One of the core practices of your certified organic operation is developing good quality record-keeping and documentation (commonly referred to as an “audit trail”). Although not every audit trail will be the same, the following general principles are applicable to all certified operators:

**Establish a documentation process that works for your business.**
Using documentation for purposes of a food safety recall is often a good starting point and allows you to use established internal controls without starting from ground zero.

**Identify and use a strong link for all of your documentation practices.**
The most important element of a good audit trail is establishing a common link between all steps and all documents in your control system. For instance, using lot code numbers can easily allow an inspector or you to work through each phase of your operation – ordering, receiving, processing and distribution to name a few – to make documentation traceable, timely and transparent.

The following samples showcase a few of the basic document types found in most tracking control systems for not just an organic inspector or certifier, but also for your own business practices:

- Document I: Ingredient Invoice Order
- Document II: Production Check Off List
- Document III: Receiving Log
- Document IV: Customer Invoice

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**Audit Trail:**
A SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

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## Audit Trail: A Sample Documentation Process

### DOCUMENT I: INGREDIENT INVOICE ORDER

**[Zoot Cuke Riot, LLC]**

[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP]  
Phone: (000) 000-0000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVOICE #</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[123456]</td>
<td>12-12-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BILL & SHIP TO**

LMNOrganic Co.  
[Company Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP]  
[Phone]  
[Email Address]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>LOT CODE</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic Cucumber Extract</td>
<td>0000001</td>
<td>2 Cases</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thank you for your business!*

**TOTAL**  
$ 400.00

If you have any questions about this invoice, please contact  
[Name, Phone, email@address.com]
## Document II: Receiving Log

### Warehouse Receiving Log  
**Date:** 01-01-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Carrier</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Lot Code</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Initialed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-02-2015</td>
<td>3PM</td>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Organic Cucumber Extract</td>
<td>0000001</td>
<td>1 Case</td>
<td>ES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special Instructions:**

N/A
### PRODUCTION CHECK OFF LIST: CUCUMBER TONIC

**DATE: 01-01-2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Lot Code</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Check Off</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic Cucumber Extract</td>
<td>0000001</td>
<td>30 Gallons</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Added .5% extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Coconut Oil</td>
<td>0000002</td>
<td>2 Liters</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Rosemary</td>
<td>0000003</td>
<td>2 Lbs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Rose Petals</td>
<td>0000004</td>
<td>1 Lbs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Comfrey</td>
<td>0009</td>
<td>.5 Lbs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date:** 01-01-2015  
**Manager:** Ed Smith  
**Batch Code:** 01012015A  
**Signature:** Ed Smith

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

N/A

**CATALOG INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Complete Check Off List
2. Sign and date
3. Log into Production Binder
4. Submit for Batch Processing
5. Submit for Spot Testing
Audit Trail: A SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

DOCUMENT IV: CUSTOMER INVOICE

LMN Organic Co.

INVOICE# 123 / 01-01-202015

Customer Name Here
Address
City, State Zip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BALANCE DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon Receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Order to be shipped via USPS Priority Mail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Lot Code</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price Per</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic Cucumber Tonic</td>
<td>123ABC</td>
<td>1 CASE</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal: $150.00
Tax - 0%: $0.00

TOTAL: $150.00