



OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION OEFFA CERTIFICATION

JANUARY 2023

BULLETIN

GREETINGS FROM OEFFA CERTIFICATION!

As we transition into the new year, we want to thank you for your commitment to organic agriculture, stewarding the land, and growing healthy food. Your efforts every day to create a sustainable and vibrant future for agriculture are deeply appreciated.

OEFFA has had great success in improving the timeliness of our inspections and certificates over this past year. We appreciate your patience as we navigated the impacts of the pandemic and database changes and improved our processes to provide more timely services. Over this past year, our staff and inspectors worked diligently to complete producer and Group A handler inspections before the end of the year. We are preparing for another successful year and are focused on continuing to improve our forms and streamline our processes to ensure that we meet your certification needs.

We look forward to working with you and wish you a warm and happy start to the new year!

2023 DEADLINES

PRODUCERS

- **Producers Renewing Certification** – The standard deadline for renewing producers is **April 15th**. An early bird discount is available for those that apply or renew by **March 15th**. The final producer renewal deadline is **June 15th**. Operations remain in compliance until this anniversary date, though additional fees apply after the standard deadline of April 15th.
- **New Producers Requesting Certification** – The deadline for new producer applicants is **April 15th**.

HANDLERS

- **Handlers Renewing Certification** – 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 Requesting Certification** – New handlers may be accepted year-round. Contact us to talk about your operation if you are interested in applying.

OEFFA WELCOMES RACHEL TAYSE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



OEFFA is pleased to announce that Rachel Tayse joins the organization as Executive Director, effective January 1, 2023.

“OEFFA Certification Board President Bryn Bird and I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to our current Executive Director, Carol Goland, who has guided and grown OEFFA expertly for 18 years. She has decided to ‘pass the torch’ to the next leader, and the Board, staff, and stakeholders have been working diligently to find a replacement. As the natural and social environments continue to change, so does OEFFA,” said OEFFA Board President Steve Edwards. “Our new director, Rachel, along with the Board and our other great staff, will continue to serve our membership as we improve

our food and farm systems. We look forward to working with Rachel for many more years. “

Rachel comes to OEFFA from her role as Program Support and Systems Manager at the Center for Mindful Self-Compassion. She previously served as a Board member for OEFFA and as the Begin Farming Program Coordinator. Rachel has a degree in geological sciences from Ohio State University.

“As a long-time farmer-member, I am eager to collaborate again with the OEFFA staff, Board, and partners to build on the organization’s 43 years of history,” said Rachel. “I truly believe that sustainable agriculture, rooted in social justice, is a foundational solution to current and future challenges.”



UPDATES TO PRODUCER CERTIFICATION FEES

As a nonprofit dedicated to the success of organic farmers, OEFFA is committed to maintaining fair and affordable certification fees. We must cover our expenses while also operating with great customer service for you, attract and retain quality staff, and contract with experienced and knowledgeable inspectors.

This past October, we reached out to all of our certified farmers and producers to ask for your feedback about our fees. A sincere thank you to all of you who shared your thoughts with us. We took every phone call, survey result, and letter into consideration as we evaluated how to move forward. In total, we received over 200 responses!

A majority of those we heard from said that they prefer a flat producer base fee as opposed to a fee that is based on gross sales from organic crops and products. **OEFFA will continue to charge a flat certification fee for producers.** However, in order to cover our costs, we unfortunately must increase the certification fee. As you will see in our Producer Fee Sheet (and based on the suggestion of one of our certified farmers), we encourage any farms that gross over \$250,000 in organic sales to consider making a voluntary contribution of \$200 to

help OEFFA keep our fees accessible to smaller and beginning organic farms.

The producer certification fee is meant to cover the costs of most producer inspections and allows for an on-site crop inspection up to 4 hours long. A portion of the livestock and on-farm handling fees are also allocated to the inspection to reflect the additional time involved on-site for operations with multiple scopes. If the inspection takes longer than is covered by the certification fee, such as for large or complex operations, the inspector may bill OEFFA for the additional time and this cost will be billed to the operation after inspection. Reduce the likelihood of this additional charge by being prepared for your inspector's visit!

And finally, we are reducing the number of fee tiers we use. Starting this year, we will have two tiers, Ohio and outside of Ohio.

As a reminder, once you are certified you can apply for reimbursement for a portion of your certification fees through the Cost Share Program. We encourage you to participate in this program and are happy to help answer any questions you may have about Cost Share.

NEW ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK RULE

The new rule on Origin of Livestock goes into effect on April 5, 2023. As of that date, only animals that were raised organically from the last third of gestation can be sold as organic. Dairy farms are eligible for a one-time transition to organic, after which all animals raised or brought onto the farm must be organic from the last third of gestation. On-farm records and transaction records will need to include information about the transitioned/last-third organic status of each animal as

well as organic slaughter eligibility. Poultry still must be raised organically from the second day of life. OEFFA has revised our policy on Origin of Livestock to match the new rule. Please read it through carefully in the 2023 Policies and Procedures booklet. If you have any questions, contact OEFFA Certification at (614) 262-2022 or call OEFFA's Sustainable Agriculture Educators at (614) 421-2022.

OEFFA'S 44TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
GERMINATE,
REGENERATE, AGITATE

February 16–18 in Newark, OH
conference.oeffa.org

This year's 44th annual OEFFA conference, Germinate, Regenerate, Agitate, will bring together hundreds of farm and food advocates for three days in February to connect, learn, and share through:

- **50+ workshops** on everything from commercial tomato production to grazing management on our own farms;
- **Keynote sessions** with seedkeeper Rowen White and agronomist Ricardo Salvador;
- **Full-day Food and Farm School classes** on holistic planned grazing, no-till vegetable production, understanding the 2023 Farm Bill, fair employment practices, and writing an Organic System Plan;



- **A big exhibit hall** with dozens of businesses, nonprofits, services, and products;
- **Easy access to recordings** of workshops and keynotes online after the event; and
- A conference kickoff and happy hour, raffle, food demonstrations, community conversations, an open mic night, and more!

Sliding scale rates and scholarships are available. Join a community of food and farm advocates helping to build a strong future for agriculture! Learn more and register at conference.oeffa.org.



OEFFA Certification • 41 Crowell Rd, Columbus, OH 43214 • www.oeffa.org

Matt Begley
 Materials Specialist
matt@oeffa.org

Jessica Crook
 Administrative Assistant
jessica@oeffa.org

Jennifer Logan
 Certification Specialist
jennifer@oeffa.org

Erin Payne
 Database and Certification
 Specialist
erin@oeffa.org

Rachel Tayse
 Executive Director
rachel@oeffa.org

Haley Behnfeldt
 Inspection Administrator
haley@oeffa.org

Juniper Cruz
 Administrative Assistant
juniper@oeffa.org

Amber Mitchell
 Administrative Coordinator
amber@oeffa.org

Kate Pierfelice
 Handling Certification
 Coordinator
kathryn@oeffa.org

Steve Wilson
 Training and Database
 Coordinator
swilson@oeffa.org

Sheryn Bruff
 Farm Certification
 Coordinator
sheryn@oeffa.org

Katie Everett
 Certification Specialist
kathleen@oeffa.org

Porter Mitchell
 Certification Specialist
porter@oeffa.org

Sarah Pinkham
 Assistant Certification Manager
sarah@oeffa.org

**Sustainable Agriculture
 Educators:**
 Casey Brooks
casey@oeffa.org

Trish Clarkweiss
 Certification Specialist and
 Staff Inspector
trish@oeffa.org

David Houston
 Inspection and
 Certification Specialist
david@oeffa.org

McLane Nagy
 Certification Specialist
mclane@oeffa.org

Alisha Schleining
 Certification Program Manager
alisha@oeffa.org

Johnnie Speicher
johnnie@oeffa.org

Shakita Kabicek
 Certification Specialist
shakita@oeffa.org

Kris Olson
 Compliance Coordinator
kris@oeffa.org

John Stock
john@oeffa.org

All Certification Staff can be reached by phone at (614) 262-2022, by fax at (614) 421-2011, and by email at organic@oeffa.org