



Certified Organic Facts

Are you in the know?

WHO can be Certified Organic?



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



- Any Crop or Livestock Farm, Wild Crop Harvester, or Handler (processor) that follows the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations, completes an Organic System Plan (OSP) and passes inspection.
- Farms or Handlers that sell over \$5K/year of organic sales must be certified.
- Those under \$5K/year in sales must keep all records and meet all regulations of NOP, they do not need to complete an OSP or be certified. These uncertified operations cannot use the USDA Seal.
- Transition can take up to 3 years (36 months) from the last application of a prohibited substance until the first organic harvest.

[USDA Introduction to Organic](#)

[Do I need to be Certified to be organic?](#)
[Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

WHAT is Certified Organic?

- Certified Organic is a well-defined agricultural practice that follows the certified food through the growing, processing, and handling of the food to the customer.
- Certification is renewed yearly by the farmer or handler.
- All aspects of the regulations must be met to carry the USDA organic seal.
- Certified products can carry the USDA Organic seal and/or the seal of the Accredited Certification Agency. (MOFGA, Oregon Tilth, etc.)
- This seal identifies that the food has met organic regulations from seed to the hands of the customer.
- Organic products are produced using sustainable, regenerative practices that protect the environment, wildlife, soil and water.
- Produce, meats, eggs, dairy, processed food and natural materials like cotton and wool can be certified organic.

[USDA Organic 101](#)

[USDA Organic Regulations](#)

WHAT certified organic does NOT allow!

- synthetic herbicides,
- synthetic pesticides,
- synthetic fertilizers,
- GMO's of any type,
- sewage sludge,
- bioengineered or
- radiated foods.

Contact: NOFA-NH's TOPP Coordinator at Teresa@nofanh.org or 603-224-5022

Find more information at www.nofanh.org/topp or www.organictransition.org



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WHERE is Certified Organic?

- The [USDA is a federal agency under the executive branch of the US Government](#). The Secretary of Agriculture oversees the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs where the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is housed. The National Organic Program (NOP) is under the AMS.
- The NOP Database houses the certification information of all the farms, handlers and importers that are Certified Organic to the USDA organic standards. This online database is the [Organic Integrity Database](#) and accessible via the internet.
- NOFA-NH keeps an [interactive farm map of Certified Organic Farms in NH](#).
- Organic Products could carry the “USDA Organic” logo and/or the seal of an accredited certifying agency that certified that product.
- USDA Organic Standards must be met for a product to be sold in the United States as certified organic. [NOP Handbook is available online](#).

[Organic Labeling Infographic](#)

[Labeling your Certified Organic Product](#)

WHY Certified Organic?

- Creating national organic standards, eliminated the confusion of different organizational organic standards across the country.
- To communicate with consumers about how your products are produced, when you can't be there to tell them.
- It shows your practices are verified by a third party, with annual compliance inspections.
- To grow food that is produced with careful stewardship of the environment, soil ecology and water quality.
- Certified organic operations are required to build soil health, protect natural resources, recycle nutrients and enhance biodiversity.
- Show traceability and transparency of the food because of required documentation.
- Guarantees that only approved materials are used in production and processing.
- Has clear economic, social, environmental, family and community well-being benefits that come with organic methods and the organic seal.
- Be part of a rapidly growing movement and mindset about stewarding our world for the benefit of the planet and people.
- The more certified organic farms there are, the more advocacy, integrity and impact there will be at the legislative level for a cleaner, living world for people.
- Shows consumers the extra effort and integrity of producers who certify organic.

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HOW to get Certified Organic?



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- Contact a USDA certifier. See table below.
- Fees for certification are set by each individual certifying agency. Not all listed agencies will certify in every state.
- [The Cost Share program](#), administered by the Farm Service Agency, is available to all certified operations. It currently provides a 75% reimbursement of inspection and certification fees.
- An Organic System Plan (OSP) is required. These forms are provided by the certifier and can vary slightly from certifier to certifier. [The NOP provides sample forms.](#)
- If new to certification, it could take up to 3 years (36 months) for transition. All recordkeeping needs to take place and regulations need to be met for those three years. Previous years' records showing compliance can shorten this time.
- Certification demonstrates compliance with the USDA organic standards. Certification happens when a farm or processor completes all required paperwork, is inspected, and is approved by a certifying agency.
- Work with established programs to get support through this certification process:
 - [NOFA-NH Transition to Organic Program \(TOPP\)](#), mentorship program & Technical Assistance
 - [NH State NRCS Office, Organic Transition Initiative](#)
 - [NH FSA State Office](#) for certification fee reimbursement
 - Start by contacting an ACA below. Reach out to NOFA-NH for support. www.nofanh.org.

| | Certifiers for New Hampshire | Phone/Email | State | |
|--|--|--|---------------|--------|
| | www.baystateorganic.org | 774-872-5544 | Massachusetts | USA |
| | www.ecocert.com | office.international@ecocert.com 888-337-8246 | | France |
| | www.mofgacertification.org | 207-568-6030 | Maine | USA |
| | www.tilth.org | 503-378-0690 | Oregon | USA |
| | www.paorganic.org | 814-422-0251 | Pennsylvania | USA |
| | www.qai-inc.com | 858-792-3531 | California | USA |
| | www.scsglobalservices.com/services/organic-certification | 510-452-8000 | California | USA |
| | www.nofavt.org_(limited in NH) | 802-434-3821 | Vermont | USA |

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