



## Inside This Issue

<a href="#">NOP &amp; ACA Training Report</a>	1
<a href="#">ACA Annual Meeting</a>	2
<a href="#">Organic Seed Finder Website</a>	3
<a href="#">Thank You</a>	3
<a href="#">Sharing Our Perspectives Summary</a>	4
<a href="#">Donation from NASOP</a>	6

## NOP & ACA Trainings Well Attended

The National Organic Program Certifier Training and the ACA Professional Development Training Programs were very well attended – 100+ attendees representing 43 different accredited certifying agencies. NOP staff present for the Training included Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator; Cheri Courtney, Betsy Rakola, Edith Adams, Corey Gilbert, and Steve Ross. In addition, Leanne Skelton with the AMS Fruit & Vegetable Program and Sarah Brown and Mark Rose of the Natural Resources Conservation Service were in attendance.

The National Organic Program Training began with an update on the activities presented by Miles McEvoy. Highlights included:

- The 3 million dollar increase in the NOP Budget for 2014, bringing total budget to 9.04 million
- The reinstatement of the Organic Cost Share Program for all states in 2014;
- The NOP will conduct a accreditation program peer review of by ANSI in 2014
- Nominations for new National Organic Standards Board members will be announced soon; terms begin in January 2015.
- Regulatory Priorities for 2014 include:
  - ~ Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule
  - ~ Aquaculture Proposed Rule
  - ~ Pet Food Proposed Rule
- Additional Priorities for 2014
  - ~ Other rules in progress: Apiculture, Mushrooms
  - ~ Guidance: “Made with,” Materials Classification
  - ~ Guidance: Substances in Post-Harvest Handling
  - ~ Material Clarifications for Certifiers

The NOP presented very detailed information in the Appeals Update section of their Training regarding the mediation process – some best practices – and the use of Settlement Agreements. A template for a Settle Agreement can be found in the Appeals Update Training Module.

The NOP also noted that they are consulting with legal counsel regarding the information to be released in a request for copies of residue sampling tests. They will be publishing Guidance on this. ACAs requested clarification regarding whether the operation name, location must be released.

The complete list of 2014 NOP Training Modules can be found at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOPTraining>

## NOP & ACA Trainings Well Attended (cont.)

The ACA Training began with the introduction of all attendees and then moved into the Sharing Our Perspectives session. Based upon feedback from our prior training this session was expanded in 2014 to accommodate additional time and discussion. Breakout sessions with multiple rotations included topics on crops, livestock, materials, accreditation, management and handling. Discussions within each group focused on specific question areas and a summary of action items was presented to the larger group. These action items will form much of the basis for ACA work in the coming year. See the [Sharing our Perspectives Summary](#) beginning on page 4.

The balance of the ACA Training sessions were equally informative and in some cases very

entertaining (IOIA skits regarding exit interview techniques). Of particular interest was the presentation by Roger Simonds (AMS National Science Laboratory) and Steve Thun (Pacific Agricultural Laboratory) on their overview of findings and experiences with residue testing samples in 2013. Both stated that overall the samples tested were very clean. There was discussion of reviewing the NOP list of testing compounds to include other compounds more relevant to various types of production (ex: fruit production) and also consider removing some compounds. Additional work will be done on this.

We would like to thank all of those who participated in our Training, especially our panelists and presenters.

---

## ACA Annual Meeting

The ACA Annual Meeting was held as a part of the ACA Training. The results of the ACA Board of Directors Election were provided – all candidates for re-election to the Board were approved. New terms begin in April. The Board will elect officers at the April Meeting. The members of the Board of Directors are: Scott Rice, Chair; Robin Allan Foster, Vice Chair; Jackie Townsend, Sec – Treasurer; Dave DeCou, Connie Karr, Kyla Smith and Sarah Townsend.

Brief reports were also given on membership and financial activities for 2013 but the bulk of the meeting time was allotted to a presentation from David Carter, University of Colorado at Denver. David has been coordinating a National Science Foundation Grant *A Study of Accredited Certification Organizations under the National Organic Program*. David presented the findings to date, and also discussed the future work of the project.

Join Us For

**ACA Meeting**

**April 29, 2014**

**5:30 pm to 7:30 pm**

**St. Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, TX**

**In conjunction with the Spring NOSB Meeting**

# Organic Seed Finder Website Update

The Organic Seed Finder Database <http://www.organicseedfinder.org/> continues to expand its listings of organic seeds with additional seed companies providing their organic seed inventories.

In addition, AOSCA (Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies) who is responsible for managing the website, and the Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) who facilitates the Organic Seed Working Group to advise the project, will begin discussion and planning for technology upgrades to the Organic Seed Finder website later in 2014. Suggestions regarding site functionality improvements from the certifier and inspector perspective are being sought by the Working

Group. If you have suggestions for improved functionality for the website please contact Kristina Hubbard, OSA, [kristina@seedalliance.org](mailto:kristina@seedalliance.org) by April 15, 2014.

Along with the listing of available organic seeds, the Organic Seed Finder website also permits users of the website to submit a request for varieties of organic seeds that are not listed. These requests are then passed along to seed companies.

At the recent National Organic Program Certifier Training, NOP enthusiastically indicated its support for the Organic Seed Finder website in their comments regarding searching for organic seeds.



## ~ Thank You ~ to the following New & Renewing Members

Agricultural Services Certified Organic  
Americert International  
Australian Certified Organic  
BCS-Oeko Garantie GmbH  
CCOF Certification Services  
CERES GmbH  
Center for Systems Integration  
Clemson University Department of Plant Industry  
ECOCERT ICO LLC  
ECOCERT SA  
Georgia Crop Improvement  
Global Culture  
International Certification Services  
Idaho Department of Agriculture  
Iowa Department of Agriculture  
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
Minnesota Crop Improvement Association  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
Monterey County Certified Organic  
Nature's International Certification Services  
Nevada Department of Agriculture  
New Hampshire Department of Agriculture

New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
OCIA International  
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture  
Oregon Department of Agriculture  
Organic Agsystems Consulting  
Organic Certifiers  
Organic Materials Review Institute  
Organic National & International Certifiers  
Organic Services GmbH  
Organic Trade Association  
Organic Valley  
Organically Grown Company  
Quality Assurance International  
Quality Certification Services  
Richard Siegel Law Offices  
Rhode Island Department of Agriculture  
Utah Department of Agriculture  
Washington State Department of Agriculture  
White Wave Foods  
Wolf, DiMatteo & Associates

# Sharing Our Perspectives Session Summary

Small Session	Topics Discussed	Action Items
Materials	Micronutrient evaluation	Guidance
	Hydroponic & Aquaculture production (also discussed in Crops Group)	Guidance
	California Dept. of Food & Agriculture Issues	Update needed
	GMO Testing – lack of guidance	ACA Board Letter to NOP
	Lack of consistent criteria for input review	
	Expense of material reviews	
Crops	Crop Rotation, recordkeeping, backtrack audits for small diversified growers	Guidance
	Residue testing – protocols, evaluating results	Guidance
	Treated wood – how evaluated	Guidance
	Sourcing organic seed – acceptable documentation	Resource / Guidance
	Addressing major pest issues	
	New Models of Grower Groups	
	How to educate new growers on recordkeeping	
Handling	Post harvest handling vs. handling – when are additional forms required and different evaluations needed	Working Group for development of matrix to help with decisions
	Legal status verification & different types of business entities	Resources needed (see Management below)
	Note to Program on business names on NOP list – if there is no business name, NOP list turns operator name into the business name	ACA Board Letter
	Private label listing on certificate – is this separate document	Pass along to Information on Certificates Working Group
	Who has to be certified	(see Management below)
Accreditation Compliance International	NOP engagement with certifiers before issuing guidance /policy that impacts certifiers/ clients	Continue discussion with NOP
	Who Needs to be certified	(see Management below)
	Reinstatement Guidance	Additional clarification needed
	Standardizing forms – import / export and certificates	(see Management below) Info on Certificates Working Group
	Settlement Agreements	Working Group to gain consistency
	Disclosure vs. Confidentiality – can ACAs disclose information to another certifier regarding certified operations without written permission from certified operation	Guidance from NOP
	Certifying marijuana/industrial hemp/medical; communicating with states	
	Inconsistent Accreditation communication	

*continued on page 5*

## Sharing Our Perspectives Session Summary (cont.)

Small Session	Topics Discussed	Action Items
Management	Who needs to be certified – identifying responsible parties (see also Handling/Accreditation)	Guidance needed on business arrangements / relationship & legal entities; Working group to provide guidance & specific examples based on NOP policy
	Standardized OSPs – help design vs. getting mandate	Guidance from NOP
	Inspecting every field every year, or just at initial inspection	Clarification needed
	Nationwide survey to evaluate how we are doing	ACA Nationwide survey?
	Assigned reviewers vs. pull system – work flow discussion	
	Fees discussion	
	Unannounced inspection	
	Sampling	
	Implementing On-line systems – challenges for clients to adapt	
	Witness Audit	
Using customer surveys		
Livestock	Origin of Livestock	Working Group for comments on proposed rule
	Pasture Practice Standard – how to evaluate and follow up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night grazing – how does this fit into rule if this is only grazing that happens</li> <li>Enforcement of grazing season for different types of animals</li> </ul>	Guidance needed; Working Group to develop parameters for assessing compliance
	Outdoor access for poultry	Guidance on enforcing
	Copper Sulfate Issues	Info will be posted on list serve
	Goat dairies and 30% DMI – pest management	
	Aviaries for poultry	
Inspections	In out mass balance	IOIA putting on 200 and 300 level webinars
	Evaluations of inspectors	ACA White Paper; IOIA Accreditation
	Technical Assistance	NOP Auditors need guidance on policy
	Unannounced Inspections	Guidance; ACA Whitepaper
	Residue Testing	

## ACA Receives Donation from NASOP

For several years ACA and NASOP (National Association of State Organic Programs) worked collaboratively on our Annual Training, and other issues as they arose. Many of the members of NASOP also joined ACA. Over the years it was apparent that the majority of our work duplicated each other. In 2013 NASOP members made the decision to officially dissolve NASOP. In the interim ACA established a permanent Government Programs Subcommittee. The Group meets quarterly and discusses topics specific to government agencies operating certification programs.

NASOP approached ACA in 2013 indicating they would like to transfer their remaining funds to

ACA, providing they were utilized for the improvement of government programs. The ACA Board discussed this and proposed to NASOP that ACA establish a Scholarship Fund for use by government program staff to attend the ACA Annual Training. NASOP agreed that this would be very useful to government programs. The transfer of funds was made during our 2014 Training. ACA will be providing assistance to government program staff beginning with our 2015 Annual Training event. ACA wishes to thank NASOP for their support of ACA and the Scholarship Fund. Additional details on the Scholarship Fund will be available later this year.



San Diego Bay Sunset