



The ACA Guidewire

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ACA / NASOP Training a Great Success

By Patricia Kane, ACA Coordinator

Our first ever ACA / NASOP joint training was a great success. A record number of 37 certification agencies, including state programs and private certifiers, were represented at the trainings, with a total number of 70 attendees. The National Organic Program held its certifier training the previous day. Our day long training was packed with presentation and information (some comments indicated information overload) but we did manage to complete the day on time. Forty-four participants returned evaluation forms with many general comments and suggested topics for next year. The input will definitely assist in the planning for 2009. The ACA Board and



NASOP have agreed to plan another joint training in 2009. For those of you who were not able to attend, ACA is offering all the presentations and resource materials in pdf format on a CD. The cost is \$100. Send your order to the ACA office address below.

ACA Meeting During All Things Organic

ACA members attending All Things Organic in Chicago are invited to meet April 27, 2008 from 12 - 2 pm. The informal meeting will focus on discussion of the Certification Issues Project topics, future work plan of ACA, and other general discussions.

NOP Materials Review Policy Change

Certifiers were generally pleased with the new NOP Materials Review Policy change, and are awaiting additional guidance on this policy. This topic was discussed at the ACA training, so it was a welcome revision. We would like to thank OMRI and Washington State Department of Agriculture for moving this discussion forward with NOP. Our thanks also to Barbara Robinson and the NOP staff for acting in such a timely manner on this.

Certification Issues Project Update

We are in the process of completing the **Use of the 100% Label** topic. Members have recently been sent Draft #2 of our prospective policy.

The response to our initial draft regarding use of the 100% Label was very good - over half of our members responded. We need to do even better on Draft #2 - so send back your response. Thanks.

Our next topic will be the Dairy Replacements issue. Look for Issue # 3 within about a month.

Do you have a topic you would like discussed? Send a list of topics to Pat Kane at patriciakane@accreditedcertifiers.org

Additional Member Services through ACA Website

At the ACA Annual Meeting Robert Simmons, ICS, proposed the addition of several new services through the ACA website. These include:

- Site for posting notices of withdrawals, suspensions or revocations of certification;
- inclusion of the new website developed by Sam Welsch, of OneCert, devoted to listing of the availability of organic materials to address the nonorganic materials listed on §205.606;
- a calendar so that inspectors could list their availability for inspections, that certifiers would then access in order to consolidate inspection travel.

Robert noted that membership dues alone likely would not cover the costs for these additions, and indicated that ICS was willing to contribute additional funding for technical support of these services. Others present voiced willingness to contribute also.

The ACA Board discussed these proposals

on their March Conference Call and voiced support for two of these proposals at this time. The Board favored the development of a site for the listing of withdrawals, suspensions & revocations and for the inclusion of the 606 organic site under ACA management. As the 606 site is already operational, management of this has been assumed by ACA. We will be announcing this through press releases and will also be encouraging our members to contact their clients to encourage listing of organic ingredients found on NOP §205.606. There is no fee for the listing. Thanks to Sam Welsch for the work done on 606 and for passing it along to ACA. It was felt by all that a site such as this should be managed by an independent group.

The withdrawals, suspensions, revocations site is currently being developed. We will provide additional details soon.

If you have suggestions for additional content for our website, let us know.

~ Thank You ~
To the Following New & Renewing Members

BCS Oeko Garantie
 CCOF Certification Services
 Ceres GmbH
 EcoCert
 International Certification Services
 Kentucky Department of Agriculture
 Kerr Center
 Monterey County Certified Organic
 North Carolina Crop Improvement Assoc.

OCIA International, Inc.
 Organic Independents
 Organic Materials Review Institute
 Organic Trade Association
 Organic Valley
 Quality Assurance International
 Washington State Department of Agriculture
 Wolf, DiMatteo & Associates



**Complete Membership List Available at:
www.accreditedcertifiers.org**

ACA Board Conference Call Summaries

December BOD Conference Call Summary

- Much of the call was spent discussing whether to increase the size of the ACA Board of Directors. It was decided that since we are not that large an organization, we should maintain the current number of Board members and establish the term rotations. The current Board has agreed they will seek re-election.
- There was no NOSB Report.
- Last minute logistics for the ACA/NASOP training were discussed.

January BOD Conference Call Summary

- **NOSB Report** - Joe Smillie, Chair of Certification, Accreditation & Compliance Committee reported that the Committee will likely provide a detailed document pertaining to group certification, including risk assessment techniques. He noted that the Board has been reviewing petitions of many materials for addition to §205.606. Next NOSB meeting will be May, 20, 2008
- ACA election was discussed. Staggered terms were established. (see page 5)

ACA Annual Meeting Held in Louisville

ACA held its 2008 Annual Meeting at *The Patron* Restaurant in Louisville, KY. The dinner was wonderful, however it took longer than planned, so the meeting was shortened somewhat. 42 members and 3 nonmembers attended - it was a very full house.

Leslie Zuck, ACA Chair, recapped the Board decision to have the number of Board members remain the same, at 7. The Board felt that since we are relatively small, 7 is a good number of members, and we will need new members down the road to fill board slots in the coming years. The following Board members were re-elected:

For a one year term:

Donald Franczyk, Baystate Organic Certifiers
Kristy Korb, Oregon Tilth Certified Organic
Bonnie Wideman, Midwest Organic Services

For a two year term:

Brett Bakker, New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission
Jake Lewin, CCOF
Marty Mesh, Quality Certification Service
Leslie Zuck, Pennsylvania Certified Organic

The Board Members will elect officers at the April, 2008 Board Meeting.

Other topics of discussion included:

- A Review of the 2007 Annual Report
- Additional Web Services (see article)
- The Issues Project
- Developing a plan for improved communications with NOP.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting will be sent to the membership.

Upcoming Events

April 26, 2008 - USDA NOP Certifier Training, held at All Things Organic, Chicago, IL. Contact NOP to register at 202-720-3252.

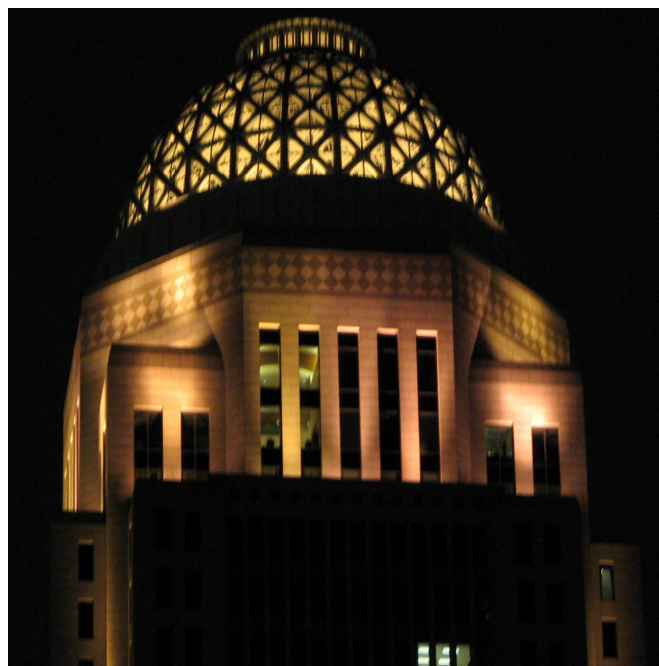
April 27, 2008 - ACA Meeting, All Things Organic, Chicago, IL; 12 noon - 2 pm, Room S 106 A

April 27 - 29, 2008, All Things Organic, Chicago, IL

May 19, 2008, **National Organic Coalition and National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture** Pre-NOSB Meeting, 9 - 5 pm, Holiday Inn Inner Harbor, Baltimore MD. Contact Liana Hoodes at 845-744-2304.

May 20 - 22, 2008 National Organic Standards Board Meeting, Holiday Inn Inner Harbor, Baltimore, MD.

AEGON Center at night in Downtown Louisville



Board Conference Call Summaries (cont.)

January Conference Call (cont.)

- The 2008 Operating Budget was approved. With our increase in membership, our budget has expanded. We did receive two donations in our recent appeal for funding.
- The update on the number of registrants for the training indicated we were at maximum capacity; the NOP had also reached the maximum room capacity.

February Conference Call Summary

- ACA received a request for support from Washington State Department of Ag regarding an upcoming meeting between OMRI, WSDA and NOP pertaining to the issue of recognition/use of 3rd party materials review programs by certifiers. The Board agreed we should support this. Pat will send a letter of support to the NOP.
- The summary of the training evaluations and comments were reviewed. In addition, since we had received requests for copies of the information presented, the Board felt we should create a CD of all presentations and resource materials. We will charge \$100 for this. We did fall short of covering all the expenses for the training by \$590, however, all of the time Pat spent on organizing this was billed to the training.
- Minutes of the ACA Annual Meeting were approved by the Board.
- The Board reviewed the Draft of the Discussion Group Guidelines. Several suggestions were made for additions. Pat will send Draft #2 to the Board for review shortly.
- The Board discussed the Certification Issues Project and the simplified system of providing comment. It was decided we would prepare a discussion topic around the use of the 100% label. Future topics are Dairy Replacements and Origin of Livestock.
- The Board discussed Robert Simmons' (ICS) proposal for adding some additional member services to the ACA website. The

February Conference Call (cont.)

The Board felt at this time we would focus on the addition of the www.606organic.com site and the development of the section on certification withdrawals, suspensions and revocations. The Board indicated they would like to wait on the development of a calendar system for inspection coordination. We will pursue additional information and funding requirements for the work.

March Conference Call Summary

- NOSB Report - Joe Smillie was not on the call, but Pat was able to speak with him briefly. The Certification, Accreditation and Compliance Committee will not be posting a revised *recommendation* for Certification of Multi-site Operations; they will be posting a *discussion* paper.
- 19 comments have been received on the Use of the 100% Label issue. Pat will compile votes and comments and develop Draft # 2.
- Pat was asked by the Board to send an official "thank you" to NOP for their listening to the problem and their positive action regarding the revised Materials Review Policy. Additional guidance from NOP on this policy is welcomed.
- Regarding the 606organic site, Sam Welsch has requested the listing remain free and open to all. The Board agreed with this. Several wording changes were suggested by the Board; Pat will forward to Sam. ACA will begin administration of this site.
- ACA staff has been included in the NOP prohibition on consultants and non-certifiers attending NOP trainings. Pat feels that prohibiting ACA staff from attending NOP Certifier trainings is a disservice to our members. ACA will continue discussions with NOP regarding this. There is support on the Board for the NOP position prohibiting consultants from attending these trainings.