



**1/07/2020**

Dear NCO Operator,

On behalf of all of us at NCO, I would like to thank you for your continued support during this year of unprecedented challenges and change.

The organic industry continues to perform well, with organic farming set to become Australia's number 1 fastest growing industry over the next 5 years (*IFOAM Market Report 2019*). According to a market Insight Report out of the USA, COVID19 is causing an increase in demand for organic food and beverages, with this increase forecast to remain until 2027. The key factors for industry growth are reported to be a growing awareness of the health benefits of organic products and produce, increased spending per capita on organic products and increasing health concerns linked to chemical usage.

As the new Financial Year has begun, we are emailing our annual fee invoice for 2020-21. These fees are an essential component in achieving progressive certification services for your products, with some key aspects as below:

### **Continued Market Access**

We continue to provide leading market access both at home in Australia and abroad by maintaining required Accreditations. This ensures we are able to be agile in responding to changes in your business models over time. The NCO label is widely recognised both in Australia and overseas, with many international markets seeking out NCO labelled products based on our quality reputation and long standing in the industry.

In addition, NCO continues to support OISCC and hence the maintenance of the National Standard through the independent National Standards sub Committee, as well as providing technical advice to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to assist in progressing equivalency agreements. NCO is also a member of the recently developed Certifier Liaison Group (CLG). The CLG is made up of two technical staff from each certifier that is a member of OISCC. Its purpose is to work together to find solutions to issues significantly affecting certified operators and implementation of the National Standard.

### **NCO Operator Portal**

At NCO we are 100% committed to provide the very best service to our operators. We have been working extremely hard on the NCO Operator Portal with new and exciting changes underway that will positively affect your certification experience in the coming year and beyond.

We are excited to announce that as part of our ongoing digitalisation project and continuous improvements in certification efficiency, operators now have the option to access our new

**NCO Operator Portal.** Providing operators access to information and documents regarding their certification directly from our secure database including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details and certificates of any associated facilities including multiple licences, sub-licences, processor licences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified Products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified Crops</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified Livestock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificates</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract Data including which standards you are certified to and relevant dates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents including invoices, OMP/OHP's, maps, flowcharts and labels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derogations tab enables access to all</li> </ul>	

The operator portal will make it quicker and easier to prepare for inspections, as all the documents listed above can be downloaded directly from the portal and provided to your inspector. Over time, this portal will evolve and become more interactive.

Some of the services becoming available through the portal this year include:

- Access to the Findings Tab where operators can receive and close out any non-compliances received and upload documents to NCO
- Reconfiguration of OMP's to ensure information requested is relevant to your operation, with the ability to upload electronically via the portal
- Automatic reminders for key milestones relating to your certification, such as OMP and OHP updates.

If you have any questions relating to the portal or would like to request your login details and user guide, please contact Jennipher at [jennipher.vivian@ncocertifiedorganic.com.au](mailto:jennipher.vivian@ncocertifiedorganic.com.au) or on 08 72317709. Jennifer will send you out the link along with your unique Username and Password.

Another recent development has been the changeover to online checklists for our inspectors. For all inspections, the inspection report is now completed directly into electronic templates which are uploaded to our database. These templates can be used without any internet access for remote operations, with data uploaded once the inspector is reconnected to the internet. This will reduce the overall inspection time and reduce costs for our operators.

### **Fee Reductions**

As a result of our commitment to continuous improvement and resulting streamlined processes, the **NCO Board has approved a change to the Producer Exempt amount, from \$40,000 to \$60,000.** This means that for all producers, the first \$60,000 of sales is now exempt from levies. In combination with the reductions in maximum levy payable from \$5,000 in 2017 to \$3,000 in 2019, this change ensures NCO certification fees are highly competitive, with no change to service delivery. We will continue to work hard to reduce fees

further in the future. We have also introduced a **discount for multiple programs**. Our fees continue to be transparent with no hidden costs.

**Ongoing Technical Support and Assistance**

A strong collaborative team culture sits at the very core of the NCO Offering. The familiar voices of our expert technical staff are always happy to assist with any enquires and appreciate your feedback. We are dedicated to providing you with strong, reliable service and support.

We look forward to continuing our strong ongoing partnerships with all of you, our valued operators, and wish you the very best for the year ahead.

Kindest Regards,



Tammy Partridge  
NCO General Manager