



# Organic Matters

## An Organic Perspective: MOA Annual Conference Highlights

By Wes Gibbs with contributions from Karl Sutton and Becky Weed, MOA Members  
Photos by Wes Gibbs

Education and fellowship were the main ingredients of the 11th Annual Conference of the Montana Organic Association, which was held in Kalispell on December 12-14. The meeting halls at Flathead Valley Community College were often filled to overflowing with an enthusiastic organic community. An active turnout from local residents interested in organics was a great topping to many of the conference sessions and events.

A MOA conference isn't all business and education, however. The announcement of MOA's two annual awards—the Lifetime of Service Award and the Leadership in Organics Award—are always a conference highlight and this year didn't disappoint. Lively music by the Pheromones, delicious organic food, and meeting new and greeting old friends complimented the full array of topics on the conference agenda.



Daryl, Linda and Trista Lassila

In the business meeting, members gave thanks to MOA Chairman Daryl Lassila, whose term on the board of directors expired with the close of the conference. Daryl has served as Chairman for three of his four years as a MOA Board Member. Appreciation also went out to Tara Blyth, who served as Secretary and Communications and Conference

Committee Chairs during her five years with MOA. Four new directors were also welcomed to the MOA Board.

Many presentations expanded on the conference theme, "An Organic Perspective: Facts and Fiction of GMOs and More," giving participants views and education on all sides of the GMO issue.



Bob Quinn, Jeremy Seifert and Kelly Shea

A highlight of the conference was the Montana premier of the documentary film, *GMO OMG*, presented in person by the film's southern California producer, Jeremy Seifert. More than 250 people were on hand for the film's showing.

### HUMANITY'S MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE—SEEDS

Inspired by his children's love of seeds, Seifert launched into production of the documentary that investigates the loss of seed diversity in the world. Viewers climbed into the family van with Jeremy and his children for trips around the world. They experienced first-hand encounters with those dedicated to preserving seed diversity and saw the forces threatening it through seed ownership and laboratory-assisted genetic alteration of food.

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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* Montana Organic Association PO Box 570 Eureka MT 59917 mtorganic@hotmail.com (406) 788-7423

*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.

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It was also clear from the film that many consumers, in the U.S. at least, aren't familiar with the term "GMO," but at the same time, they express a strong preference against eating genetically-modified food.

Afterwards, Seifert encouraged the audience to forego contention or anger and focus energy and efforts on preserving good farmers, soil, and seed to "chop the head off the beast." His documentary will be released on DVD in April. The film's premier was sponsored by KAMUT International and WhiteWave Foods.

## SESSION SPOTLIGHT



Bill Dyer speaks to an organic audience about GMOs

All ears were tuned to Bill Dyer's educational workshop entitled "Biotechnology and Genetically Modified (GM) Crops: What's All the Fuss?" Dyer indeed has the educational credentials to address the topic. He has a Ph.D. in Plant Biochemistry from Purdue University and is a professor in the Plant Sciences and Pathology department at Montana State University (MSU).

Bill felt advances in biotech have made it a much more precise science and presumably less risky. At the same time, he acknowledged that increasing pest resistance to widely used pesticides is one of the main risks of the growing use of GM crops. Also, Dyer seemed truly troubled that it has recently come to light that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been quietly informing some crop trait companies that plants formed with certain new forms of genetic modification fall outside of their regulatory authority. This effectively gives these companies the green light to proceed without review.

Dyer's recommendations to the organic community? Reach out even more, avoid inflammatory language, and use the political clout we have available.

## ORGANIC UNIVERSITY

Part of MOA's mission is to promote organic agriculture to folks just learning the ropes. Organic University was designed to present beginners with practical, hands-on advice from seasoned agricultural

producers and key players in organic production. More than 50 participants attended Organic University at the conference.

Georgana Webster of the Montana Department of Agriculture helped participants better understand the USDA's National Organic Program standards and the certification process. Jonda Crosby, an organic inspector, trainer, and former farmer, also discussed the certification process.

Seasoned organic producers Jess Alger, Doug Crabtree and Todd Ulizio each discussed their unique experience in different areas of organic production. Jess is a beef and small grains producer from central Montana. Want an herbal treatment for pinkeye in cattle? Just give Jess a call. Doug has a dryland farm north of Havre in north central Montana and raises 21 different varieties of heirloom and specialty crops. Todd Ulizio raises mainly vegetable crops, with some poultry, in northwest Montana.

## MORE SESSION SPOTLIGHTS



Fred Provenza discusses eating habits of animals and humans

Can you learn about human eating habits and healthy lifestyles by studying animal behavior? Dr. Fred Provenza, a range scientist at Utah State University, believes that we can. His insightful research showed that variation in forages and in feeding places naturally results in healthy animals that don't overeat. Provenza suggested in his workshops that for people, nothing is more important than exposing a body to a variety of wholesome foods, and trusting the body's wisdom to naturally select what and how much it needs.

Dr. Fabian Menalled, cropland weed specialist for MSU, led a discussion on using livestock to terminate cover crops and the benefits derived from their accompanying manure. However, the workshop discussion quickly turned to concern over proposed FDA regulations that would impose a nine-month waiting period for harvesting crops from fields where untreated manure has been applied.

A MOA conference would not be complete without some good discussion and presentation of practices

that get dirt under your fingernails. Dr. Michel Cavigelli is a soil scientist for the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Cavigelli notes that, "We have learned that in organic production systems, you must pay as much attention to the cover crop as to the cash crop." The take-home message is that diversity of crop rotations and longer-term rotations increase economic returns and result in better weed control.

Out of necessity, organic farmers become pseudo seed scientists themselves. There were about 30 attendees for a full-day workshop on seed production, presented by Dr. John Navazio, Senior Scientist of the Organic Seed Alliance. John is also an Extension Organic Seed Specialist with Washington State University.

Dr. Navazio covered information on how to choose appropriate seed crops for a farm's system and climate; maintain the integrity of varieties through appropriate population sizes and isolation distances; improve varieties; and conduct variety trials. The seed workshop was funded in part through the MT Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop grant program, and organized in partnership with the Organic Seed Alliance, Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, and the steering committee of Triple Divide Seeds, which is a newly forming Montana-based organic vegetable seed business.

As organic producers know, growing the crop is one-half of the effort. Successful marketing of the crop cannot be overlooked. And marketing is tied closely



Theresa Marquez emphasizes the importance of marketing organics

to consumers. Theresa Marquez, a marketing executive with Organic Valley, told the attendees that consumers are keeping the future of organics bright, but they need more education. For example, said Marquez, there is widespread consumer confusion over "natural" and "organic." It's our job to help them understand the difference, she said. Marquez also said organic farmers need to be more active in efforts to get increased research and promotion dollars focused on organic production.

Additional excellent workshop sessions and roundtable discussions were presented with the help of Kiki Hubbard, Organic Seed Alliance; Maarten Fischer

with the topic "Care Farms: Develop Your Business by Engaging in Your Community;" Jeff Rumly, Bureau Chief, Montana State Grain Lab, in his session "Commitment to Organics in Montana;" Jeff Schahczenski, National Center for Appropriate Technology, presenting "Cover Crops and Crop Insurance;" and Martin Diffley on "Appropriate Small Farm Equipment and How to Find It." MOA deeply appreciates the involvement of all these conference presenters.



A captivated audience learns about the intricacies of seeds from John Navazio

With an on-campus organic farm and an educational program for sustainable agriculture, Flathead Valley Community College was a fitting place for MOA's conference. FVCC agriculture professor Heather Estrada and farm manager Julian Cunningham were gracious hosts for the conference. The chef and students of the college's Culinary Arts Program prepared excellent organic meals for the weekend.

The Montana Organic Association expresses deep appreciation to all those who contributed to making this year's conference another great success.

## In Depth: GMOs

by Becky Weed, MOA Member

At the heart of MOA's December 2013 conference "Fact and Fiction of GMOs," Montana State University Professor Bill Dyer delivered what was requested—a primer on the basic science behind biotechnology in agricultural crops; an initial review of observed and potential benefits and risks of such technology; and consideration of at least some of the remaining uncertainties. MOA asked for, and got, the services of a Land Grant University academic, in the best sense of the word. The job may not be finished, but it was a good beginning.

Dyer managed multiple interruptions with patience and humor with a 'just-the-facts' review of what genetic engineering is: explanations of methods for selecting target traits and eliminating undesirable ones; assessment of the limitations of the most widespread GE traits to date (herbicide-tolerant and Bt crops);

*continued on p. 8*

# 2013 MOA Award Winners

by Barry Flamm and Jonda Crosby

Montana Organic Association presents two awards each year to honor and recognize special members of its community who have demonstrated outstanding service to organic agriculture. The 2013 awards were presented at the Montana Organic Association's conference in Kalispell on December 14, 2013.

**The Lifetime of Service Award** is presented to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service provider (or other) who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to organic agriculture in Montana.

The 2013 Lifetime of Service Award was presented to Judy Owsowitz. Judy has repeatedly demonstrated her commitment to the organic community. Being well ahead of the times, she had the vision over 35 years ago to help develop organic agriculture and localized food systems. Judy owns and operates Terrapin Farm, a certified organic farm and greenhouse near Whitefish, growing over 500 varieties, including her own selections of vegetables and herbs. Her commitment to young people is especially notable. She has trained numerous interns at her farm, many who have gone on to be organic farmers. Interns have characterized her as an "amazing boss."



Judy Owsowitz with granddaughters Amelia and Sofia, and daughter Chloe Christiana

Before the National Organic Program regulations were in effect, Judy was already a leader in the Montana organic community. Subsequently, she served on the steering committee which helped set up the Montana State certification program. She was influential in establishing the Montana Organic Association, served as the first Chair and has continuously served on the Board. She is also active on the policy committee of the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association.

Judy exudes amazing strength and a stick-to-it attitude. She exhibits tremendous passion and devotion to the highest standards for organics and her advice and opinions are greatly respected.



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**The Leadership in Organics Award** is presented 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.

The 2013 Leadership in Organics Award was presented to Jeff Schahczenski. Jeff is the Agriculture Policy and Development Director with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). His focus is on organic and sustainable agriculture production and marketing, climate change, bio-energy, agriculture public policy, conservation policy, transgenics in agriculture, cooperative development, sustainable building, intercultural communications and apiculture.

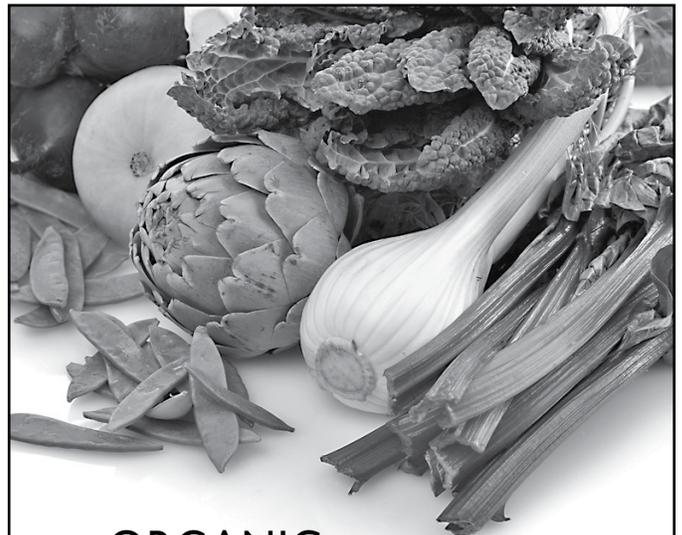
Jeff has also worked for the past 21 years on policy change at the state and national level on the Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Advisory Committee, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and with the Risk Management Agency (RMA). He has worked with NRCS at the



Jeff Schahczenski

national level to improve their policies, to recognize the conservation benefits of organic systems, and to work more closely with organic growers. He is the principle author of the AGR-Lite Wizard, a whole farm revenue software tool that can offer better coverage to diversified crop and livestock operations. He has also made recommendations to RMA to consider revising policies that discourage crop diversity and promote the use of cover crops. Schahczenski is a past Executive Director of the Big Hole River Foundation and Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. He was also an organic farmer and the owner/operator of Babylon Gardens in Whitehall, specializing in the greenhouse production of gourmet lettuce and greens and field production of medicinal and culinary herbs.

Montana Organic Association extends congratulations to our award recipients, as well as our deepest appreciation for all their hard work on behalf of organic agriculture in Montana.



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## Presenting the New 2014 MOA Board Members



Photo of Doug Crabtree by Wes Gibbs

**Doug Crabtree** and his wife Anna own and operate a diverse organic dry-land crop farm north of Havre. Doug previously worked as an organic inspector, educator,

researcher, and farm manager, and managed the certification program at the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Doug is a strong advocate for organic agriculture, which he sees as a viable social, economic and environmentally responsible system for producers and consumers.

**Mike Nault** grew up in Chouteau County on a wheat farm, where he always felt a connection to the land. Following four years of active duty service as a U.S. Army infantry soldier, he



Photo of Mike Nault by Ashley McDonald

studied in the Sustainable Foods and Bioenergy Program at Montana State University. During that time, he gained extensive experience with organic vegetable production in all phases from farm to market, diversified

cropping systems research, and the use of livestock integration as a land management tool.

Mike recently returned to Chouteau County with his wife and is currently working on consulting with area farmers with the aim of integrating organic production methods into traditional conventional systems. He is in the early stages of transitioning land out of CRP contracts and working towards organic certification for vegetable, hay, and beef production.

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**Seth Swanson** is currently a Montana State University Missoula County Extension Agent, focusing on horticulture. Seth received his B.S. in Horticulture Science from Montana State University and his M.S. in Horticulture and



Photo of Seth Swanson by Norel Swanson

Agronomy from UC Davis. He left a career in wholesale nursery production in Western Washington and moved back to Montana with his wife and daughter, where they have begun to establish some roots and build their family to include another daughter. Seth has become immersed in the food and agriculture network and is working with small diversified and specialty crop producers across Western Montana. Seth sees becoming a member of the MOA Board as an opportunity to learn more about sustainable agriculture and to help him better assist in the development and long-term sustainability of agriculture in the region.

**MonaRae Tuhy** (no photo available) was raised in a multi-generational farming family, which has farms in Eastern Montana, North Dakota and Texas. The commercial fields were managed using conventional methods, but the family garden was always organic and had been so for generations. She is an activist for agriculture and building sustainable organic local food systems. MonaRae sees the organic food system as a long-term environmental and health-responsible system for both producers and consumers. This has led her to working closely with the local community and school systems as an educator and facilitator in creating working food systems.

## 2013 Business of the Year Award

Community Co-op was awarded the "Business of the Year" award by the Prospera Business Network. The Co-op received the award for its longevity in Bozeman, support of local food and farmers and for giving back to the community. Other achievements include being the largest food co-op in Montana with more than 22,000 member owners, employing over 175 people with competitive wages and benefits, receiving national recognition and awards, and providing considerable support for local and regional food.

# ORGANICS MATTER

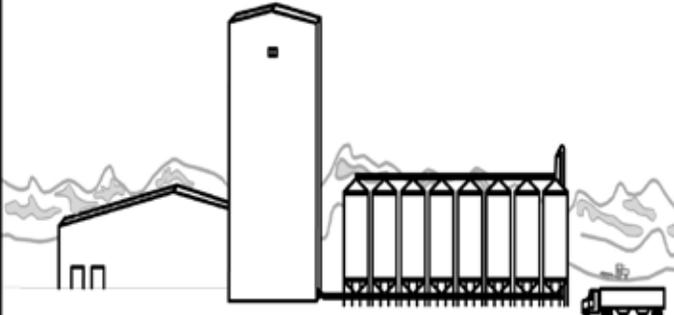
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In Depth: *continued from p. 3*

and a preview of other crop traits under investigation (delayed fruit ripening, drought tolerance, etc.).

Dyer's talk addressed some of the agronomic and ecologic risks implicit in introducing these novel crops. There are categories of technical risk, such as pollen flow to wild relatives (altering the original genetic stock of our most basic crops) and transmittal of traits to non-target plants (conferring fitness advantages to undesirable species). To some degree, scientific dialogue and regulatory processes have recognized such risk, but Dyer's short review of research into a range of examples portrays a collectively ad hoc and incomplete regime of research and regulation, performed in a variety of institutions, sometimes after the technology in question has been launched. (Dyer did not use the terms "ad hoc" or "incomplete," but neither did he sugarcoat the complex reality that we face.) His photograph of an herbicide-resistant ragweed the height of an Iowa combine is a moment to remember. That picture-worth-a-thousand-words leaves little doubt that the North American agricultural behemoth faces a self-imposed challenge. The implications go way beyond tall weeds.

Dyer was careful to leave open the possibility, even expressing some hope, that beneficial outcomes from some GMO crops may yet prove out, and that the humanitarian impulses of many of his colleagues (and ours) should not be discounted or disrespected. Fair enough. Such aspirations merit respect, but not blind acquiescence. They mask, but do not fundamentally alter, the vast reality behind that giant ragweed. There lie the categories of risk—the millions of acres of corn and soy (genetically engineered to the tune of 90±%) and the monopolistic domination of seed supply and seed research. There looms the impending approval and application of increasingly toxic herbicides to contend with the herbicide resistance certainty. Perhaps most importantly, the most fundamental risk of GMOs, as they have been manifest on the ground and not in our aspirations, is the degradation of diet and habitat diversity.

Dyer's review was an unexpectedly fitting complement to Fred Provenza's presentation—together they showed that a threat to diversity should be our caution and our inspiration. Provenza revealed the role of diversity in our bodies, our soil, our plants, and our animals (from microbes to wildlife) as one collective, interacting resource that we can ill-afford to squander. Dyer, by painting the portrait of what GMO agriculture is, in theory and in fact, also begs the question to a room full of organic farmers: "Can your model of farming stage a vital defense of diversity?" There are our marching orders.



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# Crop Insurance at Contracted Organic Price - New for the 2014 Crop Year

by Jeff Schahczenski

One of the long-standing issues that organic farmers have had with federally subsidized crop insurance products has been the inability to insure organic crops and livestock at their organic value. For example, for the coming 2014 crop year, the premium and revenue guarantee for non-organic winter wheat revenue insurance is based on the projected price of \$7.11 a bushel. Many organic grain farmers have contracted prices for their 2014 winter wheat crop that is well above this projected price. This has meant that organic winter wheat producers have most often been underinsured, since if insurable losses occur they could only capture part of the value of that loss through insurance based on non-organic market value. With a new policy announced in May of 2013, this issue has changed at least for those organic farmers that have contracts for their organic crops.

This last summer, the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) expanded the number of crops that could be insured at closer to their organic market prices IF the contract option is available for the crop in their specific location. For example, there are no organic or non-organic carrot insurance options. Also, the organic farmer has to establish a contracted price by the sales closing date of the crop to be insured and they need to provide a copy of the contract to their insurance agent and the RMA prior to the acreage reporting date of the crop insured.

For instance, in the case of organic winter wheat in Montana this coming crop year, if an organic winter wheat grower wanted to purchase revenue insurance for their winter wheat, they would have had to establish a contract by the winter wheat sales closing date of 9/30/13 and would need to provide a copy of the contract by 11/15/13, the acreage reporting date for winter wheat revenue insurance. Unfortunately, there is a maximum level of \$14.22 per bushel for an organic winter wheat under this new policy change. For more details on this new option, you can contact your crop insurance agent or look at the details at this link on the RMA website: [www.rma.usda.gov/policies/2014/14cpa-r.pdf](http://www.rma.usda.gov/policies/2014/14cpa-r.pdf).

If you are interested, for instance in this option for organic spring wheat, a contract price needs to be established by March 15, 2014, and a copy of the contract price needs to be provided to your insurance agent and RMA by July 15, 2104, the acreage reporting date for 2014 spring wheat insurance policies.

The policy change was made to what the RMA calls the "Contract Price Addendum (CPA)." In announcing the change, Sec. of Agriculture Tom Vilsack noted that this option would be expanded to between 60 and 70 crops in 2014 and would be available to the majority of insured organic crops. However, a list of which crops and in which states the CPA option will be available has not yet been provided. There is hope that in perhaps as early as the 2015 crop year, there will be general organic wheat price election and organic wheat and other crops will be able to be insured at a determined organic value rather than only through a contracted price agreement. Contact your crop insurance agent to find out more details about this and future changes to organic crop insurance or call the RMA office in Billings at 406-657-6447.

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## 'Nuff Said

Seen on Daryl Lassila's Great Falls deck on December 7, 2013.



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## EQIP Initiatives for 2014

Three National Initiatives are being offered in Montana through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): On-Farm Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel. While NRCS accepts applications for EQIP on a continuous basis throughout the year, there will be a cutoff deadline of February 21, 2014 for FY 2014 funding of these initiatives.

### Initiative Overview

**On-Farm Energy Initiative:** Producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider (TSP) to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation.

**Organic Initiative:** NRCS will assist producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or National Organic Program exempt will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns while fulfilling many of the requirements in an Organic System Plan.

**Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative:** NRCS helps producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Conservation practices must be implemented to NRCS standards and specifications. In Montana, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for eligible conservation practices applied.

For more information about EQIP, or other programs offered by NRCS, please contact your local USDA Service Center or go to the website [www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov).

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## Jones-Crabtree Appointed

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden has appointed 20 members to serve on the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. Long-time MOA member, Dr. Anna Jones-Crabtree, co-owner/operator of Vilicus Farms in Havre, has been asked to sit on the committee. The committee will provide guidance to the Secretary on expanding opportunities that will help beginning farmers and ranchers succeed in agriculture.

## Seeking Conference Coordinator

MOA is seeking a conference coordinator to help with the logistics of the MOA 2014 Annual Conference. The MOA Annual Conference will be held in Great Falls in November or December, 2014. This opportunity to work for MOA will be as an Independent Contractor. This contract will not exceed \$3,000 in compensation and will be determined by the qualifications and availability of the successful candidate. For a complete description of contract responsibilities and expectations, please contact Jonda Crosby at [jcrosby@mt.net](mailto:jcrosby@mt.net).

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# Calendar of Events

[www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm)

The National Center for Appropriate Technology, MOA, 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. As part of that project, there will be four farm tours offered—two are the operations of well-known MOA members:

- June 13, 2014—A farm tour and workshop at Vili-cus Farm, hosted by Doug and Anna Jones-Crabtree near Havre, Montana
- July 8, 2014—A farm tour and workshop near Conrad, Montana, with Dr. Clain Jones, which will explore a longer-term on-farm research project related to cover cropping
- July 16, 2014—A farm tour and workshop in Toole County with mixed livestock and small grain grower Grif Bye, who is developing a unique cover cropping and livestock system
- August 16, 2014—A farm tour and workshop at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish, Montana, which is owned and operated by Judy Owsowitz, a long-time organic producer who has extensive knowledge of cover cropping in diverse vegetable production systems

If you are interested in attending these farm tours, please pre-register at [www.ncat.org/tours/](http://www.ncat.org/tours/). We will then send you details. Questions? Contact Jeff Schahczenski, 406-494-8636 or email [jeffs@ncat.org](mailto:jeffs@ncat.org).

## Looking for Member Volunteers

MOA is in need of members who would be interested in volunteering on our various committees. It is important that MOA has input from our membership so that we can address the diverse needs and wants of all members as our organization continues to grow.

The committees that need volunteer members are Conference, Farm Tour, Newsletter, Communications, Fundraising, and the new Policy Committee.

MOA is *your* association, so it is very important for you to get involved. Your input and assistance will make MOA a better organization now and into the future. Questions, comments or concerns? Contact any board member at [www.montanaorganicassociation.org/contactus.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/contactus.htm) or Nathan Brown, phone (406)-579-6439 or email [g.nathanbrown@gmail.com](mailto:g.nathanbrown@gmail.com).

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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.

Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

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

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

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Levels:

- Individual.....\$30
- Household.....\$50 (includes two memberships)
- Farm/Ranch/Business....\$75 (includes a 5% discount on newsletter ads and an online directory listing)
- Organic Business.....\$250 (includes a 10% discount on newsletter ads and an online directory listing)
- Lifetime.....\$750

Please fill out this form,  
make checks payable to MOA and mail to:  
MOA, PO Box 570, Eureka, MT 59917  
(406) 788-7423

## Montana Organic Association

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MOA Board Members:

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Doug Crabtree - Vice-chair  
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## A View from the Chair

I'd like to start by giving a big "thank you" to our departing board members. Tara Blyth and Daryl Lassila were both hugely influential members of the board and will be missed. Tara first inquired if I'd be interested in joining the board two years ago and I am very happy that she did. I've been able to spend quite a bit of time with Daryl at MOA events this past year and I hope I picked up on his excellent leadership skills. It has been great learning from Daryl and Tara these past couple of years.

I hope that everyone who attended our conference in December enjoyed it. For me, the conference is always a time of learning and visiting with others about the past year. I always leave the conference refreshed and ready for a new year and I hope you did too. At the conclusion of the conference, I was feeling that organics is in a strong position that will only continue to grow as we look into the future.

There are a number of victories to be proud of in 2013. Whole Foods vowed to label GMOs, Connecticut and Maine passed GMO labeling laws, and Cheerios will no longer use genetically modified ingredients. We need to keep this momentum going and I think it will continue in 2014.

I am looking forward to the upcoming year for MOA. We have a great board and lots of exciting plans for 2014. We still could use some help on our committee work if there are any members who would like to help with that. The more you lend a hand, the more we will be able to grow MOA to its fullest potential.

Best of luck in the upcoming season.

Nathan Brown, MOA Board Chairman