

AN INSIDE LOOK AT JACOB'S FARM



Recordkeeping Case Study: Keeping Records for a Crop Audit

CROP AUDIT TRAIL: RECOUNTING A CROP'S "STORY"

Organic inspectors are required to conduct at least one complete audit of a randomly selected crop. An audit trail is a recordkeeping system by which a crop may be traced from field to storage to sale. This includes verification of acceptable organic management practices, inputs and products were used at every point along the way. In short, it tells the lifecycle "story" of a crop. Oregon

Tilth organic inspector, Andrew Black, maintains that an organic farmer should always try to create a recordkeeping system with this in mind. A good start is outlining all activities for each crop and then creating an ordered list of what records provide verifiable accounting of sound organic practices at every point of the crop's story.

Jacob's Farm in Freedom, California, specializes in growing over 30 varieties of culinary herbs year-round. The farm's production cycle is different from classic crop farm operations; they may plant up to 25 successions of a single variety in multiple farm locations over the course of a year. "Activities that occur only during specific seasons on other farms - like planting and harvesting - we do multiple times a day," says Brenden, director of farming operations. With multiple staff responsible for reporting different records for each succession, the farm compartmentalized their record system. Each succession crop is broken into steps: planting, growing, harvest and post-harvest; then, each step is documented with its own set of activities and records.

DOCUMENTING *for* AN AUDIT:

Records
RECEIPTS,
PACKAGE LABELS,
INVOICES, CERTIFICATES,
AFFIDAVITS, ETC.

AND

Data
LOG RECORDS OF
ACTIVITIES ON THE FARM
SUCH AS DATES, LOCATIONS,
QUANTITIES, ETC.

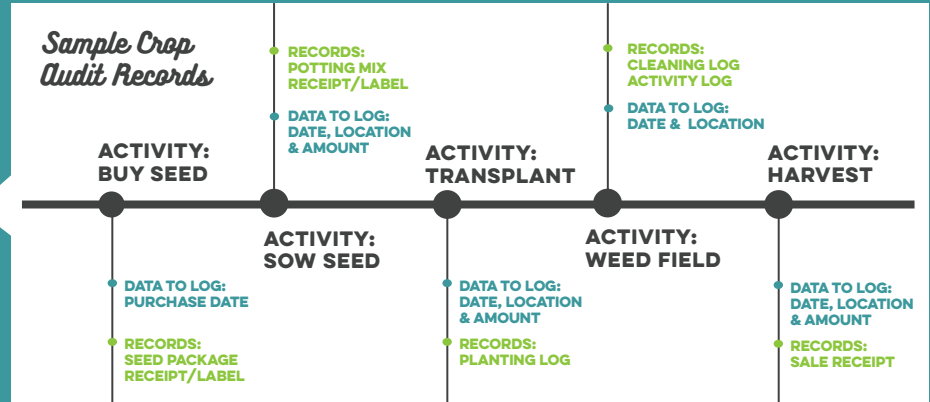
Harvest Log

2015

JACOB'S FARM - CALIFORNIA

DATE	CROP	FIELDS	HARVEST
1/2/15	BASIL	3-1	400 lbs
1/2/15	SAGE	3-1	50 lbs.
1/5/15	MINT	5-1	50 lbs.
1/5/15	THYME	3-1	100lbs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS



WORK with YOUR TEAM

Jacob's Farm uses a free online resource where records can be uploaded, viewed and updated by any staff member. If using paper records, journals and forms may be strategically placed around the farm to make it convenient for staff to log and access records quickly.

DEVELOP your PROCEDURE

Create a job description that gives equal weight to recordkeeping as other farm tasks to help develop a sense of ownership over documentation duties.

REVIEW your RECORDS

Check your recordkeeping system to account for all steps of an audit. When creating recordkeeping templates or forms, double check that all critical information needed for a crop audit is captured at the point of recording the data. See the infographic above for more information on what records to keep for a crop audit.

CREATE your SYSTEM

Standardize your recordkeeping forms for all crops. "Standardized forms with clear instructions on how to record information ensures that regardless of how many crops you have, or the number of staff that are keeping records, all records will be kept the same way," says Brenden.

RESOURCES:

USDA Documentation Forms for Crop Producers (free pdf download)
<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=358>



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