



Connecting Montana's Organic Community



OAEC

Organic
Advisory &
Education
Council

With updates from the
Montana Organic Association
and the
Organic Advisory & Education Council

Montana Organic Conference Announced for 2021

CONTENTS

[MT Organic Conference, 1](#)

[OFARM Marketing Options
for Organic Farmers, 3](#)

[NCAT's "Soil for Water"
Program Expands to MT, 5](#)

[MOA Offers CCA Credits, 7](#)

[NCAT/MOA Awarded NIFA
Grant, 7](#)

[Climate Disruption & Crop
Insurance, 9](#)

[MT Organic Events 2021,
13](#)

[Organic MT - A New
Chapter, 17 - 18](#)

[MOA Information, 19 - 26](#)

[OAEC Updates, 28 - 35](#)

The Montana Organic Conference will take place in Bozeman at The Commons this December 2 -4, 2021. Speakers include:

- **Wes Jackson, Co-Founder, The Land Institute**
- **Helen Attowe, Permaculture Expert**
- **Tom Philpott, Farmer/ Journalist/Author**
- **Selena Ahmed, MSU Associate Prof., Sustainable Food Systems**
- **Dr. David Sands, MSU Prof., Plants & Plant Pathology**
- **Dr. Patrick Carr, MSU Prof., Central Ag. Research Center**
- **And MORE!!**

The conference typically gathers more than 300 of Montana's organic community members including farmers and ranchers, university researchers, agriculture professionals, grain and pulse handlers, food processors, and consumers to celebrate the organic movement that came about thirty years ago.

Events include Kids' U, tours, MSU and OAEC research updates, cooperative marketing, consumer- focused sessions, fundraising auction, and delicious organic food! Registration for the conference will be open online in late summer.

The Annual Montana Organic Association Business Meeting will take place the afternoon of Thursday, December 2, 2021 after a series of policy discussions beginning at 10:00 AM.



Quality Foods Distributing



**Bringing Natural, Organic, Specialty, Fresh,
and Local Products to the
Northern Rockies.**

info@QFDistributing.com • 406.551.2231

QFDistributing.com

OFARM: MARKETING OPTIONS FOR ORGANIC FARMERS

by Oren Holle and Carmen Fernholz

The Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM), a Marketing Agency in Common, (MAC), has been engaging in conversation with MOPC and MOA to embark on a collaborative process to create a Montana connection to the OFARM Family of Cooperatives; currently three autonomous co-ops which comprise the OFARM membership. OFARM might be more simply described as an umbrella organization that coordinates but does not dictate the marketing programs of its member co-ops.

A broad base of producers makes up the three current organic cooperatives of the OFARM network. Together they produce, process, deliver and sell millions of dollars' worth of organic grain each year across the USA. These cooperatives include Midwest Organic Farmers (MOFC) based in Illinois, Central Plains Organic Farmers (CPOF) based in Kansas and NFOrganics based in Iowa. In total these co-ops represent, engage in, and do business with nearly 500 producers, along with processors and buyers in the organic grain supply chain community. Wholesale grain production, supply, sourcing, sampling, testing, sales, logistics, delivery, marketing program support, value added processing, are all activities and responsibilities supported by current and ongoing producer involvement and education. In short it is the best farmer owned and managed organic supply chain network system in the country.

Producers in this network are primarily in the Great Lakes region (Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio), Great Plains region (Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma,) and the upper Midwest (Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Dakotas). These cooperatives reach, connect with and market grain products to buyers in markets across 25 states including east and west coasts, southern states and states in the upper Midwest and Great Lakes regions. On occasion there are some limited transactions with Canada.

The cooperative structure, trusted relationships and operational processes within this network are components that serve to maintain a high level of integrity, communication, trust, and transparency throughout the organic supply chain in which OFARM's Co-op Members operate. Each Co-op Member's staff place a high priority on directly serving their member producers to further enhance the rural communities in which they live. Many of the relationships with buyers, grain millers, trucking companies, processors, customers, and advocates in the organic community are well developed and long standing; attributes that reflect the rural community-oriented nature and culture of OFARM. Overall, it is an established, mature organic marketing community that is well positioned and suited to collaborate with others who share its many values including being a cooperative, long term relationships, integrity, stewardship of resources and rural communities.

OFARM continually strives to improve on its Plan, Program and Process to provide an opportunity for producers to have increased control over their economic destiny in a constantly changing market environment.

It is OFARM's intent to provide an opportunity for Montana organic producers to become a part of this collaborative endeavor. It is our hope that OFARM would be able to provide these mutual benefits across an expanded area of influence to improve and protect the interests of producers as they embrace the opportunity to participate in cooperative marketing and the marketing management services OFARM is confident it can provide.

OFARM website: www.ofarm.org

Office Ph: 785-337-2442

E: ofarm.2005@gmail.com

President Oren Holle

Ph: 785-562-7500

E: oholle@bluevalley.net

Market Management with a Professional Team!

The OFARM Family of Cooperatives

provides the only program
for effective **MARKETING**
when negotiating for
fair and equitable
organic prices.

OUR MEMBERS
go to the market
with a price in
mind.



FARM
FAMILY OF ORGANIC MARKETING COOPERATIVES

CALL US!

Together let us negotiate
a fair price for farmers.

OFARM.org • OFARM.2005@gmail.com • 785-337-2442



CentralPlainsOrganic.com
785-829-7771



MidwestOrganic.com
734-649-7172



NationalFarmers.com
715-496-3956

Innovative ‘Soil for Water’ Regenerative Agriculture Project Expands to Montana

National Center for Appropriate Technology grows peer-to-peer network to combat megadrought

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, July 9, 2021
CONTACT: Emilie Ritter Saunders | emilies@ncat.org

MONTANA -- Building on a successful peer-to-peer network of Texas ranchers who are implementing innovative grazing techniques to improve soil health and increase profitability, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) is scaling up its Soil for Water project to support livestock producers and farmers across seven southern states and Montana.

The Soil for Water project grew out of persistent droughts, which put a strain on agricultural producers across the country. The effort is combining the use of appropriate technology, peer-to-peer learning, and on-farm monitoring to encourage regenerative agricultural practices across Montana, California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arkansas, Mississippi and Virginia.

“Livestock have the ability to improve soil health, and healthy soil holds more water,” said NCAT Regenerative Grazing Specialist and Montana project lead Linda Poole, who also raises sheep in Phillips County. “We know that as more producers adopt regenerative methods, significant economic, environmental and social benefits can be realized.”

Economically, regenerative agriculture has the potential to increase forage production, drought resilience, animal health, access to lucrative new markets, and therefore profitability. Environmentally, it has the potential to improve soil health and biodiversity. Climate trends across much of the U.S. indicate longer, hotter drought periods

punctuated by storms that often are more severe, according to a 2021 USDA report. Regenerative farming practices improve drought resilience by helping the soil capture heavier rainfall that otherwise might disappear as storm runoff.

By late summer, the project will be available to ranchers and farmers across Montana. The effort aims to reach hundreds of family-owned farms and ranches, creating a network of producers who prosper by applying land management practices that improve soil health, catch more water in soil, reduce erosion, sustain diverse plant and animal life and filter out pollutants.

Dale and Janet Veseth run cattle on more than 40,000 acres of rangeland south of Malta. Their place borders the Missouri River Breaks and it has been in their family for a couple of generations. Dale grew up on this ranch and says as a kid cattle were rotated across seven pastures. Now, he’s using 80 pastures through an intensive grazing plan which has improved soil health and native grasses, allowing him to maintain a healthy herd even during severe drought.

“It’s a very long-term project,” Dale Veseth says. “Managed grazing makes you more drought-proof when you build your water resources and take care of your range. Our cattle still look good. We’re not over-impacting our range. If we’re going to survive in the beef business, we’re going to have to

become more environmentally friendly.”

The high interest in nutrient dense, sustainably produced meat and locally grown products is not only an economic benefit to producers, but also a quality-of-life benefit to their communities when healthy, locally produced food is available.

The Soil for Water project launched in 2015 with support from the Dixon Water Foundation and the Meadows Foundation. Project investors include grants from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), \$980,000; The Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation, \$50,000; the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, \$1 million; and the Kathleen Hadley Innovation Fund, \$20,000. To learn more about the Soil for Water project, visit SOILFORWATER.ORG.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

Established in 1976, NCAT is a national nonprofit whose mission is to help people build resilient communities through local and sustainable solutions that reduce poverty, strengthen self-reliance and protect natural resources. Headquartered in Butte, Montana, NCAT has six regional offices in Arkansas, California, New Hampshire, Mississippi, Montana, and Texas.



Gluten Free from Farm to Fork



141 Andrea Drive
Belgrade, MT 59714
406-600-7400

www.montanaglutentfree.com

CCA Credits at the Montana Organic Conference

For the first time, the Montana Organic Association offered Certified Crop Advisor continuing education credits at the Vilicus Farms Tour. Practicing CCAs were able to earn up to 5 CEUs for Soil & Water Management (1 CEU); Crop Management (2.5 CEU); and Professional Development (1.5 CEU). Plans are in the works to offer additional CCA credits on Friday, December 3 at the Montana Organic Conference.

The CCA program is professional recognition by the American Society of Agronomy to ensure integrity and knowledge for those providing agronomic consulting and advising. The certification was established in 1992 and recognized in the United States and Canada.

The purpose of a certification program is to ensure the integrity of the profession by establishing professional standards. CCAs demonstrate they have the commitment, education, expertise, and experience to provide informed advice. There are more than 13,000 CCAs in North America; Montana has more than 70 throughout the state.

Contact Gary Iverson, a CCA for almost 20 years, to learn more and sign up for these credits. (406) 450-1106 or giverson@montanaglutentfree.com



**CERTIFIED
CROP ADVISER**

MOA and NCAT Recieve USDA NIFA Grant to Train Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

MOA together with NCAT have been awarded a significant USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant, **Preparing a Resilient Future: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Training for Organic Field Crop and Livestock Producers in the Northern Great Plains.**

This collaboration will serve to educate and support beginning farmers and ranchers seeking to explore organic field crop farming in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska (the Northern Great Plains). The project intends to work with over 300 beginning farmers and ranchers, including military veterans, limited resource, tribal and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

The project team will provide intensive trainings through one and one-half day "Organic Academy Road Show" (OARS) sessions, based on the Organic University workshop, that will include not only farmer and ranchers, but also additional efforts to inform the wider agriculture community in which the beginning farmer trainees live. The community will include civic leaders, county extension, and USDA agencies like FSA and NRCS. The grant will fund partner organizations and trainers for their time and contributions.

From previous research and many years of farmer and rancher training experience, NCAT and MOA know that engaging farmers and ranchers and their communities can provide necessary reinforcement that will improve prospects for success.

A big thanks to Jeff Schahzcenski and NCAT for leading the proposal.





MOA
Gold Level
Sponsor



A good source of financing. And knowledge.

We provide more than money. From webinars to workshops, the team at Northwest Farm Credit Services readily shares knowledge and insights with our customer-members – a practice we believe is good for individuals and agriculture as a whole.

Learn more at northwestfcs.com/resources.

406.265.7878 | northwestfcs.com

 Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Here to Help You Grow®

Ready for the Future?

Climate Disruption and Crop Insurance

Blog 62. Posted on May 13, 2021

By Jeff Schahczenski, NCAT Agricultural and Natural Resource Economist

Craig Schmitt, a long-time organic grain farmer from Wolf Point, Montana, has some problems doing the right thing. Having just recently recovered from a bout with COVID-19, he feels lucky to be well again. However, being ill put him behind on seeding and he is almost always worried about enough rain to bring his crops to fruition. Montana is a semi-arid dryland farming area, and that means that using cover cropping (or green manures), minimizing tillage, and optimizing soil moisture is tricky.

However, another important consideration is how to best optimize crop insurance under a certified organic production system. “I am a regenerative organic farmer, and I want to limit tillage and assure soil health, but crop insurance rules get in the way of developing a resilient system in the face of growing extreme weather and climate disruption,” says Schmitt.

How and why do crop insurance rules limit adaptation to growing weather and climate disruption?

Part of the answer is that the federal crop insurance program, run by the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and sold and serviced by 14 private crop companies (known as Approved Insurance Providers, or AIPs), views the past as the prime determination of the future. Any deviation from farming practices that jeopardize the insured crops’ “ability to make normal

progress toward maturity and produce at least the yield used to determine the production guarantee or amount of insurance” can cause a farmer to lose or have a reduction in coverage.

This is, in fact, the RMA’s definition of what it calls Good Farming Practices. So, when an organic farmer like Mr. Schmitt seeks to adopt a practice like green manure cover cropping and wants to inter-seed a cover crop into the cash crop to minimize tillage in weed control, he may jeopardize his crop insurance coverage because of the likelihood that such practices may have some, difficult to predict, impact on yield. Furthermore, if Mr. Schmitt wishes to practice continuous cropping on a particular field, and does not “summer fallow” a field, then he must pay higher insurance rates because long-time use of summer fallow in Montana and many dryland farming states has its built-in historic yield history, which will certainly be upset by changing from summer fallow to continuous cropping practice.

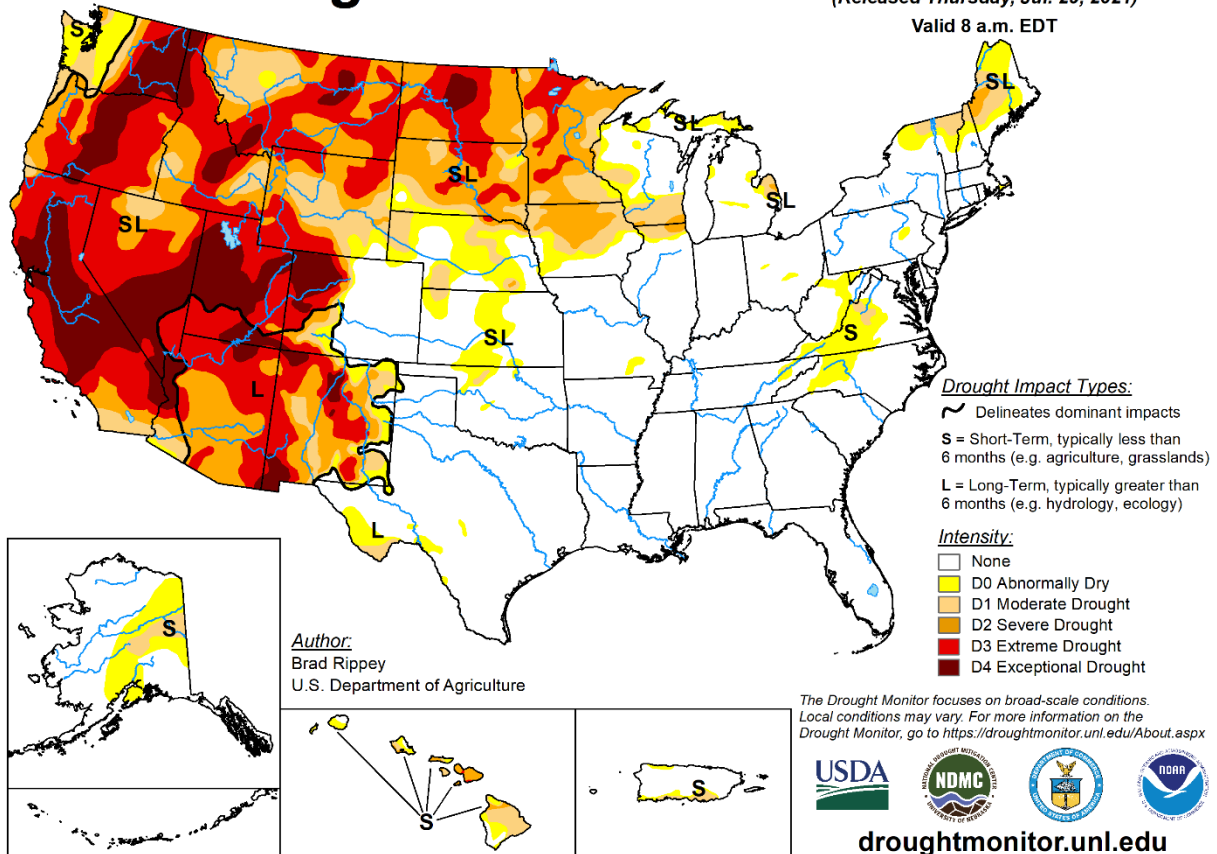
Due to intensive efforts by many organizations to change the impact of crop insurance rules on the adoption of innovative sustainable practices, the 2018 Farm Bill supposedly solved these problems. It suggested that a farmer could adopt cover-cropping practices so long as the farmer followed either a confusing and evolving guidance set by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Drought Monitor

July 27, 2021

(Released Thursday, Jul. 29, 2021)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Montana Hay Hotline Available for Producers Affected by Drought

As severe drought conditions and wildfires persist across the state, the Montana Department of Agriculture is reminding agricultural producers of the availability of the Hay Hotline, an online tool that connects those interested in buying, selling, or donating hay or pasture.

The Hay Hotline allows producers to enter new listings with descriptions of the forage they have available to sell or donate. It also provides users with an option to search for available hay or pasture, including certified organic. The online tool is maintained by the Montana Department of Agriculture as a service to the agricultural industry with the expectation that all buyers and sellers will treat each other in an equitable and lawful manner.

The Hay Hotline is housed on the MDA website at agr.mt.gov/Hay-Hotline. For more information on the Hay Hotline, contact the Agricultural Development & Marketing Bureau at (406) 444-2402 or danielle.jones@mt.gov.



A BIG FARM TOUR THANK YOU!!!

**DOUG CRABTREE & ANNA JONES-CRABTREE, &
THE ENTIRE VILICUS FARMS' TEAM**

**CLIFF & ANNA MERRIMAN &
MERRIMAN FAMILY & FRIENDS**

**SPEAKERS
SPONSORS
VOLUNTEERS**

A successful farm tour is a group effort that involves a tremendous amount of planning, organizing, executing, and cleaning up.

Thank you to all who worked to make this summer's farm tours great successes.

If you're interested in hosting a tour in 2022, please contact Sam Schmidt (406) 788-7135, Gary Iverson, (406) 450-1106, or Jamie Lockman (406) 546-6572.



Proudly Manufacturing Cereal Grains, Pulses, and Oilseeds

- Serving the Baking Industry with whole grain ingredients since 1972
- Organic since 1980
- *Whole Grain Flour*
- *Whole Grain Flakes*
- *Cracked Grains*
- *Dehulling & Pearling*
- *Specialty Mixes*

Montana Milling is in the heart of Montana's world recognized Golden Triangle. We specialize in custom milling, meeting each customer's needs and only offering the highest quality, without exception. Grains are carefully and naturally processed to retain their pure wholesome rich flavor. Every shipment is individually checked for quality before leaving our mill. Our service is superior and consistent.

Quality and service is our commitment!

800-548-8554

www.montanamilling.com

2021 Organic Events!!

The Farm Tour Committee and Conference Committee have three more events for 2021! Visit the MOA website to find registration links.

September, 17, Bitterroot Farm Tour

October 26, Organic University, Havre, Northern Ag Research Center

December 2 - 4, Montana Organic Conference, The Commons, Bozeman. Speakers include Helen Attowe, permaculture expert; Tom Philpott, farmer, agriculture journalist, and author; and Wes Jackson, co-founder of the Land Institute.

After more than a year of social distancing, it will be great to once again meet in person. Details are still being worked out. Watch OM & MOA's websites and social media accounts for up-to-date information. Public health guidelines will be followed at the event. Mask are encouraged, especially for those who are unvaccinated. Sponsorships are available. Contact moamembership@gmail.com for more information.



**BIG
FAT
SEED**

Air/Gravity
Grain
Cleaner

**(406) 403-4600
Ask for Ole**

(NRCS) or received approval by local, but undesignated, agricultural experts. However, farmers have little time to search out official sanction by experts who themselves do not have easy answers as to how best adopt a given innovative practice in each ecology without impacting historic yield. Moreover, the NRCS guidance has not kept up with emerging best practices developed by farmers and cover crop researchers.

The predictions of many scientific studies clearly suggest that extreme weather and climate disruption is going to be our future. Farmers and ranchers need insurance in the short term to weather this future. No matter how resilient the farming or ranching practices that are used, floods and drought are still destructive.

As this blog is being written, 60% of Montana is in some level of drought and federal disaster conditions have been met for 13 of its 56 counties. If, however, public crop insurance policy constrains adaptation to more resilient systems, the public and private costs are likely to grow.

Mr. Schmitt and other farmers are still waiting for a satisfactory solution to their desire to continue down the path of adopting regenerative practices without jeopardizing their ability to be insured through the federal program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture can and should make the needed changes in their policy to remove this barrier to cover cropping and other critical land management conservation practices.

Resources

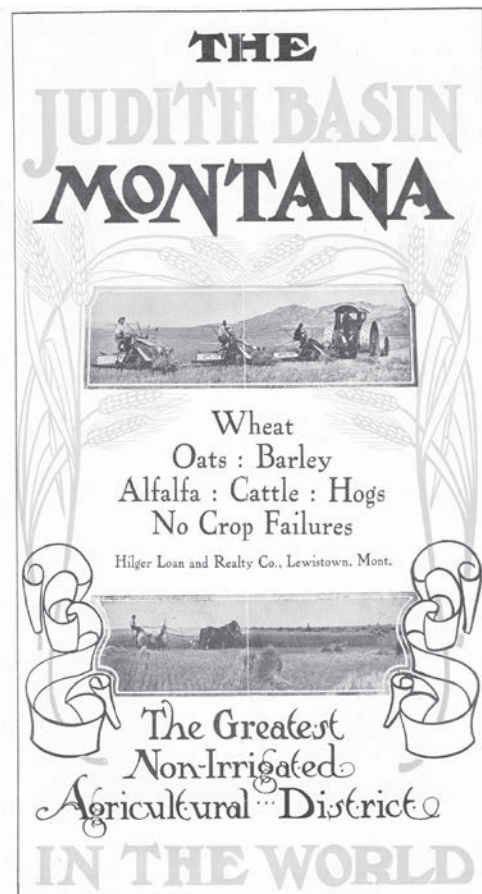
For a more detailed discussion of the issues discussed in this blog, see our

ATTRA webinar, [Climate Disruption and Crop Insurance: What are the Connections?](#)

For more details on USDA Risk Management Agency Good Farming Practice policy, see [Good Farming Practice Determinations Standards Handbook](#).

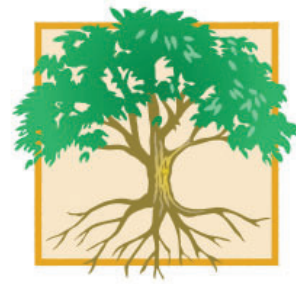
For recent information on drought conditions in the United States, see [United States Drought Monitor](#).

Please complete a [brief survey](#) to let NCAT/ATTRA know your thoughts about the content of this blog.



We support local organic agriculture.

Thank you for protecting the environment and supporting healthy communities with good food.



GOOD
FOOD

S T O R E



Missoula's home for locally produced, organic, and bulk foods for more than 45 years.

1600 S. 3rd St. West • Missoula • 406.541.3663

www.goodfoodstore.com



Do you want to get The Last Best Box or send it as a gift, but can't wait until the next subscription box is shipped? Consider one of our Montana Organic Boxes! With the help of the Montana Organic Association we've created a special box full of Organic Montana products.

It includes:

- Organic Hot Fudge Sauce from King's Cupboard (Red Lodge)
- Organic Kracklin' Kamut® from Big Sandy Organics (Big Sandy)
- Organic Waffle Pancake Mix from Montana Gluten Free (Belgrade)
- Organic Petite Crimson Lentils from Timeless Seeds (Ulm)
- Cherry Rhubarb Jam from The Orchard at Flathead Lake (Bigfork)
- Big Sky Organic Coffee from Hunter Bay Coffee Roasters (Lolo)

This box is separate from the monthly subscription, and can be shipped anytime. We use USPS 1-3 priority mail, and generally ship your box 1-4 days after you place your order. Contact us if you have any special instructions!

admin@lastbestbox.com

<https://www.lastbestbox.com/>





Community Food & Agriculture Coalition



Farmland + Farmers + Food for All

Montana's food system needs all three to survive. Your support ensures they thrive.

Join CFAC today!

Farmer Support



- Workshops and trainings for **over 370 beginning farmers and ranchers**.
- Directing **\$144,500 (over 19 loans)** to local farmers from CFAC endorsed farm projects.
- Giving **\$62,000 direct to farmers** in grants through our Field Tested program to assist with on-farm efficiencies.



CFAC

To learn more visit:

www.missoulacfac.org

www.farmlinkmontana.org

Organic Montana: A new chapter for Montana's organic community

When the Montana Organic Association was established in about 2003, the founders intended the organization be a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit. After evaluating the Articles of Incorporation and the initial By-Laws, the IRS determined otherwise; that the proposed association, focusing on policy issues affecting organic agriculture and food, was better defined as a 501 (c) 6 trade association.

Since then, MOA has grown and carried out work supporting and promoting organics by relying on membership fees, conference and event fees, sponsorship fees, and both state and federal grants to fund it. MOA's work has included lobbying through letters and farmer fly-ins, taking positions on agriculture- and food-related issues, and developing a policy platform. It has also engaged in work, like Organic University, farm tours, cooking demonstrations, and even food distribution, that charitable foundations and traditional nonprofit fundraising frequently supports. However, the trade association status prevented MOA from receiving charitable funds for the excellent work it has done outside of policy-focused activities.

In Fall 2020, MOA began forming a new 501 (c) 3 nonprofit called Organic Montana. The IRS recently determined that Organic Montana (OM) is a tax-exempt public charity able to receive tax-deductible gifts, bequests, and transfers. This organization does not have a membership structure or voting opportunities like MOA, but rather MOA is its only "member." A board governs OM, with me, Jamie Lockman, currently serving as Executive Director and Ex-Offi cio Board Member.

OM has begun undertaking MOA's more properly nonprofit educational, communication, and community-building activities. OM is able to derive funding from private foundations, donations, and other fundraising activities that IRS rules prohibit MOA from receiving. OM can also obtain discounts on fees such as reduced mailing rates and technology programs that offer nonprofit discounts that will help it operate at a lower cost. Now that it has been approved by the USPS for nonprofit postage rates, one immediate OM goal is to begin sending hard copies of the **Organic Matters** newsletter. Any contributions made to OM are tax-deductible as charitable donations. MOA and OM have distinctly different revenue sources and record keeping.

OM board members include those who currently sit on MOA's Board as well as the Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) board and those who are essential leaders in Montana's organic community: Sam Schmidt, Chair (MOA, OAEC); Wes Henthorne, Vice-Chair (OAEC); John Wicks, Treasurer (MOA); Jennifer Dees, Secretary; Jonda Crosby; Georgana Webster; and Becky Weed (MOA).

The OM Board will be reaching out to ask for your tax deductible financial support for this new organization. Your contributions will help OM support those long-term organic community members and welcome those new to it. OM plans to share the latest agronomic information that helps connect Montana's organic community to the resources it needs to help their enterprises prosper, and that helps consumers learn more about what's in their food, what it takes to grow organic food, and how to find it and to enjoy it. Your founding contributions to OM will build on MOA's work over the last two decades and help it develop the capacity to reach Montana's and the region's organic community in new ways.

To be clear, OM will not be involved in policy work but will instead serve to educate, communicate, and connect people who support regenerative organic agriculture; healthy nutritious food; and a cleaner, more resilient environment. It will take a while to transition these activities from MOA to OM. Funds contributed to OM will not be allowed to be used for policy work such as funding farmer fly-ins; membership in policy organizations like OTA, NSAC, and NOC; or other lobbying endeavors.

MOA will more keenly focus its work on developing a policy platform and using its voice to influence policy on various issues from beginning farmers and ranchers, pesticide use, hydroponics, cost-share support, and more. It's important that you continue supporting MOA with your membership and continue participating on policy matters. By being a MOA member, your vote helps it determine policy priorities and the direction of the organization. While MOA is currently reviewing membership rates, it maintains its very affordable membership structure which has been in place since at least 2010. Please invite your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to become a MOA member.

Thank you for your continued support of organic agriculture and food. Montana is recognized as a leader in the organic movement and by adding organizational and funding flexibility, it is poised to continue leading the way.



Thank you Sponsors!!!

MOA has a YouTube Channel!

This year, MOA had a virtual field tour and needed a place to post the videos. Thus, MOA gained a YouTube Channel.

In addition to videos of the farm tour at Mark and Jane Smith's Aspen Island Ranch, you'll find recorded presentations from this Fall.

Make sure to subscribe to the MOA Channel to stay up-to-date with the latest videos.

Do you have a video you'd like to share on the channel? Let's do it! Reach out to Jamie at moamembership@gmail.com

Click Montana Organic Association YouTube Channel [here](#) to connect to MOA's videos.



About MOA



The Montana Organic Association is a 501 (c) 6 non-profit organization dedicated to supporting, advocating and promoting organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and Montana's economy.

MOA Board Members

Becky Weed - Chair
Cliff Merriman—Vice Chair
John Wicks - Treasurer
Mona-Rae Tuhy - Secretary
Sam Schmidt - Parliamentarian
Doug Crabtree—Past Chair
Jess Alger
Gary Iverson
Judy Owsowitz
John Porterfield
Nate Powell-Palm

Executive Director

Jamie Ryan Lockman

The Montana Organic Association (MOA) brings together people, businesses, organizations, and agencies who are working to develop Montana's organic industry. MOA is proud of its legacy that has led Montana to be a national leader in organic production. MOA advocates for policies that protect the environment, promote healthy living, and support individuals, farms and businesses who are actively engaged in developing sustainable businesses and communities.

Do you want to support MOA's work?

MOA has several affordable membership options. Visit the MOA website to learn more.

www.montanaorganicassociation.org

You're connected to the soil. Are you protecting what you love?

Finding life insurance that aligns with your values is no easy chore. Bluestone Life is different. Our mission is to protect families, communities *and* the planet. Protect what you love with Bluestone Life and benefit the Montana Organic Association.

Call 802-428-4411 to get started or learn more at bluestonelife.com



When you purchase life insurance from Bluestone, you support MOA with a percent of your premium and a complimentary death benefit.



A “thank you” from us to you: access a NO COST WILL when you visit info.bluestonelife.com/moa. It’s a small way to say “thank you” for the challenges you face every day to grow a better future for us all.

bluestone®





MOA Membership Form

Purchase online or print this page and use this form. Mail your check to:

MOA, 3312 Hollis St., Missoula, MT 59801.

All Memberships renew on December 1, 2021.

Farm or Business: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Member 1 Name: _____

Member 1 Phone Number(s): _____

Member 1 Email: _____

Member 2 Name: _____

Member 2 Phone Number(s): _____

Member 2 Email: _____

MOA communicates via email several times per year. Please check this box to receive email notifications:

Membership Level (select one):

Basic Membership		Premium Memberships	
Individual - \$30		Organic Business - 2 memberships, discount on conference registrations, & ads, website directory listing - \$250	
Household - 2 memberships - \$50		Lifetime - 2 memberships, discount on conference registration, & ads, website directory listing - \$750	
Farm/Ranch Business - 2 memberships, discount on conference registrations, & ads, website directory listing - \$75		Lifetime Business - 2 memberships, discount on conference registration, & ads, website directory listing - \$2500	

Tell us more about what you do. Farm? Ranch? Researcher? Student? Supplier?

TOTAL AMOUNT OF YOUR PURCHASE _____

Return form (s) with membership dues to: **Montana Organic Association, 3312 Hollis Street, Missoula, MT 59801**

If you have questions, call Jamie Lockman at (406) 546-6572 or email her at: moamembership@gmail.com OR to pay online, visit www.montanaorganicassociation.org

**HELPING FARMERS TO BE MORE
PROFITABLE**



From "boots on the ground" agronomy services to the latest precision ag technologies.

Our Agronomy Coaches cover many miles and acres in the Golden Triangle, Billings, Glasgow and surrounding areas.

**WE PROVIDE MORE THAN
COACHING**

406-855-4765
www.406agronomy.com
roots@406agronomy.com

Nominations and Notice of MOA Board of Director Elections

The direction of the Montana Organic Association is only as strong as its leadership. MOA welcomes energetic, committed dynamic leaders to join us to ensure the continued success of MOA.

The Board of Directors election will take place as part of MOA activities this Fall 2021. Members will be notified of voting instructions and they will be posted on the MOA website in mid-Fall.

Directors serve three year terms and can be re-elected for subsequent terms. The Board of Directors usually meets in person one to two times each year and as needed by conference calls. Other volunteer committee work, including leadership, is expected. Since MOA is not in a position to provide monetary compensation for Board work, Directors will receive board experience advising a growing, statewide organic organization. Directors may be reimbursed for travel and communications expenses, if they choose.

Current directors who are up for re-election for the 2021 Business Meeting are:

- **JESS ALGER, Alger Ranch, Stanford**
- **CLIFF MERRIMAN, 4M Farms, Malta**

Directors seeking re-election, or anyone interested in serving as a new Director, should contact the MOA Nominations and Election Committee Chair Sam Schmidt at sam@montanamilling.com. It is encouraged that anyone seeking a nomination to the board spend time volunteering on one of MOA's committees.

Because the business meeting may be virtual, all 2021 Director nominations must be submitted no later than one month prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Candidate profiles will be posted on the MOA website and published in the Fall Newsletter. The Election will take place electronically with results will be published in the Winter issue of **Organic Matters**.



Sustainable Agriculture - Premium Food

406-622-5436

montanafLOUR.com

MOA Policy Proposal Submission Process

As a trade association, part of MOA's mission is to lobby for issues relevant to organic. The MOA Policy Sub-Committee has been busy since the start of the year refining procedures, documenting passed resolutions, and publicizing its positions and processes.

Co-chaired by Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm, the committee has established guidelines for submitting policy proposals for consideration of adoption by the MOA membership at the annual meeting. In the recent past, the Policy Sub-Committee has striven to move pro-posals forward, only to learn that membership frequently did not have enough information to pass a resolution.

It is hoped that with 90-days lead time before the December meeting, MOA can provide sufficient background information for a given proposal so that the membership is well-informed about the issues put before the membership. The proposals will be published in October in the Organic Matters Fall Issue. Proposals should be submitted by **September 6, 2021** to the MOA Policy Sub-Committee Co-Chairs, the MOA Executive Director, or via the MOA website.

All MOA members are welcome to attend Policy Sub-Committee members. Contact moamembership@gmail.com for more information about attending.

To view the complete list of MOA Policy Positions, visit the MOA website. www.montanaorganicassociation.org



Thank you!

MOA Sponsors and Members!



Thank you Vilicus Farms for Supporting MOA!

Dear MOA Members: MOA works with organizations like the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), the Organic Trade Association (OTA), and more on policy issues. Many times questions are asked about how farmers are interacting with federal programs; are sign ups going well? Are you being sufficiently notified of programs for your farm? What programs do Montana's organic farmers use? Are there problems with requirements for organic farmers?

Help MOA know what works for you and what doesn't work for you, at any time, by dropping a line. The squeaky wheel really does get the grease. These organizations have the capacity to amplify MOA members concerns with research, collaboration with other organizations, and with excellent contacts in Washington, DC. moamembership@gmail.com

Jamie

jamieryanlockman@gmail.com

OMRI LISTED
For Use In Organic Agriculture

REGISTERED
cdia
ORGANIC INPUT MATERIAL

USDA CERTIFIED BIOBASED PRODUCT

SUSTANE®

FERTILIZERS & SOIL BUILDERS

AID SEED GERMINATION IN COOL AND MOIST SOILS FOR BETTER SEASONAL PERFORMANCE.

SUSTANE
Naturally...

For inquiries please contact
Greg Naffz, Sales Manager West
(530) 305-0539 or (800) 352-9245
gregn@sustane.com • www.sustane.com

Sustane 4-6-4
50 lb. per acre

MAP 11-51-0
50 lb. per acre

A Montana Organic Association Member Benefit!

MT AGRICULTURE SAFETY PROGRAM

Cultivating a culture of safety

ENROLL TODAY!

Receive a partial premium return on your Montana State Fund Workers' Compensation Policy

WWW.MTAGRISAFETY.COM

(406) 587-3153

Organic Advisory & Education Council

2021 Board of Directors:

Chairman:
Ole Norgaard
Lewistown, MT

Vice Chairman:
Warren Lybeck
Chinook, MT

Treasurer:
Catherine Odden
Dutton, MT

Secretary:
Sam Schmidt
Great Falls, MT

Nate Brown
Belgrade, MT

Alison Harmon
Bozeman, MT

Wes Henthorne
Big Timber, MT

Matt Johnson
Hinsdale, MT

Ty O'Connor
Broadus, MT

Lise Rousseau Silva
Polson, MT

Terri Sims
Malta, MT

**Organic Advisory &
Education Council**
475 Vixen Ln
Shonkin, MT 59450
(406) 733-6633
EIN: 45-2308574

OAEC Stakeholder Update Spring 2021.

Dear Organic Growers and Friends,

Spring is here again and we thank you for your on-going support and to update you on progress made and our prospects as we move forward.

Early this year, OAEC, MSU, and Dr. Sands submitted a grant application to USDA-OREI for the future support of our Biocontrol project. Many thanks to those who wrote letters of support for the grant application. We were recently informed that the grant application has been denied. While this is disappointing, we plan to apply again next year and based on comments from the reviewers on this year's application, we will be able to reply to the reviewers concerns and submit a better application next year.

Dr. Sands is delighted to report: *"We will keep moving the work on the Biocontrol project forward with USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant that we were awarded last year. While more funding will let us move faster, we are making progress. We have more greenhouse space in the MSU Plant Growth Center than in the past, we have two undergraduate research assistants who are keeping the greenhouse work and sample testing on track, a post-doctoral researcher, Dr. Suha Hassan Ahmed Elhag from Sudan (fully funded from outside sources), and a new Masters level Lab Manager/Researcher who started work on May 5 to conduct research and deal with administration and organization to keep the work moving forward."*



Dave Sands in his lab showing biocontrol samples to Georgana Webster and Wes Henthorne in late April 2021.

OAEC has an advisory group of four board members monitoring the project now. The advisory group meets monthly with Dr. Sands and the team by Zoom calls and we recently met on campus with the research team. In order to be certain that any products developed from these efforts will be available for use in organic farming systems, we have asked Georgana Webster, the Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Program Manager, to monitor the project to stay within Organic rules and regulations. Progress is being made as this

The Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) is a non-profit organization made up of Montana certified organic farmers whose mission is to assess priority needs for research and education specific to Montana's organic farming community. OAEC's mandate is to identify and to target funds for essential projects. In an equally important role, OAEC provides information and advice to researchers and educators on areas of critical need in the organic community.

biocontrol project gears up and comes together on new levels. This year will include biocontrol field trials for Perennial Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle Canada Thistle on five different organic farms here in Montana.



MSU Plant Growth Center with trails of Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle. Dr. Suha Hassan Ahmed Elhag, undergrad student, Ole Norgaard, Wes Henthorne, Dr. Dave Sands, Georgana Webster April 2021.

IMPORTANT -- WE NEED TO KEEP SEARCHING FOR SICK PLANTS

As we proceed, the search for sick plants of Perennial Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle continues so we can find the most effective fungal isolates for control. We need your help in 2021 to locate and collect sick plants (yellowing leaves/discoloration of root systems) and we have built sample submission packages to simplify the process of getting the right parts of the sick plants to the lab. We are asking everyone to participate. Watch closely for sick plants to collect and submit to help with the ongoing research. Sample collection instructions are included with this letter and continuing the search for sick plants is key to continued progress.



Dr. Dave Sand in the greenhouse showing Canada Thistle plants that have been inoculated with strains for aggressive Fusarium oxysporum, April 2021.



Columbia Grain Cultivating Growth. Nourishing Life.

For over 40 years, Columbia Grain and its many loyal long-term knowledgeable employees have supported farmers, their families and communities to ensure that their high-quality crops are valued in the market. Since 2017, we have been providing the same support for our organic farmers by offering rotational contracts, fertilizers, seeds, and inputs directed by our experienced agronomists. Columbia Grain is truly Cultivating Growth, Nourishing Life



Columbia Grain™
CULTIVATING GROWTH™

Ryan Van Pevenage – rvanpevenage@columbiagrain.com
Justin Beach – jbeach@columbiagrain.com

503- 224-8624
columbiagrain.com



"In these challenging times, Columbia Grain is taking numerous measures to ensure all of our farmers and employees are supported and safe. We are increasing processing hours at our specialty pulse processing facilities, following all CDC guidelines, following Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), maintaining stringent Food Safety Programs, and adding more team members at our elevators to help farmers stay in their trucks while delivering their grains and pulses. The food supply chain is essential, and we are doing everything necessary to keep all safe and food flowing to nourish the world."

Jeff Van Pevenage, President and CEO

Other OAEC Updates:

The Organic Farmer Advisory group, that is connected to the Central Agriculture Research Center in Moccasin, met with Dr. Pat Carr in March on a highly informative Zoom call. Dr. Carr laid out the plans for the 2021 CREEP STOP work as well as informing us that it might be another year or two before any tangible research data and results will come.

Other OAEC Updates:

During this winter, we had three different Zoom calls with key researchers in human nutrition at MSU with the intent to create a comprehensive, robust, and meaningful framework to explore and improve the energy and nutrition levels in the things we grow and better quantify the benefits of organic production to human health. This is another example of OAEC initiating conversations between different colleges and departments at MSU. The people at MSU have become incredibly open to exploring issues together across a range of academic areas. While this is an embryonic project, and will require lots of cooperation, encouragement and nurturing, these meetings are looking very productive with different approaches and multidisciplinary cooperation. The OAEC Board has noted that one of the most important things that we do in Montana is to bring together a wide range of people on campus that do not routinely discuss organic agricultural issues outside of their departments and colleges. It is amazing to see in real time as common questions are discussed broadly and collaboration becomes likely.

Thanks again, everyone, and we are hoping that this year brings the opportunity to meet at farm tours and the MOA conference as we are starting to experience a bit more normal life.

The work that Dr. Sands is doing, as well as other OAEC projects, including sending you this update, can't happen without the generosity of our Montana farming and ranching community supporters. Please consider donating today. You can donate through our website at www.mtoaec.org or by mail to:

Organic Advisory and Education Council
475 Vixen Lane
Shonkin, Montana 59450

Have a great spring and a better summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ole Norgaard', written in a cursive style.

Ole Norgaard, President and Board Chair on behalf of the entire OAEC Board of Directors



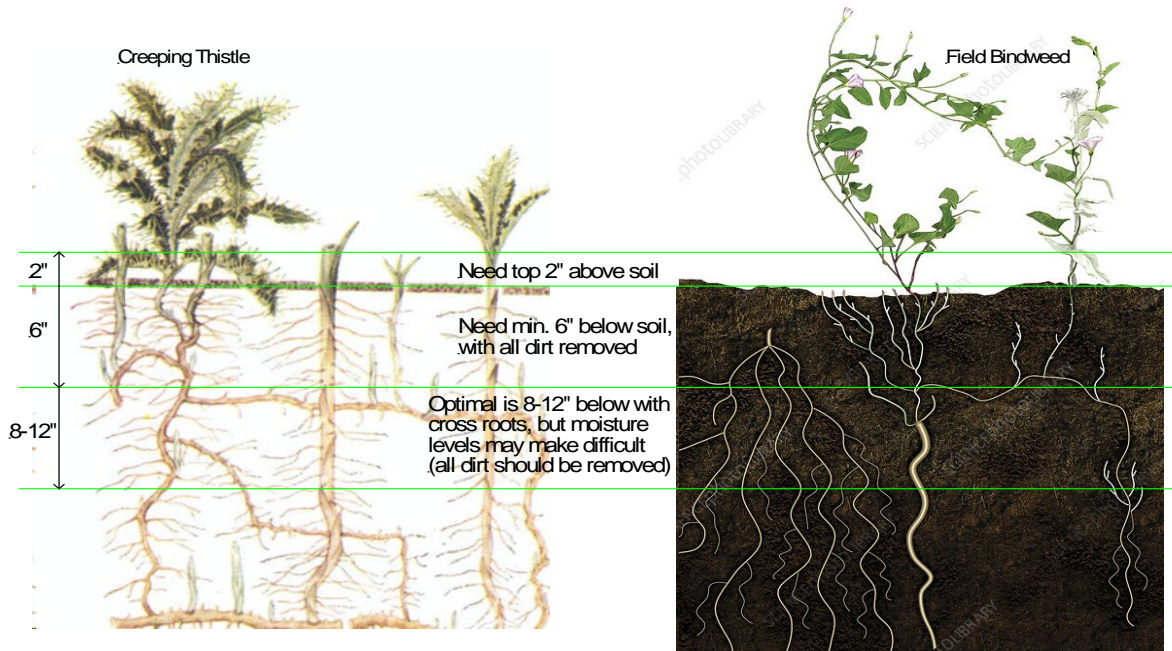
**Ancient Grain,
Organically Grown**

#kamut

www.kamut.com

Bio-Control Weed Collection Instructions Kit 2021

OAEC continues to work with Montana State University on natural bio-controls for the problematic weeds Perennial Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle. The search for new strains of *Fusarium oxysporum* continues, and we are asking for your help in 2021 to locate and collect sick plants (yellowing leaves/discoloration of root systems). We are asking everyone to participate in finding a workable organic solution and your samples will help the ongoing research. When you find a diseased bindweed or thistle plant – there are two parts (A and B) to the collection kit. Please follow the instructions and fill out the information in part A and B and mail the postage-paid box and envelope (next pages).



Collection Instructions: Optimally you will want to look for one or more patches of dead plants, but single sick plants will suffice. More specifically, wilted infected plants will have discolored vascular tissue especially towards the base of the stem. We want the plants that are these showing symptoms or have most recently died, so if you found a patch grab a few at the edge of the dying patch. Please note, the fungus may or may not be secreting mycotoxins, so use care (wash your hands, wear disposable gloves, etc.). To harvest the plant, simply dig and pull as if weeding in a garden, and then shake off the dirt. Then cut the plant stem, as we only need 4 inches above the soil line, and more importantly the 6 inches below the soil line. Please remember to always harvest at the edge of the patch, to avoid older diseased plants that may have secondary invaders. Early emergence of weeds and detection of their diseases can have stronger bio-control potential and we would like to start receiving new samples as early as May, but plants usually show wilt symptoms after it dries out (wilt diseases shut off the water), so you will likely be finding samples throughout the summer.

Instructions -- Part A.

1. Identify a sick plant/patch of Creeping Thistle or Field Bindweed
2. Take a picture of the plant or the outer edge of a patch, recording the location.
3. Dig the root system up, capturing a minimum of 6 inches below the surface.
4. Cut the plant from the stem 4 inches above the soil line, so stem and roots only.
5. Remove all dirt from the sample so it can dry and not hold extra moisture.
6. Place one plant's stem and roots in a paper bag from the kit. Use one bag for each plant.
7. Fill out the MSU Plant Information Form below, including your name, address, phone number, email, and sampling information.
8. Place all bags and Plant Information Form into the postage paid box and drop off at post office.

MSU Plant Material Information Form (A)

Name/Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Sample #	Date	Physical Location (GPS Coordinates acceptable)	Plant Species

Instructions -- Part B.

1. Fill out the OAEC Plant Donation Form (below), including your name, address, phone number, email, and sampling information.
2. Place the Plant Donation Form into the separate postage paid envelope and drop of at post office.

OAEC Plant Material Donation Form (B)

I hereby donate this/these Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) or Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) sample(s) to the Organic Advisory and Education Council for organic research. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for this donation.

Name/Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Sample #	Date	Physical Location (GPS Coordinates acceptable)	Plant Species

Do you have photos that you think capture the essence of organic food and farming?

PLEASE SHARE!!!

Photos are needed for both Organic Montana and the Montana Organic Association to be used in social media, on websites, in the newsletter, in advertising, and in the conference program. You will be recognized with a photo credit.



Twins, Spring 2021. Photo credit, Jess Alger

Advertise in Organic Matters Quarterly Newsletter

Organic Matters Ad Rates

prices and dimensions:

1 page ad --- \$110
(Size: 7-1/2W x 10H")

3/4 page ad --- \$90
(Size: 7-1/2W x 6-1/2H")

1/2 page ad --- \$65
Size: 7-1/2W x 5H") -OR-
(3-1/2" W x 10"H)

1/4 page ad -- \$40
(Size: 3-1/2W x 4-1/2"H)

Business card ad --- \$30
(Size: 3-1/2W x 2H")

Organic Matters is published quarterly by Organic Montana. Prevoius to Summer 2021, it was published by the Montana Organic Association.

Send queries, suggestions, letters, and requests to:

Organic Montana
3312 Hollis Street
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 546-6572
organicmt406@gmail.com

Organic Matters occasionally includes guest articles and opinions. While we review these for relevance to our mission and allowable activities under its charter. The opinions in these articles may not reflect the opinions or policy of Organic Montana.

Editor: Jamie Ryan Lockman