

Is organic losing the younger generation?

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### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Is Organic Losing?
- Greenwashing Regenerative
- Back to School
- AIPH & Water
- Report from the MT Outpost



## Is Organic Losing the Younger Generation?

The Real Organic Podcast recently hosted Max Goldberg, founder of *Organic Insider*, who spends his days reporting on and following news in the organic industry. (Reminder: Real Organic has an add-on label to the USDA Organic label, which, among other things, does not allow for hydroponic production.)

The podcast covers a lot of ground, and if you're looking to catch up on some of the divides within the organic industry, they spend a fair amount of time discussing hydroponic production. But the comment that caught my attention was Max noting that younger generations are trending towards regenerative agriculture and abandoning organic.





He said, "I feel like in organic, we're really losing the younger generation. It's really worrisome that so many younger people that I meet don't understand organic, they don't see the value, and they think it's losing credibility in the marketplace. I think this is a very serious issue, because if younger people are not paying attention to this, organic is going to have even more problems going forward."

[Catch the conversation here](#). But also keep in mind that while regenerative ag is having a very trendy moment right now, some folks are equally worried that it, too, will begin to lose value in consumers' eyes. (Keep reading below.)



## Will USDA's Regenerative Ag Pilot Lead to Greenwashing?

With the above podcast on organics in mind, let's turn our attention to the USDA, which has recently launched a new Regenerative Pilot Program through its Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Aubrey Bettencourt, Chief of the NRCS, recently jumped on YouTube to talk about that pilot program.

Those who take part in the pilot get to work with NRCS staff on a whole-farm assessment, and they must agree to perform soil health testing. Participants need to use at least one of the primary regenerative management practices in order to qualify. That includes things like conservation crop rotation, cover crops, drainage water management, irrigation water management, mulching and nutrient management.



However, the lack of a strict definition of regenerative agriculture in this pilot has caused critics of the program to argue that it is setting the stage for greenwashing. Meanwhile, there are a number of different regenerative ag certification options out there.

You can check out the NRCS program specifics, as well as Bettencourt's video [right here](#).



## Back to School

Time to brush up on your lifelong learning? Here are three sessions coming up—two online and one in person.

**Hottest New Perennials of 2026.** A *GrowerTalks* livestream featuring guest expert Laura Robles of Walters Gardens, who will expand your knowledge and expertise in growing Proven Winners Perennials with this in-depth webinar.

She will review 15 of the hottest new perennials available at retail in 2026. And as a bonus, she'll give you an early look at 15 standout varieties Walters is planning to introduce for 2027! This live online session will deliver practical insights, best practices and growing tips to help optimize plant performance and elevate your perennial program. Be sure to bring your perennial questions!

It's slated for Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m. EST. [Register here.](#)

**School Garden Sessions.** Kids Gardening is offering four sessions on the fundamentals of creating and sustaining a successful school garden program. (These are live sessions but recordings will be available.) March 2, 4, 9 & 11. [Register here.](#)

**CEA Herb Extension & Research Base Meeting.** Dig into the results of CEA experiments and outreach from some of the country's best researchers at this stakeholder meeting. From UV-B lighting on culinary herbs to fertilizer formulations and the effects of air and nutrient temps on growth, the presenters have a deep list of topics. Free, but registration is limited to 75 people. June 29-30 in Knoxville, Tennessee. [Register here.](#)



## Plus, AIPH Talks Water & Climate in Australia



The annual AIPH Horticultural Industry Conference heads to Sydney, Australia, this year, where they're tackling climate change and changing markets, among other topics. It's a place where some of the top leaders in the horticulture world explore forces shaping the industry—and it's both telling and appropriate that drought-prone Australia address the water issue.

Here's what they'll be looking at regarding climate topics: Matt Kean, Chair of the Climate Change Authority in Australia, will address the challenges of climate change and actions that need to be taken. Chris Philpott, CEO, The Water Conservancy, plans to give insights on water management best practices in Australia. And a panel will also tackle the issue of how the industry can respond to water pressure.

The meeting takes place March 8-12. Learn more [here](#).

## Report from the MT Outpost



Over here at the Outpost, we're experiencing some major funding losses in my day job in the nonprofit world—part of that being that vying for private grants just got frighteningly competitive.

But also, donors are more cautious right now. Meanwhile, our little cabin rental “side business” saw reservations grind to a halt for six weeks ... and I talked to several area professionals who noted similar trends. Our nearly snowless winter has compounded all this.

So here I am, having moved through the panic phase and into reframing and adapting. I'm overhauling fundraising and marketing tactics. I've done a few experiments. A few flopped. But last week, I shifted digital marketing for the [Backroad Cabin](#) to just a Montana audience, hoping to snag those local weekend getaways. It worked, reservations arrived, and then a few summer “Yellowstone trip” bookings rolled in (because the algorithm loves increased engagement, of course). It's still slow, but I can breathe a little easier.

This has given me a newfound appreciation for the precarious nature of spring plant sales, the interior stress of wobbly consumer confidence, unpredictable weather, and social trends. It's not for the faint of heart. But resilience is built in those moments of adaptation—not in constant success. And if you're glued to the winter Olympics like I am right now, I'm reminded of that message daily.

Until next time,



*Jennifer Duffield White*

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