



Preparing for an Organic Inspection

Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF)

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

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Organic certification is about verifying that your operation meets the National Organic Program standards. Organic inspectors verify this by confirming that what is reported in your organic system plan (annual application) is in accordance with what is in practice on the farm and that records are organized and sufficiently detailed to be understood and audited.

BEFORE THE INSPECTION:

- Call the VOF office to answer any questions you have regarding the organic standards.
- Confirm that any previous conditions for continued certification (CCC's) have been resolved; have resolution materials available for your inspector if they are still needed.
- Review your OSP –a thorough and detailed OSP will require less information to be collected and resolved on site during the inspection.
- Confirm the following with your inspector: meeting time, meeting address, relative location and travel time for non-adjacent fields/facilities, any on-farm protocols for biosecurity and what records to have ready for review.

RECORDS TO PREPARE:

Organic producers are required to maintain records for 5 years and inspector can choose any year's records to audit. It's good practice to have records available and accessible from the previous calendar year (Jan-Dec) to the current date.

Vegetable/Fruit/Field Crop:

Seed, planting stock and transplants	Purchase receipts, documentation of organic seed and planting stock search when applicable
Inputs (materials, dates and rates of application)	Records of material used in the field or in the greenhouse (inoculants, propagation materials, crop nutrients, soil amendments, pest management inputs)
List of crops and field activity logs (dates and materials used)	Records of crops planted (by field), estimated yields, cultivation, weed control, spraying, pruning, etc.
New fields	3-year history verification, map, acreage, signed documents from previous land owners if applicable
Soil management	Crop rotation, erosion prevention activities, soil tests
Buffers	Call land owners to discuss neighboring land use; harvest and sales records for buffer crops
Post-harvest handling records	Storage, transport and sales records; steps taken to prevent contamination and co-mingling; sanitizers/cleansers used; wash water tests if applicable
Labels and marketing	Copies of all labels and marketing materials; certification documentation for any organic products purchased for resale

Livestock:

Field crop records as listed above will apply to producers certified for hay, pasture and other annual field crops.

Animal ID lists	Current animal ID list (cull/shipping and birth records, organic slaughter status)
Purchased livestock	Receipts for any purchased animals and certificates including whether animals qualify as organic slaughter stock
Receipts for feed, health care products, feed supplements, and bedding (if using hay, straw, etc.)	Receipts (including quantity), labels of feed supplements, certificates to verify that bedding is organic
Feed harvest and storage records	Field ID, amount, and current inventory of harvested feed
Feed rations	Ration changes for each animal group; changes due to supplemental feed during grazing season, stage of life etc.
Grazing records	Turnout and barn-up dates for season for each animal group; dates restricted from pasture and reason for restriction
Outdoor access records	Records and reasoning for dates animals confined without outdoor access during winter months
Health materials	Updates to list submitted with annual application
Health care records	Dates and notes for treatments (reason for use and animal treated), withholding periods, and veterinarian/hoof trimmer invoices.
Production and sales records	Milk slips, sales records (forages, meat, whole animals, eggs, etc.),
Labels and marketing	Copies of all labels and marketing materials; certificates for any organic products purchased for resale

On the day of your inspection:

- Ensure that you can devote the time (approximately 3-4 hours depending on the complexity of your operation) and attention needed to complete the inspection
- Provide a space where you and the inspector can comfortably review records – a tailgate, picnic bench or kitchen table will usually suffice.
- Be prepared to provide the inspector access to all fields, buildings, storage areas and livestock housing facilities. This means gas in the pickup (or other vehicle) for reaching more remote parts of the operation and keys to any gates or sheds.