

Lockeretz et al (1984) do not discuss the reasons for the lower yields on organic farms. They state, however, that the organic farmers in their sample reported that weeds were one of the major problems they had to deal with. This could account for some of the differential. Some also could be accounted for by the fact that the organic farms had a greater proportion of their land in rotation hay and pasture, and in soil building crops.

Helmets et al (1986) compared two organic cropping systems with eleven conventional systems in east-central Nebraska. The organic systems were in a corn-soybean-corn-oat/sweet clover rotation, as were two of the conventional systems. The other conventional systems were continuous corn, continuous soybeans, continuous grain sorghum, and rotations of these crops with each other. The two organic systems used no inorganic fertilizer and no herbicides or insecticides. The difference between them was that in one manure was charged at the cost of applying it and in the other it was charged at the price of equivalent inorganic fertilizer.

The study covered the years 1978-1985. The yield and input data were collected from experimental plots managed by the University of Nebraska. Cost data were taken from USDA farm budget studies for the region and covered all purchased inputs, machinery operation, and labor (excluding "overhead" labor). Both input and crop prices were expressed in 1985 dollars. Net returns were calculated for each system for each year, and represent the returns to investment in land, machinery, overhead labor, and management.

Animal production was not included in any of the systems studied. Helmets et al (1986) do not indicate the source of the manure used with the two organic systems.

The results of the study showed that over the 8 years considered, the corn-soybean rotation produced the highest average net returns per acre (\$175.15). The return to the grain sorghum-soybean rotation was only