

The Checklist

For Conventional Farmers Transitioning to Organic Certification

*These steps are not necessarily designed to be completed in order. For details on each step, see the **Guide for Farmers Transitioning to Organic Certification**. The Guide also includes information for farmers who want to certify livestock.*

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with all of the National Organic Program (NOP) and the USDA organic standards, including the sections that may be of particular interest to transitioning farmers.
- ✓ Learn how to farm organic. Become familiar with all other the resources available to organic farmers.
- ✓ Learn what an organic system plan (OSP) is, and use the requirements to plan your future organic farm.
- ✓ Shop around and choose a certifying agent best suited to your needs.
- ✓ Contact your certifying agent to get the documents needed and procedures for certification.
- ✓ Visit the websites of your chosen certifying agent, OMRI or WSDA for further reading on what materials, substances and products may be used by organic operators.
- ✓ Select the land you would like to transition and record the dates the last prohibited substances were utilized on the land.
- ✓ Develop a general nutrient/cropping plan for your transitional period. Conduct soil testing if needed.
- ✓ Keep records and save receipts throughout the entire transition and application period and retain for five years.
- ✓ Be mindful not to commingle organic and non-organic crops, or to use the same equipment on organic and non-organic crops.
- ✓ Review the lumber in use on your farm as some lumber contains prohibited substances. Be prepared to identify lumber treated with prohibited materials in your application for certification and have alternative construction materials ready for use in new installations.
- ✓ Plan organic crop rotation, fertility plan, and pest/disease management plan.
- ✓ Plan your organic markets and understand their requirements.
- ✓ Learn about labeling and packaging requirements for organic foods. Before printing, submit your labels and packaging to your certifying agent for review.
- ✓ Review the seed and planting stock requirements in the organic standards.
- ✓ Complete the application forms as required by your certifying agent.
- ✓ Apply for certification.
- ✓ Once certified, remember to keep records and save receipts throughout the entire process for five years.