



Organic Food Production

IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK

The organic market is expanding at a rapid rate, and buyers demand more organic products than can be supplied domestically. Major retailers such as Costco, Walmart, and Whole Foods Market have been increasing stock of organic goods and opening doors for food companies nationally. Some of the biggest areas of growth in the California processed foods arena include fresh and frozen juices, breakfast cereals, processed grains, coffee, and tea.¹ Processors and co-packers have a unique business opportunity to get into the organic market and help convert raw goods to shelf-ready food products to meet the demand and increase profitability. Here's what you need to know.

No special facilities or equipment needed.

You just need to have systems and procedures to prevent commingling and cross-contamination between organic products and non-organic when using common equipment.

You could be certified in as few as 90 days.

For organic processors, the certification process usually takes about three months. If you need quicker service, CCOF has an Expedited Certification Program. The three-year transition periods you may have heard of only apply to land that has been farmed non-organically.

How much does it cost?

Small organic food processors are routinely certified for \$1,500 or less in the first year and approximately \$1,000 in later years. Mid- and large-size operations receive similarly competitive fees. Additionally, the federal farm bill offers a refund on organic certification fees-called Organic Certification Cost Share-that reimburses up to \$750 of those fees. Contact us to get a fee estimate.

CCOF helps guide you through the certification process.

While getting certified to the USDA organic standards is a regulatory procedure, CCOF provides assistance to guide you through completing the application forms. Once your application is reviewed and we can clearly understand your operations on paper, the inspection is a straightforward matter of confirming that your written process matches what you are doing in practice.



There is a market for certified organic co-packers.

CCOF receives calls throughout the year from producers looking for co-packers who can make their certified organic products. Our online directory of members at www.ccof.org/directory lets members include information about co-packing services offered, making it easy for potential customers to find you.

Make organic versions of your current products.

If you are able to meet the requirement of separating organic products from conventional products, it can be as simple as sourcing certified organic ingredients. There are a number of resources to help you find organic ingredients, including the USDA Organic Integrity Database at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/integrity>.

Ready? We're happy to help.

Contact our applicant specialists at getcertified@ccof.org or (831) 346-6240 for more information.

¹Organic Processed Product Registration Program Report, Handout distributed at California Organic Products Advisory Committee meeting, May 19, 2016