



# Organic Standards for Crop Production

## Excerpts of USDA's National Organic Program Regulations

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Complete USDA Organic Regulations for organic crop production, livestock production, or handling of agricultural products, as well as requirements for the inspection process and management of certifying agents, can be found on USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) website, under Organic Regulations. USDA Organic Regulations are subject to revision or amendment. Check the NOP website at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop) for the most current version.

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## Introduction

This publication contains verbatim excerpts of selected USDA Organic Regulations that are relevant to operations that produce organic crops. Two similar publications are available from ATTRA: *Organic Standards for Livestock Production—Excerpts of USDA's National Organic Program Regulations*; and *Organic Standards for Handling—Excerpts of USDA's National Organic Program Regulations*.

While this publication contains most of the key regulations that directly address crop production, it is not a complete collection of all the regulations with which organic crop producers must comply. For instance, many crop producers engage in activities that qualify as handling, such as washing or cleaning, packaging, cooling, and storing fruits, vegetables, and other crops. Review the USDA Organic Regulations in their entirety and check with an accredited organic certifying agent (certifier) to be sure that you are aware of and familiar with all the regulations that apply to your type of operation.

To achieve organic certification to USDA Organic Regulations, you can choose any USDA-accredited organic certifying agent. A list of certifying agents can be found on the NOP website at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop). You'll then need to complete the necessary application and organic system plan forms. You can clarify any points of compliance for organic pro-

duction and handling activities with your certifier. Details of this process are described in the ATTRA publication *Organic Certification Process*.

The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) was enacted under the 1990 Farm Bill. The Act authorized creation of USDA's NOP for the production, handling, and processing of organically grown agricultural products. Organic regulations are set forth under Title 7, Part 205 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Subparts (for example, Subpart A: Definitions; Subpart B: Applicability) are simply part of the outline that organizes these regulations.

The NOP oversees mandatory certification of production and handling of all products to be marketed or represented as organic within the United States. Producers who meet USDA Organic Regulations may label their products as "USDA Certified Organic."

The following sections of Part 205—National Organic Program are excerpted in the following order:

### Subpart B—Applicability

- § 205.100 What has to be certified
- § 205.101 Exemptions and exclusions from certification
- § 205.102 Use of the term "organic"
- § 205.103 Recordkeeping by certified operations

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- § 205.105 Allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients in organic production and handling

#### Subpart C—Organic Production and Handling Requirements

- § 205.200 General
- § 205.201 Organic production and handling system plan
- § 205.202 Land requirements
- § 205.203 Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard
- § 205.204 Seeds and planting stock practice standard
- § 205.205 Crop rotation practice standard
- § 205.206 Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard
- § 205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard
- § 205.270 Organic handling requirements
- § 205.271 Facility pest management practice standard
- § 205.272 Commingling and contact with prohibited substance prevention practice standard

#### Subpart D—Labels, Labeling, and Market Information

- § 205.300 Use of the term “organic”
- § 205.303 Packaged products labeled “100 percent organic” or “organic”
- § 205.307 Labeling of nonretail containers used for only shipping or storage of raw or processed agricultural products labeled as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))”
- § 205.308 Agricultural products in other than packaged form at the point of retail sale that are sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic” or “organic”
- § 205.311 USDA Seal

#### Subpart G—Administrative The National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances

#### Subpart E—Certification

- § 205.400 General requirements for certification

#### Subpart G—Administrative

#### The National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances

- § 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production
- § 205.602 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production

#### Subpart A—Definitions

- § 205.2 Terms defined (selected terms relevant to crop production)

## Subpart B—Applicability

### **§ 205.100 What has to be certified**

(a) Except for operations exempt or excluded in § 205.101, each production or handling operation or specified portion of a production or handling operation that produces or handles crops, livestock, livestock products, or other agricultural products that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must be certified according to the provisions of subpart E of this part and must meet all other applicable requirements of this part.

(b) Any production or handling operation or specified portion of a production or handling operation that has been already certified by a certifying agent on the date that the certifying agent receives its accreditation under this part shall be deemed to be certified under the Act until the operation's next anniversary date of certification. Such recognition shall only be available to those operations certified by a certifying agent that receives its accreditation within 18 months from February 20, 2001.

(c) Any operation that:

(1) Knowingly sells or labels a product as organic, except in accordance with the Act, shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than 3.91(b)(1)(xxxvii) of this title per violation.

### Related ATTRA Publications [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)

Organic Certification Process

Organic Standards for Livestock Production: Excerpts of USDA's National Organic Program Regulations

Organic Standards for Handling: Excerpts of the USDA's National Organic Program Regulations

(2) Makes a false statement under the Act to the Secretary, a governing State official, or an accredited certifying agent shall be subject to the provisions of section 1001 of title 18, United States Code.

[65 FR 80637, Dec. 21, 2000, as amended at 70 FR 29579, May 24, 2005]

## **§ 205.101 Exemptions and exclusions from certification**

(a) Exemptions. (1) A production or handling operation that sells agricultural products as “organic” but whose gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less annually is exempt from certification under subpart E of this part and from submitting an organic system plan for acceptance or approval under § 205.201 but must comply with the applicable organic production and handling requirements of subpart C of this part and the labeling requirements of § 205.310. The products from such operations shall not be used as ingredients identified as organic in processed products produced by another handling operation.

(2) A handling operation that is a retail food establishment or portion of a retail food establishment that handles organically produced agricultural products but does not process them is exempt from the requirements in this part.

(3) A handling operation or portion of a handling operation that only handles agricultural products that contain less than 70 percent organic ingredients by total weight of the finished product (excluding water and salt) is exempt from the requirements in this part, except:

(i) The provisions for prevention of contact of organic products with prohibited substances set forth in § 205.272 with respect to any organically produced ingredients used in an agricultural product;

(ii) The labeling provisions of §§ 205.305 and 205.310; and

(iii) The recordkeeping provisions in paragraph (c) of this section.

(4) A handling operation or portion of a handling operation that only identifies organic ingredients on the information panel is exempt from the requirements in this part, except:

(i) The provisions for prevention of contact of organic products with prohibited substances set forth in § 205.272 with respect to any organically produced ingredients used in an agricultural product;

(ii) The labeling provisions of §§ 205.305 and 205.310; and

(iii) The recordkeeping provisions in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) Exclusions. (1) A handling operation or portion of a handling operation is excluded from the requirements of this part, except for the requirements for the prevention of commingling and contact with prohibited substances as set forth in § 205.272 with respect to any organically produced products, if such operation or portion of the operation only sells organic agricultural products labeled as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” that:

(i) Are packaged or otherwise enclosed in a container prior to being received or acquired by the operation; and

(ii) Remain in the same package or container and are not otherwise processed while in the control of the handling operation.

(2) A handling operation that is a retail food establishment or portion of a retail food establishment that processes, on the premises of the retail food establishment, raw and ready-to-eat food from agricultural products that were previously labeled as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” is excluded from the requirements in this part, except:

(i) The requirements for the prevention of contact with prohibited substances as set forth in § 205.272; and

(ii) The labeling provisions of § 205.310.

(c) Records to be maintained by exempt operations. (1) Any handling operation exempt from certification pursuant to paragraph (a)(3) or (4) of this section must maintain records sufficient to:

(i) Prove that ingredients identified as organic were organically produced and handled; and

(ii) Verify quantities produced from such ingredients.

(2) Records must be maintained for no less than 3 years beyond their creation and the operations must allow representatives of the Secretary and the applicable State organic programs' governing State official access to these records for inspection and copying during normal business hours to determine compliance with the applicable regulations set forth in this part.

### **§ 205.102 Use of the term “organic”**

Any agricultural product that is sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must be:

- (a) Produced in accordance with the requirements specified in § 205.101 or §§ 205.202 through 205.207 or §§ 205.236 through 205.240 and all other applicable requirements of part 205; and
- (b) Handled in accordance with the requirements specified in § 205.101 or §§ 205.270 through 205.272 and all other applicable requirements of this part 205.

[65 FR 80637, Dec. 21, 2000, as amended at 75 FR 7193, Feb. 17, 2010]

### **§ 205.103 Recordkeeping by certified operations**

(a) A certified operation must maintain records concerning the production, harvesting, and handling of agricultural products that are or that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)).”

- (b) Such records must:
  - (1) Be adapted to the particular business that the certified operation is conducting;
  - (2) Fully disclose all activities and transactions of the certified operation in sufficient detail as to be readily understood and audited;
  - (3) Be maintained for not less than 5 years beyond their creation; and
  - (4) Be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the Act and the regulations in this part.
- (c) The certified operation must make such records available for inspection and copying during normal business hours by authorized rep-

resentatives of the Secretary, the applicable State program's governing State official, and the certifying agent.

### **§ 205.105 Allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients in organic production and handling**

To be sold or labeled as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” the product must be produced and handled without the use of:

- (a) Synthetic substances and ingredients, except as provided in § 205.601 or § 205.603;
- (b) Nonsynthetic substances prohibited in § 205.602 or § 205.604;
- (c) Nonagricultural substances used in or on processed products, except as otherwise provided in § 205.605;
- (d) Nonorganic agricultural substances used in or on processed products, except as otherwise provided in § 205.606;
- (e) Excluded methods, except for vaccines: Provided, That, the vaccines are approved in accordance with § 205.600(a);
- (f) Ionizing radiation, as described in Food and Drug Administration regulation, 21 CFR 179.26; and
- (g) Sewage sludge.

## **Subpart C—Organic Production and Handling Requirements**

### **§ 205.200 General**

The producer or handler of a production or handling operation intending to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must comply with the applicable provisions of this subpart. Production practices implemented in accordance with this subpart must maintain or improve the natural resources of the operation, including soil and water quality.

## **§ 205.201 Organic production and handling system plan**

(a) The producer or handler of a production or handling operation, except as exempt or excluded under § 205.101, intending to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must develop an organic production or handling system plan that is agreed to by the producer or handler and an accredited certifying agent. An organic system plan must meet the requirements set forth in this section for organic production or handling. An organic production or handling system plan must include:

- (1) A description of practices and procedures to be performed and maintained, including the frequency with which they will be performed;
  - (2) A list of each substance to be used as a production or handling input, indicating its composition, source, location(s) where it will be used, and documentation of commercial availability, as applicable;
  - (3) A description of the monitoring practices and procedures to be performed and maintained, including the frequency with which they will be performed, to verify that the plan is effectively implemented;
  - (4) A description of the recordkeeping system implemented to comply with the requirements established in § 205.103;
  - (5) A description of the management practices and physical barriers established to prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products on a split operation and to prevent contact of organic production and handling operations and products with prohibited substances; and
  - (6) Additional information deemed necessary by the certifying agent to evaluate compliance with the regulations.
- (b) A producer may substitute a plan prepared to meet the requirements of another Federal, State, or local government regulatory program for the organic system plan: Provided, That, the submitted plan meets all the requirements of this subpart.

## **§ 205.202 Land requirements**

Any field or farm parcel from which harvested crops are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “organic,” must:

- (a) Have been managed in accordance with the provisions of §§ 205.203 through 205.206;
- (b) Have had no prohibited substances, as listed in § 205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding harvest of the crop; and
- (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.

## **§ 205.203 Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard**

- (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.
- (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials.
- (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances. Animal and plant materials include:
  - (1) Raw animal manure, which must be composted unless it is:
    - (i) Applied to land used for a crop not intended for human consumption;
    - (ii) Incorporated into the soil not less than 120 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion has direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles; or
    - (iii) Incorporated into the soil not less than 90 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles;

(2) Composted plant and animal materials produced through a process that:

(i) Established an initial C:N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1; and

(ii) Maintained a temperature of between 131°F and 170°F for 3 days using an in-vessel or static aerated pile system; or

(iii) Maintained a temperature of between 131°F and 170°F for 15 days using a windrow composting system, during which period, the materials must be turned a minimum of five times.

(3) Uncomposted plant materials.

(d) A producer may manage crop nutrients and soil fertility to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances by applying:

(1) A crop nutrient or soil amendment included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production;

(2) A mined substance of low solubility;

(3) A mined substance of high solubility: Provided, That, the substance is used in compliance with the conditions established on the National List of nonsynthetic materials prohibited for crop production;

(4) Ash obtained from the burning of a plant or animal material, except as prohibited in paragraph (e) of this section: Provided, That, the material burned has not been treated or combined with a prohibited substance or the ash is not included on the National List of nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production; and

(5) A plant or animal material that has been chemically altered by a manufacturing process: Provided, That, the material is included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production established in § 205.601.

(e) The producer must not use:

(1) Any fertilizer or composted plant and animal material that contain a synthetic substance not included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production;

(2) Sewage sludge (biosolids) as defined in 40 CFR part 503; and (3) Burning as a means of disposal for crop residues produced on the operation: Except, That, burning may be used to suppress the spread of disease or to stimulate seed germination.

### **§ 205.204 Seeds and planting stock practice standard**

(a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock: Except, That,

(1) Nonorganically produced, untreated seeds and planting stock may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced variety is not commercially available: Except, That, organically produced seed must be used for the production of edible sprouts;

(2) Nonorganically produced seeds and planting stock that have been treated with a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced or untreated variety is not commercially available;

(3) Nonorganically produced annual seedlings may be used to produce an organic crop when a temporary variance has been granted in accordance with § 205.290(a)(2);

(4) Nonorganically produced planting stock to be used to produce a perennial crop may be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced only after the planting stock has been maintained under a system of organic management for a period of no less than 1 year; and

(5) Seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock treated with prohibited substances may be used to produce an organic crop when the application of the materials is a requirement of Federal or State phytosanitary regulations.

(b) [Reserved]

### **§ 205.205 Crop rotation practice standard**

The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:

- (a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content;
- (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops;
- (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and
- (d) Provide erosion control.

### **§ 205.206 Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard**

(a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases including but not limited to:

- (1) Crop rotation and soil and crop nutrient management practices, as provided for in §§ 205.203 and 205.205;
- (2) Sanitation measures to remove disease vectors, weed seeds, and habitat for pest organisms; and
- (3) Cultural practices that enhance crop health, including selection of plant species and varieties with regard to suitability to site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent pests, weeds, and diseases.

(b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods including but not limited to:

- (1) Augmentation or introduction of predators or parasites of the pest species;
- (2) Development of habitat for natural enemies of pests;
- (3) Nonsynthetic controls such as lures, traps, and repellents.

(c) Weed problems may be controlled through:

- (1) Mulching with fully biodegradable materials;
- (2) Mowing;
- (3) Livestock grazing;
- (4) Hand weeding and mechanical cultivation;
- (5) Flame, heat, or electrical means; or
- (6) Plastic or other synthetic mulches: Provided, That, they are removed from the field at the end of the growing or harvest season.

(d) Disease problems may be controlled through:

- (1) Management practices which suppress the spread of disease organisms; or
- (2) Application of nonsynthetic biological, botanical, or mineral inputs.

(e) When the practices provided for in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section are insufficient to prevent or control crop pests, weeds, and diseases, a biological or botanical substance or a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be applied to prevent, suppress, or control pests, weeds, or diseases: Provided, That, the conditions for using the substance are documented in the organic system plan.

(f) The producer must not use lumber treated with arsenate or other prohibited materials for new installations or replacement purposes in contact with soil or livestock.

### **§ 205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard**

(a) A wild crop that is intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be harvested from a designated area that has had no prohibited substance, as set forth in § 205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding the harvest of the wild crop.

(b) A wild crop must be harvested in a manner that ensures that such harvesting or gathering will not be destructive to the environment and will sustain the growth and production of the wild crop.

### **§ 205.270 Organic handling requirements**

(a) Mechanical or biological methods, including but not limited to cooking, baking, curing, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, distilling, extracting, slaughtering, cutting, fermenting, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating, freezing, chilling, or otherwise manufacturing, and the packaging, canning, jarring, or otherwise enclosing food in a container may be used to process an organically produced agricultural product for the purpose of retarding spoilage or otherwise preparing the agricultural product for market.

(b) Nonagricultural substances allowed under § 205.605 and nonorganically produced agricultural products allowed under § 205.606 may be used:

(1) In or on a processed agricultural product intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “organic,” pursuant to § 205.301(b), if not commercially available in organic form.

(2) In or on a processed agricultural product intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)),” pursuant to § 205.301(c).

(c) The handler of an organic handling operation must not use in or on agricultural products intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)),” or in or on any ingredients labeled as organic:

(1) Practices prohibited under paragraphs (e) and (f) of § 205.105.

(2) A volatile synthetic solvent or other synthetic processing aid not allowed under § 205.605: Except, That, nonorganic ingredients in products labeled “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” are not subject to this requirement.

### **§ 205.271 Facility pest management practice standard**

(a) The producer or handler of an organic facility must use management practices to prevent pests, including but not limited to:

(1) Removal of pest habitat, food sources, and breeding areas;

(2) Prevention of access to handling facilities; and

(3) Management of environmental factors, such as temperature, light, humidity, atmosphere, and air circulation, to prevent pest reproduction.

(b) Pests may be controlled through:

(1) Mechanical or physical controls including but not limited to traps, light, or sound; or

(2) Lures and repellents using nonsynthetic or synthetic substances consistent with the National List.

(c) If the practices provided for in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section are not effective to pre-

vent or control pests, a nonsynthetic or synthetic substance consistent with the National List may be applied.

(d) If the practices provided for in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section are not effective to prevent or control facility pests, a synthetic substance not on the National List may be applied: Provided, That, the handler and certifying agent agree on the substance, method of application, and measures to be taken to prevent contact of the organically produced products or ingredients with the substance used.

(e) The handler of an organic handling operation who applies a nonsynthetic or synthetic substance to prevent or control pests must update the operation's organic handling plan to reflect the use of such substances and methods of application. The updated organic plan must include a list of all measures taken to prevent contact of the organically produced products or ingredients with the substance used.

(f) Notwithstanding the practices provided for in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section, a handler may otherwise use substances to prevent or control pests as required by Federal, State, or local laws and regulations: Provided, That, measures are taken to prevent contact of the organically produced products or ingredients with the substance used.

### **§ 205.272 Commingling and contact with prohibited substance prevention practice standard**

(a) The handler of an organic handling operation must implement measures necessary to prevent the commingling of organic and non-organic products and protect organic products from contact with prohibited substances.

(b) The following are prohibited for use in the handling of any organically produced agricultural product or ingredient labeled in accordance with subpart D of this part:

(1) Packaging materials, and storage containers, or bins that contain a synthetic fungicide, preservative, or fumigant;

(2) The use or reuse of any bag or container that has been in contact with any substance in such a manner as to compromise the organic integ-

rity of any organically produced product or ingredient placed in those containers, unless such reusable bag or container has been thoroughly cleaned and poses no risk of contact of the organically produced product or ingredient with the substance used.

## **Subpart D—Labels, Labeling, and Market Information**

### **§ 205.300 Use of the term “organic”**

(a) The term “organic” may only be used on labels and in labeling of raw or processed agricultural products, including ingredients, that have been produced and handled in accordance with the regulations in this part. The term, “organic,” may not be used in a product name to modify a nonorganic ingredient in the product.

(b) Products for export, produced and certified to foreign national organic standards or foreign contract buyer requirements, may be labeled in accordance with the organic labeling requirements of the receiving country or contract buyer: Provided, That, the shipping containers and shipping documents meet the labeling requirements specified in § 205.307(c).

(c) Products produced in a foreign country and exported for sale in the United States must be certified pursuant to subpart E of this part and labeled pursuant to this subpart D.

(d) Livestock feeds produced in accordance with the requirements of this part must be labeled in accordance with the requirements of § 205.306.

### **§ 205.303 Packaged products labeled “100 percent organic” or “organic”**

(a) Agricultural products in packages described in § 205.301(a) and (b) may display, on the principal display panel, information panel, and any other panel of the package and on any labeling or market information concerning the product, the following:

(1) The term, “100 percent organic” or “organic,” as applicable, to modify the name of the product;

(2) For products labeled “organic,” the percentage of organic ingredients in the product; (The size of the percentage statement must not exceed one-half the size of the largest type size on the panel on which the statement is displayed and must appear in its entirety in the same type size, style, and color without highlighting.)

(3) The term, “organic,” to identify the organic ingredients in multi-ingredient products labeled “100 percent organic;”

(4) The USDA seal; and/or

(5) The seal, logo, or other identifying mark of the certifying agent which certified the production or handling operation producing the finished product and any other certifying agent which certified production or handling operations producing raw organic product or organic ingredients used in the finished product: Provided, That, the handler producing the finished product maintain records, pursuant to this part, verifying organic certification of the operations producing such ingredients, and: Provided further, That, such seals or marks are not individually displayed more prominently than the USDA seal.

(b) Agricultural products in packages described in § 205.301(a) and (b) must:

(1) For products labeled “organic,” identify each organic ingredient in the ingredient statement with the word, “organic,” or with an asterisk or other reference mark which is defined below the ingredient statement to indicate the ingredient is organically produced. Water or salt included as ingredients cannot be identified as organic.

(2) On the information panel, below the information identifying the handler or distributor of the product and preceded by the statement, “Certified organic by \* \* \*,” or similar phrase, identify the name of the certifying agent that certified the handler of the finished product and may display the business address, Internet address, or telephone number of the certifying agent in such label.

### **§ 205.307 Labeling of nonretail containers used for only shipping or storage of raw or processed agricultural products labeled as “100 percent organic,”**

### ***“organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))”***

(a) Nonretail containers used only to ship or store raw or processed agricultural product labeled as containing organic ingredients may display the following terms or marks:

- (1) The name and contact information of the certifying agent which certified the handler which assembled the final product;
- (2) Identification of the product as organic;
- (3) Special handling instructions needed to maintain the organic integrity of the product;
- (4) The USDA seal
- (5) The seal, logo, or other identifying mark of the certifying agent that certified the organic production or handling operation that produced or handled the finished product.

(b) Nonretail containers used to ship or store raw or processed agricultural product labeled as containing organic ingredients must display the production lot number of the product if applicable.

(c) Shipping containers of domestically produced product labeled as organic intended for export to international markets may be labeled in accordance with any shipping container labeling requirements of the foreign country of destination or the container labeling specifications of a foreign contract buyer: Provided, That, the shipping containers and shipping documents accompanying such organic products are clearly marked “For Export Only” and: Provided further, That, proof of such container marking and export must be maintained by the handler in accordance with recordkeeping requirements for exempt and excluded operations under § 205.101.

### ***§ 205.308 Agricultural products in other than packaged form at the point of retail sale that are sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic” or “organic”***

(a) Agricultural products in other than packaged form may use the term, “100 percent organic”

or “organic,” as applicable, to modify the name of the product in retail display, labeling, and display containers: Provided, That, the term, “organic,” is used to identify the organic ingredients listed in the ingredient statement.

(b) If the product is prepared in a certified facility, the retail display, labeling, and display containers may use:

- (1) The USDA seal; and
- (2) The seal, logo, or other identifying mark of the certifying agent that certified the production or handling operation producing the finished product and any other certifying agent which certified operations producing raw organic product or organic ingredients used in the finished product: Provided, That, such seals or marks are not individually displayed more prominently than the USDA seal.



### ***§ 205.311 USDA Seal***

(a) The USDA seal described in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section may be used only for raw or processed agricultural products described in paragraphs (a), (b), (e)(1), and (e)(2) of § 205.301.

(b) The USDA seal must replicate the form and design of the example in figure 1 and must be printed legibly and conspicuously:

(1) On a white background with a brown outer circle and with the term, “USDA,” in green overlaying a white upper semicircle and with the term, “organic,” in white overlaying the green lower half circle; or

(2) On a white or transparent background with black outer circle and black “USDA” on a white or transparent upper half of the circle with a contrasting white or transparent “organic” on the black lower half circle.

(3) The green or black lower half circle may have four light lines running from left to right and disappearing at the point on the right horizon to resemble a cultivated field.

## **Subpart E—Certification**

### ***§ 205.400 General requirements for certification***

A person seeking to receive or maintain organic certification under the regulations in this part must:

(a) Comply with the Act and applicable organic production and handling regulations of this part;

(b) Establish, implement, and update annually an organic production or handling system plan that is submitted to an accredited certifying agent as provided for in § 205.200;

(c) Permit on-site inspections with complete access to the production or handling operation, including noncertified production and handling areas, structures, and offices by the certifying agent as provided for in § 205.403;

(d) Maintain all records applicable to the organic operation for not less than 5 years beyond their creation and allow authorized representatives of the Secretary, the applicable State organic program's governing State official, and the certifying agent access to such records during normal business hours for review and copying to determine compliance with the Act and the regulations in this part, as provided for in § 205.104;

(e) Submit the applicable fees charged by the certifying agent; and

(f) Immediately notify the certifying agent concerning any:

(1) Application, including drift, of a prohibited substance to any field, production unit, site, facility, livestock, or product that is part of an operation; and

(2) Change in a certified operation or any portion of a certified operation that may affect its compliance with the Act and the regulations in this part.

## Subpart G—Administrative

### The National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances

#### ***§ 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production***

In accordance with restrictions specified in this section, the following synthetic substances may be used in organic crop production: Provided,

That, use of such substances do not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water. Substances allowed by this section, except disinfectants and sanitizers in paragraph (a) and those substances in paragraphs (c), (j), (k), and (l) of this section, may only be used when the provisions set forth in § 205.206(a) through (d) prove insufficient to prevent or control the target pest.

(a) As algicide, disinfectants, and sanitizer, including irrigation system cleaning systems.

(1) Alcohols.

(i) Ethanol.

(ii) Isopropanol.

(2) Chlorine materials—Except, That, residual chlorine levels in the water shall not exceed the maximum residual disinfectant limit under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

(i) Calcium hypochlorite.

(ii) Chlorine dioxide.

(iii) Sodium hypochlorite.

(3) Copper sulfate—for use as an algicide in aquatic rice systems, is limited to one application per field during any 24-month period. Application rates are limited to those which do not increase baseline soil test values for copper over a timeframe agreed upon by the producer and accredited certifying agent.

(4) Hydrogen peroxide.

(5) Ozone gas—for use as an irrigation system cleaner only.

(6) Peracetic acid—for use in disinfecting equipment, seed, and asexually propagated planting material.

(7) Soap-based algicide/demossers.

(8) Sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate (CAS #-15630-89-4)—Federal law restricts the use of this substance in food crop production to approved food uses identified on the product label.

(b) As herbicides, weed barriers, as applicable.

(1) Herbicides, soap-based—for use in farmstead maintenance (roadways, ditches, right of ways, building perimeters) and ornamental crops.

(2) Mulches.

- (i) Newspaper or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks.
- (ii) Plastic mulch and covers (petroleum-based other than polyvinyl chloride (PVC)).
- (c) As compost feedstocks—Newspapers or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks.
- (d) As animal repellents—Soaps, ammonium—for use as a large animal repellent only, no contact with soil or edible portion of crop.
- (e) As insecticides (including acaricides or mite control).
  - (1) Ammonium carbonate—for use as bait in insect traps only, no direct contact with crop or soil.
  - (2) Aqueous potassium silicate (CAS #–1312–76–1)—the silica, used in the manufacture of potassium silicate, must be sourced from naturally occurring sand.
  - (3) Boric acid—structural pest control, no direct contact with organic food or crops.
  - (4) Copper sulfate—for use as tadpole shrimp control in aquatic rice production, is limited to one application per field during any 24-month period. Application rates are limited to levels which do not increase baseline soil test values for copper over a timeframe agreed upon by the producer and accredited certifying agent.
  - (5) Elemental sulfur.
  - (6) Lime sulfur—including calcium polysulfide.
  - (7) Oils, horticultural—narrow range oils as dormant, suffocating, and summer oils.
  - (8) Soaps, insecticidal.
  - (9) Sticky traps/barriers.
  - (10) Sucrose octanoate esters (CAS #s—42922–74–7; 58064–47–4)—in accordance with approved labeling.
- (f) As insect management. Pheromones.
- (g) As rodenticides.
  - (1) Sulfur dioxide—underground rodent control only (smoke bombs).
  - (2) Vitamin D3.
- (h) As slug or snail bait. Ferric phosphate (CAS # 10045–86–0).
  - (i) As plant disease control.
    - (1) Aqueous potassium silicate (CAS #–1312–76–1)—the silica, used in the manufacture of potassium silicate, must be sourced from naturally occurring sand.
    - (2) Coppers, fixed—copper hydroxide, copper oxide, copper oxychloride, includes products exempted from EPA tolerance, Provided, That, copper-based materials must be used in a manner that minimizes accumulation in the soil and shall not be used as herbicides.
    - (3) Copper sulfate—Substance must be used in a manner that minimizes accumulation of copper in the soil.
    - (4) Hydrated lime.
    - (5) Hydrogen peroxide.
    - (6) Lime sulfur.
    - (7) Oils, horticultural, narrow range oils as dormant, suffocating, and summer oils.
    - (8) Peracetic acid—for use to control fire blight bacteria.
    - (9) Potassium bicarbonate.
    - (10) Elemental sulfur.
    - (11) Streptomycin, for fire blight control in apples and pears only.
    - (12) Tetracycline, for fire blight control only and for use only until October 21, 2012.
  - (j) As plant or soil amendments.
    - (1) Aquatic plant extracts (other than hydrolyzed)—Extraction process is limited to the use of potassium hydroxide or sodium hydroxide; solvent amount used is limited to that amount necessary for extraction.
    - (2) Elemental sulfur.
    - (3) Humic acids—naturally occurring deposits, water and alkali extracts only.
    - (4) Lignin sulfonate—chelating agent, dust suppressant, floatation agent.
    - (5) Magnesium sulfate—allowed with a documented soil deficiency.
    - (6) Micronutrients—not to be used as a defoliant, herbicide, or desiccant. Those made from nitrates or chlorides are not allowed. Soil deficiency must be documented by testing.

- (i) Soluble boron products.
- (ii) Sulfates, carbonates, oxides, or silicates of zinc, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium, and cobalt.
- (7) Liquid fish products—can be pH adjusted with sulfuric, citric or phosphoric acid. The amount of acid used shall not exceed the minimum needed to lower the pH to 3.5.
- (8) Vitamins, B1, C, and E.
- (9) Sulfurous acid (CAS # 7782-99-2) for on-farm generation of substance utilizing 99% purity elemental sulfur per paragraph (j)(2) of this section.
- (k) As plant growth regulators. Ethylene gas—for regulation of pineapple flowering.
- (l) As floating agents in postharvest handling.
  - (1) Lignin sulfonate.
  - (2) Sodium silicate—for tree fruit and fiber processing.
- (m) As synthetic inert ingredients as classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for use with nonsynthetic substances or synthetic substances listed in this section and used as an active pesticide ingredient in accordance with any limitations on the use of such substances.
  - (1) EPA List 4—Inerts of Minimal Concern.
  - (2) EPA List 3—Inerts of unknown toxicity—for use only in passive pheromone dispensers.
- (n) Seed preparations. Hydrogen chloride (CAS # 7647-01-0)—for delinting cotton seed for planting.
- (o) As production aids. Microcrystalline cheese-wax (CAS #'s 64742-42-3, 8009-03-08, and 8002-74-2)—for use in log grown mushroom production. Must be made without either ethylene-propylene co-polymer or synthetic colors.
- (p)–(z) [Reserved]

[65 FR 80637, Dec. 21, 2000, as amended at 68 FR 61992, Oct. 31, 2003; 71 FR 53302 Sept. 11, 2006; 72 FR 69572, Dec. 10, 2007; 75 FR 38696, July 6, 2010; 75 FR 77524, Dec. 13, 2010; 77 FR 8092, Feb. 14, 2012]

## **§ 205.602 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production**

The following nonsynthetic substances may not be used in organic crop production:

- (a) Ash from manure burning.
- (b) Arsenic.
- (c) Calcium chloride, brine process is natural and prohibited for use except as a foliar spray to treat a physiological disorder associated with calcium uptake.
- (d) Lead salts.
- (e) Potassium chloride—unless derived from a mined source and applied in a manner that minimizes chloride accumulation in the soil.
- (f) Sodium fluoaluminate (mined).
- (g) Sodium nitrate—unless use is restricted to no more than 20% of the crop's total nitrogen requirement; use in spirulina production is unrestricted until October 21, 2005.
- (h) Strychnine.
- (i) Tobacco dust (nicotine sulfate).
- (j)–(z) [Reserved]

[68 FR 61992, Oct. 31, 2003]

## **Subpart A—Definitions**

### **§ 205.2 Terms defined [selected terms relevant to crop production]**

**Agricultural inputs.** All substances or materials used in the production or handling of organic agricultural products.

**Agricultural product.** Any agricultural commodity or product, whether raw or processed, including any commodity or product derived from livestock, that is marketed in the United States for human or livestock consumption.

**Allowed synthetic.** A substance that is included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic production or handling.

**AMDUCA.** The Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-396).

**Annual seedling.** A plant grown from seed that will complete its life cycle or produce a harvestable yield within the same crop year or season in which it was planted.

**Area of operation.** The types of operations: crops, livestock, wild-crop harvesting or handling, or any combination thereof that a certifying agent may be accredited to certify under this part.

**Audit trail.** Documentation that is sufficient to determine the source, transfer of ownership, and transportation of any agricultural product labeled as “100 percent organic,” the organic ingredients of any agricultural product labeled as “organic” or “made with organic (specified ingredients)” or the organic ingredients of any agricultural product containing less than 70 percent organic ingredients identified as organic in an ingredients statement.

**Biodegradable.** Subject to biological decomposition into simpler biochemical or chemical components.

**Buffer zone.** An area located between a certified production operation or portion of a production operation and an adjacent land area that is not maintained under organic management. A buffer zone must be sufficient in size or other features (e.g., windbreaks or a diversion ditch) to prevent the possibility of unintended contact by prohibited substances applied to adjacent land areas with an area that is part of a certified operation.

**Bulk.** The presentation to consumers at retail sale of an agricultural product in unpackaged, loose form, enabling the consumer to determine the individual pieces, amount, or volume of the product purchased.

**Certification or certified.** A determination made by a certifying agent that a production or handling operation is in compliance with the Act and the regulations in this part, which is documented by a certificate of organic operation.

**Certified operation.** A crop or livestock production, wild-crop harvesting or handling operation, or portion of such operation that is certified by an accredited certifying agent as utilizing a system of organic production or handling as described by the Act and the regulations in this part.

**Certifying agent.** Any entity accredited by the Secretary as a certifying agent for the purpose of certifying a production or handling operation as a certified production or handling operation.

**Certifying agent's operation.** All sites, facilities, personnel, and records used by a certifying agent to conduct certification activities under the Act and the regulations in this part.

**Claims.** Oral, written, implied, or symbolic representations, statements, or advertising or other forms of communication presented to the public or buyers of agricultural products that relate to the organic certification process or the term, “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)),” or, in the case of agricultural products containing less than 70 percent organic ingredients, the term, “organic,” on the ingredients panel.

**Commercially available.** The ability to obtain a production input in an appropriate form, quality, or quantity to fulfill an essential function in a system of organic production or handling, as determined by the certifying agent in the course of reviewing the organic plan.

**Commingling.** Physical contact between unpackaged organically produced and nonorganically produced agricultural products during production, processing, transportation, storage or handling, other than during the manufacture of a multi-ingredient product containing both types of ingredients.

**Compost.** The product of a managed process through which microorganisms break down plant and animal materials into more available forms suitable for application to the soil. Compost must be produced through a process that combines plant and animal materials with an initial C:N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1. Producers using an in-vessel or static aerated pile system must maintain the composting materials at a temperature between 131°F and 170°F for 3 days. Producers using a windrow system must maintain the composting materials at a temperature between 131°F and 170°F for 15 days, during which time, the materials must be turned a minimum of five times.

**Control.** Any method that reduces or limits damage by populations of pests, weeds, or diseases to levels that do not significantly reduce productivity.

**Crop.** Pastures, cover crops, green manure crops, catch crops, or any plant or part of a plant intended to be marketed as an agricultural product, fed to livestock, or used in the field to manage nutrients and soil fertility.

**Crop residues.** The plant parts remaining in a field after the harvest of a crop, which include stalks, stems, leaves, roots, and weeds.

**Crop rotation.** The practice of alternating the annual crops grown on a specific field in a planned pattern or sequence in successive crop years so that crops of the same species or family are not grown repeatedly without interruption on the same field. Perennial cropping systems employ means such as alley cropping, intercropping, and hedgerows to introduce biological diversity in lieu of crop rotation.

**Crop year.** That normal growing season for a crop as determined by the Secretary.

**Cultivation.** Digging up or cutting the soil to prepare a seed bed; control weeds; aerate the soil; or work organic matter, crop residues, or fertilizers into the soil.

**Cultural methods.** Methods used to enhance crop health and prevent weed, pest, or disease problems without the use of substances; examples include the selection of appropriate varieties and planting sites; proper timing and density of plantings; irrigation; and extending a growing season by manipulating the microclimate with green houses, cold frames, or wind breaks.

**Disease vectors.** Plants or animals that harbor or transmit disease organisms or pathogens which may attack crops or livestock.

**Drift.** The physical movement of prohibited substances from the intended target site onto an organic operation or portion thereof.

**Excluded methods.** A variety of methods used to genetically modify organisms or influence their growth and development by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes and are not considered compatible with organic production. Such methods include cell fusion, microencapsulation and macroencapsulation, and recombinant DNA technology (including gene deletion, gene doubling, introducing a foreign gene, and changing the positions of genes when achieved by recombinant DNA technology). Such methods do not include the use of traditional breeding, conjugation, fer-

mentation, hybridization, in vitro fertilization, or tissue culture.

**Fertilizer.** A single or blended substance containing one or more recognized plant nutrient(s) which is used primarily for its plant nutrient content and which is designed for use or claimed to have value in promoting plant growth.

**Field.** An area of land identified as a discrete unit within a production operation.

**Forage.** Vegetative material in a fresh, dried, or ensiled state (pasture, hay, or silage), which is fed to livestock.

**Handle.** To sell, process, or package agricultural products, except such term shall not include the sale, transportation, or delivery of crops or livestock by the producer thereof to a handler.

**Handler.** Any person engaged in the business of handling agricultural products, including producers who handle crops or livestock of their own production, except such term shall not include final retailers of agricultural products that do not process agricultural products.

**Handling operation.** Any operation or portion of an operation (except final retailers of agricultural products that do not process agricultural products) that receives or otherwise acquires agricultural products and processes, packages, or stores such products.

**Inert ingredient.** Any substance (or group of substances with similar chemical structures if designated by the Environmental Protection Agency) other than an active ingredient which is intentionally included in any pesticide product (40 CFR 152.3(m)).

**Inspection.** The act of examining and evaluating the production or handling operation of an applicant for certification or certified operation to determine compliance with the Act and the regulations in this part.

**Inspector.** Any person retained or used by a certifying agent to conduct inspections of certification applicants or certified production or handling operations.

**Label.** A display of written, printed, or graphic material on the immediate container of an agricultural product or any such material affixed to any agricultural product or affixed to a bulk container containing an agricultural product, except for package liners or a display of written,

printed, or graphic material which contains only information about the weight of the product.

**Labeling.** All written, printed, or graphic material accompanying an agricultural product at any time or written, printed, or graphic material about the agricultural product displayed at retail stores about the product.

**Lot.** Any number of containers which contain an agricultural product of the same kind located in the same conveyance, warehouse, or packing house and which are available for inspection at the same time.

**Manure.** Feces, urine, other excrement, and bedding produced by livestock that has not been composted.

**Market information.** Any written, printed, audiovisual, or graphic information, including advertising, pamphlets, flyers, catalogues, posters, and signs, distributed, broadcast, or made available outside of retail outlets that are used to assist in the sale or promotion of a product.

**Mulch.** Any nonsynthetic material, such as wood chips, leaves, or straw, or any synthetic material included on the National List for such use, such as newspaper or plastic that serves to suppress weed growth, moderate soil temperature, or conserve soil moisture.

**Narrow range oils.** Petroleum derivatives, predominately of paraffinic and naphthenic fractions with 50 percent boiling point (10 mm Hg) between 415°F and 440°F.

**National List.** A list of allowed and prohibited substances as provided for in the Act.

**National Organic Program (NOP).** The program authorized by the Act for the purpose of implementing its provisions.

**Natural resources of the operation.** The physical, hydrological, and biological features of a production operation, including soil, water, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife.

**Nonsynthetic (natural).** A substance that is derived from mineral, plant, or animal matter and does not undergo a synthetic process as defined in section 6502(21) of the Act (7 U.S.C. 6502(21)). For the purposes of this part, nonsynthetic is used as a synonym for natural as the term is used in the Act.

**Nonretail container.** Any container used for shipping or storage of an agricultural product that is not used in the retail display or sale of the product.

**Nontoxic.** Not known to cause any adverse physiological effects in animals, plants, humans, or the environment.

**Organic.** A labeling term that refers to an agricultural product produced in accordance with the Act and the regulations in this part.

**Organic matter.** The remains, residues, or waste products of any organism.

**Organic production.** A production system that is managed in accordance with the Act and regulations in this part to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

**Organic system plan.** A plan of management of an organic production or handling operation that has been agreed to by the producer or handler and the certifying agent and that includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling described in the Act and the regulations in subpart C of this part.

**Pasture.** Land used for livestock grazing that is managed to provide feed value and maintain or improve soil, water, and vegetative resources.

**Planting stock.** Any plant or plant tissue other than annual seedlings but including rhizomes, shoots, leaf or stem cuttings, roots, or tubers, used in plant production or propagation.

**Practice standard.** The guidelines and requirements through which a production or handling operation implements a required component of its production or handling organic system plan. A practice standard includes a series of allowed and prohibited actions, materials, and conditions to establish a minimum level performance for planning, conducting, and maintaining a function, such as livestock health care or facility pest management, essential to an organic operation.

**Processing.** Cooking, baking, curing, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, slaughtering, cutting, fermenting, distilling, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating,

freezing, chilling, or otherwise manufacturing and includes the packaging, canning, jarring, or otherwise enclosing food in a container.

**Producer.** A person who engages in the business of growing or producing food, fiber, feed, and other agricultural-based consumer products.

**Production lot number/identifier.** Identification of a product based on the production sequence of the product showing the date, time, and place of production used for quality control purposes.

**Prohibited substance.** A substance the use of which in any aspect of organic production or handling is prohibited or not provided for in the Act or the regulations of this part.

**Records.** Any information in written, visual, or electronic form that documents the activities undertaken by a producer, handler, or certifying agent to comply with the Act and regulations in this part.

**Residual forage.** Forage cut and left to lie, or windrowed and left to lie, in place in the pasture.

**Sewage sludge.** A solid, semisolid, or liquid residue generated during the treatment of domestic sewage in a treatment works. Sewage sludge includes but is not limited to: domestic septage; scum or solids removed in primary, secondary, or advanced wastewater treatment processes; and a material derived from sewage sludge. Sewage sludge does not include ash generated during the firing of sewage sludge in a sewage sludge incinerator or grit and screenings generated during preliminary treatment of domestic sewage in a treatment works.

**Soil and water quality.** Observable indicators of the physical, chemical, or biological condition of soil and water, including the presence of environmental contaminants.

**Split operation.** An operation that produces or handles both organic and nonorganic agricultural products.

**State organic program (SOP).** A State program that meets the requirements of section 6506 of the Act, is approved by the Secretary, and is designed to ensure that a product that is sold or



# Notes

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