

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PRODUCTION
New York (ac.)
code NY789**

DEFINITION

Utilizing agricultural management strategies while transitioning from conventional to organic production.

Organic production is a system that responds to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve and enhance biodiversity.

PURPOSE

This practice is applied as part of a resource management system to support the following purpose:

Minimize negative impacts of agricultural production on soil, water, air, plant, animal and social and cultural resources by transitioning to organic production.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies:

1. Wherever the farming operation transitions to certified organic production;
2. To all practice components necessary to make a complete system;

3. Where natural resources are/will be adequate to properly follow an organic production system;

CRITERIA

A transition to organic production plan shall be developed. This plan shall be a component of an overall conservation plan. All methods of transition to organic production must be integrated with other components of the conservation plan.

All methods of organic production must comply with Federal, State, and local regulations, including the Organic Food Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.), and regulations with the National Organic Program final rule (7 CFR Part 205).

Management practices shall be used to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases including but not limited to:

- Crop rotation and soil and crop nutrient management practices
- Sanitation measures to remove disease vectors, weed seeds and habitat for pest organisms
- Cultural practices that enhance crop health

An appropriate set of mitigation techniques must be designed and implemented to minimize potential environmental risks of transition to

organic production management activities in accordance with quality criteria in the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). Mitigation techniques include practices such as buffer strips, filter strips and crop rotation, and management techniques such as application method and timing.

In conjunction with a conservation plan, the number, sequence and timing of any tillage operations shall be managed:

- To maintain soil quality and limit soil loss to the minimum Quality Criteria according to the FOTG.
- In conjunction with other sediment control practices, in order to minimize sediment loss to nearby surface water bodies.

Grazing of livestock shall be according to NRCS conservation practice standard Prescribed Grazing (528A).

Livestock shall be managed to minimize impact to nearby groundwater and surface water bodies.

Greenhouse, orchard, and nursery operations shall be managed in conjunction with other sediment control practices, in order to minimize impact to nearby groundwater and surface water bodies.

Buffer zones shall be maintained between organic and conventional fields as according to the National Organic Program (NOP).

The label shall be followed when applying allowed pesticides.

Nutrients will be applied according to the conservation practice standard Nutrient Management (NY590) and Waste Utilization (NY633).

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider controlling pest problems through mechanical or physical methods including but not limited to:

- Augmentation or introduction of predators or parasites of the pest species
- Development of habitat for natural enemies of pests
- Nonsynthetic controls such as lures, traps and repellants.

Consider controlling weed problems through:

- Mulching with fully biodegradable materials
- Residue management and cover crops
- Mowing
- Livestock grazing
- Hand weeding and mechanical cultivation
- Flame, heat, or electrical means
- Plastic or other synthetic mulches provided that they are removed from the field at the end of the season.

Consider controlling disease problems through:

- Management practices which suppress the spread of disease organisms
- Application of inputs allowed under the NOP.

For livestock, consider intensive management systems such as prescribed grazing and grass-based dairying to improve overall herd health.

Consider extensive use of prescribed grazing and grass-based dairying to minimize the size and scale of a necessary waste management system.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The Transition To Organic Production plan shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria of this standard and in keeping with standards for individual system components and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

As a minimum, the Transition To Organic Production component of an organic production plan as defined in 205.201, the National Organic Program, shall include

- Plan map and soil map of managed fields;
- List of all practices and procedures;
- Materials used;
- Monitoring procedures;
- Record keeping according to conservation practice standard NY748;
- Location of sensitive resources and setbacks, if applicable;
- Environmental risk analysis, with approved tools and/or procedures, for probable pest

- management recommendations by crop (if applicable) and pest;
- Interpretation of the environmental risk analysis and identification of appropriate mitigation practices and techniques;
- Operation and maintenance requirements.

Components. Components of complete transition to organic production management system may include, but are not limited to the NRCS FOTG Practice Standards listed below. Where contradictions exist between a practice standard and the Federal Rule embodying the NOP, the NOP shall prevail.

Composting Facility (317)
 Conservation Cover (327)
 Conservation Cropping Rotation (328)
 Contour Buffer Strips (332)
 Contour Farming (330)
 Contour Orchard and Other Fruit Area (331)
 Cover Crop (340)
 Critical Area Planting (342)
 Cross Wind Stripcropping (589B)
 Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C)
 Deep Tillage (324)
 Fence (382)
 Field Stripcropping
 Grazing Land-Mechanical Treatment (548)
 Irrigation Storage Reservoir (436)
 Irrigation System-Sprinkler (442)
 Irrigation Water Conveyance (428)
 Irrigation Water Management (449)
 Mulching (484)
 Nutrient Management (NY590)
 Pasture and Hayland Planting (512)
 Pathogen Management (NY783)
 Pest Management (595)

Prescribed Burning (338)
 Prescribed Grazing (528A)
 Record Keeping (NY748)
 Residue Management-No-Till/Strip
 Till (329A)
 Residue Management-Mulch Till
 (329B)
 Residue Management-Ridge Till
 (NY329C)
 Stripcropping (585)
 Waste Management System
 (NY312)
 Waste Utilization (NY633)
 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment
 (380)

Design criteria for individual components shall be according to standards in the New York Field Office Technical Guide and organic management criteria as approved by a USDA accredited National Organic Program certification agency.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The transition to organic production component of a conservation plan shall include appropriate operation and maintenance items for the client. These may include:

- Review and update the plan periodically in order to incorporate new technology and follow the Organic Food Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.), and regulations with the National Organic Program final rule (7 CFR Part 205).
- Maintain conservation practices identified in the plan in order to ensure continued effectiveness.

REFERENCES

NOFA-NY Organic Farm and Handling/Processing Certification Standards and Administrative Procedures, current edition.

Available from NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC, 607-724-9851

NOFA-NY website, www.nofany.org, articles on soil fertility management, etc. in "newsletter archives"

Organic Materials Review Institute, www.omri.org, lists of allowed products

ATTRA website, www.attra.org, for information on crops, pest control, etc.

Soil Biology Primer

Soil and Water Conservation Society, publication, www.swcs.org

Building Soils for Better Crops, Fred Magdoff and Harold van Es
 Sustainable Agriculture Network
www.sare.org

www.nysipm.cornell.edu