



From Pasture to Processing: Making Poultry Work in the NE

— September 15, 2025 —



**TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
 - Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)
 - Steadfast Farm
 - NOFA Membership Benefit
 - Q&A
 - Thank you & Survey
-

Introductions - Who's Who



Sherlene Rodriguez

Program Director, TOPP
CT NOFA



Laura Davis

Soil Health Tech Advisor,
TOPP Mentor Coordinator
NOFA/Mass



Aaron McCool

Director of Operations, Sales
Steadfast Farms



Teresa Downey

TOPP Coordinator
NOFA-NH



Teddy Tomao

NYS Education Lead
NOFA-NY

Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)

- USDA's \$100 million investment over five years with non-profit organizations to provide technical assistance and support to producers seeking or maintaining organic certification.
- **Goal** → remove technical, cultural and financial barriers to certification, making it accessible to producers of all sizes and backgrounds.
- **Builds** →
 - Farmer to Farmer mentorships,
 - Technical Assistance and Educational Resources,
 - Strengthens regional partnerships between farmers and service providers,
 - Creates a stronger network of organic producers

Transition to Organic Partnership Program

Mid-Atlantic/NE Region



Mentorship

Connect transitioning producers with experienced organic mentors.



Technical Assistance

Deliver 1:1 technical assistance to help producers and handlers navigate organic certification at their own pace.



Events

Organize events for producers, handlers and agricultural professionals.



Certification

Support operations — from urban farms to large scale farms—successfully achieve organic certification.



Understanding Organic Poultry Processing

- USDA Organic certification applies to the **entire production system**—from feed and animal welfare to land management and recordkeeping.
- Poultry must be raised according to organic standards **before** arriving at the processor.
- Certification is not retroactive—**processing organic birds at an organic facility does not automatically make your product certified.**
- The **processor (like Steadfast)** must also be certified, but they can only process and label your birds as organic *if you are certified too.*

Certification includes:

- Organic feed and pasture access
- No antibiotics or synthetic additives
- Detailed records and inspection



ORGANIC MENTEE

Steadfast Farms

STEADFAST
FARMS

"Our journey toward organic certification reflects our deep commitment to integrity, transparency, and local food resilience. Steadfast Farms is the first organic-certified poultry processor in the region in nearly 50 years, an incredible accomplishment that ensures families can enjoy nutritious, locally sourced food while strengthening our regional food economy." - Aaron McCool, Director of Operations.

"This certification is more than just a label—it represents our dedication to ethical animal welfare from hatch to harvest, exceptional quality services for our partners, and expanding support for regional farmers." - Jared McCool, Founder & CEO

Why Partner with Steadfast:

Values Driven

We are more than a processor Steadfast is an extension of your farm. Every bird represents months of your hard work, and we honor that by treating each flock with the same care you do.

Through regenerative, sustainable practices and a no-waste philosophy, we ensure nothing is lost in the journey from your farm to the final customer.

Our role is to make your efforts shine delivering quality you can trust, and a story that reflects your values as much as ours.

Our Mission

From Hatch to Harvest, with Purpose and Passion: At Steadfast Farms, we blend tradition, innovation, and regenerative practices to create food that sustains families, enriches communities, and preserves the values of ethical farming for generations to come.

Our Values

- Rooted in Resilience
- Integrity in Every Bite
- Delivering the Promise
- Pioneer, Partner, Empower
- Lead with Action, Inspire Others
- Pride in Every Flock
- Every Role Makes the Whole

Slaughter, Processing, Value-Added, and More

Slaughter

- Chickens, Ducks, Turkey

Processing

- 4-Joint to 9-Joint Cuts
- Branded Labeled Cryovaced Packaging

Value Added

- Ground
- Sausage
- Stock
- Ongoing additional products to come
 - Dog Food, Dumplings

Logistical Service

- Return Product Delivery
- Return Crate Delivery (Crate Swap)
- Cold Storage Coming in 2026



Our USDA approved Label 2025

Pasture Raised, Humanely Raised, Homegrown by Heroes, No Added Hormones, No Antibiotics

New Benefit

NOFA Membership

New Regional NOFA Membership Benefit

Key Benefits for NOFA Members:

- **Organic Processing:** No additional cost per bird for organic processing.
- **One-time Organic Paperwork Fee:** \$500 per farm - covers all label submissions and USDA compliance.*
(Farms may also complete [USDA compliance verification](#) independently with no charge)
*(*changes to label, process that require new submissions would require a new fee)*
- **Discounted Tier Pricing:** Tier Level 2 pricing (3,501 – 5,500 birds annually) applied collectively across all NOFA member farms, certified organic and conventional.
 - Lowered cost entry barriers for smaller producers
 - Improved mortality terms and priority scheduling
 - Prorated deposits - Seasonal Volume Program Deposit- based on individual farm volume

[Read more about these benefits](#)

Closing, Q&A

Ready to start your organic journey?

Visit: <https://www.organictransition.org/>

Contact your state NOFA chapter

CT: Sherlene Rodriguez, sherlene@ctnofa.org

Mass: Laura Davis, lauradavis@nofamass.org

NY: Teddy Tomao, ttomao@nofany.org

NH: Teresa Downey, teresa@nofanh.org

STEADFAST POULTRY PROCESSING & SLAUGHTER



Poultry Processing Services

Visit: <https://www.steadfastfarmsusa.com/>

Aaron McCool, steadfastpps@gmail.com

NOFA Member Poultry Processing Discount Request Form



**TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

Webinar Survey



Thank you!

