



USDA NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM:  
Is Organic an Option for Me?

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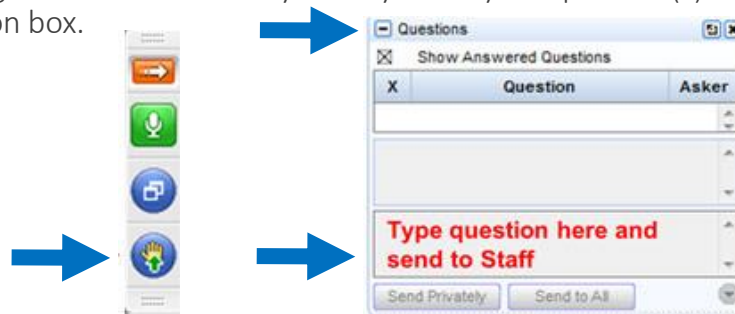
THANK YOU FOR JOINING US! THE WEBINAR WILL BEGIN SHORTLY.

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## Webinar Management

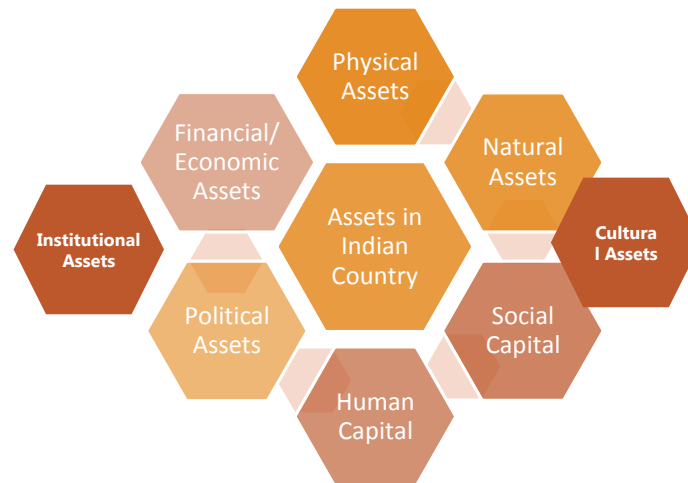
Participants will be muted for this webinar.

If you have questions during the webinar, please “raise your hand” using the hand button or you may enter your question(s) in the Question box.



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## What “Assets” Mean to First Nations



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## First Nations' Facts

**1980:** Founding Year

**1980-2017:** Provider of TTA

**1993:** National Grantmaking Program begins

**1993-2017:** Awarded 1,345 in grants;  
\$28.9 million

# First Nations' Strategies & Programs



**USDA Agricultural Marketing Service  
National Organic Program**

**An Overview Presentation:  
What is Organic and...  
Is It an Option for Me?**

**Vanessa Garcia Polanco  
December 7, 2017**



# Outline



- Origin of the U.S. Organic Sector
- What is Organic?
- National Organic Program
- The U.S. Organic Regulations
- The Organic Community
- Getting Certified Organic
- Market Overview
- Resources



# Origin of the U.S. Organic Sector





# Formally Started with an Act of Congress



The U.S. organic sector formally originated in 1990 with the passage of the Organic Food Production Act, commonly known as OFPA.



# OFPA Created ...



OFPA created:

- The U.S. Organic Regulations;
- The National Organic Program (NOP); and
- The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).

# What is Organic?



# Definition of “organic” – USDA regulations



A production system, managed in accordance with the USDA organic regulations, to respond to site-specific conditions.

An “organic” production system:

- Integrates cultural, biological, and mechanical practices
- Fosters cycling of resources
- Promote ecological balance
- Conserves bio-diversity



# A Global Organic Control System



Standards

Accreditation

Certification

Enforcement

# The National Organic Program





# The National Organic Program (NOP)



- **Mission:**  
Ensure the integrity of USDA organic agricultural products throughout the world
- **Vision:**  
Organic Integrity from Farm to Table,  
Consumers Trust the Organic Label
- **Core Role:**  
Implement the Organic Foods Production Act and the USDA organic regulations

# The National Organic Program



The National Organic Program . . .

- Develops and maintains organic standards
- Accredits and oversees organic certifying agents
- Ensures and enforces compliance by investigating complaints and taking enforcement actions
- Facilitates trade
- Supports the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

# The U.S. Organic Regulations



# Areas Covered



Organic regulations address:

- Crops;
- Wild crops;
- Livestock; and
- Handling (Processing, Packaging & Labeling).





# What Lands May Be Certified as Organic?



- To be eligible for certification:
  - Land must have been **free of prohibited substances** for **3 years**
- **Both conventional and organic production** may occur on the same farm
- **Buffer zones** may be required between organic & non-organic lands
- **There are no size requirements**—both small and large farms may be certified organic



# General Scope of Organic Regulations



The USDA organic regulations cover the product from farm to table, including soil and water quality, pest control, livestock practices, and rules for food additives.

Organic farms and processors:

- Preserve natural resources and biodiversity
- Maintain or improve soil and water quality
- Support animal health and welfare
- Only use approved materials
- Do not use genetically modified ingredients
- Document pest, weed, and other management practices
- Receive annual onsite inspections
- Separate organic food from non-organic food



# Requirements for Organic Crops



- Governed by site-specific **Organic System Plan**
- Maintain **buffer zones** to prevent prohibited substances from impacting organic areas
- **MUST NOT** use prohibited substances, sewage sludge, irradiation, or genetic engineering
- **MUST** use organic seeds and organic seedlings when commercially available
- **MUST** document pest and weed management
- **MUST** use practices that maintain or improve soil conditions and minimize erosion
- **MAY** use natural inputs and/or USDA-approved synthetic substances



# Requirements for Livestock Operations



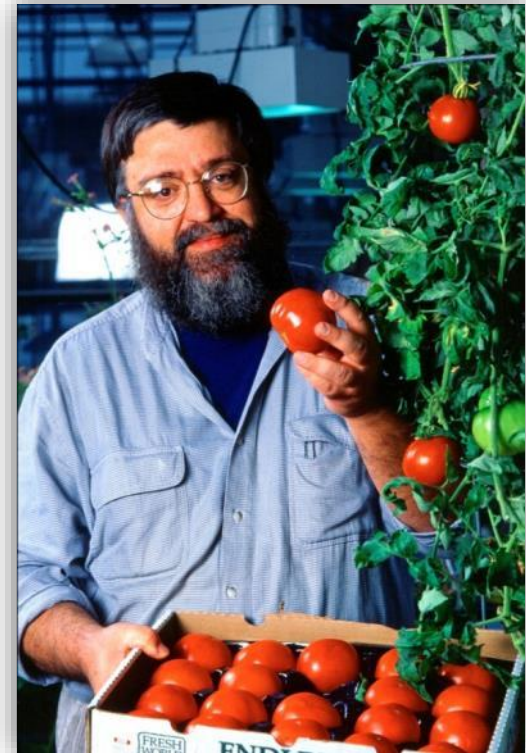
- Governed by **Organic System Plan**
- Provide **access to the outdoors** and good living conditions year-round
- Use 100% **organic feed**
- Antibiotics, growth hormones, slaughter byproducts, and genetic engineering not allowed
- **Document** the organic status of all animals
- Ruminants must have **access to pasture** during the grazing season: 30% of the animal's dry matter intake must come from pasture; grazing season must be at least 120 days



# Requirements for Processors and Handlers



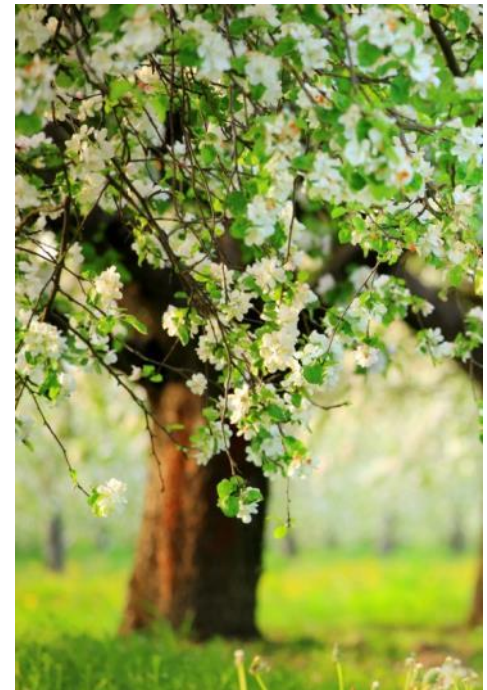
- Governed by an **Organic System Plan**
- Prevent the **commingling or contamination** of organic products by non-organic products during processing
- **Prevent pests** using only approved practices
- Use **certified organic agricultural ingredients** in organically-labeled products
- Use only **approved label claims**
- Not use **irradiation or genetic engineering**



# Allowed and Prohibited Substances



- The **National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances** is part of the **organic** regulations.
- The National List includes **synthetic** substances which are **allowed** and **natural** substances which are **prohibited**.
- The National List has separate sections for **crops, livestock, and handling/food processing**.
- All substances are reviewed by the **National Organic Standards Board**. The Board makes recommendations on substances to the USDA.





# The Organic Community



# National Organic Standards Board



The purpose of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is to:

- Assist in the development & maintenance of a list of substances to be used in organic production; and
- Advise the Secretary on any other aspects of the implementation of OFPA





# USDA Accredited Certifiers



- USDA accredits and oversees organic certifiers
- Organic certifiers are **third party organizations** that review, inspect, and certify organic operations
- Certifiers may be for-profit, non-profit, or governmental (State or foreign governments)
- Find yours [here](#).



# Accredited Certifiers: A Critical Role



- Organic System Plan Reviews
- Annual and Unannounced Inspections
- Residue Testing
- Complaint Investigations
- Noncompliances, Suspensions, Revocations
- Mediation and Settlement Agreements

# Getting Certified Organic





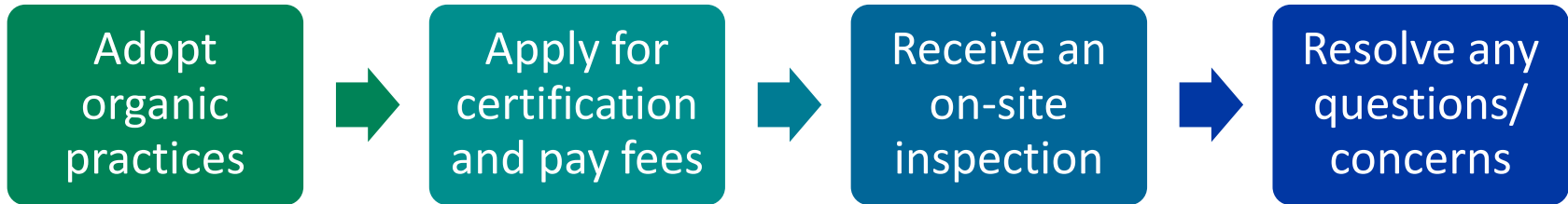
# Why is Certification Important?



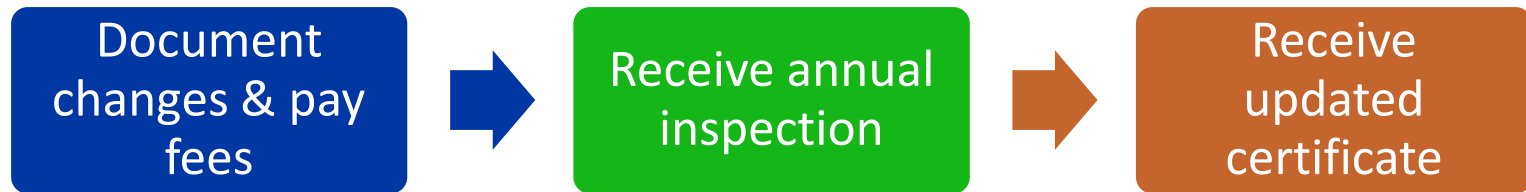
- Allows use of USDA organic seal and organic claim
- Empowers consumers to choose between production methods
- Gateway to USDA services for organic operations
- Verifies that products meet national organic standards
- Protects consumers
- Establishes level playing field for farmers, processors, and marketers



# How Does a Farmer Get Certified?



## Annual Updates:





# Common barriers to certification



## Certification myths:

1. "I can't afford organic certification."
2. "I can't handle the paperwork."

## Certification truths

1. Fees are on a sliding scale
2. Recordkeeping is good farm management

Plus, **USDA can help** with both costs and paperwork!



# Who Needs to be Certified?



- If your farm or business earns more than \$5,000 in gross annual organic sales, it must be certified.
- If your farm or business earns less than \$5,000 in gross annual organic sales, it is considered “exempt” from two key requirements:
  - Certification. Your farm or business is not required to be certified in order to sell, label, or represent your products as organic.
  - USDA Organic Seal: If uncertified, you **may not use** the USDA organic seal on your products or refer to them as certified organic.

# Not just farms, but...



- Slaughter facilities
- Custom harvesters
- Co-packers
- Seed cleaners



NOP 4009 Instruction and Q&A: Who Needs to be Certified?

# An Overview of the U.S. Organic Market





# An Overview: The U.S. Organic Market



Organic food is sold to U.S. consumers through conventional grocery stores, natural food stores, and direct-to-consumer markets.

The U.S. organic sector:

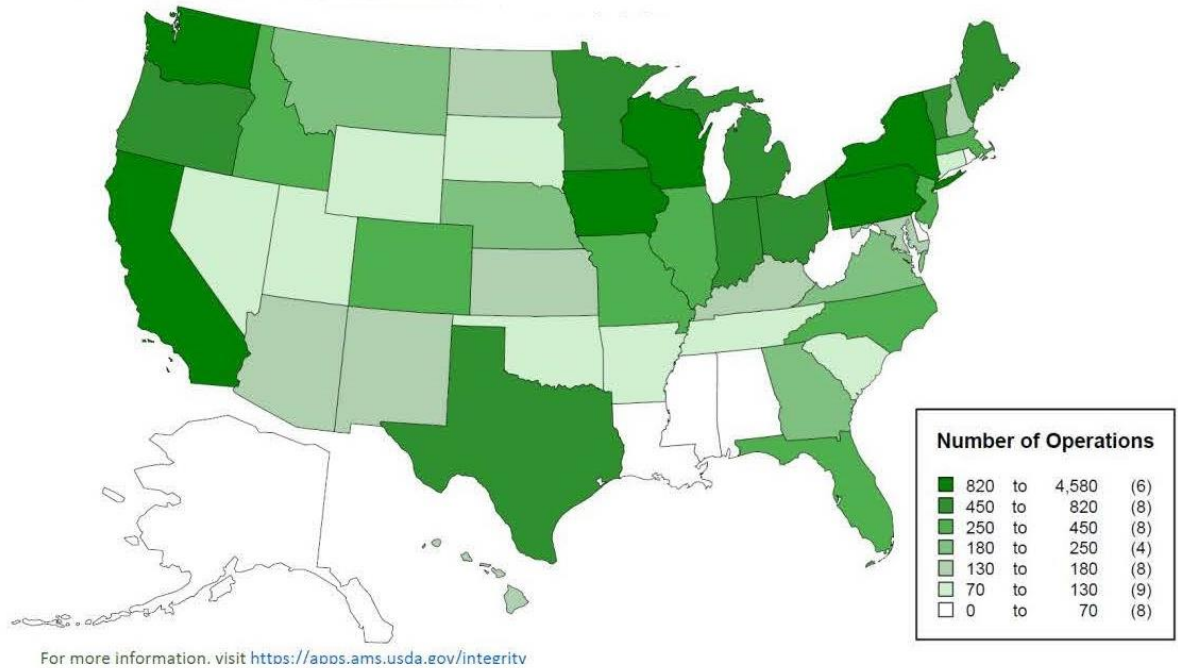
- Is the fastest growing of the U.S. food industry
- Has been on a double digit growth trend
- Has tripled in total size since 2002
- Is estimated at over \$47 billion
- Accounts for over 5 percent of total U.S. food sales



# Top Organic States



Top 10 organic states  
(# of organic farms):



California  
Wisconsin  
New York  
Washington  
Pennsylvania

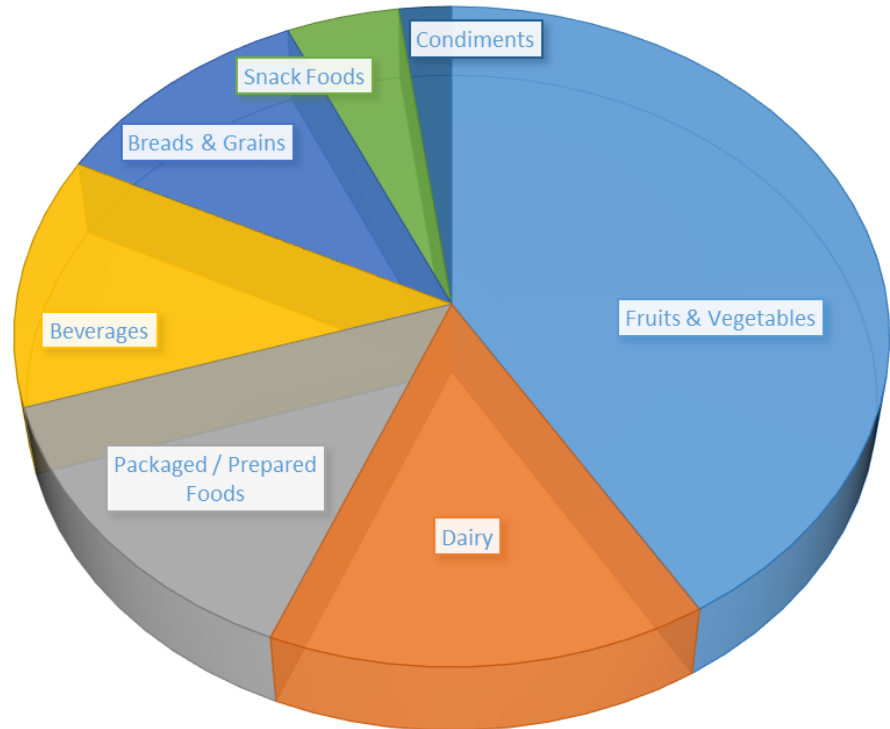
Iowa  
Ohio  
Minnesota  
Oregon  
Michigan

# Top Organic Commodities



## Top 3 organic commodities

- Fruits & Vegetables
- Dairy
- Packaged / Prepared Foods



# USDA Resources



# Online Training Modules



- Organic Training
  - The Road to Organic Certification
  - The Path to Sound and Sensible Organic Inspections
  - Organic Integrity in the Supply Chain
- Organic 101
- Organic 201
- Sound and Sensible Organic Certification Resources: The Value Proposition, Tips and Guides
- Fact Sheets

A screenshot of the USDA Organic website's training page. The page has a green header with navigation tabs for "Practices &amp; Standards", "Services", "Resources", and "Selling Food to USDA". Below the header is a social media bar with icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Email, Flickr, RSS, and Instagram, and the text "Stay connected:". The main heading is "Organic Training" with a "SHARE" button and a printer icon. The text below the heading reads: "The National Organic Program provides a variety of training resources for organic farms and businesses and organic certifiers. Each heading below indicates the intended audience for the training in that section." There are three main sections: "Training for Organic Farms and Businesses" with a list of links, "View the Organic Program Handbook" (a green button), "Road to Organic Certification" (a green button), and "Organic Cost Share Programs" (a green button). At the bottom right, there is a "Get USDA Organic Insider updates!" button with the USDA Organic logo and a "News &amp; Announcements" link.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/training>

# INTEGRITY Database



- Find certified organic operations
- Find certified organic products
- Find accredited certifiers
- [organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/](http://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/)

USDA United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service

Contact Us About

ORGANIC INTEGRITY DATABASE

Home Search Reports

The National Organic Program is hosting a public Organic INTEGRITY Database webinar on October 26, 2016 at 11 am Eastern Time. More details are available in the Organic Insider at <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs127/1103777415326/archive/1126149851834.html>

## Welcome to the Organic INTEGRITY Database!

Find a specific certified organic farm or business, or search for an operation with specific characteristics. Listings come from USDA-Accredited Certifying Agents. Historical Annual Lists of Certified Organic Operations and monthly snapshots of the full data set are available for download on the [Data History](#) page. Only certified operations can sell, label or represent products as organic, unless exempt or excluded from certification.

Certifier

[Advanced Search](#)

[Export To Excel](#)

Operation	Certifier	Info	Status	City	State/Province	Country	Certified Products
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text" value="Certified"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Enter State/Province"/>	<input type="text" value="All"/>	<input type="text"/>



# Insider Emails



## USDA Organic Insider

- Sign up for updates on issues related to organic production
- Announcements of NOSB meetings
- Rulemaking and Handbook updates
- Comment opportunities



The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Organic Program (NOP). At the top is a wide landscape photograph of a green field with rows of crops, a wooden barn, and trees under a blue sky. Below the image is the title "National Organic Program" in a blue font, followed by a "SHARE" button and a printer icon. The main text describes the NOP as a regulatory program within the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, responsible for developing national standards for organically-produced agricultural products. It states that these standards assure consumers that products with the USDA organic seal meet consistent, uniform standards, but that regulations do not address food safety or nutrition. To the right of the text is a video player showing Acting Deputy Administrator Dr. Ruihong Guo speaking into a microphone. Below the video is a green button with the USDA Organic logo and the text "Get USDA Organic Insider updates!". At the bottom left, there is a "What's New" section with a bullet point: "New Short Video for Certified Organic Handlers: Organic Integrity in the Supply Chain".

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>



## Organic Certification Cost Share Programs

- Reimbursements for up to 75% of the cost of certification
- Maximum of \$750 per year, per area of certification
  - Certification areas: crops, livestock, handling/processing, wild crops
- Contact your State's Department of Agriculture, or access more information at:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index>



## Conservation Programs for Organic Producers

- Conservation technical assistance
  - On-farm conservation planning for organic and transitional
  - Helps with paperwork – can complete part of your organic application
- Financial assistance
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
  - Conservation Stewardship Program
- Access more information at:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/organic](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/organic)

# Organic Portal at [www.usda.gov/organic](http://www.usda.gov/organic)



- One-stop for programs, services, and educational materials related to organic

The screenshot shows the USDA Organic Portal website. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture". To the right are links for "About USDA", "Ask the Expert", "Contact Us", and "En Español". Below this is a search bar and a navigation menu with "Topics", "Programs and Services", "Newsroom", and "Blog". Further right are links for "Site Map", "Glossary", "A-Z Index", "Advanced Search", and "Help". A breadcrumb trail reads "You are here: Home / Organic Agriculture". A row of social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, RSS, YouTube, Email, Flickr, and RSS) is positioned below the breadcrumb. The main content area features a large background image of a woman in a purple shirt and blue pants holding a red basket of fresh produce. On the left side of this image is a white box containing the USDA Organic logo and the text: "USDA Organic. Many USDA agencies serve the growing organic sector. Whether you're already certified organic, considering transitioning all or part of your operation, or working with organic producers, we have resources for you. This portal connects you with programs, services, and educational materials that can help your organic farm or business." At the bottom of the page are three main navigation buttons: "About Organic Certification", "Technical Training and Financial Resources", and "Data and Research".



# Thank You

Organic Integrity from Farm to Table,  
Consumers Trust the Organic Label

NOP Phone: 202-720-3252

Website: [www.ams.usda/gov](http://www.ams.usda/gov)







**THANK YOU JOINING OUR WEBINAR TODAY!**

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Recording and attachments can be downloaded from [www.firstnations.org/fnk](http://www.firstnations.org/fnk) by Thursday, December 8, 2017

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Thank you!



## Don't miss out on our upcoming webinars:

- Tribal Agritourism Marketing Tools, Part 1: Using New Media to Control Message
  - December 7<sup>th</sup> at 2pm MT
- Tribal Agritourism Marketing Tools, Part 2: Using NativeAmerica.travel to Promote Tourism and Your Agribusiness Products
  - December 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm MT

Registration can be found at [www.firstnations.org/fnk](http://www.firstnations.org/fnk) (as well as all previous webinar recordings and handouts).