

Guidance on Requests for Information

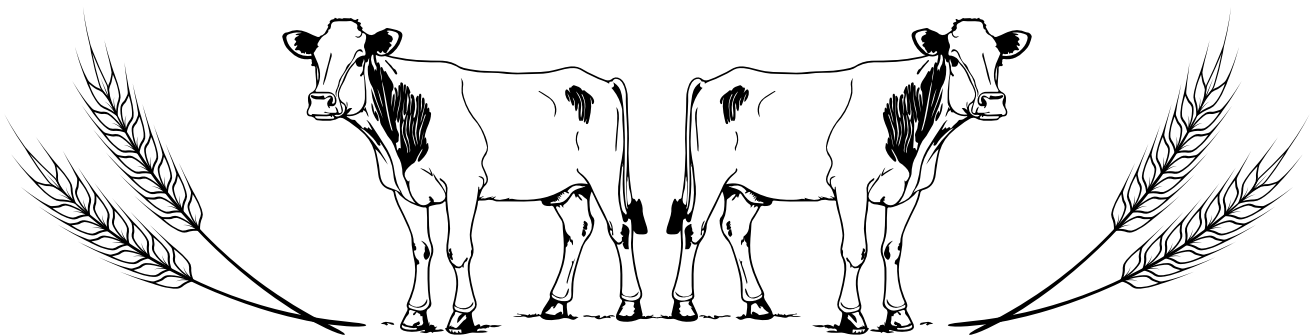
What is a Request for Information?

According to the regulations, the Organic System Plan must include any additional information deemed necessary by the certifying agent to evaluate compliance with the regulations (7 CFR 205.201(a)(6)).

QCS gathers this information through Requests for Information which lay out a list of requests/questions the operation must submit a response for by the stated deadline.

Examples of items QCS could be requesting:

- Renewal application, if not submitted by the anniversary date
- Updates to the Organic System Plan if original paperwork is incomplete, or needs clarification or more details
- Records kept of specific activities
- Product details needed to add an input to the Approved Input List
- Clarification on practices observed by the inspector
- Gross sales records
- Other documents needed to determine organic compliance.



What should I do when I receive a Request for Information?

1. Read through the notice and make note of the deadline.
2. Call or email QCS with any questions you have about the request.
3. Compile the information and number the documents and/or responses to match the numbering on the Request for Information.
4. Send the information to QCS by the deadline.

When is the Request for Information due?

The Request for Information will have a deadline listed in the notice. This is the deadline QCS must receive the information. If you are mailing in your response, please make sure the document has time to arrive to QCS by the deadline.

When mailing responses, it is a best practice to call QCS and let us know the response is in the mail as it may affect when it arrives to our office. QCS understands that mail timing fluctuates and there is less control over when the document will arrive.

If you are unable to provide QCS with the information requested by the stated deadline, please notify QCS as soon as you become aware of this issue. Under some circumstances, QCS may be able to provide one extension to the deadline. Please provide the reason for the requested extension along with a proposed updated due date. If extension is approved, then the deadline will be updated to the new agreed-upon date.



What happens if I do not submit all of the information by the deadline?

If QCS does not receive a full response by either the initial deadline or the extension deadline (as applicable), a Notice of Noncompliance may be issued to the operation.

It is a regulatory requirement to respond to all questions and requests from your certifier; not doing so is considered a violation of the National Organic Program. Please be sure that all requested information is included in your response, as a partial response can also lead to a noncompliance.



How do I submit the requested information?

The information can be submitted the following ways:

1. Email the information to the QCS staff email listed at the bottom of the notice.
2. Fax the response to QCS: 352-377-8363
3. Mail the response to QCS: 5700 SW 34th St, Suite 349 Gainesville FL 32608

Please reach out to our team if you have any questions!