

Organic Handling in Practice: Scratch & Peck Feeds

Steve Reed (00:12):

Welcome to Scratch and Peck feeds in Burlington, Washington. We're in the beautiful Skagit Valley,

Diana Ambauen Meade (00:20):

At Scratch and Peck feeds, we produced highly nutritious organic feeds for chickens and turkeys, ducks also for pigs and goats and sheep. Back in 2009, I decided to raise chickens, and I went to buy organic feed for my chickens, and there was nothing to be found, so I decided, well, I'll just make my own. This business started out and remains a values-based business. It was a given that it needed to be organic.

Rich Fowles (01:01):

We are founded on a vision that's all about health to our bodies, health to our animals, and health to the planet, and that is just central to who we are.

Tracey Vanfield (01:14):

My name is Tracey Vanfield. I am the compliance and ops director here at Scratch and Peck feeds. My favorite part about working for organic handlers is that I always feel healthy. At Scratch and Peck, I can make a porridge out of our own feed and consume it myself. Something here at Scratch and Peck that has surprised me the most is how educated backyard bird farmers are. They are constantly providing inquiries and knowledge that can help us educate our own company to the expectations of our consumers. Our manufacturing processes here at Scratch and Peck aren't much different than other manufacturing entities in the United States. We have a simple receiving process where we verify the organic compliance from our suppliers.

Steve Reed (02:10):

When the driver arrives, there's several documents that are required to help verify that the product is certified organic as we purchase. That includes the bill of lading, the washout ticket, the purchase order, and the scale ticket. As part of our receiving process, we also do mycotoxin testing to verify that we don't have any concerns with the product. We take six probe samples, we do a visual inspection, and we do a moisture test on that product to make sure it meets our requirements that we set out. Once the truck is approved, it moves over the receiving pit. As product moves up into our elevator, we do have a magnet check to catch any, uh, metals that might be coming through from the farm, and that product is then taken up into one of our large silos.

Tracey Vanfield (03:09):

We run our background checks on suppliers very easily. The Organic Integrity Database, our supplier approval program does contain a checklist. This checklist ranges from where we receive our product from, who is cleaning our products, who is storing our products, what certifications are they under. We



want to provide information for the pillars of our company and how they align with our suppliers as well.

Steve Reed (03:41):

So this is our command center where we do all of our processing, from receiving all the way through our output into our finished feed bags. This allows the mill operator with this automation system to make sure we know that the right product is going to the right bin. We also have a transparency dashboard, which is visible to everyone throughout the company. It has everything from our bagging and milling fulfillment supply chain. It lets the operators and team members add issues or updates on what they're actually working on for the day so that we have a lot of visibility on what's happening in the mill.

Tracey Vanfield (04:24):

One thing that we definitely value are processes and procedures.

Steve Reed (04:28):

When we receive our products, that starts our traceability process. We give each lot a specific name in our ERP system. We then tie that to the bin, the physical location of the product. So this is an example of our labeling where we have organic identified on the bin, as well as the product that's inside, along with the lot number for it.

Steve Reed (04:56):

So another important part of our process is to make sure the right product goes into the right bag. One critical part of compliance is having the correct information on the bag and the tag. So everything from the type of feed, the weight of the feed included, the ingredients, the lot number, and the best by date. That's all tracked on this tag.

Tracey Vanfield (05:21):

The labeling certification process through our certification body is rather complex. You not only have to provide information on the portal of your digital information of your label, but also the placement the size.

Tracey Vanfield (05:40):

Since we're an organic program, we cannot control year to year the output of the protein and other measurable inputs that happens on our crops. So when those things change from year to year, we have to provide different laboratory analysis that will then help us reformulate our products to ensure that we are meeting the AAFCO requirements. The frequency of our changes for our formulations depend upon our guaranteed analysis. Our guaranteed analysis are laboratory analysis that we do for both our finished feeds and our incoming ingredients.

Katie Nix (06:15):



My name's Katie. I work at a company called Rangen. We specialize in livestock formulations. That's what we do with Scratch and Peck is we provide organically compliant mineral mixes that ultimately end up in their finished feeds. Reformulation comes with ingredient information brought to me by Scratch and Peck. I utilize my formulation programs on my end to determine how a complete feed needs to be reviewed or redone to make sure that we're still hitting the compliancy levels that we've held ourself to.

Steve Reed (06:55):

So this area is where we do our QA and QC. We start with taking a retained sample of each product, where we put down the vendor, the date that it's received, and the product, and the lock code. We also keep visual references for our team. Sometimes barley looks like wheat, and if they have any concerns at all, they have a representative sample. We can make sure again that what's coming in is going out as the correct product.

Steve Reed (07:35):

At the offload station, as we offload into the finished feed station, we scan the UPC to make sure that it's a viable UPC for our end customers. We focus on segregation of product from finished feeds to warehouse, to the supplies that are in the racks. That's very important for our organic compliance as well. A big transformation that we did in the last couple years is an upgrade to our ERP system. That tracks information coming in all the way to going out. So as the operator pulls the product off the line, they're scanning it into the ERP system, and then when another operator is pulling product from the line, they're able to scan that license plate. We have that visual representation again, but also the digital traceability through our ERP system.

Steve Reed (08:39):

The final step of our process is our distribution and logistics where we have to make sure that we have the lot traceability and tracking all the way through to the end customer. So that happens out here on our dock. As product is loaded, our operators are making sure that the scanned product is exactly what that customer ordered.

Tracey Vanfield (09:02):

There's a lot of great organic references. The one most common starting point would be the USDA website with their federal regulatory program known as NOP, which is the National Organic Program.

Tracey Vanfield (09:15):

As a part of the NOP program, one comprehensive item that we have to do during an organic inspection is provide our details to a Mass Balance Audit. Just last month, we had an organic inspection. What they wanted to look at was all of our raw materials, what formula did we create it in, what products were made, where those products were distributed, and did we have anything remaining in inventory? Also be important is the maintenance of the records by the United States. That's done in the Organic Integrity Database to ensure that everybody has public access to their certification.

Steve Reed (10:07):

We have workstations throughout our facility to allow our team members to update logs like you see on the screen, our sanitation log, in compliance with our organic system plan.

Steve Reed (10:19):

Boom.

Tracey Vanfield (10:24):

An Organic System Plan is required for any organic facility in the United States. We have to provide all materials that we utilize inside of our facility. We have to provide all of our suppliers. We have to provide any information on commingling. We also have to provide letters of guarantee for certain types of products that we're purchasing. We also have to provide information on what they call IPM Integrated Pest Management. I think the certification standards help assess the risk at your organization. The risks that are involved can oftentimes help you focus on the areas of your compliance program that are the most important.

Rich Fowles (11:09):

To be certified organic by the USDA provides an element that consumers can trust as they make choices about how to take better care of their own health. As CEO of this organization, I believe that my number one responsibility is to create a culture that enables high performance and belief in core values, namely being organic.

Diana Ambauen Meade (11:39):

Our vision at Scratch and Peck has always been to bring our feeds to as many people as we can. We believe in organic. We believe in the good that it does, not only for people, animals, but also for the land. This dream that I had is being carried on by everybody after me, and that's a beautiful, beautiful thing.



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program

