

# Organic Certification Program Applications Available

BINGHAMTON, N.Y.—Many farmers are becoming interested in the potential for sales in the growing market for organically produced food. These farmers, and the consumers who seek to buy their products, will benefit from the Organic Certification Program of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc. (NOFA-NY).

The Organic Certification Program of NOFA-NY announces the availability of the updated organic production Standards Manual and Application Packet for 2000. The NOFA-NY Organic Certification Program offers standards for the certification of vegetables, fruits, grains and beans, livestock,

milk production, maple syrup, cheese, yogurt, wine, sprouts, greenhouse production and for companies handling and processing organic products. New in 2000 are standards for the production of Tilapia fish.

The NOFA-NY Organic Certification Program is one of the largest in the Northeast in both number of farms and in acreage certified. The program certifies farms and processors in New York and Pennsylvania and has been growing steadily since its inception in 1984. NOFA-NY offers a highly respected, third party certification process that is well recognized in the marketplace.

With the increase in demand for organic food

sources, organic certification can be a valuable marketing tool for the farmer.

"Many wholesalers, stores and restaurants require certification of the organic foods they purchase. As consumer demand rises so does consumer awareness, and increasingly consumers are looking for certified products as well," said Patricia Kane, administrator of the NOFA-NY program.

Farmer experience in the program has shown organic certification to be particularly valuable when a new farm is working to break into established markets or when an existing farm seeks to expand its production and sales.

Certification is also a valu-

able asset for the consumer of farm products. "Without organic certification, the only way a consumer can be sure of how their food is produced is to visit the farm. I don't think many consumers have time for that," said Kane. "The NOFA-NY label on a product is an assurance that it was organically produced and many customers have come to depend on this assurance when making food choices."

The heart of the certification process is the standards manual. It is the standards that outline what practices are acceptable in organic production. Kane pointed out that, "The standards manual is more than just a set of rules for the farmer. The standards manual is a valuable reference for all farmers interested in alternative farming methods, whether or not they have an interest in certification."

The standards suggest a comprehensive alternative to conventional farming methods and any interested producer is sure to discover options that can help solve problems and improve profitability on their farm. It should be encouraging to know that the methods out-

lined in the organic certification standards are successfully used on farms ranging from half-acre intensively cropped market gardens to dairy farms and 600-acre grain farms.

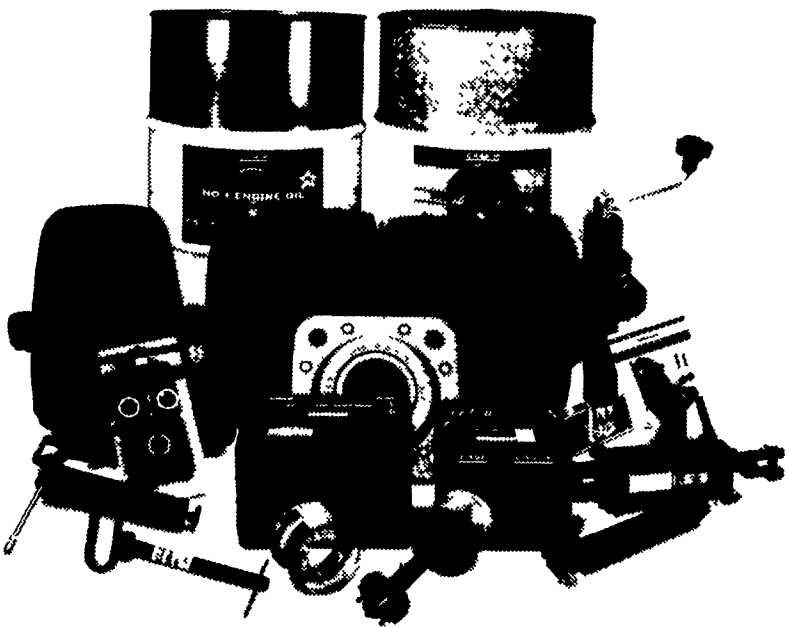
Also included in the 100+ page booklet are a series of appendices detailing the development of organic farming methods including Effective Use of Fresh Manure, Organic Greenhouse Production, Organic and Untreated Seed Sources and Organic Vegetable Transplants and Nursery Stock, Approved Materials List for 2000, Dealing with Pesticide Spray Drift, Compost Basics, Spreader Stickers and Spray Adjuvants, and Cover Crops at a Glance.

To order a copy of the 2000 NOFA-NY Organic Certification Standards Manual, send check or money order in the amount of \$15 payable to NOFA-NY, to NOFA-NY Organic Certification Program, 26 Towpath Road, Binghamton, NY 13904.

For more information on the activities of NOFA-NY or additional information on the certification process, contact the certification program office at (607) 724-9851.

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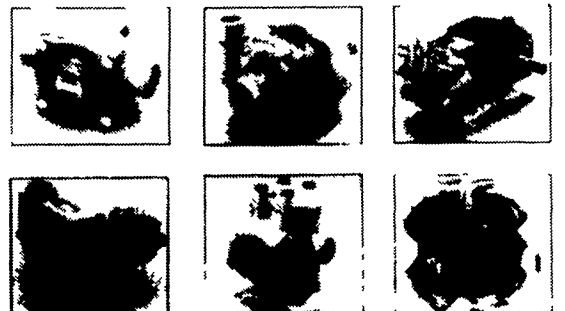
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