OEFFA LAUNCHES NEW INVESTMENT FUND: $500,000 AVAILABLE TO GROW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN OHIO

Over the last year, OEFFA has worked to shine a bright light on the challenges that small, independent family farmers employing sustainable agricultural practices confront in accessing capital. At our annual conference in February, we started this conversation with a full day workshop on the capitalization of the local food economy featuring Woody Tasch, founder of Slow Money. As part of this ongoing work, we are proud to announce the launch of a groundbreaking initiative: the OEFFA Investment Fund.

That effort encouraged a group of socially-motivated local investors to make $500,000 available, resulting in a partnership with OEFFA to provide flexible and affordable capital to OEFFA members with businesses that are financially viable, yet remain “non-bankable” in today’s environment.

The traditional sources of farm and small business financing are often not receptive to “unconventional” farmers and entrepreneurs who may lack personal capital, an equity base, sufficient credit, and the needed tools and training to convert farm production plans to business plans that traditional financial institutions require. These challenges are compounded by the national trends of agricultural lending over the last few decades, and the turmoil in the financial industry more recently.

Despite the increasing demand for local, healthy food and the economic opportunities it creates, many business ideas are not pursued because of a lack of financing. By helping to mobilize additional sources of capital, OEFFA hopes to build the supply and availability of local, sustainably grown fresh food in Ohio, enhance farm and farm-related business viability, and encourage expansion of ecological agricultural practices.

“The launch of the OEFFA Investment Fund — the farmer’s bank — could not be more timely and appropriate as we search for and deploy new solutions for capitalizing a better food system,” said OEFFA’s Executive Director Carol Goland.

With an initial capitalization of up to $500,000 to fund the pilot of this project, additional funding is planned once the model is proven successful.

The OEFFA Investment Fund will start accepting applications on November 1, with the first funding decisions expected in January 2013. In late October, the OEFFA website will be updated to include the relevant information and forms required to apply.

“We expect most of the successful applications to be for business loans in the $5,000 to $50,000 range, but other structures such as equity and revenue-sharing agreements will be considered based on applicants’ requests and individual circumstances. During the first year, the minimum funded amount will be $2,500 and the maximum will be $250,000,” added Goland.

“As a potentially critical contribution to our mission, the OEFFA Investment Fund is also a new challenge for our organization. We hope to gradually expand our programming to include both financial management and other technical assistance, tapping into existing networks and resources as we build our capacity. In that regard, we express our thanks to the Dr. Thelma I. Schoonover Fund of The Columbus Foundation for support to help OEFFA initiate this endeavor,” Goland continued.

The fund is only open to Ohio-based OEFFA members in good standing, who will be required to submit an application package, be a farm or a related business supporting the supply chain of agricultural products from farm to consumer, and commit to support sustainable agricultural practices throughout the life of the investment. Applications will be approved by the Fund’s Investment Committee (comprised of representatives from OEFFA, the investors, and two outside members) based on its review of the information contained in the application.

We welcome your inquiries and suggestions about this exciting development. For more information, contact Carol Goland at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 202 or oifinfo@oeffa.org.
The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association news is published quarterly as part of the educational mission of OEFFA, a nonprofit organization for farmers, gardeners and citizens interested in ecological agriculture and creating a sustainable, local food systems. Nominate them for OEFFA's Stewardship Award!

The Stewardship Award is presented at OEFFA’s annual conference and recognizes outstanding contributions to the sustainable agriculture community.

To nominate yourself or someone you know, email stewardship@oeffa.org or write to OEFFA Stewardship Award, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214. If you have questions, contact Harv Roehling, chair of the selection committee, at (513) 756-9272.

The deadline for nominations is December 15. As part of your nomination, please describe the individual(s) you wish to nominate, your relationship to them, and how you feel they embody the spirit of this award through their outstanding contributions to the sustainable agriculture community. Please also include your contact information and the contact information for the person(s) you’re nominating.

Call for Nominations: OEFFA’s Stewardship Award

Do you know someone who not only is committed to sustainable agriculture in their own lives, but also works to impact social change, educate and engage their community, or has otherwise shown leadership toward building sustainable, local food systems? Nominate them for OEFFA’s Stewardship Award!
I might actually have groaned out loud when I awoke to the headline on September 3 that “Organic food no healthier than conventional food” or, as one devilish media outlet described it, “Organic food is as dangerous as factory farmed food.”

In case you missed it, here’s the quick version: Some researchers affiliated with Stanford University reviewed previously published studies of differences between organic and conventional foods. According to Stanford’s press release, the researchers “did not find strong evidence that organic foods are more nutritious or carry fewer health risks than conventional alternatives, though consumption of organic foods can reduce the risk of pesticide exposure.”

Initially, I felt deflated by this high profile attack on organics. But in the few weeks since then, I’ve actually started to wonder if it might not have been a good thing. The reason for my optimism? The large number of headlines challenging the study and the conversation it’s provoking about the conventional food production system and its alternatives.

For example, just a couple of days after the study was released, New York Times columnist Roger Cohen added to the cacophony by labeling organic a “fad,” a “fable,” and a “romantic back-to-nature obsession,” summarizing his disdain with “Organic, schmorganic.” Despite his dismissive tone, Cohen acknowledges growing interest in organic food is contributing to the viability and quality of small-scale local farming, that organic farming provides ecological health, and that organic production practices are verified by a rigorous certification process. Remarkably, of the hundreds of comments his column received, the vast majority provide laser sharp critiques of the study and equally pointed arguments about the valid reasons for purchasing and consuming organic food.

Much ink has been spilled pointing out the obvious: Organics was never about nutrition, the focal point of the Stanford meta-analysis. While some researchers have pointed out methodological flaws in the new study, we don’t need to scratch that deep to turn it on its head:

- Pesticide residues were found in 7 percent of organic produce samples and 38 percent of conventional produce samples.
- Conventional chicken and pork have a 33 percent higher risk of containing bacteria resistant to three or more antibiotics, compared to organic meat and poultry.

The Stanford study does not address the environmental and public health benefits that result from reduced exposure to pesticides and antibiotics. The primary reason one-third of U.S. shoppers purchase organic foods at least once a month is the absence of negative substances: pesticides, herbicides, synthetic growth hormones, antibiotics, irradiation, and genetically engineered ingredients.

Nor did the study consider the health of the farmers and laborers themselves, who are exposed to the chemicals used in conventional agriculture, or the less direct health impacts that production practices can have on the soil, water, and air.

It seems that the Stanford research team set up a straw man to mow down. Perhaps they were unaware of the strong grassroots that gave rise to organics decades ago and that continues to safeguard its integrity, and knowledgeably consume organic foods for its multiple benefits.

Inaction is Unacceptable: Congress Must Pass a 2012 Farm Bill

By MacKenzie Bailey

Every five years, Congress takes on the task of reauthorizing the Farm Bill, which establishes U.S. food and farm policy. This year Congress—specifically the U.S. House of Representatives—failed to get the job done, and on October 1, the Farm Bill expired.

The expiration will not have an immediate impact on crop insurance, commodities, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), all of which are funded through other pieces of legislation.

Smaller programs, which are solely funded or authorized through the Farm Bill, will be immediately impacted, however. The Farm Bill expiration now effectively halts new enrollment for programs that help to drive innovation, support the next generation of farmers, conserve our natural resources, and invest in local economic development.

Producers that have relied on the support of programs like the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program (NOCCSP), which reimburses organic certification costs up to 75 percent or $750, are now faced with the very real possibility that those funds will not be there in the future (see the Organic News section on pg. 12 for information about applying for cost-share reimbursement). To make matters worse, as currently drafted, the House version of the Farm Bill would eliminate the program entirely.

The Senate and the House Agriculture Committee were able to pass versions of the 2012 Farm Bill, but the U.S. House of Representatives failed to pass the bill or add a short-term extension to the current Farm Bill before adjourning in September.

Congress is currently in recess until after the election. On November 13, they will return for a very busy lame duck session, at which point they will have the opportunity to amend and pass a Farm Bill. If Congress fails to take action before the new Congress enters office in January, then it will be back to square one in both the House and Senate.

To help ensure the House takes swift and meaningful action in November, please make a phone call to your members of Congress. Ask for full funding for the programs listed below. For more information, go to http://policy.oeffa.org/farmbill2012. If you have questions, please contact MacKenzie Bailey at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 or mackenzie@oeffa.org.

At-Risk Farm Bill Programs

National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
Farmers’ Market Promotion Program
Value-Added Producer Grants
Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative
Organic Production and Market Data Initiatives
Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
Specialty Crop Research Initiative
Conservation Reserve Program
Conservation Reserve Program – Transitioning Incentives Program
Grasslands Reserve Program
Wetlands Reserve Program
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
One of the nation’s foremost organic agriculture advocates for nearly two decades, Organic Valley’s CEO George Siemon is best known for his leadership in organizing farmers and building market support for organic agriculture.

In 1988, Siemon joined a group of family farmers in Wisconsin to found the Cooperative Regions of Organic Producers Pools (CROPP). More commonly known by its brands Organic Valley and Organic Prairie, CROPP has grown to become the largest organic farming cooperative in North America with 1,700 organic farmer-owners and 650 employees who share in the profits from the company’s $850 million in annual sales.

Siemon, who often describes Organic Valley as “a social experiment disguised as a business,” described the company’s mission this way in the Huffington Post in May: “Organic Valley represents a pioneering effort of farmers and employees to bring organic foods and farming to a level of maturity that can compete, at all levels, with chemical-based agriculture.”

The company, which sells milk and other dairy products, meats, and produce, also works to expand organic production by helping farmers transition to organic, and provides leadership training and mentorship to new farmers to help create the next generation of coop owner-farmers.

Siemon has also been a strong voice for challenging genetically engineered foods and calling for labeling. In an interview with the Huffington Post this June, Siemon said: “Genetically manipulated food is a simple profit-making venture, and giving over the ownership of our seeds to corporations is a very big threat to sustainability. Biotech has only delivered crops that need more chemicals. It only serves the chemical seed industry. At the end of the day, if we really want to breed for nutrition, let’s put some effort into it… But they’re not really doing that. The money is in the chemicals. It is all rhetoric to promote corporate grip and control, not about feeding the developing world.”

OEFFA ANNOUNCES 2013 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Growing Opportunities, Cultivating Change is the theme of OEFFA’s 34th annual conference, February 16-17, 2013 in Granville, OH. Keynote speakers George Siemon and Nicolette Hahn Niman will share their compelling personal stories, identify problems and challenges facing the sustainable and organic farming movements, and discuss opportunities farmers and consumers can embrace to forge a shift in the industrial agriculture paradigm.

GEORGE SIEMON

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BECOME A CONFERENCE SPONSOR OR EXHIBITOR

We’d like your business, non-profit organization, or institution to support OEFFA’s work to create and promote a sustainable food system by becoming a conference sponsor or exhibitor.

To register as a sponsor or exhibitor online, go to www.oeffa.org/2013.

For more information about sponsorship, contact Renee Hunt at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 205 or renee@oeffa.org. The deadline is November 7 to be included in all pre-conference publicity. For more information about exhibiting, contact Mike Anderson at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or mike@oeffa.org. Booth space is subject to availability.

DONATE TO OEFFA’S CONFERENCE RAFFLE

Support OEFFA and introduce our members to your products and services by donating to the OEFFA conference raffle. To donate, suggest someone who could, or serve on the raffle committee, please contact Kristen Pool at (330) 527-3647 or blackdogacres@gmail.com.

GENTLY USED BOOKS NEEDED

Do you have some books taking up shelf space? Donate them to OEFFA! Drop off your farm and food books in good condition at OEFFA’s book table at the annual conference. For more information, contact Renee Hunt at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 205 or renee@oeffa.org.
Siemon was instrumental in developing the national standards for organic certification and currently serves on the boards of directors for The Organic Center and Global Animal Partnership. He initiated Farmers Advocating for Organics, the only organic-focused granting fund in the U.S., which is funded entirely by Organic Valley farmer-owners. In 2012, Siemon was awarded the Natural Resources Defense Council’s Growing Green Award in the “Business Leader” category, and the Social Venture Network’s Hall of Fame Impact Award in the “Environmental Evangelist” category.

“My vision is one where food becomes a central part of our lives. As a social force, we all know the value of a family or community meal. Food is a real way to stay connected to the earth,” Siemon said.

NICOLETTE HAHN NIMAN

Nicolette Hahn Niman is an attorney, rancher, and author of Righteous Porkchop: Finding a Life and Good Food Beyond Factory Farms.

The book chronicles the problems with the concentration of livestock and poultry and her work to reform animal agriculture as the senior attorney at Waterkeeper Alliance. The book profiles successful farmers and ranchers using humane practices and gives consumers practical tips for choosing meat, while weaving in the story of her personal transition from being a big city lawyer to ranching in the west.

She wrote in Edible Manhattan in 2011, “A decade ago I was probably the last person on earth you’d have thought might become a cattle rancher. And not just because I was a vegetarian who lived on the Upper East Side. But because I was the senior attorney heading up Waterkeeper’s national fight against factory farms and their egregious affronts to animal welfare, human health, and the environment.”

As she worked to reform factory farming, she found examples of farmers and ranchers raising animals humanely and sustainably, including Niman Ranch, a natural meat cooperative in Bolinas, CA supplied by a network of more than 700 farmers and ranchers. The company was founded by Bill Niman, who she eventually married.

“Following the footsteps of Eva Gabor in Green Acres, I packed up my high heels and moved to Bill’s northern California ranch,” she wrote in Edible Manhattan. “After years chronicling industrial animal abuses, I reveled in the rightness of this kind of agriculture. Instead of being fed antibiotics and slaughterhouse wastes, these herbivores ate grass—the food their bodies were designed for; instead of a feedlot pen or metal crate, they roamed across the open range and took afternoon naps in the sun; instead of artificial insemination, they courted and mated naturally, gave birth and raised their young according to their instincts. They lived in a way that I was not only comfortable with, I was proud of,” she continued.

Hahn Niman is also an accomplished author and speaker who has been featured in Time Magazine, The New York Times, and The Los Angeles Times. She is regular blogger for The Atlantic, and has written for The San Francisco Chronicle, Huffington Post, Cowboys & Indians, and CHOW.

Conference registration will open in December. For more information, go to www.oeffa.org/2013 or call (614) 421-2022.

CONFERENCE LOCATION: YOUR FEEDBACK NEEDED

Demand to attend the OEFFA conference in recent years has grown by leaps and bounds. A committee is looking into alternative locations that would allow us to expand, but they need your feedback about how changes might impact your decision to attend future conferences.

Please look for an email with a link to a survey, which we promise will not take much of your time. If would like to provide feedback, but don’t have an email, contact Milo Petruziello for a paper copy at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206.

The 2013 conference will be held again in Granville. Plans are underway to provide more space, more workshops, and more meals so we can accommodate more people. Thanks for your patience as OEFFA undergoes these growing pains.

2013 CONFERENCE ART

A special thanks to Kevin Morgan at Kevin Morgan Studio in Athens, Ohio for creating this year’s beautiful conference art. For more information about Kevin Morgan Studio (and to see the pieces he’s created for the Pawpaw Festival and OEFFA members Snowville Creamery, Casa Nueva, and more), go to www.kevinmorganstudio.com.

ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS WANTED

Discuss your research findings with OEFFA’s diverse membership at the 2012 conference! Abstracts 200 words or less that include a title, three to five keywords, and names, affiliations, and contact information for the authors should be submitted to mike@oeffa.org by January 7.
Jumpstart Your Winter Chicken Care
By Joan Richmond

We often winterize our homes, vehicles, and equipment, but as the temperatures start to drop, it’s also a good idea to winterize your chickens! Here are some of our tips for keeping your birds comfortable and healthy throughout the winter months.

Shelter
If you have a small shelter for a few birds, you’ll want to keep it cleaned out about twice a week to prevent dampness, which can not only make the birds cold, but more susceptible to disease.

We have a larger coop for about 50 birds. We used Gene Logsdon’s idea of deep litter, starting with a thick 12 inch layer of straw, and adding more throughout the winter. As a result, the litter builds up and gets mixed with the droppings. We also throw scratch grains in there, to get the birds to scratch up the layers and speed composting. After awhile, the composting process starts to generate heat and warm the litter. In the spring, cleaning the coop is a big job, but you have fantastic material for your compost pile.

It’s important not to make your coop too airtight. The body heat and moisture naturally coming off the birds needs to escape so that you don’t end up with fungal problems or respiratory illnesses. On our coop, we left good-size cracks around the top, where the roof meets the walls. Then we put hardware cloth (wire mesh) all around it to keep critters out. We also covered the windows with hardware cloth. This way the heat and moisture rises and escapes, without the birds suffering from drafts down at their level. Cracks and holes around the bottom of the coop should be filled.

Food
Give your birds good, high nutrient feed in winter. They also benefit from scratch feed. We give ours a mixture of corn, oats, and wheat, but just corn is fine. The whole grains result in more energy being expended during digestion, which keeps the birds warmer. It can also add fat to the birds. Just don’t substitute scratch for their regular feed, which has more of the complete nutrients and supplements they need.

Remember that your birds depend on you almost completely in winter for feed, unlike warmer months when they can forage. Consider adding fresh greens to their diet or a vitamin-electrolyte supplement to their water.

Water
In cold weather, we change the water two or three times a day using warm water, which keeps it from freezing so quickly. Also, the birds appreciate warm water to drink when it’s cold. Water warmers are also available at most supply stores and are easy to use.

Health
Birds need to be able to get off snow and ice or it can affect their feet. Additionally, we use a brooding lamp in the coldest of nights, when temperatures drop below 20°, to help prevent frostbite from injuring combs and feet. A 100-watt incandescent bulb is also adequate for a 500 to 900 square foot coop.

If you have “rose” or “pea” comb birds such as Buckeyes, then frost bite is less of a problem. If they do get frostbite, you can thaw the area with cool water, then apply a layer of petroleum jelly, as needed, to help protect it.

If you see problems in your birds, such as limping, isolate them until they heal up, or see a veterinarian. If you have trouble with winter mites or lice, sprinkle diatomaceous earth around the coop. If you hear wheezing or coughing, contact your veterinarian or call your county extension agent for advice. Usually isolation and/or a dose of antibiotics is what they recommend.

Egg Production
Chickens naturally lay fewer eggs as days get shorter. Some people like to give their birds this natural break. But if you want them to keep laying, you need to simulate 14 to 16 hours of light per day with a bulb. You can either put it on a timer, or just plug it in at supper time and turn it off in the morning. But be consistent. Running late can have a measurable effect on their egg laying.

Eggs don’t freeze right away, but if you want to prevent cracking, you might need to gather them more than once per day.

Predators
Any small hole can be an invitation to rats, minks, raccoons, and other predators. We use hardware cloth to cover windows and other openings, since chicken wire just isn’t strong enough. Also, hook-and-eye closures are easily removed by a clever animal, so use the kind that require a strong thumb action slider to release.

Consider bird netting if you have a hawk or owl problem, and maybe even a motion control sensor for night-time predation. We use a battery-powered light on the outside of the coop. A sudden bright light has been enough to deter most raccoons and opossums. We also deter predators by keeping feed in tightly-lidded galvanized garbage bins.

I have continually been surprised at how hardy our birds have been in winter. We might lose one or two, but that can happen in any season. A little extra care and attention will get your healthy birds through to a glorious new spring.

Joan Richmond raises chickens at Meadow Rise Farm in Richland County and sells vegetables at farmers’ markets in central Ohio. She may be reached at joan_richmond@me.com.

Need Advice? Ask a Farmer!
OEFFA’s Farmer Information Network connects individuals with specific questions about sustainable and organic food production and marketing with experienced farmers who have the answers. To ask a question of a fellow farmer, or to volunteer to be a part of the network, contact Mike at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or mike@oeffa.org.
New Interstate Shipment Program Creates Opportunities for Processors and Producers

Ohio is the first state to receive approval for the interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry products under a cooperative federal-state inspection program created by the 2008 Farm Bill. Prior to establishment of this Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program, state-inspected meat and poultry products could not be sold across state lines. The program is expected to open up market opportunities for Ohio’s 279 state-inspected processors, and small meat and poultry producers, who often lack ready access to federally-inspected plants, or the product volume needed for federal inspection.

Ohio State Names New VP for Agricultural Administration

The Ohio State University named alumnus Bruce McPheron Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. McPheron was previously dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Pennsylvania State University and will start his new appointment on November 1. He will succeed Bobby Moser, who has served as Dean and Vice President since 1991.

Monsanto Files Brief Responding to Patent Lawsuit

In September, Monsanto filed a brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, asking a judge to dismiss a brief filed in July by the Public Patent Foundation (PUBPAT). PUBPAT’s brief asked the appellate court to reverse a lower court’s decision in February dismissing their request for protective legal action against agricultural giant Monsanto. PUBPAT filed the brief on behalf of OEFFA and 83 other family farmers, seed businesses, and agricultural organizations representing more than 300,000 individuals and 4,500 farms.

Terra Madre Delegates Named

Delegates have been named to represent Ohio at Terra Madre in Italy in October: Michelle Ajamian and Brandon Jaeger of the Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative, Bear Braumoeller of Slow Food Columbus, Kevin Caskey of Skillet Rustic Urban Food, David MacLennon of MoJoe Lounge, Brian Schlatter of Canal Junction Farmstead Cheese, Joseph Swain of Swainway Urban Farm, Ann Trudel of Ann’s Raspberry Farm, and Coleen Yuhn of The Greener Grocer.

Cincinnati Bans Fracking Injection Wells

Cincinnati’s City Council voted unanimously to ban fracking injection well sites within its city limits, making it the first city in Ohio to restrict toxic fracking wastewater from being pumped underground.

USDA Directory Records More Than 7,800 Farmers’ Markets

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Farmers’ Market Directory identifies 7,864 farmers’ markets operating in the U.S., a 9.6 percent increase since 2011. Ohio ranks seventh in farmers’ markets by state, with 264 markets.

Edible Columbus Recognized for Community Impact

Community Shares of Mid-Ohio named Edible Columbus as the recipient of its 2012 Social Justice Reporting of the Year Award. Community Shares is a coalition of nearly 70 non-profit organizations, including OEFFA, who collaboratively participate in workplace giving campaigns.

New Herbicide-Resistant Weed Confirmed in Ohio

A new herbicide-resistant weed has been documented in southern Ohio. Palmer amaranth, a glyphosate-resistant weed that has significantly impacted cotton and soybean crop yields in the southern U.S., can grow three inches a day and release nearly a half-million seeds per plant. Palmer amaranth joins the list of weeds in Ohio that have developed resistance to glyphosate, a common herbicide and the active ingredient in Roundup, including marestail, giant ragweed, common ragweed, and waterhemp.

Farm Policy Matters: New Website Resources Available

OEFFA has added new pages to the website featuring information about fracking, genetic engineering, and the 2012 Farm Bill. The new web pages include links to factsheets, reports, and other resources and information about how you can get involved in the issues you care about. To learn more, go to http://policy.oeffa.org/home.
One of the most difficult challenges facing organic growers is supplying adequate nutrients to the plants being grown. A standard soil test is necessary to determine your soil's levels of phosphorus (P), potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), organic matter, soil pH, Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC), and base saturation.

The accuracy of results depends on how well you sample the soil. Soil cores should be taken from a depth of 6 to 8 inches and collected randomly from an area with similar soils and cropping history. A composite of at least 15 soil cores should be mixed together, air dried, and crushed to remove clumps. Take one pint of this composite sample to submit for analysis.

With a current soil analysis, growers need to determine their soil nutrient needs by determining their critical soil test value, or the minimum amount needed of a nutrient for plant growth. For instance, field corn has a critical soil test level for phosphorus at 15 parts per million (ppm), potassium at 100 ppm, calcium at 200 ppm, magnesium at 50 ppm, and a pH of 6.0 is recommended. When soil test values fall below these critical levels, crop growth will suffer.

Soil fertility management also requires an understanding of the nutrients removed during harvest. This removal rate will vary according to the amount or yield of the crop harvested and the nutrient content of the harvested material. Field corn harvested for grain will contain 0.37 pounds per bushel of phosphorus oxide and 0.27 pounds per bushel of potassium oxide. These nutrients will need to be replaced to maintain soil test levels.

Nitrogen is an essential nutrient needed for crop growth. A legume such as alfalfa or beans will produce their own nitrogen, but nearly all other non-leguminous crops will need some amount of nitrogen. An acre of field corn will need 160 pounds of nitrogen to produce a yield of 140 bushels per acre. Manures, composts, and cover crops can supply this nitrogen, and their nutrient contribution can be estimated or sampled and analyzed by laboratories.

It is important for organic growers to track the flow of nutrients produced and used on the farm. To match the nutrient supply to crop needs requires an understanding of what the soil and other inputs can provide. Do not guess, soil test!


Alan Sundermeier is an Ohio State University Extension educator from Wood County and a co-coordinator for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program in Ohio. He conducts research on certified organic grain as part of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) Organic Food and Farm Educational Research (OFFER) program. He may be reached at sundermeier.5@osu.edu.
**More GE Foods Stream onto Market as Study Raises Serious Health Concerns**

This fall, French researchers released a groundbreaking, peer-reviewed feeding study showing that consumption of genetically engineered (GE) corn and Roundup causes severe health effects including mammary tumors, organ damage, and premature death.

Because of restrictions in technology use agreements, researchers are often unable to get access to seeds for independent safety trials. As a result, this is the first ever study to examine the long-term health effects of Monsanto’s Roundup weedkiller or Roundup-resistant corn.

The two-year study involved 200 rats who were fed diets containing different proportions of GE corn or water containing Roundup at levels permitted in drinking water and consistent typical human exposure. A control group was fed an equivalent diet with no Roundup-contaminated water or GE corn.

The results are disturbing:

- The team found that even the lowest doses of Roundup, at levels well within “safe” drinking water standards, were associated with severe health problems.
- Female rat mortality was two to three times greater than in the control group, in part due to high rates of mammary tumors.
- Both male and female rats fed GE feed, regardless of dose, had high rates of severe liver and kidney damage.
- When given trace amounts of Roundup in their water, 70 to 80 percent of the rats had pituitary gland abnormalities.
- The first detectable tumors occurred 4 to 7 months into the study, although biotech companies are only required to conduct rat feeding studies for 90 days to demonstrate safety.

At the same time, more GE foods stream onto the market, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is poised to deregulate even more.

Petitions requesting non-regulated status are pending for a dozen GE crops, including a soybean tolerant to the chemical 2,4-D, a component of Agent Orange which has been linked to cancer, liver disease, Parkinson’s disease, and other major health problems, as well as a non-browning apple which is designed to not discolor when bruised or sliced.

While these crops wait for the green light to come on the market, others are already finding their way onto super market shelves. This summer, GE sugar beets, GE oil soybean, and glufosinate-tolerant, bollworm-resistant cotton were granted non-regulated status. And, Walmart recently agreed to carry Monsanto’s new GE sweet corn, engineered to be resistant to Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide and designed to produce a Bt toxin that will kill insects that feed on the plant.

Meanwhile, this summer, the House Agriculture Committee included controversial riders in its version of the 2012 Farm Bill that would make approval of GE crops even easier. According to the Center for Food Safety, the House committee’s provisions would set unreasonably short deadlines for GE crop approval, create triggers for automatic approval of GE crops, set strict limitations on what the USDA can consider in environmental reviews, eliminate National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act protections, and set “acceptable” levels of GE contamination that would provide no recourse for farmers who are contaminated.

For more information about GE food, OEFFA’s work to require labeling, or how you can get involved, go to http://policy.oeffa.org/gelabeling.

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On the surface, cities seem hostile to agriculture. Traditionally, one thinks of cities as crowded, polluted, and covered with asphalt, concrete, and impervious turf lawns. However, urban agriculture is taking hold in a number of cities across the United States, utilizing vacant properties, increasing access to healthy foods in urban neighborhoods, and promoting self-sufficiency and small-scale business development.

Historically, there is a relationship between the growth of cities, the development of industrial farming methods, and the emptying out of the countryside. After World War II, as farms mechanized and grew bigger, energy got less expensive, and food prices got cheaper, an on-going wave of rural farmers got out of farming and migrated to cities in search of employment. As a result, many small towns and rural communities suffered from the loss of smaller scale farmers and rural enterprises that they supported. A drive through many small rural towns in Ohio still reveals this legacy: boarded up storefronts and deteriorating houses.

Cleveland, like many of its sister rust belt cities, has seen a resurgence of interest and support for urban agriculture in the past decade. Individuals, businesses, organizations, and collaboratives are utilizing market-based models to grow food on vacant lots in the city for local markets.

One of the most interesting examples of market gardening is the Ohio City Farm, located near the historic West Side Market, just across the river from downtown Cleveland. This six acre farm began only a year and a half ago and has quickly blossomed into a thriving metropolitan farm.

The farm represents the diversity of social networks that abound in urban centers. It supports a number of enterprises, including Central Roots Farm, a market garden initiated by a recent graduate of Baldwin Wallace College. Located a block from the farm, the Great Lakes Brewing Company operates a market garden that provides food for their restaurant.

In addition to these private market operations, the site also supports several social enterprises. The Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities hires adults with disabilities to operate a garden that markets produce throughout the city under the name of Cleveland Crops. Refugee Response, an organization dedicated to working with recent immigrants to Cleveland, provides market gardening training, and sales of food support its program. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, which owns the land where the Ohio City Farm sits, offers a community garden that public housing residents can utilize to produce food for themselves.

From what I have observed, the growth of urban agriculture is helpful to rural farmers in a number of ways. Many recent farmers’ markets, such as Tremont, were initially organized by urban farmers. Over time, rural farmers were able to strengthen these markets, often providing foods not easily grown in the city.

In addition to market access, I have seen a number of individuals get their start growing food on small city lots and then migrate into rural counties in northeast Ohio to either start new farms or work on existing farms. This reverse migration is an encouraging sign. As we look for ways to educate and empower new and beginning farmers, perhaps we should look to metropolitan centers as new farmer incubators.

Overall, the growth of urban agriculture should be measured by its impacts on the broader region. Not only does the rise of urban agriculture make cities like Cleveland more pleasant places to be, it can help to provide new opportunities and partnerships for farmers and communities in rural areas. Rather than seeing a rural-urban divide, we should start to look at the opportunities that urban and rural collaboration can bring.

Brad Masi is a consultant, writer, social entrepreneur, and media producer who focuses on sustainable community development and local food systems. He may be reached at bradmasi@earthlink.net.
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NOP Grants Temporary Variance for Organic Pasture Requirements
Due to the severe drought this summer, many producers are not able to meet the National Organic Program (NOP) standards mandating that cattle, sheep, and goats receive 30 percent of their dry matter intake from grazing. On August 14, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) granted a temporary variance from Sections 205.237(c) and 205.240 of the organic regulations allowing producers in specific counties to supply only 15 percent of their dry matter intake from certified organic pasture on average over the grazing season.

The temporary variance applies only for the 2012 calendar year and for non-irrigated pasture. Only organic ruminant livestock producers located in counties declared as primary natural disaster areas by the USDA are eligible for the variance. The counties approved for the temporary variance in OEFFA’s service area are:
- Ohio: Ashtabula, Auglaize, Darke, Mercer, Preble
- Iowva: Buchanan, Davis, Hancock, Jackson, Mitchell, Washington
- Illinois: Woodford
- Indiana: Allen, Carroll, Carroll, Daviess, Elkhart, Fountain, Hancock, Howard, Lagrange, Montgomery, Noble, Parke, Spencer, St. Joseph, Wayne, Wells
- Kentucky: Scott
- Michigan: Arenac, Clare, Clinton, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Lapeer, Montcalm, Montmorency, Oscoda, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola
- Missouri: Daviess, Knox, Moniteau, Morgan, Polk, Scotland
- Nebraska: Cedar, Gagey, Rock
- New York: Chautauqua
- Pennsylvania: Clarion, Lebanon, Mercer
- South Dakota: Haakon, Jackson

Up-to-date Dry Matter Intake (DMI) calculations will need to be maintained. Contact the OEFFA office at (614) 262-2022 with any questions. To report ration changes during the grazing season that are different from what you projected when filling out your Organic System Plan, please update your DMI calculations and submit them to the OEFFA office.

OTA’s 2012 Board of Directors Includes Ohio Dairy Farmer
The newly elected members of the Organic Trade Association’s 2012 Board of Directors includes OEFFA member and certified organic dairy farmer Perry Clutts of Pleasantview Farm in Pickaway County. Clutts is also the President of the Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council.

Last Call for 2012 Organic Certification Cost-Share Applications
Funds are still available from the 2012 Organic Certification Cost-Share Program for certified organic farmers and businesses, who may request a reimbursement of 75 percent (up to $750) of their certification fees. Cost-Share applications for 2012 are due by October 31.

All applicants must show that they have incurred certification expenses between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012 to apply during the 2012 funding cycle. Clients who are certifying for the first time will need to wait until they can also include a copy of their certificate as part of their application. Renewing applicants can submit applications as soon as certification fees are paid, and should include their most recent certificate and do not need to wait for receipt of their new certificate.

OEFFA administers Ohio’s Cost-Share program. The application can be downloaded at www.oeffa.org/certification or requested by calling (614) 262-2022.

USDA OIG Releases Audit of NOP
The USDA’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) has released a “no findings” audit report assessing the NOP’s oversight of the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances, determining that adequate oversight controls are in place.

The audit was initiated in response to a Congressional request and complaints filed by the Cornucopia Institute. The OIG evaluated allegations of collusion with corporate agriculture business, conflicts of interest, and illegal appointments tainting the decision-making process of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), the expert panel created to protect the integrity of the organic label who votes on the inclusion of new substances to the National List.

Today, more than 250 nonorganic substances are on the list, up from 77 in 2002. The Cornucopia Institute charges that this growth is a result of corporate influence at the NOSB, but USDA officials say that the expanding variety of organic products is behind the list’s growth.

Research Group Reveals Reasons Consumers Buy Organic Foods
According to the Hartman Group’s Organic and Natural 2012 report, the latest in the longest-running series of organic trends research in the U.S., more than 60 percent of organic consumers buy organic foods to avoid exposure to dangerous pesticides and herbicides, and more than 50 percent do so to avoid growth hormones, antibiotics, genetically engineered ingredients, and artificial flavors, colors, and preservatives.

Aurora Dairy to Pay $7.5 Million Settlement for Making False Organic Claims
Aurora Dairy has agreed to pay plaintiffs in a class-action consumer fraud lawsuit $7.5 million to end litigation involving fraudulent marketing claims concerning organic milk. The lawsuit was brought on behalf of consumers in more than 30 states who felt defrauded after purchasing Aurora’s private label or store brand milk at Walmart, Costco, Target, Safeway, and other large grocery chains. The USDA concluded that Aurora had been selling milk as organic in violation of the NOP standards, because they had failed to provide pasture for their cows, used non-organic subcontractors, and illegally brought conventional cows into their organic operations.
I have granary weevils in my grain bins. What control options are available for organic growers?

Organic farmers certified by OEFFA can only use products that are approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) or listed on the OEFFA Approved Products List. Sanitation and attention to moisture and temperature conditions of stored grain is particularly important to organic producers because few organic pesticides are labeled for treatment of stored grain. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service’s (ATTRA) ecological pest management database (https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/biorationals/) is a great resource for finding OMRI-approved products for specific insects, diseases, and weeds. The database lists only one active ingredient labeled for the organic control of granary weevils: diatomaceous earth (DE).

DE is the fossilized remains of ancient sea creatures. To human hands, it feels like dust, but to insects, it is like shards of glass that are lethal when ingested. Since granary pests are a common problem in organic small grains, farmers may want to apply DE preventatively when storing grain. Treating grain with DE while it is in storage bin is more costly and less effective than treating the grain when it is being loaded into the bin, since thorough mixing of DE throughout the grain bin increases efficacy. The presence of DE in grain should not reduce marketability of the product as long as it is identified as DE and not categorized as unknown foreign material. There are many brands and sources of DE available from Perma-Guard and other suppliers.

I suspect there is mold in my stored grain. Are there organic approved products that can be mixed with this grain to make it suitable for livestock feed?

Mycotoxins can form when grain molds and can be a health threat to livestock and humans. Feed refusal, reduced reproductive rates, and death of livestock can result from ingestion of mycotoxins. The presence of mold in stored grain does not necessarily mean that toxins are present, but it does mean that the conditions are right. However, these toxins can be present even if there is no visible sign of mold on the grain.1 Grain samples should be sent to a reputable lab for testing to determine the presence and type of toxins.

If mycotoxins are found to be present in stored feed, there are approved products that can be mixed with the feed to bind the toxins, and possibly decrease their toxicity to livestock. According to Jerry Brunetti of Agri-Dynamics, these binders do not kill the mycotoxin—they bind to it and neutralize it. The effectiveness of these binders depends on the type and severity of toxins present. Desert Dyna-Min™ (Agri-Dynamics), Fuse 20™, and Check-M™ (Crystal Creek) are among the mycotoxin binders approved for use in organic systems, but many others are also available. These binders are only effective when matched to the particular toxin, so it is important to determine the kind of toxin present and contact product representatives to select the appropriate treatment.

Can small grain seed be replanted if vomitoxin is present at 12 to 13 ppm in the seed?

Vomitoxin is a toxin that results from the fusarium fungus, commonly known as head scab. The answer may depend on the level of infestation in the seed. Although fusarium is primarily a soil borne pathogen, infected seed should be evaluated prior to planting. Pierce Paul, a plant pathologist with Ohio State University’s Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, suggests that vomitoxin levels in seed are one factor to consider, but seed test weight and the percentage of scabby kernels are more important factors when gauging the suitability of seed for replanting. There are some scab resistant varieties of soft red winter wheat available.

1 Buschermohle, Michael J., Lester O. Pordesimo, and Luther R. Wilhelm. “Maintaining Quality in On-Farm Stored Grain,” University of Tennessee Extension, PB1724, 2005.
LIABILITY BASICS FOR FARMERS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
By Jim McGuire

You are living your dream—a business of your own! You have put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into it, but owning a business comes with risks, even if you operate with the utmost care and provide the best quality product and services. Are you protecting your business and personal assets with the liability insurance you need?

Liability insurance coverage protects your business, its owners, employees, interns, and volunteers if you are sued because of an actual or alleged injury suffered by a third party, including employees, and persons or organizations to whom you sell your products or services. It covers legal costs and damages (physical, financial, or emotional) resulting from your negligence.

When determining how much coverage you need, it is important to pay attention both to the occurrence limit, or the amount your policy will pay per claim, and the aggregate limit, which is what your insurance company will pay for all claims occurring during the policy term. You need to consider how much coverage you need to protect your business and personal assets and the requirements of the businesses and farmers’ markets to whom you provide products or services.

There are many types of coverage available that you should consider, depending on your personal needs and situation.

» General liability coverage protects your business from injury claims and property damage arising from your premises or general business operations.

» Completed operations/product liability coverage protects you from claims made against the services you perform or the products you make.

» Damage to rented premises coverage address damage you may cause to premises you rent.

» Non-owned auto coverage protects your business if you are involved in a lawsuit that stems from someone using their vehicle for your business.

» Hired car coverage provides coverage when you lease, hire, rent, or borrow a car for business purposes.

» Employee benefits liability coverage provides protection for an error or omission in the administration of an employee benefit program.

» Stop gap or employer’s liability coverage provides protection against any claims for disease, fatality, or injury to your employees resulting from negligent workplace conditions or practices.

» Employment practices liability coverage provides protection against claims made by employees, former employees, or potential employees involving discrimination, wrongful termination, sexual harassment, and other employment-related allegations.

» Directors and officers coverage provides financial protection for the directors and officers of your company in the event they are sued in conjunction with the performance of their duties as they relate to the company.

Don’t be dismayed. This is not as complicated as it seems. Think of insurance as a foreign language. All you need is a good interpreter—a qualified insurance agent—who can help you make sure that you are getting the business protection you need.

Jim McGuire works for Wichert Insurance in Perry County. He specializes in writing policies for niche farms and small businesses. He may be reached at webinfo@wichert.com.
The OEFFA conference food committee faces this challenge every year: How do we coordinate 1,600 to 1,900 meals full of Ohio grown ingredients in the middle of winter?

Our committee begins meeting just a month after the previous conference to review the menu, read evaluation feedback, and discuss future challenges. By summer, we are setting the next menu. This is a tricky task. We want to use as many local ingredients grown by OEFFA members as possible, appeal to many dining preferences and restrictions, and make something that is easy to serve in the space-limited Granville High School cafeteria. We look to keep popular dishes like the pig roast and Jeni’s ice cream, while tweaking other recipes.

In 2011 and 2012, we undertook preservation projects to give conference diners a chance to enjoy summer foods in February. We bought green beans from the Chesterhill Produce Auction in 2011 which were then processed by volunteers at the Luna Burger kitchen. This was a lengthy undertaking that we ultimately determined wasn’t worth the coordination effort for the small contribution to a single lunch.

This August, we tried something new. Eight volunteers from the food committee washed and chopped heirloom tomatoes from Northridge Organic Farm at the Two Caterers kitchen. The tomatoes are in freezer storage at DNO Produce until they will be transformed into sauce for a 2013 conference meal.

Autumn sees our team making arrangements with dozens of growers and businesses to donate their food. Sometimes we adjust the menu based on whether the growing season produced ingredients as expected. Closer to the conference date, we work with donors to arrange transportation from the farm to the conference or cooking location.

Current OEFFA conference food committee members are Kellie Gedert, Jen Kindrick, Kitty Leatham, Jill Moorhead, Leah Rond, John Sowder, and Rachel Tayse Baillieul with the considerable help of OEFFA staff members Renee Hunt and Milo Petruziello. Chef Greg Enslen (AVI Foodsystems, Executive Chef and Resident Director, Granville Exempted Village Schools) and Chef Jessica Karr (C-TEC of Licking County Culinary Arts Program) provide input and play key roles in the preparation and serving of conference meals. For more information about participating in the conference food committee, contact Renee Hunt at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 204 or renee@oeffa.org.

Rachel Tayse Baillieul is a food educator living and working in Columbus, OH. She writes about her urban homesteading life at www.HoundsInTheKitchen.com. This is her third year serving on the food committee.
Producer-to-Consumer Food Sovereignty Needed in Ohio
By David G. Cox

Ohio is becoming a leader in the food sovereignty movement. Several communities in Ohio have embraced the local food movement, many farmers have committed to selling directly to consumers, and organizations like OEFFA have committed to supporting local agriculture and the local economy by advocating for sustainable agricultural practices.

What is missing from this picture, however, are political leaders committed to a regulatory framework conducive to small scale sustainable farming and marketing. The policy maker piece of the puzzle is needed to create a strong food sovereignty movement in Ohio.

Food sovereignty is the notion that individuals are responsible for the foods they eat and that all individuals have the right to obtain the foods of their choice from the producers of their choice with as little governmental interference and regulation as possible. Although Maine, Wyoming, and California have attempted food sovereignty legislation at the local, municipal level, I am not aware of any food sovereignty attempt that concerns the state, and certainly not federal, level. Thus, an Ohio initiative aimed at the state level would be a bold effort.

A food sovereignty bill in Ohio would recognize the differences that exist between the current, large scale, industrial agricultural food production system (replete with its extensive production, handling, packaging, and distribution aspects) and the local, direct producer-to-consumer food production and distribution system. For example, it makes little sense to force farmers to meet over-the-top on-farm equipment and handling requirements or use a state or federally approved slaughtering facility when small-scale producers can slaughter and process chickens in a more sanitized environment and then sell their products directly to the consumer. Interpreting state regulations, some county health departments are requiring constant electric refrigeration of eggs, which is expensive and onerous, instead of approving the use of a cooler with ice when a farmer sells his or her eggs directly to a consumer.

Clearly, the existing regulatory program of “one size fits all” does not work in reality or practice, and ensures that the costs of production and compliance to the small producer are inordinately expensive and prohibitive. Thus, a food sovereignty bill would create a different regulatory program designed to fit the needs of the small-scale producer and the protections expected by the consumer who obtains foods directly from producers.

Food sovereignty legislation will need your support. You will need to advocate and testify on its behalf, and write letters to your elected officials. In this way, we can support the local farmers that produce the food that sustains us, we can support a local economy that ensures local farmers can make a viable living, we can support sustainable agricultural practices that are good for the earth, and we can support a local food system that actually produces food fit to eat.

Gary Cox is General Counsel for the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, a national non-profit organization dedicated to defending the right to buy and protecting the right to sell nutritious food directly from the farm. This article is intended for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to be nor should it be construed as either a legal opinion or as legal advice. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not of anyone else.

Chapter Spotlight

Athens Chapter Offers Thanksgiving Boxes
The Athens Chapter will offer its Local Thanksgiving program again this year, providing families with a special opportunity to pre-order a fresh selection of locally produced turkey, vegetables, jam, and stuffing mix for the holiday table. The deadline for orders is November 12, although the limited number of boxes could sell out in advance. Boxes can be picked up on November 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Village Bakery in Athens.

Heart of Ohio Chapter Update
The Heart of Ohio Chapter has been busy planning their events schedule for the next year. Meetings have been scheduled through April 2013 on topics including honey bees, poultry care, crop production, and more.

Little Miami Chapter Update
The Little Miami Chapter has been busy since reorganizing last summer. The chapter generally meets every other month, with the next meeting scheduled at Jeff and Teresa Harris’s farm in November. The chapter plans to organize a group seed order in January. New faces are welcome!

OK River Valley Chapter Update
The Ohio-Kentucky River Valley Chapter once again had a booth at the week-long Brown County Fair, sharing space with the Catholic Rural Life Conference and the Southern Ohio Farm Preservation Association. The theme for this year’s fair was food preservation, so the chapter’s float featured food preservation equipment purchased with a 2011 SARE grant, and several members dressed as vegetables. The chapter continues to help members with work projects, as an opportunity to learn new skills from each other.

Southwest Chapter Update
The Southwest Chapter is gearing up for a busy fall. On October 18, the chapter joined Food and Water Watch for a showing of The Future of Food. In November, the chapter will host a guest speaker from Xavier University to discuss the new Agriculture Arts program, which will draw upon the expertise of farmers in the region. In December, the chapter will discuss plans for 2013 programs and organize a seed order for all farmers and gardeners who want to participate.

For more information about chapter events, contact the Chapter President, see the events section of this newsletter on pg. 21, or go to www.oeffa.org/events.php.
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Preserving Autumn
by Mary Clemens Meyer

Mmm, fall! Juicy grapes, spicy apple butter, creamy butternut bisque, rich pumpkin pie. Autumn foods have a special appeal when the weather turns chilly and dusk comes early. It feels good to warm up the kitchen by cooking and baking, and it's not too late to preserve comfort foods for the winter.

APPLES are abundant in autumn. You can freeze or can your own applesauce, make apple butter in your crock pot, or dry apple slices for a wholesome snack.

To make applesauce, choose cooking apples like Jonathan, Cortland, or McIntosh. Wash and cut the apples into halves or quarters (depending on size). You don't need to peel them if you're using a food mill or strainer. Cook in a small amount of water until the apples are soft and bubbling. Use a food mill or strainer to remove the skin and seeds, sweeten as desired, and your applesauce is ready to freeze or can.

To freeze, allow the sauce to cool and then ladle into freezer containers. Allow a 1/2 inch of space at the top for the sauce to expand when frozen.

To can, ladle the hot sauce into clean, hot quart-size canning jars, to within a 1/2 inch of the top (this is called headspace). Add a food mill or strainer to remove the skin and seeds, sweeten as desired, and your applesauce is ready to freeze or can.

To make crock pot apple butter, cut apples in halves or quarters and pack into the crock pot. Do not add water. Cook for 18 hours on a low setting without removing the lid. Remove the apples from the crock pot and run through a food mill or strainer. Add sugar to taste, 3 teaspoons cinnamon, and up to 1 teaspoon cloves. Pour purée back into the crock pot and cook another 4 hours on low. Pour apple butter into sterilized hot half-pint jars (this recipe makes 5 to 7 half-pints), leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Tighten the lids and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath.

To dry apples, use your oven or an electric dehydrator. Wash, dry, and core the apples, peeling them if desired. Slice the apples 1/4 inch thick. To prevent browning, dip the slices in a mixture of 1/4 cup of lemon juice and a quart of water. Dry in the oven on a baking sheet for 6 to 8 hours at 140 degrees, or follow directions for an electric dehydrator. When the apples are leathery, cool and store them in an airtight container on a dark shelf. For longer storage, keep dried apples in the freezer.

GRAPEs can be turned into grape juice with basic canning equipment. Destem, sort, and wash the grapes (Concord grapes are a good choice); then put 1 to 1 1/2 cups in each quart jar. Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of sugar and fill the jar with boiling water, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Tighten the lids and process 15 minutes in the water bath canner. The grape juice becomes more flavorful as it sits, so wait a few weeks before using the juice.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH, PUMPKIN, and SWEET POTATOES can be frozen for easy use in soups or pies. Wash, peel, and cut the squash or sweet potatoes into chunks; cook in a small amount of water until chunks are tender but not mushy. Or, cook the food until soft and then puree it. Allow the food to cool before filling freezer containers. Remember to allow 1/2 inch of space at the top for expansion.

With just a little effort now you can enjoy autumn’s bounty all winter!

Mary Clemens Meyer and her daughter, Susanna Meyer, are co-authors of Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze, or Dry Almost Anything (Herald Press, 2010, www.mpn.net/savingtheseasons). Mary works as an editor from her home, Strawberry Hill Farm, near Fresno, OH. She and her husband, Ron, grow certified organic produce, raise pastured poultry and grass-fed beef, and keep a flock of free-range laying hens. She may be reached at strawberryhillfarm1@gmail.com.

Faces of Fracking: Tell Your Story
OEFFA is currently collecting stories about farmers impacted by fracking. The stories will be highlighted on our website and used to help educate other farmers, rural landowners, and policy makers about the risks of high volume hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking.

For more information, go to http://policy.oeffa.org/fracking or contact MacKenzie Bailey at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 or mackenzie@oeffa.org.
Farm to Table
Savoring the Seasons
by Trish Mumme

Versatile Fall Greens
Autumn is the time to enjoy leafy greens in soups, pasta, or as side dishes. Freeze some arugula pesto, or mustard or collard greens to feast on nutritious greens all winter.

Bow Tie Pasta with Arugula Pesto

1/2 lb. green or yellow wax beans, or chopped fresh broccoli
12 oz. farfalle or bow tie pasta
1 pt. cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
2 lg. sweet red peppers, cut into strips
1 Tbs. vegetable oil
1 cup Italian blend shredded cheese

Trim beans and slant-cut into 1 inch pieces. Cook pasta according to directions, adding beans during last 5 minutes of cooking. Meanwhile, sauté peppers in vegetable oil until they begin to blacken, stirring often. When beans and pasta are both “al dente,” drain and rinse. Meanwhile, grind pesto ingredients in a blender until smooth. Mix with pasta and beans. Mix in sautéed peppers. Pour into serving bowls and top with cherry tomato halves and shredded cheese.

Ham, White Bean, and Mustard Greens Soup

1 Tbs. olive oil
1 cup onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
4-8 oz. cooked ham, diced
1 tsp. dried thyme
2 bay leaves

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and garlic and sauté 3 minutes, until soft. Add ham and cook 2 minutes. Stir in thyme and bay leaves, then add beans and broth and bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook 20 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaves. Add mustard greens and simmer 1 minute, until greens wilt. Remove from heat and season to taste. Ladle soup into bowls and top with parmesan cheese.

Collard Greens and Red Lentils

1 med. onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 tsp. garam masala
1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes, no salt added

Bring 1/2 cup water to a simmer in a large deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and cook 5 minutes or until onion is translucent. Stir in garam masala and cook 1 minute. Add tomatoes and their juices with 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and stir in collards. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Meanwhile, combine lentils and 2 cups water in a medium pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook about 8 minutes or until lentils are tender. Stir lentils into skillet with collards and serve.

How to Save Tomato Seed

Choose your tomatoes. Most commercial varieties are hybrids, and the seed you save from these will not produce fruit identical to the one you saved seed from. Instead, the seed will produce one of the parent varieties. Heirloom and open-pollinated tomatoes will produce the same tomato variety as the plant it came from.

1. Place the tomato seeds and their juices in a glass jar. Add no more than 25 percent water and slosh it around.
2. Place the jar someplace warm for two or three days. Check on it every day and stir it a little.
3. After a few days, mold should form on the top. Allowing mold to form mimics the rotting of the tomato in nature, or the digestive system of an animal, and breaks down the clear gel coat around the seeds. Once mold covers the top of the liquid and the seeds have begun to sink, they are ready for cleaning.
4. Rinse the seeds and pour them through a fine mesh strainer. Scoop the seeds out of the strainer and onto a plate.
5. Allow the seeds to dry at room temperature.
6. When the seeds are completely dry, store them in a moisture-proof container in a cool, dry place. Tomato seeds can last for more than 10 years if stored properly, although germination rates are likely to decline over time.

Information provided by The Seed Ambassadors Project. Learn more about saving seed at http://www.seedambassadors.org/docs/seedzine4handout.pdf.

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JANISSE RAY
AUTHOR, THE SEED UNDERGROUND: A GROWING REVOLUTION TO SAVE FOOD

MICHAEL POTTER
PRESIDENT, EDEN FOODS
BOARD MEMBER, NON-GMO PROJECT

ANDRÉ LEU
PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM)

MICHAEL POTTER
JANISSE RAY
ANDRÉ LEU
Non-Timber Forest Products Workshop
Friday, November 2 — 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
The Vinton Furnace State Experimental Forest
35700 Ball Diamond Rd., Dundas, OH
Join Rural Action’s Forestry Program for a workshop on non-timber forest product income opportunities and management strategies. Cost: $10, includes lunch. For more information, call (740) 767-4938 or email cdilbone@ruralaction.org.

Innovative Farmers of Ohio Conference
Friday, November 2 — Saturday, November 3
Ohio Wesleyan University
Delaware, OH
Innovative Farmers of Ohio will hold a Friday fundraiser featuring local food and drinks and guest speaker and author Ben Hewitt. The evening will conclude with the announcement of the 2012 Ben Stinner Award winner. A conference on Saturday will feature workshops for farmers, market managers, and interested consumers. For more information, call (440) 423-0859 or go to http://www.ifoh.org.

Southwest OEFFA Chapter Meeting
Sunday, November 11 — 1 p.m.
Gorman Heritage Farm
10052 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, OH
Join OEFFA’s Southwest Chapter for a meeting to discuss Xavier University’s new agriculture program and plan for the chapter’s 2013 programs. Free. For more information, call (513) 561-0174 or email sgodschalk@yahoo.com.

Heart of Ohio Chapter Meeting
Monday, November 12 — 7 – 9 p.m.
Granville Schools District Office
130 N. Granger St., Granville, OH
OEFFA’s Heart of Ohio Chapter will meet to discuss raising layers and meat chickens, including housing, breeds, feed and nutrition, medications, cost, urban constraints, and processing. A short business meeting will start at 7 p.m. and the gardening and farming discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m. Free. For more information, call (740) 587-8114 or email cdilbone@granvilleschools.org.

Break Baking Workshop
Saturday, November 3 — 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Stratford Ecological Center
3083 Liberty Rd., Delaware, OH
Terri Litchfield will teach you how to make homemade breads, including oatmeal bread, dinner rolls, and restaurant “copy cat” bread. Cost: $30. For more information, call (740) 363-2548 or go to www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

Farm to Table Cooking Series: Soup, Scones, and Butters
Wednesday, November 7 — 6:30 – 9 p.m.
Meshewa Kitchen at Turner Farm
7550 Given Rd., Cincinnati, OH
Turner Farm’s Gail Lennig will demonstrate how to make scones, butters, and three different kinds of soups. Cost: $45, includes all class supplies. For more information, call (513) 561-7400 or email glennig@cinci.rr.com.

Innovative Farmers of Ohio Conference
Monday, January 14 — 7 – 9 p.m.
Granville Schools District Office
130 N. Granger St., Granville, OH
Join OEFFA’s Heart of Ohio Chapter for a meeting about garden design and improving the soil. One group will discuss urban garden design and implementation, including seed and plant selection, seed starting, planting, irrigation, soil amendments, and pest and weed control. The other group will discuss rural soil improvement issues, including using compost and manure, increasing microbes, making and using compost tea, proper tillage, and using a rototiller. A short business meeting will start at 7 p.m. and the gardening and farming discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m. Free. For more information, call (740) 587-8114 or email cdilbone@granvilleschools.org.

Farm to Table Cooking Series: Soups, Scones, and Butters
Wednesday, January 16 — 6:30 – 9 p.m.
Meshewa Kitchen at Turner Farm
7550 Given Rd., Cincinnati, OH
Turner Farm’s Gail Lennig will demonstrate how to make scones, butters, and three different kinds of soups. Cost: $45, includes all class supplies. For more information, call (513) 561-7400 or email glennig@cinci.rr.com.

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OEFFA’s 34th Annual Conference: Growing Opportunities, Cultivating Change
Friday, February 15 - Sunday, February 17
Granville Middle and High schools
248 New Burg St., Granville, OH
OEFFA’s two-day conference is Ohio’s largest sustainable agriculture conference, featuring keynote speakers George Siemon and Nicolette Hahn Niman, more than 90 workshops, local and organic meals, a kids’ conference, childcare, trade show, and Saturday night entertainment. Full-day Friday pre-conferences will also be offered. Registration will be open in December. For more information, see pg. 4, call (614) 421-2022, or go to www.oeffa.org/2013.

Internship Opportunities with OEFFA
Do you know a college student interested in sustainable and organic agriculture, policy, and education? OEFFA is offering several intern opportunities for this school year! Openings exist in organic certification, communications, policy, and education. It’s a great way to gain professional experience, while advancing the cause of sustainable and organic agriculture in Ohio.

Internship duration and work hours are flexible. The internships are unpaid; however, those Ohio State University students qualifying for the Federal Work/Study Program may be eligible for compensation. If your university program offers credit for internships, we will make an effort to tailor the internship as appropriate.

For more information, please contact Julia Barton at (614) 262-2022 Ext. 220 or julia@oeffa.org or Mila Petruziello at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206 or mila@oeffa.org.
Books, Guides and Reports

Organic Fruit, Vegetable, and Dairy Guides — Cornell University has released production guides that outline general practices for growing vegetables and fruit crops using organic integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. The guides include sections on cover crops, resistant varieties, crop rotation, field selection, soil quality, and nutrient management. In addition, specific guides are available for organic dairy IPM, apples, blueberries, grapes, strawberries, beans, carrots, cole crops, cucumbers, squash, lettuce, peas, potatoes, and spinach.

http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide

Organic Contracts Guide — The Farmers' Legal Action Group has released a Farmers' Guide to Organic Contracts to help organic farmers make informed decisions when evaluating, negotiating, and managing contract agreements with buyers. This farmer-friendly guide includes a basic overview of contract laws important to farmers, a checklist farmers can use to review contract offers, descriptions of how NOP regulations interact with organic contracts, explanations and examples of over 100 types of organic contract provisions, and information about solving the types of contract disputes that commonly arise in the organic market.

http://www.bit.ly/NE2kQ

Natural Beekeeping Handbook — Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) has released an updated guide for beekeepers. The handbook is based on CNG’s Apiary Standards and includes the list of allowed and prohibited substances for CNG beekeeping.

http://www.naturallygrown.org/store


http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/


Mobile Cooling Unit Plans — North Carolina State University has released directions for constructing a mobile cooling unit for farmers called Pack ‘N Cool which can be built for less than $3,500.

http://plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/2012/08/20/pack-n-cool/

Water Conservation Bulletin — The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program has released Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch, describing innovative, SARE-funded research on a range of water conservation options including soil management, such as using compost, conservation tillage, and cover crops; plant management, featuring crop rotation, water-conserving plants, and rangeland drought mitigation; and water management strategies such as low-volume irrigation and water recycling.

http://www.bit.ly/Qodq50

Pesticide Drift and Organic Production Guide — Researchers at Purdue University and the University of Minnesota have released a publication, Driftwatch: Watch Out for Pesticide Drift and Organic Production, describing the consequences of pesticide drift onto organic farms, and steps that pesticide applicators and organic producers can take to reduce the risk of damage from drift.


Websites and Online Media

USDA Organic Literacy Initiative — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released a series of resources as part of its new Organic Literacy Initiative, an effort to help connect current and prospective organic farmers, ranchers, and processors with available USDA resources. The materials available include a guide to USDA programs and services that support organic agriculture, a brochure about organic certification, an agency directory, an organic blog, and more.

http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/organicinfo

Ohio Hay Directory — The Ohio Department of Agriculture has created a website to help farmers affected by drought find hay to purchase for their livestock.

http://www.agri.ohio.gov/HayDirectory

ATTRA Sustainable Operations Feature — The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA) has launched a new feature on their website called “Sustainable Producer Spotlight.” They are seeking producers to highlight from around the country.

https://attra.ncat.org/spotlight.html

2012 Census of Agriculture — Every five years, the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts a Census of Agriculture to collect important data for all U.S. farms and ranches. This data is used by local, state, and federal government, nonprofit agencies, researchers, and others working on farm policy. NASS will mail out census forms in late December, and responses are due by February 4.

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov

Funding

Research and Education Grants — The North Central Region (NCR)-SARE program is accepting proposals for its Research and Education Grant Program which funds projects that explore and promote environmentally sound, profitable, and socially responsible food and fiber systems. Proposals are due November 9.

http://www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Our-Grant-Programs/Research-and-Education

Youth Educator Sustainable Agriculture Grants — NCR-SARE is accepting proposals for its Youth Educator Grant Program. Projects should help youth discover the benefits of sustainable farming and ranching. Proposals are due November 15.

http://www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Our-Grant-Programs/Youth-Educator-Grant-Program

Organic Farming Research Foundation Grants — The Organic Farming Research Foundation is offering funding for research on organic seed quality or crop breeding. Proposals are due November 19.

http://offr.org/proposal-information-research-projects

Farmer Rancher Grants — NCR-SARE is accepting proposals for its Farmer Rancher Grant Program. Proposals should explore sustainable agriculture solutions to on-farm problems and include how project results will be shared. Proposals are due November 29.

http://www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants/Farmer-Rancher-Grant-Program

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OEFFA WELCOMES NEW STAFF

MEGAN OGLE
OEFFA extends a warm welcome to Megan Ogle, Certification Program Assistant, who joined the OEFFA team in July. Megan received her Bachelors degree in Environmental Studies from Denison University, and is currently researching on songbird diversity on Conservation Reserve Program grasslands in southwest Ohio as part of Miami University’s Environmental Science Masters Program. Previously, she has worked at Food and Water Watch, Locust Run Farm, and Birdsong Farm. Welcome, Megan!

MARY ANN HOPPER
OEFFA also welcomes Mary Ann Hopper as OEFFA’s new part-time Membership Services Associate. Mary Ann previously managed membership and charitable giving for BalletMet, where she gained extensive experience in donor database management, gift processing, and event registration. She has also worked in publishing, writing, and graphic design. She continues part-time as Grants Manager for Habitat for Humanity-Mid-Ohio. Her attention to detail and membership management experience will make her a terrific asset to the OEFFA team.

Lauren Ketcham previously coordinated OEFFA’s membership work, but will now focus on publications, media, and other communications as OEFFA’s full-time Communications Coordinator. Steve Cabral and Laura Anglim have taken on new roles as Crop Certification Manager and Compliance and Quality Assurance Coordinator. Steve Cabral and Laura Anglim have taken on new roles as Crop Certification Manager and Compliance and Quality Assurance Coordinator. As part of this transition, Julia Barton is taking over administrative functions as Certification Program Manager, Andy Hupp is Certification Operations Coordinator, and Kate Schmidt is now Compliance and Quality Assurance Coordinator. Steve Cabral and Laura Anglim have taken on new roles as Crop Certification Specialists.

Finally, Certification Program Assistant, Erin Kanuckel, is leaving staff at the end of October and will be moving to Portland, ME. We wish her luck!

THANKS DANI, SAMIRA, AND ARIEL!
OEFFA was lucky to have three bright, passionate policy program interns from Ohio State University this summer: Danielle Deemer, Ariel Miller, and Samira Zoofan. They generously gave their time and energy to OEFFA helping develop materials on fracking, genetic engineering, and the Farm Bill; calling our members; collecting petition signatures, and much more. Thank you!

Call for Nominations: OEFFA’s Board of Trustees
OEFFA’s nomination committee is now seeking nominations for board members. If you would like to make a nomination, please contact Ed Snavely at (740) 694-8622 or curlytail_organic@msn.com. Nominations submitted by December 15 will appear in OEFFA’s winter newsletter. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor on the day of the election, which will be held during the annual business meeting at the OEFFA conference on February 16 in Granville, Ohio.

WELCOME NEW OEFFA MEMBERS

BUSINESS
Susan Kaiser, faire la cuisine

FAMILY FARM
Ron & Kaja Bruweris, Balsams Farm
Ronda Clark & Tim Stephens, Blackberry Sage Farm
Drew & Heather Freeman, Freeman Farms
Charles Grubb & Mary Ervin, Stoneybrook Farm
Dave & Barbara Kaelber, Rustling Oaks Farm
Diane & Steve Lambright, Star Light Farm
Pam & Jeff Lanum, Lanum Farms
Henry & Kathryn Long, Blackberry Acres
Melissa & Andy Sponseller, Wrightway Farm
Robert & Linda Wheeler, Homer Page Farm

FAMILY
Kara & Ben Martell
Kathy & Jason Skestos

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
Rebekah Zimmerer, Procter Farm and Conference Center

INDIVIDUAL
Jarrod Clabaugh
Josh Clift
Patricia Dennis
Sandra HERSHEY
Jennifer Hurst
Nicolas Myers
Gail Powell
William Staler
Jay Weppler

STUDENT
Kelly Craig
Ariel Miller
Samira Zoofan

UN-CLASSIFIED ADS

Pasture for Rent: 35+ acres NE of Newark, 5 auto waterers, 5-7 paddocks planned. Call Pat in Licking County at (614) 946-4921.

Apprentices Wanted: Organic vegetable apprentices needed for 2013 season at Crown Point Ecology Center in Bath, OH. Grows 10 acres of vegetables for CSA and charity. Apprentices receive food and stipend. Housing available. Contact farm@crownpnt.org for a job description and application.

Gardener Wanted: Earth-Shares CSA in Loveland, OH near Cincinnati is looking for a gardener for the 2013 growing season and beyond. Go to www.earthsharescsa.org for more information and to apply.

Fence Posts Wanted: Up to 500 black locust fence posts 7-8’ long. Call John in Harrison County at (740) 942-8042.

Classified ads are free for members and $5 for non-members. Submissions no longer than 30 words are due by December 15 for the winter issue. Email oeffa@oeffa.org or call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 203.
It was a hard summer for farmers across Ohio and the U.S. According to the National Climatic Data Center, the 2012 drought was the worst in more than 50 years. Unusually hot and dry conditions affected seed germination and emergence; triggered unexpected pest and disease problems; reduced pollinator activity; created irrigation challenges and increased costs for farmers; disrupted plant, flower, and fruit growth and development; impacted crop ripening schedules, and lowered crop yields.

No farmers had it easy this summer, but research from the Rodale Institute suggests that organic farming methods that encourage soil health create crops more resilient to severe drought.

The Rodale Institute’s Farming Systems Trial (FST) has been tracking the performance of organically grown and conventionally grown corn and soybeans for the past 30 years. As America’s longest-running side-by-side comparison of these farming systems, the FST has revealed that crops grown organically are healthier and harder, and better able to cope with weather-related stress.

In four out of five drought years, the FST’s organically grown corn produced significantly higher yields than conventionally grown corn. The organic corn even outperformed drought-tolerant seed varieties. The Rodale Institute’s organically managed fields produced between 28 and 34 percent more corn than conventionally managed fields under drought conditions, compared to industry trials of drought tolerant seeds by Monsanto, DuPont, and Syngenta which only increased yields over conventional varieties by 5 to 15 percent.

Soybean trials produced similar results. FST figures show yields of 30 bushels per acre from organic soybeans compared to only 16 bushels per acre from conventionally grown soybeans under severe drought conditions.

Improved soil quality through organic management is credited for the performance advantage.

“Over time, organic practices encourage the soil to hold on to moisture more efficiently than conventionally managed soil,” says Jeff Moyer, Rodale’s farm manager. “The higher content of organic matter also makes organic soil less compact so that root systems can penetrate more deeply to find moisture.”

As climate change makes weather patterns more extreme and less predictable, this research underscores the importance of organic farming methods for feeding the world and creating sustainable food systems.