



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**P.O. Box 42560 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2560 • (360) 902-1800**

December 2011

Dear Certified Organic Producer –

Attached is your 2012 organic certification renewal packet. The packet includes the forms necessary to renew your certification for another year. To avoid a \$100 per month late fee, complete the packet and mail the forms along with your annual fee to our office before the **February 1, 2012** deadline.

Annual certification renewal is a requirement under the National Organic Standards. Failure to renew, or to notify our office of your wish to withdraw from certification, may result in compliance action in addition to late fees.

**If you have any questions about completing your certification renewal packet, please contact us at (360) 902-1805 or email: [organic@agr.wa.gov](mailto:organic@agr.wa.gov).**

**Note that our forms are also available for download from our website and can be found at:**

<http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic>. However, if you choose to complete forms electronically please print them out and mail them to our office along with your certification fee. Two of the required forms (Renewal Application and Site Verification (AGR 2158)) are generated from our database specifically for your operation and therefore cannot be found online.

*Below are some important items we would like to share with you as we start the new season together.*

#### **WSDA Brand Name Material List**

The WSDA Organic Program maintains a list of products that we have determined meet the requirements under the National Organic Standards. Manufacturers and distributors of these products have specifically requested a review of their formulations and manufacturing processes. WSDA's list is not a comprehensive list of all materials that are allowed for use in organic agriculture, but WSDA certified organic operators can use products that appear on this list and maintain confidence that the use of these products will not jeopardize certification.

Historically, we have enclosed a hard copy of our Brand Name Material List (BNML) with every certification renewal packet. This enclosure is quite costly, and hard copy materials lists have inherent limitations in ensuring our certified operations have the most current information when selecting products for use in organic production. As part of our effort to reduce our program's impact on resources, reduce confusion about materials that are approved at the point you want to use them, and therefore to more effectively serve our customers, we have decided to only provide a hard copy list to certified operations who request one. This change will save our program thousands of dollars in printing and mailing costs and will ensure that you, the certified operation, has the most accurate and current information available.

WSDA's Brand Name Material List is always available on our website at <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/MaterialsLists.aspx#Materials>.

This list is updated online regularly and we will provide notice when updates are made through our electronic newsletter. We are also happy to provide a hard copy of our current list to operations that do not have access to the internet and make a request to our office. Please contact us at (360) 902-1805 if you would like a hardcopy list of the input materials that are currently registered by WSDA Organic Program as approved for use in organic production.

*WSDA does not provide any guarantee or warranty for materials included on this list, nor do we offer an endorsement to any product.*

### **International Organic Program**

The Organic Program offers international certification in order to meet export market access requirements. The International Organic Program (IOP) evaluates crops and products according to the European, Japanese, and Canadian organic standards, in addition to maintaining compliance with ISO Guide 65 accreditation requirements. If your organic crops are exported to the European Union, Japan, or Canada, or become an ingredient in an organic product that is exported to these international markets, you may wish to obtain this additional certification.

Typically organic producers that participated in the International Organic Program the previous season receive an International application packet with their US renewal packet. This year however, WSDA will be sending International Organic Program packets in January under separate cover and with an extended due date. Please be sure to contact our office with any questions or concerns about your international certification.

### **Provide Complete Information Early, Save Time Later**

Organic certification is an evaluation of an operation's practices and procedures for protecting the organic integrity of a crop or product. Certification begins each year with the submission of an organic system plan that is developed by the producer, and agreed upon by their certification agency. The role of the inspection is to then evaluate the accuracy of the agreed plan by reporting on the actual practices observed during the inspection. Therefore the more detail that can be provided in your annual renewal forms, the smoother the certification process becomes.

Please read instructions carefully and provide as much accurate detail as possible about your operation when completing renewal paperwork. Your thoughtful and complete answers will reduce further requests for information, and therefore expedite the issuance of your updated certificate. ***If in doubt, our dedicated staff is here to assist you in the certification process.*** Our goals for the certification year include:

- Obtain complete information from producers prior to the busy production season in order to prevent delays in the certification process or in identification of compliance issues.
- Provide clear information and guidance in our communication and forms to ensure producers are prepared for the annual inspection; ***Tips and guidance are highlighted throughout our forms.***
- Reduce redundancies and unnecessary questions or requests.
- Ensure efficient use of our natural resources and the program's assets (staff time, certification fees).

### **National Organic Certification Cost Share Program**

The 2008 Farm Bill included a reauthorization of the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program. **This program reimburses 75% of the costs of organic certification up to a maximum payment of \$750 per each scope you are certified under.** Certification scopes include crops, livestock, and handling/processing. Last year WSDA reimbursed the full amount allocated for Washington State - \$565,000. We have been approved to reimburse up to \$600,000 this next year.

The attached Cost Share Application is valid for Washington operations that obtain organic certification or update their certification for the 2012 season. Simply submit the Cost Share Application when you pay your annual certification fees. Once we receive your Cost Share Application we will verify that you have a valid organic

certificate and issue a reimbursement check. *Late, expedited, and international fees are not reimbursable under the National Cost Share Program.*

### **Organic Publications and Fact Sheets**

The Organic Program has put together several publications and certification factsheets to assist operations with the requirements for organic production and handling. All of our publications are available on both the Crop Producer and Livestock Producer pages of our website: <http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/default.htm>. Hardcopies of publications can also be sent to you upon request. Our current publications include:

- **Organic Rules and Regulations Book.** Includes the National Organic Standards and Washington State's statutes and rules related to organic certification. Explanations of organic certification fees are also specified within the publication.
- **Guide to Organic Certification.** Provides information on all aspects of organic certification including crops, seed requirements, livestock standards, labeling, and processing and handling requirements. The guide also provides a list of resources for marketing, production and information about the expanding community of organic agriculture.
- **Seed, Annual Seedling and Planting Stock Fact Sheet (AGR 3000).** Includes details about the requirements for complying with Section 205.204 of the National Organic Standards.
- **Organic Greenhouse Guidelines Fact Sheet (AGR 3002).** Includes an overview of how greenhouse operations are evaluated for compliance with the National Organic Standards.
- **Treated Wood in Organic Production Fact Sheet (AGR 3003).** Provides details on the certification criteria for evaluating the use of treated wood in organic production.
- **Crop Rotation Guidelines Fact Sheet (AGR 3004).** Clarifies the organic production requirements for WSDA certified operations to meet the crop rotation standard as it relates to soil fertility, managing plant nutrients, erosion control, and the management practices for preventing crop pests, weeds, and diseases.

Thank you for your continued interest in certification with Washington State Department of Agriculture. Feel free to contact any of the Organic Program staff, with your questions, comments or concerns. We look forward to working with you again in 2012!

### *WSDA Organic Program Staff*

**We are proud to be your organic certification agency!**

**Thank you for being one of our partners.**

#### ***Facts and statistics about WSDA Organic Program:***

- In 1985 Washington State Legislature defined Organic.
- In 1988 WSDA began certifying 68 organic farms in response to farmer requests and became the first State Department to provide Organic Certification.
- Processor certification added in 1990. Handler certification added in 1992.
- WSDA became accredited by USDA to enforce the National Organic Standards in 2002.
- The Organic Program is funded by your certification fees; no general funds or tax dollars are received.
- An Organic Advisory Board guides the program and is made up of members of the organic industry.
- In 1988 the program certified 2,000 acres; in 2010 over 104,500 acres were certified organic.
- WSDA certifies more than 1,100 operations in accordance with the National Organic Standards and registers over 750 input materials as compliant with these national requirements.
- WSDA is currently the largest state operated certification agency in the country in terms of number of operations and acreage.