



# Organic Matters

## Still Time to Catch Two Organic Events This Summer

### Cover Cropping Farm Tour

MOA welcomes you to join us for a fun-filled and informative farm tour at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish on August 16, 2014, at 2:30 pm. MOA, The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), NRCS, MSU and Montana Farmers Union have been working together on a USDA Risk Management Agency-supported project to explore cover cropping and crop insurance issues. The Terrapin Farm tour is the last in this series.

Judy Owsowitz of Terrapin Farm is a long-time organic producer who has extensive knowledge of cover cropping in diverse vegetable production systems. With over 20 years of certified organic production, Terrapin Farm produces more than 500 varieties of diversified vegetable, herb, and seed crops and incorporates greenhouse, hoop house, and high tunnel production. Judy interplants her cover crops into the production crops. Learn about season extension, crop rotations, and seed breeding, selection and production. Terrapin Farm has over 30 varieties in seed production, some of which are Farm exclusives.

This tour will also include a presentation on cover cropping in diverse horticultural operations by Tammy Hinman, a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist at NCAT's headquarters in Butte. Tammy will address cover cropping for weed management, soil building, and fertility. Jeff Schahczenski, Agriculture Policy and Research Director at NCAT will speak on a new type of whole farm revenue for diversified farming systems that will be available in 2015.

The tour is free of charge and open to the public. Children are more than welcome to come, but please keep your four-leggeds at home. Pre-registration is not required, but it is greatly appreciated. Visit <https://www.ncat.org/tours>. For more information, please contact Jeff at [jeffs@ncat.org](mailto:jeffs@ncat.org) or call (406) 494-8636.

### Farm Feast Dinner

MOA will be having a Fabulous Farm Feast Fundraiser Dinner after our farm tour at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish on August 16, 2014. We welcome those of you who are unable to attend the farm tour, and those who would like to stay and visit with one another following the tour. (This is separate from the tour and attendance is not required but we would love to have you there!) This is a great chance to meet with other people interested in organics and share in an organic, local meal at the height of our season. There will be vegetarian and carnivore options. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served at 6:00, with dinner to follow at 6:30. A suggested donation of \$45 would be appreciated. Reservations are requested, with your dietary preference. Please contact Nate Brown at [g.nathanbrown@gmail.com](mailto:g.nathanbrown@gmail.com) or phone (406) 579-6439.

### Directions to Terrapin Farm

**Terrapin Farm is located at 6505 Farm to Market Rd., Whitefish, Montana, 59937**, which is 7 miles west of Whitefish or 18 miles northwest of Kalispell. **To get to Terrapin Farm from Whitefish**, go west on Hwy. 93 North towards Eureka for 3-1/2 miles. Spencer Lake will be on your left. Just past it, turn left on Twin Bridges Rd. In about 2 miles the road will make a 90 to the left, onto Lodgepole. ASAP, turn right, back onto Twin Bridges. Take it to the end (1 mile) to Farm to Market. Turn right. Look for the signs. Terrapin Farm will be on your right. **To get there from Kalispell and points south**, take Hwy 93 North through Kalispell to Highway 2 West. Turn left on Hwy 2. Go for about 1/2 mile to Meridian Rd. The fairgrounds will be on your right. Turn right on Meridian for about 1 mile. Turn left on Three Mile Drive. In 3 miles it will become Farm to Market Rd. Stay on Farm to Market for about 14 more miles and watch for signs.

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# Demise of the National Organics Standards Board?

by Barry Flamm, Former National Organics Board Chair and MOA Lifetime Member

The original and current purpose of the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) is to bring integrity and order to organic food production and marketing by establishing uniform standards. The Act, established by the U.S. Congress, and the implementing regulations, adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), are driven by the organic community's desire to ensure that "organic" is something special and help assure a continuing organic community role in the process.

Under the Act, the Congress established the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and gave it very important duties. In its Report (1990) on the bill, the Senate Agriculture Committee stated that, "The Committee regards this Board as an essential advisor to the Secretary (of Agriculture) on all issues concerning this bill and anticipates that many of the key standards will result from recommendations by this Board...(it) is generally responsible for advising the Secretary on all aspects of the implementation of OFPA, specifically, the Board is responsible for evaluating substances for inclusion on the Proposed National List."

The NOSB is intended to be the voice of the organic community and to represent its broad interests. The 15-member Board is comprised of four organic farmers, two organic handlers, one organic retailer, three with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation, three who represent public interest or consumer interest groups, one with expertise in fields of toxicology, ecology or biochemistry and one certifying agent.

The Board has served a vital role from the very beginning of USDA's organic program, holding meetings and consulting with the public in developing recommendations for implementing the standards. When these recommendations were ignored by the USDA, there was unprecedented public response leading to the rule's rewrite, excluding such undesirable features as allowing the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

To guide its important activities, the NOSB developed a Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM). In keeping with the desire for openness, the policies were developed with full public review and with an opportunity to comment before a Board vote on the proposed



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procedure. The policies and procedures were reviewed and improved over time and was overseen by the Policy Development Committee of the Board. The six Standing Committees did much of the actual work for the Board. Their proposals were submitted for public review and comments in writing and presentations were shared at open public meetings, which in recent years have been held semi-annually at different locations around the country.

These were extraordinary events with valuable information and interactions that led to better decisions. Unquestionably, Board members put in many hours of hard, difficult work over their five-year terms in service to the organic community.

The National Organic Program (NOP) was established in the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) within USDA to administer the OFPA requirements. Its staff was very small for many years until political change occurred in 2008, when a substantial increase occurred along with newly declared USDA support for organic and a pledge to “organic integrity from farm to table—consumers trust the organic label.” Collaboration and working relations between NOSB and NOP grew with apparent benefits to the organic community.

In 2013, all began to change without public notice or opportunity to comment or consult with the NOSB. NOP took away the Board’s ability to develop its work plan and agenda, thus severely limiting its ability to provide independent advice to the Secretary as mandated by law. The NOP effectively disbanded the Policy Development Committee (aka sub-committee) and indicated that the Policy and Procedures Manual was no longer in force, but would be used at the discretion of the program. The most immediate and serious result was that in September of 2013, Deputy Administrator McEvoy announced dramatic changes in the approval process for synthetic and non-organic materials allowed on the National List for use in organic food and agriculture. The changes to the “sunset” provision were in conflict with the PPM and were implemented without consultation with NOSB, the organic stakeholders or the public.

The fall 2013 NOSB public meeting was cancelled during the federal government shutdown, thus the public did not have that opportunity to express concerns in person on these actions by the NOP. At the April 2014 meeting, the Deputy Administrator announced that he was co-chairing the meeting, thus intruding on the independence and authority of the

*continued on p. 4*



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Demise of NOSB *continued from p. 3*

NOSB and limiting discussion on the serious changes that had been made.

No stronger condemnation of NOP's "sunset" action could be stated than that of the principal authors of the Organic Food Production Act. On April 24, 2014, Senator Patrick Leahy and Representative Peter De Fazio wrote Secretary Vilsack to raise concerns about the sunset policy change "which we believe to be in conflict with the letter and intent of the statute. We are particularly concerned that such a substantive change was made without the benefit of full notice and comment." They reminded the Secretary that OFPA "establishes the overall principle that, in order for any product to be labeled as organic it must be produced and handled without the use of synthetic chemicals."

The law recognizes there may be a need for temporary exemptions, thus it provided for a very thorough review process whereby certain synthetic chemicals could be permitted for use, but would sunset after five years. The process requires the NOSB to review the material based on a stringent list of scientific and market considerations and analyze its impact on human health and the environment, compatibility with organic principles and the availability of alternatives. They also pointed out that "the law specifies that two thirds of the full NOSB must vote in favor of allowing the synthetic material to be used."

Leahy and De Fazio expressed "great concern that we learned about a policy change implemented by your agency (USDA) which turns the sunset policy of OFPA on its head to create a presumption that all synthetic materials on the National List will be automatically renewed at the five year sunset mark and to establish a high hurdle (two thirds vote) to remove from the list." They strongly stated, "We are urging you to reverse this policy change."

Also on April 24, 2014, former past chairs of the National Organic Standards Board, Jim Riddle - Chair 2005, Jeff Moyer - Chair 2009, and myself - Chair 2012, wrote Secretary Vilsack to express "grave concerns regarding recent changes unilaterally enacted by the USDA's NOP that significantly erode the authority, independence and input of the NOSB."

The major objections expressed in the letter were: arbitrary announcements that dramatically change the approval process for synthetic and non-organic materials allowed for use in organic food and agriculture; changes in the sunset procedures required by law and reversing years of accepted procedure employed by the NOSB; and NOP intruding on the independence and authority of the NOSB by controlling work plans and agendas and co-chairing Board

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meetings, thus interfering with the important duties of listening to public concerns and interests and providing meaningful input to the Secretary.

Lastly, we expressed dismay that “the disbanding of the NOSB Policy Development Committee (aka sub-committee) was again done in an arbitrary, unilateral and disrespectful manner by the management of the NOP with no public discussion or consultation. This committee carefully and seriously charted a path of practices employed by the NOSB that was crafted in public and adopted with input from all NOSB members and organic stake holders...”

We appealed to the Secretary to intervene in this matter and suspend the policies enacted by Miles McEvoy.

Instead of addressing the concerns of Senator Leahy and Representative De Fazio, the former NOSB Chairs and others, USDA / NOP tried to cement the radical changes on May 8, 2014, through an amendment to the NOSB Federal Advisory Board Charter, which also improperly assigns authorities to the USDA to terminate NOSB, a statutory Board with duties clearly enunciated.

In response to these USDA actions, twenty organizations have, pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, petitioned amendments to the 2014 NOSB Charter that: 1) accurately reflect the continuing and non-discretionary duties of the NOSB and (2) accurately reflect the mandatory, continuing and interminable status of the NOSB.

The 11-page petition explains the need for the amendments and concludes by stating that, “recent actions on the part of the USDA have undermined the carefully crafted and contemplated OFPA framework and balance of community representation...”

The signatories to the petition are: Beyond Pesticides, Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association, Center for Food Safety, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, The Cornucopia Institute, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, La Montanita Coop NM, Food and Water Watch, Equal Exchange, Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council, NE Organic Associations of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont, Organic Consumers Association, Organically Grown Company and PCC Natural Markets. As there was limited time to reach out to more interested stakeholders, the petition may be re-opened soon for others to sign.

The Cornucopia Institute has since petitioned the White House, asking President Obama and USDA

Secretary Vilsack to reverse the USDA coup undermining the organic governing board and shifting power to agribusiness lobbyists. The petition also asks to stop allowing corporations to add gimmicky and risky synthetic chemicals to organics.

The issues may sound complicated, but it really boils down to two questions: 1) Does the organic community and public want a strong NOSB as prescribed by OFPA? 2) Does the organic community and the public believe and want the implementation of the overall principle of OFPA that for any product to be labeled organic it must be produced and handled without the use of chemicals with only temporary exemptions allowed and then only after stringent review?

Will there now be a community uproar as occurred in the nineties when USDA tried to push through unsuitable regulations?

We hope to hear your voices loud and clear.

*Barry Flamm is a MOA Lifetime Member, former MOA Board Member, Recipient of the MOA Lifetime of Service Award 2006, NOSB Board Member January 2008 – January 2013, NOSB PDC Chair 2008 – 2011, and NOSB Board Chairman 2012.*

*Barry Flamm can be contacted at (406) 883-2858 or email him at [barryexplorer@yahoo.com](mailto:barryexplorer@yahoo.com).*

*For more information, article comments, contacts, and links to the referred agencies and petitions, visit [www.montanaorganicassociation.org/nosb.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/nosb.htm).*

## Organic Consumer News

### Organic IS Healthier for You

According to two recent studies (Benbrook and Baranski / British Journal of Nutrition) compiled by The Organic Center, organic food is healthier for you and your family. Organic milk has 62% more healthy omega-3 fatty acids than conventional milk. Organic crops have significantly higher cancer fighting antioxidant levels. Organic crops have 48% lower levels of the toxic metal cadmium than conventional crops. And pesticides are found four times more frequently in conventional crops than organic crops. More at [www.organic-center.org](http://www.organic-center.org).

### Organic is Growing!

According to the Organic Trade Association, in 2013, U.S. consumer sales of organic products reached \$35 billion. Organic sales grew 82% in five years. There are 18,513 certified U.S. organic farms, ranches and businesses and 3,240 farms transitioning to organic. Nearly nine in ten parents who buy baby food choose organic. The “USDA Organic” label ranks among the top 3 seals for consumer recognition.



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we did not need to lime for the 1st time ever. This savings alone more than paid for the Fish we used.

- Pear trees that had fire blight, have shown no signs of it since spraying the Fish. They are now loaded with pears.

My neighbor who had some sweet corn that was sprayed with the Fish Fertilizer, said it was the best corn he's ever had in his life. There were 2 to 3 big, real good quality ears, per stock.

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## Don't Miss MOA's 2014 Conference

After most of your work is done this fall, wouldn't you enjoy a break with your friends and fellow organic colleagues? How about celebrating all your hard work, learning new skills and sharing ideas at MOA's 12th Annual Conference? This year, the conference will be on December 4-6 at the Great Falls Airport Hosting Facility.

We'll be hosting Organic University on December 4 and a Kid's University on December 5, along with a knowledge-packed conference agenda from December 5-6 with respected speakers, on-the-ground specialists, networking opportunities and guaranteed good times.

This year's conference theme is "'Organic Business: Benefitting Producers and Consumers.'" We'll be highlighting: research scientists Dr. Patrick Carr and Steve Zwinger; Judith Swartz, writer and educator on grazing and soil management; speakers from MSU, including Marsha Goetting, sharing her expertise on estate management, and Alison Harmon, speaking about nutrition; soil fertility and weed specialists; and much, much more.

So gather your family and friends and head on over to Great Falls, December 4-6 to join us for learning, sharing, eating great organic food and having fun. We'll also offer entertainment and tours of the local organic grain processor plants and time with the buyers.

Conference arrangements are still being made, so visit [www.montanaorganicassociation.org](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org) for the latest details. If you're interested in being a vendor, sponsor or advertiser, please contact Wes Gibbs at email [wes@montanafLOUR.com](mailto:wes@montanafLOUR.com) or phone (406) 622-3401.

## In Organic News

### New Beginning Farmer and Conservation Crop Insurance Changes Announced

On June 30, the United States Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency released an interim rule outlining seven actions it is taking to modify crop insurance in line with the requirements of the 2014 Farm Bill, to increase access for beginning farmers and encourage natural resource conservation. More information can be found on the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's July 1 blog at [sustainableagriculture.net/blog/new-crop-insurance-changes/](http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/new-crop-insurance-changes/).

### USDA Organic Cost-Share Programs Funded

Approximately \$13 million in Farm Bill funding is now available for organic certification cost-share assistance, making certification more accessible than

ever for small certified producers and handlers. These programs provide cost-share assistance through participating states to USDA certified organic producers and handlers for certification-related expenses they incur from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. Payments cover up to 75 percent of an individual producer's or handler's certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification. To receive cost-share assistance, organic producers and handlers should contact their state agencies. Each state will have their own guidelines and requirements for reimbursement; the National Organic Program (NOP) will assist states as much as possible to successfully implement the programs. More info at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop).

### Your Participation is Requested for a Seed Survey

The Organic Seed Alliance is conducting a national seed survey. The purpose is to assess certified organic crop producers' attitudes and perceptions regarding organic seed, and to better understand current organic seed usage. This national survey is only conducted every five years to monitor organic seed availability and use, challenges in sourcing organic seed, and organic plant breeding needs, among other topics that inform the organic community's understanding of the barriers and opportunities in improving organic seed systems in the U.S. Take 20 minutes to fill out the survey by October 3 at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/66KLQDT>.

### Vermont Sued Over Its GMO Labeling Law

As expected, the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), Snack Food Association, International Dairy Foods Association, and the Association of Manufacturers have filed a lawsuit against the state of Vermont for its passage of Act 120 requiring food manufacturers to label products that include genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The act was signed into law by Vermont Governor Peter Schumlin on May 8, with enforcement to begin July 1, 2016. The plaintiffs are asking the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont to invalidate the law and enjoin the state from enforcing it. More at [www.ota.org](http://www.ota.org).

*"We don't have a right to question whether we're going to succeed or not. The only question we have a right to ask is what's the right thing to do? What does this earth require of us if we want to continue to live on it?"*

~Wendell Berry, farmer, novelist and poet

# MOA's 2013 Financial Report by Jonda Crosby, MOA Treasurer

The Montana Organic Association officially closed its books on December 31, 2013. We completed MOA's tax preparation, 1099s for our contractors and the tax return in January and received confirmation that we are in full compliance as a non-profit. We also renewed our status as a non-profit in Montana with the Secretary of State's office.

As a result of finalizing our bookkeeping, we have compiled a summary of our expenses and income for 2013. Making money and saving money by being pragmatic and sticking to the Board's plan all contributed to an extremely good year, financially.

As you can see in the charts below and to the right, our income was significantly higher in 2013 due primarily to a very successful MOA Annual Conference. Overall expenses were kept to a minimum so our NET for 2013 is the highest it has been for the last seven years.

A couple of reasons we did so well this year was because we received more sponsorships for our Annual Conference, we had more participants overall in part because of the pre-conference Seed School, Organic University and the movie *GMO-OMG*. We also had a very generous host—the Flathead Valley Community College. And without our farmer and ag product business generosity we would not have been able to provide the quality of ingredients for the conference meals, a hallmark MOA has come to be known for.

An area we need to improve on is our membership support. In 2013 we dropped 20 percent in this category. We have ways to explain the drop but the bottom line is, we (as a body) did not ask enough new members to join or ask enough old members to renew in a

compelling manner that resonated with their values, needs, or interests.

For 2014, we have three contracts for services including renewing Susan Waters' contract for communications. Susan manages editing, layout and production of *Organic Matters*. She is also responsible for maintenance of MOA's website content and producing outreach materials for events, including the farm tours and all publications for the annual conference. We also renewed the contract with Sandi Shanks as Membership Services Coordinator and added a contract for her as 2014's Conference Coordinator.

The Communications Committee continues to improve the newsletter, website and Facebook page and we thank those members that gave us valuable feedback and contributions. Thank you especially to our writers and sponsors for making this part of our organization financially feasible.

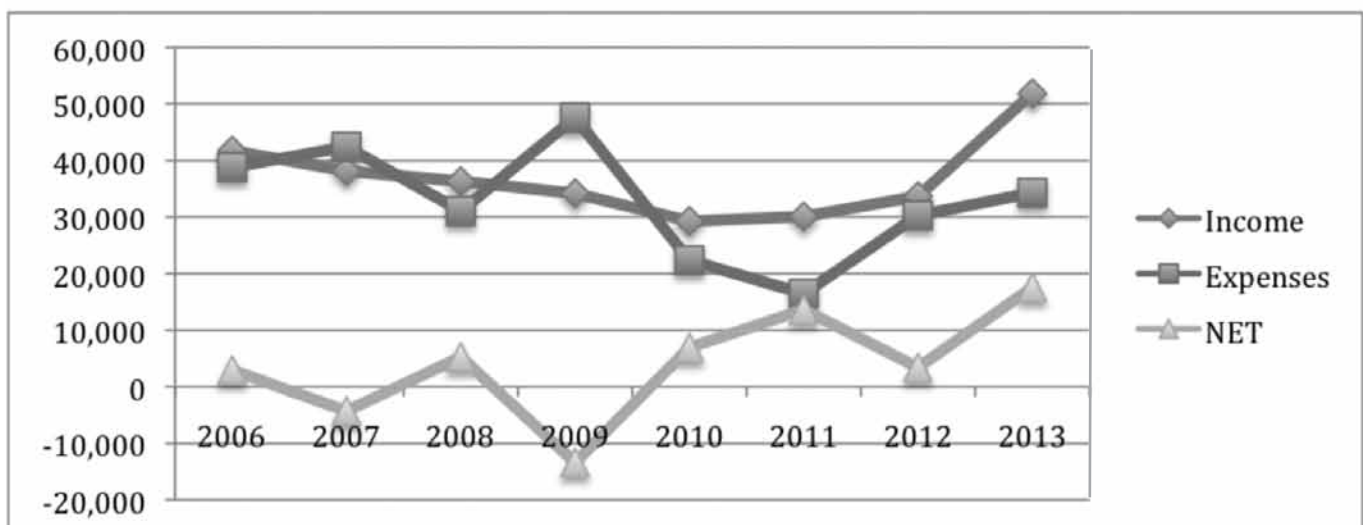
The Conference Planning Committee is in full swing lining up an exciting array of speakers for our Annual Conference in Great Falls this year. Hope to see you there.

As your representatives, the MOA Board of Directors will continue to be frugal while bringing you, our members, the highest value possible for your membership investment.

Best Regards,



Jonda Crosby, MOA Treasurer

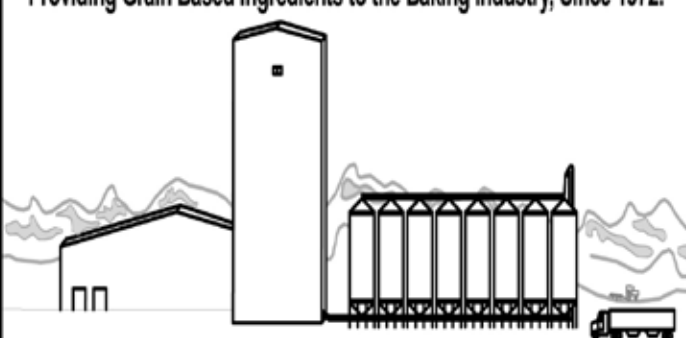





## MOA Income and Expense

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	Average
<b>INCOME</b>									
Advertising & Sales	1,342	120	1,799	1,066	1,351	1,633	974	898	1,148
Events	41,292	23,320	20,710	20,050	27,485	27,596	31,218	32,070	27,968
Membership	6,885	8,775	6,235	6,635	3,860	4,515	5,905	4,960	5,971
Grants and & Donations	2,325	2,130	1,336	1,537	1,477	2,570	25	3,800	1,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,844</b>	<b>33,663</b>	<b>30,080</b>	<b>29,287</b>	<b>34,172</b>	<b>36,315</b>	<b>38,122</b>	<b>41,728</b>	<b>36,901</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>									
Administration	3,348	3,335	3,825	3,215	3,730	2,634	2,541	1,859	3,061
Member Services	2,538	8,420	5,131	8,230	12,457	9,530	7,839	5,000	7,393
Events	19,956	15,753	4,576	8,188	27,719	11,839	27,624	28,561	18,027
Newsletter	7,034	2,093	2,685	1,890	3,385	6,443	4,370	3,088	3,874
Board Expense	1,413	678	233	849	272	609	49	270	547
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34,288</b>	<b>30,279</b>	<b>16,449</b>	<b>22,371</b>	<b>47,562</b>	<b>31,056</b>	<b>42,422</b>	<b>38,778</b>	<b>32,901</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>17,556</b>	<b>3,384</b>	<b>13,630</b>	<b>6,916</b>	<b>-13,390</b>	<b>5,259</b>	<b>-4,300</b>	<b>2,949</b>	<b>4,001</b>



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# MOA Goes to Washington

by Nathan Brown, MOA Board Chair

I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. in May for the Organic Trade Association Hill Days thanks to a generous sponsorship from Kamut, International. This was a two day event, with the first day being a policy conference with various speakers in the organic industry and the second day getting to meet with Montana's Congressman and Senators to discuss organic agriculture in our state.

The first day started with a meeting with the OTA Farmer Advisory Council or FAC. FAC is made up of small to medium sized organic farm owners that keep OTA informed on issues farmers have. One topic talked about frequently at the meeting was the need to increase supply of organic grains in order to continue the rapid growth in the organic sector. Supply and demand need to rise simultaneously in order for this to happen and at the moment demand is steadily outpacing supply. This means we need more farmers certifying organic land.

There was also a speaker giving an update about the CheckOff proposal from OTA. They said it would be an organic research and promotion order with a free standing board appointed by the Secretary of Agri-

culture so that organic producers don't have to pay into the conventional CheckOff. A 2/3 vote from all organic producers will be needed in order to establish an Organic CheckOff. It is estimated that \$40 million dollars is needed for a critical mass of research and promotion. Contributions would be based off of Gross Revenue-Cost of Goods with any producer under \$250,000 being exempt but could voluntarily pay.

Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack gave a speech on a wide range of organic issues. A highlight of the speech was that organic was the only sector of agriculture that got everything that was asked for in the Farm Bill. Cost share was doubled from \$750.00 to \$1500.00. He said he has encouraged Congress to give \$20 million dollars for organic research and education. He talked about climate change becoming an issue in farming and there will be seven climate change hubs throughout the country that will help determine vulnerability to climate change and lowering greenhouse gases. He ended with the need to revitalize and rebuild rural America and encouraged entrepreneurship through agriculture to make this happen.

The second day we got to visit with Congressman Daines and Senators Tester and Walsh. We talked about our individual farming operations, the increased demand in organics in our state and gave them numbers on this, and talked about MOA and what we do throughout the year.

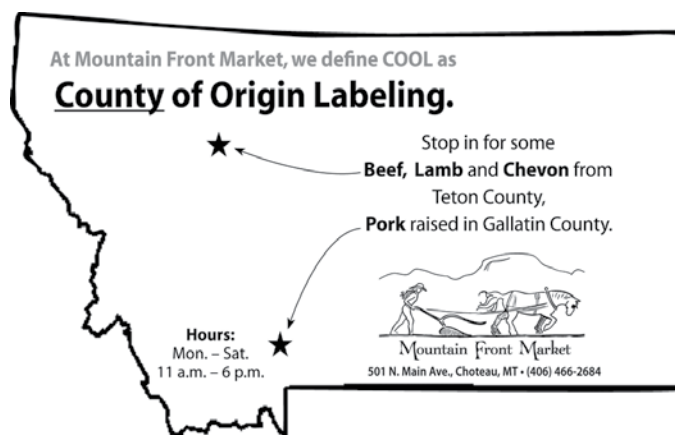
It was a privilege for me to speak to our members in Congress and we had excellent meetings at each of their respective offices. We thanked them for passing a Farm Bill and encouraged them to continue to support organic agriculture. I think they understand the need for more organic research and education and this seemed like an issue that they could easily get behind and promote. We invited each member to our annual conference and we hope that they can make it.

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# Farm Apprentice Report

by Laurel Johnson, Vilicus Farms Apprentice

I grew up in a rural part of Minnesota, where many people own small farms, but few people are full-time farmers. My parents instilled in me a love and respect for the land through the way we cared for our small farm.

I believe the primary purpose of education should be to become a better citizen of the world. At Wheaton College I became convinced that agricultural policy, farming practices, and food production systems in this country are the most tangible reflections of our society's value of natural resources and native ecosystems. After graduating in 2013 with a B.A. in International Relations I began looking for opportunities to work on a farm with a vision of creating a model of sustainable agriculture at scale. The Vilicus Farms Apprenticeship is an incredible opportunity to introduce people who are passionate about land stewardship and sustainability, and want to make these ideas a reality by organic farming. I am honored to be the 2014 Vilicus Farms apprentice.

One day I hope to own and operate my own organic farm in the Northern Plains of Montana. I cannot imagine a more exciting field of opportunities (literally) to create a model of food production that protects the value, dignity and longevity of natural resources.

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## Join MOA Today!

Each membership level delivers a quarterly newsletter devoted to sharing the latest news and information about the association and the organic industry, discounts to MOA events, special mailings on legislative alerts and events, and the networking and educational opportunities presented by joining others who share interest and experience in the field of organics.

Other member benefits include eligibility for a Workman's Comp premium discount, safety training and other services to assist you in your organic endeavors.

The business level categories offer discounts on advertising in our print publications and an online directory listing on the MOA website. The Lifetime Membership gives you permanent access, listings, discounts and the satisfaction that you're supporting the farmers, ranchers, processors, distributors, retailers, students and researchers who make organic food available and accessible.

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## Montana Organic Association

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## A View from the Chair

I'd like to give a quick update on what the MOA board of directors has been working on lately.

The conference committee is well underway on the planning of our annual conference. This year it will be in Great Falls December 4-6 and we hope you can attend. We have a great line up of speakers coming to talk about a wide range of topics from organic economics to soil fertility, crop insurance to cattle, and organic research being conducted on crops. It will be a conference not to be missed. The conference will be at the Great Falls Airport conference rooms and the venue looks excellent. See you there!

MOA also has the last farm tour of the season coming up on August 16 at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish. MOA's own Judy Owsowitz will give the tour of her certified organic vegetable farm and greenhouse. Attendees will get to see over 500 varieties of vegetables and herbs grown on

the farm as well as the on-farm seed breeding program. Cover crops and soil fertility will also be discussed during the tour.

The last update I'd like to share is how important the newly formed Policy Committee will be for MOA. Having the collective policies that MOA stands for will be tremendously helpful for when media (or anyone else) wants a statement from our organization. This will also help when collectively working with other organizations.

I hope everyone has a safe and bountiful harvest. It will be here before you know it!

Nathan Brown, MOA Board Chairman