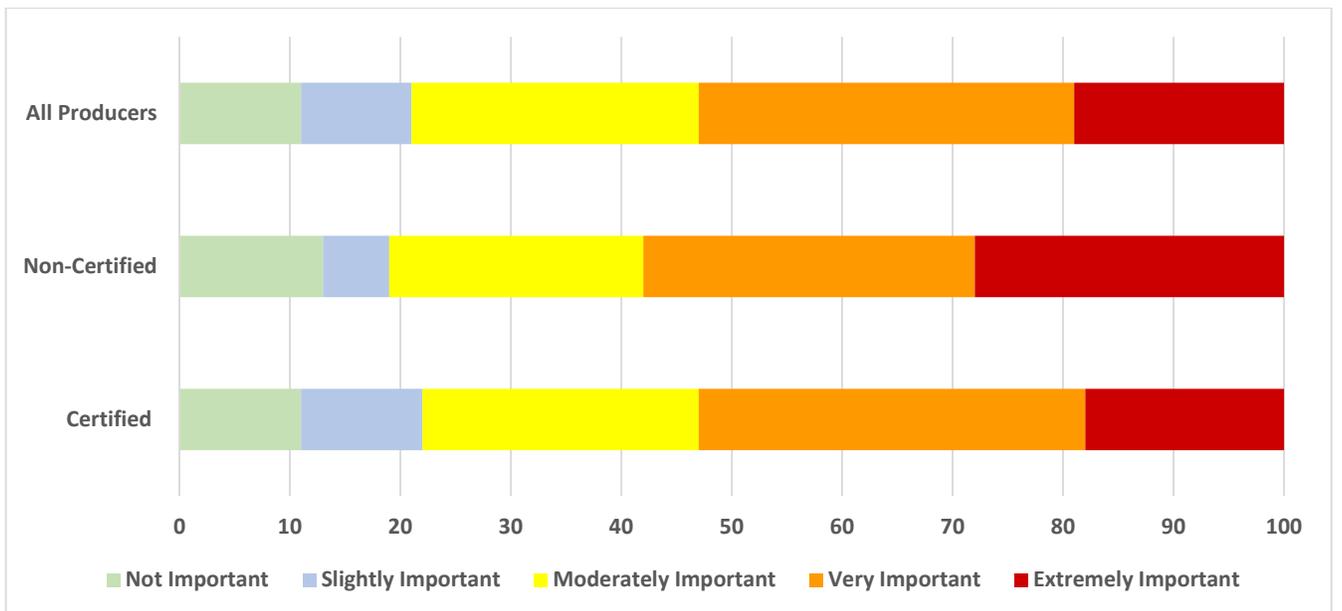
State Organic Program Survey Results

Producers

Establish Framework That Allows Organic Farmers to Receive Technical Assistance and Information



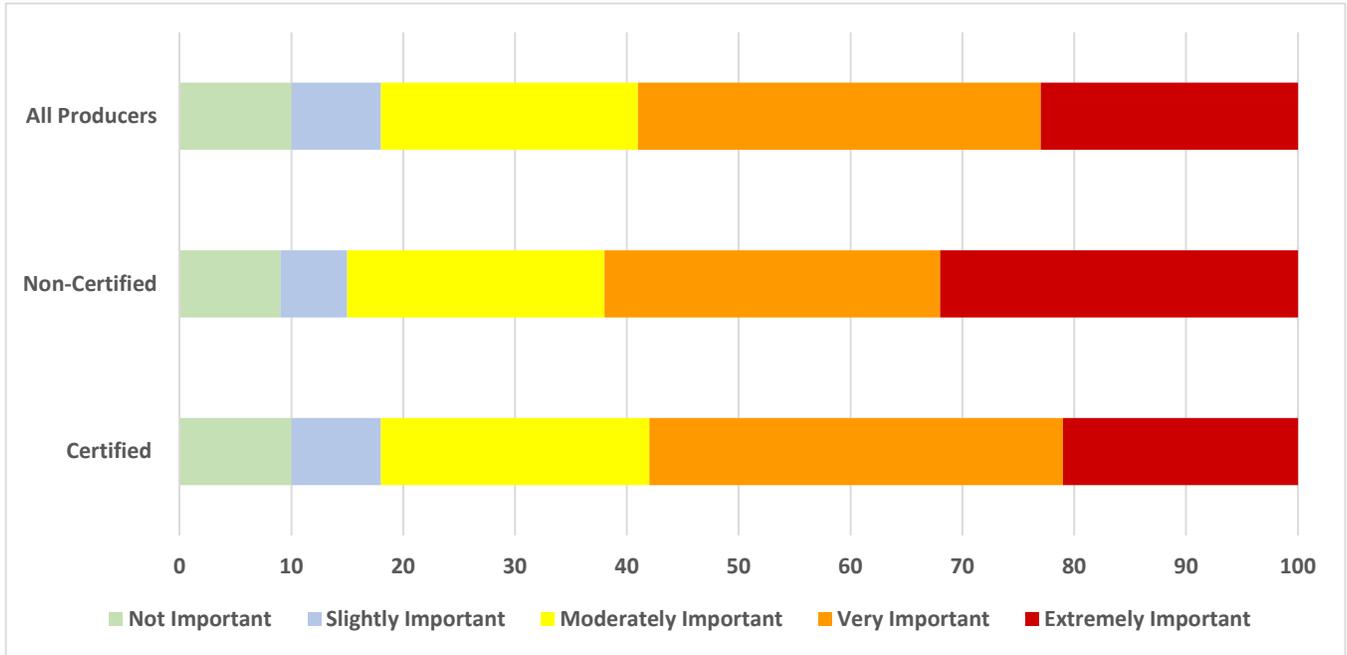
Identify Areas for Organic Research Priorities



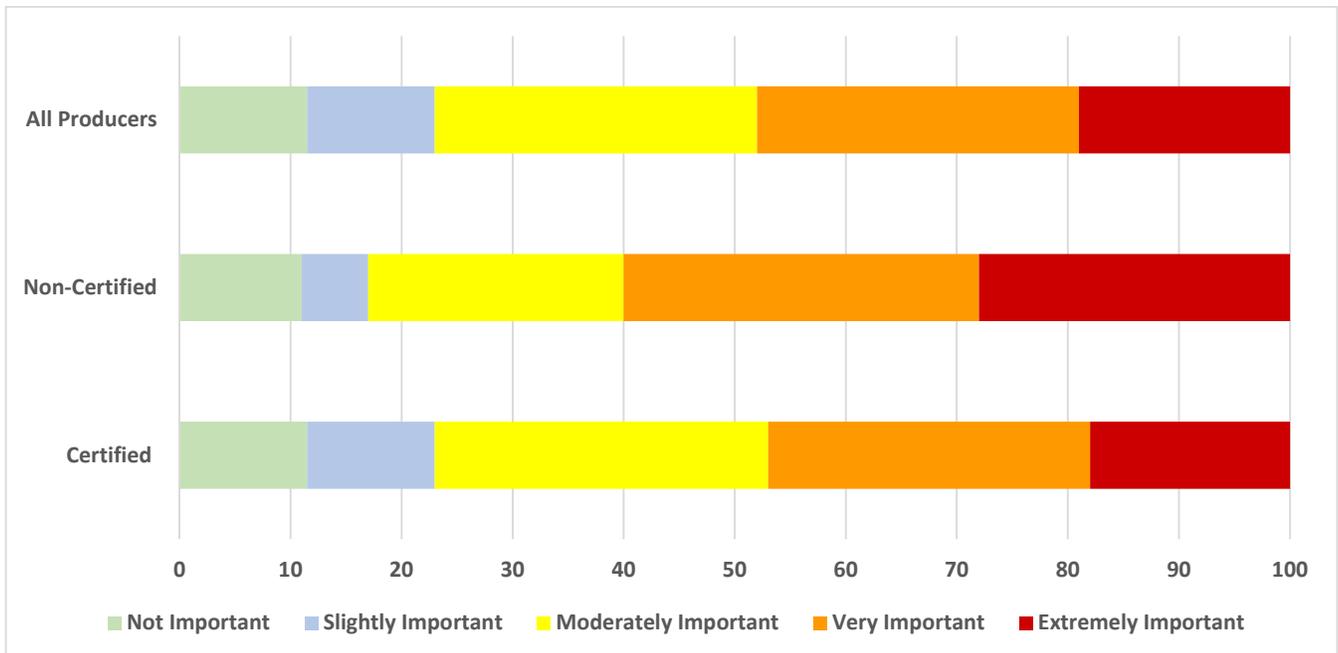
State Organic Program Survey Results

Producers

Provide a Clearing House of Information, Research Findings, Practices, and Techniques



Create a Forum for Exchange of Grower Practices



State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

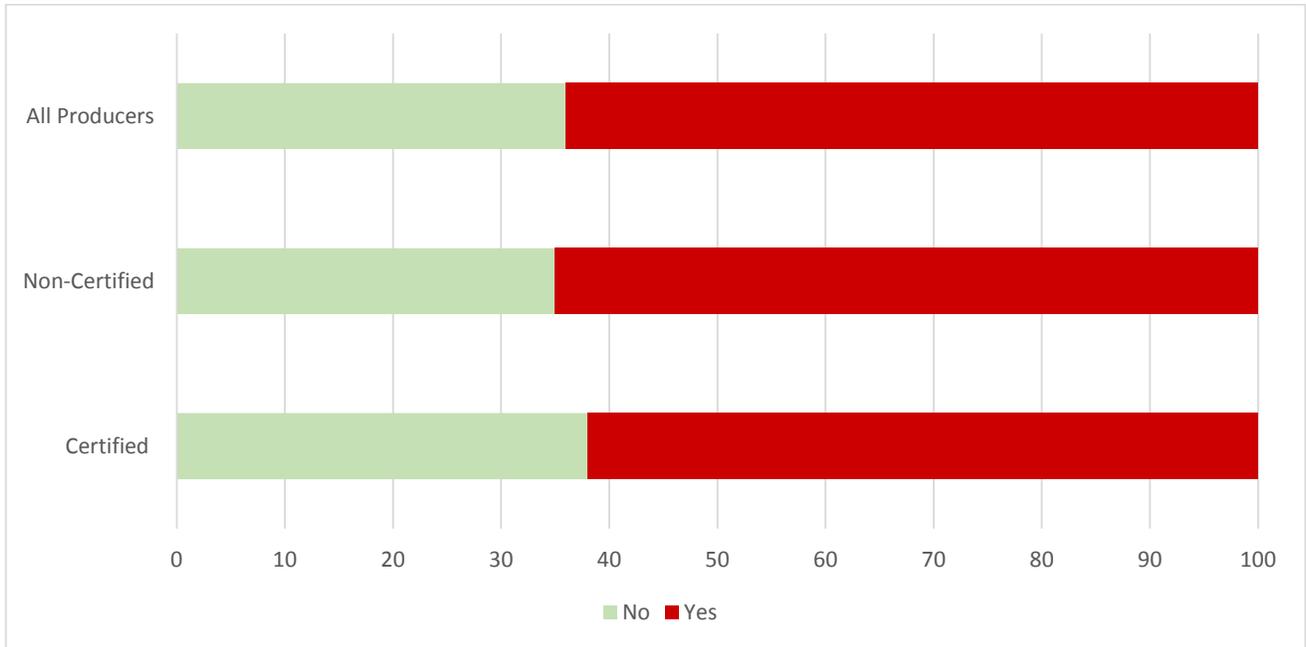
Section I

Subsection C

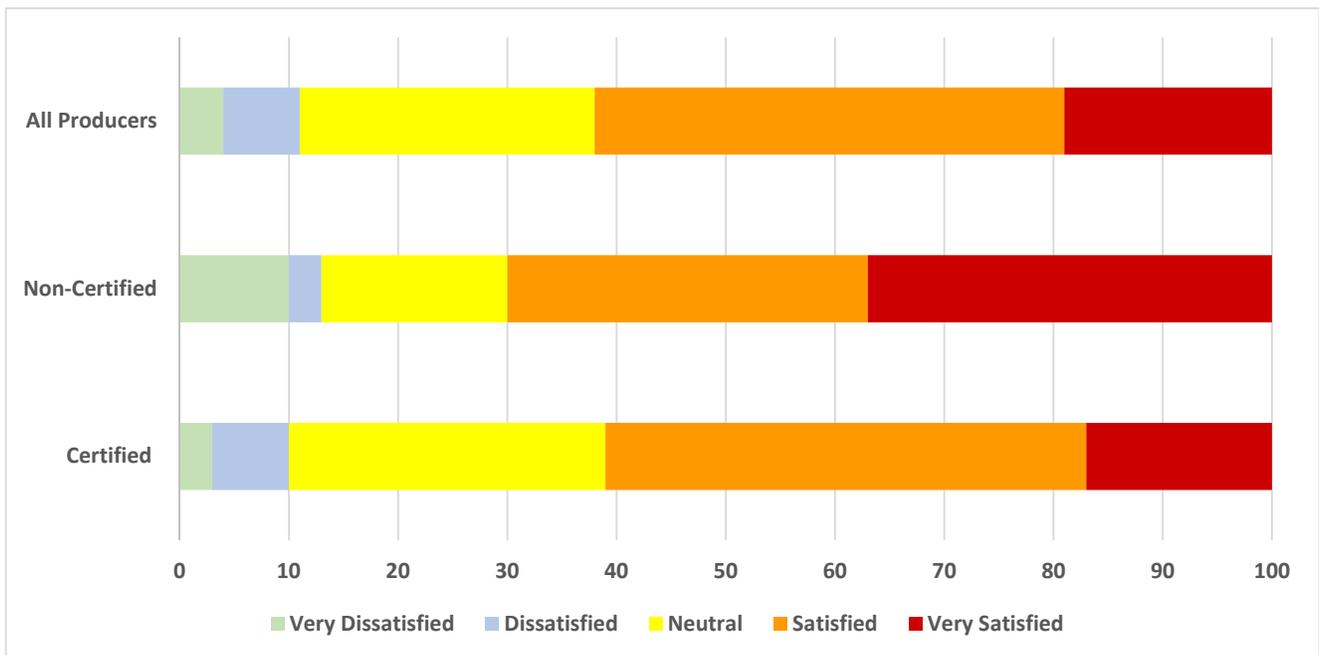
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State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Do you Currently Utilize the Online Registration Process

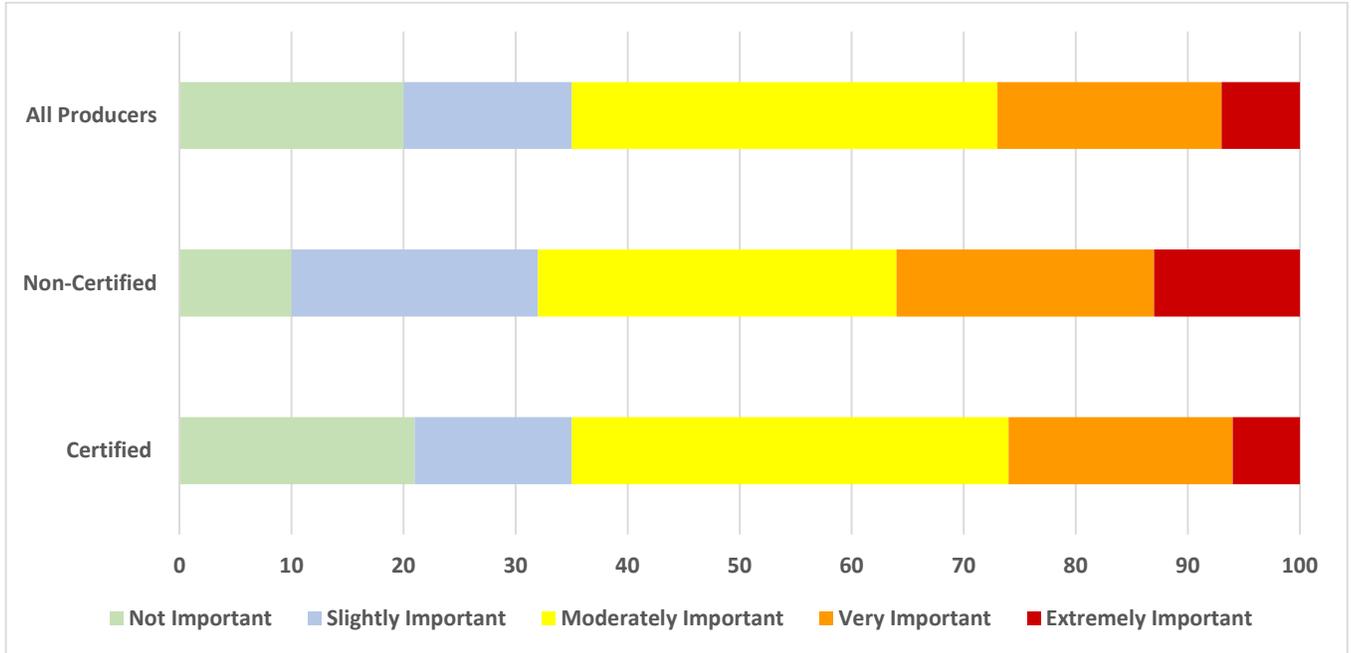


Satisfaction with Overall Experience Using the Online Registration Process

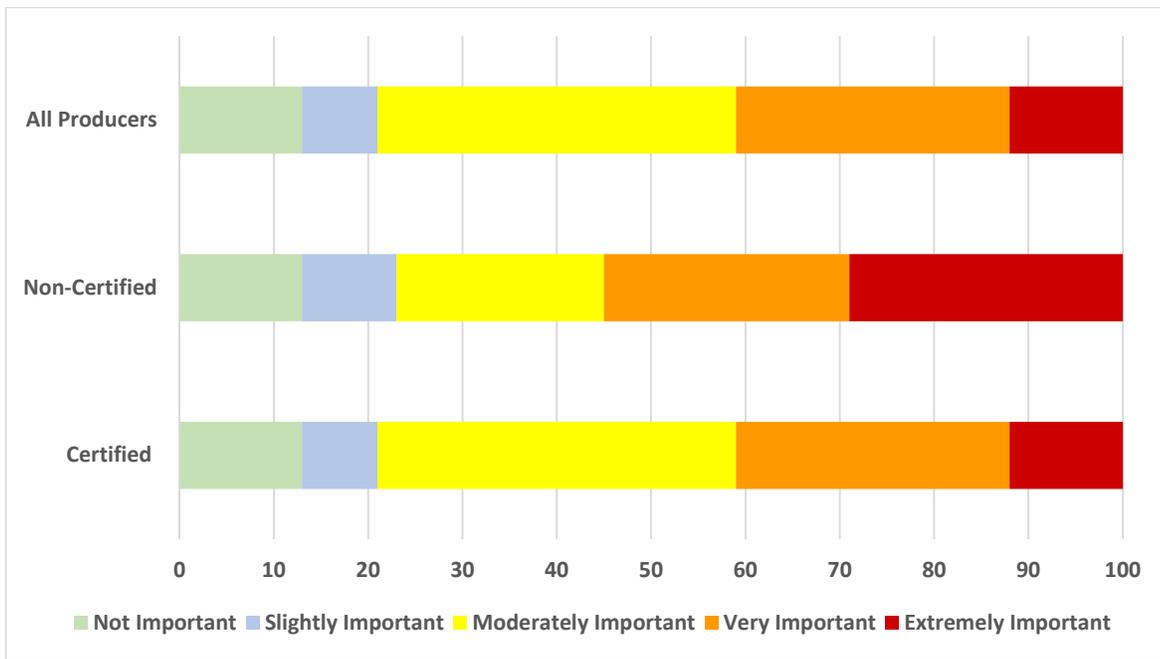


State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Gross Sales Data

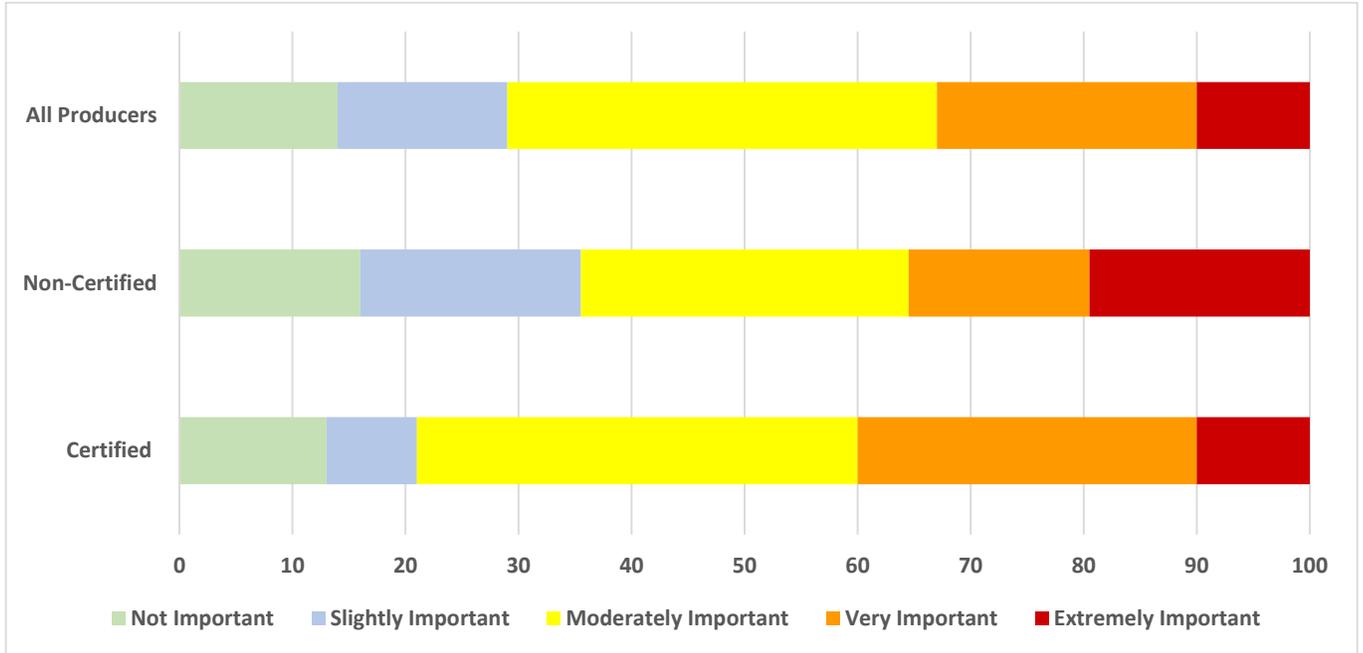


Commodity Information

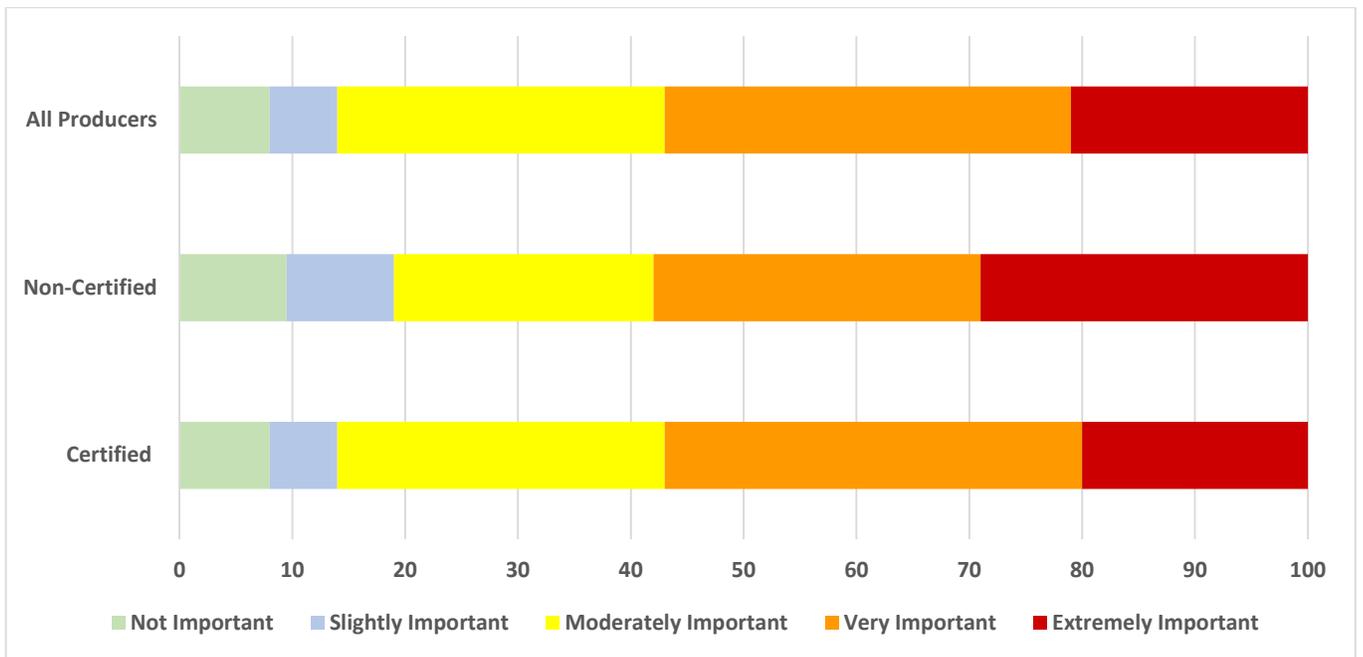


State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Site/Parcel Information

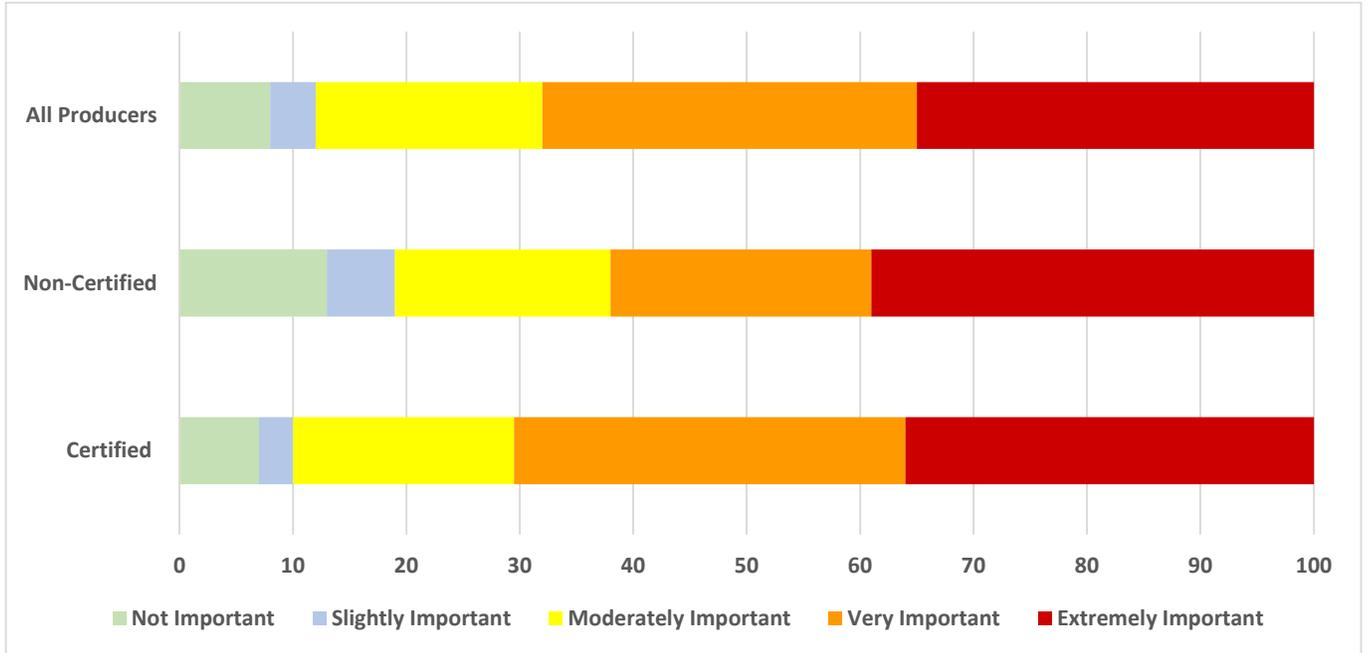


Registration Status Update



State Organic Program Survey Results Producers

Print Valid Certificates



State Organic Program Survey Results Comments

While the California Department of Food and Agriculture, State Organic Program values all responses of this survey, the following are constructive comments given by respondents. For detailed survey results and comments please go to: www.cdfa.ca.gov

“Can't use database with multiple sites.”

“There is widespread abuse as represented by operations identified as "ORGANIC" on the internet as researched by county. CDFA would be well advised to see what's happening out there.”

“Law enforcement is no 1 in organic farming”

“I would suggest that the CDFA should spend some time and money on explaining to the consumers/public exactly what "organic" means. As opposed to the rather shadowy terms "natural" and "sustainable." It seems that some large corporations are doing everything they can to confuse consumers, and water-down what "organic" is. Keep "organic" standards high.”

“While I was a Livestock Certified farmer I noticed there were differences in requirements by different certifiers! This is unfair to those farmers who follow the rules, while others don't. Make rules the same for everyone!”

“As a producer of meat products it is very confusing to determine the appropriate state agency for registration. Furthermore, attempting to register multiple production facilities served to further complicate the registration process. The registration process should really be simplified to make inadvertent registration errors less likely.”

“Database is not user friendly, if you have more than one site.”

“Don't know if this is relevant, but seems like the entire process of registration at local, state, and national (or international) level, if applicable could be made less daunting if each farm had only ONE number that covered local, state, and national levels. I go nuts trying to make sure I have the correct #s for each entity to which we are obliged to report.”

“Have not used CDFA other than for registration. Form and info are rather simple - do not need computer for it. Cannot rank other "boxes" on this survey due to lack of involvement.”

“Retail enforcement is the opportunity for cheating. Assess them and police them.”

“I produce only one commodity. So data on other commodities is not important to me. I play and grow by the rules. Therefore spot inspections and enforcement is important to me.”

State Organic Program Survey Results Comments (continued)

“Research should be conducted and distributed by UCCE; Ag commissioners are all about pesticides and are and should remain irrelevant to organics; certifiers are the go to people for advice and should remain so; SOP should be for registration. Sorry.”

“It is very confusing when you try to print a receipt for your records. I prefer to write a check not use a credit card. If you try and change something after sending or making a mistake filling the form out it locks you out of the system.”

“The state needs be concerned with research and education first, this is ALWAYS the way in which long term success will be achieved in any capacity. Second is the bureaucracy in which said education takes place. If favoring the people within the organization takes precedent over the goal of the organization, then you will fail. The only way to ensure that organic standards will break new ground, instead of maintaining the status quo, will be in the realization that the definition must expand beyond what is simply not within the products, but what is in it. Or, to put it more simply, standards of soil quality (not just the exclusion of certain pesticides), standards of processing (not just what isn't in the process), and standards of stewardship (not just "what we aren't doing") need to be implemented.”

“I like the idea of doing the paperwork online but don't like the way it is set up, i.e., not returning to the page you are working on.”

“It is our experience that Organic does not equate to higher prices for organic items thereby not competing well with non-organic. Find ways to educate the consumer and assist the producer to make it worth the effort and cost.”

“Really like the online registration process. I find it user friendly and efficient.”

“For producers that are growing 15 - 30 different crops AND on a very small scale (1-10 acres), the gross sales for each crop is incredibly challenging, and since information is not usually tracked in this way for these small farms, especially, I dare say that the gross sales information you are receiving is largely inaccurate. Simply a line item, or commodity that states "diverse vegetable operation" with corresponding gross sales is manageable.”

“As this aspect of our industry grows we need all the help we can get to keep a level playing field. We don't need new rules, just keep enforcing the ones we have. Food safety must always be a part of all of over site.”

“How are SOP and third party organic certifiers working and cooperating with each other?”

“Comments included on last page. I love the ability to renew online, but just wished that it saved my commodities list from last year's registration, since I have to re-enter my entire list, which is several pages, and like probably other farmers, doesn't change much from year to year. Stakeholder input is extremely important. We are the boots on the ground living this every day. The types of commodities are so varied that the level of expertise from the stakeholders is invaluable to the development of programs, legislation and procedure.”



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, State Organic Program would like to thank those who took the time to complete this survey. Your participation and feedback is vital to the success of our program.