The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) is excited to announce that as of August 2016, Maine has more than 500 certified organic farms and processors, according to MOFGA Certification Services LLC (MCS). About 464 farms (some of which are involved in processing as well) and 46 processors are certified by MOFGA Certification Services.

This milestone means that almost 6 percent of Maine’s 8,200 farm operations are certified organic -- one of the largest percentages in the country, based on the most recent data available (from the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture and the 2014 USDA Census of Organic Farms). Nationwide the figure is about 0.6 percent.

MOFGA was one of the first organic certifiers in the country, beginning in 1972 with Ken and Roberta Horn, who farmed the 140-acre Ken-Ro Farm in Plymouth. The organization certified 26 additional farms as organic that year -- all by following Rodale Organic Garden certification guidelines. For many years MOFGA staff members Eric Sideman (organic crop specialist) and Diane Schivera (organic livestock specialist) along with a MOFGA certification committee had primary responsibility for certification and followed state law regarding standards.

In 2002, when federal standards took effect, MOFGA hired Mary Yurlina to develop and oversee MCS in order to meet United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program regulations. The MCS program now has a staff of eight, is co-directed by Kate Newkirk and Jaco Schravesande-Gardei, and has a volunteer management committee.

In addition MOFGA was the first organization in the country to provide technical assistance specific to organic farming and gardening. The Agricultural Services staff provides farming, gardening and marketing assistance to growers in Maine and beyond. Katy Green, MOFGA’s organic transitions coordinator, helps guide farmers and processors who are interested in becoming organic.

Certified organic farms must follow federal rules regarding building soil health and promoting biological diversity. They use cultural practices such as cover cropping and crop rotation, and mechanical practices such as insect-excluding row covers, as primary means of maintaining plant and soil health. Pesticides (most coming from natural materials) are allowed only as a last resort, and most pesticides approved for organic production are of low toxicity and break down quickly. Livestock on organic farms must have access to the outdoors and may not be treated with antibiotics or with added growth hormones. Certified organic processors can use only organic products or must have strict separation of organic products from non-certified products.

Certified organic farms and processors are inspected annually by a third party, with MCS used most often in Maine. By law, MCS also regularly conducts random tests of certified operations for pesticide residues.

Consumers can search the “Yellow Pepper” database of MOFGA-certified organic farms and products at http://www.mofgacertification.org. Products include vegetables, fruits, maple syrup, dairy, meat, herbs, cut flowers, Christmas trees, hay, grains, processed products - even mushrooms and seaweed. MOFGA and MCS also put out a free annual publication called Organic Maine!, a directory of MOFGA-certified organic farms, foods and products, in printed magazine format and as a PDF available at http://www.mofgacertification.org.
Why Choose MCS as your Farm or Business’ Certifier?

MOFGA has operated an organic certification program since 1972 and was the first state level certification program in the country. In 2002, MOFGA Certification Services, LLC was established by MOFGA and accredited by the USDA to certify crops, livestock, processing and handling operations according to the National Organic Standards.

MOFGA Certification Services now certifies over 500 Maine farms and processors in 2016. Thanks to support from the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, our fees have remained very reasonable compared to other certifiers, and include the cost of the annual inspection. A farm with an income from organic produce of $25K per year can expect to pay $700 in annual certification fees. The current Cost Share program from the USDA rebates 75% (up to $750) of certification fees for farms at the end of the calendar year. After their $525 rebate, the example farm will have paid just $175 for certification for the year, including inspection.

The MOFGA Certification logo is recognized and trusted by consumers. Additional benefits of being MOFGA Certified Organic include:

- Discounted booth fees for the Common Ground Country Fair farmers’ markets.
- Free listing and automatic updates in our online searchable database (Yellow Pepper) and print directories.
- Free technical and marketing advice from MOFGA’s Agricultural Services specialists.
- Networking opportunities at MOFGA events and workshops.

MOFGA Selects Maine Native to Head Certification Services

Christopher Grigsby has accepted the Director post of MOFGA Certification Services, LLC (MCS) and will assume his duties effective December 1, 2016.

Grigsby, 41, is a Maine native and attended the University of Southern Maine. He has a long history of employment in the food industry and is currently serving as the Director of Operations at Crown O’ Maine Cooperative in Vassalboro. Prior to his work with Crown O’ Maine, Grigsby served as general manager at the Belfast Cooperative.

Grigsby said he was delighted to be joining the MOFGA team.

“I am a firm believer in organic agriculture and have always advocated for the farmers and producers in the MOFGA community through my work in the retail and wholesale sectors here in Maine. I will continue to do so in my role as Director of MOFGA Certification Services while maintaining the integrity of the National Organic Program,” said Grigsby.

Grigsby replaces Mary Yurlina, who stepped down from the position last spring. Over the past two years, Grigsby has served as a member of the Certification Services Management Committee and will be stepping away from his volunteer service on the committee effective immediately.

Grigsby homesteads in Appleton with his wife, son, dog, chickens, and rabbits in a straw bale home. He is an avid gardener, musician, and enjoys playing and coaching hockey and soccer.
In 2016, MOFGA staff created a Google map of all 500+ certified organic operations. This map is interactive; consumers can use it to search for organic producers in their specific region, or to see producers by type such as mixed vegetable and fruit, dairy, maple, etc. So far, staff have used the map in printed form at the Common Ground Country Fair and the Maine Grocers and Food Producers Association to communicate to audiences that the supply of organic is substantial in Maine, and dispersed across the state. You can link to the map in newsletters, on social media, or embed the map on your website. The map is accessible from the MCS website: mofgacertification.org.

For more information, please contact Heather Omand at homand@mofga.org.

MOFGA's Buy Organic outreach publications are colorful, informative – and free!

Download them for printing, or publish them on your website, newsletters or social media - mofgacertification.org under Resources, or mofga.org, under Programs/Buy Organic. Order copies from the MOFGA Country Store website (mofgastore.org) - a minimal shipping charge will be added.
Those of us growing crops or raising livestock in southern Maine felt the effects of drought this year to some degree, whether it was reduced seasonal crop quality and yields, insufficient quality and quantity of pasture for grazing and/or lack of water for livestock or irrigation. MOFGA Certification Services began receiving calls from certified organic producers as early as late June that they had not received any measurable rainfall for 6 or more weeks and/or that rainfall was 6 or more inches below normal. They also reported their struggles to manage the farm, and dairy and ruminant livestock producers were worried about their ability to graze in accordance with the minimum organic standards pasture requirements: 30% dry matter intake from pasture and 120 or more days of grazing on pasture. Staff at MCS and MOFGA’s Ag Services began following the U.S. Drought Monitor weekly updates; http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu - click on the Northeast section to view the map of Maine.

On September 7, 2016 the USDA Secretary of Agriculture declared York County a primary disaster area due to drought. With this declaration York County and the contiguous Counties of Cumberland and Oxford became eligible for crop relief funds. However, severe drought conditions continued into the fall and on October 5, 2016 the USDA Secretary of Agriculture declared the Counties of Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc primary disaster areas due to drought. With this declaration the contiguous Counties of Franklin, Knox, Somerset and Waldo also became eligible for crop relief funds.

### Links to Disaster Assistance Programs

**USDA Drought Programs and Assistance:**

**Drought Risk Management Tool** (University of Maine Cooperative Extension): https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDACF/bulletins/16c3a87

**USDA Assistance for Maine Farmers Affected by Drought:**
https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDACF/bulletins/16c3958

**Federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans**
U.S. Small Business Administration announced that Federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations located in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Waldo and York in Maine as a result of the drought that began on Sept. 27, 2016. The loan amount can be up to $2 million with interest rates of 2.625 percent for private nonprofit organizations and 4 percent for small businesses, with terms up to 30 years. Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA’s secure website at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela.

Disaster loan information and application forms may also be obtained by calling the SBA’s Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) or by sending an email to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Loan applications can be downloaded from www.sba.gov/disaster. Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

Completed loan applications must be returned to SBA no later than June 5, 2017.
When ever we receive a question in the office about treated lumber I grit my teeth. These questions are always very difficult to answer, as the National Organic Program (NOP) has not been clear on the use of treated lumber and there are many different interpretations. MOFGA Certification Services worked on its own guidance years ago, but was then told that the NOP was developing guidance. It is finally here!

This September the NOP announced the availability of a Draft Guidance document intended for use by accredited certifying agents and organic producers. The draft guidance document is entitled: Treated Lumber (NOP 5036). Comments to the draft guidance were due by October 31st.

However, we do not expect many changes and therefore feel it’s a good time to discuss what the guidance addresses:

- How lumber treated with prohibited substances affects a producer’s timeline for obtaining certification;
- Where lumber treated with prohibited substances can and cannot be placed on organic farms, for new installations or replacement of existing lumber;
- How organic producers can prevent crops and livestock from contacting lumber treated with prohibited substances.

**Highlight s of the Draft Guidance**

**TIMELINE FOR OBTAINING CERTIFICATION**

Lumber treated with prohibited materials and installed or used for replacement purposes prior to the operation achieving certification is permitted, provided there is no contact with crops. The use of lumber treated with prohibited materials does not necessitate a three-year transition because pesticides in or on treated articles are only intended to protect the article itself. (By definition, the use of treated lumber on land is not an application of prohibited substances to land.) However, USDA organic regulations still prohibit the use of lumber treated with prohibited materials for new installations and for replacement purposes contacting crops, soil or livestock.

Also, lumber treated with prohibited materials is not to be considered a “new” installation when the lumber was installed on a parcel prior to acquisition by a certified organic operation (lease, purchase, rent, etc.).

**LOCATIONS AND USES**

Lumber treated with prohibited materials in contact with crops is always prohibited. Lumber treated with prohibited materials in contact with soil or livestock is prohibited for new installations and replacement purposes.

Examples of lumber in contact with soil or crops in an organic crop production area include:

1. planter boxes, raised beds, or other planting containers where lumber contacts soil;
2. trellises or stakes that support crops;
3. trellis posts, including end posts and posts within a row (line posts);
4. stakes or posts placed in soil to indicate rows or identify boundaries, next to crops;
5. baseboards in high tunnels in contact with soil, with crops grown in soil.

Examples of lumber in contact with livestock in an organic livestock production area include:

1. components of a living area in contact with animals;
2. walls of a shelter, living area or pen;
3. flooring in housing areas in direct contact with livestock;
4. corrals and temporary holding pens;
5. perching structures for poultry;
6. feed bunks and watering troughs.

Examples of lumber that does not contact soil, crops, or livestock include:

1. Tables in greenhouses, where lumber has no contact with soil.
2. Baseboards in permanent greenhouses, where all plants are grown in aboveground containers and do not contact lumber.
3. Lumber used to support structures that are isolated from organic production areas, including employee/residential housing, equipment storage areas, and sheds.
4. Lumber covered with some other allowed material (see “Barriers” below).

**FENCES**

**Crop Production.** Treated lumber may be used for fences that are not in contact with soil or crops in the organic production area. Contact is direct contact with any part of the plant under organic production, including direct contact with plant roots.

**Livestock Production.** Treated lumber may be used for fences that are not in contact with livestock in the organic production area. Contact is direct contact with livestock under organic production. Evaluating if fences will contact organic livestock may depend on a number of factors, including the parcel size, the physical terrain, and an organic producer’s livestock management practices. Empirical evidence (observations) about the contact between livestock and fences on an organic operation can be an important and valid factor for evaluating compliance with USDA organic regulations.
Certifying Cultivated Mushrooms

by Joan Cheetham, MCS Certification Specialist

Mushrooms are gaining in popularity both because they are tasty and delicious and because recent research has demonstrated their exceptional health benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic website, mushrooms contain a variety of bioactive compounds that act as antioxidants. Antioxidants can protect us from cancer and heart disease, as well as moderate blood sugar levels. Regular mushroom consumption has been shown to lower risks for both cancer and heart disease. Mushrooms are also good sources of Vitamins D and B12.

Mushrooms are relatively easy to grow as long as one has a source of suitable substrate materials. There are no specific National Organic Program (NOP) mushroom standards, therefore, MCS certifies mushrooms in accordance with the National Organic Standards Board recommendations, as well as all other applicable sections of the NOP Organic Standard. Details of the MCS Mushroom Standard can be found on pages 22-23 of our current Practice Manual, which is available on our website. You can also download the two-page MCS Mushroom Cultivation Supplement which mushroom growers need to fill out and submit to MCS.

There are several important points to keep in mind when planning to grow and certify mushrooms. Mushroom spawn is generally purchased and must be certified organic, except that, non-organically produced spawn that has not been treated with a prohibited substance or raised on genetically modified substrate, may be used when organically produced spawn is not commercially available. Field and Forest Products, Inc. in Wisconsin is one source for quality, organic spawn for a variety of mushroom species. Shiitake and oyster are two mushrooms being successfully grown in Maine without any special facilities.

Mushroom growth substrate must be certified organic if it is an agricultural product, such as straw or grain. Sawdust, wood chips, logs or other materials derived from wood used as a growth substrate must come from trees in areas free of prohibited materials for at least three years, and must not have been treated with a prohibited substance after tree harvest. Generally, a landowner affidavit is needed for forest areas where logs are harvested.

An excellent guide to growing edible mushrooms is the book Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms (Third Edition) by Paul Stamets, Ten Speed Press.

For more information please visit the MOFGA Certification Services website at http://www.mofgacertification.org or call the certification office at 568-6030.

TREATED LUMBER

Continued from Page 5

Placement of fencing that would result in likely or certain contact between livestock and lumber treated with prohibited materials would be prohibited by the USDA organic regulations.

Replacement Purposes

Lumber treated with prohibited materials must not be used for replacement purposes after obtaining organic certification, if the lumber is to be in contact with soil, crops or livestock. Lumber treated with prohibited materials that was previously installed or stored outside of organic production areas (no contact with soil, crops or livestock) may not be moved into organic production areas, where it will contact soil, crops or livestock.

Buffers and Barriers

Buffer zones must be sufficiently sized or designed to prevent unintended contact. Barriers can include electric fencing, barbed wire, metal flashing, and untreated lumber (used to prevent contact between livestock and treated wood, for example). If a barrier will not sufficiently prevent contact, installation of a barrier is not an acceptable means to comply with USDA organic regulations. If a barrier is subject to degradation, decay, or other processes that result in the loss of effectiveness of the barrier, the producer must replace, repair or reapply the barrier at appropriate intervals.

Again at this point this is a still a draft guidance. There are some uncertainties that MOFGA and other certifiers have asked the NOP to clarify. We will make sure to keep you posted! Please as always make sure to contact us (even though I grit my teeth) if you are planning on using any treated lumber for your farm projects.
As noted in our article “The 2016 Drought” many dairies and ruminant livestock producers were calling MCS because they were worried about their ability to meet the Livestock Feed and Pasture Rule requirements (NOP 205.237 – Livestock Feed and NOP 205.240 – Pasture Practice Standard).

As August brought no significant rainfall MCS and MOFGA’s Ag Services designed a Producer Drought Survey for ruminant livestock producers to document how conditions were affecting their ability to comply with the Livestock Feed and Pasture Rule requirements. The open and honest participation in this survey was critical for MCS to form an argument to the NOP for a temporary variance from NOP 205.237 & NOP 205.240.

With the Secretary of Agriculture’s September 7, 2016 declaration of York and the contiguous counties of Cumberland and Oxford as drought disaster areas, MCS on September 13, 2016 sent in its first ever request for a Temporary Variance under NOP 205.290. MCS requested a variance be granted to reduce the average DMI from pasture from 30% to 15% (NOP 205.237) and the number of days on pasture reduced from 120 days to 90 days (NOP 205.240) for 2016.

On September 30, 2016 Elanor Starmer granted the requested variances for York, Cumberland and Oxford Counties.

However, the drought continued into the fall and on October 5, 2016 the Secretary of Agriculture further declaration 6 additional counties; Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc as primary disaster areas along with 4 contiguous counties; Franklin, Knox, Somerset and Waldo. With this declaration MCS submitted a second Temporary Variance under NOP 205.290 on October 15, 2016 for affected clients in Kennebec, Lincoln, Franklin, Somerset and Waldo Counties not covered under the first declaration.

On October 25, 2016 Elanor Starmer granted this second request.

In summary, dairy and ruminant livestock producers in the eight counties granted a temporary variance, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and York, are eligible for a reduction of their DMI from pasture from 30% to 15% and number of days on pasture from 120 days to 90 days for the 2016 season.

Certified organic dairy and ruminant livestock producers in these counties who would like to take advantage of the reduced grazing requirement should be in touch with Katie Webb (kwebb@mofga.org or 207-568-6035) no later than December 1, 2016 to discuss eligibility and next steps.

### 2016 Allowed Temporary Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company / Producer</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of AMS Decision</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
<th>Expiration</th>
<th>Certifying Agent</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified organic ruminant livestock producers in Maine</td>
<td>Counties in Maine declared as primary or contiguous drought disaster areas by Secretary Vilsack in calendar year 2016</td>
<td>9/30/2016 2nd Date: 10/25/16</td>
<td>9/30/2016 2nd Date: 10/25/16</td>
<td>2016 grazing season</td>
<td>MOFGA Certification Services, LLC</td>
<td>The temporary variance applies to the organic pasture requirements § 205.237(c) with the following restrictions: 1. Applies to organic ruminant livestock producers in Maine counties (York, Cumberland, Oxford, Kennebec, Lincoln, Franklin, Somerset and Waldo) declared as primary or contiguous drought disaster areas by Secretary Vilsack in calendar year 2016. 2. Applies to non-irrigated pasture only. 3. Ruminants must graze on organic pasture for at least 90 days instead of 120 days during the grazing season. 4. Ruminants must obtain, on average, at least 15 percent of their dry matter intake (DMI) from pasture during the grazing season.</td>
</tr>
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HOOF CARE FOR ORGANIC LIVESTOCK

Approved by MOFGA for Organic Use

- Biozide Gel - Performance Products Inc.
- Copper Sulfate 35, 40 - Pestell Minerals
- Copper Sulphate (Sulfate) - Fondel Commodities
- Penetrate Foot Bath Water Conditioner - IBA Inc.
- New Hoof Concentrate - Bomac Vets Plus
- Foot Salve - Dr. Paul’s Lab
- Hoof Healer Cream - Dr. Sarah's Essentials

Diane Schivera, MOFGA’s Livestock Specialist, has authored several articles* with tips for the prevention and care of hoof disease:

- Adequate copper and zinc in the diet
- Regular trimming
- Dry environment
- Limited grain feeding
- Feeding kelp
- Copper in footbath
- Hydrated lime in footbath
- Homeopathic remedies and nosodes (Hepar sulf or silica) for abscess
- 3% Hydrogen peroxide or Iodine soak or heavy spray
- Lime pad
- Honey
- Debriding wound to bleeding, trim and wrapping feet with epsom salt, Copper sulfate to draw out infection
- MU-SE (Vit.E w/selenium) (sometimes repeated every 3-4 weeks if needed)
- Mix sugar with Betadine (not iodine tincture) to make thick orange paste, lift hoof, vigorously clean out between the two claws, then cleanse with hydrogen peroxide, then wrap with the thick, orange paste, repeat in 3 days.

Prohibited for Organic Use

- Hoof Mate Salve - HUX
- Quick Hit - SSI Corporation
- Restore Hoof Concentrate - IBA Inc.
- Dr. Naylor's Hoof 'n' Heel - Dr. Naylor's

Update on Zinc Sulfate for Organic Use

As you may recall, in 2014 MOFGA helped support a nation-wide effort to request the addition of zinc sulfate to the National List of allowed synthetic materials in organic livestock production. This petition went to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) as planned and has been through an initial review for inclusion as a permitted material in organic management of livestock.

Mary Yurlina from MOFGA Certification and Dave Colson, Diane Schivera, and Eric Sideman from MOFGA Ag Services all participated heavily in discussions in support of zinc sulfate as a topical application and as a footbath in organic livestock production.

The outcome was that the NOSB recommended to NOP that zinc sulfate become an allowed material. There are no specified timelines for a response from the NOP, though MOFGA does plan on asking about progress on the allowance of this material at an upcoming National Organic Coalition event. Therefore, at present, zinc sulfate is still not allowed in organic production as a livestock treatment. MOFGA will keep you posted of any changes to the National List and of any change in the status of zinc sulfate.

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is an expert citizen panel, created by Congress which advises the Secretary of Agriculture on organic rulemaking and policy. No synthetic/non-organic farm inputs or food ingredients are allowed in organic production unless the NOSB has determined that they are safe for human health and the environment, that they are essential, and compliant with other requirements in the law.

* Raising Organic Livestock in Maine: MOFGA Accepted Health Practices, Products and Ingredients by Diane Schivera, MAT, MOFGA’s Organic Livestock Specialist. Last updated September 2016. Go to mofga.org/publications/factsheets to directly access this article.
Annual Inspections

If you are a crop farmer and have not had your inspection yet, please don’t worry. We will inspect your farm this year. Our goal is to have all inspections (for crops/livestock) completed no later than the end of November. If you have had your inspection, you will have received your inspection report, or we are working on getting it in the mail as soon as possible.

Federal Cost Share Reimbursement

All cost share information has been sent to the State of Maine this fall. If you have not received a check for your reimbursement yet, it will be coming soon. In order for a reimbursement to be issued, you must have a W9 on file with the State (Debbie Davis, contact info). If you had a name or address change since your last reimbursement, you must also file a new W9. To download a form please see http://wp.me/a7Qang-Iq.

GMO Labeling Bill Approved by Congress

On July 29, 2016, President Obama signed into law the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard, also known as the GMO labeling law, mandating that food companies disclose GMO ingredients through various means. This law also includes a provision that allows organic food companies to label their products as non-GMO, as organic certification is deemed “sufficient to make a claim regarding the absence of bioengineering in the food, such as ‘not bioengineered’, ‘non-GMO’, or another similar claim.” (7 U.S.C. 1621 Subtitle F Sec. 2 Organically Produced Food)

In response to the law, the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will allow organic meat and poultry to carry label claims stating that they were produced from livestock or poultry not fed genetically engineered feed. FSIS formerly did not allow the term non-GMO on certified organic products without additional documentation.

The USDA is charged with implementing the national mandatory labeling standards and has two years to write the rules.

Organic Hydroponic Task Force Report

In September 2015, USDA’s National Organic Program appointed 16 members, including MOFGA’s own Eric Sideman, to a task force to explore hydroponic and aquaponic production practices and their alignment with USDA organic regulations. The task force was charged with preparing a report to inform the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) as it determines the best path forward on hydroponic and aquaponic production systems. The report was published in July.

Fall National Organic Standards Board Meeting

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met November 16-18 in St. Louis, MO. The meeting agenda and other related meeting materials are available on the Fall 2016 NOSB Meeting Web page at ams.usda.gov/event/nosb-fall-2016-meeting-st-louis-mo. The public comment period is now closed.

Organic Research

The Organic Farming Research Foundation has published an analysis of organic research funded by the USDA Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and Organic Transitions (ORG) competitive research grant programs funded from 2002-2014. The analysis covers 189 organic agriculture research, education, and extension projects. See http://www.ofrf.org/news/ofrf-releases-analysis-usda-research.

USDA National Organic Summary

USDA Market News provides pricing and other related information for commodities and specialty crops that have been grown, processed and certified to USDA’s National Organic Program standards. See www.ams.usda.gov/ market-news/organic.

Food Safety for Produce Farmers

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) has created a report, “Understanding FDA’s FSMA Rule for Produce Farms.” The report provides guidance on the food safety standards that farms must follow to minimize the risks of microbiological contamination that may occur during growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fresh produce. The 29-page report is available at sustainableagriculture.net/publications.

Questions

As always, we are here to help. Please call us with any questions, whether about your inspection and report, or the Cost Share program. We want to make sure you’re getting the best service possible, so please let us know if there is anything you need!
Dear Certification Specialist,

I am trying to work on some fertility issues in my vegetable fields, and I have been thinking of purchasing some chicken manure and/or dairy manure. We do not raise livestock ourselves. What do I need to watch out for?

Signed,
Need Some Manure

Dear Need Some Manure,

Livestock manures are an important resource in organic crop production, especially combined with a whole farm fertility plan, including crop rotation and cover cropping with nitrogen-fixing legumes.

According to the National Organic Program, the source or origin of manure is not restricted but manure from off-farm sources must not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.

Although the source of manure is not restricted you do want to be careful about the manure you purchase. Manure from conventional broiler houses, for example, often used to contain elevated levels of arsenic, which was used as a feed additive to control parasites and increase weight gain. Fortunately, sales of these arsenic-based compounds are being suspended. However, other products, such as cyromazine to control flies, are still being used.

There are various dehydrated manure pellets on the market. If you would like to purchase and use one of them, please contact MOFGA Certification Services to see if it is approved.

Please keep in mind that raw animal manure must be composted unless it is:

- Applied to land used for a crop not intended for human consumption;
- Incorporated into the soil not less than 120 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion has direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles; or
- Incorporated into the soil not less than 90 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles.

Records should be kept on application dates and rates for all manure as well as the harvest date of your crops. Check out the MOFGA Certification Services Practice Manual for more details on the use of manure.

New Organic Red Star Yeast Products

This past month we received notification from Red Star Yeast Company, LLC that they have certified the following yeasts: Compressed Yeast, Nutritional Yeast Flakes, SAF Pro Relax 40 and Cream Yeast. These yeasts are commercially available.

The Compressed Yeast, Nutritional Yeast Flakes and SAF Pro Relax 40 are certified at their Cedar Rapids, IA facility. The Cream Yeast is certified at their Headland, AL facility.

Included with the information we received are the organic certificates, Technical Data Sheets and Safety Data Sheets for the compressed and cream yeasts as well as a printout of what appears to be a power point presentation entitled “Organic Fresh Yeast Baking Tests” comparing their organic to conventional yeasts. It appears to take a bit more organic yeast to produce the same quality loaf of bread as the conventional yeast. I do not see any Organic Yeast on their website [www.redstaryeast.net](http://www.redstaryeast.net) so is probably best to contact them directly. You can take a look at the Technical Data Sheets here: [http://wp.me/a7Qang-QO](http://wp.me/a7Qang-QO).

Information is available from Richard Ward, Quality Assurance Clerk, Richard.Ward@lsaf.com or 414-615-4057. Red Star Yeast Company LLC (a division of Lesaffre Yeast Corporation) can be contacted at 7475 West Main Street, Milwaukee, WI 53214. Phone number is 877-677-7000.
2016-17 calendar

Events & Training

Dec

Dec 2 – Maine Food Network Gathering Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Wells Conference Center, University of Maine, Orono. More information: www.mainefoodstrategy.org or email mfs@mainefoodstrategy.org; $30 / Registration deadline: Nov. 25.

Dec 5 – Farmland Access Conference Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Dr., Augusta. Join Maine Farmland Trust along with MOFGA and others for a day of discussions on the challenges of providing for a farm’s future when a farmer is ready to retire, and how next generation farmers can position themselves to take on the stewardship of farmlands in transition. For info: mainefarmlandtrust.org.

Dec 6 – New England Farm Succession School for senior farmers and farm couples looking toward retirement and farm transition, in Augusta. (Other dates in Concord, N.H., and Randolph, Vt.) Register ($300 per farmer or farm couple) at 603-357-1600 or landforgood.org/rsvp.

Dec 8 – Kitchen Licensing Workshop - MOFGA’s Common Ground Education Center, Unity, ME 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dec 14 – Expand Your Tunnel Vision: High Tunnel Production Conference. 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH. Cosponsored by MOFGA. Designed for growers that have some experience growing in high tunnels. Registration http://bit.ly/2ePCiUC

Jan

Jan 10 – MOFGA Day at the Maine Agricultural Trades Show. Tuesday, Maine Civic Center, Augusta. MOFGA members are encouraged to attend the Association’s Annual Meeting, which will be held from 1:30 to 3:00 in the Piscataquis/Sagadahoc Room.

Jan 10-12 – State of Maine Agricultural Trades Show. Sponsored by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and provides promotion opportunities for businesses and organizations on the tradeshows floor, but also houses various lectures, certification courses and annual meetings throughout its duration. http://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/market_promotion/ag_trade_show.shtml

Feb

Feb 2 – Ellsworth, Feb 7 – Bangor, Feb 9 – Norway - Growers meetings for farmers interested in becoming MOFGA certified organic. Details when available.

Mar

March 4 – Spring Growth Conference, Unity. 9am-4pm Keynote speaker Will Brinton and a panel of farmers focus on soil microbiology.

March 11 – Organic Orcharding Workshop: Pruning, locations TBD. Learn to prune fruit trees to encourage vigorous growth, heavy fruit set, and quality fruit yield. Workshop is geared towards beginners and experienced growers.

March 25 – Organic Orcharding Workshop: Renovating Old Trees, locations TBD. Do you have any old trees on your land that you would like to bring back into production? Attend this workshop and learn to renovate and upkeep your heritage trees.

March 26 – Seed Swap & Scion Exchange, Unity. Special All-Day Event! Gardeners and Orchardists are invited to bring their seeds, scionwood and cuttings to share and participate in educational workshops. Free!

Apr

April 5 – Grow Your Own Garden, 6-9 pm in locations throughout the state. An evening course designed to provide gardeners with essential skills and knowledge needed to make a transition from conventional to organic gardening.

April 8 – Organic Orcharding Workshop: Grafting Fruit Trees, Unity or Mount Desert. Learn to propagate and reproduce your favorite fruit tree varieties. Participants will graft trees to take home and plant.