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ACA Board Conf Call Summaries

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The ACA Board of Directors met via conference call on **May 13, 2011**. Issues addressed included:

New & Renewing Members

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- The activities of the Working Groups were reviewed. Pat will be organizing a group to assist the NOSB Livestock Committee in the work of completing the Animal Welfare and the Handling and Transport Recommendations. This will include members from the broader organic community.

ACA Code of Conduct

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- The Board voted to approve payment to NASOP representing their portion of the income from the 2011 ACA / NASOP Training Program.

- The Board discussed the Code of Conduct and decided not to include a non-compete clause, as we really do not have an enforcement mechanism for the Code. The Board decided to incorporate the NOP Handbook requirements regarding Disclosure Instructions for acas into the Code of Conduct. The revision will be distributed via email and a vote will be taken at that time.

The ACA Board of Directors met via conference call on **June 8, 2011**. Mac Stone, NOSB Representative and NOP Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy, participated for portions of the call.

Topics discussed included:

- **NOSB Report:** Mac Stone reported that the Compliance, Accreditation & Certification Committee is continuing work on the NOP Oversight of Materials Review Organizations recommendation. The membership of the Livestock Committee has been revised to include Mac and Nick Maravell. Colehour Bondera has moved to the Crops Committee.

- **NOP Update:**

The following topics were discussed by Deputy Administrator McEvoy:

ACA / NASOP Training in 2012

NOP is interested in co-locating NOP training with ACA / NASOP if there is not a conflict with the date.

Labeling of Textiles

NOP has published a Policy Memo regarding Labeling of Textiles that contain organic ingredients. This will replace the previous memo of July 2008. The 5.2011 Policy Memo did not address the “made with” category of labeling, and the NOP did receive questions about this. Miles McEvoy noted that they will likely revise this memo at some point in the future. In the interim, OTA did publish a press release with the clarifying information. The link to the OTA Press Release is:

<http://www.organicnewsroom.com/2011/06/usda oks organic textile label.html>

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ACA Board Conference Call Summaries (cont.)

- **NOP Update (cont.)**

Publications Manager

Lisa Ahramjian has been hired as the NOP Publications Manager. Her first task will be to work on upgrading the website. The Publication Manager will be responsible for insuring consistency and clarity for all publications. The NOP will be recruiting for a replacement for the NOSB Executive Director position that Lisa Ahramjian held prior to becoming the NOP Publications Manager.

Appeals Process

NOP will be developing a project to address the problem of the lengthy appeals process. Current staff will be reallocated to work on this. NOP is just starting the process and expects that it will be six months or a year until improvements are seen.

Materials Review by California State Organic Program

NOP is working with the California State Organic Program in regard to the AB 856 Materials Review Law. NOP believes that the materials review process will need to be brought into the California State Organic Program and under ISO Guide 65, in order that there is oversight of the process by NOP.

NOP Organic Insider Newsletter

NOP would like to include information from certifiers about innovative programs certifiers are conducting, such as the article by CCOF in the March/April 2011 issue. Articles should be sent to Soo Kim at Soo.Kim@ams.usda.gov NOP would like to have this as a regular feature, so that others can see how aca's are operating. The process to determine the commercial availability of organic seeds would be an example of an article that would be interesting.

Input on Future Standards

NOP is working on proposed rules for mushroom production, apiculture, and pet food. The basis for new rulemaking is the NOSB recommendations, so if you want to get a sense of what the proposed rules will look like, reviewing the NOSB recommendations is a good place to start.

- **Working Group Updates**

The Board discussed formalizing a process by which members would indicate their support for the documents created by the working groups. The Board discussed creating a poll for members to indicate whether they support the document/comment, etc. of the working group. Comments could also be submitted at the same time. The working group would then review the comments determine if they would accept the comments. A procedure for this will be drafted for review by the Board.

- **Code of Conduct**

A proposal for a response to complaints about an ACA member will be drafted for review by the Board.

- **Letters of Support**

ACA was recently asked to provide a letter of support for a nomination to the NOSB. The Board indicated that they would not be comfortable in doing this as ACA does not have a policy to do this. The Board does believe that in the long term it is in the best interest of acas that the NOSB have very well qualified members. The Board will develop a process to provide letters of support.



~ Thank You ~ to the following New & Renewing members

CERES GmbH
Colorado Department of Agriculture
EcoCert
International Organic Inspectors Assoc.
Maryland Department of Agriculture
Midwest Organic Services Assoc.
MOFGA Certification Services LLC
Monterey County Certified Organic

Oregon Tilth Certified Organic
Organic Trade Association
Organically Grown Company
Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Pro-Cert Organic Systems Ltd.
Quality Assurance International
Quality Certification Services
Wolf, DiMatteo & Associates

The Accredited Certifiers Association Code of Conduct

adopted 5.25.2011

Members of the Accredited Certifiers Association:

- support and encourage the development, and advancement of organic agriculture and processing;
- maintain the highest possible standards of integrity by avoiding situations of conflict of interest;
- work together to provide consistent implementation of the National Organic Standards by sharing information pertaining to policies and procedures and in the development of guidance documents;
- exchange information in a timely manner with the relevant certification agency regarding issues such as private label verification or detection of residues or in cases of suspected fraud;
- abide by ethical and transparent business practices in all of their activities, including full disclosure of board members, owners or responsible governing officials
- provide information to other ACAs on noncompliances and / or adverse actions as per the National Organic Program Recommendation on Disclosure of Information Concerning Operations Certified under the National Organic Program. Provide to the general public confirmation of the existence of noncompliances or adverse actions upon request.
- work together in support of the greater good of organic agriculture and hold this paramount in their decision making.