



DATE: January 6, 2004

CANCELS: No previous policy

APPROVED:  _____, Program Manager
Miles McEvoy

Organic Food Program Procedures

PRO-OFP 031 Complaint Procedures

The WSDA Organic Food Program has established a complaint procedure to help ensure that complaints from applicants for certification, certified operations and the public are processed and addressed in an orderly and timely manner.

Applicability

All applicants for certification, certified operations, or third parties may file a complaint concerning the performance of the WSDA Organic Food Program, or concerning the compliance of applicants for certification and certified operations with the organic standards.

Definition of a complaint

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as a contention of misapplication, violation or inequitable application of the WSDA Organic Program Manual, the National Organic Program or the European Organic Verification Program.

PROCEDURES

Initiation of a complaint

An applicant for certification, certified operation, or third party must initiate a complaint within 30 days of when the applicant for certification, certified operation, or third party became aware of the action or condition giving rise to the complaint.

Complaint report form

The Complaint form (AGR 2216) will be completed for all complaints received. Any WSDA Organic Food Program staff member may receive a complaint. Complaints will be forwarded to the WSDA Organic Program Manager. *Except*, That, when the complaint involves the Program Manager the complaint will be forwarded to the Assistant Director.

The Program Manager or Assistant Director will investigate the complaint and summarize the results of the investigation in the findings section of the report. The findings should include:

- the reason for the complaint,
- the actions or events that resulted in the complaint,
- the specific portion of the WSDA Organic Program Manual, National Organic Program or European Organic Verification Program that have been violated, and
- the remedy desired by the complainant.

Actions taken

The complaint report will include the complaint form and other relevant documents. Based on the complaint report the Program Manager or Assistant Director will determine if any actions need to be taken to address the complaint. Actions taken may include but are not limited to the following:

- Issuing a Notice of Noncompliance, Denial, Proposed Suspension or Revocation of Certification;
- Filing a complaint with the National Organic Program;
- Evaluating and potentially amending the WSDA Organic Program Manual.

Written resolution

A written resolution of the complaint will be completed for all complaints received. The Program Manager or Assistant Director will attempt to complete the resolution within 90 days of receiving the complaint, *Except*, when there is an ongoing investigation or the actions taken have not resolved the matter within the 90 day response time. A copy of the written resolution will be provided to the complainant.

Documentation

Any actions taken will be documented in the complaint file. A Complaint file will be maintained that will include a record of all complaints including the complaint form, actions taken and the written resolution.