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Dear PCO Certified Producers,

As we embark on the 2023 inspection season, please review the following inspection basics to support a positive inspection experience this year:

**Plan for an onsite inspection in 2023.** The regulations require that all inspections must be conducted onsite. PCO expects that all inspections will be conducted onsite in 2023 unless personal illness, biosecurity restrictions, or other unpreventable barriers arise that limit the inspector's ability to be onsite. In cases where illness, biosecurity restrictions or other preventable barriers are present, you must contact PCO to discuss contingency inspection plans. If approved, we will work with you to develop an inspection plan that meets your onsite needs and complies with the USDA-NOP regulations.

**Communicate needs and concerns ahead of time.** As in previous years, PCO will prioritize the health and wellbeing of PCO operations and inspectors while meeting the requirements of the USDA-NOP regulations. If you have concerns about social distancing, illness, biosecurity, or other safety measures during the inspection, please communicate these to your inspector prior to their arrival onsite.

**Prepare ahead of time.** Preparing records and other documentation ahead of your inspector's arrival will make the inspection process more efficient – which translates to saving money on inspection fees!

Keep in mind that any elements of the OSP that cannot be verified during your annual inspection will be noted by the inspector and may require a supplemental inspection at a later time. Follow-up inspections will be billed separately from the initial inspection activity and may be announced or unannounced.

**Communicate promptly with your inspector.**

- Failure to respond to 3 requests to schedule an inspection may result in a noncompliance for Inspection Refusal.\*
- Failure to communicate inspection cancellations to your inspector 5 days ahead of your planned inspection date may result in a noncompliance, a \$100 inspection cancellation fee, and any additional incurred inspection-related fees.\*
- Rescheduling an inspection more than 3 times will result in a noncompliance.\*

\*Exceptions may be made for justified reasons, including death in the family, religious reasons, or illness

The USDA-NOP regulations are changing significantly in 2023. The USDA-NOP is increasing oversight in many areas of the regulations. This means that PCO may be requiring additional information from you during the Annual Update process. It also means that your inspector may ask you questions that you haven't been asked to address in previous inspections. If you have specific questions or concerns about how changes to the regulations impact your operation, contact your Certification Specialist.

**Expedited certification options are available to all producers in 2023.** If you are adding a new scope of certification, a new field or facility, or a new mode of production to your certified operation and require certification in 60 days or less, contact PCO to learn more about expedited certification. For an additional fee, PCO will review your request and, upon approval, coordinate an inspection to meet your accelerated certification timeline. As always, prompt communication with PCO and your inspector at all stages of the expedited certification process are required to ensure successful outcomes. Expedited certification does not guarantee certification by a specific date and certification can only be granted upon full verification of compliance.

**We want to hear from you!** If you have feedback you'd like to share about your inspection experience, please reach out to the PCO Inspections Team. You can reach us in several different ways:

Phone: 814-422-0251

Email: [inspections@paorganic.org](mailto:inspections@paorganic.org)

Inspection evaluation survey: <https://forms.gle/CrVARixcMtc7i429>

If you have any questions about your upcoming inspection, please be in touch!

Sincerely,



Corinne Wesh

**Inspection Program Manager**

814-422-0251 (ext. 253)

[cwesh@paorganic.org](mailto:cwesh@paorganic.org)