



Draft Guidance Wild Crop Harvesting

1. Purpose

This guidance document provides clarifications on ways in which accredited certifying agents (ACAs) and certified operations can demonstrate compliance with §205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all ACAs and certified operations that certify or harvest wild crops as organic.

3. Policy

Operations may be certified for wild-crop harvesting if they are harvesting crops from a defined terrestrial or aquatic area, but are not managing the area or crop other than for harvest. If the operation is re-planting, seeding, irrigating, fertilizing or applying any crop management techniques other than harvesting, they should not be considered eligible for wild-crop certification and should be considered a crop producer instead.

Examples of wild-crops include:

- Wild mushroom collection
- Wild herb collection
- Kelp and seaweed
- Wild blueberries

4. Procedure

1. Applicants for wild harvest crops organic certification should complete the basic organic producer application forms and certification criteria.
2. A wild-crop harvesting organic system plan (OSP) can include:
 - a) A full map of the area(s) to be harvested defining boundaries, borders, adequate buffer zones, point and non-point sources of contaminants and prohibited materials, and crops to be harvested.
 - b) For land based wild crop harvest areas, documentation that no prohibited materials have been applied to the land within the last three years.
 - c) For aquatic based wild crop harvest areas, documentation that no prohibited materials have been applied or contaminated the harvest area within the last three years.
 - d) A description of the harvest plan, including:
 - i. A description of the natural environment of the harvest area (e.g. scrub steppe, oak-chaparral woodland).



- ii. Practices that ensure that harvesting will not jeopardize the long-term viability of the crop in the wild.
 - iii. Written procedures for all collectors that ensure that the crops are harvested sustainably and in a manner that does not damage the environment.
 - e) A list of any endangered terrestrial or aquatic plants or animals that occur in the harvest area.
 - f) Recordkeeping system that, at a minimum, records all collectors, harvest dates, and quantity of wild harvest crops harvested.
 - g) A description of the monitoring system that will be used to ensure that the crop is harvested in a sustainable manner that does not damage the environment, including soil and water quality.
 - h) Procedures to prevent contamination from adjoining land use or other sources of contamination.
3. In the case of wild-harvesting plants on land that is already certified organic, the applicant does not have to apply separately. The wild crop should be inspected at the time of the farm inspection to ensure that it complies with the wild-crop harvest standards.
 4. In the case of public lands or waterways, the responsible authority of those lands or waterways should verify that no prohibited materials have been applied to the land or waterways for at least three years prior to harvest.
 5. In the case of private lands and waterways, the owner shall provide a verification that no prohibited materials have been applied to the land or waterways for at least three years prior to harvest.

Inspection criteria to verify compliance could include:

1. An inspection of the harvest area, prior to harvest, to ensure that crops are being sustainably harvested.
2. Verification that the species of plants being harvested are the intended species and that these are the same species specified on the application and in the OSP.
3. An interview with the wild harvester and the wild crop collectors to verify that practices employed during harvest correspond to those documented in the OSP.
4. A review of all written harvest procedures to verify that they are being implemented and that all collectors have been adequately trained.
5. An inspection of handlers within the chain of custody of the wild harvest crop.

3. References:

Terms Defined §205.2

Wild crop. Any plant or portion of a plant that is collected or harvested from a site that is not maintained under cultivation or other agricultural management.



§205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard.

- (a) A wild crop that is intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be harvested from a designated area that has had no prohibited substance, as set forth in §205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding the harvest of the wild crop.
- (b) A wild crop must be harvested in a manner that ensures that such harvesting or gathering will not be destructive to the environment and will sustain the growth and production of the wild crop.

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