

Major US study backs alternative farming

"Well managed alternative farms use less synthetic chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and antibiotics without necessarily decreasing-and in some cases increasing-per acre crop yields and the productivity of livestock systems", according to a landmark study from the National Research council in the USA, published last September. It continues; Wide adoption of proven alternative systems would result in even greater economic benefits to farmers and environmental gains for the nation."

The report includes in-depth studies of fourteen farms successfully using alternative farming methods, including rotations, integrated pest management and animal disease prevention. It recommends that the US government invest \$40 million in a competitive grant programme to encourage farmers to convert, and identifies lack of information for farmers as a major problem.

Alternative Agriculture. National Academy Press. 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20418. USA. Price \$19.95 (paperback)

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