

Organic Certification and Colorado Department of Agriculture

April 5, 2014

Is Organic Right for Me?

Boulder, CO



Organic Certification

- USDA National Organic Program administration
 - Accredits certifiers
 - Investigates complaints
 - Hears Appeals
 - Administers and interprets the Final Rule
- 53 Domestic Certification Agencies
 - Public and Private
 - Local, Regional, National, International

CDA Organic Program

- The Colorado Department of Agriculture is an ACA
 - State Program began in 1995
 - NOP in 2002
 - 5 staff (2 full time and 3 part time)
 - 12 multiple inspectors
 - About 200 operations within our state

Types of Certification

- ◎ 4 categories:
 - > Crop
 - > Livestock
 - > Process Handling
 - > Wild Crop Harvesting

- ◎ Some operations are certified under more than one category

Steps to Certification

- Selecting a certifier
- Creating the farm plan
- Pre-Inspection Review
- Inspection
- Final Review and Decision

Certifier Selection

- What type of production is being certified
- What certifiers are operating in the region
- What markets are being accessed
- What experience does the certifier have with your type of production
- What is the cost of certification

The Organic System Plan

- Clearly identify what is to be certified
- Ensure all information is included, including maps, histories, and labels
- Be as detailed as possible

Pre Inspection Review

- Any missing information will be requested
- Be prepared to submit additional documentation
- Have all requested information available at the inspection
- Inspector Name

Inspection

- Tour of farm, including all fields, storage units, equipment, etc.
- Review of all materials used for fertility, weed control, pest control, disease control
- Review of audit trail
- Exit Interview

Final Review and Decision

- Review of farm plan, inspection report, and all submissions from both operator and inspector
- Potential requests for additional information
- Corrective actions
- Possible certification decisions
- Unannounced inspections

Technical Assistance

- ◎ Certifiers may provide:
 - > Information on Mission/Goals of the NOP
 - > Information on well-known alternatives for overcoming problems, available to everyone and not site-specific
 - > Educational information
 - > Alternatives as defined in NOP decisions/Handbook

Technical Assistance

- ◎ Certifiers may NOT provide:
 - > Completion of forms/documents/procedures
 - > Provide site-specific information for management, procedures, problems
 - > Be involved in decision-making, design, or manufacture regarding crops and products
 - > Suggest actual changes to bring an operation into compliance

Technical Assistance

- ◎ Inspectors may:
 - > Ask and answer questions regarding the regulations
 - > Collect information provided by operation, but not make suggestions for compliance or improvement
 - > Provide well-known alternatives for overcoming issues
 - > Suggest alternatives from NOP decisions/handbook.

Cost Share Program

- ◉ Will be administered by CDA for all Colorado certifications
- ◉ Seamless reimbursement
- ◉ Funding up \$5 million annually over 2008 Farm Bill.
- ◉ 75% up to \$750

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Questions?