



# 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.

## MAPLE 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 operation's production capacity (mass balance) and one that traces the origin of the raw product through to sale (traceability).

Items	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Sugarbush map	Include items listed in VOF Forest Management Plan, like location of sugar house, acres, collection zones, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest Management Plan	Must describe all stands used for organic sap collection, must be signed by consulting forester and less than 10 years old
<input type="checkbox"/> Land use verification	3-year history, co-management rights on leased parcels, neighboring land use affidavit
<input type="checkbox"/> Material list & purchase receipts	Include spouts, cleaners, sanitizers, defoamers, filter aids, pest control, purchased sap/syrup
<input type="checkbox"/> Organic certificates	Include certificates for organic defoamers, purchased sap/syrup
<input type="checkbox"/> Wash water documentation	Current documentation verifying that wash water is potable
<input type="checkbox"/> Lead test documentation	Proof of no lead contamination (if using galvanized, brass, bronze, or copper equipment)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning/sanitizing protocols	Indicate timing of cleaning/sanitizing
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest activity log	Include dates of tapping and tap removal, thinning/harvesting dates and locations
<input type="checkbox"/> Syrup/sap records	Sap collection, boiling, canning, lot numbers, sales, and inventory records
<input type="checkbox"/> Retail product labels	Approved by VOF
<input type="checkbox"/> Value-added products info	If applicable, see processing checklist