



BIG QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

How far in advance should (or can) I apply for organic certification in order to plan for my farm, business or product?

SITUATION

* 1 *

READY FOR CERTIFICATION BUT NO RUSH

SITUATION

* 2 *

NEED CERTIFICATION ASAP

SITUATION

* 3 *

FARM TRANSITION, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

SITUATION

* 4 *

CHANGING TO A NEW ORGANIC CERTIFIER

SITUATION

* 5 *

ADDING TO MY EXISTING CERTIFICATION

UNDERSTANDING *the* BASICS

Applications take an average of 90 days to process, inspect, review and approve; transitional farmers can apply prior to completion of the mandatory 36-month free from prohibited substances period

Expedited services, and all turnaround times, are based on fully completed applications and forms, few and minor issues, and fast responses to questions and requested actions

For farmers, transitional certification is available one year after the last application of a prohibited material and rolls over to your organic certification automatically

You must maintain current organic certification until granted new certificates from a new certifier and you can not use former certifier approved labels after the switchover

For farmers, adding land to your existing certificate requires an inspection, documentation, review and approval; handlers may require an inspection in order to add a new facility

CERTIFICATION PROCESS TIPS *for* GROWERS & HANDLERS

Your "Need it by..." date on the application helps our reviewers coordinate your certification

Conduct a recordkeeping review prior to inspection, going back 5 years

Schedule a planning session with our certification team to identify potential challenges

Any product processed or harvested prior to certification can't be labeled as organic

Our Transition Services Coordinator can give you ongoing support and helpful resources

Submit labels for our review in advance for timeliness (never print before approval by OTCO)

Time your certifier switch with advance planning around your certification renewal date

We will guide you through the steps of your certifier switch to prevent a lapse in certification

Save money and plan ahead by requesting additions during your annual renewal period

Submit addition requests at least 90 days before harvest or desired sell date