



Agricultural Audits Organic Jump Start Program

The guiding principles of organic agriculture are based on production systems that promote biodiversity of the environment, enhance biological cycles that improve resources, and promote sustainable agriculture. Producers of organic crops utilize cultural, biological and mechanical methods to grow crops rather than relying on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides or genetically modified seed and plants.

In the United States, the National Organic Program (NOP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service, is the federal regulatory framework governing organic food production. The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 required that the USDA develop national standards for organic products and the final rule was codified in the Code of Federal Regulations as 7 C.F.R. 205.

Many new organic producers find the regulations and certification process challenging and often overwhelming. To aid these producers, Agricultural Audits, LLC (AA) has developed the "Organic Jump Start Program". By participating in Jump Start, a producer can begin the process of learning the organic certification program requirements and documenting production practices that are in compliance with the National Organic Program. Documentation of inputs applied to land is extremely important, especially for producers who are transitioning their crops and land from conventional agriculture to organic. The Jump Start Program will document the use of land and any soil fertility or pest management inputs that may be applied in preparation for meeting the three year land history requirements of the National Organic Program. Upon completion of the required three years without the application of prohibited materials and approval of a current Organic System Plan, the applicant may be approved to produce and market certified organic products.

Participation in Jump Start does not allow a person to promote or market a product as "transitional organic" and is not approved or sanctioned by the National Organic Program. It is specifically prohibited for a participant in the Jump Start Program to use the word "organic", orally or in writings, with regard to products produced under this program. Jump Start is designed to aid producers who wish to become certified under the rules of the National Organic Program. It is an interactive way to become familiar with the NOP rules and to document transition to organic production.

Getting started:

Visit www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic for the *USDA NOP Organic Rules and Regulations, 7CFR 205*. 7 CFR Part 205 includes all USDA organic standards, including prohibited practices, requirements, and the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

Whereas a transitional producer will not be subject to these rules, the website will provide an overview of the National Organic Program. Of current interest to you as a transitional producer are:

Subpart B: Record keeping requirements and certain allowed and prohibited practices are located in Subpart B. Record keeping requirements are also described in Subpart E, subsection 205.400.

Subpart C: General production standards including farm management plans, soil fertility and pest management practice standards and seed and planting stock standards are presented in subsection 205.200-206. Post harvest handling requirements are described in subsection 205.270-272. Of particular interest is 205.202. (b).

Subpart G: Synthetic substances which are allowed for use in transitional crop production are listed in subsection 205.601. Nonsynthetic materials which are prohibited in transitional crop production are listed in subsection 205.602. Post harvest materials are defined in subsection 205.605

Also, review the [National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances](#).

APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION AND INSPECTION

NOTE: First time applicants must contact the Ag Audits office and request a fee estimate letter prior to making an application.

An application may be found at <http://www.georgiacrop.com/agricultural-audits/jump-start/> or by contacting the Agricultural Audits office. Complete and submit the form with the appropriate documentation. (First time applicants see note above relating to fee letter.) Participation is an annual process. Applicants must annually renew certification by updating field/facility histories, affidavits, etc. and have a new certification compliance inspection. The application due date is the anniversary of the original application.

An application is considered a legal document. Signing of the application attests to the truthfulness of the historical information presented and gives Agricultural Audits permission to inspect/audit the applicant's operation and records. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify the inspector of any unusual hazards to his/her personal safety.

Fees:

An estimate of fees, to include mileage and/or additional expenses will be provided to each applicant upon receipt of a completed application.

Annual Fees:

Jump Start fees for crop operation (grower/producer)

\$500.00 Initial Administration Fee; farms in excess of 20 acres add \$5.00 per acre for each additional acre (year 1)

\$450.00 Annual Renewal Fee; farms in excess of 20 acres add \$5.00 per acre for each additional acre (subsequent years)

Travel:

Mileage will be charged to the applicant at the prevailing IRS rate when application is made. All other travel expenses such as lodging, meals and/or airfare will be charged to the applicant if the operation being inspected requires any such expenses to be incurred.

Onsite Audit:

The organic system plan will be reviewed by the Program Manager prior to inspection and auditing. The applicant will be notified (email, documented phone call, UPS and/or USPS) within 45 days of a scheduled inspection/audit.

Fee Refund Policy:

Fees are non-refundable except in the following instance – The withdrawal of initial application prior to the onsite inspection. A processing fee of \$50.00 will be retained by Agricultural Audits. Refunds will be made after Agricultural Audits receives written notification of applicants desire to withdraw the application.

Agricultural Audits, LLC
2425 S Milledge Avenue
Athens, GA 30605
(706) 542-2351 Fax: (706) 542-9397
www.georgiacrop.com/agricultural-audits