

Organic Certification: The Basics

Organic growers should be certified by an accredited third party agency. Certification is an assurance to consumers, retailers and brokers of organic produce that the produce marketed as “certified organic” has been grown under standards set by the National Organic Program. Growers with less than \$5,000 in annual organic sales are exempted from the certification requirement, but are encouraged to file an affidavit of NOP compliance with a third party certifier.

Certification costs will vary, but a significant portion of the cost may be reimbursed by federal cost share program managed by the Hawai’i department of Agriculture. More information see: <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/add/md/organiccostshare/>

To begin the certification process, contact one of the certification agencies operating in Hawaii for an application (See table below). This table has been updated to reflect most recent data available. Third party certifiers continue to consolidate and this is reflected in the reduced number of certifiers in the State. For example A Bee Organics and International Certification Services have been recently acquired by Where Food Comes From.

An important part of your application is describing your organic system plan (OSP). For assistance in developing your OSP, contact your local UH Cooperative Extension Office <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/Map.aspx>

For more information on certification, see: www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification



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Table 1. List of USDA accredited third party certifiers operating in Hawaii. Compiled from: USDA National Organic Program List of certified USDA organic operations (<https://organic.ams.usda.gov/Integrity/>). Accessed 03/17/2021.

Certification Agency (listed in alphabetical order)	Website	Number of operations certified in Hawai'i	Percentage of operations certified in Hawai'i
CCOF Certification Services	ccof.org	15	10%
Control Union Certification	https:// certifications.controlunion	1	<1%
Ecocert	ecocert.com/en	1	<1%
International Certification Services (Recently purchased by Where Food Comes From)	http:// wherefoodcomesfrom.co m/division/international- certification-services/	76	50%
Organic Certifiers	organiccertifiers.com	41	27%
Oregon Tilth Certified Organic	tilth.org	9	6%
Quality Assurance International	qai-inc.com	4	2%
Where Food Comes From	https:// www.wfcfororganic.com/	5	3%
TOTAL		151	100%