

December 17, 2021

The Honorable Zach Ducheneaux  
Administrator  
Farm Service Agency  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
STOP 0506  
Washington, DC, 20250-0506

Dear Administrator Ducheneaux:

We are writing to express our appreciation for your November 4, 2021 announcement of the Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP). The program will provide additional financial resources for organic and transitioning farmers to help defray costs associated with organic certification, transition services, educational activities and soil testing.

Given the importance of this program, we are requesting a one-month extension in the application deadline from the current deadline of January 7, 2022 to February 7<sup>th</sup>. This extension would likely increase participation in the program by pushing the application period beyond the busy holiday season, giving USDA and organic stakeholder groups more time to publicize information about the new program to farmers and businesses. In addition, it would give Farm Service Agency staff more time to get acquainted with the details of the program to better serve eligible applicants when they contact their local FSA offices.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Organic Farmers Association  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organic Trade Association