



## National Organic Program

### **Basics and background on the USDA National Organic Program (NOP)**

The USDA National Organic Program is a marketing program with established regulations and monitoring guidelines: The NOP is a marketing program housed within the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) was passed by congress in 1990. The OFPA required the USDA to develop national standards for organically produced agricultural products to assure consumers that agricultural products marketed as organic meet consistent, uniform standards. The OFPA and the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations require that agricultural products labeled as organic originate from farms or handling operations certified by a state or private entity that has been accredited by USDA. Neither the OFPA nor the NOP regulations address food safety or nutrition. More at: [www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Consumers/Consumerhome.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Consumers/Consumerhome.html)

**Get Certified: Contact a Certifying Agent**

The first step to becoming certified is to contact a USDA Accredited Certifying Agent.

Farmers and handlers wishing to become certified will be asked to submit specific information to the agent, such as: Type of operation. History of substances applied to land for the previous 3 years. Organic products being grown, raised, or processed. Applicant's organic plan, including practices and substances used in production, monitoring practices and record-keeping system.

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