



ORGANIC NEWS



FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

In 2007, the Iowa lawmakers passed Farm to School legislation to establish a program that would:

- Link elementary, secondary, public and non-public schools with Iowa farmers;
- Provide schools with fresh and minimally processed Iowa grown food for inclusion in school meals and snacks;
- Encourage children to develop healthy eating habits.

This program is being administered through the Agricultural Diversification and Market Development Bureau at IDALS. We are currently seeking growers interested in participating in this program. As a grower, this may open a new direct marketing opportunity to local school districts. This is also an opportunity to help support your community by providing the children fresher

and more healthful foods. It is our hope that this program will help instill in the children an appreciation and understanding of the food they eat, as well as to help them take a vested interest in their environment. As the program develops, we hope hands on learning (including farm visits, cooking demonstrations and school gardening) will be one of the benefits the children will get to experience.

At this time, we are establishing the ground work for this program. This includes compiling a list of individuals interested in being part of a "pilot project." If you are interested in helping us establish this very important program, please contact Maury Wills at 515-281-5783 or by e-mail: maury.wills@iowaagriculture.gov. Your name will be added to a database for possible future use.

Thank you!!

OUR FAMILY IS GROWING, MEET ANDREA MCKERN

Our bureau has hired a temporary staff person to assist us with the IDALS Organic Program. We are very fortunate to be able to work with Andrea McKern. Andrea is a graduate of Iowa State University where she has spent the past seven years working for Dr. Kathleen Delate in the Organic Ag Program. In her experience at ISU, she

worked with 20 different organic crops. Andrea has been hired as an organic materials specialist and is currently reviewing crop input labels that are being submitted. You may reach Andrea by e-mailing her at andrea.mckern@iowaagriculture.gov or by calling our main number 515-281-7656.

April 1, 2008

Issue 6

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Deadline for IDALS certification **5/31**

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New organic livestock application procedures
- Farm to School Program opportunities
- 70% receive early bird discount



Thanks to all of you who worked hard to get your application submitted by the early deadline of March 15. We can happily announce that nearly 70% of you beat the deadline, which saved you \$125.00 each. For those who have yet to submit your application, the **final**

deadline is May 31, 2008, but you will have to pay \$200.00 for the application fee. Crop applications postmarked after that date will not be accepted.

We are extremely pleased with this huge response. But now, please be patient as we take the time to review the applications and arrange for inspections. You will be contacted by mail when your application has been reviewed and what, if anything, is still needed.

Our inspectors try to inspect new applicant operations and early-season vegetable producers first so they can be certified. Our inspectors also try to do as many inspections as possible within an area when they are visiting a specific area. Remember, if you were certified in 2007 by IDALS, you can continue to sell your product using your current certificate until a new one is issued.

MINIMIZING RISKS

Great news for organic producers. The registry that is currently used by beekeepers to protect their hives from harmful pesticides will soon be replaced with a more user-friendly registry. The new registry will also be expanded to include pesticide-sensitive crops such as orchard, vineyards, fruit and vegetable farms and certified organic farms. Letters are currently being sent to inform eligible individuals of the Sensitive Crops Registry. The registry will provide producers with another tool to help protect their specialty crop farms whose operation could be severely impacted by pesticide drift or misapplication.

The goal of the Sensitive Crops Program is to establish and maintain a sensitive crops internet data-base that will alert pesticide applicators of crops that are particularly sensitive to pesticides. To become part of the Sensitive Crops Directory you need to complete a Producer Registration Form.

pesticide applicators. In the future you will be able to access your information on the IDALS website through the use of a password assigned to you. You will be reminded yearly through an e-mail to update your information if you wish to remain on the database.

In addition, IDALS will make available sensitive crop signage visible to both ground and aerial pesticide applicators. More information on this signage will be forthcoming later this spring.

If you have not received a letter and think you may be eligible for inclusion in this registry, you may contact Paul Ovrom, Project Manager for Grape and Wine Development at 515-242-5028 or by e-mail at paul.ovrom@iowaagriculture.gov.



This is a voluntary program for both producers and

LOCAL OPTIONS ABOUND

While the source may have always been there, it may not have been one you have considered. Recently a grower approached me with an obstacle in selling fresh produce to a local nursing home. After contacting the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), we finally have some clarification. They have no specific rule or regulation that addresses the purchase or use of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. DIA/ Division of Health Facilities has recently issued information regarding the purchase and use of fresh produce in nursing facilities. The following is taken from that document: "All practices related to the safe procurement, storage, preparation and service of any food in a health care facility would also apply to locally grown fruits and vegetables." If you have attempted to sell produce to a

nursing home or hospital in the past and have been turned away because you were not "an approved source," this may have opened a new door for you.

At a meeting I attended recently, there was a lot of interest from the dieticians of nursing homes and hospitals to gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Don't miss this opportunity to expand your options and share your bounty with others in your community. If you would like more information or to see the entire statement, please feel free to contact me at 515-281-7657 or tammy.stotts@iowaagriculture.gov.

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BRAVO!!

Here is a good news story from one of our own. Forward your expansion or success stories to us and we will try to help share your good news with others.

American Natural Soy, Inc., Cherokee, Iowa, recently featured in the *Wall Street Journal* announced yesterday the completion of an expansion that will increase their plant capacity allowing them to process and refine up to 80 million pounds of organic and non-GMO soybean, canola, safflower and sunflower oil per year. This expansion, along with the recent addition of 2 million pounds of crude oil storage, will strategically place American Natural Soy as the largest indoor environmentally controlled or-



ganic tank farm in the world, consisting of 85 identity preserved food grade cone bottom tanks.

American Natural Soy, Inc. is a leader in providing innovative organic processing of oils, flour and meal. They process soybeans, canola, sunflower, safflower and flax seeds while supplying their customers with unsurpassed service, quality, satisfaction and expertise. They are committed to finding solutions and building long-term strategic relationships giving their customers an advantage with superior and unique products. By fulfilling customers' requests and supplying what the marketplace seeks, they have established themselves as innovators in developing unique processes for niche markets.

ORGANIC BUY/SELL SPOT

Wanted

- Certified organic lamb
- 2008 organic popcorn

For Sale

- TMR vertical feed mixer for sale. It is a Trio-Lay mixer, Solo Mix 1000 model.

Send us your e-mail request and we will post the information here. The role of IDALS will be to forward your e-mail information to interested parties, so please include all contact information in your e-mail. It's free; and you have an interested audience. You may contact Tammy Stotts by e-mail at tammy.stotts@iowaagriculture.gov.

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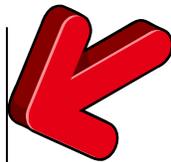
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SPRING CLEANING???



SAVE YOUR SEED LABELS!! Inspections are just around the corner, don't forget to keep those seed packages or labels that will need to be reviewed.



CHECK IT OUT

We have a new web address and look. You can now reach us on the web by going to <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/>. Our e-mail addresses have also changed. While the old addresses will still work for a period of time, please include our new information in your address book now. The format used is our first name followed by a period and our last name followed

by @iowaagriculture.gov.

The organic directory is not posted yet but should be soon. Updates to the directory will be done as soon as time permits. Make sure when you receive these, to fill them out and return them. We are making every effort to spread the organic word but without your information, our efforts are futile.

STREAMLINING THE ORGANIC PAPERWORK PROCESS FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

IDALS Organic Certification Program is always striving to lessen the burden of paperwork required for organic certification. In 2006, a new system for managing the organic system plan for processors was initiated. In the past, the entire organic system plan (application paperwork) needed to be sent in every year. The major improvement for the processors was that the same organic system plan is used year after year. Only updates to the paperwork are mailed in. While it was a lot of work initially to switch to the new system, it received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from the processors because it saved postage costs and time to apply in future years. It also saves postage and time for IDALS. This win-

ter, this system was expanded to organic livestock farmers. Meetings for livestock producers were held in the areas of the state with high concentrations of organic livestock farmers - Northeast Iowa and Southeast Iowa. The office staff enjoyed meeting the farmers in person and found the trips rewarding. The farmers worked extra hard to get their chores done, and the turnouts were good. Hopefully, it was helpful for all the farmers who attended. We are pleased with the completeness of the new livestock organic farm system plans that have been submitted thus far. This new application procedure will be evaluated and possibly expanded to the crop operations if it works out favorably for the livestock producers.