



NOVA SCOTIA ORGANIC GRADE REGULATIONS

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The organic sector in Nova Scotia is a growing industry and it is important to ensure that 'Organic' means 'Organic'. Recently, Nova Scotia enacted the [NS Organic Grade Regulations](#) which requires that any product sold or labeled as organic must be certified through a third-party certification body.

Certification is a process the farmer initiates by contacting a certifying body to begin the inspection protocol. If the certifying body finds the farm is in compliance with Canadian Organic Standards, it will issue an organic certificate listing the farm's organic products. Note that a farm may simultaneously produce organic and non-organic products; however, farms are prohibited from producing the same product both organically and non-organically (e.g. a farm cannot simultaneously sell organic carrots and non-organic carrots but can simultaneously sell organic carrots as well as different non-organic products, such as eggs).

Organic farms renew their certification on an annual basis by notifying their certifying body of the organic products they intend to produce and the inputs they expect to use (e.g. livestock feed, crop fertilizer). Trained organic inspectors conduct annual site visits and inspections of organic farms. Organic farms are required to show proof of the inputs they have used as well as harvest and sales records. If a non-compliance

is revealed during the inspection, the certifying body will make recommendations on how the farm can return to compliance. In some cases, the organic certificate will be revoked.

Certifying bodies must be accredited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Not all accredited certifying bodies are active in Nova Scotia.

[List of certifying bodies active in Nova Scotia](#)

CANADIAN ORGANIC STANDARD

The Canadian Organic Standard (COS) was developed to provide a framework for certification bodies to enforce organic standards in Canada. In the legislation it is referred to as the "Organic Products Regulation, 2009" and can be found here: laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2009-176.pdf. Farmers interested in complying with the COS will find information on acceptable principles and standards as well as permitted substances in the documents linked here. These two documents provide the details and information necessary to conduct your farming practices in compliance with the COS and are the documents that certifying bodies use to inspect your products.

[General Principles and Management Standards](#)
[Permitted Substances](#)



REGULATIONS

With more organic products on store shelves and in farmers markets in Nova Scotia the industry felt it was important to ensure that if a customer was purchasing something labeled as 'organic' that it was 'certified organic'. On Oct. 20th 2015 the NS Organic Grade Regulation was put in place so that any products sold in Nova Scotia as organic must be third-party certified, bringing our province in line with federal regulations.

The intent of the regulation is not to impact the practice of organic farming, which is determined by the Canadian Organic Standards. The Nova Scotia regulation ensures that only third-party certified organic farms are able to use the term 'organic' to describe their products.



The Canadian Organic Standard requires that organic product labels state the name of the certifying body. Organic producers and processors also have the option to use the Canada Organic logo.

The Nova Scotia Organic Grade Regulations fall under Part XVII: Grading, Packing, Inspection and Sale of Natural Products of the Province of the Agriculture and Marketing Act. If you violate the regulations, you may be subject to a fine or 30 days imprisonment (Section 174). In addition, inspectors may seize all products being sold in violation of the Regulation (Section 169 (2)).

PATH TO COMPLIANCE

Adhering to the regulation is pretty easy. If you are selling a product using the term(s) 'organic', 'organically grown', 'organically certified', or any other language implying that the products have been produced in accordance with organic standards you must obtain third party certification. Alternatively, if you don't want to go through the certification process, you may change the language you use to describe the product to something that does not imply you are adhering to organic standards.

Registered farms in Nova Scotia with annual gross sales between \$10,000–\$60,000 may be eligible for the [Small Farm Accelerator Program](#). If organic certification was identified in the business plan developed under this program, certification fees and other costs associated with compliance could be eligible for cost share. This may be useful for farms for which certification fees represent a financial barrier to compliance with the NS Organic Grade Regulations.

For more information on organic production practices and how to become certified, contact the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN).

acornorganic.org

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture staff are available in regions across the province to provide clarity and more information on the NS Organic Grade Regulation if required.

novascotia.ca/agri/programs-and-services/regional-services