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A GATHERING IN CELEBRATION OF OHIO FARMS AND FLAVORS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30 - 4 P.M.

MAPLESTAR FARM
AUBURN TOWNSHIP, OHIO



Photo: Geoff Powers, *Organic Valley Times*

Jake and Dawn Trethewey of Maplestar Farm

We had so much fun (and ate so well!) at The Farmers' Table at Jorgensen Farms last year that we decided to take it on the road!

Organic farmers Jake and Dawn Trethewey of Maplestar Farm are hosting this year's event on their Geauga County organic vegetable farm. The Trethewey's long-time restaurant partners, The Driftwood Group, are crafting a truly unique menu under the guidance of Erik Martinez, Executive Chef at Cibreo.

Just like last year, guests will tour the farm, sample carefully crafted hors d'oeuvres, and enjoy beer, wine, and tea before sitting down to an exciting four course meal, featuring wine pairings. All proceeds will support OEFFA.



THE MENU

This emerging menu will spotlight the freshest, local summer ingredients from northeast Ohio. The dinner will be rooted in certified organic vegetables from Maplestar Farm, and include an heirloom tomato salad, a modern take on a traditional fish fry featuring fresh Lake Erie perch, and a main course pork trio showcasing a pastured Berkshire/Chester White cross hog from Tea Hills Farms. Top it all off with an Auburn sweet corn custard tart for dessert!



SPECIAL GUEST ALAN GUEBERT

OEFFA 2015 conference keynoter and award-winning agricultural journalist Alan Guebert is stopping by for a hearty toast to local food. He'll be signing his new book, *The Land of Milk and Uncle Honey*, and sharing stories.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, go to
www.oeffa.org/farmerstable or call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206.

A special thanks to the following event partners:

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CLEVELAND

Kevin Morgan Studio | Organic Valley | Storehouse Tea | Tea Hills Farms

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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 alternative food system.

Members receive the newsletter as part of annual dues of \$10 (student), \$35 (individual), \$50 (family), \$50 (family farm), \$50 (nonprofit), \$100 (business), or \$1,000 (individual lifetime). Newsletter subscription only is \$20/year. Membership information is available on the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org or from the OEFFA office.

Editorial and advertising correspondence may be sent directly to the OEFFA office or newsletter@oeffa.org. Unsolicited manuscripts welcome.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of the membership, officers, or directors.

OEFFA does not endorse the products or services of any advertiser, and reserves the right to refuse placement of inappropriate advertising.

OEFFA is recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and donations to OEFFA are deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.

OEFFA shall be a democratic association of chartered grassroots chapters, existing within state bylaws, working together to create and promote a healthful, ecological, accountable, and sustainable system of agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere.

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Next deadline: September 15, 2015

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Charlie Gonzalez, President, (917) 930-3329, swoeffa@gmail.com

photos: George Remington

SAVE THE DATE!**OEFFA's 37th Annual Conference****Growing Right by Nature****February 13-14, 2016**
Granville, OH

Ohio's largest sustainable agriculture conference will feature keynote speakers, diverse workshops, local and organic meals, a kids' conference, childcare, a trade show, and Saturday evening entertainment. Registration will open in December.

Make This YOUR Conference!

Workshop applications, workshop topic and presenter ideas, food donations, and volunteers to help plan and organize workshops, meals, the book table, raffle, and kids' conference are needed now. Don't wait to apply to be a workshop presenter if you want to be considered; only a limited number of spots are available.

For more information, or to request a workshop application, contact Milo at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206 or milo@oeffa.org.





Director's Letter

Carol Golland Executive Director

OEFFA and the Road Ahead

We are grateful that so many of you responded to our request for feedback earlier this year as part of our strategic planning. We had such a tremendous response, in fact, that our consultant, with decades of experience doing this work, said he'd never seen anything like it. Thank you for taking the time to let us know about your experience as an OEFFA member and what matters to you!

Based on your feedback, we have re-committed to education, certification, and policy advocacy work. We also know that we must sustain this work by building a strong, vibrant organization.

The board has approved the goals, as well as the strategies we will use to achieve them and the benchmarks against which we'll measure our progress.

Between now and 2020, we will:

- Work to ensure that farmers and growers have the knowledge and skills they need to produce food using organic practices for their own consumption and to manage profitable farm businesses;
- Help consumers be knowledgeable about the environmental, economic, health, and social consequences of food production;
- Uphold the integrity of organics while providing excellent certification service at low cost;
- Educate and advocate for state and federal policies that create a just food system and create conditions for organic farmers to succeed; and
- Nurture a financially sound and sustainable organization, with a growing base of members and other supporters.

Clearly these goals are not a radical departure from the work OEFFA has done for almost 40 years! To paraphrase what you told us: "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" so we're going to keep on doing what we've been doing.

As always, though, the devil is in the details or, in this case, the fun is in turning goals into concrete action! Stay tuned for more news as our crackerjack staff translates these objectives into great educational events and programs for you and stronger policy advocacy for even greater impact, while honing our fantastic certification services and making sure our organization stays relevant to you and your needs.

◀ THE EVOLUTION OF CROP INSURANCE ▶

During the 1930s, many American farms were decimated by the Dust Bowl and very low commodity prices. In response, Congress established the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to provide a safety net that would protect American farmers from the uncertainties of weather and market fluctuations.

Nearly eight decades later, crop insurance is now the single largest federal agricultural program, costing taxpayers an average of \$5.8 billion per year. Despite the FCIC's original mandate to protect all farmers, the top 10 percent of farmers rake in more than half of all premium subsidies. Federal crop insurance has become a costly, inefficient program that favors industrial monocrop agriculture over small, diversified, sustainable farms.

How does crop insurance work?

The federal government subsidizes both farmers and the companies that insure them. Only 19 companies are approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to administer crop insurance. These corporations receive subsidies to cover the operating costs of offering insurance, while farmers receive premium subsidies that average 62 percent of the cost of that insurance, even at very high levels of coverage. Farmers also have the option to insure their revenue instead of their yield, which can result in insurance payouts even when the farmer suffers no actual loss, due to the unrealistic calculation method that adjusters use. Tellingly, 82 percent of crop insurance policies in 2011 insured revenues, not yields. As a result, large, cash-flush farms are incentivized to buy up more land and farm marginal parcels that are nearly guaranteed to yield poorly.

What about small, sustainable farmers?

Some reforms to the crop insurance program are underway. For the first time, the 2014 Farm Bill created an option to insure whole farms, not just specific crops. This helps level the playing field between diversified farms and monocrop operations. In addition, historically, organic producers have only been insured for the same prices as conventional farmers, despite the higher value of their crops. The 2014 Farm Bill also mandated that the USDA finalize new organic price elections.

However, despite these "wins," there is still plenty of work to be done. OEFFA is pressing for additional crop insurance reforms that will protect small farmers, end penalties for beginning farmers, protect our environment, and save taxpayer money. Contact OEFFA today at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 if you believe we need to reform crop insurance subsidy programs, and stay tuned for our policy bulletin and upcoming newsletter articles to learn more about crop insurance and how you can get involved.

◀ INTRODUCE YOUR VETERINARIAN TO OEFFA ▶

Farmers need professionals who understand that an organic livestock management system relies on preventative health practices to reduce the risk of common diseases, and to ensure animal welfare and productivity.

To help educate veterinarians, Extension educators, farmers, and other professionals who work with certified organic livestock herds and flocks, OEFFA and The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Preventative Medicine will continue to offer events as part of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Health series. Monthly webinars, scheduled through November, will cover various aspects of dairy and poultry health management and the National Organic Program standards.

A web-based professional networking forum has been established as an ongoing resource for generating ideas and answering questions. Continuing education credits are available, along with scholarships to the 2016 OEFFA Conference and Independent Organic Inspectors Association Organic Livestock Inputs Certificate training for practicing veterinarians.

Tell your livestock veterinarian about these opportunities, or contact OEFFA so we can supply them with more information. To learn more about the series, watch recorded webinars, or register for upcoming events, go to www.oeffa.org/q/organiclivestock or contact Eric Pawlowski at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or eric@oeffa.org.

What is the Win?

The Importance of Crafting Your Recipe for Success

By Corinna Bench

This summer I made several batches of garlic dill pickles using a new online recipe. After letting them sit for a few weeks as instructed, I finally tried them. The verdict: Best Pickle Ever. When I went back to the website, I couldn't locate the recipe. I have searched everywhere, but to no avail. There are other recipes out there, but they aren't the same. I am devastated. I can't replicate those winning pickles because I don't know the secret recipe.

This story illustrates an important truth for running a successful farm business. Successful farms make a discipline of studying their business, so that they know the secret ingredients that make them successful. Your farm's "secret recipe" is something you need to be able to identify and define, so you can keep doing it, protect it, indoctrinate your staff into it, replicate it, and ensure that it is championed in every fiber of your business.

Over the past two years, our farm has begun to really study our business, and we are now seeing significant progress. During this process, we've taken many stabs at writing long-winded mission statements full of buzzwords and colorful adjectives. What we found is that these statements have never really led to practical, action-oriented steps or results. Then, while listening to a podcast, I heard a question that finally helped us to uncover our secret recipe: **"What is the win?"**

A CSA customer picks up their share at the market. Employees work hard to know each customer by name.



Photo: Shared Legacy Farms

This short question asks you to look around your farm and identify behaviors among your customers and staff that you would define as a "win" for your farm. What things have customers said or done or what moments have you witnessed where you thought to yourself, "Freeze! I want more people to do that!" As soon as we asked ourselves this question, certain behaviors began to leap out at us. Here are a few examples of "winning" moments for our farm:

- ◇ When a customer invites us to dinner at their home
- ◇ A positive email message or a handwritten note, especially a long one that a customer took some time to write
- ◇ A customer interacting regularly with our Facebook page
- ◇ Customers who physically come out to the farm to volunteer or attend a farm event

As we began to identify these behaviors, we noticed a pattern. Many of these actions were focused on building integrity relationships with our customers. Customers and staff who exhibited these winning traits were becoming our loyal friends and driving our customer retention rate.

I suddenly realized we had identified our "win." While I still couldn't phrase it eloquently with buzz words and plush adjectives, I could finally share in everyday language what we were all about, and it wasn't just selling quality vegetables (although that is certainly important too). **Our farm's "win" revolves around creating integrity relationships, so people really know that we care about them.**

What will you discover when you ask yourself this question? Your answer will be based on your farm's unique values, and it's likely that your "wins" will be different than ours.

But...don't stop there. **The real power in knowing your "win" is to leverage it, put it to work for you, and use it to develop your "secret recipe" for success.** For us, knowing that connecting with people is our farm's biggest "win" was good information, but we needed to find out how we could encourage these behaviors and create opportunities for our "wins" to happen again and again.

Developing this action plan was a game-changer for us in growing our community supported agriculture (CSA) program this year. We asked ourselves: If building real relationships is the "win," then what specific things can we do as a CSA to make that more likely to happen? What can we do to show that knowing and growing relationships is important to us? We came up with a list of specific actions that we could implement. Here are some examples:

1. **Reach out.** I compose five handwritten notes a week to individual customers. We paid attention to our customer's interests and comments at pickup sites, and wrote notes in the margins of our checklists. Often I targeted customers that were showcasing the "winning" behaviors, to applaud and thank them for this behavior, and highlight why their actions

were so meaningful to us. Other times it would be a note of care and encouragement based on a struggle they were going through. Writing these notes wasn't an easy task to do at first, but it reaped huge rewards for us. Not only did it cement loyalty and friendship with the recipients, it trained our staff to look for these behaviors each week and notice them.

2. **Share the win.** We post snapshots on our Facebook page of these "winning" values being lived out in our CSA, like dinner photos sent by customers of their kids eating the food from our CSA boxes. Pictures have become a powerful medium for us to cast vision for what we value.
3. **Stay engaged.** I watch the Facebook feed for signs of our customers' interests and stories to affirm that their world matters to me. Do I always want to read the newsfeed every morning? No. But it's a good way to find out what's happening in our customers' lives and keep in touch with them. This is also a great place to get ideas for special gifts to send your customers. When one of our customers announced the birth of their baby, I sent a pack of diapers and a gift card in the mail along with our congratulations. The result? The parents showed up on the last CSA pick up day, proudly showing off their little baby to us. Here's another example: I found out that one of our new customers owns a local garlic salad dressing business. We grow lots of garlic, so guess what we priority mailed to them? Yes, I paid \$6 in postage and gave away garlic, but these over-the-top gestures go a long way to make an impression. We have discovered that the people we engage this way become "lifers" in our business, so this small fee leads to high customer satisfaction, long-term loyalty, and customer referrals. In fact, the majority of my marketing budget consists of these "customer care packages."
4. **Learn people's names.** We felt it was important to learn all our customers' names. How could we accomplish this with a 400 member CSA? The first week of CSA pickup we took pictures of our customers holding white boards with their names written on them. Then we literally studied them like flashcards. Before long, we knew everyone's name. Did it take some effort and discipline? Absolutely. Did our customers notice? You bet they did.

5. **Spend time with your customers.** We noticed that customers who attend our farm events are more likely to stay with us year after year, especially if we make a point to try and have a quality conversation with them during the event. Something intangible happens in those experiences that strengthens the bonds with our customers. Because of this, we are always looking for ways to create personalized farm experiences. This past season, one of our customers dropped an important hint that his first grade son, Simon, had always wanted to ride in a combine. We invited Simon for a 2 hour ride of his life. We cemented a relationship (and a customer) that day.
6. **Encourage community.** I write a weekly article in the newsletter that spotlights a CSA member family. The process involves some planning, as I have to target a particular customer in advance, ask them lots of questions, and find the "angle" I want to use to share their story. The resulting article shows our CSA family that individual stories matter to us and is a way to highlight the values we share.
7. **Reward customers for referrals.** The best way we get new CSA customers is by word of mouth from current customers. These referring customers are very valuable to us, and it was critical that we replicate this behavior. So, we developed a rewards program: \$10 in market bucks for every new customer they bring us. Last year, one of our customers got eight of these market buck cards! This being an outstanding example of a "win," I sent her a nice thank you note as well!

It's not enough to just know "the win" and your "secret recipe." The real power comes in replicating the win over and over again. And every time you do, it creates momentum and positive energy to power your business forward.

But, whatever you do: protect that secret recipe, because if you lose it, you'll need to figure out the ingredients all over again.

Corinna Bench is co-owner of Shared Legacy Farms. She and her husband Kurt Bench own and operate a 400 member CSA in the Toledo area. For more information, go to www.sharedlegacyfarms.com. Exceptional dill pickle recipes can be sent to slfarms2@gmail.com.

Reprinted with permission from Small Farm Central. Full length version available at <http://bit.ly/11YaN6i>.



CSA customers helped plant potatoes during an organized planting event. When customers attend farm events, they develop a relationship with the farm.

Growing an Understanding of Organics

Help OEFFA tell your customers about the benefits of organic farms!

To help Ohio consumers understand organic certification, what it means, how it works, and why it matters, OEFFA has created a series of double-sided, half page factsheets. Each one features pictures of real Ohio organic farmers and addresses a different aspect of organic farming.

If you are a certified organic farmer, these are for you! They are designed for market stands, CSA shares, and retail stores. Certified organic farmers can pick them up at the OEFFA office for free, download them from our website to print from home, share them on their websites and social media, or have OEFFA mail professionally printed copies for a small fee.

Four factsheets in the series are currently available:



Organic farmers... start with the soil.

Living soil is the foundation for healthy plants and nutritious food. Organic farmers know it's the soil that grows the crop. Improving soil fertility and building organic matter is their number one job.



Organic farmers... work with nature.

Farming organically is not just about replacing harmful synthetic chemicals with less harmful alternatives. It's about the whole system. Organic farmers strive to mimic the natural environment to grow food by working with—rather than controlling—nature.



Organic farmers... are open books.

Organic farmers are transparent and accountable, which means you can trust the organic label.



Organic farmers... restore biodiversity.

Farming can take a toll on biodiversity. Growing the same crop, row after row, removes the variety of life found in that place. Organic farmers recognize the importance of biodiversity and the unique role each species plays.

To order or download factsheets, go to www.oeffa.org/q/organicfactsheets or call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206.

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Developing Sustainable Flocks of Poultry

By Jim Adkins

Photo: Black Australorps bred by Pat Whitaker of The Forest Farm in Fairview, NC

If you're a farmer looking to start or expand your poultry flock, it's important that you carefully consider the source of your poultry to ensure sustainability, vigor, and high performance.

Why is this important? Let me share some personal experience. For several years, I worked in the commercial turkey industry and all of the turkeys we raised were unable to reproduce naturally! Human beings needed to assist in the process of reproduction by collecting semen from the toms and inseminating the hens to fertilize the eggs.

The commercial chicken industry is no different, using sophisticated, proprietary crosses of specific industrial stocks which can only produce predictable results when managed on a commercial scale. All meat chicken and egg layer hybrids, such as Freedom Ranger and Label Rouge, cannot reproduce and hatch the same species of birds. They are genetically controlled by the companies that own them. Poultry that cannot reproduce naturally are not sustainable and require farmers to be reliant on a handful of genetic companies to maintain and grow their flocks.

This is an urgent matter and we must take action to prevent the old historical, heritage breeds of poultry from disappearing. Because farmers have grown less dependent on them to produce meat and eggs, true Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks, New Hampshires, Dorkings, Orpingtons, Australorps, Chanteclers, and even Leghorns are very hard to find! It is even harder to find a breeder who is interested in breeding them to the American Poultry Association Standard of Perfection, which seeks to establish practical poultry that are not only beautiful and symmetrical, but also useful and productive.

We need to bring these birds back to the kitchen tables of American families. This means that we must breed the production qualities back into all the dual purpose breeds of heritage poultry so they can reproduce naturally, enjoy life on pasture, and have a normal, slow growth rate!

So, where should you source these heritage, standard breeds of poultry? Let me warn you, don't respond by running out to your local farm store and buying some baby chicks! And definitely don't call one of the large hatcheries! Most hatcheries in North America hatch millions of chicks and poults, and because of the emphasis on quantity over quality, most are not invested in selective breeding which emphasizes vigor and production qualities. Large hatcheries also usually don't cull for undesirable traits, like aggression.

So where should you source your birds? Your best option is to locate breeders who are committed to breeding for genetic diversity, selecting for production qualities, and culling rigorously. That is the key. Unless we intentionally work hard to breed, grow, and eat these heritage breeds of poultry, we will lose them forever.

Jim Adkins is a Sustainable Poultry Specialist with the Sustainable Poultry Network, which certifies poultry breeders, provides an online directory of certified breeders, and offers other resources for poultry producers. For more information, go to www.spnusa.com or email jim@spnusa.com.

Biodiversity, Butterflies, Birds, and Buffers: Financial Resources for Your Farm



Organic farmers are required to take steps to protect against contamination from prohibited materials, provide wildlife habitat, and promote biodiversity.

To help defray the costs of these measures, such as taking land out of production for buffer areas, programs are available to help organic and sustainable farmers meet these goals and receive payments for specific practices.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which can offer cost-share, rental payments, and bonus payments for the creation of different kinds of wildlife habitat. Specifically, two CRP options are available for creating wildlife habitat:

Pollinator Habitat



More than 30 percent of all food crops depend on insect pollination. Due to the decline of native pollinators and managed honeybees, FSA developed a conservation practice to help enhance and restore habitat for pollinator species.

Known as Conservation Practice 42 (CP42) this practice supports farmers planting pollinator-friendly wildflowers and legumes in an entire field or in blocks or strips within a field.

The program aids farmers in creating beneficial habitat for pollinators which is important to crop production, while helping organic farmers comply with Organic System Plan biodiversity requirements. Farmers can receive a modest income stream on land in buffer areas and the program offers cost-share for implementation, yearly rental payments, and a signing incentive payment.

The land has to meet certain crop history requirements. Strips, if used, must be a minimum of 20 feet wide and the minimum size requirement of CP42 is at least 0.5 acres. Contracts must be 10 years in length.



Upland Bird Habitat Buffers

Conservation Practice 33 (CP33) was created in response to the decline of bobwhite quail populations. These birds numbered close to 60 million in 1980, but their population declined by 94 percent between 1985 and 2014 in parts of southern Ohio.

The habitat buffers created in this program provide food and cover for the quail and other wildlife in cropland areas. The practice must be applied around field edges of eligible cropland and involves planting native grasses, legumes, forbs, and limited shrubs.

This practice also helps organic producers to be in compliance with organic system planning and provides a 50 percent cost-share, annual rental payments, an incentive payment for signing the CRP contract, and an incentive payment for establishing the practice. CP33 eligibility is limited to certain parts of Ohio.

Take advantage of these financial resources for your farm by going to <http://1.usa.gov/1B02R1M> or find your local Farm Service Agency office by calling (614) 255-2441.



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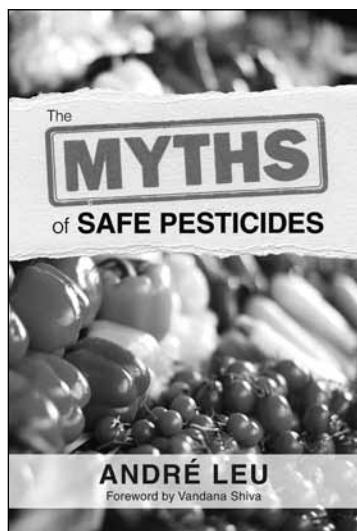
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www.spnUSA.com



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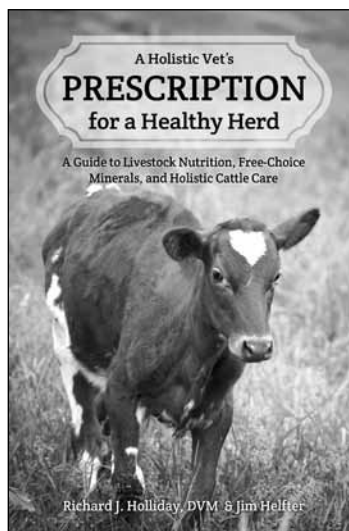


The Myths of Safe Pesticides

ANDRÉ LEU

Organic agriculturist and lecturer André Leu delves into a wealth of respected scientific journals to present the peer-reviewed evidence that proves the claims of chemical companies and pesticide regulators are not all they seem.

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NEWS BRIEFS

New Cancer Assessment of Pesticides Released

The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has assessed the carcinogenicity of five organophosphate pesticides. The herbicide glyphosate (more commonly known as Roundup) and the insecticides malathion and diazinon were classified as "probably carcinogenic" to humans. The insecticides tetrachlorvinphos and parathion were classified as "possibly carcinogenic." Research found convincing evidence that glyphosate, the most popular herbicide in the U.S., causes cancerous tumors in laboratory animals, and non-Hodgkins lymphoma and DNA and chromosomal damage in human cells.



Columbus Water Impacted by Nitrate Runoff

Farm fertilizer runoff is making headlines again as high nitrate levels caused Columbus officials this summer to urge pregnant women and babies not to drink water from its Dublin Road Water Plant, which serves much of western Columbus. Nitrates can interfere with oxygen flow and cause blood pressure fluctuations in certain people. Construction is now underway on a new \$35 million facility—being paid for by customer rate increases—that would allow the plant to filter nitrates.

Global Carbon Levels Surpass 400 ppm for Entire Month

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that for the first time in recorded history, global levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere averaged more than 400 parts per million (ppm) for an entire month in March 2015. Carbon dioxide emissions have risen by more than 120 ppm since pre-industrial times, with half of the increase occurring since 1980. Leading scientists have warned that to avoid the worst effects of a warming planet, atmospheric carbon dioxide should be reduced to below 350 ppm.



USDA to Certify Non-GMO Foods

Companies using no ingredients containing genetically modified organisms (GMO) can now receive certification from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use a "USDA Process Verified" label along with their non-GMO claims. The voluntary program requires companies to pay to participate in the Process Verified Program, submit audits, and undergo on-site inspections. The program, which verifies the processes established by the companies rather than setting a unified standard like organic certification, is the first government certification and labeling for non-GMO foods.

Chipotle Becomes First Fast Food Chain to Remove GE Foods from Its Menu



In April, Chipotle Mexican Grill announced it would stop serving food containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. The restaurant's announcement is the first of any major fast food chain. Fountain drinks sold still contain GE corn syrup and the meat and dairy served at the chain still comes from animals fed GE grain, in some cases. However, all 1,831 restaurants are now using non-GE corn and switching from soybean oil to sunflower oil and rice bran oil for their cooking.

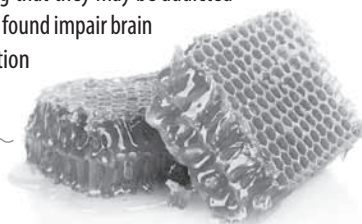
ODA Cancels Live Bird Exhibitions Due to Avian Flu Concerns

In a move designed to help protect Ohio's \$2.3 billion poultry industry from the avian flu, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) canceled all live bird exhibitions this year, including fairs and auctions. No cases of the virus, which primarily affects domestic poultry and is believed to be spread by wild, migrating birds, have been found in Ohio. Ohio is the second largest egg producer in the country, home to 28 million laying chickens, 12 million broilers, 8.5 million pullets, and 2 million turkeys.



Bees Drawn to Harmful Neonicotinoid-Laced Food

A study published in the journal *Nature* indicates that bees may be addicted to neonicotinoid pollen. Researchers offered bees food with concentrations of commonly used neonicotinoids as well as insecticide-free food; bees consistently chose to consume food containing the insecticides. Further analysis indicated that bees could not taste the neonicotinoids in the laced food, suggesting that they may be addicted to the insecticides, which other studies have found impair brain function, leading to learning and recognition problems that hurt hive health.



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What If Herbicides Fail Completely?

By Gene Logsdon

Weed control is becoming so complicated that even seasoned farmers need help keeping track of which new weedkillers and plant varieties they need to use and how to diversify and alternate them so the weeds don't develop resistance. Glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) alone is not enough anymore. I haven't read yet of anyone in the industry wondering out loud whether this strategy will really work. It might slow down the process by which weeds learn to enjoy a sip or two of a herbicide with their meals, but isn't it quite possible that if they are clever enough to immunize themselves to Roundup, they will also figure out a way to handle a cocktail of herbicides, even if they only get exposed to each of them every other year or so? Or if science finally conjures up a corn plant that can stand increasingly stronger and varied herbicides, then isn't it reasonable to wonder if in time no animal, let alone human, will eat it, or if it does, something dreadful will happen to its digestive tract? And all the while, the weeds will keep building up resistance until maybe only something like unadulterated sulfuric acid will lay them low. I imagine those new "maretail" weeds, as they are called in our neighborhood (have you seen how these awesome creatures grow when fertilized with Roundup?), getting so formidable that they will reach out from field's edge, ensnare innocent by-passers, and use them for compost.

Already, new genetically modified corn stalks are so tough that they wear out machinery and rubber tires faster than used to be the case. Tire companies are rushing to the scene with new, tougher treads. Cha-king, cha-king, cha-king, oh how the cash registers ring. At the moment, the Roundup alternative herbicide of choice is an old one, 2, 4-D, which is so malignant that hardly any plant has (yet) become immune to it. When glyphosate first came along to take the place of 2, 4-D type weedkillers, everyone was relieved because the latter were considered too dangerous for continued farm use.

I can conjure up all sorts of scenarios about the future of industrial corn. Eventually, when it becomes indigestible to insects and animals, it will be grown only for non-food purposes. Livestock by that time will all be raised on pasture, so the lack of corn will be no problem for food farming. As long as science can keep ahead of weeds, industrial corn will continue to be grown because after the grain is turned into gas, the stalks will be harvested, pelletized, and used for home heating or plywood-like panels for construction purposes. Eventually, however, the weeds will keep on rising to the occasion. Won't matter to real food farming because those farms will be numerous and small, and garden farmers will be able to keep weeds controlled with motor-powered cultivators or hoes. If the weeds become too tough for hoes, then flamethrowers to the rescue. Not even pigweeds can survive fire. But out in the vast moonscapes of industrial corn, the weeds will finally win and then science will realize that pigweeds make ethanol and methanol cheaper than corn does.

Stephen Powles, Director of the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative stresses the gravity of the situation because weed resistance affects the biggest farms in the foremost nations. "These are the nations that feed the world. We will not feed the world with watermelons. We will feed it with grains that are stored and transported all over the world."

So take that, you small garden farmers. Big grain monopolies will save the world, not you and your stupid watermelons.

I wonder if Big Ag will go like the Imperial Guards of Rome, the last to know when the barbarians came crashing through the royal gates. Every year more and more small-scale garden farmers—the "barbarians" of the new local food movement—grow more and more food to feed the world, while the monopolists say only Big Ag can do it. Such blind denial just blows my mind.

A prolific nonfiction writer, novelist, and journalist, Gene Logsdon has published more than two dozen books. He writes a popular blog, *The Contrary Farmer* (www.thecontraryfarmer.wordpress.com), and is a regular contributor to *Farming Magazine*. He lives and farms in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

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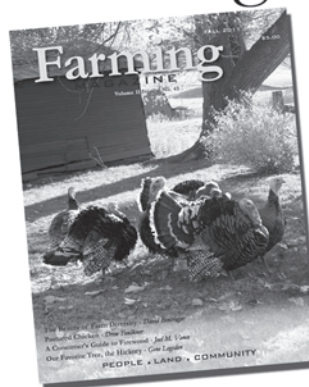
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Organic Cost-Share Funds Announced

Nearly \$12 million is now available to organic farms and businesses nationwide. Certified producers and handlers can receive National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program (NOCCSP) reimbursements for certification-related expenses incurred between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015. Payments will reimburse producers for 75 percent of their certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope (crop, livestock, handling, and wildcrop).

New certification clients must wait to receive their first certificate before applying for reimbursement. Renewing farmers and handlers may apply once they have paid their certification fees and will need to send a copy of their current certificate.

OEFFA administers the cost-share program on behalf of Ohio organic producers and handlers; applications must be postmarked by November 15, 2015. Ohio farmers and processors can find information about how to apply for cost-share reimbursement at www.certification.oeffa.org/costshare, by calling (614) 262-2022, or by emailing costshare@oeffa.org.

Non-Ohio producers should contact their state agency for more information and application deadlines, or go to <http://bit.ly/1KTyg66> for a list of state agency contacts.

Organic Industry Continues to Break Records

This April, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that there are 19,474 certified organic operations in the United States and 27,814 world-wide. The number of U.S. operations increased by more than 5 percent since last year and by more than 250 percent since 2002, when the count began.

Sales of organic products in the United States also broke previous records, totaling \$39.1 billion, up 11.3 percent from the previous year, according to a survey by the Organic Trade Association. In 2014, organic food accounted for almost 5 percent of total U.S. food sales. Twelve percent of all produce sold domestically is organic.

Groups Challenge Major USDA Change to Organic Rule

Organic stakeholders have filed a lawsuit in federal court, maintaining that the USDA violated the federal rulemaking process when it changed established procedures for reviewing allowed synthetic and prohibited natural substances used in organic production. A coalition of 15 organic food producers and farmer, consumer, environmental, and certification groups, including OEFFA, asked the court to require the USDA to reconsider its decision on the rule change and reinstitute the agency's customary public hearing and comment process.

At issue in the lawsuit is a rule that implements the Organic Foods Production Act's "sun-set provision," which since its origins has been interpreted to require all listed materials to cycle off the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances every five years unless the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) votes by a two-thirds majority to relist them after considering public input, new science, and information on available alternatives. Last fall, in a complete reversal of accepted process, the USDA announced materials can remain on the National List in perpetuity unless two-thirds of the NOSB remove the substance from the List.

Organic Agriculture Helps Boost Farmer Incomes

A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences* shows that organic farming is more profitable to farmers than conventional farming. Scientists from Washington State University conducted a meta-analysis of 44 previously published studies encompassing 55 different crops across 14 countries. They found that even though organic farming can result in lower yields and higher labor costs than conventional farming, the premium that organic farmers receive for their products makes organic agriculture 22 to 35 percent more profitable.



The Organic Farming Research Network

Helping Farmers Better Understand and Utilize Soil Balancing Practices

OEFFA, organic growers, and The Ohio State University (OSU) are teaming up to test soil balancing practices and share the results, with the goal of helping growers better understand and apply these principles more reliably and cost effectively.

Soil balancing is the idea that soils can achieve an "ideal" condition when their exchangeable bases (calcium, magnesium, and potassium) are in specific proportions to each other. Achieving these proportions, say soil balancing enthusiasts, helps improve crop health, lower weed pressure, and boost yields.

However, since there is little systematic research about the efficacy of this practice, OEFFA, OSU, and growers are conducting field experiments to see how soil balancing affects major soil, crop, weed, and profit variables.

To date, four research stations managed by the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) and 15 farms are participating in the experiments. Collectively, the sites are in every region of Ohio, and include agronomic and specialty crops, and farms and plots of many sizes, histories, and backgrounds using soil balancing practices.

OARDC collected hundreds of soil samples at all experimental sites in May. Each is being analyzed for their chemical composition and for the weed seeds they contain. Soon after soils were sampled, amendments such as gypsum, potash, and rock phosphate were applied to the soils in some plots before they were planted. Crops will be sampled at specific stages of development.

The team hopes to add additional farm sites in 2016 and 2017. The OSU research fields at the Agricultural Incubator Foundation in Bowling Green will be open on September 10 as part of the Ohio Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series (see pg. 20). Interested farmers are welcome to attend to ask questions about the project and learn about preliminary research findings.

To learn more about this four year project or to discuss how you can participate in this or other research projects, contact Eric Pawlowski at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or eric@oeffa.org or visit the project webpage at www.organicfarmingresearchnetwork.org.ohio-state.edu/network_activities/soil_balancing.

This collaboration is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Organic Research and Extension initiative.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC: NON-GMO AND SO MUCH MORE

BY NATIONAL CO-OP GROCERS

When it comes to food labels, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) certified organic seal is the gold standard and indicates so much more than just “pesticide-free” food. The label represents a sustainable, transparent, and ecologically sound system of food production that not only produces abundant, nutritious, delicious food but also speaks to one of today’s hottest food topics: genetically modified organisms (GMOs). **GMOs have never been allowed in organic production and remain excluded from organic certification to this day.**

Most people interpret the USDA organic seal as representing what the food isn’t. Organic food isn’t contaminated by toxic pesticides, antibiotics, added hormones, or synthetic fertilizers, and it isn’t irradiated or genetically modified in a lab. Since all of these things are potentially present or true in conventionally farmed and produced foods, the best way for concerned consumers to avoid them is to look for the USDA organic seal. But the seal also represents a much broader set of positive goals for our food system, ones that protect the land and our right to know what is in our food.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IS SUSTAINABLE

At its best, organic production uses sustainable practices that once established are relatively self-perpetuating and long-term solutions. These practices include:

- ♦ **Building healthy soil, naturally.** This is done through composting, green manure cover crops, crop rotation, and other time-honored methods. Organic farmers have no need for synthetic fertilizers that can pollute our water supply.
- ♦ **Using biological methods to control pests.** Pest management can be achieved by maintaining native plants as habitats for pollinators and beneficial predatory insects that will prey on common pests.
- ♦ **Maintaining humane conditions for livestock.** Plenty of fresh air and space to roam means animals are healthier and farmers don’t need to rely on daily doses of antibiotics to keep them well.

ORGANIC SYSTEMS ARE TRANSPARENT

Today, most food travels many miles and changes hands multiple times before it reaches our plate making it hard to know how it was produced. Not so for organic. Items that bear the USDA organic seal have a fully transparent production and delivery record known as an “audit trail” that is annually documented, inspected, and evaluated by third-party organic certifying agents. It’s their job to ensure organic producers adhere to the organic standards developed and enforced by the U.S. National Organic Program.

What is more, many countries participate in equivalency programs that harmonize organic certification requirements internationally. This means that for something imported to the United States to be labeled as organic, it must have international documentation that its production adhered to the same standards or better than items bearing the USDA organic seal. There are also international certifying agents that use the same criteria all over the world that meet or improve upon qualifying certification standards. Organic is a global movement that is only increasing in momentum.

ORGANIC IS NON-GMO

GMOs are plants or animals created through the process of genetic engineering. Under the organic standards, genetic engineering is an excluded method. Genetic engineering conflicts with the basic philosophy of organic farming which takes the approach of working with natural biological systems in order to produce healthy food.

Because GMO crops are prevalent in the United States food supply (173 million U.S. acres in 2012), organic farmers must take extra steps to ensure their organic crops are not inadvertently contaminated by GMOs. These efforts are verified by their inspector each year. Methods used include buying non-GMO seeds from reputable distributors and testing them before planting, timing their planting to prevent cross-pollination with neighboring GMO crops, preserving a “buffer zone” of uncultivated land around the perimeter of the farm, and documented cleaning of farm equipment. Certifiers accredited by the USDA conduct periodic residue testing to further verify organic food does not contain prohibited substances, including GMOs.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC, THE GOLD STANDARD

Regardless of which USDA certified organic label (“100% organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic ingredients”) appears on the product packaging, none of the ingredients inside are allowed to contain GMOs. On the other hand, **food bearing only a non-GMO label or claim is not making any other assurances about how it was produced.** Only certified organic food that bears the USDA label is guaranteed to provide you with all the benefits discussed in this article. This is why the seal is known as the “gold standard” of food labels.

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New “Organic is Non-GMO and More” Logo Available

As a certified organic farmer or handler, you produce products without GMOs as part of your organic management. But, you know that “organic” means so much more than non-GMO. Now you can tell the world! OEFFA is excited to announce we have created a logo you can now use to market your organic products as non-GMO and more! This logo is an alternative to the basic OEFFA Certification logo. If you are certified through OEFFA and interested in using the new logo on your organic product labels, packaging, and other marketing materials, please contact OEFFA Certification at (614) 262-2022 or organic@oeffa.org. We are happy to send you or your printer the version of the logo that will best suit your needs.



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A life-changing few days. Very inspirational and obviously the way of the future. – Neil Thomson

I came to the course hoping to learn a little bit about farming sustainably and how I could improve my own health. It ended up being probably the most informative, inspirational and important 4 days of all the years I've been studying. – Monica Antoniazzi

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Graeme Sait

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"Nutrition Rules". Graeme has formulated many of the soil and human health products for which NTS is renowned and speaks globally, inspiring audiences everywhere about the future of farming.



Joel Williams

is a biological agronomist with broad knowledge of soil cation balancing and its role in promoting soil health, crop nutrition, and production. Joel's knowledge comes from years

of study with industry experts along with practical experience working with growers across Europe and North America. When not in the classroom, Joel operates his consulting firm called BioLife Agricultural.

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ALL NATURAL LAWN CARE: DIY TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS

By Nate and Jenn Elfner

Photo: Elfner Organic Lawncare

Everyone wants a great looking lawn, but some people prefer an alternative to chemical treatments. Beginning the quest to care for your lawn naturally starts with understanding the difference between the two models.

The focus of chemical lawn care is to feed the grass using high nitrogen fertilizers for a quick green-up, while killing all weeds and insects indiscriminately. This approach can leave the soil empty of beneficial life forms and unable to protect itself from disease and pests. It can also produce excessive nitrogen runoff.

The goal of ecological lawn care is to feed the soil, which in turn works to support healthy grass. All-natural fertilizers break down slowly, providing a steady nutrient supply. Prevention is the key to reducing weeds, disease, and pests. A chemical-free lawn has nutrient rich soil full of beneficial organisms.

Get started by measuring your turf areas. That way you will know the right amount of product to use. When applying fertilizer and pre-emergent, you will need 20 lbs. per 1,000 sq. feet of lawn. Your lawn will need an early spring pre-emergent application (March-April), an early summer fertilizer application (May-June), a late summer pre-emergent application (August-September), and a fall fertilizer application (October-November). The most effective fertilizers have composted poultry manure as their base. Corn gluten and dried distiller's grains are both effective weed pre-emergent options, but they do not kill established perennial weeds.

Good lawn care practices are vital to the success of a natural lawn. Your grass should be at least four inches tall after mowing. You may need to adjust the mower deck to its highest setting. This is the key to shading out weeds and improving grass health. Do not bag grass clippings. They should be left on the lawn as a source of nitrogen, to shade out and prevent weed germination, and to preserve soil moisture. Water the lawn deeply, not frequently, to best promote root growth.

Many homeowners have concerns about lawn weeds. In addition to twice yearly pre-emergent treatments and using good lawn care and mowing practices to prevent weeds, soil testing can detect nutrient deficiencies which may affect grass performance and weed infestations. There are all-natural options for killing dandelions, including products using chelated iron, which may be used to spot treat problem areas. Make sure to use a product that does not kill the surrounding grass.

A lawn with sparse grass or bare spots is a perfect target for weeds. Homeowners should reseed annually in early to mid-September until their lawn has a solid stand of grass, which can out-compete weeds. Overseeding with a slit seeder produces the best results by placing seeds in direct contact with soil. Picking grass seed which is best suited to your local environment helps prevent lawn problems. The most disease and drought resistant grass type for central Ohio is Turf Type Tall Fescue. When reseeding the lawn, you should use 10 lbs. per 1,000 sq. feet.

Chemical-free lawns improve slowly over several years as nutrients build up and soil life multiplies. While it may take some patience, a natural lawn will provide your family, pets, and local wildlife a safe place to play and enjoy the outdoors.

Nate and Jenn Elfner started their company, Elfner Organic Lawncare, in 2000. They provide natural lawn care services to the central Ohio area. For more information, go to www.elfnerorganic.com.

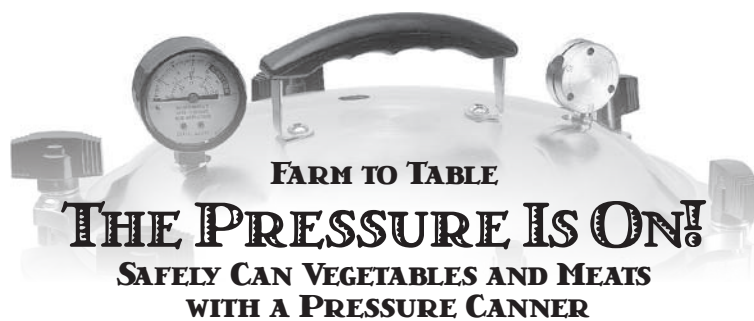
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By Rachel Tayse Baillieul

After the recent botulism outbreak caused by improperly canned food served at an Ohio church potluck, home canners are re-evaluating pressure canning. Instead of giving up this valuable practice, refocus on the basics that make pressure canning safe and reliable. Here's what to do:

Know Your Canner—Modern pressure cookers and canners are equipped with several safety mechanisms including a steam vent pipe and safety fuse. Use one manufactured after the 1970s and labeled by UL, an independent safety science company, to ensure that it's been designed properly.

Read the manual thoroughly to become familiar with the parts and operation of your canner model. If you don't have a manual, look at the website of the manufacturer for a digital version. Discover how to use and calibrate the gauge, which parts to evaluate for wear, and how to clean the unit thoroughly.

Understand Why Canning Works—We're all familiar with how food rots at room temperature; bacteria and molds that thrive on oxygen, moisture, and carbohydrates settle from the air and transform food into something that's not safe to eat. Kill the bacteria and remove the oxygen by sealing boiling hot food in an air-tight jar, and you've removed the chance for most bacteria and molds to grow.

However, botulism, a serious and potentially deadly bacteria, can thrive past the boiling temperature of water without oxygen in low-acid food. To prevent botulism toxin, canners must either adjust the acid level of the food (possible only in some situations by adding lemon juice to tomatoes or pickling vegetables) or super heat the jars to 240 degrees F with a steam pressure canner.

Use the Proper Canning Method—Most fruits are high acid foods and can be canned as jam or in pieces with a water bath canner. Many fruits and some vegetables can be pickled with vinegar (which adds acidity) and canned in a water bath canner. Most vegetables do not have enough acid to prevent the growth of botulism in a sealed jar and therefore must be canned using a pressure canner. All recipes with meat must be pressure canned.

Follow a Recipe—Pressure canning works when the entire jar of food is heated thoroughly with the proper amount of air evacuated upon cooling. Food scientists have measured the amount of time this takes for each type of vegetable, meat, and stock. Follow the time and head space (the amount of space between the top of the food and the lid of the jar) guidelines in a trusted recipe source. Good sources include the National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://nchfp.uga.edu>), state Extension services, and the *Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving*. If you want to use an old family recipe or something you find on a blog, compare the important details (acid level, head space, and time) to a trusted recipe source.

Take No Short Cuts—Pressure canners take extra time to come up to temperature and cool down. Do not rush this process or you risk unsealed jars, steam explosions, and improper canning temperatures. Do not leave additional head space, add extra low acid foods, or shorten the processing time. Botulism is simply not worth the risk.

Know Your Backup Options—If a jar doesn't seal, you can reprocess, refrigerate, or freeze. If you end up with more product than space in the canner, you can add a second layer (stagger stacked jars), run a second batch, or freeze the rest. Test the seal of the jars upon coming out of the canner and store them in a cool dark space. If in doubt, throw it out.

Have Faith in Home Canning—Home cooks have been pressure canning for several generations with very rare instances of food-borne illness. Making and eating home canned food can be thrifty, fun, and nutritious. Take your time to follow simple safety practices and enjoy the pride of a homemade pantry.

Rachel Tayse Baillieul farms with Swainway Urban Farm, educates urban farmers and homesteaders as a founder of the Columbus Agrarian Society, and blogs about her family's adventures in urban homesteading. For more information, go to www.swainway.com, www.columbusagrariansociety.com, and www.harmonioushomestead.com.

Help Us Help You: OEFFA Certification Serving Plain Farming Communities

OEFFA is committed to providing certification in a way that serves Plain communities! In a time when many certifiers are moving to digital and online processes and resources, we are dedicated to maintaining a paper-based and mail service. We are also committed to making sure that clear, accurate information about organic certification is available to all producers interested in transitioning to organic certification. We have heard feedback that face-to-face meetings are important tools for some Plain communities. We are working to meet those needs, and we welcome your ideas.

Here are two ways you can help OEFFA work more effectively with Plain communities:

1. **Consider becoming an organic inspector!** Two Amish inspectors were trained at the International Organic Inspectors Association training in October, and we have the opportunity to send more Amish inspectors to inspector trainings this fall.
2. **Invite us to your meeting!** We would be happy to visit Plain communities and meet with producers (already certified, as well as those considering certification) to talk through the process and the rules, and to answer any questions.

If you are a member of a Plain community and you're interested in either becoming an organic inspector or holding a meeting in your community about organic certification, please contact Julia Barton at (614) 359-3180, or write to OEFFA Certification, c/o Julia Barton, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214.

OEFFA is grateful to the National Organic Program's Sound and Sensible Initiative for supporting this work.



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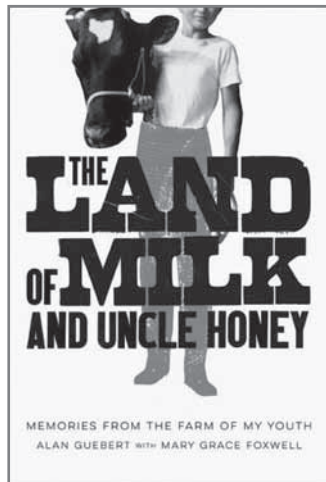
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BOOK REVIEW

OEFFA Keynote Speaker Alan Guebert Releases New Book, *The Land of Milk and Uncle Honey*



This May, the University of Illinois Press released *The Land of Milk and Uncle Honey: Memories from the Farm of My Youth*, a collection of stories written by 2015 OEFFA keynote speaker Alan Guebert with his daughter-editor Mary Grace Foxwell.

This heartfelt and humorous collection of stories is a “snapshot of life and the many lives on a bustling, 1960s dairy farm in southern Illinois,” Guebert writes.

Guebert’s Prologue sets the scene for the childhood vignettes beautifully, explaining his years after the farm: meeting his wife, “the lovely Catherine,” being expelled from college

for apathy, and returning to and leaving the farm for “something better,” which turned out to be a career in agricultural journalism. However, as the stories that follow so clearly demonstrate, the farm and the people who worked it continue to strongly influence his life and writing.

The stories paint honest, witty, and endearing portraits of Guebert’s hard-working parents, various farmhands, and Uncle Lorenz, dubbed Uncle Honey for his sweet nature, but whose farm mayhem left Guebert’s father scouting the horizon for smoke each day.

Guebert’s syndicated agriculture column, “The Farm and Food File,” began in 1993 and now appears weekly in more than 70 newspapers throughout the U.S. and Canada. Although the column focuses primarily on agricultural policy and politics, the stories of his childhood at Indian Farm proved to be his readers’ best loved columns.

It’s for that reason that his daughter, Mary Grace, encouraged him to write the book. She convinced him that “these columns could be woven together to form a uniquely personal, but also profoundly powerful account of life on an American farm,” as she writes in the Epilogue, where she also openly shares charming memories of her father from her childhood.

Guebert spoke at OEFFA’s 36th annual conference in February. He has worked as a writer and senior editor at *Professional Farmers of America* and *Successful Farming* magazine and contributing editor at *Farm Journal*. Throughout his career, Guebert has won numerous awards and accolades for his magazine and newspaper work. In 1997, the American Agricultural Editors’ Association honored him with its highest awards, Writer of the Year and Master Writer.

This August, Alan and Gracie will make several stops throughout Ohio (including Columbus, Springfield, Celina, Archbold, and at The Farmers’ Table—see pg. 1) to read from and sign copies of the new book. To see when they’ll be in a city or town near you, go to <http://farmandfoodfile.com/author-events/>. The Land of Milk and Uncle Honey is available through the University of Illinois Press, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and at independent book-sellers nationwide.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD: UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

Much of the debate around genetically engineered (GE) food has centered on health implications, but consider the bigger picture of how this technology affects our food system:



Genetic engineering threatens our seed supply

The widespread use of GE crops has increased the consolidation and power of the seed, chemical, and biotech industries and threatens seed diversity necessary for the future of our food system.

GE crops offer no appreciable gains in productivity

Despite claims that GE crops will help to feed a hungry world, an analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists revealed that GE production has resulted in little to no yield gains. The same study also found that we could increase agricultural productivity as much—or perhaps more—by boosting our investments in traditional hybridization and breeding programs.

GE farming is creating herbicide resistant weeds

When GE technology was introduced, the biotech industry claimed it would result in reduced chemical use. That has not been the case. In fact, the use of glyphosate—the active ingredient in Roundup which is used with “Roundup-Ready” GE plants—has increased, leading to herbicide resistant superweeds. And how are we dealing with herbicide resistant weeds? New GE crops have been designed to withstand a new herbicide that combines glyphosate with 2,4-D. It is hard to imagine that this will not lead to a new generation of superweeds that are adapted to this new chemical combination.

GE crops contaminate organic and non-GE production systems

Organic and non-GE growers are seeing contamination of their crops, and damage to the economic and environmental integrity of their operations. They bear the sole burden of preventing contamination of their crops.

GE technology receives inadequate review and regulation

The social, economic, and environmental impacts of this technology on our food system are not formally evaluated by the government agencies charged with regulating GE products. Public concerns are dismissed as unscientific or “anti-science.”

GE policy is based on biased science

When it comes to the health and safety of GE technology, we’re told that if we better understood the science, we wouldn’t be concerned. Yet, the core principle of objectivity in science is being violated by reliance on industry-funded research.

The most basic principle of scientific experimentation is that the researcher does not have a financial or personal stake in the outcome of their study. However, most of the scientific data being used for analysis of GE crops comes from either industry-funded university research or the laboratories of biotech corporations. Independent science that adheres to the basic principles of good research is needed for the outcomes to be trusted.

It is our democratic right to have a comprehensive discussion about GE technology that extends beyond the technical aspects of the product itself. Increased investment in traditional hybridization and breeding methods would be more cost-effective, and could focus on integrated pest management, drought and flood resistance, and other traits beneficial to the public rather than the profits of a few multinational corporations.

It is clear that the negative impacts of GE crops outweigh any purported benefits, and our lawmakers should stand up to the biotech industry and defend the public interest. Find your legislators at www.congresslookup.com, call them today, and ask them to support the Genetically Engineered Right to Know Act, which would require GE foods to be labeled.



RESOURCES

Online Conservation Assistance—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed a new online portal, *Conservation Client Gateway*, which allows producers to request technical and financial assistance; review and sign conservation plans, applications, contracts, and practice schedules; document completed practices and request certification; request and track payments, and store and retrieve technical and financial files.

 www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway

Organic Product Reports—The USDA Market News is now issuing a weekly *National Retail Report* covering prices for local and organic products based on online advertisement surveys from 350 major grocery retailers and 28,000 stores nationwide.

 www.ams.usda.gov/amsv1.0/marketnewslocalregional

Market Farming Report—The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture has released *Market Farming with Rotations and Cover Crops: An Organic Bio-Extensive System*. The 70 page report outlines how to build soil life, health, and fertility organically.

 www.kerrcenter.com/publication/market-farming-with-rotations-and-cover-crops-an-organic-bio-extensive-system

New Farm Tutorials—The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA) has released two new free, self-guided tutorials, *Scaling Up for Regional Markets* and *Pest Management*. Each tutorial includes lessons from experts, calculators, worksheets, resource lists, case studies, and other downloadable tools.

 www.attra.ncat.org/tutorials

Pesticide Guide—Consumer Reports has issued a new 53 page report, *From Crop to Table: Pesticide Use in Produce*. It identifies a list of fruits and vegetables that expose consumers to the highest hazardous pesticide residues, and describes how pesticides are used in produce production, the risks of pesticide use to particular populations and the environment, and how consumers can choose fruits and vegetables with the lowest risk of pesticide contamination.

 <http://bit.ly/1H9acKf>

Value-Added Grant Guide—The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has released an updated version of its *Farmers' Guide to Value-Added Producer Grant Funding*. The guide includes changes to the program from the 2014 Farm Bill and provides a step-by-step description of the application and ranking processes.

 www.sustainableagriculture.net/publications

Farm Real Estate Loans—The USDA Farm Service Agency's Direct Farm Ownership Program allows farmers to borrow up to \$300,000 to buy farmland, construct or repair buildings, pay closing costs, or promote soil and water conservation. Applications must be approved by September 30.

 www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/farm-ownership-loans/index

Vegetable Production Guide—Ohio State University (OSU) has released the latest version of its annual guide, *The 2015 Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers*. The 206 page guide costs \$10 and includes a summary of suggested vegetable varieties, seeding and fertilizer rates, and weed, insect, and disease control measures.

 <http://go.osu.edu/2015MidwestVegGuide>

Microbe-Containing Product Database—OSU researchers have developed a database containing Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)-listed microbe-containing fertilizer products, designed to help farmers select and use the products effectively.

 http://hcs.osu.edu/vpslab/org_micro_bioproducts

CSA Dissertation—2015 OEFFA Conference workshop presenter R. Alan Wight's dissertation, *Community Supported Agriculture as Public Education: Networked Communities of Practice Building Alternative Agrifood Systems*, is available online.

 <http://bit.ly/1GChf2D>

Want to learn more? OEFFA's online Resources section includes links to dozens of websites, publications, and organizations on a wide-range of topics including organic production, food safety, livestock, soil fertility, and more. Go to www.oeffa.org/resources.



Look for OEFFA and Community Shares in Your Workplace Giving Campaign

For many employees in central Ohio, workplace giving season is about to start. Look for OEFFA and Community Shares in your workplace giving campaign, and support OEFFA's work by making a paycheck donation. Community Shares will be participating in these workplace campaigns in 2015:

Public Workplaces

Capital University, City of Columbus Combined Charitable Campaign, City of Dublin, Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus City Schools, Columbus State Community College, Combined Federal Campaign of North Central Ohio, Franklin County Combined Charitable Campaign, Heart of Ohio Combined Federal Campaign, Hilliard Public Schools, Licking County government, Miami Valley Combined Federal Campaign, The Ohio State University, South Western City Schools, State of Ohio Combined Charitable Campaign, Three Rivers Combined Federal Campaign, Upper Arlington City Schools, Westerville Public Schools

Private Workplaces

Betty's Fine Food and Spirits, Central Ohio Transit Authority, Columbus Food League, Commerce National Bank, Denison University, Dirty Frank's Hot Dog Palace, Edison Welding Institute, Fulcrum Creatives, Hahn Loeser and Parks, Jury Room, Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, Surly Girl Saloon, Telhio Credit Union, Tip Top Kitchen and Cocktails

Nonprofits

ADA-Ohio, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Center for Humane Options in Childbirth Experience, Center for Wholeness, Columbus Film Council, Columbus Landmarks Foundation, Columbus Metropolitan Libraries, COSI, Dreams on Horseback, Earthtouch, Greater Linden Development Corporation, Kaleidoscope Youth Center, LifeCare Alliance, Mercy for Animals, Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio, Neighborhood Services Inc., Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, Ohio Historical Society, Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded, Strategies Against Violence Everywhere, University Area Enrichment Association, Vietnam Veterans of Ohio, VoiceCorps, WCBE, WOSU

Email erin@oeffa.org if you would like Community Shares and OEFFA brochures to distribute at your workplace. If your employer is not on the above list, visit www.communityshares.net to find out how you can make charitable giving a part of your workplace.

Adult Farm Camp

Saturday, July 25–Sunday, July 26

Stratford Ecological Center • 3083 Liberty Rd. Delaware, OH

Experience life on a small diversified farm by helping with animal chores, working in the garden, preparing meals, and camping under the stars. Cost: \$100. For more information, call (740) 363-2548 or go to www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

Small-Scale Biointensive Farm Tour*

Sunday, July 26—2 p.m.

Meadow Rise Farm • 6991 Renie Rd., Bellville, OH

Join the Clintonville Farmers' Market and Joan and Reed Richmond for a tour of this 2.5 acre biointensive diversified vegetable farm.

Integrated Pest Management Workshops

Sunday, July 26—10 a.m.

EC Grows Community Garden • East Cleveland, OH

Monday, August 3—6 p.m.

Colfax Garden • 7219 Colfax Rd., Cleveland, OH

Saturday, August 8—10 a.m.

Rockefeller Garden • 760 E. 88th St., Cleveland, OH

Join OSU Extension to learn about integrated pest management as part of this urban agriculture series. Cost: Free. For more information, call (216) 429-8200 or go to <http://cuyahoga.osu.edu>.

Pasture-Based Livestock and Poultry Tour*

Saturday, August 1—1:30–4 p.m.

Three Moon Farm • 8181 State Rte. 138, Williamsport, OH

Join OSU, the Ohio Women in Agriculture Leadership Network, and Kelly and Ryan Jeter for a tour of this 34 acre family farm specializing in eggs, beef, turkeys, and chicken.

Sustainable Urban Produce Farm Tour*

Sunday, August 2—2 p.m.

Peace, Love, and Freedom Farm • 4541 N. 4th St., Columbus, OH

Join the Clintonville Farmers' Market and Milan Karcic for a tour of this sub-acre specialty crop urban farm.

Organic Dairy Farm Tour*

Wednesday, August 5—9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Weaver Dairy • 1285 Frost Rd., Hillsboro, OH

Join OEFFA, the Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council, and Landis Weaver for a pasture walk and tour of this 250 acre certified organic dairy farm to learn the finer points of organic, grass-based dairying.



Grain and Alfalfa Production Farm Tour*

Friday, August 7—1–3 p.m.

Turnow Ventures • 2956 County Rd. 92, Lindsey, OH

Join OEFFA and Steve Turnow for a tour of this 1,500 acre certified organic farm to learn about alfalfa, corn, soybean, wheat, and black bean production; weed control cultivation methods, and soil fertility approaches utilizing soil-balancing techniques.



Urban Farming in Small Spaces Tour*

Sunday, August 9—2–4 p.m.

Swainway Urban Farm • 285 Canyon Dr., Columbus, OH

Join OSU, the Columbus Agrarian Society, and Joseph Swain to learn about the challenges and rewards of expanding and refining an urban farm.

Food, Family, and Farming Tour*

Saturday, August 15—10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Lucky Penny Creamery • 632 Temple Ave., Kent, OH

Join OSU, the Ohio Women in Agriculture Leadership Network, and four women in agriculture for an exciting and empowering day focused on raising dairy goats, making cheese, composting, and living the small farm dream.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For a complete calendar of events go to www.oeffa.org/events



Value-Added Fruits and Vegetables Farm Tour*

Sunday, August 16—1–4 p.m.

Ann's Raspberry Farm • 6645 Blair Rd., Fredericktown, OH

Join OEFFA, the Clintonville Farmers' Market, and Daniel and Ann Trudel to learn about raspberry and Brussels sprout production and sample local products from this and nearby farms. Pre-register by August 10 by contacting Eric Pawlowski at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or eric@oeffa.org.

Outstanding in the Field Farm to Table Dinner

Sunday, August 16—4 p.m.

Thaxton Organic Garlic • 2710 Ravenna St., Hudson, OH

Join Fred and Chris Thaxton for a meal prepared by Chef Brian Goodman of The Greenhouse Tavern and tours of the garlic farm and a neighboring alpaca farm. Cost: \$195. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/1FSu3LD>.

High Tunnel Workshop

Thursday, August 20—6–8 p.m.

Kinsman Farm • Cleveland, OH

Join OSU Extension to learn how to best use high tunnels for winter production as part of this urban agriculture series. Cost: Free. For more information, call (216) 429-8200 or go to <http://cuyahoga.osu.edu>.

Large-Scale Urban Farm Tour*

Monday, August 24—5–7 p.m.

Clarfield Farm • 3220 Groveport Rd., Columbus, OH

Join OSU, the Columbus Agrarian Society, and Urban Farms of Central Ohio, an initiative of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, to learn about how vacant and underutilized sites in underserved neighborhoods are being transformed into productive, sustainable urban farms.

Hops Production Workshop*

Tuesday, August 25—9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Agricultural Incubator Foundation • 13737 Middleton Pk., Bowling Green, OH

Join OSU and Horticulture Specialist Brad Bergefurd to learn about new hop cultivars, innovative hop production techniques, and more. Cost: \$50. Pre-register by August 18 by emailing sundermeier.5@osu.edu.



The Farmers' Table*

Sunday, August 30—4 p.m.

Maplestar Farm • 10382 E. Washington St., Auburn Township, OH

Join OEFFA, Maplestar Farm, and the Driftwood Group for a truly delicious experience that celebrates Ohio farms and flavors. Cost: \$125.

For more information, see pg. 1 or go to www.oeffa.org/farmerstable.



Cover Crop Farm Tour*

Thursday, September 3—6–8 p.m.

Turnwald Farm • 22714 Rd. N, Cloverdale, OH

Join OSU and Terry and Dennis Turnwald to learn about how cover crops can be used effectively to enhance soil productivity, improve yields, and increase profits.

Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Field Day*

Thursday, September 10—5 p.m.

Agricultural Incubator Foundation • 13737 Middleton Pk., Bowling Green, OH

Join OSU and the Organic Food and Farming Education Research program for a field day focused on new research.

Organic Weed Management Farm Tour*

Sunday, September 20—10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Rock Dove Farm • 5319 State Rte. 142 SE, West Jefferson, OH

Join OEFFA and Todd and Heather Schriver to learn about organic weed management strategies.



Carriage House Farm Open House*

Sunday, September 20—12-4 p.m.

Carriage House Farm • 10251 Miamiview Rd., North Bend, OH

Tour the garden and high tunnel on this Ohio Century Farm, examine machinery used to bale hay, take a wagon ride, tour the new on-farm market and processing facility, and sample farm ingredients prepared by local chefs and artisan producers.

Sustainable Fruit Orchard Management Tour*

Sunday, September 20—1-4 p.m.

Cherry Orchards • 10290 State Rte. 669, Crooksville, OH

Join OSU and Neil and Faybell Cherry for a tour of this family-owned orchard growing apples, peaches, grapes, plums, and pears.

2015 Farm Science Review

Tuesday, September 22-Thursday, September 24

Molly Caren Agricultural Center • 135 State Rte. 38 NE, London, OH

Join OSU Extension for workshops, presentations, demonstrations, and a trade show at this event which annually draws more than 130,000 farmers and others. Cost: \$7-10. For more information, call (614) 292-4278 or go to <http://fsr.osu.edu/visitors/tickets>.

Naturally Raised Lamb Pasture Walk*

Saturday, September 26—1-3 p.m.

Find a Way Farm • 36789 Buzzard Den Rd., Langsville, OH

Join OEFFA and Beth and Brian Duffy for a two hour pasture walk to experience life as a shepherd. Pre-register by September 12 by emailing findawayfarm45741@gmail.com.



Alpaca Farm Tour*

Saturday, September 26—10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Alpaca Spring Valley Farm • 3944 Whitacre Ave. SE, Minerva, OH

Join OSU, the Ohio Women in Agriculture Leadership Network, and Alicia Rocco to learn how to raise alpacas naturally.

On-Farm Processing, Cheesemaking, and Agritourism Tour*

Saturday, September 26—11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Blackstone Farmstead • 49800 Township Rd. 58, Lewisville, OH

Join OSU, the Ohio Women in Agriculture Leadership Network, and David and Nikki Blackstone to see their on-farm licensed commercial kitchen, licensed cheesemaking facility, milking parlor, and catering business.

Off-Season Farm Production Tour and Workshop*

Sunday, September 27—10 a.m.

Rose Hill Willow Farm • 7680 Rosehill Rd. Roseville, OH

Join OEFFA, the Clintonville Farmers' Market, and willow farmer and basket weaver Howard Peller for a workshop on creating garden structures with cut willow rods and a free farm tour. Workshop cost: \$20, or \$50 with kit. Pre-register by emailing hp@columbus.rr.com or calling (740) 697-0027.



Steel in the Field Workshop*

Sunday, September 27—1-5 p.m.

Mile Creek Farm • 10786 Mile Rd., New Lebanon, OH

Join OEFFA and Ben and Emily Jackle to learn how to make sound equipment decisions for your farm and about the basics of maintaining, modifying, and fabricating common farm equipment. Cost: \$25 for OEFFA members, \$30 for non-members. Pre-register at www.oeffa.org/q/steelinthefield.



Draft-Horse Powered Farmstead Tour*

Saturday, October 3—2 p.m.

End of the Road Farm • 455 W. First St., Fletcher, OH

Join OEFFA and Lee and Jennifer Ruff to tour this sustainable homestead and see a demonstration of the sorghum-making process using draft horses. Pre-register by October 2 by calling (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or emailing eric@oeffa.org.



Poultry Processing Workshop*

Sunday, October 11—10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tea Hills Farms • 269 Township Rd. 2450, Loudonville, OH

Join OEFFA and Cara and Jason Tipton to learn how to efficiently and humanely process your own chickens. Cost: \$75 for OEFFA members, \$90 for non-members. Price includes lunch and two fresh chickens to take home. Pre-register at www.oeffa.org/q/poultryprocessing.



Finding Your Niche Urban Agriculture Exchange Workshop*

Saturday, October 24—2-5 p.m.

The Refugee Response at Ohio City Farm • Cleveland, OH

Join OEFFA and urban homesteader Rachel Tayse Baillieul of Columbus to learn how to align products, markets, and your interests to maximize productivity, profitability, and satisfaction on your urban farm. Cost: \$20. Pre-register at www.oeffa.org/q/niche.



Solar Electric Workshop*

Monday, October 26-Friday, October 30

Local Roots Market and Café • 140 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH

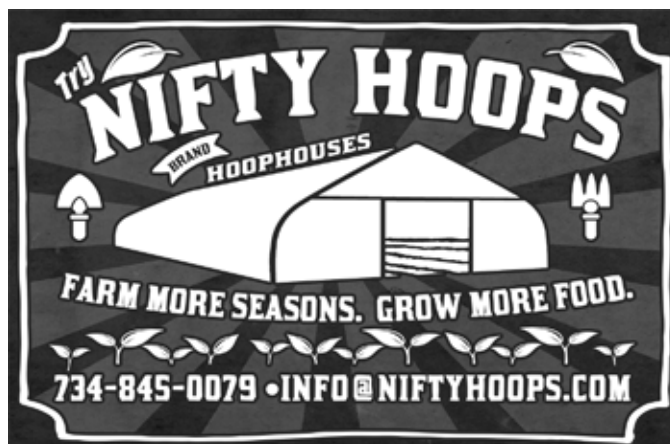
Join OEFFA and Annie and Jay Warmke of Blue Rock Station for a five-day training course where you will learn how to design and install PV systems. Cost: \$930 for OEFFA members, \$970 for non-members. Pre-register by October 21 at www.oeffa.org. (Please note: This event was originally scheduled for October 12-16.)



*This event is part of the 2015 Ohio Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series. All tours and workshops are free and open to the public and do not require pre-registration unless otherwise noted. For more information about events in this series, go to www.oeffa.org/documents/farmtour2015.pdf. For questions about OEFFA events, call (614) 421-2022 or email oeffa@oeffa.org. For questions about Ohio State University (OSU) events, call (614) 866-6900 or email hogan.1@osu.edu. For questions about Clintonville Farmers' Market events, email info@clintonvillefarmersmarket.org.

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, call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or email eric@oeffa.org.





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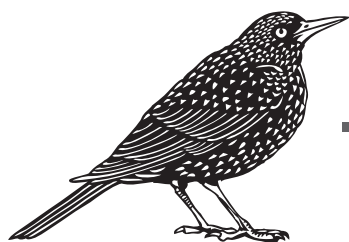
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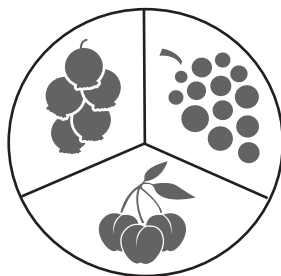
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FAMILY FARM

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 Dee and Les Beyeler
 Richard and Rebecca Block
 Floyd and Linda Bontrager, *Bontrager Family Farm*
 Vernon Bontrager
 Trina and Chris Bornejko, *Darktree Farm*
 Ivan and Kathleen Byler, *Byler Farm*
 Noel "Bud" Carpenter
 Mike Clark, *Majha Farm*
 Megan DeLeeuw, *Hand Sown Farm*
 Samuel Eash, *Eash Farm*
 Jerry and Elizabeth Eaton, *The Eaton Farm*
 John Filbrun, *The Maker's Meadow*
 Arthur Fisher, *Fisher's Fertile Acres*
 Dale Forrester
 John Gingerich, *Shallow Creek Farm*
 Toby and Wilma Gingerich, *Gingerich Farms*
 Menno Graber, *Graber Pullets*
 Mose Graber and Lavern Beechy, *Lakeview Organic Eggs*
 Andrew Headings, *Spring Valley Poultry*
 Randy Headings, *R & M Poultry*
 Michael and Krista Heckman
 Joshua Helser-Howard and George Mertz, *Patchwork Gardens*
 Donald and Ben Hoffman, *Hoffman Certified Organics*
 Jeffrey Hook, *Hook Organics*
 Daniel and Kenneth Hoover, *Bear Creek Eggs*
 Nevin Horning
 Alton and Aaron Hostetler, *Maple Hill Organic*
 Gene Hostetler, *Valley View Poultry*
 Jonas Hostetler, *Shady Maples Poultry*
 Joseph Hostetler, *J & K Organic Poultry*
 Denver Kauffman, *Rolling K Poultry*
 Atlee and Anna Keim, *Sunny Meadow Farm*
 Isaac Keim
 Marilyn King, *King & Sons Poultry Services*
 Delbert Kropf
 Wilbur and Verena Kropf
 John Kurtz, *Kurtz Chicks*
 Rudy Kurtz, *R & K Poultry*
 Matt Laidig, *Third Day Organic Farm*
 Terry Lattimer, *Toigo Organic Farms*
 Ernest Long, *Down On the Creek*
 Brad Love, *Love Farms*
 Mike Malicky, *Mother Earth Farms*
 Michael Malone, *Hungry Toad Farm*
 Craig Martin, *Martin Farms*

Mike McMunigal, *Mystic River Organic Dairy*
 Myron Metzger, *Berry Hill Farm*
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 Eddie and Rebecca Miller, *Timberland Farm Organics*
 Felty Miller
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 Nelson Miller
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 Joseph Yoder and Allen Miller, *Walnut Lane Farm*
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FARM FOR SALE For Sale: Alpaca herd dispersal. Breeding, show, and fiber quality animals. \$500 each with registration or \$100 without. Selling 17.5 acre farm and equipment soon after. Email Missy in Springfield, Ohio at info@rootdownacres.com.

Un-classified ads are free for members and \$5 for non-members. Submissions no longer than 30 words are due by September 15 for the fall issue. Call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 203 or email newsletter@oeffa.org.

WELCOME NEW OEFFA STAFF!



OEFFA is pleased to welcome our newest Certification Specialist, Cathy Jackson, who joined the staff in May. Cathy recently received a Bachelor

of Specialized Studies in Natural Sciences and Environmental Studies from Ohio University. She has experience working on a certified organic farm and helped manage a small-scale produce operation in southeastern Ohio. She has already begun to apply her producer's perspective to the organic certification process and we are delighted to have her on staff!

THANK YOU FOR GIVING BIG!



Thanks to everyone who donated during The Columbus Foundation's The Big Give this spring! More than \$15 million was donated during 24 hours to support 587 central Ohio nonprofits, including OEFFA who received nearly \$2,600 from 29 donors and bonus pool funds. Thank you for your extraordinary generosity!

INDIVIDUAL

Robert Berg	Cathy Jackson	Don Norris
Diane Harry	David Kelly	David Pinski
Jeremy Hauck	Lee Ann Lyon	Anthony Ritter
Lisa Helm Hancock	Kimberly Madden	Samantha Steiner
Srinivas Guntupalli	David Monebrake	Arlene Szkudlarek

STUDENT

Charles Gonzalez
Guang Han
Rishona Headen-Brown
Sarah Krisinski
Katherine Schultz

BUSINESS

Doug Billman, *Twinbill Registered Jerseys*
 Dan McLeod, *Copia Farm*
 Sean Wilson, *Full of Graze Farm*
 Care Works Comp

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Karen Huseman, *Earth Shares CSA*
 Tricia Watts

Become a member or renew your membership online at www.oeffa.org/membership

Need Help Keeping Your Organic Records Straight?

OEFFA Certification can help! OEFFA has developed more than 30 new and improved forms for crop, livestock, and handling. Use the forms for recordkeeping or as a template to create a system that fits your farming or handling practices. Call (614) 262-2022, write the OEFFA office to request specific forms, or download them at www.certification.oeffa.org/certification_resources.

OEFFA is grateful to the National Organic Program's Sound and Sensible Initiative for support of this work.

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ORGANIC CHECK-OFF UPDATE

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) formally petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture in May for an organic research and promotion program, which would be overseen by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

Titled the "Generic Research and Promotion Order for Organic" (GRO Organic), this proposed check-off seeks a 1/10 of 1 percent annual assessment from all organic certificate holders that gross more than \$250,000 a year. The actual assessment amount would be based on net sales, and those that fall under the \$250,000 revenue threshold could voluntarily pay into the program.

Only those who pay into the program will be allowed to vote on the referendum that would establish this program. Therefore, anyone that falls below \$250,000 in annual organic sales must agree to voluntarily pay into the program for seven years (should it pass) to have the right to vote.

Approximately 70 percent of all organic certificate holders are farmers, and it is estimated that two-thirds of organic certificate holders would need to voluntarily pay into the check-off in order to vote.

If approved, this would be the first mandatory check-off program that covers a production method, instead of a crop. The OTA estimates the program will collect \$30 million a year.

In its application, the OTA said this program is needed because:

1. U.S. organic production does not meet current demand,
2. There is not enough funding to research alternative pest management substances and practices for organic production, and
3. Consumers do not correctly understand the differences between labels such as organic, natural, and non-GMO.

Various farmer organizations, including the National Farmers Union, the Northeast Organic Dairy Producer Alliance, and the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing, have voiced concerns about establishing a mandatory federal organic check-off program. They fear that ultimately farmers will not benefit, and this program will follow the same path of corruption as other check-off programs. Further, despite a way to recall and vote to end this program, the history of other check-offs show these programs eventually have been protected by the court system.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The USDA is reviewing OTA's petition to ensure compliance with the Generic Research and Promotion Act. The department also put out a call for alternative or partial proposals for industry-funded organic promotion, research, and information programs. Those proposals are due July 20.

Once it reviews the OTA proposal and considers other submitted proposals, the USDA will decide if it will propose an organic check-off program, which could be OTA's proposed program, or a revised version. The public then would have an opportunity to comment. A vote would follow this comment period.

For more information, contact Renee Hunt at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 205 or renee@oeffa.org.