Organic Certification

It’s Easier than you think!

Scott and Laura Murray     Murray Farms, Inc.
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- Organic Agriculture Consulting and Organic Inspection Services
- Scott has been an organic farmer for 46 years in California, Hawaii & Mexico
- Laura has been an Organic Inspector for 14 years after farming for 18 years
- We specialize in helping new growers become Organic and help them to maximize the utilization of their farm’s assets. We work with growers to improve their organic practices and to add innovative crops.
Questions for the attendees…

• Please raise your hand to answer our questions – we would like to know a little bit about you…
• Are you a fruit grower? Which fruits are you growing?
• Are you a row crop grower? Which crops are you growing?
• Who is an Organic Grower?
• Who is interested in becoming an Organic Grower?
• What do you know about becoming Organic?
The NOP Rules:

The National Organic Program (NOP) is managed by the USDA for the Organic Industry.

There are over 30 third party accredited certification organizations that certify Organic Farms to the NOP standards.

You get to choose a certifier that meets your individual needs:
The word ORGANIC is regulated by use rules:

• If you package your product for sale off of the farm you must use an approved label to inform the public about your product.
• The Label requires several components such as the farm name, with the certifier name under the address panel.
• You must list a certifier if you say Organic. The USDA and Certifier Logos can also be included on your label.
Allowed Organic Materials:

All of the inputs that you apply on an Organic Farm must be reviewed and approved for use on an Organic Farm! This helps to protect your certification.

You must keep detailed records of all inputs that you purchase. OMRI and WSDA review materials for the industry.
Details of Materials Allowed for Organic Production vs Prohibited Materials:

• Allowed materials for Organic Production are reviewed to make sure they meet the rules of Organic Production set by the NOP.

• No Synthetic materials, No GMO materials, No sewage sludge, No Irradiation

• Look for the OMRI or the WSDA symbols. Most suppliers are familiar with these materials.
Natural Resources and Biodiversity:

The Rodale Institute has conducted a 44 year side by side study of Conventional production with Organic Production. The organic fields have a very biodiverse environment that supports beneficial insects and pollinators and has a mix of native species and animals.
Organic production has been proven to produce similar crops to Conventional:

In this 44 year to date study they have found no significant difference in production yields in good rain years. In Drought years the Conventional yield would drop up to 80% and the Organic yield would drop 20% due to organic matter built up in the soil.
Required Record Keeping for Organic:

- Input Application records can be as simple as an entry on a calendar or a complex spreadsheet
- Keep and organize all receipts for Inputs purchased for the farm
- Sales Records, tie to Harvest Records which should identify the area picked
- Natural resources observations and improvement actions
- Records are the key to showing your organic practices and materials
Your Organic System Plan (OSP)

- The Organic System Plan is the basic building block of creating an organic farming operation.
- Seed/Transplants/Planting stock Greenhouse & Transplant Growing
- Soil Fertility building practices, Compost production or purchase and other input application
- Pest Control on the farm and in the packing shed – Practices before materials
- A good farm map shows production areas and neighboring activities
Record Keeping is the key:

- Harvest, packing and shipping records
- Invoices with Organic listed for each certified item
- Certification Costs, Application fee, Inspection Fees and USDA Cost Share

- California Organic Registration is a separate program that all California Organic growers are required to participate in and are sometimes required to be State inspected.
Try new cropping systems such as High Density Avocado plantings

These avocado trees are planted as a High Density spacing of 6 feet apart…
Try something new to stay ahead of the market place

This is a photo of the 2015 interplanting of Coffee into a stumped and pruned growing system with 50 year old avocado trees.
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Organic Certification, Farm Design and Management, Coffee and Avocado High Density Planting, Conservation & Natural Resources