



September 2020

Dear Pennsylvania Certified Organic Operator,

We hope this letter finds you well and managing through this unprecedented global pandemic. It is a situation that has challenged all of us, and by working together we will emerge stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. Following are a few updates that may be of interest to you.

Changes to the 2020 Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The USDA Farm Services Agency recently announced changes to the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) due to financial challenges confronted by the federal government. For 2020, qualified applicants may **receive 50 percent of eligible fees paid, up to a maximum of \$500**, for each eligible scope of certification. We understand this is 25 percent less than in previous years but encourage you to participate in the program.

USDA certified organic operations that are certified or receiving continuation of certification during the period **October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020**, by a USDA-accredited certifier, may apply for the cost share reimbursement.

A copy of your certificate or renewal certificate is no longer required for the cost share application, but please be certain to enter your certificate number on the enclosed application. You will need to provide invoices and proof of payment with your completed application or arrange for your certifier to supply that information to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. This information is necessary to verify costs and process your application for reimbursement.

All completed applications must be postmarked by **October 31, 2020**, and mailed to:

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
ATTN: Michele Brookins
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Applications also are available on the [Ag Business Development Center's Financial Assistance page](#) and may be submitted by email no later than **October 31, 2020**. Please note, you will also need to submit your proof of payment, which can be done electronically as well, by emailing to RA-AgBusiness@pa.gov.

We recommend completing your application as soon as possible as reimbursements will be made on a first come, first serve basis, while funds are available. If you have any questions, please contact Michele Brookins at mbrookins@pa.gov, by phone at (717) 787-5319, or at RA-AgBusiness@pa.gov.

(More information on back of page)

PA Preferred® Organic Program

Pennsylvania farmers are leaders in organic agriculture. Not only is Pennsylvania one of the few states that boasts more than 1,000 certified organic farms, but did you also know that the state ranks third in the entire nation for total organic sales?

The PA Preferred® Organic program was created to help accelerate the growth of Pennsylvania's organic agricultural industry and assist our hardworking farmers in this endeavor. Through the program, we offer support to organic farmers and processors in a variety of ways:

- Sponsor free or low-cost technical assistance for farmers and manufacturers/processors to start and expand certified organic operations
- Support PA-specific organic research in a variety of topics, such as reduced or no-till techniques, resilience in the face of weather extremes, and reducing the threat of pesticide drift
- Identify gaps in organic processing and encourage additional capacity to improve the availability of more locally grown and made products in the marketplace
- Facilitate and support farmer education events
- Develop organic marketing materials and campaign to educate consumers about the value of locally grown and made organic products
- Create a PA Preferred® Organic product label so consumers can easily identify PA organic products

For more information about the PA Preferred® Organic program, contact Adam Dellinger at addellinge@pa.gov or (717)-787-6006.

Agricultural Business Development Center

Established as part of the 2019 PA Farm Bill, the Agricultural Business Development Center (ABDC) is a new initiative spanning the Bureau of Market Development's Economic Development Division and the Bureau of Farmland Preservation. The new Center replaces both the Center for Farm Transitions and the Preserved Farm Resource Center.

Designed to enhance the long-term vitality of Pennsylvania's farms, the ABDC is focused on providing support for sound business planning, efficient transitions of farm ownership, strategic farm expansion, diversification of agricultural production, and building a team of financial and technical expertise as a resource for Pennsylvania farmers.

For more information about the Agricultural Business Development Center, contact Phil Stober at pstober@pa.gov or (717)-836-3973.

Thank you for your continued support of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture as we work to build a sustainable agricultural industry for both farmers and consumers.

**FEDERAL ORGANIC COST-SHARE PROGRAM APPLICATION
ADMINISTERED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Certified organic operations receiving valid certification or continued certification issued by a USDA-accredited certifying agent with eligible costs paid during the period of **October 1, 2019** through **September 30, 2020** may apply for cost-share reimbursement. **PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE IN BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY- READ INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE**

1. Applicant's Name: _____ 2. Title _____

3. Payee(s)'s Name: **PLEASE COMPLETE ONLY ONE: A or B**

A. Applying under Business Name _____

BUSINESS EIN# [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

B. Applying as individual(s) *All individuals whose name appears on the organic certificate must be listed if completing this section, along with their social security number (SS#)*

Payee 1: _____

SS # [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Payee 2: _____

SS# [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Payee 3: _____

SS# [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Payee 4: _____

SS# [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

4. Owner (s): _____

5. Company/Farm Name: _____

6. Address: _____

7. City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

8. Phone #: (_____) _____ 9. Fax: (_____) _____ 10. Email: _____

11. Cost-share scope(s) (Circle each scope for which you are certified): Crops || Wild Crops || Livestock || Processing/Handling ||

12. Circle reimbursement for: First certification or Renewal 13. Certificate Number: _____

14. Certification or Re-Certification Costs \$ [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Please attach **proof of payment** for certification costs with your application

15. To Payee: (1) Are you responsible for the payment of the incurred certification fees? YES NO*

(2) Are you paying certification fees for any other organic farms? YES* NO

*If no to #1, explain on back of application. If yes to #2, list farms and addresses on back of application.

16. Certification Agent/Agency

<input type="checkbox"/> Global Organic Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> NOFA-NY	<input type="checkbox"/> NOFA-NJ	<input type="checkbox"/> OEFFA	<input type="checkbox"/> Oregon Tilth
<input type="checkbox"/> OCIA	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania Certified Organic	<input type="checkbox"/> QAI	<input type="checkbox"/> QCS	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify on reverse)

I hereby apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for reimbursement fees under the Federal Organic Cost-Share Program given under the authority of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) and Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. I verify that the information I provided on this application is true and correct. False statements are subject to penalties for unsworn falsifications to authorities (18 Pa. C.S.A. Section 4904).

17. Applicant(s)'s Signature:

1. _____ Date: _____ 2. _____ Date: _____

3. _____ Date: _____ 4. _____ Date: _____

Please see the reverse side of this document for instructions and important changes to the application procedure

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1-2. Name and Title of **individual completing this application.**
3. Names of **ALL** persons listed on organic certificate or renewal certificate who will receive reimbursement payments in equal division of the total reimbursement amount must be completed in section B. If certificate is for business, please complete section A.
SS# or business FEIN# that matches the Payee(s) listed in item 3.
- 4-10. Owner contact information. This is where any and all correspondence as well as the reimbursement check will be mailed.
11. Organic operations may receive one reimbursement per certificate or scope of certification per year. The NOP currently recognizes four scopes of certification: crops, wild crops, livestock, and processing/handling. This means that operations with more than one certification scope may be eligible for more than one reimbursement.
12. Circle **Certification** if this is your first certification year or **Renewal of Certification** if your certification was renewed this year. **IMPORTANT: You DO NOT need to send a copy of your certificate with the application!**
13. This is the unique certification number as it appears on the certificate you receive from your certification agency. Contact your certification agency if you do not know this number.
14. **Please include the dollar amount for the total costs of your certification or renewal certification for this cost share year. Invoices and proof of payment should be included with your application. Please remember, the cost share year is on or between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.**

ALLOWABLE COSTS:

- Application Fees
- Inspection Fees, including Travel Costs and Per Diem for Organic Inspectors
- Certification Costs, including fees necessary to access international markets with which AMS has equivalency agreements or arrangements
- User Fees/Sale Agreements
- Postage

UNALLOWABLE COSTS:

- Inspections due to violations of USDA Organic regulations
- Charges related to non-USDA organic certifications
- Transitional Certifications
- Other labeling program
- Materials, Supplies, Equipment
- Late Fees
- Membership Fees
- Consultant Fees

NOTICE TO OPERATIONS CERTIFIED BY PENNSYLVANIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC (PCO) YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PROVIDE AN AMOUNT OR PROOF OF PAYMENT. PCO WILL PROVIDE THE ALLOWABLE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR CERTIFICATION.

15. (1) Check yes or no in answer to the supplied question. If you answered **NO** please explain below.
(2) Check yes or no in answer to the supplied question. If you answered **YES** please list farms below and attach additional sheet(s) if necessary.
16. Name and contact information for your certifying agency. **If you checked Other**, please fill out information below:
Certification Agent/Agency: _____
Address: _____
Phone#: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____
17. **Signature of all payees as listed in item 3.**

*Applications postmarked after **October 31, 2020** may not be processed. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Michele Brookins. Additional applications may also be printed out from our website: agriculture.pa.gov/agbiz

Contact Information:
Michele Brookins
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Ph: 717-787-5319
Fax: 717-787-5643
Email: mbrookins@pa.gov