



# 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.

## DAIRY/FIELD CROPS 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 livestock produced or of feed grown/purchased to feed needed (mass balance) and one that checks the origin of livestock (traceability).

Items	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal ID lists	A list of current animals and how you identify them, including birth records, culling, shipping, organic slaughter status
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchased livestock documentation	Receipts for purchased animals and certificates, including whether animals qualify as organic slaughter stock
<input type="checkbox"/> Receipts for products and feed	Receipts (incl qty) for feed, health care products, supplements, and bedding (if using hay/straw/etc. to verify organic)
<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"/> Feed harvest and storage records	Field ID, amount, and current inventory of harvested feed
<input type="checkbox"/> Feed rations	Amount for each animal group and changes (with date) due to supplemental feed during grazing season, stage of life, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Grazing records	Turnout and barn-up dates for each animal group
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary confinement records	Dates and reason restricted from pasture/confined
<input type="checkbox"/> Health materials	Updates to list submitted with annual application
<input type="checkbox"/> Health care records	Dates, animal(s), reason, treatment notes, withholding periods, veterinarian/hoof trimmer invoices
<input type="checkbox"/> Production & sales records	Milk slips, sales records (forages, meat, whole animals, eggs, etc.)
<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"/> Seed, planting stock, and transplant documentation	Purchase receipts, organic certificates, and planting stock search when applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> Input application records for fields	Materials, dates, rates of application, and receipts for materials
<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.; receipts for hired services
<input type="checkbox"/> Harvest records	Field names/identification, dates, crop names, quantities by field
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-harvest handling & sales records	Storage, transport, and sales invoices; operating procedures to prevent contamination/co-mingling in split operations
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffers	Documentation of neighboring land use; harvest and sales records for buffer crops; no-spray agreement(s)