

Fact Sheet:

Becoming Organically Certified for Veterans: A Guide

1 Introduction

- Brief overview of organic certification and its importance for sustainability, health, and marketability.
- Recognition of the unique position of veterans in the agricultural sector.

2 Why organic?

- Organic products are in demand, offering higher price points and market stability.
- Organic farming practices promote environmental sustainability and animal welfare.
- Consumers trust organic labels as a mark of quality.

3 Eligibility for organic certification

- Any business directly involved in food production can apply, including farmers, livestock producers, and processors.
- Applies to those producing agricultural products that meet organic standards.

4 The certification process

- **Transition period.** A 36-month transition period is required before land can be certified organic. During this time, all prohibited synthetic chemicals must be eliminated.
- **Develop an organic system plan.** This document outlines your farming practices, soil health strategies, pest and weed management, and recordkeeping processes.
- **Certification process.** Work with a U.S. Department of Agriculture-accredited certifying agent to complete an application, undergo an on-farm inspection, and receive compliance approval.
- **Recordkeeping.** Maintain detailed records of inputs, crop rotations, and management practices to ensure compliance.
- ✓ **Market development.** Research organic markets and sales channels early in the transition to ensure financial sustainability.



5 Annual recertification

- Organic certification requires annual review and inspection to ensure continued compliance with organic standards.

6 Costs and financial assistance

- Costs vary depending on the size and complexity of your operation.
- USDA offers cost-share programs to help cover certification costs.
- Some programs specifically support veterans in agriculture, potentially offering additional financial aid or resources.

7 Veteran resources

- Organizations like the Farmer Veteran Coalition offer resources, training, and networking opportunities specifically for veteran farmers.
- Look for state and local programs offering additional support to veteran-owned agricultural businesses.

8 Benefits of certification

- Access to a growing market of consumers looking for organic products.
- Potentially higher prices for your products.
- Enhanced brand trust and loyalty.
- Contribution to environmental sustainability and healthier ecosystems.

9 Conclusion

- Organic certification is a rewarding pathway for veterans who are passionate about sustainable and responsible agriculture.
- Utilizing the available resources and support networks can make the transition smoother and more successful.



Additional resources

- USDA National Organic Program
- Farmer Veteran Coalition
- Your local Cooperative Extension office