




**Putting it all together:  
Developing an Organic Plan**

An Overview  
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**So you want to go organic?  
Now what?**


**1) Research certifying agencies**

- Ask other certified farmers for recommendations
- “Interview” the agencies to find out:
  - >How available they are to answer questions
  - >Charges and fees (estimates based on your farm)
  - >Expected timeline of certification process




**USDA Accredited Certifying Agencies Commonly Used in TN**

- Quality Certification Services (from FL)
- KY Department of Agriculture Organic Program
- NC Crop Improvement Association
- Oregon Tilth



**2) Request an application packet from selected agency**

- Some agencies charge for the packet
- Others have packets and information available for free downloads on the web



**3) Creating an Organic Systems Plan (OSP)**

**WAIT!! What is an OSP?!**

- Detailed documentation of the farm and the growing process that accounts for all the operations that are undertaken to produce the final (crop) product.
  - an economic plan
  - a present AND future management plan
  - \*\*a contract between the grower and the certifying agency\*\*

## Creating an OSP

The National Organic Program requires an OSP to include\*:

1. Description of Practices
2. List of Substances
3. Monitoring Practices
4. Record Keeping System
5. Contamination Prevention

\*AMOUNT OF DETAIL VARIES FOR EACH CERTIFYING AGENCY

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## 1) Description of Practices:

- Tillage practices, irrigation methods, planting of hedgerows, stream buffers, drainage, manure handling practices, composting facilities and crop rotations
- Includes all tools used, inputs and the frequency in which they are used.

**Every time** you do something on farm,  
**DOCUMENT IT.**

What? How much? Where? When? Why?

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## 2) List of Substances

•For each input on the farm, record:

- Where it is used?
- Source?
- Proof of commercial availability
- **\*\*Complete\*\*** list of ingredients

•If a material is not listed on the OSP, then it cannot be used without notifying the agency  
(EVEN IF IT IS "ORGANIC"!)

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## 2) List of Substances (for livestock, only)

- Feed
- Vitamins/supplements
- Backup source of feed
- Documentation to support the need for approved non-organic supplements

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## 3) Monitoring Practices

•Documentation of how you will anticipate and check for problems.

•Examples:

- Soil tests for copper toxicity
- Pest scouting and threshold establishment
- Compost temperature and turning log
- Fecal stool (livestock) monitoring for parasites

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## 4) Record Keeping System

**EVERYTHING MUST BE DOCUMENTED  
and records kept for 5 year minimum**

- EVERY input- fertilizer, seeds, transplants, mulch, building materials, compost, tool, feed, treatments, receipts
- EVERY operation- compost application; planting; harvesting; cleaning (tools)
- EVERY time- record dates
- EVERY field (or animal)

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### 5) Contamination Prevention

- Must demonstrate how organic products will be kept from contact with non-organic substances



### 4) Inspection

- Inspector is an INDEPENDENT agent (i.e. May NOT be part of the certifying agency)
- Inspection happens when the inspector can observe normal farm business
- Inspector CANNOT give advice or make recommendations about how to follow or improve OSP practices

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### 5) Certified or not?



- Possible Outcomes:



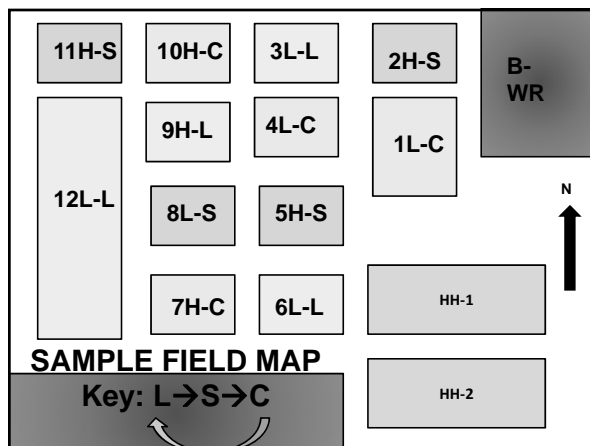
1. Approval of certification
2. Approval of certification, with minor non-compliances to be addressed
3. Deferred, pending additional information
4. Denial of certification (along with information on how to appeal)

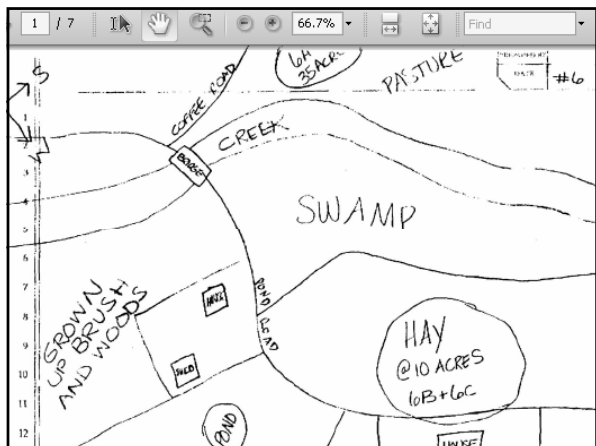
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**Organic Farm Plan**

*Please fill out this questionnaire if you are requesting organic farm/crop certification. Use additional sheets if necessary. Sign this form. You must submit farm maps and field history sheets with this form. Attach all other supporting documents (soil, tissue or water tests, rented or recently purchased land histories, etc.) outlined in section 9 of this questionnaire. This form or an update form may be used to update certification, according to certifying agent policies.*

SECTION 1: General Information			NOP Rule 205.401
Name	Farm Name	Type of Farm/Crops	
Address			For office use only
State	Zip code	City	Date received
Phone	Fax	Date	Date reviewed
	Email		Reviewer initials
			Fees received
			Inspector
Legal status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sole proprietorship	<input type="checkbox"/> Trust or non-profit	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal partnership (federal form 1065)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	
Year first certified	List previous organic certification by other agencies	List current organic certification by other agencies	Year when complete Organic Farm Plan Questionnaire was last submitted
List all crops or products requested for certification.			
Have you ever been denied certification? If yes, describe the circumstances.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Do you understand the... Do you have a copy of current organic standards? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			





**Summary:**

- The Farm Plan (and OSP) is a detailed account of the farming operation = "a management blueprint"
- It is lots of paperwork but not difficult
- All inputs that might be used should be included in the OSP
- **EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED**
- Once the farm is certified, the grower cannot deviate from the OSP unless approved by the certification agency

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**Questions?**

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Logos for 'ORGANIC & SUSTAINABLE CROP PRODUCTION', 'USDA ORGANIC', and 'UT Extension'.