



Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance

MOFFA
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Annual Report To Members 2006

MOFFA is the only non-profit, volunteer organization in Michigan whose mission is to promote organic food and farming practices that revitalize and sustain local communities.

As corporate control continues to concentrate the sources of our food, degrade the environment and profane the human spirit, we believe that organic farming practices restore wellness in people, community and the earth.

We advocate for local organic food and farming that creates the necessary connections between healthy people, communities and the earth. We work to create more public awareness about the nature of concentrated and corporately controlled food supply and its environmental and social hazards. We promote the value of local and organically grown food and we seek to increase public awareness about the need for more decentralized sources of food that encourage the viability of small, family farms and allow for greater access to healthy, local and organic food by all citizens.

As we review our activities and accomplishments during the calendar year 2006 we quickly appreciate and applaud the tremendous achievements and dedication of a few dedicated volunteers. These individuals, and many others, will be central in our efforts to foster a "Michigan organic" identity, improve the state's role in promoting organic and protect organic practices from the multiple threats of genetically-engineered technologies.

Activities and Accomplishments

Education and Outreach

Throughout the year, MOFFA volunteers hosted displays to sell and distribute informational materials at regional organic festivals and events celebrating both organic and healthy living. These included: the Southwest Michigan Community Harvest Fest in Scotts (at Tillers International); the Sixth Annual Organic Harvest Festival at the Blandford Nature Center in Grand Rapids; and, the Healthy Traditions Network's Growing Connections Festival in Davisburg.

We also continued to collaborate with others in promoting awareness of organic food and farming in a diverse range of venues including: the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference in Grayling; a group showing of the movie, "Future of Food" in Grosse Pointe; an Earth Day event at Oakland University in collaboration with Maple Creek Farm; a presentation in Macomb County on organic gardening; the Second Annual Natural Foodfest and Farmers Market in Bellaire; the Great Lakes Bioneers Conference at both the Traverse City and the new Detroit (Wayne State) sites; the Great Lakes Fruit & Vegetable Expo in Grand Rapids; the Southwest Michigan Horticulture Show; the MIFFS Michigan Family Farm Conference; and the first conference of the Food Systems Economic Partnership. Other community education work included an interview with several MOFFA volunteer members on MI Farm Radio Network about Michigan organics, and the distribution of educational materials during Organic Day at the Michigan State Fair in Detroit.

Our "signature event", the 2006 Michigan Organic Conference, held at the Kellogg Center for Continuing Education on the campus of Michigan State University, convened over 200 individuals and almost 30 exhibitors. George Bird, and others, were instrumental in all phases of planning, organizing and running this event. Generous contributions from the MSU Student Organic Farm and others helped immensely to assure the success of this annual meeting for the organic community in Michigan.

Suzanne Rutkowski volunteered as editor of the *Michigan Organic Connections* during 2006, and on a rotating basis the MOFFA Board Members agreed to accept responsibility for compiling and posting the monthly *MOFFA News Group*. Our "signature publication," *Eating Organically*, was available for sale at all of our displays and at many farmers' markets around the state.

Organizational Changes

Membership. As of October 2006, MOFFA had 149 members, including 33 new members; an additional three individuals only subscribe to the *Michigan Organic Connections*.

Bylaws Change. In October, a majority of members returning ballots approved an amendment to the MOFFA Bylaws that enables the MOFFA Board by a two-thirds vote, in addition to a majority of the membership, to amend the organization's bylaws. Prior to this change, the bylaws required a vote of the entire membership for even the most minor changes in the bylaws.

Other Changes. In February, Kurt Cobb, agreed to serve as the organization's resident agent and as of May 1, 2006, MOFFA's new registered office is 3308 Pine Bluff Lane, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. MOFFA's new mailing address is: PO Box 26102, Lansing, MI 48909-6102

The Board reluctantly accepted Carol Osborne's resignation as Office Administrator in December and began to test a way of allocating Carol's responsibilities among Board Members.

In addition to accepting numerous other responsibilities, Board member Emily Reardon, assumed responsibility for the MOFFA website.

Advocacy & Grants

MOFFA's advocacy work is carried out in collaboration with other Michigan groups and through Board member direct efforts to represent an "organic position." During 2006, Claire (O'Leary) Maitre represented MOFFA to the Food System Economic Partnership; Board member Taylor Reid served as the MOFFA representative to the Michigan Environmental Council; Board member Barb Mutch was a consumer representative on the Michigan Food Policy Council and on the Michigan Organic Advisory Committee (MOAC); and, Carol Osborne, Office Administrator, was also a consumer representative on the MOAC. MOFFA is also a member of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture.

In addition to soliciting signatures for a range of political and legislative issues confronting the Michigan organic community at various festivals, MOFFA opposed "pre-emption legislation" that affects organic food and farms, and worked to promote greater acceptability of fresh (unpasteurized) milk.

In collaboration with Michigan State University, MOFFA continued work on two USDA-funded projects focused on issues related to organic transition. One project identifies the barriers and concerns of conventional fruit and vegetable growers that keep them from 'going organic.' The project includes farmer discussions, presentations at conferences and meetings, and a survey and report on the state of organic agriculture in Michigan. A second and closely related project, seeks to gain a better understanding of the markets and marketing channels for organic produce.

Major Opportunities

As we enter 2007, we continue to face two closely related challenges opportunities – one organizational and one related to policy and programs.

Organizationally we must find a way to assure adequate compensation and office support for office staff. This will be closely tied to making a major effort to secure funding for core organizational activities. Our central and distinguishing activities require regular oversight responsibility: newsletter; news group; guide; brochures and educational materials, including our display; keeping files and records of activities and involvement; and, revising several of our policies and procedures, including the use of the MOFFA trailer and support for local festivals.

At the same it is now more important than ever for us to strengthen our leadership role for organic in Michigan. We have a message for, and respond to the concerns of a growing number of Michigan citizens. We are and will continue to be a significant part of the future of food and farming in Michigan! Healthy Food, Healthy People, Healthy Environment!

Submitted on behalf of the MOFFA Board of Directors (December 2006), by Co-Chair, Jim Bingen.

The 2006 MOFFA Board of Directors

Jim Bingen, Chair

Taylor Reid, Co-Chair

Emily Reardon, Secretary

Kurt Cobb, Treasurer

George Bird

Nancy Jones Keiser

Barb Mutch

Doug Murray

Pat Whetham

Carol Osborne, Executive Secretary

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance

2007 Budget

INCOME

Contributions - restricted	1,500.00
Contributions - unrestricted	3,500.00
Grants - restricted	0.00
Membership Dues	7,500.00
Miscellaneous income	2,000.00
Program fees	13,000.00
Sales	3,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	30,500.00

EXPENSES

Bank service charges	25.00
Book purchases	1,000.00
Computer repair & maintenance	200.00
Conferences & meetings	1,000.00
Contract Services	5,000.00
Donations	0.00
Dues & subscriptions	600.00
Exhibit expenses	1,500.00
Fees, Licenses, Permits	300.00
Insurance	650.00
Internet & Website	100.00
Meeting expense	11,000.00
Office supplies	1,500.00
Payroll Expenses	0.00
Postage & delivery	2,000.00
Printing & copying	3,500.00
Program expense	900.00
Salary & wages	0.00
Telephone	500.00
Travel	0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	29,775.00

NET INCOME	725.00
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