**Organic Overview**

The organic industry has seen rapid growth in the last several years and it continues to expand as more and more produces and consumers become aware of the advantages behind growing and eating organic. Economic, environmental, health and social benefits surround the many reasons why the organic industry continues to expand. Through environmentally sound practices, organic producers and processors strive to sustain the health of the earth while providing quality food for those who inhabit it. TCO Cert requires that its producers and processors strictly adhere to organic standards. Those who choose to certify their products with TCO Cert are maintaining the integrity and environmentally sound stewardship that goes hand in hand with providing consumers with quality organic products.

**Organic Agriculture**

* Organic agriculture is based on a system of farming that maintains and replenishes soil fertility without the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.
  + Soil is enriched with compost, green manure or other organic inputs.
  + Weeds, pests and disease are controlled through crop rotation, carefully timed mechanical and manual intervention, beneficial insects and the selective use of natural, non-chemical pesticides.
  + Products are grown and processed without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), or other synthetic inputs.

**Organic Livestock**

* Organic livestock are provided with quality living environments and are raised without hormones or antibiotics.
  + All agricultural products used for feed or feed ingredients, including pastures, must be certified organic to the respective program. All feed additives must also be of a natural source (i.e., no chemosynthetic processing, extraction, genetic modification).
  + Meat, eggs and dairy products can be certified organic.
  + Feeding of mammalian or poultry by-products to mammals or poultry is prohibited.
  + Any feed product containing manure or urea is prohibited.

Growing organic is about working with the ecosystem and limiting pollution and erosion, which ensures a better habitat for both humans and animals. Using environmentally friendly methods in turn nurtures the land and promotes the long-term sustainability of soil and water supplies. The result is a better lifestyle for the grower, a healthy alternative for consumers and a positive step forward for the environment.

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