

WSDA ORGANIC PROGRAM UPDATE

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Greetings and Happy Fall from the WSDA Organic Program. While many producers reported a delayed spring this year, summer at the WSDA Organic Program has proven busy as ever! As summer crops are coming in strong, our field inspectors around the state are completing annual inspections. Despite a sluggish economy, our number of certified operators has remained relatively stable. There are currently 746 producers and 378 handlers and processors certified.

USDA ORGANIC COST SHARE FUNDS

New for 2011, USDA certified operators are eligible for one reimbursement per scope of production. USDA recognizes four scopes of certification: crops, wild crops, livestock, and handling (includes processing). The cost share program is non-competitive and funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. The reimbursement covers up to 75% of costs associated with certification, but will not cover late fees, transitional certification fees, or fees associated with WSDA's International Organic Program. Operations with multiple scopes could receive a reimbursement up to \$1,500.00.

WSDA office will send operators who have already applied for a cost share reimbursement with WSDA and have more than one scope listed on their producer certificate (crops and livestock), additional reimbursements by December 1st. For operators who have not submitted their initial cost share applications, they may do so by completing 1) the Organic Cost Share Application, 2) a signed W-9 form, and 3) the Statewide Vendor Registration form. These forms are available for download from WSDA's website, <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic>, or by contacting the WSDA office at 360-902-1805 or organic@agr.wa.gov.

NOP TO HOST PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION SEPTEMBER 20, 2011, 8:30am – 4:00pm

The USDA Organic Working Group and USDA National Organic Program (NOP) are convening a public listening session to receive stakeholder and other public input concerning the Department's activities and priorities related to supporting organic agriculture production, handling, and markets. General categories open for comment are activities and priorities of 1) the USDA NOP, not including items related to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), and 2) USDA agencies and programs beyond the USDA NOP. The listening session is free and open to the public. More information can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/o5OEx9>.

NOSB RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT APRIL 2011 MEETING

On August 11, 2011, the NOP issued a response to the recommendations put forward by the NOSB at their spring meeting in Seattle. The NOSB recommended the following:

1. Renewing, removing, or amending the final 28 material listings on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances scheduled to expire during 2012;
2. amending the existing listing for tetracycline;
3. adding attapulgite, used to clarify plant and animal oils, to § 205.605(a); and
4. amending the definition of chemical change.

The NOSB also made recommendations to make changes to their Policy and Procedures Manual. The complete text of the NOP's response can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/qkKdQK>.

NOP DRAFT GUIDANCE

Draft guidance documents explain NOP statutory or regulatory requirements to certified operations and accredited certifying agents (ACAs). To increase the quality and transparency of agency guidance practices, NOP issues draft guidance documents for public comment prior to their finalization in the Federal Register. When finalized, these documents are intended to provide a uniform method for operators and certifiers to verify compliance with NOP regulations.

When draft guidance documents are finalized, the public will be notified through a notice of availability and the final guidance documents will be incorporated in the NOP Program Handbook, available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOPProgramHandbook>. The most recent final guidance documents, issued in May of this year, include issues of compost and vermicompost, wild crop harvesting, commingling and contamination prevention, and the use of chlorine materials in organic production and handling.

The following guidance documents will soon be finalized:

- NOP 5027 - The Use of Kelp in Organic Livestock Feed
- NOP 5028 - Responding to Results from Pesticide Residue Testing
- NOP 5029 - Seeds, Annual Seedlings, and Planting Stock in Organic Crop Production
- NOP 5030 - Evaluating Allowed Ingredients and Sources of Vitamins and Minerals for Organic Livestock Feed, Feed Supplements, and Feed Additives

More information on draft guidance documents can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/q6TBri>.

WSDA ORGANIC ADVISORY BOARD TO MEET IN YAKIMA NOVEMBER 10, 2011

The WSDA Organic Advisory Board (OAB) will meet on November 10, 2011, just before the Tilth Producers annual conference in Yakima, WA. Members of the public are welcome to attend but must RSVP to Organic Program Manager Brenda Book at bbook@agr.wa.gov before the meeting. Once the agenda is set, it will be available on the Organic Program's website, <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic>.