

# Inspection Information ~ Aquaponics

## Please read this now to ensure your certification remains in good standing.

- You are responsible for making the arrangements to have your farm inspected (no one else will set them up for you).
- To avoid a conflict of interest, there is no trading inspections. If Farmer A inspects Farmer B's farm, then Farmer B can not turn around and inspect Farmer A's farm. Such inspections would not be considered valid.
- Do not repeatedly rely on the same inspector when there are other CNG farmers nearby. Doing so risks compromising the integrity of the program and shortchanges you by not giving you diverse perspectives on your farm. Variances may be granted in special cases, as when a particularly experienced inspector is willing to inspect more than once.
- An inspection round of three or more is allowed (encouraged!). That's when Farmer A inspects Farmer B, who inspects Farmer C, who in turn inspects Farmer A. This is the beginning of a local network!
- Inspections shall be conducted annually (4-month grace period) ideally by different qualified inspectors each year.
- You may be de-listed from the CNG program if you do not arrange an inspection for your farm in a timely manner.
- You may be de-listed from the CNG program if you do not *conduct* an inspection of another CNG aquaponics farm when there is one within an hour's drive that needs an inspection. If there is not another CNG aquaponics producer within an hour's drive who needs an inspection, the work requirement may be fulfilled by reviewing the inspection documents from another aquaponic operation seeking certification, provided by CNG staff. If no inspection reports require reviewing, the work requirement may be waived for that year.
- Inspections by family members, employees and interns are not considered valid.
- Visit the CNG map online at [CNGfarming.org/map](http://CNGfarming.org/map) to see which CNG producers are near you.

## Types of Inspectors

- Another Aquaponic Producer If possible, have your inspection forms filled out by another aquaponic producer in your area whose operation is Certified Naturally Grown or certified organic. Alternatively, you may rely on a non-certified aquaponic producer. Remember you can't inspect the person who inspects you. Most CNG aquaponics producers will likely be located great distances from one another, at least in the first few years, so as an alternative, you may rely on one of the other inspectors listed below. Please note, we don't expect anyone to drive more than an hour in order to conduct an inspection of another CNG operation.
- Aquaponics Instructors/Educators If there isn't another aquaponic producer in your area, see if you can find an instructor of aquaponics who would be available to conduct your inspection. Your local university may be a good resource.
- Hydroponics Producer This is another option, though someone with experience in aquaponics production is preferable if available.
- Soil-based farmer with CNG or organic certification If there are no inspectors of the above types within an hour drive who are able to conduct an inspection, producers may rely on a soil-based farmer to serve as an inspector provided that the farmer is a) approved in advance by CNG staff and b) reviews an informational document provided by CNG prior to the inspection. Additionally, once the inspection materials are submitted, they will be reviewed by an aquaponics producer or review committee. This review may turn up questions or concerns that must be addressed before the inspection requirement is considered to have been fulfilled.

## Tips for success

Look at the Map on the website to find CNG members near you. Search by zip code! [CNGfarming.org/map](http://CNGfarming.org/map)

Use the telephone! E-mail isn't a very effective tool for this kind of request. A phone call will get much better results.

Follow-up! If your inspector made vague plans to come by, but never did, go ahead and give them another call. A friendly reminder is usually all that's needed to get the job done. Or, if necessary, find someone else to inspect.

*You may download and print Aquaponics Inspection Forms at [CNGfarming.org/cngforms](http://CNGfarming.org/cngforms)*