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NOP reconsiders controversial policies

Three years ago, the USDA's National Organic Program issued a policy defining the scope of its regulatory programme. After the release of additional policies on this and other contentious subjects, the NOSB made formal recommendations to the NOP for resolution of these issues. During April, the NOP released its long-awaited responses to the NOSB's recommendations, reversing many of the agency's previous positions.

On 22 April 2005, USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) issued its responses to recommendations made by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) on a number of controversial issues.

The NOP's recent comments are the latest in a long-running series of skirmishes between the agency and the stakeholders of the US organic industry. The discord began three years ago in May 2002 when the NOP issued a 'scope document' intended to clarify which sectors of the organic industry could be certified and display the USDA's seal on their products. In April 2004, NOP issued a handful of 'directives' on the scope of the NOP's regulatory programme as well as on the use of antibiotics in dairy animals, the use of fishmeal in livestock feed, and the types of inert ingredients allowed in pesticide formulations approved for use on organic crops. At the next meeting of the NOSB, which was held a few days after the release of the NOP's directives, members of the NOSB and many public commentators expressed not only their displeasure with the NOP's policy state-

ments but also the process by which these policies were developed. As a result, in preparation for its October 2004 meeting, the NOSB Committees developed formal positions on each of the NOP's directives, which were, after consideration by the full Board, approved as recommendations to the NOP.

The NOP's policy statements and directives covered multiple topics as did the ensuing NOSB recommendations and the NOP's response. Below is a summary of the NOP's most recent positions.

Fishmeal as a livestock feed supplement. The NOP agreed with the NOSB's recommendation to allow fishmeal preserved with natural substances as a feed additive or supplement and concurred that synthetic preservatives added to fishmeal must be added to the National Organic Program's National List of approved synthetics through rulemaking, before the fishmeal can be used in organic livestock systems.

Inert ingredients in pesticides. The NOP agreed with the NOSB's position

that only approved inert materials should be used in pesticide formulations approved for use in organic production. NOP stated, 'Certifying agents should ensure that certified operations use pesticides that are known to them to contain only List 4 (and any approved List 3) inert ingredients. USDA-NOP may initiate enforcement actions against any certified operation using a pesticide that USDA-NOP can show contains an inert ingredient other than a List 4 (or approved List 3) inert.'

Use of antibiotics in livestock production. As recommended by the NOSB, NOP upheld the prohibition on antibiotic use for 'organically produced livestock or their edible products'. NOP stated that it is currently processing a rulemaking docket addressing NOSB-recommended livestock materials, warning 'operators and certifying agents are reminded that unless and until the final rule containing NOSB-recommended materials is published in the Federal Register and becomes effective, the recommended materials may not be used.'

Conversion of dairy stock to organic production. The NOSB recommended changes to the NOP regulation regarding the conversion of conventional dairy herds to organic. NOP responded that it must await the outcome of an open court case [see TOS issues 46 & 48], which addresses statutory requirements for dairy herd conversion, before it can take final regulatory action on the issue. NOP stated that it would consider drafting an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to obtain public comments on this issue.

Types of products covered under the NOP. NOP disapproved of the NOSB

statement encouraging stakeholders to solicit information on whether legislation should be adopted for organic certification of personal care products, cosmetics, and dietary substances. NOP chided, 'OFPA [Organic Foods Production Act of 1990] and the NOSB charter establish the duties and functions of the NOSB, which do not include soliciting recommendations from private citizens or organisations regarding legislative initiatives.'

If legislation to amend OFPA with respect to personal care products and cosmetics is enacted, the NOP will enter into notice and comment rulemaking to propose standards for the production, handling, and labeling of these products.' NOP further noted that, 'Until such time, these finished products may not display the USDA seal or be represented as NOP-certified. Only the organic agricultural ingredients contained in these products may be represented as certified to NOP standards. These products may be certified to other, private standards.' Regarding dietary supplements, NOP stated that no determination has been made at this time concerning their labelling under the NOP regulations.

Soil amendments and fertilisers. With regard to soil amendments, fertilisers, manures and related products, NOP concurred with the NOSB that labeling of those products is regulated by state law while noting that 'the OFPA gives USDA jurisdiction over the use of the word "organic" to the extent such products may be agricultural products.' The NOSB plans to develop recommendations concerning labeling of these products after reviewing a proposal made by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO), which includes many state regulators as members.

Fish and seafood. As recommended by the NOSB, NOP 'is forming a task force with two working groups to consider and develop standards to be presented to the NOSB for its consideration for farm-raised and wild-caught fish and seafood.' NOP has already published a Federal Register notice calling for nominations to a task force.

Organic pet food. NOP concurred with the NOSB's recommendation regarding 'establishment of a pet food task force that can address labeling issues for pet food and make recommendations to the NOSB and NOP for amending the regulations to include pet food as an organically-produced product.' NOP had implemented this recommendation, calling for nominations for this task force prior to release of the agency's formal response to the recommendation.

Standards for speciality agricultural products. NOP agreed with the NOSB to undertake additional rulemaking for organic standards for mushrooms, apiculture and honey, and greenhouse operations but to wait for a final recommendation from the NOSB on hydroponic standards before proceeding with rulemaking on that topic. ■

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The NOSB's recommendations along with the NOP's responses may be viewed at:
www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/PolicyStatements/USDANOSBFeedback3_10_05.pdf.

Transcripts of NOSB's discussion of its recommendations to the NOP are posted at: www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/meetings/meetings.html

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KRAV REPORTS ON 2004

In its annual report for 2004 KRAV, the Swedish certification body for organic production, notes that the number of non-conformities at the farm level went down from 358 in year 2003 to 314 in year 2004. The main reason for this improvement was better handling of the derogation for the use of non-organic seeds. The number of non-conformities that occurred in processing and handling was up from 158 to 194. The most common non-conformity was the use of PVC film for packaging.

KRAV reports a more or less stable number of operators, acreage and products. Sales of KRAV certified products increased to 1789 million SEK 2003 (approx 200 million Euros) in the wholesale level. KRAV's turnover remains static at 6 million Euros between 2003 and 2004, while the profit increased from 120,000 Euros to 370,000 Euros. KRAV employs 71 people. In its sustainability report, KRAV claims to have reduced the emission of CO₂ from its activities from 1.06 kg per certified hectare to 0.39 over the last four years, mainly as a result of using ethanol cars, and non-fossil, renewable electricity. ■

see www.krav.se

Miswording confuses status of ICS Japan

Statement regarding MAFF administrative order of 19 April, 2005 clarified

In the article 'JAS organic revision makes certifiers nervous' published in the last TOS issue (49, May 2005), it was stated:

'Last month, on 19 April, the news was released that ICS Japan, an international certification organisation, had been ordered to cease all their activities **within** a week. In addition, all products produced by businesses certified by ICS Japan must be reviewed by 18 June, to ensure they comply with JAS Organic standards and regulation.'

Since publication we have learnt of a mistake in the translation: 'within' as high-

lighted in the quote should have been 'for'. The picture presented was also incomplete. The correct situation is that MAFF asked ICS Japan to temporarily cease new certification activities while reviewing all products certified to verify that only approved additives were used. This was triggered by a case where the use of wood ash was approved by ICS Japan.

The review took a few days, and ICS-Japan was in full operation again within one week. The review did not impact in any way the ongoing business or certification status of ICS operators.

TOS is sorry for the misunderstanding caused, particularly to ICS Japan.

Below ICS describes the circumstances of the case.

The action was triggered by an anonymous phone call in February to MAFF about a ICS Japan certified taro-paste product 'Konjak' containing an unapproved additive – wood ash. Konjak, an ingredient used in Oden (a Japanese stew) is traditionally made by treating

taro flour with lime (traditionally wood ash-derived lime). Use of chemical lime (mixture of calcium hydroxide and sodium hydroxide) to produce Konjak is allowed in JAS. Wood ash, itself, is not on the list, even though it is the traditional source of lime for Konjak paste.

news shorts...

FINAL VOTE ON IBS DRAFT PENDING

The ballot on the 'Final Revision Draft of the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS), Version: 20 May 2005' is open from 27 May to 25 June. This is the final step of the voting procedure. In the previous round of voting five motions remained as they could not be resolved through the contact groups established to negotiate motions. If at least 25% of the IFOAM members cast their vote in this ballot, the result will stand as it is. If less than 25% vote then the IFOAM World Board will decide. In the final draft the chapter on forestry and all related paragraphs in other chapters have been taken out of the IFOAM Basic Standards. Aquaculture moves from being 'draft standards', *i.e.* not binding to full standards. ■

More information can be found at: www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/norms/ibsrevision/ibsrevision.html

The ICS Japan inspector, who conducted the inspection assumed that wood ash was equivalent to chemical lime, hence an acceptable additive. When MAFF received the above-mentioned call, they discussed the issue with ICS Japan, and decided that wood ash was not equivalent. MAFF on this basis deemed the certification of a product containing wood ash to be a violation of the JAS Standard.

As President of ICS Japan, I do not intend to make excuses. This story, nevertheless, tells a 'precautionary tale' particularly to the international organic community, as regards to the precision with which certifiers under JAS accreditation need to deal with, under the Japanese Organic Regulation.

Under the JAS standard, calcium-sodium hydroxide (from a natural source or chemically synthesised) is approved as an additive (hardening) for the production of Konjak. Wood ash is widely used in the production of Konjak. The company, which makes the Konjak, in this case, makes wood ash from wild trees. The ICS Japan inspector identified the presence of wood ash and confirmed that the source of the wood was wild wood, free from pesticide or other contamination. He also confirmed that the main component of wood ash is calcium-sodium hydroxide and assumed that the wood ash (a natural substance from a wild forest source, where no pesticides or other unapproved substances are used) met the JAS Organic standard. He overlooked the fact that wood ash, itself, is NOT in the 'JAS approved additives list for Organic food manufacturing' and did not contact MAFF for confirmation.

ICS Japan feels that this is not an organic quality issue only a technical regulatory issue. We feel that wood ash should be an approved additive, and are in discussion with MAFF on

this point. Meanwhile, to fulfill the JAS organic standard as it currently stands, the company has switched to using chemical lime.

When this situation cropped up, ICS Japan's main concern was to make sure this technical misunderstanding did not create unnecessary damage to our client. Although MAFF had the power to publicly announce the name of the company and product, ICS Japan prevented this action by taking full responsibility for the violation. This resulted in the administrative order requiring ICS-Japan to undertake an internal audit, as described above, however it did protect the client company from adverse publicity, which we suspect the anonymous caller intended to trigger.

ICS Japan's stance would have been quite different if the manufacturer had used a material that compromised the core 'organic' status of the food. Regarding food safety, use of wood ash in Konjack is approved by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

ICS Japan was one of the first certification organisations accredited by MAFF to certify to the JAS Organic Standard. ICS Japan continually strives to maintain the highest level of integrity and rigour in its certification systems and procedures, with the goal of preserving the principles of organic agriculture and food production. We also strive continually to upgrade and strengthen the quality of service to our clients. We view this challenging episode as an opportunity to strengthen our systems and procedures so that we can deliver even stronger and more robust certification services to our clients. ■

Akira Hanawa
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ICS Japan, Inc.
May 16, 2005

Mexico the global leader in organic coffee

As in other Latin American countries, traditional agriculture played an important role in the development of organic agriculture in Mexico. Today, it is one of the leading countries in organic production in Latin American and the global leader in organic coffee.

A survey to determine the extent of organic agriculture in Mexico is currently being conducted by the Center for Economic, Social and Technological Investigation for Agro-Industry & World Agriculture (CIESTAAM) at Chapingo University of Mexico. The expected completion date is August 2005, however, useful results are already available. According to Laura Gomez of CIESTAAM, the area of certified organic land in Mexico has grown by 1,640% in the last decade, rising from 23,000 in 1996 to more than 400,000 hectares in 2004. Oaxaca, Michoacán and Chiapas are the three states with the largest certified area.

In Mexico organic agriculture is identified into specific areas called 'zones'. Results of the survey show that in 2004 there were 668 local zones with organic production. Of these, organic coffee is produced in 45.3% of the zones, fruit in 29.6%, avocado in 12.8%, vegetables in 6.6% and grain in 5.7%. Of the certified organic operators in Mexico 82.5% raise crops, 10.6% are processors or traders, 3.7% manage livestock, and 3.4% are apiculturists.

A quarter of all Mexico's coffee production area is organic; which makes it the most important country for organic coffee.

In Mexico, the majority of organic farmers are peasants and indigenous people, organised into associations

such as the Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo (UCIRI), Productores Orgánicos del Pacifico, Unión de Ejidos de la Selva and la Red de Alternativas Sustentables Agropecuarias de Jalisco (RASA), Unión de Ejidos Majumut, Campesinos Ecológicos de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas, Indígenas de la Sierra Madre de Motozintla and la Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca, among others.

Half of the organic producers, are indigenous ethnic groups located mainly in the Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero states.

According to Laura Gomez, it is estimated that small producers cultivate 98% of the certified acreage and generate 69% of the organic sector turnover, whereas medium and large producers, are responsible for 2% of the country's certified area but generate 31% of the total turnover.

In addition to the producers, the

Mexican organic movement includes universities, non-governmental and governmental organisations, certifiers and other actors. Presently, there is no formal national organisation that represents the interests of organic producers to the government or to external parties outside of the country. There are, however, diverse regional organisations and local market networks. More details can be found on the website: www.mercadosorganicos.org

Standards and regulations

In 1997 the Mexican Official Norm, NOM-037-Fito-1995, was promulgated, establishing standards for organic production and processing. This norm does not include standards on animal husbandry or apicultural production, sectors that are becoming increasingly important. According to Laura Gomez, the norm is currently being reviewed and may be modified by law (see below). According to Mr Homero Blas, Director of OCIA – Latin America, 'nobody uses the national norm'.

In December 2004, the Mexican Congress approved the first reading of an Organic Products Law consisting of 7 Articles (see TOS issue no. 46). The objectives of this Law are:

- To establish the criteria and/or requirements for conversion, production, processing, preparation, storage,

Development of certified organic agriculture in Mexico between 1996 and 2004

	1996	2000	2004
Certified organic area (ha)	23,265	102,802	+400,000
Number of local 'zones' with organic production	–	262	668
Number of producers	13,176	33,587	+ 120,000
Jobs provided	3,722	16,448	not determined
Foreign currencies income (million US\$)	34.4	139.4	+ 350

Source: Produced by author; dates supplied by CIESTAAM.

identification, packing, labelling, distribution, transport, inspection and certification of organic, as well as social justice.

- To set the minimum requirements for inspection and certification as well as requirements for a control system.
- To promote organic production systems, especially in regions where the environmental and socio-economic conditions are favourable for organic activity or for areas under conversion.
- To allow a clear identification of the products that they fulfil the criteria of organic production.
- To establish national lists of allowed and prohibited substances for use in organic production.
- To create an organisation to support the Secretary of Agriculture. This organisation will be made up of private sector actors and governmental institutions. It will be an advisory council.

All these objectives are expected to be included in the implementation of the Mexican Organic National Programme. Now called the National Council of Organic Production according to the second version of the Organic Products Law it was approved by the Mexican Senate on 26 April 2005 (details in <http://gaceta.diputados.gob.mx>). This new law is currently being reviewed by the Chamber of Deputies.

This council will consist of a delegate from the Secretary of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development, Fishing and Food, two processors, four certifiers, one consumer and seven farmers.

The new law has 8 chapters, *i.e.* definitions, production and processing criteria; council of organic production; control and certification systems; inputs allowed; importation process;

promotion of organic agriculture; social criteria; and sanctions. It will be complemented by the General Law of Forestry Development (for forestry products) and the General Law of Wild Life (for wild products), amongst other Mexican laws. An important point about the law is that it recognises alternative certification systems such as participatory systems and internal control systems.

In the meantime, the EU Reg. 2092/91, the US final rule, Japanese JAS Standards as well as private standards such as Demeter are being used in Mexico because the majority of Mexican organic products are exported.

Certification and accreditation

The first certification of organic coffee in the world, took place in Mexico. Today, there are more than 120,000 certified organic producers, making Mexico the country with the greatest number of certified organic farms in the world. They are certified by 14 certification bodies, of which OCIA – Mexico and Certimex are the most dominant as they certify the majority of operators. Naturland, OCIA – International, CCOF, Aurora Certified, QAI, Bioagricoop, IMO control, Oregon Tilth, Eko, Organic Forum and Demeter, amongst others, also operate in Mexico.

The new law says that SAGARPA will be responsible for the approval of certifiers, which were previously accredited according to the Federal Law of Metrology and Normalization (Standardisation). It will include criteria about standard setting, certification, verification and laboratories, and will amongst other points establish a national system of accreditation for

standard setting and certification organisations, and units of verification and laboratories. SAGARPA will be able to approve certifiers that are ISO 65 accredited from other countries.

In spite of all the legislative work already achieved, Homero Blas believes that the lack of consolidation of legal regulations, such as the Organic Product Law, is causing delays in Mexico being recognised by the European Union and awarding it approved third country status.

Markets

According to Laura Gomez, 85% of Mexican organic products are exported as certified organic or certified organic and fair trade. CIESTAAM figures show that the amount generated by organic exports in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002 was 34, 72, 139 and 280 million US dollars, respectively. This trend continues to grow as – according to the survey currently being conducted by CIESTAAM – in 2004 the organic trade was worth more than 350 million US dollars. The main export markets are the United States, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Japan, Denmark, England, Canada, Italy and Australia. The main Mexican organic exports are coffee, avocado, vanilla, maize, sesame, vegetables, herbs, mango, orange, papaya, banana, pineapple and honey.

Of the 15% of total organic production sold domestically, 10% is sold as conventional and 5% sold as organic in specialised stores, fairs and some supermarkets in principal cities and tourist places. Organic markets called ‘tianguis’ (local fairs) also have been established in Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Jalapa and Chapingo.

The lack of consolidation of legal regulations is causing delays in Mexico being recognised by European Union. ■

Outlook

According to the CIESTAAM study, the reasons organic production in Mexico is successful and will continue to grow are:

- Presence of traditional agriculture and indigenous knowledge.
- Constant demand and access to premium prices from foreign markets.
- Low production costs.
- Methods used for technology transfer and the formation of rural promoters.

Regarding the domestic market, the CIESTAAM study lists the following reasons why there is not a significant demand for organic produce:

- The population is not knowledgeable.

- There is no culture of consuming healthy foods or environmental protection.
- The high price of the products.
- There is no confidence in the quality or the appearance of the products.
- Lack of availability of products in commercial outlets.

Regarding certification, the government's goal is to develop a programme that complies with all Mexico's trading partners such as Europe, USA, Japan and Canada. For this reason, Mexico's goal is to complete its organic programme by 2005.

The Mexican authorities want all certifiers to be accredited according to

the national law. In addition, the government has many ideas for supporting the country's organic movement. It wishes to establish funds to assist producers access the certification they require and to support the formation of a national organisation of organic producers, processors and those associated with the organic pharmaceutical industry. A research centre providing training and information in ecological agriculture is planned, as is an organic national seal and the continued support of the development of the national market. Mrs. Laura Gomez concludes that all the mentioned are also the responsibility of the Mexican organic movement made up of farmers, research centres, and consumers. ■

CERTIMEX

In 1995 an organisation called Ecological Farmers of Mexico (ECOMEX) representing organic producers in Mexico was founded. Then in 1997, with the support of social organisations of small producers from the provinces of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero, CERTIMEX was established. Its goal was to consolidate the development of a national certification body, to overcome cultural barriers and languages, as well as reduce the costs associated with using the services of international certification bodies.

Since 1998, CERTIMEX has developed agreements with international certifiers such as IMO and Naturland, as well as with some American certifiers. Currently, they have ISO 65 accreditation and are applying for NOP accreditation. According to Mrs Laura Gomez, they can now certify to European standards without the intervention of international certifiers.

At the end of 1998 CERTIMEX was certifying thirty grower groups, which represented at least 7,000 producers with 15,000 hectares, selling coffee, sesame, honey, Jamaica (a typical Mexican tree) and chillies. The groups came from more than 290 'zones' (or communities) in the provinces of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Guanajuato, Michoacán and Jalisco.

Currently, CERTIMEX certifies more than 32,000 producers managing 77,573 hectares. The organic products certified include coffee, cacao, passion fruit, vanilla, sesame, amaranth, corn, beans, green banana, cinnamon, aloe and brambleberry. In addition to organic certification, CERTIMEX can also inspect according to bird-friendly and fair trade criteria. ■



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UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR MISSOURI ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

In the US, the recent newsletter published by the Missouri Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) reported that the future of Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) Organic Certification Program is in doubt. The report stated that the programme was dropped as part of a 20% reduction (\$1.9 million) in the department's budget for fiscal 2005-2006. The Senate Appropriations Committee has taken remedial action to restore partial funding for the programme, but it is not yet clear whether the funding will be secured. ■

For more information see <http://semissourian.rustcom.net/story/160553.html> and www.moseed.org/

Source: MCIA and SEMissourian

PHIL MARGOLIS REMAINS PRESIDENT OF OTA BOARD

Phil Margolis of Neshaminy Valley Natural Foods Distributor is continuing as OTA president for 2005-2006. Other officers are Jesse Singerman of Roundy's Inc, president-elect and vice president representing the United States; Debra Boyle of SunOpta, Inc., vice president representing Canada; Chuck Marcy of Marcy & Partners, treasurer; Julia Sabin of Smucker Quality Beverages, secretary. ■

See the complete list of board members at: www.ota.com/about/boarddirectors.html

Source: OTA newslite

Different shades of coffee

Coffee is a major export crop for many countries, and represents more than 20% of the export earnings of nine developing countries. According to Oxfam (international advocacy NGO), about 17-25 million families – mostly small farmers – in over 50 developing nations produce and sell coffee. Some estimates consider that about 100 million people are directly affected economically by the coffee trade. However, with a dramatic decline in coffee prices to a 100-year low in real terms, many producers are today facing financial difficulties and are looking for a way to increase the value of their product.

The coffee trade has historically always been subject to supply/price volatility due mostly to extremes in the weather. Currently the nature of the industry's supply system is undergoing a structural change, fuelled by increases in both the quantity and quality of coffee on offer. Many countries and producers are also seeking new strategies and ways to redefine their market position away from the commodity trading system. The strategies include differentiating the product by origin, defining the processes, or advertising exceptional characteristics of the coffee, such as superior taste or a low level of defects.

Certification schemes are a type of differentiation and the number of schemes available in the coffee sector have mushroomed in recent years. Along with organic certification some of the other schemes are fair trade, shade grown and eco-friendly, Utz Kapeh and Common Codes of the Coffee Community (CCCC, or 4Cs), not to mention private brand standards e.g. Starbucks. They may deal with ecological and/or social aspects as well as with specific varieties, regions or production methods. Below is a summary of the major coffee schemes.

Certified organic

The certification is conducted according to numerous government regulations and/or private standards. Whilst it is said that organic production requires active cultivation practices that are monitored and verified, there are situations where certified organic coffee production takes place with minimal intervention activities, i.e. indigenous farms. The organic labelling scheme also requires the processor and roaster to be certified in order for the coffee to be sold as organic. In exchange for the certification of their sustainable cultivation practices many farmers receive price premiums.

Over the coffee year 2003/2004, i.e. between October 2003 to August 2004, over 25,600 tonnes (427,400 bags weighing 60kg) of organic coffee was exported from Brazil, which amounts to about 0.64% of total exported coffee.

Fair trade certification

Fair trade certification is managed by Fair Trade Labelling Organization (FLO), one of the biggest international social economic certification bodies worldwide. FLO



news shorts...

ISO 17021 SOON TO BE RELEASED

The *ISO Focus* reports on the soon to be released standard ISO 17021, Conformity Assessment-requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. This standard will replace the current ISO 62 and ISO 66, the guides relating to certification of management systems (Note: in the organic sector it is the ISO Guide 65 for product certification that is mainly used as a benchmark).

The question of whether the certification bodies themselves should follow ISO 9001:2000 is still controversial, and *ISO Focus* reports that this will not be resolved until the final draft is published in mid 2005. ■

PCO VENTURES OUT OF STATE

In its recent newsletter (Vol 9., No. 1, Spring 2005) Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) announced changes to its by-laws that will allow it to certify operations in states adjoining Pennsylvania, *i.e.* New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio. ■

For more information see www.paco.org/pdf/OM2005Q1.pdf

Source: PCO

inspects and certifies about 420 producer organisations in 50 countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, embracing around 800,000 farmer and farm worker families. Coffee is one of FLO's many product lines. FLO certification is based on the International Fairtrade Standards. Fairtrade certification is not just concerned with a set of minimum standards for socially responsible production and trade. It also guarantees certified producers a fair price, and expects them to invest part of it into economic, environmental and social development. It is the only major certification system that requires the buyer rather than the small producer to cover the cost of certification, most of which is embedded in the base price of the product. The fair trade market sets a minimum floor price in relation to the current market (see table on fair-trade minimum prices); however if the market price rises higher than the fair-trade minimum price, the market price applies.

There are two sets of producer standards, one for small farmers and another for workers on big farms or in factories. As fairtrade is about development, the standards distinguish between minimum requirements, which producers must meet to be certified fairtrade, and progress requirements. The purpose of the progress requirement is to encourage producer organisations to continuously improve working conditions and product quality, to increase the environmental sustainability of their activities and to invest in the development of the organisation and their producers/workers. In addition, the FLO trading

standards stipulate that traders have to pay the producers a price that covers their livelihood, with an extra premium so that producers can invest in development, and sign contracts that allow long-term planning and sustainable production practices. There are also a few product-specific Fairtrade standards for each product line which determine criteria such as minimum quality, price, and processing requirements.

Bird friendly

Eco-friendly certification schemes for coffee production systems focus on maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat and encouraging biological diversity of the production system. This is particularly directed at effective management of the forest canopy on the farm and protection or restoration of surrounding natural environments. An example is Bird friendly certification, which requires the preservation of adequate multistory shaded forest settings for birds. The farm must also be managed organically. For more details see TOS issue 41, September 2004.



Rainforest alliance

The Rainforest Alliance socio-environmental certification is run by the Rainforest Alliance and Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), a coalition of nine independent, nonprofit conservation



The purpose of the progress requirement is to encourage producer organisations to continuously improve working conditions. ■

certification & accreditation

groups. This scheme incorporates environmental issues such as rainforest, water and fauna conservation, with social criteria particularly labour management practices and worker facilities. More specifically, it includes requirements for decent housing, sanitary facilities, potable water, electricity (if possible), safe cooking facilities, fair pay, access to medical care, and the availability of schooling. It is not obligatory to be 'organic certified' but the farm has to implement an integrated pest management (IPM) programme, and among other aspects administer soil management and conservation practices along organic management lines.

The Rainforest Alliance scheme has standards for several products including coffee, banana, citrus and flowers, with coffee and banana being the more important ones. Currently, there are 2,608 farms managing 129,097 hectares certified according to Rainforest Alliance standards in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru. Coffee is produced on slightly more than half the farms (1,342), or 42% of the total certified area.

Utz Kapeh

The Utz Kapeh certification programme is based on the Utz Kapeh



Code of Conduct, which in turn is based on the EurepGAP Protocol for Fruits and Vegetables. Today it officially meets EurepGAP standards. In addition, relevant elements and criteria have been added from the ILO (International Labour Organization) Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the SA8000

code for social production standards.

The Utz Kapeh foundation, recommends that a premium is paid to the producers for fulfilling sustainability practices, but does not interfere in the negotiations between buyer and seller. The recommended premiums are US\$0.07 per pound (US\$0.03/kg) for washed arabica and US\$0.04 per pound (US\$1.12/kg) for unwashed arabica but only when arabica coffee dips below US\$0.70 per pound (US\$0.3/kg) on the New York market. The suggested robusta premium is \$60/ton (\$100/ton if washed) when the market dips below US\$650 per ton. For more details, see TOS issue 47, March 2005.

Common Codes of the Coffee Community

The Common Codes of the Coffee Community (CCCC or '4Cs') is a joint project between the coffee trade & industry, the countries of origin, development cooperation agencies and interest groups. The aim of CCCC is to draw up 'social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainability of the production, processing and marketing of green coffee'. It considers other rules such as the United Nations human rights covenants, the ILO conventions, the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the national laws and International environmental treaties and guidelines. The definition of sustainability by the World Commission for the Environment and Development is also taken into account: 'It is in the



hands of humanity to make development sustainable, that is to say, seek to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. The concept of sustainable development implies limits, not absolute limits, but limitations that the present state of technology or social organisation, and the capacity of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities, imposes on the resources of the environment. But both technology and social organisation can be organised and improved so that they will open the way to a new era of economic growth.' For more details see TOS issue 42, October 2004

According to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) executive board minutes (no. 256, October 2004), the majority of producing countries were of the opinion that this code should not be implemented as it stood because it would create an uneven burden on producers imposing high costs for verification and creating a two-tier market.

It was also felt that the economic case for this Code was weak and was mainly driven by the coffee industry. More clarification and transparency was needed on the rules of participation and the selection criteria of pilot projects. In addition, it was felt that more time was needed to study the Code and to analyse its implications in more detail and that it was too early to take any decision within the ICO at this stage. The Board recommended that the matter should be further discussed at future ICO meetings and possibly in specialist workshops or seminars.

The Rainforest Alliance scheme has standards for several products.

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CAFE practices

In November 2001, Starbucks Coffee Company introduced green coffee purchasing guidelines that reward performance in several environmental and social categories, and enable suppliers to qualify as a Starbucks preferred supplier under a scheme called Preferred Supplier Program (PSP). The guidelines were developed in partnership with Conservation International's Center for Environmental Leadership in Business. Starbucks contracted Scientific Certification Systems to refine the programme so that the guidelines and application instructions are clear, and that verifiable standards for high quality sustainable coffee production are included. During 2002 and 2003, up to 248 suppliers from 20 countries participated in a pilot programme, and about 22.7 million kilos of coffee were purchased through the PSP.

Based on feedback received, the programme was relaunched as CAFE (Coffee and Farmer Equity) Practices in March 2004. The pilot Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) was phased out. CAFE seeks to ensure that Starbucks sources sustainably grown and processed coffee by evaluating

the economic, social and environmental aspects of coffee production against a defined set of criteria, detailed in the CAFE Practices Guidelines. Starbucks defines sustainability as 'an economically viable model that addresses the social and environmental needs of all the participants in the supply chain from farmer to consumer'. CAFE Guidelines comprised of a set of 26 criteria spanning a total of 12 Principles, which in turn are organised into five Subject Areas (product quality, economic accountability, environmental leadership – coffee growing, environmental leadership – coffee processing, and social responsibility). Performance has to be verified by a third party or person called a verifier.

Currently, 78 suppliers representing 880 farms and 189 mills in nine countries have applied to the programme and 95 inspectors have been trained by Scientific Certifications Systems (SCS) to become approved CAFE verifiers.

Where's the money

Whilst specific prices are guarded trade secrets, the organic coffee premium is estimated to be between 10

and 50% more than the New York exchange prices, depending on quality, origin, etc. According to a recently published study by International Coffee Organization (ICO) organic green bean premiums show a considerable level of variance but the mean range is approximately US\$0.15 to US\$0.30 per pound (US\$0.07/kg to US\$0.14/kg). While most of the industry feel the premiums are justified, nearly half predict that, as supply competition heats up over the next few years, they are likely to erode. Eco-friendly coffees typically range from US\$ 0.10 to US\$ 0.60 per pound (US\$0.05/kg to US\$0.27/kg) although it is difficult to segregate certification premiums from quality premiums. For fair trade, most participating buyers pay at least the official FLO minimum prices while a very few pay slightly more and some pay much less by operating outside of the FLO certification and registration system.

Fair-trade minimum prices, including quality differentials that currently apply, are shown in the table below. ■

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Fair-trade minimum prices for coffee and quality differentials.

Prices in US cents/lb (US cents/kg)

Types of Coffee	Fair-trade minimum price				Fair-trade premium
	Conventional		Organic		Conventional and organic All regions
	Central America, Mexico, Africa, Asia	South America Caribbean area	Central America Mexico, Africa, Asia	South America Caribbean area	
Washed* Arabica	121 (55)	119 (54)	136 (62)	134 (61)	5 (2.3)
Non-washed Arabica	115 (52)	115 (52)	130 (59)	130 (59)	5 (2.3)
Washed* Robusta	105 (48)	105 (48)	120 (54)	120 (54)	5 (2.3)
Non-washed Robusta	101 (46)	101 (46)	116 (53)	116 (53)	5 (2.3)

* Semi-washed or pulped natural coffee is listed as washed coffee.

news shorts...

ORGANIC SHRIMP STANDARDS CRITICISED

The May issue of TOS (no. 49) reported on a project to develop joint organic shrimp standards, based on the IFOAM

aquaculture standards. This initiative has been criticised by a coalition of environmental NGOs and consumer associations, including the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, IUCN Netherlands, Novib, Oxfam Netherlands, Greenpeace Spain, FIAN Germany, Environmental Justice Foundation, Public Citizen US, The Swallows India and Bangladesh Section, The Penang Consumer Association

The organisations are also concerned that IFOAM has supported a project to develop draft criteria for sustainable shrimp aquaculture without a serious consultative process with southern or northern NGOs working on tropical shrimp and mangrove protection. They state that there is currently no acceptable shrimp aquaculture practice nor any sustainable shrimp aquaculture for the export market. ■

Forum of organic certifiers in Brazil

Seven of the larger organic certification bodies operating in Brazil – from a total of more than thirty – are working together through a ‘Forum of Certifiers’, a working group integrated into the ‘Câmara Setorial’ (Sector Chamber for Organic Agriculture). Below is a report on the work of this group.

The Sectorial Chamber, organised by the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA), was created as a platform from which the voices of all stakeholders could be heard. Its purpose is to create policies to develop the organic sector and the regulation of the Law 10.831 (12/2003), the last legal provision issued by the Brazilian government for the regulation of the organic production. Members of the Chamber include representatives of certification bodies (CBs), producer organisations, consumers, input producers, commerce associations, the accreditation body INMETRO and representatives from other institutions such as the Health and Environment Government Ministries.

The seven CBs taking part in the Forum of certifiers include the international agencies – IMO, BCS, Ecocert and OIA, – as well as three national CBs, Instituto Biodinâmico (IBD), Associação de Agricultura Orgânica (AAO Cert) and the Certificadora Mokiti Okada. Each has one representative on the Forum, and a substitute representative available if necessary. The group is chaired on a rota system; currently it is being chaired by AAO Cert.

A definitive national regulation in Brazil has not been finalised, but is being prepared, and is now reaching

the final stages of development. The Forum of certifiers, created in April 2004, is currently working on the details of the final version of the organic regulation of Brazil. The forum conducts internal discussions on the issues that concern its members, and when a common position has been reached, provides feedback to the Sector Chamber and the specific working groups of MAPA. The former official provisions for organic production in Brazil were the Normative Instructions (MAPA/IN 006 and 007) published in 1995 and 1999 respectively. These were substituted on 23 December 2003 by the sanctioned Law 10.831, which until the approval of the definitive text is the most up to date legislation in force for the regulation of organic farming in Brazil.

One of the issues of concern that has been discussed between the members of the Forum and the Ministry of Agriculture is the accreditation procedure of the CBs once the national regulation is approved. The Ministry of Agriculture agreed, after some persuasion, with the organic CBs and other groups to outsource the accreditation procedure to INMETRO, the official accreditation agency for Brazil. INMETRO has the technical experience and skills to undertake audits according to the ISO 65 and is internationally recognised since it is one of

the few Latin American accrediting agencies that is a full member of IAF (International Accreditation Forum). The Ministry of Agriculture will maintain an oversight of all CBs approved by INMETRO. Together with CPOrg, the specific commissions created to support the implementation of the regulations for organic production at the level of each member state of the Brazilian federation, the Ministry will supervise the activities of the approved CBs and the organic sector.

At the moment the proposed process for the finalisation of Brazil's organic regulation is:

- MAPA will systematise the conclusions of the regulation text, elaborated by the working groups and the representatives of MAPA.
- The Sector Chamber will evaluate

the regulations and approve the final version.

- The final version will be published nationally and internationally for public comments in mid 2005.
- Results of the open consultancy will be processed by MAPA and published for a second round of public comments.
- The results will be ratified by MAPA and the definitive version of the national regulation is expected to come into force by the end of 2005 or beginning of 2006.

In addition to the development of the regulation, some of the most relevant proposals presented by the Forum of CBs are:

- To create a common register managed by MAPA to keep data on the

number of certified operators in Brazil, certified area and other statistical data.

- To harmonise working procedures of the CBs.
- To support governmental initiatives regarding the organic sector.
- To inform the public in general about the importance of the work of certification bodies.

The common register proposal supported by all public and private sectors has since been established by MAPA. ■

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ICS to administer Food Alliance inspections

On 19 May, 2005, the International Certification Services, Inc. (ICS) signed a contract with the Food Alliance to provide inspection and certification services of farms, ranches and food processors throughout the US. ICS will also be responsible for the recruitment and training of inspectors, scheduling inspections, reviewing inspectors' reports, issuing certification decisions and maintenance of certification record.

Food Alliance, however, will retain responsibility for the quality of its certification programme, including the development of certification standards, promotion of the certification programme, and service to certified businesses.

Food Alliance's decision to out-

source the administration of its inspection service stems from the increasing number of requests for certification coming from across the US. The Food Alliance now certifies over 200 farms and ranches in 16 states, representing approximately 3.3 million acres of farm and rangeland. The growth of Food Alliance certified farms and ranches has averaged at 34% for the last three years.

According to Scott Exo, Executive Director of Food Alliance, ICS was chosen because it is an internationally respected, ISO-accredited organisation with a very long history in certifi-

cation, and extensive expertise, professionalism and commitment to sustainable agriculture. In addition, ICS also has a sophisticated certification management database with remote data-entry capability that will provide fast and efficient service while maintaining the quality and credibility of the Food Alliance programme. ICS can also provide multiple certifications with a single inspection including organic certifications.

ICS will begin administering Food Alliance certification programme on 1 July, 2005. ■

For more information see www.ics-intl.com/news/NewsApril05.pdf and www.foodalliance.org/newsroom/newsreleases/2005/ICS.htm

Source: ICS and Food Alliance

ICS also has a sophisticated certification management database with remote data-entry capability that will provide fast and efficient service. ■

Matters pending and arising at the EU Commission

Topics under discussion regarding EU Reg. 2092/91

There are currently several issues under discussion in the standing committee on organic farming in the EU. Of these, three issues – inspection requirements, the allowances for use of conventional feedstuff in animal husbandry, and food additives and processing aids used in the processing of food stuff from animal products – are major topics. These issues were to be discussed at a meeting in the middle of May. However, this meeting was postponed to the beginning of July. This article reports on these issues as well as other topics that may involve a lengthy discussion process.

Food additives and processing aids for animal products

Of all the items currently being discussed by the standing committee on organic farming in the EU, the issue about food additives for foodstuff from animal products has been the longest-standing. Work with additives started in 2001, and now four years later in mid 2005 it is probably close to a decision.

The controversial question that has dominated much of the discussions and caused it to take so much time is whether nitrites and nitrates should be allowed or not.

There are strong and opposing opinions between and even sometimes within the EU countries on the acceptability of nitrites and nitrates. As the EU Regulation is currently written, all the Member States can determine individually at the national level which additives and processing aids are allowed for organic animal products.

This has had the effect of reducing the pressure at the EU level to make a decision and finalise the issue.

Recently a proposal has been put forward that deals with food additives and processing aids, including nitrates and nitrites. It suggests that only sodium nitrite (NaNO_2) and potassium nitrate (KNO_3) be allowed in meat products. The maximum ingoing amount expressed as NaNO_2 is 80 mg/kg and the maximum residual amount expressed as NaNO_3 is 50 mg/kg. This means that nitrates and nitrites are allowed, but in lower amounts than usually used in conventional food.

The proposal suggests that the allowance of sodium nitrite and potassium nitrate should be re-examined before 31 December 2007.

Other new additives are also proposed; some of the more significant ones are:

- Vegetable carbon, annatto, bixin and norbixin all for use in cheese pro-

duction.

- Sulphur dioxide and potassium metabisulphite for fruit wines (note: EEG 2092/91 does not cover the production of wine from grapes).
- Sodium ascorbate for meat products used together with nitrites and nitrates.
- Sodium lactate for milk and meat products.
- Sodium citrates for animal products.
- Hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose as encapsulation materials for capsules.
- Calcium chloride for milk coagulation.
- Talc as a coating agent for meat.

Another part of the proposal is concerned with the labelling of baby food. It is proposed that baby food can be labelled 'made with organically produced agricultural ingredients' if 95% of the ingredients come from organic agriculture. It allows the inclusion of non-organic minerals, vitamins, amino acids, nitrogen compounds and nutritional substances in the remaining 5%.

Most of the Member States are reported to accept the proposal for additives and processing aids, even if many are not totally happy with every part. However, the process has now moved on to the political level as there is an ongoing process to change the permitted amounts of nitrates and nitrites used in conventional products. If nitrates are to be allowed in organic production, Denmark, which has been strongest in the resistance against allowing nitrates and nitrites in European organic production, wants the accepted maximum levels to be related to the levels accepted in conventional food. As the process for setting the conventional levels has not yet been decided – and is expected to take a long time – the process to decide on the additives and processing aids in

news shorts...

GERMANY'S ORGANIC AGRICULTURE LAW REVISED

Germany has revised its Organic Agriculture Law, which regulates the implementation of the EU Regulation 2092/91 on organic agriculture. Germany has implemented a provision allowing the Member States to release retailers that do not store, trade or repack loose organic products from inspections.

Furthermore, the amendment specifies the duties of inspection bodies where fraud is suspected and a follow up to the pre-supplier is necessary. Inspection bodies have to publish a regularly updated register of inspected operators in order to improve the possibility of verifying authenticity of organic products. ■

GUIDE ON ORGANIC WILD COLLECTION PUBLISHED

The Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO) has published a guide for Organic Wild Collection. The authors are Silvia Muller from IMO and Klaus Duerbeck from Duerbeck Consulting. The manual can be downloaded from: www.sippo.ch/cgi/news/publications.asp?mode=6#wild ■

organic production will be delayed even more. It is still not clear whether the development will take this route or not.

There are also other proposals that have been put forward for first establishing principals on how additives can be accepted in the EU Regulation for organics, before a final decision on the proposal for additive and processing aids can be made. The whole process has taken five years so far and is likely to take some time more.

Annex III – inspection requirements

Annex III in the EU Regulation covers the requirements for inspection of organic production. In March 2004 articles 8, 9, and 10 were amended (see article in TOS issue 36) to include wholesalers and retailers in the inspection scheme. In accordance with that decision it is proposed that Annex III is changed accordingly. It now clearly states that the nature and quantities of stored products have to be documented, that the product flow has to be documented (except for the final consumer) and that even operators who do not physically store or

handle products have to document product flow. In the proposed text there is no further guidance on how strictly the changes in article 8, 9 and 10 shall be interpreted. In a previous article on this issue (TOS issue 36) a concern was expressed that the interpretation will differ between Member States on how retailers and wholesalers shall be inspected and which operations will be included in the inspection system.

One interesting point is that the proposal for changes of Annex III states in the introduction that 'the frequency of inspections can relate to the risk of non-compliance with the regulation'. In the regulation text the risk assessment shall be used when random inspections are done (this is in addition to the annual inspection visit). The text in the proposal says '... shall carry out random inspection visits, announced or not, based on a general evaluation of the risk of non-compliance with this regulation, taking into account at least the results of previous inspections, the quantity of products concerned and the risk for exchange of products'.

Importer derogation is prolonged for an extra year

The allowance in the EU Regulation for acceptance of organic products from outside the EU according to Article 11.6 (the so called importer derogation) has been prolonged to 31 December 2006. The change has just been approved by the council. Article 11.6, which under the current EU-legislation will expire on 31 December 2005, is an alternative to the standard method of accepting imported products. However, it is deemed to be used by around 80% of import goods into Europe. The work necessary to develop a new permanent system using equivalency evaluations of certification bodies, which can replace the procedure in Article 11.6, is outlined in the European action plan.

The process has already started but it is a complicated issue and therefore not expected to be finalised before the end of this year. It is underlined in the amendment to extend the importer derogation that trade in organic products should not be disrupted, and therefore the time limit should be extended for a further year.

Exemptions on the use of conventional feedstuff

Currently the EU Regulation (EEC 2092/91) includes an exemption to allow conventional feedstuff when organic feed is not available. A maximum of 10% conventional feed can be used for herbivores and 20% for other species. This exemption is due to expire on 24 August 2005. As there does not seem to be enough of organic protein feedstuff available there is an on-going discussion about further exemptions.

The new proposal is that herbivores could be fed 5% conventional feed when the farmer can prove organic feed is not available. The proposed time limit for this exemption is from 25 August 2005 to 24 August 2007. For other species the following amounts of conventional feed are proposed:

- 15% during the period from 25 August 2005 to 24 August 2007.
- 10% during the period from 25 August 2007 to 24 August 2009.
- 5% during the period from 25 August 2009 to 24 August 2011.

The percentages are calculated on annual basis and as dry matter of feedstuff from agricultural origin.

In a letter to the EU Commission the IFOAM EU-group supports the changes but express their extreme concern that the decision will be taken only a few weeks before the changes will have to be implemented by the farmers. 'Even though the end of the derogation has been notified for a long time, it is still not clear whether the derogation will end completely or only partly. As we have stated before, our principal opinion is that this kind of change should have an implementation time of at least one year.'

Vitamins in feed

The same proposal that covers the

changes in the percentage of conventional feed also includes a suggestion that the text on use of vitamins supplied to organic animals should be changed. It proposes that Part D of Annex II point 1.2 should generally allow synthetic vitamins A, D and E identical to natural vitamins to be given to ruminants. These items are currently allowed provided the producer demonstrates that the health and welfare of the animals could not be guaranteed without their use. The Member States have to authorise the use on precise criteria and then notify the commission about their decisions. This arrangement was due to expire on 31 December 2005, however the proposal is to simply make synthetic A, D and E vitamins identical to natural vitamins. These would then be allowed without any of the bureaucracy.

Feed additives, agricultural inputs and poultry

Three other topics currently under discussion are feed additives, agricultural inputs and a range of poultry issues. All three areas are at a quite early stage of discussion and there may be huge changes or the proposals or parts of them could be totally turned down.

The feed document proposes to explicitly prohibit synthetic amino acids due to the fact they originate from GMOs.

The agricultural inputs that are under discussion for inclusion in annex II are industrial lime from salt production as a fertiliser; the use of ethylene for degreening not just bananas but also for kiwi fruit and kakis (persimmons). It is also proposed that ethylene be allowed for flower induction of pineapple. It is proposed that calcium hydroxide to be allowed for use as a fungicide for fruit trees including nurseries to control *Nectria galligena*.

The third document covers production rules for poultry. The derogation for the use of 18-week old chickens for the use in egg production is proposed to expire at the end of 2006. Thereafter only 3-days old conventional chicks can be used. There is also a proposal for refining the definition of 'slow growing strains', and setting a maximum daily growth rate for turkeys and broilers. In addition, it is proposed that a poultry house cannot contain more than 6,600 pullets. The next proposal will be to ensure that pullets have access to open air when they are full feathered or at the latest when they are 7 weeks old (taking weather conditions into account). The maximum stocking rate for pullets for laying hens is 21 kg/m² and there is a proposal that each pullet should have 2.5 m² outside area. ■

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Store Wars in our midsts

We believe that even serious certifiers and standard-setters need a break sometime, and recommend a visit to www.storewars.org

The OTA together with the producers of the web film *The Meatrix* have developed the film *Store Wars*. According to the OTA newsletter 2 million people have downloaded the film from the internet. In the first 72 hours, over 168,000 people watched the movie. The five-minute *Star Wars* spoof features Cuke Skywalker, Princess Lettuce, Chewbroccoli and other organic rebels-played by real vegetables dressed as *Star Wars* characters battling it out with Darth Tader, the evil lord of the Dark Side of the Farm. ■

news shorts...

COMPULSORY TREATMENT OF PHYTOPLASMA INITIATED IN TUSCANY

In the Italian region of Tuscany, the Regional Agency for Environmental Protection has initiated compulsory treatments against *Scaphoideus titanus* (*Homoptera cicadellidae*), the vector responsible of phytoplasma, *Flavescenza dorata*. The Coordinamento Toscano Produttori Biologici (CTPB), the regional association of organic farmers, has protested against this, making the following points against the compulsory treatment:

- There are doubts that *Scaphoideus* is the real responsible agent of phytoplasma.
- Contact treatments, both conventional and bio-pesticides, destroy all the positive interactions of insects biodiversity
- Alternative methods of control pest and disease exists with positive results.

France and several other country have also established the same regime of chemical treatment in order to decrease the population of *H. cicadellidae*. According to the EU regulation 2092/91 the crops from fields where compulsory treatments have taken place cannot be sold as organic, but the conversion period can be substantially reduced so that the crop harvested the following year can be sold as organic. ■

ISO 22000 to be launched in September

September 2005 is ISO's publication target for ISO 22000, the new standard for food safety management systems. TOS reported in issues 23 and 42 on the ISO 22000 standard. The main objectives is to enhance consumer satisfaction through effective control of food safety. It requires a demonstrable ability to control food safety hazards in order to consistently provide safe end products that meet both the requirements of the customer and of food regulations. The ISO 22000 applies to all organisations within the food chain, from farmers to food services.

ISO has circulated the final draft of the standard to the national standard bodies that make up its membership for a two-month voting period, ending on 5 July 2005.

'As food safety hazards can be introduced at any stage of the food chain, adequate control throughout the food chain is essential', commented Jacob Færgemand, convenor of the ISO working group that is developing ISO 22000. 'Thus, food safety is a joint responsibility that is principally assured through the combined efforts of all the parties participating in the food chain.'

Dorte Jespersen, secretary of the ISO 22000 working group, explained the background to the standard: 'Organisations that produce, manufacture, handle or supply food recognise

that customers increasingly want them to demonstrate and provide adequate evidence of their ability to identify and control food safety hazards and the many conditions impacting food safety. The growing number of national standards for food safety management has led to confusion. Consequently, there is a need to harmonise the national standards at an international level.

It remains yet to be seen if industry and regulators will use this standard in place of all the other food safety related standards (e.g. EurepGAP, HACCP) or if it will be used in addition to those.

The standard can be applied on its own, or in combination with other management system standards such as ISO 9001:2000, with or without independent (third party) certification of conformity. The publication of ISO 22000 will be complemented by an ISO Technical Specification (ISO/TS 22004) giving guidance on the implementation of the standard, with a particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises. In the following months, another Technical Specification ((ISO/TS 22003) will be published explaining certification requirements applicable where third-party certification is used. ■

Read more in: www.iso.org/iso/en/iso9000-14000/addresses/articles/pdf/tool_5-04.pdf

It remains yet to be seen if industry and regulators will use this standard in place of all the other food safety related standards. ■

Duxbury is new SA Cert Certification Director



Robert Duxbury's was the Technical Product Manager for organic food at Sainsbury's, the major UK retailer in the mid 1980s. He was appointed to the UKROFS board (United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards) in 1997, and is currently Vice President of the IOAS board (International Organic Accreditation Service). He also served on the UK Organic Action Plan team. Last year, after 24 years with Sainsbury's, Robert founded his own advisory business, True Food Values, with a range of clients including UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service), the Welsh Development Agency and OMSCo (Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative).

Robert maintains a very positive view of organic certification in the UK, saying all the major UK certifiers, including Soil Association Certification Ltd, have contributed greatly to the quality and integrity of organic food and farming, in the UK and internationally through their interna-

tional involvement and influence.

Announcing his appointment, SA Certification Managing Director, David Peace said, 'Robert's unique experience combines retailing knowledge together with a deep understanding of organic certification. His wide international perspectives make him an ideal choice for this key position. We are all looking forward to working with him.'

In his new role, Robert says his priority is the maintenance of Soil Association Certification Ltd's leadership position. His challenge as custodian of their reputation will be to acknowledge and develop the vast array of skills and experience within the certification team. 'I will be seeking to establish further ways to offer the best service to its customers, the licensees and other stakeholders who recognise and rely upon the integrity of the Soil Association symbol.' ■

ANSI search for new president

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is currently in the process of identifying a successor for retiring President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Mark W. Hurwitz. Appointed in July 1999, Dr Hurwitz announced his intention to retire by the end of 2005. Korn Ferry International, an executive placement firm, has been appointed by the ANSI search committee to assist in the identification of a prospective president.

In July 2003, ANSI was chosen by the US National Organic Program (NOP) to perform an audit on NOP's accreditation programme. The report was made public by NOP in January 2005. ■

More information is available on website: www.ekornferry.com/Library/Process.asp?P=Opportunity&S=SJ954 and the ANSI website: www.ansi.org/careers

Source: ANSI

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