



■ | table of contents...

Updates and reports

USDA collaborate with NOP on organic grower group certification.....1
House of Agriculture hears organic.....1

Leader

A business proposition.....2

Certification and accreditation

Organic assurance in East Africa.....3
Participatory Guarantee Systems in East Africa.....7
Main features of quality assurance systems.....8
The new IMO Social and FairTrade Certification Programme.....10
The revised IFOAM Organic Guarantee System.....13

Updates and reports

Update on NOP ban on group certification.....16
New organic regulation in Paraguay.....17
Organic snails in France.....18
Clean label possibly an emerging trend.....18

NOP collaborate with NOSB on organic grower group certification

Following talks on grower groups with Andrea Caroe, Chair of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), the US National Organic Program (NOP) contacted all USDA certifying agents regarding the NOP's future approach towards grower group certification. The email, sent out on 2 May 2007 by Barbara Robinson, Deputy Administrator of NOP, said that the NOP has come to the following determination: 'effective immediately:

- NOP will do rulemaking to address the concerns that we have in the Program, but
- NOP will also collaborate with the NOSB about this, and it will be on the agenda for the meeting with the NOSB in the autumn.
- In the interim, NOP will republish the NOSB recommendation on grower group certification on their website under 'Today's News'.

Accredited certifying agencies (ACAs) are reminded that as long as they use the NOSB recommendation for interim guidance, no enforcement action will be taken by the NOP related to grower group certification. The NOSB recommendation is quite detailed in scope.'

The email also pointed out that some areas of the NOP regulations might be amended, or suggested for amendment. All amendments would require public input through notice and comment rulemaking. NOP will consult with the Board on these areas, prior to drafting the changes, and certainly during the rulemaking period. ■

For more information on the grower group certification see www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/FinalRecommendations/Oct02/GrowerGroups.pdf>2002

House of Agriculture hears organic

For the first time in history, on 18 April 2007 the US House of Agriculture heard about the challenges and opportunities facing organic agriculture and recognised the economic importance of the sector. Testimonies clearly indicate that the committee

believes even though the organic agriculture is flourishing, steadfast commitment to the National Organic Program (NOP), which has proven to be successful, must be ensured. ■

Source: House of Agriculture Committee