

Ensuring Organic Integrity via Traceability and Mass Balance Audits

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MOFGA Certification Services inspectors have begun placing more emphasis on traceability and mass balance audits at our annual inspection visits to both farms and food processing facilities. This is the result of a National Organic Program effort to ensure and protect the organic integrity of fresh and processed organic foods, as well as livestock feeds.

An **audit trail exercise** tests the ability of a client's record keeping system to provide traceability for all organic products and product ingredients. For example, the lot number on a container of jam should allow all jam ingredients to be traced back to the lot numbers on received shipments or deliveries of those ingredients. To create an auditable system, batch or production records are generally needed to record lot numbers for all ingredients used in a particular product batch.

The ability to trace ingredients via lot numbers also protects the producer in the event of a recall. With traceable lot numbers and accurate batch records in place, only the product batches containing the recalled ingredient lot number must be recalled, rather than all of the product.

When supply chains are short and local a lot number may not be needed. For example, unprocessed or minimally processed farm products (fruits, vegetables, eggs) sold directly to consumers via farmstands, farmer's markets and CSA's do not need a lot number (though harvest records can be used by your inspector for audit purposes).

When supply chains become longer or when farm products are incorporated into processed products, then a lot numbering system is needed to provide traceability. Lot numbers are needed in the following situations:

- Unprocessed farm products (fruits, vegetables, eggs) sold to local co-ops, stores, restaurants, as well as to food processors and distributors
- Processed farm products (cheese, milk, jam, pickles, meat) sold retail or wholesale
- All incoming ingredients and all products made in a processing or handling facility

A **mass balance audit** tests the ability of a record keeping system to track amounts of organic ingredients passing through your farm or facility. For example, over a particular time period, carrot harvest records should account for carrot sales plus carrots left in inventory. For processed products made with purchased ingredients, you will need to track ingredient amounts purchased, as well as amounts used in processed products. A periodic inventory is usually needed for processed products and ingredients that are stored until used or sold.

Please contact MOFGA Certification staff if you have any questions. MOFGA Agricultural Services (<https://mofgacertification.org/mofgas-agricultural-services>) can help you develop a record keeping system appropriate for the size and scale of your operation.



Each year, almost 60,000 visitors come to the MOFGA Fairgrounds to exchange knowledge, eat, and shop with our 650+ vendors and exhibitors. We are proud to provide a meeting place for our visitors from around the world to meet Maine artists, farmers, and businesses. As a MOFGA certified organic business, there are many ways to get involved:

Apply for a booth! MOFGA certified organic businesses can apply to several of our Fair areas and are eligible for a booth discount if accepted. Applications for the various areas open as early as November - browse the areas, guidelines and application dates at mofga.org/the-fair.

Advertise in the MOF&G Newspaper. You can advertise in each quarterly is-sue of the *Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener* newspaper. For more information visit <https://mofga.org/Publications/The-Main-Organic-Farmer-Gardener/advertising>. The newspaper is mailed to all MOFGA members quarterly and the fall issue is the *Common Ground Country Fairbook*, which is distributed to nearly 60,000 people at the

fair. MOFGA certified producers receive a 25% discount on advertising costs. Additional discounts are offered for MOFGA business members and for advertising year round.

Donate to the Common Kitchen! In 2019, we served over 5,600 meals to Fair volunteers throughout set up and the Fair. All meals were made with delicious, organic ingredients donated to us by farms, producers and markets like all of you!

Become a member. All MOFGA business or organic producer members receive two free passes to the Fair in addition to the other benefits of membership. Visit <https://www.mofga.org/Community/Support/Membership> for more information.

Questions? Contact the Fair Office at 207-568-4142 ext. 6041 or commonground@mofga.org.

