

Some organic rules to consider as you transition

In order to be certified organic, producers must comply with National Organic Program (NOP) regulations. Crop, wild crop, and livestock producers and handlers can become certified organic. The table below summarizes *some* of the main points to consider when transitioning to organic crop or livestock production. Speak with a certifier to discuss the details of your operation and to access the latest information.

NOP rule: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205>

USDA: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/transitioning-to-organic>

All producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land must be free of prohibited substances 3 yrs prior to harvest ● Establish buffer zones around land ● Maintain or improve natural resources & biodiversity ● Only use allowed inputs ● <u>Keep records of materials and practices from seed to sale</u> ● Fill out an Organic System Plan (OSP) and update regularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check with certifier before using new products or practices ● Use approved labels ● Register with CDFA SOP annually ● Get inspected by certifier annually
Crop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use organic seeds and planting stock when commercially available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transplants and microgreen seeds need to be organic ● Use crop rotations ● Fertility management & soil health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use allowed practices and inputs ● Pest, weed, and disease management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preventative -> use allowed “----icides” as last resource
Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Animal origin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must be organic, some exceptions for dairy and breeder stock ● Use organic livestock feed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: ruminants must have 30% of diet come from pasture during growing season ● Animal health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preventative - only use allowed treatments ● Living conditions and facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to outdoors, water, bedding, and space ● Transport and slaughter requirements

Definitions:

Organic System Plan (OSP): A form the certifier provides that you fill out to describe your farm. Typically an OSP includes a map of your farm, list of crops and sales, practices used - including record keeping practices, and list of inputs.

Buffer zones: “An area located between a certified production operation or portion of a production operation and an adjacent land area that is not maintained under organic management. A buffer zone must be sufficient in size or other features (e.g., windbreaks or a diversion ditch) to prevent the possibility of unintended contact by prohibited substances applied to adjacent land areas with an area that is part of a certified operation.” NOP 205.2 [Definitions]

Want to learn more?

- Talk with certified organic farmers and ranchers in your region.
- Sign up for the organic mentorship program and learn from another producer
 - <https://ucanr.edu/statewide-program/uc-organic-agriculture-institute/mentorship-and-demonstration-site-programs>
- Call your local UC Cooperative Extension Office, Siskiyou County Office: 530-842-2711, 1655 S. Main St. Yreka, CA 96097
 - <https://ucanr.edu/county-office/ucce-siskiyou>
- Call a certifier and ask them your questions
 - <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/docs/CertifiersList.pdf>
- Read this 2-page USDA handout “Introduction to organic practices”
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Organic%20Practices%20Factsheet.pdf>
- If you are a crop producer
 - Use this CCOF “Go Organic” Self-Assessment to see how your farm practices currently fit into the regulation
 - https://www.ccof.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Go-Organic-Assessment_fillable.pdf
 - Watch this e-Organic video on organic crop regulations - start at 0:27
 - <https://eorganic.org/node/4876>
 - Look over these record keeping templates to learn what crop records you’ll need to keep
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP-DocumentationFormsIntro.pdf>
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP-CropDocumentationForms.pdf>
- If you are a livestock producer
 - Read this 2-page CCOF handout on organic livestock production
 - <https://www.ccof.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Livestock-Introduction-3.pdf>
 - Have cows, sheep or goats? Watch videos in this Oregon Tilth Youtube playlist - videos are 5-20 minutes long
 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi5V01Ae3iiPZb5iPFMILuLVHECz4lqq9>
 - Look over these record keeping templates to learn what livestock records you’ll need to keep
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP-DocumentationFormsIntro.pdf>
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP-LivestockDocumentationForms.pdf>
- Want to know what an organic inspection is like?
 - Watch these USDA videos on what to expect during a livestock and crop inspection.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHufTWdR-PE>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84gU9KFlr8I&t=358s>
- Visit the UC Organic Agriculture Institute’s “Transition to Organic” resources page.
 - <https://ucanr.edu/statewide-program/uc-organic-agriculture-institute/transitioning-organic>