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Greetings—

Welcome to the spring edition of your MOFFA newsletter, although this year spring is very obviously a state of mind and astronomical event rather than an actual physical occurrence. Yet as we all know “hope springs eternal” from the soul of any grower.

Education, outreach and support have been the tools that the Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance has utilized through the years to promote organic agriculture. This particular edition is focused primarily on the Guide to Michigan's Organic and Ecologically Sustainable Growers and Farms (the "Farm Guide"). We, the MOFFA board, believe this information is invaluable to the consumers of our great state and seek to create an all-inclusive publication. We have many wonderful folks that have submitted the simple forms but we need your listing as well! So please



take a few minutes to visit the website www.moffa.net, click on the [Farm Guide](#) tab, and give your voice to the chorus of Michigan growers who participate in the conscious production of food, fiber and flora.

— Enjoy, John H.

Some of Our Members From Around the State

Moffa helps educate and promote an organic, sustainable environment for businesses, consumers and farmers. Connect to your community and other members by becoming a part of this great organization!



Sue Raker, Cloverland Apiary and Farm, Calumet: We joined MOFFA because we want people to understand organic agriculture. Organic farmers need to respect each other. We don't need to 'like' each other, but we do need to respect and stick together. Yes, as true now as over 150 years ago when first spoken. Conventional farms are bigger than the people who own them. As you look at organic farming, try to realize—if you can dream it, you can do it. Yes, you can! Organic

farming is not laughed at and does not have a marginal following. It's for real.

Jared Bogdanov-Hanna, Organic Farm Coordinator at the Student Organic Farm, Oakland University, Rochester:

I joined MOFFA for their excellence in education, advocacy and networking opportunities for the organic farming community in Michigan. Organic farming is important for improving public health, improving the environment and supporting the local economy. Providing and increasing



access to and knowledge of local organic foods is a crucial leverage point for many of the challenging issues we face in the 21st century.



Dana Driscoll, Oakland County Permaculture: I joined MOFFA to be part of an organization that supports organic and sustainable farms. We are committed to creating food that is organic—free from chemicals, GMO and pesticides for all living organisms.

Karen Warner, Big Head Farm, Benton Harbor: Why did I join MOFFA? I joined MOFFA because I believe that by working together as a group of organic and sustainable farmers we have a stronger voice with consumers and government, to educate and possibly enlighten them on issues in our local food-shed. I believe that we must work together toward common goals and the goals and mission of MOFFA are more closely aligned with my goals as a certified organic farmer than any other Michigan farm groups or organizations.

Organic farming is important to me because the majority of agriculture in the United States has moved in a direction that I don't believe is best for the future, that being large scale monoculture and chemical laden farms. I personally believe that nature knows best what is good for the planet and that it is my job to be a good steward of the land and to care for all aspects of the environment as I work to grow good food for my local community.





Les Roggenbuck, Upland Hills Farm, Oxford: I joined MOFFA to align with other like-minded people who want to grow organic. We grow organically because our economy, environment and health depend on it.



Michael and Julie Studier, Tower Hill Farm, Sodus: As new farmers, we joined MOFFA not only to learn about farming, but to learn to farm organically. Through our local Extension Service, we found many programs, specifically NRCS's conservation programs and the MAEAP verification program whereby our farm could become an environmentally responsible farm. These agencies were instrumental in our realizing we needed to grow organically, as we became aware of the dangers of so many

harmful chemicals (i.e. Roundup), not only for our fruit trees, but for the new blueberry patch and vegetable plot we created from fallow orchard land.

John Whittaker, Brightmoor Youth Organic Farm, Detroit: Why do we support organic farming? Organic Farming is the only way to go. Conventional farming doesn't make any sense. People need to eat real food without chemicals.





Jan and Richard O'Neill, Clare Limerick Alpaca & Produce Ranch, Jackson:

We at Clare Limerick Alpaca and Produce Ranch joined MOFFA because we wanted to be part of a group fighting Big Farming and GMOs. We were moved by the movie "Food Inc." and wanted to become involved in saving the small Independent farm in this country. We believe MOFFA is a good place to start to preserve the value of the independent family farm.

Troy Farwell, Doctor of Natural Health, Simple Organics, Oxford:

Why did we join MOFFA? When we look at our health system, there is nothing more important than the foundation of building and supporting local, organic farms. Why is organic farming important? I can't see anything more important and valuable than having locally organically grown food.



Update on the Farm Guide

In the spring of last year, MOFFA created the seventh edition of its [Guide to Michigan's Organic and Ecologically Sustainable Growers and Farms](#), and the first one to be available online.

The Guide currently lists 103 farms across the state, from Houghton County in the UP to Monroe in the extreme southeast. An additional 33 farms have applied for listing, but have not yet signed the [Farmer's Pledge](#), as we ask those who are not Certified Organic to do in order to ensure that every farm listed is committed to the principles implied in the Guide's name.

We know that there are many more farms in Michigan which are eligible for inclusion, and we hope to at least double the number listed during the course of 2014, to make the

Guide a more valuable resource for the increasing number of people who are looking to buy locally-grown food that is raised with respect for the environment.

If you have an organic operation, we encourage you to join those who are already listed in the Guide. You can do that online, at www.moffa.net/grower-information.html, or request a paper application by calling 248-262-6826 or writing to MOFFA at PO Box 26102, Lansing, MI 48909. It is not necessary to have USDA organic certification in order to be listed, although you do need to be committed to the principles outlined in the [Farmer's Pledge](#). Producers who Certified Organic are invited to sign the pledge as an additional symbol of their commitment to sustainable growing practices. Those who are not certified are required to sign in order to verify their commitment. Membership in MOFFA is not a requirement either, although we certainly hope those included will join and lend their support to the Farm Guide and other MOFFA endeavors on behalf of organic growers in Michigan. We'd also like to note that since it has been a few years, we did not automatically pick up all the farms that were listed in the 2008 edition, so if you would like your entry to be renewed, you'll need to let us know.

We are also soliciting recommendations from consumers—if you know a grower who should be listed, please either suggest it to them or let us know who they are so that we can invite them to join. There is an [online form](#) for this purpose, or you can let us know by [phone](#), [mail](#), or [email](#).

We plan to publish printable sections of the Guide by region within the next few months. A paper publication is also anticipated, but we would like to be able to include more farms before we commit to print.

Speaking of the Farm Guide ...

For a farmer who was just starting to get into organics, the MOFFA Farm Guide was an important tool. I was able to use it to connect with the resources I needed, both regionally and statewide. These resources included not only supplies such as Fertrell products, compost, and seed and feed, but also farmer-to-farmer knowledge. I was able to visit farms to talk to organic farmers and see first hand how they were implementing organic management. The Guide enabled me to make connections that I still utilize six years later. Please include your farm in the Guide!

—Chris Bardenhagen



Growing Up in Organics with the Guide

I started working on farms and farming myself in the early and still slow and foggy days of the internet. Most of what I learned of soils and cultivation, seeds and sowing, the stand and the harvest, came from time on farms, with farmers, with customers and, of course, with lots of books. Beginning a farm in central Michigan could've been an isolating experience, surrounded as we were by conventional commodities cropping. In 2001 organic vegetable production was at best seen as outsized gardening, at worst a throwback to the 60's with all the trappings and assumptions that go with it. Getting the Guide from a friend was like inheriting some grimoire of growers, an underground chapbook and a directory of revolutionaries; I hid it in the back of my desk drawer.

With the Guide in hand as a young grower, I had access to a pack of mentors and potential collaborators. With it I would collude with other growers in my area to buy cover crop seed and other bulk inputs. I had the phone numbers of people I could wonder about things with. It's how I met Doug Murray, who freely shared advice I keep to this day, in his voice in my head. When our farm got into the Guide, we started to get phone calls from people wanting, even needing good food. From these folks I learned of the lifeline that organic food has been for them. I learned that the Guide had been the pulley for their lifelines, a force multiplier that saved them time and introduced them to lifelong friends.

There are still a couple of well-worn copies of the Guide in the back of my desk drawer. The area codes are all suspect now, with the proliferation of cell phones. Most of the farms are still in business. As farms go, many of us are growing a different mix of crops and many of us are on more land as the success of organic farming swells. But there are so many more farms and allied food businesses in every region now. It's with them that I hope to share this message—of how cool and important it's been to our farm to have hold of the Guide and to be in it.

—Lee Arboreal of Eaters' Guild Farm

Membership 2014

It's a New Year, and time to renew your membership in MOFFA. It seems like more and more often I run into people who are beginning to see how great the distance has become between real food and the products of conventional agriculture, or are increasingly concerned about preserving the land and the living things that depend on it for future generations ... but aren't aware of the organizations that are working on these issues.

MOFFA's certainly not the only such organization, but it's the one that is focused on Michigan, and provides an opportunity for those who share these concerns to meet and learn from each other. The more of us there are, the greater our voice can be, both in

Michigan and at the national level. MOFFA is looking forward to a number of initiatives in the coming year to bring folks together, spread the word, and make our voices heard. But we can't do it without the support of our members. Family and individual memberships are still only \$30 per year, and only \$50 for farms and other businesses bringing in less than \$50,000 annually. It's a small price to pay to support the growth of organic and sustainable agriculture in Michigan.

You can join online at www.moffa.net/membership.html via PayPal, download a copy of the [membership form](#) and mail it to us with your check, or give us a call at 248-262-6826 or write to MOFFA at P.O. Box 26102, Lansing, MI 48909 and we'll send you a copy.

—Julia Christianson

2014 Organic Reporting Session

Vicki Morrone, Organic Farming Specialist, MSU

Organic Reporting Session—An event you shouldn't have missed!

The event brought nearly 60 farmers and 20-plus professionals from all over Michigan on March 7 to Michigan State University's Brody Neighborhood. Together, we shared a day of research findings, discussion of how the research can be used in production and then farmers identified questions that should be addressed in future research projects. Research ideas were identified by farmers following discussion with all farmers, ag professionals and researchers. Lunch time at Brody Café brought special topics including the 2014 Farm Bill offerings for Organic farming presented by Lindsey Scalera from Michigan Voices for Good Food Policy, and Expectations for the 2014 Organic Markets led by Dan Rossman, an organic farmer and MSU Extension educator.

A wide range of organic farming research was presented by MSU professors, covering techniques for discouraging pests in orchards, using compost tea in vine crops, vermicompost, and selecting soybean varieties for organic systems. Following the program, 14 attendees visited the Student Organic Farm and Haygrove Tunnels on College Ave at the MSU Horticulture Farm. The outcomes of the organic cherry and raspberry systems were of great interest to the farmers, demonstrating how each aspect of production was impacted by the Haygrove systems.

The growers expressed great interest to see future research that addresses a whole farming system within a research project. Farmers indicated that this is more realistic to "real farming," indicating that they would like to see future research take this approach. Researchers concurred but noted that it is challenging to thoroughly test each aspect of farming.

It was a great day for all, celebrating with dinner at a local restaurant. The growers anticipate the outcomes of this day to be used in future research, addressing issues

such as using reduced tillage to manage summer cover crops, investigating the impact of humic and folic acid in high tunnel soil, and cover crops that decrease corn pests in organic systems. The value of the day is way beyond identifying future research. New ideas and friends were found. The program will be held next year during MSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources week in March 2015, and I hope that you too can join us. You can see the research presentations at www.MichiganOrganic.msu.edu.

Now Accepting Nominations for the Board of Directors

Do you know someone passionate about furthering organic and sustainable food systems?

The Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA) is currently accepting nominations to our board of directors to fill a small number of recently opened vacancies. Our mission is to "Promote organic agriculture and the development and support of food systems that revitalize and sustain local communities." MOFFA's activities include education, information dissemination, and outreach, as well as advocacy for policies that will strengthen the organic community. Most importantly, MOFFA's goal is to serve as a forum and support network for our members, so they may be more effective stewards and achieve their goals in building a stronger organic community.

MOFFA would like to increase representation in areas of the state where we have many members but a less pronounced presence on the board—specifically among farmers in the central and northern Lower Peninsula as well as the Upper Peninsula—but we are seeking viable candidates from all walks of life and geographic areas.

The possibilities are endless for your role as a MOFFA board member. We know it's important to keep seeking new board members to provide fresh input in order to ensure our work stays relevant to organic producers and consumers.

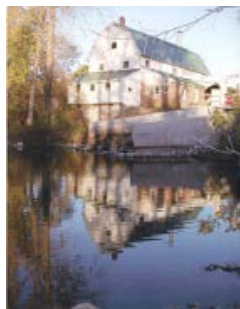
If interested, please contact: Carolyn Lowry: lowrycar@msu.edu.

MOFFA members are creating through outreach and with an entrepreneurial spirit opportunities for others. Our website www.moffa.net is a wonderful forum to let others know about available land, employment, products, or any fitting message. Just let the webmaster know what you'd like to announce.



Westwind Milling Owners' New Direction: Educational Farm Journeys at Westwind Farm and Incubator Land & Kitchen for summer, 2014!

Lee and Linda Purdy, owners of Westwind Milling Co. in southern Genesee County, have been grinding flours from certified organic, Michigan grown grains since 2002. They also have a beautiful farm with tons of potential that people love to visit. This year, they are combining these two businesses to better promote local food consumption and production in Michigan.



Westwind Farm is offering educational farm days for the average person who wants to incorporate organic gardening methods and the organic lifestyle. With six different themed days, a full summer and fall curriculum is set up. Classes are in-depth, from 3-6 hours each, including wagon rides, a seasonal garden lunch, and lots of take-home informational material, as well. There is the Kids' Summer Farm Day, family oriented Harvest Day, the Harvest Moon Ride, Tea at the Great Oak with speakers, Tea and Yoga at the

Great Oak, (both teas for adults or mature teens) and the Organic Gardening Days, a series of 3 classes spaced throughout the growing season.

Westwind Farm is also offering plots of land with access to water for a modest fee to the market grower or producer who wants to use their own variety of produce, etc. For the finished end of production, Westwind Milling is offering very reasonable rental of their MDA inspected kitchen for those who need such a kitchen.



For more information contact themillers@westwindmilling.com (810) 735-9192.

2013 Annual Report

2013 will long remain with us as a reminder of how perfect nature is to behold with both a spring, summer and autumn beyond compare and a winter that humbled—with power beyond mere mortal reckoning. This annual summation speaks not to volatility but rather to the consistency which MOFFA has steadfastly through these last decades been available and ready to lend a hand.

This past year MOFFA augmented our partnership with other fellow organizations, exhibiting at the Michigan Family Farms Conference, the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference, Everybody Eats, the Michigan Farmers Market Conference, MSU's Organic Reporting Session, Southwest Michigan Harvest Fest, Bioneers Detroit, and the Great



John Hooper at MOFFA's Conference Booth

Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Expo, all of which allowed us to reach many more individuals with our limited resources. Look for a very likely "Organic University" intensive learning experience piggybacked with a conference in the near future. Our financial support for sponsoring, presenting and exhibiting at these events continues to be derived primarily from memberships and donations—for this we thank you.

MOFFA was very fortunate to have hired, on a very limited part-time basis, an extremely multi-talented administrative assistant, Julia Christianson, this year. Her

excellent skills have graced almost every aspect of the organization. Three enthusiastic and knowledgeable individuals joined the MOFFA board of directors in early 2013— Lee Arboreal, Dane Terrill, and Linda Torony. Their positive impact has made a huge difference already during their short tenure. MOFFA board members are on a daily basis working with some aspect of organic agriculture.

In 2013, four programs dominated the monthly meeting agendas, and rightly so as they had a significant role in our organization's future. (1) Development of a Loan Policy, Loan Committee and the establishment of a three-way partnership with the Organic Farmer Training Program of the MSU Student Organic Farm (SOF), Michigan State University Federal Credit Union, and MOFFA to offer low interest loans to incoming candidates in the Organic Farmer Training Program (who are ineligible for ordinary student loans). MOFFA will act strictly as the fiduciary and be reimbursed from the loan funds for any costs incurred, and will not be responsible for the raising of those donated monies. MSUFCU will administer the program free of any fees, and individuals who may not have had the opportunity to attend the SOF will now have the ability to do so. Our loan policy also extends to other programs we may establish in the future. (2) Revision of the MOFFA By-laws to facilitate changing the structure of the organization from a "Membership" to a "Directorship". MOFFA is and continues to be a membership-driven organization; redefining our legal status has allowed us more flexibility and common sense application of day to day procedures. We spent a very considerable amount of time on this including a member survey and a member vote which all were invited to participate in. (3) Our Annual Meeting which saw the development of members' activities wish lists, and the establishment of a volunteer committee. (4) And last but not foremost, the Farm Guide previously titled Eating Organically, which now has a more defined, albeit lengthy title, the Guide to Michigan's Organic and Ecologically Sustainable Growers and Farms.

While the aforementioned items dominated our time, numerous other endeavors took place this past year. MOFFA is acting as the fiduciary sponsor of a \$35,000 high tunnel

grant. We distributed hundreds of organic seed packets printed with instructions to 3rd graders in the Thumb Area of Michigan. Our policy committee has been active with sign-ons and comment letters on a variety of topics, but most impressively a wonderfully-crafted piece from a small farmer's perspective to the FDA in regard to the Food Safety Modernization Act. MOFFA continues to work and communicate with Senator Debbie Stabenow and would like to believe that with that support, she fought even more valiantly for strong inclusion of, and increased funding to, the organic programs in the new Farm Bill.

MOFFA maintains membership in the Organic Consumers Association, the Michigan Environmental Council, Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS), the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, and the Cornucopia Institute, and supports their work. We are resolved to continually upgrade the MOFFA website with the addition of new tabs (educational events, employment opportunities) and the welcome submission by members and non-members alike of relevant information to post; it has been most gratifying to the board to create a website that is befitting your organization. Of highest priority is the MOFFA Board of Directors' absolute willingness to be always just an email, telephone call or letter away from assistance with any question or concern you may have.

As a volunteer organization we oftentimes struggle to accomplish all we envision or attempt; but the commitment is solid and the mission statement our credo of daily life. We always welcome your input and wholeheartedly thank you for your support. Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance's relevance is each one of us seeking a healthy existence for all.

—Enjoy, John H.

The Annual Report for 2013 will be posted shortly at www.moffa.net/annualreports.html where it will join those from previous years.

Keep up with MOFFA on our website: www.moffa.net, or email us at moffaorganic@gmail.com.

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