



Promoting sustainable agriculture
since 1974

PRODUCE NOTES

February 25, 2002

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCREDITATION: The process used by USDA to ensure that each certifying agent is competent, independent of financial concern in the operations it certifies, and maintains the legal standard for organic production.

AMS/TMD: The Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation and Marketing Division of USDA. The National Organic Program falls within this division.

AUDIT: A systematic and functionally independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned objectives.

BOTANICALS: Pesticides derived from plants. Their use is restricted because they may be quite high in natural toxicity or may upset the predator-prey balance.

BUFFER ZONE: A clearly defined and identifiable boundary area bordering

an organic production site that is established to limit application of, or contact with, prohibited substances (i.e., pesticide/fertilizer drift) from an adjacent area.

CERTIFICATION: The process used by certifying agents to ensure that each producer or handler of organic food or fiber meets the standards for organic production, processing and handling. Certification always includes on-site inspection of the production operation.

CERTIFYING AGENT (OR AGENCY): Any company, organization or government body that offers the service of organic certification. A certifying agent must be accredited by USDA, and may not have any financial or personal interest in the producer.

COMPOST: The product of a carefully managed aerobic process by which organic materials are digested by

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THIS WEEK

As we move closer to full implementation of The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, we recommend that we all become familiar with terms and abbreviations used to discuss organic. We hope you will find this list compiled by **The Organic Trade Association (OTA)** both useful and helpful.

Also, for those of you who may not know, the 2002 Farm Bill is currently being debated in the Senate. There are a number of provisions in the Farm Bill that concern the future of organic agriculture. For up to date information on the Farm Bill debate, visit **The Organic Trade Association** website at www.ota.com, or **The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)** site at www.ofrf.org. Also, find out those provisions that are critical to organic and call or write your senator to make your voice heard.

Karen Salinger
Sales Manager

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR MARKET

Several new fruit items are up and coming.

This week we will begin offering **Thompson Seedless Grapes** from South Africa. This is only the second year that organic grapes are being offered to the American market from South Africa. The grapes are grown in Cape Town. The shipper expects the quality to be excellent. The Thompson Seedless will be the first variety to arrive. Other varieties will follow, including **Red Globe**, **Sunred Seedless** and **Waltham Cross white Seeded**. Future arrivals will depend on weather and product quality.

Bartlett Pears are arriving from Argentina. These pears are grown in the Rio Negro Valley of southwestern Argentina. The valley is in the middle of the desert with the Rio Negro River as the only source of water, which gives life to the region. This area's unique geographical setting has made it the best pear and apple-producing region in Argentina.

Cantaloupes will begin shipping from Mexico this week in the Organics Unlimited label.

Mangos should also begin arriving in the next 5-7 days.

Rio Star Grapefruit from Texas are ending this week. The Ruby Grapefruit from the Coachella Valley are sweet and in steady supply.

We are offering **Nectarines** and **Plums** from Chile as they are available. Offerings are light and intermittent

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micro-organisms. Materials added to the composting process are limited to those permitted for crop production by the Organic Foods Production Act, such as manure, plant residues, and mulch. Sewage sludge, biosolids and mixed municipal solid waste are not allowed. Organic material for compost must be managed appropriately to reach temperatures for the duration necessary to effectively stabilize nutrients and kill human pathogens.

COVER CROP: A crop grown for soil conservation purposes rather than for sale as a cash crop (see "Green Manure").

CROP ROTATION: The practice of alternating the species or families of annual and/or biennial crops grown on a specific field in a planned pattern or sequence to break weed, pest, and disease cycles and to improve soil fertility and organic matter content.

CULTURAL METHODS: Mechanical and management techniques used to enhance crop or livestock health or to prevent weed, pest or disease problems without the use of external inputs. These may include early planting or harvesting, variety selection, plant spacing, companion planting, clean-up of crop debris, and constructing livestock facilities designed to promote animal health.

DRIFT: The physical movement, primarily through wind and water, of pesticides, fertilizers, genetically engineered organisms, or other prohibited materials onto a certified organic field, farm, or facility.

FARM PLAN: See Organic Farm/Handling Plan.

"GREEN MANURE": A crop that is grown and then plowed into the soil or otherwise left to decompose for the purpose of soil improvement. Examples of cover crops used for green manure include soybeans, clover, rye, and others. Green manure does not mean raw manure.

HANDLER: Any operation (or part of one) that "receives, processes, packages, or stores agricultural products."

Includes food processors and distributors who "substantially alter" organic agricultural products.

INSPECTOR: A person independent from the certifying agent's decision-making process who visits the grower, processor or handler being certified. The inspector interviews the producer, observes all areas of production, and reviews record-keeping for completeness and accuracy.

MANURE MANAGEMENT: A natural means to cycle plant nutrients. As such, animal manure forms an important part of organic soil fertility programs. Manure, either by itself or blended with crop residues, makes up much of the raw material for the compost used on organic farms.

MICRONUTRIENTS: Nutrients required by food crops in small amounts. For example: boron, zinc, iron and manganese.

NATIONAL LIST: The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 mandated a uniform National List of materials. Its purpose is to make clear which materials can and cannot be used in organic production, processing, and handling in the United States.

NATURAL: From a plant, animal or mineral source which has not been altered except by chopping, grinding, separating, drying, freezing, heating, or fermentation.

NON-SYNTHETICALLY TREATED MINERALS: Minerals such as limestone, rock phosphate langbenite, green sand, rock dust and others to improve the soil's tilth. The tilth of soil is a composite of its texture, structure, aggregation, density, drainage, and water-holding capacity.

NOP: The National Organic Program. NOP was established to implement the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. It is administered by state and private agencies with USDA acting as overseer.

NOSB: National Organic Standards Board. The USDA advisory board established to help develop the organic standards. Also responsible for convening Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) to evaluate materials for

the National List of approved and prohibited materials. Appointments are made by the Secretary of Agriculture.

OFF-FARM INPUTS: Materials such as fertilizers or pest control treatments which are bought from outside sources to be used in raising crops or livestock (In contrast, many growers produce some inputs, such as compost, on-farm).

OFPA: The Organic Foods Production Act (Title XXI of the 1990 Farm Bill). Mandated establishing national standards for the production and handling of foods labeled as "organic."

ORGANIC FARM/HANDLING PLAN: A written document for managing an organic crop, livestock, wild harvesting, processing, handling or grower operation which sets forth the producer's current methods, future intentions, and plan for improvements to comply with organic standards and which has been agreed upon by both the operator and certification agent.

OTA: Organic Trade Association. An umbrella organization for the organic industry, OTA has a diverse membership, including organic growers, processors, distributors, suppliers, brokers, retailers, certifiers, and non-profit organizations and individuals from North America.

SYNTHETICS: Substances made by a chemical process or by a process that chemically changes a natural substance.

TAP: Technical Advisory Panel. A panel of experts convened by NOSB to evaluate scientific data on materials considered for the National List.

TRANSITION: A time period in which a farm or other operation moves toward organic certification by improving soil fertility, reducing use of prohibited materials, and developing an organic plan.

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