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USDA Allows Flexibilities for Organic Certification Amid Coronavirus Pandemic

News Release |
Washington DC

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May 4, 2020

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WASHINGTON, May 4, 2020 – Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) may allow organic producers to report acreage as certified organic, or transitioning to organic, for the 2020 crop year if they can show they have requested a written certification from a certifying agent by their policy’s acreage reporting date. USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) made available this flexibility to help those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Many state and local governments have issued “stay-at-home” orders and have shut down non-essential businesses, resulting in market disruptions and preventing in-person crop insurance transactions.

“As the pandemic continues, RMA is also continuing to add more flexibilities to assist America’s farmers and ranchers,” RMA Administrator Martin Barbre said. “We will ensure that the Federal crop insurance program continues to serve the needs of our nation’s producers.”

In addition, policyholders who have requested but not received an organic certificate, organic plan, or other written documentation must notify their insurance agent within 30 days after the certifying agent informs them of their organic plan or certificate status. The policyholder notification may be made by phone, email, text, or other electronic communication method, and the AIPs must document the policyholder’s notification. Policyholders will be required to either sign digitally at the

time of submission or must follow up with properly signed forms no later than July 15, 2020.

More Information

RMA announced other flexibilities on [March 27](#), [April 3](#), and [April 10](#), including enabling producers to send notifications and reports electronically, extending the date for production reports, providing additional time and deferring interest on premium and other payments, allowing the use of self-certification replant inspections for certain crops, waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignment of Indemnity, addressing milk dumping, and extending other deadlines. See all [RMA Managers Bulletins](#) for more detailed information.

RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email).

For the most current updates on available services, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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Risk Management Agency:

1400 Independence Ave. SW Washington, DC 20250

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk

FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov