



Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance

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2007 Annual Report To Members

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

The 2007 year has been a watershed year for MOFFA. It represents the first year in which we've taken important steps to expand our membership and to take initial steps to broaden awareness of the contribution of organic farming practices to addressing critical climate change concerns. This year also marked our first concerted effort to begin the promotion of Michigan Organic through a Michigan Organic Farmer's Pledge, a Michigan Eater's Pledge, and consideration of a new certified Michigan Organic label.

We continue to hold firmly to our observations from last year's report. We believe that organic farming practices restore wellness in people, community and the earth. We advocate for Michigan organic food and farming that creates the necessary connections between healthy people, communities and the earth.

As we review our activities and accomplishments during the calendar year 2007 we again deeply appreciate and applaud the tremendous achievements and dedication of a few dedicated MOFFA volunteers. These individuals, and many others, will be central in our efforts to foster a Michigan Organic identity, to improve the state's role in promoting organic and to foster broader public awareness of, and action to support the multiple benefits of organic food and farming.

Activities and Accomplishments

Education and Outreach

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

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; the Seeds of Prosperity Conference hosted by the Michigan Land Use Institute; a "Meat-Out" event; the Food Systems Economic Partnership conference; the LocalMotion Earth Day event; the 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 Michigan Choices conference; Other community education work included occasional interviews about Michigan organics with MOFFA Board members with the press and on the MI Farm Radio Network.

In March we published the first statewide organic survey, "Organic Agriculture in Michigan. 2006 Survey Report," in collaboration with Michigan State University. The report was distributed widely to policy-makers and several state newspapers and agricultural publications carried articles about our findings. A copy of this report is available on the MOFFA website, www.moffa.org.

Our "signature event", the 2007 Michigan Organic Conference, held at the Kellogg Center for Continuing Education on the campus of Michigan State University, convened approximately 250 individuals, including around 20 exhibitors. George Bird, and others, was 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 continued as our editor of the *Michigan Organic Connections* during 2007, and MOFFA Board Members took responsibility on a rotating basis 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. With help from numerous volunteers around the state, the entries from the 2005 edition were updated for publication in early 2008.

In response to a call for proposals regarding the use of the MOFFA mobile processing unit, Fair Food Matters, Kalamazoo, Michigan agreed to operate this unit for two years beginning in July 2007.

Organizational Events

A very special thanks to Kurt Cobb for his innovative initiatives to boost our membership around 250 during 2007.

Throughout the year, Board members continued to share executive secretarial responsibilities.

In November, the Board held a strategic planning session at the Grange Hall in Haslett Michigan. During this important event, it was agreed that MOFFA should take the initiative to explore the creation of a statewide collaborative alliance for Michigan food and farming that would serve as a public voice on behalf of, and for all those supporting the efforts small, family organic and community farms in Michigan. It was also agreed that we needed to continue our efforts to fill the position of executive secretary.

Advocacy & Grants

During the year we distributed drafts of a Michigan Farmer's Pledge and an Eater's Pledge as a first step to broaden and renew a Michigan organic identity.

The Board also began examining alternative logos that could be used in addition to our "classic" logo designed by Laura DeLind.

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 2007, Board member Taylor Reid served as the MOFFA representative to the Michigan Environmental Council. MOFFA is also a member of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture.

Major Opportunities

As we enter 2008, 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.

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 by Chair, Jim Bingen.

The 2006 MOFFA Board of Directors

Jim Bingen, Chair

Taylor Reid, Associate Chair

Emily Reardon, Secretary

Kurt Cobb, Treasurer

George Bird

Nancy Jones Keiser

Doug Murray

Pat Whetham