



# The ACA Guidewire

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## ACA Holds Annual Meeting

ACA members gathered at the Washington Plaza Hotel on March 26, 2007 for our Annual Meeting. Prior to the meeting all enjoyed a delicious dinner.

Topics of discussion included:

- A review of 2006 activities;
- Planned ACA activities for 2007
- An OMRI presentation of upcoming options they will be providing for certifiers.
- Summaries of other meetings & activities.



The review of 2006 activities is contained in the ACA Annual Report which was recently sent to all members.

The Board has approved the following ACA activities for 2007:

- A membership survey to determine future ACA activities.
- Instituting a Certification Issues Project (see details on pg. 2)

- Researching feasibility of hosting a web-based certified party database.

- Expand working relationship with NASOP (National Association of State Organic Programs) group by working to hold a joint meeting session in 2008.

Other discussions included a brief

overview of the new OMRI proposals to assist certifiers with material review, presented by Brian Baker; a report of the National Campaign Meeting, and a report about the OTA congressional lobbying activities.

Members also requested a mechanism for an update of the Board activities, especially the monthly conference calls. Beginning with the April call a summary will be sent to the members.

## NOSB Meeting

The National Organic Standards Board met March 27-29, 2007, in Washington DC. The primary purpose of this meeting was to address materials to be added to the National List. There were however, several other topics of importance. One is that the Board did approve a recommendation regarding the suitability of use of cloned animals and their progeny in or-

ganic production. The Board firmly opposes the use of cloned animals or progeny. In addition, the Proposed Aquaculture Standards were approved, although work will continue on these. Once again, it was very apparent that the Board members are very committed to this work. A detailed report was sent to members following the meeting.

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## Certification Issues Project

The ACA Board has given approval to begin work on developing agreements on particular issues important to certifiers. We will be launching the **Certification Issues Project (CIP)** soon. Members will be asked to provide comments for and indicate support of various topics. The CIP will focus on three areas:

- Specific NOP Rule sections
- Certification procedures
- Certification policies

While this project is similar in nature to the previous Standards Consensus Project of the Organic Certifiers Council, we will work at a slower pace, providing more time for member organizations to formulate opinions. There will be multiple drafts of a position circulated. Once all comments have been received, a final draft will be circulated, and then we will conduct a conference call of interested members to finalize the position. We will require a 2/3 vote of ACA members in order to adopt the

official ACA Position Statement. Once the final document has been formulated, this will be posted on the ACA website, will be shared with other organizations and the NOP.

The Guidelines and Process of the CIP are currently being finalized. Once this is complete, a list of potential topics will be drafted. The topics will be derived from member suggestions gathered in 2006, and from our on-line discussion group. Additional suggestions from members are welcomed.

All USDA-accredited certifiers will be informed of the project. All ACA members will be supplied with information on the topics being discussed. Only ACA member certifying agencies will be involved in formulating the Position Statements. Detailed information will be sent to you soon.

**The goal of the Certification Issues Project is to develop agreement among ACA members regarding NOP issues.**

## ACA Training Materials Available

ACA is offering members who were not able to attend the ACA Training in La Crosse, WI, the opportunity to obtain the materials used in the training.

Our presenters had very well organized presentations, and these are available electronically. You will find much valuable information contained in the materials.

Topics include the following Power Point Presentations: Improving Materials Review, OMRI; The Five Most Wanted, Joyce Riddle & Lynn Coody; Entering the International Market, Robert Simmons; plus many resource materials including: Online Resources and Books to Help with Materials Review from OMRI; the Canadian Organic Regulations and

Materials List; EU Regulation, Application, sample forms; and JAS and MAFF requirements.

A copy of the presentation Reviewing Organic Product Labels for Compliance with the NOP is available from Joyce Ford. Contact Joyce at [jford@hbeci.com](mailto:jford@hbeci.com).

ACA is requesting a donation in the range of \$35 to \$50 for these materials. We feel that this donation is necessary as we did not cover our expenses for the training, and this will allow us to recover a portion of our funds which will be used for future training programs.

Contact Patricia Kane, at 607.648.3259, or [PatriciaKane@accreditedcertifiers.org](mailto:PatriciaKane@accreditedcertifiers.org) to order the materials, or if you have any questions.

## ACA Board Conference Call Summary

The ACA Board of Directors meets once a month via conference call. Members have requested that we provide a summary of these calls. The members of the Board are:

Leslie Zuck, PCO, Chair  
 Brett Bakker, NMOCC, Vice-Chair  
 Donald Franczyk, Baystate Organic Certifiers,  
 Secretary/Treasurer  
 Kristy Korb, OTCO  
 Jake Lewin, CCOF  
 Marty Mesh, QCS  
 Bonnie Wideman, MOSA

### April Conference Call Summary

While we did not elect new Board Members in 2007, Jake Lewin did replace Susan Siple,

Organic Certifiers, Inc., who recently stepped down from the Board. The Board decided that the officers will remain unchanged in 2007.

### Agenda Topics

- An evaluation of Coordinator Pat Kane will be conducted by the officers.
- The Board reviewed the CIP and decided a 30-day time limit will be used for comments. The Board also decided a 2/3 majority of ACA members will be required for approval of the Final ACA Position Statement. A list of topics will be compiled.

(continued on pg. 4)

## ACA Board Conference Call Summary (cont.)

- We will continue to explore the possibility of a joint annual meeting / training session in 2008 with NASOP (National Association of State Organic Programs). Pat will continue to be in contact with them.
- The Board reviewed a request from OMRI to be added to the discussion group. It was felt that while input from OMRI would be very valuable, the group should remain limited to certifiers only.
- The Guidelines for the Certification Issues Project were approved.
- Based on additional communication from OMRI, the Board has decided to ask the membership whether an exception policy should be established in order to include non-certifier members in the discussion group.
- ACA will establish an education fund for assistance in supporting presenters at ACA training programs. This will hopefully permit us to keep our registration fees at an affordable level. Donations for this fund will be solicited from the organic community. The Board does not feel that this is a conflict of interest as the funds will not be used to the benefit of any particular certification agency, and they will be donated to a non-profit association.

### May Conference Call Summary

- Joe Smillie, NOSB Certification, Accreditation, Compliance Committee Chair asked that ACA provide comments on the 2002 NOSB Recommendation for certification of Community Grower Groups, and the establishment of a Peer Review Panel. These will be the work topics of the committee for the Fall NOSB meeting.

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## Request from OMRI

ACA and OMRI are discussing several mechanisms to support each other in our work. OMRI is suggesting that ACA members nominate experts whose experience and judgment they value to serve on the OMRI Advisory Council. The Advisory Council was originally composed mainly of the experts used by certifiers at OMRI's founding. With turnover and changes in the certification world that have taken place over the past ten years, the composition is no longer representative of certifiers and certifiers have lost that link to shape OMRI's policies and standards.

ACA members are invited to nominate Advisory Council members as well as OMRI Board members. Contact Brian Baker at [brianb@omri.org](mailto:brianb@omri.org)

