



AN OPPORTUNITY YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS!
EVERYTHING YOU WANT ALL IN ONE PLACE !



Better Production

A premier conference and trade show sponsored by the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers, the Iowa Farmers Market Association and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will be held January 29-31, 2009. This conference will offer opportunities for fruit and vegetable growers and marketers to enhance their knowledge and skills in fruit and vegetable production, food safety, customer service and marketing. This three-day conference will feature national and local speakers. Highlights include presentations by keynote speaker Dr. Trevor Suslow, U.C. Davis, California on ensuring food safety through Good Ag Practices and Good Handling Practices. In addition, Steve Upson from Noble Foundation in Ardmore, OK will present on high tunnel production and Ralph Couey, Chipewewa Falls, WI, will address marketing. Farmers market managers and vendors will learn what can and cannot be sold at markets; the ins and



Smarter Marketing

outs' of scales and packaging; customer service to enhance sales and a special market promotion cooking demonstration. Hear also from local growers as they share their experiences and expertise on various aspects of safe food handling practices as it pertains to their own businesses. Experts from Iowa State University will cover the latest information on apples, berries, squash, tomatoes, sweet corn and more. Vendors will also be present to share the latest technologies available to fruit and vegetable growers and marketers. Meet contacts that can enhance your business and last a lifetime.



Safer Handling

The 2009 Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Marketers Conference and Trade Show will be held January 29-31, 2009 at the West Des Moines Sheraton, West Des Moines, Iowa. To learn more about the conference or to register for this event go to: www.iowaagriculture.gov or call Barbara Lovitt at 515-281-8232.

January 6, 2009

Issue 9

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- * Cost Share Available
- * Buying seeds
- * Proposed Livestock Rule Change

DATES TO

REMEMBER

- * The 2009 Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers & Marketers Conference & Trade Show—January 29-31, 2009.
- * March 16 Early Deadline for Applications



WELCOME 2009!

We are busy preparing packets to be mailed to you. We hope to send

them by mid-January. Those of you who choose to receive your application materials by email will receive yours shortly after that. Thank you for your patience.

Our early deadline for receiving applications is usually March 15. However, because that falls on a Sunday in 2009, we will accept early applications that are **postmarked by March 16**. Remember, this early deadline allows you to pay a \$75 application fee instead of the \$200 application fee that takes effect after March 16 through May 31. We

will not accept applications dated after May 31.

If you are choosing not to renew your organic certification with us, please notify us immediately.

Also, this is the last time we will be copying previous year applications and responses for crop producers. Next year we plan to introduce a new binder system in which your basic application changes only when you tell us there is a change.

We started this format with our processing applicants in 2006 and with the livestock applicants in 2008. The feedback has been very positive after the initial application has been completed. Hopefully livestock producers will appreciate the ease of updating their application in 2009.



PROPOSED RULE CHANGE MAY IMPACT LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

On Friday, October 24, 2008, the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program published a proposed rule, *Access to Pasture (Livestock)*, that would create a new set of organic livestock production requirements. The two-month public comment period ended on December 23rd. The proposed rule, if adopted as proposed, would have far reaching consequences. Many organizations and individuals most certainly weighed in on the controversial proposal. The Iowa Organic Advisory Council also submitted a comment.

The centerpiece of the proposed rule is its emphasis on establishing a 30% minimum dry matter intake requirement for ruminant animals grazed from

vegetation rooted in pasture. The proposed rule was very prescriptive and detailed and if adopted would require additional and substantial record-keeping on the part of the organic livestock producers and certifiers. To view the proposed rule please go to www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

It is likely that the proposed rule will be changed before it is published as a final rule. However, it is uncertain what changes to the rule will be adopted. We will continue to monitor this rule-making process and we will notify organic livestock producers certified by the Department once the final rule has been published.



YOUR EFFORTS HELP!

Thank you! Thank you! We have noticed that many of you are writing "Organic Program" on the envelope when you mail

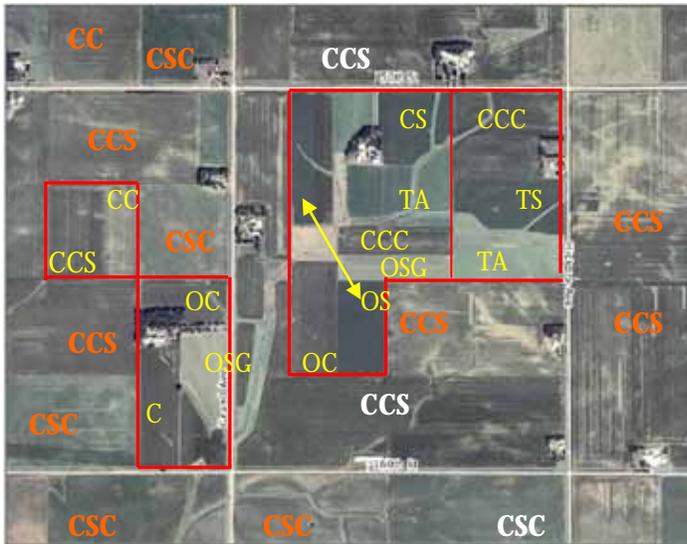
things to us. That is wonderful because our mail comes directly to us and doesn't get sent to the wrong bureau or building. Keep up the great effort!!!

RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS ARTICLE NEW TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANIC FARMING

In our last newsletter we asked you to send your responses to us regarding the question regarding the color changes in organic fields versus conventional fields. The organic fields appeared darker and more uniform in color while the conventional fields had light blotches throughout the field. The following response was received from a reader:

"Why are our soils losing organic matter and humus and their productivity? The lighter soil on your map are much like me – old and wore out.

Most conventional fertilizer programs today use anhydrous ammonia NH_3 and potassium chlorate (KCl). When NH_3 is applied to the soil, it pulls water from soil creating NH_4 . NH_4 then will replace soil nutrients on the soil particle releasing them into solution, making them readily available to the plant. This gives a good response as long as there are adequate reserves of humus and calcium in the soil. However, this will kill or



inactivate soil microbes so humus is not replaced as fast as it is burnt up. Potassium chloride (KCl) is 40% Chlorine. This excess chlorine oxidizes the cell walls of soil bacteria and weakens or destroys them. Also, the excess chloride forms salts that are caustic to soil biology. Again creating an environment where humus (organic matter) is burned off faster than it can be replaced. Adding 100#/acre of HCl is equivalent to the amount of chlorine required to disinfect 20 acres of swimming pools.

In summary the degree of soil fertility is determined by the intensity of the life process of the microbial population and we have been destroying this process for the last 4 to 5 decades."

Thank you to our reader for taking the time to share this knowledge with others!

COST-SHARE UPDATE

While we have not yet received the federal funds for the cost share program, we are accepting applications. Please refer to your last newsletter to obtain additional information about this program. Applications will be accepted until September 30, 2009 or until funds run out. We encourage you to apply as soon as possible to avoid the possibility of requests exceeding funding.

Contact Mary Nieland at 515-281-7656 if you have additional questions.

Due to the number of applications we expect to receive, we ask that you submit verification of your payment from your records or by contacting your bank for copies of cancelled checks. Having complete and accurate documentation will expedite processing your cost-share claim.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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BEST WISHES FOR A SAFE, HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 2009

ORGANIC BUY/SELL SPOT

Wanted

Organic farmer to farm approximately 40 ac expiring from CRP near Cumming, IA Iowa

For Sale

60 head home-raised, cross-bred, organic, open dairy heifers 3-14 mos. old

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 at tammy.stotts@iowaagriculture.gov.

IT IS THE SEASON OF THE SEED CATALOGUE AND A WORD OF BAH HUMBUG

With all the seed catalogues arriving in the mail, it is fun to think about warmer temperatures and the beautiful vegetable plot you'll have this next growing season. However, we want you to be aware of what horticultural seeds you are ordering. Often times certified organic seed is not available to suit your needs, and more options of seed coatings and pelletings are being offered. A seed pellet is a coating, usually of clay mixed with other inerts, that streamlines the size, shape, and uniformity of a small, non-round seed that may be used on many horticultural seeds allowing for easier mechanical planting. Some of the coatings are acceptable for organic operations, while others are not. "Pelletted" does not mean the same as "treated," which usually means the application of a synthetic fungicide. The NOP prohibits the use of "synthetically derived" materials when producing

organically grown crops. Be diligent when ordering seeds to make sure they are approved for organic use. The seed catalog may use codes to differentiate between those allowed for organic production and those that are not. So, if you order "Certified Organic" pelleted seed, that will be o.k. for sure because the seed company's certifier has verified the ingredients. If pelleted nonorganic/non-GMO seed is ordered, a coating that **may or may not** be allowed for organic production could have been used. In that case, be proactive and get verification from the seed company that the pelleting is acceptable for organic use. If seed with any prohibited treatments are planted, we have no choice except to remove that plot from organic production for three years. That situation has happened in the past more than once, so don't let today's dreams become this summer's nightmare.