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Volume 2, Issue 1

January 15, 2007

# QUARTERLY REPORT

## *Organic Advisory Board Serves Our Program Well*

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The WSDA Organic Advisory Board (OAB) was established in 1987 to make recommendations to WSDA regarding the organic certification program. The OAB is comprised of members representing various sectors of the organic food industry. Board membership reflects the interests of small and large growers, processors, handlers, research and education, industry supporters, and consumers. Currently, the Board has fourteen members representing tree fruit, vegetable production, handlers, processors, livestock producers, WSU extension, farm input suppliers, and consumers. The Board also has one member who serves on the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and another who is on the Organic Trade Association Board, furthering ties within the organic industry.

In order to support of the Organic Food Program (OFP), the Advisory Board meets a minimum of four times per year. Miles McEvoy, Program Manager, and other staff present updates on the status of the OFP's work, follow-up information from prior meetings, and issues requiring input from the Board. The agenda is always full, and the 10am – 5pm meetings never seem long. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the OFP website at <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/OAB.htm>.

The Board meetings include a public comment period, program updates and issues associated with the various certification arenas. The OAB provides recommendations regarding interpretations of the National Organic Standards and the European organic standards. The board reviews program activities and provides input into the program's strategic plan and budget priorities. Issues regarding materials allowed under National Organic Program and European organic standards are often discussed. Program updates are provided regarding fees, the budget, new business trends, compliance actions and inspections. Also, staff provides reports from the various industry meetings and conferences attended. Throughout the meetings, board members ask questions of OFP staff and one another to better clarify information.

Discussion is sometimes quite lively, with members occasionally debating the merits of controversial aspects of organics that may arise. Generally meetings are fast-paced and informative, and both board members and OFP staff leaves feeling that much has been accomplished.

A diverse board functions as an oversight to the business of the OFP. Organic Advisory Board members serve three-year terms and there is often a seat or two to fill. Meetings are open to the public and those interested in joining or learning more are welcome to attend. Questions can also be directed to any Board member, and particular issues can be addressed during the public comment period of a meeting. *By Michele Catalano, OAB Chair.*

### Important Dates

**February 1**  
 Producer Renewal  
 Applications are  
 Due!

**March 1**  
 Processor/  
 Handler Renewal  
 Applications Due!

## *Organic Food Program Update*

### Organic enforcement

In 2006 WSDA revoked the certification of three operations. The first revocation was of an organic raspberry grower in Whatcom County. Bob Van Dyken of Pangborn Farms had his certification revoked because of prohibited pesticide residues (captan) on his organic raspberries.

The second revocation involved Hap Weidner, an organic mint producer and processor in Grant County. In 2005 we received a complaint that Mr. Weidner was selling conventional mint as organic. We conducted an investigation and obtained samples of Mr. Weidner's organic mint. Pesticide residues were found from both field and product samples. We worked with the USDA National Organic Program Compliance Program to audit records and interview affected parties. We determined that Mr. Weidner had willfully violated the organic standards. Mr. Weidner's organic producer and processor certification was revoked in February 2006.

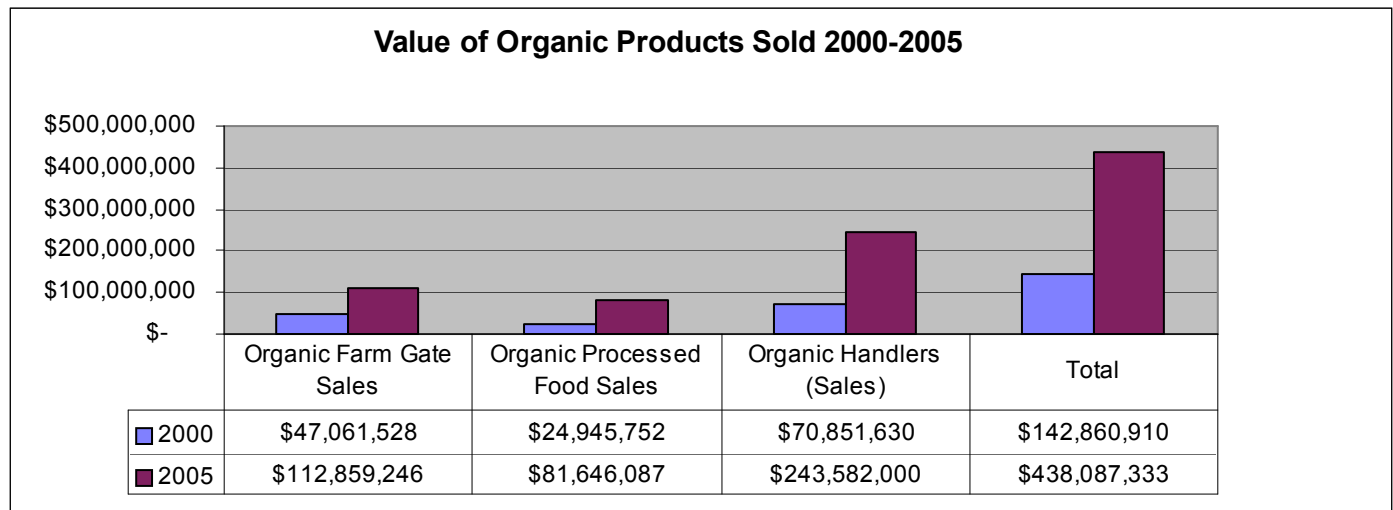
The third revocation occurred in August 2006, when we received a complaint that a Lewis County producer, Hop Two It, was buying conventional fruit and selling it as organic. We investigated Hop Two It, obtained samples of Hop Two It's organic fruit and determined that Hop Two It had knowingly sold nonorganic peaches and nectarines as organic. Hop Two It's organic certification was revoked on December 5, 2006 for willful violations of the National Organic Standards.

In 2006, the WSDA Organic Food Program also investigated a number of other complaints that either had no substance or led to minor corrections. A total of thirteen complaints were investigated including salmon mislabeled as organic, bread labeled as organic that was not certified organic, and misrepresentation of organic products at farmers markets. In 2006, the WSDA Organic Food Program conducted 30 surveillance inspections of non-certified operations (e.g. retail stores, farmers markets), as well as 1,171 inspections of our certified operations. We issued 55 Notices of Noncompliance for violations of organic standards. The most common violation is failure to maintain adequate records.

### Organic staffing/budget for 2007

In 2006 we had 7 organic field inspectors, 1 field supervisor, 4 organic program specialists, one fee specialist, two administrative staff and one program manager. The program grew significantly in 2006 with the addition of 130 new applicants and hundreds of new organic orchards, fields and products. Although the staff worked overtime, some inspections were conducted later than we would have liked. In 2007 we plan to add one organic program specialist and one field inspector to keep up with the expanding work load. To enable the program to grow, we increased fees. The fee increase was necessary because **the organic program is funded entirely by organic certification fees and receives no money from the state or federal general fund.**

*By Miles McEvoy, Organic Program Manager*



## ***Renewing your Organic Certification***

All certified operations are required to renew their organic certification and pay certification fees on an annual basis.

- Producer Renewal Packets, mailed out in December 2006, must be postmarked by **February 1, 2007**.
- Handler, Processor, and Retailer Renewal Packets, mailed out in January, must be postmarked by **March 1, 2007**.

Our goals for the 2007 renewal packets were to provide clear information concerning the renewal application process, limit paperwork to those items essential to the certification process, and minimize changes to the forms. Please note that copies of all the application forms can be found at the WSDA Organic Food Program Website: <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/default.htm>.

You will be happy to see that the renewal packets contain a simple update to the full Organic System Plan you filled out last year! Although shorter and easier, the Organic System Plan remains the cornerstone to your organic certification. Please ensure any changes from your previous plan(s) are included in your update, and ALL material inputs you plan to use are listed in the material section! All inputs must be approved prior to use.

The WSDA Organic Food Program is funded entirely by your certification fees; we do not receive general fund tax dollars. Our work not only involves meeting your direct needs, but also providing surveillance throughout Washington to ensure the integrity and compliance of organic products in the marketplace. Several targeted fee increases were put in place to enable us to meet your expectations. The specific fee changes for 2007 are explained in your renewal packets.

Please note that WSDA offers a payment plan for your certification fees. If you are interested in setting up a payment plan, please contact Jennifer Watson, Fee Specialist, at (360) 902-1885 or email [jwatson@agr.wa.gov](mailto:jwatson@agr.wa.gov). If you have any questions regarding your renewal paperwork, please contact our office. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to make 2007 a success!

*By Richard Carr and Brenda Book, Organic Program Specialists*

## ***Calendar of Events***

### ***2007 WA Farmers Market Assoc. Conference "Harvesting Change"***

—January 20-21, 2007, Ellensburg, WA. Contact: (206) 706-5198 or [www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com)

### ***Small-farm workshop, best management classes for Whatcom County***

—Feb. 3, 2007, Ten Mile Grange, 6950 Hannegan Road. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Information and registration: 360-354-2035 ext. 3.

### ***Organic Seed Workshop***

February 8-9, 2007 Mount Vernon, WA. Cost: \$40.00. Contact the Organic Seed Alliance at 360-385-7192 or [info@seedalliance.org](mailto:info@seedalliance.org).

### ***2007 OSU Small Farms and Farm Direct Marketing Conference***

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR. Contact: Chrissy Lucas at 541-766-3556 or <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu>.

### ***5<sup>th</sup> International Organic Tree Fruit Research Symposium***

March 4-7, 2007, East Lansing, MI. The emphasis will be on practical research, on-farm advances and realistic marketing strategies. Contact Mark Whalon at [RPMnews@msu.edu](mailto:RPMnews@msu.edu) or by phone (517) 353-9425.

### ***The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Sustainable Living Conference***

—April 20-22, 2007. Olympia, WA. Contact: Maggie Phillipsborn at (360) 867-6493 or [www.evergreen.edu/synergy](http://www.evergreen.edu/synergy).

### ***Farm-to-Table Regional Trade Meetings***

—Form valuable trade relationships with local farmers, restaurants, retailers or institutions. Several meetings are being held throughout Washington; January through March. Contact Peggy Campbell at [campbellp@wsu.edu](mailto:campbellp@wsu.edu) or (425) 357-6024 for details.





## BRAND NAME MATERIAL LIST UPDATE

December 27, 2006

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 December 27, 2006. 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>. If you are certified by a certification agency other than WSDA, check with your certifier prior to the use of any material not listed in your System Plan

PRODUCT NAME	COMPANY NAME	PRODUCT SUB-TYPE	PRODUCT TYPE	RESTRICTIONS
Acadian ASEP 0.5-0.2-17	Acadian AgriTech (Division of Acadian Seaplants)	Kelp Extract	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
AG Specialties Brand Sodium Nitrate	AG Specialties	Sodium Nitrate	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Use restricted to no more than 20% of the crops total nitrogen requirement [205.602(g)]
Agtiva Supreme	Keg River Chemical Corp	Elemental Sulfur	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Crop Finish 0-0-52	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Sulfate of Potash	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Dazitol	AG Specialties	Insecticide	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
Excite Seaweed SSEP 1-1-17	Acadian AgriTech (Division of Acadian Seaplants)	Kelp Extract	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Genesis Gibb 4%	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Giberellic Acid	Crop Production Aid	None
HDH Peroxy	HDH Agri Products LLC	Fungicide	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
LEC-DS Super Concentrate	Wormsworth, Inc.	Liquid Worm Castings	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Must be used in compliance NOP 205.203(c)
Mor-Bor 17	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Soluble Boron Product	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Mor-Calcium	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Calcium Chloride	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Only for use as a foliar spray to treat physiological disorders associated with calcium update [205.602(c)]
Natural-Cal	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Calcium Chloride	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Only for use as a foliar spray to treat physiological disorders associated with calcium update [205.602(c)]
NC-99	Genesis Agri Products, Inc.	Calcium Chloride	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Only for use as a foliar spray to treat physiological disorders associated with calcium update [205.602(c)]
Northwest Ag Products IWC pH	Northwest Agricultural Products	Irrigation Water Treatment	Crop Production Aid	Label Use Only
Organic Biolink 6-0-0 Fertilizer	Westbridge Agricultural Products	Nitrogen Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PAR 4 3-3-2 Crumbled Poultry Compost	North Pacific Ag Products	Processed Manure	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PAR 4 3-3-2 Pelletized Poultry Compost	North Pacific Ag Products	Processed Manure	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PAR 4 Granulated Bone Meal 2-14-0	North Pacific Ag Products	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PAR 4 Granulated Organic Fertilizer 9-3-7	North Pacific Ag Products	Blended Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
PHC Organic Plant Feed 9-0-1	Plant Health Care, Inc.	Liquid Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
RNA 6% Humic Acid	RNA Corporation - A Division of Wilbur Ellis Company	Humic Acid	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
RNA Kraft Lignosulfonate Complexed 9% Zinc	RNA Corporation - A Division of Wilbur Ellis Company	Chelated Fertilizer	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	Soil deficiency must be documented by testing
Rock 'n Chicken 2-4-2	Down To Earth Distributors	Compost	Fertilizer & Soil Amendment	None
Surround CF Crop Protectant	BASF Corporation	Particle Film	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only
Surround WP Crop Protectant	BASF Corporation	Particle Film	Disease & Pest Control	Label Use Only

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## Searching for Organic Seeds

Whether you are an organic farmer or organic gardener, now is a good time to order organic seeds for next year's crops. The National Organic Program regulation, at 7 CFR Section 205.204(a), requires organic producers to use organically grown seeds, unless there is no 'equivalent' organic variety that is 'commercially available' in the form, quality, and quantity that you need for your operation.

In approving a grower's organic system plan for certification, the certifier must decide whether the producer has made a sufficient effort to source organic seeds for all crops grown on the farm, including cover crops. Generally, producers need to check with at least three suppliers of organic seeds to see if they have organic seeds in the varieties that the producer needs. (Records should be kept of all attempts to source organic seeds.)

Fortunately, more and more varieties of organic seeds are becoming available. There are several helpful web sites where suppliers of organic seeds, and the varieties they sell, are listed. The Organic Materials Review Institute has established an excellent database so that growers can find organic seed varieties that are 'equivalent' and 'commercially available.' The database can be accessed at: <http://seeds.omri.org/>

An organic seed search service is now provided by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's Save Our Seed Project (<http://www.savingourseed.org>). The SOS Project provides certified organic growers access to organically grown seeds, tubers, and rootstocks. You can even receive customized information by submitting a list of the cultivars/varieties sought, along with the quantities needed, by FAX (540-894-8060), e-mail ([cricket@savingourseed.org](mailto:cricket@savingourseed.org)), or mail (Carolina Farm Stewardship Ass'n, 286 Dixie Hollow, Louisa, VA 23093). If no certified organic sources exist, the project will send full documentation for you to provide to your certification agent. The web site is: <http://www.savingourseed.org/>

The Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas (ATTRA) project has a publication entitled "Suppliers of Seed for Certified Organic Production."

The purpose of the publication is to help U.S. farmers find quality organic seeds of regionally suitable varieties. The list includes suppliers of organic seeds for horticultural and agronomic crops. For more information, visit: [http://ww2.attra.ncat.org/where.php/altseed\\_search.php](http://ww2.attra.ncat.org/where.php/altseed_search.php).

Other sources of organic seeds may be found at the Washington State University organic program seed database (<http://csanr.wsu.edu/Organic/OrganicSeed.htm>). *By Jim Riddle, Organic Outreach Coordinator, University of Minnesota November 7, 2006. The article above is posted at [www.organicecology.umn.edu](http://www.organicecology.umn.edu)*



WSDA Certified Organic Producer harvesting crops. Photo by Pamela Coleman

### OMRI Board of Directors

Katherine Withey was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI). OMRI is a non-profit agency that provides material review service for both brand name materials and generic materials that are allowed for use in organic food production, processing and handling. Katherine represents the certifier position on the Board and brings the voice of WSDA and her experience with the Brand Name Material List to her new position. She is elected to one two-year term, with a limit of three terms possible.

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## *WSDA Organic International Programs*

Washington State organic products can be found on grocery store shelves across the US as well as in many foreign countries, and the demand for these quality products continues to grow each year! In addition to evaluating products to US Organic Standards, WSDA Organic Food Program offers certification programs and assistance for organic products that are being sold and exported to foreign countries. Below is an overview of the export services WSDA Organic Food Program can offer your farm or company.

**European Organic Verification Program (EOVP)** - All products sold as “organic” in the European Union must be certified in accordance with European Union Council Regulation EEC 2092/91. The WSDA European Organic Verification Program includes the requirements of EEC 2092/91 as well as the requirements of the IFOAM Basic Standards. To receive EOVP certification for your organic products, your operation must comply with the USDA National Organic Standards, in addition to the EOVP Additional Requirements. It is best to plan ahead if you wish to receive EOVP certification for your products, as the EOVP Additional Requirements prohibit certain materials and inputs that are allowed under the US program. However, receiving this additional certification will allow your organic crops or products to be sold in all European countries.

**NOTE:** If you participated in the WSDA European Program during 2006, you were automatically sent an EOVP application in your 2007 Renewal Packet. If you would like to apply as a new applicant to this program for 2007, please contact our office for an application, or visit our website at <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/default.htm>

**Japan Inspection Program** – All organically labeled retail products sold in Japan are required to be certified in compliance with JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standards) and carry the Organic JAS Seal. Processors seeking JAS certification of organic products must apply directly with a Japan agency such as ICS-Japan or JONA. Although WSDA Organic Food Program does not provide JAS certification, we have been authorized to conduct inspections on behalf of these two Japan agencies. The WSDA Japan Inspection Program allows your company to cut down on costs and schedule one inspection each year, rather than having an organic inspection with two separate agencies.

**Export Documents** - Several governments require specific documentation from a USDA Certification Agency before the organic product can enter the foreign country. Currently, European Countries, Japan, and Korea require additional documentation, other than the organic certificate, for the organic products to be imported. In the future, Canada may also require additional documentation for organic products that are exported from the United States. WSDA Organic Food Program has the ability to provide these exports documents in order to facilitate the shipping of an organic product.

Please contact Brenda Book at (360) 902-2090, email: [bbook@agr.wa.gov](mailto:bbook@agr.wa.gov), with questions regarding exporting products to foreign countries, or for more information on requirements and costs for any of the WSDA International Programs. *By Brenda Book, Organic Program Specialist*



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### **ISO Guide 65 Audit**

The annual ISO Guide 65 audit was conducted from October 3-5, 2006. The USDA auditor, Mike Caceres, did not find any non-conformances during the audit. This is the first time that we have not had any non-conformances during the ISO audit. The auditor examines all aspects of the WSDA Organic Certification Program during the audit. Mr. Caceres interviewed admin staff, reviewers and inspectors to verify that procedures were being followed, that training had been provided and that staff had the necessary skills to do their work. Mr. Caceres also conducted a witness inspection with David Simpson, organic food inspector. David conducted two inspections (one producer and one handler) while under the scrutiny of the auditor.

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## *Processing Audits – What documents are needed?*

Each year at your annual inspection, your inspector is required to conduct an audit, in order to verify the integrity of organic products. For processing and handling operations, the audit can be the most challenging part of the inspection. If you understand why we conduct audits, and what documents are needed, the audit will proceed much more smoothly.

There are three types of audits, a sales / financial audit, a backtrack audit, or an ingredients in / product out balance audit, and each serves a slightly different purpose. The financial audit verifies that the income and sales of organic product reported in your application is correct. The backtrack audit verifies that you maintain documents that can track your organic products from the time they enter your possession until the time they leave the facility. The in/out balance audit verifies that organic ingredients were purchased in sufficient quantity to make the organic products that were sold. The rest of this article will explain each type of audit in more detail, including the records that will be needed at the inspection.

To conduct a financial audit, the inspector will need documents related to sales or handling fees of your organic products over a specific time period, usually the previous calendar year. Total sales or fees should agree with those reported on the Sales Summary page of your application packet. A summary sheet is helpful, but it must be supported by original documents such as invoices or purchase orders.

To conduct a backtrack audit, a lot code will be chosen from a finished product, and the inspector will work backwards to determine the ingredients that were used to make that product. When preparing for this audit, it may be helpful to look at your flow chart and assemble all records related to organic products. Begin when the ingredients enter your facility, and continue through ingredient storage, processing, final product storage, sales, and shipping.

Receiving documents include invoices and purchase orders for ingredients, weight tickets, and organic certificates from the ingredient suppliers. Storage documents include both ingredient inventory reports and finished product inventory reports. Documents generated during processing include production records, batch records, and packaging reports. Records of sales may include sales invoices, shipping logs, and bills of lading. Handlers will have some, but not all, of these documents, because this audit only covers the time period when the organic products are under your ownership or control.

To conduct the in /out balance audit, the inspector will examine the quantity of ingredients purchased and compare that with the quantity of finished product produced over a period of time. The inspector will also need to know the quantities of ingredients and products in inventory. The ingredient purchase orders or weight tickets, along with the inventory reports, indicate how much raw material entered the facility. The product formulations and batch records indicate the quantity of materials used. The finished product inventory report and the sales records indicate the amount of product sold.

Remember that your inspector may choose to conduct any one of these audits, or all three. All records must be easily understood, and must identify the product as an organic product. In addition to the above items, you will need your system plan, letters from WSDA, cleaning and sanitation logs, pest control logs, ingredient verification from suppliers, and other papers specific to your company. The purpose of an inspection is to verify that you are following the plan to maintain the organic integrity of products under your control. Having your paperwork in order will make your inspection much easier.

*By Pamela Coleman, Organic Field Inspector*



Organic Food Program Inspector Richard Carr, gathering information for an audit

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## Federal Organic Funding National Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The US Department of Agriculture budget for Fiscal Year 2007 – which started October 1, 2006 – has not yet been completed by Congress. As a result, increased funding is stalled for organic farming research, organic certification cost-share, and enforcement of organic standards. The 2007 appropriations bills have three key organic items that are in play: research, enforcement of standards, and the certification cost-share program. The House appropriations bill proposes increased funding by \$3.145 Million for USDA's organic research competitive grants. The Senate Appropriations Committee only recommended an increase of \$93,000.

A funding increase is also slated for the National Organic Program (NOP), the office that writes the organic certification rules and oversees the certifiers and the National Organic Standards Board. The budget line for organic standards and enforcement is set to go from \$2 Million to \$3.1 Million. These numbers are the same in both the House bill and the Senate committee's package. The Senate committee version requires that USDA use \$500,000 of the NOP increase to continue funding the certification cost-share program. This program provides reimbursement to organic farmers up to \$500/year for the cost of getting certified. Funding for this program ran out earlier this year. The House bill does not mention the cost-share program. The Senate language appears to be the only way to ensure that the cost-share will receive additional funding.



### ***Mission Statement***

*The USDA 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.*

"My garden is an honest place. Every tree and every vine are incapable of concealment, and tell after two or three months exactly what sort of treatment they have had." Ralph Waldo Emerson