GEORGIA CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
Administration and Policy Manual

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INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Crop Improvement Association is an organization of farmers and others who are interested in growing and making available to the public, through certification (known sources of seed, field inspections, analytical testing), high quality seeds and propagating materials of superior varieties so grown and distributed as to insure genetic purity and identity. The Georgia Crop Improvement Association was organized in 1946 and made the legal certifying agency by passage of House Bill #104 in 1956. Senate Bill #583 in July of 1997 superseded this bill. Both bills authorized the Dean of the University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences to designate the Georgia Crop Improvement Association as the legal certifying agency in Georgia.

Crop Improvement Associations emphasize more efficient crop production by encouraging the use of high quality seed of superior varieties. Larger yields per acre and better quality products have always been essential for the most profitable returns from crop production.

The Georgia Crop Improvement Association's Organic Certification Program (GCIAOCP) is a natural extension of third-party certifying activities regularly performed for seed, Quality Assurance and Identity Preserved Programs currently offered.

The GCIA Organic Certification Program is committed to environmentally sound and economically viable production of food and encourages the preservation of natural resources, the improvement of soil quality and health through organic and sustainable farming practices and to foster the production of healthy livestock and poultry production.

The GCIAOCP is based on the requirements of the June 12, 2007 Part IV, Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing Service 7CFR Part 205 *NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM; FINAL RULE*, also known in this publication as the NOP.

I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Program Administrator

The Executive Director of the Georgia Crop Improvement Associating is responsible for the daily operations of the program and for the purpose of this publication will be known as the Program Administrator.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Hear appeals and make recommendations to the GCIA Executive Committee

Records:

Assure that records obtained from applicants for certification and certified operations must be maintained for not less than 5 years beyond their receipt.

Assure that records created or received by the GCIAOCP pursuant to the accreditation requirement of the NOP Subpart F, excluding any records covered by §205.510(b)(2) must be maintained for not less than 5 years beyond their creation or receipt.

Assure that records created by GCIAOCP regarding applicants for certification and certified operations must be maintained for not less than 10 years beyond their creation.

Review of:

Review and approve any policy and fee changes before submission to the GCIA Board of Directors for action and when applicable forwarding to the NOP.

Training:

Conduct a minimum of 2 hours of organic instruction for the GCIAOCP Reviewer to include but not limited to:

- The Program Manual
- Relevant areas concerning organic production and handling issues
- Review of any USDA NOP updates applicable to organic production and handling issues
- Attendance will be documented

Investigations:

The Program Administrator will cause investigations of complaints about abuses in the production and sale of GCIAOCP certified crops or products, determine settlement of the complaint and reimbursement for the investigation cost.

The Program Administrator employs inspectors.

Evaluations of Program and Personnel:

- The Program Administrator will evaluate inspectors annually.
- The program Administrator will be evaluated each year by the GCIA Executive Committee
- The Program Administrator will submit an annual report to the NOP Administrator as required in Section §205.510 of the NOP.

Should a person(s) be identified during an evaluation as needing improvement, the Program Administrator will identify the specific areas(s) the individual needs additional training in and the Program Administrator will design a training program to address the area(s).

Should the GCIA Executive Committee determine that the Program Administrator needs improvement the Executive Committee will task the Program Manager and Certification Reviewer to develop and implement a training program to cover the needed evaluated deficiency(s).

Certification Reviewer

Duties and Responsibilities:

Review completed applications after the on-site organic inspections and be the final approving authority for certification. The Reviewer may approve, deny or place in pending an application based on the NOP.

Reviews will be completed within two weeks of receipt.

Any incomplete, incorrect or unanswered questions on OSP will be addressed to the Administrative Assistant for action using the "Certification Checklist".

When an audit/inspection results in an “identified concern” or “non compliance”, the issue will be addressed to the Program Manager for action and copied to the Administrative Assistant.

Administrative Assistant

Duties and Responsibilities:

Initial review of OSP/Application for completeness using the certification status checklist, Daily Standard Operating Procedures and "Procedures for organic application clerical review, application distribution to program manager & reviewer, and final disposition of application".

Send OSP applications to Program Manager. If a renewal, the previous year’s audit will be included.

Upon completion of the pre-audit by the Adminstrative Assistant and Program Manager, any incomplete, incorrect or unanswered questions on the OSP will be addressed by completing the “Incomplete OSP Notification” form and sending to the applicant. All such notifications should be recorded by the Administrative Assistant.

Will place “Incomplete OSP Notification” form in file to be reviewed not later than three working days after return due date.

Amend the original OSP to reflect any corrections to application per a submitted “Incomplete OSP Notification” prior to submitting to Program manager.

When an audit/inspection results in an “identified concern” or “non compliance”, the Administrative Assistant (at the direction of the program manager) will issue an appropriate notification to all parties and document any corrective actions to the OSP and enter into spreadsheet.

Upon completion of audits, client will be provided a copy of the completed audits along with any test results, to include but not limited to onsite, unannounced, and/or required sampling audits.

Program Manager

Duties and Responsibilities:

Assign or conduct audits/inspections using criteria found in SOP "Assigning Audits to Inspectors"

Review of OSP/Application for completeness prior to assigning or conducting audit

Any incomplete, incorrect or unanswered questions on OSP will be addressed to the Administrative Assistant for action.

When an audit/inspection results in an “identified concern” or “non compliance”, the Program Manager will address the issue with the applicant and copy the Administrative Assistant.

Review unannounced audits per the "Unannounced Inspection Report" and report findings to the certified client receiving the audit.

Schedule unannounced audits in compliance with NOP 2609 and Appendix B of the GCIAOCP Administrative and Policy Manual.

Training:

The GCIAOCP Program Manager will conduct or provide for organic training annually for inspectors. The instruction will include the following:

- The program manual
- Relevant areas concerning organic production and handling
- Review of any USDA NOP updates applicable to organic production and handling issues
- Attendance of training will be documented

Inspector

Qualifications and responsibilities:

Inspectors must not have a conflict of interest with parties they are inspecting and they are bound to maintain confidentiality regarding information on the application and information obtained as part of the inspection process. Inspectors will follow IFOAM/IOIA Manual section 2.0. Inspectors must not act as consultant of endorse items or products. Inspectors must have completed an IOIA basic training program.

After an inspector completes the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) basic training course, he/she will shadow a recognized, experienced inspector (assigned by the Program Administrator) on two audits, and an appointed inspector will witness at least two audits performed by the new inspector.

Upon completion of the two shadow audits and two witness audits, the assigned inspector, Program Administrator and Program Manager will review the witness audit reports completed by the new inspector. Upon such review, the Program Administrator may recognize the new inspector as proficient or develop and implement a training program to correct any noted deficiencies. Upon completion of said program, the Program Administrator will reevaluate the inspector.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION

Any producer, handler, processor, distributor of Organic Product may apply for certification. Application is made by submitting a completed form with the appropriate fee. Certification is an annual process. Every certified farm, handler, processor, or distributor must annually renew certification by updating field/facility histories, affidavits, processing facility changes, etc. and have a new certification compliance inspection. The application due date is the anniversary of the original application.

Upon request, the GCIAOCP Administrator/Manager will provide:
The GCIAOCP Administration and Policy Manual including:

Introduction

Program Administration

Appeals Process

Inspector Requirements

Application Procedures

Fees

Noncompliance, Warning and Pending Procedures

Liability Statement

Confidentiality Statement

Conflict of Interest Statement

GCIAOCP Application Flow Chart

Organic Questionnaire (the appropriate questionnaire; field, livestock, handling, etc.) Section §205.100 through Section §205.681

The applicant must provide a knowledgeable authorized representative of the operation to be present with the inspector to answer questions, sign appropriate papers, and be present at the exit interview.

The organic 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 an inspection schedule, problems with the original application, noncompliance, fee estimate, etc. The implementation and documentation of the plan will be one of the areas the inspector will be reviewing.

The GCIAOCP Manager will provide the inspector with:

- the appropriate audit form

- previous onsite inspections

- copies of all approved labels

For correctable noncompliance actions, failure to submit an annual organic system plan and/or certification fees for example, will be addressed with letters of proposed suspension or suspension and not letters of proposed revocation or revocation.

The inspector may take samples of water, soil, plant tissue, plants, etc. for testing. A receipt will be given to the producer; the producer will not charge the GCIAOCP for the sample taken. The cost of testing will be paid by the GCIAOCP, and the applicant will receive a copy of the analysis by email. ***(See Appendix A: GCIAOCP Procedures for Sampling and Residue Testing.)***

All inspections will be made when organic production, handling, processing activities best represent compliance or noncompliance with the standards and NOP.

Inspectors will conduct an exit interview with the applicant or authorized representative upon completion of the inspection process. Should the facility market more product than received, this discrepancy will be reported to the Program Administrator immediately. The Program Administrator will report the discrepancy to the National Organic Program contact within two working days. The Inspector will document on the exit interview the quantity of organic product received and the quantity shipped. The inspector will cover all potential problem areas noted on the inspection form.

The GCIAOCP Staff will email the GCIAOCP Certification Reviewer within 10 days of receiving the completed inspection report and will notify the applicant within 5 days of the Certification Reviewer's decision. The GCIAOCP Staff will supply, via email, the Inspector(s) a copy of the Certification Reviewer's Decision Checklist Document.

Upon review of the Inspector's report, the Certification Reviewer will grant organic certification to the Applicant, grant organic certification to the Applicant with areas of concern, issue Notice of Noncompliance, issue Notice of Noncompliance with Notice of Proposed Suspension or deny organic certification. If Applicant is issued a Notice of Noncompliance, Notice of Noncompliance with Notice of Proposed Suspension or denied organic certification. The Program Administrator will have 15 days to notify the Applicant. Section §205.405 of the NOP protocol will be followed. The Administrator of the NOP will be notified simultaneously with the issuance of any

Notice of Denial of Certification issued pursuant to Section §205.405 of the NOP, Notification of Noncompliance, Notification of Noncompliance correction, Notification of Proposed Suspension or Revocation, and Notification of Suspension or Revocation sent pursuant to Section §205.662 of the NOP. If the Applicant is granted certification, a certificate will be issued. The certificate will resemble the OCO/IOIA example and will comply with Section §205.404 of the NOP.

The GCIAOCP will accept the certification decisions made by another certifying agent accredited or accepted by the USDA pursuant to Section §205.500 of the NOP.

Participation in this Program will not be denied to any person due to discrimination because of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

An application is considered a legal document. Signing of the application attests to the truthfulness of the historical information presented, the desire to carry out the organic farm plan, permission to inspect the applicants operation and records and to notify the inspector of any unusual hazards to his personal safety. Only complete applications will be accepted.

III. FEES

Organic Crop Operation (Grower/Producer)

- $750.00 Initial Administration Fee with farms in excess of 20 acres add $5.00 per acre
- $700.00 Annual Renewal Administration Fee with farms in excess of 20 acres add $5.00 per acre
- $85.00 Surcharge*

Organic Livestock/Forage Operation

- $750.00 Initial Administration Fee with farms in excess of 500 acres add $1.00 per acre
- $700.00 Annual Renewal Administration Fee with farms in excess of 500 acres add $1.00 per acre with assessments based on scale listed below
- $85.00 Surcharge*

Organic Greenhouse Operation

- $650.00 Initial Administration Fee
- $600.00 Annual Renewal Administration Fee with assessments based on the scale below
- $85.00 Surcharge*

Organic Processor/Handler Operation

- $650.00 Initial Administration Fee
- $600.00 Annual Renewal Administration Fee with assessments based on the scale below
- $85.00 Surcharge*

Livestock, Greenhouse & Processor/Handler Assessment Scale

- 0.5% (one-half of one percent) of gross organic sales minus cost of raw organic product
- Minimum Annual Assessment of $100.00; Maximum Annual Assessment of $10,000.00

* Georgia Crop Improvement Association's surcharge will be $85.00 for each application, initial and renewals, to cover: (1) The NOP requires that 5% of all clients be tested for residue compliance. (2) The NOP requires that 5% of all clients receive an unannounced inspection. (3) The NOP requires that GCIAOCP be audited by the USDA/AMS every 30 months for compliance to NOP Rules and Regulations.

An estimate of fees charged will be provided to each applicant prior to inspection.
Renewal applications are due in the GCIA office on the anniversary date of the initial inspection.

OTHER CHARGES

Label Reviews: A label review fee of $50.00 per hour will be assessed for any additional products and/or label revisions during the year. *(Label Review Fees do not apply at the time of initial certification or the certification renewal process.)*

Re-inspections: Re-inspections will be charged at the rate of $50.00 per hour

Transfer Fee: Certification transfer fee of $25.00

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 expense to be incurred by GCIAOCP.

Certification Fee Refund Policy: Certification 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 GCIAOCP. Refunds will be made after application has been withdrawn.

Interest of 1.5% per month will be charged on all past due accounts and certification will be suspended 60 days after failure to pay. The USDA National Organic Program will be notified of suspension.

THE GCIAOCP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AUDIT SALES RECORDS ON ALL MENTIONED CATEGORIES.

IV. NONCOMPLIANCE, WARNINGS, PENDING AND INVESTIGATIONS

Noncompliance with the GCIAOCP may result in the loss of certification.

The GCIAOCP Administrator/Manager may investigate complaints of noncompliance with the act or regulations of this part concerning production and handling operations certified as organic.

The GCIAOCP Administrator/Manager will notify the NOP, the GCIAOCP Certification Reviewer, and the Georgia State Department of Agriculture of all compliance proceedings and actions taken.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture and the NOP will be notified of any fraud, willful violations and the loss of certification.

The GCIAOCP will use mediation as a means for dispute resolution. Section §205.663 of the NOP will be the guide for all mediations, if accepted by the GCIAOCP. The client requesting mediation will pay all expenses incurred by the GCIAOCP.

V. INSPECTION AND TESTING, REPORTING, AND EXCLUSION FROM SALE

All agricultural products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as "100 percent organic," "organic," or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)" must be made accessible by certified organic production or handling operations for examination by the GCIAOCP, the NOP and the State of Georgia's Organic Program official.

One or all of the above may require preharvest or postharvest testing of any agricultural input used or agricultural products to be sold, labeled, or represented as "100 percent organic", "organic", or "made with organic" (specified ingredients or food group(s) when there is reason to believe that the agricultural input or product has come in contact with a prohibited substance or has been produced using excluded methods or any reason as listed in Appendix A. Such tests must be conducted by the applicable State organic program's governing State official or the certifying agent at the official's or certifying agent's own expense.

(See Appendix A for GCIAOCP procedures to be used for sampling and residue testing.)

Preharvest or postharvest tissue sample collection must be performed by an inspector representing the NOP, applicable State organic program governing State officials, or the GCIAOCP. Sample integrity must be maintained throughout the chain of custody, and residue testing must be performed in an accredited laboratory. Chemical analysis must be made in accordance with the methods described in the most recent edition of the Official Method of Analysis of the AOAC International or other current applicable validated methodology determining the presence of contaminants in agricultural products.

The results of all analyses and tests performed must be promptly provided to the NOP; Except, That, where a State Organic Program exists, all test results and analyses shall be provided to the State Organic Program's governing State official by the applicable certifying party that requested testing; and will be available for public access, unless the testing is part of an ongoing compliance investigation.

If test results indicate a specific agricultural product contains pesticide residues or environmental contaminants that exceed the Food and Drug Administration's or the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory tolerances, the certifying agent must promptly report such data to the Federal Health Agency whose regulatory tolerance or action level has been exceeded.

When residue testing detects prohibited substances at levels that are greater than 5% of the Environmental Protection Agency's tolerance for the specific residue detected or unavoidable residual environmental contamination, the agricultural product must not be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced. The NOP, the applicable State Organic Program's State Official, or the GCIAOCP may conduct an investigation of the certified operation to determine the cause of the prohibited substance.

When a prohibited substance is applied to a certified operation due to a Federal or State emergency pest or disease treatment program and the certified operation meets the requirements for certification, the certification status of the operation shall not be affected as a result of the prohibited substance: provided, that:

(a) Any harvested crop or plant part to be harvested that has contact with a prohibited substance applied is the result of a Federal or State emergency pest or disease treatment program cannot be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced; and
(b) Any livestock that are treated with a prohibited substance applied as the result of a Federal or State emergency pest or disease treatment program or product derived from such treated livestock cannot be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced; Except, that:
(1) Milk or milk products may be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced beginning 12 months following the last date that the dairy animal was treated with the prohibited substance; and
(2) The offspring of gestating mammalian breeder stock treated with a prohibited substance may be considered organic: provided, that, the breeder stock was not in the last third of gestation on the date that the breeder stock was treated with the prohibited substance.

VI. LIABILITY

No GCIAOCP Staff Member, Inspector, Certification Reviewer, GCIA Board of Directors, may be held liable or responsible for any amount in excess of the administrative fees paid. Any monetary claim arising out of or relating to the administration of the program will be settled by arbitration. The GCIA Executive Committee will choose a representative, the person making the claim will choose a representative, and the two representatives will choose a third party for arbitration. The decision will be final. Signing of the Organic Application by the producer, handler, and/or processor is in agreement with the above.

The GCIAOCP will hold the Secretary of Agriculture harmless of any failure on the part of the certifying agent to carry out provisions of the NOP act.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Documentation Requests:

All GCIAOCP Staff, Contractors, Inspectors, Certification Reviewer and the GCIA Board of Directors must adhere to the principals of confidentiality. Pursuant to 7 C.F.R. Section §205.501(a)(10), GCIAOCP will, "Maintain strict confidentiality with respect to its clients under

the applicable organic certification program and not disclose to third parties (with the exception of the Secretary or the applicable State organic program's governing State official or their authorized representatives) any business-related information concerning any client obtained while implementing the regulations in this part, except as provided for in §205.504(b)(5)."

Pursuant to 7 C.F.R. Section §205.504(b)(5) the following information may be made available to any member of the public:

- Certification certificates issued to operations during the current and three preceding calendar years.
- A list of producers and handlers whose operations GCIAOCP certified, including the name of the operation, type(s) of operation, products produced, and the effective date of the certification, during the current and three preceding calendar years.
- The results of laboratory analyses for residues of pesticides and other prohibited substances conducted during the current and three preceding calendar years.
- Other business information as permitted in writing by the producer or handler.

Any requests for the above listed information must be submitted in writing and the following fees will apply:

- $50.00 per hour research time
- $0.12 per copy
- All applicable postage fees

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest is defined as having an economic interest with a farm or processor under review for certification one year prior to, during or one year after work or employment was concluded. GCIAOCP Staff, Contractors, Inspectors, Certification Reviewer and the GCIA Board of Directors with a conflict of interest must make the conflict known and not participate in discussion or decisions regarding the farm or processor under review.

The GCIAOCP Staff, Contractors, Inspectors, Certification Reviewer and the GCIA Board of Directors must sign a conflict of interest statement annually.

Should a conflict of interest be found, corrective action outlined in Section §205.501, (12) (i) of the NOP will be followed.

APPENDIX A

GCIAOCP Procedures for Sampling and Residue Testing

Purpose and Intent:
To establish program procedures and develop a system to conduct periodic residue testing for at least 5% of our certified operations where agricultural products are sold or labeled as organically produced as outlined by USDA NOP regulation.

To satisfy the requirement of USDA NOP § 205.670(d); inspection and testing of agricultural product to be sold, labeled, or represented as "100% organic", "organic", or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))" and NOP § 205.504(b)(5)(iii).

Procedures:
WHEN TO COLLECT SAMPLES

- When it is suspected that a prohibited substance has been applied.
- When it is suspected that contamination from genetically modified organisms, antibiotics, or prohibited substances may have occurred.
- When pesticide drift may have occurred.
- To gather evidence as part of an investigation.
- As part of a surveillance sampling program.
- Random selection of an operation.
- Testing operations that have a high volume of organic products.

SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA
GCIAOCP will collect a sample of a given organic agricultural product, selected from a single location in a field, bin, or pallet. A single sample analyzed for residues using sensitive test procedures should provide enough information to determine if residues are present. A sample of a crop could consist of the raw agricultural commodity (RAC) or processed commodity from the RAC (EPA Residue Chemistry Guidelines, Table 1). Samples may also include the collection and testing of soil, water, waste, seeds, or plant tissue, if appropriate. GCIAOCP may choose to select samples which attempt to detect contamination where it is most likely to occur due to risk factors present at a given operation or a location within an operation. A link to recommended methods of sampling for the determination of pesticide residues by The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) is provided below as additional guidance on sample collection.

www.codexalimentarious.net/download/standards/361/CXG_033e.pdf

SAMPLE AMOUNTS
GCIAOCP will obtain a sufficient sample to ensure the laboratories will have adequate amounts for processing and reanalysis if necessary (Table 1). The amounts shown are consistent with those instituted as part of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide Data Program. If collecting from multiple containers is needed to obtain the suggested amounts, GCIAOCP will confirm that the products being sampled are from the same lot.

Table 1: Suggested Sample Amounts by Commodity Type

Commodity Type	Recommended Sample Amount
Most fresh fruit and vegetables	3-5 pounds (approximately 1.5-2.5 kg); A single large melon or squash exceeding 5 pounds (approximately 2.5 kg) is acceptable.
Blended commodities or those smaller than a strawberry	1 pound (approximately 500 g)
Berries	
Cherries	
Coffee beans	
Dried Commodities	
Flours	
Grains	
Herbs	
Garlic	
Legumes	
Mushrooms (small)	
Nuts	
Teas	
Seeds	
Small jars/packages (i.e. baby food sized)	
Spices	
All liquids and semisolid foods (e.g. juices, oils)	16-32 ounces (approximately 500 mL to 1000 mL)
Canned/jarred foods	

Adapted from USDA AMS Pesticide Data Program SOPs and U.S. EPA Residue Chemistry Guidance.

For raw commodities, the portion which should be sampled is generally the whole commodity. Adhering soil, decomposed outer leaves, and inedible root and tuber vegetable tops should be excluded from the sample. In addition to the U.S. EPA Residue Chemistry Guidance, Codex has guidance on which portion of the commodity should be sampled and provides recommended sample preparation methods for the determination of residues.

Collection Sites:
Products will be obtained at farm gate level if growing season permits (i.e. field samples). If unable to collect at farm gate level due to growing season, sampling at other locations will be permitted (e.g. storage facility, warehouse, handler, etc.).

Sample Collection and Shipping
Sample collection and shipping methods utilized will be based on the USDA Pesticide Data Program sample collection requirements as provided by the *USDA NOP 2610*.

Sample Handling and Shipping to USDA Lab
Sample handling and shipping methods utilized will be based on the USDA Pesticide Data Program sample collection requirements as provided by the *USDA NOP 2610*.

Sample Collection Information:
Sample information and description will accompany the sample to the lab.
A Residue Sampling Form will be utilized by GCIAOCP as provided by the *USDA NOP 2610*.
The Residue Sampling Form contains; Sample ID Number, commodity information, collection site information, shipping information, and sample receipt in lab confirmation.

Sample Analysis for Pesticide Residues:
A Residue Sampling Form will be used when testing samples.
Samples will be shipped to the National Science Laboratory in Gastonia, North Carolina.
The USDA lab will test commodities for pesticide residues under the Pesticide Data Program (PDP).
NOP samples will be analyzed "as received" as per USDA NOP.

Responding to Results from Pesticide Residue Testing

Procedure:
No Detected Residues:

- Notify the certified operation of the test results and indicate that the product may be sold as organic.
- Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

Residues Detected at Less than 0.01 ppm
If tests detect residues of prohibited pesticides as less than 0.01 parts per million (ppm), which is the same as 10 parts per billion (ppb):

- Notify the certified operation of the test results and indicate that the product may be sold as organic.
- Assess why the residue is present and follow up with operation as appropriate.
- Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

Residues Detected at or above 0.01 ppm
If a test detects a residue of a prohibited pesticide at or above 0.01 ppm, GCIAOCP will first determine if U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a tolerance *for the pesticide for the tested commodity* (e.g., residues of imidacloprid in or on soybeans). Additional information on using EPA tolerances is provided below in "**EPA Tolerances"**.

Once GCIAOCP has identified whether EPA has established a tolerance for a given residue in the tested sample, GCIAOCP will use the following guidelines as outlined below to determine which reporting and adverse actions are appropriate.

EPA Tolerance is Established

If the EPA has established a tolerance for the detected pesticide in the tested sample, follow the appropriate instructions below based on the level detected.

A. **If residue is detected at or below 5% of the EPA tolerance**, GCIAOCP will:
   1. Notify the certified operation of the test results.
   2. Assess why the residue is present.
   3. If appropriate, consider a notice of noncompliance for the following violations:
      a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will inform the operation that the product is not organic. At that time, GCIAOCP will have to consider suspending or revoking the operation's certification.
      b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
      c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
   4. If residues are not a result of the application of prohibited pesticides, the product may be sold as organic.
   5. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.
   6. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

B. **If residue is detected above 5% of the EPA tolerance level,** but not above the EPA tolerance level, GCIAOCP will:
   1. *Immediately* notify the certified operation of the test results and indicate that the product may not be sold as organic.
   2. Assess why the residue is present.
   3. Issue a notice of noncompliance for violation of 7 CFR 205.671, having prohibited substances at levels greater than 5% of the EPA tolerance level. Additional violations may include:
      a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will propose to suspend or revoke the operation's certification.
      b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
      c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
   4. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.
   5. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

C. **If residue is detected above EPA tolerance level**, GCIAOCP will:
   1. *Immediately* notify the certified operation of the test results and indicate that the product may not be sold as organic.
   2. *Immediately* report the violation to the appropriate agency.
   3. Assess why the residue is present.
   4. Issue a notice of noncompliance for violation of 7 CFR 205.671, having prohibited substances at levels greater than 5% of the EPA tolerance level. Additional violations may include:
      a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will propose to suspend or revoke the operation's certification.
      b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
      c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
   5. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.
   6. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

No EPA Tolerance, but FDA Action Level Exists

If there is not an established EPA tolerance, GCIAOCP will check for a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) action level. FDA action levels are established for persistent pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons (e.g., DDT), that are no longer registered by EPA for use in crop or animal production, but continue to be detected in crops due to the persistent nature of these chemicals in the environment.

A. **If residue is detected below the FDA action level**, GCIACOP will:
   1. Notify the certified operation of the test results.
   2. Assess why the residue is present.
   3. If appropriate, consider a notice of noncompliance for the following violations:
      a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will notify the operation that product is not organic and results will be reported as described below. GCIAOCP may decide to suspend or revoke the operation's certification.
      b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
      c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
   4. If residues are not a result of the intentional or direct application of prohibited pesticides, the product may be sold as organic.

5. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.
6. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

B. **If residue is detected above the FDA action level**, GCIAOCP will:
1. *Immediately* notify the certified operation of the test results and that the product may not be sold as organic. The FDA or a foreign equivalent may provide guidance on addressing these products.
2. *Immediately* report the violation to the appropriate agency as described below in **"Reporting Violations"**.
3. Assess why the residue is present.
4. If appropriate, consider a notice of noncompliance for the following violations:
    a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will propose to suspend or revoke the operation's certification.
    b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
    c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
5. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.
6. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

No EPA Tolerance of FDA Action Level

Some testing results will indicate pesticide residues for which EPA has not established a tolerance and the FDA has not established an action level.

A. **If testing detects a residue of prohibited pesticides <u>above</u> 0.01 parts per million (ppm)**, GCIAOCP will:
1. *Immediately* notify the certified operation of the test results and indicate that the product may not be sold as organic.
2. *Immediately* report the violation to the appropriate agency as described below.
3. If appropriate, the following violations will be considered for a notice of noncompliance:
    a. *§205.202(b)*: application of prohibited substances. The notice will propose to suspend or revoke the operation's certification.
    b. *§205.202(c):* inadequate buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of prohibited substances. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
    c. *§205.272:* inadequate measures to prevent commingling or contamination of organic products. The notice will require corrective actions to prevent future contamination.
4. If suspensions, revocations, or civil penalties are appropriate, coordinate adverse actions with the NOP.

5. Retain the test results, which must be made available to the public upon request and will be reviewed as part of the next audit.

Reporting Violations

In addition to the compliance and enforcement actions described above, GCIAOCP is responsible for reporting violations of EPA and/or FDA regulations to the proper authority. Violations include application of a pesticide which is prohibited by EPA (such as a pesticide without an EPA tolerance) or an allowed pesticide at levels exceeding regulatory tolerances. Depending on the operation's location and the results of GCIAOCP's assessment, the appropriate authority may include the EPA, FDA, or State food safety program.

A. Operations within the United States:

If the violation can be traced back to an application to a field, submit the violation, including its location and time, to the EPA by visiting http://www.epa.gov/tips . Reporting to EPA is indicated if:

1. The detected pesticide doesn't have an EPA tolerance established for the tested sample (meaning EPA doesn't permit that pesticide to be applied to organic or nonorganic varieties of the crop).
2. The detected pesticide has an EPA established tolerance for the tested sample, but oo much of the pesticide was applied (i.e., exceeding labeled application rates).

If the violation can't be traced to a direct, intentional application to a field or it is detected in the stream of commerce, submit the violation to the closest FDA district office: http://bit.ly/fda-office .

EPA Tolerances

A. About EPA Tolerances

After reviewing field study data, EPA established tolerances, or maximum residues, for each allowed pesticide. EPA tolerances generally exist for specific commodities within the following categories:

- Crops (e.g., grapes)
- Feedstuff derived from crops (e.g., hay)
- Certain processed commodities (e.g., raisins)
- Certain products derived from livestock (e.g., milk).

EPA has residue chemistry test guidelines that identify which form of the raw or processed product should be tested. For example, when testing sweet corn, laboratories should remove the husk and analyze the kernels and cob. For almonds, analysis should include both the almond nutmeat and hulls, while the hulls are removed on other nuts.

EPA tolerances are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR part 180), which is also referenced below.

B. Using EPA Tolerances

In most cases, laboratories should prepare samples according to the residue chemistry test guidelines so that the data can be compared to EPA tolerances. Deviations from the standard sample preparations may be used at the discretion of GCIAOCP. For example, if GCIAOCP collects a field sample in response to a complaint that a certified operation has applied a prohibited substance, the inedible portion of the crop may be left intact for testing.

Unless field testing demonstrates that the residues increase in the final product, EPA doesn't establish tolerances for processed products. Unless a specific tolerance exists for the processed product, certifying agents should use the tolerance for the raw commodity.

For some pesticides, the EPA established tolerances that include the active ingredient and its breakdown products (metabolites). While not standard practice for every pesticide, if laboratories analyze metabolites, the residues of the active ingredient and its metabolites should be combined to determine the total pesticide residue.

The following data area an example of detected aldicarb residue and its metabolites in a sample of sugar beet tops:

- 0.90 ppm *Aldicarb (2-methyl-2-(methylthio)propionaldehyde 0 – (methylcarbamoyl) oxime)*
- 0.1 ppm Aldicarb sulfoxide *(2-methyl 2-(methylsulfinyl) propionaldehyde 0-(methylcarbamoyl) oxime)*
- 0.07 ppm Aldicarb sulfone *(2-methyl-2-(methylsulfonyl) propionaldehyde 0-(methylcarbamoyl) oxime)*

According to the tolerance established at 40 CFR 180.269 for aldicarb, these residues should be combined to determine the total residue for the sample. Since the total combined residue is 1.7 ppm, this sample exceeds the 1 ppm tolerance for aldicarb in sugar beet tops and the violation should be reported as described in **"Reporting Violations".** This sample is also in violation of the USDA organic regulations and certifying agents should follow the steps outlined in **"EPA Tolerance is Established".**

APPENDIX B

GCIA ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure for Conducting Unannounced Inspections of Certified Organic Operations

Policy

Unannounced inspections are one of the most effective and useful tools in the USDA organic regulations to ensure compliance across certified operations, and give consumers additional reasons to trust the organic label. Unannounced inspections serve the dual purpose of giving the certifying agent the opportunity to observe the activities of a specific operation without the advance notice, as provided in the annual monitoring inspections, and acting as a deterrent to other operations who may consider violating USDA regulations.

In light of these benefits, GCIAOCP will conduct unannounced inspections of 5% of their total certified operations per year as a tool in ensuring compliance with the regulations. GCIAOCP will strive to conduct unannounced inspections broadly across all certified operations, including a broad spectrum of production types and products including all geographic locations and certification scopes.

Procedure

- Operations chosen for unannounced inspections may be random, risk based, or the result of a complaint or investigation. GCIAOCP will instruct inspectors to disclose to the operation the reason that the operation was chosen for the unannounced inspection. Criteria for conducting unannounced inspections may include, but are not limited to:
    - Previous noncompliance issues
    - Complaints
    - Organic and nonorganic production or handling, especially of visually indistinguishable products/varieties
    - Risk of contamination from adjoining land use or commingling, or contamination during handling
    - Complexity of operation

- Unannounced inspections may be employed to fulfill the requirements for annual onsite monitoring inspections as required by NOP § 205.403, but only if the inspector is able to conduct a full inspection of the operation as required by this section.

- Unannounced inspections may be limited in scope, depth and breadth, and may cover only certain aspects of the operation, such as parcels, facilities, products, etc. This will be determined by the Program Manager in consultation with the Program Administrator, noted on the inspection report form and communicated in advance to the inspector.

- The GCIAOCP Policy and Procedure for conducting unannounced inspections will be provided to all certified operations and inspectors.

- Unannounced inspections, by their very nature, will not include prior notification of the inspector's arrival. However, should there be extenuating circumstances that make it impossible to conduct an unannounced inspection of the operation without prior notification (e.g. biosecurity issues), GCIAOCP may notify the operation up to four (4) hours prior to the inspector arriving onsite to ensure that an appropriate representative is present.

- GCIAOCP inspectors may collect residue samples during an unannounced inspection.

- The GCIAOCP inspector should not enter private property without explicit permission of the operation. Inspectors are required to have adequate identification, such as a business car, and/or explanatory letter from the certifying agency, to demonstrate they are acting on behalf of the certifying agent.

- If an operation refuses to allow a GCIAOCP inspector access to any part of an operation, during normal business hours, including the nonorganic portions of the operation, the operation would be in violation of NOP §205.403, and GCIAOCP will immediately issue a Notice of Noncompliance to the operation.

- An inspection report will be prepared by the inspector, reviewed by the Program Manager and Administrative Assistant and sent to the client communicating the results pursuant to NOP §205.403(e) and §205.404(a).

- GCIAOCP may charge an operation for unannounced inspections provided such fees are clearly disclosed to all certified operations in advance. Fees charged must be filed with the NOP Administrator in accordance with NOP §205.642.

Reference: NOP Guidance Document 2609.

APPENDIX C

GCIA ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure for Reviewing and Verifying the Terms of US and Other Countries' Organic Equivalency Arrangements

Policy

To foster trade of organic products among countries, the US and other designated countries have developed equivalency standards that allow products to be represented as organic in each other's markets.

Procedure

When an OSP notes that a product may be exported to another country, the Program Manager, Administrative Assistant and Reviewer will identify the country(s) and review 5-25-12 MEMO "Exporting USDA Organic Products to the European Union" and the USDA NOP web site to determine what equivalency standards must be met. Whereas this particular MEMO addresses the EU, MEMO does list various web sites that can be used as resources.

When an OSP notes that a product may be imported from another country, the Program Manager, Administrative Assistant and Reviewer will identify the country(s) and review following documents: NOP 2110-1 "Instructions for Completing an NOP Import Certificate" and the USDA NOP web site to determine what equivalency standards must be met.

Once the auditor has reviewed the documents as stated above, the auditor will note if the equivalency standards have been met and site the appropriate rule and/or guidance document and provide supporting materials.

Reference:
NOP Memo 5-25-12 – Exporting USDA Organic Products to the European Union
NOP 2110-1 – Instructions for Completing an NOP Import Certificate
USDA NOP website – www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/international-trade
Policy Memo 13

Appendix D

GCIA ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
Policy and Procedures for Conducting Investigations of Certified Operations for Possible Noncompliance Concerns

Policy

To maintain the integrity of the NOP, Certifying Agencies may need to conduct investigations of Certified Operations to determine if certain actions, products, etc. are in compliance with the submitted OSP and the NOP Act. Investigations may be, but not always, connected to complaints from the public or the NOP.

Authority for conducting investigations, and any subsequent actions, is authorized by NOP Policy Memorandum 10-1 and §205.661(a).

Procedures

When the GCIAOCP receives a complaint alleging a violation of the NOP Act, the Certified Operation will be contacted and any subsequent violations will be conducted within 30 days.

Should circumstances require more than 30 days to conduct the investigation the NOP Program Manager will be informed.

Within 45 days of receiving the complaint or longer if circumstances require, and the NOP Program Manger agrees, the NOP Program Manager will be notified of the issuances of any noncompliance or proposed adverse actions that are a result of the investigation.

The NOP 4002 “Instructions Enforcement of the USDA Organic Regulations: Penalty Matrix” and the Noncompliance and Adverse Actions Flow Chart will be used in determining corrective action(s) and procedures.

Reference: §205.661(a)
§204.504(b)(2)
NOP Memo 10-1
NOP 4002
Noncompliance and Adverse Actions Flow Chart