



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**P.O. Box 42560 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2560 • (360) 902-1800**

December 19, 2008

Dear International Program Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the WSDA International Organic Program. The WSDA European Organic Program began in 2004 out of a need to ensure access to the European Union market for WSDA certified organic products. In 2008 our agency certified over 100 producers, handlers, and processors through the European Organic Program.

In 2009 new requirements are being implemented for organic crops and products that are exported into Canada, and the European Organic Standards and import process are undergoing changes. WSDA has therefore expanded and revised the International Organic Program to meet these new market access requirements. **The International Organic Program incorporates the Canadian, European and Japanese organic standards and maintains compliance with IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) and ISO Guide 65 accreditation requirements.** If your organic crops are exported, or becomes an ingredient in an organic product that is exported, to these international markets you may wish to obtain certification under the International Organic Program. The program enables operations to be evaluated under one application for compliance with Canadian, European, Japanese and IFOAM organic standards. Application fees are \$440 for the program.

**Canadian Organic Standards**

Canada's new organic standards, the Canadian Organic Regime (COR), will be implemented on June 30, 2009. The COR will require all organic products sold and distributed in Canada after June 30<sup>th</sup> to meet the Canada Organic Standards; products certified to the USDA National Organic Standards will no longer comply. USDA and Canada are in negotiations to establish an equivalency agreement between the organic standards of the two countries. The Canadian organic standards are comparable to the standards established under the US National Organic Program (NOP), however, the COR was written to more closely reflect European organic standards rather than US standards. For instance, the COR prohibits sodium nitrate and antibiotics for fire blight control, and also has restrictions on manure/compost sources that go beyond the requirements in the NOP.

WSDA hopes that the USDA and the Canadian Food Inspection Service (CFIS) establish an equivalency agreement before the June implementation date. Many dedicated people are working on creating a solution that allows organic trade between the US and Canada to continue unimpeded by additional certification requirements. However, if there is no equivalency agreement between Canada and the US, you will need to be certified under the Canadian Organic Regime in order to ship organic products to Canada after June 30, 2009.

**Important Reminders and Changes about the 2009 International Organic Program**

- ❑ International Certification is on a site-by-site basis. Crops certified under the International Program must be located on a designated site that does not include crops produced under different management systems such as US organic, transitional, organic but not certified, or conventional. It may be necessary to split or divide your existing sites to meet this requirement.

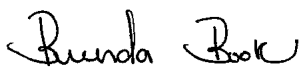
- ❑ Simultaneous, or parallel, production on a farm of the same variety of a crop under an international organic production system and another production system (such as US organic, transitional, and/or conventional crops or products) is only allowed if production is undertaken in a way that allows clear and continuous separation of all crops and records.
- ❑ For farms that engage in parallel production, an additional inspection must take place during harvest to evaluate separation of the different crops. These operations will be billed for these additional inspections at a rate of \$40/hour. It is estimated that these inspections will take 2.5 hours for a total cost of about \$100.
- ❑ WSDA is now reviewing materials for compliance with international standards through the Organic Material Registration Program. Beginning in 2009 there is a new column on the Brand Name Material List that will specify whether a material is compliant with organic standards in Canada, Japan and the European Union. Please note that this is not a required registration and therefore the Brand Name Material List is not a comprehensive list of materials that comply with International Organic Standards. As with any material or input application, contact the Organic Food Program staff prior to its use to ensure that the substance is allowed for use in organic production.
- ❑ Additional restrictions are in place on the use of manure from nonorganic animals. If a raw, composted, or processed manure product is used testing of the product for contaminants is needed. Please note that manure products that have been registered through the WSDA Organic Material Registration Program *and* have received approval as compliant with European Union and Canadian organic standards, have met the above testing standards.
- ❑ All operations involved in the chain of custody of an organic product that is exported to an international market must be inspected and certified, including, but not limited to, storage facilities, brokers, or marketing operations that are otherwise exempt from certification under the US National Organic Standards.
- ❑ As noted above, the Canadian Organic Standards are scheduled to go into affect June 30, 2009. WSDA International Program Requirements are subject to change upon implementation of the Canadian Organic Standards.
- ❑ If interested in obtaining Japan Compliance **ONLY**, and not certification in accordance with the European Union and Canada, you are not required to apply to the International Organic Program. The fee for an evaluation for the Japan Compliance Program only is \$40. Contact our office to learn about this process.

Organic operations that participated in the 2008 International Organic Program will receive an International Program application with their US renewal application packet. Other operations that wish to apply for the International Organic Program may download the application packet from the WSDA Organic Food Program website or contact our office at (360) 902-1805, [organic@agr.wa.gov](mailto:organic@agr.wa.gov) to obtain an application.

Please refer to the WSDA International Organic Program Additional Requirements (producer and handler/processor) for complete details on the requirements for certification. If you have any questions or concerns about the program, please be sure to contact our office at (360) 902-1805 or email: [organic@agr.wa.gov](mailto:organic@agr.wa.gov).

We look forward to working with you in 2009!!

Sincerely,



Brenda Book  
Organic Certification Coordinator and Export Program Manager