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## **Iowa to Host First Midwest Organic Pork Conference**

*Supported by a Grant From the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture*

**October 30, 2018 – Des Moines, Iowa** -- The Iowa Organic Association (IOA) will host the Midwest Organic Pork Conference (MOPC) in Waterloo, Iowa on March 8-9, 2019. This will be the first conference ever organized in the United States dedicated to presenting the best resources and information available to help expand opportunities for organic and natural pork production and distribution.

### **Conference Goal**

“The MOPC provides a venue to bring together a diverse group of expert organic and niche hog farmers, organic researchers, industry experts and others who will share available research, best production practices and technical assistance for organic hog production with apprentice, transitioning and organic farmers from across the Midwest,” says Rosalyn Lehman, Iowa Organic Association executive director. “This conference will further motivate interest in developing new research networks to support an expanding organic hog industry.”

### **Why the Need?**

MOPC is a response to an unmet, rising market demand for locally-produced organic pork. Currently there is a lack of both U.S. agricultural research on organic hog production and a limited number of swine veterinarians and professionals knowledgeable about the health and nutritional needs of organic hogs – especially those that supplement much of their diet with forage.

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## **Midwest Organic Pork Conference**

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This conference will reach farmers from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and across the Midwest who produce organic and “natural” pork and who are the best suited producers to expand or transition to organic pork production to fill this growing market locally.

The conference is supported by a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) grant. (Grant #2018-51300-28427/Project Accession #1016579.) IOA was one of only 24 organizations across the country to receive an OREI grant in 2018.

The MOPC Advisory Committee is comprised of some of the Midwest’s leading organic and natural pork producers, researchers, veterinarians, processors, farmer organizations, and state agencies. This collaboration has been vital in developing conference topics, recruiting presenters, setting the 2- day agenda, and coordinating marketing to attendees from across the Midwest, and beyond.

“We hope to attract interest and participation from all across the United States and even the United Kingdom where organic pork research and practices are well-established,” says Lehman. “We are excited to bring the expertise to the Midwest to not only help current organic hog farmers expand production, but to encourage those thinking about entering into this type of production or transitioning from conventional or niche operations.

The conference will be held at the Waterloo Center for the Arts in Waterloo on Friday, March 8 and Saturday, March 9, 2019 More information is available at [MidwestOrganicPorkConference.org](http://MidwestOrganicPorkConference.org).

### **About Iowa Organic Association**

The Iowa Organic Association (IOA) is a statewide, 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to organic education, advocacy and cooperation. Our membership is a diverse community of Iowa’s organic farmers, gardeners, food and farm businesses, advocates and consumers who are devoted to building a more sustainable Iowa. More information at [IowaOrganic.org](http://IowaOrganic.org).

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