



Quick Facts: Research and On-Farm Trials

Research and on-farm trials provide insight and opportunity for farmers of all scales. These activities may involve extension staff or others who are not directly employed by the farm. The operator of a certified organic farm is responsible for all activities occurring on their organic sites, and must ensure that inputs and practices comply with USDA organic regulations.

Report Activities

Certified organic operations must update their system plan to include all activities which occur on their certified sites, including research and on-farm trials. WSDA Organic Program must review and approve any changes to your organic system plan, including input materials, prior to use.

Step 1

Prevent Contamination

In order to maintain organic certification, prohibited materials or practices must not be introduced. Research trials may involve a conventional 'check' to measure efficacy of new practices. Conventional controls must be outside site boundaries and must not contaminate certified crops or land.

Step 2

Ensure Integrity

Farmers may not be in direct control of the research or farm trial conducted, but are ultimately responsible for ensuring all activities on their certified sites meet the standards defined by the USDA organic regulations.

Step 3

Research and On-Farm Trials

Minimize risks when using shared equipment

Equipment belonging to researchers may be used on your certified site as long as procedures are implemented and documented to ensure the equipment does not pose a contamination or commingling risk.

To maintain the organic integrity of your operation, ensure that researchers notify you of all activities and inputs not under your control.

Additional Resources

USDA Organic Research, Education, and Extension Programs

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic/organic-research-education-and-extension-programs>

WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resource: Research in Organic

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/program-areas/organic-agriculture/>

Organic Farming Research Foundation

<https://www.ofrf.org/research>



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