Select Resources for Preparing for the CCA Organic Specialty Certification Exam

The resources listed here may aid in your study as you prepare for the CCA Organic Specialty Certification exam. American Society of Agronomy and the International Certified Crop Adviser Program do not endorse any of these publications, nor is this list meant to be inclusive. The best way to ensure you are ready for this specialty exam is to be sure you can explain all of the items in the CCA Organic Specialty Exam Performance Objectives.

General Resources

- eOrganic. (2026). *eOrganic* [Home page]. https://eorganic.org/
- Frick, B., Telford, L., Thiessen Martens, J., & Wallace, J. (2017). *Organic field crop handbook* (3rd ed.). Canadian Organic Growers.
- Krieger, M., Powell-Palm, N., & Gurda, A. (2024). *Organic field crop production* [Video series]. SARE. https://northcentral.sare.org/resources/organic-field-crop-production-videos/
- National Organic Program, 7 C.F.R. 205 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205
- NCAT. (2026). *ATTRA tools and media: Publications*. https://www.ncat.org/tools-and-media/?media-type=publication
- OATS. *Organic Agronomy Training Service* [Home page]. https://www.organicagronomy.org/
- OMRI. (2026). *OMRI* [Home page]. https://www.omri.org/
- Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF). (2026). *OFRF's organic research hub*. https://hub.ofrf.org/
- University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program. (2005). *Organic farming compliance handbook.* University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources. https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/organic-compliance
- USDA-AMS. (2012). *Guide for organic crop producers*. USDA, ATTRA. https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Guide-OrganicCropProducers.pdf
- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). (n.d.). *Sound and sensible video series*. https://agr.wa.gov/departments/organic/resources/certification-videos

Competency Area 1: USDA National Organic Program Regulations

- Allowed and Prohibited Substances, Methods, and Ingredients in Organic Production and Handling, 7 C.F.R. § 205.105 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-B/section-205.105
  (Performance Objective 1)

- Azarbad, H. (2022). Conventional vs. organic agriculture: Which one promotes better yields and microbial resilience in rapidly changing climates? *Frontiers in Microbiology* 13:903500. https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2022.903500
  (Performance Objective 5)

- California Department of Food and Agriculture. (n.d.). *California State Organic Program*. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/organicprogram/
  (Performance Objective 4)

- CCOF. (2025). *Verify the organic status of your ingredients and suppliers: USDA organic integrity database*. https://www.ccof.org/news/usda-organic-integrity-database/
  (Performance Objective 3)

- Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Management Practice Standard, 7 C.F.R. § 205.206 (2025). https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2025-title7-vol3/CFR-2025-title7-vol3-sec205-206
  (Performance Objective 1)

- Crop Rotation Practice Standard, 7 C.F.R. § 205.205 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-C/section-205.205
  (Performance Objective 1)

- Krieger, M. (2026). *Organic certification 101: USDA NOP regulations, certification, inspection, and record keeping* [Webinar]. American Society of Agronomy. https://web.sciencesocieties.org/Learning-Center/Courses/Course-Detail?productid={DA688D67-A170-F111-AB0D-7CED8D7004D9}
  (Performance Objectives 1–7)

- Land Requirements, 7 C.F.R. § 205.202 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-C/section-205.202
  (Performance Objectives 1, 6)

- Langemeier, M., and Fang, X. (2020). *Comparison of organic and conventional crop rotations*. Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture. https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2020/06/comparison-of-conventional-and-organic-crop-rotations/
  (Performance Objective 5)

- Soil Fertility and Crop Nutrient Standard, 7 C.F. R. § 205.203 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-C/section-205.203
  (Performance Objective 1)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *5025: Commingling and contamination prevention in organic production and handling*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook/5025
  (Performance Objectives 6–7)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *National Organic Program*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program
  (Performance Objective 1)
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Organic integrity database*. https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/
  (Performance Objective 3)
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Organic regulations*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic
  (Performance Objectives 1–4)
- USDA-AMS. (2025). *National Organic Program handbook: Guidance and instructions for accredited certifying agents and certified operations*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook
  (Performance Objectives 1–4)
- WSDA Organic Program. (2024). *Establishing organic buffers*. Washington State Department of Agriculture. https://cms.agr.wa.gov/getmedia/4b68a2a0-bbc4-4959-a9b8-e5025f806da3/3025_OrganicBuffers
  (Performance Objective 6)

Competency Area 2: Certification, Inspection, and Record Keeping

- Ecocert USA. (n.d.). *Resources and guidance*. https://usa.ecocert.com/Resources
  (Performance Objectives 1–7)
- Krieger, M. (2026). *Organic certification 101: USDA NOP regulations, certification, inspection, and record keeping* [Webinar]. American Society of Agronomy. https://web.sciencesocieties.org/Learning-Center/Courses/Course-Detail?productid={DA688D67-A170-F111-AB0D-7CED8D7004D9}
  (Performance Objectives 1–7)
- Recordkeeping by Certified Operations, C. F. R. 7 § 205.103 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-B/section-205.103
  (Performance Objective 2)
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Organic certifier panel on common issues of concern* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXljyMYegqc
  (Performance Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Steps to organic certification in California* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsXT-ia4tCk
  (Performance Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *The organic system plan*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/organic-system-plan
  (Performance Objective 2)
- USDA-AMS. (2024). *The organic certification process*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2601.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1–7)

Competency Area 3: Organic Fertility Management

- Sanchez. E., & Richard, T. L. (2013). *Using organic nutrient sources*. Penn State Extension. https://extension.psu.edu/using-organic-nutrient-sources
  (Performance Objectives 2–3)

- Snapp, S. S., Ugarte, C. M., Hunter, D. W., and Wander, M. M. (2022). *Cover crops for soil health*. doi:10.19103/as.2021.0094.11
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364680683_Cover_crops_for_soil_health
  (Performance Objective 1)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Fraudulent organic certificates*.
  https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/enforcement/organic/fraudulent-certificates
  (Performance Objective 3)

- USDA-NRCS. (2011). *Carbon to nitrogen ratios in cropping systems*.
  https://soilhealth.ucdavis.edu/application/files/6715/4222/0656/USDA_C_to_N_ratios.pdf
  (Performance Objective 2)

- Wander, M. Andrews, N., & McQueen, J. (2009). *Organic soil fertility*. eORganic.
  https://eorganic.org/node/1471
  (Performance Objectives 1–3)

- White, C., & Barbercheck, M. (2017). *Managing soil health: Concepts and practices*. Penn State Extension. https://extension.psu.edu/managing-soil-health-concepts-and-practices
  (Performance Objective 1)

- Wortman, S. E., Wortmann, C. S., Linville Pine, A., Shapiro, C. A., Thompson, A. A., & Little, R. S. (2021). *Nutrient management in organic farming* (G2295). Nebraska Extension. https://extensionpubs.unl.edu/publication/g2295/2017/pdf/view/g2295-2017.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1–2)

Competency Area 4: Organic Pest Management

- Andrews, N. (2023). *Materials allowed for organic disease management*. Pacific Northwest Extension. https://pnwhandbooks.org/plantdisease/pesticide-articles/materials-allowed-organic-disease-management
  (Performance Objective 2)

- Baker, B. (2005). Materials used in organic farming. In *Organic farming compliance handbook*. University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources.
  https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk9171/files/inline-files/ComplianceHandbook_MaterialsUsed.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1–2)

- Baker, B. (2005). Organic system plan overview. In *Organic farming compliance handbook*. University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources.
  https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk9171/files/inline-files/ComplianceHandbook_OrganicSystemPlanOverview.pdf
  (Performance Objective 2)

- Caldwell, B., Sideman, E., Seaman, A., Shelton, T., & Shelton, C. (2013). *Resource guide for organic insect and disease management* (2nd ed.). New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Guide-for-Organic-Insect-and-Disease-Management.pdf
  (Performance Objective 1)
- NCAT. 2004. *Organic IPM field guide*. https://www.ncat.org/publication/organic-ipm-field-guide/
  (Performance Objective 1)
- USEPA. *Integrated pest management (IPM) principles*. https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/integrated-pest-management-ipm-principles
  (Performance Objective 1)

Competency Area 5: Organic Weed Management

- Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Management Practice Standard, 7 C.F.R. § 205.206 (2025). https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2025-title7-vol3/CFR-2025-title7-vol3-sec205-206
  (Performance Objective 3)
- Colquhoun, J. (2007). *Weed management in organic vegetable production* (A3845). University of Wisconsin Extension. https://urbanagriculture.horticulture.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2016/01/Weed-Management-in-Organic-Vegetable-Production-A3845.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1–4)
- Finney, D. M., & Creamer, N. G. (2024). *Weed management on organic farms* (AG-659-07). North Carolina State University Extension. https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/weed-management-on-organic-farms
  (Performance Objectives 1–4)
- Grubinger, V. (2010). *Managing weed seed rain*. University of Vermont Extension. https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/weedseedrain.html
  (Performance Objectives 1, 3)
- Mohammed, A. T. (2025). *Can precision irrigation be an effective approach to suppress weed pressure in organic lettuce systems?* (az2154). University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. https://extension.arizona.edu/publication/can-precision-irrigation-be-effective-approach-suppress-weed-pressure-organic-lettuce
  (Performance Objective 1)
- Mohler, C. L., Teasdale, J. R., & DiTommaso, A. (2021). *Manage weeds on your farm: A guide to ecological strategies*. SARE. https://www.sare.org/resources/manage-weeds-on-your-farm/
  (Performance Objectives 1–3)
- Pressman, A., & Rodriguez, O. (2023). *Equipment and tools for small-scale intensive crop production* (IP417). NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/publication/equipment-and-tools-for-small-scale-intensive-crop-production/
  (Performance Objective 3)

- Reberg-Horton, C., & Cahoon, C. (2024). Weed management. Chapter 10. In *North Carolina organic commodities production guide*. https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/north-carolina-organic-commodities-production-guide/chapter-10-weed-management *(Performance Objectives 1, 3)*
- Schonbeck, M., Jerkins, D., & Ory, J. (2017). *Weed management: An ecological approach*. Organic Farming Research Foundation. https://ofrf.org/soil-health-and-organic-farming-reports/weed-management-an-ecological-approach/ *(Performance Objectives 1–4)*
- Tallman, S. (2011). *Weed management in organic small grains* (IP390). NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/publication/weed-management-in-organic-small-grains/ *(Performance Objectives 2–4)*
- Taylor, E., Renner, K., & Sprague, C. (2008). *Integrated weed management: Fine tuning the system* (Extension Bulletin E-3065). Michigan State University. https://www.canr.msu.edu/weeds/extension/factsheets/IWM%20Fine%20Tuning_WholeDoc.pdf *(Performance Objectives 1–3)*
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Organic weed management* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIlIAOoDUi4 *(Performance Objectives 1-4)*

Competency Area 6: Organic Pest Bacteria and Fungi Management

- Caldwell, B., Sideman, E., Seaman, A., Shelton, T., & Shelton, C. (2013). *Resource guide for organic insect and disease management* (2nd ed.). New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Guide-for-Organic-Insect-and-Disease-Management.pdf *(Performance Objectives 1–4)*
- Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Management Practice Standard, 7 C.F.R. § 205.206 (2025). https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2025-title7-vol3/CFR-2025-title7-vol3-sec205-206 *(Performance Objective 3)*
- Pressman, A., & Rodriguez, O. (2023). *Equipment and tools for small-scale intensive crop production* (IP417). NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/publication/equipment-and-tools-for-small-scale-intensive-crop-production/ *(Performance Objective 3)*
- Schonbeck, M., Jerkins, D., & Lowell, V. (2019). *Understanding and optimizing the community of soil life*. Organic Farming Research Foundation. https://ofrf.org/soil-health-and-organic-farming-reports/understanding-and-optimizing-the-community-of-soil-life/ *(Performance Objectives 1, 3)*
- Schonbeck, M., Jerkins, D., & Ory, J. (2017). *Plant genetics: Plant breeding and variety selection*. Organic Farming Research Foundation. https://ofrf.org/soil-health-and-organic-farming-reports/plant-genetics-plant-breeding-and-variety-selection/ *(Performance Objective 3)*

- Tallman, S. (2011). *Disease and insect management in organic small grains* (IP388). NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/smallgraindisease.pdf *(Performance Objectives 2, 3)*
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Organic pest and disease management* [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKtDI32XrzI *(2.46–27.15 min; Performance Objectives 1–4)*

Competency Area 7: Organic Invertebrate and Vertebrate Pest Management

- Caldwell, B., Sideman, E., Seaman, A., Shelton, T., & Shelton, C. (2013). *Resource guide for organic insect and disease management* (2nd ed.). New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Guide-for-Organic-Insect-and-Disease-Management.pdf *(Performance Objectives 1–4)*
- Crop Pest, Weed, and Disease Management Practice Standard, 7 C.F.R. § 205.206 (2025). https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2025-title7-vol3/CFR-2025-title7-vol3-sec205-206 *(Performance Objective 3)*
- Cruz, J. K., Vaughan, M., Heidel-Baker, T., & Bolte, M. (2019). *Beneficial insect scouting guide*. Xerces Society. https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/19-061.pdf *(Performance Objective 2)*
- Gamroth, M. (2009). *Pests in the organic pasture*. eOrganic. https://eorganic.org/node/650 *(Performance Objective 3)*
- Montana Department of Agriculture. (2025). *Vertebrate pest control and certified organic farming in Montana*. https://agr.mt.gov/_docs/vertebratepests-docs/OrganicVertebrateControl.pdf *(Performance Objective 3)*
- Tallman, S. (2011). *Disease and insect management in organic small grains* (IP388). NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/smallgraindisease.pdf *(Performance Objective 3)*
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Organic pest and disease management* [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKtDI32XrzI *(27.15–58.16 min; Performance Objectives 1, 3, 4)*
- Zehnder, G. (2009). *Managing the soil to reduce insect pests*. eOrganic. https://eorganic.org/node/2562 *(Performance Objective 1)*

Competency Area 8: Organic Irrigation Management

- Agriculture Victoria. (2019). *Plant-based sensors for irrigation management*. https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/irrigation/irrigation-factsheets-and-resources/Plant-based-sensors-for-irrigation.pdf
  (Performance Objective 2)

- Anderson, B. (2021). *Smart water use on your farm or ranch*. SARE. https://www.sare.org/resources/smart-water-use-on-your-farm-or-ranch/
  (Performance Objectives 1–2)

- Magdoff, F., & Van Es, H. (2021). Managing water: Irrigation and drainage. In *Building soils for better crops* (pp. 255–273; Chapter 17). SARE. https://www.sare.org/publications/building-soils-for-better-crops/managing-water/
  (Performance Objectives 1–2)

- Ory, J., Schonbeck, M., & Jerkins, D. (2017). *Water management and water quality*. Organic Farming Research Foundation. https://ofrf.org/news/water-management-and-water-quality/
  (Performance Objectives 1–2)

- Peters, T. R., K. Desta, K., & Nelson, L. (2013). *Practical use of soil moisture sensors and their data for irrigation scheduling* (Fact Sheet FS083E). Washington State University Extension. https://irrigation.wsu.edu/Content/Fact-Sheets/FS083E.pdf
  (Performance Objective 2)

- University of Minnesota Extension. (2026). *Irrigation management*. https://extension.umn.edu/soil-and-water/irrigation#climate%2C-weather-and-water-resources-469464
  (Performance Objective 2)

- Zamora Re, M. I., Peplin, T. M., & A. Tomasek. (2026). *Soil moisture monitoring to support irrigation scheduling* (EM 9868). Oregon State University Extension Service. https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/em-9868-soil-moisture-monitoring-support-irrigation-scheduling
  (Performance Objective 2)

Competency Area 9: Organic Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety

- ATTRA. (2019). *Farm food safety and organic federal co-compliance chart for crop producers.* NCAT. https://www.ncat.org/publication/farm-food-safety-organic-federal-co-compliance-chart-for-crop-producers/
  (Performance Objective 5)

- CCOF Foundation. (2020). Organic and food safety recordkeeping for produce growers [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25R3aU68o4E
  (Performance Objective 5)

- Facility and Pest Management Practice Standard. 7 C.F. R. § 205.271 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-C/section-205.271
  (*Performance Objective 1*)

- MOFGA Certification Services. (2015). *Guidelines for organic processing and handling*. https://www.mofgacertification.org/wp-content/uploads/MCSProcessingGuidelines2015.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1–5)

- Uchanski, M., Bunning, M., & Quinn, J. (2017). *The intersection of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and the National Organic Program (NOP)*. Colorado State University Extension. https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/specialtycrops/FSNA%20Pub.pdf
  (Performance Objective 5)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Allowed detergents and sanitizers for food contact surfaces and equipment in organic operations*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/8%20Cleaners%20and%20Sanitizers%20FINAL%20RGK%20V2.pdf
  (Performance Objective 5)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *5025: Commingling and contamination prevention in organic production and handling*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook/5025
  (Performance Objective 2)

- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *5026: The use of chlorine materials in organic production and handling*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook/5026
  (Performance Objective 3)

- USDA-AMS. (2024). *Guidance: Substances used in post-harvest handling of organic products* (NOP 5023). https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP%205023%20Post%20Harvest%20Hdlg%20Rev01.pdf
  (Performance Objectives 1, 3, 4)

- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). (2017). *Preventative practices for organic handlers* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpzZqZ1i8No&list=PL0pB20prk7NhsiqObwlBPUowDLN5U4OPq
  (Performance Objectives 1, 2, 3)

Competency Area 10: Allowed and Prohibited Substances (Inputs)

- Allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients in organic production and handling, 7 C.F.R. § 205.105 (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-B/section-205.105
  (Performance Objective 1)

- California Department of Food and Agriculture. (n.d.). *Organic input material program*. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer_OIM.html
  (Performance Objective 5)

- Evaluation Criteria for Allowed and Prohibited Substances, Methods, and Ingredients, 7 C.F.R. § 205 Subpart G (2026). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-205/subpart-G/subject-group-ECFR0ebc5d139b750cd/section-205.600
  (Performance Objective 1)

- Malriat, S., & McSwain, K. (2026). *Understanding allowed and prohibited inputs under the USDA organic standards* [Webinar]. American Society of Agronomy. https://web.sciencesocieties.org/Learning-Center/Courses/Course-Detail?productid={C1CD80FA-A170-F111-AB0D-7CED8D7004D9} *(Performance Objectives 1–6)*
- OMRI. (n.d.). *OMRI lists and standards*. https://www.omri.org/lists-and-standards *(Performance Objective 5)*
- University of California Organic Agriculture Institute, University of California Cooperative Extension, & Community Alliance with Family Farmers. (2026). *Allowed inputs and biodiversity conservation* [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lWVHf_AZCY *(Performance Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5)*
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *National list of allowed and prohibited substances*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/national-list-allowed-and-prohibited-substances *(Performance Objective 1)*
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Organic regulations*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic *(Performance Objective 5)*
- USDA-AMS. (n.d.). *Synthetic substances in crop production*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/synthetic-substances-crop-production *(Performance Objective 2)*
- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). (n.d.). *WSDA organic program*. https://agr.wa.gov/organic *(Performance Objective 5)*