



Managing Split & Parallel Production Crop Systems

This factsheet is designed to help producers navigate the complexities of managing split and parallel production systems while maintaining organic integrity.

UNDERSTANDING SPLIT & PARALLEL PRODUCTION

- Split production: A portion of the farm is managed using organic practices, while the rest follows conventional methods.
 - An example of split production would be farms growing most of their crops using conventional practices but growing organic asparagus.
- Parallel production: The same crop is grown in both organic and conventional systems within the same operation.
 - An example of a parallel production system would be farms growing both organic and conventional spinach.

Both systems require strict measures to prevent contamination of organic products by conventional practices.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGING SPLIT AND PARALLEL SYSTEMS

Seeding

- Remove all fungicides from planting equipment before seeding organic crops.
- Thoroughly clean and inspect all equipment used for planting to ensure no residue or contamination.

Irrigation

- If shared irrigation systems are used for chemical applications, implement decontamination protocols.
- Maintain a cleanout log to document equipment cleaning and ensure compliance with organic standards.

Harvesting

- Establish and document equipment cleanout procedures to prevent commingling of organic and conventional products.
- Clearly label all crates, bins, and containers used for harvested materials.
- Clean tools and equipment thoroughly if shared between organic and conventional harvests.

Transportation

- Clean vehicles and tarps thoroughly before transporting organic crops.
- Maintain a cleanout log documenting cleaning procedures and details of prior cargo.

Storage

- Keep organic and conventional crops separate by storing them in different locations with the names clearly marked.
- Label all storage bins and areas to distinguish between organic and conventional products.

Buffers

- Adequate buffer zones are essential to prevent contamination of organic crops. Refer to our **buffer zone guide** for details.
- In operations that are non-certified but follow organic practices, buffer zones may not be required; however, strict storage and record-keeping procedures are mandatory.

RECORD KEEPING

- Maintain detailed records for at least five years to demonstrate compliance with organic standards.
- Key documents include cleanout logs, storage logs, and inspection reports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Consult the National Organic Program (NOP) for official guidance.
- Call the Marbleseed Organic Answer Line at 888-906-6737 ext. 1 or email specialist@marbleseed.org

THE TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM CAN HELP!

Through the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), you can apply for a mentorship program to learn through the guidance of an experienced organic producer. The TOPP mentorship program will help you set goals, navigate the transition and certification process, get expert advice and guidance on organic best practices and certification, and receive support to write an OSP. If a mentorship pairing isn't the right fit, you can also sign up for technical assistance to work 1:1 with a service provider to develop your OSP, learn how to create and maintain a successful recordkeeping system, receive help with preparing for your first inspection, and understand how your operation can meet the organic regulations. Learn more about offerings through TOPP at www.organictransition.org.



CONTACT US OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

If you have more questions about certification or organic rules, call the Marbleseed Organic Answer Line at 888-906-6737 ext. 1 or email specialist@marbleseed.org. You can also find many resources on our Marbleseed website and request free copies of select publications online at marbleseed.org/resources/organic-resource-directory.

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