

Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture Institute

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Records and Audit Trails

In order to guarantee the true organic or Vedic integrity of foods certified by Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture Institute, clients of MVOAI must maintain complete and accurate records of all farm and processing practices that effect crop and product purity and integrity.

Records may be defined as all documents that have been filled out or accumulated as part of the client's Organic Quality System and Vedic integrity program, and which contain objective evidence showing how well a quality requirement is being met or how well a quality system element is performing. A record may be in written, visual, or electronic form and document activities undertaken by producers, processors, handlers and wildcraft operators as part of their organic farm plan or processing activities.

Records include such things as organic farm and processing plans; field maps; field logs; journals; calendars; records of harvest, storage, and sales; animal health reports; receipts; invoices; billing statements; bills of lading; inventory control reports; production reports; processing reports; handling reports; facility diagrams; process flow charts; questionnaires; affidavits; inspection reports; laboratory analysis reports; minutes of meetings; personnel files; correspondence; photographs; and other materials. These records record the production, harvesting, handling, and processing practices of all certified organic products.

In organic certification, the "audit trail" and requirements for product identification are common elements of traceability for products. *Record keeping can be simply understood as maintaining documents which provide the ability to track the organic integrity of a product back to its source field on a particular date of harvest or to a particular set of traceable ingredients.*

Record keeping is most effective and useful if it follows a system that provides an audit trail for the inspectors or auditors to follow. Production records log the history of the field and the management of the crop from seed to harvesting, storage and transportation. Processing/handling records monitor the flow of product through the processing facilities from the input of raw materials to the finished goods. Sources of inputs and sales of products are documented by both producers and processors/handlers.

Records must be kept in an orderly fashion, with sufficient detail to disclose all activities and transactions of the certified operation. This is the concept of *traceability*, or the ability to use documented information to trace the evolution of a product, service, or record back to its individual components, its history, or its previous steps in a process.

General Points Regarding Records

§205.103 of the USDA NOP Program rules states that MVOAI Client records must:

- (a) Be suited to the particular farming, production, processing or handling practices that the certified client is using;
- (b) Fully disclose all activities, transactions, inputs, and outputs of the certified operation in sufficient detail as to be readily understood and audited;
- (c) Be maintained for not less than 5 years beyond their creation;
- (d) Be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with all appropriate standards and MVOAI procedures, and
- (e) Be available for inspection and copying during normal business hours by the inspector or other authorized representative of Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture Institute or an authorized governmental agency.

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Organic Records Checklist

The following is a list of records used by organic farmers to assure the MVOAI USDA Organic or Maharishi Vedic Organic integrity of a crop. You can use this as a checklist for your own organic record keeping system. Records must be kept for 5 years beyond their creation and be accessible to the organic inspector. All the records below may not be required for your particular operation. ***The goal of your record keeping system should be to provide the ability to track the organic integrity of a product back to its source field on a particular date of harvest or to a particular set of traceable ingredients.***

- field maps
- field history sheets (previous three years)
- documentation of previous land use for rented and/or newly purchased land
- documentation of attempts to source organic seeds, seedlings, and/or planting stock
- documentation of organic seedlings
- field activity log(s)
- input records for soil amendments, seeds, manure, foliar sprays and pest control products
(keep all labels)
- residue analyses of inputs (i.e., manure sourced off-farm)
- compost production records
- monitoring records (soil tests, tissue tests, water tests, quality tests, observational)
- equipment cleaning records
- harvest records that show field numbers, date of harvest and harvest amounts
(including custom harvest records)
- labor records
- storage records that show storage location, storage identification, field numbers, amounts stored,
and cleaning activities
- clean transport records
- sales records (purchase order, contract, invoice, cash receipts, cash receipt journal,
sales journal, etc.)
- shipping records (scale ticket, dump station ticket, bill of lading)
- Transaction Certificates
- audit control summary
- complaint log (ISO 65 only)
- Internal Control Group records
- Vedic procedures records
- other (please specify)