

# OCIA International Certification 101

Jackie Keller, OCIA Eastern Kansas Chapter #2





# OCIA International

- Incorporated in 1988
- Not-for-profit organization
- Member-run organization
  - Annual Meetings
- World Headquarters – Lincoln, NE
- Regional Offices – Canada, Mexico, Japan





# OCIA Membership

- Chapter Members
  - Chapters are made up of at least 5 members
  - Hold chapter meetings, farm tours, workshops, etc...
  - 19 in US / 1 in Canada / 1 in Guatemala
- Direct Associates
  - Farmers, processors, handlers not wanting to join a chapter
- Community Grower Groups (CGG)
  - Organic sales less than \$5,000 annually





# Organic Agriculture

- Whole-system farming approach that promotes an ecological balance and conserves biodiversity
- Healthy soil is the foundation of organic farms
- Pests and weeds are controlled by
  - Crop rotations
  - Soil improvements
  - Birds and predator insects
  - Row covers
  - Labor







# Organic Certification

- No prohibited materials applied to land for 36 months
- Provides verification that the operation is following organic standards
- Allows the use of organic labeling (more on this later)
- Involves annual paperwork, record keeping, and inspection
- Exemption – producers whose sales of organic products is less than \$5,000 a year and are in compliance with all organic standards, may use the term organic, but not the logo





# Monitoring Organic Standards

- USDA's National Organic Program (NOP)
  - Oversees the National Organic Standards (aka NOP Final Rule/Regulation)
- National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)
  - Makes recommendations about materials and practices used in organic production
- Organic Certification Agencies
  - USDA accredits to act on its behalf
- Organic Inspectors





# What's Prohibited?

- The National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances identifies what can and cannot be used in organic crop and livestock production
- For the most part, natural substances are allowed and synthetic substances are not allowed
- Some substances may be used only in specific situations or up to a maximum amount
- To view the complete list, please go to:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/national-list-allowed-and-prohibited-substances>







# OMRI Listed

- Always check with your certifier first. We also recommend checking the OMRI (Organic Material Review Institute) website [www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)
- **Products List:** A list of brand name products that are acceptable for use (with or without restrictions)
- **Generic Materials List:** A list of generic ingredients that are acceptable or unacceptable in inputs used for organic production.
- When doing a “Keyword Search” online, you can use specific brand names or general terms, such as ‘weed control’ or ‘pest control.’







# Annual Steps to Certification

- Contact a certification agency  
Website: [www.ocia.org](http://www.ocia.org) Email: [marketing@ocia.org](mailto:marketing@ocia.org)
- Submit an application and organic system plan (OSP)
- Have an inspection
- Respond to agency questions
- Receive a decision
  - Our average turn around time is 30-60 days after we receive all paperwork needed to review
- Apply for a cost-share rebate





# OCIA Paperwork

- Certification Application (3 pages)
  - Tells us basic contact information and type of certification requested
- Operator's Licensing Agreement (3 pages)
- Crop, Livestock, or Handling OSP (modules)
  - Each begins with an Activities Checklist
- Record Keeping Documents





# Timeframe & Tips

- Submit certification application 3-6 months before you wish to harvest and/or sell organic products
- Inspections are scheduled while the crop is growing for producers, and when the facility is ready to run organic product for processors.
- Don't leave any areas of your application blank
  - Write "not applicable" on sections that don't apply





# Organic Crops

- Soil Building Crop Rotations are Key
  - Provides organic carbon and nitrogen
  - Variety of root depths help to distribute nutrients
  - Breaks the cycles of weeds, pests, and disease
- Manure
  - Raw animal manure may be applied to crops not for human consumption. Check with certifier regarding processed manures.





# Organic Crops

- Seeds
  - All seeds must be organic unless the quantity, quality, or variety of seeds desired is not available
  - Records of a documented seed search must be kept if an untreated, non-GMO seed is used instead of an organic seed
  - During your 36 months of transition, you may also plant a non-GMO seed that has not been treated with a prohibited substance





# Organic Seed Search Form

## ORGANIC SEED SEARCH and/or PURCHASE RECORD

Name of Operator and Operation:

*(Make additional copies of this sheet, as needed.)*

| Seed Needed<br>(for EC:<br>species<br>and<br>variety) | Amount<br>Needed<br>(for EC:<br>weight or<br>volume) | Area to be<br>Seeded<br>(for EC:<br>unit of<br>measure,<br>acre, etc.) | Distributor<br>Contacted | Date of<br>Contact   | Contact<br>Method<br>(Phone,<br>letter,<br>fax, etc.) | Response/<br>Name/Variety<br>Purchased* | Amount<br>Purchased<br>(weight or<br>volume) | Date of<br>Purchase  | Proof Not<br>Treated or<br>Treated<br>with<br>Approved<br>Material**<br>(Yes or No) | Proof<br>Non<br>GMO***<br>(Yes or<br>No)                    |
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# Organic Crops

- Buffer Zones
  - Distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones must be in place to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance
  - Determination of buffer adequacy is left to the organic producer, inspector, and certifying agent on a case-by-case basis
  - You may harvest crops from the buffer zone, but cannot sell them as organic
  - Buffer zones must be shown on farm map



# Organic Crops

- Keeping Records
  - A Field History Form should include the history for the past 36 months and correspond to the areas on the farm map
  - A Prior Land Use Form should be completed by former land owner, if you have recently purchased it
  - Clean down records should be maintained when equipment or transportation is used for both organic and conventional crops







# Farm Equipment Clean-Out Record

## FARM EQUIPMENT CLEAN-OUT RECORD

Please list all equipment that is used for organic, conventional, and transitional crops. Explain how you clean it when going from conventional to organic or from transitional to organic. **Remember that buffer strips are considered conventional even though they are produced following your organic system plan.** Fill in the dates that you cleaned the equipment. (This is a lot easier to do if your field activity log is filled out in detail.)

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Producer Name \_\_\_\_\_

| Equipment  | How Cleaned<br>(Broom, Air gun, etc.) | Date(s) Cleaned |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Combine    |                                       |                 |
|            |                                       |                 |
| Truck      |                                       |                 |
|            |                                       |                 |
| Auger      |                                       |                 |
|            |                                       |                 |
| Air Seeder |                                       |                 |
|            |                                       |                 |
| Drill      |                                       |                 |
|            |                                       |                 |





# Transition Program

- For NOP Crops only at this time
- Provides peace of mind knowing you're on the right track
- \$600 Flat Fee per year (includes inspection and file review)
- Receive a letter stating your Year of Transition



# Processing

- Each facility where organic products are processed or handled, from butchering to processing, must be certified for organic production
- Ensures the integrity of the organic product
- **“Processing”** is defined as: cooking, baking, curing, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, distilling, extracting, slaughtering, cutting, fermenting, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating, freezing, chilling, packaging, canning, jarring or enclosing food in a container







# Organic Processing Steps

- Develop an organic handling plan
- Fill out a processor/handler application (OSP)
- Have an inspection of:
  - all buildings where ingredients and final products are stored
  - all equipment used for processing
  - all product packaging/labels
- Pay fees
- Keep records

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**Best**

**Kansas Organic Beef**  
Dry-Aged & Custom Cut  
Whole • Halves • Quarters

**USDA ORGANIC**

Fill your freezer with USDA Certified Organic Beef or share with family and friends.


**Buy the Best...Bossie's Best**  
Kansas Organic Farmers since 1878

[www.bossiesbest.com](http://www.bossiesbest.com)  
Nancy Vogelsberg-Busch  
Home, Kansas 66438  
785-799-3737



# Activities Checklist for Handling





## Activities Checklist – Handling

EN-QS-F-185-1 Rev. E, 2017.10.10

H 1.0

Page 1 of 1

Operator #: \_\_\_\_\_ Operation Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

- 1) Read each statement in Column A and determine if the statement describes your operation.
- 2) If a statement describes your operation, check the box and complete the corresponding module(s) in Column B.
- 3) If a statement does not describe your operation, leave the checkbox blank and do not complete or submit the corresponding module(s).

| Column A  | Column B  |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We manage a processing, brokering, warehouse, handling, or repacking operation.  | H2.0 – Product/Service List<br>H14.0 – Annual Summary of Organic Production and Sales – Handling<br>H11.0 – Recordkeeping System          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We manage a processing, warehouse, handling, or repacking operation.   | H4.0 – Water<br>H5.0 – Pest Management<br>H5.1 – Pest Control Substances<br>H7.0 – Sanitation<br>H8.0 – Storage<br>H10.0 – Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We manage a processing, handling, or repacking operation.  | H6.0 – Assurance of Organic Integrity<br>H9.0 – Packaging and Labeling  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We purchase organic ingredients, process organic products, or repack organic products using processing aids or packaging aids. | H3.0 - Ingredients  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We manage a brokering/trading operation.   | H12.0 - Brokering   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/We are requesting certification to the EU program (not US-EU Equivalency Arrangement).   | H13.0 – EU - Handling   |





# Processing Records Must Include

- Organic ingredient sources and their certificates
- Recipes detailing the percentage of every ingredient (excluding water and salt)
- Product flow chart from source to sale & transportation
- Facility & storage maps
- Proposed labels – don't print until approved
- Clean down records for parallel production



# Organic Product Ingredient Form



## Organic Product Ingredients

| Applicant Company Name:   |  | Date (M/D/Y):  |                   | Name of Product Requested for Certification:                          |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|-------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <i>Product Composition:</i> Complete the information for all ingredients contained in this product, except salt and water. List salt and water in the <i>Other Ingredients</i> section.<br>*EC formulations must be calculated by weight. |  |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| NOTE: (COLUMN A) X (COLUMN B) = COLUMN C  |  |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| INGREDIENT (INCLUDE ALL ADDITIVES)  | IS THE INGREDIENT CERTIFIED ORGANIC ?                    | INGREDIENT PRODUCER  | CERTIFYING AGENCY | CERTIFICATION PROGRAM(S) OF INGREDIENT (OCIA, EC, NOP, JAS, etc.)     | TOTAL WEIGHT*VOLUME OF INGREDIENT AT FORMULATION (INCLUDE UNITS) | ORGANIC PERCENTAGE OF INGREDIENT — EXPRESSED AS A DECIMAL (IF CERTIFIED "ORGANIC", MUST BE LISTED AS 0.95) | TOTAL ORGANIC WEIGHT*VOLUME OF INGREDIENT AT FORMULATION (INCLUDE UNITS) |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
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|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                             |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| Total of Column C   |  |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| Total Percentage of Organic Ingredients (Total of Column C divided by Total of Column A, rounded down to the nearest whole number): _____ %   |  |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| Check the labeling category for this product.   |  |  |                   | Check the type of labeling for this product.                          |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "100% organic"   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> "made with organic (ingredients or food group(s))" (≥70% organic ingredients)       |                   | <input type="checkbox"/> retail                                       |  | <input type="checkbox"/> notretail   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "organic" (≥95% organic ingredients)   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> organic ingredients identified only in information panel (<70% organic ingredients) |                   |   |  |  |  |
| <i>Other Ingredients/Processing Aids:</i> Please list salt and water used as ingredients in the product, and all processing aids used during organic processing of the product.   |  |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
| SALT, WATER or PROCESSING AID   | IS PROCESSING AID CERTIFIED 100% ORGANIC?                | INGREDIENT/ PROCESSING AID PRODUCER  | CERTIFYING AGENCY | CERTIFICATION PROGRAM(S) OF PROCESSING AID (OCIA, EC, NOP, JAS, etc.) | PURPOSE OF PROCESSING AID  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |  |                   |   |  |  |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |  |                   |   |  |  |  |

Use of this form is optional. An equivalent sheet may be used if it includes all requested information.





# Processing Facility Pest Management

- Pest management plans should focus on preventing pest access into the facility and managing environmental factors to prevent pest infestation
- Mechanical or physical methods may be used: traps, light or sound, and lures
- Only if these management practices are ineffective can pest control products on the National List be used







# Ingredients & Processing Aids

- Processors have a specific list of allowed and non-allowed products that's separate from the National List of approved substances in organic farming
- Found in section 205.605 and 205.606 of the NOP Regulation
- You still must show you searched for an organic version before using an ingredient on this list





# Labeling

- Organic labels are very closely regulated and must be approved by your certification agency
- **100% Organic**
  - Final product contains only agricultural products, excluding water and salt, that are 100% certified organic
  - Any agricultural processing aids must be organic
  - May use USDA organic seal and/or certifier's seal
  - Must name the certifier





# Labeling

- **Organic**
  - Final product contains at least 95% organic ingredients
  - Remaining ingredients are on the National List of Approved Substances
  - May use USDA organic seal and/or certifier's seal
  - Must name the certifier
- **Made with Organic Ingredients**
  - Final product contains at least 70% organic ingredients
  - All non-agricultural ingredients must follow the National List
  - Cannot use the USDA organic seal
  - May use the certifier's seal & Must name the certifier



# Purpose of an Inspection

- To verify what is written in the OSP is actually occurring
- To be the eyes and ears of the certification agency
- To watch for areas where risk to organic integrity occurs
- To observe, verify, and report





# Inspectors are NOT on-site to

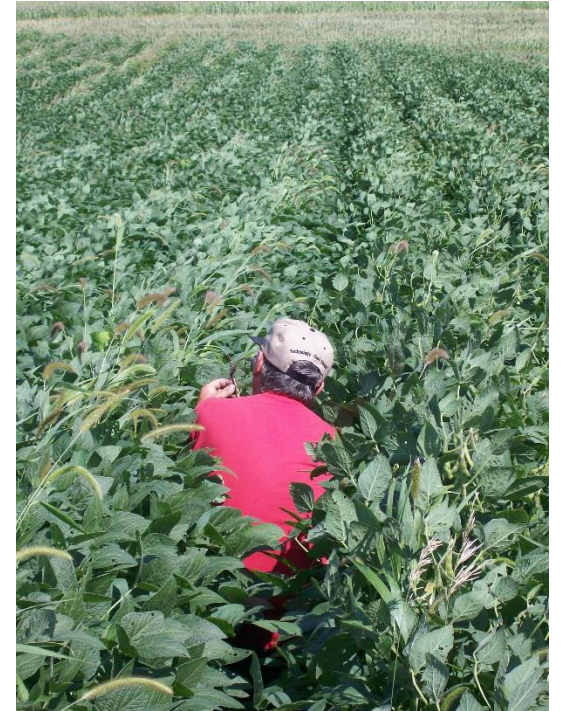
- Consult with the operator
  - Cannot help solve individual problems
  - Cannot help complete OSP
- Make a certification decision
  - Only provides a report to certification agency





# The Inspector will Look at

- All fields of the operation (including transitional and conventional)
- All equipment and storage
- Records maintained by the operation (audit trail)
- Traceability audit
- Inventory balance





# What to Expect at Inspection

- Conduct opening meeting
- Ask questions about the operation
- Go through paperwork
- Visit fields/equipment/processing facility
- Conduct exit interview
- Forward report to certification agency





# Cost of Certification

- Annual Cost for a Chapter Member
  - \$325 Certification Fee for NOP (\$80 per additional standard requested)
  - \$350 Inspection Estimate in Midwest
  - \$35 International Member Fee
  - Chapter Dues (varies by chapter)
  - Acreage Fees for Producers
  - 0.75% Sales Fee for Processors
- Currently have a \$200 coupon for new members







# Cost of Certification

- Annual Cost for a Direct Associate
  - \$880+ Certification Fee (Depends on total gross organic sales)
  - \$600 Inspection Estimate
  - \$95 OCIA Membership Fee (Optional)
    - Voting privileges & 10% discount on OCIA trainings
- Currently have a \$200 coupon for new members





# National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

- \$11.5 million allocated for each fiscal year, through 2018
- Reimburse 75% (up to \$750 per category of certification)
- Costs eligible for reimbursement
  - Application fees
  - Inspection costs
  - Equivalency agreement fees
  - Travel for inspectors
  - User fees
  - Sales assessments & postage





# Steps for Reimbursement

- Go to the website below, or contact your FSA office for an application  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic)
- Submit Cost Share Applications to FSA County Offices or Participating State Agencies





# OCIA Research & Education

- Mission Statement
  - To support organic research; facilitate connections between farmers, researchers, consumers, and decision makers; and educate producers and communities regarding organic farming and foods
- Micro Grants
- Scholarships
- Farmer of the Year Awards
- Partnerships with Universities
- Mentorship Program







# OCIA Research & Education

- Micro Grants

- Organic research micro grants / finding will help current members
- Educational micro grants / organic info into a classroom
- Awards range from \$500 - \$3,000

- Scholarships

- Organic research projects conducted by graduate student
- Awards range from \$500 - \$1,000





# OCIA Research & Education

- Mentorship Program
  - Pairs those interested in learning about organic farming with an OCIA certified farmer in their area
  - Mentees contact the mentor by phone or email
  - Mentors visit farm at least twice during the year
  - Mentors submit travel reimbursement





# 2019 Annual Meeting

- Grand Harbor Resort in Dubuque, Iowa
  - February 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Full- Day of Organic Farming Workshops on Feb 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Vendors selling local products
  - Organic lunch
  - Tour of OCIA certified facility



# OCIA International Certification 101

Jackie Keller, OCIA Eastern Kansas Chapter #2

Email: [kellerjackie99@gmail.com](mailto:kellerjackie99@gmail.com) Website: [www.ocia.org](http://www.ocia.org)

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