

Welcome to the webinar!

- The webinar will start at the top of the hour.
- If you'd like to type in a question, use the question box on your control panel and we will read the questions aloud after the c. 45 minute presentation
- The webinar is being recorded and you can find it in our archive at <http://www.extension.org/pages/70561>



**Understanding the NOP Seed Rule and
Organic Seed Sourcing**

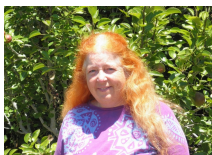
Kristina Hubbard, Organic Seed Alliance
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Zea Sonnabend, California Certified Organic Farmers and National Organic
Standards Board
Cullen Carns-Hilliker, Midwest Organic Services Association

June 6, 2014





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Hubbard




Zea Sonnabend




Emily Brown Rosen


Understanding the NOP Seed Rule & Sourcing Organic Seed

- Why Organic Seed?
- State of Organic Seed
- NOP Seed Rule & Guidance
- Perspectives on Enforcement
- Perspectives on Monitoring & Encouraging Improved Sourcing
- Organic Seed Resources






Advancing the ethical development and stewardship
of the genetic resources of agricultural seed




Why Organic Seed?


- **Why organic seed?**
 - When organic farmers have seed that performs well in organic systems, the entire organic food industry benefits.
 - The integrity of organic agriculture relies on a viable seed sector that responds to the diverse needs of organic farmers.
- **Optimum genetics**
- **Valued traits**
- **Minimize "upstream pollution"**
- **Economics**



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State of Organic Seed




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State of Organic Seed is an ongoing project to monitor opportunities and challenges in building seed systems that benefit the organic community


Need: Organic seed lags behind

Assess challenges in organic seed systems
Monitor progress through surveys & reports
Engage organic community in solutions



STATE OF ORGANIC SEED


2011




State of Organic Seed

The organic seed sector has not caught up with demand

- Our national farmer survey, which included certified organic crop growers in 45 states, showed that only 20% of respondents used 100% organic seed.
- Variety availability** was the biggest factor, especially in vegetables
- Price** was a moderate (or greater) factor or greater
- Distrust of organic seed quality** was not a major factor

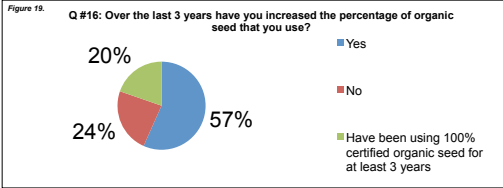


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State of Organic Seed


Figure 19. Q #16: Over the last 3 years have you increased the percentage of organic seed that you use?



Response	Percentage
Yes	57%
No	24%
Have been using 100% certified organic seed for at least 3 years	20%

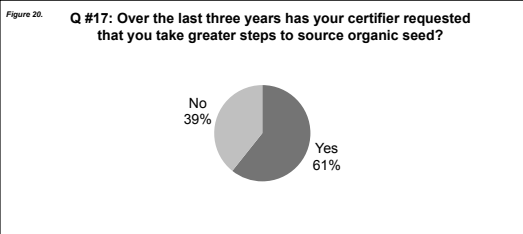


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State of Organic Seed


Figure 20. Q #17: Over the last three years has your certifier requested that you take greater steps to source organic seed?

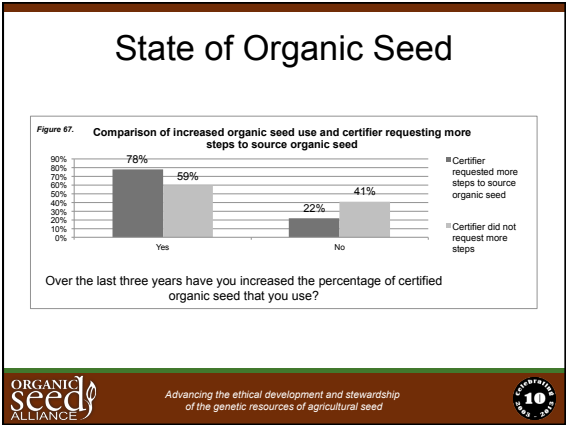


Response	Percentage
Yes	61%
No	39%



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State of Organic Seed

Perspectives on organic seed

- “Organic seed is important in maintaining the integrity of organic food production” (78%)
- “Varieties bred for organic system management are important to the overall success of organic agriculture” (83%)
- More than 50% are interested in producing organic seed commercially and conducting on-farm crop improvement projects if economic opportunity & training are available

ORGANIC seed ALLIANCE

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10 YEARS

State of Organic Seed

Some conclusions

- Organic seed use is improving
- The increase in organic seed use is linked to certifier requests
- We need to improve information sharing in organic seed availability
- Organic seed and plant breeding is important to organic farmers
- We need to support organic farmers in trialing organic varieties, conducting on-farm plant breeding projects, and building their skills in seed production

ORGANIC seed ALLIANCE

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10 YEARS

State of Organic Seed

Five-year update coming soon

OSA will be distributing another farmer survey this year to provide a five-year update to this data and report

We need your help!

- Survey distribution and data analysis
- Listening sessions at winter organic farming conferences
- Second version of *State of Organic Seed* published in 2015

To get involved: kristina@seedalliance.org



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Organic Seed Resources



Sourcing organic seed

Finding organic seed performance data

Encouraging organic variety trials

Integrating organic seed production

Engaging in organic seed policy



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Organic Seed FINDER

- Provide a reliable resource for finding & promoting organic seed
- Assist organic certifiers in the verification of seed sources
- Official endorsement from the National Organic Program



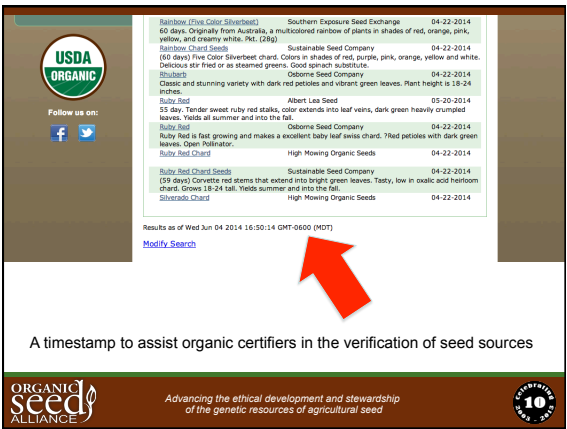
www.organicseedfinder.org



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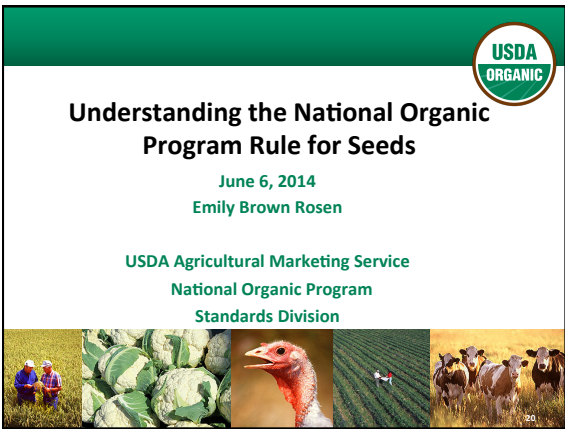






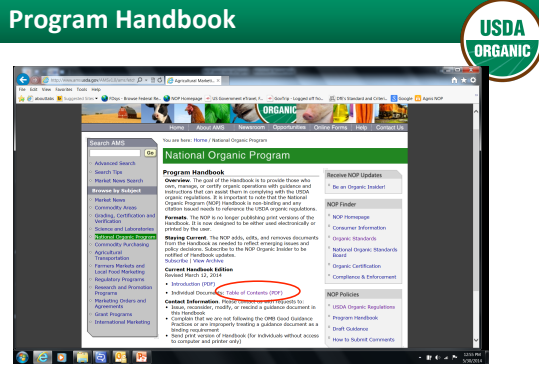








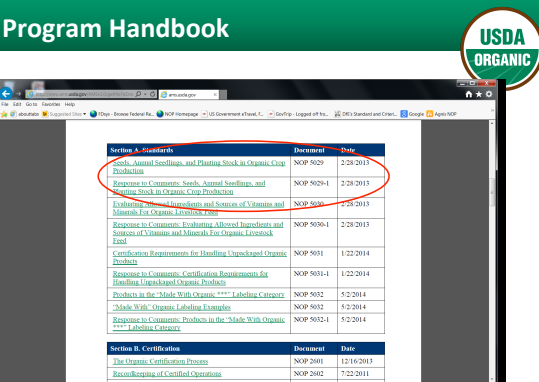
Program Handbook



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Program Handbook



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§205.204 Seeds and planting stock practice standard.



(a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock: *Except, That,*

(1) Nonorganically produced, untreated seeds and planting stock may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced variety is not commercially available: *Except, That,* organically produced seed must be used for the production of edible sprouts;

(2) Nonorganically produced seeds and planting stock that have been treated with a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced or untreated variety is not commercially available;

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§205.204 Seeds and planting stock practice standard.

USDA

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(3) Nonorganically produced annual seedlings may be used to produce an organic crop when a temporary variance has been granted in accordance with §205.290(a)(2);

(4) Nonorganically produced planting stock to be used to produce a perennial crop may be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced only after the *planting stock* has been maintained under a system of organic management for a period of no less than 1 year; and

(5) Seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock treated with prohibited substances may be used to produce an organic crop when the application of the materials is a requirement of Federal or State phytosanitary regulations.

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Organic Seed Requirement

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NOP regulation, Section 205.204:
Seeds and planting stock must be organic, except when an

- Equivalent organic variety is not commercially available

What does “equivalent variety” mean?

What does “not commercially available” mean?



National Organic Standards Board

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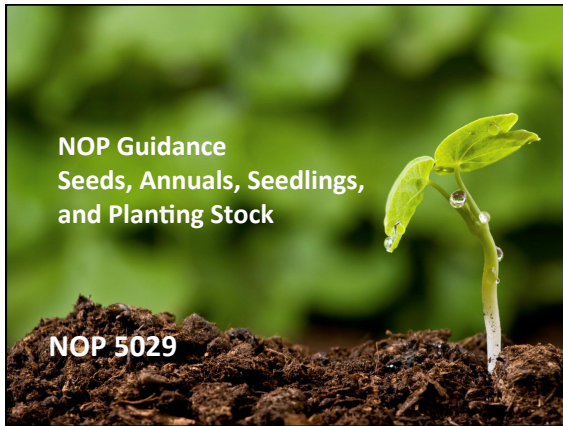


Provided advice to NOP


- August 2005
- November 2008

- “An organic variety is considered to be equivalent to a specific non-organic variety if it meets the operation’s required site-specific agronomic and marketing characteristics.”
- Details on search methods, justification, records

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Equivalent Organic Variety




- Equivalent variety
 - Of the same type, similar agronomic or marketing characters:


Examples:
Days to harvest, color, flavor, hardiness, vigor, disease resistance, regionally adapted



Not Commercially Available



- Lack of ability to obtain a seed/planting stock in the appropriate form, quality or quantity
 - Form : treated or non-treated, pelleted, use of bare root or container plants
 - Quality: germination rate, weed content, shelf life, free of disease
 - Quantity: large or small
 - Price is NOT a factor



Planting stock



- Planting stock = any plant tissue other than annual seedlings
- All planting stock must be organic unless equivalent organic variety is not available
 - Includes: garlic, potatoes, strawberry crowns or tissue culture plants, grape vines, tree fruit
- If you want to *sell* perennial planting stock as organic, it must be managed organically 1 year before sale.



Records maintained by growers



- Growers should list all non-organic seeds/stock used, with justification
 - On farm trials may be described
- Growers should describe methods of searching; and contact at least 3 sources
 - Sources should include companies that sell organic seed



Treating seeds or stock



- Treatments on National List: 205.601
 - Peracetic acid, chlorine, hydrochloric acid for cotton,
 - others for pest/disease/fertilizer
 - Chlorine is permitted for seed treatment/pathogen control, must be rinsed

Treating seeds or stock



- What needs to be reviewed:
 - All pesticides applied to seeds
 - Pelleting
 - Inoculants
- What does not need review
 - Substances used on non-organic seeds prior to harvest, or for seed cleaning and preparation that do not remain on seeds, e.g. TSP (trisodium phosphate), chlorine

Certifier role



- Verify procedures and justification for commercial availability
- Review substances, treatments used on seeds
- Should review progress in obtaining organic seeds/stock over time

Suggestions?



- Guidance documents may be amended as needed.
- Comments or suggestions are welcome, please send to:

NOPguidance@ams.gov.nop



Thank You!

 <p>Organic Seed Resource Guide http://www.extension.org/pages/18340</p> <p>Organic Seed Growers Conference https://www.youtube.com/user/eOrganic</p> <p>Organic Variety Trial Reports http://varietytrials.eorganic.info/</p>	 <p>Organic Plant Breeding, Seed Production & Variety Trial Manuals www.seedalliance.org kristina@seedalliance.org</p> <hr/>  <p>www.organicseedfinder.org organicseedfinder@aosca.org</p>
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- Find all upcoming and archived webinars at <http://www.extension.org/pages/25242>
- Have an organic farming question? Use the eXtension Ask an Expert service at <https://ask.extension.org/groups/1668/ask>
- We need your feedback! Please respond to an email survey about this webinar which you'll receive later.
- Thank you for coming!

