



ORGANIC GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK FARMERS AND THE EGG RECALL

The millions of recalled eggs contaminated with salmonella has been headline news during the past couple months. These news stories have tarnished the reputation of large scale conventional livestock operations. Some have said this will benefit organic foods, but organic grain and livestock producers need to be taking a close look at their operations to make sure they are not tomorrow's headline news story.

The media portrayed the main cause of the salmonella as coming from filth and rodents on the egg farms and feed mill. Organic farms are not exempt from filth or rodents. Organic regulations require producers to prevent pests in organic facilities. The first two strategies required by NOP §205.271 (a) involve keeping organic facilities clean and in good repair. Wooden grain structures that are used for storing grain and manufacturing feed have especially been a concern for several operations. In some inspection reports, the accumulation of spilled grain and feed has been described as "a rodent problem waiting to happen." Poor design of buildings with inadequate concrete foundations, which allow rats to burrow into the facility has also been an issue. Wood granaries have more challenges with keeping birds and raccoons out creating another concern. The media has

brought to the forefront the importance of keeping pests out of grain storage and livestock facilities in order to maintain a safe food supply. Consumers of organic food are paying a premium and they expect organic farmers to maintain higher standards. We encourage producers to do self assessments of pest control on their operations, to keep facilities in excellent repair and to maintain cleanliness of the operation. Our inspectors are instructed to continue to look for pest concerns during the annual organic inspection. Using conventional bait is acceptable only in situations where a rodent outbreak occurs that cannot be controlled by trapping or other non-chemical methods, only **after** approval by the certifier. It is better to use conventional baits in a controlled manner, than to compromise food safety.

On a positive note, feeding protein byproducts and not vaccinating has also been mentioned as contributing factors to the salmonella outbreak. Organic farmers are not feeding these protein by-products used by the large egg farms, and the commercial organic layer operations have been vaccinating for salmonella. We all need to constantly work to keep our food supply safe and wholesome.

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Issue 14

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- * Farm/Food Safety
- * Order organic seeds NOW
- * IOA's Educational Meetings

DATES TO

REMEMBER!

- * October 30, 2010 Cost-share Deadline
- * 10th Annual Organic Conference November 21-22

COST-SHARE DEADLINE IS APPROACHING, ACT FAST



October 30, 2010 is the last day for people whose organic certificate is dated on or before September 30, 2010 to apply for 2009-2010 cost-share reimbursement. Only a few of IDALS

customers have taken advantage of this great opportunity. Cost-Share is payable at 75% of your total certification expenses, up to a maximum of \$750. All IDALS' customers should have received a Cost-Share application with their certificate.

Applications are also available on the IDALS' website at: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/AgDiversification/organicCostShare.asp>

Cost-share available for 2010-2011

We just received word that the Cost-Share program will be offered again for the 2010-2011 certification year. The program dates are October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. For those that are certified by June 30, 2011, applications will need to be submitted by July 31, 2010.

- Fill out 1 page application
- Complete W9/Vendor Form
- Provide copy of your Organic Certificate
- Include copy of statement of fees paid, or invoice and checks showing fees paid



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, THE INSPECTOR **IS** COMING



Please be assured that we have not forgotten about you. With budget cuts and the early retirement incentives for State workers last year, we lost a part-time inspector. Unfortunately, this forces our

staff to rearrange job duties and priorities. We are working tirelessly to get inspections done as timely as possible. However, with inspections also comes reports to write and review and the process is very time consuming. As always, your previously issued certificate remains valid until you receive your new one.

10TH ANNUAL IOWA ORGANIC CONFERENCE

Don't miss this opportunity to listen to area experts and learn about the latest trends in organic production. Some of the sessions included in this conference are:

- How to Transition to Organic Farming
- Marketing Innovations
- Organic Grains, Fruits, and Vegetables in the Local Food System
- Organic Livestock and the New Pasture Rule

- Organic Crop Insurance—what's changed/ what's not

In addition to these sessions is a trade show of more than 35 vendors/displays and an Organic lunch that is second to none. Be a part of this event on November 21-22 at Iowa State University (Scheman Bldg.) in Ames. Register by going to: www.ucs.iastate.edu/net/organic10/home.html



IT MAY NOT FEEL LIKE IT YET, BUT 2011 IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Organic applications for the coming year will be ready to be mailed by late January. As always, you will need to complete the application, which serves as your Organic

System Plan. The early deadline will remain March 15. We strongly urge you to get your application in by that date.

SAVE MONEY NOW AND HASSLES LATER, ORDER YOUR ORGANIC SEED NOW



Most seed companies give financial incentives to order and pay for your seed early. Lots of money can be saved with these discounts. Ordering seed early is also a good way to make sure the organic seed you want is available. When placing your seed orders, remember that NOP §205.204 **REQUIRES** the use of organic seed for all seed used in your organic crop rotation. This means that organic seed must also be used for cover crops and crops that are not marketed as organic. There is an exception to this requirement which allows the planting of untreated and non-GMO seed if organic seed is not available; however, this exception has often times been over-used. The regulation states that “nonorganically produced, untreated seeds and planting stock may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically-produced variety is not commercially available.” (This exception does NOT apply to edible sprouts.) **With this in mind, you need to be tenacious in first seeking organic seed whenever possible.** An example of a valid use of this exception would be a farmer growing a new variety of oats under contract for a seed house that wants to start offering this new oat variety as organic seed. An example that is not a valid use of the exception would be a farmer who has a friend who is a seed dealer, and this dealer only offers untreated and non-GMO seed. Using his seed is not acceptable even if he provides test plot results showing that his corn variety yielded 152 and an organic corn yielded 145. That is a statistical variation of 5% and next year it could be the other way around.

Most organic seeds planted in Iowa are yellow dent corn, soybeans (food and feed), clover, alfalfa, barley, orchardgrass, and wheat. Seed companies have been working hard to make these most com-

mon seeds available in organic varieties that produce high yields and have the other agronomic traits organic farmers are looking for. Approximately 75% of the corn and oat seed purchased by IDALS-certified organic farmers is certified organic while close to 50% of the other common seeds mentioned are certified organic. While nearly all of our larger organic producers are purchasing nearly 100% organic seed, we still have several smaller producers that have been reluctant to even get certified organic seed for half of their needs. The USDA National Organic Program has been clear with certifiers about how to handle producers who are using the exception to NOP §205.204 to make the use of certified organic seed optional. In the past, IDALS has issued “Continuous Improvement Points” (CIP) when organic seed is not used. If planting non-organic seed continues, a “Minor Non-compliance” will be issued. A record of all “Minor Noncompliances” is kept in Washington D.C. If the use of available organic seeds is still not adopted, then the final step is to issue a “Major Noncompliance” which means crops from the field will not be able to be marketed as organic.

Several seed suppliers have the same priorities that you have as an organic farmer, and they have been working hard to meet your needs. For farmers who were not planting all organic seed, we have always encouraged them to do an on-farm seed comparison. Typically after 2 or 3 years of comparing, they have switched to all organic seed because they found it worked just as well. While the number of valid situations for planting non-organic seed has decreased, we realize that there are still times when it does not work to plant organic seed, and producers will not be penalized for this. As you are making out your seed order for 2011, be mindful of this regulation.

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Happy Fall

ORGANIC BUY/SELL SPOT

Wanted

No listings.

For Sale

No listings

Send us your e-mail request and we will post

the information here. The role of IDALS will be to forward your e-mail information to interested parties, so please include all contact information in your e-mail. It's free; and you have an interested audience. You may contact Tammy Stotts by e-mail:

INFORM, EDUCATE AND CONNECT



The Iowa Organic Association (IOA) will sponsor a series of Organic Outlook meetings at various locations throughout the state over the next few months. The IOA will be hosting these meetings to discuss various issues and concern that are affecting organic farmers, wholesalers, retailers, processors and consumers. These outlook meetings will encourage communication and the sharing of knowledge, provide

information about organic crop and livestock demand, price outlooks, and the volatility of the grain markets. A review of NOP pasture rule for ruminant animals will be presented. Information on pasture log worksheets, calculating dry matter for ruminants and the documentation needed for compliance to the recent NOP pasture rule for ruminant animals will also be discussed.

For more information on these upcoming meetings go to: <http://iowaorganic.org/>

LABELS, LABELS, WHOSE GOT THE LABELS?

While this subject is not nearly as much fun as the game "Button, Button, Whose Got the Button," it is important enough that we need to mention labels again.

The earlier article referencing purchasing seed makes this a very timely subject. Please provide us with labels of any new products you are planning to use in the upcoming year. Labels sent now will provide our staff with time to review them before it becomes a critical situation.

When sending in labels be sure to include your name and the intended use of the product label which you are submitting for review.

Mail them to us at:

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 Organic Certification Program
 502 E 9th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50319

Fax: 515-281-6178

