

National Organic Program: Structure, Responsibilities, Goals



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Standards Development & Review Branch**

National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture

Growing U.S. Organic Agriculture: Accessing the 2008 Farm Bill
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NOP Web Site

www.ams.usda.gov/nop

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Standards Development & Review Branch

- Develops new and amended NOP regulations
- Interprets the regulations
- Administers two certification cost-share programs
- Approves, reviews, and monitors State Organic Programs
- Manages the National List
 - Petition review
 - Data base management
 - FDA and EPA approvals
 - Coordination with the NOSB
- Works closely with
 - Tax and Trade Bureau (Alcohol label approval)
 - Food Safety and Inspection Service (Meat label approval)

Accreditation, Auditing, & Training Branch

- Accredits and monitors certifying agents
- Conducts certifying agent training
- Reinstates suspended certifications and accreditations
- Negotiates, monitors, services and reviews recognition and equivalence agreements with foreign governments

Compliance & Enforcement Branch

- Conducting proactive compliance and outreach activities
- Enforces organic production, handling, and labeling standards by
 - Processing and investigating complaints alleging violations
 - Issuing Notices of
 - Noncompliance
 - Proposed Suspension
 - Proposed Revocation
 - Suspension
 - Revocation

NOSB Administrative Team

- Administration of the National Organic Standards Board
 - Budget
 - Federal Advisory Committee reporting
 - Appointment of members
 - Meetings
 - Recordkeeping
 - Coordinates with NOP Director and Branch Chiefs for review, analysis, and potential implementation of NOSB recommendations

AMS Compliance & Analysis

- Assists the Compliance and Enforcement Branch with investigations
- Administers the NOP Appeals function by
 - Receiving and analyzing appeals
 - Preparing draft decisions for Administrator's approval
 - Preparing suspension or revocation referrals for prosecution by the Office of General Counsel

Audit, Review & Compliance Branch

- Conducts document adequacy reviews and reports results
- Conducts onsite compliance audits and reports results
- Reviews and comments on proposed noncompliance corrective actions resulting from adequacy reviews and onsite compliance audits
- Bills and collects fees for NOP accreditation services

Standards Development & Review Branch

Goals FY 09

- Pasture final rule
- Dairy replacement animals proposed rule
- Materials proposed and final rules
- Cost share reinvention
- Materials review reinvention
- Review both State Organic Programs
- Participate in Tax and Trade Bureau Expo 2009

Cost Share Reinvention

Goals FY 09

- Issue news releases and Federal Register notices announcing programs in August of each year
- Issue cooperative agreements in August of each year
- Assure that State reports are received complete and on time
- Approve all requests for funds or request missing information in a timely manner
- Respond to all questions on the cost-share programs in a timely manner

Cost Share Reinvention

Goals FY 09

- Develop and maintain reader friendly data sheets which are updated regularly
- Implement a marketing program designed to increase annual producer/handler participation
- Complete a draft of the annual report to Congress by February 1, and issue the final report by March 1
- Issue a program status report to the Branch Chief and Division Director regularly

Cost Share Reinvention

Functions to be addressed include

- News Releases
- Federal Register Notices
- Cooperative Agreements
- State Reports
- Fund Requests
- Program Questions
- Data Sheets
- Marketing Program
- Annual Report to Congress
- Program Status Reports
- Audit Program

Accreditation, Auditing, & Training Branch

Goals FY 09

- Process and as appropriate grant accreditation renewals (new applications and deferred decisions)
- Develop online certifying agent training
- Review at least 2 recognition agreements
- Work on Canadian equivalency

Online Certifier Training

- Under development by
 - AMS Training Institute distance learning specialists
 - Web design experts
- Estimated completion
 - Within 12 months
- Objectives
 - Web-based training modules based on NOP regulation
 - Accessible worldwide
 - Clear learning objectives and testing capabilities

Compliance & Enforcement Branch

Goals FY 09

- Establish internal management system
- Process and investigate complaints alleging violations and initiate enforcement actions as appropriate
- Strengthen partnership with other Federal food and agriculture agencies
- Explore areas of collaboration with other Federal food and agriculture agencies
- Plan, develop, and implement outreach and education activities
- Staff training: Criminal investigation and lead auditor

Plan, develop, and implement outreach and education activities to address specific issues by:

- Attending trade shows and meetings
- Conducting compliance reviews and monitoring visits
- Participating in Compliance & Analysis investigations and Audit, Review & Compliance audits
- Analyzing complaint trends
- Identifying and focusing on violations affecting the entire system

Contact Information

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NOP Web Site

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