

## **A HEALTHY GARDEN IS A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN**

**By Thomas N. Tomas**

Several years ago I visited Ruth Zinniker's garden near East Troy, Wisconsin. When we walked towards the garden I thought it was a flower garden. Zinnias, marigolds, cosmos, petunias and a dozen other types of flowers were scattered throughout. As we got closer I could see carrots, beets, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, beans and other vegetables planted in neat rows. This was her vegetable garden in August. The vegetables were healthy and productive and the garden was a thing of beauty. I asked Ruth about the flowers and she told me they were essential to the health of the garden. A healthy garden is a beautiful garden. Many of the flowers were volunteers and others were planted from seed she saved each year. The volunteers were thinned to allow the vegetables to get a good start and then allowed to grow and bloom. She had few insect problems and the composted dairy manure provided ample nutrition to support the abundant life in the garden.

We all know that biodiversity is one of the basic concepts of organic agriculture. By growing a wide variety of plants we provide habitat for beneficial insects and pollinators. Allowing dill to bloom in the garden provides pollen and nectar for the tiny wasps that parasitize cabbage worms. Perennial flowers and catnip provide a wintering place for aphids that will be food for the lady bugs that overwinter in the litter under shrubs and in windbreaks. The diversity of different plant root systems provides habitat for beneficial bacteria and fungi in a healthy soil. All of these are logical reasons based on sound science to encourage diversity in the garden but I keep thinking what Ruth said about a healthy garden being a beautiful garden.

Maybe there is more to the great abundance of flowers that we find in the natural world than plants attracting pollinators. Why does nature generate such beauty in birds and butterflies and insects and flowers? I know that there are many

scientific explanations for these phenomena but I'd like to think that beauty is a natural indicator of a healthy ecosystem that we are subconsciously aware of. The more we encourage biodiversity and beauty in the garden the healthier it will be and we will be better able to nourish both our bodies and our spirits from the abundance it produces.



### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR— TOM TOMAS**

Tom Tomas has been with ICS since 1991. Experience with greenhouse operations and knowledge in horticulture and Ag Business are just a few of the things Tom brings to the Certification Committee.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**CC CORNER—A  
HEALTHY GARDEN IS A  
BEAUTIFUL GARDEN** 1

**ICS WELCOMES NEW  
CC MEMBER** 2

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT—  
JANINE HOFMANN** 3

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT—  
AGRICOAT LLC** 4

**UPPER MIDWEST OR-  
GANIC FARMING CON-  
FERENCE** 5

**THE NON-GMO REPORT** 6

## ICS WELCOMES NEW CC MEMBER-AMY GRINER

International Certification Services, Inc is proud to welcome a new Certification Committee member to the team. Amy Griner grew up in western Nebraska, receiving her B.A. in English and History and a Secondary Teaching Certificate from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. It was during these college years that Amy became interested in the organic industry, due to a search for cardamom pods which brought her to an organic and nature food store.

In 1999 Amy got her first opportunity to work in the organic industry, becoming a certification coordinator (which is similar to a Customer Care Specialist at ICS) for OCIA (Organic Crop Improvement Association). She quickly moved up to being Lead File reviewer, as well as training members in the changes and developments in the organic industry, working with inspectors on requirements, and conducting chapter evaluations

*(Continued on page 3)*

## SUBMISSIONS TO “SUSTAINABLE TIMES”

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please include complete contact information including your daytime phone number and signature. All letters are subject to printing in our newsletter, however submission does not guarantee printing. Letters may be edited and cannot be returned.

For information on submitting an article, or if you have any ideas on articles that you'd like to see in our newsletter, please contact Brandi Eissinger at 701-486-3578 or via email at brandi@ics-intl.com. Letters to the editor may be sent to this same address.

## FEEDBACK WELCOME

ICS welcomes and encourages feedback on our FVO Requirements as well as the other programs we offer.

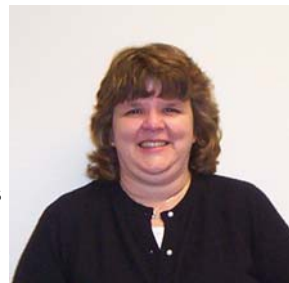
We also encourage comments and suggestions on our newsletter and website. If there is anything else you'd like to see, please let us know and we'll do our best to get you what you need.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT—JANINE HOFMANN

Janine Hofmann began at ICS in May of 2002. She is one of three Customer Care Specialists, assisting clients through the certification process. Janine is responsible for answering questions for clients, preparing and reviewing paperwork for review and inspection, issuing certificates, as well as assisting clients in other aspects of certification.

Having grown up on a farm, Janine has extensive knowledge in agriculture. She lives with her husband, Dwight, on their own organic farm in Medina, ND. Besides her responsibilities at ICS, Janine also helps operate and handles the financial records for their farm.

Janine and her husband have four children, Trichelle, Elicia, Jacob and Phillip, whom she enjoys spending time with whenever she can. She also enjoys quilting, sewing, cross-stitching, reading and spending time with friends. When asked what she likes best about her job, Janine replied “I enjoy meeting and working with my clients. I also enjoy going to tradeshow which gives me more of an opportunity to meet face-to-face with people I’ve often only been able to speak with over the phone.”



## ICS WELCOMES NEW CC MEMBER (CONT)



*(Continued from page 2)*

and unannounced inspections. In 2001 she completed the IOIA (Independent Organic Inspectors Association) Basic Farm and Basic Processing Organic Inspection course, and the following year completed her apprentice inspections.

In the summer of 2005, just having moved to North Carolina to be closer to family, Amy was contacted by ICS. She had worked with one of ICS’s CC members on conference calls previously and “knew of ICS’s reputation for excellence, the strong commitment to organic production, and the sense of integrity in the ICS system. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with ICS!” There are many differences in the “ICS way” but Amy has eagerly jumped right in from the first day of the November 2005 CC meeting, when she first joined the team. As Amy stated, “I’ve enjoyed every minute of it!”

During Amy’s free time, she loves cooking and uses it as an opportunity to unwind. She also enjoys camping and hiking, and loves spending time with her family, especially her 7 year old daughter whom is already learning about the organic industry.

We at ICS are excited to have Amy join our family, and are grateful for her past craving for Indian spiced rice – a craving which created an organic convert and in turn brought about her extensive knowledge and experience, and brought her and ICS together.

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT— AGRICOAT LLC

Exciting new technology has been introduced to the seed coating and enhancement industry to aid local organic and conventional vegetable growers in their quest to grow the perfect crops. AgriCoat LLC, a locally owned, managed and operated seed coating and enhancement company has been quietly turning out a full line of organically based seed coatings, enhancements and foliar mildew sprays and fertilizers in Soledad and distributing via local seed dealers.

AgriCoat's Todd Zehr reports that, "Our organic products are designed to work as well as or better than their conventional chemical options. Thereby, allowing dealers and organic and conventional growers to hold one inventory that can go both ways, reducing inventory requirements while increasing inventory flexibility, improving worker safety and greatly reducing or eliminating re-entry intervals."

AgriCoat's seed coating, seed enhancements, processing and facilities are certified organic by the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Their current product line is listed with OMRI and includes Natural II, a seed treatment applied as a film coating that promotes root growth and protects seedlings against early season soil borne pathogens improving germination, stand establishment and uniformity, as well as species-specific organic seed coatings. In addition,



they offer seed sizing and density separation of seed to separate seed lots into more uniform fractions to enhance plantability and emergence.

AgriCoat's newest products include Natural II Plus, a seed treatment designed to clean existing surface molds from the seed coat; Natural III, a readily available and balanced foliar fertilizer; and Natural IV, a foliar spray for the control of mildew are currently under review with the older products and processes for US and EU (European Union) FVO organic approval. As a result, these products are suitable for use in either an organic or conventional growing program in the USA, ensuring maximum flexibility and value.

To find out more about AgriCoat LLC, see their website at [www.agricoatllc.com](http://www.agricoatllc.com).

**ICS note** – As of November 29, 2005, AgriCoat LLC, located in Soledad, CA, has become an approved operation in the Input Manufacturing Program for the following services;

*Operations Performed: Seed Priming, Seed Coating, Foliar Spray Manufacturing*

*Approved products for use in certified organic operations:*

*Natural Prime - per customer contract - Approved Inputs only*

*Natural II - Per customer Contract - Approved Inputs only*

*Natural II Plus - Per Customer Contract - Approved Inputs only*

*Natural III - 5 gal, 275 gal - Approved Inputs only*

*Natural IV - 5 gal, 275 gal - Approved Inputs only*

### In the Spotlight

Do you wish to be "In the Spotlight" or know of another ICS client you'd like to see have a feature article in this newsletter? Please contact the marketing department at [brandi@ics-intl.com](mailto:brandi@ics-intl.com) with your suggestions and ideas.



**THE 17TH ANNUAL UPPER MIDWEST ORGANIC FARMING CONFERENCE (FEB 23-25, 2006 LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN)**

**MOSES** The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) will host the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC) at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, February 23-25, 2006. "This year's theme 'Growing More Organic!' echoes the dramatic increase in consumer demand for organic food and the renewed interest in sustainable farming practices in the US and around the world," says Faye Jones, executive director of MOSES.

The UMOFC is proud to host three keynote speakers. Michael Ableman, author of critically acclaimed *From the Good Earth: A Celebration of Growing Food Around the World*; Michael Sligh, with the Seeds & Breeds Project and Leslie Duram, professor of Environmental Management at the University of Illinois Carbondale.

New this year, Chef Monique Hooker hosts Coulee Chefs Cook Organic! Enjoy fine cuisine made with local organic food. Join area restaurateurs and local celebrity tasters in a presentation of excellent cooking. Monique co-authored an award-winning book, *Cooking with the Seasons: a Year in My Kitchen*. She also hosted a TV Show in Chicago called *The Seasonal Kitchen*.

The UMOFC is a unique, farmer-centered conference with over 1800 participants attending from across the Upper Midwest. MOSES education director Jody

Padgham says "The conference is renowned as the premier educational event for farmers and others," says Jody Padgham, education director of MOSES. The conference provides more than 45 workshop topics including: specialty crops, marketing issues, crop production, animal husbandry, soil management, organic certification and much more. The exhibit hall features over 130 exhibitors, representing every aspect of sustainable and organic agriculture.

On Thursday, February 23, 2006, the conference hosts the Organic University. These all-day seminars include topics: organic poultry on grass, advanced apple production, soil food web, organic dairy, organic beef, organic agriculture 101, advanced weed management, transitioning to organic and medicinal herbs. Registration includes a comprehensive resource notebook.

To receive a pre-conference flyer, with complete information on the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference and the Organic University, email: [info@mosesorganic.org](mailto:info@mosesorganic.org), call 715-772-3153 or write UMOFC P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, WI 54767. (Flyers will be mailed in early December.) For updates on the conference and for an electronic version of this press release, visit our website at: [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org).



**NEW CERTIFICATIONS**

ICS welcomes the following organizations to our family of certified clients. We're proud to have you with us.

FVO Certifications:

Loren Zundel, Family Farm

NOP Certifications:

Aspen Leaf Organics, Family Farm

Falk Farms, Family Farm

White Thunder Organics, Family Farm

ADM Edible Bean Specialties, Processor/Mfg.

## PUBLICATION HELPS FOOD PRODUCERS RESPOND TO GMO CHALLENGES

### THE NON-GMO REPORT FOCUSES ON SOLUTIONS TO THE BIGGEST THREAT TO NATURAL AND ORGANIC FOODS—GENETIC ENGINEERING.

The genetic modification or “engineering” of the food supply is one of the most revolutionary and radical technologies ever developed. Scientists are breaking nature’s boundaries to take genes from bacterium, plants, animals, and other species and insert them into food crops, raising a host of food safety, environmental, and ethical concerns. The controversial technology has many detractors who say GM foods pose dangerous risks to human health and the environment. Despite assurances from biotech companies that GM foods are safe, there has been no long-term safety testing. As a result, opposition to GM foods has spread worldwide, particularly in Europe and Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, as well as in the United States.

#### GMO challenges

GM crops have created many challenges for the food industry. Windborne pollen from GM corn can cross-pollinate with non-GM and organic corn, causing economic losses for farmers of those crops. In the United States, it is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to find pure non-GM corn and soybean seed. Food manufacturers face challenges finding non-GM ingredients for their products due to the widespread use of processed GM corn and soy ingredients. Retailers are in the dark about the GM status of food products because, unlike many other nations, the United States and Canada do not require labeling of GM foods.



Fortunately, there is a resource to help food producers, from farmers to retailers, respond to the challenges of GM foods. *The Non-GMO Report* is the only monthly publication that aims to help food producers respond to the challenges and capitalize on the growing market for non-GM foods.

Each issue features articles about non-GM ingredients, tips for farmers to avoid GMO contamination, non-GMO market opportunities, global GMO news, consumer attitudes, GM food labeling news, and profiles of companies successfully producing non-GM products.

#### Useful information

*The Non-GMO Report* aims to provide more than just news, says editor and publisher, Ken Roseboro. “We aim to help food producers prevent GMO contamination problems, connect with buyers of their products, locate sources for non-GM grains and ingredients,

and keep them up-to-date on all the issues surrounding GM foods,” he says.

Prior to launching *The Report*, Roseboro wrote extensively about GM foods for many agricultural and food industry trade publications, including *Prepared Foods*, *Organic Processing*, *Natural Foods Merchandiser*, *Grain Journal*, *Seed World*, and others. He saw a need for information about GM foods. “There weren’t many publications focusing on the impact of GM foods, particularly from the non-GM angle,” he says.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## PUBLICATION HELPS FOOD PRODUCERS RESPOND TO GMO CHALLENGES

(Continued from page 6)

“I saw a need for a publication to focus on the non-GMO market and to provide information to help the food industry as a whole respond to the challenges.”

Natural and organic food manufacturers and retailers will find *The Non-GMO Report* especially helpful. “An Organic Trade Association survey of its members found that GM foods are the biggest threat to organic,” says Roseboro. As a result, *The Report* features many articles on the impact of GMOs on organic and ways to prevent the impacts.

### “Only newsletter of its kind”

Now in its sixth year of publication, *The Non-GMO Report* is read by subscribers worldwide, many of whom are producing and selling non-GM products. These companies rely on *The Non-GMO Report* to ensure their products are non-GMO. One such company is Newman’s Own Organics. Company founder Nell Newman told *Organic Processing* magazine, “I would highly recommend *The Non-GMO Report* newsletter.” Dennis Singsank, president, American Health & Nutrition, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, says, “It’s the only newsletter of its kind that provides information to help companies produce non-GM foods.”

Subscribers include individuals and companies at all ends of food production, including seed companies, farmers, grain and ingredient suppliers, processors, food manufacturers, distributors, and retailers.

### World’s only “farm to fork” directory of non-GM products

Another resource that food producers find useful is *The Non-GMO Sourcebook*, the world’s only “farm to fork” directory of suppliers of non-GM products. Published annually, *The Non-GMO Sourcebook* features more than 550 suppliers of non-GM products, including seed, processed corn and soy ingredients, specialty grains and oilseeds, minor ingredients and processing aids, and food products. *The Sourcebook* also lists suppliers of related products and services, such as GMO testing, identity preservation, organic certification, and other services that support non-GMO production. *The Sourcebook* is global in scope, featuring non-GM suppliers in North and South America, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, and the Middle East. A major US retailer distributes *The Sourcebook* to its suppliers to ensure that all ingredients in the retailer’s branded products are non-GMO.

For more information about *The Non-GMO Report* and *The Non-GMO Sourcebook*, call 1-800-854-0586 or visit [www.non-gmreport.com](http://www.non-gmreport.com).

# THE NON-GMO REPORT

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Feb 4, 2006: NSAS Annual Conference,  
Nebraska City, NE

Feb 10-11, 2006 NPSAS 27th Annual Winter  
Conference, at the Doublewood Inn, Fargo,  
ND

Feb 16-19, 2006: Bio Fach, Germany

Feb 23rd-25th, 2006 The 17th annual Upper  
Midwest Organic Farming Conference and  
Organic University at the La Crosse Center in  
La Crosse, Wisconsin

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