

The Who, What and When of Organic Kelp!

For Livestock Feed, For Crop/Soil Fertility, As Organic Ingredient

by Kate Newkirk, Assoc. Director Processing

Kelp are large seaweeds or marine algae. Two hundred and fifty species occur in the Gulf of Maine. Rockweeds (*Fucus*) and knotted wrack (*Ascophyllum spp.*) are commercially harvested for fertilizers, livestock feeds, packing material, and for algin production. As a feed supplement, kelp is an easy to assimilate source for minerals, vitamins and amino acids.

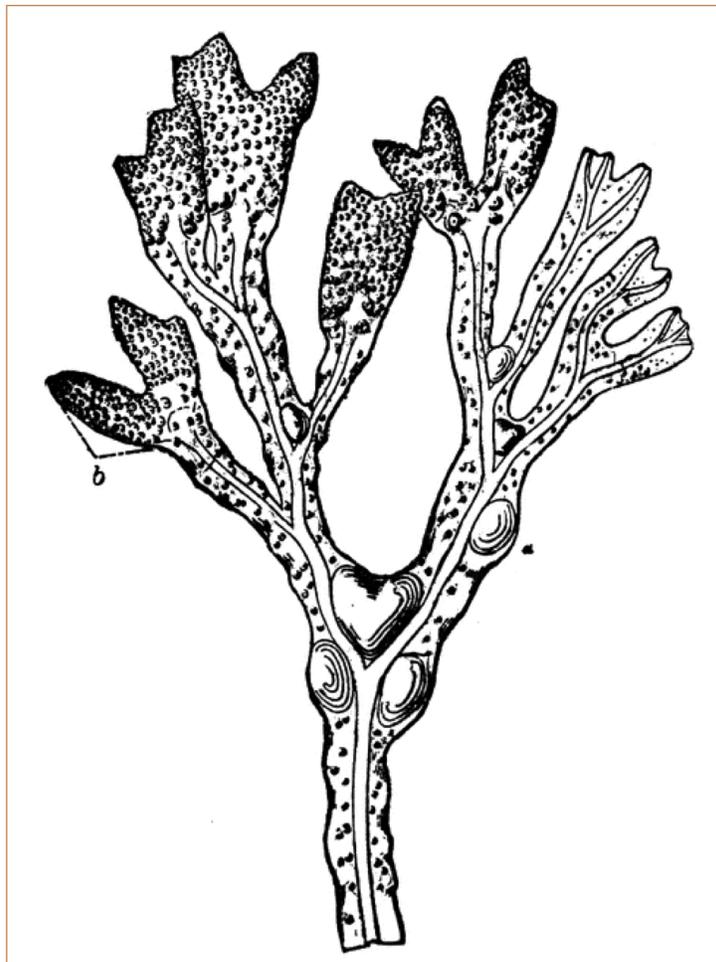
FOR LIVESTOCK: On March 4, 2014 all kelp fed to organic livestock must be certified organic. Two current NOP documents have led to this new requirement.

There was a long-standing contention that because kelp and seaweeds are aquatic plants they cannot be certified organic. However, it has been determined that the current organic regulation only excludes aquatic animals from certification, not aquatic plants. This was formally recognized with the January 9, 2013 policy memo (PM 12-1) from the NOP which states that "Certifiers and their clients may use the USDA organic regulations, ..., as the basis for the production and certification of cultured and wild crop harvested aquatic plants".

Following the January 9, 2013 policy memo, the NOP on February 28, 2013 released a guidance document for "The Use of Kelp in Organic Livestock Feed" (NOP 5027). This guidance

document requires that ALL kelp fed to organic livestock be certified organic beginning on March 4, 2014. The 12-month phase-in period allows time for suppliers to become certified and for current users to use up any existing non-organic supplies.

So, if you have a large supply of uncertified kelp on hand for live-



stock, you need to use it up by March 4th and make plans to restock with certified organic kelp. You can always use leftover uncertified kelp as a crop input (see below).

The good news is that this past July

MCS certified North American Kelp as a wild crop harvester and producer so they will have a certified organic SeaLife Kelp Meal product. You can contact North Atlantic Kelp at 207-832-5376 or online at <http://www.noamkelp.com/>

AS CROP OR SOIL FERTILITY INPUT:

There is currently no restriction on the use of non-organic kelp as a crop or soil fertility input provided that the certifier approves the kelp product as a fertility input. Call your staff representative at MCS if you have questions regarding your product and, as always, if you are adding any new product to your organic system plan please get confirmation that the product is allowed prior to any use or application.

AS AN ORGANIC INGREDIENT:

Kelp, used as a thickener and dietary supplement, has for some time now been allowed in certified organic products, with restriction. This has been allowed due to kelp's inclusion on 205.606 of the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances with the above noted annotation. Non-organic kelp may be allowed in multi-ingredient certified organic products

labeled as Organic provided that the producer can document that the kelp cannot be obtained in the necessary form, quality or quantity.

