



Application for Organic Certification

SECTION 1: General Information				CFR 7 §205.201 and §205.401	
Name of Operation: ELLIOTT GARDENS				Client ID # (b) (6)	
Authorized Representative: BRETT ELLIOTT				Date rec'd : 6/13/14	
Mailing Address: 6321 LOWELL BLVD.		Phone: (b) (6)		Review date : 6/17/14	
		E-mail (b) (6)		App Reviewer: SC	
City : DENVER	State/province: CO.	Postal/zip code: 80221	Country: USA	Fees rec'd: \$500	
				Inspector: SC	
Primary Contact : BRETT ELLIOTT				Phone: (b) (6)	
				E-mail (b) (6)	
Position or relationship to operation: GROWER					
Legal status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sole proprietorship <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> Trust or non-profit <input type="checkbox"/> Legal partnership (federal form 1065) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)					
Year company began: 1963	Number of employees: 8	Name of person overseeing organic production: BRETT ELLIOTT		Government permits/licenses:	
Do you have a copy of current USDA NOP organic standards? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
If no, contact A Bee Organic					
Please describe your procedures should you not understand a part of the organic standards:					
Does a State Organic Program apply to your operation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		If yes, State: Date of Application:		Registration #: Expiration Date:	
Export to: <input type="checkbox"/> Canada <input type="checkbox"/> EU <input type="checkbox"/> Switzerland <input type="checkbox"/> Japan <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan <input type="checkbox"/> Korea <input type="checkbox"/> Other:					
Does your operation's projected gross agricultural income from organic sales total \$5,000 or less annually? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					
If yes, do you intend to sell your products to anyone that will resell them as "organic" or use as an ingredient in an "organic" product? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
If you answered "Yes" to the first question and "No" to the second, you may be considered an exempt operation. Please contact A Bee Organic before continuing.					
SECTION 2: Site Information					
OVERVIEW OF OPERATION: Please provide a brief description of your organic production and/or handling:					
Complete and attach the <u>Product List Form</u>. Include all products requested for organic certification.					
Site ID	Site Address	City	State	Zip	Country
ELLIOTT WEST RANGE	6321 LOWELL BLVD.	DENVER	CO.	80221	USA
Attach additional sites as necessary					
Give directions to the site(s) from the nearest main highway: I-76 / FEDERAL / NORTH ON FEDERAL BLVD. TO 64TH AVE/ WEST ON 64TH AVE. TO LOWELL BLVD./ SOUTH ON LOWELL BLVD. TO 6321 LOWELL BLVD.					
Are you a split operation? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Do you have parallel production? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Estimated annual total production 50% organic 50% non-organic	
If you are a split operation, attach a list of the general categories of your <u>non-organic</u> products					
SECTION 3: Prior Organic Certification and/or Noncompliance				205.405 (e)	

Has certification ever been denied, suspended, or revoked? Yes No

If yes, describe the circumstances: **WE UNKNOWINGLY RECEIVED NON ORGANIC PRODUCT FROM AN OUTSIDE GROWER AND RE-PACKED AS ORGANIC.**

Are you currently certified organic with another certifier? Yes No

Attach a copy of each current certificate.

Have you previously been certified organic with another certifier? Yes No

Attach a copy of your most current certificate

List all noncompliance from your last certification and state how the noncompliance has been addressed. No noncompliance

Attach documentation to provide proof that noncompliance has been addressed.

SECTION 4: Affirmation

CFR 7 205.100, 205.400 and 205.401

4.1: I affirm that all statements made are accurate. I agree to comply with the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 and National Organic Program Rules and Regulations. I understand that any part of the certified operation may be subject to unannounced inspection and/or organic products and agricultural inputs used in organic production may be sampled and tested for residues at any time. I will immediately notify the certifying agent of the application, including drift, of a prohibited substance to any part or product of the operation. I agree that any changes to this plan, or to any portion of the certified operation that may affect compliance, will be discussed with the certifying agent prior to implementation. I agree to provide further information as required by the certifying agent. I have read the A Bee Organic Fee Schedule and agree to pay in full any fees incurred during the certification process.

Signature of Owner/Authorized Representative

Date

BRETT ELLIOTT

Name of Owner /Authorized Representative (Print or Type)

I have attached the following documents:

4.2A; All applicants must provide:

- Organic System Plan(s)
- Product List Form
- Site Map and/or Facility Diagram
- Materials Use List
- Labels and/or MSDS for materials
- Sample Recordkeeping

4.2B: Handlers- Processors

- Production Flow Diagram
- Pest Management Map
- Product Profile
- Product Formulation Worksheet
- Ingredient Supplier Worksheet
- Product Label Worksheet
- Product Labels
- Residue Test, if applicable

4.2C: Handlers- Brokers, Distributors, Traders

- Trader Supplier Worksheet

4.2D: All Crop Producers:

- Field History Worksheet
- Seed Source Worksheet
- Non-GMO Documentation
- Compost Worksheet, if applicable
- Water Test, if applicable

4.2E: Greenhouse/Container Crop Production:

- Greenhouse/Container Worksheet

4.2F: Hydroponic/Aquaponic Crop Production:

- Hydroponic/Aquaponic Worksheet

4.2G: Fungi/Mushroom Production:

- Fungi/Mushroom Worksheet

4.2H: Livestock Producers:

- Livestock Origin/ID Worksheet
- Livestock Health Worksheet
- Livestock Feed Worksheet
- Livestock Supplements & Additives Worksheet, if applicable
- Livestock Feed Formulation Worksheet, if applicable
- Non-GMO Documentation
- Livestock Outdoor Access Worksheet
- Field History Worksheet
- Seed Source Worksheet, if applicable

4.2J: Ruminant Livestock

- Ruminant DMI Worksheet
- Ruminant Pasture Worksheet

I have made copies of my Application, Organic Systems Plan and other supporting documents for my records.

Submit completed forms, fees, and supporting documents to: admin@abeeorganic.com

Hard copies may be mailed to:

A Bee Organic

40707 Daily Rd. Fallbrook CA 92028



40707 Daily Road, De Luz, CA 92028 USA

National Organic Program
Accreditation and International Activities Division
Ms. Cheri Courtney, Director
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2648-South, Stop 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250-0268

December 1, 2014

Dear Ms. Courtney;

This is the proposal requested in the OASIS decision letter received by A Bee Organic on November 3, 2014.

A Bee Organic has informed all their certified hydroponic and aquaponic growers that OASIS Horticultures and Rootcubes have been classified as “products containing synthetic materials not on the National List” and that they must find alternatives that are either non-synthetic or comply with Section 205.601 of the National List. They have also been informed that at this time there are no synthetics on the list so they must find non-synthetic alternatives.

We asked the growers for feedback on a reasonable timeframe for them to switch over their systems. Growers responded that ideally they would have one year to transition from using OASIS Horticultures and/or Rootcubes to another product for the following reasons:

1. Growers need to identify and test new products through 4 growing seasons: fall, winter, spring & summer. This includes testing different types of seeds, nutrient mixes, pest control- particularly disease control, and computer calibration for several growers.
2. Growers will need to retool automation equipment that is currently designed for OASIS Horticultures and Rootcubes. In several instances this involves close to \$100K of investment. Some growers will need to replace much of their irrigation systems. Others will need to purchase special equipment to form alternative products to fit their system.

A Bee Organic proposes the following transitional steps for growers using OASIS Horticultures and Rootcubes:

1. Growers immediately start tests on alternative products.
2. All tests and results are documented
3. Documented test results are provided to A Bee Organic
4. A Bee Organic reviews test results quarterly
5. Regardless of test results, all growers must transition from OASIS Horticultures and/or Rootcubes to an alternative by December 1, 2015.
6. On December 1, 2015 growers provide a Bee Organic an accounting of OASIS Horticultures and/or Rootcubes and evidence of disposal.
7. A Bee Organic will perform inspections, either scheduled or unannounced, of all growers previously using OASIS Horticultures and/or Rootcubes.
8. Any grower found to still be using OASIS Horticultures and/or Rootcubes will be issued a Notification of Noncompliance with Proposed Suspension.

Please let us know if clarification or additional information is needed.

Respectfully

(b) (6)

Sarah E. J. Costin
Certification Specialist,
A Bee Organic

A Bee Organic M001

9178RESC



40707 Daily Road, De Luz, CA 92028 USA

Ms. Cheri Courtney
Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Room 2648-S, STOP 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0268

December 29, 2014

Response to A Bee Organic LLC Notice of Noncompliance of September 30, 2014

Facts: A Bee Organic reviewed a certified operation wanting to change certifiers, Elliott Gardens, prior to inspection. A Bee Organic checked for noncompliance with the certifier, found none and accepted the CCOF certificate as valid. A Bee Organic did not check to see if Elliott Gardens was still suspended, making the erroneous assumption that CCOF had done this prior to certifying the site.

Corrective Actions:

a. Correcting the cause of the noncompliance.

On September 26, 2014 Ro Elgas of A Bee Organic submitted a final letter of request for reinstatement for Elliott Gardens- West Range. Elliott Gardens was reinstated by the Deputy Administrator of NOP on October 16, 2014. A certificate and addendum were reissued to Elliott Gardens-West Range with the Effective Date of October 16, 2014

b. Providing objective evidence supporting how the noncompliance was corrected.

Please see attached letters and revised certificate and addendum for Elliott Gardens- West Range referred to above.

c. Preventing the reoccurrence of the noncompliance in the future.

A Bee Organic policy 1.2 *Acceptance of applicants for certification* states that "A Bee Organic will review for completeness and the ability to comply with 7 CFR Part 205 any person who complies with §§205.400 and 205.401". However, as an additional safeguard, if an applicant states in the space provided on the A Bee Organic application that they have in the past been suspended, the A Bee Organic initial reviewer will check the NOP web site to see if the applicant has been reinstated, whether or not they are currently certified.

d. Providing objective evidence supporting how the noncompliance will be prevented in the future.

The Certification Process Tracker (CPT) has been revised. Line 32 was added to specifically remind the initial reviewer to check prior noncompliance and/or suspension. This was previously a part of the application review on Line 31. The revised CPT is attached.

e. Controlling noncompliant product, when appropriate.

From the time of receipt of "cease and desist" order Elliott Gardens- West Range did not sell any product represented as organic. This will be verified at the next on-site inspection.

Please let us know if further description or documentation is needed. We look forward to verification of the corrective actions effectiveness during A Bee Organic's upcoming onsite accreditation assessment.

Respectfully,

(b) (6)

Sarah Costin
Administrative Director
A Bee Organic

Cc: Ro Elgas

Attachments: LTTR A Bee Organic-Elliott Gardens Reinstatement Request2; Elliott Gardens reinstatement letter 101614; Cert-1117-rev-10-16-14; Cert Add1117-rev-10-16-14; CPT revision

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Michael Baker <Michael.Baker@aco.net.au>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 3:31 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: Automatic reply: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

Thank you for your email. I am currently out of the office overseas until Wednesday the 23rd of March. I will checking emails intermittently throughout this time.

If your enquiry is urgent please contact the ACO office on 0733505706.

I will respond to your email upon my return.

Kind Regards,

Michael Baker (Bach. Ag Sc, MA RD)



Addendum to Organic Certificate # 141731

Certified Operation: Elliott Gardens- West Range

Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Category: Crop- Hydroponic

Site Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Products Certified: 100% Organic

<u>Products</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>ID Mark</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Arugula	Common	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Baby Lettuce	Allstar	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Basil	Dolly	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Chives	Common	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Cucumbers	Assorted	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Dill	Fernleaf	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Eggplant	Assorted	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Kale	Green Curled	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Kale	Lacinato	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Kale	Red Russian	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Mint	Spearmint	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Mizuna	Green	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Oregano	Greek	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Peppers	Assorted	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Rosemary	Upright	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Sage	Common	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Spinach	Tyee	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Squash	Assorted	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Swiss Chard	Green	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Tomato	Assorted	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Tarragon	French	Private	NOP	7/16/14
Thyme	English	Private	NOP	7/16/14

Effective Date: 6/22/14

Date of Issue: 7/16/14

Anniversary Date: 6/22/15

Certification Specialist



Addendum to Organic Certificate # 141731

Certified Operation: Elliott Gardens- West Range

Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Category: Crop- Hydroponic

Site Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Products Certified: 100% Organic

Products	Variety	ID Mark	Standard	Effective Date
Arugula	Common	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Baby Lettuce	Allstar	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Living Basil	Dolly	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Chives	Common	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Cucumbers	Assorted	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Dill	Fernleaf	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Eggplant	Assorted	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Kale	Green Curled	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Kale	Lacinato	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Kale	Red Russian	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Living lettuce	Mix	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Mint	Spearmint	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Mizuna	Green	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Oregano	Greek	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Peppers	Assorted	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Rosemary	Upright	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Sage	Common	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Spinach	Tyee	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Squash	Assorted	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Swiss Chard	Green	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Tomato	Assorted	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Tarragon	French	Private	NOP	10/16/14
Thyme	English	Private	NOP	10/16/14

Effective Date: 10/16/14

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Certification Specialist



Organic Certificate

Certified Operation: Elliott Gardens -West Range

Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Category: Crop- Hydroponic

Certificate # 141731

Site Address: 6321 Lowell Blvd. Denver CO, 80221

Products Certified: Greens, Herbs and Vegetables (see addendum)

Certified organic under the US National Organic Program 7 CFR Part 205
Once certified a production or handling operation's organic certification
continues in effect until surrendered, suspended, or revoked.

Effective Date: 6/22/14

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Certification Specialist



Organic Certificate

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Once certified a production or handling operation's organic certification
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Effective Date: 10/16/14

Date of Issue: 10/16/14

Anniversary Date: 6/22/15


Certification Specialist



Name of Operation:				Client ID:	
Authorized Representative:		Phone:		Date Application Sent Out :	
Relationship to Operation:		Mobile:		Date Application received :	
		e-mail:		Application Fee received : <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Mailing Address 1:		City:		Inspection Fee received:	
Mailing Address 2:		State:		Certification Fee Received:	
Country		Zip/Postal Code:		Additional Fees Received: <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Additional Contact: Same as above <input type="checkbox"/>		Phone:		Application Withdrawn: <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
		Mobile:		Refund <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, Date:	
		e-mail:			
Site 1 ID:		Site 1 City:		Site 1 Acreage:	
Address		Site 1 State:			
Site 2 ID:		Site 2 City:		Site 2 Acreage:	
Address		Site 2 State:			
Site 3 ID:		Site 3 City:		Site 3 Acreage:	
Address:		Site 3 State:			
Site 4 ID:		Site 4 City:		Site 4 Acreage:	
Address:		Site 4 State:			
Categories of organic products:	<input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Annual or Biennial <input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Perennial: Tree, Vine, Bush, Plant <input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Greenhouse: Terrestrial <input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Greenhouse: Hydroponic <input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Wild crop <input type="checkbox"/> Crop- Fungi <input type="checkbox"/> Handler- Single Ingredient <input type="checkbox"/> Handler- Multiple Ingredient <input type="checkbox"/> Handler- Re-Pack <input type="checkbox"/> Handler- Broker, Trader, Distributor <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock- Ruminant <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock- Non-Ruminant				
Is the operation exempt?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes descr be:	<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$5000 <input type="checkbox"/> Ingredient panel		
If yes, requesting certification?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Is operation producer group member?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, group name:			
Export requested for: <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Canada <input type="checkbox"/> EU <input type="checkbox"/> Bio-Suisse <input type="checkbox"/> Japan <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan <input type="checkbox"/> Korea <input type="checkbox"/> Other				
Split Operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, was non-organic product list provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Parallel production?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, was non-organic product list provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
SECTION A: APPLICATION REVIEW					
Instructions: Review all application materials for completeness and the ability to comply with all applicable NOP regulations. Some applications may need to be reviewed for more than one category and some lines may apply to more than the category they are listed under. Generate inspector instructions. Complete all sections, sign and date, and forward the document to the Inspection Coordinator.					
ALL CATEGORIES	Not Applicable	Received	Complete	Appears to Comply	Notes
Application			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Noncompliance/Suspension	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Organic Systems Plan			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Product List			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Product Profile	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Process Flow Chart	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Site Map and/or Facility Map	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Pest Management	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Non-GMO Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Commingling Prevention	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Contamination Prevention	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Monitoring			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Cleaning	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Sanitizing	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Storage	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Recordkeeping			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Materials Use Form	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Materials Information	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Prohibited Materials Disclosure	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

CROP					
Field History Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Boundaries and Buffers	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Fertility	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Seed Source Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Greenhouse Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Mushroom/Fungi Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Water & Irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Compost Log	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Manure Management	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Harvest			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Contractor Information	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
LIVESTOCK					
Livestock Origin/ID Worksheet			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Livestock Health Worksheet			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Livestock Feed Worksheet			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Livestock Supplement/Additive Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Livestock Feed Formulation Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Livestock Outdoor Access Worksheet			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ruminant Livestock DMI Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ruminant Livestock Pasture Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Pasture Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Manure Management	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
HANDLER					
Product Profiles	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Product Formulation Worksheet	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ingredient Supplier List	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Product Labels	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Packaging	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Co-Packer Information	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Organic Ingredient Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
OTHER					
Water Test	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Soil Test	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Residue Test	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Export	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Sample Recordkeeping	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other: State registration			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other:			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	



1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 2648-S, STOP 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250-0268

VIA EMAIL

Bill Elliot
Elliot Gardens
6321 Lowell Blvd.
Denver, CO 80221

SEP 08 2014

(b) (6)

NOTICE TO CEASE AND DESIST

Dear Mr. Elliot:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP) enforces the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended, and its implementing regulations at 7 CFR 205. All agricultural products sold, labeled or represented as organic must be produced and handled in compliance with the USDA organic regulations. It has come to our attention that Elliot Gardens is selling and representing agricultural products as organic in violation of these regulations.

On July 7, 2010, the Colorado Department of Agriculture suspended Elliot Gardens' organic certification. The NOP has not granted reinstatement of Elliot Gardens' organic certification, which is required by the USDA organic regulations¹ if Elliot Gardens wishes to resume producing or handling agricultural products intended to be sold, labeled or represented as organic. Nonetheless, the NOP has determined that since its suspension, Elliot Gardens has continued to produce agricultural products represented as organic under certification from both the California Certified Organic Farmers and A Bee Organic. Because the NOP has not reinstated the certification of Elliot Gardens, these two certifications are invalid.

Be advised that failure to **cease and desist** selling, labeling or representing agricultural products as organic and otherwise to comply with the USDA organic regulations may result in a civil penalty of \$11,000 per violation. Please notify the NOP in writing of your plan to come into compliance with the regulations or of your intent to appeal this Notice. Please notify Renee Gebault King, Accreditation Manager, at ReneeA.GebaultKing@ams.usda.gov. If you have questions, Ms. Gebault King can be reached at (202) 720-3252 or via email.

You may appeal the noncompliance decision within 30 days of receipt of this notice, pursuant to §205.681(c) of the USDA organic regulations. Appeals must be filed in writing to:

¹ See 7 CFR 205.662(f)(1).

Mr. Elliot

Page 2

Administrator, USDA, AMS
c/o NOP Appeals Staff
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2095-S, STOP 0203
Washington, DC 20250

Sincerely,



Cheri Courtney
Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
National Organic Program

cc: CCOF
A Bee Organic

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, October 08, 2014 1:09 PM
To: Ro Elgas; Sarah Costin
Cc: Mann, Renee - AMS; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Subject: Elliott Gardens reinstatement follow-up

Dear Ro and Sarah,

Thank you for speaking with Cheri and Renee Mann yesterday regarding your concerns about the Elliott Gardens reinstatement request process.

Per the conversation, please providing the following information:

- 1) Please explain how your letter complies with NOP 2605, Reinstating Suspended Operations Instruction ([link](#)). Specifically, we are looking for the information on page 4 of 8 of the Instruction where it requests a letter that affirmatively states "The review found that the OSP adequately addressed the noncompliance(s) that led to the suspension, and complies with the regulations..." Thank you for clarifying that Elliott Gardens complies with the regulations – this statement is clear in your letter, however the previous statement affirmatively clarifying that the previous noncompliance has been addressed is not clear to us.
- 2) Please explain how A Bee Organic confirmed that the previous noncompliance was addressed. How does Elliott Gardens prevent the previous noncompliance from recurring in relation to packaging the product? You can provide this information in an email or separate document, whatever method is easiest for you. Please do not change the inspection report or spend time removing information from your letter requesting reinstatement. Thank you for submitting information on September 26th regarding the split operation; this has been helpful in explaining the situation. You stated, "*Elliott Gardens is both a retail nursery establishment and a wholesale organic hydroponic potted herb producer. The greenhouse up front is shared with the nursery. The organic area is divided from the nursery (conventional) by a plastic wall. The areas do not share pumps, fertigation or inputs. No issues of cross contamination was noted at inspection. The Elliot Gardens Nursery area sells the Elliot Gardens herbs that were produced organically as conventional, because they were not sure if the non certified nursery could sell organic herbs. No conventional herbs are grown or sold on the nursery side. Flowers for the nursery are not organic and not started onsite. The flowers are purchased from local growers. Brett did not want the any confusion that might happen from growing non organic plant starts.*"

I look forward to working with you to complete this request.

Kind regards,

Renee

Renée Gebault King, Ph.D.
Accreditation Manager

Office: 202.690.1312

Mobile: 202.770.8672

ReneeA.GebaultKing@ams.usda.gov

USDA National Organic Program
1400 Independence Ave SW

Room 2647-South, Stop 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250-0268
Main Tel: 202.720.3252
Fax: 202.205.7808
www.ams.usda.gov/nop

Subscribe to the USDA's [Organic Insider](#) to receive updates in your e-mail!



1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 2646-S, STOP 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0201

NOTICE OF REINSTATEMENT OF CERTIFIED OPERATION

OCT 16 2014

Brett Elliott
Elliott Gardens
6321 Lowell Blvd.
Denver, CO 80221

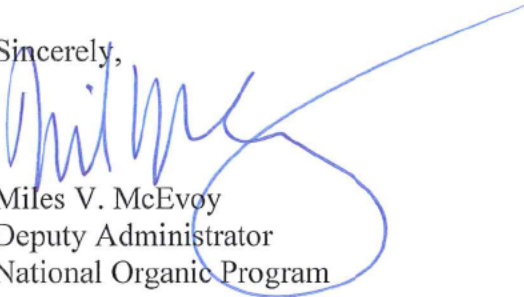
(b) (6)

Dear Mr. Elliott,

The National Organic Program (NOP) has completed its review of your request for reinstatement as a certified organic operation. Pursuant to 7CFR § 205.662 (f)(1) and based on the compliance statement provided by your accredited certifying agent, the National Organic Program, on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, reinstates the organic certification of Elliott Gardens as a certified organic operation, effective today.

Your certifier will issue your certificate for the products approved in your organic system plan. Please retain all documents relating to this reinstatement for possible future onsite auditing by NOP representatives.

Sincerely,


Miles V. McEvoy
Deputy Administrator
National Organic Program

cc: A Bee Organic LLC

EXIT INTERVIEW

CFR 7 205.403 (d) "The inspector must conduct an exit interview with an authorized representative of the operation who is knowledgeable about the inspected operation so as to verify the accuracy and completeness of inspection observations and the information gathered during the on-site inspection. The inspector must also address the need for any additional information as well as any issues of concern."	
Name of Applicant Operation: Elliott Gardens	
Name of Representative: Brett Elliott	
NOP REGULATION #	ISSUES OF CONCERN
205.601(j)(6)	Micronutrient use (b)(4) without documented deficiency.
205.206	(b)(4) in storage. Obviously not used recently. Not on Material Use List.
205.103	Receipts for inputs not available.
205.206	Baited traps in use. Bait not on Material Use List (b)(4) on sides of greenhouse.
205.601(j)(2)	(b)(4) It is not clear if this is naturally derived or if a liquid (b)(4) product is used.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED: Please send to A Bee Organic as soon as possible	
Label proofs prior to printing. Send copies of seed providers certificates	
CFR 7 205.403 (e)(1) "At the time of the inspection, the inspector shall provide the operation's authorized representative with a receipt for any samples taken by the inspector. There shall be no charge to the inspector for the samples taken."	
SAMPLES RECEIVED AT INSPECTION: Inspector- Provide representative with a receipt.	
None.	
The authorized representative attests that he/she is knowledgeable about the inspected organic operation, has responded truthfully, and that the inspector observations are accurate and complete.	
Signature of Authorized Representative	(b)(6)
Date:	6-22-14
Signature of Inspector:	(b)(6), (b)(7)(C), (b)(7)(D)
Date:	6-22-14



Inspection Report- Crop-Hydroponic/Aquaponic Production

A BEE ORGANIC USE ONLY

Inspector: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (3) Date Assigned: 6/13/14 Date Submitted: 6/24/14	Contact Information: Brett Elliott (b) (6) (b) (6) Inspection site address: 6321 Lowell Blvd., Denver CO Directions to inspection site: From Denver International Airport: Take I-70 W to Exit 271 B, Lowell Blvd. toward Tennyson St. turn R at end of ramp on to Lowell Rd. Go 1.9 miles, across RR tracks and past Lowell Ponds. Elliot Gardens is on the left.
--	---

INSPECTOR: Complete all information prior to submitting your inspection report. Please complete the two right columns directly below these instructions. Total hours DO NOT include travel time. Please submit an invoice with your completed report.
 A Bee Organic will provide the Applicant with a copy of the report as submitted. **7 CFR §205.403 (e)(2)**

Inspection Date: June 22, 2014 Arrival Time: 10:00 AM Departure Time: 12:50 PM Travel Time: 1 hr. Mileage: NA	Pre- Review Hours: 1.5 Onsite Hours: 2.75 Report Hours: 1 Total Hours: 5.25
--	---

List personnel present at inspection: Brett Elliott, co-owner, organic manager.

Report Instructions:

- Complete all specific instructions in all sections and indicate if there are associated attachments.
- Issues of Concern must be listed on the Exit Interview and **highlighted** in the body of the report. If an Issue of Concern is not listed on the Exit Interview but arises during report writing, please note this in the report.
- List attachments in the area provided at the end of the report.
- Any and all changes to the OSP, related worksheets, certificate and/or addendum, and any other form must be initialed by both the authorized representative present at inspection and the inspector.

If you have questions or concerns, especially safety concerns, please immediately call the office at **(760) 731-0155**

<i>Verify Applicant information on the Application and on the current Certificate. Note any changes.</i>	Elliott Gardens is currently certified (CCOF) as a group member of Circle Fresh Foods for in ground (pots) tomatoes and cucumbers. There was no noncompliance noted. The A Bee certificate should specify Elliott Gardens- West Range as the East side is the non-organic garden center.
--	--

<i>Verify products to be certified on the current Products List. Note changes on both the Products List and the current Certificate Addendum.</i>	The Product List is accurate. All "assorted" vegetables are being sold as 2" pots. Chard, lettuce, arugula, and spinach are sold as both cut and as 2" pots. List both on the certificate. See changes to the Product List. (Attachment A)
---	---

<i>Verify state organic program registration if applicable.</i>	State Program: N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
	Registration #: _____	Expiration Date: _____

<i>If California State Organic Program participant, verify title transfer documents</i>	Is state registration # included on title transfer documents? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Is wording "organic" or "certified organic present on title transfer documents <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Comments: _____	

<i>Verify Health Department certificates as applicable.</i>	Health Dept.: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
	Certificate #: _____	Expiration Date: _____

Prior Minor Noncompliance and Noncompliance: *Verify that prior minor noncompliance and/or noncompliance listed below have been addressed and implemented in the manner agreed upon by the Applicant and the certifier. Provide a description of your verification procedures and relevant documentation sufficient to allow certification reviewer to make an informed decision.*

Use additional sheets as necessary.	
Minor Noncompliance and/or Noncompliance	Description and Comments
	None
<p>Verify all sections of the OSP. Describe your verification procedures. Follow any Specific Instructions listed at the start of sections and provide comments. Comments must include all issues of concern and may include additional observations relevant to the operation. Present all facts involved in issues of concern. All issues of concern must be included on the Exit Interview. You must provide the Applicant, or authorized representative present at inspection with a copy of the Exit Interview at the completion of your inspection.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">7 CFR §205.403</p>	
Overview of the Operation	
<p>Elliott Gardens is a family run business started in 1963, with organic started in 2006-ish. At first they just purchased and re-packed organic herbs, then started growing them. The organic site consists of 2 greenhouse joined by a covered passage. There are areas for both recirculating hydroponic plants and potted plants. The pots are watered with a hose and have "drip and drain" nutrient application. Harvest- cutting of greens into plastic bins for bulk sale or bagging of living basil- is done in the organic greenhouse.</p> <p>Elliott Gardens is surrendering their group certification with Circle Fresh because they want a wider market for their products. They aren't producing what Circle Fresh wants to buy.</p>	
SECTION 1: General Information (From Application and Additional Forms) 7 CFR §205.201 and §205.401	
1. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:	
1.1 Has Application been verified?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: See comments above.	
1.2 Have Category and Scope been verified?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: Greenhouse Crop, hydroponic and in pots, to NOP standard.	
1.3 Has Product List Form been verified?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: See revised copy.	
1.4 Has Crop Map been verified?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:	
1.5 Are directions to the site(s) correct and complete?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, provide directions:	
1.6 Have export addendums been verified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Export to: <input type="checkbox"/> Canada <input type="checkbox"/> EU <input type="checkbox"/> Switzerland <input type="checkbox"/> Japan <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan <input type="checkbox"/> Korea <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Comments:	
1.7 Is this a split operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, was non-organic production inspected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, is there parallel production?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has list of categories of non-organic products been verified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were all inputs used in non-organic production included on the Material Use List ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: All non-organic is flowers and some nursery stock that is purchased elsewhere and sold in the garden center which is not a part of the organic operation. All onsite production is organic.	
SECTION 2: Natural Resources CFR 7 §205.2, §205.200	
2. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:	
2.1 Biodiversity	
Comments: Biodiversity has not been mapped, but there is acreage around the greenhouses that provides habitat for pollinators, birds, and wildlife. Lowell Ponds wildlife sanctuary is just down the road; there are a lot of birds.	
2.2 Conservation & Protection	
Comments: Hydroponic system conserves water and use of existing structures allows the resources on the	

adjoining acreage to be conserved..	
2.3 Water	
Comments: The water test showed clean, slightly alkaline water.	
2.4 Irrigation	
Comments: Irrigation is recirculating drip hydroponic, drip to waste, and hose.	
2.5 Manure Management	
Comments: NA	
2.6 Waste Management	
Comments: Soil in open flats is dumped into a pile behind the greenhouse, covered with plastic and allowed to mulch. It is currently used for planting non-organic perennials or put on craigslist for free. It	
SECTION 3: Land Requirements	7 CFR §205.202
3. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:	
3.1 Has Greenhouse Worksheet been verified?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: Verified accurate	
3.2 Boundaries and Adjacent Activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were all boundaries and adjacent land activities verified? Comments: The OSP descriptions are accurate. There do not appear to be any contamination issues from outside activities. We discussed the possibility of contamination from humans crossing into the organic area from the garden center. Disease would be the issue. Footbath mats with Oxidate are at the entrances to each organic area and there is a low fence between the garden center and the adjacent organic area, but a person could just walk in and avoid the footbath. Brett was aware of this possibility, however remote, and is addressing it.	
3.3 Buffer Zones and Crops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were buffer zones and disposal of buffer crops verified? Comments:	
3.5 Map	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Were drainage, prevailing winds and other map topography verified? Comments: The greenhouses sit at the top of a rise. Drainage moves towards Lowell Ponds. There is enough distance that this would not be an issue even if there was a spillage in the greenhouse.	
3.6 Soil Mixes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If soil mixes were used, were they included on the Material Use List ? Comments: (b) (4) OMRI listed (b) (4). OMRI listed (b) (4) are also ground up for the potted plants.	
SECTION 4 Fertility and Crop Nutrient Management	7 CFR §205.203
4. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:	
4.1 Were plant nutrient deficiencies present?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments: The fully mature basil was showing some yellowing because it uses more iron than what is being given, but it did not appear "unhealthy".	
4.2 Crop Nutrients/ Amendments	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Did you verify that all crop nutrients and/or amendments and manufacturer/suppliers are listed on the Materials Use List ? Comments: There was one (b) (4) in the storage area that was not listed. The container was dusty and Brett said that he had not used it for a while- he thought last on the cucumbers. This product is (b) (4) and does not state narrow range oil on the label, nor was it used in compliance with the narrow range oil restrictions. See Exit Interview. (b) (4). It is unclear if this is a naturally derived product or if liquid (b) (4) products are in use. Information was requested. See Exit interview.	

4.4 Micronutrients Did you review tissue analyses for crops using micronutrients? Comments: There is no leaf analyses or other documentation of deficiency. We discussed the regulation and Brett will be coming up with a plan and sending it to A Bee. See Exit Interview. Did leaf analyses show necessity for use of micronutrients? See Exit Interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.5 Raw Manure If raw manure was used, were application dates verified? Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.6 Compost Did you verify composting practices and procedures, including temperatures and turning? Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.7 Sewage Sludge/Bio-solids Was there evidence of use of sewage sludge/biosolids? Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.8 Treated Lumber Was lumber treated with prohibited substances used in a manner that might contaminate organic product or soil? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Comments: Channels are plastic. Support frames are metal.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
SECTION 5: Seeds and Planting Stock	7 CFR 205.204
5. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:	
5.1 A Seed sourcing Has the Seed Source Worksheet been verified? Comments: If non-organic seed was purchased, describe seed sourcing attempts and documentation Comments: All organic basil seeds were purchased from (b) (4). The seed sourcing procedure if organic seed could not be found was discussed. Send links to seed source web sites. Sent 6/24/14.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.1 B Treated Seed/Inoculants If treated seeds and/or inoculants were used, were they included on the Material Use List ? Comments: Inoculants are OMRI listed: (b) (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.1 C Sprouts If certified product is sprouts, are organic seeds used? Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.2 Seedlings If seedlings are used, was documentation of organic certification verified? Comments: Brett grows his own seedlings. If he buys from an organic producer he will obtain the certificate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.3 Planting Stock If non-organic planting stock was purchased, were planting dates verified?: Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.4 Fungi/Mushrooms If fungi/mushrooms are grown, was the Fungi/Mushroom Worksheet verified? Comments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
SECTION 6: Crop Rotation	7 CFR §205.205

6. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

6.1 Were crop rotations included in the OSP as a part of pest management? Yes No

Comments: Plants are moved around during successive plantings so that the same potted plants are placed in different areas. This helps prevent diseases.

Was actual crop rotation the same as described in the OSP? Yes No

Comments: NA

SECTION 7: Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Management

7 CFR §205.206

7. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

7.1 Pests

Are there problem pests? Yes No

Comments: Aphids and thrips are pests on larger vegetable plants. Rodents may be a problem in winter and spring. There are mechanical traps (17) and baited traps (2) serviced by a PCO.

The baited traps are at the front of the garden center area. The bait is not listed on the MUL and there is pest (b) (4) along the sides and at back of the greenhouses. See Exit Interview.

7.2 Weeds

Are there problem weeds? Yes No

Comments: Weeds grow along the edges of the greenhouses. They are managed by hand pulling.

7.3 Diseases

Are there problem diseases? Yes No

Comments: None. They are not selling impatiens in the garden center this year because most of the plants are carrying powdery mildew. See comments in 3.2 about footbath mats.

7.4 Hierarchy and Inputs

Is the pest control hierarchy followed prior to use of inputs? Yes No

Comments: See comments in 7.1 See attached photos. (Attachments B1 – B2)

Are all input used for pest management included on the **Materials Use List**? Yes No

Comments: Rodent bait is not on the list.

SECTION 8: Organic Integrity

7 CFR §205.20

8. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

8.1 Was the Equipment List verified? Yes No

Comments: Containers are listed in Section 8.3. All equipment is dedicated organic.

8.2 Contracted Harvest

Not applicable

Was documentation from contracted harvesters verified? Yes No

Comments:

8.3 Containers

Not applicable

Was harvest container cleaning documentation verified? Yes No

Comments: Containers may be re-used if clean, washed if not.

8.4 Post Harvest Handling

Not Applicable

Was post-harvest handling as described in the OSP? Yes No

Comments:

Are all substances used as cleaners and sanitizers for post-harvest handling included on the **Materials Use List**?

Not Applicable Yes No

Are all substances used as boiler chemicals for on farm handling included on the **Materials Use List**?

Not Applicable Yes No

Comments:

8.5 Packaging

Not Applicable

Was packaging verified as compliant?

Yes No

Comments: Kroger's and Rocky Mountain Herbs labels were reviewed. They do not make an organic claim. The may request organic labels. There is a "picture tag" label for 2" pots. Old tags show the USDA NOP seal, but do not list a certifier. These labels will not be used. We discussed the necessity for sending in label proofs for approval prior to printing. **See Exit Interview.**

Were packaging procedures and practices verified?

Yes No

Comments: Brett described the procedures, but there was no organic product ready to harvest at time of inspection.

8.6 Storage

Were **Organic Products Storage** areas inspected?

Yes No Not applicable

Were **Input Storage** areas inspected?

Yes No Not applicable

Were **Packaging Storage** areas inspected?

Yes No Not applicable

Comments: All storage is as stated in the OSP.

The organic cooler is dedicated storage for organic produce needing refrigeration.

Packaging stored on shelves or pallets in packing area.

Inputs are stored in the greenhouse.

Seeds are stored in a cabinet in the greenhouse during planting time, and in the office during other times to protect from rodents.

8.7 Transportation

Were **Organic Products** transportation units inspected?

Yes No Not applicable

Comments: Transportation is dedicated organic.

SECTION 9: Record Keeping

7 CFR 205.103

Audit traces for crops and their products represented as "organic" must be completed. If more crops than possible to audit during the inspection were present, three random audits must be completed. The inspector should designate crops/products to be audited. Describe the audit traces in the area provided below. If there are issues of concern, attach copies of all relevant documentation.

9. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

9.1 Check all records that you verified:

- crop rotation log field activity log crop production logs pest, weed, disease monitoring log
 - compost log seed sourcing records receipts for seed, seedlings and/or planting stock purchase
 - organic certificates of suppliers seed labels receipts for inputs equipment cleaning log
 - transport unit inspection/cleaning forms storage records harvest records bills of lading
 - scale tickets organic certificates transaction certificates phytosanitary certificates customs forms
 - verification of non-GMO status verification of no sewage sludge usage verification of no ionizing radiation
 - purchase orders receiving records quality test results sales orders sales invoices
 - organic product inventory reports shipping log shipping summary log complaint log other
- [Describe]

Comments: Non-organic harvest records were reviewed for ability to comply. See comments in trace back below.

9.2 Lot Numbering System

If a lot numbering system is used, is it consistent with the description in the OSP?

Yes No

If no explain:

Explain lot numbering system: The lot number consists of the Julian date of the pack.

9.3 Trace back

Can the recordkeeping system track the crop and all other inputs through production?

Yes No

Receipts for inputs were not available at inspection. We discussed why these were needed. Brett will devise a method of keeping them readily available. **See Exit Interview.**

Can the recordkeeping system balance organic crop produced and organic product sales?

Yes No

Describe the audit traces performed on site:

Comments: Trace of Organic "Dolly" Basil

- Certificate for (b) (4) Seeds- not available at inspection. Verified off site.
- Receipt: (b) (4) Seed; 1 lb. Dolly ORG Basil; Ship date 6/2/14; Order #3823998.306
- Seed Date/Source Log Book: (b) (4)

[Note: (b) (4)

- Harvest: Dolly Basil will not be ready for harvest until the end of July. Sales harvest records for non-organic Living Basil were reviewed for ability to comply. Log lists: Harvest date; Company (buyer); # of Cases (12 ct.); Invoice/Order # (this is not always provided. The date can also be used to trace back).
- Label: Julian date of harvest is on affixed sticker.
- Additional information: Basil is kept at room temperature, so temperatures are not recorded at shipping. Produce that is cooled will have temperature recorded.
- Inputs: The input log shows fill date; type of nutrient; dosage; area of use. Receipts for inputs were not available at inspection.

It appears that the recordkeeping will be sufficient to perform a trace back when plans for recording input receipts and obtaining organic certificates of suppliers are in place.

The need for records after one quarter of organic production was discussed but not added to the Exit Interview.

SECTION 10: Attachments

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Product List Form- revised | <input type="checkbox"/> Residue Test, if applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production Flow Diagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Record keeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Map | <input type="checkbox"/> Product Profile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field History Worksheet | <input type="checkbox"/> Product Label Worksheet, if applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seed Source Worksheet | <input type="checkbox"/> Product Labels, if applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-GMO Documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Photos of pest harborage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Use List | <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Describe] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labels and/or MSDS for materials used | <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Describe] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited Materials Disclosure | <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Describe] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pest Management Map | <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Describe] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Test, if applicable | |

SECTION 14: Affirmation

I, the Applicant, affirm that I have reviewed this inspection report and accept the inspector's observations. I attest I am knowledgeable of the operation and that all information is true and correct. I have received a copy of the Exit Interview for my records. I understand that all issues of concern noted by the inspector may be reversed or added to by A Bee Organic after review.

Signature of Owner/Authorized Representative

Date

Name of Owner /Authorized Representative (Print or Type)

Under penalty of perjury, I attest that I have reviewed the application, organic systems plan, and supporting documents and have completed an inspection of the operation, and that all statements made in this Inspection Report are accurate. I affirm that any changes to the Organic System Plan and/or related worksheets and other documents were made by the Applicant. I agree to provide clarification of information contained in this report and its attachments as required by the certifying agent. I understand that if I fraudulently misrepresent information, or violate the terms and conditions of the Inspector Contract, I am liable for all damages determined by a court of law. I further indemnify and hold harmless A Bee Organic, its agents and all others from liability for mistakes I knowingly commit. In addition, I attest to the following:

- Neither I nor my immediate family members are currently providing consulting services or in any way involved commercially with this operation.
- I attest that I have not accepted payment, gifts, or favors of any kind from the inspected operation.
- I understand that I am required to submit my inspection report to A Bee Organic within 5 working days of inspection unless approved by A Bee Organic or my inspection fee may be subject to a delay of up to 30 days.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (7)(D)

June 22, 2014

Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (7)(D)

Name of Inspector (Print or Type)

Submit completed inspection report and supporting documents to:

**A Bee Organic
40707 Daily Rd.
De Luz, CA 92028
admin@abeeorganic.com**

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2014 12:19 PM
To: Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS
Cc: Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: FW: 205.662 (f) (1) Request for the reinstatement of Elliot Gardens to organic.
Attachments: Elliot Gardens NOP C & D letter.pdf; LTTR A Bee Organic-Elliot Gardens Reinstatement Request.doc; Request reinstatement letter-9-14.pdf; FORM- IR Greenhouse-1117-14.doc; FORM- EI-1117-14.pdf; A-BEE APPLICATION x.doc; Cert-1117-14.pdf; Cert Add1117-14.pdf

Renee,

Here is the official request for reinstatement from ABee organic. We need to determine if he still selling products as organic. Also we need to finalize the NC for ABee. Did you hear from CCOF?

Cheri

From: Essig, Mario - AMS **On Behalf Of** AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 2:30 PM
To: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: FW: 205.662 (f) (1) Request for the reinstatement of Elliot Gardens to organic.

Cheri and Renee,

Forwarding the reinstatement request to be assigned. (Please remember to forward the attachments to the assigned AM).

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: Ro Elgas [<mailto:ro@abeeorganic.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 1:53 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Cc: elliottgardens@comcast.net
Subject: 205.662 (f) (1) Request for the reinstatement of Elliot Gardens to organic.

205.662 (f) (1) Request for the reinstatement of Elliot Gardens to organic.

Attached;

- Elliot Gardens NOP C & D Letter
- Letter from A Bee supporting reinstatement.
- A request from Brett Elliot for reinstatement of Elliot Gardens to NOP.
- Copy Inspection Report-Crop
- Copy Exit Interview
- Copy Application for certification.
- Elliot Gardens Certificate Crop and Addendum.

Does Brett Elliot need to file an appeal? If yes, can an appeal be filed alongside a reinstatement request?
Robert said that reinstatement no longer needs to be a lengthy process? Is there an estimated time?

Best regards,
Ro Elgas

From: ReneeA.GebaultKing@ams.usda.gov [mailto:ReneeA.GebaultKing@ams.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2014 2:10 PM
To: elliottgardens@comcast.net
Cc: sarah@abeeorganic.com; ro@abeeorganic.com; jake@ccof.org
Subject: Registered: NOP Notice to Cease and Desist



This is a Registered Email® message from **Gebault King ReneeA - AMS**.

Dear Mr. Elliott,

It has come to our attention that Elliott Gardens is selling and representing agricultural products as organic in violation of the regulations in 7 CFR 205. Attached is a Notice to Cease and Desist issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP). Please consult the attached letter for complete details and instructions pursuant to this notice.

Renée

Renée Gebault King
Accreditation Manager
USDA, National Organic Program
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2647-South, Stop 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250-0268

Tel: 202.690.1312
Fax: 202.205.7808
Main: 202.720.3252
www.ams.usda.gov/nop

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[Click here](#) to send a Registered Email[®] message to anyone.



Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Essig, Mario - AMS on behalf of AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, December 30, 2014 8:37 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Cc: Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS
Subject: FW: A Bee Organic response to noncompliance
Attachments: ABO Response to Noncompliance-12-29-14.pdf; LTTR A Bee Organic-Elliott Gardens Reinstatement Request2.pdf; Elliott Gardens reinstatement letter 101614.pdf; Cert-1117-rev-10-16-14.pdf; Cert Add1117-rev-10-16-14.pdf; CPT revision.pdf

Hi Cheri, Renee M and Renee GK,

Forwarding a response from ABO.

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: Sarah Costin [mailto:admin@abeeorganic.com]
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2014 7:24 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Cc: Ro Elgas
Subject: A Bee Organic response to noncompliance

Please see attached letter of response to the A Bee Organic Notice of Noncompliance dated September 30, 2014. A Bee Organic received this notice from Renee Gebault King on November 28, 2014.

There are 5 supporting attachments, listed at the close of the attached letter, for a total of 6 attachments to this message.

Best regards,
Sarah Costin
Co-Creator/Owner



A Bee Organic

40707 Daily Road
De Luz, CA 92028
[760-731-0155](tel:760-731-0155)

Link to the NOP regulations <http://bit.ly/NOPStandard-e>

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Essig, Mario - AMS on behalf of AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 12:24 PM
To: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: FW: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures
Attachments: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS.pdf

Hi Cheri & Renee,

Forwarding this message regarding Horticultures and Rootcultures.

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: Sarah Costin [<mailto:sarah@abeeorganic.com>]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2014 6:01 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Cc: Ro Elgas
Subject: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures

Please see the attached A Bee Organic proposal for the phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures by certified growers.

Sarah Costin
Co-Creator/Owner



A Bee Organic
40707 Daily Road
De Luz, CA 92028
[760-731-0155](tel:760-731-0155)

Link to the NOP regulations <http://bit.ly/NOPStandard-e>

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Brines, Lisa - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 10:51 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Subject: FW: MI-14-3 Rockwool in Organic Hydroponic Production

Importance: High

Hi Renee,

JD drafted text below to send to EcoCert-IMO in response to the rockwool issue, Materials Inquiry 14-3. Since you are the accreditation manager for this certifier, can you forward the text to your contact at EcoCert-ICO for a response? If you have any questions before sending, feel free to check-in with JD directly. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Brines
USDA-AMS-NOP
Direct: (202) 821-9683
lisa.brines@ams.usda.gov

From: Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 8:06 AM
To: Brines, Lisa - AMS
Subject: MI-14-3 Rockwool in Organic Hydroponic Production
Importance: High

Dear Lisa,

I have drafted the following based upon a previous inquiry for Renee to send to Ecocert-ICO regarding their approval and allowance of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production. Not sure of the procedure since this is my first...do you approve this then I can forward to Renee (AM for Ecocert) to send or do you forward this? Please let me know I'm willing to do either. Thanks for your help.

J.D.

Jonathan (J.D.) Melvin
Compliance & Enforcement Division
USDA-AMS-National Organic Program
1400 Independence Ave SW; Room 2648
Phone Number 202-205-7806
jonathan.melvin@ams.usda.gov
www.ams.usda.gov/nop

Register for the USDA Organic Insider, the National Organic Program's email notification service, by visiting <http://bit.ly/NOPOrganicInsiderRegistration>

Dear Dave,

This email is a request for additional information in accordance with [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), Evaluation of Materials Used in Organic Crop, Livestock, and Handling Operations.

NOP Policy Memo 11-4 provides a process for resolving conflicts in interpretation on the allowance of materials under the USDA organic regulations.

On June 17, 2014, a certifier contacted NOP regarding the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production. Specifically, the certifier requested NOP's interpretation on the allowance of Rockwool as an approved growing media in organic hydroponic operations. An operation that was denied the use of Rockwool in its hydroponic operation by its previous certifier was changing certifiers to Ecocert-ICO so that they could use this substance as a growing media for their organic hydroponic production.

In order to resolve this conflict in interpretation on the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production, **NOP requests that you provide a brief written summary of any current or previous decisions to approve or deny the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production.** The summary should include citations to relevant sections of the USDA organic regulations, as applicable, and indicate whether the Rockwool was previously approved or denied as a synthetic or nonsynthetic substance.

Following receipt, NOP will review the information provided from all parties and determine whether the regulations have been properly applied. NOP's determination will be limited to the application of the USDA organic regulations for generic materials; the NOP does not approve or endorse branded (formulated) input products.

A written response to this inquiry is requested no later than Tuesday, July 15th.

Sincerely,

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS on behalf of AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 8:34 AM
To: McElroy, Bridget - AMS
Subject: FW: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[Join the NOP mailing list.](#)

From: Betty Kananen [mailto:goaorg@centurylink.net]
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 6:43 AM
To: AMS - AIAinbox <AIAinbox@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: RE: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

Global Organic alliance, Inc has not certified any entities for hydroponic, aquaponics, aeroponic in 2015.

Sincerely,

Betty Kananen
President/CEO
Global Organic Alliance
goaorg@centurylink.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/goainc
Phone – 937.593.1232
Fax – 937.593.9507

From: Baron , Anne - AMS [mailto:AnneP.Baron@ams.usda.gov] **On Behalf Of** AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 3:30 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

This message is sent on behalf of Cheri Courtney, Accreditation and International Activities Division Director of the USDA National Organic Program.

Dear Certifiers:

Please remember to submit information about your certification of hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic, and associated production systems to Bridget McElroy at bridget.mcelroy@ams.usda.gov as soon as possible. The original message with instructions is below.

Regards,
Cheri Courtney
Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division

Original Message

The NOP is seeking information from certifying agents on the certification of hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic and associated production systems. This information is primarily for internal use. The NOP will not share information that identifies you as a certifying agent, or the operations that you certify.

What do we mean by hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic?

The exact definition of hydroponics can be unclear. In this case, we are asking about production systems of containment that derive the majority of nutrients for plants from water and/or small amounts of growing media. This includes both systems that rely on mineral nutrient solutions and those that rely on biological activity in the water or growing media for nutrient availability. This also includes aquaponic systems, which use fish effluent in the water as a nutrient supply. Examples of systems that fall under this category:

- Deep flow/raft
- Nutrient film technique (NFT)
- Ebb and flow
- Slab (lay-flat bags)
- Upright bags or Dutch buckets
- Troughs
- Towers
- Pots
- Aeroponics
- Aquaponics

Questions for Certifying Agents:

Do you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponic operations to the USDA organic standards?

If you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponics operations to the USDA organic standards, how many of these operations do you currently certify?

In what state or country (if international) are the certified operations located (list)?

What crops do these certified operations produce (list)?

Please send your response to Bridget McElroy, Policy Analyst at the following email by March 11: bridget.mcelroy@ams.usda.gov. You can also contact Bridget with any questions that you have.

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Essig, Mario - AMS on behalf of AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 7:59 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Subject: FW: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures
Attachments: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS.pdf

Hi Renee,

What is the proper procedure for this kind of message?

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: Sarah Costin [<mailto:sarah@abeeorganic.com>]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2014 6:01 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Cc: Ro Elgas
Subject: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures

Please see the attached A Bee Organic proposal for the phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures by certified growers.

Sarah Costin
Co-Creator/Owner



A Bee Organic
40707 Daily Road
De Luz, CA 92028
[760-731-0155](tel:760-731-0155)

Link to the NOP regulations <http://bit.ly/NOPStandard-e>

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 5:59 PM
To: Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS
Cc: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: FW: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures
Attachments: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS.pdf

Hello Renee GK:

I think this is the same document from A Bee Organic that I forwarded to you – but just in case, I am forwarding it on.

Thanks,
Renee

Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[Join the NOP mailing list.](#)

From: Essig, Mario - AMS **On Behalf Of** AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 12:24 PM
To: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: FW: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcultures

Hi Cheri & Renee,

Forwarding this message regarding Horticultures and Rootcultures.

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: Sarah Costin [<mailto:sarah@abeeorganic.com>]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2014 6:01 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox

Cc: Ro Elgas

Subject: ABO Proposal for phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcubes

Please see the attached A Bee Organic proposal for the phase out of OASIS Horticultures and Rootcubes by certified growers.

Sarah Costin
Co-Creator/Owner



A Bee Organic
40707 Daily Road
De Luz, CA 92028
[760-731-0155](tel:760-731-0155)

Link to the NOP regulations <http://bit.ly/NOPStandard-e>

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 5:35 PM
To: Howley, JannaB - AMS
Cc: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Essig, Mario - AMS
Subject: FW: Horticulture and Rootcubes

Hello Janna:
Please handle this question from Americert.

Thank you,
Renee M

Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[Join the NOP mailing list.](#)

From: Essig, Mario - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 3:29 PM
To: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: FW: Horticulture and Rootcubes

Cheri & Renee,

Forwarding the question.

Regards,
Mario Essig



Mario Essig | Program Support Assistant | National Organic Program
USDA AMS | 1400 Independence Ave. SW RM 2648-S Washington, DC 20250
Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov
Office #: 202.779.9466
[NOP website](#)

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From: AmeriCert International [<mailto:americert@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 3:24 PM
To: Essig, Mario - AMS
Subject: Re: Horticulture and Rootcubes

Cheri and Mario,

Can you advise if this was because the material was suffused with synthetic wetting agents/ starter fertilizers or was it because the material itself was synthetic? When we review materials of this type, we verify no wetting agents/synthetic fertilizers but we have not resolved the issue of whether growing media which technically synthetic (i.e. rock wool) is allowed as a soilless media.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Austin

On Wed, Nov 12, 2014 at 3:08 PM, Essig, Mario - AMS <Mario.Essig@ams.usda.gov> wrote:

Dear Accredited Certifiers:

On May 5, 2014, NOP received notification from a certifying agent regarding an alleged difference in interpretation of the use of two growing media products, Horticultures and Rootcultures, for organic hydroponic production. The notice was submitted according to Policy Memo 11-4, which indicates that certifying agents must notify the NOP when a certifying agent concludes that a product may not comply with the regulations, but the product is allowed by another certifying agent.

Upon review of the information provided by both parties, NOP has determined that the USDA organic regulations have been misapplied in approving these growing media products for organic hydroponic production, since these products contain synthetic materials that are not on the National List.

NOP has instructed the certifying agent involved to rescind its approval of these products.

Certifiers and material evaluation programs may need to take steps to ensure that previously-approved growing media products are nonsynthetic or comply with section 205.601 of the National List.

Parties interested in further consideration of synthetic materials for organic hydroponic production may submit a petition to the National Organic Standards Board according to the current National List petition guidelines published in the Federal Register.

Cheri Courtney

Director, Accreditation & International Activities Division

National Organic Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Room 2648-So. (Stop 0268)

1400 Independence Ave SW

Washington, DC 20250-0268

Phone: [\(202\) 720-8491](tel:(202)720-8491)

www.ams.usda.gov/NOP

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--

Americert International
(formerly known as OIA North America)
2603 NW 13th St. #228
Gainesville, FL 32609
Ph: 352.336.5700
Fax: 866.325.8261
www.americertorganic.com

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Rakola, Betsy - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2014 8:21 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: Fw: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media
Attachments: Oasis Grower Solutions growth media.pdf

Hi Renee - it looks like this issue may need to go to the materials evaluation committee to resolve the differing interpretations of A Bee and CCOF. Let me know if there's anything you'd like me to do.

Thanks,

Betsy
Sent from my Blackberry

From: Devon Pattillo [mailto:devon@ccof.org]
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 08:07 PM
To: AMS - Guidance, NOP
Cc: Jake Lewin <Jake@ccof.org>; Rakola, Betsy - AMS
Subject: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media

Per [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), CCOF is providing NOP with this notification.

CCOF differs from A Bee Organic in our evaluation of the product "Horticubes" and "Rootcubes" by Oasis Grower Solutions. See <http://www.oasiseasyhydro.com/oasis-easy-hydro-horticubes-product.asp>. These are growing media products used in hydroponic systems.

CCOF is evaluating hydroponic growing media based on 1) determination of synthetic vs. non-synthetic status, and 2) the potential for uptake and/or translocation of synthetic materials via root-media interaction.

As we understand it, this is a phenolic foam product based on phenol-formaldehyde chemistry with added surfactants, colorants, and catalysts (see attached). Therefore, we find these material to be synthetic and not allowed per the National List. This is based on information provided by the manufacturer about the manufacturing process (attached).

Furthermore, we expect plant roots to permeate the growing media and therefore expect significant root-media interaction (compared to a Styrofoam block used to float plants, for instance). Our evaluation of the of the potential for root-media interactions is supported by evidence presented in the attached document (page 3) disclosing that analysis of plants grown on these products indicate presence of surfactants and sulfonic acids. These are synthetic products involved in the manufacture of the products.

CCOF has not allowed our certified hydroponic operations to use these specific products and have communicated the same position on a number of similar products. We also understand our review practices to be aligned with OMRI's policies and those of other accredited certifiers.

We have communicated in the past with Ron Elgas at A Bee Organic on this issue and he has notified us that they differ from CCOF in our conclusion on this material.

Please let me know if you need anything else from CCOF. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,

Devon Pattillo

Livestock Certification Supervisor & Materials Coordinator
CCOF

2155 Delaware Ave., Suite 150

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 423-2263, ext. 39

fax (831) 423-4528

www.ccof.org

Visit CCOF on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Rakola, Betsy - AMS
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2014 8:40 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Subject: FW: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media
Attachments: Fw: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media

FYI. I don't believe we provided a response to CCOF.

Betsy Rakola

Organic Policy Advisor, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Tel 202-604-5693
www.usda.gov/organic

From: Devon Pattillo [mailto:devon@ccof.org]
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2014 8:04 PM
To: AMS - Guidance, NOP
Cc: Rakola, Betsy - AMS
Subject: RE: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media

Has NOP had a chance to review this material? I'm a little unclear about your process for communicating the results of the review, and our client continues to ask us about our position.

Thank you,

Devon Pattillo
Livestock & Materials Manager
CCOF
2155 Delaware Ave., Suite 150
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 423-2263, ext. 39
fax (831) 423-4528
www.ccof.org
Visit CCOF on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Cost Share - A Refund of Organic Certification Fees! Receive a 75% refund on your certification costs up to \$750. [Apply today.](#)

From: Devon Pattillo
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 5:07 PM
To: 'NOP.Guidance@ams.usda.gov'
Cc: Jake Lewin; 'Rakola, Betsy - AMS'
Subject: Notification per PM 11-4 Oasis Grower Solutions Growth Media

Per [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), CCOF is providing NOP with this notification.

CCOF differs from A Bee Organic in our evaluation of the product "Horticubes" and "Rootcubes" by Oasis Grower Solutions. See <http://www.oasiseasyhydro.com/oasis-easy-hydro-horticubes-product.asp>. These are growing media products used in hydroponic systems.

CCOF is evaluating hydroponic growing media based on 1) determination of synthetic vs. non-synthetic status, and 2) the potential for uptake and/or translocation of synthetic materials via root-media interaction.

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Furthermore, we expect plant roots to permeate the growing media and therefore expect significant root-media interaction (compared to a Styrofoam block used to float plants, for instance). Our evaluation of the of the potential for root-media interactions is supported by evidence presented in the attached document (page 3) disclosing that analysis of plants grown on these products indicate presence of surfactants and sulfonic acids. These are synthetic products involved in the manufacture of the products.

CCOF has not allowed our certified hydroponic operations to use these specific products and have communicated the same position on a number of similar products. We also understand our review practices to be aligned with OMRI's policies and those of other accredited certifiers.

We have communicated in the past with Ron Elgas at A Bee Organic on this issue and he has notified us that they differ from CCOF in our conclusion on this material.

Please let me know if you need anything else from CCOF. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,

Devon Pattillo

Livestock Certification Supervisor & Materials Coordinator

CCOF

2155 Delaware Ave., Suite 150

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 423-2263, ext. 39

fax (831) 423-4528

www.ccof.org

Visit CCOF on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Baron , Anne - AMS on behalf of AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:12 AM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

This message is sent on behalf of Cheri Courtney, Accreditation and International Activities Division Director of the USDA National Organic Program.

Dear Certifiers:

The NOP is seeking information from certifying agents on the certification of hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic and associated production systems. This information is primarily for internal use. The NOP will not share information that identifies you as a certifying agent, or the operations that you certify.

What do we mean by hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic?

The exact definition of hydroponics can be unclear. In this case, we are asking about production systems of containment that derive the majority of nutrients for plants from water and/or small amounts of growing media. This includes both systems that rely on mineral nutrient solutions and those that rely on biological activity in the water or growing media for nutrient availability. This also includes aquaponic systems, which use fish effluent in the water as a nutrient supply. Examples of systems that fall under this category:

- Deep flow/raft
- Nutrient film technique (NFT)
- Ebb and flow
- Slab (lay-flat bags)
- Upright bags or Dutch buckets
- Troughs
- Towers
- Pots
- Aeroponics
- Aquaponics

Questions for Certifying Agents:

Do you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponic operations to the USDA organic standards?

If you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponics operations to the USDA organic standards, how many of these operations do you currently certify?

In what state or country (if international) are the certified operations located (list)?

What crops do these certified operations produce (list)?

Please send your response to Bridget McElroy, Policy Analyst at the following email by March 11: bridget.mcelroy@ams.usda.gov. You can also contact Bridget with any questions that you have.

Regards,
Cheri Courtney
Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division



40707 Daily Road, De Luz, CA 92028 USA

Administrator, USDA, AMS c/o NOP Appeals Staff
1400 Independence Ave, SW Room 2095-s, STOP 0203
Washington, DC

9/26/14

To whom it may concern:

A Bee Organic is submitting a formal request by Elliott Gardens- West Range for reinstatement to active USDA Organic certification.

History: Elliott Gardens (previously a certified Handler) was suspended in 2010 for having received, packed and sold non-organic product that was sold as organic. At the time of suspension Elliott Gardens was told that the suspension would last one year, and that after one year the operation could reapply for organic certification. After the year had passed Elliott Gardens applied for organic certification as a part of a crop grower group certified by CCOF. Unknown to A Bee neither Elliott Gardens nor CCOF contacted the Administrator of the USDA, AMS to get the operation properly reinstated.

Current: Before Elliott Gardens withdrew from the grower group they applied for organic certification with A Bee Organic. The suspension was listed on the application, (see attached). The A Bee inspector reviewed the certificate and last letter of certification issued by CCOF for unresolved noncompliance issues. No issues had been cited from last inspection. A Bee found Brett Elliott forthcoming with information and he made no attempt to obscure the suspension from 2010. A Bee Organic inspection found a few issues that were listed on the Exit Interview. The issues were addressed to our satisfaction and a certificate was issued to Elliott Gardens- West Range. The inspection report clarified the question of split operation with the following statement: "The A Bee certificate should specify Elliott Gardens- West Range as the East side is the non-organic garden center."

Elliott Gardens- West Range is not a split operation. There is a retail conventional nursery, Elliott Gardens, on the East side of the land that has been in the family for years and is run by Brett's mother, and then there is Brett's business, Elliott Gardens- West Range that grows organic hydroponic herbs and vegetables. The herbs and some vegetable starts are sold wholesale in 2" pots. The two businesses occupy their own areas and are separated by a plastic wall. There is no parallel production and records are kept separately.

A Bee has determined that the hydroponic crop operation meets the compliance requirements in 7 CFR 205. At this time Elliott Gardens- West Range is seeking reinstatement into USDA Organic Certification. A Bee Organic supports the reinstatement of Elliott Gardens- West Range based on the fact that the operation no longer purchases, or handles any organic product from other growers and that they have been able to operate in compliance as a crop grower for the last couple of years.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Ro Leigh Elgas



40707 Daily Road, De Luz, CA 92028 USA

Administrator, USDA, AMS c/o NOP Appeals Staff
1400 Independence Ave, SW Room 2095-s, STOP 0203
Washington, DC

9/9/14

To whom it may concern,

A Bee Organic is submitting a formal request by Elliot Gardens for reinstatement to active USDA Organic certification.

Elliot Gardens (certified Handler) was suspended in 2010 for having received, packed and sold non-organic product that was sold as organic. At the time of suspension Elliot Gardens was told that the suspension would last one year, and that after one year the operation could reapply for organic certification.

After the year had passed Elliot Gardens applied for organic certification as a Crop producer as a part of a hydroponic grower group certified by CCOF. Elliot Gardens did not know, and was not told by the new ACA that once suspended they had to reapply with the Administrator of the USDA, AMS.

Elliot Gardens withdrew from the grower group they applied for organic certification with A Bee Organic. On the application they listed the suspension, (see attached). At inspection a certificate issued by CCOF along with the last letter from inspection were reviewed. A Bee found Brett Elliot forthcoming with information and he made no attempt to obscure the suspension from 2010. Because of certification with CCOF A Bee had reason to question further.

At inspection and in review no issues resembling those that triggered the 2010 suspension were noted. A Bee has determined that the hydroponic crop operation is in compliance with NOP rule and issued a certificate. That certificate was declared invalid due to the yet to be resolved suspension issue. At this time Elliot Gardens is seeking reinstatement into USDA Organic Certification.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Ro Leigh Elgas

A-7.1

Specialized media for hydroponics seed germination

A low density, high-drainage foam, OASIS® *Horticulture*® growing medium is specifically engineered for hydroponics seed germination of vegetables and herbs. Growers will appreciate the simplicity this medium brings to the challenges of hydroponics production.

The excellent performance of *Horticulture* medium is based upon its unique cell structure which closely resembles the cellular structure of plants. This growing media is designed to drain off excess water from the base of the seed, allowing an optimal balance of oxygen and water, even when the foam is completely saturated.

Horticulture growing medium is sterile upon receipt and provides a clean start, pathogen-free, environment which reduces disease and insect problems for plant germination. All *Horticulture* media is manufactured in a "sheet" style that fits easily on a bench or into industry standard "1020" trays. Each sheet is pre-scored for easy removal of a single cube, block of cubes, or strip of cubes.

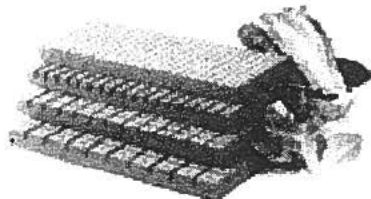


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Growing Medium

Features and Benefits

From sowing to transplanting, *Horticulture* growing medium makes hydroponics an easy process. Growers benefit from:

- Simple to use – just add water and sow seeds
- High-drainage product characteristic is ideal for crops requiring high water usage
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- Consistent product quality cell to cell
- Product cells do not compact after continual watering, maintaining the original air porosity
- Pre-dibbled holes make it easy to set the seed into place in the media
- Sterile sheets reduce disease problems



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BY: _____

 **OASIS**
GROWER PRODUCTS

A-7.3

PHENOLIC FOAM FOOD SAFETY STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting medium is a synthetic substrate for soilless propagation of vegetative cuttings, raising of seedlings and growth of plants. The Oasis Grower Foam is a porous solid matrix based on phenol-formaldehyde chemistry. The foaming process starts with a liquid phenol-formaldehyde resin, to which a number of proprietary surfactants, colorants, inert ingredients and acid blend catalysts are added to manufacture a solid wettable foam product. Blowing agents are used to further "expand" the foam to produce a physical support structure for growing plants. Depending on the intended usage, the ingredients are added at different proportions to give desired characteristics.

One of the intended uses of the phenolic foam is for starting, supporting and/or growing certain food crops for human consumption such as lettuce, herbs, vegetables, rice, etc. The testing described in this report was commissioned by the Smithers-Oasis Company to evaluate the safety of the phenolic foam products as delivered to the customers (raw foam). This study had three major objectives: 1) determine if common pathogenic bacteria associated with foodborne illness may be present on the raw foam; 2) determine if the phenolic foam products have mutagenic properties that could be transferred to food plants grown on the products; and 3) determine if the foam products contain soluble organic compounds of potential concern related to the manufacturing process that could be translocated into plants grown on the foam.

The results of the tests performed as a part of this safety study are summarized below.

Objective 1: Determine if Common Pathogenic Bacteria are Present in the Raw Foam

Since the intended use of the phenolic foam products is to germinate/grow certain crops for human consumption, tests were conducted to determine if common bacteria indicative of fecal contamination and known to cause foodborne illnesses (i.e., Escherichia coli, Salmonella sp. and Listeria monocytogenes) may be present in the phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products-as manufactured and before being packaged and supplied to the customer.

Tests conducted on the products indicated that these genera of bacteria were NOT present on the raw foam products immediately after manufacture.

Objective 2: Determine Potential Mutagenicity of the Products

Standard protocol Ames Assays were performed on extracts from the phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products, and lettuce and rice plants grown on the products to screen for the presence of mutagens.

The results of the Ames tests were negative, indicating that there are no mutagenic constituents in the phenolic foam products or in plants grown on those products. Since many (but not all)

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APR 27 2012

BY:

A-7.4

carcinogens are also mutagens, the Ames Assay results provide supporting evidence against the presence of carcinogenic compounds.

Objective 3: Determine if Soluble Chemicals of Potential Concern are Present

The third objective was to determine if potentially toxic soluble chemicals of public health concern might be present in the phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products as supplied to the customer. Two screening methods were used to determine if chemicals related to the manufacture of the foam were likely to be present in the final products. Gas Chromatography – Mass Spectroscopy (GC-MS) was used to look for volatile organic compounds; and High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) was used to look for other compounds that are not readily detected by GC-MS methods. The HPLC method can also reveal the presence of some types of compounds produced by plants growing on the phenolic foam growing medium.

GC-MS analysis of extracts from three different phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products and from lettuce and rice plants grown on those products did not detect the presence of volatile organic compounds of potential concern.

HPLC analysis of the phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products and from lettuce and rice plants grown on those products indicated the presence of low levels of surfactants and sulfonic acids used in making the products, and natural sugars and related compounds formed by the lettuce and rice plants.

Conclusion

Based on the testing described in this report, it is concluded that when used as intended, the phenolic foam plant growing or growth supporting products do not pose a risk to the people who handle the foam or to people who eat food crops grown on the products.

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Brandon Nauman <BNauman@scsglobalservices.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:15 AM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: Out of Office: Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

Greetings,

I will be out of the office until Wednesday, March 2. I will have periodic email access and will respond to your inquiry as I am able.

If you need assistance with Organic Certification or Non-GMO Verification, please contact:

Lucy Anderson (LAnderson@scsglobalservices.com)
Faye Litzinger (FLitzinger@scsglobalservices.com)

For assistance with Food Testing:

Danny Diaz (DDiaz@scsglobalservices.com)

I will respond to all nonurgent inquiries when I'm back in the office on Wednesday.

Regards,

Brandon

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Hartley, Julie - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 1:25 PM
To: Crail, Lars - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS; Pooler, Bob - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: RE: aquaponic

There are certified hydroponic and aeroponic operations. In a [2010 ACA survey](#), OIA was listed as having one aeroponic operation. In the 2013 follow-up, there were at least 39 certified operations using hydroponics.

I do not know of anyone certifying aquaponic operations, however Colorado Dept of Ag has had inquiries from operations to certify. They responded that they would not certify hydroponic or aquaponic operations until the NOP wrote guidance or regulations.

I do not believe the NOP has ever issued any adverse actions against a certifying agent for certifying these types of operations.

Julie

From: Crail, Lars - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 9:19 AM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS; Pooler, Bob - AMS; Hartley, Julie - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: RE: aquaponic

There are hydroponic operations that are certified. NOP is not disallowing certification of hydroponic operations.

I think that this might be the correct response:

“The question/issue that your raise is being considered as part of the formal rulemaking or guidance process. We are sorry we are not able to give you an individualized response at this time, but believe that a more formal evaluation process will benefit the organic community as a whole. Please keep an eye on announcements from the NOP about upcoming rulemaking or new guidance released in the Handbook.”

Lars

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 8:58 AM
To: Pooler, Bob - AMS; Hartley, Julie - AMS; Crail, Lars - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: RE: aquaponic

Hi Bob:

I don't know. Are we allowing the certification of hydroponic operations? I seem to remember a time when the NOP said that hydroponic operations could not be certified because they could not meet the requirements for 205.203 (a-c) to maintain or improve physical, chemical & biological aspects of soil. My understanding is that aquaponic systems are similar to hydroponic systems where fish waste is used as nutrients.

Sorry I'm not more helpful.

Best,
Renee

From: Pooler, Bob - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2013 4:24 PM
To: Hartley, Julie - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS; Crail, Lars - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: FW: aquaponic

As of now, these operations can be certified as long as they meet NOP reg requirements, concur?

From: Michelle Menken [<mailto:michelle.menken@mncia.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2013 4:14 PM
To: Pooler, Bob - AMS
Subject: aquaponic

Hi Bob,

We are working with three different producers who want to certify their aquaponic operations and a fourth who wants to do aeroponic. Obviously it's the new hot thing. I have talked to CCOF and MOSA and gotten some guidance and we are putting the final touches on the new application form (which is our crop application modified). Do I need to send you this form when it is done? We will not be certifying fish- just crops.

Do you think seeds have to be organic as they do for sprouts in such systems, or would the "if not available" clause still apply? I'm inclined to go with must be organic as with sprouts.

Thanks.

Yours truly,

Michelle Menken
Organic Program
Minnesota Crop Improvement Association/MCIA
1-855-213-4461
612-625-3123 (direct)

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Davis, Graham - AMS
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 1:45 PM
To: Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: RE: NOP Certification in Taiwan

Please see my updated response:

Good afternoon Lennea,

Thank you for your question regarding certification of an operation in Taiwan. The trade arrangement between the US and Taiwan includes all USDA organic products produced in the United States or its territories. USDA organic products produced outside the United States are not included in this arrangement. As such, the description of your situation would not be covered under the arrangement.

There are, however, operations certified to the USDA Organic regulations in Taiwan. Organic certifiers would need to contact Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency (AFA) of the Council of Agriculture (COA) for more information regarding their requirements to certifying operations in there. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Regards,

Graham

Graham Davis
Accreditation Manager
USDA | NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM
1400 Independence Ave SW | 2649-S | Washington DC 20250
Desk: 202-692-0047 | Cell: 202-595-4946



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From: Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 2:32 PM
To: Davis, Graham - AMS <Graham.Davis@ams.usda.gov>; Mann, Renee - AMS <Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: RE: NOP Certification in Taiwan

The response does not answer the question.

Cheri

From: Davis, Graham - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 1:26 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS <Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov>
Cc: Courtney, Cheri - AMS <Cheri.Courtney@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: FW: NOP Certification in Taiwan

Renee- OC resubmitted their question using the template. Please let me know if I need to provide them with additional information in my response. Thanks.

Good afternoon Lennea,

Thank you for your question regarding certification of an operation in Taiwan. The trade arrangement between the US and Taiwan includes all USDA organic products produced in the United States or its territories. USDA organic products produced outside the United States are not included in this arrangement. As such, the description of your situation would not be covered under the arrangement.

Graham

Graham Davis
Accreditation Manager
USDA | NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM
1400 Independence Ave SW | 2649-S | Washington DC 20250
Desk: 202-692-0047 | Cell: 202-595-4946



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From: Lennea Morris [<mailto:lennea@occert.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 11:35 AM
To: Davis, Graham - AMS <Graham.Davis@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: RE: NOP Certification in Taiwan

Hi Graham,

Ah yes, totally forgot you guys had a question template to follow, my apologies, I will insert my question into the template provided below:

1. *What is "At Issue," or your "Question":* Can we certify a hydroponic / aquaponic operator in Taiwan to the USDA NOP Regulations and would this operator be able to sell their product locally in Taiwan without any issues?
2. *Relevant Standard(s):* no specific regulation, more related to international trade arrangements.
3. *Background:* We have an interested operator in Taiwan looking to get certified by Organic Certifiers.
4. *Proposed Solution(s):* After reviewing all the material available to us online, we as a certifier are under the impression that we can certify an operator in Taiwan to the USDA NOP Regulations. With the current Export Arrangement between the US and Taiwan, it does not exclude products produced with hydroponic or aquaponic methods, therefore, it leads us to believe we can certify this applicant.
5. *Attachment(s):* <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/international-trade/Taiwan>

This is an urgent matter as this operator has been waiting for us to give them a response based on our communications with you.

Please let me know if you need anything further or have any other questions.

Thank you,



Lennea Morris
Operations Manager
Office Phone: (805) 684-6494
Direct Line: (951) 795-4342
Website: www.organiccertifiers.com

From: Davis, Graham - AMS [<mailto:Graham.Davis@ams.usda.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 7:20 AM
To: Lennea Morris <lennea@occert.com>
Subject: RE: NOP Certification in Taiwan

Good morning Lennea.

Before I respond to your question, please resubmit it using the template so that I can better respond to the question. I have provide a copy of our temple below:

Question Template

1. *What is "At Issue," or your "Question": Please state briefly, with no more than a few sentences, the issue or the question you wish answered.*
2. *Relevant Standard(s): Please cite the relevant NOP standard(s), if applicabl.*
3. *Background: Please provide us the context surrounding the issue and/or why this question is relevant. As much as possible, keep this section brief and on topic.*
4. *Proposed Solution(s): This is your opportunity to provide us valuable input and insight. Since you have a greater understanding of the specific circumstances, you may be better equipped to foresee and suggest a solution. Your solution should be supported by the information in the other sections.*
5. *Attachment(s): Relevant documents and/or links, if applicable.*

Urgency: If you are facing a deadline or under a time constraint, please indicate this to me. If I have this information, I will be better able to prioritize your question(s).

Thank you.

Graham

Graham Davis
Accreditation Manager
USDA | NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM
1400 Independence Ave SW | 2649-S | Washington DC 20250
Desk: 202-692-0047 | Cell: 202-595-4946



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From: Lennea Morris [<mailto:lennea@occert.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 29, 2016 6:21 PM
To: Davis, Graham - AMS <Graham.Davis@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: NOP Certification in Taiwan

Hello Graham,

Hope you are doing well! Nice to meet you over email.

We do have an international question for you. After reviewing all the material available to us, we as a certifier are under the impression that we can certify an operator in Taiwan to the USDA NOP Regulations. The kicker here is that this interested applicant is a hydronic / aquaponic operator who plans to sell locally within Taiwan. With the current Export Arrangement between the US and Taiwan, it does not exclude products produced with hydroponic or aquaponic methods, therefore, it leads us to believe we can certify this applicant. Can you please confirm our thought process is correct?

Thank you so much for your time!!

Sincerely,



Lennea Morris
Operations Manager
Office Phone: (805) 684-6494
Direct Line: (951) 795-4342
Website: www.organiccertifiers.com



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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Katherine Borchard <kat@ascorganic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 4:02 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: RE: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

ASCO already submitted this information on the 12th of March.

Thank you

Katherine Borchard, ASCO Program Director

Agricultural Services Certified Organic
PO Box 4871, Salinas, CA. 93912
P: 831.449.6365 F: 831.975.4414



Confidentiality Notice:

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From: Baron , Anne - AMS [mailto:AnneP.Baron@ams.usda.gov] **On Behalf Of** AMS - AIAinbox
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 12:30 PM
To: AMS - AIAinbox
Subject: Reminder - Hydroponic, Aquaponic, Aeroponic and Associated Production Systems

This message is sent on behalf of Cheri Courtney, Accreditation and International Activities Division Director of the USDA National Organic Program.

Dear Certifiers:

Please remember to submit information about your certification of hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic, and associated production systems to Bridget McElroy at bridget.mcelroy@ams.usda.gov as soon as possible. The original message with instructions is below.

Regards,
Cheri Courtney
Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division

Original Message

The NOP is seeking information from certifying agents on the certification of hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic and associated production systems. This information is primarily for internal use. The NOP will not share information that identifies you as a certifying agent, or the operations that you certify.

What do we mean by hydroponic, aquaponic, aeroponic?

The exact definition of hydroponics can be unclear. In this case, we are asking about production systems of containment that derive the majority of nutrients for plants from water and/or small amounts of growing media. This includes both systems that rely on mineral nutrient solutions and those that rely on biological activity in the water or growing media for nutrient availability. This also includes aquaponic systems, which use fish effluent in the water as a nutrient supply. Examples of systems that fall under this category:

- Deep flow/raft
- Nutrient film technique (NFT)
- Ebb and flow
- Slab (lay-flat bags)
- Upright bags or Dutch buckets
- Troughs
- Towers
- Pots
- Aeroponics
- Aquaponics

Questions for Certifying Agents:

Do you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponic operations to the USDA organic standards?

If you certify hydroponic, aeroponic or aquaponics operations to the USDA organic standards, how many of these operations do you currently certify?

In what state or country (if international) are the certified operations located (list)?

What crops do these certified operations produce (list)?

Please send your response to Bridget McElroy, Policy Analyst at the following email by March 11: bridget.mcelroy@ams.usda.gov. You can also contact Bridget with any questions that you have.

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 3:51 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: 'denise aguero'
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:
Thank you. I will forward this to the people reviewing this issue.

Kind Regards,
Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 205-9643 - New phone number
[NOP website](#)
Sign up for our newsletter, the [USDA Organic Insider](#)

From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 3:46 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: 'denise aguero'
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Renee

ECOCERT-IMO. Client informed QCS they are switching because ECOCERT is allowing rockwool. QCS confirmed it via phone call between QCS and ECOCERT-IMO on June 16, 2014.

Our big picture here is to get a guidance from NOP whether rockwool would be allowed in Hydroponic/Aquaponics. This will create consistency and clients do not have to switch certifiers depending on who allows what.

A guidance would be much appreciated.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 4:51 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:
Thank you for your inquiry. In order to process such a request, I need to know what other certifier you are in disagreement with and what evidence you have that they allow rockwool.
Thank you,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[NOP website](#)
Sign up for our newsletter, the [USDA Organic Insider](#)

From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [<mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 3:17 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Renee,

QCS is seeking guidance of rockwool in hydroponics. QCS refused to allow rockwool to be a media for crop growth in hydroponic and come in contact with organic crop. Rockwool is a synthetic. The client switched to another certifier who allows rockwool for organic hydroponic production. We were advised by NOP that when certifiers disagree to bring it to NOP attention.

A guidance on whether rockwool is allowed or not will be helpful. Question attached.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 3:51 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: 'denise aguero'
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:
Thank you. I will forward this to the people reviewing this issue.

Kind Regards,
Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 205-9643 - New phone number
[NOP website](#)
Sign up for our newsletter, the [USDA Organic Insider](#)

From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 3:46 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: 'denise aguero'
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Renee

ECOCERT-IMO. Client informed QCS they are switching because ECOCERT is allowing rockwool. QCS confirmed it via phone call between QCS and ECOCERT-IMO on June 16, 2014.

Our big picture here is to get a guidance from NOP whether rockwool would be allowed in Hydroponic/Aquaponics. This will create consistency and clients do not have to switch certifiers depending on who allows what.

A guidance would be much appreciated.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 4:51 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:
Thank you for your inquiry. In order to process such a request, I need to know what other certifier you are in disagreement with and what evidence you have that they allow rockwool.
Thank you,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[NOP website](#)
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From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [<mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 3:17 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Renee,

QCS is seeking guidance of rockwool in hydroponics. QCS refused to allow rockwool to be a media for crop growth in hydroponic and come in contact with organic crop. Rockwool is a synthetic. The client switched to another certifier who allows rockwool for organic hydroponic production. We were advised by NOP that when certifiers disagree to bring it to NOP attention.

A guidance on whether rockwool is allowed or not will be helpful. Question attached.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2014 7:12 PM
To: DE COU Dave
Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Subject: RE: Rockwool

Hello Dave:

The NOP has completed a review of the rockwool issue to which you responded on July 14, 2014.

I would like to confirm that Rockwool is a synthetic material that is not allowed in organic hydroponic production per §205.100(a). Thank you for informing us that Ecocert ICO has not allowed the use of rockwool for any of its clients.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Renee

Renee Mann

Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division

USDA National Organic Program

(202) 260-8635

[Join the NOP mailing list.](#)

From: DE COU Dave [mailto:dave.decou@ecocert.com]

Sent: Monday, July 14, 2014 7:25 PM

To: Mann, Renee - AMS

Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Subject: RE: Rockwool

Renee Mann and all,

Ecocert ICO has not to date approved the use of Rockwool in any operation. We have not allowed the use of rockwool containing products but on the basis of other materials in the product. The question of rockwool appears to be forthcoming because of communication with a previous client of ours who was unable to meet the requirements to be an organic aquaponics client and chose to go to a different certifier and then has apparently chosen to return and to attempt to become certified by Ecocert ICO again after working with a consultant. Whether they can be fully certified or not is in process. Not to our knowledge have we informed them that they can use rockwool. In fact with this discussion we have stated to them that they should not use rockwool because it is in question.

The question of the allowance of rockwool as an input to an agricultural system depends upon a certain degree of interpretation of both the regulations and common practice. Rockwool is made by the melting of rock at high temperatures and creating strands by blowing air or steam through the liquid. Is the heating to 1600 degrees C of rock necessarily the creation of a synthetic? If there are additives to the process, the question becomes clearer, particularly if the additives are synthetic. Vermiculite is a particular rock which expands when heated, also commonly considered non-synthetic by all certifiers. Rockwool is considered to be environmentally good, with an ecolabel endorsement by the WHO. Clearly such a label does not determine the compliance of the material. But what about the use of other synthetic materials, not listed on 205.601, in organic production: Steel for the tools which work soil (hoes, plows, discs, etc. and rubber tires which wear out (slowly) on soil while being used on tractors and implements.

There is a progression of desired materials for organic aquaponic producers which is leading to a grey area:

- Plastic trays have been used in plug and plant production for organic producers for almost as long as plastic trays have been available to farmers. No certifier has denied the allowance of plastic trays in organic production to my knowledge and yet the various types of plastic are considered to be synthetic. If this use of plastic were eliminated for organic growers there would be a drastic reaction.
- Recently companies have blended similar types of plastic with peat moss to create a sponge like material for growing plugs or plants in. Most certifiers have indicated that this is not compliant under the regulations based on the use of a synthetic. It is not clear to me what is the difference between this use of plastic and that of plug

trays which all allow and no other certifiers have given me an answer to that question. We do not allow this product because there is also a prohibited fungicide in the product, but both our clients and the manufacturer want us to allow it if the fungicide and any other prohibited substance were removed. The client considered the sponge like material to be a container much like a plastic tray. Insight on this issue would be helpful.

- Rockwool as a growing medium, blended with other allowed ingredients or just alone is also a desirable medium for growers. So is it a container, as the plastic trays above, or something else? And where do we as certifiers draw the line if you consider rockwool to be synthetic? This question will keep coming up for certifiers and their clients.

Regards,
Dave



David DeCOU
Certification Manager
ECOCERT ICO LLC, 70 East Main Street, Ste. B
Greenwood, Indiana 46143
Toll Free: 888-337-8246 Office: 317-865-9700,
Fax: 317-865-9707, Cell: ((b) (6)) (Oregon)
<mailto:dave.decou@ecocert.com> / www.ecocertico.com

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [<mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov>]

Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 8:35 PM

To: DE COU Dave

Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Subject: Rockwool

Dear Dave,

This email is a request for additional information in accordance with [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), Evaluation of Materials Used in Organic Crop, Livestock, and Handling Operations.

NOP Policy Memo 11-4 provides a process for resolving conflicts in interpretation on the allowance of materials under the USDA organic regulations.

On June 17, 2014, a certifier contacted NOP regarding the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production.

Specifically, the certifier requested NOP's interpretation on the allowance of Rockwool as an approved growing media in organic hydroponic operations. An operation that was denied the use of Rockwool in its hydroponic operation by its previous certifier was changing certifiers to Ecocert-ICO so that they could use this substance as a growing media for their organic hydroponic production.

In order to resolve this conflict in interpretation on the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production, **NOP requests that you provide a brief written summary of any current or previous decisions to approve or deny the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production.** The summary should include citations to relevant sections of the USDA organic regulations, as applicable, and indicate whether the Rockwool was previously approved or denied as a synthetic or nonsynthetic substance.

Following receipt, NOP will review the information provided from all parties and determine whether the regulations have been properly applied. NOP's determination will be limited to the application of the USDA organic regulations for generic materials; the NOP does not approve or endorse branded (formulated) input products.

A written response to this inquiry is requested no later than Tuesday, July 15th.

Sincerely,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann

Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division

USDA National Organic Program

(202) 260-8635

[NOP website](#)

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 8:58 AM
To: Pooler, Bob - AMS; Hartley, Julie - AMS; Crail, Lars - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: RE: aquaponic

Hi Bob:

I don't know. Are we allowing the certification of hydroponic operations? I seem to remember a time when the NOP said that hydroponic operations could not be certified because they could not meet the requirements for 205.203 (a-c) to maintain or improve physical, chemical & biological aspects of soil. My understanding is that aquaponic systems are similar to hydroponic systems where fish waste is used as nutrients.

Sorry I'm not more helpful.

Best,
Renee

From: Pooler, Bob - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2013 4:24 PM
To: Hartley, Julie - AMS; Mann, Renee - AMS; Crail, Lars - AMS; Kuhn, Meg - AMS
Subject: FW: aquaponic

As of now, these operations can be certified as long as they meet NOP reg requirements, concur?

From: Michelle Menken [<mailto:michelle.menken@mncia.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2013 4:14 PM
To: Pooler, Bob - AMS
Subject: aquaponic

Hi Bob,

We are working with three different producers who want to certify their aquaponic operations and a fourth who wants to do aeroponic. Obviously it's the new hot thing. I have talked to CCOF and MOSA and gotten some guidance and we are putting the final touches on the new application form (which is our crop application modified). Do I need to send you this form when it is done? We will not be certifying fish- just crops.

Do you think seeds have to be organic as they do for sprouts in such systems, or would the "if not available" clause still apply? I'm inclined to go with must be organic as with sprouts.

Thanks.

Yours truly,

Michelle Menken
Organic Program
Minnesota Crop Improvement Association/MCIA
1-855-213-4461
612-625-3123 (direct)

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 4:51 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:

Thank you for your inquiry. In order to process such a request, I need to know what other certifier you are in disagreement with and what evidence you have that they allow rockwool.

Thank you,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
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From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 3:17 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

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A guidance on whether rockwool is allowed or not will be helpful. Question attached.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2014 7:08 PM
To: Ramkrishnan P.B.
Cc: denise aguero; Courtney, Cheri - AMS; Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Subject: RE: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production

Hello Ram:

The NOP has completed a review of the rockwool issue you posed on June 17, 2014. I would like to confirm that Rockwool is not allowed in organic hydroponic production.

Ecocert ICO confirmed that it has not allowed the use of rockwool for any of its clients. Ecocert ICO noted that it worked with a client that attempted to change certifiers that has now returned to Ecocert ICO for certification. The operation has sought the help of a consultant and originally requested to use rockwool. Ecocert ICO told the client that rockwool is not allowed. We will reiterate to Ecocert ICO that rockwool is a synthetic material that is not allowed according to the regulations.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind Regards,
Renee

Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
[Join the NOP mailing list.](#)

From: Ramkrishnan P.B. [mailto:ram@qcsinfo.org]
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Cc: denise aguero
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Ramkrishnan

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: DE COU Dave <dave.decou@ecocert.com>
Sent: Monday, July 14, 2014 7:25 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Subject: RE: Rockwool

Renee Mann and all,

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There is a progression of desired materials for organic aquaponic producers which is leading to a grey area:

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- Rockwool as a growing medium, blended with other allowed ingredients or just alone is also a desirable medium for growers. So is it a container, as the plastic trays above, or something else? And where do we as certifiers draw the line if you consider rockwool to be synthetic? This question will keep coming up for certifiers and their clients.

Regards,
Dave



David DeCOU

Certification Manager

ECOCERT ICO LLC, 70 East Main Street, Ste. B

Greenwood, Indiana 46143

Toll Free: 888-337-8246 Office: 317-865-9700,

Fax: 317-865-9707, Cell: (b) (6) (Oregon)
<mailto:dave.decou@ecocert.com> / www.ecocertico.com

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 8:35 PM

To: DE COU Dave

Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Subject: Rockwool

Dear Dave,

This email is a request for additional information in accordance with [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), Evaluation of Materials Used in Organic Crop, Livestock, and Handling Operations.

NOP Policy Memo 11-4 provides a process for resolving conflicts in interpretation on the allowance of materials under the USDA organic regulations.

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Specifically, the certifier requested NOP's interpretation on the allowance of Rockwool as an approved growing media in organic hydroponic operations. An operation that was denied the use of Rockwool in its hydroponic operation by its previous certifier was changing certifiers to Ecocert-ICO so that they could use this substance as a growing media for their organic hydroponic production.

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Following receipt, NOP will review the information provided from all parties and determine whether the regulations have been properly applied. NOP's determination will be limited to the application of the USDA organic regulations for generic materials; the NOP does not approve or endorse branded (formulated) input products.

A written response to this inquiry is requested no later than Tuesday, July 15th.

Sincerely,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann

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USDA National Organic Program

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2014 8:38 AM
To: DE COU Dave
Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Subject: Re: Rockwool

Hello Dave,

Thank you for your response.

Kind Regards,
Renee

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 14, 2014, at 7:24 PM, "DE COU Dave" <dave.decou@ecocert.com> wrote:

Renee Mann and all,

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Ecocert ICO has not to date approved the use of Rockwool in any operation. We have not allowed the use of rockwool containing products but on the basis of other materials in the product. The question of rockwool appears to be forthcoming because of communication with a previous client of ours who was unable to meet the requirements to be an organic aquaponics client and chose to go to a different certifier and then has apparently chosen to return and to attempt to become certified by Ecocert ICO again after working with a consultant. Whether they can be fully certified or not is in process. Not to our knowledge have we informed them that they can use rockwool. In fact with this discussion we have stated to them that they should not use rockwool because it is in question.

The question of the allowance of rockwool as an input to an agricultural system depends upon a certain degree of interpretation of both the regulations and common practice. Rockwool is made by the melting of rock at high temperatures and creating strands by blowing air or steam through the liquid. Is the heating to 1600 degrees C of rock necessarily the creation of a synthetic? If there are additives to the process, the question becomes clearer, particularly if the additives are synthetic. Vermiculite is a particular rock which expands when heated, also commonly considered non-synthetic by all certifiers. Rockwool is considered to be environmentally good, with an ecolabel endorsement by the WHO. Clearly such a label does not determine the compliance of the material. But what about the use of other synthetic materials, not listed on 205.601, in organic production: Steel for the tools which work soil (hoes, plows, discs, etc. and rubber tires which wear out (slowly) on soil while being used on tractors and implements.

There is a progression of desired materials for organic aquaponic producers which is leading to a grey area:

- Plastic trays have been used in plug and plant production for organic producers for almost as long as plastic trays have been available to farmers. No certifier has denied the allowance of plastic trays in organic production to my knowledge and yet the various types of plastic are considered to be synthetic. If this use of plastic were eliminated for organic growers there would be a drastic reaction.
- Recently companies have blended similar types of plastic with peat moss to create a sponge like material for growing plugs or plants in. Most certifiers have indicated that this is not compliant under the regulations based on the use of a synthetic. It is not clear to me what is the difference between this use of plastic and that of plug trays which all allow and no other certifiers have

given me an answer to that question. We do not allow this product because there is also a prohibited fungicide in the product, but both our clients and the manufacturer want us to allow it if the fungicide and any other prohibited substance were removed. The client considered the sponge like material to be a container much like a plastic tray. Insight on this issue would be helpful.

- Rockwool as a growing medium, blended with other allowed ingredients or just alone is also a desirable medium for growers. So is it a container, as the plastic trays above, or something else? And where do we as certifiers draw the line if you consider rockwool to be synthetic? This question will keep coming up for certifiers and their clients.

Regards,

Dave

David DeCOU

Certification Manager

ECOCERT ICO LLC, 70 East Main Street, Ste. B

Greenwood, Indiana 46143

Toll Free: 888-337-8246 Office: 317-865-9700,

Fax: 317-865-9707, Cell: (b) (6) (Oregon)

<mailto:dave.decou@ecocert.com> / www.ecocertico.com

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [<mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov>]

Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 8:35 PM

To: DE COU Dave

Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Subject: Rockwool

Dear Dave,

This email is a request for additional information in accordance with [NOP Policy Memo 11-4](#), Evaluation of Materials Used in Organic Crop, Livestock, and Handling Operations.

NOP Policy Memo 11-4 provides a process for resolving conflicts in interpretation on the allowance of materials under the USDA organic regulations.

On June 17, 2014, a certifier contacted NOP regarding the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production. Specifically, the certifier requested NOP's interpretation on the allowance of Rockwool as an approved growing media in organic hydroponic operations. An operation that was denied the use of Rockwool in its hydroponic operation by its previous certifier was changing certifiers to Ecocert-ICO so that they could use this substance as a growing media for their organic hydroponic production.

In order to resolve this conflict in interpretation on the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production, **NOP requests that you provide a brief written summary of any current or previous decisions to approve or deny the use of Rockwool in organic hydroponic production.** The summary should include citations to relevant sections of the USDA organic regulations, as applicable, and indicate whether the Rockwool was previously approved or denied as a synthetic or nonsynthetic substance. Following receipt, NOP will review the information provided from all parties and determine whether the regulations have been properly applied. NOP's determination will be limited to the application of the USDA organic regulations for generic materials; the NOP does not approve or endorse branded (formulated) input products.

A written response to this inquiry is requested no later than Tuesday, July 15th.

Sincerely,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann

Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division

USDA National Organic Program

(202) 260-8635

[NOP website](#)

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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Steve J. Marty <s_marty@agri.nv.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 5:16 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS; Hartley, Julie - AMS
Subject: RE: USDA NOP hydroponic

Thanks Renee! We don't mean to 'stir the pot', but clarification will be appreciated.

Cheers

Steve Marty

Agriculturist IV

Nevada Department of Agriculture

405 South 21st Street

Sparks NV 89431

775-353-3773

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-----Original Message-----

From: Mann, Renee - AMS [mailto:Renee.Mann@ams.usda.gov]

Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 10:22 AM

To: Steve J. Marty; Hartley, Julie - AMS

Subject: RE: USDA NOP hydroponic

Dear Steve:

Thank you for informing us of this situation. I will forward this information to Miles and our accreditation division, so that they are aware of the confusion this has caused. I will let you know if we have any questions for you, if I can provide any further guidance, and/or if we have plans to create a formal action or recommendation on this topic.

Kind regards,

Renee

Ms. Renee Mann

Agricultural Marketing Specialist

USDA National Organic Program

+1 (202) 205-5213

[NOP website](#)

Sign up for the [NOP Organic Insider](#), NOP's newsletter.

From: Steve J. Marty [mailto:s_marty@agri.nv.gov]

Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 7:01 PM

To: Hartley, Julie - AMS

Cc: Mann, Renee - AMS

Subject: USDA NOP hydroponic

Hello,

NDA has an inquiry regarding certification of hydroponic and/or aquaponic production systems to USDA NOP standards, and I've included both our new and old accreditation managers on this email just in case. NDA is familiar with the NOSB recommendation stating that hydroponic operations are not eligible for certification to USDA NOP standards. Additionally, Miles McEvoy confirmed that USDA NOP agreed with this recommendation when speaking publicly at a Nevada Organic Advisory Council workshop in Las Vegas a few years back. However, no formal action has been taken on the recommendation and it is clear that a number of accredited-certifiers are in fact granting certification to hydroponic and aquaponic operations. Given the NOSB recommendation and Miles' personal backing of that recommendation, NDA has turned away a good number of

potential clients. Other accredited-certifiers who work in our State are certifying these operations, apparently based on non-official feedback from Miles/NOP, creating what we feel is an unfair certification/business environment. NDA would like to request clarification from USDA NOP regarding the eligibility of hydroponic and aquaponic production systems to receive certification to USDA NOP standards. Please let us know if additional information is needed. We look forward to your response.

Cheers

Steve Marty

Agriculturist IV

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SEPTEMBER 8, 2014

**Elliott
Gardens**

6321 LOWELL BLVD.
DENVER, COLO.80221
Ph.303 428-4043
Fax.303-428-4075
E-mail brettelliottgardens@comcast.net

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We formerly request reinstatement of organic certification of our organic growing operation pursuant to 205.662(f)(1) of the USDA organic regulations.

On July 12, 2010, The Colorado Department of Agriculture suspended our certification for the "sale of conventional herbs as organic" and suspended our organic certification for one year from that date. At the time of the suspension we were certified as a process handler/repacker of fresh herbs. On 12-05-12 we were certified by CCOF as a network grower for Circle Fresh Farms. We were certified for container production of organic cucumbers, tomatoes, and sweet basil. At that time, CCOF did not mention to me that I needed to get reinstated from NOP before I could be certified through them. We resigned as a grower for Circle Fresh Farms on 6-01-14. At that time, we understood that our organic certification through CCOF would no longer be valid since we were no longer affiliated with Circle Fresh Farms. We then pursued certification with A Bee Organic. On 6-22-14, A Bee Organic conducted a full onsite inspection to verify our compliance with the regulations.

We have asked A Bee Organic to provide you with the necessary supporting documentation. We would appreciate your prompt consideration for this request for reinstatement.

(b) (6)

Sincerely, Brett A. Elliott X---

Brett A Elliott
Manager / Grower / Co-Owner
Elliott Gardens



Quality Certification Services (QCS)

PO Box 12311 Gainesville FL 32604

phone 352.377.0133 / fax 352.377.8363 / www.qcsinfo.org

QCS is the Certification Program of Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG)

June 17, 2014

Renee Mann
Regional Accreditation Manager
USDA National Organic Program
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2648 – South, Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Mann,

Quality Certification Services (QCS) is a USDA accredited certifying agent based in Gainesville, Florida. QCS certifies crop, wild crop, livestock, and handling operations to the National Organic Program standards. This letter is a request for NOP guidance. All pertinent information is listed below in compliance with the NOP "Certifier Questions to the NOP" proper question submission format.

1. What is "At Issue," or your "Question"

Is Rockwool or any other synthetic material able to be used as a media in a certified organic, hydroponic operation?

2. Relevant Standard

In reference to §205.105(a) of the National Organic Program, it is stated: *To be sold or labeled as "100 percent organic," "organic," or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))," the product must be produced and handled without the use of: (a) synthetic substances and ingredients, except as provided in §205.601 or 205.603.*

3. Background

Hydroponic growing systems typically rely on an inert growing media to be used as an anchor for plant roots. Many conventional growers in the industry use Rockwool, a synthetically derived substance, as a media. Alternatively, there are many successful certified organic growers that are not using Rockwool or synthetic materials as a media, and using NOP compliant materials instead. Consistent with the NOP, the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) has ruled that Rockwool is not able to be used in organic crop production as a crop fertilizer, soil amendment, crop management tool, or production aid. OMRI based their decision on §205.105(a) of the NOP rules and regulations. The rule, listed above, insists that synthetic substances are not to be used with products claiming organic status. Some grower's and certifier's interpretations of rule §205.105(a) are that it is not applicable to hydroponic soil media because the material stays intact in the system. It is highly unlikely that 100% of the synthetic ingredients contained in Rockwool (and similar synthetic products) stay intact in the system. These synthetic materials and plugs are subject to degradation, and worst, are in direct contact with plant material.

4. Proposed Solution

Based on the NOP regulations in place for (b) (4)

5. Attachment

Not Applicable

6. Urgency

Pressing; many hydroponic operations are seeking to be certified organic. These same operations need guidance on if Rockwool and other synthetically-derived materials are able to be used as a plant media source.

QCS strives to ensure that our certification program is wholly consistent with the National Organic Program standards as set forth in 7 CFR Part 205. Therefore, we greatly appreciate your guidance on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about this letter.

Sincerely,

Ramkrishnan,
Chief Operating Officer

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Ramkrishnan P.B. <ram@qcsinfo.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 3:17 PM
To: Mann, Renee - AMS
Cc: denise aguero
Subject: Rockwool Use n organic hyrdoponic production
Attachments: Rockwool.docx

Renee,

QCS is seeking guidance of rockwool in hydroponics. QCS refused to allow rockwool to be a media for crop growth in hydroponic and come in contact with organic crop. Rockwool is a synthetic. The client switched to another certifier who allows rockwool for organic hydroponic production. We were advised by NOP that when certifiers disagree to bring it to NOP attention.

A guidance on whether rockwool is allowed or not will be helpful. Question attached.

Thanks,
Ramkrishnan

Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Mann, Renee - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 11:35 PM
To: dave.decou@ecocert.com
Cc: Brines, Lisa - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Subject: Rockwool

Dear Dave,

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A written response to this inquiry is requested no later than Tuesday, July 15th.

Sincerely,
Renee

Ms. Renee Mann
Assistant Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division
USDA National Organic Program
(202) 260-8635
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Schurkamp, Lynnea - AMS

From: Steve J. Marty <s_marty@agri.nv.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 7:01 PM
To: Hartley, Julie - AMS
Cc: Mann, Renee - AMS
Subject: USDA NOP hydroponic

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Cheers

Steve Marty

Agriculturist IV

Nevada Department of Agriculture

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