



Washington State Dept. of Agriculture Organic Food Program

Certification Fact Sheet

Organic and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA) Organic Program is authorized by USDA to certify operations according to the USDA National Organic Standards. WSDA Fruit and Vegetable Program offers a GAP auditing service to allow you to demonstrate to customers that you are following USDA's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for on-farm food safety. A Good Handling Practices (GHP) audit is also available to confirm that handling and processing are done in accordance with USDA GHP standards.

Organic certification is required in order to sell, label, or represent a crop as "organic." Operations are certified based on the type of business and the products that they want to market with an organic claim (crops, livestock, handling or processing). GAP audits are voluntary, but may be required to gain access to certain markets. An operation may choose to be certified for any or all of the scopes that apply to the operation; the GAP auditor will evaluate only those sections of your operation that you have specifically requested to have audited.

As with organic certification's system plan, GAP is structured around implementation of standard operating procedures and requires thorough recordkeeping. While organic standards require operations to prevent contamination of organic crops from prohibited input materials and prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products, GAP certification ensures that the operation is following practices to minimize the risk of microbial contamination of crops. Both regulations cover practices from planting through harvest, packing, storage and transportation.

If you run a certified organic farm and are looking to expand your marketing options with GAP certification, consider that you are probably already implementing a system that could easily be adapted to meet GAP requirements. You may even be keeping some of the records required by GAP. A basic comparison of Organic and GAP requirements is outlined in this factsheet. This list is not an all-inclusive list of requirements, but instead a useful starting point in evaluating if GAP certification is right for you.



	Organic	USDA Organic Regulation	GAP	USDA GAP/GHP Audit Checklist
Traceability	Begins with seeds, ends with product distribution. Records must be maintained regarding all activities and transactions.	§205.103	Begins in planting field and ends with buyer “one step forward, one step back”.	General Question G-1
Mock Recall	Not required	None	The operator must conduct mock recall 12 months or less prior to GAP audit, or during the audit itself.	General Question G-2
Water Analysis	Analysis not specifically required. However, producer must ensure no prohibited material contamination of crops via irrigation water and must ensure organic practices do not contribute to contamination of water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.	§205.202 §205.203	The operation must have a water risk assessment in place.	General Question G-3; Part 1 Farm Review 1-3 and 1-4
Land Use Risk Assessment	Not required, but land must be free of prohibited materials for three years prior to the harvest of the first organic crop.	§205.202	The operation must document a previous land use risk assessment.	Part 1 Farm Review 1-23
Raw Manure Management	Raw manure must be composted unless it is applied to land used for a crop not intended for human consumption or is incorporated into the soil not less than 90 or 120 days prior to harvest (depending on crop).	§205.203(1)	Raw manure must be incorporated at least two weeks prior to planting and at least 120 days prior to harvest. Cannot be applied to crops harvested within 120 days of planting.	Part 1 Farm Review 1-14 through 1-21
Biosolids	Prohibited	§205.105 §205.203(e)(2)	Biosolids are allowed with proper management.	Part 1 Farm Review 1-18 through 1-21
Lot Numbers	Lot numbers recommended.	205.307(b)	Lot numbers recommended.	General Question G-1, Part I Farm Review 1-26, Part 2 Field Harvest & Packing 2-21

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Packing Shed Pest Control	Records must be maintained to verify preventative practices are in place prior to use of an input. Records must verify prohibited materials have not contaminated organic products.	§205.103 §205.271	An animal and pest exclusion plan must be maintained, and records and inspection reports must be available for review.	Part 3 House Packing Facility 3-30 - 3-32; Part 4 Storage and Transportation 4-14 & 4-15
Financial Records	Records regarding all activities and transactions related to organic products must be maintained.	§205.103	Financial records are not required.	None
Storage Records	Records regarding all activities and transactions related to organic products must be maintained, and must verify organic products are not contaminated or commingled during storage.	§205.103	Routine sanitation records are required.	Part 4 Storage & Transportation 4-19 through 4-22
Transport	Records must be maintained to verify organic products are not contaminated or commingled during transportation, this includes transportation by 3 rd party.	§205.103 §205.272	Routine sanitation records, along with a plan for transport temperature control, odor control, and cleanliness are required.	Part 4 Storage & Transportation 4-24 through 4-27
Does my certificate expire?	Certification does not expire unless the operation surrenders their certificate or it is suspended or revoked by a certifier. Annual recertification is required.	§205.404 §205.406	Certificates are granted annually after a successful audit. An immediate food safety risk identified at time of audit or through an unannounced visit can result in revocation of certification.	None

For Organic Certification questions or application forms:

Washington State Department of Agriculture
Organic Food Program
PO Box 42560; 1111 Washington Street SE
Olympia, WA 98504-2560
(360) 902-1805, organic@agr.wa.gov
<http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic>

For GAP questions or application forms:

Washington State Department of Agriculture
Organic Food Program
PO Box 42560; 1111 Washington Street SE
Olympia, WA 98504-2560
Yakima District Office: (509) 249-6900
Wenatchee District Office: (509) 662-6161
<http://agr.wa.gov/Inspection/FVInspection/GAPGHP.aspx>

Resources:

USDA National Organic Program (USDA NOP) and links to the USDA organic regulations
Phone: 202-720-3252
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop>

WSDA Bridging the GAPs
Education and Outreach about USDA GAP/GHP Audit Program in Washington State
GAPedu@agr.wa.gov
<http://agr.wa.gov/Inspection/GAPGHP/>

