



What to Expect at Your Annual Inspection

PURPOSE OF THE ANNUAL INSPECTION

- The annual inspection verifies that your operation meets the National Organic Program standards.
- The inspector assigned to your business confirms that your Organic System Plan (your annual application) aligns with what is happening on-site, reviews / audits your records, and notes changes since you submitted your plan.

BEFORE THE INSPECTION

- Review the [VOF Guidelines](#) and call the VOF office for any questions you have regarding the organic standards.
- Review your Organic System Plan (OSP) – a thorough and detailed OSP will require less information to be collected and resolved during or after the inspection.
- Confirm that any previous conditions for continued certification have been resolved and have related materials available for your inspector, when applicable.
- Schedule a time to meet with the inspector (thank you for flexibility). Confirm meeting time, meeting address, location and travel time for non-adjacent fields/facilities, any on-site protocols for biosecurity or food safety, and what records to have ready for review.
- Ensure your vehicle has gas if needed to reach remote parts of operation and have keys to any gates or buildings.
- Alert and schedule other personnel/employees as necessary.
- Gather your records - see checklists appropriate to your operation (below).
 - Have applicable records available and accessible from the previous calendar year (Jan-Dec) to the current date, but note that records must be kept for five years and those over a year old could be reviewed, too.

THE DAY OF INSPECTION

- The inspection will consist of a tour, records review, and two audits:
 - Mass Balance Audit: checks organic sales against quantity of crops grown / production capacity or the quantity of feed purchased/grown to qty of feed needed (for livestock).
 - Traceability Audit: checks the origin of livestock, traces a product from seed to sale, or from purchase through production to sale.
- Devote the time and attention needed to complete the inspection (2-6 hrs, depending on your operation).
- Provide a space where you and the inspector can comfortably review records – ex. a conference room, office, tailgate, picnic bench, or kitchen table.
- Provide the inspector access to all facilities included in certification – fields, buildings, production area, storage areas, livestock housing facilities, etc.
- Your inspector will end with an exit interview / summary and may request missing documents.

AFTER THE INSPECTION

- The inspector will submit a final report to the VOF office for review. Any issues in this final report will be the same issues covered in the exit interview.
- An updated certificate will be issued after the inspection report has been reviewed by VOF certification staff.
- Please submit any corrective actions resulting from issues found during the inspection to VOF by the due date given to avoid elevating the issues and potential future suspension of your certification. In general, call the office with any questions about how to respond.

VEGETABLE/FRUIT/FIELD CROP RECORDS CHECKLIST

Records are an integral part of organic certification and the inspection. The inspector will review your records and complete two audits — one that checks that organic sales match the quantity of crops grown (mass balance) and one that traces a crop from seed to sale (traceability).

Items	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Seed, planting stock, and transplant documentation	Purchase receipts, organic certificates, and seed & planting stock searches when applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> Input application records	Materials, dates, location, rates of application, and receipts for materials used in fields/greenhouse (ex. inoculants, propagation materials, soil amendments, potting mix, compost, disease control products)
<input type="checkbox"/> Field maps	Identify each field with a name or number, include the number of acres for each field, adjoining land use, buffer areas, major roads, and physical features
<input type="checkbox"/> Field activity logs	Records with dates of crops seeded, planted (by field), cultivation, weed/pest/disease control, pruning, soil fertility/analysis, crop rotation, water tests, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Harvest records	Field names/identification, dates, crop names, quantities
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-harvest handling & sales records	Storage, transport, and wholesale/retail sales invoices, and receipts; operating procedures to prevent contamination/co-mingling; sanitizers/cleansers used; wash water tests if applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> Labels & marketing	Copies of current labels and marketing materials in use if applicable; certification documentation for any organic products purchased for resale
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffers	Documentation of neighboring land use; harvest and sales records for buffer crops, no-spray agreement(s)