

Produce and Livestock Inspection Guidelines

Please read this now to ensure your certification remains in good standing. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in an invalid inspection.

- Take the Initiative You are responsible for making the arrangements to have your farm inspected - no one else will set them up for you. However, if you need assistance finding an inspector or finding out if an inspector is valid, we are here to help.
- Annual Requirement Inspections shall be conducted annually (with a 4 month grace period) ideally by different qualified inspectors each year. If your farm is Certified Organic, you may send a copy of your organic certificate in place of a CNG report. You may be de-listed from the CNG program if you do not arrange an inspection for your own farm in a timely manner.
- No Trading To avoid a conflict of interest, there is no trading inspections within two consecutive years. If Farmer A inspects Farmer B's farm, then Farmer B should not inspect Farmer A's farm until
 - At least 24 months have passed, or
 - Farmer A has been inspected by someone other than Farmer B.
- Repeating Inspectors You may not repeatedly rely on the same inspector when there are other CNG farmers nearby. Doing so risks compromising the integrity of the program and fails to provide you diverse perspectives and feedback. Repeating an inspector two years in a row requires an Observer (see [Include An Observer](#)). The Observer cannot be an employee, intern, or family member of either you or the inspector.
- Work Requirement Every CNG producer must *conduct* at least one inspection of another CNG operation (of a similar type) annually. You may be de-listed from the CNG program if you do not fulfill this requirement. This requirement is waived if there is not another CNG producer within an hour's drive of you.
- Inspections by family members, employees, and interns are not considered valid.

Types of Inspectors

- **CNG Producers:** When possible, have your inspection done by another CNG producer in your area who is familiar with your type of production (so a beekeeper shouldn't inspect a livestock producer, unless they also have experience with livestock). Use our [map](#) to find CNG producers in your area, or call us if you do not have access to the internet.
- **Remote Inspection (conducted by a CNG producer):** Please review our [Remote Inspection Policy](#) to determine if you are eligible for this option. If you proceed with this option, be sure both the farmer and inspector adhere to our [Remote Inspection Checklists](#).
- **Other Producers using Natural Practices:** As an alternative, you may rely on a non-CNG farmer using natural practices. Consider contacting a certified organic farmer, or a non-certified producer using natural methods who is familiar with your type of production. The inspector must be a farmer producing for market, *not a gardener*.
- **Extension Agents & SWCD Agents:** In many areas, extension agents have been pleased to conduct inspections, but attitudes vary. The response you get may depend on how big-ag friendly your extension agency is.
- **Educators:** Someone who teaches courses on natural farming practices may conduct your inspection, so long as they can indicate an institutional affiliation.
- **Customers (3 or more):** This option is only to be used by members who have had at least two inspections conducted by one of the options listed above. Invite 3 customers to visit at the same time, when things are interesting and active (and you'll be able to spare a couple hours). One customer will complete the inspection forms while the other two should be given a blank page to write down their notes. They will all sign the Summary Page and share their contact information on the following pages. *The inspection forms are designed to walk people who don't know a lot about farming through a meaningful inspection process.*

Tips for Success

- Use our [map](#) to find CNG members near you.
- Use the phone! Email is fine for initial outreach, but a follow-up phone call often gets much better results. Be sure to introduce yourself, explain where you are located, and what times might work best for you.
- Follow-up! If your inspector made vague plans to come by, but never did, go ahead and give them a call. A friendly reminder is usually all that's needed to get the job done. If necessary, find someone else to inspect.