

FIRST DRAFT

Post Harvest Handling vs. Processing – Organic Production Operations

The processing committee was asked to provide guidance concerning post harvest handling and processing functions for operations producing organic products. This document focuses on plant production. The intent of this document is to provide some basic guidance for determining tasks which could be considered post-harvest handling and those considered to be functions of processing.

The committee wishes to forward this information to the National Organic Program staff for consideration and legal review. Consequently the format of this document is intended to provide the NOP staff an opportunity to consider each task listed under the appropriate category (post-harvest handling or processing). The committee hopes the result will be a definitive determination (when possible) as to the status of each particular task in the context of an organic production operation.

The committee consulted the following information in creating this document:

- Organic Foods Production Act
- National Organic Program-Final Rule
- Pertinent Industry Documents

Definitions pertaining to production and post-harvest handling:

OFPA

Agricultural Product: Any agricultural commodity or product whether raw or processed including any commodity or product derived from livestock that is marketed in the United States for human or livestock consumption.

Certified Organic Farm: A farm or portion of a farm or site where agricultural products or livestock are produced that is certified by the certifying agent under this chapter as utilizing a system of organic farming as described by this chapter.

Handle: To sell, process or package or package agricultural products.

Handler: Any person engaged in the business of handling agricultural products except such term shall not include final retailers of agricultural products that do not process agricultural products.

Handling Operation: Any operation or portion of an operation that receives or otherwise acquires agricultural products and processes, packages or stores such products.

Producer: A person who engages in the business of growing food or feed.