



Pete Ricketts
Governor

Department of Agriculture
Greg Ibach
Director
P.O. Box 94947
Lincoln, NE 68509-4947
(402) 471-2341
Fax: (402) 471-6876
www.nda.nebraska.gov

**NEWS RELEASE
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www.nda.nebraska.gov

Contact: **Christin Kamm**
(402) 471-6856

**NDA ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FUNDS FOR
NEBRASKA PRODUCERS, HANDLERS**

LINCOLN -The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is accepting applications until Nov. 7, 2015, from eligible producers and handlers in the state who want to participate in USDA’s National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program. Producers or handlers who are currently certified organic under the National Organic Program (NOP), and whose certified land is located in Nebraska, are eligible to receive a 75 percent refund (up to \$750) for their 2015 certification expenses.

“The USDA created this program to encourage and support organic farmers who have become officially NOP certified,” NDA Cost-Share Program Manager Steve Martin said. “The department administers the program for USDA and has been allocated \$115,300 in funds for 2015. We strongly encourage our eligible NOP certified growers and handlers to take advantage of this program.”

Martin said USDA listed 217 NOP certified organic operations in Nebraska in 2014. USDA’s recently released Organic Survey indicates Nebraska’s value of sales of organically produced commodities in 2014 was nearly \$76 million. That compares to \$48.6 million in value of sales in 2008.

Applications for the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program can be found at www.nda.nebraska.gov or by calling 800-422-6692. Applications are processed as they are received and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are expended.

The USDA National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program was part of the 2014 Farm Bill and will be funded for the next three years.

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