



# United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

National Organic Program

***Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC***

**14 Pleasant Street, Richmond, VT 05477 USA**

meets all the requirements prescribed in the USDA National Organic Program Regulations

**7 CFR Part 205**

**as an Accredited Certifying Agent**

for the scope of

**Crops, Wild Crops, Livestock and Handling Operations**

This certificate is receivable by all officers of all courts of the United States as prima facie evidence of the truth of the statements therein contained. This certificate does not excuse failure to comply with any of the regulatory laws enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture .

Status of this accreditation may be verified at <http://www.ams.usda.gov>

Certificate No: **NP219200A**  
Effective Date: **September 24, 2012**  
Expiration Date: **September 24, 2017**

**Ruihong Guo, Ph.D.**  
**Acting Deputy Administrator**  
**National Organic Program**



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<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Vermont Organic Farmers
<b>Physical Address:</b>	14 Pleasant St., Richmond, VT 05477
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	P.O. Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477
<b>Contact &amp; Title:</b>	Nicole Dehne, Certification Administrator
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:Nicole@nofavt.org">Nicole@nofavt.org</a>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	802-434-3821
<b>Auditor(s):</b>	Renee Mann, Assistant Director
<b>Program:</b>	USDA National Organic Program (NOP)
<b>Audit Date(s):</b>	June 9, 2014
<b>Audit Identifier:</b>	AIA14104RAM
<b>Action Required:</b>	None
<b>Audit Type:</b>	Corrective Action Review
<b>Audit Objective:</b>	To evaluate the corrective actions submitted by the certifying agent in response to the non-compliances identified during the annual report Assessment.
<b>Audit Criteria:</b>	7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program; Final Rule, dated December 21, 2000, as revised.
<b>Audit Scope:</b>	VOF's 5/14/2014 corrective action plan, in response to the Notice of Noncompliance issued on 4/15/2014.
<b>Location(s) Audited:</b>	Desk

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF) is a not for profit, Limited Liability Company which was first accredited as a certifying agent to perform certification activities on behalf of the USDA under the National Organic Program (NOP) on September 24, 2002 for crops, wild crops, livestock, and handling operations. VOF certifies operations primarily in Vermont and surrounding states, including New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Washington D.C.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This report explains Vermont Organic Farmers's (VOF) corrective actions in response to a notice of noncompliance, dated April 15, 2014.

## FINDINGS

The findings below describe the NOP's issues of concern and identify the relevant section of the regulation for each issue. We also outline the certifying agent's response to these issues, which describe how they will correct the problem and prevent it from recurring in the future. During the next on-site assessment, the NOP will review the corrective actions below to verify that the certifying agent has effectively addressed all concerns.

### Non-Compliances – Certifier Response Accepted

The NOP has reviewed the corrective actions submitted by VOF and determined that they demonstrate sufficient compliance.

**AIA14104RAM.NC1 – Accepted** - §205.510(a)(6) – General requirements for accreditation.

*(a) A private or governmental entity accredited as a certifying agent under this subpart must: ...*

*(6) Conduct an annual performance evaluation of all persons who review applications for certification, perform on-site inspections, review certification documents, evaluate qualifications for certification, make recommendations concerning certification, or make certification decisions and implement measures to correct any deficiencies in certification services;...*

VOF submitted performance evaluations in its annual report on October 4, 2013. VOF demonstrated that it had conducted performance evaluations of inspectors and office staff, but it had not evaluated Review Committee members. The Review Committee members make certification decisions and are required to receive annual performance evaluations. **Corrective Actions:** VOF submitted evaluations for its five Review Committee members. VOF also submitted its Administrative Manual showing where VOF had added a requirement that it will annually evaluate the Review Committee members.

**AIA14104RAM.NC2 – Accepted** - §205.510(a)(7) – General requirements for accreditation. *(a)*

*A private or governmental entity accredited as a certifying agent under this subpart must:...* *(7)*

*Have an annual program review of its certification activities conducted by the certifying agent's staff, an outside auditor, or a consultant who has expertise to conduct such reviews and implement measures to correct any noncompliances with the Act and the regulations in this part that are identified in the evaluation;...*

VOF submitted an accreditation renewal audit report generated by the USDA NOP as evidence that VOF had completed an annual program review in 2012. The USDA NOP report did not meet the requirements of an annual program review according to 205.501(a)(7) because it was not conducted by the certifying agent's staff, an outside auditor, or a consultant. The USDA NOP audit of VOF was conducted on behalf of the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service and is not equivalent to an annual program evaluation. **Corrective Actions:** VOF revised its Administrative Manual to state that VOF will conduct an Internal Audit every year. The procedure specifies that audits will even be conducted in the same year that the USDA accreditation audit occurs.

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF)
<b>Est. Number:</b>	N/A
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<b>Auditor(s):</b>	Darrell Wilson, Lead Auditor; Meg Kuhn, Auditor
<b>Program:</b>	USDA National Organic Program (NOP)
<b>Audit Date(s):</b>	Sept 15 – 25, Oct 5 – Nov 7, 2012
<b>Audit Identifier:</b>	NP2192OOA
<b>Action Required:</b>	No
<b>Audit Type:</b>	Corrective Action Audit
<b>Audit Objective:</b>	To verify review and approve corrective actions addressing the non-compliances identified during the Renewal Assessment.
<b>Audit Criteria:</b>	7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program; Final Rule, dated December 21, 2000; revised March 15, 2012.
<b>Audit Scope:</b>	VOF's September 15 and October 5, 2012 response letters to the Renewal Assessment non-compliance report
<b>Location(s) Audited:</b>	Desk

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF) is a not for profit, Limited Liability Company which was first accredited as a certifying agent to perform certification activities on behalf of the USDA under the National Organic Program (NOP) on September 24, 2002 for crops, wild crops, livestock, and handling operations. VOF currently has 582 certified clients, which includes 243 livestock, 315 crops, and 79 handling (all processors) operations certified to the NOP. There are no certified wild crop operations at the time of the audit. The majority of clients are certified in the state of Vermont, with additional clients certified in New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Washington D.C.

## AUDIT INFORMATION

During the Renewal Assessment, the corrective actions for the non-compliances identified during the 2010 Mid-Term Assessment were verified and found to be implemented and effective and the non-compliances were cleared. There were 10 (ten) non-compliances identified during this audit. VOF was notified of this finding in a notice from the NOP on July 24, 2012. A response was received from VOF on September 15 and October 5, 2012.

## FINDINGS

**NP2192OOA.NC1 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.403 (a)(1) states, “A certifying

agent must conduct an initial on-site inspection of each production unit, facility, and site that produces or handles organic products and that is included in an operation for which certification is requested. An on-site inspection shall be conducted annually thereafter for each certified operation that produces or handles organic products for the purpose of determining whether to approve the request for certification or whether the certification of the operation should continue.”

- *A review of 2 files for producers of maple syrup and interviews with the Certification Administrator revealed that inspectors are not visiting all production sites for the larger maple syrup operations. The current policy is that the inspector is to inspect different sugarbush areas than what the previous inspector did during the harvest season. There is also a policy to visit additional areas during the summer when there is no harvest. Even with these two policies there is no way to ensure that all the sugarbush areas in an operation would all be visited within the certification year.*
- *During the witness inspection of the crop/livestock operation, it was observed that only 1/3 of fields were visited during the annual inspection.*

**Corrective Action:** VOF provided two responses to this non-compliance; combined, the responses provide sufficient corrective action. Specifically, VOF indicates that, “effective for the 2013 season and beyond, VOF will ensure that the requirement that all fields and sugar bushes are visited during an inspection is practice at annual on-site visits. VOF will insure that inspectors visit all fields and sugar bushes during an inspection, except for the case of extenuating circumstances (inaccessible by flooding, road washout, etc.)” VOF updated, and provided a copy as objective evidence, both the Farm and Maple Inspection Report documents requiring inspectors to list the fields visited and extenuating circumstances that kept them from visiting certain areas. VOF indicated that all producers would be notified of this program change in the cover letter that is sent along with their annual update in the spring. Inspectors were already notified of the change and the requirement to visit all fields in an email on October 4, 2012; this topic is also included in the spring 2013 inspector training, which occurs prior to farm inspections. For maple operations, the Maple Certification Specialist will also send a detailed letter to all maple inspectors by January 2013, once the VOF Review Committee has met and establishes protocols and standards for sugar bush visits. VOF specifically notes that “due to the parameters of the climate and sugaring season in Vermont, VOF is positive that no maple inspections will happen out of compliance with this regulation, as no maple inspections will happen until, at the absolute earliest, February 2013. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC2 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.404 (b)(3) states, “The certifying agent must issue a certificate of organic operation which specifies the: Categories of organic operation, including crops, wild crops, livestock, or processed products produced by the certified operation.” *The certificates for the 10 files reviewed included the certified organic products covered under the organic certification; however, they do not include the categories of organic operation.* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s written response states, “All future certificates will include the farm scope (crops, livestock, handling, wild crops).” The “timeframe for completion” is September 1. As objective evidence, VOF submitted an updated certificate template that displays the certification scope. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC3 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.404 (b)(2) states, “The certifying agent must issue a certificate of organic operation which specifies the: Effective date of certification.” *2 of the 10 files reviewed had effective dates of certification that were prior to the implementation of the NOP Rule. Interviews with the Certification Administrator indicated that there were more certificates which had the same issue.* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s written response states, “All future certificates will include a “certified since” date and an “effective date.” The certified since date will be the first year they were certified by VOF, the effective date will be the first year they were certified under NOP standards.” Though VOF’s response states the effective date will be the first “year” an operation is certified; the objective evidence of a new certificate template shows the effective date will be a full MM/DD/YYYY format. VOF’s written response also indicates “timeframe for completion” as September 1. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC4 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.404 (c) states, “Once certified, a production or handling operation’s organic certification continues in effect until surrendered by the organic operation or suspended or revoked by the certifying agent, the State organic program’s governing State official, or the Administrator.” *The decision letters for all 10 files reviewed contained the statement, “The enclosed certificate verifies that your certification is valid until your next annual review.”* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s written response states, “All future letters will not include this statement.” VOF submitted a revised template of the “New Certification Letter Template” that shows this statement has been removed. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC5 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.501 (a)(11)(v) states, “A private or governmental entity accredited as a certifying agent under this subpart must: Prevent conflicts of interest by: Requiring all persons who review applications for certification, perform on-site inspections, review certification documents, evaluate qualifications for certification, make recommendations concerning certification, or make certification decisions and all parties responsibly connected to the certifying agent to complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure report.” *Review of conflict of interest (COI) disclosure statements showed that no COIs were on file for the 3 Executive Committee members.* **Corrective Action:** VOF provided signed copies of COI forms for all Executive Committee members. To prevent reoccurrence, ensuring that all staff COIs – including those of Executive Committee members – is a task that has been added to the job description/duties of the Certification Staff Assistant. A copy of the job description was attached to VOF’s response. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC6 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.501 (b)(2) states, “A private or governmental entity accredited as a certifying agent under this subpart may establish a seal, logo, or other identifying mark to be used by production and handling operations certified by the certifying agent to indicate affiliation with the certifying agent: *Provided, That,* the certifying agent: Does not require compliance with any production or handling practices other than those provided for in the Act and the regulations in this part as a condition of use of its

identifying mark: *Provided, That, certifying agents certifying production or handling operations within a State with more restrictive requirements, approved by the Secretary, shall require compliance with such requirements as a condition of use of their identifying mark by such operations.*” *Section II E of the VOF Certification Guidelines requires wash water from non-municipal water sources to be tested on a biannual basis. 3 of the 10 files reviewed, the operations were issued noncompliances for not having current water tests. By requiring the operation to submit a water test, VOF is not following the NOP requirements:*

- *§205.403, On-site inspections, section (c), Verification of information. states, “The on-site inspection of an operation must verify: (3) That prohibited substances have not been and are not being applied to the operation through means which, at the discretion of the certifying agent, may include the collection and testing of soil; water; waste; seeds; plant tissue; and plant, animal, and processed products samples”;*
- *§205.670 (b) states, “Such tests must be conducted by the applicable State organic program's governing State official or the certifying agent at the official's or certifying agent's own expense”; and*
- *§205.670 (c) states, “The preharvest or postharvest tissue test sample collection pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section must be performed by an inspector representing the Administrator, applicable State organic program's governing State official, or certifying agent.”*

**Corrective Action:** VOF’s response states, “VOF will reword all future letters changing the requirement of a water test to the requirement that producer provide evidence that water does not contain prohibited substances....” After request for additional information from the NOP, VOF submitted a response that states, “VOF has removed all mention of a requirement for water tests from any of our correspondence with farmers. We have changed our inspection report to ask inspectors to report what practices or monitoring procedures are in place to ensure producers are monitoring water...for potential contaminants. We have also made changes to the OSP to allow producers to explain what practices or procedures are in place to monitor wash water for potential contaminants. These changes to the inspection reports and OSP will be effective beginning January 1, 2013.” VOF submitted, as objective evidence, copies of the inspection report and OSP documents. VOF also provided sample language for a non-compliance to operators where the inspector notes the operator has “no evidence available that you are monitoring water used for potential contaminants.” To prevent reoccurrence of the non-compliance, VOF proposed changes to the Certification Guidelines that reflect changes mentioned (i.e., required water test to verification of practices and procedures). VOF annually updates the Certification Guidelines in February, and propose to forward the final change to the Guidelines to the NOP in February 2013 once the change has been made and forwarded to the growers. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates compliance with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC7 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP § 205.510 (c)(2) states, “An accredited certifying agent's application for accreditation renewal must be received at least 6 months prior to the fifth anniversary of issuance of the notification of accreditation and each subsequent renewal of accreditation. The accreditation of certifying agents who make timely application for renewal of accreditation will not expire during the renewal process. The accreditation of certifying agents who fail to make timely application for renewal of accreditation will expire as

scheduled unless renewed prior to the scheduled expiration date. Certifying agents with an expired accreditation must not perform certification activities under the Act and the regulations of this part.” *The 2012 renewal application for accreditation was due March 24, 2012. The application was not submitted by VOF until June 10, 2012. The 2012 renewal application was not submitted within the time frame required by this section.* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s response states, “In the future, VOF will be sure to submit the renewal application on time or before the deadline.” VOF provided additional response that identifies how this will be accomplished. Specifically, VOF has implemented a “NOP submission calendar” marking March 24 as the date for the renewal to be submitted to the NOP (6 months before VOF accreditation date of September 24). Further, the VOF Certification Administrator is now responsible for following up with key staff involved and marking their calendars with the renewal date deadline, when VOF receives the 1-year reminder notice from the NOP. VOF submitted their calendar for this purpose as objective evidence. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates a capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC8 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.662 (b) states, “When a certified operation demonstrates that each noncompliance has been resolved, the certifying agent or the State organic program's governing State official, as applicable, shall send the certified operation a written notification of noncompliance resolution.” *Review of 4 non-compliance letters and an interview with the Certification Coordinator demonstrated that operations had adequately addressed the non-compliance or proposed suspension; however, a notice of noncompliance resolution was not issued to the certified operation.* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s written response indicates that future notices of proposed suspension where the operation corrects issues prior to the deadline will be followed up with a non-compliance resolution notification to the client (in VOF’s system, this is a postcard format) as of September 1. If effectively and consistently implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates compliance with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC9 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.662 (c) states, “When rebuttal is unsuccessful or correction of the noncompliance is not completed within the prescribed time period, the certifying agent or State organic program's governing State official shall send the certified operation a written notification of proposed suspension or revocation of certification of the entire operation or a portion of the operation, as applicable to the noncompliance. When correction of a noncompliance is not possible, the notification of noncompliance and the proposed suspension or revocation of certification may be combined in one notification.” *Review of 4 non-compliance/proposed suspension letters for non-payment of fees and an interview with the Certification Coordinator showed that combined notices of non-compliance/proposed suspension were being issued for non-payment of fees. This is allowed only when the non-compliance is non-correctable, which is not the case with payment of fees.* **Corrective Action:** VOF’s written response states, “VOF had been sending combined non-compliances and proposed suspension for non-payments of fees despite the fact that correction of the non-compliance was possible. VOF has changed this protocol to issue a separate non-compliance followed by a proposed suspension when applicable for late or non-payment of fees.” VOF submitted a revised procedure document for “Procedure/Timeline for invoicing producers” as objective evidence of changes made to the VOF system. The changes to the procedure include issuing a Notice of Non-Compliance on the day the operation’s payment is



due, giving 2 weeks to submit payment; after that, a Notice of Proposed Suspension is issued giving another 2 weeks. Should the producer pay during that time, then the “producer will be sent a non-compliance resolution postcard or a proposed suspension resolution postcard, depending on what type of notice they have received.” If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC10 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.662 (c)(4) states, “The notification of proposed suspension or revocation of certification shall state: The right to request mediation pursuant to §205.663 or to file an appeal pursuant to §205.681.” *In review of 4 notices of proposed adverse action (either for suspension or revocation), all 4 notices indicated the proposed effective date of the suspension or revocation to be 30 days from the issuance date of the letter. This is out of compliance with §205.681(c), which allows for 30 days from the receipt of an adverse action notice to file an appeal. Corrective Action:* VOF’s written response states, “VOF’s proposed suspension and revocation letters stated that the effective date of the suspension or revocation was 30 days from issuance of the letter. This has been changed to state 30 days from the receipt of the letter therefore meeting the 30 days from receipt of the letter requirement.” VOF provided a revised template of proposed adverse action letters to demonstrate this change to the system. If effectively implemented, VOF’s response demonstrates capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.

**NP219200A.NC11 – Submitted and Accepted:** NOP §205.660 (d) states, “Each notification of noncompliance, rejection of mediation, noncompliance resolution, proposed suspension or revocation, and suspension or revocation issued pursuant to §205.662, §205.663, and §205.665 and each response to such notification must be sent to the recipient's place of business via a delivery service which provides dated return receipts.” *Review of 4 non-compliance letters and an interview with the Certification Coordinator demonstrated that VOF is not currently sending notices of non-compliance or resolution to operations via a delivery service that provides dated return receipts. Corrective Action:* VOF’s written response states, “VOF was not sending minor non-compliances via delivery receipt.... This change will be a huge adjustment to our program and we are requesting some time to get it set up properly in our systems approach. As of January 2013 all non-compliances and resolutions will be sent via delivery service. VOF will use a combination of services including certified mail, priority mail tracking, fax and email.” VOF sent an additional response indicating that VOF would follow direction from the NOP given in the NOP guidance document, “Recommended Penalties for Violations of Specific Regulatory Requirements.” Specifically, 4.2 of this section provides various types of violations that may be issued by certifying agents. As the Penalty Matrix, along with this guidance document, allows for the issuance of “Minor Issues – Conditions for Continued Certification,” VOF intends to implement the use of this violation type into their system. Letters sent to operators under “minor issues – conditions for continued certification” will not be sent using a delivery system that provides dated return receipts. VOF’s response indicates that official Notices of Noncompliance and Notices of Resolution will be sent via delivery service that provides dated return receipts through one of the following methods: certified mail, priority mail tracking, fax, or e-mail. VOF provided a copy of the “VOF Letter Template – Conditions for Continued Certification” as objective evidence to this change; further, VOF policy documents will be updated when the VOF Certification Director returns from maternity leave in December 2012. If effectively

implemented, VOF's response demonstrates a capability to comply with NOP accreditation requirements.



**Livestock and Seed Program  
Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch  
Quality System Audit Report**

**AUDIT INFORMATION**

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC
<b>Est. Number:</b>	N/A
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<b>Mailing Address:</b>	PO Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477
<b>Contact &amp; Title:</b>	Nicole Dehne, Certification Administrator
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:Nicole@nofavt.org">Nicole@nofavt.org</a>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	802-434-4122
<b>Auditor(s):</b>	David J. Hildreth
<b>Program:</b>	USDA National Organic Program (NOP)
<b>Audit Date(s):</b>	November 22, 2010
<b>Audit Identifier:</b>	NP0098ACA
<b>Action Required:</b>	No
<b>Audit Type:</b>	Corrective Action Audit
<b>Audit Objective:</b>	To verify that corrective actions adequately address the non-compliances identified during the Mid-Term Audit.
<b>Audit Criteria:</b>	7 CFR Part 205 National Organic Program, Final Rule, dated December 21, 2000, updated August 24, 2010.
<b>Audit Scope:</b>	Submitted corrective actions
<b>Location(s) Audited:</b>	Desk

**FINDINGS**

Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF) submitted corrective actions on September 15, 2010, that adequately addressed the non-compliances identified during the Mid-Term Audit.

**NP0098ACA.NC1 – Adequately Addressed** - NOP §205.301 (a) states, “*Products sold, labeled, or represented as “100% organic.”* “A raw or processed agriculture product sold, labeled, or represented as “100% organic” must contain (by weight or fluid volume, excluding water and salt) 100 percent organically produced ingredients.” *A label from a manufacturer stating 100% organic was reviewed by VOF and found that the product did not contain products that were 100% organic. VOF did issue a non-compliance to the applicant but gave the applicant one year to use the incorrect labels. The rule does not allow for the ACA to extend the use of the incorrect labels.* **Corrective Action:** VOF will give producers the same timeframe to correct non-compliant labels as all other minor non-compliances (between 30-60 days). In addition, VOF has sent out a notice to all of their producers informing them of the policy change and reminding them that proofs should be approved by VOF before being sent to the printers. VOF hopes this will help minimize the number of incorrect labels in the future.



**Livestock and Seed Program  
Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch  
Quality System Audit Report**

**NP0098ACA.NC2 – Adequately Addressed** - NOP §205.402 (a)(1,2,4) states, “Upon acceptance of an application for certification, a certifying agent must: Review the application to ensure completeness pursuant to §205.401; Determine by a review of the application materials whether the applicant appears to comply or may be able to comply with the applicable requirements of subpart C of this part; Schedule an on-site inspection of the operation to determine whether the applicant qualifies for certification if the review of applicable materials that the production or handling operation may be in compliance with the applicable requirements of subpart C of this part.” *VOF certification specialists do a cursory review of the application for certification and then the certification packet is sent to the inspector who does a formal review of the application to determine if the applicant qualifies for certification. VOF has no written procedures which indicate if the inspector formally notifies VOF about the outcome of the formal review, if the applicant qualifies or may not be able to qualify for certification. The certification administrator indicated that if the inspector did observe that the applicant may not be able to qualify then VOF is notified, however, there are no written procedures for the inspector to follow.* **Corrective Action:** VOF has revised their 2010 Administrative Manual to read, “Preliminary Review of Application: Once an application and payment has arrived at the VOF office, the Certification Administrator and Administrative Assistant complete an initial review of the application for completeness and compliance or ability to comply with the standards. VOF will communicate the findings of the application review to applicants in a reasonable amount of time. Applications must be completed in full and reviewed before an inspection can be scheduled.” Inspectors will continue to do an application review as part of their evaluation but it will be considered second to the certification specialist’s assessment.

**NP0098ACA.NC3 – Adequately Addressed** - NOP §205.501 (a)(6) states, “A private or governmental entity accredited as a certifying agent under this subpart must: Conduct an annual performance evaluation of all persons who...perform on-site inspections...” *No annual performance evaluations are being conducted on the contract inspectors. The only evaluations that are being done are by the applicants who are sent an inspector evaluation form and then return the form to VOF. The forms are kept in the inspectors files and reviewed by the certification administrator and the certification specialist.* **Corrective Action:** VOF stated that, “The certification administrator will conduct annual performance evaluations on contract inspectors starting in 2011. The evaluations from producers will continue to play an important role in evaluating our contract inspectors.”

**NP0098ACA.NC4 – Adequately Addressed** - NOP §205.510 (a) (1-5) states, “Annual report and fees. An accredited certifying agent must submit annually to the Administrator, on or before the anniversary date of the issuance of the notification of accreditation, the following reports and fees: 1 – 5.” *VOF did not submit the annual report and fees for 2009.* **Corrective Action:** VOF stated that, “The certification administrator will submit the Annual Reports and fees for 2009 by the end of business on September 27, 2010.