

What is not acceptable? "Water, Palm and coconut oil and essential oils of lavender." This is misbranding under the FDA law and would tie a certifier of an organic product to an "untruthful" label. Why is this not "truthful"? Because the oil is gone – and the new chemical is not truthfully described, as it excludes the lye.

While many certifiers may not want the responsibility of determining FDA label compliance, they need to decide if, 1) they want their name and, potentially, the USDA seal tied to a product that may be subject to FDA regulatory action and a charge of "misbranding"; and 2) is the certification of a synthetic product allowed under OFPA (see the definition of "synthetic" below)? Are you having fun yet?

I try to look at the cosmetic industry as parallel to the early standards we worked on for processed foods. I remember fighting with Brian Baker in 1992 about how many tests I had to do on my well water. The full gamut would have cost \$9,000.00. Brian and I settled on total plate count, *E. coli*, coliform, salmonella, and nitrates (our farm was across from a chicken ranch). We had to understand the potential problems and attempt to account for them in the certification process – the "precautionary principle". I think this principle is much harder to express in the complex chemistry of the cosmetic formulator. Just wait until someone tells you that an input doesn't exist any more – because it became something else so now something else "must be organic". I always want to ask if the chemical fairies took it away – but I've learned not to be so glib.

Here are a few definitions for reference. Most of them come from the Title 21 CFR used in the industry. A few are from other sources.

Definitions:

Cosmetics - (1) articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body or any part thereof for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance, and (2) articles intended for use as a component of any such articles; except that such term shall not include soap. (From CFR Title 21)

IOIA Accreditation News
IOIA offers Accreditation in 3 categories as a membership service available to IOIA Inspector Members with at least 2 years of inspection experience in the category.
Contact the IOIA office for application forms.
The IOIA Accreditation Program is available to review on our website.
Next deadline: March 1

New in 2003:
Jill Forrester (Crop)
Leanne McCormick (Crops, Livestock, Processing)

Renewals:
Luis Brenes (Crop, Processing)
Sandra Conway (Crop, Livestock, Processing)
Joyce Ford (Crop, Livestock, Processing)
Stephen Grealy (Processing)
Billy Hunter (Crop, Livestock, Processing)
Al Johnson (Crop, Livestock, Processing)

The Accreditation Review Panel:
ARP Chair: Stephen Grealy
Inspector Members: Linda Kaner, Monique Scholz
Certifier rep: John McKeon
Consumer rep: Ami Greenberg

Saponification - A reaction in which an ester is heated with an alkali, such as sodium hydroxide, producing a free alcohol and an acid salt, especially alkaline hydrolysis of a fat or oil to make soap. (From Answers.com)

Misbranding -

(a) Among representations in labeling of a cosmetic which render such cosmetic misbranded is a false or misleading representation with respect to another cosmetic or a food, drug, or device.

(b) The labeling of a cosmetic which contains two or more ingredients may be misleading by reason (among other reasons) of the designation of such cosmetic in such labeling by a name which includes or suggests the name of one or more but not all such ingredients, even though the names of all such ingredients are stated elsewhere in the labeling. (From CFR Title 21)

Soap - (not a definition but good info).

In its definition of the term cosmetic, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act specifically excludes soap. The term "soap" is nowhere defined in the act. In administering the act, the Food and Drug Administration interprets the term "soap"

to apply only to articles that meet the following conditions:

(1) The bulk of the nonvolatile matter in the product consists of an alkali salt of fatty acids and the detergent properties of the article are due to the alkali-fatty acid compounds; and

(2) The product is labeled, sold, and represented only as soap. (From CFR Title 21)

Synthetic - a substance that is formulated or manufactured by a chemical process or by a process that chemically changes a substance extracted from naturally occurring plant, animal, or mineral sources, except that such term shall not apply to substances created by naturally occurring biological processes. (From OFPA). (So – is the addition of lye to oil "naturally occurring"? – the same question could be asked about most multi-ingredient food products.) ☛

NAL Resources

Access to loads of useful information is available thru the National Ag Library site – check out the resources galore at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/ofp/>

Falls Brook Centre Hosts 2nd IOIA Training

By Janine Gibson

On The Farm

IOIA held its second training at Falls brook Centre in Knowlesville, New Brunswick this fall. The farm course took place from the 15th – 18th of October, with a total of 17 attendees. Training coordinators were Janine Gibson and Monique Scholz. As is often the case, attendees came from all over the world, one from Germany via the west coast, many from the Maritimes, the Midwest and East Coast. Monique designed some excellent interactive activities based on a variety of certifier paperwork examples and presented an in-depth session on maple syrup inspection. The recipient of the most outrageous statement award was Eric Frank, who during a discussion of the blending of low grade and high grade maple syrup said “That’s why I drink single malt scotch!”

Eric, IOIA wishes you all the best in your continued high spirited adventures in organic agriculture!



Inspecting the storage facility at a local mill

At The Mill

A total of 11 students participated in the IOIA New Brunswick Basic Processing course held from the 19th-22nd of October 2005. The training coordinator was Janine Gibson. The class was a gathering of backgrounds from private certification agency personnel, a retired member of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, two ISO auditors, a Quality Manager from a large cereals processor and a former USDA meat inspector!

After a participatory session diagramming Process Flow charts, we were glad to welcome Guest speaker Brian Ives presenting his long time experience with designing and evaluating basic HACCP systems. Brian also briefed us on Pest Control vectors of contamination and was an asset to the Sanitation presentation and discussion. Two of the three Process Flow Diagrams the groups developed were based on processing livestock, demonstrating the experience many of the group members had in that arena, including Tom Cassan the winner of the Outrageous Statement Award. Language alert here as Tom won with

“We fed those cows cornflakes and they could s@#% through the eye of a needle at 30 feet!”



Healthier Food Uses of Plastics

Plastics are widely used to store and package foods and beverages. In IATP's latest Smart Guide, there are tips for parents and children on how to avoid environmental and health risks from plastic packaging of food. The *Smart Plastics Guide* is the latest in a series of consumer guides put out by IATP. Other guides report on meat and dairy, produce and fish.

- * Smart Plastics Guide
- * Smart Meat and Dairy Guide
- * Smart Produce Guide
- * Smart Fish Guide

Check out these PDF files at the IATP website, www.iatp.org

PA Livestock Training

By Jim Riddle

All 19 students successfully completed the IOIA Livestock Inspector Training held October 19-21 at the Midway Mennonite Center, Lititz, PA. The course, which focused on dairy inspection, was co-sponsored by Pennsylvania Certified Organic. Jim Riddle was lead trainer, with Emily Brown Rosen and Al Johnson helping out as training assistants. Dr. Hue Karreman gave two talks on livestock health and health care inputs. The field trip inspection was conducted at an Amish dairy farm. As Jim Riddle said, in winning the Outrageous Statement award, "All right class - back to breeding!"



Process Inspector Training in Taiwan

By Jim Riddle

Students practiced their question-asking and note-taking skills during the field trip to the Joy Spring Soy Sauce Company, part of the IOIA Process Inspector Training Course held September 24-27, 2005, at the Transworld Institute of Technology in Douliou, Taiwan. Jim Riddle was lead trainer, with Emily Brown Rosen training assistant. The course was co-sponsored by Quality Certification Services and the Integrated Agricultural Development Foundation. 23 people successfully completed the course.



Livestock Inspector Training in Taiwan

By Jim Riddle

Fourteen students completed the IOIA Organic Livestock Inspector Training held September 29-October 2, 2005, at the Transworld Institute of Technology, Douliou, Taiwan. The lead trainer was Jim Riddle and Emily Brown Rosen was training assistant. The field trip inspection was conducted at the Chauhua Animal Propagation Station Livestock Research Institute, a government research facility focused on swine and geese production and propagation. While the facility is not organic, the field trip and post field trip discussions were very educational. The exam occurred on Saturday evening, instead of Sunday morning as originally planned, due to an impending typhoon. No one was blown away.



Advanced Organic Inspector Training- Organic Fiber- November 2005

By Harriet Behar

IOIA, OTA (Organic Trade Association) and TOCMC (Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative) sponsored the first advanced organic inspector organic fiber training in Lubbock Texas and environs on November 11-November 13, 2005. A group of almost 30 people, a mix of 1/3 from the fiber industry and 2/3 experienced organic inspectors, filled their brains with information about organic cotton and wool production, spinning, dyeing, weaving and knitting. This mix of attendees was valuable to both sectors, with the attendees learning from each other as well as from our excellent speakers.



On the first day, we spent half of our time in the classroom. Presentations included a brief overview of the OTA's AOS (American Organic Standards) organic fiber standards from **Grace Gershuny** and organic fiber labeling challenges in the U.S. from **Harriet Behar** and **Fred Ehlert**. **Sam Moore** from Burlington Chemical gave us a stimulating presentation concerning cotton dyeing and processing and an overview of other global certification activities that oversee fiber processing with environmental and human safety



Sam Moore of Burlington Chemical

standards and certify fiber dyeing and finishing processes. **Matthew Mole** (VT organic fiber) gave a brief summary of organic wool processing and **Kayleen Anderson Hanna** (Sew Ecological Organic Cotton Textiles) took us through an exercise determining the percentage organic ingredients there could be in an organic brimmed ball cap.

For the second half of the first day, **Khawar Arain** from the Texas Tech University International Textile Center gave us a detailed tour of their cotton processing facility, where they receive raw cleaned (ginned) cotton bales, blend them together, card and comb them, spin the cotton on various machines, warp it on beams and eventually weave it into cloth. We were able to view a variety of machinery, as well as identify possible organic control points in the process. Our group of organic inspectors was enthralled with the various processes and greatly enjoyed seeing the process from raw organic cotton, to beautiful organic fabric.

The second day, our group was taken on a bus tour lead by **LaRhea Pepper** and

sponsored by the TOCMC. As LaRhea stated, "cotton is king" in the region around Lubbock, and we saw many cotton fields with both unharvested cotton and large "modules" of harvested cotton ready to be taken to the gin. We visited a USDA cotton quality classification laboratory (12,000 samples reviewed daily), a cotton ginning facility, a cotton storage warehouse, and the farm of LaRhea and **Terry Pepper**, where we saw both organic and nonorganic cotton growing as well as watching Terry mechanically harvest his cotton with his stripper. LaRhea and Terry hosted a dinner at their home for our entire group. LaRhea's excellent organizational skills, knowledge and warm, engaging personality made for an enjoyable and educational day for our group.

Fred Ehlert gave a 2 hour presentation on how to inspect a variety of organic fiber processing facilities specifically for inspectors and certification agency personnel on Sunday morning. His information helped the group to focus all of the knowledge from the previous 2 days into a format where organic inspectors could use it in their work.



Khawar Arain, Texas Tech Textile Center director and tour leader 2005
extraordinaire



Modules being loaded into gin

We reviewed various materials used in fiber growing and processing, and the differences between organic fibers and nonorganic ones. Organic fiber is a young sector of the organic industry, with both farmers and processors facing challenges in production and marketing of their products. However, the further education of consumers on the benefits of organic fibers for clothing, bed linens, etc. and the enthusiasm of the organic farmers and processors for their products should bring a bright future for the continued growth of organic fibers in the marketplace. É

Mexico Passes Nation Organic Law

By Homero Blas Bustamante

Dateline: 8 December 2005

After a long legislative process, the "Law of Organic Products" (LOP) was definitively passed into law on December 8, 2005, to regulate the Organic industry in Mexico. The law establishes a six month period, once it is published in the *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, to elaborate the regulations under which this official program will operate.

México tiene ya una Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO), después de un largo proceso legislativo, hoy fue aprobada en definitiva para ser publicada en el Diario Oficial de la Federación, la misma Ley establece un plazo de seis meses para elaborar la reglamentación de un programa oficial en México.

The LOP authorizes the Secretariat for Food, Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (SAGARPA) to coordinate a national Organic Program, but also contemplates the active participation of a National Council for Organic Products, which involves representatives from all sectors of the organic industry, including producers, traders, research institutions, certification agencies, and consumers.

La LPO le da facultades a la Secretaria de Agricultura Ganadería Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA) para coordinar un programa nacional orgánico, pero también considera la participación activa de un Consejo Nacional de Productos Orgánicos donde involucra a todos los sectores como representantes de productores, comercializadores, Instituciones de investigación, consumidores, organismos de certificación y consumidores.

One important characteristic of this law is that it was developed and proposed by the organic sector and has widespread support by organic producers. The LOP is founded on the National Constitution of the United States of México and is designed to promote organic production, and internal commerce of organic products as well as exports. Most importantly, it favors the development of organic agriculture as a means for promoting sustainable development and the conservation of Mexico's natural resources.

Una de las características de esta Ley es que fue elaborada y propuesta desde el sector orgánico y mantiene el respaldo de los productores. La LPO tiene sus fundamentos en la Constitución Nacional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos y esta

diseñada para el impulso de la producción nacional, el comercio interno, las exportaciones pero sobre todo para favorecer el desarrollo de la industria orgánica en torno al desarrollo sustentable y cuidado de los recursos naturales.

A group of experts and representatives from the various sectors known as the National Organic Products Commission are now working on the regulations for the new law and it is hoped that México will have a its National Organic Program up and running within six months. México is hoping to take advantage of the various Free Trade agreements that are in place with Canada, USA, Japan and the European Community by negotiating equivalencies which will favor the export of organic products. It is hoped that this law will serve as a catalyst for growth in rural areas of México.

Un grupo de expertos y representantes que han trabajado en nombre de la Comisión Nacional de Productos Orgánicos están en este momento trabajando ya en los reglamentos de la Ley y se espera que México tenga en menos de seis meses un Programa Nacional para la Productos Orgánicos de los mas modernos del mundo, México espera aprovechar las ventajas que tiene con la firma de diferentes tratados comerciales con Estados Unidos, Canadá, Japón y la Comunidad Europea, en el sentido de negociar equivalencias en favor de las exportaciones, el sector espera que esta Ley sea un detonante sobre todo en el sector rural.

The relationship between national markets and small producer groups is considered fundamental. Certification of organized small farmer producer groups is being considered and a space is created for the design of a participative certification system favoring local markets and small producer organizations.

El mercado interno y los pequeños productores son considerados como fundamentales, por ejemplo se considera la certificación de Grupos de Productores y abre el espacio también para el diseño de un sistema de certificación participativa en favor de los mercados locales y organización de pequeños productores.

SAGARPA, with support from the National Council for Organic Products, is the national governmental institution responsible for the National Control System which will regulate the organic sector. Certification agencies will need to register with the National Control System, and if the sector considers it necessary, it will have the faculty to form its own organic accreditation entity. To



Homero Blas Bustamante

register as certification entities, organizations must be accredited ISO 65 nationally or internationally.

La SAGARPA es la institución del Gobierno Federal responsable del Sistema de Control Nacional con apoyo del Consejo Nacional de Productos Orgánicos, dicho control considera un registro de organismos de certificación e incluso hay la posibilidad, si el sector lo considerara necesario, de formar su propia entidad de acreditación orgánica. En cuanto al registro de organismos de certificación se reconocerá la acreditación ISO 65 bajo el sistema nacional o internacional.

The "Blas Law", as some have come to call it, has been passed just after the lawmakers have approved the Bio-security Law, also called the "Monsanto Law". Both laws are not contradictory, but rather complementary in the legal system in Mexico since the Organic Products Law offers a development alternative without the use of genetically modified organisms, or the derivatives of these. This will be of great importance for the identification of organic foods in México, as the LOP also mandates labeling with the use of a national Organic Seal.

La "Ley Blas" como algunos le llaman, se aprueba justo después de que los legisladores aprobaran la Ley de Bioseguridad o también llamada "Ley Monsanto", ambas no son contradictorias sino complementarias para el sistema legal en México por el hecho de que la Ley de Productos Orgánicos ofrece una alternativa al desarrollo sin el uso de organismos modificados genéticamente ni productos derivados de estos, esto será de suma importancia para la identificación de los alimentos orgánicos en México ya que la LPO considera el etiquetado mediante el uso de un sello nacional.

Homero Blas Bustamante is Regional Office Manager for OCLA's Latin American office.

Exploring Prospects for IOIA Training in Morocco and the Middle East

by
Mostafa
Chtaini

Background: It all began in September 2004 in a conversation with Margaret Scoles, at the Expo East show in Washington, DC. I wanted to know whether it was possible for the IOIA to provide training for organic inspectors in Morocco and, more generally, North Africa and the Middle East. I was encouraged by Ms. Scoles' response: "We can explore the possibility."

During a meeting with Ms. Scoles the following day, we arrived at developing a realistic and transparent approach to making the process of providing an initial training for organic inspectors in Morocco feasible. We agreed to meet again at the All Things Organic™ show in Chicago in May 2005.

In the meantime, I contacted potential partners for an organic training project in Morocco. I visited Dr. Kenny and spoke to Dr. Hanafi, Moroccans with doctorates from US universities, who were both professors at the Hassan II Agronomic and Veterinary Institute, Agadir Campus, and who were involved in organic activities at the local, national and international levels. I was also able to contact and meet in Marrakech with the leadership of Maghrebio, an organic association that already has three of its members certified as organic inspectors through a French organization.

Dr. Belekziz, a pharmacist and President of Maghrebio, and her board members offered me the opportunity to meet with them to make my presentation on IOIA's willingness to explore organic inspector training in Morocco. I was encouraged by their receptivity, and I concluded that Maghrebio might be the right partner for IOIA to launch an initial training project.

During my 3-day visit, I sat down with Maghrebio's leadership and we drafted a letter to IOIA, seeking to enter into a partnership for initiating a first-of-its-kind project in the Arab or Moslem World -- that is, an organic inspectors training program in Morocco. I brought the letter back to the US to deliver it to Ms. Scoles, who was pleased by the positive response from Maghrebio.

In May, as planned, I met again with Ms. Scoles in Chicago and we discussed the project further. Ms. Scoles informed me that she was going to present the issue to the board of IOIA and that Ms. Lisa Pierce, IOIA's International Training Manager, would be the person to send to Morocco. The IOIA board approved this initiative and Lisa and I got in touch with each other by phone. We set the date for her visit to Morocco - June 16 to 26.

June found me already in Morocco at the "American Café-2005," a US marketing food show organized by the Agricultural Attaché of the US Embassy in Morocco. I participate in this show in anticipation of the implementation of the US-Moroccan Free Trade Agreement. I was positioning the companies I represent to benefit from the reduction or gradual elimination of customs duties on US food products, now scheduled for implementation in January 2006. One of the people who provided invaluable assistance at the show was Miss Whalin Leahy, the daughter of my friend Brian Leahy, formerly with California Certified Organic Farmers. Whalin graciously agreed to join me in the agricultural tour for Lisa.

Lisa Pierce's Moroccan Visit: Day 1

On June 16, 2005, I was at the Mohamed V Int'l Airport in Casablanca picking up Lisa at 7:30 AM. We got along just fine, which made our task easier. Who would not get along with Lisa? She is highly professional, very flexible, adaptable and cool. All of us here in Morocco liked Lisa very much because we found her to be genuine, real, committed to the organic cause and full of fun.

My rented 2-bedroom apartment in Casablanca was large enough to accommodate Lisa and Whalin. Lisa relaxed the rest of the day, and we decided to start our travels on the 17th to see Morocco's agricultural sector. Morocco's agricultural activities are similar to those found in California. Everything grown in California grows in Morocco and vice versa. Morocco began a water use and conservation program in 1930 similar to that established in California. Since 1956 Morocco has built over 75 dams and scores of artificial lakes. The irrigated areas located in land reclamation zones have reached over 1 million hectares. Morocco anticipates having over 5 million irrigated hectares by the year 2020.

Morocco has embarked on a \$300-million-dollar plan to improve its agricultural sector, which is the backbone of its national economy. Briefly, the plan seeks to expand irrigated land, increase poultry, meat and milk production, and increase the planting of fruit trees to replace grain production. The Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture is expecting to improve the agricultural efficiency, which now encounters a 40% yield loss annually. At present, Morocco's conventionally produced products are not competitive in the European market with those of Spain, Turkey and Eastern Europe. Perhaps one way to go is organic.

Day 2: June 17

It is against this background of the Moroccan agricultural system that our trip began. We took off to the north of Morocco and saw an irrigation system that allowed the cultivation of strawberries, tomatoes and red peppers for industrial purposes such as strawberries



Mostafa Chtaini at the Research Station in Doukkala Province

fresh and processed, tomato paste and paprika. We spoke to farmers who informed us about the crops, seasons and yield. We lunched on fresh fish at the Sidi Bouselham summer resort perched on a hill overlooking a lagoon, which was the habitat of migratory birds including the Ibis. After lunch we did some sightseeing and drove to the rice and sugar cane producing region known as the Gharb near Sidi Kacem. We later drove back to Casablanca and then got on the newly-built four-lane highway which stretches from Casablanca to Fez, encountering on our way farms growing wine grapes and sunflowers as well as citrus and bananas in hot houses. There were groves of apricots, apples, pears and peaches all over and all types of vegetables.

Day 3: June 18

On June 18, we had a meeting with a women's association known as "Espode". The meeting included several agronomists, businesswomen, people in agribusiness, the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in Casablanca Province and the Laboratory Director of the "Etablissement de Controle." Lisa made her first presentation in Morocco and explained what the IOIA is all about and how the international training can be developed and carried out in Morocco. From the content of the presentation and the questions and answers it became clear to all of us that "Espode" showed an interest in the sponsorship of an IOIA training program. We were all pleased by this first encounter, which prepared us for future meetings and presentations to be made in other parts of Morocco.

Day 4: June 19

Heading south to El Jadida Province, we crossed Morocco's largest river, the Oum Rabi, the Mother of Spring, through the City of Azemmour, which is perched on a cliff at the edge of the river. This city has a rich history; which dates back to the Phoenicians. It is known for the two wars waged in 1508 and 1513 against the Portuguese King Emmanuel and his invading pan-European armies. In these wars, a strong Jewish militia fought alongside the Moslem militia against the king who had initiated the Inquisition in Portugal, which led to the persecution of Moslems and Jews alike in the Iberian Peninsula. The Alawite King Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah, an ancestor of the present King of Morocco, drove the Portuguese out of El Jadida in the 18th century. A contemporary of George Washington, he was one of the first leaders of the world to grant recognition of the United States in an exchange of diplomatic letters with President Washington in 1777. Since then Morocco and the United States have been the oldest of friends.



From the city of El Jadida we drove to the Doukkala region and saw sugar beet production and one of Morocco's modern sugar processing plants. Efforts and funds have been invested in attempts to seek self-sufficiency, which led the country to develop a sugar beet and sugar cane planting and processing industry. In spite of these efforts and funds, Morocco still imports semi-refined sugar to complement its needs.

El Jadida Province, 60 miles south of Casablanca, comprises 516,000 hectares. Its climate is Mediterranean -- semi-arid with temperate winters and hot, dry summers. With 98,000 irrigated hectares and 328,200 hectares of rain-fed agricultural land, the Province has about 428,000 hectares of useful agricultural land. Farmer-owned plots of 0.5 to 5 hectares comprise 55% of the land (91.7% of the useful agricultural land). The Moroccan Government plans to double the amount of dam-irrigated land in the province.

We drove south from El Jadida toward the Sid Bouzid Beach; a beautiful sea resort perched on a cliff. From there we continued south to the new harbor of Jorf Lasfar, built to export phosphate. With the largest deposits of phosphate in the world, Morocco is a major exporter and has built a multi-million dollar industrial facility near the new harbor to process its phosphate into triple concentrate used in fertilizer.

South of Jorf Lasfar we drove to Moulay Abdallah, a town that lives only for the month of July. This is where able and agile horsemen of the Doukkala tribes, riding pureblood Arabians, show their horsemanship and their unshakable ties with their horses. For the whole month of July, hundreds of "Fantasia" are run, where horses with riders run at full speed for a quarter of mile then stop on a dime at the sound of the gun shots, as riders shoot their muskets into the air in concert. Doukkala tribes set up hundreds of tents and offer hospitality to visitors. Everyone enjoys the evenings of this Festival because there is music, dancing and singing.

Before going to El Oualidia where we decided to spend the night on our way south to Agadir, we went to the Khmis El Matouh, a small village in the Doukkala Province where the Office of Land Reclamation has been testing the possibility of growing fresh fruit and nut trees. We drove to the farm test area known in Arabic as "Tjairiba" (the small test). We took a walk and found out that they were testing the adaptability and productivity of assorted fruit and nut tree varieties on lots varying in size such as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a hectare to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hectare. We tasted some of the fruits, and spoke to the people in charge before moving on to El Oualidia where we spent the night. Oualidia beach is a graceful natural bay of indescribable beauty.

[See **Morocco**, page 22]

Maintaining and Improving Wildness Is in the Rule

By Jo Ann Baumgartner

The writers of the National Organic Program Rule do not always get the credit they deserve. They were a forward-thinking group to include language throughout the Rule that addresses the core philosophy of organic production – that farming is done in a way that benefits from and supports biological diversity. This was undoubtedly done for two reasons, one that the writers knew farming in this way was ultimately sustainable for generations of human and wild communities, and two, that organic consumers expect this stewardship.

In August, the National Organic Standards Board reconfirmed this view by unanimously approving a suite of biodiversity issues into their model Organic System Plan (OSP). The NOSB's template is used directly by many certifiers, or indirectly as a guide for those others who craft their OSP's to their regions. Biodiversity conservation guides for farmers and certifiers addressing these inspection questions have been created and are available to all that request them (see below).

The definition of organic production includes biodiversity conservation, and the preamble explicitly says that by the use of the word 'conserve,' it is meant that the producer must initiate practices to support biodiversity and avoid, to the extent practicable, any activities that would diminish it. The organic production and handling standard itself states that the production practices must maintain or improve the natural resources of an operation, including soil, water, wetlands, woodlands and wildlife. Other areas of the rule related to biodiversity address crop rotation, crop pests, water contamination, livestock conditions and health, and wild crop harvesting.

A few years ago Harriet Behar, the then Chair of Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA), first called attention to the fact that biodiversity educational materials and criteria were lacking for IOIA's inspector trainings and requested that the Wild Farm Alliance (WFA) assist them with this effort. Through support of the Organic Farming Research Foundation and others, WFA formed a broad-based working group of organic farmers, certifiers and conservationists to develop biodiversity criteria and the

supporting guides for farmers, inspectors, and certifiers.

Organic farmers across the country are serving as exemplar stewards for natural resources. They are taking advantage of nature's ecosystem services such as pollination, pest control, beneficial predation, flood and erosion control, nutrient cycling, and improved water quality and quantity while

conserving and restoring native plants and animals. They are avoiding conversion of sensitive habitats to agriculture and preventing the production and spread of invasive, non-native species. And they are providing patches and even large connected expanses of native habitat that are key for maintaining and improving the diversity of life on the farm and in the broader landscape.

In the arid Southwest, organic farmers are conserving riverine habitat that supports endangered birds and amphibians and that helps capture and store groundwater which then acts as a water bank for surface flows in the drier times of the year. West Coast organic farmers are installing native plant hedgerows that support beneficial insect pollinators and predators, planting grasses in waterways for water quality, and vegetating canal banks with structurally diverse plants to stabilize soils and provide wildlife habitat. Organic farmers in the prairie pothole region are conserving the low-lying ponds and wetlands that serve as stepping-stones for migrating birds. Sheep ranchers in the Rocky Mountain region are using guard animals to protect their livestock eliminating the need to shoot native predators. Farmers in the Midwest are allowing native prairies to reestablish themselves. In the Northeast, they are part of wildlife movement corridors and are planting high value crops in part of the farm while conserving natural areas in marginal production areas. Down in the Southeast, organic farmers are taking advantage of restoration demands by growing native plants for sale.

A continuum of practices supports the natural resources of organic farms and their surrounding areas. In a way, they are similar to the continuum of 'IPM'

Riverdance Farm, Livingston, CA, showing contoured rows of lavender next to rinarian habitat



practices. On one end are piece-meal methods, and on the other is a holistic approach with self-sustaining natural enemy insects, or in the case of natural resources, self-sustaining native plants and animals, and ecosystem processes on the farm.

When balancing the changes that agriculture brings to the land, the gain of a pigeon or hayfield does not offset the loss of an eagle or wetland. It is not the number of animals or native plants that are important, so much as which ones and what ecosystems support them. As we all know, biodiversity crisis is about the sad fact that many species and whole ecosystems have or are on the brink of winking out. Uncommon, rare, or species that function as key components of healthy ecosystems should receive more consideration in the organic system plan.

Management decisions farmers make, such as providing habitats and wildlife linkages, can dramatically affect biodiversity levels. Without food, water and cover wildlife becomes vulnerable to prey and harsh weather conditions. And without space and the right disturbance regimes, native plants disappear. Organic farms that maintain or improve their natural resources not only comply with the NOP rule, but also reap nature's ecosystem services.

Incorporation of the biodiversity amendment to the NOSB's model OSP is providing transparent and predictable consistency and guidance to farmers, inspectors, certifiers, and accreditation auditors. Presentations on this subject will be made at IOIA trainings, and at sustainable agriculture conferences this winter hosted by the following organizations: Southern Sustainable

[see **Biodiversity**, page 22]

Organic Farmers' Rejection of GE Vindicated in AU

The Biological Farmers of Australia has welcomed calls by Dr Charles Benbrook, touring Australia from the US, for follow up testing of existing GE foods to find out if they are safe for human consumption. Scott Kinnear, a Director on the BFA Board and spokesperson, said that "Dr Benbrook's visit has enabled a thorough discussion of the significance of the Australian National University testing of the GE field pea developed by CSIRO."

"This study is a world first in testing GE foods for safety because it uses highly sophisticated and sensitive immunological assays in determining allergenic responses," said Kinnear.

"The field pea is the only GE food to have undergone this testing and serious allergic problems were detected in mice. Many other GE foods such as GE soy have been shown to have higher levels of trypsin inhibitors and lectins and the GE field peas also exhibited this. In addition it has been a longstanding concern that the glycosilation of proteins (attachment of sugars) may alter the immune response when eaten. This appears to have occurred in this mouse study of the GE field pea. We are very concerned by comments from CSIRO to the effect that this is a sign that the regulatory system is working, when nowhere in the world do food regulators require these sorts of testing."

"This research will drive a huge amount of follow up research around the world. Dr Benbrook, in meetings this week with State and Federal Government members and representatives, urged all Australian Governments to fund a comprehensive, independent, published scientific program of testing on existing GE foods to follow on from the ground breaking research at ANU."

"The WA Government has already announced such research and is rumored to be in negotiation with Tasmania to support the work. Dr Benbrook has pointed out that this research is best performed at two or more facilities, because if adverse results are discovered with existing GE foods consumed by people, then the scrutiny of such work will be considerable. The US plants 85% GE RoundUp Ready soybeans and the world market is 50%. The implications of a world wide rejection of GE foods which could occur if further problems are found will be

enormous for food producers, processors and retailers."

"The BFA has supported the State moratoriums and believes the evidence from ANU may be an advance warning of a very rocky road for GE technologies."

"The BFA is at pains to point out that organic farmers are not unilaterally opposed to biotechnology, which is a broad and complex field of research has the potential to provide benefits to farmers and consumers. The use of biotechnology in marker assisted breeding and genomics is supported by organic farmers. Our most critical objection is to the cutting and splicing of DNA sequences which cross species boundaries, to form the transgenic crops on the market today and proposed for Australia in herbicide tolerant canola." BFA News, 6 Dec 2005, www.bfa.com.au

Stakes High in WTO GM Crops Dispute

Soon the WTO will rule on a highly anticipated case that will directly impact how countries regulate genetically modified crops. The Institute for Agricultural Trade Policy has outlined the key issues in a new background, "U.S. vs. the EC Biotech Products Case: A WTO Dispute", covering the trade dispute between the primary plaintiff, the US (joined by Canada and Argentina), and the European Communities. Read about it at www.iatp.org

Swiss Approve 5-year GMO Farming Ban

In a national referendum, Swiss voters recently adopted a five-year moratorium on GMO crops and the import of genetically modified animals. The measure, approved by 55 percent of voters, is one of the toughest stances in Europe on GMOs. In related news covered by EUobserver, Austria has said it will launch a European Union-wide debate on GMOs when it takes over EU's rotating presidency in January. Austria already has a ban of its own on GMO plants.

Britain Approves GM Corn with Caveat

As expected, the British Gov't approved the planting of genetically modified maize throughout the UK. It is the first biotech crop the nation has approved. The government announcement allowing planting of the modified seed also said that neither the government nor British citizens would

pay for any contamination to other crops caused by modified seed. That expense would be charged back to the biotech industry, the announcement said.

AU Wine Industry Advice is 'No' to GM Yeast

GM wine yeasts have arrived on the North American market; what does this mean for the Australian industry? Until now, the GMO debate has largely been academic for Australian grape growers and wine-makers but this is likely to change: Springer Oenologie has released the first GM wine yeast, known as ML01, to the North American market.

The Australian wine industry's position on the application of gene technology in grape and wine production is: ... that no GMO's be used in the production of Australian wine. The reason for this is not that the industry is anti-GM but rather that it acknowledges the importance of safety and public acceptance before adopting any new technology in wine production. In this context it is important to note that U.S. legislation does not require labeling to notify the consumer that Springer Oenologie's ML01 yeast is a GMO.

Whether the Australian wine industry's position on use of GMOs in winemaking is likely to change in the foreseeable future depends on the balance between risks and benefits associated with using such yeasts and whether local and overseas markets are seen to be ready to accept wines that have been made using GMOs.

What are the risks associated with using ML01? In terms of health risks there should be none. The two foreign genes incorporated into the wine yeast to make it MLF-competent come from organisms that are typically associated with foods and/or beverages. One comes from the yeast *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*, which is found in many alcoholic beverages, and the other comes from *O. oeni*, which is used routinely in the wine industry for MLF. A great deal of work has been done to show that the two genes are stable in their new background and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration designated it a GRAS (generally recognised as safe) organism in their response to Lesaffre's submission to that office (although it should be pointed out that 'GRAS' is not recognised as a global standard).

More info: rae.blair@awri.com.au

Biodiversity, from page 20

Southern Sustainable Working Group, Texas Organic Gardeners and Farmers, Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture, NOFA-Vermont, MOSES, and New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission. Most organic farmers and all accredited certification agencies in the U.S. will receive copies of the guides. To make sure you are on the list and receive a guide, email the Wild Farm Alliance at info@wildfarmalliance.org.

Morocco, from page 19

Day 5: June 20

In the morning we drove along the coastline to the city of Safi, the pottery capital of Morocco. From the cliff on the way to Safi just south of Oualidia one can see a depression, which goes for miles in which land lots are planted with all types of fresh vegetables. Water is from 5 to 10 meters underground. All these lots are drip irrigated with cane sticks as separators. There are also some hot houses. From Safi we drove to Essaouira, known for holding the Blue Moses Gnaoua music festival annually. Essaouira also houses the home of Jimmy Hendrix. The house is well kept in his memory and some American and European Hippies still hang around there. We had a late breakfast in Essaouira and drove to Taroudant. There we visited El Boura Domain as well as Copag.

We had lunch at El Boura Domain, which is a very modern production farm covering 1,500 hectares of citrus, potatoes, peaches and other fruits and vegetables with a production of 30,000 tons of citrus, 10,000 of potatoes and 1,000 of peaches. Facilities include a packinghouse with 5,000 ton cold storage capacity; a laboratory for phytochemical testing of viruses, fungi and bacteria; a biochemical lab for biochemical analysis; a tissue culture laboratory for in vitro propagation of potatoes, stone fruits and other fruits and vegetables; a nursery for production of certified citrus plants; and an insectarium for the production of predators. El Boura employs 30 agronomists, technicians and phyto-pathologists and 1,000 workers. Its production is 100% certified Europ-Gap, SGS System Certification as well as British Retail Consortium. We had lunch in El Boura Domain with its General Manager, Dr. Abdullah Redouani, a Moroccan Ph.D. graduate from the Uni-

versity of Minnesota. Once Lisa finished making her presentation, Dr. Redouani volunteered to hold an IOIA training program at El Boura Domain and offered to provide 10 candidates from his operation to be trained.

We then went to visit Copag and its multi-faceted cooperative, which produces citrus, vegetables, dairy products, and red meat. It is one of the largest cooperatives in Morocco with one of the most modern packinghouses and state-of-the-art milk plants and animal feed production plants. Copag controls 30% of milk distribution in Morocco. The leadership of Copag also offered to propose candidates for an IOIA training program.

We drove from there to Marrakech, the red city, where Lisa and Whalin visited a Peace Corps volunteer friend of Whalin's in the mountains while I drove back to Casablanca.

Day 6: June 21

We met again in Marrakech and went to our meeting at the hotel provided for us by Maghrebio. There we met with the President of Maghrebio, Dr. Belakziz and the Secretary General, Mr. El Mouadin. We went to visit two organic farms -- a melon farm run by a French family and a citrus farm run by a Moroccan woman. Marrakech is in the Haouz land reclamation area. The Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture has about nine offices of land reclamation all over Morocco. Their role is to bring efficiency to the farmers within their area through better agricultural techniques and water use. We also visited an organic tea packinghouse; which impressed us a lot.

Day 7: June 22

On June 22, we went to the Ourika Mountains, at the feet of the Atlas Mountains. There we visited a natural saffron farming operation and saw how saffron is grown and harvested. From there we went to an organic aromatic and medicinal herb garden where we enjoyed a mint tea with Dr. Abdeljalil, the scientist who owns and runs the garden where essential oils are extracted from the aromatic and medicinal herbs he grows in his garden.

Day 8: June 23

On June 23 we had our meeting with the Maghrebio board of directors and members at the Agricultural Chamber, in Mar-

rakech. Lisa made her presentation, followed by questions and answers. In the dialogue that ensued, the President of Maghrebio welcomed the opportunity for an IOIA training program to be sponsored by Maghrebio and proposed that Maghrebio and IOIA work jointly to find sources of funding to support this first training in Morocco. The meeting was adjourned and we drove back to Casablanca. Before Lisa left on the morning of June 26, she had a chance to do some shopping and enjoy Casablanca by night.

Conclusion

Moroccan agriculture needs to be diversified not only in production varieties but also in conversion and methods of farming. Conventional agricultural and wheat production has not paid off so far. The new measures undertaken by the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture are long overdue. There is no doubt that organic agricultural production is one of the approaches under consideration and the efforts of Maghrebio and IOIA to train Moroccans to become organic inspectors could not be more timely. Both organizations are preparing to get the first training running in 2006.

Mostafa Chtaini prepared this paper in collaboration with Lisa Pierce. Chtaini was born in Casablanca and has lived in the United States for the past 43 years. A retired university professor and Washington bureau chief for the Moroccan news agency, Mr. Chtaini lives with his family in Berkeley, CA, where he pursues trade and economic development projects that focus on organic agriculture and form linkages between communities in the U.S. and those in the Middle East and North Africa. Mr. Chtaini works as consultant and representative for DNE World Fruit Imports, Lundberg Family Farms, and many other U.S. companies. ♦



USDA Publishes Latest Economic Data for Organic Agriculture

USDA's Economic Research Service has updated its U.S. organic production information online. The 57 tables in "U.S. Organic Agriculture in the U.S., 1992-2003" now include data from 2002 and 2003 added to the previous data, posted at www.ers.usda.gov/Data/Organic/index.htm

Gaining Ground: Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming

Canadian Organic Growers, the publisher of the highly respected Organic Field Crop Handbook and Organic Livestock Handbook is announcing a new handbook, *Gaining Ground: Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming*.

The Gaining Ground: ... handbook is an invaluable tool for all farmers interested in organic farming, whether conventional, transitional or organic. The book covers all bases – from soil-building and planting to certification and marketing, revealing an approach that is much more than simply farming without chemicals. Based on interviews with over 80 of Canada's organic or transitional farmers across the country, this book provides valuable, practical advice and connects you to a national network of organic farmers, the next best thing to having an organic farmer next door. Farmer wisdom is supplemented with a wealth of scientific information from around the globe.

The key tools of organic farming, like weed and pest management, crop rotations and green manures, composting and equipment are addressed in *Gaining Ground: Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming*. In addition, it discusses the difficult shift in thinking from an input-output approach to an integrated, whole-system approach based on ecological principles. The handbook includes an extensive list of resources for further reading.

Gaining Ground: Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming is available in English or French for \$45 USD. OR for \$69.95 including a one-year membership or renewal with Canadian Organic Growers, connecting you to the national organic community.

To order visit COG Publications page, call toll free at (888) 375-7383 or send an email to publications@cog.ca.

Canadian Organic Growers is Canada's national membership-based education and networking organization representing organic farmers, gardeners and consumers in all provinces.

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2006 Calendar

Dec 28 – 29, 2005 Hong Kong, China. IOIA and Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre will cosponsor Basic Organic Farm and Process Inspector training. See page 3 for details.

Jan 9 –14, 2006 Austin, Texas. North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Annual Convention. Pre- and post-conference tours, a trade show, and presentations in seven tracks. Conference theme is "Discover Potential."
www.nafdma.com/Texas/

Jan 11 – 12 Bloomington, Illinois. Illinois Organic Production Conference.
www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/orgconf/

Jan 11-12 Troutdale, Oregon. Organic Seed Growers Conference.
www.seedalliance.org/?page=Seed-Growers-Conference

Jan 13 –14 Hagerstown, Maryland. Farming for Profit and Stewardship Conference.
www.futureharvestcasa.org/conf.html

Jan 13 – 14 Des Moines, Iowa. 2006 Practical Farmers Annual Conference. Growing our Future: Tools and Inspiration for Beginning and Transitioning Farmers.
www.practicalfarmers.org

Jan 18 – 20 Tucson, Arizona. Growers Marketing Forum: Farm to Fork. Please join us for the first Growers Marketing Forum for vegetable and specialty crop growers. www.ag.arizona.edu/ceac/extension/shortcourse001.htm

Jan 19 – 22 Louisville, Kentucky. SSAWG Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference.

The fifteenth annual event, with topics covering production, marketing, farm business management, federal farm policy, and community food programs, to name just a few. www.ssaawg.org/

Jan 23 – 29 San Jose, Costa Rica. IOIA and BCS Oko Garantie will be sponsoring five day Basic Organic Farm Inspector Training, followed by two day Advanced Organic Inspector Training. See page 3 for details.

Jan 24 –25 Pacific Grove, California. Facilitating Sustainable Agriculture: A Participatory National Conference on Post-Secondary Education.
www.studentfarm.ucdavis.edu/

Jan 25 - 28 Pacific Grove, California. Eco-Farm 2006: Savoring Connections from Seed to Table. Eco-Farm features prominent keynote speakers and more than 50 workshops on the latest advances in agricultural production, marketing, research, and important issues. Farm tours and exhibitors.
www.eco-farm.org/efc_05/aboutefc.html

Jan 26 - 29 University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Guelph Organic Conference. Offers growers, farmers, retail and wholesale trade an opportunity to network and learn in a four-day Conference with over 30 workshops.
www.guelphorganicconf.ca/

Jan 28 - March 19 Eugene, Oregon. Tools for Whole System Design: A Permaculture Design Certification Course.
www.cascadiapermaculture.com/courses.html

Feb 2 – 4 State College, Pennsylvania. PASA Farming for the Future Conference. Conference theme: Weaving a

Diverse Landscape: Food as a Common Thread. www.pasafarming.org/

Feb 23 La Crosse, Wisconsin. IOIA Annual General Meeting, in conjunction with training and UMOFC. See page 2 for details.

Feb 23 La Crosse, Wisconsin. Organic University. The OU offers a selection of in-depth courses that are designed to provide information critical to successful organic farming.
www.mosesorganic.org/ou/ou.htm

Feb 24 – 25 La Crosse, Wisconsin. 17th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. This year's theme 'Growing More Organic!' www.mosesorganic.org

Feb 24 – 25 Albuquerque, NM. New Mexico Organic Farming Conference. Info, joan.quinn@state.nm.us or call 505-841-9067.

April 4 – 6 St. Louis, Missouri. The Fifth National IPM Symposium. Symposium sessions will address state of the art strategies and technologies to successfully solve pest problems.
www.ipmcenters.org/ipmsymposium/

April 15 – October 15 Santa Cruz, California. 2006 Farm & Garden Apprenticeship. The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food System offers training in the concepts and practices of organic gardening and small-scale farming. www.ucsc.edu/casfs

April 28 – 29 Chestnut Ridge, New York. Organic Beekeeping Workshop. A workshop for active beekeepers as well as for beginners including a hands-on session. Lots of practical advice and demonstrations. www.pfeiffercenter.org/

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