Certifying Your Farm

Written and designed by staff at Quality Certification Services (QCS) and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). This product was developed with support from U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program.
Ice Breaker

2 Truths and 1 Lie
Pre-Test
What is Organic?

A Production System...

managed to respond to site-specific conditions
integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices
to foster cycling of resources
promote ecological balance
and conserve biodiversity
History of Organic Certification

1980's

- Farmers, retailers, and consumers want uniformity
- Multi-ingredient products

1990

- Organic Foods Production Act [OFPA]

2002

- NOP Regulations "Go Live"
As of the end of 2012...

17,750 U.S. organic farms & processing facilities were certified.

$31.5 billion U.S. organic industry!

$63.8 billion Worldwide sales

*This data is from the OTA 2012 Survey Report*
42% of parents report their trust in the ORGANIC SEAL has increased.

81% of U.S. families are BUYING ORGANIC.

MORE PARENTS ARE BUYING ORGANIC...

48% say “it’s HEALTHIER for me and my children”

30% to avoid TOXIC PESTICIDES and fertilizers

29% to avoid ANTIBIOTICS and growth hormones

22% to avoid GMO’s

*This data is from the OTA 2012 Survey Report*
Marketing Your Products...

Retail
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Farmer's Markets
- U-Pick

Non-retail
- Grocery Markets
- Brokers/Distributors
- Restaurants
§205.103
Record keeping

Fully disclose all activities and transactions of the certified operation in sufficient detail to be readily understood and audited.

e.g. purchase invoices, field activity records, input application, spray records, planting records, harvest, and sales records.
§205.201
Organic System Plan

Description of:
- Management practices and procedures
- Record keeping system
- List of inputs in use

QCS Application = OSP
§205.202
Land requirements

- Managed organically per regulations.
- Have had no prohibited substances applied to it for a period of 3 years.
- Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones to prevent unintended application of prohibited substances.
§205.205 Crop Rotation

“A planned pattern or sequence in successive crop years so that crops of the same species or family are not grown repeatedly without interruption in the same field.”
**Must implement a crop rotation plan!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Season</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rye Aisles</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sudex/Soybeans</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Late Squash and Beans</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheat/Crimson Clover</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cabbage and Kale</td>
<td>Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buckwheat</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cabbage and Kale</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rye and Clover</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peppers/Eggplant</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oats/Winter Peas</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that...

- maintain or improve soil organic matter
- pest management
- manage nutrients
- provide erosion control
Perennial cropping systems employ alley cropping, intercropping, and hedgerows... in lieu of crop rotation
§205.204 Seeds and Planting stock

What must be organic?

- Organic seeds to produce edible sprouts.
- Annual seedlings- unless a temporary variance is granted.

[When can Non-organic be used?]

- Untreated Non-GMO seeds and planting stock may be used when an equivalent certified organic commercial variety is not commercially available.
- Non-organic personal planting stock must be managed organically for 1 year before it can be represented, labeled, and sold as organic.
When can Non-organic be used?

- Untreated Non-GMO seeds and planting stock may be used when an equivalent variety is not commercially available.

- Non-organic perennial planting stock must be managed organically for 1 year before it can be represented, labeled, and sold as organic.
Activity 1
§205.203 Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management

Soil and Crop Fertility Management

- Biological:
  Cover crops, compost, animal products

- Mechanical:
  Ground rock: lime, phosphate, greensand, etc.

- Cultural:
  Rotations, legumes, contour plowing, etc.
Cowpeas

July 20th

August 15th
Soil and Crop Fertility Management

Compost and manure use

• Natural resources
• Conservation practice
• Water quality and sources
Animal Manure Usage

- Soil contact: 120 days before harvest
- No direct soil contact: 90 days before harvest
Composting

A managed process...

that combines **plant** and **animal materials** with an initial C:N ratio between 25:1 and 40:1

- Static pile: between 131F and 170F for 3 days
- Windrow: 131F and 170F for 15 days, turned at least 5 times

*Keep records and take temperatures!!*
Crop Management

§205.206 Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease

How do you confront challenges?

- Weed Management
- Pest Management
- Disease Management

Evaluation of all areas
Weed Management

What are the problem weeds on your farm?

- Cultivation
- Mulching
- Plastic mulch must be removed at season's end
- Natural materials decompose to improve soil
- Flame weeding
- Rotations and crop timing
Pest Management

**Systems approach**
- Rotations, cover crops, diversity, attracting beneficials

**Limited use of OMRI and WSDA approved products**
- Bt for cabbage worms
- Insecticidal Soap for aphids

**Hand picking and trap cropping**

Monitoring (scouting) is most important!
Disease Management

- Disease resistant varieties
- Clean equipment and greenhouses
- Rotations to break disease cycles
- Water management
  - Good drainage and air flow
- Proper fertility management
Maintaining Organic Integrity

- Adjoining Land Use
- Adequate buffers
- Split operations
- Prevent commingling
- Storage of crops including pest control
- Transportation and marketing
- Documented cleaning vs. dedicated organic
Which of these are allowed?
ORGANIC NITROGEN

Milorganite®

FERTILIZER
Colorado Potato Beetle Beater

Kills Colorado Potato Beetle

Controls certain insects in vegetable gardens

ACTIVE INGREDIENT:
Spraydron 50 (mixture of spinosad A and spinosad 97)

OTHER INGREDIENTS:
Total 1000.00%

Keep Out Of Reach Of Children

CAUTION:
Use only as directed. May irritate eyes. Avoid breathing spray vapors. Wash thoroughly after handling. Store in a cool, dry place.
Biological Insecticide

DiPel DF
Dry Flowable

For Organic Production

Active Ingredient:
Bacillus thuringiensis, subsp. kurstaki,
strain ABTS-351, fermentation solids, spores, and insecticidal toxins... 54%
Other Ingredients

Total: 95%

Potential: 32,000 Cabbage Looper Units (CLU) per mg (14.5 billion CLU per pound)

The present active ingredient does not indicate product performance and potency
measurements are not federally standardized.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

CAUTION

PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS
HAZARDS TO HUMANS AND
DOMESTIC ANIMALS

CAUTION

Potential if inhaled or absorbed through the skin,
Causes moderate eye irritation. Avoid breathing dust or spray mist. Avoid contact with skin, eyes
or clothing. Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling. Remove contaminated clothing
and wash before reuse.

Mixer/loaders and applicators must wear a dust/mist filtering respirator meeting NIOSH
standards at least N-95, R-95, or P-95. Repeated exposure to high concentrations of essential
proteins can cause allergic sensitization.

NET CONTENTS: 1 POUND (454 GRAMS)
What Fertility or Pest Control Input Can I Use?

§205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production

§205.602 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production

- No new installations of treated lumber
- Sewage sludge is prohibited!

Always contact your certifier to approve inputs!
Always contact your certifier to approve inputs!
Activity 2
Processing & Handling

100% Organic
- All ingredients and processing aids must be certified organic.

Organic
- All agricultural ingredients must be certified organic.
- Non-organic ingredients allowed per National List up to a combined total of 5% of non-organic content (excluding salt & water).

Made with Organic
- At least 70 percent of the product must be certified organic ingredients (excluding salt & water).
§205.236 Origin of Livestock

Must be managed organically from last third period of gestation for meat production

Poultry must be managed from 2nd day of life.
§205.237 All feed must be grown on certified organic land or purchased certified organic.

- Conventional dairy herd can be transitioned into organic after being managed for 1 year on certified organic pasture.

  *(Additions to herds must be from on-farm breeding or buying certified animals.)*

- Ruminants 30% of DMI must come from rooted pasture, 70% from certified hay, silage, or grain. Pasture grazing must be at least 120 days per year minimum *(dependent on geographical location.)*
§205.238 Livestock Health Care

*Preventative health care practices such as*

- Breed suitability and disease/parasite resistance
- Nutrition, sanitation, appropriate housing
- Vaccines are allowed
- Antibiotics are prohibited
- Restrictions on use of parasiticides in dairy animals.
- Not allowed for meat or poultry
§205.239 Living conditions

Year round living conditions that support health and the natural behaviors of animals...
Year round access for all animals to
  • Shade and shelter
  • Outdoors
  • Exercise area
  • Direct sunlight
  • Clean water
  • Fresh air

Note animals may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors but reasons must be documented. Suitable to stage of life and environment.
§205.240 Pasture Practice

Pasture = crop
Minimize disease and parasites
Stocking density, size of pastures, type (annual or perennial)
e.g. mob grazing and MIG grazing
How do I get certified?
What's the Cost?
Total Certification Cost

- Certification: Depending on type of Operation
- Inspection: Depending on the location, size and complexity
- Assessment: 0.005 x total organic sales (0.5%)
Cost Share
Covers 75% of Certification Costs up to $750!