

VIA EMAIL

September 3, 2024

April Vasquez
CCOF Certification Services, LLC
2155 Delaware Ave, Suite 150
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
april@ccof.org and complaints@ccof.org

Re: NOPI-LS-00240-2024, Alexandre Family Farm

CASE CLOSURE NOTICE

Dear April Vasquez:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), National Organic Program (NOP) has concluded its investigation of your client, Alexandre Family Farm (Alexandre). Between 2019 and 2023, Alexandre allegedly violated the USDA organic regulations at 7 CFR Part 205 by contaminating soil with animal carcasses, using prohibited substances on organic livestock, and committing multiple animal welfare noncompliances.

The investigation determined that some of the allegations were substantiated, while others were not. On February 16, 2024, CCOF Certification Services, LLC (CCOF) entered into a two-year settlement agreement with Alexandre and will have heightened oversight of the operation during that time. CCOF's June 2024 unannounced inspection of Alexandre showed improvements and compliance at Alexandre.

The NOP recognizes that CCOF first noted concerns with animal welfare at Alexandre's 2021 inspection, and at the 2022 inspection the issues previously noted were not found. However, the annual inspection was announced, and the operation had time to correct previous issues and possible noncompliances. During the NOP's investigation, the NOP found multiple animal sale ticket records of Alexandre animal's being sold to (b) (4) from 2021 through 2023. The sale ticket records showed that animals were unfit for transport as they were described as "crippled", "thin", "abscess", "down", "broken jaw", "dead", "real rough", "lame", etc.

The NOP requests that CCOF continue their heightened oversight of Alexandre and provide copies of inspection reports and compliance decisions to the NOP after each inspection, throughout the duration of the settlement agreement. Additionally, please communicate to the NOP any other concerns that CCOF may have regarding Alexandre throughout this timeframe. Please forward this information via email to nopcompliance@usda.gov.

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The NOP has closed this investigation, and will continue to monitor oversight activities. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

As of **March 19, 2024**, the [Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule \(SOE\)](#) is in effect. All businesses involved in organic trade must now comply with the SOE requirements. Complete information can be found on the [SOE Final Rule webpage](#). The NOP will be assessing certifiers' processes for implementing SOE requirements and issuing Notices of Noncompliance where appropriate.

If you have further questions, please contact compliance specialist, Judith Ragonesi Bradley at (202) 684-5620 or Judith.Ragonesi2@usda.gov. Thank you for your commitment to organic integrity.

Sincerely,

SHANNON
NALLY YANESSA
Digitally signed by SHANNON
NALLY YANESSA
Date: 2024.09.03 13:18:22
-04'00'

Shannon Nally Yanessa
Deputy Director,
Compliance and Enforcement Division
National Organic Program

cc. Jennifer Cruse, Accreditation Manager