



organic supplyline

June 2005

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NEW ARRIVALS!!!!

Apple-Juice Sweetened Dried Cranberries

– These tasty dried cranberries are perfect as a stand-alone snack or make a colorful ingredient in snack mixes, cereals, and baked goods. The apple juice imparts a tangy, tart flavor and gives the cranberry a deep red coloring. West Coast only.

Fair Trade Nicaraguan Sesame

Seed – Fresh from the *campos* in Nicaragua, we have just received a new shipment of hulled (white) and natural (brown) sesame seed. Nicaraguan seed is known for its consistency in appearance and mild flavor. Available East and West Coast

ORDERING CUTOFF

We want to be able to accommodate your schedule! When placing your order, please keep in mind that we require a minimum 24-hour turnaround time before your order can be shipped or picked up. If you require a same-day order, we charge a \$50 rush fee.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATIONS

Are there hidden costs in our current system?

Prior to the implementation of the USDA's organic regulation in October of 2002, individual certifiers in the United States had their own systems and criteria for approving and accepting organic products on behalf of their clients and members. In other words, if there was an importer or a processor wanting to import, for example, coffee from South America, the US certifier used their review process to determine acceptability for the US organic market, according to agreed upon organic standards. Remember, this was *prior* to the US law's implementation.

This system of acceptance was full of problems because certifiers had their own criteria, which in some cases differed greatly (or more accurately stated) was perceived to differ greatly, from the criteria of other US certifiers. In the years leading up to the USDA organic law implementation, certifiers had come very close to having very similar standards, with only minor differences remaining, so this system basically worked.

Along comes the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) and there was new oversight to take care of reviewing all ingredients and products, whether from domestic sources or from anywhere on the planet, labelled as organic for the US market. Any certifier, foreign or domestic, could apply for accreditation to be a bona fide USDA organic certifier. This created a whole new set of problems and discrepancies.

First of all, from a logistical viewpoint, how could all of the certifiers in the world have their organic programs reviewed? The NOP had, and still has, limited funds and limited staff. Language is, of course, another huge issue. All documents and manuals required by the NOP had to be in English. Who was going to pay for the mandatory on-site reviews by NOP staff for a certifier halfway around the globe (airfare, hotel, meals, review time, etc.)?

International Organic Certifications cont'd.

What we call "organic farming methods" have been used throughout the world for as long as people have been growing crops, long before we came up with the term and the law for "organic". Is it fair, is it right, that indigenous farmers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere, have their markets and livelihoods taken away because of our rules, even though they have been using this system of agriculture for hundreds of years, or longer?

What is the true price of organic food when we affect "small" farmers and communities and support a system that encourages large scale farming and large scale certification organizations? Who do we want to have growing our food; corporations or farmers? Who do we want inspecting and certifying our organic products? People who live in the areas where the food is being grown, speak the local languages and dialects, and understand the cultures and climates of the farmers are the best people for this job!

Unfortunately, some of the human contact and "down to earth" values which some of us aspired to, may be lost within our current system. While there are certain benefits to the USDA accreditation system, there are also some huge deficiencies and casualties that are being left in its wake. The US consumer is ultimately paying the price.



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ORGANIC MARKETPLACE

SEEDS

Caraway is still expensive with availability limited to Egyptian. Canadian caraway is not likely to return to the market until next crop (Canadian caraway has a 2-year crop cycle).

Poppy is likely to stay high priced even into new crop. Major producing countries reduced acreage for conventional poppy which has impact on organic prices.

Good quality **Flax** from Canada is limited and prices are expected to stay high at least until new crop becomes available in Fall. New crop acreage is up but we still need good growing conditions during Summer.

Pumpkin Kernels have moved up in China. We could see a squeeze before new crop will be available for shipment in October / November. Forward coverage recommended.

Sunflower Kernels - Good availability from China and substantial increase of new crop acreage for conventional sunflowers in U.S. contribute to improved outlook.

Although conventional **Sesame** prices have eased off, organic prices are holding steady. Available supplies should carry us into new crop

NUTS

Almonds are basically unavailable. New crop unlikely to bring relief from high prices. California crop is expected to be down. Although European crops look good, it is unlikely they can make up for the shortfall in California.

With **Pecans**, **Hazelnuts** and **Macadamia** Nuts prices high, we still have **Walnuts** and **Cashews** at relatively reasonable price levels.

FAIR TRADE AND LABOR PRACTICES

This is an issue that will touch all segments of the organic industry as it grows. The global market has reached into all corners of the world for sourcing organic products; it is now an issue of concern that many products we enjoy as organic are still being produced under substandard work conditions.

Commodities such as coffee, sugar, and chocolate are leading the way to establish fair trade markets domestically. Here at HP Schmid/Organic Planet, we have over 30 years of importing experience, allowing us to cultivate strong relationships with growers of quality and standard. In some cases, these growers are simply local farming and community collectives. This is a great example of how we as suppliers and consumers can support groups that have their workers' (their own) best interests in mind.

ORGANIC MARKETPLACE cont'd

DRIED FRUITS

Banana Chips used to be hard to get. We now have an excellent source. Available from our warehouses now.

Mango and **Pineapple** are in season with prices steady. Inquire about diced tropical fruit for usage in energy bars, granola and trail mixes.

The 2005 crop of **Tart Cherries** is in the final ripening stage. Because of popular demand we are bringing in another shipment from the current crop to ensure supplies to our customers until new crop is ready to ship.

Desiccated Coconut has been a fast moving item. We are rushing in another shipment.

THE FOOD SPOTLIGHT What is Kasha?

Kasha, the product of roasting buckwheat kernels, is a traditional grain dating back to the 1700s. Brought to America by Eastern European and German settlers, the great taste and nutritional benefits of Kasha have been enjoyed ever since.

The name, Kasha, is actually a Russian term for a family of porridge dishes - some sweet, some savory. Since most of these dishes contained buckwheat, Kasha became the English name for buckwheat upon arrival in the US. Nowadays, Kasha refers to buckwheat grouts after they have been roasted.

Kasha has a smoky, toasty flavor that compliments both savory and sweet dishes. It is an excellent addition to breakfast cereals, veggie burgers, soups, entrees, and desserts. It can also be used as a healthier substitute for rice or potatoes. Kasha contains a high amount of fiber - one cup provides over 20% of dietary fiber recommended by the USDA. Because the kernels are roasted, they cook faster than normal grains.

We are expecting a fresh shipment of Kasha this month. Please let us know if you are interested in this versatile buckwheat for your next recipe!

PAYMENTS

When making payments, we respectfully request that if the payment is for an amount different from the amount of the invoice (or statement), please advise why. It helps us all to ensure the accounting is smooth.

FUEL SURCHARGE

In line with higher fuel costs across the country (and across the world) truckers have been increasing their fuel surcharge to us. We regret we have no option but to pass these increases on. The higher fuel costs are reflected not only in higher freight costs from our warehouse to you, but also in the costs of the product, as it costs us more to transport from point of origin to our warehouse.