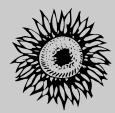
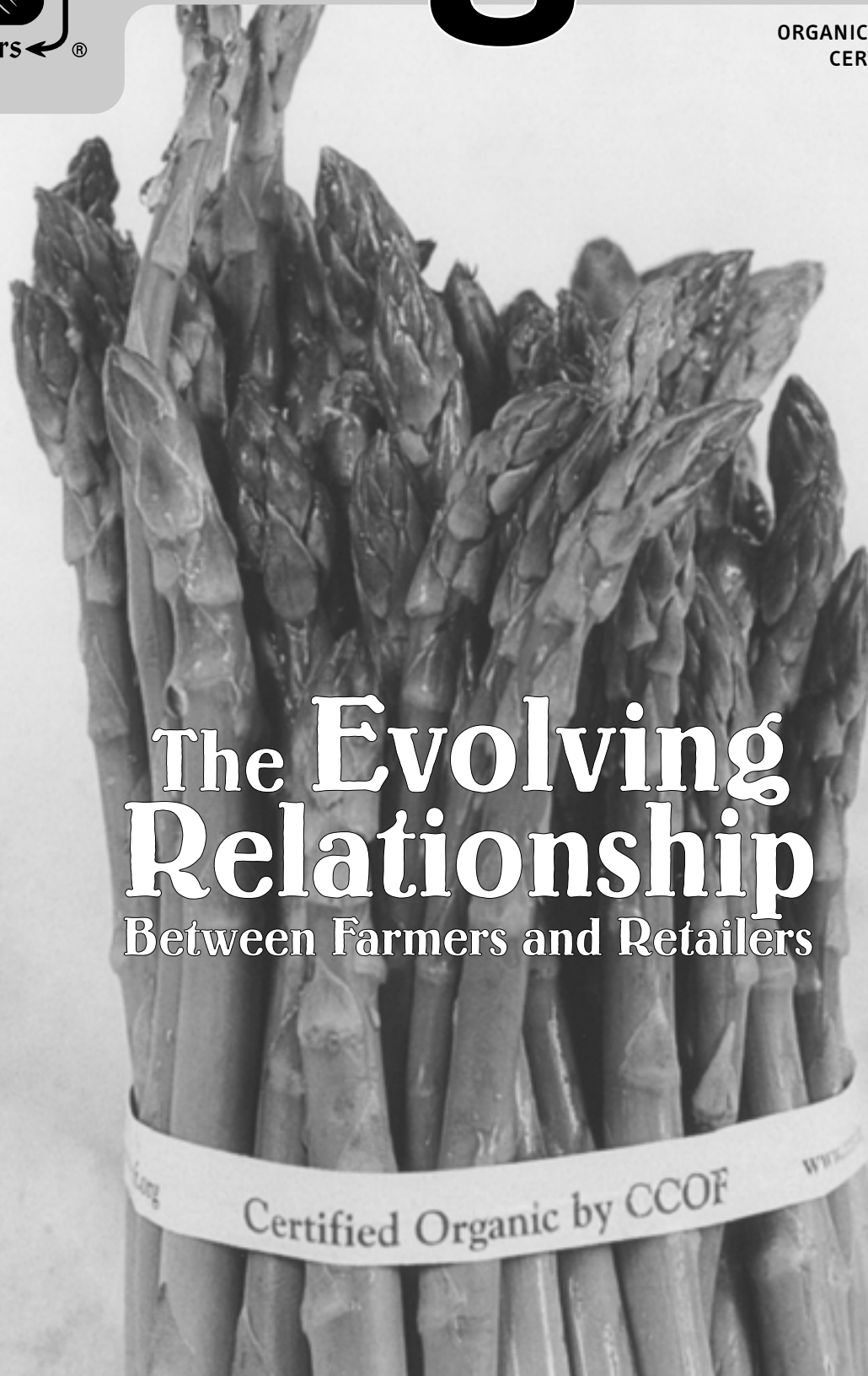


SPRING 2005



CERTIFIED organic

ORGANIC NEWS, EVENTS AND
CERTIFICATION UPDATES



Industrial Hemp
Legislation

Glossy Paper?
Still recycled

Wine Label
Update

Movie Reviews

The Evolving Relationship Between Farmers and Retailers

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Glossy Paper?? What gives?

During production of this magazine, we agonized over our paper choices. We're committed to using a high level of recycled content while maintaining a professional and attractive appearance. Within our cost and quality parameters, this glossy paper was the best value and had the highest recycled content we could find. This paper is processed without chlorine and contains 80% recycled content, 40% of which is post-consumer (twice the level of its nearest competitor). That's 8 trees, 4,852 gallons of Water and 6 Million BTUs of energy saved. We hope you enjoy this new look and our continued support of environmentally friendly paper. More info? www.newleafpaper.com.

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The “Graying” of Organic

BY VANESSA BOGENHOLM
OWNER VB FARMS AND CCOF BOARD CHAIR

Quick, don't think about it — A friend says “Hey, you're an organic farmer right? What does organic mean?” What is your response in that 20-second sound bite that people will remember??



Here are some answers:

CCOF website: Organic food is produced without conventional pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation. That's correct, but now you will spend the next hour 1) defining conventional pesticides, and 2) defining synthetic because even that Phytamin has to be made; it doesn't come naturally in a liquid form! Or, can we even mention Chilean Nitrate?

Or, you can say:

Products grown or processed in accordance with the National Organic Program of the USDA or the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 passed by our Federal Congress (then hand them the 20 pages of the act or the hundreds of pages we have now accumulated to define the NOP that we will continue to define long after I retire).

Or...

Give them the dictionary definition: Organic—Of or designating carbon compounds. Of, relating to, or derived from living organisms. Of, marked by, or involving the use of fertilizers or pesticides that are strictly of animal or vegetable origin. Raised or conducted without the use of drugs, hormones, or synthetic chemicals. Simple, healthful, and close to nature.

Go into a home supply store and see the word “organic” on fertilizer bags (urea) that we would never consider

“organic” because they contain carbon, so they can use the term and confuse the consumer. Tell your friend minerals are also allowed because they are on the National Organic List. And, oh yes, we use some drugs on organic chickens, especially because we haven't figured out a way for large producers to make organic chickens without them.

So now the original guy who asked you has lost interest and will not see a reason for paying that price premium. And, you're just frustrated because you know in your heart what you meant.

As I sat in the last National Organic Standards Board meeting, I thought, “What have we done to ourselves?” In that meeting were about 100 leaders of the organic industry, and none of us agree on what “organic” is. So, how is the consumer going to understand this? And, why are lawyers and judges, and not us, deciding what “organic” is? Let's go back 30 years to when CCOF began. Most of those farmers, and many like them around the world, will tell you, “I wanted to farm in a way that was safe for my family and the environment and produced a healthy product for the consumer.” I think we really need to go back to this way of thinking for “organic.” Many times I find myself on the farm, farming by the recipe of the OMRI list, and forget about why I am doing this in the first place.

When someone today asks me what organic means, I tell them a pregnant woman can stand on my farm without incurring any injury to herself or her baby by coming in contact with my products, soil or irrigation water. Would they want to do that on a conventional farm with the use of Methyl Bromide and petroleum-based fertilizers?

We, as an industry, need to define “organic” globally and stop hiring lawyers to analyze every word we use and get back to why most of us are in this business – a safe working environment producing a safe food supply without damaging the environment.

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What's New with your CCOF

2005 Organic Directory

The 2005 CCOF Organic Directory is out! If you haven't received a copy of the 2005 organic directory, please contact us for a copy or visit the CCOF store online at www.ccof.org.

The organic directory has received tremendous interest this year and will be distributed throughout 2005 to consumers, organic buyers, chefs, media, and others.



New Website

Visit the newly redesigned CCOF website!

Our new website is designed to make it easier for you to find what you're looking for. Whether it's forms, information, classifieds, or something else, the CCOF website offers a wide range of services to CCOF's clients, the organic industry and the public. For clients, we've built a "frequently used forms" area and updated our online directory so buyers can find you and your products. We maintain a calendar of events associated with organics and maintain classifieds that advertise everything from land to equipment and apprenticeships. Remember that ads are free to CCOF clients! Visit www.ccof.org to check it out and email jake@ccof.org with your suggestions and comments.

Industrial Hemp

On February 23rd Assemblyman Mark Leno (13th District) introduced a landmark bill to legalize and regulate the production of industrial hemp in California. CCOF has formally supported this bill because of the important economic benefits it represents for California's organic farmers. Currently, the majority of food-grade hemp is grown in Canada and processed in California for sale in the United States.

Have you received an email from CCOF lately?

If you're a client or supporting member and you haven't received an email from CCOF lately, your spam software or email server is probably blocking our messages, or we don't have your correct email address. Please send an email to ccof@ccof.org to ensure we have the correct email address. Include your name and company, and we'll make sure to keep you in the loop. You can also check the email address we have on file during your annual inspection.

CCOF is aware of companies ready to provide production contracts to California growers and wants to see this revenue stay in the state to benefit our clients, organic consumers, and the U.S. organic marketplace through less expensive products and increased availability. As an important potential rotation crop and significant revenue source for field crop growers, industrial hemp is a huge opportunity for organics in California. To learn more about CCOF's position on this issue and background on the bill, AB 1147, visit www.ccof.org and click on "Industrial Hemp" under the "Political Advocacy" tab. Please note that as this bill goes to hearings, it will need your support. Please contact Jake Lewin at jake@ccof.org or 831-423-2263, ext. 21, to participate in media events and legislative hearings.





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So, You Say You Want an Evolution

By MARK MULCAHY

Whether you have been farming organically for 20 years or are just getting started, it isn't hard to recognize that the organic industry has been growing. I'm sure if you have been farming for a while, you have definitely felt the impact on your farm...but every day new studies are being released that back it up. This is true not just in our country but also around the world. According to a new study entitled "The World of Organic Agriculture – Statistics and Emerging Trends 2005" by The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), and the Foundation Ecology & Farming (SÖL, Germany), global farmland under organic management increased almost 10% in 2004, meaning there are currently more than 26 million hectares (a hectare is approximately 2.471 acres) of farmland are under organic management worldwide. This equates to two million hectares more than in the previous year. In the US there were about 557,000 acres of organic cropland in production in the United States in 1994, and that number had grown to 1.3 million by

2001 according to the U.S.D.A.

What does that break down to in dollars? According to the Nutrition Business Journal, sales of organic foods grew more than 20 percent to \$10.4 billion in 2003. NBJ predicts organic food sales will almost double again to \$16 billion by 2006 with an annual average growth rate of 18 percent forecasted for 2004-2008.

How much does this directly affect the average grower? Quite a bit, when you consider the fact that fresh produce sales contributed over 40 percent to that total figure. Competition for the organic consumer dollar is only going to increase, so knowing who your organic customers are and how to attract them is key to maintaining or increasing your market share.

As with growth in any market, the organic customer is changing too. Recent surveys show that the next wave of growth will no longer come from the core customer that fueled the increase before, but from the mainstream consumer.

While this report focused on retail sales, the farmer's market customer is changing as well.

Bellevue, Wash.-based The Hartman Group breaks the organics-buying constituency into three groups. Knowing what's important to each segment can give you the marketing edge to succeed.

Periphery. These folks like the organic image and are beginning to buy organic products, but they lack knowledge. They may think "natural" equals "organic." They prize price and convenience over health and nutrition concerns. Friends influence them more than environmental issues do, and they shop in fewer channels.

Mid-level. These customers have more awareness and knowledge about organics, are focused on health and environmental concerns, and may purchase from grassroots companies. However, price and convenience are still primary factors. This group has the highest growth potential as its members' knowledge about organics increases. They make most of their purchases in the grocery store channel.

Core. This group has a greater commitment to the organic lifestyle. Its members are highly motivated by health and nutrition; price is a secondary concern. They seek stores with knowledgeable salespeople. They might shop multiple channels to find the products they want.

So where does that leave today's organic farmer in the retail marketplace?

It leaves them with an opportunity to reevaluate their markets, their products, their relationships, and the overall direction of the organic farm.

CCOF grower John Lagier of Lagier Ranches, with 120 acres of cherries, almonds, table grapes, citrus, berries, and sweet corn in Escalon, California, did just that 5 years ago. John looked at the perishability of the cane berries



he grew and realized that processing could eliminate some of the loss associated with his crop. And the Lagier Ranch jars of Marion Blackberry, Boysenberry, and Bing Cherry Organic Fruit Spreads were born. This not only led to having more products to sell in his slow season

but to the evaluation of other products in the market as well.

He expanded his almond products from raw almonds to 3 flavors of roasted flavored almonds—Cinnamon, Tamari, and Mandarin--when he recognized that there were not many in the market place. Lagier also created a line of Roasted Organic Almond Butters (Smooth and Crunchy).

And as if this weren't enough, he has now added fresh

pies to his products.

He started with a certified organic pie that uses canola oil and has a 40% whole-wheat crust. This satisfied the health-conscious customers who wanted a wholesome pie but who didn't want the graininess of 100% whole wheat.

He then created a traditional crust pie, which includes all sustainably grown ingredients but is not certified. For this pie, he uses palm fruit oil and a non-organic non-GMO cornstarch, which gives him the tender flaky crust that many mainstream customers prefer – thus covering both ends of the market. Generally he will start a first time customer out with the traditional pie and then move them over to the organic, most often with very positive results.

John's fresh produce and processed products are distributed all over Northern California. Some distribution he handles himself – he still works the farmers market and takes care of stores he sells direct to like Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op, Berkeley & El Cerrito Natural, and Rainbow Grocery – while he uses the service of other distributors to handle more traditional accounts and a group of stores in Santa Cruz.

Working both the direct and retail markets with fresh and processed items allows John exposure to a wider range of customers. It also creates label recognition in other areas of a store, which can benefit long-term sales.

John Lagier's tips for staying healthy in the marketplace

1. Have a good product that stands out
2. Be committed—to the work and financially
3. Do lots of demos
4. Get exposure—do table tops and trade shows
5. Know your market

On the other hand, it isn't always as much about processing or making new products as it is looking at what you have, how it's packaged, and how it can help you sell more products in the retail environment.

Tom & Denesse Willey of T&D Willey farms (who have been farming since 1980 and certified organic by CCOF since 1987 and who farm 75 acres in the Central San Joaquin Valley in Madera, California) did just that.

When the Willeys started growing their famous Bloomsdale spinach several years ago, retail package size varied from 6 oz. to 1 lb. So, Denesse decided to package her spinach in a 10 oz. bag based on her own personal use. 10 oz. was the right amount to make a family spinach salad or enough to make a decent portion when cooked. Years later, when she was ready to order new bags, she called her distributors and asked about changes in the market place as far as bags were concerned. That's when she



Evolution continued on page 18

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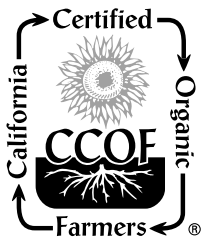
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Certification News

Updates, information, and tips for CCOF clients and members.

Spring 2005

Welcome

Welcome to *Certification News*, a permanent section of *Certified Organic* – the CCOF magazine that provides important standards and certification updates in one easy to find location. Look to this section for information about changes to both organic standards and CCOF procedures and policies. Whether you're an organic producer, processor, livestock operation or an affiliated business, this section will keep you informed about materials, regulatory changes and organic news at the Federal and State levels. We will also include organic certification and information about maintaining organic certification – truly *Certification News* you can use.

Certification Update

Information to make your life easier...

Product Labels

To avoid complications for you, certified operations that label product as “organic” must submit those labels to CCOF for approval before printing and using those labels on product. NOP regulations are very specific about the wording that must appear on a label. Please contact us as soon as possible in the label design process so that we can help you produce compliant labels.

Printed labels that do not comply with the regulation may have to be destroyed, and that's just a waste of your time and money. Be aware that USDA personnel and consumers are on the lookout for labels that do not comply with the regulation. We want to help ensure that your labels are compliant so that you can continue to use them.

Wine labels

The Tax and Tariff Bureau (TTB) – formerly the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms – is now sending all wine and alcoholic beverage labels to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) for approval. The USDA staff is strictly enforcing NOP regulations regarding labeling on all wine, beer, and other alcoholic beverages. Prior to implementation of the NOP, the TTB had final approval for wine labeling. Thus, many

producers had labels previously approved that currently do not fully meet the NOP regulations.

TTB and NOP staffs are now communicating regarding all labels marked organic. As a result, many wine labels have been rejected. We know it's frustrating when you spend many weeks or months assembling the documentation for a wine label – only to have it rejected. In some cases, NOP staff contacts CCOF when there is a problem and will discuss the issue with CCOF. Unfortunately, it's too late for us to fix it at that point. CCOF is here to help, so remember to submit your labels to us for review prior to submitting the labels to the TTB.

CCOF has sent a notice to all our certified vineyard and wine producers describing the process they should follow to get approval for a label that makes an organic claim. This applies to all organic claims – even if the claim is made in the “romance” language on a back label.

If you did not receive a copy of the CCOF notice on wine labels and would like a copy, please contact any certification staff member or email us at ccof@ccof.org.

Updating your Organic System Plan (OSP)

If you are adding new organic products, facilities,
Certification Update continued on next page

NOSB Meeting Brief

Excerpt from the report from the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met in Washington, DC, from February 28 to March 3.

Materials

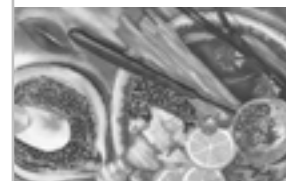
The NOSB recommended adding ferric phosphate (the active ingredient in SLUGGO) to the National List as a molluscicide.

Renew the listing of synthetic DL-methionine as a feed additive for poultry until October 2008.

New NOSB member

Congratulations to Gerald Davis, a CCOF Certified producer now an NOSB member!

NOSB continued on next page



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NOSB continued from previous page

Dairy Animal Access to Pasture

The NOSB unanimously recommended changing the phrase 'stage of production' to 'stage of life' in the pasture requirement section of the Rule. The NOSB also recommended that the Rule be changed to make it clear that ruminant animals are required to graze pasture. Lactation cannot be considered a stage of production to deny grazing. Finally, on the pasture issue, the NOSB recommended a guidance that organic dairy cows should receive a minimum of 30% dry matter on a daily basis for a growing season of at least 120 days. Temporary confinement is permitted only under occasional well-defined conditions, such as inclement weather or to protect the health, safety, or well-being of animals. The NOSB struggled with a legally defined growing season and is recommending that it be based on the Natural Resources Conservation Service best management practices for grazing in each county.

Made With Organic

The NOSB recommended a rule change in the product composition section of the rule to forbid the use of non-organic sources of an ingredient labeled as 'made with organic [specific ingredients]'.
Next meeting was tentatively scheduled for August 16-18.

Certification Update continued from previous page or acreage to your operation, please notify CCOF of those changes. Changes to the OSP should be submitted to the Santa Cruz office so that we can review them prior to the inspection. Review of the OSP prior to inspection will allow potential problems to be identified and resolved before the inspection – saving you time and frustration.

Adding acreage: CCOF office staff can often identify additional documentation that is needed prior to inspection, such as land history information. While an inspector will verify the physical aspects of the new parcel, they will not be able to approve all the land history documentation.

New processed products: CCOF office staff can help identify issues related to non-organic ingredients, labels, and the calculation of organic percentage. The inspector may not be able to verify all of this information on site.

CCOF 2005 Renewals.

CCOF clients who renew in 2005 should note that our renewal packets have been simplified! January renewals have been completed, and those of you who renew in April and July should be pleasantly surprised at the ease of the renewal paperwork. A couple of points:

- If you have made changes to your operation, you may want to contact the Santa Cruz office staff to ensure that you submit the required information. The renewal documentation will not list all your parcels and products, as it previously did.

- CCOF is required to provide an "estimate" for annual certification costs. This estimate is included on the renewal form, but it is not the amount you pay at this time, and it does not match the invoice. Just pay the amount on the INVOICE. The estimate includes the projected cost of the inspection and is only an estimate. ☞

COPAC Update

The California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC) meets every couple of months and advises the California Secretary of Agriculture and the State Organic Program (SOP) on organic issues in California. As a service to our readers, CCOF actively participates in COPAC and reports on their meetings in this publication.

Last meetings – February 2, 2005, in Sacramento and March 7, 2005, in Salinas.

Over the last several months, several new members have been named to COPAC. They include agricultural economics re-

searcher and CCOF Certification Services, LLC Management Committee Member Karen Klonsky, James Rickert, Jr. of CCOF certified Prather Ranch, and New Hope Natural Media's organic program manager Scott Silverman.

Of note, the chairperson position has transferred to long-time organic handler representative Joe Hall of Terravita Organics. But, little else has occurred in the committee in recent months. COPAC has held several listening sessions with different segments of the organic industry in California.

These sessions are meant to engage stakehold-

CCOF continued on page 14



CCOF staff at the recent Natural Products Expo West tradeshow with Callie Tai, CEO of Malaysian retailer Blue Oasis (pictured from left, Callie Tai, Janning Kennedy, Jake Lewin, and Ellie Downing).

We want to include you. Send us pictures of products, logos and life around your organic business. Send photos and logos to jake@ccof.org or Attn: Jake Lewin, CCOF, 1115 Mission St. Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

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www.ccof.org

Visit the CCOF website to learn more about certification, membership and organics.

COPAC continued from page 12

ers in California's organic marketplace regarding implementation of the National Organic Program and activities of the SOP.

There will reportedly be a farmer and/or consumer listening session at the May 10 Sacramento meeting. CCOF strongly recommends that organic companies make their views heard.

An area likely to elicit comments is the budgetary and activity changes under consideration at COPAC. Currently, the SOP is collecting more revenue than it spends on an annual basis. While it is entirely likely that the SOP will increase its spending as its appeals, enforcement and other

roles are implemented further, there currently exists approximately \$500,000 in reserve funds at the SOP. This is likely to increase unless the SOP provides additional services or reduces the amount of income it collects from registrations.

While the process of changing spending patterns and priorities may be quite lengthy, CCOF clients and others are encouraged make their views heard at this critical time. Currently, COPAC is considering a variety of options ranging from registration fee reductions, additional certification cost share plans, increased enforcement activities, and new training initiatives aimed at various segments of the industry from inspectors to ag commissioners. ☞



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programs

CCOF Programs Update

For more information about CCOF programs and upcoming events, visit the programs and calendar sections of www.ccof.org.

Sustainable Agriculture Crop Advisors Conferences

This past December, CCOF and the Cal Poly Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium (SARC) presented the 3rd annual Sustainable Agriculture Pest Control Advisor (PCA) conference in San Luis Obispo. The event was a huge success and featured presentations from renowned agronomist Gary Zimmer and CCOF's Brian McElroy and Jake Lewin. About 100 PCAs, growers and others attended the conference.

CCOF and SARC are already scheduling a follow up to this event on December 2 and 3, 2005, in San Luis Obispo. The conference will feature updates on organic standards, materials issues. Educations units, including Laws & Regulations units, will be applied for. If you would like to attend this year, call Jake at 831-423-2263, ext.21, Or email jake@ccof.org.

Sponsorships are still available for businesses interested in gaining additional exposure at the event.

COPES - Certified Organic Products Export Strategy, California

The COPES program is winding up its final year of funding and is enjoying tremendous success. The program has generated approximately \$2 million in organic export sales for the State of California – over four times the value of the original two-year grant. Most recently, the program implemented two trade missions. One brought California organic companies to the largest food show in Asia – Foodex Japan. The other trade mission brought eight foreign buyers to the Natural Products Expo West show in Anaheim, California, between March 17 and 20. One-on-one meetings were arranged with potential trade partners, and we look forward to continued success for the program.

Expect another COPES seminar in the Davis, California area in May 2005. Visit www.copes-ca.org for more info.



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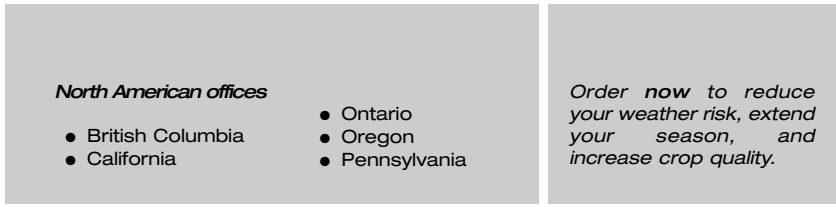


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movie reviews

The Real Dirt on Farmer John

Farmer John, the “star” of the film, grows up on an idyllic farm with his hard-working farmer father, loving mother, and two older sisters. When his father passes away, the farm duties fall to young Farmer John. Sadly, he has to sell off parts of the farm to survive. His mother’s life revolves around the roadside stand outside her home where she sells her son’s crops. She begs Farmer John to keep the farm so that she can continue to operate the stand. “What else would I do, John?” she asks him.

Not long afterward, the farm becomes a commune with hippies roaming here and there. They attempt to revive the farm and are successful – for awhile. Soon, Farmer John finds himself alone again and about to lose the farm. His dying mother’s wish is that he keep the farm running.

Serendipitously, he is approached by a young couple seeking a farmer with whom they can start an organic community supported agriculture (CSA) program. He scoffs at their idea, and they part ways. After months of watching the farm continue to wither and die, Farmer John thinks again about the CSA. It’s a crazy idea, but he figures it’s worth a try.

A must-see for anyone interested in learning about where their food comes from. Visit Farmer John’s website at www.angelicorganics.com.

The Future of Food

As the name implies, this film follows the story of what some people believe is the future of food, namely genetic engineering.



In the film, we meet Percy Schmeiser and other farmers who have faced the wrath of Monsanto, the multinational seed and pesticide giant that is driving the GMO food movement while successfully suing dozens of small farmers.

Filmmaker Deborah Koons Garcia requested interviews with representatives at Monsanto. She did not receive a response.

The Future of Food has been shown in a variety of venues, so watch for it at a location near you. For more information, visit www.thefutureoffood.com.

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Evolution continued from page 9

learned that 8 oz bags had become the common size for spinach. So she switched to the new bag size, and her sales almost doubled.

That wasn't the only product with which they found success through change. Though well-known in the marketplace for their quality hot peppers, they recognized that smaller retailers had a hard time selling 10 lbs. of specialty hot peppers like Habañeros, Serranos, or Poblanos.

Not only was it difficult to sell that amount, but also the traditional size box meant retailers were restricted to a smaller selection of peppers if they didn't want to lose profit margin to shrink in their departments. So the Willeys came up with the Spicy pepper family, which included five to six varieties of specialty peppers, divided into sections in the same size box. This allowed the retailer to offer more variety, texture, and flavors in amounts they could actually sell.

Another part of the fresh picture is knowing your product. Your product quality may be different in texture and flavor with the changing of the seasons. Even with the most diligent post harvest standards, things can change in your product and in your retail customers' minds. The Willeys realized this about their bunched carrots during the wetter season. Even though they were more juicy, they were also more prone to shatter, which meant the retailer may not have been getting the full amount of product that they intended to buy. So, they started adding a 25th bunch of carrots to their box for good measure. Whether it's said or not, it is appreciated.

Denese's tips for staying healthy in the marketplace

1. Under commit and over achieve
2. Hunger is the best sauce (your product is always more desirable when you have less than you frequently sell)
3. Don't be caught flat footed (pay attention to the fluidity of the marketplace)
4. Know your buyers

This leads us to your retail relationships. How much time do you spend cultivating them? Remember, it's a two-way street. And, you may have to continually introduce and re-educate buyers to the reasons why you have the best product for them and why it is the best value for their customers. If the manager or buyer doesn't request a winter meeting to discuss how the relationship is going, request it yourself. It serves you to know what works or doesn't work. Be interested in the retailer and their business. How are they doing? One of the areas I commonly work on with retailers and growers is communication and understanding each other's worlds. The more you know about how and why things work in the retail world and vice versa, the better for both of you. Make a list of what you don't know, and ask them to do the same.

You can start with the one below:

Understanding the world of retailing

- Pricing
- Buying - why, how, when
- Storage
- Ripeness, size, packing, post harvest

Key Points for Retail Contacts

1. Give examples: Taste tests work wonders! They help a produce or deli manager make a decision in your favor. Ask if they will allow a tasting table for customers.
2. Be reliable: Be very reliable on product quality. The store has to depend on you and your consistency.
3. Create easy and clear invoice procedures: Make it clear for the user and for yourself. Keep it as simple as possible.
4. Keep clients current on your procedures: Keep store managers and other clients up-to-date on your seasonality and availability, or on anything happening at your farm that might influence your product or delivery schedule.
5. Ask questions: Show an interest in the retailer's business—how it's going, what kinds of goals they have, and what their mission is.
6. Help them out: Massage their egos (without going overboard). Give compliments. Make the relationship positive.
7. Show up regularly: Consistency and reliability go a long way in building trust.
8. Do a monthly newsletter: Farms with CSAs do this with their CSA customers. Do the same for retail or restaurant customers. It will keep them involved and connected to your farming operation. You want them to feel as though they belong and are invested!
9. Do call backs to check on quality satisfaction: This is important not only from the point of view of quality, but of business relationships. It will let the buyer know that you are committed to high quality and serious about keeping up the arrangement.
10. Write your own mission statement: You might want to use it sometime, and it's good exercise for clarifying your essential goals.
11. Commitment, commitment, commitment for both your product and your service.

- Receiving
- Promotion materials
- The need for guidelines and contracts
- Time management
- In-store farmer days

Understanding the world of farming

- Pricing
- Costs
- Promotional materials
- The need for guidelines and contracts
- What it takes to get food to the market
- Delivery
- Post-harvest handling
- Farm tours

For example, do you know why a produce manager needs to charge what they do? Do they know why you need to get the price that you are asking for?

Most often the answer is no!

The average natural foods produce manager works on a 35 to 40% margin, which means that for every dollar they make, 60 to 65 cents goes to cost of goods (your product), 4 to 6 cents goes to shrink or loss, and 8 to 10 cents goes to labor. Some departments pay up to 1% for packaging. That leaves around 19 cents to pay for the entire overhead. Taking into consideration lighting, refrigeration,



maintenance, and other departments that don't produce income (such as cashiers, etc.), at the end of the dollar they end up with about 2 to 4 cents profit. If you're trying to sell to a deli, they run at lower costs of goods but a much higher labor cost. If you haven't broken down your dollar, it may be helpful when having price discussions.

Once you've developed these relationships, you'll find that often there are produce kings or queens like Bert Brown of New Leaf Community Market in Felton, Andru Moshe of Sacramento Natural Foods Coop, or Libby Uhuru of Ukiah Natural Foods. You'll also find others who are more than willing to work with you, who value quality, and are often willing to pay more for the value that goes beyond the box and deeper into the farm.

Lastly, be willing to help with the consumer education that stores often don't have the time or resources to do.

Remember that the "mid-level" shopper, where the next round of growth will come from, likes to know about their food but prefers to hear the facts that are easy to digest. Research shows that mid-level shoppers prefer a more positive message – something that shows how their purchases can make a positive impact. They also want to buy from the sensual experience, so it's good to emphasize attributes like how your farming techniques make the food more flavorful, or how the taste nuances improve due to the chilly mountain nights of your region.

If you are going to provide information, make it easy to read and compact enough that it can fit on a sign that can be placed near your product.

Even better, do an in-store demo. Research shows that customers read more information when it is connected with a sample. Plus, demos work for selling your product. Just look some of these results:

- If you demo a product, you can sell 5 times more than in a normal day.
- If you put your product on sale as well, you can sell 10 times more.
- If you take the time to create a coupon and have it on hand, you can sell 20 times more...all while educating your new and future customers.

If you are reluctant to offer your product for less, look at it this way: If you sell 10-20 lb. boxes of tomatoes for \$2.00/lb., you make \$400; if you sell 30-20 lb. boxes of the same for \$1.50/lb., you make \$900. And for the "periphery" customers, it may be the nudge that gets them hooked.

While many of these ideas are common practice for farmers, it isn't uncommon to slack off, especially when things are going well. But this is precisely when you should be looking at these ideas, as you may find that the market is changing faster than you think. I once did a market tour with a well-known high quality grower who was quite confident that they had the best carrots in the market. But when we reviewed the boxes of several other growers, we found that while his were very nice, he had to admit there were others that were better than his. Eye opening? Yes! Valuable to his farm? Absolutely! Did he change some things? You can count on it!

Self evaluation can help you differentiate yourself in the marketplace, and showing a willingness to evolve and grow is something that can make you stand out in the organic crowd and bring you loyal retailers and customers for a long time to come.

"Key points for retail contacts" information from: *SELLING DIRECTLY TO RESTAURANTS and RETAILERS* pamphlet. Publication available at <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/selldirect.pdf>

Mark Mulcahy Organic Options, Glen Ellen, Calif.

Thanks to Mark Mulcahy for writing our feature article.

Winner of the Ecological Farming Association's 2002 Sustie (Stewards of Sustainable Agriculture) Award, Mark is the founder of Organic Options, a leading organic education and consulting company. Organic Options provides consulting and educational services for retailers, farmers, cooperatives, wholesalers, and brokers nationwide.



Mark is a regular columnist for Natural Foods Merchandiser, Cooperative Grocer, and the Melissa's World Variety Produce web magazine, Organic Solutions. He leads produce, staff development and departmental systems seminars and grower/retailer relationship seminars and is the co-creator and co-presenter of two 3-day courses, New Hope Natural Media's Organic Retailer's Revival and Supervisors' Renewal: Polish Your Rising Stars.

Mark helps to teach dietitians and consumers how to have a new relationship with fresh food with the acclaimed Field to Plate program. His monthly organic produce newsletter Fresh Perspectives and educational cards are used in stores nationwide.

Mark Mulcahy, Organic Options, P.O. Box 1886, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, (707) 939-8355, Fax: (203) 547 7501, markdmulcahy@sbcglobal.net, www.fieldtoplate.com

2005 Sustie Awards Go to Organic Pioneers

Congratulations to the recipients of this year's Sustie (Stewards of Sustainable Agriculture) Awards presented at the annual Eco-Farm Conference!

Judith Redmond of Full Belly Farm in Guinda, California, is well known in the CCOF community.

She got her start in organic farming in the early 1980s on a small plot of land. She realized that she enjoyed the experience of working with and nurturing plants. She also discovered that she enjoyed bringing people good, healthful food. Judith attributes her success to working with an amazing set of partners. "They have made farming so much fun for me!" she said.

Judith has always been active and interested in sustainable agriculture and the environmental aspects of farming. Currently the president of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, she praises the work of nonprofit organizations such as CCOF. "Nonprofits have been critical in building the market for this food that all of us are growing," said Judith. "I've always felt that the food system that we're all building depends on a whole circle of partners." She acknowledges the role of farm workers, independent grocery stores, journalists, and everyone else who plays a part in producing organic food and promoting it to the public.

If she could do it all over again, would she do anything differently? "No. I was following my heart and didn't have a big plan. I really didn't know what I was getting into," she said. "Had I actually thought about it, it might have been too scary, and I might not have done it!"

Her advice to new organic farmers is to develop skills in marketing and the business side of farming. "The actual production of crops takes so much time, that you might forget that you have to sell the stuff as well!" she laughed.

Andy Scott and Carolyn Brown of Hidden Villa Farm & Wilderness in Los Altos Hills, California, have been farming organically since 1965.

Persistence is a key attribute that helped Andy and Carolyn succeed in organic farming. Working with other farmers toward common goals also helped. "Through the years we worked with other growers, especially in the Capay Valley. We worked together on marketing, transportation and coordinating our planting," said Andy. That was the beginning of the idea of creating an identity with a particular area. Andy compared it to a wine appellation but for fruits and vegetables. "We created a sense among consumers that because of the particular soil and climate, the fruits and vegetables grown in the region have a special characteristic," he said.

In the mid 1990s, Andy and Carolyn started a CSA at Hidden Villa. They enlarged the farm and brought more land under cultivation. They wanted to bring people to the farm so they could see where their produce was grown. The Hidden Villa Farm & Wilderness operates as a nonprofit organization with a mission to educate children. They offer farm visits for schoolchildren and a multicultural, multiracial summer camp. During the school year, they operate an international hostel. Open to the public, the farm offers more than 10 miles of hiking trails.

"We're evolving and making a connection with the farmers and consumers in the community," said Andy. "Farms that are successful work on relationships and recognize that we're all in this together."

Upon accepting the Sustie award, Andy recited a John Muir quote:

*We live in "creation's dawn"
The morning stars still sing together
And the world, though made, is still being made,
And becoming more beautiful everyday.*

Renowned author **Eliot Coleman** and **Barbara Damrosch** of *Four Season Farm* were also honored with a Sustie.



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For Sale: Gearmore Rotary Tiller for "L" series, PTO driven. This used unit is in fair condition, works well. New PTO safety cover. Asking \$800.00. Email: Everettfarm@comcast.net

Calendar

May 1-3, 2005

All Things Organic – The Organic Trade Association Trade Show held at McCormick Place, Chicago, IL. This show is co-located with the Fancy Food, FMI, United Ag and US Exporter showcase. For more information, go to www.organicexpo.com. Visit CCOF in booth 429.

May 6 - 8, 2005

Whole Earth Festival in Davis, CA
The Whole Earth Festival will feature educational booths, speakers, performances, and great music. Visit the CCOF booth! Where: UC Davis. For more information visit <http://wef.ucdavis.edu/>.

May 20-21, 2005

Cooking for Solutions: Celebrity Chefs Celebrate Sustainable Cuisine. At the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, CA. See ad page 5.

May 21, 2005

The Heartland Festival in Stevinson, CA.
A celebration of food, farming, and healthy living in the Central Valley. For more information please contact the Ecological Farming Association at [831] 763-2111, email info@ecofarm.org, or visit www.greatvalley.org/conference

June 27 - August 18, 2005

Sustainable Agriculture & Organic Farming: Principles and Practices

5 Units of UC Davis Credit. An in-depth introduction to sustainable agriculture and organic farming. For information and application materials, contact: Mark Van Horn [530] 752-7645, mxvanhorn@ucdavis.edu, <http://studentfarm.ucdavis.edu/>

September 11, 2005

Carmel Tomatofest at Quail Lodge Resort in Carmel, CA.
Featuring a tasting of more than 300 tomato varieties from around the world, and much more. Visit the CCOF booth. Visit www.tomatofest.com for tickets and additional information.

September 19-23, 2005


15th IFOAM World Congress. September 19-23 in Adelaide, Australia. For more information, go to www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam or email ifoam2005@nasaa.com.au. Fax: +61 8 8339 7800

December 2-3, 2005

4th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Pest Control Advisor (PCA) Conference San Luis Obispo, CA

Sponsored by CCOF and Co-sponsored by Cal Poly State University's Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium. This annual conference addresses a wide variety of issues and provides an excellent forum for PCAs and farmers from all areas of agriculture to expand their knowledge about sustainable agriculture. Attend to update your skills, learn about organic production, organic standards, and organic regulatory issues, and more

A minimum of 8 Continuing Education Units will be applied for, including Laws & Regulations units. For more information and to receive registration information or to become a sponsor, please email: jake@ccof.org or call [831]423-2263, ext. 21.



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bettyjo@msn.com
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stephen@SebastopolTea.com
www.SebastopolTea.com
Certified Crops/Products/Services:
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Santa Cruz, CA 831-429-8122
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www.sunchai.com
Certified Crops/Products/Services:
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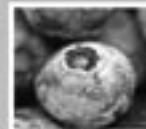
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