

## New Florida Department of Citrus Rules for Organic Grove Registration and Fruit Movement <sup>1</sup>

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Effective August 1, 2003, certified organic citrus growers in Florida are required to register their groves and use approved trip tickets when moving fruit. According to recently established Department of Citrus Rules, all certified organic groves placing fruit into commercial channels must register by August 1, 2003 and each August 1 thereafter with the Office of License and Bonds, Division of Fruit & Vegetables.

### Grove Registration

Required grove documentation includes: current organic certification by a USDA accredited certifying agent; organic certificate number; name of the grove property owner; the grove location referenced in Global Positioning System coordinates; citrus varieties grown; and an estimate of current season production in field boxes.

### Transportation of Fruit

Organic fruit transported on state highways must also be accompanied by a trip ticket issued by the Florida Department of Agriculture, Division of Fruit & Vegetables. These tickets, filled out before fruit is hauled, must list the name of the USDA-approved

certifying agency, organic certificate number, grove owner, handler, trailer number, and driver's name. Copies of this ticket must be given to the grower or dealer, the harvester, and to the scale operator or receiver at the load destination.

Loads made up from lots from different groves must be accompanied by trip tickets from each grove and the grower name, grove, and grove location must be indicated. Such loads must also be labeled as mixed loads. However, when loads of organic fruit are mixed at a packing house or other location, a single trip ticket can be used for subsequent fruit movement. But the fruit dealer doing the mixing will be responsible for maintaining the above described trip tickets for each separate fruit load that was delivered to his facility. Furthermore, organic fruit cannot be commingled or mixed with non organic fruit.

These Rules provide federal penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation for anyone who knowingly sells or labels a product as organic in violation of the Federal Organic Food Production Act and/or the USDA National Organic Program.

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1. This document is HS946, one of a series of the Horticultural Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 2003. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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These rules will sharpen local definition of already established national standards and, in providing accurate records of organic citrus production, could improve both domestic and international marketing of organic fruit.

Go to

<http://fac.dos.state.fl.us/faonline/chapter20.pdf> for Rule 20-2.002 and 20-2.003 (6) dealing with the organic trip ticket and Rule 20-39.017 dealing with the registration program. For information on grove registration and trip tickets, contact the office of Jim Ellis, Office of License and Bonds, Division of Fruit and Vegetables at 1-800-782-3240, extension 225. The National Organic Standards can be accessed at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm>.