



Comparison of the Major Certification Agencies in the Carolinas

Originally compiled by Molly Hamilton, North Carolina State University
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	<u>Clemson University's Department of Plant Industry</u>
Contact Information	Ryan Merck 511 Westinghouse Rd, Pendleton, SC 29670 Phone: 864-646-2129 Website: www.clemson.edu/organic
Pricing for crop certification	<u>Services only available to SC-based operations.</u> Initial certification costs (non-refundable): \$750 Renewal certification costs: \$200 + 0.5% of gross annual organic sales Operations with less than \$5000 gross annual organic sales: Initial certification costs (non-refundable): \$200 Renewal Certification costs: \$200 + 0.5% of gross annual organic sales
Inspectors	Located in Pendleton, SC.
Average turn-around time	2 months
Other organic certification	Yes - livestock, processors/handlers, farmers.
Experience	Certifying organic operations since April 2002.
Activism	Involved with some local organic organizations such as CFSA.

	<u>International Certification Services</u>
Contact Information	Marlene Ells 301 Fifth Avenue SE, Medina, ND 58467 Phone: 701-486-3578 Website: www.ics-intl.com
Pricing for crop certification	<p>1. Initial Application Fee: \$200, one-time set up fee</p> <p>2. (Step 1) Base Fee (plus inspection minimum): \$550 Constitutes \$425 base fee + \$125 inspection minimum (applied to inspection costs after they are incurred)</p> <p>3. (Step 2) Inspection Fee: Varies based on inspector travel expenses and how long the inspection takes.</p> <p>4. (Step 3) Per Unit Fee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agronomic Crops: \$1.55/acre • Specialty Crops: \$3.65/acre • Orchard/Garden: \$16.00/acre • Greenhouse: \$0.03/sq ft (\$50 minimum) • Hydroponics/Aquaponics: \$0.03/sq ft (\$50 minimum) • Livestock: Per head fee based upon species. <p>Contact ICS for a no-obligation, risk-free cost estimate - estimated total costs can then be assessed from the very beginning. <i>Bundling rates available for operations certifying to multiple programs in addition to organic.</i></p>
Inspectors	Local independent organic inspectors
Average turn-around time	3-4 months
Other organic certification	Yes - livestock, processors/handlers, farmers. Also accredited to certify to IFOAM (Farm Verified Organic) standards and equivalencies for international organic export programs. <i>Other certifications/verifications outside of organic certification include: Gluten-Free, Non-GMO Project Technical Administrator (in cooperation with Where Food Comes From), Food Alliance, Better Cotton Initiative and various livestock verification programs.</i>
Experience	Certifying organic operations since 1980.
Activism	Involved with Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA), Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (NPSAS), Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA), North Dakota Organic Advisory Board and Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) Board. Supporter of Farm Rescue and State/National FFA Organizations.

	<u>Quality Certification Services (QCS)</u>
Contact Information	<p>Virginia Office: Brian Cricket Rakita 286 Dixie Hollow, Louisa, VA 23093 Phone: 540-894-7855</p> <p>Main Office P.O. Box 12311, Gainesville, FL 32604 Phone: 352-377-0133 Website: www.qcsinfo.org</p>
Pricing for crop certification	<p>Standard Farm Certification: First year / Renewal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-20 acres: \$250 / \$200 • 21-99 acres: \$300 / \$250 • 100-500 acres: \$375 / \$325 • More than 500 acres: \$475 / \$425 <p>Assessment fees : 0.5% of gross organic sales, assessed twice a year in January & July Minimum assessment: \$150/year, \$75/period Maximum assessment: \$6000/year</p> <p>Inspection fee: Varies based on inspector travel expenses and how long the inspection takes.</p>
Inspectors	One inspector servicing the entire region from Louisa, VA. Contract inspectors in the NC Triangle & Triad regions as well as the Cherokee, Pisgah and Great Smokey Mountain Forest regions.
Average turn-around time	3 months
Other organic certification	Yes - livestock, processors/handlers, farmers, wildcrafting.
Experience	Certifying organic operations since 1989.
Activism	Involved in many state and federal level organic committees and advisory boards.

	<u>CCOF Certification Services</u>
Contact Information	Jane Wade 2155 Delaware Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (831) 423-2263 ext. 43 Regional Representation in North Carolina Website: www.ccof.org
Pricing for crop certification	<p>Initial application fee (non-refundable): \$325</p> <p>Annual certification fee based on annual sales of organic crops:</p> <p>Up to \$10,000 annually: \$220 \$10,001 to \$20,000: \$300 \$20,001 to \$50,000: \$375 \$50,001 to \$100,000: \$575 \$100,001 to \$200,000: \$650 \$200,001 to \$300,000: \$775</p> <p>Fee schedule for sales above \$300,000 available on the CCOF website: www.ccof.org/certification/fees</p> <p>Inspection fee: Based on time and travel. Farm inspections usually range between \$300 and \$800.</p>
Inspectors	Local independent organic inspectors
Average turn-around time	60 to 90 days for standard services. Expedited certification services available at additional cost reduces
Other organic certification	Yes - Livestock, Processor/Handler, Retail and Restaurants.
Experience	Founded in 1973, CCOF is the largest and one of the oldest certification agencies in the U.S.
Activism	CCOF's trade association educates, advocates, and promotes organic and CCOF members nationally, including with the National Organic Standards Board.