

National Organic Standards: What Do They Mean In Pa.?

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Eberly processes about 20,000 organic broilers per week and 6000 organic turkeys per year part of his specialty poultry ration.

Now that the USDA is allowing use of the (USDA Organic) label, "we should see an increase in sales," he said.

Eberly noted that the new standards should also help eliminate "fraudulent companies" that sell meats under misleading labels.

PCO member David Fogarty-Harnish has a mixed response to the new regulations. He and his wife, Peggy, grow 35 different types of vegetables and run a

community-supported agriculture (CSA) operation on Scarecrow Hill Farm near Ephra-

"I think it's positive that the customers because they want to be certified they're getting certified organic," Fogarty-Harnish said.

He also believes that the rules can benefit smaller operations such as Scarecrow Hill to the degree that they require all producers abide by the same book.

From our standpoint, it's good because our competitors following the same rules," he said.

At the same time, Fogarty-Harnish is concerned that the national standards have diluted some of the practices organic growers adhere to as a

Wilson Elected

WORCROSS, Ga. — Michael M. Wilson, president and chief operating officer (COO) of Agrium Inc., was elected chairman of the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) Board of Directors at a recent meeting.

Mike Wilson brings an impressive background of achievement and leadership experience and is certainly welcome as a talent in this key responsibility as chairman for the year ahead," said Dr. David W. Dibb, PPI president.

Wilson joined Agrium (formerly known as Cominco Fertilizers) in 2000 with more than 25 years of management and executive management experience in the chemical industry. His most recent position before coming to Agrium was as executive vice president and president, Methanol, with Methanex Corporation in Vancouver, B.C.

At Agrium, Mr. Wilson is responsible for North American wholesale (operations and technical services, marketing and distribution, and supply management), North American retail.

matter of principle.

"Some things have been watered-down to include larger farms," Fogarty-Harnish said. He pointed out that Scarecrow Hill production standards are "actually exceeding the rules."

"Some small farmers think the name 'organic' was stolen from them."

According to PCO certifier Sandoval, the increasing involvement of larger companies in the organic business should help validate the industry as a major part of the food system.

"We're hoping that consumers will see that no matter where they go, organic means the same thing," she said. "It's not just a fad anymore."

Growers, processors and handlers of organic agricultural products will gather to hear the latest on the National Organic Standards and certification program and to honor the founding directors of Pennsylvania Certified Organic.

PCO will conduct its Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet Jan. 22 at 4 p.m. at the Farm Show Complex, Room B, in Harrisburg.

The meeting will begin with a question and answer session on the National Organic Standards. Several speakers will address the group, including Leslie Zuck, PCO executive director; Jeff Moyer, farm

manager of the Rodale Institute Farm; and Brian Snyder, executive director of Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture.

Pennsylvania Certified Organic is a nonprofit organization that educates and certifies organic farmers within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. PCO was established in 1997 with the goal of assuring the integrity of organic products through education

and certification. The organization serves approximately 350 producers in Pennsylvania.

The meeting and supper are free for PCO members. Preregistration is required for the meal. To preregister or to find out how you can become a member, contact PCO at 1919 General Potter Hwy., Suite 1, Centre Hall, PA 16828, (814) 364-1344, or at info@paorganic.org.

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