



A day in the life of a PCO certification staff member...

PCO certification specialist use a wide range of skills and participate in varied activities. To perform the job well, it helps to have a background in sustainable or organic farming, food processing, environmental science, or law, but just as important is a willingness and aptitude to learn about organic practices and regulations through on-the-job training. The following examples should give a sense of the types of tasks a PCO certification staff member might tackle on a typical day. (Accomplishing all of the tasks, however, would take quite a while!)

- Answer a farmer's questions about organic certification, how PCO works, or how much certification costs.
- Direct a farmer's file to determine whether the materials he or she is using are allowed in organic production.
- Review an organic processor's product profile to determine if the ingredients meet organic standards.
- Review the inspector's report of an organic farm inspection and determine what the farmer must do to come into compliance with the National Organic Standards.
- Discuss dairy cow production practices with a local veterinarian.
- Help develop a list of potential speakers for PCO's Annual Meeting.
- Attend a field day on organic raspberry production or organic dairy production at a local farm. Take photos and notes to write the field day article for PCO's quarterly newsletter, *Organic Matters*.
- Attend an educational program on weed ecology at Penn State University research plots.
- Attend a Certification Team meeting and discuss PCO policies on documenting pest management in an organic processing facility or the amount of daily outdoor access that should be required for organic chickens or how a combine should be cleaned out between harvesting non-organic and organic soybeans.
- Participate in national and regional meetings on organic agricultural policy.