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Organic Flax Production in Iowa

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Organic Flax Production in Iowa

Abstract

Iowa producers interested in raising flax will find valuable information in a new Extension publication, Organic Flax Production in Iowa – PM 2058. The publication by Kathlene Delate, Craig Chase and John Kennicker outlines planting and fertility requirements, variety selection, management issues, harvesting, storage and handling of the crop.

Keywords

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Disciplines

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Organic Flax Production in Iowa

By Kathleen Delate, Departments of Agronomy and Horticulture

Iowa producers interested in raising flax will find valuable information in a new Extension publication, [Organic Flax Production in Iowa – PM 2058](#). The publication by Kathlene Delate, Craig Chase and John Kennicker outlines planting and fertility requirements, variety selection, management issues, harvesting, storage and handling of the crop.

There has been an increased public interest in food grade flaxseed and flaxseed oil because of the high content of omega-3 fatty acids associated with lowering blood cholesterol levels and heart disease risk. In recent years, there has also been a renewed interest in organic flax, grown and processed without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or food processing aids.

BIOWA Nutraceuticals, an organic flaxseed oil crushing facility in Cherokee, opened in 2004 to meet an increasing worldwide demand for the oil. The facility sources organic flax from Iowa farmers and other organic growers. Growers are encouraged to contact the facility directly to assure proper brown flax varieties are planted.

The positive aspects of growing flax include diversifying a farming operation and a favorable economic return if the flax crop meets the specifications for the organic flaxseed oil market.

The trade-offs, however, include weed management for a poorly competitive crop, harvesting issues (purchasing, renting, or locating a custom operator of a swather/wind-rower), and weather (dry conditions can lower yields).

Organic Flax Production in Iowa can be ordered or downloaded from the [ISU Extension online store](#). Further organic grower information can be obtained by visiting the [ISU organic agriculture webpage](#).

Kathleen Delate is an extension organic agriculture specialist. She can be reached by email at kdelate@iastate.edu or phone (515) 294-7069.

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