



## **GCIA Organic E-News**

*August 2019*

### ***Important Reminders from Johnny Luke, Organic Program Manager:***

- For crop certification, inputs must be compliant (OMRI, WSDA or PCO) with proof of current approval. Also, field histories, input records, time, date, amount and where it was applied must be complete for the growing operation.
- For handling / processor certification, all ingredients must carry documentation that they are compliant (organic certificates, natural flavor documents, storage affidavits, etc.) Records must be legible and easy to understand. Records should also be traceable back to the source and forward to the final point of sale. This includes product tracking codes to verify compliance with the NOP standard.
- For all clients, Organic System Plans must be updated anytime a new product is added; new inputs are planned for use; any changes of name, operator, ownership; when new land is acquired; changes in storage locations, custom operations, label changes, suppliers, shipping/receiving, equipment, pest management, etc. Be sure to notify GCIA of any changes to your OSP.

### ***USDA NOP clarifies rule regarding organic container production***

On June 3, the USDA notified accredited organic certifying agents of a clarification to the rules covering certification of organic container production. *Prior to June 3*, it was possible for container operations to be certified organic even if the underlying soil may not necessarily pass organic certification. Containers were considered an independent system because they did not include the location's soil for crop production. Crops produced in pots filled with soilless media (such as pine bark and compost) on landscape fabric would be an example of this type of system. *Now, after June 3*, containers and soil are no longer mutually exclusive. Basically, both soil and containers need to be certified. The clarified rule states:

“The legal requirements related to the three-year transition period apply to all container systems built and maintained on land.”

In other words, the National Organic Program (NOP) views containers as an extension of the soil. If the soil would not meet the criteria for organic certification, then the container will not meet the criteria either.

To read the full USDA NOP memo, click [HERE](#).

***What if I receive a notice of noncompliance?***

If a certified operation has not received a notice of noncompliance before, this can be unsettling as the required information and format make this notice appear strict and intimidating. This is not our intent; the format is required by USDA NOP. If you do receive a notice of noncompliance, don't panic. Give us a call at the office, and we will work with you to resolve it. To learn more about how to respond to a noncompliance notice, click [HERE](#).

***GCIA's Organic Jump Start Program***

Many new organic producers find the regulations and certification process challenging and often overwhelming. To aid these producers, GCIA 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.

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.

For more information on the Jump Start Program, click [HERE](#).

***Organic E-News***

To view past editions of Organic E-News, you will find them archived [HERE](#). If you have suggestions or comments regarding E-News, please let us know.

Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact our organic staff at the office (706-542-2351) or via email:

Johnny Luke, Organic Program Manager ([johnny.luke@georgiacrop.com](mailto:johnny.luke@georgiacrop.com))

Jeanne Gonzales, Organic Program Assistant ([jeanne.gonzales@georgiacrop.com](mailto:jeanne.gonzales@georgiacrop.com))

Billie Dunn, Outside Services Program Assistant ([billie.dunn@georgiacrop.com](mailto:billie.dunn@georgiacrop.com))

Please be sure to visit the [GCIA Organic Program website](#) for additional resources.

Georgia Crop Improvement Association  
2425 South Milledge Avenue  
Athens, Georgia 30605  
Phone 706-542-2351  
[www.georgiacrop.com](http://www.georgiacrop.com)