

Organic Certification

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Please



Why Get Certified?

- Use of organic seal
- Access to organic markets
- Improve profitability potential
- Increase environmental sustainability
- Protect from contamination





Organic Certification

- I. Overview
- II. Choosing aCertificationAgency
- III. Applying for Certification
- IV. Inspection
- V. Decision Process





Certification

Process that verifies organic regulations have been followed





Certification Overview

Organic Producer Certificate

The Midwest Organic Services Association, Inc, MOSA, has verified through a third-party inspection and review that this Producer's operation has met the organic standards of MOSA.

2001 Certified Organic Crops/Products: CORN, HAY, PASTURE, EGGS

Producer Number: WIG0304-01 Associate Number: 421

This certificate serves to establish the current MOSA certification of the member named above and is not valid for trade. Transaction certificates are issued for requested trade purposes.

Authorized Signature - Certification Coordinator

12-1

State Number

4/2/01 - 9/30/01

Certificate Validation Dates

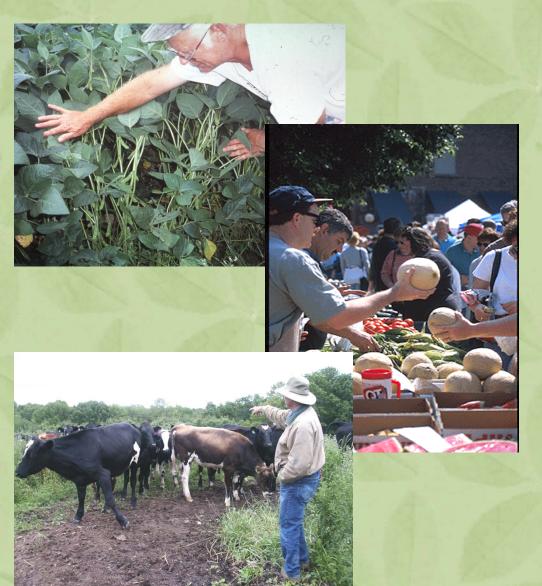
MOSA-I-012-99 MOSA Inspector Number



- Farmer works with certifying agency
- Organic certificate issued annually
- Allows crops, livestock and processed products to be sold as organic



Who Needs to be Certified?



- Crop producers, livestock producers, and processors
- Operations with more than \$5,000 in annual organic sales
- Not required in transition



Who Certifies Organic Farmers?

- The USDA does not certify farmers
- Accredits certifiers
 as agents to
 conduct organic
 certification





Who Are Certifying Agents?

- U.S. or International
- Private or Statesponsored
- For-profit or non-profit





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Finding a Certifier

- The USDA-AMS lists certifiers by each state
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture lists certifiers that operate in MN
- Other states will have their lists as well
- (Check Resources at end of this modules for links)







- Does the certifier operate in your state?
- Are they approved to certify your type of operation?
- Can they certify your operation in time for you to sell your first organic crop?
- Do your potential buyers have any preference regarding which certifier you choose?



Learning about Certifying Agencies

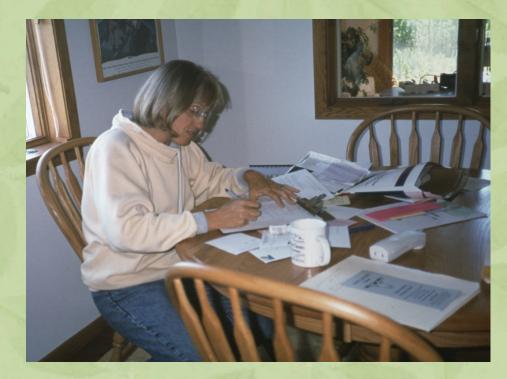
- Get recommendations
- Visit agency websites
- Visit certifier
 booths at organic
 conferences or
 other events





How Much Will Certification Cost?

- Costs vary by agency
- Fees are public
- Can be based on production volume and/or sales
- Crops, livestock and handling require separate certifications





Typical Costs



- In 2012, median in MN = \$1000
- Nationally
 - \$700 for small operation
 - \$1000-2000 for medium operation
 - \$6000 for a large operation
- Cost share is available



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When to Apply

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January
                        MTWTFSS
                                                                         9 10 11 12 13 14 15
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
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3-6 months BEFORE you are ready to sell an organic crop



What You Will Need to Start

- Records from transition years
- Field maps
- Organic System Plan (OSP) of your certifying agency





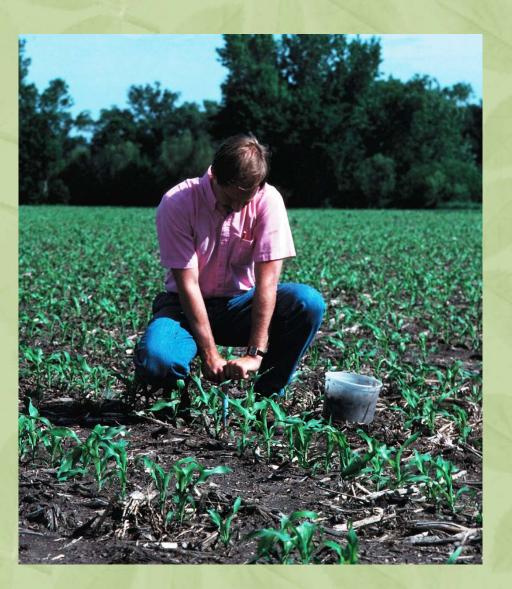
Organic System Plan (OSP)

- A <u>management</u>
 <u>plan</u>
- Includes written strategies for all aspects of production
- Assists certifier in determining organic compliance

Last Name(s)	ast Name(s) First Name(s)		Farm / Ranch / Business Name		
Land Requirements			NOP § 205.103, § 205.202		
documentation to estal each farm location (not has distinct land use his This Land Requirem Additional copies o	blish its eligibility for orgar for individual fields) that i	nic certification. Su s non-adjacent to prohibited materi e land in my orgar	•	irements form for on locations, and/or	
2.1 Land Description Farm Name or Number			Area (acres) to be certified organic		
Parcel Location			Field Numbers (ALL fields on this farm)		
City / Town		State	County		
Logal Description, Secti	on / Township / Range or	Assessor's Parcel N	lumber		



OSP Details



- Equipment and maintenance
- Inputs to be used
- How to address potential problems
- Monitoring practices



Tips for Completing OSP



- Allow adequate time
- Answer as completely and clearly as possible
- Be realistic



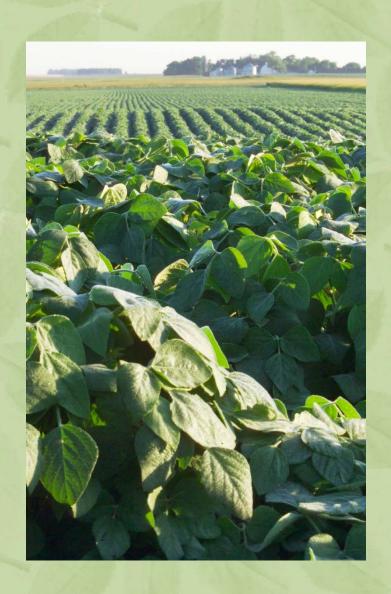
OSP Resources

- Certifiers' websites
- ATTRA template with detailed instructions
- MOSES organic certification fact sheets
- (Check Resources at end of this modules for links)





OSP - Making Changes



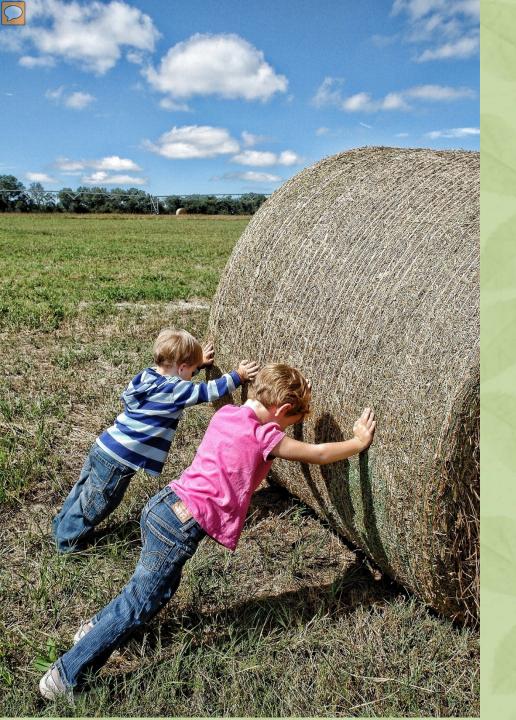
- Some flexibility
- Contact your certifier before making changes
- Keep track of changes and be able to explain why
- Always follow organic regulations
- Always verify new materials are acceptable before purchase and use



After Submitting Application

- The certifier does an initial review of your OSP for compliance
- May contact you if there are questions
- Next step is setting up the inspection





One Final Note

Your OSP should be less work in subsequent years



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Purpose of Inspection

- Compliance with NOP rules
- Accuracy of OSP
- Assess records and audit trail





Certifier vs. Inspector

Not the same person!

Certifier

- Does not visit your farm
- Verifies NOP rules are being followed based on OSP and inspector report details
- Decides fate of certification

<u>Inspector</u>

- Visits your farm
- Verifies OSP matches up with site
- Does not make certification decision
- Staff of agency or independent contractor



Certifiers and Inspectors ≠ Crop Consultants

They can tell what is allowed and prohibited





University of Minnesota



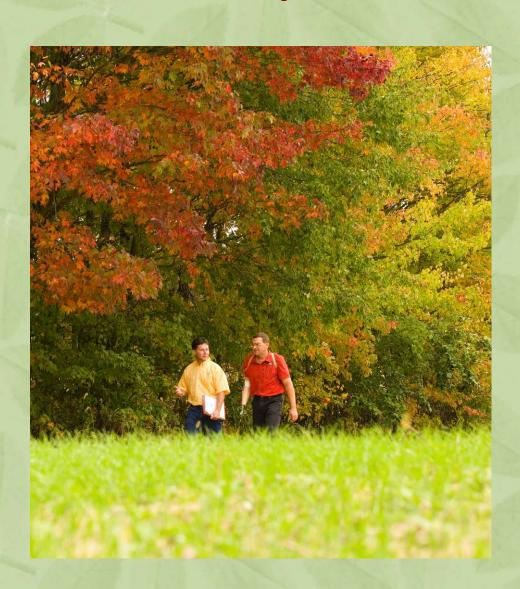
Scheduling Your Inspection

- Occurs when crops still in field
- Someone knowledgeable of the operation needs to be there
- Can take 2-6 hours depending on operation





Inspection Overview

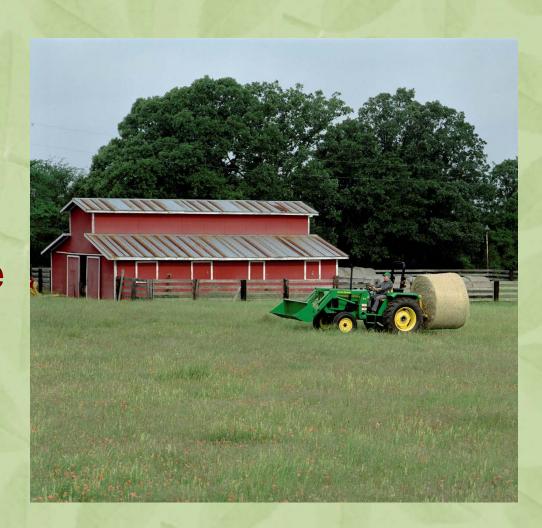


- Beginning meeting
- Farm tour
- Records review
- Exit interview



What Will Be Inspected

- Anything relating to production
- With split operations, conventional side will be inspected, too
- All records





Tips for Your Inspection



- Be ready on time
- Have all documents available
- If your OSP is complete and correct, things will go fine
- Share any changes in the OSP with the inspector

You have to pay if they need to come back!



Non-Compliance





Common Non-Compliance Issues

- Lack of records
- Use of non-organic or synthetically-treated seed
- Use of prohibited materials
- Lack of labels for inputs, seed or feed
- Missing application deadlines



How the agency will treat each issue will depend on the nature of the infraction



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Post-Inspection

- Inspector writes report
- Certifier reviews report and application
- Certifier makes decision

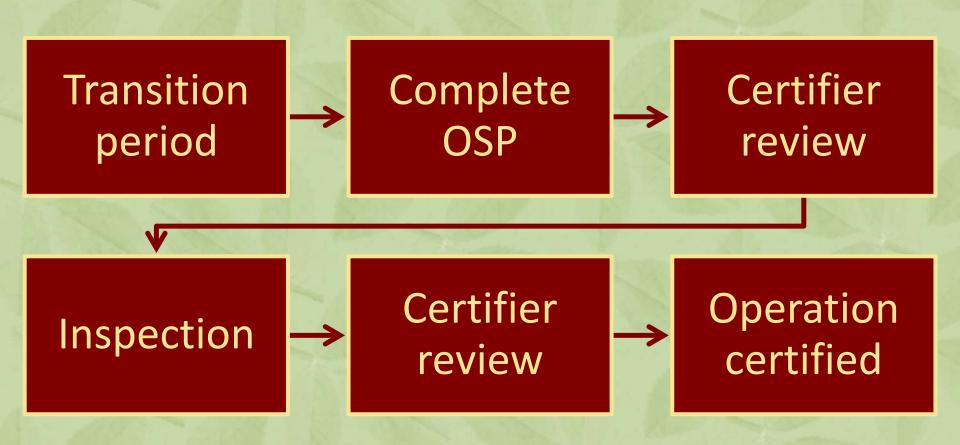




Certifier Decision – Possible Outcomes

- 1. Certification
- 2. Certification with conditions
- 3. Notice of Noncompliance for issues that are correctable
- 4. Notice of Noncompliance and Denial of Certification for non-correctable violations

Overview of Certification



Recertify on a yearly basis



Resources

- USDA-AMS Organic Certification and Accreditation
- USDA-AMS Organic Certifying Agents
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture USDA-Accredited Organic Certifiers Active in Minnesota
- Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Minnesota Guide to Organic Certification
- ATTRA Organic System Plan Template for Crop and/or Livestock Production
- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education
 Service Guidebook for Organic Certification



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United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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