

2023 ORGANIC PRODUCER ANNUAL UPDATE GUIDANCE

ANNUAL UPDATE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Operations are required to review their organic system plan form and supporting documentation (i.e. maps, soil analysis results, etc.) to determine what information must be updated and/or revised.
- With the implementation of the online system Field2Base, please ensure you are transferring your information into the new account created for you. If you have questions, please contact program staff directly.
- **All forms are available in your Field2Base online account.**

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT SUBMISSION:

TDA Information Security Policy, TDA cannot guarantee receipt of documents to staff members' personal email addresses. Please follow these two guidelines when submitting documentation electronically:

1. Send all electronic copies of documents to Organic@TexasAgriculture.gov.
2. Program Staff are NOT responsible for submissions sent to our direct email addresses rather than the Organic email address and will not be able to prevent your operation from incurring late fees or noncompliance fees when emails sent to direct email addresses.

Supporting Documents listed in Section C of the ROR-607 that must be updated:

- Copies of all material product labels that are not approved by OMRI, WSDA, or the EPA, and if necessary, a complete listing of ingredients (including inert/other ingredients). Please refer to the paragraph titled Input Material Review for further direction.
- If a restricted input material has been used or is intended for use to address a nutrient deficiency, please provide a copy of your soil analysis report.
- Copies of organic certificates for all certified organic seed. Please note, due to our new Policy on use of Certified Organic Seed and Planting Stock, additional input fees are not accrued if organic seed certificates with complete product profiles are submitted for each seed variety.
- The [National Organic Program \(NOP\) Regulations](#) require that a producer **MUST** use organically grown seed for all certified organic crops. However, **non-organic seed may be used if organic seed is not available in the appropriate form, quality, or quantity** that you need for your operation. If you do use conventional seed, you must be able to prove that you attempted to find appropriate organic seed. A written record of what seed varieties you were looking for; what companies you searched or called; and the date of your inquiry is often sufficient evidence for certifying agents. The attempts should be listed for ALL nonorganic kinds and varieties used in your operation in Section Y Planting Stock Search of the ROR-607 TDA form.
- Remember: the cost of organic seed or shipping of organic seed cannot be used as justification to use conventional seed.
- Remember to secure proof from the seller about the seed itself, either in the form of a letter provided by the company you purchased the seed from, or a receipt or tag that shows it is untreated and non-GMO. The best time to get this documentation is when you purchase the seed. The inspector and/or program staff will ask for it, and it can often be difficult to obtain after the fact.
- The Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) and the Organic Seed Alliance have developed an organic seed finder website: <https://www.organicseedfinder.org/Page/Home.aspx?nt=358>
- §205.201(a)(3) A description of the monitoring practices and procedures, including the frequency with which they will be performed. Per NOP 2615: An operation must monitor its activities to ensure that its organic practices are effective. The results of monitoring should help the operation identify areas that need improvement. This helps operations maintain organic integrity and maintain or improve natural resources. Monitoring methods may include:
 - a. Soil testing (e.g., testing for organic matter content);
 - b. Monitoring soil moisture or water quality;

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- c. Product quality testing;
- d. Residue testing;
- e. Monitoring crop or pasture quality;
- f. Use of body conditioning scores for monitoring herd health;
- g. Somatic cell counts; and/or
- h. Pest monitoring.

INPUT MATERIAL REVIEW

In a policy memorandum dated January 21, 2011, the USDA National Organic Program clarified the process of how TDA and all other certifying agents must conduct input material reviews. Based on this memorandum, TDA will only be able to review and approve formulated materials when a complete listing of ingredients (including inert/other ingredients) is submitted to TDA or when approved for use in organic agriculture by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI), or the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

SPECIAL NOTE ON ADDING HEMP TO YOUR CROP CERTIFICATION:

NOP Instruction 2040, effective as of November 26, 2019, states that “only hemp produced in accordance with the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program and/or the 2014 Farm Bill may be certified as organic, if produced in accordance with USDA organic regulations.” In order to comply with that instruction, TDA asks growers to submit a copy of your state, tribal, or federal license or registration with your application for certification.

SPECIAL NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENT COMPLIANCE REVIEWS:

TDA recommends that you contact those entities who will be contracting with, purchasing your crops, marketing your crops, etc. to determine if your crop may be exported out of the United States. If so, identify the applicable trade agreements that your crops must comply with in Section E International Markets of the ROR-607, and include the international trade agreement review fee of \$75.00 for each trade agreement review that must be conducted by TDA in Section H of the ROR-601 Fee Payment Forms.

HOW DO I RENEW MY ORGANIC CERTIFICATION?

Step 1: Submission of annual update and certification fee payment

In accordance with §205.406 of the National Organic Program (NOP) Regulations, certified operations are required to submit an updated organic system plan and fee payment annually. Per §18.702 of the Texas Organic Standards, late fees will be incurred by operations that fail to submit all required annual update documents and fee payment by the identified due date.

Step 2: Initial Review Process

Once your fee payment and annual update documentation is received, TDA will conduct a review to verify that full fee payment was received, and your Organic System Plan (OSP) is complete and in compliance with the NOP Regulations. If your OSP is found to be incomplete, TDA will contact you in writing to request the additional information. If additional information is requested, you must respond within the time period provided by supplying the additional information or documentation. If your response is not received within the provided time period and you do not contact TDA, corrective action and additional fees may be applied to your organic certification. Per NOP 2603 3.4 Updated certificates may be issued after reviewing the annual update or after the annual inspection is completed.

Step 3: Annual On-site Inspection

Once the initial review process is complete, your OSP will be forwarded to an inspector who will schedule and conduct your annual on-site inspection.

- An operation may be approved for inspection with pending items when the update OSP is only lacking minimal information. If your OSP is approved for inspection with pending items, you must have the requested information readily available for the inspector at the time of inspection.

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- Operations must cooperate with the inspector to schedule the on-site inspection.
- An authorized representative who is knowledgeable about the operation must be available at all times during the inspection.
- Operations must have all records and documentation available at time of inspection and must provide access to all production or handling sites, including nonorganic production, and handling sites.

Step 4: Final Review

Once the on-site inspection has been completed, TDA will conduct a final review of all documentation and notify your operation of the findings.

- Operations must correct any identified areas of non-compliance, including additional requirements within a reasonable time period.

HOW DO I SURRENDER MY ORGANIC CERTIFICATION?

If you no longer wish to continue your organic certification, please submit the ROR-625 Organic Certification Surrender Form.

Documentation that must be submitted by Certified Organic Livestock Producers:

- *All sections of the ROR-603 Livestock Producer Organic System Plan form must be updated.*
- Copies of organic certificates for organic livestock feed, including hay and supplements.
- Split operations must submit any additional supporting documentation that describes the management practices and physical barriers established to prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products.
- An updated ROR-624 Livestock Outdoor Access Calendar.
- An updated ROR-623 Organic Livestock Dry Matter Worksheet for each production group (ruminant livestock producers only).
- DMI worksheets for each production group must be submitted at a minimum- with the renewal, during the inspection (assuming mid-year), and immediately when the grazing season is completed for the year.