

# Organic Matters

## Eastside to Westside: 2009 Farm Tours

Eastside/Article by Jim Lindquist, Photos by Susan Tallman

Puffy white clouds hanging in a big blue Montana sky and no wind. What a great day it was for the Hinebauch Farm Tour. I knew this was going to be a big tour when we pulled into the farm and saw four combines parked by the shop. About 50 or more folks gathered up at the shop, introductions were made and we loaded up on Brian Bauer's school bus to look at how the Hinebauch's crops were doing.



Welcome sign

Randy and Lisa Hinebauch and their family have been organic farmers since 1987 and are certified by OCIA. Their farm sits close to Chinook, up on the high

line, north of the Bear Paw Mountains. It is one of the oldest organic farms in the State. Their primary crops are winter and spring wheat, with alfalfa and

peas used as rotational plow downs. The Hinebauch spread is impressive and includes 4300 acres of wheat, 1400 of peas, and 2400 of summer fallow. A typical five-year rotation for them would be peas followed by spring wheat, then

fallow, winter wheat and back to peas on the 5th year. Randy plows down all his peas, which contributes to his high yields.

*Continued on page 2*

## Westside/Article and Photos by Susan Waters

"We're proud of the fact that we can make a living, raise a family here, without having outside jobs," says Antje Baty, one of the hosts of this year's MOA Farm Tours. "And we feel we're doing something positive—working with nature and giving something back," adds Doug Baty. "We used to recreate in the wilderness, sometime scaring the wildlife and stepping on wildflowers. Now we work with the animals and grow food."

The Baty's organic Wild Plum Farm in Dixon is the focus of discussion on a pleasantly warm and sunny day in late June on

the first stop of the day's two-location Farm Tour. One can easily see the



Doug Baty demonstrates a tool he uses

passion and sensitivity the Batys put into their fields, totaling about five acres, which are nestled within a 280-acre farm, used mainly for grazing. The participants soaked up the sun and the 40+ years of experience the Batys had to offer about running a small-scale vegetable, herb and seed operation, sometimes using the most basic techniques and hand tools. They are techniques and tools that bring them

even closer to understanding their land's needs.

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Eastside

*Continued from page 1*

Farm tours are a great opportunity to see how the farmer works with varying conditions: It was notable how the rainfall varied from field to field—the southern fields had received more than adequate moisture



Probing for moisture in the field

this year, where the fields to the north were pretty dry. And nature has a way of finding some of her own solutions: A close inspection of the pea fields showed that when the fields needed more nitrogen in the soil, the peas would produce more nitrogen-producing nodules. And plain old hard work is a given on any farm: On the way back for lunch, Randy pointed out a fallow field where he and his sons had hand picked 74 truckloads of rock. Talk about work.



Randy Hinebauch in his field

When asked, Randy attributes the farm's success to networking with other organic farmers, good family, good neighbors and friends, and good crops. And as the perfect example, the tour was topped off with delicious food and informative farm chatter by friendly folk in the shade of some huge cottonwood trees. Tom Bergren and Ethan Hinebauch made burgers on the grill while Lisa Hinebauch provided some great salads and deserts for all who attended. Cheers to another fine year on the farm!

Westside

Continued from page 1

In addition to being visual delights, the productive plots also supply the Western Montana Grower's Coop with garlic, tomatoes, cucumbers and squash. Steve Dagger from the Coop also added to the discussion, highlighting the Coop's role in the relationship between the farmer and the consumer.



One of the Baty's garden plots

The stunning Mission Mountains offered a fitting backdrop to the second stop on the day's MOA Farm Tour. John and Crystal Walkup and their three children have run the Mission Mountain Organic Egg Farm, a certified organic egg operation in Ronan, since early 2007. The picturesque setting doesn't detract from the efficiency of their operation though. They are currently producing about 90 dozen eggs per day from just under 1400 current layers, with just over 1600 more pullets on line to begin laying this fall. But this is just about as far from factory farming as one can get. Several buildings along the tour house the essential stages of egg production, but with some chicken-style amenities: selective feed processing and delivery; warm chick brooding; roomy, straw-lined



The girls stretching their legs in the straw bedding house

laying house; extra-large outdoor chicken yard; and a partially-mechanized egg processing building. The family discussed many of the details of the operation, including breed selection, market demand, feed types, and egg inspection and handling, much of which is done by hand and with care at the Walkup's.

"Get to know your local organic farmer and his personal commitment to the health and goodness of the food he raises," advises John Walkup—a solid first step to build trusting and sustainable relationships between dedicated farmers, conscientious distributors and loyal consumers.

But as they say, the proof is in the pudding. Both the Batys and the Walkups scored perfect "10s" in the taste test. The Third Street Market in Whitefish donated eggs (from the Mission Mountain Organic Egg Farm) for



All Mission Mountain eggs are inspected carefully

some ultra-fresh egg salad sandwiches along with a delicious, nutritious green salad, compliments of the Baty farm and kitchen. The Western Montana Grower's Coop also donated Mission Mountain eggs as a giveaway to the participants.

The Baty and Walkup tours (as well as the Hinebauch tour) were also made possible by generous donations from The Good Food Store in Missoula, the Montana Department of Agriculture, AERO and the Organic Crop Improvement Association, North Central Montana Chapter.

The love of their land, lifestyle and work, the encouragement they shared with the novice-farmer and consumer participants, and the lively discussion amongst the seasoned farmers made all three tours educational and networking successes. MOA extends a hearty "thanks" to all who participated in this year's events, as well as to all those who made them possible.

"We used to be a nation of farmers, but now it's less than two percent of the population in the United States. So a lot of us don't know a lot about what it takes to grow food."

~Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farms



# Farming in Malawi

by Lauren Lindquist

My name is Lauren Lindquist and I am the daughter of Jim and Sharon Lindquist, organic farmers in Eastern Montana. On the 22nd of February I left the US to come to Malawi, Africa, to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer. I have been placed in the district of Mchinji in the village of Nyoka to work with the Mchinji Forest Reserve. My main work will be with the forest reserve and the farmers that live near the reserve trying to work against deforestation as much as possible by helping the farmers come up with other income generating activities (IGA) so that trees are not needed for income.

When I first got to my site, everyone in my village, including my "family," was shelling maize. In Malawi, there are three main cash crops and everyone grows at least one. These crops are maize, groundnuts (peanuts) and tobacco.

Abambo Mafunga, my landlord, grows five acres of maize every year, which goes to help feed his family living in the village, as well as his two daughters living in the BOMA. Harvesting maize is a long process, which is all done by hand.

The maize is dried in the field and when it is taken from the field to the house, an ox cart is used (two acres equals one load in an ox cart). The maize is dumped on the ground, and is either stored in the house or in a grass silo while the shelling is going on. After the maize has been husked, mats and plastic are spread on the ground and all the maize is put on the ground. Then the shelling begins.

Shelling maize is a job for the whole family from the smallest children to the grandparents. Shelling maize with three generations of one family really gives you a sense of family. Children will put maize into bags and beat them with clubs to loosen the kernels while the adults sit on the mats and pop the kernels off with their thumbs or use another cob to take off the kernels. An adult can shell an ear of maize in about two minutes, but this is still a long process that will take about two weeks to process two acres.

After the shelling, the kernels are spread out on the mats to dry further. At the end of the day, the women will use winnowing baskets to clean debris from the kernels. The maize is then put into 50kg bags with the tops tied together using rubber twine from old car tires. The bags are stored for next year's seed, sold, or milled into ufa (maize flour), which is used to make nsima, the Malawi staple food.



*Editor's Note: One of Lauren's Peace Corp goals is to demonstrate and initiate varied and organic methods of farming. Not only do they farm traditionally and manually, but they do use chemical fertilizers to insure crops and they also burn residue instead of tilling it back into the soil. Lauren has started a demonstration garden in her village to show that organic methods work and is beginning to teach some classes on environmental issues in the high school, where she has initiated a tree seedling plot as one of their projects. Lauren is currently seeking donations of vegetable seeds--preferably corn, squash, or any other vegetable that thrives in lots of rain and temperatures above 50 F. To donate seeds or for more information on how to help, phone Jim or Sharon Lindquist at (406) 583-7722.*

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**USDA Shows Growth of Organic Agriculture**

by Doug Crabtree

The USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) recently released a report detailing the continued growth of organic agriculture. The report includes the number of certified operations, as well as total acreage certified and certified acreage for various crops by state and nationwide. The USDA acreage data is reported through 2005, while the number of certified operations is reported through 2007.

For the US, the ERS reports that, "In 2005, for the first time, all 50 states had some certified organic farmland." The total area devoted to organic production in the US was over four million acres, including 1.7 million acres of cropland and 2.3 million of pasture and rangeland. Organic acreage increased by 111% between 2002 and 2005. Over a million new organic acres were added in each year of that period. While the growth rate of organic acreage is impressive, the total organic acreage is still barely one-half of one percent (.51%) of total US farmland area. Just over 4 million of the nearly 800 million acres of US farmland is certified for organic production. The percentage of land devoted to organic production is much higher for some crops. Almost five percent (4.66%) of all vegetable acreage and 2.5% of all fruit acres in the US are certified organic. Carrots "lead the pack" in the proportion of organic acreage, with 5.80% of the acreage organic. On the other end of the spectrum; corn (.16%), soybeans (.17%) and cotton (.07%) each show nearly insignificant percentages of acreage devoted to organic production. Of the major crops grown in Montana, about half of one percent (.48%) of US wheat acres, one percent (1.01%) of barley acres, over three percent of dry pea and lentil (3.11%), flax (3.14%) and apple (3.35%) acres are organic.

The number of certified operations in the US grew by 16% (from 7,300 to nearly 8,500) from 2002 to 2005. The more rapid rate of increase in acreage indicates that organic farms are growing larger and/or that larger farms are converting to organic production.

Montana is one of only four states (Alaska, California, and Texas are the others) with more than 100,000 acres of land devoted to organic production. Montana's 230,000 acres of certified land trails only Alaska (1.46 million) and California (360,000) in acreage. Our 139 certified producers rank 17th nationally. These two rankings, when considered

together, indicated that we have some large organic farms in Montana!

Montana is a very significant producer of several specific organic crops. We lead the nation in acreage of organic wheat, with 56,000 acres representing over 20% of the US total. Montana also leads the US in organic dry peas and lentils, with over 50% of the total US acreage. We are a distant second (to neighbor North Dakota) in organic flax acres, with 11% of the US total. Finally, Montana ranks third in acres of "unclassified" organic crops, the largest component of which is fallow. Our 21,000 acres of fallow trail only California and Texas.

While the ERS data do show significant gains in US and Montana organic acreage, more recent happen-

ings are even more pronounced. The Montana Department of Agriculture has certified 39 new organic operations since 2007, when the USDA data were collected. Another 17 new operations have applied for certification in 2009. Another bit of data may suggest why more farmers are converting to organic agriculture. Statistics gleaned from the 2007 Census of Agriculture (table attached) indicate that organic farms generated 4.35% of the total agricultural sales in Montana, from only .32% of the land and .78% the farms in Montana. In short, less than one percent of the farms, using less than one-third of one percent of the land generated over 4% of the agricultural revenue in Montana. All in all, these statistics show that an increasing number of farmers- in Montana and the US are seizing the opportunity of certified organic production.

### Organic Agriculture Data

2007 Census of Agriculture, USDA, National Agriculture Statistics Service

	TOTAL FARMS	TOTAL ACRES	CROP ACRES	PASTURE ACRES	ACRES IN CONVERSION	AGRICULTURAL SALES	EXEMPT FARMS*	CERTIFIED FARMS
Montana ALL Agriculture	29,524	61,388,462	18,241,710	43,146,752	61,388,462	\$ 201,752,000	29,524	29,524
Montana Organic Agriculture	229	195,204	58,868	75,807	37,260	\$ 8,776,000	86	121
<b>Organic % of Montana Total</b>	<b>0.78%</b>	<b>0.32%</b>	<b>0.32%</b>	<b>0.18%</b>	<b>0.06%</b>	<b>4.35%</b>	<b>0.29%</b>	<b>0.41%</b>

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-Albert, vineyard bird dog,  
Missoula, Montana

Dog Photo: Elise Schemm

## NOSB News Update

(National Organic Standards Board) by Barry Flamm

Board members and the public alike were excited to have our new Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Kathleen Merrigan address the May Board meeting. It is quite a boost to organics to have a person with such experience and dedication to organics in such a high position in USDA. NOP will get elevated in the USDA hierarchy and get a better shake in the budget. The NOP program manager position is now being recruited under the Senior Executive Service (non-political) system and will not have to serve also as Deputy Administrator for Transportation and Marketing in AMS.

At her morning presentation, Merrigan made a very strong appeal for biodiversity conservation. It was a great lead-in for my subsequent presentation of the guidance recommendation for Implementation of Biological Conservation in Organic Agriculture Systems. During the evening visit, she told me she had read the full recommendation document. The recommendation was passed by the Board: 14 yes, 1 absent.

Of much interest, NOSB had received its first petition to remove a material from the National List of allowed substances. After receiving and considering hundreds of written comments plus oral presentations, the Board voted to remove Lecithin, bleached

from 205.605b and the 605.606 listing to only the dry form. This is because of availability concerns that still remain.

Those of you with alkaline soil problems may be interested that the Board approved the sulfurous acid petition for an on-farm manufacture for use in pH adjustment of water. Also, livestock producers now will have vitamins and minerals injected as supplements available.

Following the Board meeting, some of us met with AMS Science and Technology staff. S&T has been contracted by NOP to prepare technical reviews of petitioned materials. The purpose of the meeting was to achieve a better understanding among S&T of our needs so as to achieve superior work to meet our needs in reviewing and decisions making for petitioned materials.

Since then, in mid-July, Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that an agreement has been reached between the United States and Canada that will expand opportunities for organic producers in both countries. The "equivalency agreement" follows a review by both nations of the other's organic certification program and a determination that products meeting the standard in the United States can be sold as organic in Canada, and vice versa. Read more at [www.ams.usda.gov](http://www.ams.usda.gov). Until next time...



# On the Farm (and at the Market)

by Jacob Cowgill

Farmers' Market season is in full swing. After months of planning, dropping seed by tiny seed into cells in the greenhouse, and nurturing tender seedlings in the ground have all culminated into the weekly ritual of harvesting in the early Friday evening, waking up at 3:30am on Saturday morning to brew coffee, loading up and jumping in the pickup to get to market on time. Then it is a mad dash to set everything up, the bell rings, and it is four hours of an ebb and flow of people, some stopping to check out our produce, others eyeballing the table but moving on.



Jacob and Courtney Cowgill at their market stand in Great Falls

This is Prairie Heritage Farm's first market season ever and each week we get a little better at it. Our Saturdays are consistently sunny and warm now, but during the first part of June, the weather was far less predictable. Some weekends would find us huddled under our shelter shivering in the chilly temperatures and rain. Early on we were unsure as to how we would be received but week after week we have folks came up to our stand and tell us how happy they are to see us there - local organic growers. Demand for fresh, local and organic food is as high as ever and we've started our farm enterprise at a great time. So many others before us in the organic movement have blazed the trail. All we have to do is grow good food and show up at the market.

While the vegetables take up the majority of our time on the farm, the field crops - the emmer and lentils - continue to quietly grow taller in the abundant sunshine. I look at them every day, but besides rolling the field of lentils (to push rocks into the ground so the combine can cut very low), that is all I've done since planting - watch them grow.

The heritage turkeys are becoming more turkey-like by the day. They recently moved outside from the

brooder house, where they eat fresh grass and forage for insects, elements that will define their flavor come Thanksgiving.

Some days on the farm we get done all those things we had on our list, other days are frustrating, dealing with something unplanned for, but all days are an adventure and from time to time I stop and shake my head, not quite believing this is my job, or more accurately, this is my life.

## MOA Needs You

As MOA grows and develops, involvement by members becomes evermore essential, whether it takes the form of voicing your opinion or lending a hand. Here are some ways for you to become involved...

**Join a committee.** MOA has committees that oversee each of its strategic goals. Consider joining the Communications, Conference, Farm Tours, or Fundraising committees. Contact moa@montanaorganicassociation.org or 406-871-0019 for more info.

**Become a member.** The simplest way for you to advance MOA's current efforts and future goals is to provide financial support through membership. Just fill out the form below and send it in.

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**SUMMER** is a glorious season of plentiful bounties of fresh and nutritious foods from local organic gardens. But great taste never has to be sacrificed to cook healthfully. Try this delicious recipe as is, or prepare it as a dip or a taco salad ingredient.

**Sweet Potatoes and Kale Quesadillas**

by Sharon Lindquist

Ingredients:

<p><b>1 lrg sweet potato, diced</b>  <b>1 lrg Vidalia onion, sliced</b>  <b>1 clove garlic, chopped</b>  <b>1 c black beans, rinsed &amp; drained</b>  <b>c salsa</b>  <b>tsp cinnamon (opt)</b>  <b>2 kale leaves, stalks removed, chopped</b></p>	<p><b>2 tbsp oil</b>  <b>c frozen/fresh sweet corn</b>  <b>jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced</b>  <b>dash hot sauce</b>  <b>1 tsp chili powder</b>  <b>salt &amp; pepper to taste</b>  <b>Sour cream</b>  <b>6-8 small wheat tortillas</b>  <b>olive oil</b></p>
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To prepare:

Place chopped sweet potato in pot, cover w/ water & bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Heat oil in frying pan over medium heat, sauté onions, until brown. Add corn and cook for another 5 min. until it starts to brown. Add garlic & jalapeno, sauté. Add beans and hot sauce, mix well. Add salsa, spices and season to taste. Drain potatoes, add to pan with chopped kale, cook until kale is bright green. Remove from heat. Heat another pan for the tortillas. Brush 1 side of the tortillas with olive oil, spread mixture on of tortilla, fold in half, cook on 1 side then flip and cook on the other side until golden. Remove from heat, slice into 3 triangles. Serve with salsa and sour cream.

Serves 6-8.

**To Your Health**

by Sharon Lindquist

Spring in Eastern Montana was late and cool this year. We planted our garden this year in bits and pieces working around weather and larger farm chores and I watched each day for signs that our seeds were germinating with anticipation of that first truly fresh salad. A staple in our salad garden along with spinach and lettuce is kale; a nutritious, great tasting and easy to grow vegetable. Kale is packed with vitamins, minerals and amino acids. Not only is it nutritious but it is colorful and comes in a variety of shapes and textures. It tolerates extreme temperature ranges and becomes sweeter with a frost, handy in our Montana climate.

Kale likes loamy soils with good drainage and lots of well-rotted organic matter. Cabbageworms and aphids will be the pests to watch for. Kale comes in a variety of colors from pale yellow to steel blue, through purplish red to almost black. My favorite varieties are Scotch, Siberian, Heirloom and Dinosaur. I start harvesting leaves for salads as soon as the plant is established and continue to harvest through the fall months.

To turn an ordinary green salad into an extraordinary side dish or complete meal with health benefits unlike any other vegetable, add a cup of kale. A one cup serving, chopped, is approximately 36 calories and loaded with protein, vitamins and minerals. One cup of kale added to a salad provides almost twice the daily requirement of vitamin A, almost all of the vitamin C required for a day and 1,300% of the daily requirements of vitamin K. Kale also contains a number of compounds that do a lot to keep the body strong, healthy and free from damage.


To slow the hand of time, add just one cup of kale a week to your diet to protect your body against disease caused by the aging. Kale contains a high amount of carotenoids (lutein and zeaxanthin), protecting the eyes from ultraviolet light, which is important in preventing cataracts. Kale also produces a phytochemical compound called sulforaphane which signals the liver to produce cancer fighting enzymes, helping to prevent and lower your risk of getting colon, lung, prostate and breast cancers.

A few notes from the kitchen: preparing kale is easy. It can be steamed, braised, stir-fried and sautéed. Kale is a hearty green that stands up to bold flavors, so season liberally. When growing kale for salads, Oak-leaf Siberian or Russian types are sweeter and can be harvested early for your salad. Blue Scotch and Lacinato varieties of kale are great for cooking when mature. Enjoy, and cheers to your health!

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## MOA Board Recruitment

Do you want to be involved in promoting organic food? Are you interested in helping organize MOA's annual conference or farm tours? Maybe you have other skills and ideas that will help MOA fulfill its mission. We are looking for you.

MOA will fill four positions on the Board of Directors at the annual conference in November. Board members serve three-year terms and generally serve on one or more committees. The committees include Conference, Communications and Newsletter, Farm Tour, Board Development, Finance and Fund Raising and Nominations. The Board of Directors usually meets in person two times each year and by conference call several times each year.

If you are interested in serving on MOA's Board of Directors or would like to know more, contact Steve Baril (406-458-4981 or [barils@mt.net](mailto:barils@mt.net)) or Judy Owsowitz (406-862-6362 or [terrapi@aboutmontana.net](mailto:terrapi@aboutmontana.net)).

## CSA Shares Still Available

Western Montana Growers Coop has CSA shares available for the remainder of this summer and fall. Our shares are comprised of vegetables grown by several local and organic farmers in Western Montana. We distribute these shares from Missoula to Polson. Through our website you have the opportunity to purchase local, organic, dairy products, meat, eggs, grains and additional vegetables. If you are interested in signing up please contact Paul Lowrey at 406-544-6135 or [montanacsa@hotmail.com](mailto:montanacsa@hotmail.com).



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## A View from the Chair

by Ole Norgaard

It happens every year—summer arrives with its share of sunshine, blue skies and hopefully, some rain showers. As farmers, it's also the busy time of growing our crops, keeping the cows happy out on the range, making hay, praying for rain and hoping that the potatoes will be plentiful and the grain bin will get full. This is also the time when one should observe and learn from one's crops. What are the crops, weeds, and cows "telling" us? What is running perfectly and where is there room for improvement in one's farming practices? Are there things that need to be done differently to improve the farm, soil, crop, and livestock?

Keeping an open mind and learning from one's successes and not-so-great outcomes are what we all need to do to keep getting better at what we do, both as farmers and as human beings in our everyday life.

MOA just hosted its farm tours for this year, one on the east side and one on the west side of this big State. I took the opportunity to participate in Randy Hinebauch's tour up on the high line, west of Chinook. It was a great tour and a very impressive

organic farm operation. I observed, asked questions and learned a lot that day. I came home with a deeper understanding of some farming practices that I need to integrate into my own operation so that I can keep improving my own skills as a farmer and produce better crops. It was a pleasant and inspiring day.

As these words are being written, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration is going on with its share of fireworks, parades and other fun stuff. I sometimes wonder what the founding fathers of this nation would think if they could see what their ideas and thoughts have created over the centuries. What would they say about the time we are living in, the technology we are using, the environment, the big corporations, the stimulus money, the internet, the healthcare system, the food we are eating? It is hard to speculate what they would say. One would hope that they would be proud of the nation's successes and honestly assess the not-so-great outcomes with compassion and the courage to move ahead and make decisions for a better tomorrow.

Have a great summer.