
ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND MARKETING NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

New Articles

- . [Federal Organic Standards On The Way](#)
- . [ABC News on Organic Food](#)
- . [Family Farm.com](#)
- . [New Marketing Alliance](#)
- . [Organic Guidelines](#)
- . [Organic Produce Price Wars](#)
- . [Brazilian Organic Products](#)
- . [Organic Food Business News](#)
- . [North Florida Research and Education Center Organic Web Site](#)

Ongoing Articles

- . [What is the Organic Farming Listserve?](#)
- . [Florida Organic Certifying Agencies](#)
- . [Organic Grove Care Services](#)

- [Organic Consulting](#)
- [Organic Materials](#)
- [Listing of Florida Organic Growers/Crops](#)
- [Mark Your Calendar](#)

Federal Organic Standards On The Way

After the U.S. Department of Agriculture received a record 300,000 comments on its proposed national organic standards (including the application of biotechnology, irradiation and biosolids) in late 1997, the USDA reconsidered its proposal. The Clinton administration may release a second proposal in February. Organic farming groups like the Organic Farming Research Foundation, Santa Cruz, California and large organic growers like Natural Selection Foods LLC, a 6,000 organic farm near San Juan Batista, California support national standards but other groups have some misgivings. Bill Dusing, president of the seven-state Northeast Organic Farming Association in Northford Connecticut suggested that growers sending food to the next town may not need the same rules as growers sending food to China.

Kathleen Merrigan, administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, echoed Dusing's reservations but added that national standards would remove new market constraints and standardize rules that would allow easier access into the European Union. Katherine DiMatteo, Organic Trade Association also commented that ninety percent of the first proposal contradicted many existing state standards but that this second proposal should be more in accord with established state standards.

Otherwise, USDA, look for more mail. The Packer, 1/24/2000

ABC News on Organic Food

The ABC News show, 20/20 ran a segment on February 4 that focused on organic produce. 20/20 questioned the growing public perception that organic produce is healthier and better for the environment than other types of produce. Dennis Avery, a former USDA researcher and a leading critic of organic produce, said that consumers should be more worried about potential bacterial contamination related to manure fertilizer than pesticide residues. Katherine Di Matteo, Organic Trade Association, said that organic farming is more healthful for the environment but Avery disputed this, saying that organic farmers waste land and resources because they lose so much of their crop to weeds and insects.

ABC News also commissioned a telephone survey August 4-8, 1999 among a random national sample of 1,041 adults. The survey had a three point error margin. Forty-five percent of the public thought organic foods were more nutritious than those not grown organically, 42% said the same and 3% said worse. In terms of environmental impact, 57% said organic foods were better for the environment, 27% the same as conventionally grown food and 5%, worse. Seventy-percent think organic foods are more healthful because they are less likely to be contaminated with residues that could cause illness. According to this survey, nearly half the population eats organically produced food at least occasionally, primarily for health reasons (37%) than for environmental ones (13%). Read the survey at http://abcnews.go.com/onair/DailyNews/poll_2000203.html

Steve and Mary Bryan, cherry growers from Montana, have launched a web site for the family farm to supply growers with access to supplies, market information and farming events. The site, which will open officially in March or April, will include an online catalog of farming tools and implements, news, features, market information and tips to save money. On May 1, the site plans to give away a tractor so check it out at www.allag.com The Packer, 1/24/2000

New Marketing Alliance

The New Organics Co., an organic foods manufacturer, and Albert's Organics, a major fresh organic buying agents and whole and value-added shipper, formed an alliance to expand the organic market through cross-promotional opportunities. New Organics carries 39 items in 12 grocery categories, sells to more than 3,000 retail outlets and publishes an email www.neworganics.com/Newsletter.htm and hard copy consumer newsletter. The Packer, 1/17/2000

Organic Guidelines

The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) has released the third edition of its Generic Materials List and Brand name Products. This list contains information about more than 500 substances, including restrictions, qualifications and recommendations from the US National Organic Standards Board. The lists are available by calling (541) 343-7600.

Organic Produce Price Wars

"Organic Produce Price Wars" was the topic of a workshop at the 20th Annual Ecological Farming Conference in Pacific Grove, California recently. A panel of organic growers and shippers suggested that organic growers and shippers should avoid selling organic produce at below profit levels, even when production gluts occur. Reasonable market prices could be maintained by retail market consolidation, long range planning, developing less-expensive farming methods and forming partnerships. Larger growers are putting more and more supply into the market place and even though the market for organic produce is increasing, oversupply can be a major problem, especially with cheaper labor costs in Mexico.

Another interesting suggestion was that organic produce be marketed as value-added per se on the basis that organic produce is grown without synthetic pesticides and "genetic manipulation". But consumers must first be educated about this value-added aspect before they will accept it. The Packer 1/31/2000.

Brazilian Organic Products

The Instituto Biodinamico, (a Brazilian institute accredited by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), certifies the following concerns in Brazil. The Agropalma Group had 19,000 hectares (47, 000 acres) of oil palms in production, some of which is devoted to production of organic palm oil for domestic consumption and export to European countries. Web site at fale@agropalma.com.br.

Univalem S. A. Acucar e Alcool produces sugar cane on 20,000 hectares (49,000 acres) and is an open shareholder industry where producers and investors participate together in making production

decisions. Univalern has 5,000 hectares (12,000 acres) of organic cane in the organic certification process. Production practices integrate cattle, cereals and sugar cane and include green manuring, composting with cane bagassus (cane refuse) and bovine manure, crop rotation with soy beans and corn and incorporating native trees at marginal swamp and river bank areas.

Email at Univalern@infocenter.com.br.

Montecitrus Trading SA in Sao Paulo state produces organic fresh citrus fruit and approximately 4000 metric tons of frozen and and 24000 metric tons of not from concentrate orange juice. Email at mcitrus@barretos.com.br.

Organic Food Business News

The Organic Food Business News, published monthly in Altamonte Springs, FL, contains information about organic food business, marketing, certification, USDA news, publications, letters and editorials and other related news. Subscription rates for 12 issues are \$99.00 from Organic Food Business News, Hotline Printing and Publishing, P.O. Box 161132, Altamonte Sp ring, FL 32716-1132. Phone (407) 628-1377.

North Florida Research and Education Center Organic Web Site

http://nfrec-sv.ifas.ufl.edu/organic_production.htm

The above web site contains information about UF publications relevant to organic farming and other web resources.

What is the Organic Farming Listserve?

The Organic Farming Listserve is a way for Florida organic farmers and others interested in organic farming to communicate with each other, share information and send/receive announcements of general interest. Essentially it is an email list in which all messages to the listserv address are sent to everyone who has indicated they wish to be added to the list. Anyone can add/delete themselves to the list and any member of the list can post messages to the list for everyone else to read.

Hopefully, this listserv can improve statewide communication about organic farming questions, problems and resources. Give it a try!

How do I subscribe?

To subscribe to the listserv, you must have an email account and access to electronic mail.

- 1) Log in to your email account and invoke mail.
- 2) To subscribe to the Organic Farming Listserv mailing list, send an email message to: mailserv@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu
- 3) Type the following message as the message text: sub organic
- 4) Send the mail message.
- 5) You will receive an email confirmation of your subscription to the list like this:

The address: jfm@GNV-IFAS.UFL.EDU has been added to the organic mailing list by Jim Ferguson

- 6) To send a message to the listserve, the address is organic@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu
7) To remove your email address name from the organic listserve, send the following command:
"unsub organic" to maillserv@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu

Florida Organic Certifying Agencies

Organic Certifying Agents

The Florida Department of Agriculture licenses agencies (\$500.00/year) to act as Organic Certifying Agents after review by the Organic Food Advisory Council. This list is maintained by the Bureau of Compliance Monitoring (Contact Van Madden; (850)487-3863; As of 11/8/99 only two agencies were licensed, down from six in previous years.

The first step in becoming a certified organic grower is to contact one of the below listed agencies for information about certifying fees and certification standards, which usually are sold as a manual. While there may be some difference among the standards of different organic certifying agencies, these standards are generally the same. National Organic standards have been under discussion since the passage of the Organic Farming and Food Bill in 1990, but no definite date has been set for the completion of this process. If you re certified by one of the below agencies, you will probably also maintain certification when the national standards are approved. (List update 2/15/00)

Florida Organic and Consumers, Inc.

POB 12311
Gainesville, FL 32604
(352)377-6345
fogoffice@aol.com

(FOG) has already certified approximately 115 growers in Florida and several in Mexico and Costa Rico.

Organic Crop Improvement Association

1011 Y Street, Suite B
Lincoln NE 68508-1172
Phone: 402-477-2323
Fax: 402-477-4325
<http://www.ocia.on.ca/>

Oregon Tilth

1860 Hawthorne Avenue NE
Suite 200
Salem, OR 97303
Phone: 503-378-0690
Fax: 503-378-0809
<http://www.tilth.org/>

Quality Assurance Interational

12526 High Bluff Drive
San Diego CA 92130
Phone: 858-792-3531
Fax: 858-792-8665

Organic Grove Care Services

Arapaho Citrus Management, a full service, commercial citrus grove management business, headquarters in Ft. Pierce, working throughout southern Florida.
Phone: 800-288-8447
Email: pdspyke@arapahocitrus.com

Additional listing can be added by contacting me at JJFN@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Organic Consulting

Agricultural Resource Management

Mike Ziegler
Agricultural Resource Management, Inc.
P. O. Box 993
Vero Beach, Florida 32961-0993
Phone: 561-569-1598
Fax: 561-569-3207
E-mail: zieglersarm@netscape.net

Established in 1975 and operating in Florida, Agricultural Resources Management offers consulting services in sustainable agriculture, organic crop production and processing, and integrated pest management; provides services for transitional and certified farms.

Additional listing can be added by contacting me at JJFN@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Organic Materials

United Agricultural Services

8721 Casper Avenue
Hudson, FL 34667
Phone: 727-861-7710
Toll Free: 800-476-6674
Fax: 727-861-7103
Email: info@uas-cropmaster.com
<http://www.uas-cropmaster.com>

Manufacturers and suppliers of Organic fertilizers, Liquid Fish Emulsion products, Liquid humates, Sugar based organic chelated Micronutrients, Liquid and soluble seaweed products, Beneficial bacteria and soil fungi

Additional listing can be added by contacting me at JJFN@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Listing of Florida Organic Growers/Crops

I would like to add a listing of Florida Organic Growers and availability of crops. However, listings of organic growers are not readily available from organic certifying agencies for proprietary and other reasons. Let me know if you're interested.

Mark Your Calendar

March 8-15, 2000. Independent Organic Inspectors Association Meeting, Annual Meeting, Florida Organic Growers and Consumers - Future Farmers of America (FFA) Leadership Training Center near Haines City.

April 1, 2000. Small Farm Conference and Trade Show - Volusia County Fair Grounds, Deland, FL - Free and open to the public. Discussions and demonstrations on beekeeping, organic certification, cut foliage and flowers, plant tissue culture labs, fruit crops for small farms, small scale timber lots, electric and solar fencing; rabbit production and marketing, tropical fish farming, livestock marketing, pasture management, trade show and association meetings. Contact: David Griffis, Phone: 904-822-5778, Email: dtg@grv.ifas.ufl.edu

