

Certification Notes & Tips

From the office of WI OCIA #1 and MOSA

July 2001

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Your Inspection Notes for the 2001 Season

The growing season is here and one of these days the inspector will be calling or writing to make an appointment with you. This may be your first inspection, or organic inspection may be old hat to you. Either way, here are some bits of information that may make the inspection process easier.

Q. How is my inspector assigned and when will my inspection happen?

A. Every spring the MOSA/OCIA office contracts with inspectors from Wisconsin and surrounding areas, and sometimes from farther away. Inspectors are independent contractors who set their own schedules and rates and often work for many different certification agencies. Each inspector lets us know how many inspections s/he can do and in what months s/he can do them. Throughout the spring and summer, we send groups of applications to the inspectors based on their availability. Once the inspector receives your application, s/he makes an appointment directly with you. We try to process applications on a

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Renewing Certification - 2001

Are you intending to NOT renew with MOSA or WI OCIA Chapter #1 in 2001? If so, please let us know so that we can update our records. If you have any questions about deciding whether or not to renew, please give us a call.

If you do intend to renew your certification with MOSA or WI OCIA Chapter #1 in 2001, your application is probably in our office by now. Late renewal applications are subject to a \$100 late fee if they are received postmarked by July 2nd, 2001. Renewal applications postmarked later than July 2, 2001 are subject to a \$200 late fee. Renewal applications will not be accepted if postmarked later than August 1, 2001, so be sure to get your application in by then!

This year, you will be receiving a letter notifying you of the initial review of your application. Most of these initial reviews will be done by mid July. If you have not received your initial review letter by then, please give us a call to make sure that your application has been received and is in process.

Submitting Changes to the MOSA Standards

All MOSA Associates are welcome to submit proposals for changes to the MOSA Standards. Submissions are due by **October 7, 2001** and may be sent by letter, fax or email to the attention of Dave Engel, MOSA Executive Director. This year, many of the proposed changes will include changes to bring the MOSA Standards into compliance with the new USDA National Organic Program (NOP). For more on the NOP, see the next page.

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**WI OCIA #1
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Stoddard, WI

Pat Zietlow
Cashton, WI

Office Update

NOP Accreditation MOSA is continuing the process of upgrading systems to meet the requirements of USDA National Organic Program (NOP) accreditation. We plan to submit our application for accreditation in time to be reviewed in the first round of certifier accreditation. The deadline to apply for review in the first round is October 21st, 2001. All certifiers who successfully complete the NOP accreditation process in the first round will be announced as accredited in early 2002. Full implementation of the NOP will go into effect on October 21st, 2002.

Staff Stephen Walker of Viroqua, WI is the newest member of the MOSA/OCIA office staff. Steve has been focussing on initial reviews and preparing files for inspectors. Welcome Steve!

MOSA also has hired new Certification Review Committee (CRC) staff. We welcome Paulette Bradley, Aaron Brin, Julie Marquardt and Linda Nash to the team. Liz Rose, formerly Certification Coordinator and an office staffer, has now left the office and joined the CRC and is busy taking care of her new baby, Martha. Congratulations Liz!

The office wishes to thank the 2000 CRC - Wendy Everham, Lowell Gause, Matt Messa, Lynn Tschumper and Pat Zietlow - who had the responsibility of reviewing all MOSA and OCIA files in 2000. Fortunately for us, they are continuing in 2001 as the WI OCIA #1 CRC.

**MOSA
Review Committee**

Paulette Bradley
Camp Douglas, WI

Aaron Brin
Gays Mills, WI

Julie Marquardt
Richland Center, WI

Linda Nash
Postville, IA

Liz Rose
Soldiers Grove, WI

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First come, first served basis, but even if you got your application in early you may have a later inspection because of the geographic area you are located in and the availability of inspectors for that area. **In 2001, inspector availability is such that the majority of MOSA/OCIA inspections will happen in August and September rather than June and July.**

Q. Can I choose my inspector?

A. No, the new national Organic Program regulating organic certification requires that you cannot choose your inspector. You may, however, object to a particular inspector.

Q. How much will my inspection cost?

A. Inspectors are independent contractors who set their rates, which include fees for travel expenses. The inspector submits a bill to the MOSA/OCIA office when reports are submitted. In 2001, your application for certification requires a \$130 deposit towards the cost of the inspection. This \$130 is generally the absolute minimum that an inspection may cost. Almost all inspections will cost more than \$130 and so you will be billed for the cost overrun. Receiving a bill for an inspection cost overrun does not usually mean that you are being charged for extra time spent. Most often, the cost overrun is due to the travel expenses incurred by the inspector.

Q. What should I expect during inspection and how should I prepare?

A. Because much of the inspection centers around your audit trail (the records you maintain on your operation) and the inspector is also required to fill out certain forms during the inspection, you may spend a good part of the inspection in your kitchen, or office or wherever it is comfortable for you to review papers. The best way to prepare is to go over the inspection checklist provided in your certification packet, or your renewal packet, and make sure you have all applicable items available. If you have an old certification packet, you may not have received the inspection checklist. Please call the MOSA/OCIA office to get a copy. Also, read your initial review notification letter and make sure you have all items requested in that letter

Q. Does the inspector certify me?

A. No, the inspector does not make certification decisions. The inspector is there to record his/her observations and identify any potential areas of noncompliance with the Standards. All questions regarding your certification, allowed and prohibited materials and so on, should be directed to the MOSA/OCIA office.

Q. What happens after my inspection?

A. The inspector submits a written report on your operation to the MOSA/OCIA office. Inspectors are required to submit these reports within 35 days of inspection. Often reports are submitted sooner than this. Sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances, reports may be submitted after a longer period of time. This year the MOSA/OCIA office has implemented a strict report deadline policy, which will greatly minimize and hopefully eliminate late inspection reports. Once your file has been returned to the office, it is reviewed by the MOSA or OCIA Certification Review Committee in the order that it was received. You are also sent a copy of your inspection report and are free to submit comments on it within a stated time period.

Q. Is there anything else I should know?

A. Always feel free to call the MOSA/OCIA office with any questions you have. Our customers are important to us!

MIDWEST ORGANIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION

ORGANIC CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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