



Introduction to Organic Certification

A presentation of the CCOF Foundation



CCOF Foundation, presenter



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Quick Quiz

- Are GMO's allowed in organic?
- Do annual seedlings have to be certified organic?
- Can a farm have organic and non-organic production?
- How many years does the land need to be free of prohibited materials to be eligible to certify organic?
- Is hydroponic production able to be certified organic?
- Can conventional strawberry crowns be used to produce an organic crop?
- Can chlorine be used in the wash water that contacts organic crops?
- Is treated lumber allowed in the crop growing area?

What is Certified Organic?

- “Organic” is labelling term regulated by the US federal government
- National Organic Program (NOP) of the USDA, administers the regulations
- Certification agencies such as CCOF are accredited by the USDA to certify organic



What is organic production?



My field in 2011

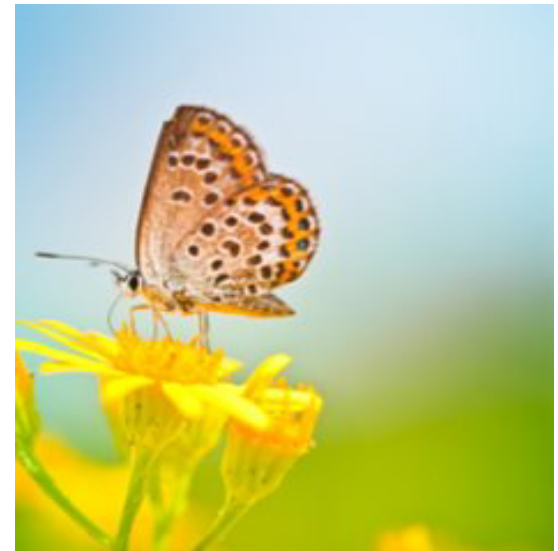
**Organic is much more than
input substitution!**

An organic production system:

- Uses cultural, biological and mechanical practices
- Cycles resources
- Promotes ecological balance
- Conserves biodiversity
- Improves natural resources including soil and water

Benefits of Organic Certification

- Farming practices that primarily use nonsynthetic fertilizers and pesticides
- Farming practices that protect natural resources and biodiversity
- Organic is non-GMO
- Attract consumers who value these practices



Benefits of Organic Certification

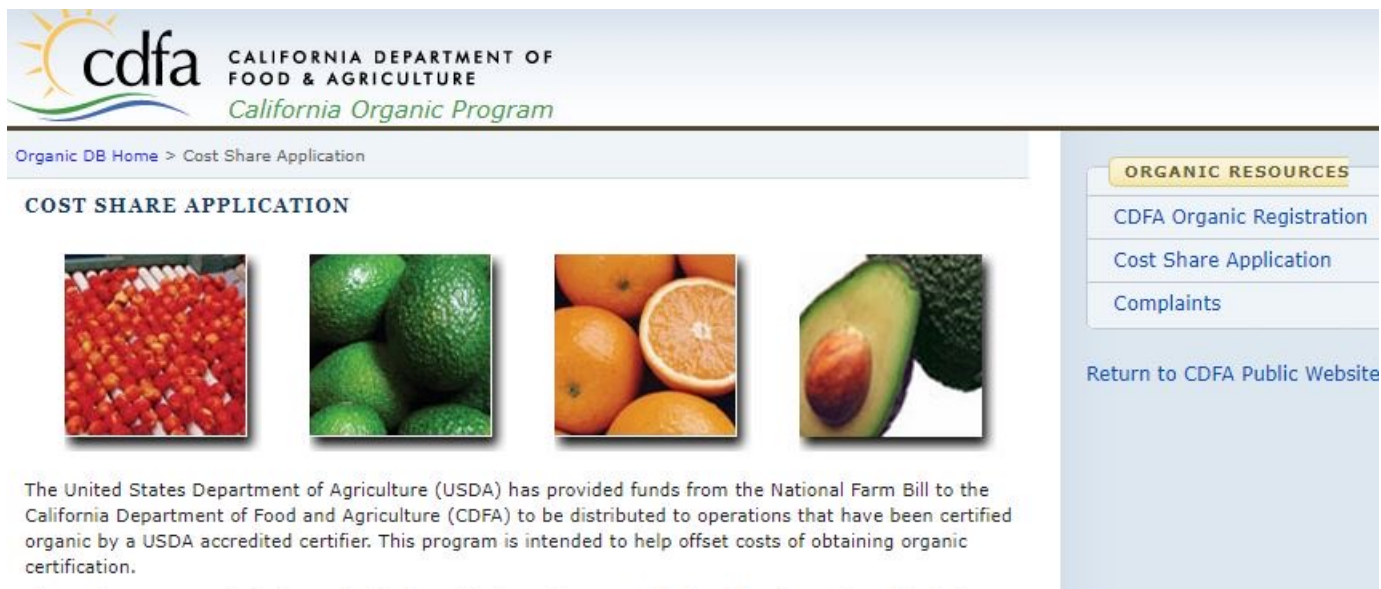
- A tool for producers to increase revenue and expand market opportunities
- Growth of 6.5% annually in vegetables and fruit
- Fastest growth of all sectors of the food economy



My field in 2023

Cost Share

- CDFA cost share program gives money back up to 75% of the costs of certification up to \$750 dollars



The screenshot shows the CDFA California Organic Program website. At the top left is the CDFA logo with the text "CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE" and "California Organic Program". Below the logo is a breadcrumb trail: "Organic DB Home > Cost Share Application". The main heading is "COST SHARE APPLICATION". Below this heading are four images: a tray of red cherry tomatoes, several green avocados, a bunch of oranges with one sliced, and a single avocado cut in half. Below the images is a paragraph of text: "The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided funds from the National Farm Bill to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to be distributed to operations that have been certified organic by a USDA accredited certifier. This program is intended to help offset costs of obtaining organic certification." On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with the heading "ORGANIC RESOURCES" and a list of links: "CDFA Organic Registration", "Cost Share Application", and "Complaints". At the bottom of the sidebar is a link: "Return to CDFA Public Website".

Organic Regulations Overview

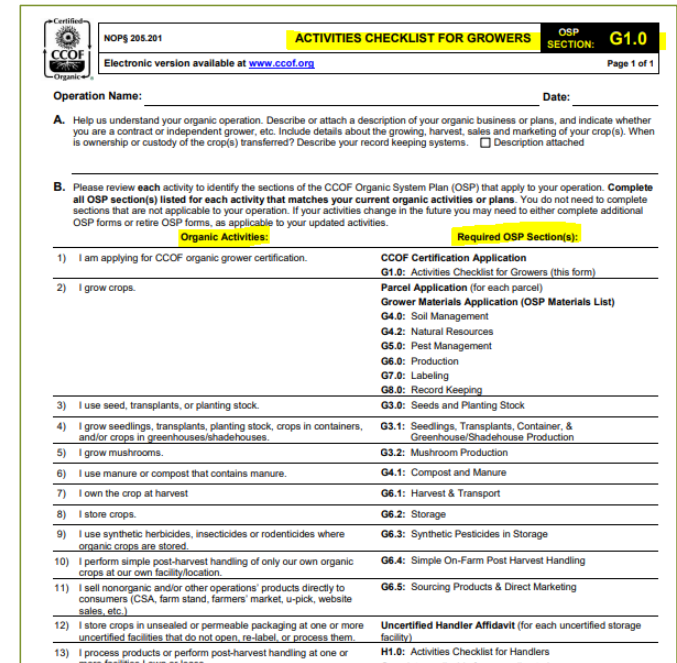
- Organic System Plan
- Improve the soil
- Land is eligible after three years free of prohibited materials
- Improve the natural resources
- Keep records
- Seeds, planting stock and annual seedlings
- Pest management
- Materials
- Yearly inspection
- Labels
- Direct sales

*NOP Standards: 7
CFR Part 205*

The Organic System Plan (OSP)

- A detailed description of farming practices used to produce organic products
- Updated as practices change
- Certifier reviews changes for compliance
- Implementation verified during inspections

NOP Standards: 205.201



The image shows a sample of the CCOF Organic System Plan (OSP) form, specifically the 'ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST FOR GROWERS' section. The form is titled 'NOP§ 205.201' and 'ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST FOR GROWERS' with the OSP SECTION: G1.0. It includes a header with the CCOF logo and the text 'Electronic version available at www.ccof.org'. The form is divided into two main sections: A and B. Section A asks for the operation name and date, and requests a description of the organic operation. Section B is the checklist, which is organized into two columns: 'Organic Activities' and 'Required OSP Section(s)'. The checklist items are numbered 1 through 13, and each item is followed by a line for the grower to write their response. The 'Required OSP Section(s)' column lists the corresponding sections of the CCOF Organic System Plan that apply to each activity. For example, item 1 (applying for certification) requires sections G1.0, G4.0, G4.2, G5.0, G6.0, G7.0, G8.0, and G9.0. Item 13 (post-harvest handling) requires section H1.0.

Organic Activities:	Required OSP Section(s):
1) I am applying for CCOF organic grower certification.	CCOF Certification Application G1.0: Activities Checklist for Growers (this form)
2) I grow crops.	Parcel Application (for each parcel) Grower Materials Application (OSP Materials List) G4.0: Soil Management G4.2: Natural Resources G5.0: Pest Management G6.0: Production G7.0: Labeling G8.0: Record Keeping
3) I use seed, transplants, or planting stock.	G9.0: Seeds and Planting Stock
4) I grow seedlings, transplants, planting stock, crops in containers, and/or crops in greenhouses/shadehouses.	G3.1: Seedlings, Transplants, Container, & Greenhouse/Shadehouse Production
5) I grow mushrooms.	G3.2: Mushroom Production
6) I use manure or compost that contains manure.	G4.1: Compost and Manure
7) I own the crop at harvest	G6.1: Harvest & Transport
8) I store crops.	G6.2: Storage
9) I use synthetic herbicides, insecticides or rodenticides where organic crops are stored.	G6.3: Synthetic Pesticides in Storage
10) I perform simple post-harvest handling of only our own organic crops at our own facility/location.	G6.4: Simple On-Farm Post Harvest Handling
11) I sell nonorganic and/or other operations' products directly to consumers (CSA, farm stand, farmers' market, u-pick, website sales, etc.)	G6.5: Sourcing Products & Direct Marketing
12) I store crops in unsealed or permeable packaging at one or more uncertified facilities that do not open, re-label, or process them.	Uncertified Handler Affidavit (for each uncertified storage facility)
13) I process products or perform post-harvest handling at one or more facilities I own or lease.	H1.0: Activities Checklist for Handlers

Example of Organic System Plan



NOP§ 205.201

ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST FOR GROWERS

OSP SECTION: **G1.0**

Electronic version available at www.ccof.org

Page 1 of 1

Operation Name: _____ Date: _____

A. Help us understand your organic operation. Describe or attach a description of your organic business or plans, and indicate whether you are a contract or independent grower, etc. Include details about the growing, harvest, sales and marketing of your crop(s). When is ownership or custody of the crop(s) transferred? Describe your record keeping systems. Description attached

B. Please review **each** activity to identify the sections of the CCOF Organic System Plan (OSP) that apply to your operation. **Complete all OSP section(s) listed for each activity that matches your current organic activities or plans.** You do not need to complete sections that are not applicable to your operation. If your activities change in the future you may need to either complete additional OSP forms or retire OSP forms, as applicable to your updated activities.

Organic Activities:

Required OSP Section(s):

1) I am applying for CCOF organic grower certification.	CCOF Certification Application G1.0: Activities Checklist for Growers (this form)
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3) I use seed, transplants, or planting stock.	G3.0: Seeds and Planting Stock
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5) I grow mushrooms.	G3.2: Mushroom Production
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7) I own the crop at harvest	G6.1: Harvest & Transport
8) I store crops.	G6.2: Storage

Soil Management

- Improve soil condition and minimize erosion
- Manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and application of plant and animal materials
- Crop rotation requirement
- Compost production (with required specs)
- Raw manure (with required time intervals)

NOP Standards: 205.203, 205.205



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Land

- Location, borders, crop
- 3 years free of prohibited material
- Land history documentation to verify eligibility date
 - Date of last prohibited material (DLPM)
 - Land use since DLPM
 - All material applications since DLPM



NOP Standards: 205.202

Natural Resources

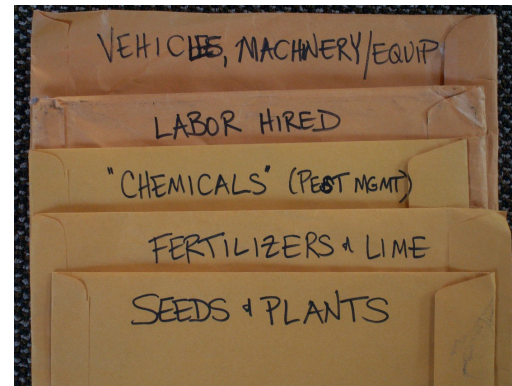


- General requirement to maintain or improve natural resources, including soil and water quality
- Examples: increasing biodiversity, creating pollinator habitat, protecting riparian zones, cover cropping
- Organic and food safety: “co-management”

NOP Standards: 205.200

Records

- Document all activities and transactions
- Maintain for 5 years
- Reviewed at inspections
- Adapt recordkeeping to your operation



NOP Standards: 205.103

Records

- Input application records and purchase receipts
- Seed, planting stock, annual seedling receipt and seed search logs
- Planting and crop rotation records
- Natural resource management records
- Harvest records
- Sales records

Market Load List

Market Location: _____ Day/Date: _____

Crop	Quantity Harvested/Field	Quantity Sold	Quantity Remaining

NOP Standards: 205.103

Market Load List

Market Location: _____ Day/Date: _____

Crop	Quantity Harvested/Field	Quantity Sold	Quantity Remaining

Seeds and Annual Seedlings and Planting Stock

- GMOs are prohibited
- Seed must be organic
 - If after searching for organic seed and finding it **not** commercially available, non-GMO and nonorganic seed may be used
- Seed treatments (including inoculants, coatings, pelletings, etc.) must be approved for organic
- **Annual seedlings must be certified organic**
- Planting stock (strawberries, fruit trees) also subject to commercial availability

NOP Standards: 205.105, 205.204

Pest Management

- First, preventative practices such as:
 - Cultural practices: timing of planting, crop rotation, companion planting, sanitation, soil health
 - Biological controls: beneficial insects or microorganisms, attractant or repellent crops
 - Mechanical controls: baits, traps and lures, hand removal, Bug Vac, pruning, mowing, row covers
- Then, if needed, can use organic-approved materials



NOP Standards: 205.206

Materials

- Fertilizers, soil amendments, compost/manure, pest/weed/disease control, adjuvants, transplant/container media, seed treatments
- All ingredients must either be:
 - Non-synthetic (natural), if not specifically prohibited
 - Synthetic, only if specifically allowed
 - AKA “The National List”



AgroThrive General Purpose
(55 Gallons)



AgroThrive Fruit & Flower
(55 Gallons)

NOP Standards: 205.105, 205.601, 205.602

Materials

- Each input material must be included in OSP and approved by certifier prior to use
- All ingredients are reviewed
- Certifiers rely on outside material review organizations:
 - OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) www.omri.org
 - WSDA (Washington State Department of Agriculture)
 - CDFA Organic Input Material Program

NOP Standards: 205.105, 205.201, 205.601, 205.602

Labels



- All labels must be approved by the certifier
- Nonretail labels: Identify the crop as organic, lot numbers or other tracking method
- Retail labels: “Certified Organic by [certifier]” directly below the operation name

Organic Regulations: Labels

- USDA logo and certifier logo may be used but certifier logo may not be more “prominent”
- USDA logo color cannot be modified



NOP Standards: 205.303, 205.307, 205.311

Direct Sales

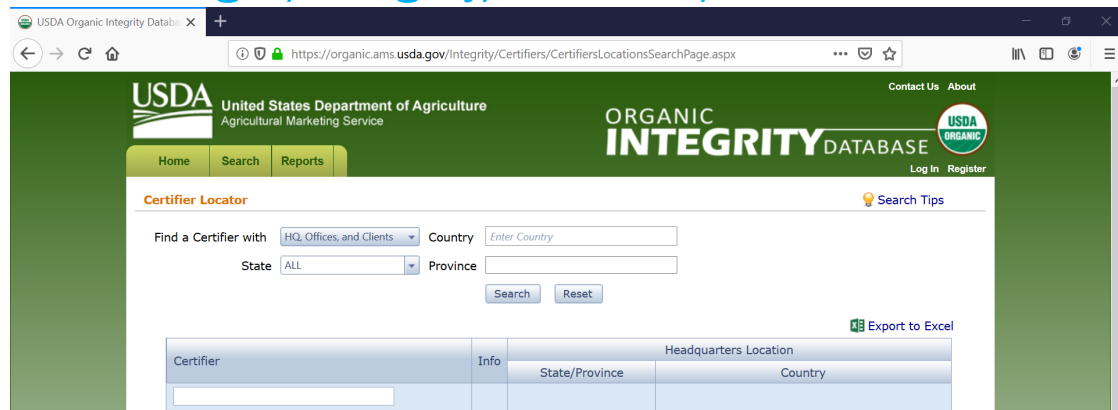
- Prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic
- Clear separation and identification of organic and conventional
- Only certified or exempt (<\$5,000) operations can claim “organic”

NOP Standards: 205.100, 205.101, 205.272



Resources

- USDA National Organic Program: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>
- NOP Standards: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic>
- Find an accredited organic certifier: <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/Certifiers/CertifiersLocationsSearchPage.aspx>



The screenshot shows the USDA Organic Integrity Database website. The page title is "Certifier Locator". It features a search form with the following fields:

- "Find a Certifier with" dropdown menu (set to "HQ, Offices, and Clients")
- "Country" text input field (placeholder: "Enter Country")
- "State" dropdown menu (set to "ALL")
- "Province" text input field
- "Search" and "Reset" buttons

Below the search form is a table with the following structure:

Certifier	Info	Headquarters Location	
		State/Province	Country
<input type="text"/>			

There is also an "Export to Excel" button to the right of the table.

Resources

- General Information on Becoming Certified Organic:
 - NCAT/ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture Tutorials: <https://attra.ncat.org/tutorials/>
 - CCOF "Go Organic" Checklist - <https://www.ccof.org/certification/how/ready-go-organic>
 - CCOF Webinar Library: <https://www.ccof.org/ccof-foundation/organic-training-institute/past-events-recordings>
- Information on Organic Production Practices
 - NCAT/ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture Publications: <https://attra.ncat.org/publications/>
 - OFRF Online Organic Farming Course: <https://ofrf.org/news/new-training-program-offers-organic-basics-beginning-farmers>
- USDA National Organic Certification Cost Share Program:
 - CA Operations: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i & c/organic.html>
 - Outside CA: www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp
- Material Review Organizations:
 - OMRI - <https://www.omri.org>
 - WSDA - <https://agr.wa.gov/departments/organic/input-material-registration>
 - CDFA OIM - <https://apps1.cdfa.ca.gov/fertilizerproducts/>



Thank you

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