

## Moving Forward in 2009



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As another year comes to a close, we want to thank each and every one of our clients and friends we have the privilege of working with for being with us.

This year we changed the format of our service survey to give us more information on where you see our strengths and weaknesses. The reason for this was so we can make our services better. Without your input, it is difficult for us to see where we can improve.

Thanks to comments and suggestions we received from clients, we now see not only what the problem areas are, but how we can change to solve these problems. Many of these changes have already been made and we are confident that the 2009 season will be more timely and efficient for everyone.

In the fall of this year we added another full time reviewer as well as contracted the services of more part time reviewers. The commitment from these reviewers will increase our efficiency and turn around time.

We have completed some revisions to our production plan modules. You will be receiving the new production plan along with the last one you completed to aid in completing the 2009 modules. Please update the information as accurately as you can and just as importantly is to update the modules to include any condition responses. This will save you time in having to respond to conditions which have already been met but not updated in the plan and in turn will increase the turn around time in getting approval and your certificates.

Several clients requested a checklist of what attachments need to be sent in to ICS with the completed production plan. Thanks to this suggestion, we have created such a checklist and it will be included with your paperwork.

This is just a summary of some of the improvements we have made, and we still have more we are working on.

One change which should be available sometime in the first quarter of the new year will be the ability to search online for ICS certified organic products. We will keep all our clients informed as to when this tool is available.

We are also working hard on finding resources for problem areas you have specified (i.e. how to control weeds, pests, etc.). Although we cannot offer consulting in these areas, there are many people available who can, and who often offer this assistance free of charge.

Although we strongly believe our changes will be a great improvement for the 2009 season, they are still new changes, and there may be areas you feel we can still improve. We ask all of our clients to please continue to be honest with your comments and suggestions. We take the information we receive from you very seriously and will do everything in our power to implement requested improvements.

Thank you again to everyone who submitted surveys, comments and suggestions. You are helping make this process better for everyone.

## Calendar Of Events

Marketplace - Bismarck, ND - Jan 14, 2008

MNOC - St. Cloud - Jan 16-17

KMOT - Minot, ND - Jan 28-30

NSAS - Norfolk, NE - Feb 13-14

NPSAS WC - Huron, SD - Feb 13-14

Bio Fach - Nuremberg, Germany - Feb 17-22

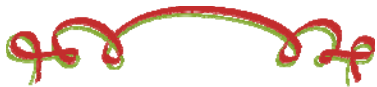
UMOFC - LaCrosse, WI - Feb 26-28

Valley City Winter Show - Valley City, ND - March 3-8

Expo West - Anaheim, CA - March 5-8

ATO - Chicago, IL - Apr 27-29

ICS will be attending each of these events. Please contact us if you wish to meet with a representative.



## Classifieds

Please contact Brandi Eissinger, Marketing Specialist, to place a classified ad in the ICS Sustainable Times. Classified ads are free to ICS clients; ad rates available to non-ICS clients.

## Submissions

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 Eissinger at 701-486-3578 or via email at brandi@ics-intl.com. Letters to the editor may be sent to this same address.

## Feedback

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.

To submit your feedback, either contact your Customer Care Specialist, email info@ics-intl.com, or contact our office at 701-486-3578.

## Resources for New Organic Growers

Looking for answers of how you should do things and what exactly the NOP requirements are asking of you? Or do you know of someone considering transitioning to organic? The following are only some of the good resources available to everyone:

- The New Farm: <http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/home>
- ATTRA—National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: <http://www.attra.org/>
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education: <http://www.sare.org/>
- Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Resources Management and Sustainability: <http://www.farrms.org/>; info@farrms.org or 701-486-3569
- USDA National Organic Program: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm>
- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service: [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org) or 888-551-4769
- Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society: [www.nebusag.org](http://www.nebusag.org)
- Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society: [www.npsas.org](http://www.npsas.org); npsas@drtel.net; 701-883-4304 (or 5205)

# Alternatives to Treated Fence Posts

The USDA National Organic Program Final Rule states “a producer must not use lumber treated with arsenate or other prohibited materials for new installations or replacement purposes in contact with soil or livestock” (§ 205.206(f)).

This restriction applies to lumber used for feed bunks, shelters, storage facilities, fence posts for pastures and holding areas, fence posts for any frames, trellises, etc. in fruit and vegetable production, or any other structure which will be in direct contact with organically produced or handled crops and livestock. It does not apply to fence posts or other struc-

tures which are isolated from production.

If you use treated lumber on any structure isolated from direct contact, be certain to document these instances in your production plan. In general, any already existing structures made with treated lumber are “grandfathered in,” and therefore will be allowed to remain; however a certification agency can require these be replaced if they find them to be a risk of contamination. Always be specific in your production plan of what lumber exists so you and your certifier can best determine if any changes must be made. Any replacements or

new facilities must follow the above regulation.

If replacements or new facilities are needed, there are a number of alternatives to treated wood for you to consider. Things to think about before choosing an alternative include: the effectiveness of the product, the life expectancy, the ease of installation, availability, cost, and safety.

### **Untreated Lumber:**

Your best bet with untreated lumber include: Redwood, Red Cedar, Black Locust or Bald Cypress. Some sources also say Oak and some White Cedar will hold up.

### Life expectancy of various species of untreated heartwood in ground contact

Durability	Species	Life expectancy of untreated heartwood (years)
<b>Very durable</b>	Eastern red cedar	30+
	Redwood	10-30
	Western red cedar	10-25
<b>Durable</b>	White and burr oak	10-15
	Northern white cedar	5-15
<b>Moderately durable</b>	Tamarack	8-10
	Red oak	6-8
	Douglas fir	4-6

(Chart from: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/housingandclothing/DK0897.html>)

### **Approved Treatments:**

Some treatments are available which do not contain arsenic or other prohibited materials. These include treatments with Borates, Ammoniacal Copper Citrate, Copper Azole, or Alkaline Copper Quaternary. With any of these, be certain to contact your certification agency **before** purchasing the lumber. Your certifier will, most likely, need all information, MSDS sheets, etc. of

what these treatments entail. Your certifier will then review the product to ensure it is within the scope of the National Organic Program. Failure to get this information to your agency beforehand could result in compromising the organic integrity of your operation.

### **Other Options:**

Plastic, steel, concrete, fiberglass, or concrete-filled PVC piping are some of

the other alternatives to building a safe and effective fence for your organic operation.

This article is only a brief description of available options. If you would like further details, contact your Customer Care Specialist, or contract ATTRA for a copy of “Organic Alternatives to Treated Lumber.” (<http://attra.ncat.org/>) or call: 800-346-9140.

## Export Assistance for North Dakota

Are you seeking ways to expand your market either domestically or internationally? Do you have target markets you'd like to get your product into but just need a little help in getting there? The ND Dept of Agriculture has two export assistance programs available to help you do just that!

The **Marketing Assistance Program (MAP)** exists to assist North Dakota food companies the opportunity to expand their markets domestically and internationally. The program will provide matching funds for travel and lodging expenses to increase sales of North Dakota food and agriculture. MAP is limited to food and food ingredient companies only.

The Pride of Dakota **Trade Show Assistance Program** is to provide Pride of Dakota companies with assistance to further develop existing

markets through trade show exhibiting by offering assistance to qualifying companies to help pay for expenses of exhibiting. This program is open to any qualifying company – food and non-food.

**The basic qualifying criteria for each of these programs is:** (*visit websites below for the details on how to apply and qualify*)

- Must be a Pride of Dakota member in good standing.
- The company must have the potential for creating or increasing sales of North Dakota products.
- The company must show ability to provide competent staff and other resources to ensure execution of project.

- The company must show willingness and ability to back up promotional activities with aggressive selling and adequate supplies.

- Must meet other detailed criteria listed on websites.

If you would like more information on how you can get help in expanding your markets and get funds assistance for marketing your product, call Stephanie Sinner with the ND Dept of Agriculture at 701-239-7211 or email her at [ssinner@nd.gov](mailto:ssinner@nd.gov).

**MAP** details and applications can be accessed at: <http://www.agdepartment.com/Programs/MktgAsstProg.html>

**Trade Show Assistance** info can be found at: [www.prideofdakota.com](http://www.prideofdakota.com), click on Members Corner

## New Certifications

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

### FVO Certifications:

Asociacion. de Productores Organicos. de Para el Desar  
 rollo Integral del Polochic - Grower Cooperative  
 Contract Coating Inc - Processor/Mfg  
 Cool Springs Organics - Family Farm  
 Eagle Nutritionals - Processor/Mfg  
 Hickory Meadows Organics - Family Farm  
 Keith Jackson - Family Farm  
 Kochergen Farms Composting, Inc. - Family Farm  
 Moola Gill Organic Farms - Family Farm  
 P & R Organics - Commercial Farm  
 Rocking S Farm - Family Farm  
 TNT Organic - Family Farm  
 Whistling Winds Farm - Family Farm  
 Wiedel Dairy - Family Farm

### NOP Certifications:

All Star Peanuts, LLC - Contract Service  
 Benny Teichroeb Farms - Family Farm  
 Biltong USA, Inc - Processor/Mfg

Bodegas Luzon, S.L. - Processor/Mfg  
 Danly Farms - Family Farm  
 Ens Farms, Ltd - Family Farm  
 Full Service Foods - Contract Processor  
 Generic Pharmaceutical Services, Inc - Contract Service  
 Guy/Mike Ferris - Family Farm  
 Hase Farms - Family Farm  
 Milo Buchholz - Family Farm  
 Old Orchard Farm - Family Farm  
 Private Label Foods - Contract Processor  
 Rozeboom Farm - Family Farm  
 Superior Almond Hulling, LP - Processor/Mfg  
 Sweet Ridge Organic Dairy - Family Farm  
 Thorson Produce - Family Farm  
 Three Barn Farm - Family Farm  
 Tim Nissen - Family Farm  
 Vick's Organic Veggies - Family Farm  
 Wiebe Ventures, Inc - Family Farm  
 Wilderness Family Naturals - Processor/Mfg

# Save Your Wallet - And the Environment - This Holiday Season

The holidays can be a very stressful time on our emotions and our pocket books. We search the aisles for inexpensive gifts, end up spending more than what we had planned and usually wind up spending it on items that will sink to the bottom of a toy box, or end up in a drawer or cupboard forgotten, if not in the trash.

This year, take a new approach to the gift giving season. Give friends and family something useful and from the heart that they will remember forever. Here are just some ideas of economic and environmentally friendly gifts you can give to loved ones.

**Green it Up** – give a house plant. This allows for many ideas from flowering plants, fruit bearing gifts, or maybe a revitalized pot you no longer use with some soil and seeds. Even children love plants and knowing they grew it themselves is an added bonus.

**Make it Tasty** – homemade treats are the way to go! Who doesn't enjoy homemade cookies, cakes, fudge, peanut brittle, jam or the likes? Go the extra mile in supporting our environment by purchasing organic and/or local ingredients for the goodies you make.

**Book Lovers** – why spend money on books when you have boxes in your basement of books you've read several times? Make a new tradition of exchanging books with friends during the holidays. This saves money, trees, and is a fun way to give and receive gifts.

**Organic Bath Salts** – Make your own bath items for loved ones. For example, sea salt mixed with some essential oils and packaged in glass pickle jar makes a wonderful scented gift which promotes recycling and organic bath products.

**Make it Yourself** – handmade crafts are truly from the heart. The time and effort you put into something handmade shows how much you care. These gifts can be little finger or hand puppets, crocheted blankets, embroidered dish towels, etc. Not only is this an inexpensive way to say you care, making sure you use recycled fabric or other items also makes it a great way to protect our environment.

**Wrap it Up Sustainably** – an interesting statistic I found recently claims that if every American family used recycled wrapping paper on just 3 gifts this year, the paper saved could cover 45,000 football fields (<http://www.brighthub.com/environment/green-living/articles/12414.aspx>).

That's a lot of paper getting thrown in the trash every year. So how do we keep this from happening? Here are some excellent ideas I'll be using this year:

- Wrap it up in fabric. Using spare cloth, dish towels or handkerchiefs, wrap up the gift. Use hair ties or other useful items to secure the cloth. Not only will your family member or friend be receiving the gift under the fabric, they also get the fabric and ties. Or use a handmade Christmas stocking to tuck the gift into.
- Reuse last year's paper. Although I haven't tried it, I have heard a light mist of water and a warm iron will take out wrinkles in previously used wrapping paper.
- Do you travel? Newspapers from other countries make for very interesting wrapping paper.
- Who doesn't like the comics? Use the comic section (or sports section or other section the recipient would prefer).

#### Other ideas:

- Gift cards for restaurants, massages, hair stylist, etc.
- Coupons for services you can provide such as babysitting, housecleaning or dinner at your house.
- Take them out to a movie, the theatre, their favorite restaurant, etc.
- Reuse greeting cards – turn your old Christmas cards into new cards, gift tags or crafts.
- Adopt a pet.
- Get them a membership to a CSA
- Donate to a foundation or give a gift to the less fortunate in their name

With a little time and creativity, you can make this holiday one everyone will remember with pride and joy for years to come. Don't hurt your wallet or the Earth to show someone how much you care.



# Canada's Organic Product Regulations

## Implementation date postponed until June 30, 2009

The *Organic Products Regulations* (the Regulations) are being amended to extend their coming-into-force date, currently set at December 14, 2008. This amendment will respond to industry stakeholders' request to extend the transition period of the Regulations, originally scheduled to end on December 14, 2008, to June 30, 2009.

There are significant changes in scope, requirements, and intent in the revision with an overall improvement in clarity and transparency. Changes include:

### A. Scope.

The OPR now explicitly limit their scope to food and beverages for humans, feed for livestock, and the cultivation of plants for the above. Non-food, emerging and sectors which fall beyond the authority of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will not be subject to the regulation for the time being. Therefore, aquaculture, personal care products, textiles and other such sectors will continue to be able to make verifiable market claims based on their third-party organic certification.

### B. References to ISO guidelines.

The new OPR make explicit references to ISO 17011 (for accreditation) and to ISO 65 (for certification) as guidelines for the relevant bodies of the Canadian Organic Regime.

### C. Import and Export criteria.

The new OPR clarify the extent to which products can come into the country and be marketed as organic, or exported to another country. The options include:

- certification to the Canadian standard by an accredited certifying body; or

- certification according to another standard deemed equivalent to the Canadian organic standard through a country-to-country agreement.

The import requirements in the 2006 OPR which called for a "letter of attestation" to accompany all shipments of organic goods no longer appears. Instead, companies must be available to prove at all times that their products meet all standards and regulatory requirements.

### D. Labeling and the new organic logo

The requirement to label products as "imported" or "product of X" if not a Canadian product has been retained.

A new labeling requirement will make bilingual organic claims mandatory - "Organic/ Biologique".

The new OPR also designates and protects for "organic" products (over 95% organic ingredients) the following phrases on packaging and in advertising: "organic", "organically grown", "organically raised", "organically produced" as well as similar phrases and phonetic variants.

For more information, please visit: <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/partII/2008/20080917/html/sor279-e.html>



## Welcome to the Family



ICS would like to introduce everyone to our new Customer Care Team Coordinator – Tessa Tripp. Tessa started working with International Certification Services, Inc on July 31, 2008, assisting with data entry, client questions, and a myriad of other responsibilities.

Tessa attended North Dakota State University and Dickinson University, and brings with her an educational background in Crop and Weed Science and Natural Resources Management. Before starting at ICS, she interned with Natural Resources Conservation Service of North Dakota.

Raised on a family farm five miles northeast of Tappen, ND, Tessa now lives in Pettibone, ND with her husband of one month and her two dogs, Bruiser and Scooter. During her spare time, Tessa enjoys hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and just spending time outdoors.

Welcome to our family, Tessa!

## Group urges Obama to Pick Sustainable Food Experts to Run USDA

*Center for Food Safety says agency's next leader to have fewer corporate ties, deeper focus on sustainable ag*

by Sustainable Food News  
December 3, 2008

The Center for Food Safety (CFS) Tuesday urged President-elect Obama to consider just a handful of sustainable food advocates as candidates for Secretary and Undersecretaries of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), including organic expert Jim Riddle heading up the agency's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which runs the nation's organic regulations.

CFS sent a letter to Obama outlining its recommendations, and contends that substantial changes are needed to turn around the poorly-run USDA, given the Bush Administration's history of undermining food safety agencies and promoting big agriculture at the expense of mid-sized and small family farmers.

"We urge the new Obama Administration to elevate food safety to the top of the government's list of priorities and require those agencies charged with regulating our nation's food supply to fortify food and farm policies so that they are truly protective of human health, worker safety, family farmers, animal welfare, the environment, and local economies," said Andrew Kimbrell, founder and executive director of CFS, in the letter.

CFS recommends the following candidates for the post of USDA Secretary and Undersecretaries:

- Jim Riddle, Coordinator for Organic Outreach at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center, has played a pivotal role in the progress of the modern organic agricultural movement and industry. Riddle was founding chair of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association, where he trained organic inspectors and certifiers nationally and internationally. He chaired the National Organic Standards Board, advising USDA on organic agriculture policy, and received the USDA Certificate of Appreciation. As a leading proponent for local food systems, Riddle's appointment will give small and mid-sized farmers a much-needed voice on national agriculture pol-

icy and his experience working in all aspects of the organic industry makes him an ideal candidate to head the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which oversees the National Organic Program;

- Tim LaSalle, CEO of Rodale Institute, a 60-year-old organization dedicated to researching and educating farmers and consumers about sustainable agriculture, was a full professor at Cal Poly, where he taught dairy science and served as the president and CEO of California's Agriculture Education Foundation. While at Cal Poly, LaSalle started and operated a dairy near Templeton, California which has championed organic agriculture as a solution towards mitigating climate change, improving nutrition in food, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. His knowledge of using organic farming to lessen impacts of global warming would bring revolutionary change to the USDA;

- Kathleen Merrigan, Ph.D., Director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program at the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, is a former representative on the National Organic Standards Board and has served as senior science and technology advisor to the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee. She helped usher in the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 which mandated the implementation of national organic standards and a program of federal organic certification. Her academic and public policy experience in the sustainable agriculture arena makes her an ideal choice for Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at USDA;

- Tom Buis, President of the National Farmers Union (NFU), has ushered in policies very much in line with the President-elect's platform on rural issues. NFU, the nation's second-largest farm organization, has a long history of putting the needs of small and mid-sized farmers first, and opposing the concentration of agriculture operations that can hurt all farmers. He would bring years of farm policy experience to USDA, with a refreshing focus on sustainability;

- Dr. John Boyd, Founder and President of the National Black Farmers Association, is a fourth-generation farmer

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*Organic farming has been shown to provide major benefits for wildlife and the wider environment. The best that can be said about genetically engineered crops is that they will now be monitored to see how much damage they cause. (Prince Charles)*

## Group urges Obama to Pick Sustainable Food Experts to Run USDA (cont.)

*(Continued from page 7)*

and a civil-rights leader. Boyd could bring a breath of fresh, small-farm air to an agency long beholden to big business. Given the GAO's report this year criticizing USDA for its long-standing civil rights abuses, and Boyd's tenacity in seeking justice for farmers discriminated against by the agency, his civil rights leadership and experience with small-scale and minority farmers could be key in turning this agency around;

- Mark Ritchie, Minnesota Secretary of State, previously worked in Minnesota's Department of Agriculture addressing the economic crisis facing family farmers and rural communities and as president of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. His leadership of the National Voice, a coalition of more than two thousand community-based organizations from across the country, resulted in registration of over five million new voters nationwide, making the effort one of the largest non-partisan voter mobilizations in our history. Ritchie would be a catalyst for fostering long-term economic and environmental sustainability at USDA.

CFS contends that several reported candidates for USDA leadership will only offer the administration more of the same lax regulatory approaches and fail to bring meaningful change to the U.S. food system. CFS opposes the following:

- Former Texas congressman and "Big Ag" lobbyist Charles

Stenholm. After being defeated for reelection, Stenholm became a prominent lobbyist for the horse meat industry and a major opponent of the Horse Slaughter Prohibition Bill that passed the U.S. House. The slaughter of horses is opposed by an overwhelming majority of the American public, and Stenholm's apparent support for the industry shows just how out of step he is with Americans;

- Dennis Wolff. As Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary, Wolff was relentless in his support of an unpopular ban on the labeling of dairy products produced without the use of genetically engineered, recombinant bovine growth hormone (rbGH) in the state. Wolff also has a long history of pushing the "Big Ag" agenda in his state. With Wolff's support, Pennsylvania's ACRE initiative ultimately preempted local governments from putting any agricultural regulations in place stronger than the lax state regulations, including those on CAFO placement and restrictions, and sewage sludge restrictions, all of which strips local communities' control over their own health, environment, and economy;

- Rep. Collin Peterson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. Despite his decent work on wilderness and animal welfare, Peterson's failure to lead meaningful change in farm subsidies and other important provisions in the recent Farm Bill does not bode well for his ability to make the tough decisions needed to reinvigorate the USDA.

(<http://www.sustainablefoodnews.com/index.php>)