

# Gathering Montana's Organic Community: Farming for the Next Generation

Montana Organic  
Association  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

Billings, Montana

November 11 - 13, 2005





# Welcome!

Welcome to the 3rd Annual Conference of the Montana Organic Association and thank you for joining us for our first eastern Montana gathering. We believe we have brought together a truly special combination of speakers and panelists for you to learn from and be inspired by, and to inspire in return. Your toughest choice surely will be which session to sit in on. We hope you will enjoy this organic community—a broad network of people in agriculture, support businesses, consumers, retailers, conservationists, researchers, and others who endeavor for and are benefited by organics.

As farmers we live in the future, planning, hoping and praying long before the work begins. Our best tool is our individual wealth of knowledge, and that which others share with us. We hope you find that here.

We have received amazing support from our advertisers, vendors and sponsors. Please be sure to visit them all in the vendor area during breaks and the special vendor session on Saturday afternoon.

We have endeavored to put together another Montana-based, organic menu, and some of the growers who have provided us with the ingredients are listed in the program. We thank them for their beautiful bounty.

You'll see that we are continuing the silent and quarter auctions due to popular demand. Please note the generous individuals and businesses that have donated their wares, and be sure to support them when you return home. Let them know how much we all appreciate their support of organics in Montana.

Before you leave us, we ask that you take a few minutes to tell us how we did on the evaluation form slipped into your program. Your feedback will help us to continue bringing you the most relevant topics and speakers in future conferences.

If you are not yet a member, please consider joining MOA as we grow in Montana.

Thank you for coming and enjoy!

.....

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Conference Coordinator  
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# Conference Agenda at a Glance

## Friday, November 11

### Afternoon

- 3:00 Registration & Exhibitor area opens – *Atrium Lobby*
- 3:00 Introductory session on Transitioning to Organic Agriculture – *Bighorn*
- 5:00 No-host Social  
*Organic beer, wine and light hors d'oeuvres with live entertainment – Atrium Lobby*
- 7:00 Silent auction opens for bidding – *Missouri*

## Saturday, November 12

### Morning

- 7:00 Breakfast – *Missouri*
- 8:30 Welcome and Logistics – *Missouri*
- 8:45 Organic Marketing Opportunities and Challenges – *Missouri*
- 10:15 Break (*Refreshments – Atrium Lobby, Vendor area*)
- 10:30 **First Breakout Sessions**
  - Plant Medicines for Animals – *Stillwater*
  - Benefits of Grass Finished Beef – *Bitterroot*
  - Organic Research Discussion  
“What do Growers Need? You talk, We listen” – *Gallatin*
  - Growing Organic Grapes in Montana – *Bighorn*

Noon Lunch – *Missouri*

### Afternoon

- 1:00 Opportunities for Family Farms in Organic Agriculture – *Missouri*
- 1:30 **Second Breakout Sessions**
  - The Role of Farmers in Organic Seed Development – *Stillwater*
  - Diversified Dryland Farm Systems that Work – *Gallatin*
  - Economics of Grass Finished Beef – *Bitterroot*
- 3:00 Break (*refreshments – Atrium Lobby, vendor area*)
- 3:15 **Third Breakout Sessions**
  - Grains Marketing Panel – *Gallatin*
  - Vegetables, Fruits, and Herb Marketing Panel – *Stillwater*
  - Production of Grass Finished Beef – *Bitterroot*
  - Where to Buy Organic Food in Montana – *Bighorn*
- 4:45 Exhibitor Session – *Atrium Lobby, vendor area*  
*Wine, beer, and time to look at the silent auction items*
- 5:45 Dinner – *Missouri*
- 6:30 25 Farms that Survived and Thrived because They Went Organic – *Missouri*
- 7:30 FUNraising quarter auction and socializing – *Missouri*

## Sunday, November 13

### Morning

- 7:00 Breakfast – *Missouri*
- 8:30 **Fourth Breakout Sessions**
  - Livestock Marketing Panel – *Bitterroot*
  - Soil Fertility: Lessons in Nitrogen Cycling from Natural – *Stillwater*
  - Organic Goat Dairying and Cheese Making – *Bighorn*
  - Alternative Fuels for the Farm – *Gallatin*
- 10:00 Break (*refreshments – Atrium, Lobby, vendor area*)
- 10:15 Drawing it all Together, Lessons for the Future – *Missouri*
- 11:00 Annual Meeting – *Missouri*

### Afternoon

- 12:30 Lunch – *Missouri*
- 1:30 MOA Board Meeting – *Bighorn*

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# Conference Agenda

## Friday, November 11

3:00 P.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area  
**Registration & Exhibitor area opens**

3:00 P.M. – Stillwater  
**Transitioning to Organic Agriculture**

*Margaret Scoles, IOIA and Doug Crabtree, MDA  
Organic Certification Program*

5:00 P.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area  
**No-host Social**  
*Organic beer, wine and light hors d'oeuvres with live entertainment*

7:00 P.M. – Missouri  
**Silent auction** opens for bidding

## Saturday, November 12

7:00 A.M. – Missouri  
**Breakfast** (provided)

8:30 A.M. – Missouri  
**Welcome and Logistics**  
*Judy Owsowitz, MOA Chair*

8:45 A.M. – Missouri  
**Organic Marketing Opportunities and Challenges**

*Fraser McLeay and Jan Tusick*  
The organic food market offers tremendous opportunities for Montana producers, but also a number of challenges. McLeay will provide an overview of trends in the organic industry and outline the benefits of taking a marketing/customer focused approach to agri-business development. Using real examples from Montana companies including Timeless Seeds and the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, he will provide an overview of the barriers that small Montana companies must overcome to compete successfully in the **retail** organic market place. Tusick will present several successful models of producer cooperative businesses that have successfully

entered the organic retail market and have thrived. The challenges of developing cooperative businesses will be reviewed as will the opportunities the business model offers to the Montana organic producer.

10:15 A.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area  
**Break** (Refreshments)

### First Breakout Sessions

10:30 A.M. – Stillwater  
**Plant Medicines for Animals**

*Terrence Fox, PhD, Buck Mountain Botanicals, Miles City, Veterinary Research Council, Inc.*  
This presentation should be of particular interest to those with organic herds and those who are holistic in their approach to health issues. Dr. Fox's presentation will cover the historical use, chemistry, pharmacology, clinical application, adverse effect, interactions, and toxicology of many botanicals and medicines.

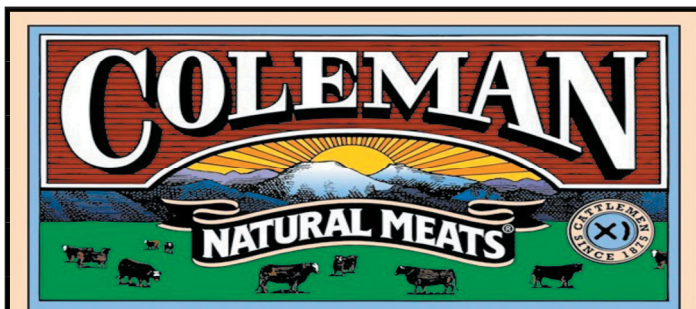
10:30 A.M. – Bitterroot  
**Benefits of Grass Finished Beef**

*Dr. Steve Atchley, Mesquite Organic Beef, CO*  
Our ancestors had eaten red meat for thousands of years, choosing it over other forms of nutrition that did not require the energy expenditure and danger of chasing the meal on foot. What happened to beef to give it such a bad reputation as an unhealthy food? Dr. Atchley will explore how choosing the right breeds of cattle and applying a holistic approach to range management that mirrors closely the natural range ranchers can produce a healthful fine cut of beef with excellent flavor and tenderness.

10:30 A.M. – Gallatin  
**Organic Research Discussion "What do Growers Need? You talk, We listen"**

*Perry Miller, MSU; Clain Jones, MSU; Bruce Maxwell; Tom DeLuca, U of M; Joyce Eckhoff, Research Agonomist, MSU Eastern MT Ag Research Station*  
Just like it sounds, this is an opportunity for growers to share their research needs with Montana researchers.

Continued on page 7...



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# Agenda, continued...

10:30 A.M. – Bighorn

## **Growing Organic Grapes in Montana**

*Andy Sponseller, Rattlesnake Creek Vineyard, Missoula and Bob Thaden, Tongue River Vineyard, Miles City*  
Andy and Bob will present from two different climates and two different sized operations. Andy has 4.25 acres in production and produces approx 3500 cases of wine yearly, mostly from purchased organic grapes and cherries. He will discuss commercial, organic grape growing in the mountains at 46 degrees seven minutes latitude. Bob has 1 acre which will reach production in 2006, and will be selling locally grown and produced grape and fruit wines.

12:00 PM – Missouri

**Lunch** (provided)

1:00 P.M. – Missouri

## **Opportunities for Family Farms in Organic Agriculture**

*Nancy K Peterson, Director, Montana Department of Agriculture*

## **Second Breakout Sessions**

1:30 P.M. – Stillwater

## **The Role of Farmers in Organic Seed Development**

*Matthew Dillon, Executive Director, Organic Seed Alliance*  
In the ten thousand years plus years of agricultural history, farmers have filled the primary role of seed production (or saving), seed distribution, crop improvement, and plant breeding. In the 20th century this role shifted, with farmers being seen as “end users” that would be served by public (university) and private (corporate) “agricultural professionals”. Farmers were for the most part, removed from the circle of seed development and distribution. We are beginning to see a new trend emerging – farmers reclaiming their place in the circle of seeds – as specialists, stewards, and advocates of regional seed systems. Matthew Dillon will give a historical background on the history of seed development, share new and positive trends, and outline how farmers might involve themselves in developing seed for regional and organic needs.

1:30 P.M. – Gallatin

## **Diversified Dryland Farm Systems that Work**

*Debbie Miller, Sunrise Farms, SK and Blaine Schmaltz, Rugby, ND, certified organic farmers*  
Debbie and Blaine will discuss the various farm practices employed in a diversified dryland farm system including rotation, microbial/soil building, conservation and weed control techniques.

1:30 P.M. – Bitterroot

## **Economics of Grass Finished Beef**

*Jim Gerrish, American Grazing Lands, grazing consultant and forage specialist, Idaho*  
Just getting a premium price for grass-finished beef doesn't guarantee a profit to your business. Production costs must still be kept at a reasonable level. The real challenges for small scale pasture-finished beef profitability come from transportation, processing, and marketing. In this session we'll discuss how to meet those challenges.

3:00 P.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area

**Break** (refreshments)

## **Third Breakout Sessions**

3:15 P.M. – Gallatin

## **Grains Marketing Panel**

Meet the buyers. Representatives from organic grain buyers will briefly describe their companies, what type of markets they have, and what they look for when they purchase. The marketing panel will include producers to give the grower perspective.

3:15 P.M. – Stillwater

## **Vegetables, Fruits, and Herb Marketing Panel**

Meet the buyers. Representatives from organic produce buyers will briefly describe their companies, what type of markets they have, and what they look for when they purchase. The marketing panel will include producers to give the grower perspective.

Continued on page 9...



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# Agenda, continued...

3:15 P.M. – Bitterroot

## **Production of Grass-finished Beef**

*Jim Gerrish, American Grazing Lands, Idaho*  
Grass-finished beef should be of a defined quality grade for a consistently pleasurable dining experience. Animal genetics, type of forage, and grazing management all combine to produce a high quality product. This session covers producing high quality, pasture finished beef from breeding to harvest.

3:15 P.M. – Bighorn

## **Where to Buy Organic Food in Montana**

Meet local vendors and consumers who will introduce you to organic food and products in eastern Montana and around the state.

4:45 P.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area

## **Exhibitor Session**

Wine, beer, and time to look at the silent auction items

5:45 P.M. – Missouri

## **Dinner** (provided)

6:30 P.M. – Missouri

## **25 Farms that Survived and Thrived because They Went Organic**

*Eric Newman and Allen Moody, CROPP and Organic Valley, Wisconsin*

This program will be a combination of the history of CROPP Cooperative and the personal profiles of various family farm members from the many different regions of production. Literally coast to coast and from Canada to Texas there are over 600 family farms in CROPP Cooperative. The story will encompass the many challenges faced by CROPP Cooperative as well as the many successes.

7:30 P.M. – Missouri

## **FUNraising event and music**

## **Sunday, November 13**

7:00 A.M. – Missouri

## **Breakfast** (provided)

## **Fourth Breakout Sessions**

8:30 A.M. – Bitterroot

## **Livestock Marketing Panel**

Meet the buyers. Representatives from organic meat buyers will briefly describe their companies, what type of markets they have, and what they look for when they purchase. The marketing panel will include livestock producers to give the grower perspective.

8:30 A.M. – Stillwater

## **Soil Fertility: Lessons in Nitrogen Cycling from Natural Ecosystems**

*Tom DeLuca, U of M*

Dr. DeLuca will discuss how farmers can apply research findings from temperate forests, grasslands, and boreal forests to our Montana agroecosystems.

8:30 A.M. – Bighorn

## **Organic Goat Dairying and Cheese Making**

*Melvyn & Susan Brown, Almaltheia Dairy, Belgrade*  
Sue and Melvyn will share the ins and outs of running an organic goat dairy and cheese making operation.

8:30 A.M. – Gallatin

## **Alternative Fuels for the Farm**

*Chaz Holt, Bob Quinn, Doug Crabtree and John Sheldon*

Biodiesel is one option for farmers as they search for ways to wean themselves off of fossil fuels on the farm. Join Chaz, Bob, Doug and John as they discuss the many facets of biodiesel from growing your own fuel, to “homebrew” and commercial enterprises.

10:00 A.M. – Atrium Lobby, Vendor Area

## **Break** (refreshments)

Continued on page 11...

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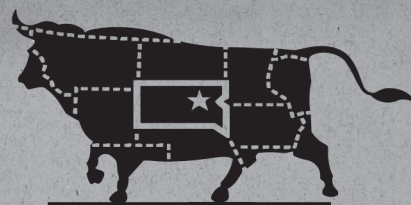


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# Agenda, continued...

10:15 A.M. – Missouri

## **Drawing it all Together, Lessons for the Future**

*Bob Quinn, Kamut International, Big Sandy*

11:00 A.M. – Missouri

## **Annual Meeting**

12:30 P.M. - Missouri

## **Lunch** *(provided)*

1:30 P.M.

## **Conference closes**

1:30 P.M. – Cottonwood

## **MOA Board Meeting**

# Our Presenters

**Dr. Steve Atchley** is a board certified cardiologist and principal of Mesquite Organic Foods. He has been recognized as one of the outstanding cardiologists in Colorado and continues an active role in patient care, along with teaching responsibilities at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Mesquite's group of ranchers have joined together to provide grass-fed, organic beef that returns beef to its rightful place as a healthy food choice. Mesquite Organic Beef cattle are raised without ever being exposed to agricultural chemicals, antibiotics or hormones, in a truly organic method of ranching.

**Sue and Melvyn Brown** own and operate the Almaltheia Dairy, in Belgrade, Montana. They initially sold their milk to a cheese producer, but after one year, started their own cheese making operation. At first the dairy made cheese as a private label for a San Francisco company. After six months, Sue developed some recipes for their Amaltheia Dairy brand. The goals of the dairy are to be sustainable with zero emissions. Sue was awarded a grant from the USDA to dry whey for nutritional supplement companies in 2004. They now sell to Wild Oats, Whole Foods, New Seasons, and other stores throughout the country as well as on the internet and to restaurants throughout Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. Nathan, their son, sells composted manure to individuals, and hopes to expand his business next year.

**Doug Crabtree** currently serves as organic certification program manager for the Montana Department of Agriculture. His affiliations include IOIA, the National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP), the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) and the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (NPSAS). Since joining the department in 2001, Crabtree has worked to develop and implement the certification program. He previously worked as an organic inspector, educator, researcher, farm manager, and farmer. Crabtree is a strong advocate for organic agriculture, which he sees as a viable social, economic and environmentally responsible system for producers and consumers.

**Tom DeLuca** is currently Professor of Forest Soils in the newly formed Department of Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences, The University of Montana and Guest Professor of Soil Ecology Department of Forest Vegetation Ecology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. He holds a Ph.D. in Soil Science from Iowa State University, a M.S. in Soils from MSU, and a B.S. in Soil Science from University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests are the carbon and nitrogen dynamics of natural and disturbed ecosystems; the influence of fire and fire exclusion on nutrient turnover in coniferous forests; the analysis of rhizosphere chemistry and its influence on microbial processes; soil resource sustainability as influenced by land management; and disturbed lands reclamation using organic amendments. Dr. DeLuca was born and raised in Madison, WI.

**Matthew Dillon** is the founder and Executive Director of Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) in Port Townsend, Washington. OSA's educational programs train farmers in seed production and crop improvement. OSA also works with the seed trade and farmers to develop Participatory Plant Breeding programs for organic systems. Prior to founding OSA, Dillon was the Director of Abundant Life Seed Foundation. Dillon is a regular contributor to New Farm and other agricultural journals and recently received a Lannan Foundation Fellowship Award and Residency for his writing and work on seed issues. During the residency for the Lannan Fellowship he will be working on a book tracing the history of seed development, current trends, and future possibilities in the face of increased seed industry consolidation.

**Joyce Eckhoff** is a Research Agronomist with Montana State University at MSU Eastern Agricultural Research Center. She holds graduate degrees from University of Arizona and an undergraduate degree from University of Delaware. Her work is with small grains, sugar beets, alternative crops, and alternative uses for conventional crops.

Continued on page 13...

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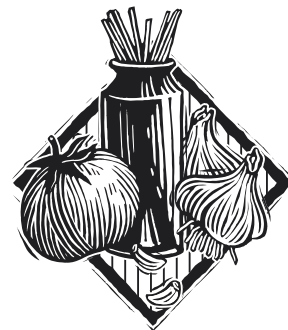
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**Terrence Fox, Ph.D.**, a northwest native—Idaho, Washington, Montana—has been professionally active in industry, academia, and private practice. His life long passion for flora and fauna has developed into research and manufacture of veterinary phytopharmaceuticals. At his retirement from past professional practice, he began organically growing medicinal botanicals and manufacturing plant medicines. For the past twelve years he has been increasingly active in this endeavor and now makes phytopharmaceuticals broadly available for veterinary application. Dr. Fox is Treasurer of the newly formed Veterinary Research Council, Inc. which is creating and funding--and intends to publish the result of research--projects in natural plant medicine.

**Jim Gerrish** is an independent grazing lands consultant from east-central Idaho providing service to farmers and ranchers across the US. His past experience includes over 22 years of pasture-based research and outreach while on the faculty of the University of Missouri, as well as 20 years of commercial cattle and sheep production on his family farm in northern Missouri. His research encompassed many aspects of plant-soil-animal interactions and provided the foundation for many basic principles of Management-intensive Grazing.

**Clain Jones, Ph.D.** Soil Chemistry, works for MSU Extension Service, educating extension agents, crop advisers, and producers on nutrient management. His research focuses on alternative cropping systems and organic farming.

**Fraser J. McLeay, PhD**, has worked in more than 50 countries for food multinationals such as Nestle and Nutricia Asia-Pacific, Ltd, as well as the European Union and World Bank. McLeay moved to Montana in 1998 to act as Senior Manager of the Montana World Trade Center and to serve as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Montana. In 2005, he started Kiwi Trade and Business, a Missoula based consulting company that provides hands on business-development services, conducts marketing research, and develops feasibility studies and business strategies with his wife Nicola. In this capacity he has worked with more than 20 Montana agri-food companies during the last year, including organic producers such Timeless Seeds and the Western Montana Growers Cooperative. McLeay holds a Ph.D. in Food Marketing and Business Strategy and a Bachelors Degree in Agricultural Science (honors in Agricultural Economics) from Canterbury and Lincoln Universities, New Zealand. He was brought up on a small family farm.

**Dr. Bruce Maxwell** is Professor of Agroecology/Weed Ecology in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Science at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. Bruce holds a B.S. degree in Botany, an M.S. degree in Agronomy, and a Ph.D. in Forest Ecology/

Crop Science. His research in Oregon was focused on invasive forest shrub population dynamics. As an Assistant Professor of Weed Ecology at the University of Minnesota his research centered on developing improved methods for quantifying weed interference in corn and the modeling of herbicide resistance evolution in weeds. In 1992, Bruce returned home to Montana to become Assistant Professor of Weed Biology and Ecology at Montana State University. The emphasis of Bruce's research in Montana is application of ecological principles to pest management and land use planning. Modeling the spatial and temporal dynamics of organisms is an underlying theme of most of his research. Bruce currently has one post-doctoral research scientists, two research technicians, and 4 graduate students working in his lab on various aspects of agroecology and ecologically based pest management. Bruce has published over 60 scientific journal articles and chapters in books and has been a member of two National Research Council Committees on Agriculture. In 1978 and 1979, he and his wife, Anne, were Peace Corps Volunteers in Micronesia.

**Debbie Miller** is the Foreign Affairs Director for OCIA International and the Manager of OCIA Canada. She is an active participant in the organic sector both nationally and internationally, however, the role she is most proud of is that of organic consumer and farmer.

**Perry Miller** researches the 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. *Associate Professor, Ph.D. 1992, University of Minnesota; M.S. 1989, University of Guelph; B.S. 1984, University of Saskatchewan.*

**Allen Moody** has been involved in the organic production world for 17 years. He farmed organically in western Kansas and worked as a grain buyer for an organic grain processor called Heartland Mills. Since 1997 he has worked for CROPP Cooperative Organic Valley as the Cattle and Hog Procurement Specialist. Other life experiences include working as an oil well geologist and feedlot cowboy and serving for numerous alternative organizations supporting family farms. Today when Allen isn't working with his alternative cattle operation he enjoys writing songs and performing in a local populist protest band.

**Eric Newman** has been involved with sales and marketing in the organic food industry for over 25 years. A long time advocate for family farmers and regional food production systems, Eric was the president of the Southwest Montana Chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association

Continued on page 15...



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(OCIA) for six years. He has participated as a member of the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) in Helena, Montana, and is Co-chair of the Organic Trade Association's fundraising committee. Eric's background has included management positions in institutional foodservice (Missoula School District #1), Community Food Co-op, a natural foods retailer in Bozeman, Montana, and owned two restaurants in Montana. He currently serves as Vice President of Sales for CROPP Cooperative, the nation's largest organic farming cooperative. He oversees all of Organic Valley® branded sales as well as all of CROPP's Industrial Sales. Organic Valley/CROPP sales for 2005 will exceed \$250 million. Eric resides in Bozeman, Montana.

**Bob Quinn** of Big Sandy (Kamut International) is a farmer; plant researcher; founder of Montana Flour and Grains; and a founding NOSB member. He developed kamut grain production and marketing. Bob is also a recipient of Montana SBA's Small Business Exporter of the Year.

**Nancy K. Peterson** is the Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture. A native of Montana, her agricultural experience includes more than 30 years as a farm and ranch owner/operator producing livestock, grains, pulses, and oilseeds.

**Blaine Schmaltz** is a certified organic farmer from north central North Dakota raising grains and livestock. He is founder of Blaine's Best Seeds, a family operated seed farm, providing certified organic seeds consisting of many varieties of small grains, legumes and grasses. A farmer, breeder, club director, and heritage seed saver, Blaine assists in developing many regional varieties in the U.S. His farm practices employ many rotational, microbial / soil building, conservation, and weed control techniques.

**Margaret Scoles** is the Executive Director of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association. She has 18 years of experience inspecting organic crops, livestock, and processing facilities and has trained and apprenticed numerous inspectors. She and her husband have a cow/calf operation near Broadus.

**John Sheldon** is currently the Vice President of Agricultural Operations for Sustainable Systems, LLC. As a graduate of Montana State University, Mr. Sheldon is a 4th generation Montana farmer who has developed certified seed programs and farmer cooperatives in the Pacific Northwest, most notably Amazing Grains. Mr. Sheldon brings substantial expertise and critical and core knowledge in all aspects of agricultural production and operation. He manages his 250-acre farm as OCIA certified organic and has done this for the past 12 years. This operation is focused on certified grass and certified oil seed production. Mr. Sheldon is a direct seed, no till farming practitioner who specializes in alternative crops and sustainable

farming. Mr. Sheldon provides the skill sets that have facilitated strong key agricultural producer relationships throughout the Pacific Northwest and abroad.

**Andy Sponseller** used his skills as a welder and contractor to start building a vineyard in 1998. Oenological classes from UC Davis, biology and chemistry at the University of Montana, and several trips to Wisconsin and Minnesota wineries and vineyards gave him a solid foundation for growing wine grapes and making wine in Montana. He had the fortune to get first-hand advice from the late Elmer Swensen, the father of northern grape growing whose hybrid grapes now encircle the globe. Andy's certified organic Rattlesnake Creek Vineyard, 4.5 acres in Missoula, is in its third year of commercial production. It supports five French-American hybrid varieties that produced ten tons of grapes in the 2005 harvest.

**Bob Thaden** and his wife, Marilyn, have been gardening, mostly organically, since they were married 37 years ago. His first experience with grapes was picking wild ones in Wisconsin for wine and juice and jelly. Eleven years ago, the Thadens planted 4 BETA grapevines (hardy to -60° F) which thrived. Cancer, burnout from ministry, two 80+ year old moms moving in, convinced the Thadens to move back to Miles City to plant wine grapes, grow a small commercial garden, open a winery and take it easy on six acres on the Tongue River. They now have approx 1 acre in vines (approx 12 varieties making 625 vines.) 60 of the vines were planted in 2004, and will produce a first real harvest next year.

**Jan Tusick** is presently the director of the Mission Mountain Market Cooperative Development Center and Program Manager for the Lake County Community Development Corp. Agricultural Innovation Center. Jan has effectively facilitated cooperative groups and value added agricultural ventures in their business development and assisted with business and market planning, capitalization, and feasibility analysis. Her agricultural background of 20 years gives her a solid foundation of understanding the Ag economy and the challenges it faces. She presently lives on an eighty acre sheep farm with her husband, Will, and their main production is natural lamb, which they direct market. As a committed agriculturist in Montana, Jan understands the challenges facing the small farmer today and is proactive in working hard to bring opportunities to Montana farmers and ranchers.





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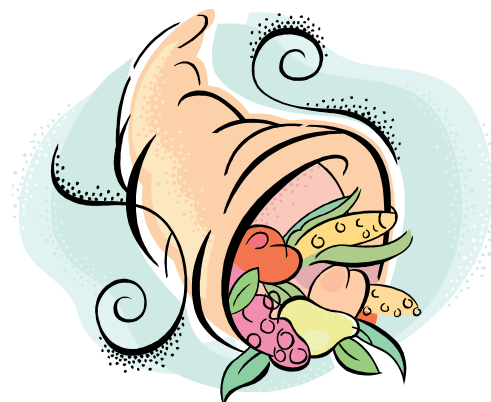
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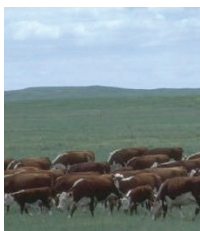
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