



# Organic Matters

## Growing New Organic Farmers

Please plan to attend the Montana Organic Association Conference in Bozeman on December 4-6. Entitled *Growing New Organic Farmers*, the main theme of the conference is to draw new farmers to the exciting opportunities in the raising and marketing of organic crops and livestock. This year's conference, our first in Bozeman, is planned to create and foster connections between Montana's dynamic organic community and the students and faculty at Montana State University (MSU). The conference will be held at the Bozeman Holiday Inn.

The first day and a half are devoted to training prospective new organic farmers and ranchers on how to transition to organic and are designed so they can leave the conference with a well started organic system plan for their farm or ranch. Speakers will include researchers from MSU on the economics and science of organic production. Representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and MSU Extension Service will detail opportunities for organic farmers available from their agencies. There will also be representatives from the Organic Crop Improvement Association and the Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Program to provide input from an organic certifier viewpoint. A variety of certified organic farmers will be available share their experiences with certifying

a wide variety of crops and livestock.

The general conference kicks off after lunch on Friday and features sessions to help us all understand the organic provisions of the new Farm Bill and how to effectively access them. Our opening speaker from the Organic Trade Association to give us a national perspective on the state of organic agriculture and trends for the future. The social hour Friday evening features a poster session for MSU students to present their work and get acquainted with MOA members.



Saturday morning starts with a panel of MSU researchers and faculty members who are supporters of organics. They will tell us about their work. That will be followed by breakout sessions that will provide opportunities to let them know what the organic community needs and wants from MSU.

Our keynote speaker will address our theme of *Growing New Organic Farmers* at the university level and through outreach and extension programs. We have planned a sumptuous organic dinner for Saturday night with live music and our always popular auctions. There are even rumors that dancing may break out. So, plan to come to Bozeman for a few days of learning, fun and fellowship with friends and colleagues in the Montana organic community in early December.

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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.

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Organic Matters  
MOA  
PO Box 1675  
Polson MT 59860  
info@montanaorganicassociation.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.

# IFOAM 2008

by Kathryn Begeal, MOA Board Member

In June, Troy DeSmet and Kathryn Begeal traveled to Modena, Italy to participate in their first International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) conference representing Ceres Organic Harvest. What the heck is IFOAM and how did we convince our boss to send us to Italy? Read below for the full scoop!

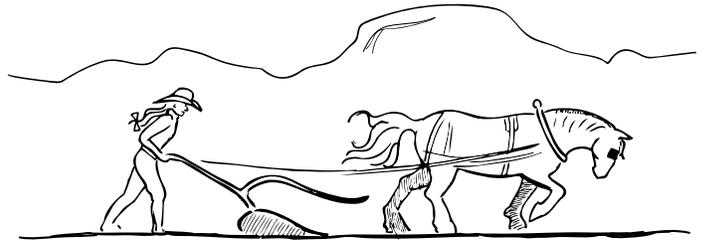
The World Organic Congress conference is held every three years in a different place and is the international forum for philosophical, technical, and political dialogue with our organic agriculture colleagues across the world. The result is a global perspective (108 countries and 1,700 attendees) on organic agriculture and this year's key topics ranged from climate change to food security, seed sovereignty and development to global markets. The Congress also showcases technical knowledge, so no matter what your passion, a series of workshops presents worldwide experiences. The best part of the experience for me was the people I met and the wonderful conversations with dedicated, smart people working in agriculture (and lots of gelato, too.)

In addition to facilitating information exchange, IFOAM is the policy forum for organic agriculture.

It has articulated a clear set of guiding principles (Health, Ecology, Fairness, and Care) for organic agriculture and continues to debate and clarify a worldwide vision for what defines the word "organic." Their website is jam packed with statistical information, reports and policy positions on a wide variety of issues: [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)

Our U.S. IFOAM Board member is former OTA Director, Kathleen DiMatteo, also newly elected as Board President and one of three Board members re-elected.

To anyone interested in going to the 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress Conference in 2011, start making plans to go to South Korea...



## Mountain Front Market

Organic and locally grown groceries ~ Jill Owen, proprietor  
824 N. Main Ave., Choteau, MT ~ (406) 466-2684 ~ [mfm@3rivers.net](mailto:mfm@3rivers.net)

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- ★ **SUSTAINABLE**
- ★ **NOTHING ADDED**

For more information about the Co-op's Farm to Market program, interested producers should contact Joel Ellefson, Farm to Market Coordinator, 587-4039 x 3057, or [frm2mkt@bozo.coop](mailto:frm2mkt@bozo.coop)

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A photograph of a watermelon. On the left is a slice of watermelon with a rind. On the right is a whole watermelon with its characteristic netted skin. The background is a light, textured surface.

# A Perspective from the Cutting Edge

by Jacob Cowgill, Farmer, MOA Member

If one has issues with their age, they ought to consider getting into farming. Anybody under 40 is considered a young farmer since the average age of farmers these days is in the upper 50s. I'm 30, so I guess I'm pretty young. The reason the average age is creeping ever higher is due in part to fewer farm kids returning to farm, as well as fewer new people starting farms. In the latter instance it's often not because folks don't want to farm, but because they don't have access to land, and in some cases, due to the difficulty in creating financially viable enterprises.

What we're experimenting with here on the Quinn Organic Farm in Big Sandy attempts to address this. The overarching experiment is to figure out ways a farm family can make a living on smaller acreage in dryland country. The size we're focusing on is 320 acres, which is sounds huge, but when you consider many farms around here are over 3,000 acres, 320 is quite small. The focus is on high-value crops like vegetables and oilseeds.

We have been experimenting with dryland vegetables for the past few years. Bob Quinn started trialing different varieties of storage vegetables like winter squash, pumpkins, and potatoes four or five years ago, and last year, when I started working with him, we added some fresh vegetables like summer squash and sweet corn. This year we're growing potatoes, winter squash, pumpkins, watermelon, sweet corn, summer squash, onions, tomatoes, green peppers, bush beans, and eggplant. All this has been growing with an average rainfall of 12 to 14 inches a year. So far, since March, we've had 7 to 8 inches of rain. Some may call what we're doing plant torture, but I don't think we give plants enough credit for their ability to survive tough conditions. We're building plant character.

We also grow black Indian corn for a farmer named Dave Christensen. He's been developing his different Indian corn varieties for the past 30 years in order to create highly nutritious maize varieties that can grow well on marginal land for under-served people around the world.

We grow safflower, camelina, and sunflower for oil to eventually fuel and lubricate the farm's tractors. I am also raising heritage turkeys to assess whether pasture-raised turkeys can be a viable enterprise on a small farm in central Montana.

My long-term plan is to find my own farm with my new bride closer to home, near Great Falls. I haven't had any luck in the land search so far. Rural Montana is dying, the average farmer's age is older year

by year, and we're losing our agricultural heritage. I want to play a part in reviving small farms, revitalizing small Montana towns, and bringing back the culture in agriculture.

MOA has invited me to share on ongoing efforts on the Quinn Organic Farm as well as my personal experiences in coming issues. I hope you'll let me know if you want to hear anything specific from me.

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## Board Positions to be Filled

Four directors will be elected to the MOA Board at our annual meeting on Saturday, December 6th, 2008 in Bozeman this year. The Nominations and Elections Committee has nominated Steve Baril (currently serving), Kathryn Begeal (currently serving), and Jim Lindquist (currently serving) for your approval to fill three of those positions. Additional nominations can be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

After a recent strategic planning session, we have a strong, cohesive plan for the board to follow. We are looking for interested people to join us in this exciting endeavor.

Board member terms are for three years, and directors are expected to participate in at least one committee. There are generally two in-person board meetings a year, as centrally located in the state as possible. We also have erratically regular telephone conferences.

If you, or someone you know, are interested in serving on the board of MOA with a great bunch of committed folks, please contact Judy Owsowitz, 406-862-6362 or terrapin@aboutmontana.net to find out more.

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

MOA's annual conference gives all of us an opportunity to see old friends, make new friends, and to share experiences. Some of the most important work of this and any conference is the connections and sharing that goes on at the dinner table or at the social events. My experience is that people involved in organics are creative in their approaches to agriculture, and are willing to listen and share their knowledge. And don't forget the wonderful organic meals that are a traditional part of this gathering.

Our annual event promises to renew old members and grow new ones. Come and participate, renew your friendships, and learn. I hope to see you all there.

*Steve Baril*

## MOA Awards Nominations

The MOA Awards Committee is seeking your nominations for two awards to be presented at the annual meeting in Bozeman, December 4 – 6.

The “Lifetime of Service” award will go to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service provider (or other) who has demonstrated a **long-term commitment to organic agriculture in Montana**. Previous recipients are:

Robert Boettcher (2005), Barry Flamm (2006),  
and Bob Quinn (2007)

A “Leadership in Organics” award will go 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**. Previous recipients are:

Margaret Scoles (2005), Jon Tester (2006),  
and Jonda Crosby (2007)

Written nominations may be submitted by MOA members no later than October 3, 2008 by email (preferred) or regular mail to the Awards Committee members listed below. Please provide the following information with your nominations:

- Nominee’s Name, Address, Phone, and Email
- Describe the nominee’s connection to organic agriculture (50 words or less)
- Why the nominee should receive the award

Current and immediate past members of the MOA Board of Directors and members of the Awards Committee cannot be considered for these awards. It is preferred, but not required, that nominees be members of the MOA. Please include your contact information as well.

**Doug Crabtree**  
433 West Lawrence St  
Helena MT 59601  
[d.crabtree@bresnan.net](mailto:d.crabtree@bresnan.net)

**Jonda Crosby**  
3845 Hart Lane  
Helena MT 59602  
[jcrosby@aeromt.org](mailto:jcrosby@aeromt.org)

**Bob Quinn**  
333 Kamut Lane  
Big Sandy MT 59520  
[bob.quinn@kamut.com](mailto:bob.quinn@kamut.com)

**Judy Owsowitz**  
6505 Farm to Market Rd  
Whitefish, MT 59937  
[terrapin@aboutmontana.net](mailto:terrapin@aboutmontana.net)

**Steve Baril**  
2970 Arabian Road  
Helena, MT 59602  
[barils@mt.net](mailto:barils@mt.net)

If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulder of giants.

Isaac Newton

## The MOA Farm Tour

by Jim and Sharon Lindquist, Lester Hill Farm

This past July MOA organized a farm tour at Dave and Dee Turner’s certified organic farm, outside Oilmont, up along the Hi-Line. The Turners have been certified OCIA organic for 18 years.

Dave and Dee farm about 3,000 acres, leaving about half of that fallow each year. Their main crops are spring wheat, barley, and Austrian winter peas for a green manure plowdown. Dave took us out and showed us how his crops were doing, discussing crop rotations and machinery needs. MOA members chipped in and provided a great lunch, of salads, beans, and roasted pig, and goat. Towards the end of lunch, Dee gave a history of both her and Dave’s families which have lived in the area for a long time.

After lunch we went to see what the goats do. Matt Turner, Dave and Dee’s son, runs two herds totaling about 1,400 goats. He has been in business for six years, selling goats and leasing them for weed control, a specialized rangeland restoration service with minimal impact to pasture and water. The herd we went to see is leased out with guard dogs and a herder to neighboring ranchers to help manage noxious weeds, primarily leafy spurge. It was pretty dramatic to see 1,000 head of goats come over the hill and swarm a patch of spurge. They didn’t leave much. An example he gave was that the goats reduce leafy spurge by about 7% per year, and after 10 years spurge is under control.

Thanks are due to our co-sponsors, MDA, OCIA and AERO. We extend our special appreciation to Bob Herdegen, who provided the pig and prepared both it and the goat, and of course the Turners, Dave, Dee and Matt, for the generosity in opening their farm to us and sharing their story.

All in all it was a great time. Good information, good food, good folks and a beautiful day.

Mat Turner  
and his  
leafy  
spurge-  
eating  
goats



# Gathering Montana's Organic Community:

## Growing New Organic Farmers

December 4 ~ 6, 2008

Bozeman Holiday Inn  
Bozeman, Montana

### Conference Lodging

MOA's conference will be held at the Bozeman Holiday Inn. A block of rooms has been set aside for people attending the conference at a reduced rate of \$79/night. Rooms at the conference rate are limited, so please make your reservations early.

All room reservations must be made directly with the hotel at (406) 587-4561. Be sure to ask for the MOA conference rate when you make your reservation.

Alternate Lodging near the Bozeman Holiday Inn:

#### **Best Western ~ Grantree Inn**

1325 N 7th Ave, Bozeman (406) 587-5261

#### **Fairfield Inn of Bozeman**

828 Wheat Dr, Bozeman (406) 587-2222

#### **Bozeman Microtel Inn & Suites**

612 Nikles Drive, Bozeman (800) 771-7171

#### **Days Inn**

1321 North 7th Avenue, Bozeman (406) 587-5251

#### **Comfort Inn**

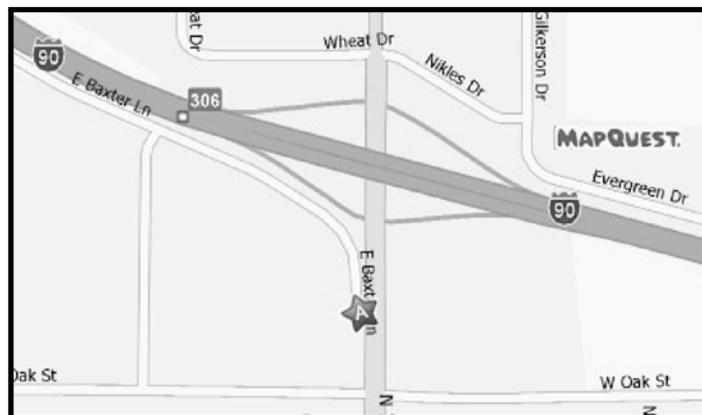
1370 N. 7th Ave., Bozeman (406) 587-2322

### Information

For more information, please call 406-871-0019, or email [conference@montanaorganicassociation.org](mailto:conference@montanaorganicassociation.org).

### Directions

From East or West: The Bozeman Holiday Inn is nearly adjacent to Interstate 90 at Exit 306 (North 7th Avenue), from Exit 306 turn south, towards downtown Bozeman, and look for a nearly immediate right Hand turn onto Baxter Lane. The Bozeman Holiday Inn is at 5 East Baxter Lane.



### Auction

If you have items that you would like to donate to the auction, please contact Sharon Lindstrom at (406) 583-7722 or [lesterhillfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:lesterhillfarm@yahoo.com).

# Conference Agenda

(Subject to change. Please visit our website [www.montanaorganicassociation.org](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org) for updates and details.)

Thursday, December 4

**Organic University** ~ Training for new farmers in creating an organic system plan

8:00 am **Introduction: Why are we here?** *Perri Walborn, Steve Baril, Ginny Harrington*

**Economics and Production Issues**

8:15 am **Economics of Organic Production** ~ *Chad Lee, MDA*  
Organic vs. Conventional systems

9:15 am **Economic Returns (Organic vs. No-Till)** ~ *Dave Buschena, MSU*  
Organic Crop Prices

10:00 am **Break**

10:15 am **Weed Management Principles** ~ *Fabian Menalled, MSU*

11:00 am **Nutrient Management in Organic Systems** ~ *Clain Jones, MSU*

11:45 am **Cropping Systems** ~ *Perry Miller, MSU*

12:30 pm **Lunch**

- **NCAT/ATTRA resources for organic farmers** ~ *Jeff Schahczenski, NCAT*
- **History of (support of) Organic in Montana** ~ *Jonda Crosby, AERO*  
Rules, Regulations and Fees

2:00 pm **Organic Standards for Montana Producers** ~ *Doug Crabtree, MDA*

3:00 pm **Certification Process and Fees** ~ *Sean Mulla, MDA*

3:30 pm **Break**

3:45 pm **What to expect from an Organic Inspection** ~ *Margaret Scoles, IOIA*

4:45 pm **Meet the Certifiers** ~ *OCIA and MDA*

5:30 pm **Adjourn**

6:30 pm **Dinner for the Organic University Group**  
*Speaker Jim Knight, MSU Extension*

Friday, December 5

**Completing Your Organic System Plan**

**Farmer Mentoring Session**

8:00 am **Introduction and Explanation of Groups** ~ *Ginny Harrington, OGAC*

8:15 am **Group Workshops**

**Field Crops** ~ *Matt Johnson, Dee Turner*

**Hay and Forage Crops** ~ *Ole Norgaard, Jim Lindquist*

**Beef Cattle** ~ *Rob Forstenzer, Wes Henthorne*

**Vegetables and Produce** ~ *Judy Owsowitz, Steve Baril*

**Tree Fruit** ~ *Lise Rousseau Silva*

10 am **Break**

10:15 am **Workshops Continue**

11:30 am **Lunch for Organic University Participants**

**Montana Organic Association Annual Conference**

*Growing New Organic Farmers*

11:30 am **Registration and Sign in**

1:00 pm **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

1:15 pm **Opening Speaker** ~ *Laura Batcha, Organic Trade Association (invited)*

2:00 pm **Accessing the Farm Bill** ~ *Laura Batcha, Organic Trade Association (invited)*

3:00 pm **Break**

3:15 pm **Marketing Panels ~ Breakout Sessions**

\* **Grain**

\* **Seed, Fruit, Vegetables, Produce & Livestock** (with an emphasis on distribution & transportation)

4:45 pm **SOCIAL HOUR** ~ *Meet the Farmers, Students, Consumers, Coop Staff, MSU*

Hors d'oeuvres Social with Beer, Wine, and Music/  
Poster Session for MSU students/Doug Crabtree's  
"Faces of Organic" PowerPoint Presentation

6:30 pm **Dinner on your own**

Saturday, December 6

8:15am **Who's Who in Organics at MSU**

*Alison Harmon*

*Bruce Maxwell*

*Clain Jones*

*Cliff Montagne*

*Dave Sands*

*Fabian Menalled*

*Jeff Jacobsen ~ Dean*

*Mary Stein*

*Perry Miller*

9:00 am **Break**

9:15 am **Exploring Research Needs of Farmers and Researchers ~ Breakout Sessions**

- **Cropping Systems & Weeds**
- **Nutrition, Livestock, Food Systems**

10:45 am **Break**

11:00 am **Political and Legislative Panel**

*Invited are Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, Representative Rehberg, Governor Schweitzer, MDA Director de Yong, State senators and representatives*

12:00 pm **Lunch**

1:15 pm **Annual Meeting**

2:15 pm **Keynote Speaker** ~ *Cathy Perillo, Washington State University (invited)*

3:30 pm **Break**

3:45 pm **Breakout Sessions ~ Food Systems**

- **Carbon Credits, Allen Merrill** ~ *Farmers Union*
- **History and Processing in MT** ~ *Alison Harmon*

4:45 pm **Adjourn**

6:30 pm **Dinner and Auction with Music and Dancing**

# A Sampling of Presenters

**Mary Stein**, MS, Nutrition Education Specialist whose interests include strengthening the local food system, Farm to School Programs, Value-added food production in Montana, online nutrition education for teachers and nutrition education for children and adolescents.

**Alison Harmon**, PHD, RD, LN is an assistant Professor whose interests include education for sustainability, local food systems and food system change, environmental issues related to food choices, and community food security and hunger issues. She is an advisor to MSU Friends of Local Foods and Towne's Harvest Garden.

**David E. Buschena**, Professor, Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley, 1993, M.S., University of Minnesota, 1988, B.S., Southwest State University, 1986 Research Interests: Risk, Agricultural Marketing and Trade, Site-Specific Agriculture

**Jeff Jacobsen**, Dean and Director, MSU's College of Agriculture and Agricultural Experiment Station; Ph.D. 1985, Oklahoma State University; M.S. 1982, Colorado State University; B.S. 1979, California Polytechnic State University. Fellow, Soil Science Society of America (2005) Fellow, American Society of Agronomy (2000)

**Clain A. Jones**, Assistant Professor; Ph.D. in Soil Chemistry, Montana State University, 1998; M.S. in Environmental Engineering and Science, Univ. of Washington, 1988; B.S. in Agricultural Engineering, Cornell University, 1986. Interests: Evaluating processes controlling availability of nutrients and educating extension agents, crop advisers, farmers, ranchers, and homeowners on soil fertility issues. Current research: Comparing nitrogen and phosphorus availability in both no-till and tilled systems for a variety of cropping systems.

**Bruce D. Maxwell**, Interim Department Head, Professor; Ph.D. 1990, Oregon State University; M.S. 1984, B.S. 1977, Montana State University. Agroecology and weed biology research on the design and development of nonchemical weed management strategies for annual and perennial weeds in cereals, row crops and forage cropping systems. Research includes crop-weed competition, economic thresholds of weeds, weed population dynamics and identifying measures of ecosystem integrity.

**Fabian D. Menalled**, Assistant Professor; Ph.D. 1996, University of Massachusetts; B.S. 1985, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Cropland Weed Specialist. Research and extension programs are focused in developing and delivering information on the integrated management of agricultural weeds. He is interested in

understanding the mechanisms conditioning the abundance and distribution of annual and perennial weeds in agricultural systems. Research includes weed population and community dynamics, crop-weed competition, herbicide resistance, and weed management in conventional and alternative cropping systems.

**Perry R. Miller**, Associate Professor; Ph.D. 1992, University of Minnesota; M.S. 1989, University of Guelph; B.S. 1984, University of Saskatchewan. Development of dryland management principles for diversified cropping systems in the Northern Plains, to optimize soil water and N use efficiency, improve soil quality, increase or stabilize economic returns and foster sustainable agricultural management. MSU Outreach Award (2006) recipient.

**Cliff Montagne**, Associate Professor; Ph.D. 1976, M.S. 1971, Montana State University; B.S. 1969, Dartmouth College. Soil-landscape relationships, including geology, landscape ecology, landscape inventory, soil genesis and classification, and holistic resource management of agricultural and non-agricultural soils; philosophy and ethics of land resource use; development of more effective techniques for learning, teaching and problem solving. Working with bioregional management at ecosystem and human community levels in Greater Yellowstone, northern Mongolia, and northern Japan.

**Cathy Perillo**, Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences at WSU (Pullman, and Distance Ed), and an affiliate faculty member with CSANR. Her emphases include: land use and soil management, world agricultural systems, and sustainable agriculture. She was the coordinator of the Agriculture and Food Systems program, which offered the nation's first major in organic agriculture. She has taught Environmental Biophysics, and Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition. Cathy worked at the University of Minnesota's Southwest Research and Outreach Center and taught at SW State University in nearby Marshall. Ph.D. and MS in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota and WSU, respectively. BA is in Biology from Middlebury College.

**David C. Sands**, Professor, Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. Research interests include plant bacteriology, biological control of weeds, and biotechnology. Ongoing work includes the ecology, detection, characterization, and control of *Pseudomonas syringae* and *Xanthomonas campestris*. As an alternative to chemical herbicides, plant pathogenic fungi and bacteria are being developed as biological herbicides to control weeds. The tools of biotechnology are being used to improve the nutritional value of human and animal foods. Current projects include biological control of weeds and biological control of fungus diseases of plants

# Montana Organic Association 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

December 4-6, 2008, Bozeman Holiday Inn, Bozeman, Montana

## Participant Registration Form

(to qualify for early registration this form must be postmarked by November 22, 2008)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Farm or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Conference Registration (per person)

Organic University for Prospective Organic Farmers..... X \$50 .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Organic University for Non-Farmers ..... X \$100.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration conference and meals, MOA Member ..... X \$140.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration conference and meals, MOA Member – Couples..... X \$260.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration conference and meals, MOA Member – Families\* ..... X \$300.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration conference and meals, non-member ..... X \$160.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration conference and meals, Student Rate (Saturday Dinner excluded) .. X \$35 .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Dinner ..... X \$65 .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Late Registration for conference after November 22..... X \$180.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Meals cannot be guaranteed for very late registrants)

\* Families = 2 adults and 2 children under 12

<b>Food Preferences:</b> Omnivore _____ Vegetarian _____ Vegan _____	<b>I'd like to donate an item(s) to the auction</b> Item description: _____ _____	<b>MOA Membership</b> Individual ..... \$25 ..... \$ _____ Household ..... \$40 ..... \$ _____ Business..... \$50 ..... \$ _____ Contributing..... \$120 ..... \$ _____ Life ..... \$500 ..... \$ _____ Living Lightly ..... \$15 ..... \$ _____
<b>Limited childcare available upon request. Please call or email.</b>		

*If financial limitations may keep you from attending, a limited number of scholarships are available based on merit and need. Please contact us to explore scholarship or work/trade opportunities.*

### Scholarship Fund

Please consider a donation to the Scholarship Fund to assist those in need.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total (please make checks payable to: MOA) \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please note: Refunds are not available for cancellations made after November 26, 2008.

**Please return this form to: MOA Conference, PO Box 1675, Polson, MT 59860**

For further information or questions, please call 406.871.0019 or email

# NOSB News

by Barry Flamm, NOSB Board Member

The next National Organic Standards Board meeting will be held November 17-19 at the Savoy Suites Hotel, Washington DC. I was hoping this meeting would be held somewhere in the west, but maybe next time.

Again the agenda is jammed full. You can read the complete agenda along with committee recommendations on the NOSB website. Here I'll just give you an overview.

The first morning will be devoted to Board business matters and a Program update. NOP, thanks in part to funding in the Farm Bill, is expanding its staff to better serve the organic community. The rest of the day will be devoted to listening to public comments on a full range of organic topics.

Day 2 NOSB committees present their recommendations. I lead off as Chair of the Policy Development Committee (PDC). The "Sunset" and "Technical Review" recommendations should be of interest to you. These recommendations address the integrity of the materials review for the all important National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

The Compliance, Accreditation and Certification Committee (CACC) has two recommendations. The first recommendation involves certifying operations with multiple production units, sites and facilities, often referred to as group certification. This has been a controversial topic especially regarding the proposed inclusion of handlers and retailers into the process. The recommendation now addresses only producers (farmers). The second recommendation from CACC addresses issues that have arisen regarding the 100% labeling claim on organic products.

The joint CACC and Crops committee will present recommended guidance on the availability and use of organic seed, with exceptions allowed. This is of importance to many Montana organic farmers..

The Joint committee will also present a discussion paper on opportunities to strengthen biodiversity conservation, a core organic principle.

The Crops committee will present its recommendation on several substances that have been petitioned to be added to National List. Of particular interest is the petition to add Tetracycline (oxytetracycline hydrochloride) to the list for crop use. There are presently two antibiotics on the List: Streptomycin, for fire blight control in pears and apples and Tetracycline (oxytetracycline calcium complex) for fire blight control only. Antibiotic use on crops is not allowed in Europe so use here prohibits exports to those and some other countries. There is strong opinion that it was a mistake to permit their use here. These two materials

come up for Sunset in 2012. The Crops committee will also discuss "soil-less growing systems" (hydroponics).

The Livestock Committee has three recommendations on aquaculture and a discussion on animal husbandry.

The Handling Committee will present recommendations for eight nonorganic substances petitioned to be allowed in processed products. The Committee will also make recommendations for pet food standards.

There will then be opportunity for further public comment on NOSB action and discussion items.

Committees will present their recommendations on the final day, November 19, followed by Board discussion and vote on the recommendations. The meeting is concluded by officer election and discussion of work plans for the next half year.

Public comments and meeting oral presentation sign ups close on November 3. Oral and written comments will also be accepted during the meeting. In submitting your comments refer to Docket Number AMS-AMS-08-0083. To find the relevant documents, visit the NOSB website at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>. Click on the National Organic Program link and then the National Organic Standards Board link.

I hope you had a good crop this year and I look forward to seeing you in Bozeman.

## Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm or Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Raising Awareness on Organic Certification

Grain growers in eastern Montana will have three opportunities in October and three more in February to learn about organic certification and the process of switching grain production from conventional to organic farming methods.

Area organic farmers, grain buyers, members of the Montana Organic Association, and agricultural support staff will discuss opportunities in organic farming at meetings October 28-30 in Glasgow, Plentywood and Sidney. Presentations will include the certification process, economics, challenges during the transition and management practices regarding soil health, rotations, weed control and buffers.

The sessions are part of the Montana Department of Agriculture's ongoing organic grower awareness campaign. Presentations titled "Is it Time to Transition? A Discussion of Organic Production" will be held at:

- Glasgow, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 28, at The Cottonwood Inn, Hwy 2 East. Dinner provided.
- Plentywood, 2-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 29, at Sheridan Civic Center/Sheridan County Fairgrounds in conjunction with the Great Northern Development Center's Northeast Montana Agri-

cultural Conference. The conference begins at 8 a.m. Attendance for the entire conference is not required to participate in the organic discussion. However, a wide range of helpful programs is offered. Contact Jeanna Adkins at (406) 653-2590 for more information on the regional agricultural conference. Refreshments provided.

- Sidney, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, October 30, at the USDA Plains Agricultural Research Lab, 1500 N. Central Ave. Lunch provided.
- February 3, Lewistown, 8 AM – 5:00 PM, Sheriff's Complex Basement Meeting Room
- February 10, Great Falls, 8 AM – 5:00 PM, location TBA
- February 16, Scobey, 8 AM – 5:00 PM, Nemont Friendship Hall

At the organic awareness sessions, growers will share experiences and buyers will explain the increasing demand for organic products. Contact Ginny Harrington at (406) 444-2402 or by email at [agr@mt.gov](mailto:agr@mt.gov) or check out their website at <http://www.agr.mt.gov/organic/awareness.asp>.



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My favorite time of the year is when the fall light turns everything golden and we have a few moments to reflect on the abundance of our blessings. Some of those blessings can take the form of beautiful hearty beets and shiny apples, ubiquitous to many a Montana farmstead. Here's a quick and tasty recipe

that combines the two into an elegant and satisfying salad that is a perfect complement to just about anything, including a Thanksgiving turkey. Enjoy!

**A Yummy Fall Salad of Beets, Fennel, and Apples, with Stilton and Maple-Candied Pecans**

- 1/2 cup pecan halves
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 large (uncooked) beet, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1 firm-fleshed apple, peeled, cored and coarsely grated
- 1 fennel bulb, trimmed and coarsely grated
- 1/2 cup fresh mint, stems discarded, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 4 ounces Stilton, or other blue cheese, crumbled

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Pour maple syrup into a small bowl. Toss nuts in syrup, remove with a slotted spoon, and bake on aluminum foil or a cookie sheet for approximately 10 minutes, or until nuts are roasted and syrup solidifies around nuts.

In a large bowl, add beet, apple, fennel, mint, salt and pepper. Toss. Add oil and vinegar, stilton and nuts. Toss and serve immediately.

Submit your favorite recipe using Montana-based ingredients to [lars@montanaorganicassociation.org](mailto:lars@montanaorganicassociation.org).

*Earth is here so kind, that just tickle her with a hoe  
and she laughs with a harvest.*  
 - Douglas William Jerrold, *A Land of Plenty*

## 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 sixth installment we'd like to introduce you to Roy and Kaylee Benjamin of Shelby...



Roy Benjamin is a young businessman from Shelby, Montana. Just a few years ago, he began farming at the age of 19, and found organics to be a promising way to begin in an industry with otherwise prohibitive risk and start up costs. Although they are young, Roy and his wife, Kaylee, manage their enterprise the old-fashioned way: they do most of the work themselves, and when possible, try to keep more money coming in than going out.

Roy and Kaylee raise organic wheat and feed barley, as well as peas and barley for hay.

Roy has experience transitioning land to organic, as well as making use of expired CRP, native sod, and irrigated land. They have found the MDA certification program to be the best fit for their operation.

Roy's parents are now in the process of transitioning to organic on their farm as well.

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# Still organic?

Of course. Because some things don't change.

Like the desire to protect our kids from unhealthy chemicals. The pleasure of waking up to birdsong. And the importance of supporting our local farmers. So yeah, we're still organic. Always will be.



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## A View from the Chair

*by Steve Baril, MOA Board Chair*

Much of the work of the growing season is winding down, but work is just getting busier for MOA's Conference Committee. Wes Henthorne and his crew are putting the finishing touches on the conference details, and it is shaping up to be an educational, fun event. This year's conference theme, "Growing New Organic Farmers," is appropriate if we consider the opportunities that are present in organic agriculture. Even though economic issues are straining everyone's wallets, growth in sales of organic products remains strong. The Organic Trade Association reports that sales of organic products slowed, but are still expected to increase 18% in 2008. In Montana, demand for organic food is still outpacing the supply, particularly for small grains, but also in meat, dairy, farmers markets, and retail businesses. It seems that this is indeed a time to "grow new organic farmers."

MOA's conference kicks off with "Organic University," a 1½ day school for people aspiring to transition to organic agriculture. The school will educate participants on organic standards, crop production, and the transition process. The goal of the organizers

is for each participant to get the information and help they need to complete an Organic System Plan by the end of the school. Mentors from certified operations will assist with hands-on work completing organic system plans. University professors, staff of the Montana Department of Agriculture, certifiers, inspectors, and other experts will discuss pest management, soil fertility, organic standards, and economics of organic agriculture. Participants will get information to help in their decision-making, to weather the transition process, and to ultimately gain organic certification if they so choose.

The general conference begins on December 5, and it will include information about organic research at the MSU School of Agriculture, organic marketing, global warming, legislative issues, and more. You will have an opportunity to talk with MSU professors about research direction for organic crop and livestock systems. Representatives from grain, seed, livestock, and food systems will be on hand to discuss marketing opportunities and answer your questions. Take a look at the agenda and information in this issue of "Organic Matters" for more details.

*Continued on page 3*