A major requirement of the USDA organic regulations is the maintenance of all records related to organic production and handling.

- An audit of your records will be conducted during an onsite inspection.
- Complete and accurate records that track the organic products from seed to sale, or from receiving through final sale and shipping must be kept.
- If you produce or handle both organic and non-organic crops or products, records related to your non-organic production may be needed to verify organic crop and product compliance.

The NOP Program Handbook Guidance 2601 states the inspection includes, but is not limited to, trace-back audits or in-out balances

- **Audit Trail/Trace-back**
  - Documentation that demonstrates that a single organic product or organic finished product can be traced back to an organic supplier or field harvest/seed purchase.

- **In/Out or Mass Balance** – A process of totaling production during a period of time and the total sales during same period including changes to beginning and ending inventories.

  **Formula examples:**
  a) Beginning inventory + Purchases – Ending inventory = Quantity available for planting or production
  b) Beginning inventory + Quantity harvested – Quantity used for seed/loss – Ending inventory = Quantity available for sale
  c) Beginning inventory + Production or Purchases – Ending inventory = Quantity available for sale

Use page 2 to determine what types of records the inspector may need to look at. This list is guidance only, and not a list of all required records.

The NOFA-NY website offers comprehensive forms to assist you in maintaining compliance:

https://www.nofany.org/certification/forms-documents

Forms and worksheets can be accessed through the following links, on the NOFA-NY website or digital/hard copies may be requested from the office.

Some key records:
Checklist, Equipment, New Field, Seed & Planting, Material & Input, Harvest, Sales, Livestock records, Feed Records, Product Ingredients records, Other Handler

**Organic Software**

COG-Pro and Sow Organic are online databases that help you maintain your farm records in accordance with organic standards. The records can be maintained from your laptop, tablet, or smartphone in the field. They require fees to access their database.

**Recordkeeping Tools**

- The Rodale Institute's electronic Organic System Plan tool... The purpose of this tool is to help you assemble the necessary documentation to apply for organic certification through an accredited certifying agent.
- ATTRA's Documentation Forms for Organic Crop and Livestock Producers can help you set up a system on your home computer, or even on a notebook in your farm truck (simply print the forms).
- The Organic Farmers Business Handbook, by Richard Wiswall, is very user friendly for farmers. A version includes excel templates on a CD. The author is a farmer and has been refining his record system over many years. Chelsea Green distributes this book and can be found on Amazon or other retailers.

Any reference to an organization, or products, or services in this text does not constitute or imply the endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC.
Organic Production (Farm) Records

Seeds and Transplants, Including Cover Crop and Pasture Seeds

- Seed invoices, seed packages, and labels.
- Organic certificates for seeds and transplants.
- Attempts to obtain organic seeds or perennial stock before sourcing nonorganic (search logs, catalogs, seed supplier letters).
- Verification of untreated seeds, and/or disclosure of ingredients in seed coating.
- Verification seeds are not genetically modified (for crops also available in a GMO form).

Input Material Records

- Application records for all materials used. Including: fertilizers, manure, compost, soil amendments, foliar micronutrient sprays, pesticides, spreader/stickers, post harvest applications or treatments.
- Invoices or receipts for all input purchases including custom applicator work.
- Input material storage records.
- Records related to inputs used on non-organic land.

Production Records

- Farm activity log and/or records documenting activities such as cultivating, weeding, flaming, planting dates.
- Standard operating procedures and staff instructions or training records.
- Invoices for services (mowing, spreading manure, seeding, planting).
- Farm consultant recommendations.
- Soil, tissue, and fruit analysis reports.
- Compost production records.

Harvest Records

- Yield records (number of bins, pounds, tons, cartons, CSA shares, etc.).
- Shipping, warehouse or processor delivery receipts, delivery summaries.
- Custom harvest: records or information on harvester and equipment cleaning.
- Buffer harvest records and buffer and border management records.

Income Records

- Direct market: CSA share reports, sales receipts, daily farmer’s market sales reports or bank deposits.
- Wholesaler markets: Warehouse and processor income summaries, pool closings; sales invoices, receipts.

Livestock Operations

- Organic certificates and invoices for all feed, including pasture, grain, hay or silage.
- Records detailing access to pasture, supplemental feeding, and reasons for confinement.
- Grain invoices with weights.
- Animal medical treatment records (including vaccinations).
- Animal sale or purchase records if applicable.

New Fields

- Material application records for at least 36 months prior to harvest.
- Cropping history or land use for at least 36 months, including previous owner/manager affirmation.
- Organic Certificate if land was previously certified.
- Maps of new fields.

Organic Handling/Processing Records

Receiving Records and Ingredient or Product Compliance Records

- Current organic certificate for suppliers of organic products or ingredients.
- Ingredient labels and compliance affidavits from ingredient manufactures.
- Clean truck/equipment affidavits or cleaning logs.
- Invoices, purchase orders, bill of ladings, scale tickets.
- Contracts.
- Certificates of analyses or Product Specification Sheets.
- Full ingredient disclosure and verification of no GMOs for minor nonorganic ingredients or processing aids.
- Attempts to obtain organic forms before sourcing nonorganic minor ingredients or processing aids.

Storage and Production Records

- Standard operating procedures and staff instructions or training records.
- Equipment clean-out logs, purge records.
- Pest management records (preventative practices as well as application records).
- Batch recipes and product formulations.
- QC reports and product testing records.
- Ingredient usage reports and production logs.
- Packaging reports and waste or shrinkage logs.
- Inventory reports for ingredients and finished products.

Shipping and Income Records

- Pallet/tote tickets and scale tickets.
- Certificates of analyses.
- Purchase orders and invoices.
- Shipping logs and bills of lading.
- Export records and transaction certificates.
- Sales summaries, income reports.