International Certification Services, Inc

# Organic Producers

## Why Organic?

Organic agriculture protects the water supply, enriches the soil, encourages biodiversity & helps reduce the toxic burden on our bodies and our planet.

- Employs sound cultural production practices
- Replaces synthetic fertilizers, chemicals and pesticides
- Enhances the inherent fertility and biological life to build soil
- Improves water quality
- Creates a safe environment for people and wildlife.
- Increases value of organic products through identity preservation.

## Where do you fit?

*Family Farm*

An organic farming operation where at least 75% of the labor is provided by members of the immediate family (excluding seasonal labor). Product is sold bulk from the farm.

*Commercial Farm*

Organic farming operations that utilize more than 25% of the labor by employees that are not family members (excluding seasonal labor)

*Cottage Operation*

An organic operation which includes a value added enterprise; such as consumer packaging, on-farm processing, cleaning, washing, bagging, etc.

## Why Farmers Choose ICS?

- Multiple, thorough and comprehensive programs.
- Certification Team made up of members with experience or education in Organic Farming, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, Thermodynamics, Genetics, Cell Biology, Microbiology, Mammalian Anatomy and Physiology, Human Sensation & Perception, Food Science & Technology, Human and Animal Nutrition & Behavior, Manufacturing/Processing and Systems Analysis, Horticulture and Ag-Business.
- Certification with integrity, honesty and a dedication to the philosophies organics originated from.

## Market Potential

- Total US organic sales have been increasing on an average of 18-20% per year for the past 10 years.
- 24% of US consumers purchased organic products in 2004.
- 2004 US sales exceeded $12 billion and is predicted to reach $30 billion by 2007.
- 2004 world organic sales estimated at $26.5 billion US dollars.
- US is currently the fastest growing organic market in the world.
- Demand is greater then supply in almost all organic products. (OTA website and BioFach Newsletter)

***Organic certification is required by law in the U.S.A. and many other countries.***

International Certification Services, Inc
301 5th Ave SE
Medina, ND 58467

Website: www.ics-intl.com

Phone: 701-486-3578
Fax: 701-486-3580
E-mail: info@ics-intl.com

# Basic Organic Farming Principles

ICS emphasizes a systems approach to the management of organic farms. Our farmers are encouraged to integrate their entire farm so that the different aspects of the operation can support one another.

ICS requires that farmers use their farm's own resources as the primary source for solutions to agricultural problems. By instituting this principle, a farmer can greatly decrease the costs of inputs such as fertilizers and chemicals. In conventional farming the trend is to "BUY" a quick fix. In organic farming we use problem- solving methods.

If off-farm inputs are necessary, the inputs must be in compliance with organic requirements.

When we refer to 36 months without any prohibited materials applied to the soil, here are a few examples of what we mean by "prohibited materials":

*Genetically Modified Seeds
*Herbicides
*Insecticides
*Genetically Modified inputs
*Pesticides
*Treated Seeds

Crop rotation and soil building are key elements to successful organic farm operations.

One of the most powerful tools that an organic farmer has to solve weed and fertility problems on the farm is crop rotation. An ideal crop rotation for annual crops includes:

* using a diversity of crops
* feeding the soil, so that it can feed the crops
* planting a mixture of small grains/grasses, broad-leaf plants, and legumes
* planting 3 different crops in 3 consecutive years
* a plow down/cover crop every four or five years
* frequent application of animal manure

We do not require the entire farm to be converted to organic all at once. We actually encourage you to try out some methods on a portion of your land. Once you feel comfortable with organic farming, more acres can be added.

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