

Organic Farms Can Be Certified

PORT CLINTON (Schuylkill Co.) — Farmers desiring to have their farms certified by the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) should move quickly to qualify for the 1992 round of inspections, the president of the state's OCIA Chapter No. 1 announced.

The OCIA, with more than 1,700 certified organic farmers in 10 countries, is the world's largest and best-known certifying agency. OCIA has two chapters in Pennsylvania.

Chapter president Jodi Snyder of Great Bend Organic Farm said

the organization is planning to conduct its annual round of farm visits to certify OCIA members in May and early June. About 30 farms were certified in the state last year.

"We're receiving more inquiries than ever before," Snyder said, "and we welcome as members any farmers who are committed to the OCIA principles of farming without synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides."

A basic requirement for OCIA certification is that a farm, or the portion of it for which certifica-

tion is sought, must have been without synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides for at least three years. Certified farms must follow rigid standards governing the use of off-farm inputs and must carry out soil improvement programs.

"The guiding principle of the OCIA is soil improvement," Snyder said. "Our chapter is eager to enroll farmers who are interested in moving their operations away from high chemical usage. Once they have converted to a non-chemical approach they can become eligible for certification,

which will open their products to new markets."

Snyder said that she and Preston Boop of Mifflinburg, head of the chapter's certification committee, can provide interested farmers with more information on OCIA membership and the requirements for certification.

Certification is available for field, vegetables, and fruit-crop operations as well as livestock and poultry producers, she said. The OCIA also certifies processors, brokers, wholesalers, and retailers who deal in organic foods.

Snyder's address is P.O. Box

158, Port Clinton, PA 19549. Boop can be reached at Briar Patch Organic Farms, R.D. #2, Box 168, Mifflinburg, PA 17844.

"Certification by OCIA can bring important economic benefits to farmers, but there is more to the organization than that," Snyder said. "The OCIA is a self-help organization whose main purpose is to inspire farmers to farm in environmentally sound ways. Improvement of our soils is a centerpiece of this approach."

Mounting consumer demand for food products grown without agricultural chemicals has provided a strong impetus to the organic farming movement here and around the world, Snyder said. Additional impetus is coming from the federal government's new-found interest in farming with less chemicals and synthetic fertilizers — the so-called sustainable agriculture movement.

Snyder said that the OCIA inspection program conducted through Pennsylvania Chapter No. 1 is also open to farmers in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New York, and New Jersey, which do not yet have OCIA chapters.

"A prerequisite for certification is that a farmer must become a member of our organization," she said. "Once a grower is approved for membership, he or she may then seek certification. We feel that many farms in our area already qualify for certification. Farmers who want to be a part of OCIA are likely to find more reliable and more lucrative markets for their products."

Springer Receives Distinguished Award

HAMMONTON, N.J. — Dr. John "Jack" Springer, extension specialist in plant pathology, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, recently received the Pesticide Association of New Jersey's Distinguished Service Award. Springer was recognized for his outstanding activities in pesticide education.

Springer began his career with Rutgers University Cooperative Extension Service 28 years ago, specializing in fruit and vegetable disease management and control. Later, he also assumed responsibility for field and forage crops.

His research and extension work also included nematode control in these crops. He developed and annually updated the Vegetable Disease Control Recommendations through 1982. To the present, he has also developed and updated the disease and nematode control recommendations for fruit and field and forage crops.

Springer has conducted research on disease and nematode control and has tested thousands of pesticides for their efficacy. The results of his various projects have resulted in approximately 345

publications, as well as speaking engagements with students, farmers, plant pathologists, agricultural professionals, and the agribusiness industry. In addition to these accomplishments, Springer has:

- Developed a management program to increase peach tree life by 10 years in orchards affected with peach decline.
- Discovered soybean cyst nematodes and developed control strategies.
- Developed tests to easily identify and manage fungicide resistance in apples and peaches in New Jersey.
- Developed reduced-rate fungicide control strategies for peaches.

Springer was on the first steering committee of Rutgers Research and Development Center

in Bridgeton, and was involved in its development to the research facility it is today.

He has served the Pesticide Association of New Jersey and Rutgers University well by working on numerous committees. Notably, he has served on the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Pesticide Registration Committee, the USDA/ARS National Soil Fumigation Assessment Committee, and the USDA/ARS Carbofuran Impact Assessment Committee.

In addition, Springer has held many positions in the American Phytopathological Society, Cumberland Shenandoah Fruit Workers, Mid-Atlantic Vegetable Workers, and the Apple and Pear Disease Workers groups. He is also the editor of the publication, the "New Jersey Grower."


Eastern Shore Farmers May Be Eligible For Aid

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — When President George Bush declared a major disaster last month in Delaware because of damages and losses caused by a severe coastal storm, farmers in contiguous counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore also became eligible to apply for loans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration.

The affected counties in Maryland are Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Wicomico, and Worcester.

Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Robert L. Walker urges all farmers in those counties who think they might be eligible to contact the Delaware Office of the Farmers Home Administration, 4611 South Dupont Highway, Box 400, Camden, DE 19934, (302) 697-4305.

All emergency loan applications demonstrating physical and production losses must be in the hands of the Farmers Home Administration by Oct. 6, 1992.



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