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# New Hampshire

*Department of Agriculture,  
Markets & Food*

Shawn N. Jasper, Commissioner

## **Division of Regulatory Services Organic Certification Program**

January 11, 2024

**To:** Organic Producers

**Subject:** UPDATE – Application Deadline for Organic Certification  
Organic System Plan Form Updates  
2025 Fee Increase  
Organic Related NH House/Senate Bills  
Staff Update

The NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food (NHDAMF) Division of Regulatory Services (DRS) is authorized as a Certifying Agent on behalf of the National Organic Program (NOP). Your involvement in the program is VOLUNTARY and all associated regulations, as overseen by this Division, are dictated by the NOP. Please consider this letter a notification regarding expectations for the upcoming 2024 organic inspection season.

### **Application Deadline for Organic Certification**

The deadline for receipt of the submission of Organic System Plans (OSPs) for Crop certification is **MARCH 1, 2024**. This is a hard deadline applicable to all 2024 applicants. Submittals received after that date may result in the DRS being unable to provide certification services and/or a NOP Notice of Non-Compliance, documenting a record of the late submittal. Hard submittal deadlines are an expectation of the NOP.

### **Organic System Plan Form Updates**

Last year the OSP templates were changed to a modular format, each provided as an Adobe Acrobat Fillable Form. The intent is to simplify your experience in that this year you are only required to resubmit the modules identified as, “(Required),” along with any other module necessary to document changes on your previous year OSP **and** all required attachments. Use the 2024 OSP Module Checklist as your guide. Please note, “(Required)” is identified immediately after the required module Section titles found at the below stated URL:

<https://www.agriculture.nh.gov/divisions/regulatory-services/organic-certification-forms.htm>

### **2025 Fee Increase**

At a meeting on September 7, 2023, the Agricultural Advisory Board voted to support the NHDAMF as a NOP Certifying Agent given the program is financially self-sustaining. Based on preliminary calculations, this will result in a significant fee increase for the 2025 growing season. The final calculations are dependent upon the outcome of existing NH House/Senate Bills.

### **Organic Related NH House/Senate Bills**

DRS is currently aware of the following three bills in Committee with the NH State Legislature:

- 1) HB1184-FN-A, appropriation to the organic certification program.  
Appropriating \$220,326 to hire one full and one part-time position of organic certification inspectors and associated vehicle and computer resources.
- 2) HB1578, organic certification and labeling.  
To repeal language in the RSAs associated with the DRS as a NOP Certifying Agent for the scopes of Handling, Wild Crops, and Livestock. The DRS is no longer certified by the NOP as a Certifying Agent for these three scopes. This bill also eliminates paragraphs defining currently existing Federal organic labeling laws for which the State of NH has no enforcement jurisdiction.
- 3) HB1618-FN, mandating agreement with the USDA for organic certification.  
This bill requires the NHDAMF to enter into an agreement with the USDA to become a certifying agent as provided for by the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, including the certification of agricultural producers, processors, on-farm processors, and handlers.

Full language of each bill can be found via the following URL:

[https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill\\_status/advanced.aspx](https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/advanced.aspx)

### **Staff Update**

It has been a year since Natasha Argenio, authorized as an NOP Organic Inspector, joined the DRS. She is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University, RI with a Bachelor of Science, Culinary Nutrition, Food Science and minor in Environmental Sustainability. She has prior experience as a Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager. The DRS looks forward to her assistance in completing NOP inspection tasks along with Janis Conner and Carina Mackiewicz.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please call me at (603) 271-7761.

Sincerely,



Allen Wyman, Director  
Division of Regulatory Services  
Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food