



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

USDA Recognizes WSDA and OMRI	1
Working with the Weed Board	2
Two Years of Dramatic Growth for Organic Farming	3
Compliance Actions	4
Organic Advisory Board	4
Requests for Additional Reviews of Organic Products	5
Open Comment Period on Sunset Reviews	5
BNML Update	6
Flooded Organic Farms Continue to Meet Organic Standards	8
Gopher Blasters Not Allowed	8
Three New Staff Members Welcomed	9
IFOAM	10
National Organic Standards Board	10
Calendar of Local Events	10
Tilth Producers Farm Walks	11
Future of Farming Project	12

USDA Recognizes WSDA and OMRI For Evaluating Materials

“The OMRI and WSDA brand name lists have been used as an industry standard for many years...”

During the January 2008 National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP) annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, USDA National Organic Program (NOP) officials stated that certifiers could not rely on the materials registration programs operated by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Because of the complexity in determining which materials are approved and prohibited under the National Organic Standards, OMRI and WSDA have developed material registration programs that are based on international quality management systems and the National Organic Standards. OMRI and WSDA evaluate hundreds of materials and publish lists that specify which brand name materials are allowed for use in organic production and handling. Certification agencies, organic producers and handlers rely on these lists to make certification decisions. The USDA National Organic Program does not have the resources or the expertise to do this work. The OMRI and WSDA brand name lists have been used as an industry standard for many years and are widely recognized for the quality of their work by certifiers, producers, handlers and the industry that produces the materials.

In late February, NASOP President Miles McEvoy and OMRI Executive Director Dave DeCou met with NOP Program Manager Barbara Robinson to try to resolve this problem. As a result of the meeting USDA issued a statement on March 5, 2008 that clarified that accredited certifying agents could utilize OMRI and WSDA for evaluating materials used in organic production and handling. Organic producers and handlers certified by WSDA may utilize materials approved by either WSDA or OMRI in their organic systems. Over the next year, OMRI and WSDA will be working with USDA to develop an accreditation program for material evaluation programs. The full text of the March 5, 2008 USDA statement is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/VerificationOfMaterialsMemo30508.pdf>.

By Miles McEvoy, Organic Program Manager

Inspector's Corner - Working With the Weed Board

“Organic Farm – Do Not Spray”.

Organic farmers often post “Do Not Spray” signs along roadways, especially where the crops are planted close to the road. As organic acreage increases, there are an increasing number of signs like this along the roadways. There is also an increasing concern from the Noxious Weed Control Board, the people whose job it is to control noxious weeds, because the need to protect organic crops from pesticide drift can conflict with the need to control noxious weeds with herbicides. Bighead Knapweed, pictured at right, is one example of a noxious weed.



Recently I met with the Grant County weed board and a few local organic farmers, to discuss this issue. I explained the National Organic Standards for maintenance of buffer zones to protect organic crops from drift. Organic farmers may choose to allow roadsides to be maintained by the county, as long as adequate buffers are present to minimize the risk of drift, or the crops at risk are not sold as organic crops. Alternatively, many farmers choose to maintain the roadsides themselves, so that they can harvest the entire crop as organic.

If a farmer chooses to maintain the roadside himself, there are some steps to take to ensure that the roadsides are not sprayed by the county. First, sign a contract with your local authorities, which may be the county road departments, the county weed board, or the state Department of Transportation. This documents your request that the roadsides should not be sprayed. Second, post clear signs. Grant County offers free laminated signs that say “**BEGIN – Owner will maintain**” and “**END – Owner will maintain**”. Check with your local authorities to find out what they prefer. Signs should be placed near the road, facing oncoming traffic, and be easily visible to the operator spraying the roadside.

These steps should prevent unintentional herbicide use along your roadways. However, if the road department is not spraying the roadsides, it becomes the responsibility of the farmer to prevent the spread of noxious weeds on his property. Even where herbicides are not used, the weed board is required to ensure that noxious weeds are controlled, to ensure that the weeds do not spread to the rest of your farm and to your neighbor’s farm. This spring, when you post “**Do not spray**” signs on your organic farm, remember that controlling weeds in the buffer zones will be for everyone’s benefit. Reducing herbicide use will benefit everyone as well.

By Pamela Coleman, Organic Field Inspector

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Mission Statement

The WSDA Organic Food Program protects consumers and supports the organic food industry by ensuring the integrity of organic food products. The program certifies organic producers and handlers to US National Organic Standards and enforces organic standards in Washington State. The program supports the development of export markets by providing certification to foreign organic standards.

Two Years of Dramatic Growth for Organic Farming

Organic farming shows no signs of slowing down, according to the most recent data (preliminary) compiled about the organic sector in Washington State. Each year, the WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources partners with certifiers to develop a detailed picture of organic farming in the state and for Oregon as well. This activity is funded by the Organic Farming Research for the Northwest special grant from the USDA. These statistical reports are put on line for public use at <http://csanr.wsu.edu/Organic/OrganicStats.htm>.

Washington organic agriculture is as diverse as the conventional agriculture. Currently certified organic acreage is dominated by forages, vegetables (largely for processing), and tree fruits (Table 1). Forages have increased in prominence over the past two years with the rapid increase in organic dairies. There are now 45 certified organic dairies in the state, and their cows represent about 5% of the total state dairy herd. The number of organic dairy cows more than tripled since 2005.

the biofuels boom might be disincentives for growers to bring more land under organic management.

Eastern Washington, particularly the irrigated zone in the central part of the state, is the home for the majority of organic growers, and acres (Table 2). Grant County has the most certified acres (15,120) and Yakima County the most certified growers (90). These numbers don't include an unknown number of organic growers who are exempt from certification (under \$5,000 in direct sales) or who choose not to be certified.

Table 2. Estimates of organic farms and acres in Washington State in 2007, based on WSDA and OTCO estimates.			
	Number of Farms	Organic Acres	Transitional Acres
Eastern WA	382	52,102	12,060
Western WA	232	23,040	838
State	614	75,142	12,898

Eastern Washington also receives the majority of the income from organic sales (Table 3). Overall, there has been an 88% increase in the dollar value of organic farm products over the last two years. This coincides with a 91% increase in organic acreage from 2005 to 2007. As demand for organic products continues to grow, we expect that our organic farming sector will continue to grow as well.

Table 3. Estimates of farmgate sales of organic crops grown in Washington State in 2006.		
	Millions \$	Increase
Eastern WA	110.5	+86%
Western WA	35.2	+97%
State	145.8	+88%

Table 1. Crop Distribution of certified organic acreage in Washington – 2007	
32%	Forages
25%	Vegetables
14%	Tree Fruit
8%	Fallow
6%	Grains, Beans, Oilseeds
4%	Small Fruits, Nuts
2%	Mixed Horticulture
12%	Other

The tree fruit sector is poised for major expansion, more than any other crop, with nearly 11,000 acres certified in 2007 and over 9,000 acres in transition. Growers are not required to sign up transition acres, and thus there might be considerably more growth than this. In contrast, organic wheat acreage remains relatively small, despite Washington State being a major wheat producer. Demand for organic wheat is huge, but high commodity prices and

By David Granatstein and Elizabeth Kirby, WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, Wenatchee

WSDA Organic Food Program Compliance Actions

In 2007, the WSDA Organic Food Program inspected over 1400 farms, processors, distributors and markets to verify that organic standards were being followed. The vast majority of those inspections found that organic producers, processors and handlers are in compliance with organic standards. However, there are a number of operations that have correctable violations that we address by issuing Notices of Noncompliance (NONC). In 2007, WSDA issued 25 NONC's for nonpayment of fees and 54 NONC's for minor violations including record keeping and label violations.

Serious violations of organic standards are addressed through denying certification, suspending certification, revoking certification or by imposing civil penalties. In 2007 a few operations had serious violations including the following:

- **Certifications denied:**
Three operations that applied for certification were denied organic certification for failure to comply with the organic standards due to inadequate records or due to the use of a prohibited substance.
- **Certifications suspended:**
Two operations were suspended for failure to update their Organic System Plan.
- **Civil penalties:**
Two \$1,000 civil penalties were issued in 2007. One was issued to Patterson Fruit for selling conventional fruit as organic at the Gig Harbor Farmers Market. The other was issued to Roberto Guerrero of A.C.M.E Orchard for selling conventional apples as organic at the Proctor's Farmers Market in Tacoma.
By Miles McEvoy, Organic Program Manager

Organic Advisory Board

The WSDA Organic Advisory Board (OAB) is looking for new members, especially those who represent the processing sector of the organic industry. Current members represent a variety of sectors of the organic food industry.

If you are interested in being a member of the Organic Advisory Board please obtain an application from our website <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/OAB.htm> or contact Miles McEvoy at mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov, 360-902-1924. The OAB meets 3 times a year. The next meeting is May 6, 2008 in Wenatchee at the Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center. The May OAB agenda will be posted on the WSDA Organic Food Program website in April.

Current OAB Members:

- **Michele Catalano,**
OAB chair, consumer representative, Seattle
- **Luis Acuña,**
CF Fresh, fruit handler, Sedro-Woolley
- **Aaron Avila,**
GS Long, input supplier, Yakima
- **Harold Austin IV,**
Zirkle Fruit Company, fruit handler/grower, Selah
- **Dan Dufault,**
Emmanuel Enterprises, tree fruit, vineyard, Plymouth
- **David Granatstein,**
Washington State University, Wenatchee
- **Jay Gordon,**
Gordon Dairy, Elma
- **Steve Hallstrom,**
Let Us Farm, vegetable grower, Oakville
- **Don Odegard,**
Watts Brothers, dairy and vegetables, Kennewick
- **Andrea Pipitone,** Pipitone Farms,
tree fruit, vegetables, processing, Rock Island
- **Phil Unterschuetz,**
Industry supporter, Wenatchee
- **Eiko Vojkovich,**
livestock, Sedro-Woolley

Requests for Additional Reviews of Organic Products

The organic industry is growing in leaps and bounds! In 2007 our program certified 202 processors of organic products and 142 handlers of organic products. Due to the increased demand for organic products in the market place we have not only seen new applicants for certification, but we have also seen an increase in the number of new products that are submitted to our program for review and approval.

The Organic Food Program is a fee for service program within the Department of Agriculture; our operating budget comes from certification fees and we do not receive general fund tax dollars to our program. WSDA Certified Organic Handlers and Processors are welcome to submit new and updated products for certification at any point throughout the year, depending on market and product development needs.

However, requests received outside of the annual renewal cycle take a significant amount of time for our staff to evaluate. Due to the increased demand for this service, in 2008 we will begin charging an

hourly fee for the review of products that are submitted outside the annual renewal process. This fee is being instituted per WAC 16-157-250 and as required by our State statute to recover the cost of the WSDA organic certification program. Products submitted with the annual renewal application **are not** subject to this fee.

More information on this process will be included in your handler or processor application response letter. However, we would also like to remind our operations that a request for a review of a new product does not guarantee certification, and in some situations, an additional inspection may also be needed in order to approve a new product or a new product line.

We anticipate that this new process, and the recovery of our expenses, will allow our staff to continue to process your requests in an efficient and timely manner. We welcome you to contact our office with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Brenda Book, Organic Certification Coordinator

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Open Comment Period on Sunset Reviews

The National Organic Program has announced a public comment period regarding the sunset reviews of materials on the National List. The public is welcome to comment on each sunset review as it occurs. Your comments may be in support of the renewal of any or all existing allowances, or you may choose to not support the allowances. Either way, your comments should clearly indicate your preference and include any documentation that is relevant.

Comments must be submitted on or before May 13, 2008. Comments can be submitted electronically via www.regulations.gov. You can find more information about these materials, and the guidelines for commenting, on the NOP website, under "Today's News:" <http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOP/TodaysNews.html>.

This current round of sunset reviews includes the following materials:

Crop Production

Hydrogen chloride
Ferric phosphate

Handling

Egg White Lysozyme
L-Malic Acid
Microorganisms
Activated charcoal
Cyclohexylamine
Diethylaminoethanol
Octadecylamine
Peracetic acid/peroxyacetic acid
Sodium acid pyrophosphate
Tetrasodium pyrophosphate

BRAND NAME MATERIAL LIST UPDATE

March 15, 2008

This list is to be used as an addendum to the Brand Name Material List distributed to all new and renewal applicants for certification. All materials listed below are approved as of March 15, 2008. You may access a complete updated Brand Name Materials List at the WSDA Organic Food Program website:

<http://agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/default.htm>.

Brand Name	Company Name	Sub-Type	Type	Restrictions of use
AG Specialties Brand Sodium Nitrate	AG Specialties, LLC	Sodium Nitrate	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Use restricted to no more than 20% of the crops total nitrogen requirement [205.602(g)]
Ag-Life 7-2-1	Rhizogen, Inc.	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Al-U-Grow 0-0-4 + 10S + 1.5 Fe	DC Minerals, Inc.	Mined Mineral	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Ascend PA (OPHI)	BioScientific, Inc.	Biological Soil Amendment	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Biolizer XP	United Organic Products	Fish Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Bio-Save 10 LP	Austin Grant, Inc. dba Jet Harvest Solutions	Biological Fungicide	Post Harvest Material	Label Use Only
BorrePlex Ca (Liquid)	LignoTech USA, Inc.	Chelating Agent	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	For use only as a chelating agent, dust suppressant or floatation agent [NOP 205.601(j)(4)]
BorrePlex Ca (Powder)	LignoTech USA, Inc.	Chelating Agent	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	For use only as a chelating agent, dust suppressant or floatation agent [NOP 205.601(j)(4)]
BorrePlex NA	LignoTech USA, Inc.	Chelating Agent	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	For use only as a chelating agent, dust suppressant or floatation agent [NOP 205.601(j)(4)]
BorrePlex OA (Liquid)	LignoTech USA, Inc.	Chelating Agent	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	For use only as a chelating agent, dust suppressant or floatation agent [NOP 205.601(j)(4)]
Champ WG	Nu Farm Americas Inc. AGT Division	Copper Hydroxide	Disease & Pest Control	Must be used in a manner that minimizes accumulation of copper in the soil. Shall not be used as an herbicide. [205.601(i)(1)]
DAZITOL	AG Specialties, LLC	Insectide	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
Down to Earth Vegan Mix 3-2-2	Down To Earth Distributors	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Faith Dairy Compost	Faith Dairy, Inc.	Compost	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Firewall™ 17 WP Fungicide/Bactericide	AgroSource, Inc.	Streptomycin	Disease & Pest Control	For fire blight control in apples and pears only
FOAMBLAST® ORGANIC 16	Emerald Foam Control LLC	Foam Control	Processing Aid	Label Use Only
Goemar MZ 'O'	Agrimar Corporation	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Green Cypress Organic Spreader	Monterey AgResources	Spray Adjuvant	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only

Brand Name	Company Name	Sub-Type	Type	Restrictions of use
Hansen Soil Enhancements Aged Screened Manure	Hansen Soil Enhancements	Manure	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Must be used in compliance with NOP 205.203(c)(1)
IAP 440 All Purpose Spray Oil	Independent Agribusiness Professionals	Horticultural Oil	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
Jet-Oxide	Austin Grant Inc. dba Jet Harvest Solutions	Peracetic Acid	Processing Aid	For use in wash and/or rinse water according to FDA limitations. For use as a sanitizer on food contact surfaces [205.605(b)].
KELPPOWER	KWS Distributing, LLC	Kelp	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Leaf Life Gavicide Green 415	Western Farm Service, Inc.	Horticultural Oil	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
Leaf Life Gavicide Green 440	Western Farm Service, Inc.	Horticultural Oil	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
MAG-KO-SUL	Northwest Agricultural Products	Potassium Magnesium Sulfate	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Monson Organic	Monson Ranches	Manure	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Must be used in compliance with NOP 205.203(c)(1)
Natural Coat 10	HDH AgriProducts, LLC	Fruit Coating	Processing Aid	Label Use Only
Natural Foam 10	HDH Agri Products LLC	Fruit & Vegetable Wash	Post Harvest Material	Label Use Only
Natural Foam 20	HDH Agri Products LLC	Fruit & Vegetable Wash	Post Harvest Material	Label Use Only
Natural Foam 42	HDH Agri Products LLC	Fruit & Vegetable Wash	Post Harvest Material	Label Use Only
Oly Mountain Fish Compost™	North Mason Fiber Company	Compost	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
ORGANIC FOAM-A-CID	CH2O, Inc.	Mineral Remover	Post Harvest Material	Label Use Only
OxyWater Organic	BioScientific, Inc.	Biological Soil Amendment	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PAR4 Granulated Feather Meal 13-0-0	North Pacific Ag Products	Feather Meal	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PHT 3-11-1 100% Natural Organic Fertilizer	J.R. Simplot Company	Processed Manure	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Phyta-Grow Leafy Green Special 8-1-2	California Organic Fertilizers, Inc.	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Phytamin 411	California Organic Fertilizers, Inc.	Liquid Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Phytamin 512	California Organic Fertilizers, Inc.	Liquid Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Royal Classic Compost	A.M. Todd Company dba Royal Organic Products, LLC	Compost	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Ruffin-Tuff Organics Copper 5-G	Winfield Solutions	Copper Sulfate	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Ruffin-Tuff Organics Crop Mix 1	Winfield Solutions	Chelated Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Ruffin-Tuff Organics Iron 10-G	Winfield Solutions	Chelated Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing

Flooded Organic Farms Continue to Meet Organic Standards

Several farms experienced devastating losses of livestock, feed, harvested produce and equipment in December's floods. The farms may never recover all the financial losses they have suffered. Loss of organic certification would have been another serious blow to economic recovery.

“Sample results confirm that the flood did not adversely affect these farms’ compliance with organic certification standards. The organic farms in the Chehalis River Valley continue to follow organic management practices and comply with the National Organic Standards.”

Miles McEvoy,
Organic Program Manager

In December, organic inspectors visited each of the 17 organic farms impacted by the flood. Inspectors walked the fields to note how high water levels rose, where the flood deposited sediment on the farmland, and if there were any signs of petrochemical residues or other contaminants. The inspectors’ initial assessments found silt, mud and woody debris, but no areas of concern from synthetic contaminants.

In recent weeks, WSDA inspectors collected 40 samples of plant material growing on the flooded farms. WSDA laboratory staff tested the plants for a wide range of pesticides that would threaten the organic status of the farms. Results show that the flood waters did not cause any contamination that threatens the farms’ organic status or prevents them from marketing this year’s crop as organically raised.

Gopher Blasters Not Allowed

Please note that the use of gopher blasters will not be approved for the 2008 crop season. "Gopher Blasters" inject propane into the tunnels of burrowing animals. Recent information from the National Organic Program indicates that the use of these tools are not allowed in certified organic crop production. The application of propane to the soil is considered an application of a prohibited ingredient.

Brand Name	Company Name	Sub-Type	Type	Restrictions of use
Ruffin-Tuff Organics Manganese 8-G	Winfield Solutions	Chelated Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Ruffin-Tuff Organics Zinc 10-G	Winfield Solutions	Chelated Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
SB-Peracetic Acid	Shepard Bros., Inc.	Peracetic Acid	Processing Aid	For use in wash and/or rinse water according to FDA limitations. For use as a sanitizer on food contact surfaces [205.605(b)].
SB-Peracetic Acid FV	Shepard Bros., Inc.	Peracetic Acid	Processing Aid	For use in wash and/or rinse water according to FDA limitations. For use as a sanitizer on food contact surfaces [205.605(b)].
SEA-ZYME	Bio Ag Nutrient Solutions	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Tetra-Bor 15 Maxi Granule	Tetra Micronutrients, Inc.	Boron	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Tetra-Bor 17 Commercial Grade Boric Acid	Tetra Micronutrients, Inc.	Boron	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
True "402"	True Organic Products, Inc.	Fish Product	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Virosoft CP4	BioTEPP, Inc.	Granulosis Virus	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only

Three New Staff Members Welcomed

The Organic Food Program is pleased to announce the hiring of **Scott Rice** (photo at right) as a permanent staff member. Scott came aboard last May as a temporary employee to help with the windfall of new organic applications we were receiving. Scott has proved to be excellent communicator and quickly learned the intricacies of the National Organic Standards.

Many of you may already know Scott from his work at the Pike Place Market. Prior to that, Scott worked for the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), giving him a solid background in the various material inputs used in organic farming. Scott also has worked in the asparagus fields of New Zealand and co-founded the Selwyn Farmer Market there.

We are delighted that Scott accepted a position with the Organic Food Program.



Renee Delaney (photo at left) joined the Organic Food Program this March and we are pleased to have her working with crop growers on our review team.

Renee grew up on a family farm in central Illinois, raising livestock, corn, wheat, and soybeans. Today, the family farm continues to grow on that same 300 acres. Renee received a degree in Plant Biology from Southern Illinois University, and she has a broad range agricultural experience in both the private sector and state government. Renee eloquently expressed her experience, as *“these jobs were a wonderful experience. Having worked in greenhouses and fields, and then seeing the distribution and sales enabled me to see full circle; **from seed to table.**”*

Renee’s experience, combined with an understanding of the real life issues facing farmers, will make her a great asset to our program and the organic community as a whole.

Kristy Jones (photo at right) joined the Organic Food Program as our new Administrative Coordinator. She will oversee many tasks happening behind the scenes. For example, Kristy will manage the Organic Food Program budget and web site, and will be our new Document Controller. The latter is responsible for literally making sure “we are all on the same page”.

Kristy was born and raised in the South Sound region of Washington State. Amongst her many accomplishments is a degree in Graphic Design, which she continues to use working on side projects designing everything from business cards to billboards. Kristy comes to us from the Dept. of Labor and Industries, and she brings a long list of talents and skills to the Organic Food Program. We feel very fortunate that Kristy decided to join our organic team.



IFOAM — An International Voice for Organic Agriculture

“IFOAM brings together the key players from all over the planet to facilitate trade in organic products.”

IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, is the worldwide umbrella organization for the organic movement, uniting more than 750 member organizations in 108 countries. IFOAM actively participates in international agricultural and environmental negotiations with the United Nations and multilateral institutions to further the interests of the organic agricultural movement worldwide. Through IFOAM World Congresses, International Trade conferences, commodity specific (coffee, seeds, wild products, etc.) and other events, IFOAM brings together the key players from all over the planet to facilitate trade in organic products.

IFOAM provides a market guarantee for integrity of organic claims. The Organic Guarantee System (OGS) unites the organic world through a common system of standards, verification and market identity. It fosters equivalence among participating IFOAM accredited certifiers, paving the way for more orderly and reliable trade whilst acknowledging consumer trust in the organic ‘brand’. The USDA Organic Food Program obtained IFOAM accreditation in 2004 for its International Programs.

The 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress will be held from June 18-20 2008 in Modena, Italy. The IFOAM General Assembly convenes once every three years in conjunction with the IFOAM Organic World Congress. The IFOAM General Assembly is the democratic decision making forum for the international organic movement. For more information about IFOAM, the World Congress and the General Assembly visit IFOAM’s website at <http://www.ifoam.org/index.html>



National Organic Standards Board

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) makes recommendations to the USDA National Organic Program. Their main function is to approve and prohibit materials that are used in organic production and handling. The next NOSB meeting is scheduled for May 20-22, 2008 in Baltimore, Maryland. During this meeting the NOSB will be making recommendations on the commercial availability of organic seeds, grower groups, and organic aquaculture standards, and will take action on materials that may be added or deleted from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Materials. Information concerning the meeting will be posted at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/index.htm>

Calendar of Events

Growing Alternative Livestock Feed in Western Washington, April 23, Everett, WA. Learn what European and UK growers are doing to provide livestock with high nutrition by growing Brassica and other forages. Pre-registration required. To register call Karie Christensen at (425) 338-2400 or email klchristen@cahe.wsu.edu.

All Things Organic Conference and Trade Show, April 26—29, Chicago, IL. For information visit www.organicexpo.com.

USDA Organic Advisory Board Meeting, May 6, Wenatchee, WA. The OAB meets at the Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center. Contact Miles McEvoy at 360-902-1924, for more information.

National Organic Standards Board, May 20-22, Baltimore, MD. See article above.

IFOAM Organic World Congress, June 18-20, Modena, Italy. See article at left.

Tilth Producers Farm Walks

Monday April 28 – Sweet Grass Beef Farm, Lopez Island www.sgfbeef.com

Innovative Management for Positive Returns
Scott Meyers and Brigit Waring produce grass finished Wagyu beef on Lopez Island. Scott will demonstrate his own fencing and water systems, which minimize labour requirements and stress.

Monday, May 5 – Stokesberry Sustainable Farms, Olympia

Organic Pastured Poultry and Beef
Come walk through Jerry and Janelle Stokesberry's intensively-managed pasture rotation system. Tour the on-farm certified WSDA processing facility and discuss keys to successful direct marketing and growth.

Monday May 19 – Willie Green's Organic Farm, Monroe www.williegreens.org

Season Extension- Capturing the Market
Jeff Miller will share his innovative ideas for getting a jump on early mixed vegetable production. We will tour greenhouses and propagation houses, as well as direct-seeded and transplanted row crops.

Monday June 2 – Zakarison Partnership, Pullman, Wheat, Grain, and Livestock

This innovative family-run farm produces wheat, feed grains, locker lambs and pastured poultry. Eric Zakarison is experimenting with 'solar tractors,' using draft mule, horse and oxen teams.

Monday July 28 – Alm Hill Gardens, Everson www.almhillgardens.com

Diversified Production, Cooperative Ownership
The Alm Hill Garden team will cover season extension, crop diversity, berry production, and direct marketing strategies. This Farm Walk will be offered in both English and Spanish.

Monday August 18 – 21 Acres, Woodinville www.21acres.org

Agricultural and Environmental Learning Center
Visitors will tour the farm and future site of the multi-purpose Agriculture Center, with a focus on

urban farming, green technology, and building community support in urban areas for a traditionally rural enterprise.

Monday September 1 – Methow Creamery, Twisp

Value-Added Cow Dairy, On-Farm Feed Production
Methow Creamery is a small scale sustainable organic dairy operation featuring twenty dairy cows and 800 acres of grain and hay production for the cows and off-farm sales.

Monday September 8 – Nash's Organic Produce, Sequim www.nashsorganicproduce.com

Integrating Seed Into a Diversified Organic Farm
Micaela Colley from Organic Seed Alliance will join Nash and the farm crew to lead a Farm Walk demonstrating the benefits of on-farm seed production. Following the Farm Walk, a seed saving workshop will be taught.

Monday October 6- Styger Family Dairy Farm, Chehalis

Intensive Grazing for Award Winning Milk
Andy and Linda Styger have been farming for 28 years on their family-operated farm in the Chehalis Valley, where for the past 18 years, they have run a dairy farm using intensive grazing practices.

For more information:
www.tilthproducers.org,
(206) 442-7620,
nancy@tilthproducers.org



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“We want to help the next generation succeed on the farm.”

WSDA Director Valoria Loveland

Future of Farming Project Aims to Keep Agriculture Profitable

What can our state’s policy leaders do to help Washington’s farming families stay profitable over the next 20 years?

The challenges for the agriculture community are daunting: high start-up costs, weather and price risks, input costs, and many more. At the same time, opportunities are abundant: a diverse climate, a well-developed food processing infrastructure, world-class export facilities, and strong demand for local farm products. What can the Legislature do to mitigate some of the risks? In areas of opportunity, how can the state lay the groundwork for profitable businesses?

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Future of Farming project will develop a strategic plan to guide decision makers as they work to support the continued economic viability of the state’s food and agriculture industry. You are encouraged to help develop this strategic plan through the Future of Farming project. The goal of the project is to pass on a vibrant farm economy to the next generation of Washington producers.

A project steering committee has met to develop a framework for prioritizing discussions. WSDA has hired an agricultural economist, Jennifer Harte, to coordinate the project. During the spring and summer, listening sessions with farmers, food processors and other members of the public will be held throughout the state. WSDA is currently requesting input through an online survey on the project’s Web site: www.agr.wa.gov/fof. The project’s final report will be delivered to the Washington State Legislature before the end of the year. The strategies identified in the report will be structured to assist the Legislature and other governments to enact policies that benefit agriculture. For more information, please call 360-902-7549.
