GREETINGS!
We want to thank each of you for your patience this past year. We know 2020 presented unique challenges for everyone and this held true for certification work as well. Given the delays we experienced last year, we will be implementing new processes and efficiencies in 2021 to ensure that we are providing excellent and timely certification services. Thank you for your understanding and patience!

2021 DEADLINES
Application deadlines are the same this year as in past years. The standard deadline for producers is May 15th. An early bird discount is available for those that apply or renew by March 15th. Operations remain in compliance until their anniversary date, which for producers is August 15th, though additional fees apply after the standard deadline.

Handlers who receive renewal paperwork in January must renew by March 31st and those that receive renewal notices in June must renew by September 1st to remain in compliance.

New handlers and producers whose production does not fit the standard growing season may be accepted year-round. Contact us to talk about your situation.

UPCOMING CHANGES TO PRODUCER DEADLINE IN 2022
Starting in 2022, the final producer renewal deadline will be June 15th. Applications for new producers will continue to be accepted until August 15th. The reason for this change is to provide improved customer service and timely inspection assignments. Additionally, the proposed Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule includes a requirement to inspect each operation once per calendar year and moving our final producer renewal deadline to June 15th will help OEFFA ensure that this requirement is met.

We are not making changes to the final deadlines for 2021, but you will see that the late fees associated with renewing after June 15th have increased. We encourage producers to apply before June 15th if possible.
OEFFA’S 42ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OUR TIME: ESSENTIAL LINKS FOR A STRONG FOOD CHAIN

Online February 10-15, 2021
www.oeffa.org/conference2021

For the first time, the OEFFA conference will be held online, allowing organic farmers everywhere to join by computer, phone, or tablet! While the way we gather for the 2021 OEFFA conference will be different, our intent remains the same: sharing information so that we can all succeed, moving our food system toward greater resilience and equity, and forging a strong and dynamic community.

This can’t-miss online conference offers up to six days of learning, sharing, and networking for organic producers and others and will feature:

• More than 60 educational, inspiring workshops featuring speakers such as Patty Lovera, Will Harris, Erin Silva, Jim Hoorman, Jo Ann Baumgartner, and Joel Gruver, and topics such as no-till organic machinery, organic perennial grain crops, organic grain markets, organic seed, cover crops in organic grain systems, marketing organic products, organic dairy farm survival, organic gourmet garlic, and organic soil health economics.

• Powerful keynote sessions with Will Harris, Elaine Ingham, and Navina Khanna will reflect the inspiring response to a global pandemic and strength of alternative food systems, and together represent the three legs of the sustainability stool: economic profitability, environmental health, and social equity.

• In-depth Food and Farm School classes on the soil food web, humane pork production, and raw milk risk management.

• An interactive virtual trade show

• Mixology and chefinar lessons, interviews, debates, and an open mic night

• An easy-to-use app and online event platform that allows you to play games, send messages, create a custom schedule, and more—along with instructions and support to help you have your best experience!

Sliding scale rates and scholarships are available. Be a part of this inspiring community of food and farm advocates helping to build a strong and sustainable food chain! Learn more and register at www.oeffa.org/conference2021.
POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR CONTAINER PRODUCTION

Container production, including hydroponics, aeroponics, and plants grown in pots or sacks, has long been a controversial topic in the organic world. OEFFA is working, in collaboration with other certifiers, to create a clear policy for consistent implementation of crop production standards on container-based growing systems. If you have questions or comments to share, please contact Certification Program Assistant Manager Sarah Pinkham at (614) 725-1467 or sarah@oeffa.org.

The OEFFA conference will feature a debate about the place of hydroponic systems in certified organic production between Dave Chapman, Executive Director of the Real Organic Project and Kelly Damewood, CEO of California Certified Organic Farmers.

CERTIFICATION FEES

Due to increased costs in providing certification and to continue to provide excellent service to you, we have, reluctantly, increased our producer base rate for 2021. The annual inspection continues to be included in the base fee for the majority of producers. Please be sure to review the full fee schedule in the Policies and Procedures booklet for changes that have been made to fees or new fees for 2021, such as an incomplete OSP fee and failure to respond by deadline fee.
REAL ORGANIC PROJECT

Real Organic Project is a farmer led non-profit that manages a free add-on certification for organic farmers that raise their crops in healthy living soil and their animals humanely and on pasture. OEFFA Certification and the Real Organic Project have determined that our understanding and interpretation of the NOP Standards are in alignment, and therefore OEFFA has been identified as a partner certifier.

If you are interested in Real Organic Project certification visit realorganicproject.org/apply

• Real Organic Project’s add-on certification is completely free for farmers
• The certification process involves filling out an online application (which takes about 15 minutes to finish) and then completing a free 1 hour onsite inspection with one of their staff
• Over 450 farms across the country are currently certified with Real Organic Project
• Any type of certified organic farm is eligible, including diversified operations

2021 applications are currently being accepted at realorganicproject.org/apply

Questions? Feel free to contact the Director of Certification at ariel@realorganicproject.org or pop into their weekly Zoom Q&A with farmers from 3:30PM-4:30PM CST every Tuesday, use meeting ID 863 4848 1594.