

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION IN 5-STEPS

Obtaining and maintaining organic certification is an ongoing process. It starts when an operation creates and implements an Organic System Plan that is compliant with National Organic Program regulations, which is reviewed and inspected by an accredited organic certifier on an annual basis. The certification cycle can be broken down into the five stages described below.

1



STEP ONE: CREATE AND SUBMIT AN ORGANIC SYSTEM PLAN

In the Organic System Plan (OSP), you will explain the practices for all aspects of your operation and how they are compliant with National Organic Program (NOP) regulations. QCS will provide you with the necessary documents to create an Organic System Plan. QCS will begin the review of your OSP once you return your completed application with applicable fees.

2



STEP TWO: INITIAL REVIEW

During the initial review, a certification reviewer will conduct a desk audit of your Organic System Plan to ensure that, on paper, your operation is compliant with organic regulations. They may reach out to you for further information or clarification before concluding their review.

3



STEP THREE: INSPECTION

A qualified inspector will perform an on-site audit of your operation. Their primary purpose is to verify that the information outlined in your Organic System Plan aligns with your on-farm practices. The inspector will conduct an exit interview reviewing their observations and submit an inspection report to QCS.

4



STEP FOUR: FINAL REVIEW

After your inspection, a final reviewer ensures compliance between the practices outlined in your Organic System Plan and practices observed at your operation during inspection and outlined in your inspection report. They may reach out to you for further information before reaching a certification decision.

5



STEP 5: CERTIFICATION DECISION & CONTINUING CERTIFICATION

After final review, we will make a certification decision: either that we need more information before we can proceed or that your operation is compliant with organic regulations and has achieved organic certification. Once you have achieved certification, you can market and sell products as certified organic.

On an annual basis, you will be required to renew your certification and undergo an on-site inspection. Be sure to contact QCS with any updates to your OSP prior to implementing them to ensure that your operation remains compliant.

We look forward to helping you with all your certification needs!