



Job Description: Certification Specialist

Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF)

The USDA accredited certification agency owned by NOFA Vermont

VOF Office: 802-434-3821 vof@nofavt.org www.nofavt.org/vof

Job Title: Certification Specialist

(The Senior Certification Specialist title will be reserved for employees with five or more years of professional work experience directly relevant to third-party certification)

Employee Status: 40 hrs./wk., Salaried; Exempt

Salary Range: \$42,000- \$57,000

Summary Description: The Certification Specialist will verify the organic production practices of our organic producers. Major duties include reviewing organic system plans and inspection reports, assessing compliance to the organic regulations and VOF guidelines and assisting producers with the certification process.

Reports to: Operations Manager

Responsibilities include:

- Serve as primary contact for assigned certified and new producers.
- Review certification applications, inspection reports and supporting documentation and determine compliance status for certified and new producers.
- Reviews and tracks new applications to ensure timely review and communicates application status to producers.
- Provide services to certified organic producers, including reviews and communication with certified operations about mid-year updates, such as new labels, input materials, suppliers, products, fields, etc.
- Provides written and verbal instructions to VOF producers regarding compliance to all applicable standards.
- Provide information to persons requesting organic certification and respond to producer requests for information regarding their certification.
- Implement certification policies and procedures.
- Track all outstanding adverse actions.
- Work with Operations Manager to respond to rebuttals and appeals of adverse certification decisions.
- Ensures that database records and server files are organized, consistent and current for assigned certification files.
- Support the development and maintenance of certification forms and documents including information materials to aid producers with NOP compliance.
- Maintain an understanding of the USDA National Organic Program regulations, as well as VOF policy and procedures.
- Keep up to date with allowed and prohibited materials, and work with Material Review Specialist to identify and communicate material issues to producers.
- Communicate with inspectors as far as appropriate workload and scheduling of assignments for new and certified producers.
- Conduct inspections of applicants requesting certification as needed.
- Assist with preparation for and attend Inspector Training.
- Assist with marketing of certified growers and VOF label in general.
- Present certification information to producers and consumers when needed.
- Work with NOFA-VT's and other partner's technical assistance program to help producers get through certification process smoothly and identify areas of need.
- Assist with residue testing.

Vermont Organic Farmers LLC
PO Box 697 · 14 Pleasant Street · Richmond VT 05477 · 802-434-3821
Certified **Organic, Locally Grown**

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- Participate in VOF staff meetings.
- Assist with preparation for and attend VOF Annual Meeting.
- Assist with Review Committee work and attend meetings, as needed.
- Any other task relevant to these ties or the mission of the organization as assigned by supervisor.

Additional Responsibilities:

- Attend bi-weekly NOFA/VOF joint staff meetings
- Represent VOF at NOFA Winter Conference
- Represent VOF at NOFA Board Meetings when applicable
- Write content for outreach and marketing when needed
- Facilitate a minimum of 2 events annually

Qualifications

Knowledge: Hands-on experience with diverse organic and sustainable agriculture; Knowledge of organic and sustainable farming in Vermont preferred; Knowledge of food science/food processing.

Education & Training: Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience; preferably in food science, agriculture or environmental science or related field; Familiarity with regulatory compliance; Knowledge of organic standards and regulations; Familiarity with certification procedures.

Skills: Analytical problem solving ability; Ability to manage multiple priorities and perform within deadlines; Excellent communication; writing and interpersonal skills; Computer proficiency: word processing; spreadsheets; internet research; databases (Salesforce experience a plus!); Excellent organizational skills; Exceptional attention to detail; One or more years experience in a professional office environment preferred; IOIA Organic Inspector training; auditor training for food quality production systems or similar field preferred; Experience with quality auditing or regulatory compliance auditing preferred.

Capabilities: Able to work with minimal supervision while understanding the necessity for communicating and coordinating work efforts with others; Must be able to develop a workplan and perform in a team environment; Understands and appreciates importance of extraordinary customer service; Strong interest in and commitment to promoting the goals of VOF.

Conditions: Minimal physical requirements other than occasional light lifting; Valid driver's license; Moderate statewide and occasional out-of-state travel required.