

# CCOF Become Certified Organic

*When you produce healthful organic foods,  
you make a commitment to your customers.  
CCOF honors your commitment by offering  
certification your customers can trust.*

## Be Recognized for Your Commitment to Organic

The only way to become truly recognized for a commitment to producing and manufacturing organically is to become certified organic. Organic certification enhances the value of a product and makes it more marketable to the health- and environmentally-conscious consumer.



The presence of the USDA and/or CCOF seal on a product guarantees to the consumer that the food they are purchasing has been grown and produced to federally regulated, U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA), standards and that it has been inspected. Research shows that there is increasing consumer confidence in the USDA seal and that it represents someone working behind the scenes to ensure their food is safe and healthy.\* CCOF is happy to be that someone, we are proud of the role we play in ensuring the integrity of organic in the eyes of the consumer and we are pleased to provide these six simple steps to certification.

## Six Simple Steps to Becoming “Certified Organic”

### 1. Complete and Submit the Application

Complete your Organic System Plan (OSP) and application. The CCOF certification application guides you through the required organic standards and helps you document your organic operation. Applications are available for download at [www.ccof.org/downlogo.php](http://www.ccof.org/downlogo.php), by emailing [ccof@ccof.org](mailto:ccof@ccof.org) or calling (831) 423-2263. Get started now.

### 2. Review Stage 1

Your application will be reviewed by a CCOF certification specialist to assess whether you are ready to move forward towards organic certification. If so, you will be assigned to a Regional Service Representative (RSR) who will arrange for a trained inspector to come to your operation to perform an on-site inspection.

### 3. Inspection

The purpose of the inspection is to verify that what is detailed in your Organic System Plan and application is what is happening in practice. The inspector will submit an inspection report to CCOF.

### 4. Review Stage 2

CCOF certification specialists will review the inspection report alongside your initial application and OSP. Any issues of non-compliance or requests for further information will be addressed with you.

### 5. Certification Status Notification

Upon successful completion of the review process, you will receive a letter from CCOF to inform you of your certification status and any requirements for ongoing certification.



### 6. Annual Renewal Process

To remain certified in good standing, every operation must be re-inspected annually. Each year your certification will be renewed and annual certification fees are due. When CCOF grants an operation a status of Organic Certification, it issues a federal license that will be held by you, the client, until it is withdrawn, suspended or revoked.

\* Natural Marketing Institute (NMI)



# CCOF Become Certified Organic – continued

## FAQ's

### Q: How long does organic certification take?

**A:** CCOF generally recommends that you start the process several months before harvest or launch of your organic product. You can expect certification to take up to 90 days. CCOF understands that you may be pressed for time or require certification by a certain deadline. In these cases, CCOF offers expedited services; see page 12 for more information. An Expedited Certification Service form can be downloaded at [www.ccof.org/forms.php](http://www.ccof.org/forms.php). Alternatively, call us at (831) 423-2263.

### Q: How much does CCOF organic certification cost?

**A:** CCOF certification is competitively priced to both provide superior value and allow new farms, processors and other businesses to easily enter the organic marketplace. In summary, certification costs are based on 1) an initial application fee, 2) the cost of inspection and 3) an annual certification fee. Small farms and processors are routinely certified for between \$400 and \$1500. Larger operations receive competitive rates while maintaining personalized service. Additional detailed information is available online at [www.ccof.org/fees.php](http://www.ccof.org/fees.php) and in CCOF Manual 1 in the application package and CD.

### Q: How can I transfer my certification to CCOF?

**A:** CCOF offers a certification transfer program to assist operations that wish to take advantage of CCOF's superior services and benefits. The program allows you to start the certification process at any time and decide the date the CCOF certification becomes effective. You only begin paying certification fees at that time, ensuring that

there is no lapse in certification while never paying dual certification costs. In addition, because CCOF understands that labeling changes are often the most expensive factor in a certifier change, we will allow reasonable time frames to modify your existing labels.

### Q: Why should I be Certified Organic with CCOF?

**A:** CCOF has been leading the organic marketplace since 1973. As a trailblazer in the development of organic agriculture and certification, CCOF has been a critical player in the development of the certification process and organic standards. The CCOF name and seal have been trusted as the mark of organic integrity by consumers and buyers worldwide for over 35 years.

Today, CCOF offers excellent value in certification through cost effective, full service certification and trade association benefits not found anywhere else. Our comprehensive range of member programs and benefits are designed to help your business succeed. We keep you informed about important certification standards changes and marketing opportunities. We promote you locally, nationally and internationally through our print and online directories, marketing and PR initiatives. We provide media opportunities for our members to help you gain increased recognition and celebrate your achievements.

Additionally, CCOF organizes educational and community outreach activities with the aim of expanding support and acceptance of organic foods and agriculture and growing the marketplace you depend on, while our policy and advocacy efforts strive to enhance and protect the integrity of organic.

*For more information on the activities of our trade association visit [www.ccof.org/atwork.php](http://www.ccof.org/atwork.php).*

If you have any questions or require clarification, please don't hesitate to contact us or visit our certification FAQ's at [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org)