



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC ACCREDITATION SERVICE

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Official Notice Number 2010-02

Issued: July 23, 2010

Invite to participate in development of inspection and certification requirements for inputs suitable for use in organic production systems.

Background

All organic production standards and regulations make reference to an approved list of generic inputs that may be used in organic agriculture. Increasingly available is a wide range of multi-ingredient and brand name inputs that are certified by various entities as being suitable for use in organic agriculture with the intention that such certification will assist the organic producer in selecting appropriate inputs.

To have confidence in these various certifications it is necessary that the inspection and certification systems implemented are transparent and well defined and by extension allow third party verification such as accreditation. The IOAS concludes that apart from the IFOAM certification requirements for input manufacturing implemented under IFOAM accreditation, this is generally not the case. None of the major regulations set down any guidelines for how third party certification of inputs for organic agriculture should be performed. At the same time it is quite common for certification bodies to issue certificates declaring suitability of an input for use under regulation XXXX. Many bodies involved in such certification may have their own rigorous procedures but the lack of a harmonised set of rules brings uncertainty when the goal is trust and reliability.

As a result of this thinking the IOAS has recently informed all of its clients with ISO Guide 65 accreditation scope input manufacturing certification, that the IFOAM criteria on input manufacturing must be applied.

Proposal

The IOAS is inviting expressions of interest from individuals knowledgeable in inspection and certification systems for inputs destined for use in organic agriculture to assist in the development of criteria that can assist in harmonising this field of work across the world with the intention that regulators and accreditation bodies will adopt the requirements. The final document is intended to be freely available and in the public domain.

The work will begin with the IFOAM criteria for certification of input manufacturers (see appendix below) as a starting point and hope to deliver a first comprehensive draft for comment before **December 31, 2010**. All meetings and discussion will be held electronically and no payment for participation is anticipated.

The invitation is open to both public and private sector individuals but the committee of no more than ten persons will be appointed by the IOAS based on the submission of a statement of interest and a *curriculum vitae*. The committee will elect a Chairperson and be supported by the IOAS Programme Manager, Jan Deane. To be considered for this committee, your statement of interest must reach Jan Deane at deane@ioas.org before **September 17th, 2010**. The first 'meeting' of the committee will take place before **October 15th, 2010**.

If you have any questions on this initiative, please contact Jan Deane directly.

End

Appendix: Excerpt from IFOAM requirements for organic certification bodies

Approval Systems for Brand Name Inputs

- 8.2.1** Where a certification body issues lists or in any other way approves brand name products without formal certification it shall document at least the following measures:
- a. the application procedure, including the necessary documents to be submitted by the applicant;
 - b. the procedure to be followed in evaluating the products compliance with the certification body's standards;
 - c. the decision making authority;
 - d. the length of time for which approval is granted and the requirements for the manufacturer to report changes in composition or other relevant factors;
 - e. a clear statement of the nature and guarantee of the approval which shall appear in the listing.

***Guidance:** The statement shall include the limitations of the approval - for example, that it does not imply effectiveness of the product.*

- 8.2.2** The certification body may receive payment for its work in assessment but shall not receive any non-work related payments such as advertising endorsement payments.

- 8.2.3** Approval systems shall not allow for any indication of the approval on the product itself.

Certification of Brand Name Inputs

- 8.2.4** Where a certification body issues certificates or allows the use of its certification mark on input products, in addition to the measures in 8.2.1 above, the certification body shall document the inspection and certification procedures. This shall clearly indicate:
- a. the inspection frequency which may be less than annual but no less than once every 3 years;
 - b. the requirements other than the composition of the product that will be checked during inspection and evaluated in making the certification decision.

Guidance: *The inspection shall verify compliance with relevant standards such as those related to separation of product and pollution resulting from the process and contamination.*

- 8.2.5** In cases where the product is not a certified agricultural organic product, the certification mark may only be used when it is accompanied by explanatory language that clarifies the nature of the certification.