Organic and the law

- Outline:
  1. History (read about it yourself in ATTRA’s organic crop production overview)
  2. The NOP, The Farmer and the Certifier
  3. Getting certified
  4. The Organic System plan

The NOP and The Farmer

- Read about it: ATTRA’s ‘Organic farm certification and the national organic program’
- 2002, Federal Law implemented
- The National Organic Program (USDA): uniform standards for organic
- The NOSB: approves/changes standards
- Grower says: ‘I’m Organic!’
- Government says: Aha! You have made an agreement with us to follow NOP guidelines. Break this agreement and punishment ranges from no longer being organic to fines, prison or both. Double Aha!

The NOP and the Certifier

- Law says: let’s have someone in between grower and gov’t. (Read about the reasons for this yourself). We’ll call them Certifiers.
- Certifier says: ‘I’m a Certifier!’
- Gov’t says: ‘Aha!’ and the NOP investigates and collects a fee. Certifier becomes an agent of the federal government.
- Certifier verifies that farmer is doing what he said he would do. Farmer gets a federal license.
- Must be certified. One exception: <$5k/yr. Agreement is then directly with gov’t.

Getting Certified

1. Choose a certifier. 50/95
2. Apply (pay $).  
3. Send in OSP (What’s an OSP?)
5. Inspection. Consistencies and inconsistencies.
6. Review. Conditions that must be resolved
The Organic System Plan

- The fundamental document
- Agreement between grower and certifier
- Description of practices to show how grower will meet the standards
- Site specific and a 'living' document (it updates)
- See examples: ATTRA, CCOF

The Organic System Plan (OSP)

1. Map. Size of farm, potential for problems from surrounding area.
2. Three yr. verification.
4. Soil management. Describe your version of GFM. Soil o.m/ rotations/ *off farm inputs (fertilizers)/system design.

OSP (continued)

5. Pest management. Describe your version of GFM: system design/*inputs. (pesticides)/rotations. *You can’t use pesticides without first trying prevention.*

Remember:

- Update your OSP before or during your annual re-inspection.
- Notify certifier before you use new inputs (even if they are OMRI)