

Organic Inspection and Consulting



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(Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education)

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inspection vs. consulting

- The picture showed a sunny peak in sky
- & another reflected in the placid lake water
- ...
- In organic inspection it is as clear (in the sky)
- & as it is “lurking” on the surface (in the lake)
- Very **clear directives**, yet “difficult path to walk”

NO consulting - while inspecting

- ***NOP*** (National Organic Program of USDA) and ***Certifiers (CB)*** expect every Organic Inspector to ...
- Be Bound by Confidentiality Agreement (signed)
- Only Discuss & Clarify general Standards questions
- Not give specifics: productivity/sourcing/methods

NO consulting - while inspecting



- Phrase taught by IOIA's internationally-recognized inspector-training program ...
- When asked, “So what or how do I fix or implement ...?”
- The only accurate answer, “That is for you to determine ...!”

NO consulting - while inspecting

- One is allowed to refer to reputable sources:
- **ATTRA** (The National Sustainable Ag Information Service managed by NCAT and funded by USDA)
- **OMRI** (Organic Materials Review Institute) ratings
- **MOSES** (Midwest Organic & Sustainable Ed Service)
- **SARE** (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education)
- And **now** ... The **NRCS** County Conservationist
- But **NOT** ... Advice to overcome compliance barrier

NO consulting - while inspecting

- At the beginning of **each year** - Each certifier sends out **forms to have filled-in & signed** - Prior to any work assignments being considered or issued ...
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Conflict of Interest Agreement

NOP vs. Certifiers

- **NOP** has 55 ACCREDITED Certifiers in the US
- Each Certifier is audited every year by NOP
- Each Certifier INTERPRETS the NOP differently
- Each Certifier has very unique & different forms
- The DOCUMENTATION requirements are huge
- *I work independently for about a dozen different CB's*

NO consulting - while inspecting

■ **Confidentiality Agreement** (to sign on **every** report form)

■ **Confidentiality:** *The information contained in this report is confidential among the inspector, the inspected party, and the Certifier. This report does not constitute certification or consultation. All observations and compliance assessments made are based on current Standards of the certification program(s), and are derived directly from observations, review of documents made available, and operator interview by the Inspector.*

■ *By signing this form, I attest that I, in my capacity as inspector for the above noted operation, affirm that I do not have an interest that conflicts with those of the above client's case. I also attest to the fact that the inspection covered the programs noted above and that I understand the standards/regulations concerning these programs.*

NO consulting - while inspecting

- **Conflict of Interest Agreement or Declaration:**
- **Financial Interest** (Direct / Indirect / Perceived)
- **Consulting Service** (Direct / Indirect / Perceived)
- **Family Member or Business** (Direct / Indirect / Perceived)
- **Signed & dated** (every year, as it may change)

Organic Inspections

- The farmer must annually submit an **OSP** (Organic System Plan) to the CB (Certifying Body)
- The CB reviews the OSP (may ask for clarification)
- The CB assigns an inspector (to inspect in 3-5 weeks)
- The Inspector verifies the OSP via observations, walk- or drive-around, discussions, and audit trails
- The report submitted is then basis for certification determination

Organic Inspection

- Component parts of a CROP Inspection Report (1):
- General Information ... new/renew; cert. program
- Certification History ... been suspended/revoked?
- Prior Year Non-Compliances ... major or minor *
- Farm Profile ... Organic/Transitional/Conventional
- Organic Crop Profile ... Crops/fields/acres /Parallel

Organic Inspection

- Component parts of a CROP Inspection Report (2):
- OSP Verification ... accurate/current/maps/inputs
- General ... Crop status/Prohibited/Soil erosion
- Seeds ... Organic/Untreated/Inoculated/Non-GMO
- Fertility & Nutrient Management ... Tests/Inputs
- Manure ... on-farm or off-farm (w/ affidavit)/dates /amounts

Organic Inspection

- Component parts of a CROP Inspection Report (3):
- Compost ... on-farm or off-farm (verification)
- Pest, Weed & Disease Control ... Management/Spray
- Water ... Source/Quality/Irrigation/Crop Washing
- Adjoining Land Use ... Drift/Signage/Buffer (protect)
- Split/Parallel Production ... Visually Distinguishable

Organic Inspection

- Component parts of a CROP Inspection Report (4):
- Equipment ... Owned/Custom-Handling/Clean-Out
- Post-Harvest Handling ... Storage/Sanitation/Pests
- Storage ... On- or Off-farm/Organically Designated
- Transportation ... Clean-Truck Affidavit/Lot #
- Audit Trails ... From seed thru production to buyer

Organic Inspection

- Components of LIVESTOCK Inspection Report (A):
- Organic Livestock Profile ... Species (Dairy/Beef) ... Cows/Heifers/Calves ... Breeding/Slaughter Stock
- Origin of Livestock or Poultry ... Organic/Transition
- Living Conditions .. Shade/Shelter/Air/Water/Light
- Feed & Supplements ... Rations/Pasture/Mixing
- Animal Health ... Treatments (=non-org.)/Vaccines

Organic Inspection

- Components of LIVESTOCK Inspection Report (B):
- Physical Alterations ... When/How/Why/Stress?
- Reproduction ... Natural or AI (Artificial Insemination)
- Slaughter .. State/Federal/Organic Plant/Ownership
- Milk Handling ... System/Sanitation/Cleaning
- Egg Handling ... Collection/Cleaning/ Storage

Organic Inspection



Certifiers with clients in Missouri:

Yesterday's field trip: Schrock, OEFFFA; Graznak, QCS; Rice, OneCert; & Mayberry uses OEFFFA.

Personally, in MO I have inspected for: OCIA (has chapter OCIA-MO1) and OCIA, Intl., MOSA, OneCert, OTCO, QAI, COI, NICS, ICO, GOA, OEFFFA, ICS, & CCOF

Certifications available for NOP, EU, COR & JAS

Organic Inspection

“Don’t like going to meetings”, said Mayberry

Organic support: MOA, ACRES, MOSES, co-operatives (KOPA & MWOFC), Organic Valley/Prairie Coop, KCU....., “Grow Local/Eat Local”, Door to Door Organics, & CSAs

Organic Consulting

My consulting portfolio consists of ... (1)

Organic Inspections (*guess that's why I'm here*) ... of crops/
livestock / handlers / processors /retailers

NRCS Transition to Organic Plans (with crops & vegetables)

Organic Certification Counseling (with clients in Iowa)

Organic Conversion of Poultry Consulting (in Mexico)

CNMP's, NMP's, CP's in many states (as a subcontractor)

Organic Consulting

- My consulting portfolio also consists of ... (2)
- Animal Welfare Audits (Dairy/Beef/Swine/Poultry)
- Sustainable Agriculture Audits (Large Greenhouses)
- Environmental Consulting (as far away as Kazakhstan)
- Nutritional Consulting (as far away as China, India & Thailand)
- Management Consulting (in US, Russia, Moldova & Ukraine)

Organic Consulting

- The “MIND-SET” Change in Mexico - Irreconcilable with their current commercial cage layer operation ... after all birds on the floor with outside runs and bedding requires a very different bird management.
- The “Inspector vs. Auditor” Concept in Iowa - Tough for the staff, who was used to financial management where “every penny could & would be accounted for” versus an inspector’s perception of what’s “good, bad or ugly” in a field, crop, livestock setting.



Consulting - in general

- Consultants - with ample experience - can save the client time, energy, hassle, and expense ...
- How do you find a “cost-effective” (regardless of hourly rate) consultant? Great question ... (Guess someone should start an Angie’s List for Agriculture).
- Have been a member of ASAC (American Society of Agricultural Consultants) since 1977 ... because of Impeccable Standard, Code of Ethics, & Networking.
- IOIA (International Organic Inspector’s Association) member, too.

Organic Inspection

- *In Summary ...*
- Organic Inspection & Consulting are two very different concepts, that must not be inter-mingled, or to use a favorite organic term: ***“In order to maintain the organic integrity there can be no commingling ...”***

Organic Inspection & Consulting

- Thank you for your interest ...
- Any questions ?



Organic Inspection & Consulting

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