



organic supplyline

December 2005

ORGANIC PLANET

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JUST ARRIVED!!!

Dried Whole & Diced Apricots

fresh from Turkey have just arrived into our East and West coast warehouses. Limited quantities available.

Another round of **Diced**

Almonds and Almond Meal is available at excellent prices. With the almond market remaining firm, these products may be the perfect ingredient for your recipes.

Regular & Whole Wheat

Couscous is now available on both coasts.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

H.P. Schmid/Organic Planet

Closed December 26 & January 2

Dreisbach Warehouse (West Coast)

Closed December 26 & January 2

Accem Warehouse (East Coast)

Open 8am-12pm December 24

Closed December 26 & January 2

Happy Holidays from Organic Planet!

RETAILER ORGANIC CERTIFICATION *IS THIS THE "WEAKEST LINK" IN THE CHAIN??*

What if you spent a lot of time, and money, and educated yourself in the principles of, for example, building a pipeline to bring fresh, potable water to your village, and you then left the final stage of the project in someone else's hands to complete. Will they have the experience, education, or dedication to the water delivery system as you do? The bottom line is that you may, or may not, get your desired result of clean potable water.

This is the case with the organic certification system under the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) National Organic Program (NOP) with regards to retail stores that sell organic products.

In the US, with a few exceptions, producers and handlers making organic claims must be certified by an independent third party certifier that has attained accreditation by the USDA. In other words; the farmer who grows the raw material is certified to ensure the crop is grown and handled at the farm in a manner that complies with organic standards. Next, the food processor is certified and must demonstrate that they maintain the organic integrity of the original organic raw materials. Aspects of this certification include compliant sanitation, compliant pest control procedures and adequate audit trail systems. (Trucking and warehousing are handled in the certification process often through affidavits and other documents which attest to compliance to the organic standards).

Next stop is typically the retail store where the end consumer endeavours to buy, often at a premium price, organic foods which they feel are either healthier, more environmentally friendly...

(cont'd on Page 2 Center Column)

WHERE DOES MY ORGANIC FOOD COME FROM??

Many visitors call it Paradise – "the golden island" of Sri Lanka. Just a few minutes away from beautiful tropical beaches in the middle of the



jungle, a German family settled down many years ago to live the dream of their life.

What started from the desire to grow fruits and vegetables on a family farm without the use of any chemicals in order to feed their young children gradually developed into one of the larger organic businesses in Southeast Asia. Today they grow organic fruits not only on their own farms but contract with over 1000 small family farms and growers. Most farms use Bio Dynamic farming methods.



When the tsunami rolled over this Paradise, our friends helped coordinate efforts to assist the thousands left homeless by the tsunami. For a while, the staff cooked fish curry and rice for 2000 people a day. Now a model village is being created using solar energy and organic farming methods.

So when you buy "Organic Planet" brand organic cashews, mango, papaya, pineapple from Sri Lanka, you know that a small portion of the purchase price helped many homeless Sri Lankans to re-establish their livelihood after the devastating tsunami.



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ORGANIC MARKETPLACE

Sesame Seed – the total (conventional + organic) sesame crop in Guatemala this year is less than half of a normal crop. Internal prices at the farm level are very high. This will affect price levels throughout Central America. Do not expect lower organic sesame prices. Some relief may come around April when South America harvests sesame crops in Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay.



Sunflower Kernels from China continue to be offered at very attractive prices. Contact us if you want to contract forward.



Pumpkin Kernels – as anticipated in our last newsletter, prices for pumpkin kernels have started to move up. Supplies of Dried **Apricots** are limited and prices are advancing. We still have a good supply of whole and diced apricots – while they last.

Desiccated Coconut is steady but arrivals have been a bit irregular. Our stocks are limited but a new shipment is on its way. **Tart cherries** have arrived from far away Uzbekistan, with a stop-over in Austria for laser sorting. They are not cheap but they are delicious. Availability is limited until new crop cherries are harvested next May. California had a small **Prune** crop, resulting in high prices. We expect a shipment next month of imported prunes at somewhat more economical levels.



Retailer Organic Certification Cont'd from Page 1

...or of higher quality and taste better than their conventional counterparts.

What they don't know is that the stores they are purchasing these products from are not required to be certified and may not have adequate information and procedures to ensure that the organic integrity is maintained and delivered to the consumers. Let us state here that some stores are voluntarily obtaining organic certification in order to demonstrate their ability to provide organic products without question and instill customer confidence.

On the other hand, many stores are simply not adequately familiar with organic requirements. While all stores must maintain organic certificates and keep adequate records for all organic products purchased and sold, the stores often handle the organic products the same way they handle conventional products. So they could store and display these products together and risk commingling organic and conventional products. This is not an issue with canned or certain other packaged products, however bulk grains, and fruits and vegetables are at the highest risk of commingling and contamination. Prohibited pest control and sanitation methods may be inadvertently used either in the storage areas or in displays. Mislabelled bulk products are a potential risk as well. Proper training for retailers and their staff are mandatory in maintaining the organic integrity from the farm to the consumer, although there is virtually no enforcement body with the resources to ensure training or compliance.

Cont'd to right

ORGANIC MARKETPLACE cont'd

Almonds are still hard to find but at least there is a limited quantity available and prices have topped out. Besides whole almonds, we can process sliced almonds, diced almonds, almond flakes, almond meal.



Walnuts are in reasonably good supply but even so, prices are up about 10%. **Cashews** remain reasonably priced.



Hazelnuts and **Pecans** still command premium prices.



Amaranth might be tighter over the next few months until new crop is harvested next June. **Quinoa** prices have stayed relatively steady but we have experienced some shipping delays. We are making some progress with finding a new source for organic **Teff**.

Lentil prices have dropped. **Chickpeas** are quite firm. Expect further advances.



Retailer Organic Certification Cont'd from center column

Those stores that voluntarily seek and maintain organic certification must be applauded for their efforts and others should be encouraged to work towards certification. Perhaps one day the USDA will develop standards and require retailers to all be certified thus tightening up this weak link in the organic certification chain.