

Preparing for your Organic Inspection

ORGANIC FACT SHEET



Preparation

All organic inspections must be done when an authorized, knowledgeable representative of the operation is physically present, and at a time when it is possible to observe all land and facilities.

The average farm inspection takes 2-4 hours when the operation is fairly straightforward and the operator is well organized. Processors and farms that are more diverse or complicated will require more time.

The inspector does not make decisions about who gets certified. The job of the inspector is to report on the extent to which the operation matches (or does not match) the description given in the Organic System Plan (OSP). Many inspectors will start with the tour of the farm or facility. If they notice that anything looks different than the OSP describes, you will be asked to explain the change. The inspector is required to ensure that the paperwork is accurate and up to date.

For Farm Inspections You Should Have:

- Updated copies of maps and field plans.
- Copies of receipts for all inputs and seeds.
- A completed Seed Table.
- A bag or tag for each seed variety.
- An organic seed search if non-organic seeds are used.
- Product labels and ingredient information for inputs not OMRI listed or previously approved by MOSA.

Quick Facts

- All land and facilities must be inspected each year.
- All documentation must be available for review.
- The inspector will confirm that all previously identified issues and noncompliances of concern were corrected.

- Up to date field activity logs and records of harvest and storage.
- Sales records for the current and previous year.
- Equipment cleaning records for any equipment used on conventional or transitional crops (including buffers).
- An updated Livestock List.
- If you have ruminants, a copy of your Livestock Winter & Summer Rations.
- Receipts and certification documentation for all purchased feed and supplements.
- Updated animal health records.
- Certification documentation for purchased livestock.
- Receipts for all livestock inputs.
- Pasture & confinement records.

For Processing/Handling Inspections

- All equipment proposed for use must be in place and functional at the time of inspection.
- A map of your facility indicating the location of equipment and storage areas.
- A product flow chart.
- Product Profiles: have labels, receipts, ingredient information, organic certification verification or affidavits for all inputs including organic ingredients, non-organic ingredients, non-agricultural ingredients, additives, and processing aids.
- Audit trail documentation showing how products are tracked from ingredient receiving all the way through sales and shipping.
- Supporting documentation for: pest management and employee training logs; quality assurance protocols and procedures; sales invoices; and composition and source information for pest control products, boiler chemicals, cleansers and sanitizers.
- Current verification to show compliance with any National List restriction or annotation for any ingredients or processing aids used from the list.
- If organic and non-organic products are handled in the same operation (parallel or split production), have records (such as equipment cleaning logs) that show there is no commingling or contamination.
- Total dollar amount of net sales (gross sales less the cost of organic ingredients) made on certified products or services.
- Current or proposed retail and non-retail labels for all products making an organic claim.
- Current licenses and/or permits as required by other regulatory authorities.

Noncompliances and Issues of Concern

No matter what kind of farm or handling facility you run, one of the key things all inspectors will ask is, “Have you resolved any noncompliances or issues of concern since your last inspection?” For this reason, it’s best for you to review your most recent Certification Determination Letter(s) and Initial Review Letters before the inspection so you can easily answer this question.

If you struggle to answer questions about how previously identified issues were resolved, this will complicate your inspection. The same is true about any questions that may have been asked in the Initial Review letter that comes from MOSA before the inspection. If you received a letter that says, “Have Document A ready for your inspector to collect”, then the inspector will ask you for that piece of documentation. This is true even if it’s something they’ve not needed to collect in previous years. Inspectors are required to follow up on requests that come from MOSA.

The inspector may also collect samples for residue testing. A percentage of operations are randomly selected for testing each year. Testing may also be required if there is reason to believe an organic product may have become contaminated with a prohibited substance.

At the conclusion of the inspection, there is an exit interview where the inspector reviews any areas of concern. The inspector submits the inspection report to the certifier and it is reviewed alongside the Organic System Plan.

Many farmers and processors find their inspections to be enjoyable experiences. Inspection is a challenge, but it doesn’t have to be unnecessarily stressful. Set yourself up for success by preparing as much as possible and asking any questions you might have in advance.

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