

Certification Timing Needs



mosaorganic.org

ORGANIC FACT SHEET

Defining a Timing Need

Farming and food production/processing are dynamic operations that are often in the state of change. An occasional point of stress in the certifier-client relationship is meeting timing needs related to Organic System Plan changes.

We define a timing need as an event that involves a deadline- usually so crops and new products can be added to a current certificate, or so new clients can be certified to meet harvest or sales goals.

MOSA's goal is to proactively gather the necessary information so that your certification application, or your current certificate, can be updated in a timely and orderly manner.

For new clients, this information should be noted on the **New Client Overview** and the **Organic System Plan**. For updating clients, this information should be noted on the **Easy Organic System Plan**. An important section of these forms identifies any critical "timing need" for your operation. An identified timing need prepares our office to review Organic System Plan changes so your certification can be updated without causing delays in your marketing plans for organic products.

Updating Clients

If you are adding new products to your certificate, let us know. For farm operations, this means that crops not

Quick Facts

- A timing need is an event that requires a deadline.
- New crops, new products, new land and new facilities are examples of timing needs.
- New land requests **require** an inspection before harvest.

listed on your certificate should be added.

If production of the new crop is consistent with your approved Organic System Plan, the crop may be added to your certificate when we review annual update paperwork. The updated certificate would be mailed with your annual Initial Review Letter. This would allow you to sell the new crop prior to inspection.

Examples of new crops could include adding tomatoes to a certified vegetable operation, or adding corn to a current row crop certification. Any seed or crop inputs used in production will be verified at inspection, so be prepared to have all the necessary paperwork and records available. If the new product or service reflects a significant change to your approved Organic System Plan, an inspection and

review of the inspection report will be required before the new product or service is added.

For example, if you produce row crops and plan to add vegetable and greenhouse production, you will have to submit a Greenhouse Organic System Plan with your update application. You will also have to update your Farm Organic System Plan to describe all aspects of the vegetable production. Additionally, you should notify us of the new production type, and provide a first sale date of vegetables on your the annual Easy Organic System Plan. We will then track the timing need, schedule the inspection, and appropriately update your certificate prior to sale. If you do not inform our office of the new product or service, we may not be able to meet your timing needs.

Adding New Land

Another important timing need is the addition of new land. If you are adding new land, let us know on your annual Easy Organic System Plan. With your update application, submit a Prior Land Use Declaration form for land previously managed by someone else. If you managed the land, submit a 3-Year Field History. Also, submit a map of the new field. All new land must be inspected and determined eligible prior to organic harvest or grazing.

To determine eligibility, we will review your inspection report and assess if the new land is compliant. You will be informed the new land is eligible in your Certification Determination Letter. If a quick response is needed, we can call or email you to let you know the land is eligible.

Sometimes producers want to add new land after update paperwork is submitted. If this is the case, contact us. If your inspection has not occurred, new information may be reviewed at inspection and our office can verify the land is eligible prior to harvest or grazing. If land may be added later, but you are still working out the details, let our office or your inspector know. Your inspector may

be able to view the land during your annual inspection, so an additional inspection may not be needed. If needed, additional paperwork can follow the inspection.

Sometimes clients identify a timing need that requires no action from our office. Examples include a harvest date for a crop already listed on the certificate, or informing us of new land that has already been inspected. In these cases, we let you know that your file needs no special attention to meet a need that was previously addressed. If your certificate lists all the products that you produce and you are in the midst of the annual certification review process, then there is usually no urgent need to update it.

Unless suspended, revoked or surrendered, your certificate is current and remains in effect, and will be updated during the normal certification cycle. Sometimes, buyers do not understand that certification remains active, so they expect certificate dates to be from within the last year. In such a case, let us know and we can talk with your buyer to confirm the validity of your certificate.

Communication with MOSA

These are the most common timing needs resolved by our office. MOSA should be notified of any timing needs, including changes to Handling Organic System Plans, or other unique needs. With proactive communication, we can address needs efficiently and appropriately, ideally as a part of the routine annual review process. Additional services, including certificate changes outside of the annual review process, added verifications, international services and other administrative services are subject to an administration fee of \$90 per hour. If you have concerns that our office will not meet your timing need, contact us. We can let you know where we are in the process and work with you to resolve your need.

Visit www.mosaorganic.org for more details.

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