



Organic Matters

Mr. Flamm Goes to Washington

by Judy Owsowitz, Terrapin Farm

Montana Organic Association's own Barry Flamm, recipient of the 2006 Lifetime of Service Award, has received an appointment to the position of environmentalist on the National Organic Standards Board. Barry thought that after selling his cherry and mixed fruit orchard on Flathead Lake retirement would allow more time for his international biodiversity conservation work, exploring places near and far, and outdoor sports like kayaking, skiing, fishing, hiking, etc. Instead, he now finds himself in the challenging position of being on the advisory board to the National Organic Program.

Barry's credentials for the job are impressive. He has served as the Director of the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ), chief of fire control for the United States Forest Service (USFS), developed the first National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the USFS, worked with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), was vice-chair of the MOA steering committee, was vice-chair of the MOA board of directors, was a board member of AERO, and a board member of Montana Organic Commodities Advisory Council (MOCAC) to name just a few. His educational degrees include a Doctorate in philosophy from George Mason University.

Barry has a long and dedicated history in environmental activism, both locally and worldwide. He went

to South Vietnam to help improve forest management and became heavily involved in studying effects of agent orange and other war damages to the forests. He has done environmental work in China, Costa Rica, Mongolia and Nepal, to name a few.

In 1992 he forged into organic orcharding. Here Barry was a pioneer, having the first certified organic cherry orchard on Flathead Lake, in an orcharding community that was not always friendly to organics. He persevered to achieve certification through biological controls.



Now Barry gets to carry this all a step further. He will be representing organic farmers at our governing body. He will be researching, reading, listening, and discussing with our best interests in mind. When you get that inevitable skeptic, asking if organics has been corporatized, you can assuredly reply, "Heck, no. Barry is in Washington."

In response to his appointment, Barry says, "As a life long conservationist, environmentalist, and long time advocate of organics, I am pleased and proud to serve the organic community in this new capacity and honored by the support of my friends and colleagues in Montana that have worked so hard and passionately."

Barry has promised to write a column and keep us all informed. And you thought you were retired, Barry? Congratulations and thank you!

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Montana Organic Association is a 501(c)6 non-profit organization dedicated to advocating and promoting organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and the state economy.

Organic Matters is published quarterly by the Montana Organic Association. Send queries, suggestions, letters, and requests to:

Organic Matters
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Polson MT 59860
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association.org

Organic Matters occasionally includes guest articles and opinions. While we review these for relevance to our mission, the opinions in these articles may not reflect the opinions or policy of the Montana Organic Association.

MSU Organic Researchers *Still* Need Your Input

Montana State University faculty are conducting organic farming research as part of a three-year USDA grant. They were on-hand at the MOA conference in Great Falls and presented some of their research findings to a standing-room-only audience. These researchers are continually identifying areas for further organic farming research and would like your help with this process.

They have developed a survey designed to help prioritize crop management issues, concerns, and problems that face organic farmers. The results from this survey will be used to identify research needs, develop grant proposals and/or refine current projects designed to directly benefit Montana's organic farmers. Some of the selected projects will be conducted on a five-acre block that has been reserved for organic farming research at the Agronomy Post Farm in Bozeman, while other research may be on-farm.

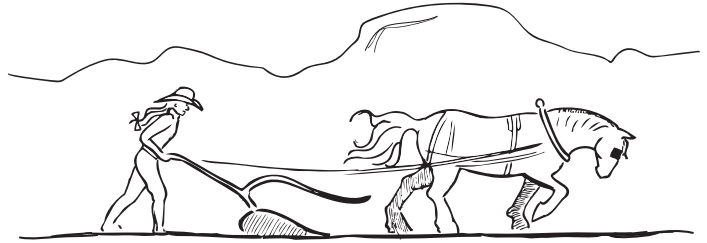
As an organic farmer, you have a unique opportunity to shape the direction of future organic farming research in Montana. By participating in this survey, you can share your individual needs with those that have the greatest ability to assist you, and by extension, other farmers who may share your situation. Who knows? By participating in this survey,

you may be able to work directly with MSU by doing research on your farm. This is an opportunity not to be missed, or wasted.

A link to the survey can be found at the MOA website:

<http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/survey.htm>

Please participate at your earliest convenience so that our MSU researchers can get to work on setting their (and hopefully your) list of research priorities. If you have already participated, thank you!



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MOA Board Changes

MOA is pleased to announce the election of two new members to the MOA Board at our annual meeting in Great Falls. Join us in welcoming Kathryn Begeal and Sam Schmidt to the MOA Board. We've asked them to share a little of their history with you in a short bio (see below).

As we celebrate Kathryn and Sam's arrival, we also must give our sincere appreciate to our departing board members, Glen Babcock and Jerry Habets. The board is deeply grateful for all of their hardwork and input during their tenure as board members and look forward to their continued involvement as MOA grows and evolves. Thank you, gentlemen.



Kathryn Begeal joined Ceres in March 2005 as Grower Outreach Coordinator and manager of the organic oat and Hi-Fi Oat programs. She now serves as the Project Manager for Grower Outreach. Kathryn has a BS in Sustainable Agriculture from Western Washington University and a MA in Community and Regional Planning from

University of New Mexico. She brings over ten years of experience in organic farm operations to MOA along with a background in community-based planning, community food security projects and facilitation. She is headquartered out of Ceres' Boulder, Colorado office. Kathryn has a soft spot for Montana; she lived in Arlee and managed Common Ground Farm several years ago. She feels strong ties to the organic community and land here and is honored to have the opportunity to serve the interests of growing and expanding organics in Montana.

Growing up on a small western Kansas wheat farm, Sam Schmidt started his grain industry education as the head "dust collector" at the local elevator in Russell, KS. Approaching high school graduation, and getting bored with shoveling spilled piles of wheat, he decided to attend Kansas State University and its Grain/Milling Science school. A couple of years in, a pasta manufacturer's internship gave him new hope, larger piles of durum flour, semolina, and broken



pasta to shovel, and Sam could see the education was broadening his horizon. Upon completion at KSU, and some part time work at the USDA Grain Research Center in Manhattan, KS, Sam entered into the grain industry full time. His real interests in the industry have developed over the last 17 years with various companies, and multiple opportunities, in shuttle loading terminals, wheat and durum mills, plant expansion projects, merchandising operations, and now specialty milling. It was also in this period he was introduced to Montana, and as Sam's wife Roberta would say, "an overwhelming sickness for outdoor recreation was nurtured, and hopefully moving towards rehabilitation." Roberta and Sam reside in Great Falls, where both enjoy its career opportunities in the agri-industry, its Montana-metropolis lifestyle, and its proximity to mountains, fishing waters, and golf courses. Sam joined the Thayer's family owned operation of Montana Milling Inc. four years ago, and it has been an enjoyable combination of organic grain procurement, milling, product sales, and operation expansion project. Sam says, "I do not know if I could have asked for a better blend of my interests." Sam is proud to share his professional and personal experience as a MOA board member.

A View from the Chair, *continued from back page*

What is our role in correcting global warming, one of the most serious conservation issues ever to arise? Organic agriculture with its capability to store organic carbon in the soil may be part of the solution. What about energy conservation? Organically labeled foods on the shelves of grocery stores can be grown thousands of miles away. Are the energy costs associated with transportation keeping with the conservation ethic of organic agriculture? What is our role in energy dependence, something that certainly affects the survivability of family farms? Can we meet the needs of small-scale farmers?

As we go through strategic planning and as we implement the business of MOA, we will hopefully engage the broader community to discuss these issues and our priorities. Some issues are straining the organic community. Some issues touch us deeply and discussions can be challenging. They don't need to be confrontational. We can seek common understanding and be openly respectful of opinions and ideas. Doing so, we can build community, which after all, is one of the things we are about.

I know that the Board needs advice and help from members and friends. I encourage you to stay in touch and tell us what is on your mind.

Steve Baril, MOA Board Chair

MOA Conference a Rousing Success

by Lise Rousseau, MOA Executive Coordinator

Great Falls was the site of MOA's 5th annual conference, held November 30-December 2, 2007. Entitled "Organics...Farming for the Future," the conference spanned two and a half days and was attended by nearly 200 individuals from throughout Montana, plus Idaho, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Canada.

The conference was kicked off on Friday morning by a highly popular "processors tour," which visited all of the organic grain processors in the Great Falls area. In the afternoon, attendees could attend the Organic University or several other breakout sessions.

MOA was fortunate to have two highly regarded key note speakers this year in Dr. Jill Clapperton and Dr. Hue Karreman. Clapperton presented the opening keynote on Saturday morning with an excellent presentation on the nature of soil and soil organisms. She then fleshed out her keynote in a breakout session. She had also given an informal talk on Friday evening about her experience in "world agriculture." Dr. Karreman was the noontime speaker and shared with the audience his take as an veterinarian and NOSB member on organic trends as well as some of the action at the most recent NOSB meeting. He went on to present two breakout sessions on organic animal husbandry and plant medicines.

As usual, the major complaint among conference goers was that there were too many good choices for breakout sessions throughout the conference. The agenda included several soils sessions, poultry, no-till, seed production, research, and more, including two consumer sessions on the organic label and nutrition and mental health. Saturday concluded with our now-

famous quarter and live auctions which provided ample entertainment to all.

Sunday morning also included breakouts on co-ops, flax, and GMOs, followed by an in-depth panel discussion of the Farm Bill. MOA was fortunate to have representatives from Senators Tester and Baucus' offices, as well as Dr. Karreman, join our special guest panelist Caren Wilcox, executive director of the Organic Trade Association.

Ms. Wilcox and Wes Henthorne, MOA board member, closed out the conference with their take on what we've learned and where we go from here.

Conference attendees also enjoyed a wide selection of vendors at this conference, more than at any previous conference. Vendors displayed their wares and services from mapping programs to soil tests, grain mills to amendments, and everything in between.

The conference concluded with the annual meeting and election of new board members.

A true wrap-up of the conference wouldn't be complete without our most sincere thanks to all of the wonderful growers and other food providers that helped to make our meal times extra special and full of the abundance of Montana's organic harvest. We also must thank the truly generous organic community for providing us with so many wonderful auction items (a full list is available on the MOA website). And last, but not least, our extraordinary sponsors and vendors, without whom we could not put on such a conference. On a personal note, I'd like to thank the MOA board and particularly Ole Norgaard, '07 conference committee chair, and members for making my conference experience so rewarding.

MOA's year's conference was brought to you with the generous support of the following businesses. Please show them your continued appreciation!

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MOA Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Judy Owsowitz, Chair, convened the annual business meeting at 1:00 PM on December 2, 2007 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls.

Ole Norgaard gave a treasurer's report and provided copies of the report.

Jeff Schahczenski gave a report for the Fundraising Committee.

Judy Owsowitz gave a Chair's report on MOA's accomplishments during the year, including publishing three newsletters, collaborating on three farms tours, assisting in the reversal of the Dept. Public Health and Human Services' decision to withhold organic foods from the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition Program, implementing a website, participating on the Governor's Task Force for Food Security, and influencing the state organic certification program.

Lise Rousseau reported on MOA membership, which had grown from 205 in '06 to 218 in '07. She reported conference attendance to be lower than in '06, but with good cross-community representation.

Matt Johnson gave the Nominations and Elections Committee report and nominated the following people for board positions: Judy Owsowitz, Sandi Shanks, Jeff Schahczenski. Nominations were received from the floor from Doug Crabtree for the following people: Katherine Begeal, Sam Schmidt, and Maureen Downey. On a point of order, Doug withdrew Maureen Downey's nomination because she was not a current member of the MOA. A motion to accept the remaining five nominations was approved by the membership. Paper ballots were used to vote and counted by the Nominations and Elections Committee. Upon hearing that the results resulted in a tie, the membership approved a motion by Wes Henthorne to approve all five positions for the Board of Directors.

New Business:

Ole Norgaard asked the Board of Directors to consider having a conference every other year, and in the off year to consider a smaller meeting that included the annual business meeting.

Trevor Blythe presented two resolutions on behalf of Bob Quinn. Both resolutions were adopted by the MOA after some modifications to wording. The resolutions state as follows:

Resolution 1. A resolution to be sent to MSU President Gamble; Dean of Agriculture Jacobsen; and Dean of Education, Health, and Human Development Baker. The MOA supports the development and approval of the proposed Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems Degree at MSU. This interdisciplinary degree is perfectly in line with the mission of MOA and represents a progressive change in the training of students

for some of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture, particularly organic agriculture. Our organization recognizes the need for new approaches to agricultural education that encourages a new generation of farmers from neighborhood gardens to large-scale grain farms. We believe that the proposed SFBS Degree embraces this new approach to education and further captures the concept that agriculture is about food systems, not just production. MOA believes that one of the greatest challenges to maintaining an organic and sustainable agriculture will be the production of bioenergy. Providing a base of training for students to understand the agronomic, economic, ecological and distribution aspects of bioenergy in Montana could be absolutely crucial to maintaining sustainable production systems and rural communities. Thus, we are supportive of all aspects of the proposed SFBS Degree, and hope that it will be approved by the MSU administration and Board of Regents.

Resolution 2. Whereas the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee has funded organic projects in Montana, the Montana Organic Association supports the voluntary check-off program for organic wheat raised in Montana and continued use to support organic research and education.



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MOA Awards Presented to Quinn & Crosby

At its annual meeting, the Montana Organic Association presents the Lifetime of Service Award and the Leadership in Organics Award to two members of the organic community who are judged to be outstanding in some way. This year's awards were presented at the annual meeting held in conjunction with the MOA conference in Great Falls, November 30-December 2, 2007.

The "Lifetime of Service" award goes to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service provider (or other) who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to organic agriculture in Montana. Montana Organic Association was pleased to present this award to Dr. Bob Quinn for his outstanding contributions to the field of organics, especially in Montana. The nominations committee selected Bob because he is a pioneer of Montana organic agriculture, is a strong advocate for organic farming, was a member of the NOSB, worked with the state legislation in establishing the Organic Certification Program, for his participation as a MOA advisor, and for his current research into crop rotations and diverse crop systems.

Bob Quinn is the most famous and well-recognized organic producer, promoter and marketer in Montana. He is, in many ways, the face of organic agriculture in our state. He has managed a successful family farm, developed a successful dryland wheat rotation, started a grain milling business, launched a specialty grain and numerous products into worldwide distribution, and more recently, started a fascinating experimental farm to prove that a family can make a living on 320 acres in North Central Montana. A key component of all of Bob's endeavors has been an advanced understanding of, and commitment to, organic agriculture.

Bob owns and operates a diverse organic farming operation east of Big Sandy, in North Central Montana. Additionally, Bob is the President and founder of Kamut Enterprises, Inc., which promotes and markets organic Kamut® grain and products across the world.

Previous recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award are: Bob Boettcher (2005) and Barry Flamm (2006).

A "Leadership in Organics" award goes to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service provider (or other) who demonstrates an on-going commitment to advancing the adoption, practice and success of organic agriculture in Montana.

This year the MOA was pleased to present Jonda Crosby with the Leadership in Organics Award. Jonda



Steve Baril, Awards Committee member (right), congratulates Bob Quinn and Jonda Crosby on their MOA awards

was selected for her work in sustainable and organic agriculture as the Executive Director of the Alternative Energy Resources Organization and as a long time organic farmer and processor of feed; and to recognize her support of MOA in its formative years. MOA particularly wanted to recognize Jonda for her unique ability and desire to work collaboratively to help farmers, citizens and organizations achieve success. Jonda also has been an organic inspector, was an instructor at Penn State University in sustainable agriculture while developing their 180 acre sustainable student farm, and has worked for both Cornell and Penn State Universities as a Cooperative Extension agent. She holds an MS in Agricultural Education and a BS in General Agriculture both from Murray State University, Kentucky. In addition to her numerous professional accomplishments over the past 20 years working in sustainable and organic efforts, Jonda, and her partner, Nancy Matheson, jointly operate Big Sky Organics LLC, which is their farm and feed processing business featuring high-quality certified organic poultry feeds.

Previous recipients of the Leadership in Organics Award are: Margaret Scoles (2005) and Jon Tester (2006)

MOA again extends its congratulations to both of our award winners as well as our deepest appreciation for all of their hard work on behalf of organics in Montana. Keep up the good work, Bob and Jonda!

Leadership can be thought of as a capacity to define oneself to others in a way that clarifies and expands a vision of the future.

Edwin H. Friedman

Farm Bill & Organics Update

by Jeff Schahczenski, Policy Committee Chair

By the time this article is in your hands, the Senate and House will be in the midst of a conference to bring together their separately passed Farm Bills. The expectation is that the President will sign or possibly veto the compromise conference Farm Bill before Easter.

Also as of this writing, precisely who will be the members of the Farm Bill conference committee is not known. However, it is likely that Senator Baucus will be a member since he is a ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. If that happens we do have some opportunity to impact the final compromise bill. Stay tuned by email for possible calling to impact the outcome.

For organics, the outcome of the conference looks quite good, despite some devilish detail differences between the Senate and House Farm bills. In general, organics fared well in both bills. Highlights include:

- A new organic conversion program is likely to be created which could offer farmers who wish to convert to organic systems of production up to \$20,000 to do so, along with some new dollars for technical resources to be supplied through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). I know you long time existing organic farmers wish such a program was around when you converted, but this should be a positive for growing the industry.
- If the Senate version is adopted, the 5% surcharge on crop insurance currently paid by organic farmers will be eliminated and coverage will be at organic market prices beginning in 2009 at least for those crops with adequate data on organic prices.
- \$22 million in mandatory funding over five years for cost share to cover certification costs. The maximum support was increased to \$750.
- If the Senate version is adopted in conference, \$5 million in mandatory funding is available to improve collection of organic production and marketing data.
- If the Senate version is adopted \$16 million in mandatory funding will be available for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.
- NCAT's ATTRA program is reauthorized, allowing the program to continue to provide excellent information on organic agriculture and collaborate with organizations to promote sustainable agriculture.
- A sense of Congress that the USDA's Agriculture Research Service should provide a "fair share"

(equal to organics' share of food market) of total research dollars to organic research.

Again, none of the above are done deals, but all are highly likely. Finally, in the big picture, neither the Senate nor House offered any substantive reform of the commodity programs. Without that reform, the possibility of a Presidential veto of the whole Farm Bill is still possible. Also, billions of dollars of possible increased funding for organic and sustainable agriculture generally are lost to the very well-off farms in the nation. Even limited reform under the Dorgan-Grassley amendment in the Senate failed even though it would not have impacted any farm entity in Montana. Unfortunately, Senator Baucus did not vote for reform while Senator Tester did, thereby effectively canceling the impact of Montana on this important national issue for the future of progressive agriculture.

If you are interested in receiving email updates regarding the Farm Bill or other organic policy issues, please send us your email address to: info@montanaorganicassociation.org.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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MDA Organic News

Update on Organic Grower Recruitment Campaign

by Ginny Harrington, Industry and Commodity Development Officer, Montana Department of Agriculture

An Organic Grower Recruitment Campaign is in the fledgling stages, having grown out of an informal meeting in December at the Montana Organic Association (MOA) conference. A group of interested parties with representatives from the Montana Department of Agriculture, MOA members, processors, marketing co-ops and other buyers expressed interest in pursuing a strategy to help conventional growers understand the benefits of organic production and assist in their transition through information meetings and other educational efforts. Doug Crabtree, the department's Organic Program manager led the meeting. Director Ron de Yong attended and discussed the need to recruit organic growers to meet the increasing demand for organic crops in general and grain crops specifically.

"I view the proposed organic informational meetings as a collaboration of the Department of Agriculture, MOA and MSU Extension Service," de Yong said.

Crabtree stated he sees a series of meetings

throughout the state to inform conventional growers about the increasing opportunities in organic farming, a "barnstorming tour" of sorts. Virginia Harrington, MDA Marketing Specialist is facilitating this effort with advice and assistance from Crabtree, the director and Perri Walborn, the Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau Chief. Director de Yong has made initial contacts with MSU Extension personnel to seek their input and involvement.

Meanwhile, the department has drafted a news release for Farm Service Agency local and regional newsletters discussing the possibility of organic certification using land on which Conservation Reserve Program contracts will expire in 2008 and 2009. CRP acres may hold potential for a quick, if not immediate, conversion to organic production. This document is in final review and should be distributed shortly.

The department will be organizing a meeting to further define the campaign and explore the capabilities of collaborators and possible funding sources. Contact Ginny Harrington at MDA's marketing division at 406.444.2402 for further information.

Lindquist and Thayer appointed to MOCAC

by Doug Crabtree, Organic Program

Ron de Yong, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture has appointed two new members to the Montana Organic Commodity Advisory Committee.

Sharon Lindquist of Bloomfield will represent organic producers on the committee. Greg Thayer of Great Falls represents organic handlers. Two existing members, Laura Garber of Hamilton and Mark Bruckner of Malta, were appointed to new terms and will serve until August 2009.

"We have an excellent committee representing both large and small organic producers to advise the department on what is very much a growth industry in Montana agriculture," said de Yong, who chairs the committee.

Under Montana administrative rules, the director serves on the committee along with certified organic producers, a certified organic handler and a consumer representative. Other members of the committee are Andy Sponseller of Missoula, Jill Owen of Choteau and Robert Forstenzer of Livingston.

Speaking for the MOA board, Steve Baril, board chair, appreciates all of the service given and commitment displayed by the members of this committee. "It does an important job as an avenue for the organic community to have input into how the MDA administers its certification program," states Baril.

For more information about the Montana Organic Program, contact Doug Crabtree at (406) 444-3730 or by email at agr@mt.gov.

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Good Ideas

From the New Farm Newsletter...

"Transition to Organic" is the name for a expanding toolkit of online resources from The Rodale Institute. These farmer-centered tools:

- Highlight the benefits of organic farming.
- Assist with decision-making to assess economic risk and potential.
- Show how to convert a farm to meet organic certification standards.

Jeff Moyer, farm manager at the Institute, is your guide as you learn about the principles and practices of organics in the toolkit. You can work at your convenience, in any order, through modules on soils, crops, livestock, marketing, and certification. Moyer shares his 30 years of experience in pioneering organic grain systems at the Institute, and invites many other farmers from across the U.S. to share the details of their organic successes and challenges.

They've put the Organic System Plan worksheets (developed by ATTRA) online, allowing you to apply the principles in the course to your own farm. This plan is the first step toward certification, and helps you organize an orderly consideration of all aspects of farm conversion.

View the training course by going to: <http://www.tritrainingcenter.org/course/>



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Curried Chickpea, Lentil, Lamb and Swiss Chard Stew

1 lb. ground lamb, chicken, or omit for vegetarians
 1 1/2 cups dried brown lentils, rinsed
 2 tbs. olive oil
 Bouquet garni (parsley stems, celery leaves, springs of thyme tied up in cheesecloth)
 1 medium onion, chopped
 4 cloves garlic minced
 Salt
 2 qts. chicken or vegetable stock
 2 tsps. curry powder
 1/2 tsp. cayenne powder (start with less if you are sensitive to spicy foods...you can always add more later)
 1 tsp. ground cumin
 1 large bunch swiss chard, leaves only, chopped
 2 c. chick peas (canned or pre-cooked)
 2 tsps. cumin seeds
 1 c. yogurt for garnish

In a stock pot, cook lamb until almost browned.

Add onions and saute until softened.

Add garlic, herbs, and salt. Saute for just a minute or so.

Add the stock, spices, and lentils and simmer over moderate heat until the lentils are tender, at least 20 minutes.

Add the chard and chickpeas and cook until the leaves are wilted, about 5 minutes or so.

Remove the bouquet garni. Taste for seasoning and adjust to taste (add more salt or cayenne, if needed.)

While the stew is finishing, toast the cumin seeds in a small dry skillet over moderate heat. Shake until the seeds are fragrant and evenly toasted, about two minutes. Don't burn them!

Serve in bowls with a crusty homemade bread, or warmed pitas with a spoonful of yogurt and a sprinkling of the cumin seeds.

Yum!

Submit your favorite recipe using Montana-based ingredients to lars@montanaorganicassociation.org.

Here's Looking at You

In this issue we continue our series profiling MOA members, to give all of us a better understanding of just who makes up the MOA. In our third installment we'd like to introduce you to Jill Owen...

Jill Owen and her husband, Russ, live in Choteau, MT. They do not have children so instead spoil their cat and two horses. Russ works full-time for the US Forest Service. Jill gave up her seasonal backcountry ranger job with the USFS to pursue her dream of opening an organic grocery store in Choteau. Mountain Front Market, which opened in May 2007, specializes in locally grown foods as well as organic groceries. The store supports Montana producers like Lifeline Farms, Timeless Seeds, Eighth Wonder, and Montana Flour and Grains, just to name a few. Several folks in the Choteau community provide eggs, produce, pork, beef, and lamb to the store.



Jill's interest in organic food began as a kid growing up in Pennsylvania. "My Dad subscribed to Rodale's Organic Gardening digest in the 1970's and I read a lot of them while biding my time in the water closet. My sister and I were the mechanical weeders in the garden and our horses supplied the fertilizer. Even after all those years of breaking my back as a young child pickin' rocks and weeds in the garden I still believe it's better not to go the chemical route."

Jill's interest in eating organic food matured in adulthood as she discovered organic food tastes like the food she grew up eating. She wanted to share her love of real food with her community which is what lead to her opening the grocery store. Jill's perfect day used to be kicking and gliding on cross-country skis down a snowy wooded trail or riding horseback through the wilderness clearing trees from hiking trails but now she would say a perfect day is "cashing out at \$500 or better." Yes, sad but true, she is now more motivated by the almighty buck than she used to be. But she is still inspired by the likes of Wendell Berry, Alice Waters, and all the other not so famous folks she knows who live to make their community a better place to be.



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A View from the Chair

MOA, formed in 2003, is a new kid on the block. With restructuring of certification groups, brought on by adoption of a national organic standard, organizers saw a need for an association to foster a sense of community, create a common voice, and provide a setting for exchange of ideas, and education. They set broad goals to promote the benefits of organic agriculture, mentor transitional operators, lobby, build relationships, and promote research. They acknowledged the origin of organic agriculture as a conservation and preservation movement, but also recognized opportunities in a growing organic marketplace.

Over its brief history, MOA has successes. Our annual conference is the setting for folks to congregate and educate. Our newsletter, "Organic Matters," is a forum for information. With help from our friends, we hosted educational organic farm tours. We have a website, a permanent address, and a part time Executive Coordinator. I want to acknowledge continuing board member, Judy Owsowitz, MOA's chair for our first four years, for her contribution to these successes. Still, we face huge challenges from a broad array of issues and limited resources to tackle them.

Recently, the Board of Directors, recognizing these challenges, decided to embark on strategic planning. This is a wise use of time to evaluate what we are doing and plan the future of MOA. It will help us reaffirm our values, represent the diversity in our membership, and decide what we can accomplish with the resources at hand. As a new member in a complex network of trade and conservation groups, we will talk about building relationships. Will these be with agricultural and conservation groups, other advocacy groups, government agencies, educators? At some point in strategic planning, now or in the future, we must talk about the expectations of our members and partners and how we learn about these expectations.

Strategic planning allows us to look critically at our origins, as well as the challenges we face. For example, do we address the stress that is occurring between organic values and the organic marketplace? Are we now about a written standard and marketing, or do we have a broader purpose? What is MOA's role in an emerging food culture in the USA that increasingly values local systems and ethics of food production such as fair trade and food security?

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