

Organic Matters

Semi-Annual Newsletter | Summer/Fall 2025



2 | From Farmer to Mentor:
*Andrea Davis-Cetina
Champions Organic Growth
Through TOPP*

5 | From Field to Flakes:
*Bringing Organic Oat
Production to Pennsylvania*

6 | Speaking Up for Organic:
*Practical Ways to Make a
Policy Impact*





Organically Speaking

Advancing Organic Together



CHRIS SOLT, INCOMING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with deep gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility that I step into the role of Executive Director for Pennsylvania Certified Organic. PCO is more than an organization – it is a community of farmers, processors, businesses, and advocates bound together by a shared belief that food and farming should honor the earth, nurture people, and sustain livelihoods. I am humbled to join in that work.

My own path has been shaped by a lifelong passion for organic standards and practices, and a deep respect for the visionaries and pioneers who built the organic movement from the ground up. I believe small farms and independently owned businesses are not just vital to our economy – they are the heartbeat of our rural and urban communities, the stewards of biodiversity, and the innovators who continually push the boundaries of what is possible in sustainable agriculture.

As Joe Dickson, our president and outgoing interim executive director, mentioned in the *Message from the President* in this publication, PCO is in the midst of positive transformation. We are building on a foundation of rigor and integrity, while also refining how we serve you – making certification smoother, more responsive, and more supportive. I am honored to carry this work forward, with a commitment to organic innovation, radical inclusivity, and removing barriers so that more farmers, businesses, and communities can participate fully in the organic journey.

For me, organic certification is never the finish line – it is the beginning of a much bigger conversation. It is the first step in a shared commitment to the health of our soil, the welfare of our animals, and the dignity and resilience of the farmers and workers who form the backbone of our food system. Together, we can continue to strengthen that commitment while exploring new opportunities to deepen our impact.

In the year ahead, my focus will be on listening and learning – from you, our clients and partners – so that PCO can more authentically, effectively, and efficiently respond to your needs and represent your voices across the country. I am excited to connect with you, to hear your stories, and to work alongside you in shaping the future of organic.

Thank you for welcoming me into this extraordinary community. I look forward to what we will accomplish together.

– **Chris Solt**
Incoming Executive Director
Pennsylvania Certified Organic



106 School Street, Suite 201
Spring Mills, PA 16875

phone: 814.422.0251 / fax: 814.422.0255

email: pco@paorganic.org

web: paorganic.org



106 School Street, Suite 201
Spring Mills, PA 16875

phone: 814.422.0251 / fax: 814.422.0255
email: pco@paorganic.org
web: paorganic.org
facebook.com/PAorganic

PCO BOARD MEMBERS

President
Joe Dickson, *Lot 49 Advisors, VT*
Vice President
Lisa de Lima, *Industry Advisor, MD*
Treasurer
William (Bill) Kitsch, *Ephrata National Bank, PA*
Secretary
Katherine DiMatteo, *Independent Consultant, MA*
Nominating Committee Chair
Betty Harper, *Penn State University, PA*
Gwendolyn Wyard, *Strengthening Organic Systems, OR*
Chris Anderson, *Sustainable Strategies, VA*
Jaclyn Bowen, *Independent Consultant, MI*
Joe Miller, *Kalona SuperNatural, Newville, PA*

PCO STAFF

LEADERSHIP TEAM
Chris Solt, *Executive Director*
Diana Underwood, *Director of Operations*
Edy Penn, *Human Resources Director*
Leilani Durand, *TOPP Director*
Alison Garber, *Executive Support and Communications Manager*
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
Wren Brudon, *Administrative Coordinator*
FINANCE TEAM
Elizabeth Leah, *Deputy Finance Director*
Jana Casteel, *Accounting and Grants Manager*
Shawnee Matis, *Staff Accountant*

SALES AND MARKETING
Craig Shroyer, *Lead Specialist*
CERTIFICATION TEAM
Corinne Wesh, *Certification Deputy Director*
Jordon Downton, *Certification Program Manager – Crops and Livestock*
Caitlan Reilly, *Assistant Certification Program Manager – Processors/Handlers*
Abbey Roggenbuck, *Certification Specialist*
Dara Raidel, *Certification Specialist*
Christie Badger, *Certification Specialist*
Andrea McKern, *Certification Specialist*
Gail Doesken, *Certification Specialist*
Hannah McGilvary, *Certification Specialist*
Tanay Nestico, *Certification Specialist*
Alex Restaino, *Certification Specialist*
Gabrielle Rovegno, *Certification Specialist*
Lou Saunders, *Certification Specialist*
Jenny Rocco, *Certification Specialist*
Patti Bursten, *Certification Specialist*
Rebekah Rodriguez, *Certification Specialist*
Rose Petros, *Certification Specialist*
Alexis Dragovich, *Certification Specialist*
Sophie Skripka, *Certification Specialist*
Nancy Stoner, *Certification Assistant*

INSPECTION TEAM
Laura Wies, *Inspection Deputy Director*
Lee Blahoto, *Inspection Program Coordinator*
Rachel Myers, *Inspection Program Coordinator*
QUALITY TEAM
Cathy Jackson, *Quality Deputy Director*
Gwen Ayres, *Quality and Materials Manager*
Kyla Smith, *Certification Policy Advisor*
Nathan Lehrman, *Quality Specialist*
April Kocis, *Materials Specialist*
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP (TOPP) PROGRAM TEAM
Maggie Saska, *Education & Outreach Specialist*
Wren Frueh, *Mentorship Program Coordinator*

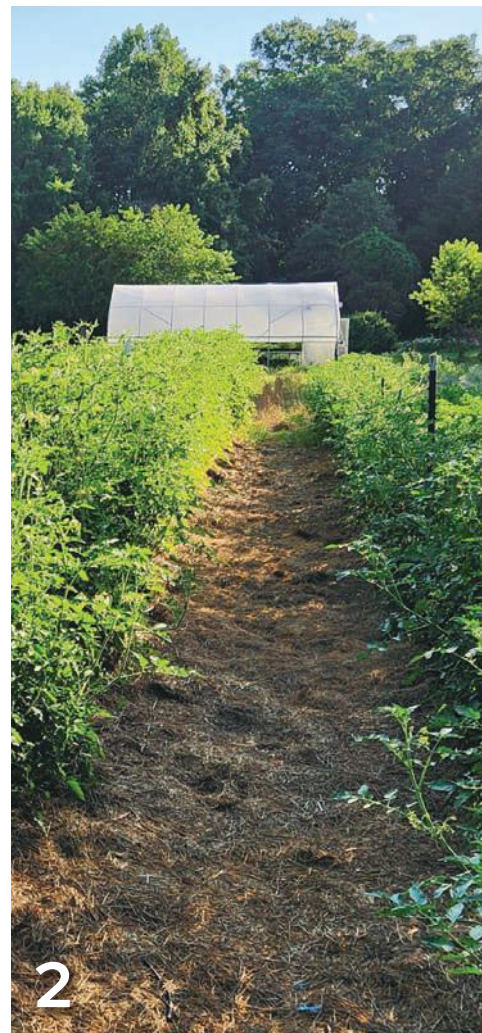
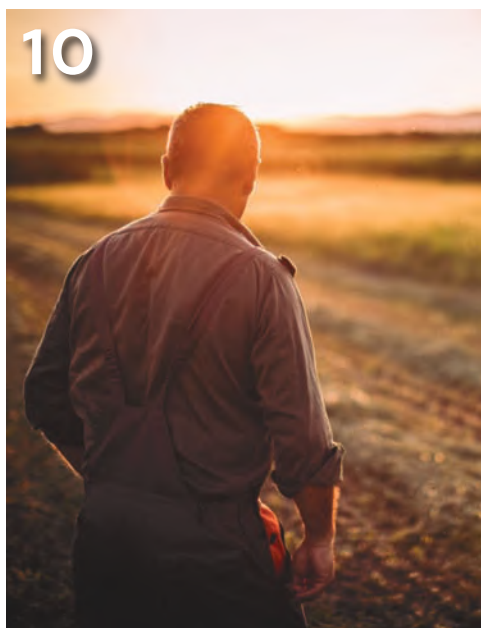
PCO'S VISION
A world where agriculture systems prioritize health, ecological balance, fairness and care.

PCO'S MISSION
To uphold and advance organic principles and practices through certification, advocacy, and technical support.

PCO'S CORE VALUES
1. **People & Service** – Keep people at the center of every action, interaction, and decision
2. **Organic Spirit & Environment** – Promote restorative practices that improve the world for future generations
3. **Honesty & Integrity** – Embrace transparency and integrity in all our work.

Organic Matters

Summer/Fall 2025



FEATURES

2
From Farmer to Mentor: Andrea Davis-Cetina Champions Organic Growth Through TOPP

5
From Field to Flakes: Bringing Organic Oat Production to Pennsylvania

6
Speaking Up for Organic: Practical Ways to Make a Policy Impact

8
Soil Test Report Translation Into Certified Organic Recommendations

10
Avoiding Common Mistakes: A Guide for Organic Farmers and Producers

COLUMNS
Inside front cover
Organically Speaking

12 New Faces

15 Updates
Standards & Policy
Legislative

16 Event Calendar



COVER PHOTO: Andrea Davis-Cetina



From Farmer to Mentor: Andrea Davis-Cetina Champions Organic Growth Through TOPP

ALISON GARBER, PCO EXECUTIVE SUPPORT &
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER | JULY 2025

Seventeen years ago, with a quarter-acre plot and a vision rooted in sustainability, Andrea Davis-Cetina sowed the first seeds of what would become *Quarter Acre Farm LLC*. At the time, she was farming on a small parcel of leased land in California, guided by a passion for sustainable agriculture and a belief in the power of local food systems. Today, Andrea operates her certified organic farm in Greensboro, Maryland on 12.6 acres which includes an old farmhouse, woodland, a budding pawpaw orchard, and land dedicated to growing organic vegetables and seedlings.

Her journey from a beginning farmer to a Transition to Organic Partnership Program Organic Mentor and board member of California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) is one marked by growth, curiosity, and a deep commitment to demystifying the organic certification process for others. Whether she's guiding a new farmer through a certification packet or harvesting organically-certified tomatoes alongside her farmdog Sunny, Andrea's work is grounded in making organic agriculture accessible, transparent, and meaningful.

FROM CURIOSITY TO CERTIFICATION

Andrea's path to becoming a certified organic farmer wasn't immediate. It was, like many journeys, born from conversations and a bit of trial and error. With a degree in sustainable agriculture from Hampshire College in Massachusetts and apprenticeships on many east coast farms under her belt, Andrea was well-versed in environmentally conscious growing practices. But in the early days of Quarter Acre Farm, she didn't

think her tiny operation qualified for the USDA organic seal.

"I thought it was this exclusive club," she recalls, "something reserved for large farms." But conversations with peers who were organically farming just a few acres changed her mind. At the 2010 EcoFarm Conference in California, she visited the CCOF booth and decided to start the certification process. By that spring, she was officially certified organic, and has maintained her certification ever since.

At first, the paperwork seemed daunting. "If you just read the text, it's intimidating," Andrea explains. "But once I started talking to other organic farmers, I realized if they could do it, so could I." Selling at farmers markets and restaurants, Andrea noticed that customers would often ask if her produce was certified organic. Without that label, she found herself having to explain her practices repeatedly, something that was time-consuming and often left customers unsure. Organic certification made the sales process much smoother. "It created an easier pathway for customer communication," she says, "and it linked me to a community of organic growers."

FROM SMALL FARM TO NATIONAL VOICE

Quarter Acre Farm is a true reflection of Andrea's values: the entire property is certified organic, with eight acres preserved as woodland and space carved out for agroforestry experiments and a future pawpaw orchard. Beyond organic fresh produce, Andrea and her husband, Juan Carlos also offer prepared foods at a local farmers market, such as garlic scape pesto and pico de gallo, made with tomatoes and garlic harvested right from Quarter Acre Farm. Her husband, a professional chef, lends his expertise to the business through Quarter Acre EATS, leading the food preparation and joining

TOP: Garlic, Quarter Acre Farm, Spring 2025.

Andrea at the market, where he serves up fresh tacos and other Mexican-inspired dishes on-site.

But Andrea's impact extends well beyond the farm. As a board member for CCOF, she represents at-large members; farmers operating outside of California and Mexico. This work has brought her into close contact with the broader organic movement, including her past involvement with the Organic Trade Association.

"I'm often the smallest producer in the room," Andrea says with a smile, "but it's inspiring to know my voice still matters." She has found it encouraging that leaders in the organic space are listening to small-scale and younger farmers. "There's real change happening," she adds. "Consumer demand is dictating the market, and the industry is responding."

THE FUTURE OF ORGANICS AND THE WORK AHEAD

Andrea sees a bright future for the organic sector, particularly as more consumers gravitate toward organic transparency and sustainability in their food choices. "People get overwhelmed by labels," she says, "but the organic seal is always something they recognize and trust." When she shops, she often lets that label guide her. "If I don't know the brand but it's certified organic, I'm buying it."

But she also sees critical areas in need of attention, particularly in the organic supply chain. "The biggest gap is in processing, handling, and transportation," Andrea explains. "If organic integrity isn't maintained after the product leaves the farm, then the certification loses its value." Ensuring that



TOPP regional leads and regions.



Greenhouse, Quarter Acre Farm, Spring 2025.

wholesalers, handlers and retailers uphold organic standards is, in her view, the next frontier for the strengthening of the organic movement.

Another major concern is the dwindling support for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program. Andrea believes strongly in its importance, not just for individual farms, but for the health of the entire industry. "It was one of the few subsidies available to organic farmers," she says. "If we want more organic food produced domestically, the support has to be there."

Andrea calls for the program to be reinstated and for the amount to be increased to at least \$1,550 to keep up with rising certification and inspection costs. "It's not just about reimbursing producers," she says. "It's about investing in a food system that benefits everyone and the planet."

FARMING, FOOD, AND A BIT OF JULIA CHILD

Outside of farming and mentorship, Andrea expresses her love for food through Quarter Acre EATS, which she co-owns and operates with her husband. Many of the ingredients of their dishes come straight from Quarter Acre Farm, adding a fresh, hyper-local flavor to their offerings. When asked about her culinary heroes, Andrea doesn't hesitate: "Julia Child."

"I grew up watching PBS and loved her," Andrea says. "She made things that seemed overwhelming feel completely approachable, and did it with such warmth and humility." It's an energy Andrea channels in her own work. Just as Julia Child brought French cooking to everyday kitchens, Andrea brings

continued next page

Andrea Davis-Cetina

continued from page 3

the message of organics to everyday farmers: she says “ this isn’t an exclusive club. Anyone can farm organically.”

MENTORSHIP WITH MEANING

Andrea’s leadership in the organic community also includes her role as a mentor through the USDA’s Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), which is designed to support farmers transitioning to organic production. She’s now in her second year of TOPP mentoring, with each experience offering unique insights. Her first mentee was still in the planning stages of starting a farm; they connected largely through phone calls and one on-farm visit to Quarter Acre Farm. Her current mentee is already in production and focused on herbs and, in a small-world moment, happens to be a regular customer at Andrea’s farmers market stand.

The TOPP mentorship involves monthly Zoom calls, farm visits and, perhaps most importantly, certifier-neutral conversations about the practical side of organic certification. “One of the biggest things I do is help demystify the paperwork,” Andrea says. She remembers being in her mentees’ shoes during her own transition to organic. While filling out the Organic System Plan (OSP), a key document in the certification process, she got stuck on a question about how she cleaned her equipment. “I thought the answer had to be really formal,” she recalls. “But a fellow organic farmer simply

asked, ‘How do you actually clean it?’ I said, ‘With soap and water.’ He told me, ‘Then that’s what you write!’” Andrea now shares this experience with her mentees to show that the paperwork isn’t as intimidating as it seems, it’s just about being honest and practical.

It’s moments like these, helping a fellow farmer realize they already have what it takes, that Andrea finds most fulfilling. “Being a mentor shows others that this process is doable,” she says. “It’s satisfying to be that bridge.”

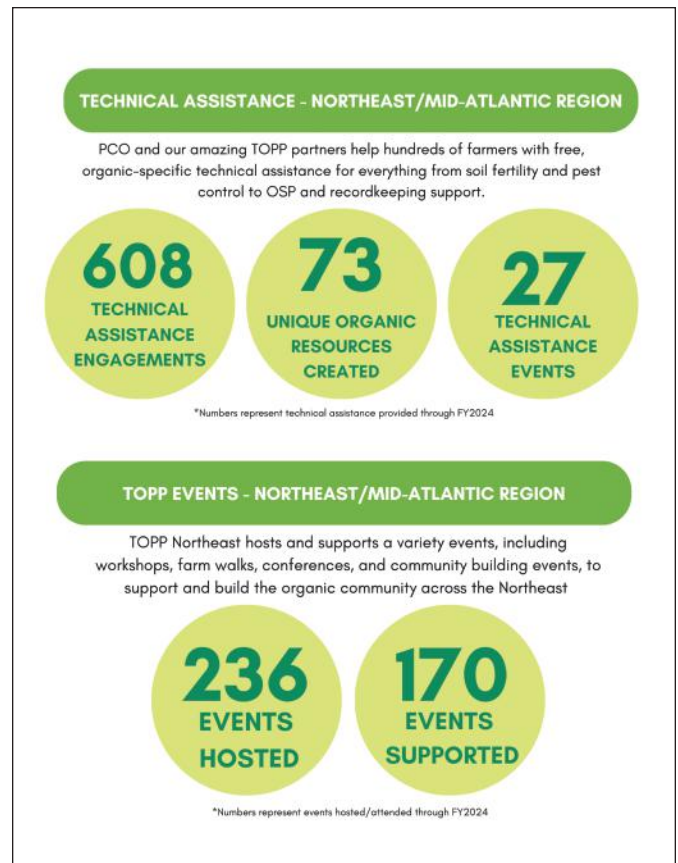
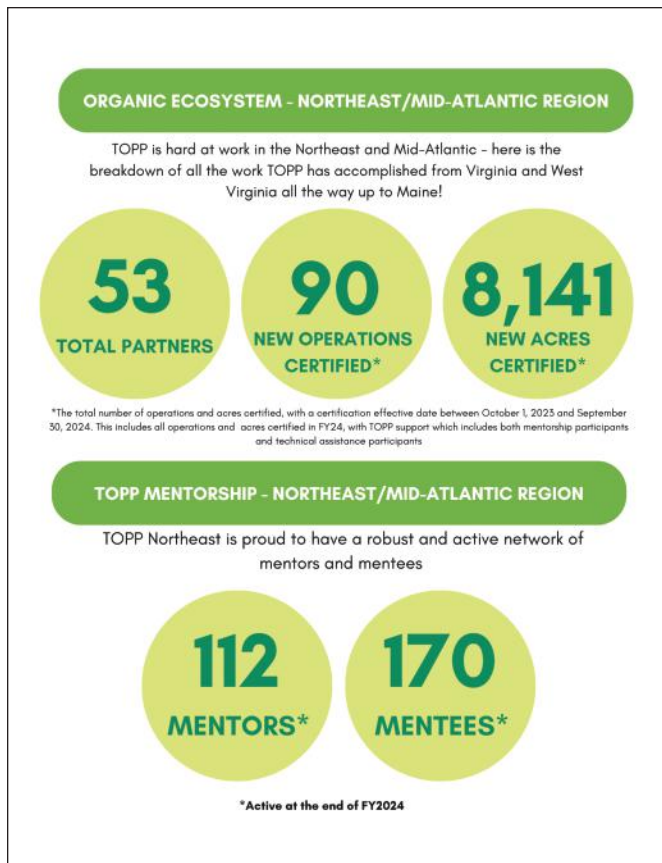
ADVICE FOR ASPIRING TOPP MENTORS

For anyone considering becoming a TOPP mentor, Andrea’s advice is simple: “Give it a go!”

Like many, she was initially worried about the time commitment. But she’s found the program to be flexible and low-pressure. “If you can spare an hour or two a month, it’s totally manageable,” she says. In fact, the challenge isn’t in keeping up with the workload, it’s in helping mentees stay connected and supported. “Most of it is just checking in and being available.”

Andrea also sees mentorship as a powerful tool for outreach. “There are a lot of myths about being certified organic,” she says. “Some conventional farmers don’t even know programs like TOPP exist.” She believes more awareness-building of the National Organic Program and TOPP, especially through TOPP events, field days, and one-on-one conversations could help bridge this knowledge gap.

continued on page 16



From Field to Flakes: Bringing Organic Oat Production to Pennsylvania



DANIELA CARRIJO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GRAIN CROP PRODUCTION; NATALIYA VOLOSHCHUK, POST-DOCTORAL SCHOLAR IN FOOD SCIENCE; JOSEPHINE WEE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FOOD SCIENCE; DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCE, THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Oat acreage in Pennsylvania has been on a downward trend for several decades as more acres are devoted to corn and soybeans. However, with the recent rising interest in alternative food grains, especially in emerging markets like gluten-free, oats might make a comeback. To address this emerging market, we started a PDA-funded research project in 2024 to evaluate the performance of spring oat varieties in Pennsylvania. We sourced 18 varieties from the western United States and Canada, and conducted a field trial on certified organic acres at the Penn State Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, near Rock Springs, PA.

We were interested in how different varieties impacted plant and grain characteristics. Grain yield ranged from 40 to 105 bushels per acre depending on the variety. The top three yielding varieties included Blazer, SD Buffalo, and SD Momentum, all of which yielded significantly higher than Jerry, a popular variety in Pennsylvania. Hulless oat varieties, which are desirable for food, generally yielded lower than hulled ones, with Streaker being the highest yielder among the hulless varieties. The main drivers of yield differences between varieties in this study were susceptibility to foliar diseases (especially leaf rust) and plant height, likely a proxy for weed suppression.

Overall, from an agronomic perspective, these results suggest a large genetic basis among modern spring oat varieties and highlight that variety selection is key to achieving high yields. We were also interested in food-relevant quality and safety parameters of grains and selected four oat varieties,



Close-up of the Penn State organic oats trial field. Credit: Larissa Correia.

TOP: Penn State organic oats trial field. Credit: Larissa Correia.

Blazer, Gehl, Hayden, and Steuben. Gehl and Blazer produced grains with higher protein levels (15–18% dry weight), while Hayden and Steuben were notable for higher fiber levels (13–15% dry weight).

All four varieties studied resulted in non-detectable levels of 18 tested mycotoxins. However, HT-2 toxin, a form of trichothecene mycotoxin produced by the fungi, *Fusarium* spp., was detected in Blazer, Hayden, and Steuben (levels ranging from 12–21 ppb) but not in Gehl. While genetic diversity of oats can differentially affect nutritional quality and safety, we hope to understand how oat physiology (hulled v. hulless) and growing season across multiple years impact agronomic performance as well as quality and safety of final grains.

continued page 15

Speaking Up for Organic: Practical Ways to Make a Policy Impact



ASHLEY DULANEY, OFRF COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR, & VINNIE TROMETTER, OFRF POLICY
FELLOW

Dr. Eric Brennan, a research horticulturist at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) station in Salinas, California, has dedicated years to advancing organic and sustainable farming systems through science and advocacy. In 2021, he had the opportunity to share this research and long-term findings with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board during a key regulatory hearing for Ag Order 4.0, a program impacting more than 540,000 acres of farmland. In just ten minutes, Brennan presented strong evidence on cover crops and compost use, persuading the board to revise the regulation immediately to better promote sustainable practices. His testimony shaped a policy that now gives growers credit for proven conservation strategies – a major achievement for organic farming in the Central Coast region.

This success did not stem from longstanding connections to the board or an orchestrated campaign. Instead, it resulted from persistence, readiness, and a commitment to farmer-informed science – values at the heart of the organic community. Just as USDA organic standards took years to establish, effective advocacy requires perseverance. Dr. Brennan's story demonstrates that it's worth the effort.

You don't need a large platform or a high-profile title to influence policy. Direct engagement grounded in experience and purpose can bring about meaningful change. Every day, individuals like you speak up for what matters, helping shape decisions that influence our food and farming systems. In fact, right now scientists across the country are partnering with our team at the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) to reach elected officials and share research on producing organic

corn with living mulch systems, breeding organic tomatoes resistant to emerging diseases, and developing methods to combat fire blight.

Now more than ever, our insights and perspectives are vital and must be shared. Whether you're farming, researching, or organizing in your community, your voice can help shape the future of food and farm policy. Ready to get started?

HOW TO SPEAK UP

The easiest way to share your story is to contact your legislators directly. To do this, you first need to know who your members of Congress are. You can find them and their contact information at www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member.

Once identified, you can call or email your Senators and Representatives directly to share your opinions. A staff member might answer your call, or you may leave a message. To prepare, we suggest writing down a few key points or using a phone script template. Don't worry if you don't speak with a staff member personally; all voicemails and emails are carefully reviewed to ensure legislators understand the views of their constituents.

Want to meet with your legislators directly to discuss a specific issue? Let them know by requesting a short meeting when you call or email. Most members of Congress keep time available in their schedules for these kinds of interactions.

Using action alerts from organizations like the National Organic Coalition and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is another effective way to communicate with legislators. These alerts, sent during urgent times, enable you to send personalized messages to your representatives

TOP: Dr. Dilip Panthee, associate professor and tomato breeder at North Carolina State University, is working to breed organic tomatoes resistant to emerging diseases like late blight, bacterial spot, early blight, and Septoria leaf spot

with just a few clicks, using your home address. Signing up for email updates from these organizations keeps you informed about new alerts, helping you advocate for causes like organic farming and sustainability.

Writing a Letter to the Editor in your local newspaper is a great way to share your opinions on political issues and engage your community at the same time. Once published, share it with legislators to show public support, highlight local relevance, and encourage action.

Finally, don't just share your story with Congress – share it with organizations working to amplify farmer and researcher voices, like OFRF. Stories from the field help us advocate more effectively and ensure that organic priorities stay at the forefront of policy discussions. Whether it's your experience or someone you admire, every story builds momentum for the movement.



OFRF team members in Washington D.C. working to ensure the voices of organic farmers and ranchers are heard.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's organic sector is growing rapidly – and so is its influence. The state now ranks third in the nation for organic farmgate sales, reaching \$1.09 billion in 2021, with more than 1,100 organic farms across the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania leads the country in organic livestock, poultry, and mushroom production, and since 2011, the state's organic sales have surged by over 789%, far outpacing national growth.

Recent state-level action reflects this momentum. In 2023, Governor Josh Shapiro signed legislation establishing the PA Preferred Organic brand and the Organic Center for Excellence to boost consumer confidence and strengthen integrity in organic products. New efforts, such as the Agricultural Innovation Grant Program – the first of its kind in the nation – and proposed legislation, like HB 894, which supports veterans entering the sustainability sector, further signal a strong commitment to innovation and inclusion in agriculture.

Pennsylvania is also a leader in organic research. Since 2009, Penn State University has received more than \$27 million in USDA OREI and ORG funding to advance organic systems research, including cutting-edge projects investiga-

ting anaerobic soil disinfection as an organic method (to aid producers transitioning into organic production and working to integrate weed and disease management), and best management practices on honey bee colony performance, immunocompetence, and parasite and pathogen levels. And through the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), organizations like Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) offer training, mentorship, and community support to help more farmers transition to certified organic production.

If you're based in Pennsylvania, you're part of a state where your voice and your values can help shape the future of agriculture. Now is a powerful time to speak up.

GET THE TOOLS YOU NEED

If you've never contacted a legislator before, you're not alone. That's why OFRF created a free, self-paced email course called *Communicating with Legislators* to help farmers, researchers, and advocates engage with policymakers through quick emails, calls, or meetings. It includes videos, templates, and tips for different advocates, offering simple, actionable advice and guidance on telling your story effectively. Hundreds of people have already signed up and successfully engaged with officials on important issues.

Ready to join them? Sign up for the course at ofrf.org/advocacy.

Organic farmers and supporters have always been innovators, stewards, and community builders. By speaking up, whether through policy, education, or public platforms, we can shape the future of agriculture, together.

OFRF's Communicating with Legislators email course is free, online, and self-paced over 3 weeks

SOIL TEST REPORT TRANSLATION INTO CERTIFIED ORGANIC RECOMMENDATIONS

JOSEPH HECKMAN, EXTENSION SPECIALIST
SOIL FERTILITY, COOK CAMPUS, RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF PLANT BIOLOGY,
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

Requests for the translation of soil test reports into organic-compliant recommendations are becoming frequent. For this purpose, I write these general guidelines.

When working with organic growers it is important to remember certain crucial details. Organic farming is an ecological system that by the nature of the standards requires continuous improvement in soils and avoidance of materials that may negatively impact soil health. Crop rotation, cover cropping, composting, and livestock integration are some of the ways an organic farm may work good cultural practices into an approved organic farm system plan. When inputs are needed, organic farmers can look for the OMRI (Organic Material Review Institute) listing to see if a material is permitted for use in a certified operation. However, some materials such as naturally occurring limestone mined from the earth might not have an OMRI listing but still be permitted to be used as an amendment on a certified organic farm. In such cases, the organic farmer should check with their certifier before applying the material. Also, organic farmers may import to their farm materials such as horse manure or community-collected shade tree leaves for purposes of making compost. In such cases the organic farmer needs to document certain details about the source of the material and that nothing synthetic or prohibited has been added. Organic growers also need to be mindful to avoid the use of any materials on the USDA-NOP prohibited list.

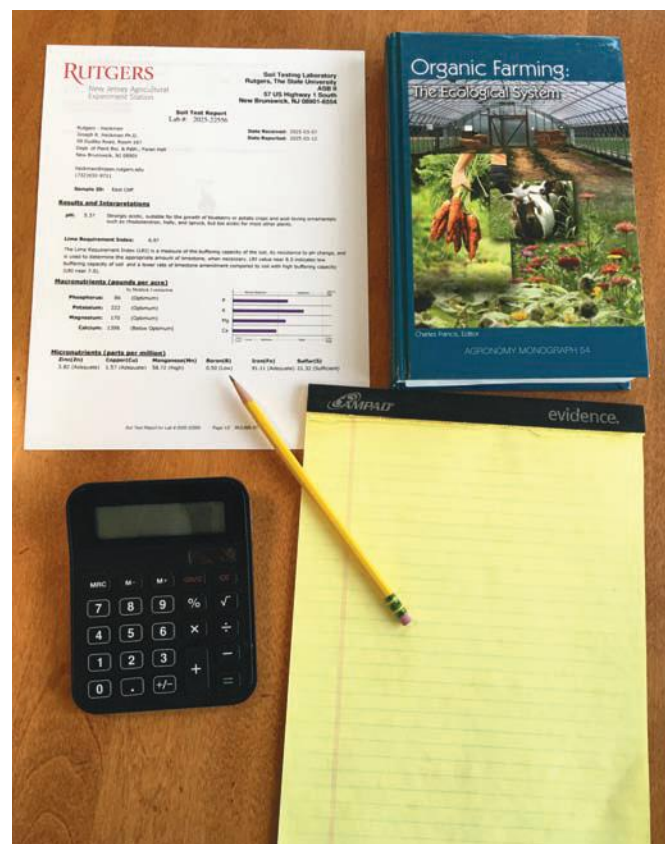
SOIL PH AND LIMING

The first place to start is to remember that soil pH targets and liming practices for organic farming are very similar to other farming. Limestones are calcium carbonates (calcite) or calcium magnesium carbonates (dolomite) mined from the earth and are approved for use in organic agriculture. These naturally occurring minerals are the most widely used liming materials in all of agriculture. In general, natural materials that are mined from the Earth are permitted. Physical changes to the material by grinding are acceptable but chemical alteration is not. Liming materials typically come from local quarries and may not be OMRI-listed. Amendments that are not OMRI listed can sometimes be used on organic farmland but check with the organic certifier to be sure. An important thing to remember when making liming recommendations for organic growers is that calcium oxide and calcium hydroxide (sometimes called

burnt lime or quick lime) are prohibited materials. Another thing to keep in mind when working with organic operations is that some growers are particular about calcium to magnesium saturation levels on the CEC. Calcium saturation levels near 68% and magnesium levels near 12% are generally good soil fertility and agronomic targets. Organic growers may also use wollastonite, a mined calcium silicate. This naturally occurring mineral functions like a liming material much the same as calcium carbonate. The benefit of using wollastonite is that it also supplies plant-available silicon which strengthens crops and protects against powdery mildew disease. OMRI-approved wollastonite can be found by web search.

NITROGEN

The next focus should be on a recommendation for nitrogen. A regular soil fertility test report does not directly determine nitrogen availability. However, soil organic matter content can be measured by soil tests. This factor, along with the type of crop, can be a useful consideration in deciding how much



Soil test report for a farm field in need of soil fertility recommendations for USDA Certified Organic Farming. The book on display, Organic Farming the Ecological System, is a good reference. This best seller was published by the American Society of Agronomy.

nitrogen to recommend. As a rule of thumb, each percent organic matter in soil may convert into 20 pounds of plant available N during the growing season. For example, soil with 4% organic matter content may supply about 80 pounds of available N. However, many exceptions to this rule depend on other agronomic factors such as crop rotation, previous organic amendments, types of mulch, soil temperature, and weather conditions that influence the nitrogen cycle. An organic grower must adopt an effective organic system plan (a requirement to become certified organic) that will over the years build organic matter content and soil health. This should increase the ability of that soil to feed crops with N with minimal supplemental N fertilizer. Because organic-approved N fertilizers are expensive, it is in the farmer's interest to minimize the need to use them. But, if some N fertilizer is needed, the organic grower can supplement with fertilizers such as dried blood (13%N), fish emulsion (4% N), or other approved N sources. In the case of corn and most types of annual vegetable crops, organic growers can use the special soil test called the pre-sidedress soil nitrate test (PSNT). Use of the PSNT during an early crop growth stage helps to determine with confidence that their organic farm plan is working to effectively supply N to the crop. Note that the PSNT soil test is only useful for annual crops, not perennials. Also, the PSNT is only useful when a farm employs good production practices, such as legume cover crops, and applications of manure or compost, that build soil organic matter content. Attempts to use the PSNT on soils with low organic matter content are normally a waste of time. In the case of woody perennials, the need for N should consider plant tissue analysis.

PHOSPHORUS

Soil test for phosphorus (P) is a very useful guide for determining the need for P fertilizer. Many agricultural soils in New Jersey are already well supplied with P. Organic growers who may have applied compost or manures regularly over the years will often have high levels of soil test P. In such a case, a zero P fertilizer recommendation may be appropriate. However, if soil test P is below the optimum range, a P fertilizer should be recommended. Compost is generally a good source of plant-available P. Another P fertilizer source organic growers can use is bone meal (10 to 15% P₂O₅). Rock phosphate (contains 25 to 30% P) is a widely used fertilizer for organic farming. However, the P is only slowly available. When soil tests low in P, rock phosphate may be applied at 500 to 1000 pounds per acre of rock phosphate. Legume cover crops such as red clover should be grown to make the P from the rock phosphate more plant available. The P availability to crops from rock phosphate varies by source. Rock phosphate from North Carolina is more soluble than that mined from Florida.

POTASSIUM

Soil test for potassium (K) is a useful guide for determining the need for K fertilizer. In general, sandy soils are more prone to K deficiency than loamy soils. Potassium fertilizer recommendations for organic growers are similar in practice to other farming. Organic growers can use certain potassium sulfate fertilizers or potassium magnesium sulfate (langbeinite) fertilizers

so long as the products are approved for organic production. The OMRI listing can be used as a guide to approve materials. Potassium magnesium sulfate is a good choice for soils that need both K and Mg. Potassium sulfate is the better choice for soils that already have high levels of Mg but need K. Other organic approved K fertilizers may include materials such as rock powders, granite dust, and greensand. Where manures and composts are being applied, the K rate recommendation should credit the K content of those materials. Potassium chloride and potassium nitrate fertilizers are not approved for organic farming.

SULFUR

Organic farms that make regular applications of composts and manures and build soil organic matter content are not generally deficient in sulfur (S). However, if S fertilizer is needed consider that it might already be supplied as part of the K fertilizer application. Otherwise, gypsum (23% S) products that are OMRI-listed may be used to supply S.

MICRONUTRIENTS

Soil testing and plant tissue analysis are very important to organic growers because they must have diagnostic tests to document that micronutrients are needed before they can be applied as a fertilizer. But once organic growers have the diagnostic tests to show a need for a micronutrient, they may apply it and use many of the same micronutrient fertilizers as other growers. There may be a few exceptions on types of micronutrient fertilizer products. So organic growers should check with their certifier to be sure that the material is approved. Micronutrient soil tests for Boron (B) Copper (Cu), Manganese (Mn) Iron (Fe), and Zinc (Zn) are based on the soil test level rating described as "Low", "Adequate", or "High" on the Rutgers Soil Test Report. Besides the soil test extract level, soil pH should also be taken into consideration. Most micronutrients become less available as soil pH increases.

When making product recommendations for organic farms, growers should always be prepared to check with their certifier to be sure the application follows the USDA National Organic Program standards.

Organic growers, like all farms, can use targeted plant nutrition to grow healthy crops with better protection from pests and disease. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-profile/pdfs/spv29.pdf>

REFERENCE: Heckman, J.R., R. Weil, and F. Magdoff. 2009. Practical Steps to Soil Fertility for Organic Agriculture. 33 pages. In C. Francis. (ed.). Organic Farming: The Ecological System. American Society Agronomy, Crop Science Society America, Soil Science Society America, 677 South Segoe Road, Madison, WI 53711, USA. Agronomy Monograph 54. Madison, WI.

Joseph Heckman, PhD is Rutgers University Professor of Soil Science and teaches courses in Soil Fertility and Organic Agriculture. For nine years he served on the board of Northeast Organic Farming Association-NJ. He currently serves on the board of the Raw Milk Institute. On the family farm in Ringoes, NJ he raises grass fed Jersey beef, black locust trees and USDA Organic Hay Certified by PCO. Email: heckman@njaes.rutgers.edu

AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES: A GUIDE FOR ORGANIC FARMERS AND PRODUCERS



A farmer observes their field. Image Credit: PCO

ALISON GARBER, PCO EXECUTIVE SUPPORT & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Organic certification provides valuable benefits: increased market access, consumer trust, and proof that your operation meets high standards. Whether you're new to certification or have years of experience, it's important to understand the rules and avoid common missteps. Even small mistakes can lead to delays or compliance issues. By staying informed and proactive, you can protect your certification and keep your operation on a strong path forward.

MISTAKE #1: INCOMPLETE ORGANIC SYSTEM PLANS (OSP)

Your Organic System Plan is the cornerstone of your organic operation. It outlines every aspect of your practices – from seeds and inputs to harvest and sales. If you forget to include a crop or omit a product you plan to use, you could face delays in approval or even noncompliance. Keep your OSP complete and up to date. If anything changes, notify your certifier before the change happens – not after.

MISTAKE #2: USING NON-COMPLIANT INPUTS

Just because an input is “natural” doesn't mean it's allowed in organic production. Some materials contain synthetic or prohibited substances that can jeopardize your certification. Before applying any new product – fertilizers, pesticides, or soil amendments – check with your certifier or look it up in the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) database. One wrong spray could mean big consequences.

MISTAKE #3: INADEQUATE RECORDKEEPING

In organic certification, if you don't write it down, it doesn't count. Make sure to keep clear and complete records of everything you do – like buying seeds, using inputs, cleaning equipment, and making sales. Good records help protect your certification and make your farm or business run better.

Because of new rules under the Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) rule, certifiers are paying even more attention to recordkeeping and labeling. You must keep documents that clearly show the full history of your organic products, all the way back to the last certified organic source.

MISTAKE #4: SKIPPING BUFFER ZONES

Organic fields must be protected from things that are not allowed, like chemicals that could drift over from nearby farms. To help with this, you usually need a buffer zone – about 25 to 30 feet wide – between your organic fields and any non-organic land. You should include this buffer zone in your Organic System Plan (OSP) and check it regularly.

If you don't have a buffer zone, your certifier will ask you to get a signed Adjoining Land Use statement from your neighbor. This statement must show that they do not use any banned substances on the land next to your organic fields.

And remember: Inspectors will check your buffer zones every year!

MISTAKE #5: COMMINGLING ORGANIC AND NON-ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Mixing organic and non-organic products – even unintentionally – can lead to immediate loss of organic status. Shared harvest bins, tools, or storage containers can cause contamination. Always keep organic products separate and clearly labeled. Clean equipment thoroughly before switching between organic and non-organic use, and don't forget to document. Remember, if it's not recorded, it didn't happen!

MISTAKE #6: MISLABELING PRODUCTS

Clear and accurate labeling is very important! Using the USDA Organic seal incorrectly, making unapproved label claims, or leaving out your certifier's name can all lead to serious violations. These mistakes can put your certification at risk.

SOE requires that all organic products have labels that are truthful, approved, and traceable. Always get your certifier's approval before printing or using any organic labels. Proper labeling helps maintain consumer trust – and protects your organic certification.

MISTAKE #7: NOT REPORTING CHANGES

If you add a new field, use a new input, or change how you produce or handle products, you must tell your certifier *before making* the change. Some changes – like adding fields, storage spaces, or new production areas – usually need an inspection before they can be certified.

Being open and honest is very important in organic certification. Always update your Organic System Plan (OSP) and get approval when your operation changes.

MISTAKE #8: SELLING TOO SOON

Land must go through a full three-year transition without any banned substances before it can be certified organic. Some people think they can sell crops as organic before they get their certificate, but that's not true.

Here's some examples of the certification timeline:

A grain or hay operation applies for certification → complete the initial review → be inspected → harvest and store the grain or hay → go through the final review → receive certification → then sell the hay or grain.

A produce operation applies for certification → complete the initial review → be inspected → go through the final review → receive certification → then harvest and sell the produce.

You must wait until you have your certificate before selling anything as "organic."

If you're already certified and want to add new fields or storage areas, those areas must be inspected and officially added to your certification *before* using them for organic production or storage.

All products you plan to sell as organic must be listed on your certificate. Selling too early is a violation and could slow down or even stop your organic certification.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Staying compliant with organic standards requires diligence, organization, and communication with your certifier. Avoiding these common mistakes will help you protect your certification – and your livelihood.



Contact Us to Request a Catalog!

The Fertrell Company

PO Box 265, Bainbridge, PA 17502

800-347-1566 • www.fertrell.com/organic

STAY CONNECTED, VISIT:
paorganic.org

New Faces



Gail Doesken

Gail grew up in Colorado at the juncture of mountains and plains. She has always loved wide open blue skies and the sound of the Western Meadowlark. Gail got her bachelor's degree in Soil and Crop Science with a Concentration in Organic Agriculture at Colorado State

University and has since travelled and lived across the US, Canada, and Europe where she has worked on farms, food enterprises, and farm-based education and therapeutic programs.

Prior to joining PCO in 2025, Gail worked as a Certification Specialist at Oregon Tilth, and an Organic Inspector and Certification Specialist at NICS.

In her free time Gail loves hanging out with her teenage son (when he lets her), walking her dog (barefoot when possible), getting her hands muddy (gardening and pottery), and laughing with good friends.



Patti Bursten

Patti joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in May 2025. Patti came to PCO after 5 years at the National Organic Program (NOP) as an Accreditation Auditor. Prior to working at the NOP, she spent more than 25

years as an independent organic inspector, reviewer, and consultant. A new transplant to Vermont, Patti lived most of her life in Wisconsin, where she was co-owner of a certified organic dairy farm. Patti graduated from The Evergreen State College, where she was the college's first full-time intern on their organic farm.



Rebekah Rodriguez

Rebekah joined PCO in 2025. Her background includes regulatory compliance, organic food systems, and organic certification. She loves wild plants, world history, and serves as treasurer of a radical school for self-directed education. Her personal and profes-

sional commitments are to building community and ethical food systems.



Rose Petros

Rose joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in May 2025. She graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a BS in Animal Science and a Minor in Poultry Management. Prior to working at PCO, Rose was a Certification Officer at OTCO and

worked in the nut processing industry as a Food Safety Supervisor. Based in Northern California, Rose enjoys exploring the area with her husband and their dog.



Andrea McKern

Andrea joined the PCO team in February 2025. She has a passion for organic agriculture spanning a quarter-century including organic agriculture research at Iowa State University and organic crops and livestock certification with the Iowa Department of Agriculture

and Land Stewardship. She has a bachelor's degree from ISU and a master's degree in Entomology from UNL. She enjoys being the "good idea fairy" in most aspects of her life, the satisfaction of a self-calculating Excel spreadsheet, and exploring science and nature with her husband and daughter. When she has free time beyond that, she can be found fixing up her craftsman home or tinkering in her craft room with one of her granny hobbies – knitting, quilting, sewing, crocheting, wood burning, glass etching, beadwork, embroidery, costuming, etc. Controversial opinion: pineapple DOES belong on pizza.



Sophie Skripka

Sophie joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in May 2025. Prior to joining PCO, she worked for another certifier, OTCO.

Sophie immigrated to NYC from eastern Europe when she was young. She attended Binghamton University and there, regained her love for all things outdoors. She attained a horticulture certificate and worked for a hydroponics startup. From there, she pivoted to working on organic veggie farms in PA and then MT, where she currently resides.

Sophie enjoys living seasonally. She gardens, backpacks, and floats the river in the summer and turns to pottery and curling (the world's silliest sport) in the winter.



Alexis Dragovich

Alexis has been an organic inspector since 2020, conducting inspections across Western Pennsylvania and Ohio. Based in Northeast Ohio, she co-operates her family's certified organic farm – raising cereal grains, chickens, and goats – and runs a small on-site

flour mill. Each week, Alexis participates in farmers markets, where she loves talking about local food systems and supporting the growers and producers who make them possible. Outside of work, she loves ALL dogs, swimming, kayaking, and trying new foods.

Christie Badger

Christie joined PCO in 2025 as a Certification Specialist. Prior to joining PCO, she worked as an organic inspector for the past ten years, as well as an NOSB Specialist with the National

Organic Coalition for eight of those years. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, preserving food, reading, camping, boating, and hanging out with her husband, son, family, and dogs. Christie is a member of the Evangelical Friends Church and strives to share Christ's love in all that she does. She was born and raised in Pennsylvania.



Rachel Myers

Rachel Cherry Myers has been working in organic farming in various capacities since before the NOP. She started out on the first organic vegetable CSA in Western NY while attending the University of Buffalo. She later graduated Magna Cum Laude with a major she created, "Sustainable Community." She has continued working in the food system around the world. Her experiences include managing the organic compliance for a large, fully integrated organic dairy start-up in the Midwest, inspecting and reviewing thousands of farms and processing facilities around the world, and policy and compliance work in the organic industry. She has served on the IOIA Board of Directors for 3 years, including the last year as Chair

Organic Oat Production

continued from page 5

In conclusion, several oat varieties currently available on the market can perform well under organic farming conditions and meet the safety and quality standards required for organic food and feed products. We hope that these findings are a first step to help boost market opportunities for Pennsylvania farmers to be a national leader in organic oat production. We sincerely acknowledge the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the PA Preferred Organic Initiative for supporting this research.

BROWSE
TOPP Resources


**Explore Resources for
Transitioning to Organic**

Through the USDA's Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), a growing library of [free resources](#) is available to help support organic transition across the supply chain. Handlers can find outreach templates, supply chain guides, and educational tools to engage partners and support transitioning producers.


www.organictransition.org




The Organic Trade Association and the Rodale Institute are TOPP National Partners



USA Gypsum®



Gypsum Products
Soluble Calcium Sulfate

- Damp for broadcasting
- Bedding additives
- GripX2 Barn dry
- Compost additives
- Water Clarification

usagypsum.com • Denver, PA • 717-335-0379



Building conservation solutions for resilient farms and communities.

- Planning
- Design
- Engineering
- Funding
- Permitting
- Construction Oversight



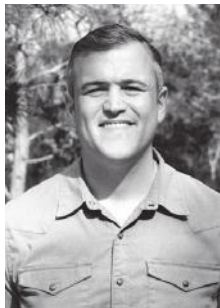


ENGINEERING | PLANNING | INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS

WWW.HRG-INC.COM

Message from the President

JOE DICKSON, PCO BOARD PRESIDENT



As the leaves are beginning to turn and the harvest season is well underway, I've been reflecting on the cycles of growth and renewal that are at the heart of all life, agricultural systems, and the work we do at PCO. This fall, we're experiencing our own transformation – one that I believe will strengthen our service to you, our clients and community, for years to come.

Over the past several months, our Certification team has been undergoing an important and thoughtful evolution. We've been looking closely at how we can make the certification process smoother, faster, and more responsive, while never compromising the integrity and rigor that organic demands. This has meant rethinking roles, refining workflows, and sharpening our focus on what matters most: your experience as a PCO client, and the quality of the service you receive.

Our movement continues to grow in both scale and complexity, and yet its core principles remain unchanged: care for the land, care for the people who steward it, and care for the communities nourished by it.

These changes are already helping us operate with greater efficiency, deeper expertise, and a renewed commitment to making the certification process a supportive and transparent partnership.

We're also preparing for another milestone: the arrival of our new Executive Director, Chris Solt, at the end of September. Chris brings a wealth of experience in fair trade, cooperative business, and sustainable agriculture, along with a thoughtful and engaging leadership style that fits PCO's values beautifully. I'm excited for you to get to know him, and I'm confident he will lead the PCO team and community into a new chapter of growth, innovation, and member service.

At the same time, I'm mindful that these organizational changes are happening within a larger moment for organic. Our movement continues to grow in both scale and complexity, and yet its core principles remain unchanged: care for the land, care for the people who steward it, and care for the communities nourished by it. In a world that often prioritizes speed and short-term gains, organic stands as a testament to patience, integrity, and the belief that how we grow and produce food matters.

As my time as Interim Executive Director draws to a close, I want to express my deepest gratitude to you – our farmers, processors, and partners – for choosing PCO as your certifier. Your trust in us is not something we take lightly. Every certificate we issue, every question we answer, and every audit we support is part of your story, and we're honored to walk alongside you in it.

Here's to a season of growth, change, and shared commitment to the values that brought us each to the organic movement!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Dickson', written over a light background.

Joe Dickson
PCO Board President, Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Founder and Principle – Lot 49 Advisors

STAY CONNECTED, VISIT:
paorganic.org

Andrea Davis-Cetina

continued from page 4

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE OF ORGANIC, ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME

Andrea Davis-Cetina's story is one of transformation, not just of land, but of perspective. From her first steps into farming on a quarter acre to her leadership on the national organic stage, she has consistently focused on inclusion, education, and real-world support.

At its heart, her work is about connection: connecting farmers to organic resources, consumers to trustworthy food, and communities to a healthier, more sustainable future. Whether through the rows of organic vegetables she grows or the mentees she guides, Andrea is planting the seeds of a movement that is rooted, resilient, and ready to grow.

And she'll be the first to tell you: you don't have to be big to be impactful. You just have to begin.

To learn more about the Transition to Organic Partnership Program, head to www.organictransition.org

Learn more about *Quarter Acre Farm* at www.quarter-acre.com

Note: The Transition to Organic Partnership Program is a certifier-neutral program.

Standards & Policy Update

Kyla Smith, PCO Certification
Policy Advisor, NOSB Chair, USDA
Accredited Certifying Agent Seat, 2021–2026



USDA PROPOSES TO RESCIND MARKET DEVELOPMENT FINAL RULE (MUSHROOMS & PET FOOD)

On May 12, 2025, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) issued a proposed rule to rescind the Market Development Final Rule, which had been finalized on March 21, 2025.

This rule originally sought to clarify how organic regulations apply to mushroom and pet food production, aiming to foster growth in these markets—particularly through clearer guidelines for inputs such as slaughter by-products used in organic pet food.

The comment period on this proposed rescission is now closed. PCO will continue to monitor this issue and provide an update once a final decision is made.

SAVE-THE-DATE: FALL 2025 NOSB MEETING

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) will meet in Omaha, NE from November 4-6, 2025 to discuss substances petitioned for addition to or deletion from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List), substances due to sunset from the National List in 2027, and recommendations on organic policies.

The NOSB typically meets twice per year in various locations around the United States. Prior to meetings, the NOSB reviews written public comments and listens to oral public comments. Oral public comments will be heard virtually on October 28th and 30th. The organic industry operations in a public-private partnership model. This means certified organic operations ("private") get to influence how the USDA ("public") implements the organic program. You have a voice in what the organic regulations say – what production or other types of requirements are added or revised?; what materials continue to be allowed or those that get removed? However, this requires participation. It requires your voice in the conversation through public comments. As is the case in many discussions, silence is seen as agreement and the loudest voices prevail. Your stories about your organic operations matter. Especially if the discussions being had by the NOSB could impact your operation. And the board wants to hear them. You can submit a written comment or can sign up for an oral comment slot.

During meetings, the NOSB discusses agenda items, and then votes on recommendations to the Secretary in a public forum. Detailed information, including agendas, locations, proposals, and public comments, will be posted on the meeting website as it becomes available: www.ams.usda.gov/event/-national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-fall-2025.

Please contact Kyla Smith, Certification Policy Advisor and NOSB member, at kyla@paorganic.org or 814-422-0251 x216 to discuss the meeting agenda or how to participate through the comment process. She loves to talk about organic practices and policy and help ensure others have a seat at the table for these important conversations.

Legislative Update

Alison Garber
PCO Executive Support and
Communications Manager



USDA ANNOUNCES MAJOR REORGANIZATION: IMPACT ON NOP STILL UNCLEAR

On July 24, 2025 Agriculture Secretary Rollins announced a significant USDA reorganization designed to refocus the agency on its core mission of serving American farmers, ranchers, and foresters. The plan includes relocating most Washington, D.C.-based staff to five regional hubs, consolidating office space, and reducing the USDA's Washington presence from more than 4,600 employees to fewer than 2,000.

USDA described this move as part of its broader workforce reduction efforts, noting that over 15,000 employees have previously opted for deferred resignation. While the Department has outlined its high-level restructuring goals, it has not yet provided specifics on how individual programs – such as the National Organic Program – may be impacted.

PCO will continue to monitor developments and will update you as we learn more.

INCREASED FUNDING SECURED FOR ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program has received a significant boost, with \$8 million allocated annually through 2031, thanks to recent federal budget legislation.

This long-term funding commitment will help certified organic farmers, ranchers, processors, and handlers offset the cost of maintaining their certification. Under the program, eligible operations can be reimbursed for 75% of their certification expenses – up to \$750 per scope – for:

- Crops
- Livestock
- Handling
- Wild Crop

The USDA has not yet released full program details for the upcoming funding cycle. PCO will share updates as soon as more information becomes available, including guidance on how to apply for reimbursement.

This funding represents a meaningful investment in the growth and sustainability of the organic sector, helping to make certification more accessible and affordable for operations nationwide.

Event Calendar

All times listed are Eastern Time Zone unless otherwise indicated.

* Notes a TOPP Core Partner Regional Event

SEPTEMBER

PCO – Fox Haven Farm, Herb CSA with Farm Tour*

September 4
Jefferson, MD
<https://paorganic.org/topp/organic-transition-events/>

CT NOFA- SOIL HEALTH: Physical Properties of Soil – Part 1*

September 10
<https://ctnofa.org/events/>

Rodale Institute: Regenerative Landscaping and Design

September 12
Kutztown, PA
<https://rodaleinstitute.org/education/workshops/>

NOFA NH – Managing Soil Fertility: An In-Depth Intensive for Organic Growers*

September 13
Winchester, NH
www.nofanh.org/events/picadilly-intensive

NOFA NJ- Pawpaw Workshop at West Farm Nursery*

September 16

Branchberg, NJ
<https://nofanj.org/https-nofanj-org-event-calender-calendar/#/event/2025/9/16/pawpaw-workshop-at-west-farm-nursery>

NOFA/Mass- Four Seasons of Viability, Organic High Tunnels in Action*

September 16
Stow, MA
www.nofamass.org/event/four-seasons-of-viability-organic-high-tunnels-in-action/

Organic Agronomy Training Service- Biological Amendments, In-Furrow Fertility, Planting Best Practices

September 16
Virtual
www.organicagronomy.org/events

CT NOFA – SOIL HEALTH: Chemical Properties of Soil – Part 2*

September 17
<https://ctnofa.org/events/>

PCO – Farm Tour Eden Hall Farm*

(at Chatham University)
September 19
Gibsonia, PA

<https://paorganic.org/topp/organic-transition-events/>

MOFGA – Common Ground Country Fair (TOPP Sessions)*

September 19-21
Unity, ME
www.mofga.org/the-fair/

NOFA NJ – Monthly Organic Open House*

September 24
Virtual
<https://nofanj.org/https-nofanj-org-event-calender-calendar/#/event/2025/8/27/monthly-organic-open-house>

CT NOFA – SOIL HEALTH: Biological Properties of Soil – Part 3*

September 24
<https://ctnofa.org/events/>
CT NOFA – Soil Health 3 Ways – In Person Event*
September 27
<https://ctnofa.org/events/>

OCTOBER

Rodale Institute: Fall On the Farm

October 4
Kutztown, PA
<https://rodaleinstitute.org/education/workshops/>

Pasa Sustainable Agriculture – Soil & Crop Fertility Practices

October 9
Montgomery Co., PA
<https://pasa.tfaforms.net/1579>

Rodale Institute: Gather & Grow: Cultivating Organic Connections*

October 10
Charlottesville, VA
<https://rodaleinstitute.org/education/workshops/>

Organic Agronomy Training Service – Organic Fertilizer. How Much?

October 14
Virtual
www.organicagronomy.org/events

RECURRING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EVENTS:

NOFA NH – Organic Support Hour*

Online Wednesdays 1-2 pm
https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engi ne/s/iATWulu_WOPT2tWcmyrtPw

NOFA NJ – Monthly Technical Assistance Hour*

Online First Wednesday of each month at 9AM
<https://nofanj.org/https-nofanj-org-event-calender-calendar/#/event/2025/8/6/nofa-nj-monthly-technical-assistance-hour>

NOFA NY Farmer's Forum*

Last Tuesdays Monthly Online from 7:00-8:00 pm via Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckd-qsrz4iE9c-7HbKJJBim-P5cCJtg7JWm#/registration>

PCO – Organic Office Hours technical assistance*

Online – Wednesday 8/6 and 8/27
<https://paorganic.org/topp/organic-office-hours/>

A new bank built for farms & food businesses.

MISSION-DRIVEN LOANS FOR EQUIPMENT & LAND, LINES OF CREDIT, AND DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS



JOIN US!
USE PROMO CODE "PCO"*
VISIT US AT WALDENMUTUAL.COM OR CALL (603) 227-6801



"In addition to meeting our banking needs, Walden is a breath of fresh air - aligning with a financial institution that is committed to our shared values."

PENNSYLVANIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC



**WALDEN
MUTUAL
BANK.**

FDIC *FDIC insured. Backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government

*Choose from a range of incentives (up to \$100 in value) when you open and fund (minimum for accounts for individuals \$100; minimum for accounts for organizations \$1,000) a Walden account within 30 days of opening.



LAKEVIEW ORGANIC GRAIN

Box 361, 119 Hamilton Place
Penn Yan, NY 14527
315-531-1038
mh@lakevieworganicgrain.com

for Northeast Organic Farmers . . .
. . . from Northeast Organic Farmers



**NORTHEAST/
MID-ATLANTIC**
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

for Transitioning and
Certified Organic Producers



The Northeast/ Mid-Atlantic Transition to Organic Partnership Program mentorship program pairs experienced organic producers and producers transitioning to organic, supports the transition process, and creates a stronger network of organic producers across the country.

MENTORSHIP SUPPORT

Certified organic producers serve as a paid mentor, supporting producers through the transition and certification process. Transitioning producers receive free mentorship.

PRODUCER PARTNERSHIP

Northeast/ Mid-Atlantic TOPP will provide guidance and support for the mentorship. Mentors and transitioning producers will meet regularly on their own either virtually or in person.

TAILORED GUIDANCE

Mentors and transitioning producers will work together to set goals for the mentorship year and build a communication system tailored for their individual needs and preferences.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!
Learn more and apply at www.organictransition.org or
email wfrueh@paorganic.org

Have you been certified organic for at least 3 years?
Are you passionate about building organic community?
Do you want to be paid to support new farmers?

Sign up to be a mentor today! www.organictransition.org

Mentorship available in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

For more information, contact the Northeast/ Mid-Atlantic TOPP Mentorship Coordinator at wfrueh@paorganic.org.



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program





106 School Street, Suite 201
Spring Mills, PA 16875

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE PAID
STATE COLLEGE, PA
PERMIT NO. 21

You have **Options!**

Crop Guard *Forage Inoculants*

- Latest Technology
- Carefully Selected Strains
- Superior Performance
- Maximum Forage Quality



Quantum - Organic Light™ & Organic VSC®

Spore Forming & Photosynthetic Bacteria



- Mitigates Moisture to Prevent Disease
- Enhanced Plant & Root Development
- Faster Seed Germination



Manure Treatment that:

- Controls Odors
- Breaks Down Solids
- Requires Less Agitation
- Retains High Levels of Nitrogen

FINALLY!

A Quality Source
of Organically
Acceptable Nitrogen!



BENEFITS OF EXPLORER™ LIQUID 10-0-0:

- Does not volatilize
- High carbon content makes excellent food source for soil biology
- Carbon based and contains plant derived amino acids
- Natural product with no negative environmental impact
- Beneficial use in conditions of biotic and abiotic stress conditions



New Holland, PA
(717) 354-4398
www.HomesteadNutritionInc.com