

§ 205.404

7 CFR Ch. I (1-1-05 Edition)

(c) *Verification of information.* The on-site inspection of an operation must verify:

(1) The operation's compliance or capability to comply with the Act and the regulations in this part;

(2) That the information, including the organic production or handling system plan, provided in accordance with §§ 205.401, 205.406, and 205.200, accurately reflects the practices used or to be used by the applicant for certification or by the certified operation;

(3) That prohibited substances have not been and are not being applied to the operation through means which, at the discretion of the certifying agent, may include the collection and testing of soil; water; waste; seeds; plant tissue; and plant, animal, and processed products samples.

(d) *Exit interview.* The inspector must conduct an exit interview with an authorized representative of the operation who is knowledgeable about the inspected operation to confirm the accuracy and completeness of inspection observations and information gathered during the on-site inspection. The inspector must also address the need for any additional information as well as any issues of concern.

(e) *Documents to the inspected operation.* (1) At the time of the inspection, the inspector shall provide the operation's authorized representative with a receipt for any samples taken by the inspector. There shall be no charge to the inspector for the samples taken.

(2) A copy of the on-site inspection report and any test results will be sent to the inspected operation by the certifying agent.

§ 205.404 Granting certification.

(a) Within a reasonable time after completion of the initial on-site inspection, a certifying agent must review the on-site inspection report, the results of any analyses for substances conducted, and any additional information requested from or supplied by the applicant. If the certifying agent determines that the organic system plan and all procedures and activities of the applicant's operation are in compliance with the requirements of this part and that the applicant is able to conduct operations in accordance with the plan,

the agent shall grant certification. The certification may include requirements for the correction of minor noncompliances within a specified time period as a condition of continued certification.

(b) The certifying agent must issue a certificate of organic operation which specifies the:

(1) Name and address of the certified operation;

(2) Effective date of certification;

(3) Categories of organic operation, including crops, wild crops, livestock, or processed products produced by the certified operation; and

(4) Name, address, and telephone number of the certifying agent.

(c) Once certified, a production or handling operation's organic certification continues in effect until surrendered by the organic operation or suspended or revoked by the certifying agent, the State organic program's governing State official, or the Administrator.

§ 205.405 Denial of certification.

(a) When the certifying agent has reason to believe, based on a review of the information specified in § 205.402 or § 205.404, that an applicant for certification is not able to comply or is not in compliance with the requirements of this part, the certifying agent must provide a written notification of noncompliance to the applicant. When correction of a noncompliance is not possible, a notification of noncompliance and a notification of denial of certification may be combined in one notification. The notification of noncompliance shall provide:

(1) A description of each noncompliance;

(2) The facts upon which the notification of noncompliance is based; and

(3) The date by which the applicant must rebut or correct each noncompliance and submit supporting documentation of each such correction when correction is possible.

(b) Upon receipt of such notification of noncompliance, the applicant may:

(1) Correct noncompliances and submit a description of the corrective actions taken with supporting documentation to the certifying agent;

(2) Correct noncompliances and submit a new application to another certifying agent: *Provided*, That, the applicant must include a complete application, the notification of noncompliance received from the first certifying agent, and a description of the corrective actions taken with supporting documentation; or

(3) Submit written information to the issuing certifying agent to rebut the noncompliance described in the notification of noncompliance.

(c) After issuance of a notification of noncompliance, the certifying agent must:

(1) Evaluate the applicant's corrective actions taken and supporting documentation submitted or the written rebuttal, conduct an on-site inspection if necessary, and

(i) When the corrective action or rebuttal is sufficient for the applicant to qualify for certification, issue the applicant an approval of certification pursuant to § 205.404; or

(ii) When the corrective action or rebuttal is not sufficient for the applicant to qualify for certification, issue the applicant a written notice of denial of certification.

(2) Issue a written notice of denial of certification to an applicant who fails to respond to the notification of noncompliance.

(3) Provide notice of approval or denial to the Administrator, pursuant to § 205.501(a)(14).

(d) A notice of denial of certification must state the reason(s) for denial and the applicant's right to:

(1) Reapply for certification pursuant to §§ 205.401 and 205.405(e);

(2) Request mediation pursuant to § 205.663 or, if applicable, pursuant to a State organic program; or

(3) File an appeal of the denial of certification pursuant to § 205.681 or, if applicable, pursuant to a State organic program.

(e) An applicant for certification who has received a written notification of noncompliance or a written notice of denial of certification may apply for certification again at any time with any certifying agent, in accordance with §§ 205.401 and 205.405(e). When such applicant submits a new application to a certifying agent other than the agent

who issued the notification of noncompliance or notice of denial of certification, the applicant for certification must include a copy of the notification of noncompliance or notice of denial of certification and a description of the actions taken, with supporting documentation, to correct the noncompliances noted in the notification of noncompliance.

(f) A certifying agent who receives a new application for certification, which includes a notification of noncompliance or a notice of denial of certification, must treat the application as a new application and begin a new application process pursuant to § 205.402.

(g) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this section, if a certifying agent has reason to believe that an applicant for certification has willfully made a false statement or otherwise purposefully misrepresented the applicant's operation or its compliance with the certification requirements pursuant to this part, the certifying agent may deny certification pursuant to paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section without first issuing a notification of noncompliance.

§ 205.406 Continuation of certification.

(a) To continue certification, a certified operation must annually pay the certification fees and submit the following information, as applicable, to the certifying agent:

(1) An updated organic production or handling system plan which includes:

(i) A summary statement, supported by documentation, detailing any deviations from, changes to, modifications to, or other amendments made to the previous year's organic system plan during the previous year; and

(ii) Any additions or deletions to the previous year's organic system plan, intended to be undertaken in the coming year, detailed pursuant to § 205.200;

(2) Any additions to or deletions from the information required pursuant to § 205.401(b);

(3) An update on the correction of minor noncompliances previously identified by the certifying agent as requiring correction for continued certification; and