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**Review of *The Economics of Organic Grain and Soybean
Production in the Midwestern United States* by Rick Welsh**

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The Economics of Organic Grain and Soybean Production in the Midwestern United States. Rick Welsh. Greenbelt, MD: Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture, 1999. 56 pp. Photos, tables, references. \$15.00 paper (ISBN 1893182207).

Funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, this short report, its foreword claims, “synthesizes and interprets economic studies of organic grain and soybean production by Midwestern universities.” In so doing it reviews and analyzes previously completed studies from Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota, along with two earlier studies of the Corn Belt.

The titles of the chapters that follow the introduction offer a clear idea of the report’s attempt at coverage: “The Growing Organic Industry”; “Is Organic Agriculture Productive and Profitable?”; “Review of Midwestern Organic Grain and Soybean Studies”; “Additional Considerations”; and “Policy Implications.” The work was completed just before controversy erupted over the international trade of agricultural products employing genetically modified organisms, an issue likely to increase interest in organic agriculture significantly.

In addition to synthesizing previous studies, the report’s major contributions lie in its examination of how price premiums change the economic competitiveness of organic agriculture and its conclusion “that organic production systems are competitive with most common conventional production systems. Indeed, if farmers obtain current market premiums for organic grains and soybeans, their organic production generally delivers higher profits than nonorganic grain and soybean production.”

Even within its limited focus, the report devotes some discussion to transition problems farmers face moving to organic production, environmental implications and externality problems, and policy issues. There is no discussion, however, of supposed biases in past federal commodity programs against crop rotations associated with organic agriculture. Also, the report does not examine the commonly held perspective that organic agriculture would be useful in slowing down farm size expansion and helping to maintain rural communities.

One weakness of some of the studies used as the basis for the report is the relatively short length of the yield trials. In addition, organic agriculture as a practice has tended to be viewed as equally applicable for all soils rather than a practice better adapted to some soils than others.

This report is a useful addition to the literature related to the economics of organic agriculture. While relatively few studies of farm level economies of Midwest organic farming have been completed, it is convenient to have them summarized in one place. **Glenn A. Helmers**, *Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.

Insecticide Resistance: From Mechanisms to Management. Edited by I. Denholm, J. A. Pickett, and A. L. Devonshire. Wallingford, Oxfordshire, UK and New York: CABI Publishing, 1999. vi+123 pp. Figures, tables, references, notes, index. \$65.00 cloth (ISBN 0851993672).