

ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE

MILKING THE TERM “ORGANIC” FOR ALL IT’S WORTH

BY DAVID GOULD

Excuse me while I grind my axe a bit...

Not too long ago while spending the day on an organic dairy farm near where I live, I happened to meet the director of the regional dairymen’s association, who also stopped by. This guy is a voice for, either directly or indirectly, all the dairies around here – organic or conventional. His position was, “There’s room for everybody in this state – the guy with 100 cows and the place with 50,000 cows.” In the course of our conversation, I happened to say something about how I thought the term “sustainable” was coming to be abused, to which he immediately and enthusiastically replied, “And I tell you, we intend to abuse it thoroughly!”

Around here, as a dairyman you can get on some kind of a “sustainable” milk program just by not giving your cows rBST. How did anyone ever conclude that was even a shadow of sustainability? Still, if the average uninformed consumer only hears that it’s milk produced on a sustainable program and they don’t know anything more about it, what do we expect they’ll think?

In this country, apparently you can get your dairy certified *organic* even if your cows have never set foot on pasture. Is that organic? Not in ICS’ judgment. Not according to the NOP rules. For some certifiers though – and apparently for the USDA as

well, who is complicit – the requirement for access to pasture is satisfied if that access is visual only, or theoretical. I doubt the cows see things quite like that, or that most organic consumers would, if they were aware of the difference.

A little while after my encounter with the local dairy industry leader, I was on another dairy farm around here. This farmer is a really nice guy, and as far as I can tell does exactly what he says he’s going to do. He’s been a conventional dairyman until recently, when he decided to start converting some of his operation to organic. As we rode around his recently converted fields, he said to me, “Those 10,000-cow dairies – I can’t compete with them. Why do you think I’m going organic? It’s a niche market where I can survive.”

I said to him, “Then you better get your cows out on pasture, or those 10,000-cow operations are also going to get certified organic and they’re gonna put you out of business.” Something registered on his face. He’s newly certified, and still his cows haven’t been out of the barn. Sure, it’s been wet around here, so there’s been a little delay, but the fields can handle the cows now and that grass sure looks good. But the farmer’s got a lot of stuff on his plate, and he just hasn’t gotten around yet to finishing the access way from the barn to the pasture...

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SUBMISSIONS TO “SUSTAINABLE TIMES”

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please include complete contact information including your daytime phone number and signature. All letters are subject to printing in our newsletter, however submission does not guarantee printing. Letters may be edited and cannot be returned.

For information on submitting an article, or if you have any ideas on articles that you’d like to see in our newsletter, please contact Brandi Eissingner at 701-486-3578 or via email at brandi@ics-intl.com. Letters to the editor may be sent to this same address.

CLASSIFIEDS

As an added service to our clients, International Certification Services, Inc is now offering free Classified ad space to all ICS clients (and also to organizations associated with ICS) in the ICS Sustainable Times. The Sustainable Times is published 6 times a year and is also available electronically from our website.

To submit an ad for print in the ICS Sustainable Times, please send your classified ad to the editor, Brandi Eissingner, at brandi@ics-intl.com. Final approval is at the option of the editor. Any questions you have on this opportunity, please contact Brandi via the afore mentioned email address, or call 701-486-3578.

FEEDBACK WELCOME

ICS welcomes and encourages feedback on our FVO Requirements as well as the other programs we offer.

We also encourage comments and suggestions on our newsletter and website. If there is anything else you’d like to see, please let us know and we’ll do our best to get you what you need.

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TRADESHOW EXHIBITION

In the last issue of the ICS Sustainable Times, we mentioned the hope to have an organic booth at the All Things Organic tradeshow in 2007. Because of the short notice on this booth, we were unable to organize a combined booth. However, we did have many clients interested and therefore will be trying again—but this time for the 2008 show. This will give everyone enough time to plan and budget for this great opportunity.

We still have some spots available, and if we know in

advance that clients are interested we can register for a larger space if we need. Please contact ICS if you would like to take part in the ICS Organic Booth at ATO 2008.

Also, if you would like to attend any other tradeshow, but find the costs a little extravagant, ICS is always looking for more opportunities and could possibly co-exhibit, thus saving costs for everyone involved. Contact Brent Schulz at ICS to find out if it's possible or if you would like more information.

CALL FOR INTEREST IN ORGANIC PET FOOD

The NOSB's Pet Food Task Force is soliciting comments from USDA accredited certifying agents about NOP standards for pet food and related products. ICS is planning to submit comments to the NOSB by the deadline of September 1, 2006. As always, we try to craft standards – especially for new categories of products – in cooperation with those people who will actually have to implement the practices required by those standards.

We value your experience, expertise, and concerns. We are thus asking all of our clients and any other interested parties to share with our Certification Committee any comments, questions, concerns, or other ideas about this new and potentially large organic product market. Any comments you wish to share will be gladly received and duly considered as we formulate our feedback to the NOSB.

Please submit comments to us no later than August 15, so we can be sure to have enough time to give them attention and still meet the NOSB's deadline.

All comments sent to us will be read only by ICS staff and will not be distributed as such otherwise without your written consent. In our comments to NOSB, we

do not intend to share any names, market or formulation information, or other trade secrets, and as such the confidentiality of your comments will be protected.

In particular, we are interested in what kinds of pet food products you are interested in marketing, what types of challenges you foresee, concerns/ideas about labeling declarations, and explicit preferences/concerns regarding inclusion of ingredients that are not certified organic in pet food formulations. Any other comments or insights are of course also welcome.

For additional information, the Item for Public Comment and NOSB Interim Report may be found on the NOP website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/TaskForces/PFTFPUBLIC%20COMMENT%20Notice051906.pdf>

Please submit comments to Karri at the ICS office (kstroh@ics-intl.com).

ICS also encourages everyone to submit their own comments directly to the NOSB as well, as directed by the above link.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT—MOJO ROAST, INC

“We are the first and only coffee company in North Dakota to be certified ORGANIC!”

(www.mojoroast.com)

This statement is definitely something for MoJo Roast, Inc to be proud of. In an interview conducted electronically with MoJo Roast, Inc.—a certified organic coffee roasting company in North Dakota—ICS was able to find out more than certification paperwork can tell us and we also found out some tips on brewing, roasting and storing coffee. Below is the interview which was done on June 22, 2006. Please see the article “Tips From the Experts” written by MoJo Roast, Inc for tips on coffee.

ICS: Could you tell us a little about your operation such as when you formed MoJo Roast, Inc., where you’re located at, and what products you produce?

MoJo Roast: *We formally incorporated as coffee roasters MoJo Java, INC. on May 17th of 2005 at 9725 Hwy 83 Westhope, ND 58793. We’ve recently had a name change so it’s easier for people to find our web-site: www.mojoroast.com. We roast traditional and organic specialty grade coffees (the best in the industry). We also sell flavorings, French presses, biscotti, mugs and cups.*

ICS: What made you decide to go into organic?

MoJo Roast: *One very important factor for us to be certified organic was; the benefit to the environment, and also there is a significant consumer demand for organic products, and our customers drive our business.*

ICS: Have you always been in the organic industry or did you dabble in the conventional market at the be-

ginning?

MoJo Roast: *I have always sold traditional coffees, and had a desire to incorporate the organics into our program. I currently have 9 to choose from.*

ICS: How long have you been certified organic (and how long have you been certified by ICS)?

MoJo Roast: *ICS has been our only certifier and we’ve been certified for a little over a year now.*

ICS: What benefits have you found in having an organic operation?

MoJo Roast: *Customer demand. There are a few of us coffee roasters that travel and do trade shows, our company does get business that we probably wouldn’t have, had we not been certified. It is rather funny because our competition, when asked by customers for organic coffee, will send them our way. It is nice knowing that we are the only company certified organic.*

ICS: What was your biggest concern in entering the organic certification process?

MoJo Roast: *The fee. I had heard the paper work was tough as well. It was a piece of cake, very straight forward and very easy. I had mine done within the day*

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MOJO ROAST, INC (CONT)



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that I received it, and faxed it in.

ICS: Do you feel all of your certification needs are being met to allow access into the markets you require?

MoJo Roast: We have been very satisfied with ICS, they have worked with us on any questions that we've had. They have always been there to make sure that our program is a success.

ICS: What would be the best advice you would give to someone considering moving into the organic industry?

MoJo Roast: #1 be honest and open with your agent. We run a very transparent company, it makes working together much easier. 2# Don't be afraid to ask ques-

tions. #3 don't be intimidated by the paperwork, do it the day you receive it and get it in, the process is much quicker.

ICS: Was there any point in the process where you wanted to turn away from the organic path and almost went back to the "easier" conventional methods.

MoJo Roast: No, we knew what was required of us right off the get go, I keep very good records, and it makes my inspection go a lot quicker.

ICS: Do you have any ideas how to make the conventional sector better aware of the organic movement?

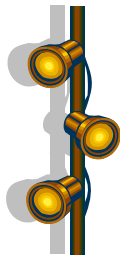
MoJo Roast: I know I have my competitions' ears perked up, and they are watching and wanting to become certified. It'll be a matter of time. But our focus has never been the initial cost of the cert. Rather is has been our customer base. We went into business knowing exactly what our goals were, and it is paying off. One of our hospitality accounts really only wants to serve organic menu items, and we do have that account because of that. The consumer demand will make the conventional sector aware soon enough.

We service individuals, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, and coffee bars nation wide. If there is a place that you would like to see serve or sell our fine coffees, feel free to send them our way. Because coffee is a perishable food item, all of our coffees are roasted fresh to order and shipped within hours of your order. We are personal coffee roasters which means that we roast to all of our customers specific requests. Whole bean or ground you get it the way you want it.

Visit MoJo Roast's website, www.mojoroast.com, for more information as well as recipes, ordering information, and contact information.

In the Spotlight

Do you wish to be "In the Spotlight" or know of another ICS client you'd like to see have a feature article in this newsletter? Please contact the marketing department at brandi@ics-intl.com with your suggestions and ideas.



ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE (CONT)

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This is not a farm that ICS certifies. I truly believe this farmer wants to do the right thing and will do whatever his certifier requires, and ultimately probably get his cows out there at least some of the time; he's an honest guy trying to do the right thing, and on a pretty steep learning curve about how to be organic. But at the same time, he's got pressures of various kinds, and in the face of those pressures he might also do only what he's required to do. There are a lot of cows in confinement. The real carrying capacity of the land is probably about a third of the herd's size, if there's some supplemental feed used.

It's a bit subjective how much any livestock operation's stocking rate should be allowed to exceed the real carrying capacity of the land. This very issue is currently a crucial front in the battle to maintain the market integrity of the term "organic." We can tolerate seasonal and regional variations, but the vagueness of the rules allows for too much variation in practice, and thus too much straying from the intention and principles of organic production. *The NOP needs clearer rules about livestock confinement and access to pasture.*

Let's also look at the "two track" system of dairy conversion that the USDA currently recognizes. You can convert a "distinct herd" (whatever that exactly means) and then have to have the herd be fully organic forever after (i.e., last third of gestation for all animals). This track makes a lot of sense to us at ICS, and that is what we support. The other track, if you don't convert the whole herd at once, is that you can keep bringing in non-organic animals without limit, manage them organically for 12 months, and then start selling organic milk from them.

I would think it reasonable if the rules allowed a certain type of emergency replacement provision in the rule, for farmers who face a disaster. In some current situations though, it seems to me that under this second track, "manage them organically" - to USDA and some certifiers and operators - equates to 100% organic feed and no prohibited veterinary inputs, and to hell with the housing/pasture/holistic management requirements. How much GMO feed and antibiotics did those animals get before they were brought onto the organic farm? How much and what kind of animal products were in their feed? How many topical insecticides? How many synthetic parasiticides? What kind of life did they have? Is this operation maintaining or improving the natural resources of the operation, including soil and water quality? If it's not, it's breaking one of the first requirements of the NOP rules.

To me, it is an outrageous abuse of the term "organic" that USDA would allow such a "two-track" system. It's almost like one is "full organic management" and the other is "organic feed and no prohibited drugs - for the past year." Or maybe "organic farming" versus "corporate organic production." What's the motivation

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR
DAVID GOULD**

David Gould, one of ICS's Certification Committee members, has been providing his expertise in organic certification to the company since 1998. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his family.

ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE (CONT)

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to do things by the corporate model? A big part of it is about profits, not one that has anything to do with stewardship of land or livestock – or the health of farming or rural economies. It sets up a vicious cycle whereby larger less organic farms are advantaged and smaller more organic farms are disadvantaged.

Another short sell of the non-organic replacement track is that it is a huge disincentive for anyone who might try to raise organic replacements. I know of a farmer who is actually raising organic replacements, and he's sold out for literally the next several years in advance! Why not encourage more of such operations? Because big interests don't want that as much as they want some other things, and they have a lot of sway in our government and in the media, disproportionate to the number of persons interested.

When a 5000-cow dairy can keep its animals inside all the time – or let them out in a mud or dust patch and somehow call that “access to pasture” - they break the rules. Their certifiers ignore the rules, or don't understand them. And USDA does not enforce them – either because they also don't understand them, or they are pressured by big business interests to ignore the facts, or both.

But that does not mean we just have to roll over and take it. In a democracy you don't always get what you want, but at least you get to say your piece. And if enough people say the same piece, it usually gets heard. I call on consumers to object to the tolerance of certified organic operations and products that do not really meet the rules, and of certification agents who enable them. Even more, I call upon dairy farmers and other organic farmers to rise up and object to the tolerance of big agribusiness being allowed to flourish under the

organic seal because of a weakening or disregard for the rules. Such success – if unfairly gained – is at the expense of farmers who really embody the rules and principles of organic. Sale prices will be successively shaved by greater sales volumes, smaller guys will suffer smaller profits, and the giants of the world will continue to squeeze small farmers out of business. Instead, I say let's reverse the trend and secure the survival of more good organic farmers, and make them the base the marketers must use.

If we don't reverse these trends, we are continuing with the demise of small farms, reducing the number of farmers, and endangering our own national security. There are so few farmers left – and even fewer of them who actually know how to farm in a healthy and sustainable manner – that our knowledge base for how to farm is pathetically and perilously small. History has shown that such top-heavy situations inevitably invite their own collapse. In a way, we are approaching the Soviet system of agriculture from the other direction, namely a few huge farms to the exclusion of smaller enterprises; the difference is that the Soviet system was state mandated, whereas in the USA it has sprung from a free-market system, abused by laissez-faire giants and enabled by the complicit policies of a corrupt federal government that plays to the interests of the powerful few. This is not solely the USDA's fault, not even close. It is a systemic disease of our American culture.

The only way we can expect a change for the better is if we make our voices heard. There are more of us than there are of them, and that can really count for something. Keep your eyes and ears open; USDA will ask for comments soon. *Rise!*

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

ICS and the editor of the Sustainable Times has started a new feature, "Tips from the Experts." The suggestions and tips within these articles come from clients whose work centers around the specific products mentioned, and not from ICS.

To start off this new feature, MoJo Roast has graciously submitted some tips on coffee: how to keep it fresh, the best way to grind it, and more...

THE KEY TO A GOOD CUPPA

Since coffee is a perishable food item it should be used within a couple of weeks. Ultimately coffee should be stored in an air tight container in a dark cupboard. Storing it in the freezer or refrigerator dehydrates and coagulates the coffee oils. We package in bags that have one way degassing valves to really keep the coffee fresh. Oxygen, light, heat, and moisture are coffees worst enemies.

The grind is very important. Coffee stays fresher longer in the whole bean form because less surface area is exposed to the elements, so it is best to grind before each brew. Each brewing method requires a different grind. Sometimes the coffee can taste flat or bitter because the wrong grind was applied for a particular brewing method.

Brewing: The recommended water to coffee preparation is 2 level Tablespoons of coffee to every 8 oz of water. The water is very important to brewing a good pot of coffee, no matter what method is used, make sure it is a good drinking water without any impurities in it, mineral content adds to the quality of the coffee brewed, so distilled water isn't always the best to make coffee with. 196 to 210 degrees F is the optimal brewing temp. Never boil coffee, it brings out bitterness in the cup.

I would also like to mention that the quality of the coffee is essential to a quality cup. Make sure that your coffee is a specialty grade coffee roasted by a reputable company. Don't be afraid to ask the grade, and if they roast to order, it's key to a good cuppa.

*For more information, recipes, and additional tips, check out MoJo Roast's website:
www.mojoroast.com.*

*If you have any tips you would like to share about your product, please send them to the editor, Brandi Eissinger
(brandi@ics-intl.com).*

WANT YOUR OWN WEBPAGE?

As an added service to our clients, International Certification Services, Inc is now offering “Client Pages.” Each client who wishes to have their own page on the ICS website now can.

The information on these pages resemble the information on our Certification List, listing contact information and certified products/services provided; other information is also allowed, such as an “About My Operation” section. It also gives viewers the ability to search for specific products or services allowing interested buyers or service-seekers to find your page easily.

This offer is free and voluntary to all ICS Clients. For more information, please contact Brandi Eissinger at the ICS office—701-486-3578 or via email: brandi@ics-intl.com.

NEW CLIENT PAGES POSTED

If you wish to see how the pages mentioned in the above article look, there are several client pages now posted on the ICS website. Although the layout is similar in all cases, you’ll see the different information you can provide should you wish to also participate in this free offer.

<http://www.ics-intl.com/clients/index.htm> is the website address for the client pages, which provides an index of all pages as well as a search engine. Below are the clients currently posted on the site:

[Beckner Farms](#)

[Capay Canyon Ranch/Stan Barth Farms](#)

[Daybreak Farm](#)

[Espeland Farm](#)

[Evergreen Farm & Earth Shepherd Medicinal Herbs](#)

[Global Protein](#)

[Hasse Farm](#)

[Heartsong Herbal Brewing Company](#)

[Mojo Java, Inc](#)

[Native Organic Products](#)

[Rockwell Organic](#)

[Specialty Export Productions, Inc](#)

[Vets Plus](#)

[Webster Farm Organics](#)

NEW—WEBSITE MEMBERS AREA

International Certification Services, Inc has now created a “Members Area” on our website. This area contains requirements and forms relevant to ICS organic certification. Some of the forms include Production Plan modules, instructions on how to complete ICC’s and ISR’s, Audit Registers, Field History Sheets, etc. There is also a discussion board for posing questions to other clients and/or ICS.

Because this part of the website is only for ICS clients, ICS is creating usernames and passwords for anyone interested. Simply call Brandi at ICS, or email her (brandi@ics-intl.com) with your email address and she’ll get your account set up. Please note, you must have a valid email address to be registered.

If you have any questions on this, or any other ICS service, please contact ICS at 701-486-3578.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT—BRENT SCHULZ

Brent Schulz just celebrated his third year anniversary with ICS in June 2006. He was hired to help develop the Marketing and Business Development Team for ICS and continues to represent the company in this area traveling to various trade shows across the US and one international show in Nurnberg Germany annually.



Brent graduated from Valley City State University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree with a double major in Business Administration and Business Management with related fields in Marketing and Advertising. He continued his education with various sales and marketing trainings, GMAC Finance & Insurance School in Detroit, MI., Agronomy Management classes with Cenex Harvest States, Peak Potential trainings and continues to train with self development programs.

He began his work experience at the age of 12 in a livestock auction barn and continued gaining work experience in restaurants, retail, dairy, beef and grain farms, carpentry, construction, finance and insurance in the auto mobile industry, account manager for a steel building manufacturer, managing an industrial/construction supply company, and agronomy manager. The emphasis has been on sales, marketing and management.

The North Dakota Ag Department recently accepted Brent's nomination to the North Dakota Organic Advisory Board representing ICS as an organic certifier. This board will be advising the North Dakota Ag Department on how they can better support the organic industry in ND. He is really looking forward to helping the organic industry in ND.

Brent has always had a passion for health and wellness so working in the organic industry fits with his personal philosophies. "I really enjoy knowing I am making a difference with every farmer and processor I help get certified for organic production. I truly believe producing and processing foods without harmful chemicals is very beneficial to our health and the environmental" says Brent.

FBM AVAILABLE TO SOUTH CENTRAL ND FARMERS

The James Valley Career/Technology Center of Jamestown, North Dakota announces Farm Business Management (FBM) educational program for farmers and ranchers in south central North Dakota.

This FBM program is an educational program that offers farm families the benefits of instruction in farm management and production agriculture. The objective of the program is to assist farm families in achieving their goals through improved management.

This program is sponsored and funded by combined efforts of Jamestown Public Schools and the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. They are welcoming new conventional, sustainable and organic farmers for enrollment. For more information contact Virgil Dagman, program coordinator at 701-952-4261.

COMPOST THIS—INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT COFFEE

- Coffee is the second-most traded commodity in the world economy, after oil.
- The global coffee industry earns \$60 billion annually.
- Coffee farmers earn as little as 4 cents a pound for the coffee they pick by hand.
- Most of the world's coffee is grown by small-scale coffee farming families.
- 25 million families around the world work in the coffee-fields and totally depend on the coffee crop as their only source of income.
- One coffee tree yields slightly less than 1 pound of coffee per year.
- For every pound of gourmet coffee sold, small-coffee farmers receive between 12¢ and 25¢.
- When shopping for perfume, take some coffee with you in your bag and have a good sniff in between smelling each perfume to refresh your nose!
- Sprinkle spent coffee grounds around the base of your garden plants and it will stop snails and slugs from munching them!



- A mixture of coffee grounds and sugar, fed to a potted plant and watered regularly, will revive houseplants that have turned yellow in winter.
- Some of the world's most powerful business, including Lloyds of London and the New

York Stock Exchange, started life as a coffee house.

- In December 2001 Brazil produced a scented postage stamp to promote its coffee - the smell should last between 3 and 5 years.
- A coffee tree has a lifespan of about 50 to 70 years.
- When it is in bloom, the coffee tree is covered with 30,000 white flowers which begin to develop into fruit after 24 - 36 hours.
- A coffee tree can flower eight times in any one year - depending on rainfall.
- Coffee is consumed at the rate of 1400 million cups per day.
- Coffee is the world's second most popular drink after water.



NEW CERTIFICATIONS

ICS welcomes the following organizations to our family of certified clients. We're proud to have you with us.

EVO Certifications:

Flavor Infusion, LLC, Processor/Manufacturer

NOP Certifications:

Willis Bontrager, Family Farm



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

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.ICS-INTL.COM

**CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**

October 4-7, 2006 - Expo East;
Baltimore, MD

November 12-24, 2006 - PLMA;
Chicago, IL

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