Good farmer-chef pairings—like bacon and eggs—depend on timing

By Bailey Webster

Most chefs choose to order from large food distributors, getting everything they need in one phone call. They don’t want to bother remembering which farmer sells the best potatoes or who takes orders on Tuesdays. They get the food they need delivered on time in the quantities they want. The middle-man removes the need for chefs to make relationships with the farmers who grow their food. Many would argue that the efficiency gained by buying and selling through a distributor makes any flaws in the system well worth it. But for a handful of chefs committed to sourcing locally from farmers in their area, it’s more about relationships than efficiency.

**Birchwood Cafe**

For over 20 years, the Birchwood Cafe in Minneapolis, Minn., has been committed to building relationships with local farmers and businesses. Their website lists over 30 local farms that supply the Birchwood with vegetables, fruit, grains, meat, and dairy. Chef Marshall Paulsen keeps an impressively complex ordering schedule in his head, which requires over 12 hours of staff time per week. Multiple people are involved in ordering. They order directly from farmers as much as possible, filling gaps with orders from Co-op Partners Warehouse, an organic foods distributor based in St. Paul.

Paulsen said they try to accommodate the farmer’s preference when it comes to ordering. Some farmers prefer emailed orders, while others like to get a phone call or text message. The Birchwood has been purchasing from most of its farmers for 10 years or more, so the process is fairly routine. However, Paulsen acknowledged that it could be quite daunting for a chef who is used to ordering from a single distributor to think about managing accounts with several local farmers and their different ordering preferences.

The Birchwood’s weekly ordering process begins on Sunday, with staff taking an inventory with a customized “fresh produce guide” that helps to determine what is needed for the week. About a dozen email, phone, and text message orders go out to farmers on Sunday afternoon. It takes about four hours from start to finish. On Monday, they order dry goods, dairy, and meats, also from local farmers. This takes another four hours. Tuesday is a quicker maintenance order from Co-op Partners, for things the Birchwood has unexpectedly run out of, or that can’t be procured locally (such as lemons, or items that are not in season). On Wednesday, staff spends another 2-3 hours ordering from local farmers. On Thursday, they take inventory and

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**Plan now to manage risk during organic transition**

By Paul Dietmann

In October 2017, the farm gate price of organic corn was approximately $9 per bushel while the price of conventional corn was slightly above $3. Is it any wonder that some farmers are looking at what it takes to transition to certified organic production?

While prices for organic commodities look very attractive to farmers who are facing their fourth straight year of declining net farm income, the transition to organic needs to be entered with eyes wide open. It is neither simple nor without costs.

The transition to organic production is much more than an economic decision. A farmer has to be willing to commit to a significant shift in production philosophy—not just a change in practices—or the transition will fail. Here are some things to consider as you contemplate a switch to organic production:

**Start planning at least a year before beginning the transition.**

Attend conferences, introduce yourself to experienced organic growers, and build a network that can provide support as you begin farming organically. Spend time with experienced organic growers at different times of the growing season to learn how they manage production challenges.

Figure out where you can buy organic seed, fertilizer, and any specialized equipment you might need. For the most part, you can use the same equipment in non-organic and organic fields, but you will need to clean equipment before entering organic fields. Also, look ahead to how you will transport and store your organic harvest to prevent co-mingling and loss of organic status.

**Begin discussing your plans with your lender early in the transition process.**

Explain your plans and get your lender’s thoughts. Your cash flow may change a lot during the transition. You’ll want to make sure you have enough operating capital to carry you through.

If you need new equipment or grain storage, you’ll want to be ready to finance those purchases. You may need to restructure some existing debt to free up borrowing capacity.

Fortunately, a farmer transitioning now to organic production is much more likely to find an ag lender who has some experience with organic farms than farmers who switched 30 years ago. If your lender doesn’t have experience with organic production or isn’t supportive of your decision, you may need to find a new lender.

**Plan a gradual transition of acres.**

The learning curve for organic production can be steep as a farmer learns how to grow crops without the use of herbicides or standard commercial fertilizer. It often takes more time, labor, and trips across the field to grow a crop organically. Start with a small enough acreage that it won’t present the farm with a financial hardship if crop performance is down in the first year or two.
From the Executive Director

As you know, organic isn’t a niche market any more. MOSES and our community have been successful in helping more farmers start farming organically, become certified organic and grow their farm businesses.

We’ve educated, inspired and empowered our way to the front of a movement which has brought organic farming to the mainstream of the U.S. food system. Many longtime friends have worked hard for the day when organic food and organic thinking are prominent. We’ve arrived! Together, we’ve caught the attention of the broader farming community.

Along with all of our success comes a responsibility to prepare those who are just now coming to the organic and sustainable farming movement. MOSES intends to be here for them as well.

This past year, we put on programs in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. At these events, grain farmers, livestock producers, and vegetable and fruit growers, beginning farmers and retiring farmers all connect with MOSES, some of them for the first time. They learn about the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, the Organic Broadcaster, the Guidebook for Organic Certification, the Organic Answer Line, and all of our other resources. And, they are relieved to find they’ll have support on this new path they’re choosing.

MOSES is going to continue to meet the growing needs before us by tapping into the power of the community we’ve built over these years. Rather than having a few general organic specialists, pulled in many different directions simultaneously, we are developing a team of remote specialists representing many different areas, in terms of both geography and scope. We plan to have one or more specialists working on specific content, like vegetables, crops, livestock, or dairy.

At a field day earlier this summer, I spoke with a farmer who came not knowing anything about organic farming or MOSES. He was just “checking us out,” so to speak. After the event, I had a chance to ask him what he thought. “Oh, my, you people sure want to share what you are doing with others! I’ve never been to an event where more people were interested in helping me learn. It’s a little odd, but I kind of liked it for a change!”

This openness is nothing new for the MOSES community, but it is new for many—it’s one of the things that makes our community so successful.

This year, we are seeking to raise $150,000 to spread this open, sharing, inspiring, empowering way of thinking even more broadly. We want to take our expertise on the road and make sure all farmers have a chance to learn from and be a part of the MOSES organic farming community. I invite you to join this effort by making a gift to MOSES, and investing in organic farmers.

Thanks for reading. As you put your farm to bed this winter, I hope you are making plans to join us for the MOSES Conference Feb. 22-24 in La Crosse. There, you’ll see our community on full display!

— John Mesko, MOSES Executive Director
USDA's failure to enact new livestock standards upends organic rule-making process

By Maggie McNeil, Organic Trade Association

The Organic Trade Association is honored to be featured in this space that for so many years has offered the respected insights of Harriet Behar. Harriet’s last Inside Organics column talked about the importance of organic standards being robust, consistent and clear in order to stay meaningful and in order to maintain the integrity of organic.

Our association could not agree more. That’s why in September we took the very serious step of filing a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture over its failure to put into effect new organic livestock standards. We did not take this action lightly. But after careful consideration, it became clear that we had to take this step to stand up on behalf of the entire organic sector and protect organic integrity, advance animal welfare, and safeguard the process for the development of organic standards.

Our CEO and Executive Director Laura Batcha explains it this way: “The organic industry deeply respects its contract with the consumer and will not stand aside while the government backs the meaningful and transparent choice of organic foods that deliver what the consumer wants. The government’s failure to move ahead with this fully vetted regulation turns upside down the entire process by which organic regulations are set—a process that Congress created, the industry has worked within, and consumers trust.”

So acting in the interests of the organic sector, the Organic Trade Association’s Board of Directors voted unanimously to legally take USDA to task for not honoring its rule-making mandate as a federal agency.

This issue of the Organic Broadcaster goes to press Nov. 14, the very same day that the Organic Livestock and Poultry Production rule, commonly referred to as the Organic Animal Welfare Rule, was set to go into effect. On Nov. 9 the USDA announced another six-month delay in the rule. That’s good news and bad news.

The Organic Trade Association had anticipated a further “walk back” by the Trump Administration of more than a decade of work to improve and clarify organic animal agriculture regulations. However, the silver lining is that the Organic Trade Association lawsuit prevented USDA from complete withdrawal of the organic animal welfare rule.

Any steps by USDA to unwind the changes to federal organic regulations are being taken against a backdrop of nearly universal support among the organic community, animal welfare advocates, and consumers for the rules that USDA has now rejected. We will continue this fight in the court, where a federal judge will now evaluate whether the Administration has wrongly ignored the laws that require consultation with the National Organic Standards Board and those requiring informing the public and providing consumers a chance to comment on organic policies before they take effect.

We are still hoping that our federal officials will decide to uphold their end of the bargain, and abide by their mandate. But if not, the following is a primer on our action, and why we know this was the right thing to do, and why we are confident that we will prevail on this important issue for the organic sector.

Our suit alleges that the USDA has violated the Organic Foods Production Act, and unlawfully delayed the effective date of the final livestock standards that were developed by industry and in accordance with the established rule-making processes. The suit also contends that the USDA has violated the Administrative Procedure Act—which sets out the rule-making processes established by Congress—because the repeated delays were issued without any public process. We also allege that the USDA abused its discretion by ignoring the overwhelming public record established in support of these organic standards.

Supporting the Organic Trade Association in the suit, as groups harmed by this protracted government inaction, are organizations representing organic livestock farmers, organic certification agencies, and organic retailers and consumers.

There is a failure of the government right now to advance the development of organic standards. The American organic sector is the gold standard of how a successful public-private partnership works, but if the government does not pull its weight in this partnership, then the organic sector must do everything it can to make sure it is continuing to move forward. Organic is an opt-in regulated marketing program that ensures products bearing the USDA Organic seal meet strict, consistently applied standards and provide the consumer a meaningful choice. Organic producers and businesses choose to be organic, and choose to follow a set of clear and strict federal organic regulations. The organic sector is unique in that regard, because we welcome and appreciate robust regulations to maintain the integrity of organic.

The organic animal welfare rule is the result of 14 years of public and transparent work within the process established by Congress that provides deep engagement and input by organic stakeholders during multiple administrations, both Republican and Democrat.

It addresses four broad areas of organic livestock and poultry practices, including living conditions, animal healthcare, transport, and slaughter. The rule represents a refinement and clarification of a series of organic animal welfare recommendations incorporated into the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, which established the federal regulations overseeing the U.S. organic sector.

If the organic rule-making process is allowed to be over-ridden by special interest groups, then we’ve lost not just this fight, but could be in jeopardy of losing the organic battle.
might also consider removing fixtures, valves, you may do this by “blowing out” the lines. You supplies. Depending on your irrigation system, before there is damage.

winter and find appropriate containers now need to be protected from rodents through the winter. What items (floating row cover, packaging, etc.) will be protected from extreme temperatures, will be protected from rodents through the winter in crop residue. Remove it and manage the compost well to make sure your problems have been disposed of. After all that residue has been removed, the soil has less protection from winter winds, snow melt, and spring rains. You can help protect your soil from erosion, hold on to its nutrition, and add organic matter to your soil by planting a winter cover crop of your choice. Depending on your bed layout and harvest patterns, you may be harvesting some crops beyond the planting window. Consider managing your rotation so that those areas get a rest at a different time of year. Consider managing your rotation so that those areas get a rest at a different time of year.

There always seems to be a “race to the finish line” when it comes to preparing your farm for winter. If you’re involved in full production, it can be even more difficult to fit it all in before the snow flies. However, there are a few tasks that are very important for the success of your next season. First, make sure to walk your property and look for misplaced or forgotten tools. That screwdriver you used to fix the irrigation line will be much easier to see now in the fall grass. Later, after it’s been buried in snow, it can be ruined by the elements, or worse, it could cause much larger problems to your tractor tires. Carefully collecting, cleaning, organizing, and storing your tools now—while they’re still on your mind—will make the spring rush more streamlined. Make certain to store sensitive items (like an electronic scale or irrigation timer) where they will be protected from extreme temperatures, changes in humidity, and dust. Also, consider what items (floating row cover, packaging, etc.) need to be protected from rodents through the winter and find appropriate containers now before there is damage.

Next, thoroughly drain and store irrigation supplies. Depending on your irrigation system, you may do this by “blowing out” the lines. You might also consider removing fixtures, valves, and hose bibs to replace them with solid end caps to prevent damage from freezing and discourage critters from setting up shop for the winter in your irrigation lines.

Finally, and most importantly, clear and compost potentially hazardous litter from your field and, if possible, secure your soil and fertility with a winter cover crop. It might seem counter-intuitive to remove vegetable matter from the field and then plant a cover crop. However, those squash vines on the field might be offering shelter to cucumber beetles that will return with a vengeance for next year’s crop. Many pests and diseases can be harbored through the winter in the snow flies. However, there are a few tasks that are very important for the success of your fields for winter?"

Answer by Lauren Langworthy

“What should I be doing to prepare my vegetable fields for winter?”

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A Global Equipment Company, Inc.
Rodale Institute, partners introduce Regenerative Organic Certification

By Diana Martin

Earlier this fall, Rodale Institute announced a new “Regenerative Organic Certification,” a holistic agri-culture certification with guidelines for soil health, and land management, animal welfare, and farmer and worker fairness. The standard was generated by a cooperative effort among a coalition of farmers, ranchers, nonprofits, scientists, and brands, led by Rodale Institute, including Patagonia, Dr. Bronner’s, Agriculture Justice Project, Compassion in World Farming, Fair World Project, White Oak Pastures, Maple Hill Creamery, Grain Place Foods, and others.

The goals of the certification include increasing soil organic matter over time, sequestering carbon in the soil, improving animal welfare, providing economic stability and fairness for farmers, ranchers, and workers, and creating resilient regional ecosystems and communities. Regenerative Organic Certification does not aim to compete with or negate current organic standards. The certification uses the USDA’s National Organic Program (USDA Organic) certified organic standard (or its international equivalency) as a base-line requirement, and adds criteria in the areas of soil health and land management, animal welfare, and farmer and worker fairness.

“The Regenerative Organic Certification builds upon the nearly 100-year legacy of organic movement visionaries like J. I. Rodale and Dr. Rudolf Steiner and provides stepwise guidance for farming and ranching operations, transportation, slaughter, and processing facilities that produce food, cosmetics, and fiber,” said Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute’s executive director. “It is essential to farm in a way that enriches rather than degrades the soil, and values animals and workers. Regenerative Organic Certification leverages existing high-bar organic, animal welfare, and social fairness certifications, and includes additional regenerative requirements.”

The standard is based on three pillars: soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness. Specific practices and guidelines apply to each pillar based on the level of certification the producer is seeking. The levels are bronze, silver, and gold, offering a tiered approach so producers can adjust and adapt their practices over time.

The standards for each level of certification are very detailed. Complete details are online at bit.ly/RegenerativeOrganicStandards. Here’s a simplified look:

**Soil Health**
- Operation has proof of existing USDA Organic certification or equivalent.
- Producers use a minimum of one cover crop per year per acre on an annual basis.
- Land maintains adequate green cover year-round, with roots remaining in the ground, when possible.
- Tillage must be less than 8 inches. Cultivation tillage, under 2 inches, is permitted as outlined by level.
- Ruminant feed comes from organic or regenerative organic grains, wherever applicable.
- Operation does not feed animals or treat animals with cruelty.
- Operation has a rotational grazing plan.
- Producers promote compassionate care and handling of animals. Operations do not abuse animals or treat animals with cruelty.
- Aquaponics, hydroponics, and other soilless practices are not eligible.
- Operation does not use any genetically modified inputs. Cloned animals are not eligible for Regenerative Organic Certification.
- Requires soil health testing.

**Animal Welfare**
- Operation does not feed animals in a manner that meets the USDA’s definition of a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO).
- Environment considers an animal’s welfare needs and is designed to protect animals from physical and thermal discomfort, fear, distress, and allows them to perform normal behaviors conducive to good animal welfare. Includes adequate shelter, indoor space for avian species, appropriate exposure to light, pasture for livestock and more.
- Operation has implemented an animal nutrition plan that encourages consumption of forage/regenerative organic grains, wherever applicable.
- Operations do not use any type of temporary or permanent confinement (including cages, crates, tie-stalls, and any other system that restricts mobility) at any point during the production cycle, except if necessary for veterinary treatment or transportation.
- All slaughter/killing systems need to be designed and managed to ensure animals are not caused unnecessary or intentional distress or discomfort.

**Social Fairness**
- With the exception of the operator’s family members, no children below the lowest of 15, legal age, or age of compulsory schooling are

To New Certification on page 14

- Requires soil health testing.
place orders for the weekend. Some ordering happens on Friday and Saturday as well. “Every day, we order,” Paulsen said.

In addition to preferring different ways of ordering, restaurants have different requirements regarding lead time. Some farmers need 2-3 days’ notice before they can deliver. Others will do next-day delivery. Some items are ordered well in advance. For example, this February the Birchwood and Café Alma decided to purchase 500 pounds of blueberries from Blue Fruit Farm. This is enormously helpful for farmers who have time and energy to market their produce in the winter months, and are overstocked with winter harvest season. Farmers will also sometimes bring extra produce when they do a delivery, giving the restaurant staff the opportunity to check their inventories and purchase more on the spot if they need it.

It would seem that relationship is at the heart of good farm-to-restaurant partnerships. Paulsen said of the farmers he’s been working with for a decade or more: “We know their dogs’ names; we’ve been to their homes.”

During the summer, the Birchwood hosts a “Crop Mob” every month on a local farm. Staff and guests from the restaurant visit the farm to help with a project. Birchwood provides lunch once the hard work is over. The events are free and family-friendly. Birchwood also hosts a “meet-and-greet” at the restaurant, for diners to meet the farmers that supply their food. At a crop mob two years ago, hosted by Heartbeet Farm, several staff members took kittens home with them. They have been beloved pets ever since.

For farmers who are just beginning to sell to restaurants, Paulsen recommends going around and meeting chefs and restaurant owners. “Develop a relationship, he advised. “If they can put a face or a story to the person they meet, they will be more inclined to buy from them.” Also said it’s important to make an appointment rather than just dropping in. Chefs are very busy people, and if they are working in the kitchen or on the line, they aren’t going to want to hear about your potatoes. “Unless it’s a Sunday afternoon after brunch, and you happen to have a bunch of stuff we just ran out of,” he laughed.

Riverbend Farm
Greg and Mary Reynolds of Riverbend Farm in Delano, Minn., run a CSA and sell to 15 different restaurants. When they started farming, they found it challenging to get into the co-op market. “They can see how we take care of our land and the way the Birchwood website does. Alma takes a more subtle approach, preferring to allow the food to speak for itself.” At Alma, we believe that food and cooking should tell a story of a place and time,” explained Chef de Cuisine Matti Sprague.

Chefs like that are no fun to work with, so I don’t,” he explained. “One of the great things about Matti and Marshall is that they are good leaders—hard-working, very talented—and if you walked into the kitchen you would probably find them peeling horseradish, chopping up zucchini or assembling a pan of hotdish for lunch. Characteristics like that might have something to do with why their staff sticks around so long.”

There are few challenges for farmers working with chefs. “Chefs are always looking for something new that can’t be grown in Minnesota, or isn’t in season. Because people are so disconnected from their food sources, restaurant season doesn’t line up with the seasons in the physical world,” Reynolds pointed out. For example, as soon as temperatures rise in the spring, people want to eat spring foods. Chefs are putting things on their menu well before they are available locally. “By the time the grass is turning green in mid-April and we have had a few sunny 70s days, they have peas and asparagus on your menu. Most years the frost has barely come out of the ground by then,” he added.

Reynolds actively uses the Riverbend Farm story to market their produce. He writes a newsletter for their CSA, and sends it to the restaurants they work with so that the chefs and staff have some idea of what happens on the farm. Most of the people they sell to have been out to visit Riverbend Farm. “They can see how we take care of our land and crops, and know why we do it,” he explained.

After years of working with restaurants, Reynolds has some sage advice for farmers just getting started. “Work to grow the market for local food. The well-known and established local food system is made in heaven—kind of like bacon and eggs.”

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Paulsen of the Birchwood.
Young farmer creates livestock feed business with ‘waste’ produced by grain mills

By Jody Padgham

Eight thousand tons. That’s 16,000,000 pounds, the estimated amount of agricultural by-product diverted from landfills this year by Riverside Feeds of Riceville, Iowa.

Based on the idiom, “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure,” Riverside Feeds takes food and feed-grade byproducts, primarily soy and oat products, from multiple processing plants throughout the central U.S. and remanufactures them into usable livestock protein. The resulting organic/non-GMO product goes into feed used by dairy, beef, pork and poultry farmers.

Owner James Frantzen was partnering with his dad, Iowa organic pastured hog farmer Tom Frantzen, to operate Frantzen Farm Feeds in 2013 when a supplier called with an excess of non-GMO soy protein. While Frantzen Farm Feeds regularly handled organic soy products, they were not set up to manage non-GMO. The younger Frantzen saw an opportunity, and within 48 hours had a business set up.

Since then, Riverside Feeds, LLC has expanded into a dynamic business with six full-time employees, distributing product in 30 states.

“The grain processors we work with, producing ingredients for the organic food industry, have no interest in the feed industry,” claimed Frantzen, now 29 years old. “They need someone to handle the byproducts they create, which otherwise were primarily going into landfills.”

Frantzen’s visionary response has created a unique, fast moving and successful business. Responding to the 2013 opportunity, he purchased a warehouse for non-GMO and organic products in Riceville, 20 minutes from the Frantzen home farm. By mid-2014, he began construction of a feed mill, allowing him to grind and mix ingredients. Continuing demand led him to add a grain cleaning and bagging facility and mix ingredients. Continuing demand led him to add a grain cleaning and bagging facility and mix ingredients.

For many years, the original Frantzen mill was doing about 1,000 tons of business annually. This year, the mill will be at 8,000 tons, with most of that growth in the last five years. Growth is already running ahead of projections made for the March 2017 expansion, Frantzen said. While he acknowledged the excitement of success, he also noted the hard work such rapid growth demands. He is quick to point out that People’s Savings Bank of Elma, Iowa, has been instrumental in his success.

“Working with a small, local bank has made all the difference,” he said. “What we’re doing is so unique, they had no model to fall back on. We worked together to figure things out.”

The Northeast Iowa bankers didn’t have a lot of experience with organic products or markets, either. “They’ve committed to learning a lot,” Frantzen noted. He recently took the bank president and vice president on a tour to the Organic Valley Distribution Center in Cashton, Wis. “They’ve been surprised by the volume and growth of the organic industry, and are excited to discuss business decisions.

“Working with a small, local bank has made all the difference,” he said. “What we’re doing is so unique, they had no model to fall back on.
Organic is a long-term investment. The net cash flow could very well be negative on transitioning acres during the first two or three years of the switch. As with any other long-term investment, cash is invested upfront with the expectation of a positive return in future years. Cash returns on organic production typically turn positive in the third or fourth year. Don't lose sight of the potential future returns during the initial years of negative cash flow.

Keep variable costs low on transitioning acres. Variable costs are those you wouldn't have if you weren't growing any crops. They include seed, soil amendments, fuel, crop insurance, operating interest, and the costs of harvesting, hauling, and drying crops. These are all cash costs that have to be paid during the year, as opposed to an overhead cost such as depreciation that doesn't require the farmer to write a check. Consider ways in which those cash costs can be minimized on transitioning acres. For example, the variable costs to grow hay are roughly two-thirds of the variable costs of growing corn in the first year of the transition. Many transitioning farmers find the cash flow is easier to handle if they grow a crop like hay that requires lower out-of-pocket costs.

Timeliness is critical in organic production. Organic crop production is weather-dependent to the extreme. A grower may find that only one or two days in the season are fit for rotary hoeing or cultivating, and every acre of organic ground must be covered within that narrow window. Operations won't be a good fit for someone with an off-farm job and an inflexible schedule. It may require investment in larger equipment that can cover more acres in a shorter timeframe. It may be difficult to hire custom operators familiar with organic production to help with planting or harvest, which might also lead to more machinery investment for your farm.

Get expert advice. You may not be able to anticipate or overcome every hurdle that will appear on your path to organic certification. That's why it's important to have a network you can turn to for help. The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) has organic experts on staff that are available to answer questions from growers. The organization also offers field days and hosts the largest organic farming conference in the country every February in La Crosse, Wis. (See mosesorganic.org.) MOSES partners with the University of Wisconsin-Madison on the Organic Grain Resource and Information Network (OGRAIN). This resource was created in 2015 specifically to help conventional grain growers transition to organic. (See uworganic.wisc.edu/ograin.) Finally, there are many experienced growers in the Midwest who have successfully transitioned and are willing to help others make the switch. MOSES can connect you to these growers.

Cost-sharing is available. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers organic transition cost-sharing for a variety of practices through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grants. Talk to your local NRCS staff and get on their list of farmers to contact when an EQIP signup is announced. Up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification can be reimbursed through the USDA Farm Service Agency’s cost-share program. Some states offer assistance with organic transition through their departments of agriculture. It's worth a call to your state department to see if they have an organic assistance program.

The transition to organic grain production takes time, and cash flow may be negative for a few years. Get your lender on board with your plans early in the process. Keeping variable costs low and taking advantage of cost-sharing opportunities helps. There will be some tough times on the road to certification, but growers who start the process thinking of it as a long-term investment will likely see their perseverance rewarded over time.

Paul Dietmann is a Senior Lending Officer with Compeer Financial. For additional insights from Paul and the rest of the Compeer Financial team, visit Compeer.com/Home/Educational-Opportunities.
By Teresa Opheim

No farm heir? Start wheels in motion to find successor years before you retire

You and your family worked hard to make the land a better place. You want your farm to continue, but no one in your family wants to work the land. Off you go on the bewildering journey of finding a non-related successor for your land. Does it help to know that you are not alone? In Iowa, for example, 68 percent of farmers report they have no adult children who currently farm.

Farmland owners who have successfully transitioned to non-family successors have advice for you: start early. Decide what matters most for the future of your farmland. Look into strategies that will maximize your successor’s chance to succeed.

Transitions take time! One Minnesota farmland owner I know started 35 years ago, and has just now found the right non-related couple. I also have an Iowa farmer friend who is 80 and just starting the search for someone to take over his farm. That is simply not enough time to make this work.

You can’t have it all. You need to decide which of these goals comes out on top: 1. Provide a farm for a family to work. 2. Maximize income for my family. 3. Help other farmers lodge on the land. 4. Maximize property value of the land. 5. Maximize job opportunities. Each of these goals has its value, but your goals may differ. Not everyone will agree with your goals. It’s just that you should be clear how much flexibility you have in terms of return and timing for that return. That helps potential successors know whether or not they will be able to work with you.

Many need to maximize financial return with their farm, and this is where things get really complicated. Nothing wrong with that. It’s just that you should be clear how much flexibility you have in terms of return and timing for that return. That helps potential successors know whether or not they will be able to work with you.

Northeast Iowa resident Dale Nimrod’s story is a wonderful one (see practicalfarmers.org/farm-transfer). Nimrod’s parents purchased a farm in Southwest Iowa in 1944, but his father died before having an opportunity to work the place. Their mother was determined to raise her family on the farm, and did so with a lot of support from the nearby town of Stanton and the local church.

Years after Nimrod and his siblings, Faith and Vance, inherited the farm, they decided on their top goal for the land: to pay back the community that had helped raise them. They decided to sell the farm, and did so with a lot of support from the local church.

Dale and Sunny Nimrod of Decorah, Iowa, are happy their family’s farmland went to a family who will keep the land as a farm. (Photo by Teresa Opheim)

The Nimrods decided it was best to sell the land to the Petersens, and they sold it on generous terms that were based on the production value of the land (using farm productivity worksheets from Iowa State University), which “has little to do with the market price,” Nimrod said.

Neil Hamilton is another landowner who chose to sell. Hamilton grew up on and then inherited farmland in Southwest Iowa. He later offered his neighboring young farmer a 15-year land contract with a balloon payment at the end, because he believes “Adams County needs young farmers owning a piece of land” more than it needs people who don’t live nearby owning the land. “Historically this nation’s preference was not for tenancy but to convert tenants into owners,” Hamilton said.

“Ownership was the goal for a lot of reasons—for security, for wealth creation, for stewardship. Not many people would choose to always be a tenant if they could own the land.”

If, unlike Nimrod and Hamilton, keeping the land in your family is a top priority, you can still help get another farmer on the land. Kate Edwards is a young vegetable farmer who has been successful on leased land near Iowa City. If you chose this rental route or decide to run the farm business with your successor, it is even more critical that you two have a good match.

According to the organization Land for Good, transferring a farm to a non-family successor is often different in many ways. With a family transfer situation, both parties have likely known each other most of their lives. That isn’t as likely with a non-family successor. Whether you are leasing or selling, Land for Good recommends solid interview of the potential new farmers to get to know them better, and to understand how they will maximize the farm’s potential. A business plan will spell out the land as a farm. (Photo by Teresa Opheim)

owners in contact with land seekers. The MOSES Land Link-Up is free (mosesorganic.org/land-link-up). Also see www.youngfarmers.org/landlinks.

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Dale and Sunny Nimrod of Decorah, Iowa, are happy their family’s farmland went to a family who will keep the land as a farm.
Longtime organic farmer shares skills as volunteer in Africa

By Tony Ends

Hungry children fed me. Spare frames knelt with me on a reed mat covering a shack's dirt floor. Thin fingers pushed the few bits of meat and vegetables to my side of the common rice bowl.

They were Peulfar refugees from Guinea—hundreds of them, squatting along railroad tracks of a town to which they'd fled in Senegal. In the hot, dry region is only secondary school, I was the young American Peace Corps teacher. I never forget their profound signs of respect, the unfathomable depths of their kindness. From them, I learned food was more important than money. I learned dignity can thrive in the midst of poverty.

This winter, 63 years old, I'm going back to volunteer in Africa. My commitment this time is 6 months.

Today, everything about my life and me is very different. I've had many other teachers, many important lessons across 40 years. I love my wife, Dela, my first mentor in organic agriculture. I love farming and the Wisconsin countryside I've shared with her for a quarter century. I love when our son, Joel, comes by for breakfast, or our daughter, Holly, meets us in town to talk over dinner. I love hearing my grandson, Charlie, age 3, call out, "I will help you, Papá" as he attempts whatever I'm doing in garden or field.

It isn’t easy leaving all I deeply love here in southern Wisconsin. It’s as hard as letting go of crops we tend each growing season when Nature’s cycle runs its course.

Why should I volunteer overseas? Why should anyone who feels a great sense of purpose “in place” leave a full larder, a warm fireside, comfort of familiar food, for a blustery land and uncertain purpose? Could my answers become your answers?

All my values for life regarding food and faith, community and vocation, drew from a well of volunteering. Fresh out of college, in a little Midwestern town where I grew up, I was thirsting for the experience the Peace Corps gave me.

It was the Senegalese people in North Africa, the Irish, the Spanish, the German, the Guatemalan, the Senegalese, whatever country I served I always felt food was the key to giving people a stable place.

What's happened in the past 63 years? I'm still alive and well, and I can give thanks to the African people I've served, and the lessons I learned from them. I'm back with my colleague, Dela, who has been my partner in organic farming and life.

We were trained in agriculture by CARE. I love that organization. I've had the honor of working for CARE in Senegal, the Republic of the Congo, and in Africa for volunteers of many nationalities.

Did I enjoy volunteering in Africa? I'm not sure. But the work was very satisfying, especially for people who were food insecure, food insecure, food insecure. I can't imagine the dignity of people who have nothing to eat.

Every year, I return to Africa to volunteer, and every year I'm back with Dela. We share our skills and knowledge. People everywhere want to learn how to grow food.

CARE is the perfect partner for this work. Their mission is to save lives and change the world. I believe in the work that CARE does. I believe in our ability to make a difference in the world.

The future is now. We can all make a difference in the world. We can all help to create a world where food is plentiful and people are healthy.

To Teaching Farmers Abroad next page

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Tony Ends guides a primary school teacher’s use of an Earthway Seeder in the Republic of the Congo. He was there for six months in 2014-2015 in a USDA Food for Education national school lunch project.

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Teaching Farmers Abroad — from previous page

NCBA CLUSA’s website succinctly describes its international development work. That work “centers on building resilient communities, promoting economic opportunities and strengthening community groups through cooperative principles.” The group has pioneered climate-smart farming techniques in Niger. It has connected coffee co-ops in El Salvador to international buyers. It has trained farmers to cultivate new high-value crops in East Timor.

When CLUSA sent Dela and me to Senegal in January 2012 as Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers, we found lead farmers and technicians all across the country eager to learn composting techniques. Yet everywhere we went, farmers and cooperative gardeners lacked forks to turn beds or speed the composting process.

CLUSA with USAID staff asked me to return on a commercial-grade tool demonstration project with cooperative gardens and village artisans in July 2012. Artisans adapted, duplicated and bettered the production of tools I brought with me. When Dela and I returned a third time to Senegal on organic pest management and solar food drying assignments respectively in 2014, we found 100 copies of a tool kit had been made and distributed to cooperative gardens in a central region of Senegal. Artisans had even innovatively addressed scarcity of wood and metal in sub-Saharan Africa, adapting a single long-handled metal tube to fit multiple tool heads.

“The core of sustainable development is providing people access to the skills and tools that enable them to articulate, promote and manage sustainable, locally generated solutions,” according to NCBA CLUSA. Dela and I found this expressed over and over in three and four Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer assignments with the organization in Senegal.

Details about CLUSA’s Farmer-to-Farmer program are online at ncba.coop/volunteer-for-farmer-to-farmer. Other programs that welcome volunteers include: VEGA – Voluntaires for Economic Growth Alliance with the USAID program has sponsored 16,000 volunteer assignments in more than 110 countries over the past 30 years. See farmer-to-farmer.crs.org/about/

Land O’Lakes International Development since 1987 has fielded more than 1,300 volunteers in more than 120 countries over the past 30 years. See farmer-to-farmer.org/content/

Catholic Relief Services also operates a Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer program, focused mainly in East African nations. Volunteers usually take on 2- to 4-week assignments in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda or Tanzania. Prospective volunteers must first enter their skill and experience information into a data base at farmer-to-farmer.crs.org/volunteer.

Each time I took Farmer-to-Farmer assignments in Senegal since 2012, I’ve wanted to keep serving African farming people. Village and country life was surprisingly not much changed from my first Peace Corps experience in Senegal in the 1970s. Implications of one big change, though, hit me hard. Senegal back in 1977 had a population of less than 5.2 million people. Today, it has nearly 16 million people.

Guinea is little different. The 1977 population there of 4.4 million people has ballooned to 12.8 million. An estimated 84 percent of these people are still deriving income from farming, yet little more than 1 in 10 of the people in rural areas has access to electricity.

From an electronic Peace Corps bulletin sent to returned volunteers back in July, I learned of a need in Guinea to help 100,000 school children. The United Nations World Food Program has been helping these primary grade children stay in school and improve attendance through a hot lunch program.

A 2012 UN and government analysis showed that 27.2 percent of households in Guinea are food insecure, with 3.3 percent severely food insecure. The nationwide chronic malnutrition rate among children that same year was 34.5 percent, well above the global emergency level of 15 percent.

Peace Corps Response recruits former volunteers and professionals for high impact, short-term assignments abroad. This summer, they selected me to serve as a field officer with the UN program in Guinea, monitoring and evaluating food and nutrition needs.

I’m taking what I’ve always taken on volunteer assignments to Senegal and the Republic of the Congo in recent years: organic seeds, commercial-grade tools, books and resources, teaching aids and patterns. I hope to encourage school gardens and farms to develop, as well as ongoing curriculum development through parent-teachers associations.

Peace Corps, which marked its 55th anniversary last year, presently is fielding and training more than 7,200 volunteers in 65 countries. They serve as educators and health care volunteers, environmental and economic specialists. About 7 percent work in agricultural projects.

Average age of volunteers today is 28, but 7 percent are 50 years of age or older. Only about 4 percent are, as I am, a returned volunteer or professional taking a shorter term, high-impact assignment in Peace Corps Response.

Nearly half the Peace Corps volunteers America sends abroad today go to African nations. Hopefully, they learn, as I have, vital lessons from their service. They learn how we’re all connected and depend upon one another.

Guinea, for instance, holds the largest reserves of Earth’s bauxite aluminum ore. Every can of beer or soft drink, every automobile and airplane, countless kitchen and household items in the United States, depend on aluminum mining and manufacture. Alcoa Corporation, based in Pittsburg and the 6th largest manufacturer of aluminum, has operations in Guinea.

As a volunteer with UN partners for 6 months this winter, I am grateful for this chance to give something back for all the ways African people have enriched my life. Volunteering to teach others organic and sustainable agriculture skills has changed my life. It could change yours, too, and positively impact our world.

Tony Ends and his wife, Dela, own and run Scotch Hill Farm, a certified organic farm near Madison, Wis. He is currently teaching farmers in Guinea.
Inside Organics — from page 3

After extensive public input and a thorough vetting process that included the transparent review and recommendation process of the National Organic Standards Board, an audit by the Agriculture Department’s Office of Inspector General and solid economic analysis by the National Organic Program, the National Organic Program released the final rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices on Jan. 19, 2017, and published it in the Federal Register on that day. Due to a White House Memorandum to federal agencies released the next day, requesting a regulatory freeze on rules recently published or pending, the effective date of the rule was delayed to May 19, 2017.

On May 10, 2017, the USDA delayed the effective date again by an additional six months to Nov. 14, and opened a 30-day comment period asking for responses to four possible options for the Final Rule: 1) let the rule become effective Nov. 14, 2017; 2) suspend the rule indefinitely, during which time the USDA would consider whether to implement, modify or withdraw the Final Rule; 3) delay the effective date of the rule beyond Nov. 14; 4) withdraw the rule.

More than 47,000 comments were received during the 30-day comment period, with 99 percent of those comments in support of the rule becoming effective as written, without further delays, on Nov. 14, 2017. Laura Batcha makes the point: “Organic regulations apply only to certified organic producers, and those organic producers are overwhelmingly in favor of this new regulation. Most of the criticism of the new organic animal welfare rule has come from outside the sector, and by special interest groups not impacted by the regulation, but which would like to override the will of our members.” USDA ignored that solid public support for the rule becoming effective on Nov. 14, 2017, and just five days before the rule should have gone into effect, the department announced another delay, this one for six months until May 14, 2018.

Lawsuit

Specifically, our lawsuit argues:

• That USDA has violated the Administrative Procedure Act because the repeated delays were undertaken and published without any public process.

• That USDA has violated the Administrative Procedure Act and abused its discretion by proposing action to indefinitely delay or kill the properly adopted rule, in stark contrast to the established public process.

• That USDA has violated the Organic Foods Production Act and its consultation provisions enacted to address just these circumstances for industry and public stakeholders to revise, refine, and advance organic standards via a well-defined process.

• That the Trump Administration Executive Order freezing regulations should not apply to the voluntary industry-driven organic standards that allow for businesses to opt in or out.

The lawsuit also describes the extensive public process and overwhelming record used to develop the standards, and details the faulty appeals decisions from USDA on the use of “porches” to comply with the existing outdoor access requirements of the standard that have resulted in an uneven playing field.

The Organic Trade Association asked the court to reverse the agency’s decisions to delay and eliminate options proposed by USDA to further delay, rewrite, or permanently shelve the rule—thereby making the final livestock rule effective immediately, as written.

We all know that American consumers are eating more organic food than ever before. Our 2017 Organic Industry Survey found that organic food sales in the U.S. totaled $45.1 billion in 2016, marking the first time organic food sales in this country have broken the $40 billion mark. Organic food now accounts for more than 5 percent of total food sales in this country, another significant first for organic.

Organic meat and poultry sales posted new records in 2016, increasing by more than 17 percent to $991 million, for the category’s biggest-ever year gain. Sales are expected to surpass the $1 billion mark for the first time in 2017. Growing awareness of organic’s more encompassing benefits over natural, grass-fed or hormone-free meats and poultry is spurring consumer interest in organic meat and poultry aisles.

In March 2017, Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a national phone survey on the opinions of Americans regarding the organic label. The survey found that six out of 10 Americans said it is highly important that the animals used to produce organic food are raised on farms with high standards for animal welfare. For consumers who always or often buy organic, this number rose to 86 percent. Also, more than half of Americans say it is highly important that eggs labeled organic come from hens able to go outdoors and move freely outside. Among consumers who always or often buy organic, that number rises to 85 percent.

People are choosing organic because they know it makes a difference. They look for the USDA Organic seal because they understand that the seal means that product was grown and produced in ways that are different from other agricultural practices. Organic dairy, livestock and egg producers follow the highest standards in caring for their animals because that is what they believe in. And that is what the organic consumer rightfully expects of the organic industry.

If the organic rule-making process, which has served the organic community and the organic consumer so well, is allowed to be over-ridden by special interest groups not impacted by this regulation, then we’ve lost not just this fight, but could be in jeopardy of losing the organic battle.

The organic sector depends on USDA to set organic standards fairly and according to the law. When USDA fails to do this, it is time for us to insist that it live up to its responsibility.

Maggie McNeil is the director of media relations for the Organic Trade Association, a membership-based association of over 9,500 organic businesses across 50 states, representing the entire organic supply chain from farmers to retailers.

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Farmers can dig into specific topics through Organic University courses

By Audrey Alwell

The 2018 Organic University™ provides 11 in-depth courses just prior to the MOSES Organic Farming Conference Thursday, Feb. 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wis. Registration opens Nov. 30, with Early Bird pricing of $160/course. See details at mosesorganic.org/organic-university.

1-Growing Profits in Vegetables & Livestock

Veggie Compass and Livestock Compass are whole-farm management software tools from the University of Wisconsin-Madison designed to help producers analyze their operations and make smart financial decisions. Presenters Jim Munsch and John Hendrickson helped develop these software tools, and will show you how to use them to determine your real costs, set prices, and maximize profits.

The workshop will start with a combined session and then divide into two hands-on working groups focused on either vegetables or livestock. You will use your own financial and production data (or use sample data provided) to learn how to use the Compass tools to make decisions about crops, markets, pricing, and more.

2-Successful Biological Orcharding

Instructor Michael Phillips is a renowned author and orchardist. His books include The Apple Grower, The Holistic Orchard, and Mycorrhizal Planet: How Fungi and Plants Work Together in Pristine Dynamic Soil. He will explain the principles of growing healthy fruit based on an ongoing investment in soil nutrition and biodiversity.

He’ll show you how to build a holistic system that keeps your trees and berry plantings healthy from the get-go. He’ll also share protocols for herbal treatments and organic sprays to grow a successful fruit crop. Plus, get marketing insights for selling the good fruit you’ll grow.

3-From the Ground Up: Organic Pastured Beef

Consumer demand has created premium markets for organic and grass-finished beef. Producing quality beef requires a complex skill set involving animal husbandry, genetic selection, and stockmanship, as well as pasture management and forage selection. To raise beef profitably, you also need to know about marketing.

Sharpen your skills through this course with Laura Paine, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship, and Kent Solberg, Sustainable Farming Association. They’ll cover pasture establishment and management, infrastructure and livestock handling, soil fertility, and how to develop a forage chain. They’ll delve into cattle genetics to match your production model, economics and marketing, and winter herd management and feeding strategies.

4-Land Access Bootcamp

Finding land to farm can be an enormous stumbling block for new farmers. Get a leg up on your search with help from this powerhouse team: Brett Olson, co-founder of Renewing the Countryside, with Rachel Murray and Tess Brown-Lavoie from Land for Good. They’ll help you determine the utility of a piece of land, whether buying or leasing is the best option, and how to get financing. They’ll also cover pitfalls to avoid and issues to anticipate as you look for a home for your farm.

5-Maximizing Hoophouse Production

Learn techniques used by commercial greenhouse growers to optimize your hoophouse’s precious space for highest yields and profits.

Instructor Andrew Mefflend is a market farmer and publisher of Growing for Market magazine. He’ll explain best practices, focusing on the most reliable crops for hoophouse production: tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, eggplant, lettuce, greens, herbs and microgreens. He’ll cover variety selection, propagation, temperature, climate control, plant care, spacing, trellising, grafting and vegetative/generative steering. Content is geared to intermediate to advanced growers. Those new to protected growing will find this course challenging, but a good foundation for success.

6-Assessing Soil Health

Healthy, fertile soil is the foundation of every successful farm. If you understand the health of your soil science and principles, and learn how to evaluate and improve the soils on your farm.

Instructors Joel Gruver, Western Illinois University’s Organic Research Program, and Justin Morris, Natural Resources Conservation Service, have deep roots in soil science. They’ll review the rapidly expanding toolbox of commercial soil biology/health testing methods. Through case studies, you’ll see how farmers are using these soil health assessment methods to guide management decisions in organic row crop, vegetable, and pasture management systems.

7-Ecological Weed Management

Waging war on weeds? You must know your enemy to defeat it. Explore the ecology of weedy plant pests and their vulnerabilities to improve your weed management skills. Weed experts Dave Mortensen, Penn State, and Matt Liebman, Iowa State University, will explain the ecological principles and processes of weed population dynamics. They’ll illustrate a range of paths to sustainable and effective weed management. Because the principles underpinning weed management are scale-neutral, this course applies to farmers from operations of any size.

8-Food Safety, GAP & FSMA for Veggies

Learn from real-life examples how you can make food safety part of your farm’s culture.

Instructors are Annalisa Hubberg, University of Minnesota, Kelly Muynard, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Laura Frerichs, a certified organic vegetable farmer from Minnesota, and, Teresa Wiemerslage, Iowa State University Extension. They’ll explain the new federal food safety regulation, and the similarities and differences between FSMA, GAP, and organic certification. At the end of the day, you’ll know more about microbial risks on your farm, practical strategies to reduce these risks, and how to arrange a GAP audit.

In addition to the custom course handbook, you’ll receive a jump drive with a food safety plan template, videos, and supporting materials.

9-Health & Profitability in Organic Dairy

Promoting health and increasing profitability on organic dairies requires an approach that’s both holistic and innovative. Learn about practices and principles to improve your farm from experienced dairy experts Guy Jodarski, staff veterinarian for Organic Valley, and Francis Thieke, certified organic dairy farmer from Iowa. They’ll cover everything from soil health and feed quality to key factors influencing dairy production and marketing. They will discuss approaches that work under a variety of farming conditions and regions, drawing from their many years of personal experience.

10-Transition for Commercial-Scale Farms

Learn what it takes to transition a conventional operation to organic, and what you can expect along the way. Tap into the combined expertise of instructors John Mesko, MOSES, Dave Bishop, MFR & Organic, and veteran of Bob Yanda, Midwestern BioAg, to get a clear picture of how an organic system could work on your farm. Whether you’re considering an all-out switch to an organic system, want to create a split operation, or are already in transition, this course will help you make sound decisions to ensure your success.

11-Growing & Marketing Food-Grade Small Grains

Bakers, brewers, and foodies are boosting demand for heirloom and artisanal grains. These food-grade small grains can round out your crop rotation and add profits through value-added products. Three farmers—Thor Oechsner, Harold Wilken, and John Wilkening—will share their experiences and explore the wide variety of standards and heirloom grains, focusing on the specific production benefits and challenges of each. They’ll cover seed varieties, crop rotations, fertility strategies, storage, processing, and sales.

Audrey Alwell is the communications director for MOSES.
New Certification — from page 5

employed. Children under 18 do not perform work that jeopardizes health, safety, education, and emotional or physical development.

• Workers earn a living wage as calculated based on the region’s cost of living and typical expenses.

• People are not forced to work or remain on premises against their will.

• Operation minimizes number of immediate threats to workers lives (immediate physical hazards; lack of emergency preparedness; improper handling or storage of flammable materials/chemicals).

History of Regenerative Organic Agriculture

Rodale Institute has pioneered regenerative organic agriculture since founder J.I. Rodale wrote “Healthy Soil=Healthy Food=Healthy People” on a chalkboard in 1942. His son, Robert, coined “regenerative organic agriculture” in the 1980s to distinguish farming that goes beyond “sustainable.”

To us, that always meant agriculture improving the resources it uses, rather than destroying or depleting them,” Moyer explained. “It is a holistic systems approach to farming that encourages the resources it uses, rather than destroying or depleting them,” Moyer explained. “It is a holistic systems approach to farming that encourages continual innovation for environmental, social, and economic wellbeing.”

Products that meet the standards can be labeled with a silver or gold emblem to note the level achieved.

Next Steps:


• Incorporate public comments into certification.

• NSF to conduct pilot program with select farms and brands (December-January).

• Share updated Regenerative Organic Certification and incorporate final feedback from Steering Committee (January 2018).

• EcoFarm Conference (Jan. 24-27): David Bronner, Dr. Bronner’s, and Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute, will keynote and hold panel.

• Expo West (March 7): Rose Marcario, Patagonia, will keynote and announce the new label to consumers.

Diana Martin is the communications director for the Rodale Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to pioneering organic farming through research and outreach. Learn more at RodaleInstitute.org.

Livestock Feed — from page 7

to learn more.”

He also credits his bankers as being strong partners, helping him make business decisions and projections, and monitor impacts. He also sees his long association as a meat pool member and executive committee member at Organic Valley as a factor, contributing to his knowledge base and support.

One of the keys to Frantzen’s success has been focusing on exactly what he wanted to do and not getting distracted by other potential opportunities, he said. Focusing on recycling byproducts for the organic and non-GMO feed industry has kept him successfully on task.

He sees growing demand from both the source companies and feed customers (livestock operations looking for quality organic and non-GMO feed rations). Riverside Feeds currently receives byproduct from a half dozen suppliers, and ships product to about 100 feed mills, brokers and farmers. While the major-ity of the product is shipped by the semi-load, Riverside Feeds does some direct sales to farm-ers, producing a few mixed rations in totes and 50-pound bags.

Seventy-five percent of their product is certi-fied organic, the rest is non-GMO, with the entire processing facility GMO-free. The new pellet mill allows the company to make custom pellets for specific needs, including returning byproducts to the source companies in more usable forms.

With fall harvests going strong, Frantzen has been fielding a lot of phone calls from farmers looking to sell grain. He must explain that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-als from farmers, has no storage facilities, and that Riverside Feeds does not buy raw materi-

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Wisconsin farmers win freedom to sell home-baked goods

By Lisa Kivirist

Thanks to cottage food laws in just about every state, farmers can diversify and sell to their community certain “not potentially hazardous” food products made in their home kitchen, such as breads and pastries, jams, jellies and pickles. After years of waiting, Wisconsin bakers can finally catch up with the rest of the country as the state’s ban on the sale of homemade baked goods has been officially lifted.

On Oct. 2, 2017, a Lafayette Circuit Court Judge clarified his May 31, 2017 ruling that the state’s ban on selling home-baked goods is unconstitutional. If you can recall, Lisa Kivirist, an organic dairy farmer and author of the national authoritative guide to cottage food business from your home kitchen, had argued that the ruling was limited to the three plaintiffs in the lawsuit challenging this ban in state court: myself and fellow farmers Kriss Marion of Circle M Farm and Dela Ends of Scotch Hill Farm. But on Oct. 2, Judge Duane Jorgenson officially disagreed and clarified that his ruling applies to all home bakers in the state.

Start your ovens, Wisconsin! After nearly five years of farmer-led grassroots kitchen activism, this ruling immediately opens up opportunity, particularly for farmers looking to diversify on-farm income streams by adding on a bread share to CSA or bringing baked goods to farmers markets, for example.

In his initial May decision, Judge Jorgenson found that the ban had “no real or substantial connection” to protecting the public, because there was no instance of anyone ever becoming sick from an improperly baked product despite home-baked goods being sold out of their home, at community events and doing in almost every other state every day.”

But what about the judge’s ruling that the ban only benefited spécial interest groups, like the Wisconsin Bakers Association, who wanted the government to shut down healthy competition from home bakers. “This ban is only intended to prevent home bakers from being competitive with the state’s existing cottage food law covering high-acid canned items, commonly called the ‘Peckle Bill.’ High-acid products still have a gross sales cap of $5,000, and sales can only be done at public venues like farmers markets. “None of us would have ever imagined we were in for such a long and strange fight to end the ban on home baking in Wisconsin, but we have shown that persistence pays off,” added plaintiff Dela Ends of Scotch Hill Farm, who also serves on the MOSES board. “Small businesses are the backbone of our local economies, and I am so happy to see justice and the farmer voice prevail.”

Think creatively on ways to diversify and add baked goods into your farm business mix. Ends plans to add a “baking share” to her next CSA season, with a focus on the more savory and healthy recipes and experiment with gluten-free items. For me, my family and I have been running our farm stay B&B, Inn Serendipity, for over 20 years and now can finally sell baked goods to guests that I could legally only serve all these years. We’ll be diversifying and adding “Inn Serendipity Bakes” this winter and offering a variety of holiday cookies featuring local ingredients like our farm pumpkins and Wisconsin maple syrup and dairy.

“Adding baked goods can really boost attendance and success of small town farmers markets like mine,” explained Kriss Marion of Circle M Farm and the third plaintiff in our successful lawsuit. “We immediately saw this effect at the tiny rural market in Blanchardville as both new businesses popped up that then drew more customers and gave the whole market a fun and lively draw.”

Get our all-blustatus, Wisconsin bakers, and see WisconsinCottageFood.com for updates. Find Homemade for Sale in the MOSES online book store at mosesorganic.net.

Lisa Kivirist coordinates the MOSES In Her Boots project. She and her husband also write books from their bed-and-breakfast inn in southern Wisconsin.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is an accredited national training program that provides a structure of support for the transfer of knowledge, skills, and farms from current and retiring organic dairy farmers to the next generation.

Improve & protect your organic farming profits

Sustaining organic producers by coordinating marketing groups.

Organic Certification

Organic BROADCASTER

www.wisconsincottagefood.com to help get you get started with your home baking business.”

Specifically, a “not potentially hazardous” baked good is one that can safely remain unrefrigerated. While most cookies, muffins, cakes, and breads are typically not-potentially hazardous and have a low-moisture content that inhibits mold growth, not all are. For example, some baked goods with vegetables as an ingredient, such as zucchini bread or pumpkin muffins, may not qualify as non-hazardous because they are too moist. Foods with cream filling, custard, meat, or other made with cream ingredients are potentially hazardous and are definitely not allowed.

If you are at all unsure if your item is not-potentially hazardous, you can simply submit the recipe to a science lab that can test for around $25 for the official non-hazardous definition per the FDA Food Code of a “water activity value of 0.85 or less.” When in doubt, err on the side of caution. The Wisconsin Cottage Food Website has a list of testing labs.

Labeling

Although there is currently no specific labeling requirement for baked goods, it is advisable to label and include these four things:

1) A statement to the effect that “This product was made in a private home not subject to state licensing or inspection.”

2) A list of ingredients in descending order of prominence, including any allergens. The eight most common allergens to note are milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, or soybeans.

3) The date the baked good was made.

4) Your name/business name and contact information.

Selling

All sales must be direct to your customer, which can be anything from farmers market sales or filling a special order from a customer. Wholesale or retail sales at state lines is not permitted. Because there is no law in Wisconsin, there currently is no gross sales cap for the sale of home baked goods. Note that the lifting of the ban on baked goods does not affect Wisconsin’s existing cottage food law covering high-acid canned items, commonly called the “Pickle Bill.” High-acid products still have a gross sales cap of $5,000, and sales can only be done at public venues like farmers markets.

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Goat farmer finds new book a welcome resource
By Leslie Svacina

When it comes to goats, there’s not much research, health care products, equipment, reference books, or even veterinarians who have basic knowledge about or are willing to work with goats. Goat producers usually put on their “goat glasses” and adapt sheep or other ruminant information to manage the health needs of their herd.

That’s why Gianacilio Caldwell’s new book, Holistic Goat Care, is such a welcome resource. The book is a comprehensive guide to raising healthy goats, and solving health issues that arise. It’s well suited for both the new and experienced goat keeper, and covers all types of goats. Topics include:

• Starting and managing a herd, and understanding goat behavior
• Farm management, nutrition needs, and feed choice
• Basic skills for managing herd health
• Breeding, pregnancy, delivery, caring for kids, milking
• Managing specific goat health problems, including signs and symptoms, as well as treatments and prevention options

Caldwell presents the content in an easy-to-read manner that flows well, whether one reads the book in its entirety or uses it as a reference guide. Throughout the book, she blends her practical experience with goats with science-based information. Caldwell also takes a broad holistic approach to health care for goats.

While the goat resources that do exist touch on many of the same topics, most do not have the depth of this book, nor recognize holistic management practices.

Since there are few veterinarians in our area who are knowledgeable on goats, I’ve added a goat veterinary textbook to my stack of resources. While Holistic Goat Care doesn’t dive deep into veterinary medical speak, it is a great resource for goat producers. It is much easier to read than the veterinary textbook, and explains terminology and practices for those who may not have formal education on goats. The book also includes a variety of supply lists, checklists, terminology, signs/symptoms, resource lists, photos, troubleshooting guides, A-Z list of disorders, and a glossary. Additionally, the value of the content is more reasonable—about $40 versus $100 or more for a textbook.

I especially liked the feed choice section, which includes information about pasture, grazing, browse, and forages. Other feeding options were covered, but since I practice rotational grazing, I really appreciated the information in this section.

Finally, a liquid organic fertilizer that doesn’t clog equipment and can be used all year
You don’t have time for clogged sprayers and plugged drip lines, so we developed a new fertilizer to give you the nutrients you need, without the hassle. Plus every batch is pathogen tested with a third-party certificate for your records.

The Power of Poultry Manure for Precision Application
• Nutrients when you need them most: side dress, foliar and all fertigation, as well as a starter
• Amino acids to improve protein synthesis and reduce plant stress
• Beneficial bacteria to improve soil biology, nutrient availability and uptake

Easy to use with your current spray and drip equipment
• Meets USDA National Organic Program requirements
• No setback restrictions for food crops

The New Standard in Liquid Organic Fertilizer
And the first derived from chicken manure.

EnviroKure Liquid Organic Fertilizer
www.EnviroKure.com

Living Potting Soil for Organic Growers

“Vermont Compost’s potting soils make my job so much easier—I am almost guaranteed a healthy, vigorous plant.”

— Richard Wiswall, farmer & author


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My organic hay has never looked better!

We used 5 gal/yd² of the L. Ribesnet at green up and have seen significant improvement in color. The yields have increased by 25% and we have disposed to use this product on our winter wheat this year.

Jeff Bruno, Bruno Farms, Lushartville, PA
Organic Hay & Winter Wheat

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MOSES 2018
Registration opens Nov. 30 with Early Bird discounts for the 2018 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 22-24 in La Crosse, Wis. Innovative farmers, experienced educators, and farming professionals will present 66 workshops offering practical information about field crops, soil health, livestock, dairy, vegetables, and specialty crops, plus strategies to help you manage and grow your business. Look for the conference guide in your mailbox in late November. Learn more at mosesorganic.org/conference.

Farm Finances Workshop
Gain control of your farm finances by taking a one-day workshop based on the book Fearless Farm Finances, published by MOSES. Dr. Craig Chase, Iowa State University, and Paul Dietmann, Compeer Financial, two of the book’s authors, will teach this workshop on basic farm financial management. Workshop is Dec. 3 in Streator, Ill., 36-hour workshop costs $50 and includes a copy of Fearless Farm Finances. Register online at mosesorganic.org/fearless-farm-finances-workshop or call 715-778-5775.

Food Safety Workshop
MOSES presents a workshop Dec. 8 in Streator, Ill., to help vegetable growers meet the new rules laid out in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), especially the Produce Safety and Preventive Controls for Human Food rules. Cost to attend is $50. Register online at mosesorganic.org/food-safety-workshop or call 715-778-5775.

New Farmer U
Beginning farmers can boost their farming skills through New Farmer U, a weekend conference Dec. 8-10 in Streator, Ill., presented by MOSES, Renewing the Countryside, and Angelic Organics. The conference includes 90-minute workshops on farming topics, a panel presentation with experienced farmers, plus resource tables with services to help beginning farmers. Cost for the training, lodging, and meals is just $125, with a $25 discount for farm partners. Register online at newfarmeru.org or call 715-778-5775.

Call for Research Posters for MOSES 2018
The Organic Research Forum at the 2018 MOSES Conference includes a poster session. Poster session topics related to organic agriculture. Poster proposals must be received by Dec. 15. Space is limited to 25 posters. All accepted poster presenters receive full conference admission. See mosesorganic.org/organic-research-program.

Online Beginning Farmer Conference
National Farmers Union hosts a free, online, interactive conference Dec. 4-7 for beginning farmers and ranchers. The conference will cover USDA programs, and more. MOSES will present sessions on organic certification, women in farming, and tractor maintenance. To register, see nfu.org/growing-for-the-future.

Farm Training for Veterans
Angelic Organics Learning Center hosts the Take Root Veteran Training Program to connect veterans to paid employment and training on established farms in southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and Chicagoland. Application period runs through Dec. 1. The training is free for veterans, and includes lodging and admission to both MOSES 2018 and New Farmer U in Wisconsin Dells, April 2018. Find details online at learngrowconnect.org/takeroot.

Grants for Livestock & Poultry Farmers
Food Animal Concerns Trust’s (FACT) is taking applications for grants to help livestock and poultry farmers obtain humane certification or expand their animals’ access to pasture. Up to $2,500 is available for projects that improve farm animal welfare, such as building hoop houses, constructing fences, or laying water lines on pasture. Family farmers with at least one year of experience may be eligible. Deadline is Dec. 4. See foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants.

Improve Research Access
The Agricultural Research Service has updated its website to improve access to its scientific research; topics covered include animal and crop health, human nutrition, food safety, and natural resources. The website has new features and is now mobile responsive. Learn more at www.ars.usda.gov.

Farm Credit Services and United FCS merged on July 1 were 1st Farm Credit Services, AgStar Financial Services and Badgerland Financial to form Compeer Financial. This new organization includes 144 counties in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with headquarters in Sun Prairie, Wis. 

FSA County Elections
Producers who participate or cooperate in a Farm Service Agency (FSA) program are eligible to vote in the county committee election. County committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, disaster and disaster programs, and emergency programs and eligibility. Producers will receive a ballot by mail, may pick one up at their local FSA office, or download one online at fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections. Ballots are due by Dec. 4.

Soil Mapping Tool
The Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Soil Data Extension recently updated the online soil mapping tool, the Official Soil Database. The site, which classifies and maps study of the soils in a given area, can be useful for farm field planning. See websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov.

Hardship Assistance for Organic Producers
The Brimont Hardship Assistance Fund provides assistance to organic producer who suffer losses due to extreme hardship. To apply for financial assistance, producers are required to submit an application no later than Dec. 1. Documentation of economic loss and organic certification is required. Assistance will be awarded based on need and available funds. Learn more at bit.ly/brimont-hardship-assistance-fund.

Biotech Regulation
The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has withdrawn its proposed rule on the importation and interstate movement, and environmental release of certain genetically engineered organisms due to the scope of comments received last January. The organic community didn’t think the regulation was strong enough, while the bio-tech industry thought it was too restrictive. The agency plans to re-engage stakeholders as it reevaluates how to regulate biotechnology. “It’s critical that our regulatory requirements foster public confidence and empower American agriculture while also providing industry with an efficient and transparent review process that doesn’t restrict innovation,” said Secretary Sonny Perdue. Read the full explanation in the Federal Register: www.aphis.usda.gov/farm/feedregister/BBS_20171107.pdf. Watch future issues of the Organic Broadcaster and Organic Link enews for links to comment on this critical regulation.
Hydroponics, Aquaponics
At the National Organic Standards Board earlier this month, the controversial issue of allowing hydroponic and aquaponic operations to be certified organic took center stage. After a two-hour discussion, the motions to prohibit hydroponic and aquaponic production and aquaponic production both failed on a vote of 8-7. The motion to prohibit aeroponic production passed with 14 in favor of prohibiting it and one abstention.


2018 Dicamba Ban in Arkansas
The Arkansas State Plant Board recently voted to prohibit the use of products that contain dicamba between April 16 and Oct. 31, 2018. The changes are subject to final approval by the executive subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council. The regulations include exemptions for the use of dicamba in pastures, rangeland, turf, forestry, and yards. Missouri, which had also stopped the sale and use of products containing Dicamba this summer, will allow restricted use in the 2018 season. For details, see agriculture.mo.gov/plants/pesticides/dicamba-facts.php

Soil Study
A recent study by Northeastern University and The Organic Center shows soil on organic farms supports larger amounts of soil organic matter (SOM) and carbon for longer periods of time than conventionally farmed soils. The research also demonstrated that organic soil has 44 percent higher levels of humic acids than conventional soil. Humic acids act as a natural fertilizer, and capture carbon from the air and store it long-term. The study, which included over a thousand soil samples from across the nation, was one of the largest studies of its kind ever conducted. Learn more at www.organic-center.org/study-finds-organic-soil-captures-holds-more-carbon.

Soil & Water Health Pocket Guide
The Land Stewardship Project has released a new pocket guide: Soil Health, Water & Climate Change. It provides an introduction to the latest innovations in science and farming related to building soil health. It is available as a pdf and online mobile app at landstewardshipproject.org/smartsoil.

SARE Organic Production Resource
SARE’s new Organic Production topic room is a free online resource for organic producers. Topics include whole systems, seeds, fertility management, certification, transitioning, animal systems, and more. The resources were developed by SARE, grant recipients and experts in the field. Learn more at sare.org/Learning-Center/Topic-Rooms/Organic-Production.

SARE Administrative Council Openings
The North Central Region – Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) has openings on its Administrative Council for a farmer or rancher, and an ag-related nonprofit, university, and business. Council members must live and work in one of the 12 states that comprise the North Central SARE region. Those states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Nominations must be received by Dec. 5. See bit.ly/SARE-council

National Organic Program Leadership
Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator for the National Organic Program at the USDA, has stepped down after eight years in the position. Dr. Ruilong Guo will serve as interim director of the NOP until Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue selects McEvoy’s replacement.

Budgeting Tool for Organic Grain Production
The U.S. Organic Grain Collaboration has developed a new budgeting tool to assist organic and transitioning farmers and producers in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana with planning future crop production and improving the management of their current operation. The tool contains templates that present conventional, transitioning, and organic scenarios side by side so producers can evaluate the financial merit of switching to organic. The tool provides the flexibility to choose from a suite of typical organic transition and organic cropping rotations, allowing fine-tuning of field operations, and enabling the user to adjust expected future crop prices. Seeota.com/about-ota/member-councils-forums-task-forces/sector-councils/grains-council.

Spring-Seedled Brassica Cover Crops Report
Practical Farmers of Iowa has released a report summarizing the research results conducted by three farmer-cooperators on spring-seeded brassica cover crops. The farmers hand-seeded six different brassica cover crops into soybean stubble in small plots. Before terminating the spring cover crops, they evaluated each species for the amount of groundcover provided. Learn more at practicalfarmers.org/blog/2017/10/research-report-spring-seeded-brassica-cover-crops.

2018 Farm Bill Platform
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) released its 2018 Farm Bill Policy Platform. The platform, put together by NSAC’s 120 member-organizations, prioritizes a more sustainable farm and food system with increased opportunity for beginning farmers and ranchers, growth of regional food economies, crop insurance modernization, and more. The 128-page agenda is online at sustainableagriculture.net.

Federal Organic Project Grants
New grants focusing on organic ag research, education, and extension projects have been funded through the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and Organic Transitions Program (OTP). One of the research projects funded is a Lincoln University project to determine the economic viability of different types of cover crop-based, no-till systems for small- and mid-scale organic growers. See the complete list of funded research online at bit.ly/OREI-grants.

Organic Movement in Michigan
The Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance has published the Michigan Organic Movement: An Ongoing Journey. The book covers a wide variety of information: historical summaries of the major organic organizations, reports on organic activities, and essays about the past, present and future of organic farming. Wes Jackson of The Land Institute says, “Perhaps the best documented history of the organic movement globally comes out of Michigan,” adding, “I am excited practitioners beginning in the early 70s—have written a comprehensive history of the local, organic, community supported story.” For more details, see michiganorganic.org/the-book.

Iowa Organic Association Leadership
Iowa Organic Association (IOA) is looking for a part-time, collaborative, values-driven, and vision-ary leader who is passionate about organic agriculture in Iowa and motivated to further develop a growing organization. The successful candidate will work to promote the success of organic farmers, create opportunities for conventional farmers to transition to organic practices, advocate for state and federal policies that support organic production and expand outreach to organic gardeners and consumers. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. Application deadline is Dec. 8. Learn more at iow.org/jobs.

Pipeline Foods Farm Profit Program
Pipeline Foods LLC, the U.S.-based supply chain solutions company focused on non-GMO and organic food and feed, has created a Farm Profit Program. The program’s goal is to increase the number of organic grain-producing acres in the U.S. The program offers economic, certification, and agronomic support, and enhances community connection, access to inputs and equipment, and assistance navigating the organic crop insurance program. Pipeline recently hired Anders Gurdé to lead agronomy solutions for the program. Gurdé previously managed OGRAD, a partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and MOSES.

SFA Founding President
Founding SFA President Ralph Lenza, 88, of Lake City, Minn., passed away Oct. 1 at Lake City Care Center. In the late 1980s, Lenza helped establish the first Sustainable Farming Association chapter of Minnesota. He was a respected agricultural teacher and pioneer of grass-based farming.
**FORAGES**

Organic hay and straw for sale. Round bales. 1st, 2nd and 3rd crop. Oat and rye straw also available. 507-725-5281.


For sale: 2017 organic hay 5x dry net-wrapped round bales. 1st & 2nd crop. 1200 bales barley, 1000 bales oats. Oat straw baling 4x5 round bales - MOSA certified. 715-495-2813.

Certified organic alfalfa & straw 3x3x8 & 3x4x8 bales. 2016 and 2017 crop years. Antelope Valley Farms, Ravenna, NE 308-380-3311.

First crop 2017 certified large 6x4' round bales. RFV 110. $48 per bale, roughly $100 per ton. Farm is located one hour west of Minneapolis. Will deliver for extra fee. Mark (952) 380-6644 or mrsland@hotmail.com. Also available: small squares.

2017 OFEFA certified organic alfalfa and alfalfa/ orchard grass in 3x3 squares. 120-200+ RFQ. 2016 hay testing 140-160 also available at discounted price. Northeast Nebraska. Josh (402)-336-8130.

**LIVESTOCK**


Agrarian Trust seeks Organizational Director with experience in nonprofit startup, land conservation, administration, and development. To apply or for job description, email office@agrariantrust.org or call John at 218-779-6773.

Help Wanted: Year-Round help on organic row-crop farm located in eastern North Dakota. Some farm or mechanical experience helpful. Top pay for right individual. Call John at 218-779-6773.

**FARMS/LAND**

Looking for crop ground in 3W Iowa or NW Missouri that is currently in organic crops or eligible for organic production, such as expiring CRP ground. 712-542-0517.


**MISCELLANEOUS**

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**ORGANIC BROADCASTER**

mosesorganic.org | 715-778-5775 | 19
Farmer Education Program Info Session
November 28 | Free | 6 – 7:30 p.m. | St. Paul, Minn.
Learn about services MPA offers for immigrants, and others who are underrepresented in farming and want to grow organic vegetables as a business. Contact Laure 651-433-3676 or laura@mfoodassociation.org.

FSMA Produce Safety Alliance Train the Trainer Course
November 28 – 29 | $75 | Saint Paul, Minn.
This training is for produce safety educators and others who work with fruit and vegetable growers who are interested in becoming PSA Trainers or PSA Lead Trainers.

Perennial Farm Gathering
November 29 - 30 | $540-95 | Madison, Wis.
Teamed up with the Green Lands Blue Waters annual conference, this gathering builds a collaborative community working to make ecological agriculture thrive.

Cottage Food Producer Advanced Food Safety Training
December 1 – 2 | $995 | Rochester, Minn.
Includes presentations by MOSES on organic certification, tractor maintenance, and women in farming.

Webinar: Organic Poultry and Outdoor Access
December 5 | Free | 2 – 3 p.m. | Online
This webinar is presented in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Science and Technology National Technology Support Centers. USDA Organic Regulation create new outdoor access requirements for poultry. This webinar will discuss the new requirements (since finalized), potential resource concerns and opportunities for conservation. Learn more at tilth.org/webinars.

Webinar: THE CONSERVE Program: Transdisciplinary Research, Extension, and Education at the Nexus of Sustainable Water Reuse, Food and Health
December 7 | Free | 2 – 3 p.m. | Online

Fearless Farm Finances Workshop
December 8 | $50 | Streator, Ill.
Practical financial training based on the book Fearless Farm Finances, published by MOSES. MOSES: 715-778-5775

Food Safety Workshop
December 8 – 10 | $50 | Streator, Ill.
Training for vegetable growers to meet new FSMA rules.

New Farmer
December 8 – 10 | $50 | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | East Lansing, Mich.
Sessions feature organic small grains with John Sherck, livestock with John Biernbaum and Collin Thompson.

“Bringing Livestock Back” Workshop
January 9 | $525 | 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Gilwood, Minn.
Learn how livestock can help increase your farm’s profitability and resilience, make it possible for a family member to join the operation, increase your farm’s revenue without buying more land, and take your farm’s soil health and nutrient cycling to the next level. For more information, email Brian blumberg@landstewardshipproject.org.

OGRaine Winter Workshop
January 26 – 27 | $50 | Madison, Wis.
Two packed days of all things organic grain — presented by farmers, industry, and university experts. Details TBA.

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