



# Organic Matters

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# Organically Speaking

**T**his New Year brings with it a new urgency of being thankful, feeling supported by community, and giving and receiving care to prepare for what this spring and the rest of 2022 might bring. Despite our fears, differences, and the many uncertainties we continue to navigate, we choose to put faith in each other and what we can accomplish **together**, which is always something greater than the sum of the parts we play. I continue to be in awe of what each of you contributes to your individual operations, the organic sector, and the community of PCO. Considerate communication has been, and will be, key to all of our successes.

I've been with PCO for about 18 months at the time of writing this note, and there isn't anything I can think of that we don't accomplish by some kind of partnership between any combination of our clients, staff, board, inspectors, fellow accredited certification agencies, partnering organizations, and the USDA NOP. To be a more effective organization, we have engaged with all of those stakeholder groups in different ways over the last year to find out what we can do better, how we can promote healthy communication, and how we can deepen productive relationships. This includes internal trainings, facilitated trainings, surveys, consistent dialogue, and structured work plans.

All of this work has made it possible to navigate the organizational change road we have all been on together with more clarity and a lot more grace for each other and the process. At PCO, we are so thankful to be working with all of you and each other, and we look forward to meeting the challenges of the new year **together**!

PCO's Annual Meeting will take place with both virtual and in-person options for attending. See more details on our website here: [paorganic.org/annualmeeting](https://paorganic.org/annualmeeting). We hope you will join us for this opportunity to celebrate and

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also participate in PCO's future. We will be presenting a set of revised bylaws for approval, and plenty of staff and board members will be there to talk with clients before and after the official meeting. Changes in the bylaws, if approved, offer a space for interested clients to lend your expertise by participating in advisory committees, which will present feedback directly to the board. We look forward to talking with you about these opportunities to serve. With this meeting taking place during the Pasa Sustainable Agriculture conference, we also are very much looking forward to being **together** for the first time in a long time with those of you able to attend in-person.

I believe whole-heartedly in the power of your work to regenerate life in our soils and in each other, offering great healing to people and the planet. **We all need that power and you more than ever, and we at PCO thank you for choosing to do your work with us, together.**

In service,

Diana Kobus

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#### VISION

All communities are enriched through organic food and farming

#### MISSION

To ensure the integrity of organic products and serve our farming community

#### CORE VALUES

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

# Organic Matters

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Bub Herfurth  
of Lehigh Valley Meats



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PCO Board at Fall 2021 retreat



Hector Nunez C.,  
PCO Certification  
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COVER PHOTO: Sheep winter grazing at Hershberger Heritage Farm. Photo: Jeff Binns, Hershberger Heritage Farm

# Grassroots to Organic Growth

*The evolution of PCO –  
25 years of certification service*

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STACEY BUDD, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/OUTREACH COORDINATOR

**A**t its roots, agriculture cultivates a seed and allows nature to nurture and produce – pure organic. It wasn't until the 1940s that organic practices became more defined as a response to the development and application of synthetic fertilizers for industrial agriculture. For pioneers like J.I. Rodale, commonly regarded as the father of the modern organic farming movement, practices that focused on building healthier soil for healthier food leading to healthier people would have a long-lasting impact on agriculture the way nature intended. On a small farm outside of Emmaus, Pennsylvania, J.I. Rodale began growing his family's food using organic methods and documenting the process, laying the foundation for what would be the Rodale Institute and their publication of *Organic Gardening and Farming*. Momentum for organic production was built right in Pennsylvania.

## ORGANIC BEFORE "ORGANIC"

Inspired by a better way to do things, other farmers in Pennsylvania were implementing organic practices and building a network of support. In 1985, a group of organic farmers in the Lancaster County area formed a Pennsylvania chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA). As a chapter of OCIA, they were allowed to perform certification services for its members. During this time there was increased consumer demand for organic products but no centralized standards or regulations that defined organic production, giving each state or certifying agency liberty to craft their own standards based on regional production practices and constraints. Not long after, Congress passed the Organic Food Production Act (OFPA) in 1990 to develop national standards as guidelines for food to be labeled "organic".

In those early days of the OCIA Pennsylvania chapter, farmers and inspectors collaborated to form committees that focused on defining their standards and protocol for certification. It was all hands on deck as the excitement and energy about organic production grew among local Pennsylvania farmers. Proud of the groundwork and grassroot efforts being done in the state, the idea of creating a new organization that had Pennsylvania in the name was put on the table – and in

February 1997, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 to serve the growers, processors and consumers seeking a healthier approach to agriculture and food while maintaining the integrity of organic products in the marketplace. From humble beginnings with 27 certified operations, PCO expanded to over 200 crop, live-stock and dairy certified operators within the first couple of years. During this time, PCO not only grew in operations but also as a thought leader in contributing a voice to the development of the national standards being drafted by the USDA.

## EXPANDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

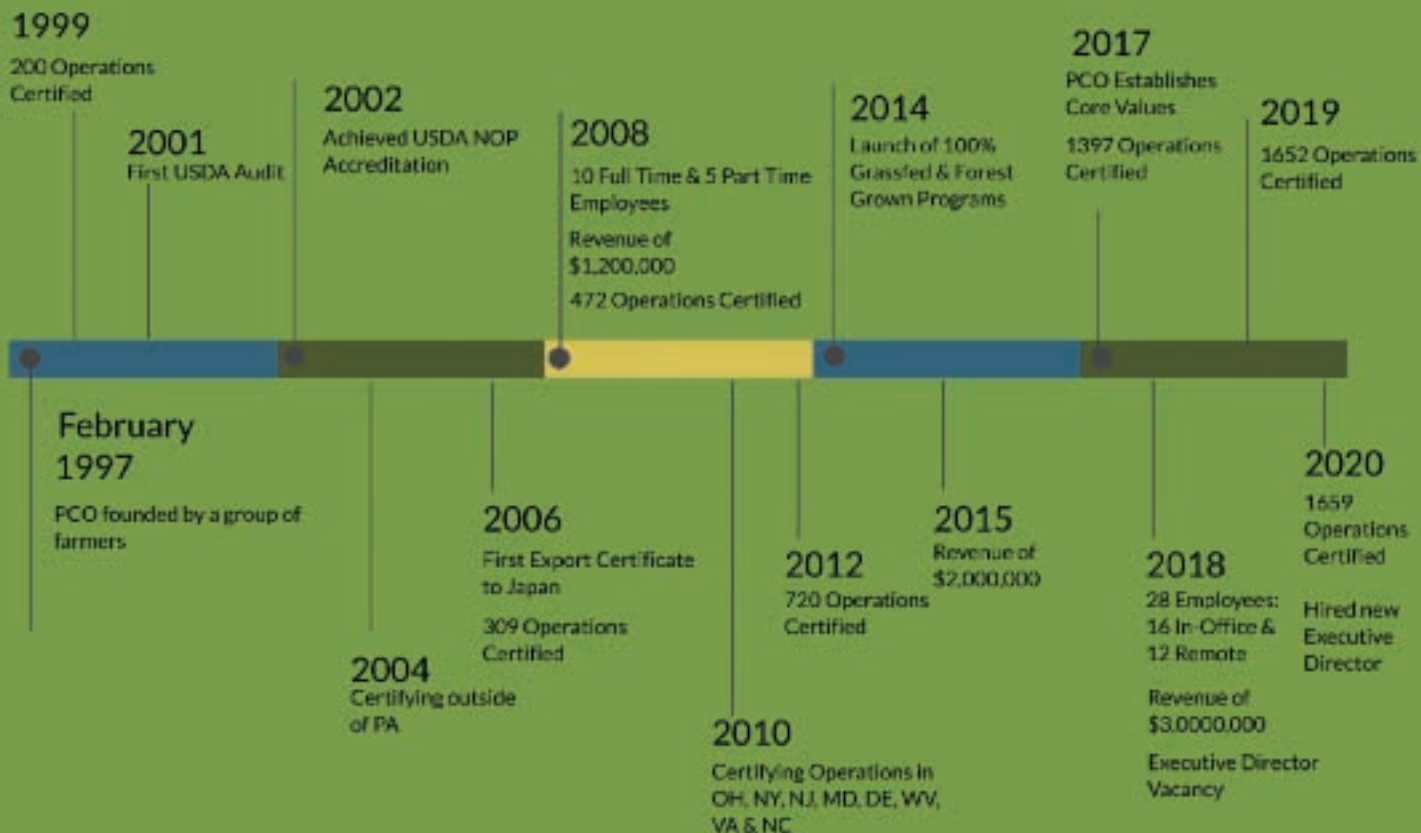
By the time the USDA National Organic Program standards and regulations were finalized in 2002, PCO was responding to the organic marketplace. As the cachet of organic continued to grow, so did the demand for certification services beyond the Pennsylvania border. By 2004, PCO had expanded its reach to offer certification services to operations in adjoining states, including Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia. Not only did PCO expand geographical reach, we also developed add-on label certifications to help define client products in the marketplace.

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**Whether from certified operators or executive directors and staff, PCO's success and growth has evolved from the many hands who helped shape our organic journey. It all started with the vision that PCO can be the voice of organic in the state of Pennsylvania.**

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By 2014, PCO had over 800 certified operations. While we had a growing number of staff, we still relied on the contributions of volunteers (often certified members) to serve on committees and assist in program development. One area of development was grassfed products. PCO launched our 100% GrassFed label as a response to our grass-based ruminant livestock producers needing a way to market their products beyond the organic seal. PCO, with the help of farmers and processors, established strong label claims to help define grassfed products. In June 2014, PCO began certifying our first organic grassfed milk processor – Maple Hill Creamery. This agreement would lead to significant impact on the industry. Beyond consumer product demand, the popularity of grassfed production was growing as farmers were seeing the benefits in animal health, pasture productivity and profits. Over five years, expanded collaboration among certifiers, dairy/livestock producers and processors resulted in a new certification program that brings consistency and transparency to grassfed standards and thus the PCO 100% GrassFed program was dissolved into the new Organic Plus Trust certification accredited by EarthClaims LLC. Though we no longer run the program, PCO was at the forefront of bringing grassfed to market for our clients.



## SUCCESS COMES FROM LEADERSHIP

There is a proverb by John Heywood, an English writer from the 16th century, that states “many hands make light work”. Whether from certified operators or executive directors and staff, PCO’s success and growth has evolved from the many hands who helped shape our organic journey. It all started with the vision that PCO can be the voice of organic in the state of Pennsylvania. Our visionary founding farms invested their valuable time and knowledge into bringing our organization to fruition. They lent their hands to help develop standards and grow our outreach efforts to build a connected community of passionate growers, processors and supporters of organic agriculture. Though many deserve accolades, we would be remiss if we did not recognize a handful of operations/individuals who were with us then and are still with us today:

- The Beddard Family, Lady Moon Farms
- The Brownback Family, Spiral Path Farm
- D. David Martin, Danda Farms, LLC
- Brian Magaro, Organic Inspector
- Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute
- Preston & Wanda Boop, Briar Patch Farms
- Roman & Dwight Stoltzfoos, Spring Wood Organic Farm

- Tim Hihn, C.P Yeatman & Sons/Mother Earth Mushrooms, LLC
- The Phillips Family, Phillips Mushroom Farms
- The Brubaker Family, Village Acres Farm

To add to this list are all the dedicated souls who have served board terms for PCO. Whether in an advisory board role or a managing board member, PCO has been gifted with many talented board members with diverse expertise that contributed valuable dialogue to our decision-making process.

The growing demand for certification services brought forth an expansion in staff to meet client needs. What was once a handful of staff members, our team has grown to 32 individuals committed to organic integrity and quality customer service. We are fortunate to have had some with long-standing tenure that contributed not only PCO’s growth but the organic industry at-large, including our founding Executive Director, Leslie Zuck. Additionally we continue to benefit from Sabine Carey’s expertise. From Certification to Materials Specialist and always our resident photographer, she was one of PCO’s early staff member 21 years ago. Today our Certification Director, Kyla Smith, has been with PCO in various capacities over the past 11 years and is currently serving in the certifier seat on the

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# Current State of Affairs with Local Organic Meat Processing in Pennsylvania

*Addressing challenges to the local organic meat industry*

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RYAN SIWINSKI,  
RODALE INSTITUTE | ORGANIC CONSULTING

**T**ransparency throughout the entire food system has become an increasingly important demand from consumers throughout the United States. Regardless of the recent global events, the shift to buying local produce and meat has become more popular for a variety of reasons.

## The benefits to buying local include:

- Cyclical Community Economics
- Increased Attention to Health and Wellness
- Decreased Logistical Dependency
- Transparent Supply Chain
  - On Farm Practices
  - Local Meat Processing
  - Local Distribution Channels

When consumers purchase from local farmers and food businesses, they are ultimately voting for their local food production to grow in the future. The small market signal that occurs every time a local food purchase is made can compound over time to bring resurgence to “buying local”. This has created plenty of new opportunities for farmers, businesses, and residents alike.

## RODALE INSTITUTE’S MOBILE FARMERS MARKET

When opportunity presents itself, however, challenges and inefficiencies become apparent. During the past two years, and amidst the global pandemic, one bottleneck became easily



Local Meat Processor Bub Herfurth at Lehigh Valley Meats.

identifiable in the food industry at all scales: meat processing. Farmers struggled to find available processing time slots at their local meat processing facilities due to the heightened demand for local meat. The major demand initially occurred when traditional grocer distribution channels struggled to keep their shelves stocked. Large scale food brands suffered from single source vertical integration shutdowns. Local farmers suffered from spiked demand combined with inability to access local processors due to the lack thereof.

To add to the bottleneck, certified organic livestock farmers must also ensure that their meat processor is certified organic. This additional layer of necessity presents a major issue for organic livestock producers in Pennsylvania who struggle to find a meat processing timeslot at all, let alone a certified organic meat processor. To circumvent this issue, certified organic livestock producers that do not have a stable option for certified organic processing may forego the certified organic label and price premium to ensure end-product sales.

## RODALE SUPPORT FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

At the Rodale Institute, our team of organic consultants are currently working with crop and livestock producers across the country to help them transition their production systems from conventional to certified organic. Our work to help transition conventional livestock producers is heavily dependent on processing capabilities. We often discuss the variety of processing opportunities with the farmer to ensure that they have a certified organic processor in place. This discussion is typically dependent on the location of the nearest certified organic USDA Inspected meat processor. In Pennsylvania there are currently 100 USDA inspected meat establishments. This list also includes USDA inspected facilities that are vertically integrated into existing farms and meat producers for beef, poultry, swine, etc. These facilities would not be available for outside business from additional farms. Of the 100 USDA inspected facilities in PA, **2 hold an organic certification** for all livestock processing (beef, hogs, poultry, etc.). In addition to the USDA inspected establishments there are also 147 Custom Exempt facilities.

### LOCAL MEAT PROCESSOR: BUB HERFURTH AT LEHIGH VALLEY MEATS

#### ***What is the goal of the future expansion to your existing business?***

"Currently we are operating at full capacity. My wife and I have had this plan in place for a few years. It was not a plan that came in result to COVID-19. This, however, did help us identify that the expansion plan may have been built too small initially. We adjusted the plan and began implementing the necessary steps." – The expansion project is set to be a six-month project once it begins.

#### ***Do you see a trend in local agriculture demand?***

"There feels to be a movement for people to buy in volumes right now. Consumers are comfortable buying at farm stands and local producers rather than buying mass produced meat from the grocery store. This is a time for small producers to market their products because consumers are looking for other options that produce higher quality meats and proteins on the market. There is real value in this and it's a major win for their community."

#### ***How do you view your role in the agricultural industry?***

"We as a business, especially a small business, are *fanning the flame* to help producers bring high quality products to market. There are a lot of people and producers that are passionate about what they do and can provide the story behind their product via social media." Lehigh Valley Meats ultimately provides the opportunity for these producers to see their product through to the end phase.

#### ***Do you see meat processing as the largest bottleneck in the supply chain?***

The two options for meat processing in Pennsylvania are USDA Inspected (FSIS) or Custom Slaughter. USDA Inspected facilities are certified and have a USDA Inspector on site during all hours of operation. Custom Slaughter is not inspected at the state or federal level, however any livestock that is processed must be sold as a living animal prior to slaughter and processing. The processed meat then goes to the person or group that purchased the live animal. In addition to this differentiation, USDA Inspected meat can be sold, legally, across state lines whereas custom exempt meat cannot.

In the fall of 2021, we sought out an opportunity in Pennsylvania to identify meat processors that are interested in certified organic processing. Bub Herfurth at Lehigh Valley Meats in Nazareth, PA has demonstrated interest in acquiring organic certification for his meat processing operation. In 2022, Bub has planned an expansion for his current operation that will increase his processing capacity. This will allow existing farm customers to scale up and give an additional resource for farmers looking to identify a local meat processor.

I had the pleasure to speak with Bub regarding the building expansion, certified organic production, and more!

"The capacity is absolutely constrained at the processing level in Pennsylvania. This bottleneck, however, is not the only bottleneck in the system. Local livestock producers along with the trend to purchasing local products have helped identify inefficiencies in the existing supply chain infrastructure. It could be a wonderful time to produce agricultural products while ideally minimizing the bottlenecks as this becomes the norm."

#### ***You were once a certified organic meat processor. What happened and why are you interested in pursuing the certification in the future?***

"Producers that are certified organic have an additional criterion to meet with certified organic meat processing. Considering the lack of meat processing in general, it is tough for a producer to certify their livestock at this point. Our capacity is extremely limited as it stands. Organic producers may produce

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Rodale Institute's Mobile Farm Market.

# Can We Have Our Soil and Till It Too?

*Designing strip tillage systems for organic vegetables*

Ryan Maher



RYAN MAHER, CORNELL UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SPECIALIST AND ANU RANGARAJAN DIRECTOR, CORNELL SMALL FARMS PROGRAM

Organic vegetable production is often criticized for a reliance on repeated, intensive tillage that is detrimental to soils. While cover crops can handle some of the burden, innovative growers are looking to do more and a number of reduced tillage (RT) practices are emerging on farms across the Northeast. Many are based on finding opportunities in the crop rotation and using new tools that help them use less tillage or do it differently. The plow or rototiller may not be sold, but it gets a longer rest, and a critical eye is being used to adopt more crop-appropriate RT. Especially for organic farms, the costs and benefits of RT practices need more research. Can they conserve surface residue, protect soils from crusting, and limit erosion? How can we reduce tillage without setting back the crop and then losing it to weeds? Thinking along these lines, Cornell and partnering universities in Michigan and Maine are scaling up their work in strip, or zone tillage to offer organic growers a way to find the right balance.

Zone tillage leaves between-row areas undisturbed and creates a narrow (~12-14" wide), tilled planting zone, warming soils,

forming a seed bed, and burying residue and weeds. Years of work by Cornell researchers, extension, and Northeast growers in conventional vegetables show that zone tillage can offer clear advantages to conventional tillage. Growers cite the labor and time savings along with the soil benefits, like improved tilth and better drainage.

Zone tillage equipment takes many different forms and growers are modifying their own based on farm needs and field conditions. Systems are designed to reduce field passes, combining primary tillage with a finishing unit for seedbed preparation. Generally, a residue-cutting disc is followed by a narrow-pointed, straight shank to create a slot. A set of row cleaners mounted ahead of the shank can be critical for moving residue out of the zone. The slot is then closed (open slots dry out quickly) with a set of hilling discs or wavy coulters that loosen and mound soil. Finally, a roller unit, like a rolling basket or cultipacker wheel, breaks up clods and firms the soil in a mini-mound.

Shanks are typically set deep at first to rip the soil just below the plow pan and break up compacted subsoil. After a few years, shallow zone tillage without the deep shanks may be optimal. It's difficult to achieve a fine seed bed, so the most

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**Research hopes to identify the cover crops and residue management practices best suited for strip tillage that balance weed control, crop nitrogen needs, and labor to help growers think through adoption strategies for their own farm.**

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**Figure 1 (left)** Yeomans plow shanks.

**Figure 2 (below)** Cover crop plantings.

*Photos: Ryan Maher, Cornell Small Farms Program.*



success has been found for large-seeded crops, like sweet corn and beans, and transplants, including cabbage, squash, and tomatoes. Horsepower can be a limiting factor for small growers, about 30–35 HP per shank, but using lighter Yeoman’s plow shanks with custom-made finishing units can add flexibility to this system (see Figure 1). They can be moved around on a toolbar to accommodate different crop spacings.

Success with strip tillage in organic vegetables will require some system-wide changes. Current research in Central New York, Long Island and Michigan is focused on managing strip tillage with winter-hardy cover crops, like cereal rye and hairy vetch, and for summer vegetable transplants (see Figure 2). Spring cover crop growth adds lots of organic matter and legume-fixed nitrogen for summer vegetables. When killed at maturity and left in place, residues serve as a mulch to protect soil and suppress weeds but may also tie up soil nitrogen and complicate planting. Early results are showing the value of strip planting cover crops to improve tillage operations. Alternate strips of vetch in the planting zone and rye in-between leave rye residue and root masses undisturbed, while nitrogen-rich vetch is tilled in. Research hopes to identify the cover crops

and residue management practices best suited for strip tillage that balance weed control, crop nitrogen needs, and labor to help growers think through adoption strategies for their own farm.

*From the Vault: This article was first published in the Spring 2017 Organic Matters issue.*



**CORNELL  
small  
FARMS  
PROGRAM**

For more information on RT research in organic vegetables, visit: [smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/reduced-tillage/](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/reduced-tillage/) or contact Ryan Maher at [ryan.maher@cornell.edu](mailto:ryan.maher@cornell.edu).  
For updates specific to strip tillage research, please visit: [smallfarms.cornell.edu/2019/07/why-strip-tillage/](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2019/07/why-strip-tillage/)



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. . . from Northeast Organic Farmers  
Organic Feed, Seed and Community

# Fall 2021 NOSB Meeting Recap

JEN BERKEBILE, MATERIALS PROGRAM MANAGER

In October 2021, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met remotely to address several issues in the organic industry. The NOSB is a volunteer board made of 15 members who make recommendations to the National Organic Program (NOP). Recommendations may be developed into proposed rules by the NOP, and they may be incorporated into the regulations if they become final rules.

The NOSB meets twice per year in various locations around the United States. During meetings, the NOSB listens to public comments, discusses agenda items, and then votes on recommendations in a public forum. The fall meeting, like the three meetings before it, was held remotely due to travel limitations caused by COVID-19.

PCO Certification Director Kyla Smith continued her work as a member of the NOSB. Kyla was appointed to fill the sole USDA Accredited Certifying Agent seat at the beginning of 2021, and at the October 2021 meeting, she was elected to be Secretary. Congratulations, Kyla! In addition, Kyla serves as the Chairperson of the Handling subcommittee and also serves on the Livestock (LS) and Certification, Accreditation and Compliance (CACS) subcommittees.

One of the main duties of the NOSB is to review materials and recommend changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances, the section of the organic regulations related to input materials. The NOSB makes recommendations to the NOP on whether input materials should continue to be allowed or prohibited in the organic regulations. This is called the Sunset Review process. The fall 2021 meeting represented the second of two discussions on these materials, as well as a vote. Notable materials under sunset review at this meeting included chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, hypochlorous acid, and sodium hypochlorite) for crop, livestock, and handling uses; calcium borogluconate and calcium propionate for treatment of milk fever; and nutritive supplements for livestock health care (including injectable trace minerals, vitamins, and electrolytes). The NOSB voted to retain this meeting's sunset materials in the regulations. As such, there will be no changes to the allowance or prohibition of these sunset materials.

The NOSB also voted on several proposals, some of which are highlighted here. To see a complete list of topics and voting outcomes, please visit [ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-sacramento-ca](https://ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-sacramento-ca) or contact Jen or Kyla at the PCO office, 814-422-0251.

A proposal to prohibit non-synthetic ammonia extracts and to limit the total amount of nitrogen products used on organic

crop operations was considered. The board voted to prohibit non-synthetic stripped ammonia and concentrated ammonia. However, the board voted to continue working on the proposal to limit the total amount of nitrogen products used on organic crop operations, based on feedback from commenters that the proposal needed more work. It is anticipated that the NOSB will address this further at a future meeting.

The board considered a proposal to change the definition of biodegradable biobased mulch film at §205.2. The current definition, in combination with the annotation for biodegradable biobased mulch film at §205.601, appear to allow the substance for use on organic crop production, but the requirements are so stringent that no products on the market qualify; therefore, the product is effectively prohibited. The NOSB voted to change the requirement for biobased content from fully biobased to 80% biobased. Manufacturers of these types of products commented that products do not currently exist to meet these standards either, but they may be able to be developed.

**The NOSB voted to change the requirement for biobased content from fully biobased to 80% biobased. Manufacturers of these types of products commented that products do not currently exist to meet these standards either, but they may be able to be developed.**

The NOSB also voted to reinstate the listing for sodium nitrate at §205.602(g) – prohibited nonsynthetic: “Sodium nitrate – unless use is restricted to no more than 20 percent of the crop’s total nitrogen requirement...” This listing became invalid when the National Organic Program failed to publish a final rule to renew the listing.

Finally, the NOSB voted on an update to the annotation for fish oil at §205.606. The current listing reads, “Fish oil (Fatty acid CAS #'s: 10417-94-4, and 25167-62-8) – stabilized with organic ingredients or only with ingredients on the National List, §§ 205.605 and 205.606.” The NOSB voted to update this annotation to “§205.606(e) Fish oil (Fatty acid CAS #'s: 10417-94-4, and 25167-62-8) – stabilized with organic ingredients or only with ingredients on the National List, §§205.605 and 205.606. Sourced from fishing industry by-product only and certified as sustainable against a third-party certification that is International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Code Compliant or Global Seafood Sustainability Initiative (GSSI) recognized.” This limits the sources of acceptable non-organic fish oil used as an ingredient in products labeled as “organic.”

As with any NOSB meeting, the outcome of these votes does not mean that the organic regulations were instantly changed. These votes are taken as recommendations to the

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# From the Board



## Transitions to Support the Next 25 years

JOE MILLER, PRESIDENT & MANAGING BOARD CHAIR



Happy New Year! As we enter 2022, we are full of hope and optimism for a resilient future of organic production. As I visit various food retailers up and down the East coast, I see more organic produce, more organic proteins and new innovative organic products filling the grocery shelves. The growing awareness by consumers on how their food choices impact their health and our climate continues to fuel our growing industry. This is putting more importance on and reassurance behind what you do each and every day.

In order for PCO to be resilient in our ever changing world, we must adapt and evolve as an organization while still adhering to our roles and responsibilities as an accredited certifying agency. In the early days of incorporation, PCO board members performed operational tasks to provide certification and grow our client base. 25 years later, we have a competent staff who handle the operations and certification process, giving the current board members space to be visionary and strategic in our work. Our recent board retreat, held October 28-29, 2021 at the Rodale Institute, was a good example of how the board has moved in this direction. With the support of a facilitator, we discussed new ways to examine the challenges we face as an organization and an industry. We went through exercises that explored how asking good, insightful questions can strengthen leadership skills. As a board, how we govern can impact our

organizational growth. Based on the book *Governance as Leadership; Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*, we learned three important modes of thinking that help boards like ours design a future that allows us to best serve our clients while influencing an evolving organic sector:

- Fiduciary Thinking – ensuring our organization stays true to our mission while remaining compliant with all laws and regulations.
- Strategic Thinking – aligning our strengths and opportunities with the goal of having the maximum impact for our community.
- Generative Thinking – reframing organizational issues by exploring how we can shape society through our work.

Our time together was filled with robust dialogue about PCO's identity, where we fit into the organic landscape, and areas to grow our industry leadership. With every conversation we upheld our core value to keep our certified operations and their success at the forefront of our discussions/decisions.

With PCO's proposed bylaw revisions, the structure of the board will be evolving to help mitigate inefficiencies in our current two board dynamic and establish clear boundaries in our decision making authority as required by the NOP. This will eliminate the opportunity for certified operators and those with commercial conflicts from sitting on our board. As a board, we and the leadership team at PCO believe that the input from our certified operators is crucial as we continue to support you. We are creating new opportunities for stakeholder engagement through the development of advisory committees. Whether by scope, operation type or geographical location, these 3-5 member committees will be able to provide reports to the board with their first-hand experiences to help inform the board in our decision making. We see this as a valuable way to engage with you and learn more from you how policies and procedures impact your operation. If you are interested in serving on an advisory committee, please reach out to me or Diana Kobus, our Executive Director.

Wishing you a resilient and bright 2022!

Joe Miller, joehasit@gmail.com • 717-385-4610  
Joe is the Sales & Brand Manager for Kalona SuperNatural



PCO Board gather for a retreat at Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA.

## Dear Aggy



### Mulch Options for Organic Production

Dear Aggy,

I'm placing my supply orders for the next growing season. I rely on mulch for weed control, and I'd really like to move away from the regular black plastic mulch. What are my options for using paper or biodegradable biobased mulch?

— *Puzzled by plastic*

Dear Puzzled,

The use of plastic mulch does serve to suppress weed growth, moderate soil temperature, and conserve soil moisture, but as a single use product, plastic mulch contributes to non-recyclable waste and associated environmental pollution. The organic regulations require that plastic mulch be removed from the field at the end of the growing season at 7 CFR §205.206(c)(6).

Paper may be used as mulch, provided that it is recycled and does not utilize any gloss, glossy inks, or color inks. Black ink is allowed. Paper mulch is an alternative option that is becoming

more widely available, and OMRI has rolled paper mulch products, such as Weedguard Plus, listed under the *Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Control/Newspaper or other recycled paper categories*.

Cardboard is a type of paper and therefore must be made from recycled materials. The cardboard cannot be printed with glossy or color inks. In addition, the cardboard must not be waxed or have been treated with fungicide. For smaller scale applications, cardboard may be both an acceptable mulch as well as a compost feedstock.

While biodegradable biobased mulch films, such as those made of non-genetically modified corn starch, seem to offer an attractive alternative, none of these biobased mulches in the marketplace currently have been able to meet the strict requirements at 7 CFR§205.601(b)(iii) and §205.2, which state that biodegradable biobased mulch films must be completely biobased.

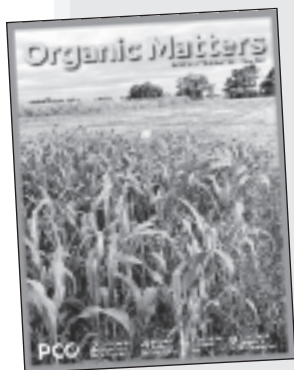
At the 2021 Fall National Organic Standards Board meeting, the NOSB did vote to update the definition for biobased mulch at §205.2 to require that it be at least 80% biobased. This is just a recommendation at this point and still awaits further rule-making. Any biodegradable biobased mulch film will still need to be produced without organisms or feedstock derived from excluded methods (GMO's).

Do keep in mind that PCO will review paper/biobased mulches for compliance, so make sure to add them to your Materials Used Form and request review before use. To find PCO approved mulches on the PCO List of Allowed Materials, look under the Crops / Weed Control.

STAY CONNECTED, VISIT:  
[paorganic.org](http://paorganic.org)

## Advertise in Organic Matters

*Organic Matters* is the quarterly newsletter of Pennsylvania Certified Organic, a non-profit organization serving growers, processors and handlers of organic products. Issues contain articles on the latest news and research in the organic industry, often highlighting our certified members. Approximately 1,500 copies of each publication are distributed directly to members and those requesting information about organic agriculture, and made available to the public at conferences, exhibits and educational programs in the Mid-Atlantic region.



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For more information, please contact [sbudd@paorganic.org](mailto:sbudd@paorganic.org) or call the PCO Office at 814-422-0251.

## PCO Core Values in Action

*PCO staff engage in creating our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion purpose statement*

DIANA UNDERWOOD, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Winter is a time of reflection and preparation, and this holds true for our work at PCO. The PCO staff completed our final 2021 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) training in the fall and are now using the culmination of all the training to reflect and prepare for developing our DEI Purpose statement. Why are we engaging in DEI work? Why is it important? Who will it serve? How will we measure success? These are important questions, and through the guidance of professionals in this field, PCO staff and board will work together to answer these questions and more. This important foundation will allow us to build a stronger sense of community among staff, board, inspectors, and clients, and it will support our success as we move forward.

Our learning so far is setting us up to take important action steps. Because this is such important work to our organization, our industry, and society as a whole, we are taking our time to get it right, which means it will be an evolving process and journey. The staff and board group will spend the beginning of 2022 working on PCO's case for DEI work, which will ultimately be the DEI vision, mission, values, and goals. Upon completion of this work, expect to hear from us! We'll be communicating what we learned, where we are going with respect to DEI, and most importantly WHY!

This foundational work will support our first core value, **"We keep people at the center of every action, interaction, and decision."** We do this by:

- Caring intensely about our stakeholders and their ability to succeed.
- Showing deep respect for human beings inside and outside our company and for the communities in which they live.
- Listening well and seeking to understand before reacting.
- Being empowered to provide proactive solutions.
- Communicating in a clear and timely manner.

As PCO grows and changes, DEI work becomes even more important in supporting all of us now and in the future. Learning, growing, and improving are all part of the important work we all do to support a vision where **all communities** are enriched through organic food and farming. We hope you will join us on this journey!



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# "Nothing works like Udder Comfort!"

— Myron Martin



PEACE HOLLOW FARM, Myron and Janet Martin  
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"I've tried other products, but nothing works like Udder Comfort!™ We use it for swollen udders, as needed, especially to remove edema in fresh cows. And, for any cow with flakes or elevated SCC, I use it on that quarter," says third generation dairyman Myron Martin of Peace Hollow Farm near Knoxville, Maryland.

He operates the 80 cow dairy with his wife Janet and associates Michael and Angela Busselberg, with emphasis on producing high quality, organic, grass-fed A2 milk. They feed all grass and hay and maintain a 150,000 SCC average. Myron gives some of the credit for milk quality to Udder Comfort.

"It promptly takes down swelling," says Myron. "It is good to have this natural product, and it's handy for other things, like swollen hocks. I love the simplicity of Udder Comfort and how it really works. The comfort and results for the cows make me feel good."

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[www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org)

# New Faces

## PCO Welcomes New Certification Specialists

### **Abbey Roggenbuck** *Certification Specialist*

Abbey joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in October 2021. Abbey grew up in Michigan spending evenings, weekends and summers working on her dad's organic farm. She earned a Bachelor's in Public Policy and Environmental Studies from the University of Michigan and a Master's in Environmental and Geographical Sciences from the University of Cape Town. Abbey now lives with her partner, Moeti, and her cat, Moo, in South Florida and enjoys spending time with friends and family, traveling, hiking, and baking.



### **Alex Restaino** *Certification Specialist*

Alex joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in October 2021. Alex worked as an organic farm inspector traveling up and down the east coast since spring 2018. Prior to inspecting, Alex worked as a farm manager for an organic CSA produce and poultry operation in Northern VA. He has a B.A. in Finance and Marketing from Baldwin Wallace University. In his spare time, Alex enjoys soccer, camping, hiking, fly fishing, and exploring nature with friends and family.



### **Caitlan Reilly** *Certification Specialist*

Caitlan joined the PCO team as a Certification Specialist in October 2021. Caitlan grew up in Binghamton, NY and has also spent time living in New York City. She graduated from Binghamton University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies and earned a MS in International Transportation Management from SUNY Maritime College. Prior to PCO, Caitlan has worked as a Certification Coordinator for NOFA-NY and in the international dry bulk shipping industry. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband, fishing, bird watching and skiing.



### **Hector Nunez C.** *Certification Specialist*

Hector joined PCO in 2021 as a Certification Specialist. He is from Mexico where he received a Bachelor of Sciences in Agricultural Business. Hector came to Pennsylvania to study a dual degree at Juniata College but fell in love with the 4



seasons of the Pennsylvania woods and his wife, and never left. Hector worked at Penn State University as an Extension Educator with the mushroom and orchard industry. He also worked as a Food Safety Director for Manfredi Cold Storage and International Repack processing fruits and produce from 22 countries. Hector is currently aspiring to obtain a M.S. in Sustainability and Renewable Energies at Penn State World Campus. During his free time, he enjoys time outdoors, camping, video games and working on his off-roading jeep.

## Local Organic Meat Processing in PA

*continued from page 5*



an organic meat product but have a tough time identifying a reliable local meat processor, let alone certified organic meat processor. If I show the community that I have certified organic processing, the demand will rise. Once the expansion is complete, we will be able to allow capacity to additional producers. We always want to do right by our customers."

Although the standard symbol of a local farm may be a herd of cows on pasture or a flock of chickens near a coop, it also has its upstream and downstream actions that are essential in sourcing and distributing the products that are grown on the farm. A farmer cannot fall in love with one part of the process. Each stage of the production cycle must be dependable, built into product pricing, and align with their farm business practices. The urge to produce certified organic meat in Pennsylvania is apparent. The capability to do so becomes the issue. Our work with Bub at Lehigh Valley Meats will hopefully help local organic farmers and exemplify their capability to effectively produce organic meat in a local supply chain.



Are you a livestock producer that is uncertain about organic certification? Do you need assistance in charting a path forward with your local and organic supply chain? Rodale Institute is here to help. We have been actively working on building an organic meat supply chain that meets the farmers where they are. Contact our livestock specialist, Ryan Siwinski, at [ryan.siwinski@rodaleinstitute.org](mailto:ryan.siwinski@rodaleinstitute.org) or call him directly at 484-209-2653.

## Certification Update

Kyla Smith  
Certification Director



The Certification Review Team is hard at work wrapping up the 2021 certification and inspection cycle and preparing for the 2022 cycle to begin. Our goal is always to complete one annual cycle prior to the start of a new one, which typically corresponds with the calendar year. However, due to several changes - from implementing a new certification database in 2021 to hiring new staff, along with continuing to navigate organic certification and inspections during a pandemic - we are still completing 2021 certification reports. We feel confident that the changes implemented in 2021 (new database and hiring), as well as a few additional process efficiencies, will set us up for a successful 2022 certification and inspection cycle.

You should have already received your 2022 Annual Update paperwork either in the mail or via PCO's Certification Web Portal (based on your communication preference). If you have not received your annual update, please contact the PCO office immediately. Annual Updates are due back on **March 1, 2022**. If they are not received back by the due date you may be subject to a Notice of Noncompliance. Additionally, you also should have received your invoice for your basic certification fee. Failure to pay fees by their due dates may also result in a Notice of Noncompliance.

With moving to our new certification database, your Annual Update paperwork will look a little different this year depending on if receiving via paper or through the portal. Please read the instructional letter that accompanies the paperwork or email notifying you that your annual update is ready to ensure you complete your annual update appropriately. **If you wish to add products, fields, farms, or other changes that might require an early season inspection, please note on your annual update form, and please call or email PCO to let us know. Also, if you no longer wish to be certified, you must let us know so we can surrender your certificate.**

If you have any questions or need assistance with your certification report or annual update paperwork, please call PCO at 814-422-0251 and you will be directed to the appropriate person to help. Thank you for choosing PCO! We look forward to another successful year together!

## Inspection Team Update

Corinne Wesh, Inspection  
Program Assistant Manager



Stephen Hobaugh, Inspection Program Coordinator



It's wintertime and the PCO Inspections Team is busy preparing for the 2022 inspection season to come. As we reflect on 2021, we are immensely grateful to our clients and inspectors for the cooperation and flexibility that made the inspection season a success despite the challenges we all continue to face due to the pandemic.

In 2021, PCO inspections were completed safely and effectively thanks to the mutual commitment of inspectors and clients to keep each other safe during the pandemic. PCO continues these efforts to prioritize the health and safety of our clients and inspectors while delivering inspection services that meet the requirements of the USDA-National Organic Program's regulations.

As the 2022 certification cycle and inspection season begins, please keep the following in mind:

- While the 2021 Inspection season officially closed on 12/1/21, a small percentage of operations continue to be inspected into January. If you have not had your 2021 inspection, an inspector will be contacting you to schedule your inspection. If you have any questions, please call the PCO office and ask to speak with someone from the Inspection Team.
- If you are a renewing client and plan to request certification for new land, facilities and/or add a new scope in 2022, be sure to inform your Certification Specialist and include all new certification requests in your Annual Update submission.
- If you are a renewing client with early 2022 certification requests (January through June), please communicate with your PCO Certification Specialist immediately to explain your needs. Do not wait. If you're not sure who to contact, reach

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out to the PCO office and you will be connected from there.

- If you are a new client with PCO, please contact us as soon as possible to begin the application process. New clients must submit complete applications prior to being scheduled for inspection. Please allow for at least 6-12 weeks from the submission of your complete application and fees to receive a final certification decision.
- For all PCO clients, early communication about your 2022 inspection and certification requests will support the PCO Inspections Team in meeting your timing needs.

If you have any questions about your PCO inspection, please be in touch with Corinne or Stephen at the PCO office, 814-422-0251. We look forward to working with you!

## Legislative Update

Kyla Smith  
Certification Director



### USDA LAUNCHES PANDEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR CERTIFIED ORGANIC AND TRANSITIONING OPERATIONS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing \$20 million in pandemic assistance to cover certification and education expenses for agricultural producers who are certified organic or transitioning to organic through the new Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP). This program is part of USDA's broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, which provides new, broader and more equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers and producers.

OTECP funding is provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). Certified and transitional operations may apply for OTECP for eligible expenses paid during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 fiscal years. The deadline of February 4, 2022, for the 2020 and 2021 fiscal years has past; however, this program will also be available for expenses related to the 2022 fiscal year (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022). OTECP covers 25% of a certified operation's eligible certification expenses, up to \$250 per certification category (crop, livestock, wild crop, handling, and State Organic Program fee). This includes application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, state organic program fees and more.

Crop and livestock operations transitioning to organic production may be eligible for 75% of a transitional operation's eligible expenses, up to \$750, for each year. This includes fees charged by a certifying agent or consultant for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan.

This program offers funding for items not covered under the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). For both certified operations and transitional operations, OTECP covers 75% of the registration fees, up to \$200 per year, **for educa-**

**tional events** that include content related to organic production and handling in order to assist operations in increasing their knowledge of production and marketing practices that can improve their operations, increase resilience, and expand available marketing opportunities. Additionally, both certified and transitional operations may be eligible for 75% of the **expense of soil testing** required under the National Organic Program (NOP) to document micronutrient deficiency, not to exceed \$100 per year.

Producers apply through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364 or visiting the OTECP website at [farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/otecp](https://farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/otecp)

## Materials Update

Jen Berkebile  
Materials Program Manager



### MATERIAL REVIEW STATUS CHANGES

Happy New Year! The PCO Materials Team is heading into 2022 refreshed and renewed after our holiday break. Thank you for your patience while we were out of the office for the holidays. If you have any outstanding material reviews, don't hesitate to contact us at 814-422-0251 for an update.

Please note the following status changes for materials reviewed by PCO for use by certified operations:

#### ALLOWED

##### ■ Livestock Materials

- **BVS Vitamin & Electrolytes Concentrate** by Best Veterinary Solutions, Inc. (BVS) is allowed as a livestock medical treatment with the following restriction:

Medical Treatment. Must not be administered in the absence of illness. Records must be kept documenting specific animal treated, treatment/dosage used, and duration of treatment. §205.238(b)

**PROHIBITED** – Operators must immediately discontinue use of these products unless otherwise noted.

##### ■ Crop Materials

- **Black Nitrogen 6-2-2 Plus Ca 2.0** by Sterling Agriculture is PROHIBITED for use as a crop fertilizer/soil amendment
- **Pelletized High Calcium Limestone** by Shelburne Limestone Corporation is PROHIBITED for use as a crop fertilizer/soil amendment

##### ■ Livestock Materials

- **Eastern White Pine Shavings** by Robbins Lumber is PROHIBITED for use as a livestock production aid
- **Rovabio Excel AP T FLEX** by Adisseo USA Inc. is PROHIBITED for use as a livestock feed additive/supplement

# Standards & Policy Update

Kyla Smith  
Certification Director



## STRENGTHENING ORGANIC ENFORCEMENT (SOE) RULEMAKING UPDATE

In August 2020, the National Organic Program (NOP) published the Strengthening Organic Enforcement proposed rule, which was the largest piece of rulemaking since the original final rule was published in 2002. The SOE final rule is continuing its path through the rulemaking process that includes many steps and involves several other agencies and offices in the federal government. PCO expects to see the publication of a final rule during 2022 (perhaps as early as the spring). However, with so many people involved, there are several opportunities for the rule to be delayed, so the specific publication timeline remains unpredictable. It is anticipated that there will be a 1-year implementation timeline from the publication date of the final rule.

The Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule will amend the USDA organic regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement of the production, handling, and sale of organic agricultural products. If you are engaged in the organic industry, you will likely be affected once the rule is finalized.

Affected entities may include but are not limited to:

- Brokers, traders, and importers of organic products that are not currently certified under the USDA organic regulations (AMS estimates that 961 domestic, and an equal number of foreign-based, operations would need to become certified as a result of this rule);
- Individuals or business entities that are considering organic certification;
- Existing production and handling operations that are currently certified organic under the USDA organic regulations;
- Operations that use non-retail containers for shipping or storing organic products;
- Retailers that sell organic products;
- Storage facilities, grain elevators or ports that process or alter organic products in anyway;
- Operations that receive or review organic certificates to verify compliance with USDA organic regulations;
- USDA-accredited certifying agents, inspectors, and reviewers;
- Operations that import organic products into the United States; and/or
- Operations that export organic products to the United States.

SOE covers around 20 topics of either new or revised regulations. The areas we think will be most impactful to PCO-certified operations are:

- Applicability and Exemptions from Certification
- Imports to the United States
- Labeling of Non-retail Containers
- Supply Chain Traceability and Organic Fraud Prevention

## APPLICABILITY AND EXEMPTIONS FROM CERTIFICATION

AMS proposed to amend §§ 205.2 and 205.100-101 of the USDA organic regulations to clarify the applicability of the regulations and limit the types of operations excluded from organic certification. Certain types of handlers previously exempt from certification may now be required to be certified (e.g. brokers, traders, importers, exporters). If you aren't currently certified and engage in one of these activities contact PCO to learn more about how to become certified.

If you are certified and do business with an uncertified operation engaged in brokering, trading, importing, or exporting, they will likely need to become certified. Please be aware of the operations you do business with. If they are currently excluded from certification but will need to become certified, encourage those operations to apply for certification early as to not disrupt your supply chain.

There will be many operations that will be seeking to become certified during the implementation period (which is anticipated to be 1 year from the publication of the final rule). We are encouraging operations that will be required to become certified to apply now to get ahead of the rush! For more information on becoming certified please call the PCO Office (814-422-0251) or visit the PCO website at [paorganic.org](http://paorganic.org).

## IMPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES

AMS proposed to amend the USDA organic regulations by adding a new section (§205.273) discussing the use of the National Organic Program Import Certificate. This would mandate the use of an NOP import certificate for all imports. Currently, import certificates are only required for some imports.

Once the rule is effective, for PCO operations that purchase any imported product, you will be required to obtain an NOP Import Certificate for that imported product. These imports certificates may need to be submitted to PCO to verify ingredients in product formulations as well as kept on file for your inspector to verify.

Once the final rule is published, we will determine if our International Trade Supplement requires revision to capture any aspects of the final rule. If so, you may be asked to complete a new form to capture these aspects.

If you currently import products from countries that do not require an import certificate, it may be beneficial to begin discussing this new requirement with your suppliers to ensure they are aware of this impending change. Of course, the details will not be available until the final rule is published.

## LABELING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

AMS proposed to amend § 205.307 to add new requirements for the labeling of non-retail containers.

In this section, there are two NEW pieces of information that will be required (in addition to the currently required lot #): 1) a

statement identifying the product as organic; and 2) the name of the certifier that certified either the producer of the product, or, if the product is processed, the last handler that processed the product.

If you produce organic product and utilize non-retail labels, you will likely need to revise your labels to become compliant with the new requires as they are written in the final rule. Again, there is anticipated to be a 1-year implementation period from the publication date of the final rule.

## SUPPLY CHAIN TRACEABILITY AND ORGANIC FRAUD PREVENTION

AMS proposed to amend §§ 205.103, 205.201, 205.501, and 205.504 to require certified operations and certifying agents to develop improved recordkeeping, organic fraud prevention, and trace-back audit processes to be able to trace product back to the source (i.e. origin).

NOP intends to clarify who is responsible for each element of product traceability, with the goal of full supply chain traceability. It is stated that:

- certified operations are responsible for traceability within their operation, back to their suppliers, and forward to their customers
- certifying agents are responsible for tracing products along the supply chain back to their origin and assessing the traceability efforts of operations.

Some of these revisions align with current PCO policy, such as performing one trace-back audit and one in-out balance audit at each annual on-site inspection.

However, these revisions will increase the recordkeeping expectations required of organic operations to maintain records that document a product's source and chain of custody

across the supply chain, clearly identify products as organic on all records and labels, and document the monitoring practices used to prevent fraud and verify suppliers and products.

Due to these changes, PCO will evaluate our OSP forms to determine if any revisions need to be made or additional forms developed as recordkeeping resources. If there are template forms that you'd find beneficial to aid in your recordkeeping system, please let us know (you can communicate these suggestions to your Certification Specialist).

Additionally, the Rodale Institute offers consulting services to transitioning and organic farmers. If you are looking for someone to assess your current recordkeeping system and offer suggestions on improvements to come into compliance with SOE, contact Rodale Consulting via email at [consulting@rodaleinstitute.org](mailto:consulting@rodaleinstitute.org) or phone at (610) 683-1416.

Lastly the Organic Trade Association's (OTA) Organic Fraud Prevention Solutions program guides an operation through the development and implementation of a fraud prevention plan. SOE will require all operations to develop and implement fraud prevention practices in their organic system plans. Participation in OTA's Organic Fraud Prevention Solutions program will help you achieve this new requirement. For more information on this program visit: [ota.com/OrganicFraudPrevention](http://ota.com/OrganicFraudPrevention) or contact Gwendolyn Wyard at (503) 798-3294.

PCO will continue to provide information as the rule moves through the various stages toward implementation. It is never too early to start thinking about how you will implement the proposed changes upon publication of the final rule.

For more information on the Strengthening Organic Enforcement rulemaking process, contact Kyla Smith, PCO Certification Director, at [kyla@paorganic.org](mailto:kyla@paorganic.org) or 814-422-0251 ext. 216.



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# New Members

PCO Welcomes 4th Quarter  
New Members!

## NEWLY CERTIFIED ORGANIC

### Adam Martin

Fredericksburg, PA

### Amos B. Smoker

Strasburg, PA

### Bill Woodling

Mount Joy, PA

### Brent Habig

Lakewood, PA

### Bryan and Jessica Hart

New York, NY

### Calvin D. Brubaker

Perry, NY

### Carl & Rosa Sensenig

Shiloh, OH

### Charles Dillenbeck

Fonda, NY

### Chester Zimmerman

Fredericksburg, PA

### Chris Hart

Killbuck, OH

### Coexist Build LLC

Blandon, PA

### Colton D. P. France

Muncy, PA

### Dan J. and Cevilla Troyer

Little Falls, NY

### Danny K. Byler

Whitehall, NY

### Darin M. Bresett

Hammond, NY

### David Sauder

Mertztown, PA

### Dean Weinhold

Fredericksburg, PA

### DTS LC

Winchester, VA

### Emanuel B. Stoltzfus

Honey Brook, PA

### Gideon K. Byler

Whitehall, NY

### Homesweet Homegrown, LLC

Kutztown, PA

### Isaac Yoder

New York, NY

### Ivan Ray Peachey

Lykens, PA

### Jaindl Farms ROC LLC

Orefield, PA

### Jason Martin

New York, NY

### Joe Leak

New York, NY

### John Byler

Mount Joy, PA

### John Byler

Whitehall, NY

### John E. Hershberger

Edmeston, NY

### John Earl Zimmerman

Dundee, NY

### John J. Lapp

Gap, PA

### Jonas L. Fisher

Ronks, PA

### Jonathan K. Fisher

Dalmatia, PA

### Karlan Martin

Annaville, PA

### Leroy Stauffer

New York, NY

### Leshers Poultry Farm Inc.

Chambersburg, PA

### Levi Lapp

New York, NY

### Michael Jamann

Perkasie, PA

### MKF LOMPOC, LLC

Lompoc, CA

### Noah Worobey

Thompson, PA

### Omar Stoltzfus

New York, NY

### Patriot Farms LLC

Lenhartsville, PA

### Rohrer Family Homestead LLC

New Holland, PA

### Shale Rock Acres

Fredericksburg, PA

### Solomon F. Beiler

Honey Brook, PA

### Sombra Buena LLC

Port Matilda, PA

### Stephen Stoltzfus

New York, NY

### Titus and Elaine Coblentz

New York, NY

### Troy Gelsinger

Fredericksburg, PA

### Urie R Hochstetler

New York, NY

### Will M. Comley

Mexico, NY

### William Brunelle

Granville Summit, PA

### Zego LLC

San Francisco, CA

## ORGANIC PLUS TRUST

### Chad McCuller

Union Bridge, MD

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

### Adisseo USA, Inc

Alpharetta, GA

### Baker Hill Farm

Manheim, PA

### Grow Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA

### Pertinent Animal

Nutrition

Brookhaven, GA

### Probiotech International

Inc.

Quebec, Canada

### SCS Global Services

Emeryville, PA

### Zee Company, Inc.

Chattanooga, TN

## Fall 2021 NOSB Meeting Recap

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National Organic Program. The NOP may choose to publish proposed or final rules on these topics based on the NOSB's votes. Any proposed or final rules will be communicated to you via letter or our electronic newsletter, or E-news. If you are not subscribed to PCO's E-news and you would like to be, you can sign up on our website ([paorganic.org](http://paorganic.org)) at the bottom of the page. Additionally the NOP provides a written response to the NOSB which outlines the actions NOP will take on the recommendations voted on by the NOSB and is available at the Fall 2021 NOSB meeting web page

All PCO certified operations are encouraged to participate in NOSB meetings. The NOSB relies on comments from all organic stakeholders, including certified operators, to determine what recommendations to make for newly allowed materials and new regulatory requirements. If you are interested in participating, you can attend the future meetings in person to give oral comments, you can submit written comments, or you can give oral comments over the phone or on the computer during the comment webinar. The next NOSB meeting is scheduled to be held in person April 26-28, 2022, in Crystal City, VA. Additionally, public comment webinars will be held on Tuesday, April 19, and Thursday, April 21, 2022.

For more information about this meeting, visit [ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-crystal-city-va-1](https://ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-crystal-city-va-1). Contact Jen at the PCO office for help with developing and submitting public comments.

# Marketplace

## CROPS

Certified Organic meadow grass hay. Large square bales. Contact for pricing at 717-476-1220. York County.

Organic wrapped wet baleage, \$50 per bail. Dry bales 4x4, \$30 per bale. Please contact James and Donna at 570-746-1651. Bradford County.

Organic Wheat Straw, Dry Alfalfa, Dried Grass and Wrapped Baleage. 717-860-3504. Franklin County.

## EQUIPMENT

Farm cultivators for sale. Four and six rows; John Deere and IH, ready to go to work (both rebuilt). John Deere 348 with a no.40 kicker, ready to go to work. Contact Carl Modica for prices. 814-267-5640. Somerset County.

## SERVICES

Ag plastic recycling- I can use black and white bunker covers, bale wrap, plastic twine, clear stretch film, greenhouse covers, flats, and pots. Call for details. 717-658-9660. Franklin County, PA.

## LAND FOR SALE/RENT

Organic Grassfed farm prime grazing land for sale. Owner relocating. Mohawk Valley, Little Falls, NY. 315-867-7414. Herkimer County.



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Made young with no rain,  
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**\$52/Bale**

Free Delivery within 200 miles.  
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## Grassroots to Organic Growth

*continued from page 3*

National Organic Standards Board. Though short on PCO tenure but long on experience and talent in the certification sphere, we are excited to have Diana Kobus, Executive Director, leading us through our next phase of growth and development for PCO. We look forward to you meeting her this next year as we are out and about celebrating PCO's milestone with our community.

## THE NEXT 25 YEARS

So what will happen in the next 25 years? And how will PCO respond to changes in the industry? With the USDA NOP prioritizing their Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) final rule, we will see more work done to close the gap in the organic supply chain. PCO leadership and staff are committed to being informed and educated to support our clients' needs as organic rules and regulations evolve. Over these past 25 years our focus has remained the same – to build PCO as a strong, viable and growing organization that is responsive to our clients'/operators' needs. We hope you will continue to be a part of our journey these next 25 years as we uphold organic integrity and enrich our communities through organic food and farming.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to PCO at no additional cost to you. Simply go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) from your web browser. Then select "**Pennsylvania Certified Organic**" using your existing Amazon.com account.

# Event Calendar

NOTE: With all in-person events, it is advised that participants follow current CDC and COVID-19 safety protocol and guidelines.

## FEBRUARY

### FEBRUARY 1–MARCH 31

PA Small Business Development Center  
**Making Your Business Plan Work for You** (On Demand Recording)  
pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com

### FEBRUARY 5, 3–4PM

Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
**PASA 2022 Virtual Annual Meeting**  
pasafarming.org

### FEBRUARY 9, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Transitioning from a Conventional to Organic Production System**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### FEBRUARY 10, 6–7:30PM

**PCO's Annual Membership Meeting**  
Lancaster Convention Center  
Lancaster, PA  
Register for Virtual Option at [paorganic.org/annualmeeting/](http://paorganic.org/annualmeeting/)

### FEBRUARY 16, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Organic Farming: Starting from the Ground Up**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### FEBRUARY 16, 5–7PM

NOFA-NY  
**Exploring the Small Farm Dream 2022 – Week 1**  
nofanj.org

## MARCH

### MARCH 2, 1–5PM

Organic Trade Association  
**Future of Organic Farmers Workshop**  
ota.com

### MARCH 9, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Becoming a 'PA Preferred' Farm**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### MARCH 10–11

**Northeast Cover Crop Council Conference**  
Online  
[northeastcovercrops.com/conferences/](http://northeastcovercrops.com/conferences/)

### MARCH 23–24, 10 AM–3 PM

Penn State Extension  
Online Training  
**Food Safety Modernization Act: Produce Grower Certification Training**  
[extension.psu.edu/fsma-grower-training](http://extension.psu.edu/fsma-grower-training)

### MARCH 28–30, 9AM–5PM

Organic Trade Association  
**Organic Week in Washington DC**  
ota.com

### MARCH 30, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Diversifying Your Grain Crop Rotation**  
rodaleinstitute.org

## APRIL

### APRIL 6, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Rotational No-Till Series, Part 1: What is Rotational Tillage?**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### APRIL 13, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: 40 years' Research Update of Rodale Institute's Farming Systems Trail (FST)**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### APRIL 20, 2–3PM

Rodale Institute  
**Webinar: Rotational No-Till Series, Part 2: Let's Talk About No-Till "Regenerative" Agriculture (Live Q & A)**  
rodaleinstitute.org

### APRIL 22–28, 8:30AM–6PM

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)  
**Spring 2022 Meeting**  
[ams.usda.gov](http://ams.usda.gov)



Plans are underway to bring us together throughout the year to celebrate our clients and their contributions to the organic industry.

Keep your eyes open for announcements in our quarterly Organic Matters issues and our monthly electronic E-news.

# Employment Opportunity

## Certification Specialist

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) announces a job opening for a Certification Specialist. The Certification Specialist serves as the primary contact between PCO and our certified organic clients. This position focuses on assessing and determining compliance of the operation's organic system plan with organic regulations; conducting inspections, as assigned; evaluating inspection reports and writing/issuing reports to our clients; providing customer service and working collaboratively within the Certification Review Team. This position is primarily remote office-based with some minimal travel exceptions. The ideal candidate will have education and/or experience in the following areas: familiarity with regulatory compliance and organic certification, knowledge of organic standards, agriculture and/or food science/processing, and organic/regulatory inspections. We are looking for a well-organized and self-motivated person to join our team-oriented environment at PCO. This is a full telecommuting position.

PCO is a growing non-profit organization that works with organic farmers and food producers across the US. PCO provides organic certification services to approximately 1700 operations and employs approximately 33 staff and sub-contracts with 40 field inspectors. Our team is dedicated to our mission: to ensure the integrity of organic products and serve our farming community.

- This is a full-time, exempt, Telecommute position.
- Salary range: \$47,500 to \$58,000, depending on experience.
- To view a job description, visit: [www.paorganic.org/openings](http://www.paorganic.org/openings)
- Benefits: health, dental, vision, disability, and life insurance; Simple IRA, generous holiday, volunteer time, vacation, paid time off, and paid leave.



This position will remain open until February 18, 2022. Please submit a resume and cover letter to the link provided on [paorganic.org/openings](http://paorganic.org/openings).

PCO is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. We do not discriminate with regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, political beliefs, union membership, disability (in accordance with the American With Disabilities Act and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act), veteran status, gender or sexual orientation, marital or familial status, genetic information, and any other characteristic protected by law. We value and encourage all qualified applicants to apply, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; members of the LGBTQ+ community; veterans; people with disabilities; and people who have been formerly incarcerated. Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for opportunities when they don't feel fully qualified. We are most interested in finding the best candidate, and that candidate may come from a less traditional background. We would encourage you to submit your interest. If you are unsure whether you meet the qualifications, please contact us.

Our core values serve as a guide for how PCO works and makes decisions every day. Through our Core Values, we recognize the interdependent relationships between all our stakeholders: certified clients, supporters, and members; PCO staff and independent contractors; partner organizations; community and environment.

### EMPLOYEE VALUE STATEMENT

**We keep people at the center of every action, interaction, and decision. We value employees who:**

- Care intensely about our stakeholders and their ability to succeed.
- Show deep respect for human beings inside and outside our company and for the communities in which they live.
- Listen well and seek to understand before reacting.
- Are empowered to provide proactive solutions.
- Communicate in a clear and timely manner.

**We promote restorative practices that improve the world for future generations. We value employees who:**

- Provide sensible enforcement and understand how that impacts people, the environment, and the organic industry.
- Create a network of support by connecting stakeholders to resources.
- Are an advocate for PCO and the industry – building trust in organics from the inside out.

**Embrace transparency and integrity in all our work. We value employees who:**

- Embrace humility, own mistakes, and honor commitments.
- Actively welcome and give constructive feedback.
- Foster a participatory workplace through inclusive discussion and decision-making.

At PCO, we strive to promote a work culture that promotes caring, purpose, and results.



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