



Frequently Asked Questions About Your Annual Update

Annual Update Deadline and Fees

- ***Is the Annual Update required?*** Yes, the National Organic Standards 205.406(a)(1) require that (to continue certification) an operation must pay annual certification fees and submit an updated organic system plan. Failure to submit annual update forms and fees may result in cumbersome and costly noncompliance procedures, and will delay your annual certification process.
- ***When is the deadline?*** April 1 of each year.
- ***Can I get a discount on fees?*** Yes! Submit your completed forms and fee payment early, and receive an Early Bird discount. Important note: Your paperwork must be complete in order to be eligible for any discounts. See the cover letter for details.
- ***How do discounts apply if I submit online?*** If the application is completed by midnight on the Early Bird deadline date, the discounts will automatically be applied to your account.
- ***Are there late fees?*** Yes. If you submit your annual update forms and fees after April 1, and have not been granted an extension, a late fee of \$150 per month will be charged, up to a maximum of \$300.00. You may also be subject to cumbersome and costly noncompliance procedures for failure to submit your annual update and fees by April 1. If the noncompliance remains unresolved, a proposed suspension will be issued.
- ***Can I get a one-time annual update extension?*** Yes, you may request a one-time 15-day extension. You must submit the request by April 1. The extension fee is \$75.
- ***How do I calculate adjusted gross organic sales for handling operations?*** Adjusted gross organic sales are gross organic sales less the cost of organic ingredients. You may not deduct the cost of ingredients that are not certified organic (such as salt, yeast, or pectin) and other non-ingredient costs, such as packaging, trucking, or production. Retail operations and brokers are considered handlers and calculate their fees in different ways. Please review the Handler Fee Schedule or contact MOSA for details if you have questions.
- ***Are there ways to reduce my certification costs?*** The USDA/FSA offers the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) to help defray the cost of certification. Contact the MOSA office for more information about this Program.

Business Information

- ***Why do I need to provide Contact and Business Info?*** We must know who is responsible for organic management, and how to best communicate with that individual. The National Organic Program (NOP) requires that only one “person” is identified on a certificate: This “person” can be an individual, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, trust, or other legal entity.
- ***Why do I need Tax ID numbers?*** We must be able to confirm the legal identity of all certified entities. Sole proprietors/individuals do not need to provide a social security number.
- ***Why do I need to provide additional contact names?*** We must know who is connected to your operation and with whom we are authorized to communicate about confidential certification issues. These additional names could be family members, business partners, employees, etc. We request the names of all “responsibly-connected” parties, including partners, officers, boards of directors, holders, managers, or owners of at least 10% of the voting stock. See the chart on the Annual Update OSP.
- ***Can I have multiple entities on one certificate?*** Organic products may be produced/handled only by persons/businesses that are certified and inspected in accordance with the National Organic Standards section 205.100, and each legal entity needs their own certificate. Certified operations may not allow the use of their certificate to enable other persons to produce or handle products sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

Certificates are not transferable if there are mergers or new partnerships or other changes of ownership. In some circumstances, we may require that certain parts of your operation be certified as a separate entity.

Forms and the Certification Process

- **Should I keep copies of my Annual Update forms?** Yes! **Make copies of everything that you submit.** The National Organic Standards **require** you to keep copies of certification documents, including all receipts, for at least 5 years.
- **Can I fax or email my Annual Update forms to MOSA?** Yes! **New in 2024**, MOSA **will** accept update forms via fax or email. You may submit Annual Update forms in the following ways:
 - By mail or put them in our dropbox at 122 W. Jefferson, Viroqua WI 54665
 - Submit your updates, pay your fees, and upload documents through MyMOSA, our online system: www.mymosa.org. *To access your online account for the first time, call us at 844-637-2526, and we will help you through that process.*
 - Email your Annual Update forms to mosa@mosaorganic.org; *we'll reply to confirm successful receipt*
 - Fax your Annual Update forms to 608-492-0470; *a postcard will be sent to confirm successful receipt*
- **Can I text my Annual Update forms to MOSA?** No. *We will not accept OSPs or Annual Updates via text message.*
- **What forms will MOSA accept by text message?** *We'll accept short documents (PLUDs or VALUs, for example), photos, or specific items requested by MOSA staff. MOSA will not accept long forms such as OSPs and applications, nor responses to non-compliances, proposed suspensions, or settlement agreements.*
- **What if I wish to discontinue my MOSA certification?** This is considered a voluntary surrender of your organic certification. Once an organic certificate is voluntarily surrendered, you may not sell, label, or represent any product as certified organic. If you plan to surrender in 2024, please notify MOSA as soon as possible. For voluntary surrender after April 1, 2024 some MOSA fees apply. Please see MOSA's *Surrender, Withdrawal, Transfer, or other Termination Policy* described on the enclosed Fee Schedule.
- **What if I have just received my updated certificate for the previous year?** The April 1 deadline still applies. Certificates do not expire, but certification uses an annual update cycle. The annual update may come just after, or even before, the conclusion of your prior certification cycle. Although you may have just received an updated certificate or your file may still be in review, you must complete the required annual update by the April 1 deadline.
- **Will MOSA make copies for me?** Yes, but making your own copies prior to mailing will save you time, money, and stress. MOSA staff may not always be able to meet requests for copies in a timely way and you will be charged an administrative fee. In addition, paperwork can get lost in the mail, so it's best to make copies **before** mailing in your application.
- **Can I view my account online even if I don't want to submit my annual update online?** Yes! Even if you don't submit your forms electronically, you can review your Organic System Plan and previously submitted updates and documentation, you can upload documents, and you can make payments online through MyMOSA, our online electronic system. *To access your online account for the first time, call us at 844-637-2526, and we will help you through that process.*

Inspection

- **What parts of my operation get inspected?** All land, livestock and facilities must be inspected annually. All storage facilities, greenhouses, processing facilities, and off-site land and facilities must be included in the inspection. Nonorganic production areas may be included in the annual inspection.
- **How do my inspection fees work?** The cost of inspection is based upon travel costs to get to your operation, time spent on site, and inspection report preparation. Additional factors include the complexity of your operation, how prepared you are for the inspection, and how complete and organized your records are. With such variables, we cannot predict your final costs in advance; this is why each year we ask you to pay a base fee on those inspection costs. Once the inspection is complete, you will be invoiced for any outstanding balance.
- **Why must I submit my organic sales from last year?** MOSA's fees are based on your sales from the previous year. In this way, we collect our fees after you have sold your organic product; this is also one way that MOSA

seeks to support operations of all different sizes and stages of organic certification - from people just starting out to large, established organic operations. Failure to report your sales in your update paperwork may delay the issuance of your annual certification.

Inputs (Materials)

- ***Why does MOSA ask about my inputs?*** The National Organic Standards requires an operator to disclose which inputs are used, where and why they are used, and application rates. Additionally, some inputs are prohibited for use and may jeopardize your organic certification. Always contact MOSA for approval before using new inputs that are not OMRI listed!
 - Commonly prohibited inputs include, but are not limited to: 1) Crops: Synthetics not on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (NL), human sewage sludge; 2) Livestock: Antibiotics, hormones and parasiticides not on the NL, nonorganic feed; 3) Handling: Prohibited ingredients or processing aids.
- ***What steps do I take regarding inputs for my operation?***
 - Verify with MOSA if an input has been reviewed and approved by MOSA;
 - Consider using inputs that have already been reviewed and approved if the requested input has not;
 - Wait to use the requested input while MOSA reviews it.
- ***What information does MOSA need to review inputs for my operation?*** You should include three pieces of information about your requested input when you contact MOSA:
 - The input's exact name (from the product label)
 - The brand/manufacturer
 - Your intended use of the product
- ***What inputs have been approved for my operation?*** Inputs that have been approved for your use are listed on the Input Inventory printout that was provided during the previous annual certification review. If your Inventory has been revised (or misplaced) recently, MOSA can provide you with a new copy.

Special Requests

- ***What if I need something new added quickly?*** The organic certification process takes time. If you have specific timing needs, let us know right away. Are you adding a new product or new land? Let us know what's new and when you intend to sell or use the product. Products you wish to sell or otherwise represent as organic must be listed on your certificate. New land should be inspected and certified before you harvest or have livestock graze. We work hard to meet your needs, but it all starts with timely and complete communication. As the season progresses, please update us on any changes to your timing needs. Additional fees may apply. See the enclosed Fee Schedule for more information.
- ***What if I have a biosecurity concern?*** The well-being of your operation is important to us. Livestock and plant diseases are an unfortunate but manageable reality. We need to know what your biosecurity concerns are. Avian Influenza has been of special concern in the past, as well as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus. These diseases are highly contagious and can be devastating to flocks and herds. If you have any chickens or hogs, organic or conventional, for sale or for personal use, complete the biosecurity section of your Annual Update form. Discuss any biosecurity protocols with MOSA or your inspector before they arrive at your operation.

If you have other questions, please contact the MOSA office:

Phone: (844) 637-2526 Email: mosa@mosaorganic.org

Fax: 608-492-0470 Text: 608-424-4118