

OVF is an Organic Garden. No pesticides, herbicides, non-organic fertilizer or pressure treated lumber is allowed. Look for the OMRI and CDFA symbols to positively identify organic products. Just because something says it is "organic" does not necessarily mean that it is.



<https://www.omri.org/what-we-do>

OMRI lists input products such as fertilizers, pest controls, and livestock care products that are compliant with organic standards. Allowed products are "OMRI Listed®" and may display the OMRI seal. These "input" products are then used to produce organic food and fiber products such as carrots, granola bars and cotton that are certified by an accredited certifying body.

OMRI verifies input products intended for use in organic production. By focusing exclusively on inputs, OMRI provides essential expertise to support the organic certification process. On average 10-15% of the applications that OMRI receives do not make it through the process, either because the application is withdrawn by the applicant, or the product is determined to be prohibited.

### **What is Organic?**

In the United States, the term "organic" is federally regulated and governed by standards in the [Code of Federal Regulations](#) only when used on food or fiber products. Food and fiber products that use the term "organic" are required to be certified by an independent third party certifier, with an exception for very small-scale producers with earnings below a certain amount. All producers that use this term are required by law to follow organic practices. The term "organic" is not currently regulated for many non-food products such as pet food, cosmetics, household products and fertilizers. These products may meet non-government, privately maintained standards, but the use of the term "organic" on labels is not federally regulated for these non-food products. For example, a fertilizer may be "OMRI Listed," meaning that it meets OMRI's standards for a fertilizer, but almost any fertilizer can use the term "organic" on the label. Canadian and Mexican laws are similar regarding what can and can't be called "organic."

To become certified organic, a conventional farmer must first undergo a three-year transition period, during which time no prohibited inputs can be used. Organic certifiers can provide support for the transition process, helping the farmer understand and follow the organic standards. Once the three-year period is complete, the farmer can start to produce organic food. The farmer completes an "Organic System Plan" that explains how the food will be produced, including a list of all inputs that will be used, and the farm undergoes an annual certifier inspection.

### **Is OMRI a certifier?**

No, OMRI does not certify food or fiber products. OMRI is the only independent, nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to **inputs**. OMRI is a trusted third-party nonprofit organization that is accredited to ISO 17065 standards by the USDA Quality Assessment Division. Where certifiers focus on the food and fiber products that you see on the grocery store shelves, OMRI verifies the substances used in organic production: fertilizers, pesticides, livestock health care products, processing aids, and a number of other products that organic farmers and processors rely on every day. OMRI works with all certifiers to ensure that materials used in organic food production meet the organic standards, in accordance with consistent criteria and review methods.

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<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/organicprogram/aboutus.html#:~:text=The%20California%20Department%20of%20Food,and%20Farming%20Act%20of%202016.>

The [California Department of Food and Agriculture](#) (CDFA) State Organic Program (SOP) is responsible for enforcement of the federal Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, and the California Organic Food and Farming Act of 2016. These statutes protect consumers, producers, handlers, processors and retailers by establishment of standards under which fresh agricultural products/foods may be labeled and/or sold as "organic".

#### **California Department of Public Health**

The [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) and CDFA work cooperatively to enforce organic regulations within California. CDPH oversees processors and handlers of organic food, pet food, and cosmetics; while CDFA oversees organic agricultural production, milk and dairy food processing, meat and poultry processing, and retail organic production activities.

#### **National Organic Program**

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) organic regulations describe the specific standards that farmers and processors must meet to use the word "organic" or the USDA organic seal on food, feed, or fiber. The NOP accredits and oversees all USDA accredited certifiers.

The NOP also authorizes State Organic Programs, which provides the opportunity for a state to oversee organic production and handling operations within its state. An authorized State Organic Program must assume regulatory enforcement responsibility of the USDA organic regulations for all organic farms and businesses operating within its boundaries. Upon approval by the NOP, State Organic Programs may add more restrictive requirements due to specific environmental conditions or a need for specialized production and handling practices in that State. California is currently the only state in the U.S. with a State Organic Program (SOP).

The CDFA State Organic Program (SOP) does not provide organic certification. Instead, the California State Organic Program oversees and enforces the USDA organic regulations within California.