

The USDA published its proposed rule to exempt more organic farmers from paying into conventional commodity check-off programs on December 16. The proposed rule would extend the exemption for organic farmers, handlers, marketers and importers to products that are certified “organic” or “100 percent organic” and also to those who produce, process, handle or import both organic and conventional products.

Instructions for submitting comments to USDA

To submit comments to USDA online (regulations.gov) on the rule on an Organic Exemption from Conventional Commodity Check-offs, [click on this direct link and follow the instructions](#) we have provided:

Step 1. If your comment is less than one page (5,000 characters), enter your comment in the “Comment” box. If you are attaching comments as a separate file, click on “Choose files” to select and upload your document.

Step 2. Enter your “First Name”, “Last Name”, “City” and “ZIP/Postal Code”.

Step 3. If you want to give additional Contact Information, enter that information. Otherwise, leave those fields empty.

Step 4. Click “Continue” to see “Your Preview” and verify the information you entered. You may click “Edit” if you need to make changes. Otherwise, click the box “*I read and understand the statement above*” and click “Submit Comment.”

To submit written comments, mail your comments to:

Docket Clerk, Marketing Order and Agreement Division, Fruit and Vegetable Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
STOP 0237
Washington, DC 20250-0237

Be sure to include the Agency Name and docket number as shown on the sample letter:

Organic Exemption from Conventional Commodity Check-offs Rule: AMS-FV-14-0032-0001 (Dec. 16, 2014) (Federal Register Number 2014-29280) (79 Fed. Reg. 75006 et seq.)

Note: Because of the tight timeframe (and holidays), please contact both [Marni Karlin](#), OTA’s Vice President of Government Affairs/General Counsel, AND [Laura Batcha](#), OTA’s Executive Director/CEO, if you have any questions, if you need assistance in filing your own comments, or if you would like to provide feedback on the proposed rule.