

US National Organic Program

INFO SHEET

Export to the US

There are additional organic product requirements for export entry into the US market. Exporters must meet additional accreditation requirements under the national organic program administered in this country, the US National Organic Program (USNOP).

NASAA Certified Organic is your first point of contact to advise on the requirements for, and latest updates on, the USNOP Standards and Guidelines. Accreditation through this program can be undertaken as a separate exercise, or in addition to existing NCO licensees.

While NCO makes every effort to ensure the accuracy and currency of information within this information sheet, we accept no responsibility for information, which may later prove to be misrepresented or inaccurate, or reliance placed on that information by readers.



The National Organic Program (NOP), a stand-alone certification program developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), came into effect in October 2002 to regulate organic production, processing and marketing in the US.

NASAA Certified Organic (NCO) has been accredited by the USDA to carry out certification services for the NOP. Under the NOP regulations, **all members of**

the supply chain must be certified to the NOP standard. This means that all suppliers and handlers of ingredients and/or products that are labelled, sold, or represented as '100 percent Organic', 'Organic', or 'made with Organic ingredients' in the USA have to be certified under the NOP certification system.

The certification process is similar, whether your operation is based in, or outside of, Australia. To obtain NOP certification, applicants must develop an annually updated '[Organic System Plan](#)' in accordance with NOP requirements, which details specific standards for organic management and for the labelling of product (based on the percentage of organic ingredients in a product).

Operators will need to be able to demonstrate that they are substantially compliant with these requirements prior to an initial inspection. Where non-compliances are noted, or insufficient information supplied, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that such issues are addressed within a defined timeframe. Additionally, any modifications to the System Plan will need to receive approval prior to implementation.

Whilst there is no conversion period in accordance with the NOP requirements, the system is not retrospective. Certification will be granted following point of application and initial positive inspection, provided that at least three years compliance can be demonstrated.

US NOP Standards

The US NOP Standards (containing standards for primary production, manufacturing & distribution) are your guide to achieving recognised status.

It is essential that you read through the relevant Standards applicable to your operation before submitting an application for certification. A current version of the Standards is available via:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop>

Application & Questionnaire

Making an application for US NOP certification requires the completion of the following documents.

In addition to submitting the [US NOP Application Form](#), and after reading the relevant Standards, you will be required to complete a questionnaire outlining your organic management plan. Information contained within the questionnaire, along with relevant support documentation, will form the basis of your NOP recognised [Organic System Plan](#).

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Further Information

For further information about US NOP certification through NCO please contact the Office:

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NCO staff responsible for the administration of the program will work with you to ensure that this essential compliance documentation meets NOP requirements prior to inspection.

There are two relevant Questionnaires: the [NOP Organic Farm Questionnaire](#) (Primary Production) and the [NOP Organic Handling Questionnaire](#) (Manufacturing & Distribution). In addition to the Farm Questionnaire, specific information is required to be supplied by **Livestock** farmers. Similarly, in addition to the Handling Plan, specific information is required for **Organic Milk** handling.

Inspection & Review

Following the approval of your organic system plan, you will receive a letter of confirmation from NCO, naming an inspector who has been allocated to inspect your operation and to verify your approved plan.

Inspections are subcontracted to a wide network of professional, independent and NCO trained 'organic inspectors' conversant with the requirements of the US NOP program. In addition to scheduled inspections, unannounced and additional inspections may be carried out at NCO's discretion.

Inspection reports will then be reviewed by NCO's Inspection Review Committee, and a decision made in relation to certification.

US NOP Fees & Charges

NCO's fees for US NOP certification are competitive, with a pricing structure which serves to underpin the provision of the certification service.

Our fee structure comprises an initial application fee and inspection deposit, and annual charges and levy payment system where applicable. Refer to the [NCO Fee Schedule](#) for further detail on applicable certification costs.

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