



# OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION OEFFA CERTIFICATION

JUNE 2026 BULLETIN

## GREETINGS FROM OEFFA CERTIFICATION!

We hope this mid-year update finds you well and that you are enjoying a wonderful start to the summer.

OEFFA Staff are hard at work processing new applicants and renewals, focusing first on priorities such as new land and crops. We submitted comments for the NOSB meeting that was held in May and updated forms for our group B handlers, whose renewal information is going out this month. This summer, OEFFA will have community booths at the following Columbus area farmers' markets:

- Upper Arlington: Wednesday, June 10, 3-6pm
- Bexley: Thursday, July 9, 4-7pm
- Clintonville: Saturday, August 22, 9am-noon

We look forward to seeing some of our certified operations at the market and talking with market attendees about the benefits of organics.

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## 2026 DEADLINE REMINDER

As a reminder, all certified operations must submit their renewal paperwork each year by the renewal deadline in order to remain in compliance.

**May 15, 2026** was the renewal deadline for all producers.

**September 1, 2026** is the standard renewal deadline for Group B Handlers.  
The final renewal deadline is October 1, 2026.

## CURRENT TRENDS IN THE ORGANIC INDUSTRY

The Organic Trade Association's 2026 Organic Market Reported showed a strong year for the organic sector. U.S. Organic sales rose 6.8% in 2025 from the previous years, totaling \$76.6 billion.

Top Performing Organic Categories (2025–2026):

- **Organic Beef:** Saw an extraordinary growth rate of 44.3% in 2025.
- **Organic Eggs:** Continued high growth (22.4% in 2025) due to high quality perception.
- **Organic Produce:** Remains the top category, accounting for over 30% of total sales

This rebound follows a period of inflation-driven slowdown and reflects consumers' willingness to prioritize organic products even amid price sensitivity, especially as the price gap between organic and conventional foods continues to narrow. Produce remains the leading category, while organic meat, poultry, and seafood are among the fastest-growing segments, signaling broader adoption beyond traditionally strong categories like fruits and vegetables.

Despite this strong consumer demand, data from the Organic Integrity Database (OID) indicated a decrease

in certified acres in 2025 compared to 2024. Data analyzed from the OID by Mallory Krieger from the organic Agronomy Training Service showed the following trends:

- Increase in urban area or adjacent certified farms
- Certified crop operations had a net loss of operations, while livestock and handling showed net increases
- Operations coming in averaged 203 acres, while exiting operations averaged 355 acres

Transitioning conventional farmers to organic has always been a barrier to increasing the number of certified operations and acreage. The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) was meant to address this barrier and made significant progress. However, in 2025, partner agencies were informed that funding would be reduced and would conclude in June 2026, prior to the completion of the original five-year agreement. The fate of the initiatives created by this program are currently unclear without the dedicated funding, leaving a gap in resources for operations who want to transition.

## UPDATES ON THE NEW STANDARDS FOR MUSHROOMS AND PET FOOD

The final rule for pet food and mushroom production went into effect on March 21, 2025, with a compliance date of March 22, 2027. Although the USDA proposed rescinding it, it is still considered in effect unless the rescission becomes finalized. OEFFA has already contacted operations who are affected by this new rule to request Organic System Plan updates. If you have any questions about the new standards and how they apply to your operation, please contact OEFFA!

## TEMPORARY VARIANCE FOR ORGANIC LAYING OPERATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

NOP is granting a temporary variance from 7 CFR § 205.238(c)(10), allowing operators to induce molting. This temporary variance applies only to organic laying operations located in the United States for the period of one year from March 27, 2026. Organic laying operations inducing molting must continue to comply with all other applicable USDA organic regulations. This temporary variance was granted in response to a request from multiple certifiers on behalf of their certified organic laying operations experiencing business interruptions due to the impacts of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

OEFFA will rely on previous internal policies to determine when induced molting is compliant with the regulations. Below are some examples:

- Forced molting through feed withdrawal is not consistent with the requirement to feed a ration

sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of the animal. However, induced molting through ration modification may be acceptable.

- Constant light and constant darkness are not in keeping with the stress reduction requirement and may not be used to force molting. However, light modification to mimic natural seasonal changes may be acceptable to induce molting.
- Induced molting is not covered under 7 CFR § 205.239(b) and (c) as a reason for allowed temporary confinement.

Operators who are interested in making use of this temporary variance must submit their plan to OEFFA for approval prior to inducing molting.



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