

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: farm location, completeness of organic plan and the ability to demonstrate compliance at the time of inspection.

What is Oregon Tilth's involvement with the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Standard?

Oregon Tilth is one of the USDA NOP accredited certifiers. We certify to the standard of the USDA, following their guidelines as our only standard for agricultural products in the USA. The USDA does not actually have any direct interaction with you, the producer, so as an accredited certifier, we authorize people to use the USDA label after they have undergone the certification process outlined in this brochure.



Why should I certify my farm USDA Organic?

There are many reasons why you should consider certifying your farm and/or livestock USDA Organic. The USDA National Organic Standard seal assures consumers that your farm procedures are authentically organic and meet the stringent standards set forth by the USDA. To this end, it makes the product that comes from your farm more marketable to the consumer or buyer. Also, the measures you take to implement organic agricultural 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 USDA National Organic Standards are available for free—download from the Oregon Tilth website, www.tilth.org. Additional information can be viewed on the USDA National Organic Program website, www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

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.

Livestock Farms

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROCESS



OREGON TILTH

470 Lancaster Drive NE | Salem, OR 97301 | PH 503.378.0690 | FX 503.378.0809 | www.tilth.org | organic@tilth.org



© OTCO 1021.M



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 USDA Organic Standards. 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.

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.

Our farm and livestock certification team has extensive experience and expertise in crop and livestock 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 make your livestock production organic, then we want the certification process to be easy, straightforward, friendly, and supportive for you. The steps below outline the OTCO—certification process.

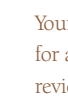
1 First, you should note that your **APPLICATION** for certification doubles as your Organic Farm and Livestock Plan, the foundation of organic certification. The OFP will describe your record keeping, animals, and healthcare practices, fields and facility, pest- and disease-management practices, and the methods you use to prevent contamination.

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. 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.

OTCO will send you a **CERTIFICATION** contract and your organic certificate. Your certificate is a legal document identifying your farm name and address, category of certification, and your certified organic products. Your organic certification remains in effect until surrendered, suspended, or revoked.



THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS

§205.236 Origin of Livestock

Organic meat animals must be under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation. Poultry must be under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life. Dairy animals must have been under continuous organic management beginning no later than one year prior to organic milk production. Breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time provided that, if such livestock are gestating and the offspring are to be raised as organic livestock, the breeder stock must be brought onto the facility no later than the last third of gestation.

§205.237 Livestock Feed

Organic livestock must be fed a total feed ration composed of certified organic feed, including pasture and forage. Nonsynthetic substances and synthetic substances allowed under §205.603 may be used as feed additives and supplements.

§205.238 Livestock Health Care Practices

Preventive practices must be the primary practice. Parasiticides may not be used on organic slaughter animals. Antibiotics and hormones are prohibited. Health treatments must consist of nonsynthetic materials or synthetic substances as provided for on the National List under §205.603.

§205.239 Livestock Living Conditions

Organic livestock must have access to the outdoors, shade,

shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, and direct sunlight suitable to the species, its stage of production, the climate, and the environment, including access to pasture for ruminants.

HOW MUCH WILL CERTIFICATION COST?

Fees for growers, including livestock, are based on gross income and are determined using fee schedule charts. These charts are available from our website or call the OTCO office for an estimate of your certification costs. Inspection expenses are assessed to operators outside of the state of Oregon.

