



TODD STAPLES, COMMISSIONER

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



A Resource for Organic Operations

For a copy of the National Organic Program Regulations and Title 4, Section 18 of the Texas Administrative Code, a companion to the Organic Certification Handbook, please contact the Texas Department of Agriculture, Organic Certification Program or refer to our website, www.TexasAgriculture.gov.

The TDA Organic Certification Rules Packet includes the following:

- Title 7, Part 205 (National Organic Program Regulations) of the Code of Federal Regulations
- Title 4, Section 18 (Texas Organic Certification Regulations) of the Texas Agriculture Code
- [Applicable forms for Organic Certification with TDA](#), Organic Certification Fee Information

**Texas Department of Agriculture
Organic Certification Program
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, TX 78711**



Phone	(800) TELL-TDA (within Texas)
Information	(512) 463-7476
TTY	(800) 735-2989
Fax	(888) 215-5295
Email	Organic@TexasAgriculture.gov
Website	www.TexasAgriculture.gov

Updates to TDA publications are available on our website.

Page	Section 1: General Information
4	TDA, Organic Certification Program staff and contact information
5	Mission Statement for the Texas Department of Agriculture
5	Mission Statement for the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), Organic Certification Program
5	Authority
5	Texas Organic Agricultural Industry Advisory Board
6	TDA, Organic Certification Program history
	Section 2: Organic Certification
8	Organic certification categories
9	Seven steps to organic certification
10	Materials approved for use in organic production and handling
11	Organic labeling and product composition requirements
14	How to file a complaint
	Section 3: Organic Land Producer Information
15	Organic land producer information
21	Organic producer recordkeeping requirements
18	Seed and planting stock guidelines
20	Organic seed decision tree
21	Transitional certification program
21	Transitional product labeling requirements
	Section 4: Organic Livestock Producer Information
22	Livestock producer information
22	Livestock organic system plan
22	Origin of livestock
23	Organic livestock feed
23	Organic livestock healthcare
23	Organic livestock living conditions
42	Organic livestock pasture practice standard and grazing season
24	Organic livestock record keeping requirements
25	Requirements for slaughtering organic livestock and processing organic livestock products
	Section 5: Organic Handler Information
26	Information for organic handlers
26	Organic handler recordkeeping information
27	Policy for organic handlers to notify TDA about food health and safety licenses
	Section 6: Frequently asked Questions
28	Frequently asked questions about organic certification
31	Frequently asked questions about organic production
32	Frequently asked questions about organic livestock
33	Frequently asked questions about organic handling
	Section 7: Resource Guide
38	Listing of applicable forms
38	Research and education
40	Organic industry
42	Material review
43	GO TEXAN
44	Marketing
45	Soil fertility and water quality testing
46	Partial listing of testing laboratories located in Texas

Organic Certification Program Contact Information

Coordinator for Organic Certification

Mary Ellen Holliman

Organic Certification Specialist

Nicole Fiedler

Regulatory Program Specialists

Alexandra Hunt

Phone: 512-936-4178

Fax: 888-215-5295

Email: Organic@TexasAgriculture.gov

TDA Regional Offices

Lubbock Regional Office

4502 Englewood Ave.

Lubbock, TX 79414

Phone: 806-799-8555

Fax: 800-831-3746

Dallas Regional Office

1720 Regal Row, Suite 118

Dallas, TX 75235

Phone: 214-631-0265

Fax: 888-205-6335

Houston Regional Office

5425 Polk Street Suite G-20

Houston, TX 77023

Phone: 713-921-8200

Fax: 888-223-5606

San Antonio Regional Office

8918 Tesoro Drive, Suite 120

San Antonio, TX 78217

Phone: 210-820-0288

Fax: 888-203-1235

San Juan Regional Office

900-B East Expressway 83

San Juan, TX 78589

Phone: 956-787-8866

Fax: 800-909-816

Mission Statement for the Texas Department of Agriculture

Partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

Mission Statement for the TDA, Organic Certification Program

To ensure the integrity of organic agriculture products produced and manufactured in Texas by providing certification services to Texas producers and agribusinesses.

Authority

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has received accreditation from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Organic Program (NOP) as an organic certifying agent. TDA is authorized to regulate production and handling operations or a specified portion of a production or handling operation (except for those exempt or excluded from certification) that produces or handles crops, livestock, livestock products or other agricultural products that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

Texas Organic Agricultural Industry Advisory Board

The Texas Organic Agricultural Industry Advisory Board was established in 2007 to help strengthen and promote the organic agricultural products industry in Texas. The Advisory Board consists of producers, processors, handlers and other stakeholders.

Duties of the Advisory Board

1. Assessing the state of the organic agricultural products industry in Texas;
2. Developing recommendations to the Commissioner and the Texas Legislature on how to promote and expand the organic agricultural products industry in Texas; and
3. Identifying and obtaining grants and gifts to promote and expand the organic agricultural products industry in Texas; and
4. Developing a statewide organic agricultural products education and awareness campaign.

Advisory Board Membership

1. Each board member is appointed to a renewable four-year term.
2. The board consists of 13 members representing the following categories:
 - a. Four members who produce agricultural products;
 - b. Two members who are retail sellers of organic agricultural products;
 - c. One member who distributes organic agricultural products;
 - d. One member who processes organic agricultural product;
 - e. One member who represents a Texas organic agriculture trade association;
 - f. One member who represents the Texas Cooperative Extension

- g. One technical advisor member who is employed by an institution of higher education or government agency as a researcher or instructor
 - h. One member who represents the public
 - i. One representative of TDA
3. The board elects a presiding officer from among its members

Advisory Board Meetings

The Advisory Board shall meet at least once a year and may meet at other times considered necessary by the Commissioner. Certified operations and the public are welcome to attend meetings, but please contact the TDA, Organic Certification Program in advance to ensure space in the meeting room and to allow time for your comments if you are bringing an issue to the Advisory Board.

TDA Organic Certification Program History

In 1987, the TDA conducted a study of the organic food market that revealed retailers were interested in marketing organic products, but concerned about their ability to verify the authenticity of such products. Retailers said government certification would allay their own concerns, as well as those of consumers. However, on the supply side, organic farmers in Texas were wary of government regulation, although they knew they needed help to break into mainstream markets. TDA responded to these various concerns by bringing representatives from all interested parties together in an 18-member task force made up of farmers, retailers, consumers, scientists, and processors. During a six-month period, this task force devised production and handling standards for an organic certification program. The task force was dissolved upon completion of its preliminary work and in 2007 the Texas Organic Industry Advisory Board was created to continue organic certification development in this state.

The department's organic certification program fostered a new alliance between consumers, farmers and government to help standardize organic labeling and promote the organic industry in Texas. Prior to implementation of TDA's program, the process of verifying the authenticity of organic products was done privately by the industry itself, mostly through organic farmer organizations. TDA's program shifted regulation of organic food from industry to government, conferring the necessary credibility for organic products to successfully penetrate the general marketplace.

In 2002, the federal National Organic Program (NOP) superseded TDA's state certification program. Under the NOP, TDA is accredited by USDA as an organic certifying agent. National organic regulations are now established and enforced uniformly across the United States under the federal program and TDA's role is similar to that of private and sister state certifying agents.

Snapshot of the history of organic certification in Texas

- June 15, 1988 – TDA, Organic Certification Program began.
- September 1989 – the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture adopted a Texas resolution calling on Congress to adopt a national organic law.
- November 1989 – Sen. Patrick Leahy, chair of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee, introduced S.B. 1986, a national organic bill that relied heavily on Chapter 18 of the Texas' standards and concept.
- 1990 – TDA, Organic Certification Program began certifying production of organically grown cotton.

- 1990 – Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) in December.
- 1993 – The 73rd Texas Legislature passed House Bill 2446, moving the state's organic certification program from a voluntary program to one which mandated producers, processors and distributors of in-state or out-of-state organic products be certified by either TDA or an accredited organic certifying agent. Retailers were required to be certified if they sold unpacked or bulk-bin organic products. Retailers of packaged products could voluntarily be certified.
- 1995 – TDA, Organic Certification Program developed standards to certify processors of organic wool and mohair.
- April 21, 2001 – The OFPA went into effect.
- Oct. 21, 2002 – The OFPA was fully implemented.
- April 29, 2002 – TDA, Organic Certification Program became an accredited certifying agent under the USDA, National Organic Program Regulations.
- Sept. 1, 2007 – The Texas Organic Industry Advisory Board was created.

As a USDA-accredited certifying agent, and in accordance with the NOP, TDA inspects and certifies organic farms, as well as processors, distributors and retailers of organic food and fiber. To be certified, an operation or portion of an operation must comply with organic production and handling regulations established under NOP Regulations. In exchange for participation, certified organic businesses may use both the USDA organic seal and the TDA organic logo to identify their products as certified organic. The Marketing Division at TDA may also help certified businesses market their products by promoting Texas-certified organic food and fiber.

TDA's wide-ranging organic certification and marketing programs assist the development of our state's agricultural economy, provide consumers with the most abundant and diverse organic food and fiber supply possible, and help Texas farmers work effectively to capture a larger share of the growing premium market for organic products, while ensuring the authenticity of those products for both retailers and consumers.

Who Must be Certified

All farm, livestock, and handler operations that represent or sell agricultural products as “organic” and whose gross income from organic sales total \$5,000 or more must be Certified Organic.

Organic Land Production Certification: for any crop, pasture, and greenhouse operation (or specified portion of an operation) involved in the production of food, fiber, feed and other agricultural-based consumer products.

Organic Livestock Production Certification: for any livestock or poultry operation (or specified portion of an operation) involved in the production of food, fiber or other agricultural-based consumer products, wild or domesticated game, or other non-plant life, except aquatic animals.

Organic Processor (Handler) Certification: for any operation (or specified portion of an operation) involved in manufacturing a processed and/or packaged product represented or sold as organic. Under the NOP Regulations, processing is defined as cooking, baking, curing, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, slaughtering, cutting, fermenting, distilling, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating, freezing, chilling or otherwise manufacturing and includes packaging, canning, jarring, or otherwise enclosing food in a container.

Organic Distributor (Handler) Certification: for any operation (or specified portion of an operation) involved in the distribution of a product represented or sold as organic. Distributors include brokers, traders, warehouse facilities or storage facilities that handle organic products, as well as packing sheds and operations that grade and/or size organic products.

TDA Organic Retail Certification: Retailers who sell organic products may wish to be certified in order to ensure that their stores comply with all of the organic handling requirements. However, the majority of retailers are exempt or excluded from the requirement to be certified.

TDA Transitional Production Certification: Available to land and livestock production operations who wish to document their transition period to certified organic production. Operations certified as transitional under the Texas Agriculture Code must be able to prove their compliance with the NOP Regulations, except for the requirement of not having any prohibited substances applied to the land for a period of three years.

Five Steps to Organic Certification

Step 1: Research

Determine if you are willing and able to comply with the NOP Regulations and Title 4, Chapter 18 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). Contact TDA to request an Organic Certification Regulations packet or go to our website, www.TexasAgriculture.gov.

Step 2: Apply

Complete all applicable forms and submit, along with applicable fees, to the TDA, Organic Certification Program. Printable copies of all forms and direction on which forms you should complete is available on our website, or you may contact the TDA, Organic Certification Program. The information to calculate your certification fees is located in the instructions of the Application for Organic Certification (ROR-600).

Step 3: Review of the Application and Organic System Plan

Once your application and organic system plan forms are received by TDA, it will be reviewed for compliance with the NOP Regulations and Title 4, Chapter 18 of the TAC. If your application is found to be incomplete, TDA will contact you in writing to request the additional information. If additional information is requested, respond within the 30-day time period and supply additional information or documentation as directed.

Step 4: Inspection

After your application has been initially reviewed and determined to be complete you will receive an acknowledgement letter and your application will be forwarded to the TDA Regional Office nearest you for assignment to an inspector.

- Cooperate with the inspector to schedule the on-site inspection. An authorized representative who is knowledgeable about the operation must be available at all times during the inspection.
- You must have all records and documentation available at time of inspection.
- You must provide access to all production or handling sites.

Step 5: Review of Inspection Report and Certification Decision

TDA will conduct a final review of all documentation and make a certification decision.

- You must review the certification decision letter and certificate (if granted) for accuracy and report any discrepancies to TDA for review or correction.
- You must correct any identified areas of non-compliance, including additional requirements within a reasonable time period. This time period is typically 30 days.
- Once certified, you are required to submit an updated organic system plan (OSP) and certification fee each year.
- Once certified, your certification remains in effect until surrendered or suspended or revoked by TDA, or the Administrator of the USDA Agricultural Service.

Materials Approved for Use in Organic Production and Handling

In order to comply with NOP Regulations, producers and handlers must use input materials and substances that are in compliance with the regulations. Both the active ingredients in a substance, as well as any inert or minor ingredients, must fully comply with the NOP Regulations to be used in or on organic crops, products, or sites. “The National List,” sections 205.601-206-606 of the NOP Regulations outlines the allowed and prohibited substances that can be used in organic production and handling. The National List can be found in the TDA Organic Rules and Regulations Packet or on the NOP website: www.ams.usda.gov/nop

WARNING: Prior to using any substance in an organic operation, carefully evaluate the input material for compliance with the NOP Regulations. Use of a prohibited substance will result in a loss of organic certification. Keeping the TDA, Organic Certification Program informed of all materials that you plan on using before actual use will help ensure compliance and help you avoid accidental application of a prohibited substance that may affect the status of your organic certification.

Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI)

The Organic Material Review Institute is an additional resource for materials that are approved for use in organic production and handling. OMRI publishes a brand name material list and a generic material list of materials allowed, allowed with restrictions, and prohibited from use in organic production and handling.

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Organic Food Program

The WSDA publishes the brand name material list, which may be useful in determining if an input material is allowed under the NOP Regulations.

TDA does not endorse or guarantee any of the products listed on the OMRI Products List or the WSDA Brand Name Material List. In addition, manufacturers are not required to register their products; therefore, neither is a comprehensive list of materials that meet organic regulations. Please refer to the NOP National List of allowed and prohibited substances for the complete list of generic substances that may be used in organic production. You are also encouraged to contact the TDA, Organic Certification Program with questions regarding compliance with the NOP Regulations.

Crop Production

The NOP Regulations allow the use of natural substances unless they are specifically prohibited (for example: strychnine and nicotine are prohibited). Conversely, synthetic substances are prohibited unless they are specifically allowed according to the NOP Regulations. Sections 205.601 and 205.602 of the National List contain the list of allowed and prohibited substances for use in organic crop production.

Soil fertility may be maintained or improved through the application of natural or approved synthetic fertilizers. Many approved synthetic fertilizers have restrictions or annotations regarding their use and should be considered carefully prior to their application. Natural and approved synthetic substances are also used for insect, weed and disease control in organic farming systems when a preventative plan is not adequate to avert pest pressure.

Livestock

Materials approved and prohibited for use in organic livestock production can be found in sections 205.603 and 205.604 of the National List. These material lists include the requirements for feed additives, vaccines and biologics, medications, and any other production aid used in an organic livestock system. Natural substances are approved for use in organic livestock systems, such as herbal remedies or naturally derived enzymes. All synthetic medications are prohibited, unless specifically allowed in section 205.603 of the National List. Prior to using a material in livestock production, evaluate the substance carefully and verify there are no prohibited substances in the product.

Processing Aids

A processing aid is any substance used during processing that does not become an ingredient or is present at insignificant levels in the finished product. Examples of processing aids include defoamers, enzymes or filters.

- To use a processing aid with a product labeled as “100% organic,” the aid must be certified organic.
- To use a processing aid with an organic product labeled as “organic,” or “made with organic (specific ingredients or food groups),” the aid must be an approved agricultural product, or must be listed in section 205.605 of the National List.

Post Harvest Materials

A post harvest material is a substance that is used on a raw organic crop prior to packaging or processing of the crop. Examples of post harvest materials include food contact sanitizers, waxes, diatomaceous earth, and sprouting inhibitors. In order to use a post harvest material directly on an organic crop product, the material must be an approved natural product, or must be listed in section 205.601 of the National List and used in accordance with any noted annotations.

Organic Labeling and Product Composition Requirements

All product labels and marketing information that make an organic claim must comply with Subpart D of the NOP Regulations (sections 205.300 – 205.311). These sections outline product composition requirements, along with labeling requirements for the different composition categories. Types of organic labels that are regulated under the NOP Regulations include:

- Retail Packages
- Nonretail Containers (Containers for Storage and Shipping Only)
- Livestock Feed Labels

In addition, the NOP Regulations outlines requirements for the labeling of non-packaged products sold at retail stores (such as bulk containers), as well as the labeling of products that are produced at operations that are exempt or excluded from certification. Refer to sections 205.308- 205.310 of the NOP Regulations for details on these types of label claims.

Retail Packages (Sections 205.301, 205.303 – 205.305)

Retail packages are divided into different categories by the NOP Regulations. These categories are based on the amount of organic ingredients in the product. The formula for calculating the percentage of organic ingredients in a product is outlined in section 205.302 of the NOP Regulations.

100% Organic Claims

MUST:

- Be made entirely of 100% organic ingredients and processing aids (excluding water and salt).
- Identify all organic ingredients as “organic” on the ingredient statement if it is a multi-ingredient product.
- Include the statement “Certified organic by the Texas Department of Agriculture.” This statement must be located below the name of the manufacturer or distributor of the product.

MAY (Optional):

- Display the USDA seal in the colors set forth by the NOP.
- Display the TDA organic logo.
- 100% qualifier (the percentage of organic ingredients in the product).

Organic Claims

MUST:

- Be at least 95% organic ingredients (excluding water and salt).
- All agricultural ingredients must be organic unless they are listed in section 205.606 of the NOP Regulations and are demonstrated to not be commercially available in an organic form.
- Identify all organic ingredients as “organic” on the ingredient statement.
- Include the statement “Certified organic by the Texas Department of Agriculture.” This statement must be located below the name of the manufacturer or distributor of the product.
- All non-agricultural ingredients must be in section 205.605 of the NOP Regulations and must be used in accordance with any annotations.

MAY (Optional):

- Display the percentage of organic ingredients. The size of the percentage statement must not exceed one-half the size of the largest type size on the panel on which the statement is displayed and must appear in its entirety in the same type size, style, and color without highlighting.
- Display the USDA organic seal in the colors set forth by the NOP.
- Display the TDA organic logo.

Made with Organic (specified ingredients) Claims

MUST:

- Be 70% or more organic ingredients.
- Indicate all ingredients as organic on the ingredient panel.
- Include the statement “Certified organic by the Texas Department of Agriculture.” This statement must be located below the name of the manufacturer or distributor of the product.
- Non-organic ingredients must not be produced using prohibited practices (GMOs, sewage sludge, ionizing radiation).

MUST NOT:

- Use the USDA organic seal

MAY (Optional):

- Indicate the percentage of organic ingredients.
- Display the TDA organic logo.
- Display the statement, “Made with organic (specified ingredients or food groups).” The statement may not list more than three ingredients or food groups

Organic Claims in the Information Panel Only – Less than 70% organic ingredients

MUST:

- Identify organic ingredients as “organic” in the ingredient statement if the % of organic ingredients is displayed in the information panel.

MUST NOT:

- Be labeled as organic on the principal display panel.
- Use the USDA organic seal, TDA organic logo, or other identifying mark, which represents organic certification of a product or product ingredients.

A handling operation or portion of a handling operation that only identifies organic ingredients on the information panel is exempt from certification but not certain requirements detailed in section 205.101 of the NOP Regulations.

Nonretail Container – Any container used for shipping or storage of an organic agricultural product and is not used in the retail display (sections 205.301 and 205.307).

MUST:

- Must be traceable back to an organic product and must display the production lot number of the product if applicable.

MAY (Optional):

- Identify the product as “organic.”
- Display special handling instructions needed to maintain the organic integrity of the product.
- Display the USDA organic seal in the colors set forth by the NOP Regulations.
- Display the TDA organic logo.
- Although not required, labeling all storage and shipping containers with the statement, “Certified organic by the Texas Department of Agriculture” ensures better tracking and transparency of the product’s organic certification.

Livestock Feed (Section 205.237, 205.301, 205.306)

MUST:

- A raw or processed livestock feed product sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic” must contain (by weight or fluid volume, excluding water and salt) not less than 100 percent produced raw or processed agricultural product. (205.301(e)(1))
- A raw or processed livestock feed product sold, labeled, or represented as “organic” must be produced in conformance with section 205.237 of the NOP Regulations.

MUST NOT (Section 205.237):

- Use animal drugs, including hormones, to promote growth;
- Provide feed supplements or additives in amounts above those needed for adequate nutrition and health maintenance for the species at its specific stage of life;
- Use plastic pellets as roughage;
- Use formulas containing urea or manure;
- Use mammalian or poultry slaughter by-products.
- Use feed, feed additives, and feed supplements in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;

- Use feed or forage to which any antibiotic including ionophores has been added.

MAY (Optional):

- Display the statement “100 percent organic” or “organic,”
- Display the USDA organic seal in the colors set forth by the NOP Regulations
- Display the TDA organic logo.
- Use the word, “organic,” or an asterisk or other reference mark, which is defined on the package to identify ingredients that are organically produced. Water or salt included as ingredients cannot be identified as organic.

How to File a Complaint

Who can file a complaint?

Any person may file a complaint if he or she believes a violation of the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 or its implementing regulations has occurred or is about to occur.

How are complaints filed?

To file a complaint against a TDA-certified organic operation, please contact our program directly.

Complaints against operations not certified by TDA should be forwarded directly to the compliance office at the National Organic Program.

What information is needed?

When you report a suspected violation, be prepared to provide as much detailed information as possible (who? what? when? where? why? and how?). Please include documentation when available. Complete and accurate information helps ensure that the issue can be successfully reviewed or investigated.

Contact Information:

Texas Department of Agriculture
Organic Certification Program
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, TX 78711
Toll Free: (800) 835-5835
Local: (512) 463-7476
Fax: (888) 215-5295
Email: Organic@TexasAgriculture.gov

NOP Compliance
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Mail Stop 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: (202) 720-8311
Fax: (202) 205-7808
Email: NOPcompliance@usda.gov

Organic Land Producer Information

Organic production is a system of ecological soil management that builds organic matter and humus levels through crop rotations, recycling plant and animal materials, and applying balanced mineral amendments. When necessary, an organic production system uses mechanical, botanical or biological controls to manage pests, weeds and disease.

The following are the major components involved in the certification process.

Farm Plan

- A description of all practices and procedures that will be performed, including how often they will be performed.
- A list of each substance to be used as a production input, including its composition, source and location(s) where it will be used.
- Some inputs, such as seed, may also require justification and documentation of a thorough search for organic seed to demonstrate that organic seed is not commercially available, before using any nonorganic, untreated seed.
- A description of monitoring practices to be used, including how often they will be performed, to verify that the plan is being implemented as outlined and is effectively addressing production challenges.
- A description of management practices and physical barriers used to prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products on a split operation, and to prevent contamination of organic products with prohibited substances.
- A description of the recordkeeping system that fully discloses all activities and transactions of the certified operation in sufficient detail to be readily understood and audited, and is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with NOP Regulations.
- The Producer Organic System Plan (TDA form ROR-607) is designed to gather most of the information needed in a farm plan. You may include additional pages to describe any part of the production system that is not addressed completely in filling out the form.

Land History

- The producer must provide a full three-year farm history of agricultural use of the land using verifiable records such as crop records, production or management plans, affidavits from the previous and/or current owner-manager, or FSA records.
- Producers of crops who have satisfied all requirements for certification for organic production except the passage of the required three-year period may request certification of their crops under the Texas Department of Agriculture's "Transitional" label.

Buffer Zones

- Distinct, defined boundaries must exist between fields under organic management and other fields.
- Buffer zones separating land managed organically from other cultivated agricultural land or non-agricultural land, or physical barriers such as hedgerows must be adequate to prevent prohibited substances used on adjacent land from contacting organic or transitional crops.
- Larger buffer zones may be needed if drift, run-off, or other farming practices jeopardize the integrity of the organic crop.

Soil Management

- Soil condition must be managed to increase the soil's organic matter through crop rotation, cover cropping, manuring and/or composting. Producers should utilize legumes and green manure crops, cover cropping and mulching for improved soil condition and for optimal weed management.
- Soil amendments from natural materials or listed as allowed in § 205.203 and the National List may be utilized for supplemental sources of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, calcium, magnesium, management of soil pH, and micronutrients.
- Crop nutrition management must be monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the fertilizer management program. A simple monitoring system could be based on annual soil fertility analysis and/or plant tissue analysis. Also, nutrient credits for manure, compost, legume cover crops and soil organic matter should be factored into crop nutrition management decisions.
- Soil conservation practices may include, but are not limited to, terracing, benching, land leveling, furrow diking, conservation tillage and planting practices. Cover crops, mulches and surface crop residues can also be used to enhance soil and water conservation. Water conservation practices include irrigation scheduling, application rates and intervals, and soil and crop moisture utilization.

Weed Management

- Weed management of both annual and perennial weeds should be based on a program of preventative weed management, which includes methods such as crop rotation, cover cropping, mulching and smother cropping.
- Also, cultural practices such as mowing, grazing and shallow cultivation (including flame cultivation) are allowed. However, extensive cultivation is discouraged.
- Use of any synthetic herbicides not included on the National List, including rope-wick application or spot-application, is prohibited.

Insect Pest Management

- Insect management should be based on integrated pest management principles including cultural practices such as planning production schedules, planting resistant varieties, planting dates, crop selection, rotation, trap cropping and intercropping.
- Other practices including pheromone traps, sticky traps, vacuuming and water jets or other mechanical or physical controls are also allowed.
- Producers may use beneficial organisms such as parasites, predators and pathogens to control pests.
- Crop management, including intercropping or utilization of legume or grass cover crops to develop natural insectaries is encouraged, and beneficial insects may also be released by artificial application methods.
- Pheromones used in traps or for mating disruption are allowed.
- Biological pesticides such as Bt's (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), viruses and entomopathic fungi are permitted, provided that all ingredients are allowed under the NOP Regulations.
- Applications of allowed materials such as insecticidal soaps, natural vegetable oils, herbal preparations and diatomaceous earth are permitted pest controls if preventative methods do not adequately control pests.
- The use of botanical pesticides as a pest control method and may be utilized only as a last resort when other methods are ineffective.

Disease Management

- Disease prevention must be a consideration in planning production schedules, choosing crops, locating and sizing plantings, and deciding on soil-management practices.
- Management practices such as planting resistant varieties; timing plantings to avoid cycles of pest emergence, intercropping, crop rotations and avoidance of excessive fertilization can be useful in preventing disease problems.
- If justified in the farm plan, substances allowed under the NOP Regulations may be used if preventative methods do not adequately control diseases.

Harvest & Handling

- Harvesting equipment used for conventional crops must be mechanically or physically cleaned prior to harvesting organic crops.
- Crops harvested from buffer zones must be sold as conventional crops rather than organic. An on-site inspection may be required at harvest time to verify compliance with harvest requirements.

Operator Management

- Producers or managers should have a thorough knowledge of organic standards and certification procedures.

Organic Producer Recordkeeping Requirements

National Organic Program Regulations section 205.103 – Recordkeeping by certified operations

A major requirement of the NOP Regulations is the maintenance of all records related to organic production and handling. These records must be maintained for a minimum of five years and be available during an inspection and must be easily understood. A review of your records will be conducted during each on-site inspection to verify certification requirements have been followed. Complete and accurate records must be kept that track the organic products from seed to harvest, or from receiving through final sale and shipping.

Use the following information to help you determine what types of records the inspector may need to look at during your inspection. Please note that this list is only to be used as guidance, and is not a list of all required records.

Seed and Transplants, including cover crop and pasture seed.

- Invoices (seed packages, and labels can be useful).
- Verification of organic production for seed and transplants (organic certificates).
- Verification of attempts to obtain organic seed or transplants (phone logs, catalogs, seed supplier letters).
- Completion of the ROR-622, Seed and Planting Stock Disclosure Form.

Application Records For All Farm Inputs

- Application Records for ground and foliar applied materials such as fertilizers, manure, compost, soil amendments, foliar micronutrient sprays, pesticides, etc.
- Purchase invoices or receipts for all input purchases including custom applicator invoices.

- Product labels and material data sheets for input materials used that are not approved by OMRI or WSDA. If a custom mix is used, the individual ingredients must be listed in the Organic System Plan.
- Post harvest materials (materials used on crop after harvesting), including materials applied to crop while in on-farm storage or stored at a public grain warehouse if you maintain ownership of the product.

Production Records

- Cultivating, weeding, flaming, planting dates.
- Farm activity log, invoices for services (mowing, spreading manure, seeding, etc.).
- Farm consultant recommendations.
- Soil and tissue analysis reports.

Harvest Records

- Yield records (number of bins, tons, cartons, CSA shares, etc.).
- Shipping, warehouse or processor delivery receipts, delivery summaries.
- Custom harvest: records or information on harvester and equipment cleaning.
- Crop loss and shrinkage records.

Sales Records

- Direct marketers: records may include farmer's market records, CSA sales, sales receipts and daily market sales or bank deposits.
- Wholesaler marketers: records may include scale tickets, warehouse and processor sales summaries, pool closings; sales invoices.

New Application or Addition of Crop Acreage

- Material application records to verify that the land has been under organic management for at least 36 months prior to harvest.
- Cropping history or land use for at least three years.
- If the land was previously certified organic, a copy of the organic certificate (if available).
- Lease Agreements for any leased land.
- Documents and maps from other governmental agencies (NRCS, Farm Service Agency, County survey map, etc).

Seed and Planting Stock Guidelines

National Organic Program Regulations section 205.204 – Seed and Planting Stock Regulations

- (a) The producer must use organically grown seed, annual seedlings, and planting stock: Except,
- (1) Nonorganically produced, untreated seed and planting stock may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced variety is not commercially available: Except, organically produced seed must be used for the production of edible sprouts;
 - (2) Nonorganically produced seed and planting stock that have been treated with a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced or untreated variety is not commercially available;

- (3) Planting stock, seeds and annual seedlings must always be used to produce an organic crop unless a temporary variance has been granted in accordance with §205.290(a)(2);
- (4) Nonorganically produced planting stock to be used to produce a perennial crop may be sold, labeled or represented as organically produced only after the planting stock has been maintained under a system of organic management for a period of no less than one year; and
- (5) Seed, annual seedlings and planting stock treated with prohibited substances may be used to produce an organic crop when the application of the materials is a requirement of Federal or State phytosanitary regulations.

Definitions:

Commercially available: The ability to obtain a production input in an appropriate form, quality, or quantity to fulfill an essential function in a system of organic production or handling, as determined by the certifying agent in the course of reviewing the organic plan.

National List: A list of allowed and prohibited substances located in Subpart G, Sections 205.601 – 205.607 in the NOP Regulations.

Transplant: A seedling, which has been removed from its original place of production, transported, and replanted.

Annual Seedling: A plant grown from seed that will complete its life cycle or produce a harvestable yield within the same cropping year or season in which it was planted.

Planting Stock: Any plant or plant tissue other than annual seedlings but including rhizomes, shoots, leaf or stem cuttings, roots, or tubers, used in plant production or propagation.

Excluded methods: A variety of methods used to genetically modify organisms or influence their growth and development by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes and are not considered compatible with organic production. Such methods include cell fusion, microencapsulation and macroencapsulation, and recombinant DNA technology (including gene deletion, gene doubling, introducing a foreign gene, and changing the positions of genes when achieved by recombinant DNA technology). Such methods do not include the use of traditional breeding, conjugation, fermentation, hybridization, in vitro fertilization, or tissue culture.

Certification Criteria and Recordkeeping Strategies for seed and planting stock:

- Edible sprouts are specifically required to be produced with organic seed only.
- Verification of all seed sources and their compliance with the NOP is required to be maintained in a producer's record files. This includes invoices, organic certification verification, and documentation that an organically produced variety is not commercially available.
- Seed treatments are permitted if all ingredients are documented to comply with the NOP Regulations.
- Inoculants must be documented to meet NOP Regulations, including verification that the treatment isn't produced from genetically modified organisms.

Verifying Commercial Unavailability:

Producers must use organic seed. If organic seed is not available, nonorganic seed (untreated, non-GMO) may be used, except for edible sprouts. Organic producers must search for organic seed and document that an organic variety is not commercially available if nonorganic seed is used. Documenting that one or more organic varieties are not commercially available should include the following steps:

- Contact three or more organic seed suppliers and document whether organic seed is available.

- Document on the ROR-622, Seed and Planting Stock Disclosure Form all seed used. If nonorganic seed is used, document a minimum of three organic seed sources you contacted to locate organic seed.

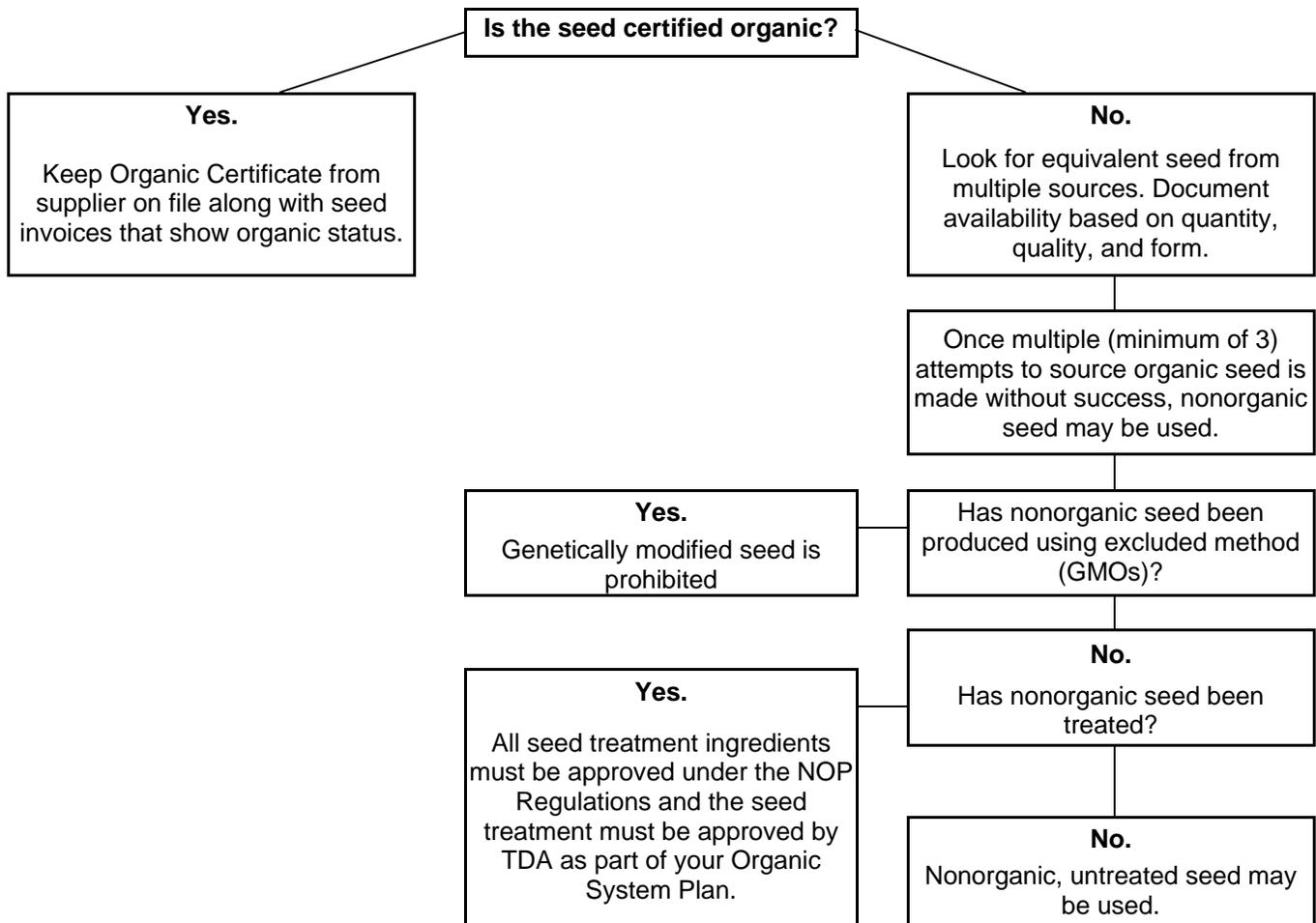
Reasons why organic seed may not be commercially available:

- Retail packets may not be the appropriate form/quantity for your operation.
- Unsuitable variety for your production system or specific market (i.e., disease resistance, fruit size).
- Documented quality concerns from on-farm variety trial testing.
- Letters from seed suppliers verifying no equivalent organic seed available.

NOTE: The cost of organic seed is not valid justification for the use of nonorganic seed.

Organic Seed Decision Tree

Created by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Organic Food Program.



Transitional Certification Program

Organic certification requires land to be free of prohibited material applications for 36 months prior to the harvest of a crop. Land undergoing this waiting period is considered transitioning into organic status. A farm may be certified as “Transitional” under Title 4, Chapter 18 of the Texas Agriculture Code after 12 months of operation under organic management, until it meets the full 36-month requirement. This certification is offered on a voluntary basis for producers who market their products as “transitional.”

Transitional certification ensures the integrity of the future organic claim due to the fact that a producer is working with a third party inspection body during the 36-month time period before land qualifies for organic certification; the land is monitored and ensures compliance with organic standards during the transitional period. Annual inspections occur along with submission of annual application to TDA. Due to the fact that transitional producers must meet all organic requirements, operations that wish to apply for transitional certification should complete the same forms that an organic producer completes.

An operation may have both transitional sites and organic sites under the same certification number. Please note that TDA does not offer transitional livestock certification.

Transitional Product Labeling Requirements

1. Transitional products do not meet the NOP Regulations as a certified organic product and cannot be labeled as such. Thus, it is important that it is made clear to consumers that transitional products are not “organic” products. In order to allow producers the transitional market opportunity, as well as to ensure transitionally certified products do not violate the federal organic labeling standards, TDA Organic Certification Program has developed a specific logo to identify Certified Transitional Products.



Organic Livestock Producer Information

Sections 205.236 – 205.240 of the NOP Regulations contain the requirements for organic livestock production. The standards include criteria for the origin of livestock, feed, health care, living conditions, and access to pasture requirements.

Overview of organic livestock requirements

- Organic livestock production requires that animals be fed a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage that are organically produced and handled by operations certified to the NOP (except as noted in section 205.236(a)(2)(i)).
- Ruminant livestock must meet the grazing requirements in accordance with sections 205.237(c) and 205.240 of the NOP Regulations.
- Year-round access for all animals to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, clean water for drinking and direct sunlight, suitable to the species, its stage of life, the climate, and the environment: Animals may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with sections 205.239(b) and (c) of the NOP Regulations.
- The use of antibiotics and hormones is prohibited in organic livestock production.
- Artificial insemination is allowed under NOP Regulations but hormone synchronization is not.
- Organic livestock must be under organic management for a specific period of time.
- Yards, feeding pads and feedlots are allowed under certain conditions.
- Organic livestock operators must maintain or improve soil and water quality, and provide living conditions and health care practices that meet NOP Regulations.

Livestock Organic System Plan

The Form titled, ROR-603, Livestock Producer Organic System Plan, is a management plan that you complete and is specific to your operation. This plan includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- Description of preventative measures taken to deter illnesses in the livestock, the practices to be followed to eradicate a disease, and medications that may be given (both approved and non-approved) if an illness occurs.
- List of production input materials, including: composition and sources of feed rations, maps of fields used for crops or forages, grazing rotation schedule and any medications that may be given to the animals.
- Description of record keeping system used to preserve the identity of the organic product.

In order to have your livestock certified organic, you must have your land certified organic.

Origin of Livestock

Livestock products that are to be sold, labeled or represented as organic must be from livestock under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or hatching, except:

Poultry must comply with sections 205.236(a)(1) of the NOP Regulations.

Dairy animals must comply with sections 205.236(a)(2) - 205.236(a)(2)(iii) of the NOP Regulations.

Breeder stock must comply with sections 205.236 and 205.236(a)(3) of the NOP Regulations.

Organic Livestock Feed

The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with a total feed ration of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and handled by operations certified to the NOP, except as provided in section 205.236(a)(2)(i). Allowed synthetic substances and allowed non-synthetic substances not prohibited under the National List may be used as feed additives and feed supplements, provided that, all agricultural ingredients included in the ingredients list, for such additives and supplements, shall have been produced and handled organically.

TDA maintains an Organic Feed and Forage Hotline (located in the Resource Guide) that lists sources of organic feed and hay.

Organic Livestock Healthcare

A livestock health program must include strategies for disease prevention, parasite control and disease treatment as outlined in section 205.238 of the NOP Regulations. Vaccinations and veterinary biologics for endemic disease are approved. When preventative practices are inadequate to prevent sickness, synthetic medications may be administered only if approved under section 205.603 of the National List.

Organic Livestock Living Conditions

The producer of an organic livestock operation must establish and maintain year-round livestock living conditions, which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals, including:

Year-round access for all animals to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, clean water for drinking, and direct sunlight, suitable to the species, its stage of life, the climate, and the environment. Animals may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with section 205.239(b) and (c) of the NOP Regulations;

Yards, feeding pads, and feedlots may be used to provide ruminants with access to the outdoors during the non-grazing season and supplemental feeding during the grazing season, provided that section 205.239(a)(1) and (5) of the NOP Regulations;

Ruminant livestock must be managed on pasture and grazed daily throughout the grazing season(s) to meet the requirements of section 205.237 of the NOP Regulations.

When roughages are used as bedding, they shall have been organically produced and handled by operations certified to the NOP, except as provided in section 205.236(a)(2)(i). Shelter should be designed to allow for natural maintenance, comfort behaviors, opportunity to exercise, temperature

control, ventilation and air circulation suitable to the species, and reduced potential for livestock injury. Refer to section 205.239 of the NOP Regulations for the complete requirements for Livestock Living Conditions.

Pasture Practice Standard for Organic Livestock

The producer of an organic livestock operation must, for all ruminant livestock on the operation, demonstrate through auditable records in the organic system plan, a functioning management plan for pasture.

Grazing season: The period of time when pasture is available for grazing, due to natural precipitation or irrigation. Grazing season dates may vary because of mid-summer heat/humidity, significant precipitation events, floods, hurricanes, droughts or winter weather events. Grazing season may be extended by the grazing of residual forage as agreed in the operation's organic system plan.

- The grazing season may range from 120 days to 365 days, but not less than 120 days per year.
- Due to weather, season, and/or climate, the grazing season does not have to be continuous.
- During the grazing season, ruminant livestock under organic production must receive a minimum of 30% of their dry matter intake from residual forage or vegetation rooted in pasture.

Refer to section 205.240 of the NOP Regulations for the complete requirements for Pasture Practice Standard for organic livestock.

Organic Livestock Recordkeeping Requirements

A major requirement of the NOP Regulations is the maintenance of all records related to organic production and handling. These records must be maintained for a minimum of five years and be available during an inspection and must adequately provide for reviewing the organic production system. A review of your records will be conducted during each on-site inspection to verify certification requirements have been followed. Complete and accurate records must be kept that track the organic livestock and their products from birth/purchase to death/sale.

Use the following information to help you determine what types of records the inspector may need to look at during your inspection. Please note that this list is only to be used as guidance, and is not a list of all required records.

- All organic stock must be individually identified with the exception of poultry, which may be identified by flock or lot.
- Livestock Organic System Plan (may use a completed Form ROR-603, Livestock Organic System Plan)
- All feed bought or raised (including invoices, receipts, sources, organic certificates, labels, etc.).
- All feed supplements used (including receipts, sources, organic certificates, labels, etc.).
- Animal medical treatment records (dates, dosages, and sources).
- Animal purchase records for livestock and livestock products (dates, weights, quantities, description, etc.).

- All materials used in the on-site production of crops for feed (receipts, source, dates, & quantity applied).
- Somatic cell counts for the last 6 months (dairy animals).
- Animal transition records for breeding and dairy stock.
- The weight of slaughter animals at slaughter or hanging carcass weight.
- Sales records for livestock and livestock products (dates, weights, quantities, description, etc.).
- Copies of organic certificates for slaughter facilities if finished meat product is sold as organic.

Requirements for slaughtering organic livestock and processing organic livestock products

All processing facilities that slaughter livestock and/or process livestock products (eggs, wool, milk, etc.) that label, sale, or otherwise represent meat or meat product as organic, must be certified. If a facility wishes to become certified organic by TDA, they should contact our office at least four months prior to slaughtering and or processing organic livestock meat and livestock products.

Information for Organic Handlers

The TDA, Organic Certification Program also certifies processors, distributors and retailers who produce, handle or sell organic products. Certified businesses and those requesting organic certification must comply with all production, handling and labeling requirements in the NOP Regulations.

Businesses must:

- Implement measures to prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products.
- Protect organic products from contact with prohibited substances.
- Manage pests with management practices and controls allowed in the NOP Regulations.
- Keep records adequate to verify the organic status of ingredients and quantities of organic products produced (product traceability).
- The National List specifies synthetic and natural ingredients allowed in organic processed products. Only ingredients included on the list and organic agricultural ingredients can be used in processed products labeled as “organic.”
- Four labeling categories are established in the National Standards - 100% Organic, Organic, Made with Organic (specified ingredients) and Ingredients list. Complete labeling rules and the NOP organic deal are available on the NOP website.

Organic Handler Recordkeeping Information

National Organic Program Regulations Section 205.103 – Recordkeeping by certified operations

A major requirement of the NOP Regulations is the maintenance of all records related to organic production and handling. These records must be available for inspection and must be easily understood. A review of your records will be conducted during the on-site inspection to verify certification requirements have been followed. Complete and accurate records must be kept that track the organic products from seed to harvest, or from receiving through final sale and shipping.

Use the following information to help determine what types of records the inspector may need to look at during your on-site inspection. Please note that this list is only to be used as guidance, and is not a list of all required records.

Receiving Records and Ingredient or Product Compliance Records

Information detailing the amount of product received by your operation and information detailing the organic status or compliance of an incoming product.

- Current organic certificate for each supplier of organic products or ingredients must be on hand. All organic products sold in the United States must have documentation that verifies the product was certified by a USDA, NOP accredited certification agency and that the product was specifically certified according to NOP Regulations.
- Field or bin tickets.
- Clean truck/equipment affidavits.
- Invoices, purchase orders, bills of lading, scale tickets.
- Contracts.
- Certificates of analyses or product specification sheets.
- Purchase orders

Storage and Production Records

Information detailing the handling or processing of organic products at your operation:

- Equipment clean-out logs.
- Production logs.
- Product specification sheets and ingredient inspection forms.
- Batch recipes and product formulations.
- Ingredient usage reports and production logs.
- Quality control reports.
- Waste and shrinkage logs.
- Inventory reports for ingredients and finished products.
- Packaging reports.
- Pest management records.
- Shipping records.
- Pallet/tote tickets and scale tickets.
- Certificates of analyses.
- Cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Purchase orders and sales journals.
- Shipping logs and bills of lading.
- Export records and transaction certificates.

Policy for Organic Handlers to Notify TDA About Food Health and Safety Licenses

- I. All handlers certified by the TDA, Organic Certification Program are required to submit current copies of local, state, and federal health and safety licenses on an annual basis.
- II. If the facility is not required to hold any local, state, or federal health and safety licenses, the applicant/licensee should submit documentation in one of the following forms stating the operation does not have to be licensed:
 - A. A written letter, email or fax from Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) stating that the operation is not required to be licensed by the TDSHS, or
 - B. A statement of contact with the TDSHS where the applicant/licensee verified that his or her operation does not have to be licensed by the TDSHS. The statement must include the following information.
 1. Full name of the TDSHS employee
 2. The phone number dialed to reach the TDSHS employee
 3. Date contact was made with the TDSHS employee
- III. It is the responsibility of the handling operation to inform the TDA, Organic Certification Program of all local, state, and federal health and safety licenses the operation is required to maintain.
- IV. During on-site inspections, a TDA Inspector will verify that the applicant/licensee submitted current copies of all health and safety permits held by the operation to the TDA, Organic Certification Program.
- V. TDA will not certify an organic handling operation without this documentation.

Frequently Asked Questions About Organic Certification

What is Organic Production?

The NOP Regulations define organic production as a system that is managed in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources; promote ecological balance; and conserve biodiversity.

Organic products are produced **without the use of**:

1. Synthetic substances and ingredients, except for those listed in section 205.601 and section 205.603 of the NOP Regulations.
2. Natural substances that are prohibited in section 205.602 and section 205.604 of the NOP Regulations,
3. Nonorganic agricultural substances, except for those listed in section 205.606 of the NOP Regulations,
4. Excluded methods (genetically modified organisms),
5. Ionizing radiation, and
6. Sewage sludge.

What are the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Regulations and the National Organic Program?

The NOP Regulations are the USDA's regulation to which all products sold, labeled, or represented in the United States as "organic" must comply. The NOP develops, implements, and administers national production, handling and labeling standards for organic agricultural products. The NOP also accredits third party certifying agents (foreign and domestic) to inspect and evaluate organic production and handling operations, and certify businesses that meet USDA standards.

How can I get a copy of the National Organic Program Regulations?

Contact the TDA, Organic Certification Program at 1-800 TELL TDA or email:

Organic@TexasAgriculture.gov. The regulations packet contains both the USDA National Organic Regulations and Title 4, Chapter 18 of the TAC. You may also visit the TDA website (www.TexasAgriculture.gov) or the USDA, NOP website (www.ams.usda.gov/nop) for complete copies or updates to the regulations.

What is the National Organic Standards Board?

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 authorized the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a 15-member National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). The board's main mission is to assist the Secretary in developing standards for substances to be used in organic production. The NOSB also advises the Secretary on other aspects of implementing the National Organic Program. The NOSB receives and reviews petitions from the public and industry, and makes recommendations to remove or add substances to the National List of allowed and prohibited substances. Those wishing to petition the NOSB or view past and current recommendations can visit www.ams.usda.gov/nosb

Does natural mean organic?

No. Natural and organic are not interchangeable. Other truthful claims, such as free-range, hormone-free and natural, can still appear on food labels.

Do I need to be certified?

Operations, or portions of operations (except those exempt or excluded), that produce or handle agricultural products intended to be sold, labeled, or represented in the U.S. as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic ingredients” must be certified by a USDA accredited certifying agency.

Is organic certification a requirement for my operation?

All producers and handlers of organic products must be certified, unless they meet the criteria to be exempt or excluded from certification under the NOP Regulations. Exempt or excluded producers and handlers may choose to obtain certification due to market demands, or to increase consumer confidence in their products.

Exemptions:

- Producers or handlers whose gross agriculture income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less per year. If there are no actual organic sales, projected sales should be used to determine exemption status;
- Retailers who have no in-store processing of organic products;
- Processors or distributors who only handle agricultural products that contain less than 70 percent organic ingredients (ingredient label claim only, no front label claim);
- Processors or distributors who only handle agricultural products that restrict the organic claim to the ingredient statement (regardless of the percentage of organic ingredients).

Exclusions:

- Distributors who receive organic products already in packages/containers, and not processed or removed from packages/containers while under their control.

How long does it take to get certified as an organic producer or handler?

The certification process takes an average of 90 - 120 days. Submitting an incomplete application packet will delay the certification process. Application packets should be submitted in time to allow for the inspection and review process. Organic crops may not be certified after they have been harvested, and organic processed products may not be certified after they have been processed and released.

What is the cost of certification?

The fees associated with organic certification are based on the type of certification requested and, for producers, the size and scope of the operation. The TDA Organic Certification fee schedules are outlined in the TDA Organic Rules and Regulations Packet, as well as within the application packets. Certification fees must be submitted annually.

How often do I have to update my application for certification?

Organic Certification is an annual process. To remain compliant, an operation must update its certification annually. An organic system plan and certification fee must be submitted every year. Update packets are mailed in January for producers and July for handlers. To avoid late fees, update documentation and certification fees must be post marked by March 1 for producers and August 31 for handlers.

What happens if I do not update my certification?

If an operation does not intend to update its organic certification, the responsible party must contact TDA and complete a ROR-625, Organic Certification Surrender Form and submit it to the Organic

Certification Program. Failure to update or surrender an organic certification will result in TDA taking compliance action against your operation and may lead to suspension of your organic certification.

When are organic certificates updated?

Licenseses will receive their updated certificate following the receipt of applicable certification fees, review of their complete update organic system plan and annual inspection report, provided that no compliance issues are identified.

How often will my operation be inspected?

Certified organic operations are inspected at least once each year of certification. An inspector will contact the responsible party to schedule the initial or annual inspection. TDA is authorized to conduct additional inspections (both announced and unannounced) during the certification year to verify compliance with the NOP Regulations. Surveillance inspections of markets where organic products are sold may also be conducted to monitor compliance with the NOP Regulations.

Will samples of products be taken and tested? Is there an extra cost for testing?

The TDA Organic Certification Program may notify the inspector to collect a pesticide residue sample while conducting your on-site inspection. Samples may be collected during the initial and annual on-site inspection of production operations. These samples will be collected by the TDA inspector and analyzed for pesticide residues and other prohibited substances by a TDA authorized laboratory. A copy of each sample analysis will be sent to the applicant or certified operation. There is no fee to the applicant or certified operation for sample collection and analysis that was authorized by the TDA Organic Certification Program.

My buyer wants a pesticide residue sample taken and analyzed. What is this and how much does it cost?

A producer may contact TDA to request a pesticide residue sample be collected or request that a sample be collected at the time of inspection. However, if the TDA Organic Certification Program has not given the inspector prior authorization for sample collection, there will be a fee of \$250 per sample collected.

What happens if I don't show up at the agreed upon time for the annual inspection?

If the responsible party does not show up or cannot be reached at the agreed upon time, the inspection will end and the inspector will leave the premises. A noncompliance will be issued to the applicant or licensee for failure to be present for the inspection (section 205.403(b)(2)). In order to resolve the noncompliance, the responsible party must attend the re-inspection and pay a \$250 re-inspection fee.

What happens if my farm or business practices are not in compliance with the NOP Regulations?

If TDA finds violations of the NOP regulations, a Notice of Noncompliance will be sent to your operation. The notice will state what the noncompliance is, what actions must be taken to correct the noncompliance, and the timeline you are given to submit any required information to TDA. If a re-inspection is required to verify that the correct actions have been implemented, the applicant or licensee must pay a \$250.00 re-inspection fee.

Failure to resolve all areas of noncompliance may result in the issuance of a Notice of Denial or Notice of Proposed Suspension.

Frequently Asked Questions About Organic Production

Can I grow both organic and conventional crops on the same farm?

Yes. Operations with both organic and conventional crops are referred to as split operations. Adequate buffer zones and/or barriers must be in place to prevent the unintended application (i.e. spray drift) of a prohibited substance on an organic crop and procedures must be in place to prevent organic crops from being contaminated (i.e. cleaning procedure for equipment used for both conventional and organic production). Recordkeeping must clearly delineate between organic and conventional crops.

What are the requirements for using manure on organic crops?

Raw animal manure must be composted unless it is:

- Applied to land used for a crop not intended for human consumption;
- Incorporated into the soil not less than 120 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion has direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles; or
- Incorporated into the soil not less than 90 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles.

What are the requirements for composting manure?

- Establish an initial C: N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1; and
- Maintain a temperature of between 131°F and 170°F for three days using an in-vessel or static aerated pile system; or
- Maintain a temperature of between 131°F and 170°F for 15 days using a windrow composting system, during which period, the materials must be turned a minimum of five times.

Can I spread green waste compost over my organic crop if I cannot verify that no prohibited materials have been applied to the green waste?

The compost may be acceptable for use in organic production provided that the green waste and green waste compost is (1) is not subject to any direct application or use of prohibited substances during the composting process, (2) that any residual pesticide levels do not contribute to the contamination of crops, soil or water and (3) made from approved feedstocks.

Approved feedstocks include:

- Plant and animal material such as manure, crop residues, lawn waste and food waste;
- Nonsynthetic substances not prohibited in section 205.602 of the National List
- Synthetic substances specifically allowed in section 205.601 of the National List

Compost that is produced with prohibited feedstocks such as uria, sewage sludge, or recycled wallboard is prohibited. The NOP does not allow the use of compost that contains synthetic substances that are not allowed in the National List.

If I grow perennials, do I need to grow a cover crop?

Yes. For perennial cropping systems, grow cover crops in alleys, between rows or as hedgerows to introduce biological diversity in lieu of a crop rotation. Organic cover crop seed is required when commercially available

Do I need to notify TDA if my organic system plan changes during the year?

The organic system plan should describe your plans for producing organic crops or livestock and include a list of all inputs you are planning to use. It is understood that environmental, economic, and other reasons can cause you to modify this plan as the year progresses. The NOP Regulations require that

certified operations notify their certifying agent **BEFORE MAKING ANY CHANGES** to your organic system plan.

Do I need to be a certified processor if I am currently certified as an organic producer?

Organic on-farm processor certification is required if you engage in changing an organic food into a different form or product. Processing includes, but is not limited to: canning, freezing, drying, dehydrating, cooking, pressing, powdering, packaging, baking, heating, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, cutting, fermenting, eviscerating, preserving, jarring, and slaughtering.

If you are processing organic products that are produced on your farm, you must apply for on-farm processing certification. If you are processing organic products that are not produced on your farm, or you custom process for another farm or business, you must apply for commercial processing.

Frequently Asked Questions about Organic Livestock

Where are the organic livestock producer regulations located in the NOP Regulations?

- Origin of Livestock, section 205.236
- Livestock feed, section 205.237
- Livestock health care practice standard, section 205.238
- Livestock living conditions, section 205.239
- Pasture practice standard, section 205.240
- Labeling of livestock feed, section 205.306
- Approved and prohibited materials for health care, feed supplements, feed additives, or other purposes are listed in the National List (sections 205.603 and 205.604).

What are the requirements for different kinds of animals?

Slaughter Stock (beef, pork, lamb, etc.)

Feed: Requires 100 percent organic feed from the last third of gestation.

Antibiotics: Prohibited

Hormones: Prohibited

Vaccinations: Vaccinations and biologics for endemic disease are approved.

Living conditions: Requires year-round access to the outdoors. Organic pasture practice standards apply for ruminant livestock.

Poultry (meat and egg)

Feed: Requires 100 percent organic feed from day old chicks to slaughter or egg production.

Antibiotics: Prohibited.

Hormones: Prohibited.

Vaccinations: Vaccinations and biologics for endemic disease are approved.

Living conditions: Requires year-round access to the outdoors and direct sunlight.

Breeder Stock

Feed: Requires 100 percent organic feed from the last third of gestation.

Antibiotics: After conversion antibiotics are prohibited from the last third of gestation.

Hormones: Oxytocin allowed for postpartum therapeutic use. After conversion hormones are prohibited from the last third of gestation.

Vaccinations: Vaccinations and biologics for endemic disease are approved.

Living conditions: Requires year-round access to the outdoors. Organic pasture practice standards apply for ruminant livestock.

Dairy Whole Herd Conversion

Feed: Herds converting to organic require 100 percent organic feed for 12 months prior to selling milk as organic. Pasture and feed crops that are on the same dairy farm and are in their third year of transition to organic may also be used during the dairy herd's conversion year.

Antibiotics: Prohibited for one year prior to milking during conversion. After conversion antibiotics are prohibited from the last third of gestation.

Hormones: Prohibited for one year prior to milking during conversion, except for oxytocin for postpartum therapeutic use. After conversion hormones are prohibited from last third of gestation.

Vaccinations: Vaccinations and biologics for endemic disease are approved.

Living conditions: Requires year-round access to the outdoors. Organic pasture practice standards apply.

Frequently Asked Questions About Organic Handling

What is an organic Handler?

A handling operation is an operation or portion of an operation (except final retailers of agricultural products that do not process agricultural products) that receives or otherwise acquires agricultural products and processes, packages or stores such products. The TDA classifies organic handlers into three categories: Distributors, Processors and Retailers.

What is an organic Distributor?

An organic distributor is someone who sells, stores, brokers, distributes, packs, or labels organic products without changing the physical or chemical composition of the product. Distributors of organic products must maintain the identity of organic food and prevent contamination with prohibited substances. Organic products are identical in appearance to nonorganic products; therefore all labels and documents must clearly identify the product as organic. Distributors of organic products must demonstrate that they have procedures in place to maintain the identity and segregation of organic products at all times.

What is an organic Processor?

An organic processor is someone who engages in canning, freezing, drying, dehydrating, cooking, pressing, powdering, packaging, baking, heating, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, cutting, fermenting, eviscerating, preserving, jarring, slaughtering, or otherwise processing of organic food products. Processed organic products contain organically grown ingredients and do not contain artificially derived preservatives, colorings, flavorings, or other artificial additives. Processed organic products that have both organic and nonorganic ingredients have specific labeling restrictions on the use of the term "organic."

What is an organic Retailer?

A retail food establishment is a restaurant; delicatessen; bakery; grocery store; or any retail outlet with an in-store restaurant, delicatessen, bakery, salad bar, or other eat-in or carry-out service of processed or prepared raw and ready-to-eat-food.

How do I determine what input substances are approved for use with organic products?

Post Harvest Materials – A post harvest material is a substance that is used on a raw organic crop prior to packaging or processing of the crop. Examples of post harvest materials include food contact sanitizers, waxes and sprouting inhibitors. In order to use a post harvest material directly on an organic crop product, the material must be an approved natural product or must be listed in section 205.601 of the NOP Regulations and used in accordance with any noted annotations.

Ingredients – Organically labeled products must contain organically certified ingredients. However, depending on the labeling claims that you wish to make, there may be an allowance for some approved minor nonorganic ingredients in your product. Refer to the Organic Labeling and Product Composition Requirements in section 2 for more details on the different labeling categories and the requirements of each.

Processing Aid – According to the NOP Regulations, a processing aid is defined as (a) substance that is added to a food during processing, but is removed in some manner from the food before it is packaged in its finished form; (b) a substance that is added to a food during processing, is converted into constituents normally present in the food, and does not significantly increase the amount of the constituents naturally found in the food; and (c) a substance that is added to a food for its technical or functional effect in the processing, but is present in the finished food at insignificant levels and does not have any technical or functional effect in that food. Examples of processing aids include defoamers, enzymes or filters.

- To use a processing aid with a product labeled as “100% organic” the aid must be certified organic.
- To use a processing aid with an organic product labeled as “organic,” or “made with organic (specific ingredients or good groups),” the aid must be an approved agricultural product or must be listed in section 205.605 of the National List.

Pest Control – The NOP Regulations require a certified operation to implement management practices to prevent pests. These preventative practices include the removal of pest habitat, food sources and breeding areas, good sanitation, sealed doors and windows, air curtains and prevention of access to the facility. Environmental factors such as temperature, light, humidity, atmosphere and air circulation may be used to prevent pests. Control of pests may also be accomplished by mechanical or physical controls including, but not limited to, traps, light, sound or lures and repellants that use organically approved substances.

If these measures are not effective, a synthetic substance that does not appear on the National List may be used, provided TDA approves the use of the substance, method of application and measures taken to prevent contact with ingredients or organic products. Use of pest control products must be documented and included as part of your Organic System Plan.

What kind of documentation is needed to demonstrate that a noncertified substance used during the processing of an organic product complies with the NOP Regulations?

Documentation must be on file and must be submitted to the TDA, Organic Certification Program for all inputs used during the handling or processing of organic products. This documentation must include

enough information to determine if the input substance complies with the NOP Regulations and any noted annotations.

If using a substance that has been registered and approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), or by the Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, Material Registration Program (or other recognized entity), a copy of the registration certificate should be maintained. For other input materials, full disclosure of the product's composition is required. This disclosure may be provided in the form of a complete listing of ingredients, technical data sheets from the manufacturer, material safety data sheets or a copy of the product's label. Additional statements or information from your supplier may also be needed on the manufacturing process of the substance to ensure it meets noted annotations outlined in the sections 205.601, 205.605, or 205.606.

In order to use a nonorganic minor ingredient in an organic product, verification must be obtained that the ingredient has been produced without the use of excluded methods (GMOs), ionizing radiation and sewage sludge. Verification that no GMOs were used in the production of certain nonagricultural ingredients or processing aids may also be required.

What kind of cleaning products can I use on my equipment and food contact surfaces?

The NOP regulations do not contain an approved list of cleansers and sanitizers that may be used on food contact surfaces. Organic handlers and processors should follow all appropriate and mandated food safety protocols and FDA regulations regarding cleaning and sanitizing equipment and food contact surfaces.

The NOP Regulations do require that handling practices and procedures prevent contamination of organic products, including from the use of cleansers and sanitizers. Depending on the products you use, intervening steps are often required to ensure residues of materials are not present. These steps may include a potable water rinse, complete evaporation of the substance prior to processing, purging of equipment with organic products that will be sold as conventional, or even routine residue testing by your operation. Your procedures for cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces must be included in your Organic System Plan, and the implementation of your procedures before and during organic handling or processing must be documented. During your application review and inspection, TDA staff will evaluate the procedures you have in place around the use of equipment cleansers and sanitizers.

Can I use the same equipment and containers for both organic and conventional products?

Yes. The NOP Regulations do not require certified operations to have designated equipment for organic products. The same equipment and containers may be used, provided adequate steps are taken to: (1) prevent any commingling of organic and nonorganic products, and (2) prevent any contamination of organic products with prohibited substances. The cleaning of all equipment between conventional and organic product handling and processing can ensure the protection of organic products. Reusable bags or containers that have been in contact with prohibited substance cannot be used unless the bag or container has been thoroughly cleaned and presents no risk of contamination.

How do I add a new product to my existing certification?

TDA certified organic distributors and processors are welcome to submit new products for review at any time. To add a new product to your certification, or request the approval of a revised product, please submit the following:

- Distributors/Brokers: A copy of the organic certificate and the label for all new organic products must be submitted and approved for the product to be added to your organic certificate. Also, a

ROR-602 Distributor Organic System Plan must be submitted with the applicable sections completed.

- Processors: A product formulation, label, organic certificates for all organic ingredients, and information regarding any nonorganic ingredient and/or processing aid, must be submitted and approved in order for the new product to be added to your organic certificate. Also, the applicable ROR-604 Processor (Fiber) Organic System Plan or ROR-606 Processor (Food & Feed) Organic System Plan must be submitted with the applicable sections completed.

Do I need to notify TDA if my Organic System Plan changes before the annual update period?

Yes. The Organic System Plan should describe your plans for distributing or processing organic products and include a list of all input materials you plan to use. It is understood that environmental, economic and other reasons can cause you to modify this plan as the year progresses. The NOP Regulations require that certified operations notify their certifying agent prior to making any changes that could affect the integrity of organic products. The following must be submitted to make changes to your Organic System Plan:

- Distributors/Brokers: ROR-602 Distributor Organic System Plan with all applicable sections completed to indicate all changes to the Organic System Plan.
- Processors: ROR-604 Processor (Fiber) Organic System Plan or ROR-606 Processor (Food & Feed) Organic System Plan with all applicable sections completed to indicate all changes to the Organic System Plan.

I have a contract to pack an organic product with a label that is owned by another business. Is it correct that this product and label are my customer's responsibility to ensure they have been approved for compliance?

The NOP Regulations require all operations that sell, label or represent products as "organic" to be certified, and requires all information on the compliance of an organic product and label to be approved by the certifier of the operation. Even if you do not own the organic product being handled by your operation, you are taking responsibility for the compliance of the claims being made on the product. If you are handling, processing, or repacking a product for another company (a private label) you must submit the information to the TDA, Organic Certification Program for review prior to the handling of the product. This is true even if you are contracting with a company that is also certified by TDA. Your file and certification is not connected to any other operation; if your contractor provides you with new organic labels, those labels need to be submitted and approved specifically for your operation and as a part of your certification. Also, if your company is using a label that lists a certification agency other than TDA, a copy of the Organic Certificate corresponding to the agency on the label must be submitted.

Are Brokerages required to be certified?

If a brokerage does not physically handle or process organic products, certification is not required. Refer to section 205.101 of the NOP Regulations for the requirements of exemptions and exclusions from organic certification. Exempt and excluded brokerages may choose to obtain certification due to market demands or to increase consumer confidence of products.

What are the requirements for Brokerage Certification?

If a brokerage company chooses to obtain certification, they must comply with the handling requirements outlined in the NOP Regulations. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Brokerages must submit an application packet

- Records must be maintained that verify the organic status of the products handled by the operation as well as records that disclose all activities and transactions of the operation in regards to organic products
- Procedures must be in place to ensure that no commingling or misidentification occurs between organic products and nonorganic product records handled by the operation
- Custom marketing labels for all organic food products must be submitted and approved prior to obtaining organic certification.

Are retail stores that sell organic products required to be certified?

According to section 205.101 of the NOP Regulations, retail food establishments are exempt and excluded from organic certification. Exempt and excluded retail food establishments may choose to obtain certification due to market demands, or to increase consumer confidence of products. Operations that do not choose to be certified must comply with the NOP Regulations when handling organic products to ensure the integrity of the organic claim remains intact.

What are the requirements for retail store certification?

If a retailer chooses to obtain certification, they must comply with the handling requirements outlined in the NOP Regulations including, but not limited to, the following:

- Retailers must submit an application packet;
- Procedures must be in place to ensure that no commingling or misidentification occurs between organic products and nonorganic products;
- Prohibited substances used within the facility must not come in contact with or contaminate the organic food products;
- Labels or menus making organic claims must be submitted and approved prior to obtaining organic certification.

How are the requirements for Retail certification different than those of county health departments?

Retailers should follow all appropriate and mandated food safety protocols and FDA regulations regarding cleaning and sanitizing equipment and food contact substances. Substances used as cleaners or sanitizers must be outlined in your Organic System Plan and adequate steps must be taken to eliminate the risk of contamination of the organic product (i.e. potable water rinse).

Listing of applicable forms for certification with TDA

[ROR-600, Organic Certification Application](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-602, Distributor Supporting Documentation](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-603, Livestock Producer Organic System Plan](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-604, Processor \(Fiber\) Supporting Documentation](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-606, Processor \(Food and Feed\) Supporting Documentation](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-607, Land Producer Organic System Plan](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-608, Organic Retailer Supporting Documentation](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-619, Organic Cost Share Application](#) and [Information](#)
[ROR-621, Previous Land Owner/Manager Affidavit](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-622, Seed and Planting Stock Disclosure Form](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-623, Organic Livestock Dry Matter Worksheet](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-624, Organic Livestock Outdoor Access Calendar](#) and [Instructions](#)
[ROR-625, Organic Certification Surrender Form](#)

These [forms](#) are also located on our website at www.TexasAgriculture.gov.

This is a partial listing of available resources for organic agriculture. The following are not to be considered as an endorsement by TDA and are included here for reference only.

Research and Education

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)

Specializes in identifying resources about sustainable food systems and practices in support of USDA's effort to ensure a sustainable future for agriculture and farmers worldwide.

www.nal.usda.gov/afsic 301-504-6559

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

Provides information on sustainable farming, alternative crop/livestock enterprises and marketing.

www.attra.org 800-346-9140

ATTRA Organic Publications

Several publications including log sheets that can be used for record keeping. All publications are free and can be printed and/or downloaded and saved electronically for future use.

www.attra.ncat.org/organic 800-346-9140

Eco-Farm Association

Nonprofit educational organization that promotes ecologically sound agriculture.

www.eco-farm.org 831-763-2111

Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture

Part of Winrock International, a global research and education organization promoting responsible resource management.

www.winrock.org/wallace

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

The National Agricultural Statistics Service provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

www.nass.usda.gov 800-727-9542

Texas Agriculture Statistic Service

www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Texas/index.asp 512-916-5881

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

www.nrs.usda.gov

NRCS Texas State Office

www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov 254-742-9819

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)

Fosters the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems.

www.ofrf.org 831-426-6606

Rodale Institute

Non-profit organization that is dedicated to pioneering organic farming through research and outreach.

www.rodaleinstitute.org

New Farm

Electronic publication from the Rodale Institute that provides information on organic and sustainable farming practices.

www.rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm

Sustainable Agriculture and Research and Education Programs (SARE)

Sponsors grants and outreach efforts to advance sustainable innovations to the whole of American agriculture.

www.sare.org 301-504-5199

Transitioning to Organic Production

Free publication available in printed and electronic format

www.sare.org/publications/organic 301-504-5199

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Partners with Texas A&M University, the state legislature, and the communities to provide community based education.

www.texasextension.tamu.edu 979-845-7800

Dr. Joseph Masabni, Assistant Professor and Extension Horticulturist for TexasAgriLife

Dr. Masabni holds a statewide responsibility to serve commercial vegetable growers and conduct projects on production, pest control, new technology practices and adoption. Dr. Masabni works with small-size farms and new growers interested in vegetable production utilizing organic or commercial pesticides.

jmasabni@ag.tamu.edu 979-845-8562

Organic Industry

Acres USA

A national monthly publication that offers a comprehensive guide to sustainable agriculture.

www.acresusa.com

800-355-5313

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Focused on finding sustainable solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges facing farmers, ranchers and rural communities

www.kerrcenter.com

918-647-9123

LOHAS Journal

A national monthly publication that offers a comprehensive guide to sustainable agriculture.

www.acresusa.com

Organic Processing

Publication that covers all aspects of certified organic food, fiber, and personal care manufacturing.

www.organicprocessing.com

Organic Seed Alliance, On-farm Variety Trails: A guide for organic vegetable, herb, and flower production

This publication of the USDA Risk Management Agency and the Organic Seed Alliance offers information on how to conduct seed trials on your farm. The publication's aim is to teach producers how to conduct on-farm variety trials and use the results of trials to direct their variety selection and seed purchasing choices in a manner that minimizes farm risk.

www.seedalliance.org

360-385-7192

Organic Trade Association (OTA)

OTA represents the organic industry in Canada and the United States. It is made up of growers, farmer associations, processors, retailers, distributors and several other stakeholders in the organic industry. The association is concerned with all aspects of the organic agriculture industry, including production, markets and legislation. It sponsors the annual "All Things Organic" trade show and maintains an extensive website with fact sheets and search tools to locate a variety of inputs and markets.

www.ota.com

413-774-7511

Soil Association

United Kingdom environmental organization promoting sustainable, organic farming and human health. Their website offers a host of information for both producers and consumers that is applicable to users worldwide.

www.soilassociation.org

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)

The Commission works to protect all Texas livestock and to keep pest from reoccurring as a major livestock hazard. Anyone wishing to report a suspected or confirmed case of a foreign or emerging animal disease should contact the TAHC at the number provided.

comments@tahc.state.tx.us

800-550-8242

Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation

A grower-initiated and funded program designed to eliminate the boll weevil from Texas' cotton fields.
www.txbollweevil.org 325-672-2800

TDA, Pesticide Programs

This division is responsible for licensing and training pesticide applicators, overseeing worker protection, registering pesticides for sale in the state and working to minimize unnecessary impacts to agriculture while enhancing protection of endangered and threatened species as mandated by the federal law. The Structural Pest Control Service, part of the Pesticide Division, licenses applicators that make pesticide applications in and around structures.

pesticides@TexasAgriculture.gov 512-463-7622

TDA, Rural Economic Development

The Rural Economic Development Division has several programs to assist rural communities and businesses to create and retain jobs through business development and community assistance.

finance@TexasAgriculture.gov 877-428-7848

Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS)

The TDSHS is the regulatory authority for public health related matters in the state of Texas.

web.master@dshs.state.tx.us 888-963-7111

TDSHS, Foods Licensing Group

Protects the public's health and safety by effectively and efficiently supporting the Health Care Quality Section and the Environmental and Consumer Safety Section in their regulatory activities.

512-834-6626

TDSHS, Food Establishment Group

Works toward the elimination of food-borne illness in Texas.

512-834-6753

TDSHS, Milk and Dairy and Meat Safety Assurance

Partners with people, communities, and meat and poultry industries to protect and improve health.

512-834-6727

TDSHS, Rabies Prevention

Evaluates possible human exposure to rabies, regulates rabies vaccination requirements and treatment regimens.

512-458-7676

USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

APHIS helps to ensure the health and care of animals and plants. The agency improves agricultural productivity and competitiveness and contributes to the national economy and the public health.

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>

USDA, National Organic Program (NOP)

The NOP website includes organic regulations, a current list of USDA-NOP accredited certifying agents, consumer information, and guidance on the interpretation of the National Organic Standards.

www.ams.usda.gov/nop 202-720-3252

USDA, National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

The primary mission goal of the NOSB is to assist the Secretary in developing standards for substances to be used in organic production. The NOSB also advises the Secretary on other aspects of implementing the National Organic Program. The NOSB receives petitions, and makes recommendations to remove or add substances to the National List of allowed and prohibited substances. This website is a source for those wishing to petition the NOSB or view past and current recommendations.

www.ams.usda.gov/nosb

University of California Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems

The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems is a research, education, and public service program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, dedicated to increasing ecological sustainability and social justice in the food and agriculture system.

www.casfs.ucsc.edu

University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

SAREP supports scientific research and education to balance economic viability with resource conservation.

www.sarep.ucdavis.edu

530-752-7556

Material Review

Organic Materials Review Institute

Publishes a listing of materials allowed and prohibited for use in organic production, processing and handling. Updates are made on a monthly basis.

www.omri.org

541-343-7600

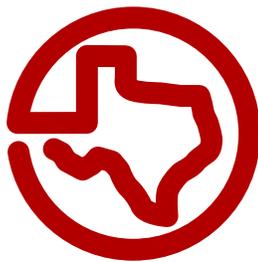
Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Organic Food Program

Publishes the WSDA Brand Name Material List (BNML) of brand name products that comply with the NOP Regulations. Updates are made on a quarterly basis.

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/MaterialsLists.aspx>

360-902-1805

GO TEXAN



GO TEXAN.

GO TEXAN is the Texas Department of Agriculture's program promoting the products, culture and communities that call Texas home. As a sign of Lone Star pride, the GO TEXAN mark – a glowing brand in the shape of Texas – can be found on everything from organic products and grapefruit to cowboy boots and retirement destinations. GO TEXAN members report increased sales and increased Texas pride!

Membership includes:

- Use of the GO TEXAN mark to identify your business as a member and spotlight your Texas products
- Business listing on the GO TEXAN website
- Eligibility to apply for a dollar-for-dollar matching-funds grant* to double your marketing funds
- Discounted rates to advertise in statewide publications and exhibit at tradeshow
- Point of purchase materials
- Opportunities to showcase your organic products at events GO TEXAN attends

**depending on availability of funds*

Note: GO TEXAN membership and use of the GO TEXAN mark does not constitute certified organic production.

Want an application or have questions? Visit www.GoTexan.org, e-mail GOTEXAN@TexasAgriculture.gov or call toll free (877) 99-GOTEX.

Marketing

Agricultural Market Resource Center (AgMRC)

Webpage that may be utilized as a resource for the organic dairy industry. Also includes case studies and highlighted dairy producers in the United States.

www.agmrc.org/commodities_products/livestock/dairy/organic_dairy.cfm

TDA, Marketing and Promotions Division – GO TEXAN

Works to increase the sales of Texas made products under the GO TEXAN campaign. GO TEXAN encourages consumers across the state and the world to seek and purchase Texas products first and always. The GO TEXAN Program is not part of the Organic Certification Program and the GO TEXAN logo should not be used or promoted as the TDA certified organic logo.

GoTexan@TexasAgriculture.gov 877-994-6839

Market News 800-252-3407

Hay Hotline 877-429-1998

USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS)

Provides economic analysis of the United States agricultural industry.

Briefing Room Organic Farming and Marketing

www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/organic/

Organic Farming Issues Center

www.ers.usda.gov/data/organic

Organic Wholesale Prices

www.ers.usda.gov/data/organicprices

USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

Linking U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security.

www.fas.usda.gov

Soil Fertility and Water Quality Tests

Suggested Soil Fertility Test: A soil fertility analysis is recommended as part of the monitoring system for verifying the effectiveness of soil improvement plans. Consider including the following when requesting a soil test to evaluate soil:

- Organic Matter
- Nitrogen (N)
- Phosphorus (P)
- Potassium (K)
- pH level
- Salinity or total soluble salts (electric conductivity) analysis
- Micronutrient (The NOP Regulations only allow the use of synthetic micronutrients if there is documentation that the soil or plant tissue is deficient in that micronutrient)

NOTE: If an applicant chooses not to submit soil test results, he or she must outline a monitoring system that will be used to determine whether farming practices are effectively maintaining or improving soil organic matter, soil fertility and physical, chemical and biological condition of the soil.

Suggested Water Quality Tests: A water quality test is recommended when organic product is irrigated or washed in water from on-farm sources (wells, ponds, streams, etc.). Consider including the following parameters to evaluate the effect of your irrigation water on your soil management program:

- Total soluble salts (electric conductivity)
- pH level
- Absorption ration
- Total dissolved solids
- Chlorides
- Carbonates
- Bicarbonates
- Calcium
- Sodium
- Potassium
- Magnesium
- Sulfates
-

NOTE: Water used for sprouting operations and for washing produce need to have a coliform bacterium count test conducted and must document how the operation is in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water standards.

Partial Listing of Soil Fertility Testing Laboratories

This is a partial listing of testing facilities in Texas. This list is not to be taken as a recommendation by the Texas Department of Agriculture. We do not guarantee the lab's knowledge of organic certification requirements. It is the producer's responsibility to request that the appropriate tests are performed.

Texas A&M University – College Station

Extension Soil Chemist

Soil & Crop Science Building #345

College Station, TX 77843

Telephone: 979-845-4816

*Contact your local Texas AgriLife Extension Agent for information, soil packet, and assistance

Will analyze soil and water quality samples.

Stephen F. Austin University

Soil Testing Lab

Ag Building Room 122

Wilson Drive, P.O. Box 9020

Nacogdoches, TX 79562

PH: 936-568-4500

Will analyze soil samples.

A & L Ag laboratories

302 34th Street, P.O. Box 1590

Lubbock, TX 79408

Telephone: 806-763-2760

Will analyze soil and water quality samples.

Will also conduct coliform bacteria count of water samples.

High Plains Laboratory, Inc

1502 W. Park, P.O. Box 791

Hereford, TX 79045

Telephone: 806-364-0242

Will analyze soil samples.

Texas Plant and Soil Lab

F.M. 1925 Rt. 7, Box 213 Y

Edinburg, TX 78539

Telephone: 956-383-0739

Will analyze soil and water quality samples.

Will also conduct coliform bacteria count of water samples.

Western Ag Lab

P.O. Box 64666

Lubbock, TX 79464

PH: 806-794-4888