

Professional Development Training for Organic Certification Agencies

February 6 - 8, 2018
San Antonio, Texas

Including
National Organic Program Certifier Training

hosted by



Accredited Certifiers Association, Inc.

PO Box 85

Mabel, MN 55954

www.accreditedcertifiers.org

For additional information contact:
Jenny Cruse, ACA Coordinator
jennycruse@accreditedcertifiers.org

Accredited Certifiers Association Professional Development Training

Schedule

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--|
| February 6, 2018 | 8 am to 5 pm | National Organic Program Certifier Training |
| February 7, 2018 | 8 am to 5:15 pm | ACA Professional Development Training |
| February 7, 2018 | 5:30 pm to 7 pm | Reception * |
| February 8, 2018 | 8 am to 4:45 pm | ACA Professional Development Training |

Also: ACA Annual Meeting

* The reception will be co-sponsored by the Organic Trade Association

Location

The Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk

105 South St. Mary's Street | San Antonio, Texas

Phone: (210) 270-7799

<https://druryhotels.com/locations/san-antonio-tx/Drury-Plaza-Hotel-San-Antonio-Riverwalk>

- Located on the San Antonio Riverwalk, within walking distance to many restaurants and shops, as well as nature, arts, and entertainment. The hotel is just a quick 15-minute drive from the San Antonio International Airport, with taxi, Uber, and Lyft services available.
- A free hot breakfast and afternoon “kickback” (free food and beverages) are offered by the hotel. The hotel does not have an onsite restaurant or room service, but lots of restaurants are within walking distance, and since the lodging rooms all have microwaves and refrigerators, keeping food and beverages in your rooms is an option.
- A block of rooms has been reserved for training attendees (until January 12, 2018) with the following rate:

Single or Double Guestroom: \$139.00 plus tax (includes internet access)

For Lodging Reservations

- Call 1-800-325-0720 and reference Group # **2309000**.
- Or go to www.druryhotels.com, then enter Group # **2309000**.

Accredited Certifiers Association Professional Development Training Topics Planned

The ACA Professional Development Training will include panel discussions as well as individual presentations. Below is a listing of planned sessions:

- **Sharing our Perspectives**

The Sharing Our Perspectives session returns this year to provide a discussion opportunity for small groups of professionals with similar roles and responsibilities. Moderated by Brenda Book, select topics will focus on identifying solutions to certification stumbling blocks. Discussion topics will be identified just a few weeks prior to the conference to ensure only the most relevant and current issues are brought to the groups for consideration. After the session, a summary of obstacles and possible solutions will be presented to attendees, and provide the basis for some of the ACA's future work.

- **Efficiency and Process Management**

Within the growing and dynamic organic industry, there is a continued need to adapt methods of process management. Refining of systems for increased efficiency is a universal goal among certifiers. In this session, we will hear from Kelsey McKee, the Review Program and Quality Director at the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), Darin Jones, Processing Program Manager at Oregon Tilth, and Jody Biergiel Colclough, Director of Certification Operations at CCOF, regarding their process management experiences internally and with outside consultants. Speakers will discuss their agencies' experiences and the benefits of formal process improvement.

- **Soils 101**

Soil quality is a main goal within organic production, and evaluating compliance with related statutes is a complex task for certifiers. A firm footing in soil science informs overall certifier understanding and should increase confidence in the ability to assess these systems. If you want to learn a few basics, or refresh your awareness of basic soil principles, join us for this lecture with Dr. Lee Burras of Iowa State University.

- **Soils Lab**

Because soils are so central to organic certification, Dr. Burras will offer a second soils session -- this one hands-on. View and handle soil cores that demonstrate differences in soil texture, structure, and behavior. Hear from an expert about interpretation of soil test results. And see how understanding this material can inform your abilities as an organic certifier

- **Traceability in the Supply Chain**

As organic markets grow and expand on local and global levels, certifiers and operators have noted challenges with verification of organic integrity. These include uncertified handlers, long and complicated supply chains, and systems of documentation that are non standardized and often incomplete. The ACA and the Organic Trade Association (OTA) have enacted separate working groups to address this challenge, with the ACA focusing on areas for certifiers improvements, and OTA focusing on improved methods of verification for certified entities. Representatives from the ACA and OTA groups will discuss the output of their efforts and connections between the two projects.

Planned Sessions (cont.)

- **Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices**

ACAs have put much thought into implementation of the new Organic Livestock and Poultry Practice standards. Hear from Jackie DeMinter of MOSA Certified Organic about the work of the ACA Working Group on this topic. The main output of this group was a Best Practices document for consistent interpretation of the new regulations. Have questions about a tricky word, phrase, or standard? Come and listen.

- **International Requirements, Including Phytosanitary Requirements and Paperwork**

Do you need an update on information related to organic international trade requirements -- critical variances, labeling, and documentation? Do you need help understanding phytosanitary requirements during import and export, and the paperwork that goes along with these? Hear from organic experts and professionals from USD-APHIS on the import/export process and related policies and paperwork.

- **Working Group Roundup**

Representatives from the past year's ACA Working Groups will discuss their involvement, the end product that was generated, and the process of arriving at conclusions with their fellow group members. They'll reflect on changes that were made within their program or organization in response to the Best Practices or other output that was generated.

- **Best Practices for Common Material Review Issues (Crop, Livestock, Handling)**

Within each scope of certification, tricky material review questions exist, sometimes introducing inconsistency in terms of what materials are allowed for use on organic operations. Johanna Mirenda, Technical Director of OMRI, and Jackie DeMinter, MOSA Certification Policy Manager, have worked with a cross-agency team of material review experts to arrive at best practices for many tricky inputs. They'll be sharing the results of their work.

- **Assessment of Biodiversity and Natural Resources**

What are best practices for implementing NOP 5020, which requires certifiers to assess operations' efforts to conserve biological diversity and natural resources? Representatives from the Wild Farm Alliance, NRCS, and ACAs have been developing guidelines to help certifiers with this challenging issue. They'll be sharing the latest on their work.

Organic and Food Safety Regulations Overlap

During the process of verifying compliance with the National Organic Standards, reviewers and inspectors bump up against related regulations that are commonly referenced in conversation or within the Organic System Plan. As an expert in food safety verification, Ram will discuss these programs as they relate to the National Organic Standards. The focus of the conversation will be on handling operations.

Things to Know

Discount on ACA Training Registrations

ACA member agencies registering 8 or more staff for the Annual Training will receive a 10% discount on the total registration fees.

More Concurrent Sessions

We are offering additional choices in training topics with more concurrent sessions. This training offers options for new and seasoned staff, reviewers as well as management.

- **Food and Beverages**

Even with increased session offerings, we are reducing the price this year by simplifying when it comes to food and beverages. In the meeting room, there will be coffee, tea, and juice in the mornings, with a light snack in the afternoon. The restaurant offers a free hot breakfast and afternoon "kickback" consisting of free food and drinks. While these options will not be organic, personal food items can be kept fresh in the lodging rooms since each has a fridge and microwave.

ACA Professional Development Training Registration
Registration and payment must be received by: January 12, 2018

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| Registrant Information | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Company: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| City: | | ST | Zip |
| Phone: | | | |
| E-mail: | | | |
| | | | |
| No. of Registrants | | Fee | Subtotal |
| | ACA Members | \$275.00 | |
| | Non Member ACA | \$325.00 | |
| Additional Contribution for the ACA Scholarship Fund | | | |
| Total | | | |
| List Names of Additional Registrants: | | Email Address of Additional Registrants | |
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Registration fee includes topic information, break refreshments, and Welcome Reception;
(meals on your own)

Please make check payable to:

Accredited Certifiers Association, Inc. PO Box 85, Mabel, MN 55954

For payment by credit card or additional information contact:

Jenny Cruse, ACA Coordinator, 844-783-7974 or jennycruse@accreditedcertifiers.org

USDA National Organic Program Certifier Training Registration

There is no fee to attend the NOP Training; pre-registration is required and is limited to accredited certifying agency staff only.

Registrants for the ACA Training will automatically be registered for the NOP Training.
For those attending only the NOP Training, please complete the information below:

| Names of Registrants | Certifying Agent Name | Email Address of Registrant |
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