

## Issues to Resolve: Suggested Questions to Certifiers

Certifier: **NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC**

Roundtable Participant: **Lauren Tonti, Certification Co-Director**

Main Contact Person (if different):

- Crop & Hemp Producers: **Kristen Barker & Cassie Abrams** [cropcert@nofany.org](mailto:cropcert@nofany.org)
- Livestock and Dairy Producers: **Erika Worden & Francesca VanDeWeert**  
[dairycert@nofany.org](mailto:dairycert@nofany.org)
- Handling Operations **Maggie Raymond & Ashleigh Knecht** [handling@nofany.org](mailto:handling@nofany.org)

Website: <https://nofany.org/certification/apply>

Phone: **607-724-9851**

1. How does confidentiality and information sharing work between NJDA and new agency?
  - *NOFA-NY is working closely with NJDA to ensure as smooth of a transition between certifiers as possible. Operations can complete a Release of Records statement and NJDA will share producer records directly with NOFA-NY to help reduce the amount of paperwork that will need to be submitted directly by the producers.*
  - *NOFA-NY has worked in the past with many operations that were transitioning from certifiers that surrendered their accreditation and are confident we can make the transition as smooth as possible.*
2. Fees- How transparent is certifier's Fee Schedule?
  - *NOFA-NY's fee schedule is very transparent and can be found in new applicant packets at <https://nofany.org/certification/forms/>. Our fees are very simple and based on gross organic sales. Crop and Livestock Inspection Fees are included in your flat fee. We offer flexible payment options and are happy to provide a quote at [certifiedorganic@nofany.org](mailto:certifiedorganic@nofany.org) or (607) 724-9851.*
  - *NOFA-NY is waiving the new applicant fee of \$75 and hard copy application fee of \$54 for all operations previously certified by NJDA.*
3. Fees – Are they flat or is there a relationship to size of operation, time spent on review?
  - *NOFA-NY's fee schedule is based on gross organic sales. The inspection fee is included in the annual fees for Crop and Livestock Operations. Handling Facilities annual inspection costs are not included in their annual fee.*
  - *There is not a relationship between the amount of time spent on review and the cost to the certified operation for annual review and certification.*
  - *NOFA-NY does offer a number of additional services to accommodate our operations and these can all be found on the fee schedule form on our website. The complexity of review and time spent on review may factor into some of these additional service hourly fees.*

4. Fees – Does the fee schedule include inspection costs and are those charges flat or does it depend on inspector time on site, hotel costs, miles driven etc.?
  - *All annual inspection costs are completely included in the annual fees for Crop and Livestock operations. Handling inspections are billed based on the amount of time at the operation itself as well as travel time. NOFA-NY works directly with inspectors to help minimize the amount of travel to operations and keep costs down for our producers whenever possible. If an additional inspection is necessary or additional production types/scopes are added outside the normal annual cycle, additional inspection fees may apply.*
5. Do you have other clients in NJ? Can you provide their names as references?
  - *NOFA-NY currently certifies handling and crop operations in New Jersey and certifies many New York operations located in very close proximity to New Jersey. You can find a list of these operations in the [Organic Integrity Database](#).*
  - *We would be happy to reach out to specific operations to ask their permission to provide references if requested. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the office to find out what types of operations we certify.*
6. Inspectors – Does certifier have some relatively local to NJ?
  - *We are working with a few inspectors who live/and or inspect in NJ. As a regional certifier we have many inspectors local to New Jersey. Inspection travel costs are not applicable to any livestock or crop operations, and we work closely with our inspectors to reduce the inspection cost to handling operations as much as possible.*
7. Is the agency non-profit, for profit or a state agency?
  - *NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC is a non-profit certifier. We are a regional certifier and very dedicated to the organic community in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. We work very closely with our education program and our sister organizations NOFA-NJ, NOFA-CT, NOFA-MA, NOFA-NH, NOFA-RI, and NOFA-VT to advocate for our regional producers. Certified producers located in NJ are given complimentary membership to NOFA-NY as well as NOFA-NJ. Benefits include technical assistance, discounts to educational conferences and events, discounts to partner businesses, the opportunity to be listed in NOFA-NY's Food & Farm Guide, and more.*
8. What kind of client services do you provide: Will each client have a specific person to deal with or can anyone on your staff provide service/answer questions for anyone?
  - *NOFA-NY staff is dedicated to answering any questions or concerns that arise in a timely and thorough manner and ensuring a smooth flow of your file. Each operation will have a department Coordinator and Coordinator Assistant that will be familiar with your operation and producers can reach out to directly.*
    - i. *Crop Producers: **Kristen Barker & Cassie Abrams** [cropcert@nofany.org](mailto:cropcert@nofany.org)*

- ii. **607-724-9851 ext 2**
- iii. **Livestock and Dairy Producers: Erika Worden & Francesca VanDeWeert**  
[dairycert@nofany.org](mailto:dairycert@nofany.org) **607-724-9851 ext 1**
- iv. **Handling Operations Maggie Raymond & Ashleigh Knecht**  
[handling@nofany.org](mailto:handling@nofany.org) **607-724-9851 ext 3**

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- 9. What is your Materials Review Process (i.e. – rely on OMRI or WSDA?, Use OMRI & also publish own list, own list, shared list w/ other certifiers)?
  - *Together with Vermont Organic Farms (VOF), NOFA-NY has established a shared Livestock Materials Review Program. NOFA-NY also allows OMRI-listed, WSDA-listed, CDFA-listed and EPA Approved for Organic Use materials without further review.*
  - *NOFA-NY has a database of over 6,000 materials per our internal material review program. We offer in-house review of new materials for an additional review fee (\$65/hour with a 15-minute minimum) for Crop and Livestock Operations. First year applicants are offered this service at no charge.*
  - *The review of many handling ingredients, as well as pest and sanitation materials, used at handling facilities is included in your annual fees. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the handling department ([handling@nofany.org](mailto:handling@nofany.org)) for any additional handling operation material review questions.*
  - *Livestock healthcare material list is published on our website.*
- 10. How do you disseminate information on successfully reviewed materials?
  - *Operations who request in-house review of materials not already reviewed will be notified promptly via preferred communication methods once a decision has been made. Reach out to your coordinator for inquiries on already approved materials in our internal database. Additionally, a list of approved livestock inputs is available on our website.*
- 11. Is your annual update a long form, a summary of changes or editing of existing OSP?
  - *NOFA-NY's annual update application packet will be sent out at the end of the preceding year and will include a copy of your OSP pre-filled with existing information, with any new or changed questions highlighted. Simply make any updates and submit with other supplemental forms as indicated on your Complete Application Checklist. Some records from the previous year will also be required to be submitted with annual updates.*
- 12. Are there initial testing requirements of new clients such as soil & water and if so, who bears the cost?
  - *There are no initial testing requirements or cost for new clients.*
  - *Please note, for some operations additional testing may be required to meet some compliance standards (soil tests if using micronutrients, potable water tests*

*if using well water to wash human consumption crops, etc). These tests would not be paid for by NOFA-NY LLC.*

13. Electronic Capabilities – are there minimum software requirements? Are handwritten paper submissions OK?

- *NOFA-NY allows handwritten paper submissions and works very closely with many communities that due to religious requirements or preferences do not wish to use technology.*
- *NOFA-NY prefers electronic submission, however. Our forms are sent as PDFs typewriter enabled forms so inputting information is simple and the free version of adobe software is all that is needed.*
- *If you would like us to mail you a hard copy application, please fill out the order form sent out with the January Mailings NOFA-NY sent to all currently certified operations and return it to: NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC, 834 Upper Front Street, Binghamton, NY 13905*

14. If you have software requirements, does your staff provide support services during initial application process and beyond?

- *Our applications can be completed electronically with Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, a free program. The office has detailed instructions to help producers unfamiliar with this program that include photos, and office staff are available to assist if producers have any questions or concerns. Our Handling application can also be completed using Microsoft Excel if preferred, Excel is not required.*

15. Do you offer add-on certification services such as Certified Humane, Regenerative etc.?

- *NOFA-NY also certifies operations Organic Plus Trust Grass Fed Certification and NOFA-NY 100% Grass Fed Certification. We offer Field and Dairy Herd Transitioning Monitoring.*
- *NOFA-NY offers many additional services such as: Expedited Certification, International Trade Documents, Product and Material Review, and more. Additional fees associated with add-on services can be found on our fee schedule on the website.*

16. Do you offer International Certification Services?

- *NOFA-NY is happy to work with all of our producers that would like to export to other countries. We do not require operations exporting to pay additional fees or enroll in an international program. Additional fees would apply for issuing of NOP Import Certificates or Certificates of Inspections, but no flat fee needs to be paid each year to have equivalence listed on your organic certificate. NOFA-NY is not accredited to certify facilities located outside of the United States. NOFA-NY certifies to USDA National Organic Program standards only.*

17. Any other information you would like potential clients to know about your agency.

- *NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC and our entire staff is dedicated to the organic industry in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. We specialize in our region in order to better assist in finding allowed inputs, addressing soil and pest issues, and more. We are invested in our producers and provide easy and timely access. We also seek to reduce inspector travel cost by using local inspectors.*
- *Consumers know and trust the integrity of the NOFA-NY Certified Organic name and seal.*
- *NOFA-NY has a diverse client base and we certify a wide range of organic operations that include: Farm/Producer, Hemp, Dairy, Livestock, Wild Crops, Maple, Handler, Importer, Broker, Processor, Co-packer, Slaughterhouse, Distributor, Restaurant, and Livestock Auction House.*
- *NOFA-NY has highly experienced and trained staff. We offer a dedicated staff with extensive years of experience in farming and organic certification.*
  - i. *Our staff contains graduates in fields including Environmental Studies/Planning, Animal Science, Ag Business, Biology, Vegetable Crops, and Plant Pathology. Our goal is to provide great customer service and always ensure the highest integrity of the organic standards.*
  - ii. *NOFA-NY staff is highly knowledgeable and happy to work directly with your operation to ensure you have the support you need to certify complex processing facilities including: Hemp & CBD Products, Supplements and Skin Care Products, Import and Export requirements, Co-Pack, Private Label, and Toll Processing operations and more!*
- *Many of our staff (including Lauren Tonti who is here with you today!) grew up in the great Garden State and we are all so excited to work with all of you!*