

Organic Hemp Guidance



*Note: When applying for hemp certification, be sure to complete the Farm Plan, Hemp Compliance Affidavit and Hemp Supplement, along with all applicable forms (Field Histories, Landowner Affidavits, Materials list, etc.). **If you plan to process your hemp crop beyond a basic drying step, please complete the On-Farm Processing Supplement or the Organic Handling Plan.** If you have questions, contact the office for more information.*

1. Licensing

Growers who wish to certify hemp as organic must have an up-to-date license from the State of Maine and/or USDA. The acreage included in the Crop Supplement in the Organic System Plan for hemp must not exceed the acreage noted in the grower's hemp license. The address and GPS coordinates listed on the grower's hemp license must match the address of the field or fields included in the application. Each licensed grower must apply for organic certification separately. Growers wishing to produce and sell hemp seedlings must also include a copy of their State of Maine nursery license.

2. Seeds, Seedlings and Planting Stock (Clones)

National Organic Program (NOP) §205.204 regulations require the use of organic seeds, seedlings and planting stock, unless not commercially available in the form, quantity or quality required by the grower. Growers must conduct a reasonable search for organic seed. This means contacting at least three seed companies likely to carry organic seed and doing so during the time of year when there is likely to be inventory. Documentation of the seed or planting stock search is required.

a) Purchased Seed and/or Planting Stock - Purchased seed or planting stock must be certified organic unless not commercially available. Conventional seeds treated/coated with prohibited materials (e.g., fungicides, synthetic fertilizers), genetically engineered seed varieties, and GE legume inoculants are prohibited. *Note:* If seed or planting stock is imported, phytosanitary docs as well as Certificates of Analysis (COA's) are required. These documents verify that the seed wasn't irradiated, fumigated or otherwise treated for pest issues. For more information, please visit: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/hemp>

b) Feminized Seed- Feminized seed may be used provided the following parameters are met:

Chemically Induced Feminization- Chemical means can be used to produce feminized seed or pollen, however seed from the plant treated chemically cannot be used in certified organic production. Instead, seed from a plant at least one generation removed from the chemical process must be used in organic production.

Stress Induced Feminization- Techniques such as light manipulation can be used to produce feminized seed in organic production.

c) Annual Seedlings- Annual seedlings must be certified organic. Purchased annual seedlings must be from a certified organic source. All seedling production materials and methods must be described in the *Organic System Plan*.

d) Clones- Clones are considered equivalent to planting stock. Organic clones must be used unless not commercially available. Cloning methods and materials must be disclosed in the *Farm Plan* and *Hemp Supplement* and all materials must be permitted in organic production. MCS requires that clones be in a soil-based medium by at least three weeks of age. Rooting hormones are not permitted.

3. Crop Rotation, Soil Fertility, and Pest and Disease Control

Refer to MCS' Practice Manual for additional requirements and information related to crop rotation, soil fertility, and pest and disease control. Additional requirements may be applicable through state or federal licensing requirements regarding pest and disease control.

Please see the State of Maine DACF hemp website, under "*Other Hemp Resources*" for a list of pesticide products approved for use in hemp production.

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/hemp/>

Note: all inputs intended for use in the production of your hemp crop must be approved for organic use and must be fully disclosed in your application. This includes all fertility inputs (foliar sprays, soil inputs, and seedling fertility), fungicides, pesticides, sanitizers, microbial inputs, etc. Failure to provide full disclosure may result in the denial of your application.

4. Processing

If your final hemp product is processed *beyond a basic curing step*, you will need to complete an On-Farm Processing Supplement. If you use another company to dry the hemp for you, the facility you work with will need to be certified organic. All drying locations must be disclosed and require a site visit during the annual inspection. *Please note that some hemp-derived processed products are not permitted to carry organic marketing claims on product labels or related marketing materials per MCS policy. See the MCS Hemp-Derived Products Policy Statement for details.*

Please contact our office if you have additional questions at (207) 568-6030 or certification@mofga.org.