

Certificate of Inspection (COI) TRACES

Contact export@tilth.org for additional support.

What is a Certificate of Inspection (COI)?

The official Certificates of Inspection (COI) for export to the European Union from the U.S. and Mexico are issued through [TRACES](#). An official COI means the parties involved have submitted the necessary records to validate a transaction of certified organic products destined for the European Union.

The European Union requires that any organic product being imported into an EU member state be accompanied by a Certificate of Inspection (COI); including Andorra, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino and other non-EU member states, including Switzerland and Sweden.

ALERT

To avoid REJECTED SHIPMENTS with organic products exported to the European Union, Certificate of Inspection must be authorized prior to product leaving port.

OTCO is unable to authorize any COI requests once a consignment has left the country of origin, even if the COI requests were submitted to OTCO before the product left.

Any organic products that arrive in the European Union without an authorized COI are subject to REJECTED SHIPMENTS. For more information, refer to [EU Regulation 2021/2306](#) or reach out to us at export@tilth.org

What is TRACES?

The Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) is the European Commission's multilingual online management tool for all sanitary requirements on intra-EU trade and importation of animals, food, feed, and plants. TRACES is used as the centralized tool used by operators, certifiers and the European Union to authorize transactions of organic certified products.

Who can request a Certificate Of Inspection?

Importers and exporters have the ability to request a COI if they are registered in [TRACES](#).

How do I get started in TRACES in order to request a COI?

OTCO clients need to be registered as organic producers and organic exporters in order to be selected in designated boxes. An operator account is needed in order to create a COI. Create an account on [EU Login](#). Then request an access profile in [TRACES](#). Learn more and get step by step instructions on the [TRACES NT Website](#).

Once you are registered in TRACES, notify export@tilth.org. Upon notification, OTCO approves your account to begin the process for obtaining a Certificate of Inspection (COI).

For instructions on how to complete a COI, please refer to the European Union's [COI User's Manual](#), which explains box by box.

Few tips to ensure timely processing of your COI:

- Prior to any authorization, ensure that all products listed in the transaction are certified organic by OTCO and the product is EU-approved; including verification of compliant labels.
- List products on transaction certificates exactly as they appear on the current Organic Certification of Operation.
- OTCO requires box 24, *First Consignee within the European Union*, to be completed. **If the 'To be released in batches (base for extract)' box is checked, then this box isn't required (because in those cases, there are multiple first consignees).

- OTCO requires a lot number within box 13 to be completed. Each unique lot number, even when concerning the same product, must be listed on a separate line within box 13, so that we may verify the quantities and net weights of each lot number included.
- OTCO requires supporting records enable OTOC to verify the information included on the COI, including the organic products and the chain of custody. Records must have clear identifiers that link not only the supporting records to each other, but to the COI itself. These records must be uploaded to the COI directly or sent in as PDF attachments to export@tilth.org
 - **The supporting records include a commercial invoice and/or packing list AND a booking confirmation or draft AWB/SWB.** The records (if not all, at least the commercial invoice and/or packing list) must identify products as organic and allow for the verification of the following information: importer, first consignee, shipment date, products, lot numbers, quantities, and net weights.
 - Provide the booking confirmation or draft AWB/SWB to allow OTCO to verify the estimated shipment date and confirm that the consignment has not yet left the country of origin.
 - Once transport documents are available (final complete international bill of lading or sea/air waybill), submit to OTCO via export@tilth.org

ALERT

Once a COI is submitted for certification within TRACES, send an email to export@tilth.org, along with the relevant COI number indicated in the subject header of the email. This email may be sent by an OTCO client or sent directly by the person who submitted the request.

The timeline for authorization can take up to 5 business days. If the request is an expedited one (or a same day expedite), please explicitly state in the body of the email. Any expedites are subject to additional fees. **It is the responsibility of the requester to submit the request with sufficient time to allow for processing.**