



National Organic Program Information Submission Requirements for Certifying Agents

1. Purpose

This document specifies the information that certifying agents must submit to the National Organic Program (NOP), Accreditation and International Activities (AIA) Division to maintain accreditation.

2. Scope

This document applies to all certifying agents operating under the NOP Regulations.

3. References

- 3.1. *The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990; 7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq. (The Act)*
- 3.2. *7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program Regulations (NOP Regulations)*
- 3.3. *NOP Program Handbook*
- 3.4. *NOP Reading Room*
- 3.5. *NOP 2000 – General Accreditation Policies and Procedures*
- 3.6. *NOP 2024-1 Annual Report Checklist*
- 3.7. *NOP 2024-2 List of Certified Operations Template*

4. Policy

Certifying agents are required to submit information to the NOP per the requirements at 7 CFR Part 205. This information includes:

- 4.1. Changes to policies, procedures, operating protocols in accordance with §205.510(a).
- 4.2. Relevant notices in accordance with §205.501(a)(15)(i).
- 4.3. A current list of operations certified as of January 2nd of each calendar year in accordance with §205.501(a)(15)(ii).
- 4.4. The results of all analyses and tests in accordance with §205.670(d)(1).

5. Submitting Information

5.1. General Information

5.1.1. Language

All documents and related information must be submitted in English. Documents and information submitted in other languages are not compliant with the NOP reporting requirements.



5.1.2. Format

NOP must receive documents and related information in a portable electronic form such as a flash drive, CD ROM, or DVD or through e-mail. Printed material will not be accepted by the NOP.

NOTE: When submitting information via e-mail, please limit document size to approximately 2 megabytes per submission to ensure receipt through network.

5.1.3. Contact Information

Unless otherwise instructed, submit all information, including corrective actions, to the address below:

USDA, AMS, National Organic Program
Accreditation and International Activities Division
100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101
Fredericksburg, VA 22406
Phone: (540) 361-2712
Email: AIAInbox@ams.usda.gov

5.2. Annual Reports

In accordance with §205.510(a), certifying agents are required to annually submit to the NOP on or before the anniversary date of issuance of the notification of accreditation, as shown on the *Decision on Accreditation*. The following information must be submitted as part of the annual report:

5.2.1. A complete and accurate update of information submitted pursuant to §205.503 and §205.504, in accordance with *NOP 2024-1 Annual Report Checklist*;

5.2.2. Information supporting any accreditation changes requested by the certifying agent per §205.500, in accordance with *NOP 2024-1 Annual Report Checklist*;

5.2.3. A description of measures implemented or to be implemented to satisfy any terms and conditions, as specified in the most recent notification of accreditation or notice of renewal of accreditation;

5.2.4. The results of the most recent performance evaluations and annual program review, including a description of adjustments to the certifying agents operation and procedures implemented or to be implemented in response to the performance evaluations and program review, in accordance with *NOP 2024-1 Annual Report Checklist*; and

5.2.5. The fees required in §205.640(a), if applicable.



5.3. Notifications

In accordance with §§205.501(a)(15)(i), certifying agents must notify the NOP when issuing the following notifications to an applicant for certification or a certified operation.

- a. Notification of noncompliance issued pursuant to 205.405 or 205.662,
- b. Notice of denial of certification issued pursuant to §205.405,
- c. Notification of noncompliance correction/resolution,
- d. Notification of proposed suspension,
- e. Notification of proposed revocation,
- f. Notification of suspension, and
- g. Notification of revocation.

The NOP regulations state that these notices must be sent to the NOP simultaneously with its issuance. The NOP considers sending copies of notices within 1 business day of issuance by email or postal carrier acceptable to meet the requirements of this section. Submit an electronic copy of these notifications to the Administrator in care of the NOP Appeals Team at:

Administrator, USDA-AMS
Attention: NOP Appeals Team
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Mail Stop 0203 – Room 2095-S
Washington, DC 20250
Telephone: (202) 720-6766
Email: NOPACAAdverseActions@ams.usda.gov

NOTE: Some of these notifications can be combined. A certifying agent may issue a notification of noncompliance and notification of denial of certification at the same time.

5.4. Lists of Certified Operations

5.4.1. Certifying Agents Accredited by NOP

In accordance with §205.501(15) (ii), certifying agents must submit, to NOP, by January 2 of each year, a list of each operations granted certification during the preceding year. The NOP considers lists postmarked after January 2nd noncompliant with the NOP regulations. The list must be submitted in MS Excel according to the format described in Attachment A and include:

- a. The name, address, and telephone number of each operation;
- b. The scope of certification;
- c. A list of products certified in MS Excel format;
- d. A FAX number, and
- e. An email address if available.



5.4.2. Certifying Agents in Countries with Recognition Agreements

In accordance with the §205.500(c)(1), the NOP may recognize a foreign government's system for accrediting certifying agents that certify organic operations in compliance with the NOP regulations. A foreign certifying agent accredited through recognition agreements must direct appeals of decisions and relevant notices to the recognized accrediting body's appropriate review authorities, not the NOP Appeals Team.

Recognized foreign governments must submit, to NOP by January 2 of each year, a list of each operation granted certification under the NOP regulations during the preceding year. The list must include:

- a. The name, address, and telephone number of each operation;
- b. The scope of certification;
- c. A list of products certified in MS Excel format;
- d. A FAX number, and
- e. An email address if available.

5.4.3. Certifying Agents in Countries with Equivalency Agreements

In accordance with the §205.500(c) (2) the NOP will accept a foreign certifying agent's accreditation of an organic production or handling operation, when the foreign certifying agent is accredited by a foreign government acting under an equivalency agreement. Annually, the foreign government must provide the NOP with an up-to-date list of certifying agents that are authorized to certify operations under the terms of the equivalency agreement.

Approved on March 29, 2013



Attachment A

Submitting the List of Certified Operations

Column A – “**Certifying Agent**” – Enter the name of the certifying agent that is certifying the operation from the drop down list provided. Either acronym or full name may be used, as long as it is consistent throughout the document;

Column B – “**Certification #**” - Enter the number of the certificate issued to the operation. If there is more than one certificate issued make separate entries;

Column C – “**Primary Scope**” – Enter Crop, Wild Crop, Livestock, Handling, from the drop down list in the form; NOTE: Not Applicable and entries other than the four listed above are not acceptable in this column;

Column D – “**Secondary Scope**” – If more than two scopes are listed on a single certificate, make a separate entry for the additional scopes. Enter Crop, Wild Crop, Livestock, Handling, or Not Applicable from the drop down list in the form; NOTE: Not Applicable may be chosen for this column if operation only has one scope;

Column E – “**Last Name**” – Enter the complete last name of the primary contact for the certified operation;

Column F – “**First Name**” – Enter the complete first name of the primary contact for the certified operation;

Column G – “**Operation’s Name**” – Enter the complete name of the operation that has been certified;

Column H – “**Physical Address**” – Enter the complete street address of the certified operation;

Column I – “**Post Office Address**” – Enter a complete mailing address here if other mail is not received at the physical street address of the organic certifier; and

Column J – “**City**” – Enter the city, town, township, or parish;

Column K – “**State**” – Enter the state or commonwealth from the drop down list provided; if your state is contained in the list, scroll to the end of the list and choose the blank space provided, then type in the name of your state;

Column L – “**Zip Code**” – (U.S. - enter 5 digit zip + 4 e.g. 12345-7890); Internationally (postal code + city/town/locality/postal district/state/province abbreviation), (city/town/locality/country/island name + postal code), or (country code + postal code + city/town/locality);



Column M- -“**Country**” – Enter the country where the operation is located from the drop down list provided. If the country is not on the list provided, scroll down to the blank space provided, select it, then type in the name of the country;

Column N – “**Telephone number**” – Enter the country code and the area code if outside the U.S. (e.g. 011-49-6131-555-5555 (international); (domestic) (123) 456-7890).

Column O – “**Fax number**” –Enter the country code and the area code if outside the U.S. (e.g. 011-49-6131-555-5554); (domestic) (123) 456-7809.

Column P – “**E-mail Address**” – Enter the complete e-mail address of the contact person for the certified operation. This will be in the format of the [name@internetserviceprovidername.com](#) or [name@internetserviceprovider.net](#).

Column Q – “**Products Produced***” – Enter up to five general types or specific products produced by the certified operation.