

Record keeping for Streamlined Certification and Farmer Sanity

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Certification

The procedure whereby a certification body provides written assurance that products or production systems conform to specified requirements

Based on inspection activities including verification of management practices, auditing of quality assurance systems, and in/out production balances.

Inspection

Inspection key part of organic certification

Farm/ site inspection

Record keeping/ Audit trail

Role of the inspector = Eyes and ears of certifying body

Good record keeping system = better for your farm and for us!

New Canadian Organic Standards

Have you read them?

How often do you read them?

Do you

- Use them for reference?
- Read them cover to cover?

What do the standards say?

4.1 The operator of an enterprise shall prepare an organic plan outlining the details of transition, production, preparation, handling and management practices ...

4.2 Plan shall be updated annually

What is an organic plan?

Description of the operation – crops, acreages, projected yields, parallel production etc

Field Maps and Field history

Seed sources – non-GMO, non-treated, organics where available, inoculants

Fertility management

Input records

Compost/manure usage

Soil conservation and water usage

Rotation plan (be specific!)

Weed management

Pest Management

Disease Management

Maintainance of organic integrity (adjoining land use, buffer zones (clearly indicated on maps), split or parallel production,

Equipment

Harvest

Post harvest handling

Crop storage

Transportation

Record keeping – systems!

4.3 The organic plan shall include a description of the internal record-keeping system, with documents sufficient to meet audit trail and record-keeping requirements

4.4 Record Keeping and Identification — The operator ... shall maintain records and relevant supporting documents concerning the inputs, production, preparation and handling of crops, livestock and organic products

4.4.1 Traceability

4. Maintain for 5 years

Practical Record Keeping

Information should be recorded in a way that is clear, logical, consistent, complete and easy to retrieve. Should save you time not create more work.

Good

Notepad, journal or calendar - small farm

Computerised - larger farm or processor

Not so good

Scraps of paper

Back of your hand

Terrible

In your head

What kind of records do I need to keep?

Growers

Seeds – status

Purchased inputs (information, ingredients)

Seed search record (if not organic)

Non-GMO documentation

Field map

Field history

Rotation plan

Activity log

- Field operations- timing & frequency
- Fertility amendments and application rates
- Pest controls and application rate
- Compost records - temperature and turning events

Written communications

Previous land usage

Letter of notification to neighbours

Soil and water tests

Harvest records

Storage records

Sales records & receipts

Collector/picker agreements

Livestock... more records

Births

Purchase of organic/nonorganic stock

Feed/supplement receipts

Health records - any vaccinations

Medication/treatment log

Parasite management plan

Any exceptions granted by cert agency (feed, pasture access, or health)

Sales records

Letters from processing facility

Audit Trail

- A documentation control procedure that can determine the origin, transfer of ownership, and transportation process (i.e. supply chain) of ... organic product.

Audit Trail for Growers

Should enable the inspector to trace an individual bag of potatoes, apple or bag of salad greens to the field in which it was grown.

Audit Trail for Livestock Farmers

Should enable the inspector to trace an individual joint of meat to the animal that it came from.

Common Mistakes

Failure to complete paperwork on time or at all!

Not submitting needed documents to Certifying Body

Not annually updating plans

No organic seed search

Misunderstanding with CB re: inputs

Failure to follow organic plan as filed

Not using lot numbers

Not keeping field activity log up to date

Not recording activities to clean/inspect transport containers/vehicles

Incomplete cleaning logs for shared equipment

Unclear or inaccurate maps

(Jim Riddell, IOIA.net)

Elements of a good map

To scale

Clear

Orientation

Field numbering system that you actually use!

Buffers, neighbouring land uses

Important landmarks and buildings

Benefits of a good map

Know

- where you planted each crop
- how much you planted of each crop
- position with respect to other crops
- The exact location of trouble spots – poor drainage, weed infestations etc

Used for

- yield calculation,
- tracking rotations
- planning for the future

Seeds

Need to keep seed packets, tags or seed receipts.

Indication of seed status – organic, untreated, non-GMO

Seed search document where organic seed not purchased.

Record of seed saved from previous years

Some Other Examples of Records

Field maps

Plot plan

Seed documentation

Non GMO documentation

Rotation plans

Field History

Activity log

Harvest and crop storage records

Seed Search

Inventory

Crop areas

Input documentation

Activity log - Calendar

Harvest Records

- Need yields of each crop, from each field
- Should have date of harvest, storage records (bin identification number)
- paper and/or computerised

Sales receipts (with lot numbers)

Clean transport documentation

- If equipment borrowed, need cleaning log

Paper Processing/Packaging Report

Sales Records

Delivery Slips

Market Sales records

Wholesale bulk sales receipts

Sales of products from other growers

Sales - farm market

Record of sales

Delivery Slip

Annual Sales Data

Lot numbers

Traceability

Package Label (lot number)
to Sales Record
to Harvest report (via processing report)
to Field history
To Field Map
and Seed order and seed search.

Useful sources of documentation

Tracking sheets
www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/tracking-system/tracking-system.html

Sample forms (for US NOP)
attra.ncat.org/marketing.html#organic

Independent Organic Inspectors Association
www.ioia.net

Have a wonderful growing season in 2008
And a wonderful record keeping season too!