major crops as the organic farms and most of them combined crops with livestock.

Data were collected by questionnaire from each of the paired farms for the years 1974-1976.

Another study was done of 23 Cornbelt organic farms in 1977 and 19 of the same farms in 1978. The farms produced the same crops as the 14 paired farms and the same sorts of data were collected from them. However, in the second study the data for the organic farms were compared not with paired conventional farms but with averages for the counties in which the organic farms were located.

The combined results of the two studies showed that averaged over the years 1974-1978 the organic farms had lower yields than the conventional farms, but they also had lower costs, reduced outlays for fertilizer and pesticides more than offsetting increased labor costs. The yield and cost data were averaged over all cropland, including that in rotation hay and pasture, soil improving crops and crop failure.

Because lower yields on the organic farms were offset by lower costs, net income per acre averaged over the five years was about the same for organic and conventional farms. However, in an analysis of these results, Madden (1987) notes that in 1974-1977 severe drought affected some parts of the study area. In 1978, when rainfall approximated the long-term average, per acre net income on the 19 organic farms averaged 13 percent less than the comparable county averages. Madden does not comment on the reasons for this. A possibility, however, is that organically farmed soils may have greater water holding capacity than conventionally farmed soils, giving organic farms relatively more favorable yields in dry years. Recall, however, that even in the droughty years of 1974-1977 average yields of organic farms were less than those of conventional farms.