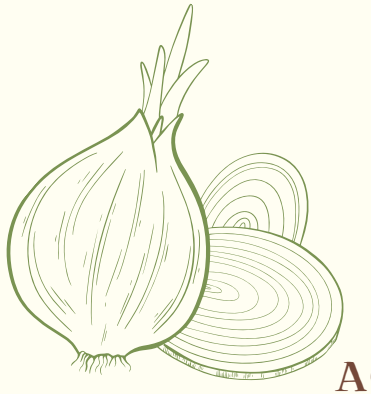
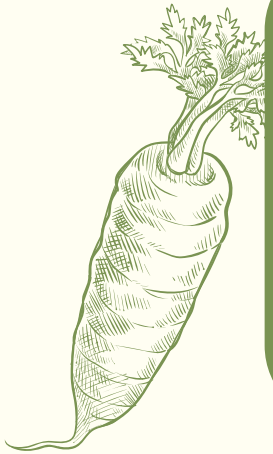




AGRI-CULTURA
COOPERATIVE
NETWORK



STEP-BY-STEP: HOW TO GET USDA ORGANIC CERTIFICATION (FOR FARMERS)

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STEP 1: DEVELOP AN ORGANIC SYSTEM PLAN (OSP)

What it is:
A detailed plan describing how your farm will comply with organic standards.

Includes:
Practices and substances used in production (e.g., fertilizers, pest management, crop rotation)

- Recordkeeping system
- Monitoring practices
- Pasture management if raising livestock
- Description of physical barriers to prevent contamination





STEP 7: MAINTAIN CERTIFICATION

- Annual inspections are required to remain certified.
- You must update your Organic System Plan annually and remain in compliance.
- Keep clear records of all practices, inputs, and sales.

TOOLS TO HELP

- NOP Organic Integrity Database: Check certified operations or certifiers.
- USDA Organic Certification Cost Share Program: Offers partial reimbursement for certification fees.
- Extension services: Many extension offices offer help with developing an OSP or preparing for certification.



STEP 5: CERTIFIER REVIEW

- After the inspection, the certifier reviews the findings.
- If the farm meets all requirements, certification is granted.
- If not, they will issue non-compliance notices and allow time to correct them.

STEP 6: RECEIVE YOUR ORGANIC CERTIFICATE

Once approved, you'll receive a certificate listing:

- The scope (e.g., crops, livestock)
- Your certifier's name
- The date of certification

STEP 2: ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ORGANIC STANDARDS (SUBPART C)

These standards must be followed before and during certification:

A. Land Requirements (§205.202)

- Land must not have had any prohibited substances (like synthetic pesticides/fertilizers) applied for at least 3 years.

B. Soil Fertility and Crop Nutrient Management (§205.203)

- Use compost, cover crops, crop rotation, or approved natural inputs.
- No synthetic fertilizers or sewage sludge.

C. Seed and Planting Stock (§205.204)

- Use organic seeds when commercially available.
- Non-organic seeds may be used only if untreated and if no organic option exists.

STEP 2: ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ORGANIC STANDARDS (SUBPART C)

D. Crop Rotation and Pest Management (§§205.205–206)

- Rotate crops to maintain soil health and reduce pests/disease.
- Use mechanical, biological, and cultural methods before any approved inputs.

E. Livestock Requirements (§§205.236–240)

- Animals must be under organic management from birth or third trimester.
- Feed must be 100% organic.
- No antibiotics or growth hormones.
- Provide access to outdoors and pasture for ruminants.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A USDA-ACCREDITED CERTIFYING AGENT

- Find a certifier from the USDA list.
- Submit your Organic System Plan to the certifier for review.
- Pay application and inspection fees (these vary by certifier).

STEP 4: ON-SITE INSPECTION

The certifier will schedule an on-farm inspection.
They will verify:

- Practices match your Organic System Plan.
- No contamination or commingling with non-organic products.
- Accurate records are being kept.