



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

January 2009

Dear New Organic Producer:

Thank you for considering the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) as your organic certifier. We look forward to working with you. Enclosed you will find the 2009 Organic Certification Application packet. Please review this application packet carefully.

Electronic Application

Before you begin completing the application materials, we encourage you to consider using the electronic format of the application forms. The Organic Crops/Farm Management Plan is available for you to fill out as a Microsoft Word document. Some additional documents require the use of Microsoft Excel. If you would like to fill out your application on the computer, email your request to Steve Pedersen at steve.pedersen@iowaagriculture.gov.

Completing Your Application

The Organic Crops/Farm Management Plan is divided into 9 sections. Most questions require a narrative response, which will require a significant amount of time to complete for your first year.

Deadline and Late Fee

The deadline for application is **March 15, 2009**. This deadline is much later than most of the other certifiers. **Because March 15, 2009 falls on Sunday, we will accept early deadline applications postmarked by Monday, March 16, 2009.** To encourage you to submit your materials by the March 15th deadline, the application fee remains at \$75. **The late application fee for applications submitted between March 17th and May 31st is \$200.** Applications will not be accepted if postmarked after May 31st.

Cost Share Program

The National Organic Program (NOP) Cost Share Program allows certified operations to be reimbursed for 75% of their certification expenses not to exceed \$750. This program covers certifications issued from October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009, so you may want to get your 2009 application sent in early so you can be certified by the deadline. When your certification is sent to you, you will also receive a Cost Share application.

Incomplete Applications

Please review the application instructions to ensure that all necessary documents are completed and returned to the office with the application. After initial review of your application, you will be notified if additional documents are needed to complete your file. The tracking down of needed documents takes staff time and delays the processing of the application. Your timely responses are appreciated.

Regulations

The application packet includes a complete set of current organic regulations that have been 3-hole punched for inclusion in your 3-ring binder which will be provided to you during your inspection. Please review all regulations. We will only be sending changes or amendments to the regulations in the future. The National Organic Program regulations may also be viewed at www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

Documenting the Sale of Grain Crops

When you are ready to sell your organic crops, such as corn, soybeans, hay, alfalfa, and livestock, you will need to document the sale by using Application for Transaction Certificates (ATC's) and Clean Transportation Affidavits. These forms will be given to you by the inspector when he visits. Submit the ATC's **with scale tickets** so we can issue a Transaction Certificate (TC) to your buyer. The original Clean Transportation Affidavit is to be sent with the truck, and you will need to keep a copy for your records. You will also need to complete the Organic Product Movement sheets to keep track of your sales.

Resources

Additional information on National Organic Program (NOP) Regulations including an NOP Policy Section & Question & Answer Section can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm>.

- The 20th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference will be held February 26-28 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Organic University gets underway on Thursday, February 26th during which in-depth organic production classes are available. The conference and trade show runs from Friday morning through Saturday afternoon. For more information, call 715-772-3153 or visit www.mosesorganic.org/conference.
- The Iowa State University Organic Agriculture web site <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/organicag> is updated regularly by Dr. Kathleen Delate. It includes information on upcoming events related to organic farming, information on aphid management in soybeans, and other helpful resources.
- Organic production information is also available from ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer For Rural Areas). ATTRA can be found at <http://attra.ncat.org/>.

Finally, if you have questions regarding the completion of certification forms, use of inputs or any organic production requirements, you can contact our office at 515-281-7656. **Our fax number is 515-281-6178.**

We look forward to providing you with certification services in 2009 and hope you have a productive and profitable season.

Sincerely,

Maury Wills
Organic Program Administrator