

Certification Notes & Tips

From the office of WI OCIA #1 and MOSA

April 2001

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Watch Out For Genetically Engineered Seed Inoculants!

Genetically engineered (GE) seed inoculants are now readily available on the market and are often included with seed, whether you ask for them or not. GE inoculants are prohibited products by both MOSA and OCIA Standards and use of GE inoculants can result in decertification of crops, fields and even an entire operation (see OCIA Standards, Section 2 or MOSA Standards, Section 3 and Section 5).

Now that spring is here, check all your seed for inoculants prior to planting. In 2000, it was especially common to find GE inoculants on alfalfa seed. If your seed has an inoculant, check with the manufacturer of that inoculant and get verification that it is not GE. Have this verification available when the inspector comes.

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Renewal Deadlines Are Here

If you are renewing your certification with MOSA or WI OCIA Chapter #1 for the 2001 crop year, your renewal application should have been postmarked on or before April 2, 2001. Applications postmarked later will have a \$100 late fee applied to the applicant's account. Renewal applications received postmarked later than July 2, 2001 will have a \$200 late fee applied. **Renewal applications will not be accepted if postmarked later than August 1, 2001.**

REMINDER:

Bio Cal is now prohibited by both OCIA and MOSA. Always check your products with the office if you are unsure of their acceptability.

Feed/Grain Processing Requirements

OCIA Standards require the use of an OCIA certified processing facility for processing of all OCIA certified organic grains, feeds, etc. For example, if you are an OCIA certified beef producer, you must have our feeds processed at an OCIA certified facility. Use of conventional facilities, or facilities certified by an agency that OCIA does not recognize, will cause decertification of the feeds and grains processed.

OCIA does not currently recognize MOSA certification, and many other certifications. If you are an OCIA producer and you want to purchase organic goods or processing services that are certified by another agency, you must first contact the Chapter office. The Chapter office can determine if non-OCIA certified organic products might be accepted by OCIA after doing a document review.

In 1999 and 2000, the MOSA Certification Review Committee (CRC) required that MOSA producers use a MOSA recognized certified facility for processing of feeds and grains if there was one available in your area. ...continued on next page

**WI OCIA #1 and
MOSA Certification
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For OCIA Conversion Year Producers

If you were a first time OCIA applicant in 2000 and were granted "conversion" status, you are probably looking forward to harvesting a certified crop in 2001. **Keep in mind that OCIA requires that you have an inspection prior to your first harvest of any certifiable crop.** For example, if you are planning to harvest wheat that you want to have certified this year, you must have your inspection prior to that wheat harvest.

As you prepare for the 2001 season, keep in mind the timing of all harvests that you wish to certify. Do not assume that the Chapter office will anticipate your needs for timing of an inspection. Notify the Chapter inspector coordinator (Kathy Casper) well ahead of time of when you will be harvesting your first certifiable crop. If you have not heard from an inspector 3 or 4 weeks before you are planning to harvest, give the Chapter office another call to make sure that an inspection will be scheduled on time.

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Please call us with any
questions

Processing Requirements ...continued from page 1

If an uncertified facility was used, you were required to accompany your product to the facility, make sure that all necessary cleaning was done and document the clean out procedures in your records.

For 2001 and onward, the MOSA CRC is now requiring that certified facilities be used for processing of certified feeds and grains, as is stated in the MOSA Standards. MOSA currently recognizes certification by agencies that are USDA/ISO 65 accredited.

For both OCIA and MOSA, it is possible to have a processor certified as a "contract processor" under your own certification. Portable processing facilities that you bring to your own farm to use do not need to be certified, as they are considered similar to custom equipment. Any portable facility that also processes non-organic grains must be thoroughly cleaned and purged prior to use for organic grains and all cleaning must be documented.

New in 2001...

As MOSA works towards compliance with the new Federal Rules, we are implementing many new policies and procedures. Here are two that you will notice this year. We will keep you informed of more to come!

The Complaint Log – sent to you in your renewal packet. The Federal Rule may be requiring that all producers have this, so keep it in your records.

New in 2001, continued...

The Initial Review – you will be notified of receipt of your application, and of the results of the initial review of your application prior to inspection. Please call the office if you have not received this notification by mid-May.

Exit Interview – the Federal Rule requires that the inspector conduct an official exit interview with an authorized representative of your operation to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the information gathered.

Vegetable Rotation Policy

The WI #1 OCIA and MOSA Certification Review Committee (CRC) recently reviewed the MOSA/WI #1 rotation policy as it applies to vegetable growers. The current rotation policy stipulates that no more than four years in a row of row crops may be grown on a given field. At least one non-row crop year must then follow before returning to row crops. The CRC does consider vegetables a row crop. Small grains are considered a row crop unless underseeded with a hay/cover crop.

The CRC decided that, for vegetable growers only, a grower may be exempt from the non-row crop year, if s/he actively incorporates a significant amount of cover cropping, plow down, interseeding etc. throughout his/her vegetable rotation. The CRC will look at vegetable growers' rotations on a case by case basis to determine whether or not soil building practices are adequate to warrant exemption from the usual requirement of a non-row crop year.

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