



# Organic Matters

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# Organically Speaking

## Celebrating Relationships While Building New Community Partnerships

As the weather warms and spring brings color back into the landscape, transition is on our minds in the organic community. Working with nature, and as part of, means we pay special attention to changes large and small. It is time for some of that hard earned wisdom to more formally support others who are interested in farming differently. In fact, there has never been more support for more farms and processors to make the transition to organic, and that will take the support of our whole community of stakeholders.

We are fortunate at PCO to be at the forefront of this work in a myriad of ways, mainly due to strong and enduring relationships of support. As the organic industry continues to grow, so must the infrastructure for supporting it, from acres in transition to processing infrastructure, and from distribution networks to the human capital required to facilitate the work knowledgeably.

As we celebrate over 25 years of USDA Organic Certification at PCO, we also celebrate our relationships and support from: universities and state extension agencies, partners like Rodale and Pasa, the Pennsylvania Farm Bill, and now through state, regional, and national partnerships. We cannot forget the contributions and strategic direction from our volunteer Board of Directors, including lifetimes of expertise in all corners of the organic sector: sales, retail, finance, trade associations, marketing, certification, education, and non-profit management.

One thing we know in the organic sector is the importance of community. Relationships between farmers for exchanging knowledge and expertise are fundamentally important, as are local businesses like CSAs and co-ops. Equally important is the relationship between a certifier and a client. Though this relationship can often be seen simplistically as a burdensome regulatory requirement, at PCO we are working hard to have our clients understand that we are as equally interested in their successes as we are in successful regulatory program enforcement, which helps all of the organic community. There are also relationships with university extension offices, banks friendly to the business of organic farming, supportive state departments of agriculture, and other non-profits. The certification agencies also collaborate to bring as much consistency as possible to interpretations of the regulations, and they rally their energy and expertise to do so daily (and with recent regulatory



*Our TOPP Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Core Partners braved heavy snowfall across the region to meet in-person for the first time at Pocono Organics March 13–15, 2023. A wonderful place to host a group meeting, Pocono Organics and Rodale Institute went above and beyond with support for hosting our group.*

updates, there is a lot of activity in this regard!). It takes a village to grow the organic sector in a way that keeps agroecological principles, small farmers, processors, and profitability all in mind as we grow and support more transition to organic.

With PCO at the table, literally and figuratively, in so much of the programmatic support and collaboration happening around the transition to, and expansion of, USDA certified organic, there are many more ways than ever that you can be a part of this work, in your community, in your state, or in our TOPP regional coverage area. Our TOPP core partner group recently braved a huge snowstorm to come together for our in-person kickoff meeting for the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Region, and they are all energetically ready to support anyone interested in participating on a deeper level. Read on and stay tuned for e-news for more information about how to be involved! As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly with questions and concerns.

In service,

Diana Kobus

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#### PCO's VISION

A world where agriculture systems prioritize health, ecological balance, fairness and care.

#### PCO's MISSION

To uphold and advance organic principles and practices through certification, advocacy, and technical support.

#### PCO's CORE VALUES

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

# Organic Matters

Spring 2023



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COVER PHOTO: Matt Snell-Callanen, High Mowing Seeds, 2022.



# High Mowing

## *Behind the Seeds*

MICHELLE HOCHKEPPEL, COMMERCIAL GROWER REPRESENTATIVE (MID-ATLANTIC), HIGH MOWING ORGANIC SEEDS

**A**s a commercial grower representative for High Mowing Seeds, I hope growers know that their feedback drives development. Organic seed development needs grower support. Grower support encourages our community, connects us with each other, supports farmer breeders and drives organic policy change. Now, more than ever, our mutual support reminds us of our collective power.

High Mowing is constantly searching for new and improved varieties to meet the needs of farmers across the continent. This is an ongoing and often years-long process that we explore in a combination of different ways. There are four main ways varieties are added to our catalog. They are the result of working collaboratively with: Vendor Breeders. Public Breeding programs (like Land Grant Universities), Participatory Breeding Groups (like the Organic Seed Alliance), and Farmer Breeders.

In addition to working with breeders for new varieties, we work to maintain open-pollinated and heirloom varieties in the commons. We trial around 1,000 varieties every year at our 4-acre trials farm in Vermont. We evaluate a mix of organically available varieties, conventionally produced industry standards, conventional varieties that we'd like to see in organic production, and breeding populations of varieties in progress. We look at factors like vigor, pest and disease resistance, plant habit, yield, flavor, field holding, and storage potential — qualities that matter to growers. When we trial varieties, we look at how they compare to what we offer and what we could offer. Just like farmers in the field, we take note and collect data about how they hold up over the season.

We want to give growers tools that work; provide varieties that growers need to make their farms thrive. For example, Encino and Lovelock lettuces are varieties that we know fill important slots on organic farms. We advocated to keep these varieties in production to keep them available on organic farms. Speaking with grower representatives help us know what's going on in your area and are crucial in educating breeders on what traits and production slots are needed.

We always want more organic varieties available for growers. This season, we're excited to offer Black Jack F1 and Black Magic lacinato kales. Black Magic, a well-known conventional variety, has been a steady go-to lacinato variety with its dark green, savoyed leaves. Black Jack F1 has highly uniform leaves,



Examples of hybrid-heirloom tomatoes, also known as "hylooms."

an upright plant habit and is bolt resistance. Working with our partners at Tozer Seeds, we're thrilled to have organic options to meet grower needs.

Grower feedback helps us stay in tune with the newest market trends, disease pressure, and current environmental stresses. This year we added four new chicory varieties to support growing interest in bitters. Market trends evolve as relationships between growers and culinary professionals grow more connected. Consider the evolving interest in shishito peppers, unique herbs or pea tendrils. We have been hearing



Black Jack F1 Kale



**Left to right:** Amber Onion, Dolciva Carrot, Cubo Orange Pepper.

about growing interest in chicories in some parts of North America, but what's going on in your area?

While there are plenty of conventionally developed varieties that work well in organic production, there's greater collective strength in supporting breeders that are breeding for organic production systems. We work with a handful of organic breeding companies that are releasing some great new OP and F1 varieties. Examples include Amber onion, Esmee arugula – a cold tolerant variety with an upright habit, Bollin and Dolciva carrots, and Cubo Orange – a thick-walled, reliable open pollinated orange pepper.

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**While there are plenty of conventionally developed varieties that work well in organic production, there's greater collective strength in supporting breeders that are breeding for organic production systems.**

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Production trends are also important to hear about. For example, seeding with pelleted seed because you're using a paper pot transplanter. Season extension has encouraged growers to invest in high tunnel or protected culture production. I often hear that people love the flavor and appearance of heirloom tomatoes, however, they're not always the best choice for productivity and vigor. We've introduced a handful of new tomatoes that breeders are calling "hylooms." These are hybrid-heirloom tomatoes that have great flavor and the appearance of heirlooms, and the productivity and disease resistance of modern hybrids. These varieties are well-suited to get the most out of that valuable protected space.

Public Breeding Programs at land grant universities are another source of new organic vegetable varieties. Some varieties are licensed finished varieties from the university breeder. For example, Badger Flame Beet, developed by Dr. Irwin Goldman of University of Wisconsin or First Kiss cantaloupe from Dr. Brent Loy's University of New Hampshire breeding program.

Other varieties we continue selections on breeding material to create a strong variety that works for organics. This is the case for King Crimson pepper and Honeynut butternut squash from Cornell's breeding program. Breeders like Michael Mizourek and Phillip Griffiths spend several years honing in on genetics that work.

Participatory Breeding Groups also take an active role in influencing seed development and production. Groups like the Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) or the Tomato Organic Management and Improvement Project (TOMI) organize and use group collaboration to make progress. Participatory Breeding Groups have regional power to focus on adapting and evolving regionally specific seeds. This can mean that varieties change over time based on grower needs. This is another reason why your input matters. Participatory Breeding Groups advocate for organic seed, research and education. They further organic plant breeding and helping to train the next generation of organic plant breeders and seed producers.

Seed production is a web of inter-related relationships. Much like our ecosystem and our roles as farmers, it's a balancing act that relies on observation, inputs and feedback. Organic seed production encourages a long-term growth mindset. When running on annual cycles, continual feedback and development is crucial to understanding the wins and working on the ever-changing challenges.

So, what can you do? Take a moment to appreciate each other and the importance of knowledge sharing in our community. Consider forming grower round tables to swap information, regional seed or tool swaps, share with each other knowledge about preserving heirlooms and regional varieties, communicate with seed companies, share the data you collect, let us know what works and what doesn't. We're here, we're listening.

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*Photos by Matt Snell-Callanen, High Mowing Seeds, 2022.*

*Michelle Hochkeppel can be reached by email at [mhochkeppel@highmowingseeds.com](mailto:mhochkeppel@highmowingseeds.com) or by phone at 802-472-6174 x135. For additional organic seed sources, please reach out to PCO for listing or visit the website at <https://paorganic.org/resources/organic-seed-finder>.*





## FEATURE

# PCO Facilitates First TOPP Core Partners Meeting

DIANA KOBUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since being announced last fall, there has been a constant hum of activity and want for more details about the NOP's Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), a \$100M part of USDA's \$300M Organic Transition Initiative (OTI).

March 13-15, at Pocono Organics in eastern Pennsylvania, our TOPP Core Partners in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Region gathered in-person for the first time to kick-off our work together and hammer out more of those details. Traveling from as far as West Virginia and Maine, our team of collaborators arrived just ahead of a snowstorm, and many chased it away upon departing.

What happened in between was a generative meeting of some of the most experienced, informed, and locally connected minds of the region's organic and agroecological farming communities. As we often hear, joining a movement becomes attractive when we see people enjoying the work together, and the energy between folks throughout this meeting in the middle of a snowstorm blanketing the region was one of palpable, and welcoming, convivial connections.

## AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

After getting everyone checked-in, we were honored and excited to be joined for our first meal together by Jennifer Tucker, Deputy Administrator for the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Program, and Jeff Moyer, CEO of Rodale Institute, who will be retiring in April after 47 years of service, including being instrumental in the founding of PCO. Often when planning meetings in the organic community, finding venues and food choices that align with our missions can be a big challenge. Pocono Organics made this challenge seem effortless, and to begin our time together, our group was treated to both a private tour of the organic research and production facilities and a hearty meal in the café, made by their on-site executive chef that accommodated all manner of dietary restrictions. This is a venue we all highly recommend for

**Above:** Core partner members of the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership for Organic Transition kickoff meeting at Pocono Organics with special guests Dr. Jennifer Tucker (Deputy Administrator of the USDA's National Organic Program) and Jeff Moyer (CEO Rodale Institute).

small to medium-sized group meetings or retreats and look forward to returning to in the future.

## NORTHEAST/MID-ATLANTIC CORE PARTNERS AS OF MARCH 2023

### Core Partners:

- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardener's Association (MOFGA)
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – New Hampshire
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – Vermont
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – Massachusetts
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – New York
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – Connecticut
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – New Jersey
- Virginia Association for Biological Farming
- WV Food and Farming Association

### Definition of core partner:

Co-lead(s) with Regional Lead to deliver on mission areas and to help shape and implement strategy for region. Significant responsibility for mission achievement side-by-side with Regional Lead.

## COMMUNITY OF PARTNERS WITH DEEP ROOTS IN ORGANIC

To recognize and honor all of the experience and resources we have to leverage for organic transition in our region, our Core Partner group ended the evening and began the next morning's discussion by examining our personal and organizational strengths, as well as the potential we create by coming together collectively to network our communities of support.

This energizing discussion led to an effective day of digging into the nuts and bolts of responsibilities, deliverables, time-

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# Tips for saving time – and money – on your 2023 inspection

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CORINNE WESH, INSPECTION PROGRAM MANAGER

**G**ood communication and a bit of preparation can go a long way in saving time during an inspection – which can mean savings on your inspection invoice! This article will demystify inspection expenses and provide some helpful tips to guide your preparation for the 2023 inspection season.

To save money during your next inspection, it's important to start by understanding how inspection fees are determined.

Inspectors bill for their time preparing, conducting, and reporting on your inspection. To prepare for each inspection, inspectors review the files for each certified client they are going to inspect to familiarize themselves with the operation's specific details. This is the pre-inspection stage. The onsite inspection stage is the time that your inspector spends with you onsite at your facility examining records and observing your operation's practices and procedures. After the inspection is complete, inspectors compile their notes into a report that documents their observations and the outcomes of the inspection. This is the post-inspection stage. The report is sent to the PCO Certification Review Team and informs your operation's certification outcomes from year to year.

Inspectors work as efficiently as possible at all stages of inspection completion to keep inspection time costs as low as possible while not compromising their work and oversight of organic integrity. An inspector's pre-, onsite, and post-inspection time is lumped together to create the inspection time hourly assessment on your invoice. While it may not be possible to change the time your inspector takes to prepare for your inspection, you can have an impact on the onsite inspection time and even the post-inspection time.

Certified producers can help manage onsite and post-inspection costs by taking time to organize records and documents ahead of the inspection. Being organized and setting aside focused, uninterrupted time for your scheduled inspection can go a long way to supporting a time-efficient inspection process for you and the inspector. Any time spent looking for paperwork during the inspection or tending to activities outside of the inspection process during your scheduled inspection time can add up to unnecessary expenses. Additionally, being organized helps inspectors

gather the information they need and take notes more efficiently, which can support an efficient inspection report writing process and save you money on post-inspection fees.

In addition to billing for the time spent to complete all steps of the inspection, inspectors also bill for the time it takes them to travel to your inspection, as well as related travel expenses. The PCO Inspections Team and PCO inspectors work hard to coordinate inspection trips that bundle travel expenses with other inspections in the same geographic area to help minimize

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**In 2023, inspection expenses will be passed along to certified operations, so it's more important than ever to be communicative and flexible when a request to schedule your inspection comes along.**

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travel costs. In 2023, inspection expenses will be passed along to certified operations, so it's more important than ever to be communicative and flexible when a request to schedule your inspection comes along. Certified producers can help keep travel costs to a minimum by promptly communicating with inspectors about inspection scheduling to support inspector efforts at conducting inspections in the same geographic area at the same time. Delays in communication with your inspector could result in your operation not being included in an inspector's planned trip, which could mean that your inspector will need to return to your area at another time and might not be able to bundle your operation with other clients to cut down on travel costs. Being as flexible as possible with inspection scheduling will give inspectors more ability to bundle nearby inspections and lower the overall travel costs applied to your final invoice.

Keep in mind that annual inspection costs can grow rapidly if you cancel your inspection with less than 5 days' notice (from the date of the scheduled inspection). In these cases, your operation will be assessed for the inspector's preparation time, all reimbursable expenses (travel, lodging, etc.) that have been incurred for the planned trip, as well as an administrative fee of

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# PA Department of Agriculture — Organic Ag Statistics

*PDA offers individualized technical guidance for farmers*

Pennsylvania is the only state with its own farm bill, and an important part of our state's support for agriculture is the PA Preferred™ program — our state's trademark brand for promoting Pennsylvania farm products. Under that program, the Pennsylvania Organic Transition Assistance Program, funded by the PA Department of Agriculture, is a three-year effort from Team Ag, Kitchen Table Consultants (KTC) and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO), who are all working together to engage and assist producers and processors interested in organic transition, including free individualized technical guidance for farmers.

## Want to know more about what that could mean for your farm and farm business?

For those interested in the transition to organic, a team of farming, financial and organic certification experts will work with you, consulting 3-4 times/year on-farm and virtually, on the following:

- Understand the Basic Principles of Organic Production
- Evaluate your market
- Support organic certification
- High Level Budgeting/cost analysis of transitioning-to organic methods
- Develop your Organic Farm System Plan
- Organic application assistance
- Ongoing support through the three year transition period

For more information, contact Eric Sauder, Project Manager at [erics@teamaginc.com](mailto:erics@teamaginc.com) or Sue Ellen Johnson, Program Director at 717-419-6535 Not sure if you want to get started right now? Contact us and we can hold a spot for you!



The infographic features a green and white color scheme with a background image of green leaves. At the top, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized green and blue field icon above the text "pennsylvania" and "DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". Below this, a green banner reads "PENNSYLVANIA ORGANIC AGRICULTURE". The main content area has a light beige background with a subtle leaf pattern. It includes a blue headline about the Organic Initiative, a section titled "The PA Department of Agriculture:" with a bulleted list of six points, and a green banner at the bottom titled "WHY TRANSITION TO ORGANIC FARMING?" with a bulleted list of three points. The USDA Economic Research Service is credited at the bottom of this section. The website "agriculture.pa.gov" is printed in white at the very bottom.

**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**PENNSYLVANIA ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

The Organic Initiative was created to help accelerate and support the growth of Pennsylvania's organic agricultural industry.

**The PA Department of Agriculture:**

- Administers the Organic Certification Cost-Share Program (OCCSP) to offset a portion of annual organic certification costs
- Sponsors free or low-cost technical assistance for farmers and processors to start or transition to USDA certified organic operations
- Supports networking opportunities between organic farmers
- Funds PA-specific organic research on a variety of topics
- Creates resources and educational events for farmers and agricultural professionals
- Provides marketing opportunities through the PA Preferred® Program

**WHY TRANSITION TO ORGANIC FARMING?**

- Organic price premiums remain high in many markets as the demand for organic products increases.
- Organic methods build healthy soils that retain more water and nutrients.
- Crops are more resilient in times of drought and better able to withstand pests or diseases.

USDA Economic Research Svc.

**agriculture.pa.gov**



For more information visit:  
[agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov).

## PA ORGANIC AGRICULTURE BY THE NUMBERS

PA farms produced and sold \$1.09 billion in organic commodities, up 48% from 2019.

\$742 MILLION in 2019  \$1.09 BILLION in 2021

PA farms rank 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in organic sales.



Number of Certified Organic Farms in PA:

1,048 in 2019  1,125 in 2021

PA is the Top Organic Producing State of:

Organic Livestock  
& Poultry  
 \$730 MILLION



Organic Mushrooms  
 \$95.4 MILLION

National Sales of Organic Products in 2021

\$11.2 BILLION 

USDA, NASS - 2021 Organic Survey



[agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov)

## Tips for Your 2023 Inspection

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\$100. If you cancel while the inspector is en route, the certified operation will be billed for travel time in addition to the above listed costs. Plus, the inspector will need to return at a later date to complete your required annual inspection, so you'll be responsible for additional fees to have the inspector return. Also, as mentioned before, they might no longer be able to bundle your operation with other inspections to keep costs lower.

Preparing and reviewing paperwork ahead of the inspection day can speed up the inspection process –which can save time during your inspection– and money on your inspection invoice.

Before your inspector arrives to conduct your inspection, take some time to gather your operation's organic records and paperwork in one place to support your inspector with getting the answers they need quickly. Having records prepared and accessible ahead of your planned inspection time is **ESSENTIAL** for an efficient inspection.

During every inspection, your inspector will confirm your Organic System Plan (OSP) and review changes that have occurred since the last inspection. You can save time in this annual verification and revision step by taking time to review your OSP prior to the inspector's arrival to make sure that it is updated and complete. Make a note of changes to your OSP prior to the inspection so you're prepared with updates when it comes time to confirm your OSP and make edits during the inspection.

Additionally, it's recommended that all certified producers take some time to review letters and reports you've received recently from PCO. Review your recent Certification Report, which contains the results of your last inspection. Also return to your current year's Initial Review report, which will contain follow-up questions and requests based on the materials you submitted for your Annual Update. Both of these documents will include important information and requests from your Certification Specialist that you'll need to be prepared to discuss with your inspector during the inspection. If your operation is working through compliance issues, you'll also want to have all records and other documents related to the compliance resolution available for your inspector to review.

If you have questions about your 2023 inspection or inspection invoice, reach out to the PCO Inspections Team ([inspections@paorganic.org](mailto:inspections@paorganic.org)) or the Accounting Team ([accounting@paorganic.org](mailto:accounting@paorganic.org)) or call 814-422-0251.



# Standards & Policy Update

KYLA SMITH, CERTIFICATION POLICY ADVISER

## STRENGTHENING ORGANIC ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) published a final rule to amend the USDA organic regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement of the production, handling and sale of organic agricultural products.

Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) is the largest regulatory change to the organic regulations since the final rule was first published in 2002. Throughout the remainder of this year PCO will be digging into the details, revising forms and policies. PCO will inform clients along the way what steps they need to take to come into compliance. PCO is here to assist you in ensuring operations implement the applicable parts of the new rule by the implementation due date March 19, 2024.

If you are engaged in the organic industry, you will likely be affected by this final rule. Affected entities may include but are not limited to:

- Organic supply chain participants that are not currently certified under the USDA organic regulations, including but not limited to brokers, traders, exporters and importers of organic products
- All producers, processors and handlers of organic products that are currently certified organic under the USDA organic regulations;

- USDA-accredited certifying agents, inspectors, and reviewers

PCO will be providing more information in the weeks and months ahead. In the meantime, it is recommended that all certified operations take the following steps:

- Review your supply chains
  - The chart below identifies the types of activities and examples of operations that will now be required to be certified.
  - Do I purchase organic ingredients, livestock feed, etc from an operation that engages in the activities in the above chart? Are they certified?
  - Does the physical product I purchase flow through any uncertified operations from the last certified operation until it gets to me?
  - If there are uncertified entities in your supply chain, review the Applicability Exemptions from Certification section of the final rule, review against the chart below or discuss your particular situation with your Certification Specialist to determine if those uncertified entities will need to become certified or will remain exempt based on their activities.
  - If certification is required PCO is here to help. Inform these entities to contact the PCO Client Service Team at [cst@paorganic.org](mailto:cst@paorganic.org) or 814-422-0251.
- Start thinking about your fraud prevention plan
  - The inclusion of how an operation prevents and monitors potential fraud will be required to be added to your OSP.
  - The new rule specifically states that it is the responsibility of the certified operation to ensure ingredients, livestock feed, livestock for slaughter, etc. are indeed organic.

ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE CERTIFICATION	EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONS
Operations that buy, sell, trade, or facilitate the sale/trade of organic goods in nonretail packaging or containers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• brokers, traders, distributors, and wholesalers who sell organic products that are not labeled for retail sale</li><li>• brand owners that buy ingredients in nonretail packaging to send to co-packers</li></ul>
Operations that buy, sell, trade, or facilitate the sale or trade of retail-labeled product that is <u>not</u> in sealed, tamper-evident packaging or containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a grocery store chain’s importing or distribution activities</li></ul>
Importers of products into the United States as well as exporters of products into the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• brokers, traders, ingredient sourcers, importers, or exporters of organic products</li></ul>
Storage facilities that store product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bulk grain storage facilities, some ports of entry that store unpackaged product</li></ul>
Retail operations that process organic product at a separate location from the point of sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• central bakeries or kitchens that serve grocery chains</li></ul>
Retail operations that process organic product and have only virtual sales (no physical location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• online, phone, or mail order companies that sell organic products with no physical store</li></ul>
Transport companies that combine, split, or unload unpackaged organic produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• rail transloaders</li></ul>



- **Review your Non-retail labels**

- If you use non-retail containers (e.g. containers used to ship or store organic products), the new rule requires the organic identification on the label.

- **Contact your Certification Specialist**

- PCO staff are a wealth of information. Reach out to your Certification Specialist early to discuss if there are other parts of the rule besides those listed above that will impact your operation.

Visit the NOP's Strengthening Organic Enforcement at [www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/strengthening-organic-enforcement](http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/strengthening-organic-enforcement) for additional resources, such as a side-by-side comparison of the current regulations and the final rule.

## **REMINDER: ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK / NEW HERD LIST REQUIREMENTS**

The National Organic Program (NOP) published a final rule, effective on June 6, 2022, that amended the Origin of Livestock (§205.236) section of the USDA organic regulations. This rule change aims to increase uniformity in origin of livestock production practices for organic dairy animals, and reduce variances between the approaches taken by certifying agents related to how organic dairy animals are brought into organic production.

The rule was effective beginning on June 6, 2022. However, a compliance date of April 5, 2023 was established to allow operations time to come into compliance with the new regulations – the biggest change being the prohibition on the purchase of transitioned animals. This means that beginning on April 5, 2023 all animals that are purchased must have been managed organically from the last one third of gestation. Purchased animals **MUST NOT** be a transitioned animal.

In order for operations purchasing organic replacement animals and PCO to verify animals being sold and purchased is being done in accordance with these new requirements, operations will need to keep a more detailed herd list showing whether animals have been under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or were a transitioned animal.

The new Herd List form and parts of the OSP Ruminant and Swine with some new questions were sent to operations for submission with your 2023 Annual Update paperwork. All ruminant operations must complete this new herd list, regardless of if you want slaughter eligible on your certificate as the purpose of this herd list is also to track the origin of animals (born last one third or transitioned) which impacts the ability to sell these animals, as well as the additional OSP questions. These were due with your annual update paperwork by March 1, 2023. If you have not yet submitted these forms please do so immediately or you will receive a Notice of Noncompliance.

Please contact your Certification Specialist if you have any questions on how this regulatory change impacts your operation or if you have questions on how to complete the new Herd List form.

## **ADJOINING LAND USE POLICY UPDATE**

PCO has revised our policy on Adjoining Land Use to be more in line with the organic regulations. This revision will likely result in changes to how your operation manages borders and buffers of your organic land/fields with relation to neighboring land. The policy now requires that operations either have an established buffer or additional documentation verifying the management of the adjoining land for all neighboring land depending on how the adjoining land is managed. The policy maintains the required establishment of buffers if the adjoining land uses prohibited substances. For adjoining land that is managed organically (either is certified organic or just uses organic practices), PCO will now require additional documentation to verify the management of the adjoining land for all sides of all organic fields (e.g. Adjoining Land Use agreement or organic certificate). If this documentation is unable to be obtained/provided, then a buffer must be established. Adjoining Land Use agreements do not need to be updated annually if there are no changes. If there are changes, then a new agreement should be obtained.

Copies of PCO's Adjoining Land Use form were sent out with Annual Update paperwork this year. This form is also available on our website at <https://paorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Adjoining-Land-Use-2021v3.pdf>, or you may request additional hard copies by contacting your Certification Specialist.

The compliance date for operations to come into compliance is January 1, 2024 – meaning that if you do not have an established buffer between your certified fields and your neighboring land you must obtain this additional documentation of an Adjoining Land Use form or organic certificate (if the neighboring land is organic) by January 1, 2024.

Please contact your Certification Specialist if you have any questions on how this policy change impacts your operation.

## **MANURE – OFF-FARM SOURCES POLICY UPDATE**

PCO has revised our policy on Manure – Off-Farm Sources to be more in line with the organic regulations. This revision will affect any operation sourcing manure from off-farm sources. PCO will now require additional documentation be submitted (e.g. Off-Farm Manure Affidavit or a letter completed by the manure supplier) to ensure that manure from off-farm sources does not contribute to the contamination of crops, soil, water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.

A copy of the Off-Farm Manure Affidavit was sent along with your Annual Update paperwork. This form is also available on our website at <https://paorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Off-Farm-Manure-Supplier-Affidavit.pdf> or you may request additional hard copies by contacting your Certification Specialist.

The compliance date for operations to come into compliance with this policy revision is January 1, 2024 – meaning that if you use manure from off-farm sources you must obtain this additional documentation by January 1, 2024.



## Board Corner

### Message from the President

JOE MILLER, BOARD PRESIDENT



Several weeks ago I had the privilege of once again attending the natural and organic foods mega-gathering known as Natural Products Expo West. It continues to be a great time to connect with friends and colleagues in the food industry. There is always much conversation and commiseration on the ever-changing organic food world, and we often look at these as challenges within the greater food industry as a whole. This year there was a great exchange around the economy, the Strengthening Organic Enforcement Act (SOE), and Regenerative farming — more on that in a bit.

I'm happy to report that the state of the organic industry, while facing headwinds, is very strong. Many brands are seeing strong opportunities coming out of this pandemic era. Consumers are more aware of their health and the deterioration of nutrition (both in the soil and food) caused by the conventional farming systems. According to a SPINS survey, consumers continue to buy natural and health-focused products at an increasing rate, driving the highest growth opportunities for brands. Even in the face of a recession, the U.S. natural and organic products industry is projected to hit \$300B in sales by the end of 2023 and surpass \$400B by 2030. The challenge for us is to ask ourselves — How am I taking action to share the value of what we are creating for our customers? Are you giving your customers the opportunity to claim a portion of the success that you are accomplishing? When customers buy your products for more than they pay for the conventional version of that product, they are making a statement about what they value. They are placing a vote on what they want to see more of. How can we give them the tools to feel good about the purchase they made and the information to know that they are making a difference?

As I mentioned above, regenerative farming was a significant discussion point in the various speaker sessions and on the show floor. Consumers are looking at the impact of their purchases and wondering if they could do more to be a better steward of our planet's resources. Brands are looking at how they can improve their footprint on the planet and offer better products to consumers. At PCO we have partnered with the Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA) to offer Regenerative Organic Certification (ROCTM) to growers and processors. We know that the foundation of any regenerative system needs to

be organic. ROCTM begins with the USDA Organic Standard and from that point looks at three pillars of rehabilitating soil, respecting animal welfare, and improving the lives of farmers and farmworkers. To learn more about this certification, reach out to your PCO Client Services Team.

In summary, there isn't a better time to be a Certified Organic grower or processor than now! Consumers are looking to us, the farmers and processors, to meet their needs. In the face of national headwinds and waves that threaten to push us back, DON'T GIVE UP! Families depend on you, consumers depend on you, and thus the whole world depends on you.

Keep pressing on and we will be here supporting your work and cheering you on as you make a difference in your community!

Sincerely,

Joe Miller, joehasit@gmail.com • 717-385-4610  
Managing Partner at Kalona Organics LL

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# Core Values in Action/ Living Our Core Values

## *PCO's Commitment to Building a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Food System*

DIANA UNDERWOOD, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

**W**hy is PCO committed to building a diverse, equitable and inclusive food system? Why does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion matter inside and outside our organization? Why are we engaging in DEI work? Why is it important? Who will it serve? How will we measure success?

These are questions we have been asking ourselves as an organization since we began our diversity, equity, and inclusion journey in 2020. With guidance of professionals in this field, the PCO staff and board worked together to answer these questions. First we began with foundational training as an organization, which fulfilled several important purposes: support the current work of our core values, expand our knowledge to apply in our day to day work, and set a foundation for discussion and action on addressing social injustices.

At the conclusion of our training, we shifted our focus to better understand why this work was important to us as an organization so we could ultimately take steps towards action. Much of our work in 2022 was devoted to creating PCO's Purpose Statement. Through our learning from the training and collaboration among facilitators, staff and board, PCO now has a Purpose Statement that helps answer these questions.

As with so much in our own families and operations, this will be an ongoing journey for PCO – one that we are deeply committed to. Have you thought about why and how you are committed to the organic industry? What connects you to this work? Hopefully the Purpose Statement below is as inspiring to you as it is to me each time I read it. You can read more about PCO's commitment to DEI on our website: <https://pa-organic.org/dei-at-pco/>.

### **PCO's Commitment to Building a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Food System**

At PCO, we recognize the impacts of systemic racism and oppression in our global food system. We understand that our work is directly linked to people, the planet, and systems that perpetuate disparity. Given PCO's role as an organic certifier within the larger agricultural system, we are committed to supporting and advancing just relationships with each other and the environment. PCO is committed to building our allyship for a world where certified organic agriculture is part of the solution. We are working toward a healthy environment and equitable food system for all and by all.

PCO's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is reflected in our Core Values:

- **Inclusion:** We keep people at the center of every action, interaction, and decision. We will look to amplify voices that have been silenced and to organizations of Color for their expertise.
- **Equity:** We promote restorative practices that improve the world for future generations, with equity for all involved in the food production systems provided by our environment.
- **Diversity:** We embrace transparency and integrity in all our work. We recognize we have work to do so that our staff, clients, and stakeholders represent the diversity of the communities we serve, now and in the future.

Toward these commitments, PCO currently plans to:

- **Undergo** robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training that will continue to evolve as PCO staff and the organization embark on this journey.
- **Examine** our practices and how we deliver our services to ensure our assumptions, goals, and commitments are not in conflict with our mission of contributing to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organic future.
- **Partner** with stakeholders to increase access to the organic marketplace to allow for business opportunities, job & training opportunities, and organic food for all.

Our purpose statement reinforces the decisions and actions for our journey ahead. Just as the organic movement was born of shared understandings and relationships amongst those committed to a vision, PCO will need the input and support of many diverse voices to make meaningful impacts toward a more diverse, equitable and inclusive future. As we continue to examine our role, we invite you to hold us accountable to our purpose and commitment through our decisions and actions. Organic is more than a set of standards. We see the organic movement as a web of relationships. Thank you for being a part of that relationship.

## New Faces



### **SARAH BROWN**

Sarah joined the PCO team as Certification Director in March 2023. She comes to PCO with two decades of experience in organic and a passion to build connection between people, our Earth, and each other. Over the past 15 years she's established her own certified organic farm in Oregon's Willamette Valley; developed Oregon Tilth's education and advocacy into a nationally recognized program; launched DEI initiatives and workshops to build awareness in the sector; and most recently served as Head of Stakeholder Strat-

*continued on page 16*



# Certification Update

Cathy Jackson  
Certification Program Manager



## ANNUAL UPDATE REMINDER

All operations are required to submit a complete Annual Update submission and submit annual certified fees to maintain their certification each year. PCO sent out Annual Update information in early January that was due by March 1, 2023. Failure to submit your Annual Update to PCO by the specified deadline is a violation of organic regulations and will result in a Noncompliance. Failure to resolve the noncompliance by submitting the Annual Update or surrendering your certification will result in a Proposed Suspension of your certification. Once a Notice of Proposed Suspension has been issued, you must either request mediation or submit an appeal to the NOP in order to avoid suspension (you cannot simply submit your Annual Update or surrender your certification). If your operation has a history of submitting late annual update paperwork, a combined Notice of Noncompliance/Proposed Suspension may be issued. Contact your Certification Specialist if you have any questions or are unsure what to submit for your Annual Update.

## INSPECTION FEE UPDATES

Please see the 2023 PCO Certification Fee Schedule for details regarding our fees for annual certification, late Annual Update submission, mediation, etc., as well our refund policies for operations surrendering their certification. PCO also made some changes to our fee schedule for 2023. A letter detailing the changes was sent with your annual update paperwork. One change involves inspection expenses. For close to ten years, PCO has been absorbing inspection expenses (e.g. mileage, meals, hotel, etc) for non-expedited, renewing client inspections. We will now be passing these expenses along for each inspection. This means that each inspection invoice will now include the inspector time and any associated expenses. It is very unusual for accredited certification agencies not to charge for these expenses, so part of this change is to ensure we remain competitive within the industry. We recognize this is a change that may require some adjustment, and we are here to support you by helping you to find ways you can reduce your inspection costs. Preparing records and other documentation ahead of your inspector's arrival will make the inspection process more efficient. Contact PCO's accounting team if you have any questions about our fees.

## EXPEDITED SERVICES REMINDER

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 addi-

tional 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.

## PRE-INSPECTION REVIEW PROCESS FOR 2023

As a reminder, PCO is no longer sending every operation an Initial Review Report prior to inspection. This is now completed only for operations reporting changes with their Annual Update. After your Annual Update submission is processed, you will receive a confirmation letter and a new version of your organic certificate with an updated anniversary date. Further updates to the certificate will be made during initial review, or during certification review for products that require inspection prior to approval, if complete information was provided.

## INSPECTION EXPECTATIONS FOR 2023

A letter explaining Inspection Expectations for 2023 is being sent to each operation upon receipt and approval of their Annual Update submission. Please read this letter carefully and contact PCO if you have any questions. A summary of inspection information for 2023 is outlined below.

PCO expects that all inspections will be conducted onsite in 2023. If personal illness, biosecurity restrictions, or other unpreventable barriers arise that limit the inspector's ability to be onsite, you must contact PCO to discuss contingency inspection plans.

Please communicate promptly when your inspector contacts you for scheduling. 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 to these policies may be made for justified reasons, including death in the family, religious reasons, or illness.

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.

Annual inspections must be completed within the annual calendar year. Operations that have been contacted by their assigned inspector and have not agreed to a proposed inspection timeframe by October 31 will be issued noncompliances for inspection refusal per 205.406(b).

Recordkeeping audits will be completed at every inspection. Inspectors will conduct traceability audits to verify your records account for organic products moving through your operation and the supply chain, and mass balance audits to verify your records account for all quantities of organic products moving into and out of your operation. Actual products audited will be determined by the inspector during the inspection process.

Unannounced inspections are required by the USDA-NOP regulations. Your operation may be selected for an unannounced inspection based on risk, compliance issues, or at random. Participation in unannounced inspections is required. Failure to participate may result in a noncompliance.

## Materials Update

Hector Nunez C.  
Materials Program Assistant Manager



### ATTENTION: STATUS CHANGE REMINDER TO B1 AND PROCAINE

As you may remember, PCO sent a letter about Vitamin B1 in Crops and Procaine in Livestock as being prohibited in 2021. The reason behind the prohibited status of these two compounds is that they were removed from the National List. This was part of the National Organic Program; Amendments to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (2022 Sunset). USDA AMS gave a provisional enforcement period which was completed on March 15, 2023. There aren't many inputs that are affected due to this change but you may want to check your list of materials in abundance of caution. Further details about this change can be found at the following link: <https://bit.ly/prohibitedin23>. If you do use any fertilizers that contain Vitamin B1 or livestock medical treatments that contain Procaine, you need to immediately discontinue using them and make a record of this. As always, if you have any questions about this don't hesitate to call PCO.

### RESIDUE TESTS WITH POSITIVE O-PHENYLPHENOL RESULTS

While we are on the topic of prohibited substances, PCO wanted to take some time to discuss a problematic substance called O-Phenylphenol, as we have seen a recent increase in detection of this substance in haylage and baleage. Let's first take a moment to review the basics of residue sampling requirements in the NOP regulations.

The regulations require that PCO conducts residue sampling on a minimum of 5% of PCO-certified organic operations per year to verify the organic integrity of products being produced and sold for the organic market (\$205.670). Qualified

inspectors collect samples at inspection, and then send the samples to an accredited and qualified laboratory that screens the samples for over 200 compounds prohibited by the NOP regulations. PCO uses Matrix Sciences Pacific Agricultural Laboratory for this test. You may have already participated in the residue sampling process and have received letters notifying you that your sample was processed and came back with a positive or negative detection of prohibited substances.

Often with positive test results identifying the exact source of contamination is straightforward, but O-Phenylphenol detection presents more of a challenge as there are many possible sources of contamination. O-Phenylphenol is present in many fungicides, bactericides and other allowed pesticides in conventional agriculture. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is tasked with establishing an acceptable maximum tolerance level for all pesticides. They call that level a tolerance for residues. In the case of O-Phenylphenol, there are tolerances of residues for the following commodities in conventional agriculture: apple, cantaloupe, carrots (roots), cherry, citrus fruits, cucumber, lemon, nectarine, orange, bell pepper, peach, pear, pineapple, plum, sweet potato (roots) and tomato. There are no residue tolerances for corn, hay, livestock feeds, or any other crop outside of that list established by the EPA. Further information about tolerances can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/epatolerances>.

One potential source of O-Phenylphenol in haylage and baleage that was identified by the Accredited Certifiers Association (<https://www.accreditedcertifiers.org/>) Material Working Group is potentially treated sisal twine that was produced outside of the United States. EPA only regulates the usage of pesticides in the United States and some imported agricultural products. But not all imported products are declared as treated with a pesticide so there is the possibility of agricultural inputs entering the US market through the cracks. This treated sisal twine produced abroad may be treated with fungicides that extend the shelf life of the twine and has higher resistance to rotting. The addition of fungicides would result in the twine being prohibited in organic since it is a prohibited substance and conventional agriculture since it is a prohibited use. PCO created the following restriction for bailing twine: *Must be confirmed to be non-synthetic AND untreated to be chopped/ incorporated into feed, bedding, or soil. If synthetic, treated, or unknown, must NOT be chopped/ incorporated into feed, bedding, or soil.* The intention behind this restriction is to reduce the possibility of incidental contamination with prohibited substances but as an operator there are many things you can do to verify that your twine is untreated and not chopped into the livestock feed. If you are unsure if the twine you are using is treated or not, contact your Certification Specialist.

Also keep in mind that another potential source of contamination of O-phenylphenol in the organic industry are contractors for custom harvesting services. PCO recognizes the challenges operators face with the large cost of specialized harvesting equipment, increased cost of labor, and the justification of such an investment. Custom harvesting contractors are a great idea if they are aware of your needs as an organic operator. They are a source of contamination and a risk to your

*continued on page 16*



## PCO Giving Back

### *Happy Spring from central Pennsylvania!*

My name is Craig Shroyer and I started my path in organics as a PCO inspector in 2015. In 2018 I started full-time with PCO as a Certification Specialist and continue to operate in that role. Aside from my love of organic agriculture and my own personal gardening adventures I am also an avid fly fisherman. My love for the outdoors and fly fishing has led me down the path of local conservation, water quality and the effects of farming in our local watershed. I currently reside in Penns Valley just east of State College, which is the main watershed for the famous trout fishing stream of Penns Creek. Penns Creek is a 67 mile long tributary of the Susquehanna River and a critical part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Throughout the years I have had the pleasure to work alongside and volunteer with our local Penns Valley Conservation Association (PVCA). Recently I was invited to participate in an engagement roundtable discussion with other local farmers, CSA organizations and agricultural experts to assess some of the challenges our local watershed faces with both conventional and organic farming that takes place in our valley. PVCA has formed a 20 year plan on how to support our local farms and some of the challenges they face while also incorporating ways to protect our natural resources through education, outreach and sustainable farm-



*Craig Shroyer trout fishing in Penns Creek.*

ing practices that both enrich the land that is being farmed while minimizing the impact on our local streams and forests. I look forward to participating in more of these events and continuing to learn about the different approaches to sustainable agriculture and the many ways to help both farmers and our local ecosystems thrive for years to come.



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## TOPP Core Partners Meeting

*continued from page 4*

lines, and budgeting, while during breaks I witnessed endless discussions about ways to help each other in our shared (but always a little different) work, bringing clarity and resourcing to mutual challenges, and simply connecting as people. There is joy in connecting at these levels, and as non-profit professionals with our unique set of daily challenges, it was a relief to recognize the shared community in the room.



TOPP Core Partner attendees networking during meeting breaktime

We often talk about a sense of place being so important in understanding this work, as in “you have to put boots on the ground at a farm to really understand what’s happening there,” and for me, seeing all of these representatives of their respective places coming together to create a regional sense of place was really something special to be a part of, and carry with us, for our future of working together.

Special thanks to core partner staff attendees: Devin Cornia, Laura Davis, Nicole Dehne, Chris Grigsby, Bay Hammond, Samantha Kemnah, Nikki Kolb, Hannah McDonald, Spencer Moss, James Russell, Teddy Tomao, and Brent Wills.

## CALL FOR SERVICE AND PARTICIPATION

As all of our regional partners as well as TOPP partners across the nation solidify plans for projects and events in the short and long term, there are ways you can help immediately, including by contributing your name as a potential organic farming mentor and/or spreading the word to farmers in your community who may be open or interested in organic transition. We need to recruit and collect the contact information for potential participants now, so that as events and programs roll out, we are prepared with initial outreach audiences.

While there will be a single landing page on an independent website before the end of the year for all TOPP work, for now you can go to PCO’s site to submit inquiry within our region (CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV) at <https://paorganic.org/topp/> or to the NOP’s link [www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp) to submit an inquiry that will be redirected to the appropriate region.

Requirements for participation in mentor and operation transition programs are in development and being finalized now. These will be posted on PCO’s TOPP webpage as soon as they are approved and available.

## TRANSITION IN COMMUNITY

For all of us in the organic community, entering into the

space of organic transition comes with particular challenges of mindset and communication skills. TOPP funding for this work is meant to support the processes of transition through services such as paid farmer mentors, educational events to introduce farmers into the organic community, provide networking opportunities, and technical assistance for supporting stakeholders along the way. Programs that support equity and underserved rural and urban communities will also be a focus of this work, along with functional support for market development and developing the human capital necessary to support organic certification, inspection, and technical support work.

Everyone has a seat at the table for this work, whether as core partners, project and supporting partners, or simply in an advisory capacity. In addition to certifiers, this work will ideally bring together as many community stakeholders as possible in supporting organic transition, from trade groups to non-profits, distribution networks and brand partners, and from extension agencies to state departments of agriculture. Our regional core partners will be putting proposals together specific to their states, and in addition, as the TOPP Regional Lead, PCO will be planning regional gatherings and events. There will be a wide range of programs and partners.

This is a cooperative agreement with USDA-NOP and not a grant program, meaning there is constant communication and feedback ensuring work is progressing as intended. In addition, there are working groups among the Regional Lead organizations (CCOF, FOG, MOSA, OCIA, Oregon Tilth, and PCO). These working groups have included mentorship program standards and requirements, website/marketing, metrics/data, and contracts/finance.

In all of these ways, the organic sector is leveraging its many community relationships, collectively perhaps our greatest strength, to build successful outcomes during this five-year program.



TOPP Core Partners gather for final dinner meeting on March 14th, 2023.

*Special thanks to the PCO Team and Pocono Organics staff for their work, attention, and support to make our first meeting a great success! Please send questions and interest to [topp-ne@paorganic.org](mailto:topp-ne@paorganic.org)*

*An updated TOPP partner map and more information is available at the USDA site: [www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp).*



# New Members

*PCO Welcomes 1st Quarter  
New Members!*

## NEWLY CERTIFIED ORGANIC

**Isaac S. Beiler**  
*Spring Run, PA*

**Blue Oak Enterprises, LLC**  
*Holtwood, PA*

**Double A Eggs**  
*Shiloh, OH*

**Danny Furr**  
*Rockwell, NC*

**Jonas R. Hershberger**  
*Edmeston, NY*

**Wilmer Horst**  
*Mount Pleasant Mills, PA*

**Huvepharma, Inc.**  
*Phoenixville, PA*

**July Sunshine LLC**  
*Lancaster, PA*

**Joseph King**  
*Waveland, IN*

**Ronnie Love**  
*Stanfield, NC*

**Keith Martin**  
*Chambersburg, PA*

**Marchese Farm LLC**  
*Hopewell, NJ*

**Gary Musser**  
*Fredericksburg, PA*

**Robert & Leda Muth**  
*Williamstown, NJ*

**Neshanic Pastures LLC**  
*Ringoes, NJ*

**Joel Nissley**  
*Manheim, PA*

**Jonathan Reiff**  
*Newburg, PA*

**Rolling Hills Farm LLC**  
*Lambertville, NJ*

**R&R Trade International,  
Inc.**  
*Jessup, MD*

**John Seleski**  
*Cadiz, OH*

**Benuel Z. Stoltzfus**  
*Honey Brook, PA*

**Nelson Talley Farms**  
*Stanfield, NC*

**Elwayne Weaver**  
*Mount Joy, PA*

**Dana Wingert**  
*Orrstown, PA*

**York Rail Logistics, Inc.**  
*York, PA*

**Thomas J. Zeng**  
*Flemington, NJ*

## New Faces – Sarah Brown

*continued from page 11*

egy for Organically Grown Co., leading their social impact and sustainability efforts. She's especially excited to join PCO's leadership team during a time of unprecedented support for organic and hopes to further enhance certification services with education and infuse PCO's work with joy and care. In her spare time she is restored and inspired by time spent in nature's wild spaces, laughing with her kids, singing in community, or deep within a good novel.

## Materials Update

*continued from page 13*

certification if they are not aware of your needs. They may go to a conventional farm where they will be harvesting a crop with prohibited pesticides, they may then go to your farm without washing their equipment, they may be using a fungicide or detergent that is not compliant with organics, or they may have other conventional practices that are prohibited in organics. This can be a source of not only prohibited pesticides to your farm but also increased biosecurity risk for crops and animals alike. It is your responsibility to prevent contamination from prohibited substances in your operation. If you use contractors at your operation, in order to ensure prohibited substance prevention ask them a few questions about their equipment cleaning and sanitation practices before having them come into your operation and obtain documentation that cleanout procedures happened. For more information on how PCO and other certifiers respond to positive pesticide residue tests, please visit: <https://bit.ly/NOPpesticides>

As always, if you would like to verify that your twine is not a risk or have any other material needs, contact us at 814-422-0251 for updates and questions. Your Certification Specialist can add most materials and check a status right over the phone! Remember to first collect your intended use, the full material name, and the material manufacturer name. For more technical questions, feel free to dial extension 3 or email us at [materials@paorganic.org](mailto:materials@paorganic.org)

We sincerely appreciate your business and everything that you do for our food system.

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# Event Calendar

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

All times listed are Eastern Time Zone unless otherwise indicated.

## MAY

### MAY 2

New York Soil Health/Cover Crop Breeding Network  
**Cover Crop Breeding Field Walk**  
Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Farm  
133 Fall Creek Rd. Freeville, NY 13038  
3:00–5:00 PM  
[www.newyorksoilhealth.org](http://www.newyorksoilhealth.org)

### MAY 2–JUNE 6 (TUESDAYS)

Penn State Extension  
**Brooder School for Poultry Producers**  
Registration Deadline: April 28  
Penn State Extension Lebanon County,  
2120 Cornwall Rd.  
Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042  
<https://extension.psu.edu/brooder-school>

### MAY 3

Penn State Extension  
**Shiitake Mushroom Grower School**  
4:45–8:00 PM  
The Farm at Awbury Arboretum, 6336 Ardleigh St.,  
Philadelphia, 19138  
<https://extension.psu.edu/shiitake-mushroom-grower-school>

### MAY 9–MAY 11

**Organic Trade Association Week in Washington D.C.**  
**Featuring: 2023 Organic Confluences: Reducing Plastics Along the Entire Organic Supply Chain, presented by the Organic Center & the Organic Policy Conference**  
<https://ota.com/2023-organic-week>

### MAY 11

PASA  
**Farm Bill 101: What is a Marker Bill?**  
Webinar  
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM  
<https://pasafarming.org/events/category/pasa-event/>

### MAY 11

PASA  
**Irrigation Systems for Urban Growers**  
6:00 PM–7:30 PM  
Garden Resource Center - 147 Putnam Street, Pittsburgh, PA  
<https://pasafarming.org/events/category/pasa-event/>

### MAY 18

PASA  
**Garden Dreams' Net-Zero Plant Nursery**  
Garden Dreams Nursery – 806 Holland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA  
6:00 PM–7:30 PM  
<https://pasafarming.org/events/category/pasa-event/>

### MAY 18–19

PASA  
**Regenerative Grazing with Ian Mitchell-Innes**  
Painterland Farms - 908 Howland Hill Rd, Westfield, PA  
<https://pasafarming.org/events/category/pasa-event/>

### MAY 20

Grow Pittsburgh  
**Volunteer Day at Braddock Farms**  
1000 Braddock Avenue, Braddock, PA, 15104  
9:30 AM – 11:30 AM  
[www.growpittsburgh.org/event/volunteer-day-at-braddock-farms/](http://www.growpittsburgh.org/event/volunteer-day-at-braddock-farms/)

### MAY 29

New York Soil Health/Cover Crop Breeding Network  
**Cover Crop Breeding Field Walk**  
Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Farm  
133 Fall Creek Rd. Freeville, NY 13038  
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
[www.newyorksoilhealth.org](http://www.newyorksoilhealth.org)

## JUNE

### JUNE 27

Grow Pittsburgh  
**Backyard Farm School Chickens**  
Shiloh Farm - 7211 Thomas Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15208  
5:30–7:00 PM  
[www.growpittsburgh.org/event/backyard-farm-school-chickens/](http://www.growpittsburgh.org/event/backyard-farm-school-chickens/)

## SAVE THE DATE!

**JULY 21 • Rodale Institute Annual Field Day**

**AUGUST 8–10 • Ag Progress Days**

# Marketplace

## CROPS

Organic wrapped baleage for sale. 2022 wet bails: \$50 each; 2022 dry bales: \$20 each. 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.

Certified Organic dairy quality baleage for sale. 1st cut \$50.00. 2nd cut \$60.00. Discount available on large quantities. 570-727-2322. 570-396-3280. Star-rucca, PA. Wayne County.

Certified organic hay for sale. Grass

legume baleage, can deliver. \$70 per bail. Call 315-823-2671. Herkimer County.

## EQUIPMENT

Farm cultivators for sale. Four and six rows; John Deere and IH, ready to go to work (both rebuilt). 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.





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**EXPLORER** *Liquid* 10-0-0

**EFFICIENT, PLANT-DERIVED ORGANIC NITROGEN**

### **BENEFITS OF EXPLORER™ LIQUID 10-0-0:**

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

ANIMAL BASED NITROGEN VS. EXPLORER™ LIQUID 10-0-0	Animal- Based Nitrogen	Explorer™ Liquid 10-0-0
<b>Nitrogen Availability</b>	Slow Release, requires bio-decomposition	100% - Immediately
<b>Solubility</b>	Not fully soluble	100%
<b>Application Restrictions</b>	Foliar Applications not recommended	None
<b>Ease of Use</b>	Smell, mixing procedure	None
<b>Origin</b>	Chicken/Fish/Manure	Non- GMO, soy protein hydrolysate
<b>Effect of temperature on availability</b>	Slower or no release in colder temperatures	None
<b>Amino Acid Profile</b>	Inconsistent to None	98.6%/60.9% Iq Amino Profile
<b>Stability</b>	Adulterated for insuring some stability	Complete and lifetime

### **Conversion Recommendations from HNI: Explorer 10-0-0**

#### **Excellent Conditions:**

**High Organic N (with Manure)**

2 Quarts = 60 lbs. Nitrogen

**Low Organic N (without Manure)**

2 Quarts = 30 lbs. Nitrogen

#### **Challenging Conditions:**

**High Organic N (with Manure)**

3 Quarts = 60 lbs. Nitrogen

**Low Organic N (without Manure)**

3 Quarts = 30 lbs. Nitrogen



  
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