

healthy work environments.

### HOW MUCH WILL CERTIFICATION COST?

OTCO's certification fees are determined by the type of operation, the products produced, and/or services provided. Fees range from 0.0025% to 0.5% of gross sales of organic products and/or organic handling services, plus inspection expenses. Complete information is available in the OTCO Fee Schedule or by request from the OTCO office.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### How long will it take to get my operation certified?

The certification process for new applicants can take 8–12 weeks from the date OTCO receives the certification application and payment. There are several variables that can affect this. Factors that can contribute to time delays include: operation location, completeness of organic plan, and the ability to demonstrate compliance at the time of inspection.

#### Why should I certify my operation to the GOTS Standards?






There are many reasons why you should consider certifying your operation to the GOTS standards. The GOTS seal assures consumers that your procedures are authentically organic and meet the stringent GOTS standards. To this end, it makes the product that comes from your operation more marketable to the consumer and your operation more marketable to other companies that may want to hire your organization to do a co-process for them. Also, the measures you take to implement organic practices should be recognized, especially as our society becomes increasingly aware of the value of buying organic.

#### Do I have to be an Oregon resident farmer to be OTCO certified?

No. Over the years, Oregon Tilth has made its certification process available to people in many states and countries.

#### Is an OTCO organic certification specific to one industry, aspect of agriculture, or product?

No. At Oregon Tilth, we recognize the increasing reach and impact of organic business. We strive to provide for that growth by offering certification services that include, but are not limited to:

-  Commercial producers of organic crops and livestock
-  Processors of organic foods, feed, and fiber
-  Handlers of organic products such as packers, brokers, distributors, and wholesalers
-  Marketers of processed or co-packed organic products
-  Restaurants and retailers specializing in organic fare

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The OTCO Procedures Manual, Fee Schedule, and the entire Global Organic Textile Standards are available for free—download from the Oregon Tilth website, [www.tilth.org](http://www.tilth.org). Additional information can be viewed on the Global Organic Textile Standards website, [www.globalk-standard.org](http://www.globalk-standard.org).

Our dedicated and knowledgeable Oregon Tilth staff is available to answer all of your questions and help make your certification process a success. Call us Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST, 503.378.0690.

# Fiber & Textiles

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROCESS



OREGON TILTH

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## ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

### ENDORSE YOUR ORGANIC PRACTICE. VALIDATE YOUR ORGANIC PRODUCT.

At Oregon Tilth, we've been working to promote and support organic farmers, gardeners, producers, and consumers since the early seventies and have since played an integral role in helping create the current organic standards for food and feed. In 1982, we began offering organic certification to help ensure product authenticity and quality, and support our local organic advocates in their efforts to expand sustainable agriculture. In 2005, we were the first and only U.S.-based certifier to begin certifying organic fiber and textile products and in 2007, Oregon Tilth was recognized as the first U.S.-based certifier approved to offer certification to the Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS).

Today, the Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO) program is an internationally recognized symbol of organic integrity. The organic-certification process must cover not only the end product, but also every step of the process from harvest to market. In order to ensure quality throughout a product's journey to the consumer,

OTCO provides a system that combines strict production standards, on-site inspections, and legally binding contracts to protect the producers and buyers of organic products. Due to our unwavering dedication to organic practices and widely recognized certification processes, we are currently recognized to certify to the Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS). Any finishing or handling of fiber products such as spinning, weaving, assembly, dyeing, etc. are covered under these internationally accepted standards.

Our certification team has extensive experience and expertise in certification and fiber production—ensuring excellent customer service. The OTCO program complements Oregon Tilth's research, education, and advocacy programs to further promote and support organic food systems. We invite you to learn more about OTCO, and we commend your efforts to further the organic community.



## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

If you've already taken the initiative to source organic raw fiber and implement an organic strategy for your product, then we want the certification process to be easy, straightforward, friendly, and supportive for you. The steps below outline the OTCO-certification process.

**1** First, you should note that your **APPLICATION** for certification doubles as your Organic Handling and Production Plan, the foundation of organic certification. The plan will describe your record keeping, sources of organic product and inputs, environmental management practices, and the methods you use to prevent contamination with any prohibited inputs.

A trained organic **INSPECTOR**, familiar with your type of operation, will contact you to schedule your annual inspection visit. The inspector will examine each component of the operation to verify your Plan is an accurate description of organic standards compliance and will summarize his or her findings during an exit interview. Inspections typically last 3–5 hours, depending on the complexity of the operation.

OTCO conducts a **REVIEW** of your application and the inspector's report to evaluate compliance with the organic standards. A summary is presented to the Application Review Committee that makes the final certification decision. **3** OTCO will then notify you of the certification decision, which may note items that require clarification or correction prior to completing certification.

Your proposed **RESOLUTIONS** for any minor points of noncompliance will be promptly reviewed by OTCO. Once these are cleared, the operation is approved for organic certification. **4**

OTCO will send you a **CERTIFICATION** contract and your organic certificate. **5** Your certificate is a legal document identifying your farm name and address, category of certification, and your certified organic products. Your organic certification is valid for one year at which time it is necessary to renew and the above process is repeated.



## THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS

### Product composition

Organic raw material must be certified as organic by an approved certification agent and accredited by various international governmental or private agencies. Non-agricultural materials or production aids are limited to those that comply with sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 of the standards.

### Labeling

Products may carry different label claims (“Organic” or “Organic in Conversion,” “Made with X % Organic Materials” or “Made with X% Organic in Conversion Materials”) depending on the final product composition. Organic-labeled products must include at least 95% organic fiber content (excluding accessories). Products labeled as “Made with” must include at least 70% organic fiber content (excluding accessories). Restrictions for the non-organic portion of the finished product are described in sections 2.3.3 – 2.3.11

### Record Keeping

Records must fully disclose all activities and transactions in sufficient detail as to be readily understood and audited. Your records must provide a clear audit trail of incoming ingredients, production, product storage, and sales.

### Contamination and Commingling Avoidance

Operations handling organic and non-organic products in the same facilities must demonstrate their ability to maintain the organic-product integrity. Management practices must be in place to secure critical control points and prevent contamination or commingling.

### Environmental Management

Operations must have an environmental policy in place that, depending on the type of processing performed, would include procedures for minimizing waste, monitoring waste, and appropriate discharge practices and

procedures for staff training in the conservation of water and proper use of chemicals.

### Social Criteria

Organic handlers certified under the GOTS standard must meet the basic requirements for social criteria for all employees required in section 3 of the standard. This includes fair treatment and wages for employees as well as creation of

