



Policy Memorandum

To: Stakeholders and Interested Parties

From: Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator

Subject: Certification of Grower Groups

Date: Original Issue Date – January 21, 2011

Grower group certification refers to the certification of a group of producers whose farms are uniform in most ways, and who are organized under one management and marketing system. Grower group certifications have historically been used for the certification of cooperatives located in geographical proximity, whose crops are marketed collectively. Primary crops produced by grower groups include coffee, cocoa, tea, spices, and tropical fruits.

The National Organic Program (NOP) is drafting guidance regarding certification of grower groups and will be requesting public comment before publishing final guidance and possible regulation change. In the interim, accredited certifying agents should use the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommendations of October 2002 and November 2008 as the current policies.

References:

NOSB Recommendations

October 20, 2002, “Criteria for Certification of Grower Groups”.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Rec%20Criteria%20for%20Certification%20of%20Grower%20Groups.pdf>

November 19, 2008, “Certifying Operations with Multiple Production Units, Sites, and Facilities under the National Organic Program”

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP%20Final%20Rec%20Certifying%20Operations%20with%20Multiple%20Sites.pdf>

Document Control:

This document supersedes “**NOP and NOSB Collaboration on Grower Group Certifications**” dated May 02, 2007, which is now obsolete.