

■ table of contents...

Updates & reports

EU and USDA organic trade disruptions expected 1

Country focus

Argentina: a country with prospects 4

Certification & accreditation

A new solution to certification transference 8

Organic Guarantee System marks its thirtieth year 11

Who certifies inputs? 14

Updates & reports

Britain wants to harmonise standards 16

Japan's production process managers and grower groups 17

Notice of two conferences 18

EU and USDA organic trade disruptions expected

EU import authorisations for products from the US/USDA accredited certifiers will expire on 20 October 2002, the day before the US National Organic Program comes into effect.

How will this impact organic trade in the two regions?

In a letter issued to all UK importers the United Kingdom Register for Organic Food Standards (UKROFS), the UK certification authority for organically produced food, informed importers of the following:

- All current authorisations from the US/USDA accredited certifiers will expire on 20 October 2002.
- Authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that are already or are about to become fully compliant with the National Organic Program (NOP) may be withdrawn earlier than 20 October.
- Authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that will be fully in compliance with the NOP after 21 October will not be extended until the equivalency assessment of the NOP has been completed.
- New authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that are fully in compliance with the NOP will not be granted until the

equivalency assessment of the NOP has been completed.

- Decisions about authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies accredited under the NOP but who have private standards as well, will be made on an individual basis.

This action by UKROFS is not unexpected, and comes in anticipation of the US National Organic Program coming into full effect on 21 October 2002. Accordingly, all products labelled as organic in the US or imported as such into the US must comply with the NOP. The EU similarly requires products labelled as organic in the EU to comply with Council Regulation 2092/91 or an equivalent system for imports. Equivalency of the US organic standards with EU standards is currently not established.

The USDA, according to UKROFS, has applied to the European Commission for recognition under Article 11(1) of Regulation 2092/91. The EU, it states, is taking the

All products labelled as organic in the US or imported as such into the US will have to comply with the National Organic Program.