MATERIAL INPUTS GUIDE FOR ORGANIC PRODUCERS
Finding fertilizers & pest controls allowed in organic production

The amount of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides that are commercially available is staggering. There is no comprehensive list of allowed substances for organic production, generally referred to as “materials” or “inputs”. Since material use will determine eligibility for organic certification, it is important to select the correct ones.

Materials are either Allowed or Prohibited but generally cannot be “certified organic” because only agricultural products (derived from plants or animals) can be certified. For example, allowed materials like minerals & nutrients (such as calcium, sulfur, phosphate rock, etc) are not agricultural and cannot be certified.

The word “organic” routinely appears on material labels but its use is not currently regulated by the USDA/National Organic Program (NOP). This leads to confusion and frustration. If you see a material that proclaims itself “organic”, be cautious and check with your certifier before using. If a prohibited input is applied, intentionally or not, the three-year transition to becoming certified organic begins again.

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The NOP issues the National List. This is a list by exclusion: generally, all natural materials are allowed except for listed exceptions, and all synthetics are prohibited except for listed exceptions. The List can be found here: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=013725381a8b4509025542aa99d56d38&mc=true&node=sg7.3.205.g.sg0&rgn=div7

(Also please note the entire NOP Organic Rule can be found at this same site and it is always current) http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfr205_main_02.tpl

Below are the Materials Review Organizations (MROs) approved by the NOP. Generally, if the label of a material bears the seal of these MROs, it is allowed but always check with your certifier first because there may be restrictions on use. If applied incorrectly, use of a material can jeopardize your organic certification.
The best resource for materials is the **Organic Materials Review Institute**. OMRI is a non-profit organization that reviews generic materials (compost, sulfur, microbes, etc) and brand name product materials (as well as processed food ingredients) for organic allowance. You can download their current lists [http://www.omri.org/omri-lists](http://www.omri.org/omri-lists) or search for specific products on the website:

![OMRI List](image)

Approved brand name products will bear the OMRI seal which has two formats:

![OMRI Seal](image)

**Washington State Department of Agriculture** (WSDA) also publishes a list although it is not as extensive as OMRI’s: [http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/materialslists.aspx](http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/materialslists.aspx). Brand name products may carry this seal:

![Washington State Department of Agriculture Seal](image)

The **California Department of Food and Agriculture** (CDFA) **Organic Input Materials** program (OIM) also publishes a list of approved fertilizers and soil amendments. [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/pdfs/RegisteredOrganicInputMaterial2016.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/pdfs/RegisteredOrganicInputMaterial2016.pdf) Brand name products may carry this seal:

![California Department of Food and Agriculture Seal](image)

The **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) reviews a small number of materials but it does not publish a list. Brand name products may carry this seal:

![Environmental Protection Agency Seal](image)