

# Avoiding Delays with the Initial Review

ORGANIC FACT SHEET



mosaorganic.org

The most important step in renewing your MOSA organic certification year is getting your update paperwork turned in on time and making sure it's complete. For new clients, a complete application is instrumental in making sure we get you certified in time to meet your needs.

The first step in the certification process is the Initial Review. The reviewer makes sure that all information is complete and accounted for. Missing information, or information that contradicts other information in your paperwork, may delay the process.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid the most common mistakes:

## New Clients

Looking at that stack of papers can feel daunting. The best advice we can give is to grab the instruction sheet that came with your packet, and just take it all one page at a time. Carefully consider whether or not a document applies to your operation, and if you're not sure, make a note of it so you can ask us about that one specifically. We encourage you to look over all the forms before calling or writing to us, so that you can both have a complete and specific list of your questions. Every farm or operation is different, take your time, ask questions when you have them, fill each applicable form out thoroughly, and follow the form instructions.

This should always include a completed Organic System Plan (OSP) for each scope of production being requested (i.e. Farm, Livestock, Handling). We won't be able to review your file without those. It's important to note that as a new client your initial deposit is required to begin the review process. This should be included with your complete application.

## Quick Facts

- Make sure your paperwork is complete and on time.
- Organic System Plans are required for each scope of production (farm, livestock, greenhouse, processing, etc.)
- All applicable fees must be paid, before a file can be reviewed.

New clients must also submit an initial deposit to begin the review process. This should be included with your complete application.

## Existing Clients

Your complete application and first quarter fees payment are due by May 1st to enable us to schedule all of our work efficiently and to avoid a noncompliance. Getting your application in earlier than this can save you some money (\$25 Early Bird discount if update forms and fees are received by March 15th). It also helps us prioritize your file, and assures that any new land or products are properly considered for addition to your certification. Always notify MOSA of any new products or land before you

If you need a little extra time, we do offer a one time deadline extension of your due date to May 15th for \$60. Applications received after May 1st without an approved extension request will be assessed a late fee of \$150 per month.

## **Common Mistakes that Lead to Delays**

Getting your application in on time is important, but there are some other things that if omitted or submitted incompletely, can result in delays and potential noncompliance concerns:

### **Current Year Field Plan**

Your Current Year Field Plan (CYFP) should list all fields in your operation thoroughly and clearly, including new land requested for production. Please pay special attention to ensuring that field numbers and acreages either are the same as last year, or that a thorough explanation is provided for any changes.

### **Three Year Field History or Prior Land Use Declaration**

If you have any new land this year, or land that hasn't been listed on a previous CYFP, we'll need to verify that this land is eligible for organic production. If you've managed the land for a full 36 months prior, complete the Three Year Field History. If somebody else has managed the land for the past 36 months, you'll need them to thoroughly complete the Prior Land Use Declaration. If you've managed the land for only a part of the time, you'll need to send both. Make sure these forms list all fields, and provide an explanation of field number changes if you have made them.

### **Crop/Livestock Input Inventory**

If you are proposing any new inputs for use this year in your crop, livestock, or handling operation, you must submit these to us for review **prior to use**. Be sure to fill in the product name, manufacturer, and intended use sections.

### **Farm Maps with Fields, Buffers and Acreages Identified**

If you have added any new land, changed buffers, or changed field designations/sizes, we will need new maps to reflect this information.

### **Livestock List**

If you have livestock, you will need to submit a list of all new animals, including purchases. This

list should include slaughter eligibility, dates of birth, and other information as needed to maintain traceability in your herd.

### **New Products**

Be sure to indicate in your Easy OSP if you have any new products and when you anticipate first having sales of those products so that we may accommodate your needs. If you have any new labels for us to review, be sure to send those along too. *All labels must be reviewed prior to use.*

### **Legal Information**

It is important that we have an accurate picture of who is responsible for organic integrity in your operation, as the National Organic Program (NOP) requires. Make sure that your Easy OSP includes accurate business information, additional contact information, and address information including all additional facilities as applicable.

### **More Information Needed Letters**

If something is missing from your application/update materials, the reviewer will notify you by email if you requested electronic communications, or by mail for paper clients. Carefully read the letter and promptly return the information or answer the questions outlined.

Prompt and complete response to More Information Needed Letters will help ensure that any further delays are minimized. Delayed response, or no response will prevent your file from moving forward. This is especially important if you have requested an expedited (quicker than normal) review due to a critical certification date.

### **The Final Word**

If you follow these tips, check your application carefully for accuracy and completeness, submit it with required fees prior to the deadline, and respond quickly if more information is requested, we should be able to complete your initial review and pass along your file to the inspector promptly.

V1.1 5-2016 JP