

Gathering Montana's Organic Community:

Growing New
Organic Farmers

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



Welcome!

Welcome to the 6th Annual Conference of the Montana Organic Association and thank you for joining us as we meet in Bozeman for the first time. We hope you will enjoy our Montana 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. This year's conference is a departure from our past conferences. We will be spending more time together in a large group than in the past and hopefully it will not be as difficult to decide which session to join when we do have concurrent sessions. Our theme this year is "Growing New Organic Farmers." There are many ways to increase the number of organic farmers: transition from conventional farming like many of our grain growers; pioneer a new organic enterprise near a town or city like some of our vegetable growers; and create enterprises on the farm so the kids can stay home like many of our family farms do to name a few.

This year we have substantially expanded our "Organic University" sessions from what was done in previous years. We have actively recruited for prospective new organic farmers. We have designed a program that will expose them to not only organic production and marketing practices but give them hands on experience in creating and documenting an organic system plan.

Meeting in Bozeman and having a chance to get to know the scientists and researchers interested in organics is especially timely with the passage of the Farm Bill and its inclusion of numerous organic provisions. We also expect to see a number of NRCS personnel at this year's conference. They will be getting to know the organic community in the state and learn our issues as they prepare to administer conservation measures in the Farm Bill that affect organics. NRCS is poised to become an important source of information for new and experienced farmers that wish to begin the transition to certified organic production.

It's been rewarding to work with a number of local stores that support organics as we have moved the MOA Conferences around Montana. Their support over the years has been key to the success of our conferences. This year we have the chance to get to know

some of the folks involved in the Bozeman Community Coop. The Coop has supported MOA in the past and has been eager to help with this conference in their hometown.

Special thanks to all of the farmers, ranchers, processors and retailers who helped us procure the organic bounty we will be enjoying at this year's conference. We hope you enjoy seeing old friends and acquaintances in Bozeman and make new friends as well especially among the new crop of organic farmers we are growing.

MOA Board of Directors

Steve Baril, Chair
Matt Johnson, Vice-Chair
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Wes Henthorne, Secretary

Kathryn Begeal
Lou Ann Crowley
Jim Lindquist
Judy Owsowitz
Jeff Schahczenski
Sandi Shanks
Samuel Schmidt
Dee Turner

Conference Organizing Committee

Doug Crabtree
Lou Ann Crowley
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Sharon Lindstrom
Judy Owsowitz
with special help from
Ole Norgaard
Lise Rousseau Silva

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Conference Agenda at a Glance

Thursday, December 4

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

8:00 am **Introduction: Why are we here?**
Montana-State-University
~ Steve Baril, MOA Chair, Greg Ames, Montana Department of Agriculture

Economics and Production Issues

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

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

10:00 am **Break**

10:15 am **Weed Management Principles**
Montana-State-University
~ Fabian Menalled, MSU

11:00 am **Nutrient Management in Organic Systems**
Montana-State-University
~ Clain Jones, MSU

11:45 am **Cropping Systems**
Montana-State-University
~ Perry Miller, MSU

12:30 pm **Lunch**
Montana-State-University

NCAT/ATTRA resources for organic farmers ~
Jeff Schahczenski, NCAT

History of (support of) Organic in Montana ~
Jonda Crosby, AERO
Rules, Regulations and Fees

Rules, Regulations and Fees

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

3:00 pm **Certification Process and Fees**
Montana-State-University
~ Sean Mulla, MDA

3:30 pm **Break**

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

4:45 pm **Meet the Certifiers**
Montana-State-University
~ OCIA and MDA

5:15 pm **Homework Assignment - The Organic System Plan**
Montana-State-University
~ Steve Baril

5:30 pm **Adjourn**

6:30 pm **Dinner for the Organic University Group**
Montana-State-University

Friday, December 5

Completing Your Organic System Plan ~ Farmer Mentoring Session

8:00 am **Introduction and Explanation of Groups**
Montana-State-University
~ Grower Awareness Campaign

8:15 am **Group Workshops**
Montana-State-University

Field Crops ~ Matt Johnson, Dee Turner

Hay and Forage Crops ~ Ole Norgaard, Jim Lindquist

Beef Cattle ~ Rob Forstenzer, Wes Henthorne

Vegetables and Produce ~ Judy Owsowitz, Steve Baril

Tree Fruit ~ Lise Rousseau Silva

10 am **Break**

10:15 am **Workshops Continue**

11:30 am **Lunch for Organic University Participants**
Montana-State-University

Montana Organic Association Annual Conference Growing New Organic Farmers

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

1:00 pm **Welcome**
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Steve Baril, MOA Chair

1:15 pm **The State of Organics and Accessing the Farm Bill**
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Laura Batcha, Organic Trade Association

2:15 pm **Organic Reduced Tillage/Living Mulch Vegetable Production System**
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Helen Atthowe, MSU Extension

3:00 pm **Break**

3:15 pm **Marketing Panels ~ Breakout Sessions**
Grain
Montana-State-University

Seed, Fruit, Vegetables, Produce & Livestock
Gallatin-Jefferson

4:45 pm **SOCIAL HOUR**
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Meet the Farmers, Students, Consumers, Researchers, Inspectors and some folks from the Community Coop
Hors d'oeuvres Social with Beer, Wine
Music by Dave Turner
Poster Session for MSU students
Doug Crabtree's "Faces of Organic" PowerPoint Presentation

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

Continued on page 4

Conference Agenda

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Sponsored by Kamut International

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~ Fabian Menalled, MSU

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Sponsored by Montana Flour and Grains

12:30 pm Lunch
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~ OCIA and MDA

5:30 pm Adjourn

6:30 pm Dinner for the Organic University Group
Montana-State-University
~ Speaker Jim Knight, MSU Extension
Sponsored by the Organic Grower Awareness Campaign

Friday, December 5

Completing Your Organic System Plan ~ Farmer Mentoring Session

8:00 am Introduction and Explanation of Groups
Montana-State-University
~ Ginny Harrington, OGAC

8:15 am Group Workshops
Sponsored by Montana Flour & Grains
Field Crops ~ Matt Johnson, Dee Turner
Hay and Forage Crops ~ Ole Norgaard, Jim Lindquist
Beef Cattle ~ Rob Forstenzer, Wes Henthorne
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Continued on page 7...

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Let's do lunch.

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Agenda, continued...

10 am Break

10:15 am Workshops Continue
Montana-State-University

11:30 am Lunch for Organic University Participants
Montana-State-University

Montana Organic Association Annual Conference

Growing New Organic Farmers

11:30 am Registration and Sign in
Lobby Area

1:00 pm Welcome and Opening Remarks
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Steve Baril, MOA Chair

1:15 pm The state of organics and Accessing the Farm Bill – A National Perspective
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Laura Batcha, Organic Trade Association
Organic Trade Association Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Laura Batcha, will travel to the conference from OTA Headquarters in Massachusetts to tell us about current issues facing the organic community on the national level. She will specifically speak on Accessing the Farm Bill to let us know the wide range of new and old programs available from USDA for the organic community.

2:15 pm Organic Reduced Tillage/Living Mulch Vegetable Production System
Gallatin-Jefferson
~ Helen Atthowe, MSU Extension-Missoula County
How do you design and test a system for effective ecological function, sustainable yield, and reduced labor and inputs? We spent 11 years developing a systems approach to produce vegetables in western Montana, and then in 2004 designed experiments to test and further understand the system. The goal is to see if our reduced

tillage, enhanced diversity system can provide the plant nutrition, insect, and weed management for an adequate yield with less labor and fewer inputs. We designed 3 studies: a long-term organic residue/soil quality experiment, a short-term insect biological control experiment, and a short-term weed experiment. In 2006, we found acceptable biological control of insects in unsprayed broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts. In 2007 we looked in more detail at nutrient cycling and weed, or vegetation, competition in plots with different in-row soil/weed management treatments. In 2008 we finished our soil nutrient cycling and microbial health study of animal manure and green manure residue additions in no-till, reduced tillage, and normal tillage plots. We'll report on our findings during this session and talk about our incubation farmer project.

3:00 pm Break
Gallatin-Jefferson
Sponsored by OFARM & Montana Organic Producers Coop

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

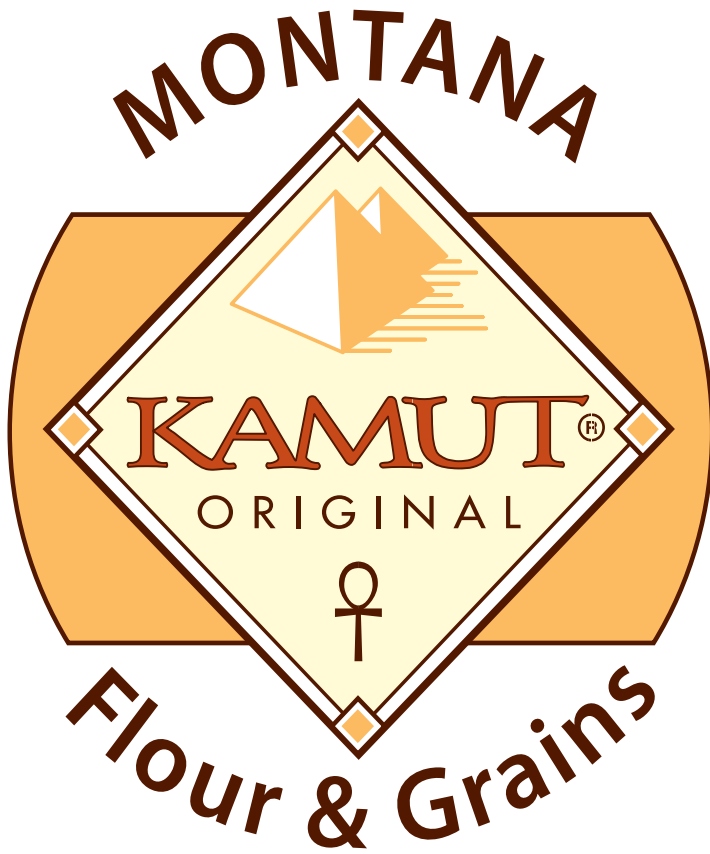
Grain
Montana-State-University
Millers, processors and marketers from Montana and beyond will get together with producers to discuss current and future opportunities.

Seed, Fruit, Vegetables, Produce & Livestock

Gallatin-Jefferson
The emphasis of this panel for a variety of growers will be networking on transportation and distribution opportunities in Montana and beyond. A key question is now that we have raised and created a healthy, wholesome organic product, how do we get it to consumers?

4:45 pm Social Hour
Gallatin-Jefferson
Meet the Farmers, Students, Consumers, Researchers, Inspectors and some folks from the Community Coop

Continued on page 9...



Agenda, continued...

Students from MSU will present their work in a poster session. There will also be a chance to meet a variety of people from the Bozeman Community Coop; staff, board members and volunteers have all been invited to mingle with farmers, ranchers, processors and our conference speakers. The social hour will feature Montana organic beer, wine and light hors d'oeuvres and live organic entertainment.

6:30 pm Dinner on your own

Saturday, December 6

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

Gallatin-Jefferson

Alison Harmon, Bruce Maxwell, Clain Jones, Cliff Montagne, Dave Sands, Fabian Menalled, Mary Stein, Perry Miller
Scientists and teachers from MSU with a keen interest in organics will share brief descriptions of their projects that relate to the organic community. This session will allow the folks from MSU to introduce themselves before we break into groups for more detailed discussions of research needs. Fabian Menalled will also give a brief description of the eOrganic project he is working in.

9:00 am Break

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

Cropping Systems & Weeds

Gallatin-Jefferson

This session will focus on research questions related to cropping systems and weeds. There will be an emphasis here on small grain production and alternative field crops. Weed management strategies and questions will also be discussed.

Nutrition, Livestock, Food Systems

Montana-State-University

This group will discuss a wide range of organic topics ranging from production issues with vegetables and livestock to how we get products to consumers. Questions are

also expected about what we know versus what we think we know about the health and benefits of organic food.

10:45 am Break

Sponsored by Kamut International

11:00 am Political and Legislative Panel

Gallatin-Jefferson

Invited are Governor Brian Schweitzer, Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, Representative Rehberg, MDA Director Ron de Yong, moderator

This discussion will be moderated by Montana Department of Agriculture Director Ron de Yong. Invited to participate are Senators Baucus and Tester, Representative Rehberg, and Governor Schweitzer. We hope to learn what's on tap for organic agriculture in the new Congress and the next session of the Montana Legislature.

12:00 pm Lunch

Gallatin-Jefferson

Sponsored by The Good Food Store, Missoula

1:10 pm Annual Meeting

Gallatin-Jefferson

General Report, Treasurer's Report, Election of Directors, Old Business, New Business

2:15 pm Cultivating Success: What Can and Is Being Done By Universities?)

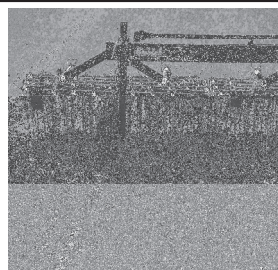
Gallatin-Jefferson

~ Cathy Perillo, Washington State University

Sponsored by Montana Flour & Grains

There's a surging public interest in organically produced food. Are our public universities keeping up? Can these institutions help farmers and consumers separate the "grain" from the "chaff" amidst all the hype? The answer is yes! Research, education, and outreach efforts at the universities – sometimes as isolated efforts, sometimes as steady and growing streams – are beginning to coalesce to reach a new age where for-credit certificates and majors are being offered in organic agriculture, and the topic

Continued on page 11...



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Agenda, continued...

is the subject of a surprisingly widespread number of research and extension efforts.

3:30 pm Break

Sponsored by Montana Milling

3:45 pm Breakout Sessions

Carbon Credits Explained

Montana-State-University

~ *Montana Farmers Union*

Carbon credits and trading have been in the news off and on for several years now but how do they really work? How much are they worth? How do we get paid? Who pays? What if my farming practices change? How do we sign up? How long are we signed up for? Are there special benefits for organic operations? Learn the answers to these questions and more as we hear from the Montana Farmers Union about their Carbon Credit program.

Envisioning a Sustainable Food System for Montana State University

Gallatin-Jefferson

~ Alison Harmon

This presentation will provide a conceptual overview of the food system and a definition of sustainability in the context of food systems, and outline components of an emerging sustainable food system model at MSU including an interdisciplinary curriculum, integrative research, community service and outreach, student activities, and innovations in university foodservice.

4:45 pm Adjourn

**6:30 pm Montana Organic Association
Feast**

Gallatin-Jefferson

Dinner, Music by Dave Turner and Robert Boettcher, The MOA Awards, Auction Fun (Quarter and Silent)

Sunday, December 7

MOA Board Meeting

Board Room off the Lobby

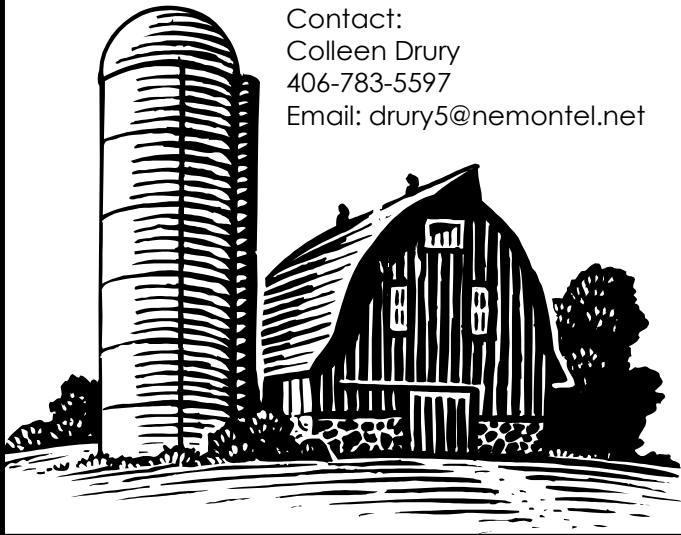
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Northeast Montana O.C.I.A. Chapter #2

Chapter service organization covering Eastern Montana and Western North Dakota's certified organic farmers

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Our Presenters

Helen Athhowe is a Missoula County Extension Agent with an emphasis in horticulture and Integrated Pest Management. She also operates a 30-acre organic farm in Stevensville, Montana, raising vegetables, fruit, native plants, and pasture. She has an M.S. in Horticulture/Plant Physiology and is conducting research in organic residue management, soil fertility management, and least-toxic pest management.

Laura Batcha is the Marketing and Public Relations Director at the Organic Trade Association where she is spearheading OTA's new marketing and public relations campaign design to reach more than 25 million consumers in 2009 alone. The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. Its 1,700 members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy. Batcha has been a member of the natural and organic business community for over 15 years. She brings a range of experience including owning and operating an organic herbal products business, as well as seven years at Tom's of Maine, Inc., in leadership positions in the areas of product development, marketing, business development. She holds a masters degree from Marlboro College in Management Science with an emphasis on new technology applications. She lives with her family on a small working organic vegetable farm (CSA) in Southern Vermont.

David E. Buschena is a Professor in the Department of Ag Economics and Economics in the College of Agriculture. He teaches undergraduate courses in agricultural marketing, micro economics, and economic issues for the international wheat industry. He also teaches a graduate course in economic theory and is Chair of the Department's Graduate Studies Program. Dr. Buschena's research interests include Decision Making under Risk, Agricultural Marketing and Trade, Economic Issues in Hunting. Since 2000 he has been involved with economic profitability studies for various rotational systems for dryland agriculture in Montana. Dr. Buschena has a background in production agriculture on a mixed grain and livestock farm.

Alison Harmon is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Health and Human Development at Montana State University. Her courses emphasize the ecological, political, and economic aspects of food choices, and she strives to teach our undergraduate food and nutrition students to think more broadly about foods, their origins, and the consequences of food behaviors. Her current research is related to interdisciplinary food systems curriculum development and methods used to teach sustainability and food systems concepts to nutrition and dietetic students. In 2006 she began supervising Americorps volunteers to help start MSU's farm to college program, now called Montana Made. Also in 2006 she began advising the MSU student organization Friends of Local Foods, which has since started a garden CSA on campus called Towne's Harvest. Her most important goal is to further encourage food sustainability on campus by facilitating connections among Friends of Local Foods, University Foodservice, Towne's Harvest, and the new degree program Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems.

Clain Jones is the Extension Soil Fertility Specialist for the state of Montana, and has been at MSU since 1993. His work on organic systems has included evaluating soil fertility changes following transition to organic in plot studies and at Bob Quinn's. He has also helped lead a project determining methods to increase phosphorus availability on organic farms through a mix of green manures and certified organic fertilizers.

Bruce Maxwell is the interim department head for the Land Resource and Environmental Sciences Department in the College of Agriculture. His work includes agroecology and weed biology research on the design and development of nonchemical weed management strategies for annual and perennial weeds in cereals, row crops and forage cropping systems. His past and current research includes crop-weed competition, economic thresholds of weeds, weed population dynamics and identifying measures of ecosystem integrity.

Fabian Menalled is a Cropland Weed Specialist. His research and extension programs are focused in developing and delivering information on the integrated management of agricultural weeds.

Continued on page 13...

Food, glorious food...

The delicious Montana organic meals you will enjoy at this year's conference were only possible through the Herculean efforts of the food committee, the flexibility of Chef Michael and his staff at the Best Western Heritage Inn and the hard work of the following producers and handlers:

2 - Js Produce
B Bar Ranch
Blackfoot River Brewing
Browns Meadow Farm
Caroline Ranch
Fat Robin Orchard and Farm
Garden City Fungi

Kimm Farms
McAlpine Ranch
Mission Mountain Organics
Montana Flour & Grain
Nature's Gate
North Frontier Farm
Organic Valley

Smoot Honey Company
Ten Spoon Winery
Terrapin Farm
Third Street Market
Thirteen Mile Farm
Timeless Seeds

Our Thanks

A special thanks to the following businesses and individuals for their generosity and support of MOA and this conference.



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Steve & Cindy Baril
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Wes Henthorne, B Bar Ranch
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Community Food Co-op
Albert and Lise Silva,
Fat Robin Orchard & Farm
First State Bank of Shelby
Barry Flamm
General Mills

Good Food Store
Pam Clevenger & Kurt
Welborne, Home Acres
Orchard
Jason Kimm, Kimm Farms
John & Crystal Walkup,
Mission Mountain Organics
Rob Forstenzer, Lore Kann
Foundation
Montana Flour & Grain
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Montana Specialty Milling
Ole Norgaard,
North Frontier Farms
Colette Skundberg-Radtke,
Organic Valley
Smoot Honey Company
Judy Owsowitz,
Terrapin Farm
David Oien, Timeless Seeds
Third Street Market

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

Perry Miller is an Associate Professor in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University – conducting cropping systems research since 1998. His research focuses on systems-level water and nitrogen-use-efficiency in diversified wheat-based farming systems. Research emphases include no-till and organic cropping systems, pulse crop agronomy and ecology, winter broadleaf crops, crop energy budgets, and best management practices for greenhouse gas mitigation.

Cliff Montagne is an Associate Professor in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University. His interests and research include soil-landscape relationships, including geology, landscape ecology, landscape inventory, soil genesis and classification, and holistic resource management of agricultural and non-agricultural soils; philosophy and ethics of land resource use; development of more effective techniques for learning, teaching and problem solving. He has been working with bioregional management at ecosystem and human community levels in Greater Yellowstone, northern Mongolia, and northern Japan.

Cathy Perillo, Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University (Pullman, and Distance Ed), and member of the Leadership Team for WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources. Her emphases include: ecological soil management, sustainable agriculture and food systems, distance education, and the assessment of student learning. She has recently finished a three year term as Academic Director of the interdisciplinary, interdepartmental Agriculture and Food Systems degree program, which developed the nation's first major in organic agriculture. She has taught courses ranging from Ecological Soil Management and Sustainable Agriculture, to Soil Physics and Environmental Biophysics. Prior to WSU, Cathy worked at the University of Minnesota's Southwest Research and Outreach Center and taught at SW State University in nearby Marshall. Her Ph.D. and MS are

in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota and WSU, respectively, and her BA is in Biology from Middlebury College.

Dave Sands is a Professor in the Department of Plant Sciences & Plant Pathology in the College of Agriculture at Montana State University. His research interests include plant bacteriology, biological control of weeds, and biotechnology. Ongoing work includes the ecology, detection, characterization, and control of *Pseudomonas syringae* and *Xanthomonas campestris*. As an alternative to chemical herbicides, plant pathogenic fungi and bacteria are being developed as biological herbicides to control weeds. The tools of biotechnology are being used to improve the nutritional value of human and animal foods. For example, lysine-excreting *Lactobacillus fermentum* can be substituted for soybean meal in some animal diets. Current projects include biological control of weeds and biological control of fungus diseases of plants.

Mary Stein is a nutrition education specialist and adjunct faculty member within the Department of Health and Human Development at Montana State University in Bozeman. Through her work with the Team Nutrition Program, Mary works on a variety of Farm to School initiatives throughout Montana. Mary also provides technical expertise to Montana food entrepreneurs in the areas of nutrition labeling and product formulation. Mary serves on the Board of Eat Right Montana, Gallatin Valley Farm to School and on the steering committee of the statewide Grow Montana Coalition. She is committed to future work that strengthens Montana's food system and increases access to healthy, nutritious, locally produced food for all Montanans.

Bozo Ad