



CCOF

Organic Certification Education & Outreach Political Advocacy Promotion

CCOF Virtual Inspections During COVID-19 Pandemic

Organic certification is part of the critical infrastructure of food and agriculture, an essential service. During a public health pandemic with widespread Stay-In-Place orders, CCOF will use novel inspection techniques including hybrid (minimal on-site) and fully virtual (no on-site). All certified operations should remain inspection-ready and maintain required records and a current organic system plan.

Virtual inspections occur fully remotely with no on-site portion. We selected operations eligible for virtual inspections by overall risk and complexity, date of last inspection, and result of last inspection. Operations with no physical processing (e.g brokers/traders) can also be conducted virtually. New operations and those that do not meet the criteria will have a hybrid inspection, which includes an onsite portion. Operations with virtual inspections in 2020 will have an onsite inspection in the first 6 months of 2021

In order to comply with NOP regulations around onsite inspections, CCOF may need to adjust the timing of your annual inspection compared to previous year's. Please note that inspections do not need to occur exactly 12 months apart from each other. Inspection timing may need to be adjusted for many reasons, including emergencies like pandemics and natural disasters. There is also value in inspecting operations at different times of the year to allow a more complete picture of the operation. Please be flexible and cooperate with the inspector to the best of your ability to meet their due dates.

The virtual inspection will occur by all manner of suitable electronic communication platforms enabling interviews and document reviews. The inspector will arrange a pre-inspection meeting with you to develop and agree upon an inspection plan that is suitable for your operation and communication capabilities. The inspector may request records be sent ahead of time for review. **Together you will determine what software and device platforms are available and best suited to the scope and structure of your records and documents.** Optimally this will include webcams and screen sharing for the office portion, and a smart phone with live camera app for site viewing all or parts of your production sites. **New parcels, facilities, or processes will be prioritized for remote viewing.** In locations without decent cell service, photos or video footage may suffice. Inspectors and producers will need to be flexible to work with whatever virtual tools are available. If the desired and optimal technologies are outside of your capability, consider whether you have a family member, employee, or friend who could provide assistance. Whenever CCOF is unable to verify essential compliance points during any inspection, a follow up inspection may be required.

We thank you for your cooperation and flexibility as we work together during this unprecedented situation to continue producing organic food and upholding high standards of integrity in our organic certification.

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