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NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release



October 14, 2016
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NDA ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST-SHARE FUNDS FOR NEBRASKA PRODUCERS AND HANDLERS

LINCOLN—The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is accepting applications until Nov. 1, 2016, from eligible producers and handlers in the state wanting to participate in USDA’s National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program. Producers and 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 expenses associated with each of their 2016 certifications.

“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. “Our department administers the program for USDA and has been allocated \$115,300 in funds for 2016. We strongly encourage our eligible NOP-certified growers and handlers to take advantage of this program.”

Martin said that USDA listed 217 NOP-certified organic operations in Nebraska in 2014. USDA’s 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 two years.

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