

Guidance on On-Farm Processing

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to promote consistent application of the USDA National Organic Program Regulations by the Texas Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program. This instruction is based upon updated guidance received from the USDA National Organic Program.

2. Applicability

This instruction applies to all crop producers certified organic, certified transitional, or in application status with the Texas Department of Agriculture.

3. Scope

This guidance is focused on the use of temperature controlled storage of organic crops after harvest.

4. Authority

TDA is accredited by the USDA National Organic Program under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. §§6501 et seq.) as described in 7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program. As such, TDA must carry out the provisions of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 and the National Organic Program Regulations (§205.501(a)(3)). Per §205.100, unless exempt or excluded in §205.101, each operation or portion of an operation that handles crops, livestock products, or other agricultural products that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must be certified according to the provisions of subpart E of 7 CFR Part 205.

5. Guidance

Effective 9/01/2015, certified organic producers who store harvested crops in temperature controlled storage prior to removing the harvested product from the operation may no longer be required to obtain and maintain certification for the scope of organic handler. However, the operation must show evidence that the following activities are not conducted:

- a) Drastic temperature change such as freezing or flash freezing for the purpose of retarding spoilage;
- b) Application of a substance to the harvested product (does not include fresh water rinsing);
- c) Conduct any processing activities which cause a chemical or physical change to the product; and
- d) Label, package, or otherwise enclose the product in a container for any purpose other than transportation.

TDA will review all handler operations on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not these criteria are met.