Organic Certification in Nevada

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about Organics in Nevada

What does it mean to be Certified Organic?

Organic agriculture is an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony. The principal guidelines for organic production are to use materials and practices that enhance the ecological balance of natural systems and that integrate the parts of the farming system into an ecological whole.

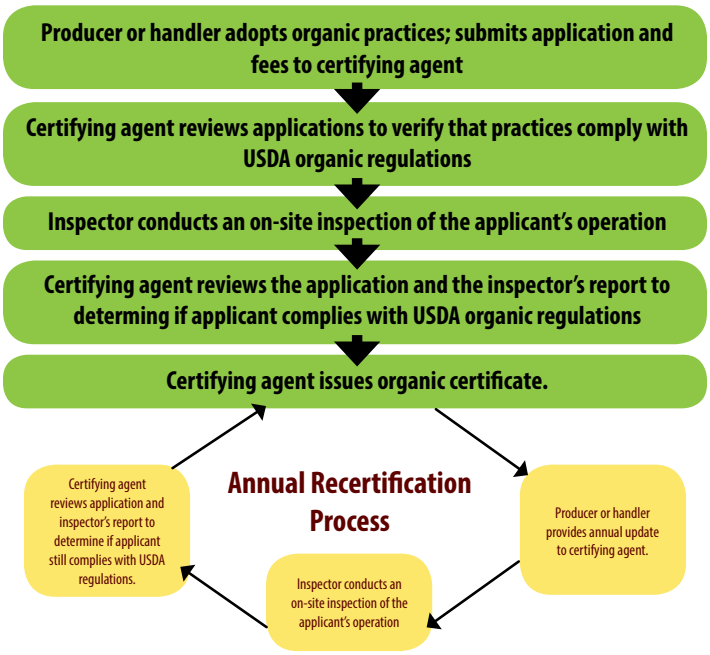
The USDA Certified Organic label is required for any operation to call their products organic, to ensure clear standards.

What is the current status of organic certification in Nevada?

There are currently eight organic certifiers operating in the statt, and all USDA-accredited organic certifiers certify to the same standards set forth by the USDA National Organic Program (NOP).

What is the organic certification process?

To become certified as an organic producer or handler, an application must be made to a USDA National Organic Program (NOP) - accredited certification agent. All certification agents require the applicant to submit an Organic System Plan, a written plan which contains relevant information concerning all aspects of operations on the farm or in the processing facility. The organic certification process includes five steps:



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What is the NDA's role in organics?

On June 3, 2015, the Board of Agriculture voted 9-2 to dissolve the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Organic Certification Program due to significant budgetary shortfalls. The NDA's Organic Certification Program will officially close on March 31, 2016.

The NDA will assist growers, producers and sellers with transitioning to a private or independent certification program, which are all held to the same USDA NOP standards.

The NDA supports farms and operations of all sizes, and will continue to pursue funding through the National organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) in order to offset costs for certified organic operations in Nevada. Any entity that successfully receives certification through any certifier would be eligible to receive funding as it is received by NOCCSP. Producers can be reimbursed up to 75 percent of the cost to certify, with a maximum of $750. Current funds will be available for reimbursement through Sept. 30, 2018, and the NDA will continue to pursue NOCCSP funding opportunities on behalf of organic operations in Nevada as long as they are available. To apply for reimbursement, contact Ashley Jeppson at ajeppson@agri.nv.gov.

The NDA continues to provide support to organic farms through the Small Farms Conference, the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Program, grants such as the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, marketing and education to the public.

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How will growers become certified now that there is no Organic Certification Program?

Local Certified Organic Produce will continue to be available in Nevada, thanks to several independent certifiers already certify operations in Nevada. A list of NOP accredited certifiers can be found on the USDA National Organic Program website at :

http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/NOP.

Will I still be able to buy locally grown, certified organic food in Nevada?

Yes! Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of the agriculture industry in the United States. We are proud to be partners with all of Nevada's organic operations and accredited certifiers, and excited to be part of the growth of this sector of the industry in Nevada.