Full-day classes dig deeply into farming topics

By Audrey Alwell

The 2019 Organic University™ offers 9 in-depth courses taught by experienced farmers, researchers, and ag professionals. These engaging classes provide deeper content than farmers can get from a 90-minute workshop, and give them a chance to get answers for their specific farm situations. Past participants rate Organic University highly, adding that “presenters share their vast knowledge and experience in a very accessible and relatable way.”

Organic University takes place Thursday, Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., just prior to the MOSES Organic Farming Conference at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wis. Registration opens Nov. 29, with Early Bird pricing of $160. See registration details at mosesorganic.org/organic-university.

Wholesale Vegetable Production for Small- to Mid-Scale Farms
Ariel Pressman & David Giedd

Dwindling CSA numbers? Ho-hum turnout at the farmers market? Growing for wholesale accounts might be a better option.

Instructor Ariel Pressman’s Seed to Seed Farm is a 13-acre certified organic vegetable farm, which sells almost 100% to wholesale customers. He’ll examine the specific systems and investments needed for different wholesale models, and help you determine which crops and markets are most appropriate for your specific farm scale, skill set, and set up. One of his customers, Lakewinds Natural Foods’ category manager David Giedd, will share tips on working with retailers.

At the end of the day, you’ll have a customized wholesale plan detailing the crops you’ll grow, how you’ll set prices, and how you’ll market your crops—a business plan that will balance profits with your desired quality of life.

Easy-to-grow microgreens can add year-round farm income

By Hallie Anderson

Microgreens have been popular with talented chefs for many years but are now gaining ground with the discerning home cook who adds them to eggs for breakfast, or as a nutritional and flavor burst in smoothies, sandwiches, and dinner salads. For the farmer, microgreens can be a valuable addition to farm enterprises, providing cash flow even in the winter months. Microgreens can be easy to grow and reliable under the right conditions with lots of opportunities for expansion.

Microgreens are the coryledon stage of any vegetable or herb plant, generally grown in trays in a greenhouse or controlled growing space and marketed as a superfood. They are a great wholesale product and appeal to CSA and farmers market customers.

We added microgreens to our farm, 10th St. Farm & Market in Afton, Minn., in our second production year to help with year-round cash flow and help pay for the heat in our greenhouse in the winter months when we’re starting early transplants. We sell the greens through our three-season CSA, wholesale markets, and a well-attended farm stand.

Our microgreens have allowed us to grow our business without increasing field space. The packaged greens have attracted new customers to our CSA because they liked our product when they bought it at the co-op. It’s great when customers find us rather than the other way around!

Growing Tips

First decide what works best for your farm. Do you have greenhouse space that sits idle in the winter and mid-summer months? Do you have a seed-starting station set up in a spare room? You can utilize these resources to their full potential by adding microgreen production.

Just like all new varieties on a farm, there is a trial period with microgreens. Grow different varieties to determine which you want to focus on, and then set yourself up to do them well. The most common products are individual varieties or mixes sold direct to consumers or through grocery stores or farmers markets.

Microgreens are generally grown in trays in a grow ing medium. Some people use mineral wool mats like in hydroponic systems or potting soil in a greenhouse environment—we use the latter. The seed is planted on the surface of the tray, watered in, and allowed to grow...
The Organic Broadcaster™ is a bimonthly newspaper published by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), a nonprofit that provides education, resources and practical advice to farmers.

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MOSES educates, inspires, and empowers farmers to thrive in a sustainable, organic system of agriculture.

MOSES draws on power of community
By John Mesko, Executive Director of MOSES

Anyone who has been to the MOSES Organic Farming Conference has felt the power of community.

A professor at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, who attended the 2018 conference, told me, “I was amazed at the values that are transferred at this event. Just being there, immersed in the understanding that the other 3,000 people attending this conference want to see each other reach the farming goals we’ve outlined is uplifting, inspiring, and empowering.”

Food production—especially where the manner and method are meaningful to the food, the eaters, and the community at large—is a noble occupation. Farmers who care about the food they produce, the animals they raise, and the land they steward are the most innovative, articulate, creative problem-solvers in the world, but are rarely recognized as such. Organic farmers think independently and collaborate more effectively, mainly from the need the organic system imposes on them. Over the years, they’ve been called on to save our global collective tails. We are facing similar times right now.

A common narrative in the scientific and agricultural biotechnology community is that the world will have 10 billion people by the year 2050, and the only way we can feed them is through biotechnology. This narrative is being leveraged by researchers, businesses, policy makers, and others to garner resources and power across the agricultural landscape. As a result, farmers and consumers are being pressured to accept more unproven technology, less profit, fewer choices, and multiple negative environmental outcomes.

The irony is, we are already producing enough food for over 10 billion people and have for at least 6 years. For the past two decades, the rate of global food production has increased faster than global population growth. According to a study from the University of Minnesota published in 2012, with good management practices, organic systems can nearly match conventional yields. We really can feed the world with organic farming practices. But much work needs to be done to identify and garner the resources needed from the research, public policy, farming practice, and consumer perspectives to make this a reality. That’s where the power of the MOSES farming community comes in.

Organic 2051: Feb. 21 in La Crosse, Wis.

By now, you’ve heard of this innovative, one-day forum that will bring together change-makers in the organic and sustainable farming community—farmers, researchers, public policy experts, community leaders—to discuss key issues related to the development of the solutions we all know are there, but need to be articulated. The world longs for a response from our community to the fear-based solution foisted upon us by conventional farming experts. Let’s give them our solutions.

What do you think needs to happen to move organic and sustainable farming practices to become the primary driving force in food production and rural communities world-wide in the next 30 years? Do we need more research, government funding or regulation, more restrictions on agricultural biotechnology, or other solutions? Organic 2051 is your opportunity to bring those ideas forward.

We have 100 seats available in this solutions-focused event. You could be there! If you are reading this, you likely have something to contribute.

Applications are due by Nov. 30, 2018. The planning committee will select participants from among these applications, and notify them Dec. 10, 2018. Participants will receive free registration to Organic 2051, one night’s lodging Feb. 20, 2019, and lunch and snacks during the event on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019. For more details, please email john@mosesorganic.org or check out our website mosesorganic.org/organic2051.

Let’s change the world together!
Coalition works to ensure organic integrity

By Abby Youngblood, National Organic Coalition

The National Organic Coalition (NOC) convened nearly 100 farmers and organic leaders (including a large cadre of MOSES board members) in St. Paul, Minn., to discuss some of the most pressing challenges we face as an organic community. This meeting was a precursor to the three-day meeting of National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), a citizen-stakeholder board that advises the U.S. Department of Agriculture on organic standards.

NOC has been attending NOSB meetings for a very long time now. In fact, one of our members, Michael Sligh from the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) was the Chairperson of the very first NOSB when it formed in 1992.

The NOC ‘Pre-NOSB’ meeting has become a longstanding tradition—it has been taking place two times annually for nearly 20 years alongside the semi-annual NOSB meetings. During the NOS meeting, the board hears oral testimony from public stakeholders and delibera on materials and petitions that are being considered for use on organic farms and in organic foods. The NOC meeting, by contrast, provides a space for round table discussions across the many different sectors and stakeholder groups within organic with the aim of increasing dialogue on issues that are at the forefront more broadly in organic.

For example, NOC raised the issue of import fraud at its meeting in the fall of 2016 before the issue had garnered widespread attention from the USDA, the NOSB, the media, or industry members. Since that time, a Washington Post article from May of 2017 and a report from the USDA Office of Inspector General have thrust the issue into the light by exposing flaws in oversight and enforcement for organic imports. NOC is now being joined by many other groups in efforts to address import fraud through Farm Bill legislation and new regulations.

NOC is equally concerned about uneven enforce- ment domestically, especially in the poultry and dairy sectors. This is a topic we’ve raised repeatedly with USDA that NOC and other plaintiffs do not have legal standing to challenge the withdrawal decision. The Court held that the withdrawal of the rule that set organic animal welfare standards injures the organiza- tions’ members because it “undermines the organic label” for consumers. We are thrilled to see this legal challenge move forward.

Additionally, NOC has been beating the drum with both Congress and USDA leadership about the lack of consistent enforcement for dairy pasture require- ments and rules regarding how organic dairy livestock are transitioned into organic production (“Origin of Livestock”). We believe that this lack of consistent enforcement and level playing field has contributed to the oversupply of milk in the marketplace, with devas- tating effects on prices to organic dairy farmers.

These dairy sector enforcement issues have been a major theme of the past two NOC meetings in Tucson and St. Paul. In St. Paul, NOC convened a panel to consider how we create a strong and unified call for consistency in dairy sector enforcement, especially regarding origin of livestock. In a Q&A session with the top official for the National Organic Program, Deputy Administrator Jenny Tucker, we urged the USDA to take action to bring about consistency and fairness for organic dairy producers.

In a victory for NOC, the NOSB also took up this issue by passing a unanimous resolution urging USDA Secretary Perdue to issue new regulations on origin of livestock that reflect the will of public stakeholders and the organic community. The NOSB has done its part by communicating about this issue to the highest levels at the USDA. NOC will now be working with dairy farmers and other partners in the organic com- munity to step up efforts to achieve a greater level of fairness for organic dairy producers.

One of the reasons that NOC continues to engage deeply with the NOSB is because we believe the NOSB is at the heart of the transparent, democratic process that upholds the integrity of the organic seal. The role of the NOSB is important to the organic sector to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in organic agriculture and food have access and input into the USDA process for setting organic standards.

When the USDA National Organic Program was first created, there was a great deal of apprehension about turning over the keys of the grassroots organic movement to the federal government, for fear organic would lose its connection to farmers and consumers. The compromise was the creation of the NOSB as a citizen-stakeholder advisory committee to allow for a formalized process to ensure grassroots organic input into standard-setting and decision-making processes at USDA. The board also has statutory authority to keep toxic substances out of organic production.

For these reasons, NOC is engaged in the NOSB process both to ensure that toxic substances that have no place in organic stay out and to draw attention to issues critical to the organic sector, like the Origin of Livestock issue.

NOC draws on the strength of our diverse mem- bership to serve as a unified voice for the integrity of the USDA organic seal. The work of the National Organic Coalition is essential, especially at a time of increasing marginalization of family-scale farmer, consumer, and environmental voices.

NOC has been a leading voice with members of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Organic Standards Board since 2003. We rep- resent more than 1 million citizens, farms, and busi- nesses through our 14 member organizations: MOSES, Beyond Pesticides, Center for Food Safety, Consumers Union, Equal Exchange, Food & Water Watch, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, National Co-op Grocers, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, Northeast Organic Farming Association, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, Organic Seed Alliance, Puget Consumers Co-op, and RAFI.

Abby Youngblood is the executive director of the National Organic Coalition.

Get involved through NOC

2. Follow NOC at Twitter.com/NationalOrganic.
3. Take part in an NOSB meeting, typically in April and October. NOC convenes a ‘Pre-NOSB’ day before the start of the NOSB meeting. The next Pre-NOSB and NOSB meeting will be on April 23-26, 2019 in Seattle, Wash. Public stakeholders and farmers can deliver written testimony, in-person oral testimony, or give oral testimony to the NOSB via webinar.

NOC offers a limited number of scholarships to support farmers who wish to take part in NOSB meetings. To learn more, sign up for NOC’s email list and visit NOC’s events page: www.NationalOrganicCoalition.org/events.
**What organic methods will control diseases in my apple trees?**

**Answer by Organic Specialist Chris McGuire**

Apples are a challenging crop to grow organically. Fungal and bacterial diseases can cause leaf spots, defoliation, spotty and disfigured fruit, or dieback of branches and whole trees. Diseases are particularly devastating in humid climates such as the Midwest. That’s why most organic apples are grown in the deserts of Washington State, where the dry climate keeps diseases at bay. However, it is possible, although not easy, to grow healthy trees and beautiful apples in our region.

First of all, identify the specific diseases that are attacking your trees. Consult guidebooks such as Tree Fruit Field Guide to Insect, Mite, and Disease Pests and Natural Enemies of Eastern North America, or submit a sample to your state’s plant disease diagnostic lab. Diseases can sometimes be confused with nutrient deficiencies, winter cold injury, or attack by small insects such as leafhoppers and aphids.

Most commercial organic apple growers spray some organic-approved disease control products to produce saleable fruit and make a living. The National Organic Standards and good sense, however, dictate that we first try cultural controls before spraying. Michael Phillips, in *The Holistic Orchard* and other books, lays out innovative ideas about how we can holistically promote tree health through good soil nutrition and encouraging beneficial microbes.

Disease-resistant varieties are another important cultural control. There are excellent apple varieties, such as Pristine, Williams Pride, Winecrisp, CrimsonCrisp, Liberty, and Goldrush, which are resistant to apple scab, probably the most destructive disease of apples in our climate. However, you may have to work extra hard to market these varieties because they are unfamiliar to most consumers. Some of these varieties are quite susceptible to diseases other than scab. Most organic orchardists recommend against growing varieties which are highly susceptible to scab, such as McIntosh.

Don’t forget to consider the rootstock which your apple trees are grafted on—rootstocks may be susceptible to fire blight or collar rot, diseases which can kill an entire tree. Some growers have begun planting trees grafted on newer Geneva series rootstocks that are resistant to these pathogens.

Humidity favors disease. An important method of disease control is to prune and train your trees so they are open to sun and wind. A major advantage of growing small, dwarf trees is that they have smaller canopies that dry more quickly.

Apples are a long-lived crop, and many of the important cultural decisions such as soil fertilization, variety and rootstock selection, and pruning and training systems are made when you plant your trees. It’s difficult or impossible to change these decisions subsequently. If you’re starting a new orchard, plan carefully!

If or when you do need to spray, a wide range of products is allowed in organic production, and specific information is available in the growing timing and application rates. For control of apple scab, Harry Hoch at Hoch Orchard and Gardens has written an excellent article describing their use of sulfur fungicides: www.hochorchard.com/wp-content/uploads/Scab_article_2009.pdf

Fire blight is a potentially devastating bacterial disease that can kill entire trees and has become more difficult to control organically since the antibiotics streptomycin and oxytetracycline have been banned in organic production. A good publication reviewing organic spray options for fire blight control is at www.organic-center.org/organic-fire-blight-prevention-project.

All in all, organic disease control in apples is challenging and complicated. You’ll need to do your research and be observant in order to raise delicious and beautiful apples in our climate.

**Chris McGuire, MOSES Organic Specialist, grows organic fruit and vegetables at Two Onion Farm in Belmont, Wis.**

“In the wake of Election Day, I wonder: how can I participate more in community governance?”

**Answer by Program Director Lauren Langworthy**

America has a long history of farmers as leaders in their communities, from serving on school boards to paving the way for huge community improvements like rural electrification.

The first step to getting on a ballot is reflecting on your personal interests, community needs, and personal availability. If you find that you have the time and energy to devote to your community, the following questions will help you direct your efforts into the most fruitful areas of community leadership – whether that be joining the public library board, Chamber of Commerce, FTA, Rotary, FSA board, village or county boards, nonprofits or even an assembly seat.

If all of that sounds like a little more involved than you were thinking, it’s still good to get involved. Consider attending your monthly village or town board to hear what’s going on and attend events like “Hill visit,” “Farmer Fly-in,” and “Day at the Capitol.” These are opportunities for your voice to be heard and for you to learn a little more about how the systems work. You can build relationships with elected officials, grassroots organizations, and the other people who feel compelled to participate. These first steps can help clarify what participation you may want to have in the future.

If you feel ready to take on a slightly more formal role, consider joining a committee (a county board committee, for example). Many will accept non-board citizens, providing opportunities to participate in local democracy. Committees usually have a specific focus area (like water quality or local economic development). Try to find committees working on topics that match your own interests or concerns. Committees are good ways to develop relationships with people who share common interest areas and a willingness to work through the governance process. These relationships can be very important as you work toward solving your community’s concerns.

Perhaps you’re reading and thinking that you want to be a lot more engaged in democracy than what I’m describing. I respond by saying that it might be time for you to find a board seat or elected position that you can serve in. Our communities are full of boards and elections that go uncontested. Again, it’s important to reflect deeply on your goals and passions to find a good fit. Begin by attending meetings and getting involved—this will help you find the right place for yourself while developing the relationships you will need to get elected or appointed.

If you’re considering getting yourself on the ballot for a county or state role, head to your local Elections Commission website to learn what forms you need to complete and the deadlines for the process. For local roles, contact your Municipal or Town Clerk. When you feel ready to take the final step, find local community members, and organizations that can help you better understand the process and how to have a successful campaign.

As farmers, we have a lot of skills and knowledge to share with our local communities. Participation in the governance process, at whatever level feels appropriate, is a great way to have our voices heard and to create the improvements we’d like to see.

Lauren Langworthy, MOSES Program Director, serves on the board of the Wisconsin Farmers Union.
Grafting holds promise for vegetable production

By Matthew Kleinhenz

Grafting woody plants to produce desired traits has become routine. The value for producing fruit is rarely questioned. The same is true of vegetable grafting in many other countries as well as in large portions of the North American greenhouse vegetable industry. A small, but growing number of vegetable farmers and researchers in the U.S. is looking at the practice to determine its best application in soil-based production (including sustainable-organic) of tomato, pepper, watermelon, cucumber, cantaloupe, and other crops.

As a production tool and source of income, grafting is regarded as an emerging, must-test technology capable of significant and timely outcomes for the U.S. vegetable industry. The reason for this is straightforward: with a logic hinging on three points: grower need; shortcomings of traditional variety development; and, grafting’s ability to target specific traits.

First, growers will continue to rely heavily on the genetic makeup of their plants to provide abundant, high quality crops with ever-greater reliability and efficiency.

Second, using standard approaches, variety development teams will continue to fall short just short of providing farmers with exactly what they need, at least in the short-term. Developing a range of individual farmer-friendly varieties—each containing all the desired traits—has been impossible so far. Variety development teams are exceptionally talented. However, no matter their ability, these teams are typically required to select one trait over another (i.e., to compromise), resulting in most varieties having at least one troublesome weakness.

Third, grafting dramatically alters the variety development and selection process, improving it for farmers. Scion (fruitering) and rootstock varieties are developed and selected separately, each to bring key attributes to the physical hybrid created by their being developed and selected separately, each to bring key attributes to the physical hybrid created by their being grafted. Breeders face fewer and less significant combinations that: a) withstand abiotic stress (e.g., drought/flood, salinity, extreme temperature) more effectively; b) use inputs (e.g., land, water, nutrients) more efficiently; c) produce greater marketable yields under good or alternative (e.g., strip-till or no-till) production conditions; and d) improve fruit quality are also possible and a topic of study among farmers and investigators—again, with many evaluations completed in organic systems. Findings are shared in scientific articles (see www.vegetablegrafting.org/resources/reference-database) and in publications, field days, workshops, presentations, webinars, etc. (See www.vegetablegrafting.org/resources.)

Taken together, these points reveal why changing the variety development and selection process through grafting is speeding the delivery of a wider array of important, naturally occurring traits to farms, allowing farmers to make faster and more effective use of genetics.

Still, all is not perfect. Although some major benefits made available by using grafted plants have been demonstrated, evidence for others is promising but less convincing, so far.

Limiting damage caused by nematodes and soil-borne diseases (e.g., Verticillium and Fusarium wilts) that attack the roots or lower stems of crops drives much of the current interest in grafting among tomato, pepper, watermelon, cucumber, and cantaloupe growers, grower-advisors, and investigators. That ability has been made clear through collaborative on-station and on-farm studies and farmer-led evaluations, with some conducted in organic systems. Findings are also summarized in an increasing number of extension/industry resources calibrated for local conditions. Indeed, farmers are rarely far from a university or industry professional with some grafting expertise. (See updates at www.vegetablegrafting.org/about/regional.) Regardless, for some farmers unable to rotate away from infested soils, change crops, or use another tactic, superior genetics represents an opportunity to maintain an income.

More effective nematode and disease management is responsible for much of the interest in vegetable grafting but it is not the only driver. Rootstock-scion combinations that: a) withstand abiotic stress (e.g., drought/flood, salinity, extreme temperature) more effectively; b) use inputs (e.g., land, water, nutrients) more efficiently; c) produce greater marketable yields under good or alternative (e.g., strip-till or no-till) production conditions; and d) improve fruit quality are also possible and a topic of study among farmers and investigators—again, with many evaluations completed in organic systems. Findings are shared in scientific articles (see www.vegetablegrafting.org/resources/reference-database) and in publications, field days, workshops, presentations, webinars, etc. (See www.vegetablegrafting.org/resources.)

Naturally, the opportunity to supply grafted plants to eager vegetable farmers (and gardeners!) has caught the attention of seedling/transplant growers and propagators. Demand for grafted plants in the U.S. currently exceeds the domestic supply, and appears to be increasing. To the extent that farmers and gardeners see the benefits of grafted plants, it will be necessary for someone to provide them, including certified-organic versions, in many rootstock-scion combinations and in varying numbers. Important advances in the process of preparing grafted vegetable plants have been made recently thanks to industry-university partnerships, and additional improvements are likely. Online or downloadable how-to guides (e.g., www.vegetablegrafting.org/resources/grafting-manual and u.osu.edu/vegprolab/research-areas/grafting-2), hands-on workshops and trainings, and other resources address many questions about making grafted plants. In the Midwest, experts including Drs. Wenjing Guan (Purdue), Ajay Nair (Iowa State University), and Cary Rivard (KSU) provide excellent research-based information on a range of grafting-related topics.

The overall expectation is that grafting will help more people make more money, especially by farming more sustainably and diversifying their product line. Skeptics claim that most of the money made on...
Organic University —— from page 1

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
Teresa Wiernersilage, Kirsten Slaughter, & Annake Ramsey

Meet the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement for food safety training with this official PSA Grower Training course, which includes the PSA manual and certificate. You’ll learn everything you need to know to ensure your farm complies with the Produce Safety Rule and follows safe food handling practices.

Teresa Wiernersilage specializes in local food systems for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Kirsten Slaughter teaches food safety for Wisconsin Farmers Union. Annake Ramsey is Organic Valley’s produce program manager. This experienced team understands organic small- and medium-sized produce farms, and will share examples of practices used on these farms to help you promote a culture of food safety on your farm. Come prepared to share your farm’s produce safety experience and questions.

Advanced Organic Weed Management
Matt Liebman, Sam Hitchcock Tilton, Joe Fitzgerald, Matt Fitzgerald, & Keith Wilson

Weed control is a continual challenge in organic grain production. But this isn’t your grandparent’s method of farming! Organic grain producers employ a variety of strategies to manage weeds, from cutting-edge technological innovations and adapted machinery to ecological techniques and systems-based approaches. A group of experienced professionals will help you identify the best strategies for your operation. Matt Liebman, Iowa State University, will explain weed population dynamics, weed biology, and research-based control strategies. Sam Hitchcock Tilton from KULT-Kress Cultivation Solutions will highlight new and emerging machines on the market, individual tools, as well as best-use strategies for your current equipment, and options to tune-up your cultivator. In addition, a panel of experienced organic grain farmers will share their weed-control strategies and offer practical advice you can apply to organic grain production on your farm.

Reduce Risk in Your Farming Business
Margaret Krome

Farming is an inherently risky business. Faced with climate change, uncertainty in international marketplaces, water contamination, inadequate insurance, and other variables, farmers need to leverage all the tools available to be successful.

Learn how managing for strong soils, diversifying marketplace access, finding the right crop insurance, and employing forward-thinking production practices can reduce risk and strengthen your farm business. Margaret Krome is the policy program director at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, and the interim executive director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. She is well-versed in federal programs that support organic and sustainable farming, along with crop insurance programs supporting diversified farms. She’ll lay out a buffet of options so you can select the tools that will offer the best support for your farm.

Maximize Nutrition from Grazing & Forages
Brad Heins, Kevin Mahalko, & Silvia Abel-Caines, DVM

With today’s disheartening dairy market, good management is crucial to survival. This powerhouse team will share strategies you can use to maximize profitability from your herd.

Veterinarian Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines specializes in ruminant nutrition for Organic Valley. Brad Heins teaches dairy management at the University of Minnesota-Morris, where the West Central Research Center manages both certified organic and non-organic dairy herds. Kevin Mahalko is an Organic Valley dairy grazer from Gilman, Wis. He is president of Grassworks, and teaches grazing management for the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program and other groups.

These experts will explain how to improve soil to promote lush forage and robust animals. They’ll also dig into the nutritional requirements of an entire herd, showing you how to grow and feed to keep your herd healthy both in the field and on top-quality forage stored for the non-grazing season.

Grow & Market Specialty Cut Flowers
Jeanie McKewan

Discover how to make your cut-flower farm bloom. This course covers all facets of operating a profitable cut flower farm, from planning what to grow and how to grow it to delivering the right product to your buyers to build lasting relationships.

Jeanie McKewan of Brightflower Farm has been growing and selling flowers since 2006, serving floral designers and wholesale accounts. She’ll talk about growing and harvesting techniques, storage requirements, and records to keep, as well as ways to create winning relationships with your customers through product choices and management techniques that result in a profitable flower business.

Soil: The Final Frontier
Kris Nichols & Loran Steinlage

This course bolsters the principles and tools for soil health to support your ongoing mission to improve the soil on your organic farm.

Soil microbiologist Kris Nichols founded KRIS (Knowledge for Regeneration and Innovation in Soils) Systems Education & Consultation. She was chief scientist at Rodale Institute. Iowa farmer Loran Steinlage has a 1,500-acre operation where he’s exploring no-till organic companion/relay cropping.

This farmer-researcher pair will combine practical knowledge with research data to encourage you to become a systems-thinker who uses biological, mechanical, and organic chemical tools synergistically for maximum impact. They’ll demonstrate soil health assessment tools, and show you how to create some tools yourself. They’ll help you develop new observation skills to guide you as you build your farm’s soil.

Grow & Market Organic Mushrooms
Tradd Cotter

Add an income stream to your farm or homestead with fast-growing, high-value mushrooms.

Microbiologist-mycologist Tradd Cotter, author of Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation—which you’ll get with this course—has been growing mushrooms and experimenting with production methods for over 20 years. Tradd will teach you several indoor cultivation methods that meet organic standards, highlighting low- to high-tech options so you can choose a production scale that’s right for you. He’ll cover organic strategies to prevent infestations of insects, molds, and other contaminants that could reduce yields and impact food safety. He’ll share successful business models and help you plan your mushroom operation for growth and profit. He’ll also give you ideas for value-added products and tips for marketing the fresh and dried mushrooms you’ll grow.

Audrey Alwell is the communications director for MOSES.
NRCS program supports farmers transitioning to organic

By Matt Leavitt

Organic agriculture as a production system emphasizes protecting and building the natural resources of agricultural land in production. A farm’s Organic System Plan (OSP) includes detailed sections on how the farmer will build soil health; mitigate erosion, preserve biological diversity, protect water quality, and manage nutrients and manure. Addressing these areas can seem daunting to farmers who are new to organic production. What many non-organic farmers don’t realize is that there are established government programs that can help put practices in place to meet the objectives of an OSP.

One such program is the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition, or CAP138. This program focuses on the natural resource concerns of an operation to assist producers who want to transition to certified organic production.

The NRCS views resource concerns as quantitative measures of the natural resources of the farm in question. These include soil erosion, soil quality degradation, water quality degradation, insufficient water, excess water, degraded plant condition, inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife, and livestock production limitations.

CAP138 was developed by NRCS and the National Organic Program (NOP) to provide a detailed inventory of resource concerns and practices that also satisfies the requirements of the Organic regulations. The OSP is the primary document that a transitioning producer would submit to an organic certifier for review and serves as a verifiable whole-farm management plan for the farm to stay in compliance with the NOP.

CAP138 requirements have evolved since the implementation of the program and are in the process of being reviewed and renewed for 2019 and beyond. In an ideal world, the OSP and CAP138 would be interchangeable, but a producer needs to provide additional documentation to satisfy the requirements of both the NOP and NRCS. This documentation, along with the time involved from the producer and other support staff have led to underutilization of the CAP138 program.

The money available through CAP138 is specifically allocated to repay the services of a Technical Support Provider (TSP) who helps write the plan, technically allocated to repay the services of a Technical Support Provider, or TSP. This program focuses on the natural resource concerns of an operation to assist producers who want to transition to certified organic production. The TSP serves as a farm transition consultant.

Access CAP138

1. Visit your local NRCS office and sign up through EQIP or Organic EQIP. See offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app/agency=nrcs to find your local NRCS office.
2. Locate an organic certifier.
3. Find a TSP. (See list below.)
4. Complete a resource concern template, erosion control template, summary record of planned NRCS conservation practices (and all Organic System Plan Templates within).
5. If a CAP138 plan is approved by NRCS, then producer is reimbursed the cost of paying a TSP.
7. Organic Certifier reviews OSP (Organic System Plan Template + additional information), inspection, review and issues decision on organic certification.

CAP138 Doesn’t Cover:
- Cost of certification/inspection, implementation of organic practices on the farm, organic seed, farm equipment, land purchase/rental, and all other associated farm/production costs
- The Farm Service Agency offers Organic Certification Cost-Share to reimburse producers up to 75% of certification costs. Other USDA programs also support aspects of organic transition. Ask your NRCS agent about additional supports.

Local Technical Service Providers (TSPs)

IA, MN, WI—Joseph Lally (jotbud1@gmail.com)
Minnesota —
Aaron Brin (abrin@countyspeed.com)
Glen Borgerding (glenbac@albanytel.com)
Wisconsin —
Ruth Hilfiger (rehilfiger@frontiernet.net)
Cindy Logsdon (clogriv@yahoo.com)
Man Plan Inc. (godar@manplan.net)

www.nrcs.usda.gov/organic

submit the paperwork to the right people, and offers additional guidance as appropriate. In essence, the TSP serves as a farm transition consultant.

“I am devoted to helping grow the organic industry, one farm at a time,” said Ruth Hilfiger, a TSP in New Richmond, Wis., and farm consultant with EcoGrow Consulting. “It takes many hours to become certified [as a TSP] and to develop Organic Transition plans.”

Hilfiger explained that a TSP’s payment for a plan varies with the type of operation and the distance to the farm. She offers services beyond the scope of the NRCS requirements, helping producers think through the basics of organic crop production, the issues they will likely face in transition and beyond, best management practices, crop rotations, soil analysis, and more.

The process of becoming a TSP isn’t an easy path. TSPs have to be recertified every three years, submit an example Organic Transition Plan, and take online and in-person training required by NRCS. TSPs must have some agricultural education background as well as experience working with producers.

“Beginning farmers seem to benefit the most from organic transition planning by technical service providers like myself, but existing farmers who are interested in a more scientific approach to farming are also a key audience for CAP138 cost-sharing,” Hilfiger added. She advises farmers who are interested in the organic transition planning program to visit an NRCS office 1-3 years before they want to be certified.

It took about a year to complete the CAP138 plan for Don Sherman, a landowner from Ortonville, Minn., who had help from TSP Glen Borgerding with Ag Resource Consulting.

“Getting my act together and putting the necessary tools in place is what the program is all about,” Sherman said. “Having a written plan was the first step for me.” He is in his first year of transition and expects to have a portion of his farm certified in 2021. “I would absolutely go through the program again, and I would tell everyone I know about it,” he added.

TSPs are in short supply in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. TSPs often have to travel long distances; wait times for services can be extensive.

“We had a hard time finding a TSP because the other [TSPs] we contacted were backlogged over a year out,” said Becky Leupi of Vibrant Gardens, a diversified...
just to the first leaf stage. Then it is cut, washed, dried, and packed in a retail-ready container or in bulk for restaurants. Order small amounts of seed initially and take notes on how long each takes to grow, which variety needs to be covered with vermiculite to germinate, or which needs a deeper tray. Measure out your seeds per tray and pay attention to the density in which they grow. We struggled with rot in the middle of a tray because it was seeded too heavily. That taught us to alter seeding rates.

Weigh out and record the harvest of each tray so you have an idea of how much to plant to guarantee orders. Generally, you will get a good idea of what works for you in 2 to 3 planting successions.

Washing and packaging is a critical part of selling your product; microgreens need to be clean and packed in a retail-ready container or in bulk for restaurants.

Packaging
Pack retail-ready microgreens in a container, like a clam shell or deli package, that will protect them from being squished. You want to pack the container so it looks good and is priced/packed for weekly consumption. It should be easy to explain to your customer how to use microgreens in everyday dishes. Find flavors that will appeal to the most people.

When selling microgreens to a producer who has not carried them before, you need to be prepared to educate both the manager and store consumers on what they are and how to use them; this means a little extra effort and printed materials. Approach the producer manager with your retail-ready products in hand to sample. Arrive at a time when the manager won’t be too busy and can spend a few minutes learning about your product. Sometimes this means introducing yourself via email beforehand and setting up an appointment, but most of the time, it is ok to drop by in the middle of the day—Wednesdays or Thursdays between 1 and 3 p.m. usually is the slowest time of the week for shoppers.

Bring along a price sheet with all your products listed, when they are available, and your minimum order; this sheet should also have your contact information on it. In addition, show the manager your retail-ready information sheet about microgreens and your specific products—something they could hang up in the produce department to draw attention to a new product and educate consumers.

When you’ve finished showing off your product, thank the manager for seeing you, and offer to follow up in a week to give them time to think. Do not miss this follow up! Everyone gets busy, but it is on you to call or stop back in. They are most likely not going to call you even if they love it. If they place an order... awesome! Maintain your quality standards and check in the first few months to see how sales are going and if they have gotten customer feedback.

If they don’t order, ask what their concerns are. Is it something you can control? Was it your quality? Thank them for their feedback, and go fix the problem. Do you just not have space on their shelf right now? Try back in a month and see if something has changed. Do they think their customers won’t know what to do with it? Offer to do in-store demos, and give examples of other stores that carry microgreens. Also suggest they carry them for a month as a trial, that way the manager does not feel like they made a long-term commitment to your farm, and you have four weeks to convince their customers the product is worth buying.

If your markets are restaurants or specialty grocery stores, you may want to grow and package individual microgreens or micro herb varieties over mixes. The quantities for herbs are generally smaller, but you can charge a higher price for a unique item. Micro herbs have a lot less kitchen prep to them than their full-grown counterparts.

To get your products into a restaurant, go in when they are slow so they have time to talk—Tuesdays between 2 and 4 p.m. usually is the slowest time.

Fairly new, you will probably need to introduce your produce will have full flavor and last longer because it was harvested at its peak and traveled very few miles to the restaurant. Make a point to mention how long your microgreens last, if they have pre-washed microgreens through a distributor, they are probably accustomed to throwing half of them out due to rot or wilt.

Listen to what the chef is looking for in a product and in partnering with a local farm. If all they talk about is the price, it may not be the relationship you want to pursue. But, if they talk about high quality ingredients, seasonality, and flavor, this is the chef for you. Chefs can be both fun and challenging to work with as the menu changes through the seasons. Stay in with the chef and you can offer variety throughout the year. In smaller restaurants, the chef is often the buyer, menu maker, daily cook, and wears many other hats so put a reminder in your phone to call or email regularly for orders if they are not consistent.

Once you establish a few products, branching out with more variety is an easy way to expand your sales to existing customers. The reputation you build for quality products grown with high standards will give you confidence to pursue new clients.

Microgreens have great potential to bring added revenue to your farm operation, especially in winter months or slow times of the year. They may take a little effort to educate your markets about them, but once established become a consistent and reliable form of income while utilizing structures and resources you probably already have, making you one smart cookie.

Halle Anderson and her mom, Lisa Talbott, own and operate 10thSt. Farm & Market, a half-acre farm in Atlon, Minn., growing produce for a three-season CSA, farm stand, and wholesale accounts.
Neighboring confinement hog operation threatens Illinois organic farm

By Bailey Webster

Randy and Crystal Clair of Sunset Lake Organics in Loraine, Ill., are in what they see as the fight of their lives. They believe that a confinement hog operation proposed for the property next door threatens their health, the value of their property, and their very livelihood.

Sunset Lake Organics is an organic row crop and vegetable farm in Adams County. The farm has been partially certified organic since 2014. The Clairs make their living growing corn and soybeans. It’s easy to miss the corn and beans in their elevator speech, though. What they’re really passionate about—what they see as their higher calling—is growing soil.

“We have a lot of faith in God,” said Crystal Clair. “We’re taking care of our soil and trying to be good stewards of land. We’re not rich, but we’re successful.”

The Clairs make compost—“platinum” compost. It’s plant-based, with no animal products. The process of making the compost to organic standards is highly regulated. They use a specific recipe to get the balance of nutrients just right, and take core temperature and CO2 measurements daily. The windrows (long lines of heaped compost) are turned regularly with a compost turner, a specialized tractor implement designed just for that purpose. The Clairs also have a bale slicer (hay is a primary ingredient), as well as a vertical mixer. They have invested heavily in equipment to make the composting operation efficient and productive.

The site of the Sunset Lake Organics composting operation is neat as a pin. Because the process is so meticulously managed, there is very little odor even standing right next to the compost.

The Clairs have 540 acres of organic crops in production, and 250 acres in transition that will be certified in 2020. They average 130 bushels per acre of corn and 45 bushels per acre of soybeans. Their business is called County Line Swine, Inc. He is knowledgeable about all of the regulations he must comply with, and believes his hog operation will be an economic boon to the community.

During his brief testimony at the public informational meeting regarding his proposed operation, Peter stated: “The facility will meet or exceed all the requirements from the Livestock Management Facilities Act, which governs the siting of livestock farms and protects the rights of citizens. The new hog farm will bring economic activity to our local economy. Our farm has four full-time employees. The farm will provide a market for local corn and soybeans. We will also be adding approximately $16,000 of tax revenue to the county, [of] which ten thousand will go to the Mendon School District.”

County Line Swine plans to house 5,000 hogs at a time, with two cycles per year (10,000 hogs/year). After two years, Peter would be able to expand again with a third building. Each building would produce 1.2 million gallons of manure a year. The manure flows through slats in the floor where the pigs are housed, into storage pits lined with eight inches of concrete. The storage capacity for each building will be enough for nearly 12 months. The state's Livestock Management Facilities Act requires only five months of storage.

The Clairs also use water from the lake to irrigate the vegetables they grow in their greenhouse. One of the reasons they can use the lake water is that it’s clean and free of pollutants that could damage their plants and compost. But they’re concerned that the confinement hog operation that has been proposed adjacent to their property will impact the quality of their lake water.

The confinement hog operation is being proposed by Ragan Peter, who grew up in Adams County. He has a wife and two daughters, and has been raising pigs for most of his life. Peter’s business is called County Line Swine, Inc. He is knowledgeable about all of the regulations he must comply with, and believes his hog operation will be an economic boon to the community.

Randy and Crystal Clair of Sunset Lake Organics use water from this lake to irrigate their greenhouse and to make compost—the windrowed compost is visible on the opposite shore. They’re fighting to block a proposed confinement hog operation because the manure could pollute this water source.

Photo by Crystal Clair

Peter has secured access to 620 acres near the proposed confinement hog operation on which to spread his manure. County Line Swine would keep records on manure production and nutrient value to calculate loading/application rates for spreading manure. In Illinois, manure management is regulated by the state Environmental Protection Agency. Peter plans to inject the manure eight inches below the soil surface, which significantly reduces the risk of runoff.

According to the Clairs, some of the fields where Peter would be spreading manure have drain tile that drains to their lake. They worry that manure will end up in their lake. And if the lake becomes contaminated, they say, their business will no longer be viable.

Confinement hog operations are notorious for odor issues. Large fans blow gases from the manure out of the building, and the smell can travel for miles. In addition to being unpleasant, the blown-out air includes ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, and hog dander. Numerous studies show increased rates of asthma and other respiratory problems, headaches, nausea, and eye irritation in people living near confinement hog operations. Vulnerable populations, including children and older adults, are of special concern.

Crystal Clair is currently fighting breast cancer, and she’s very worried about her health if the confinement hog operation is approved. At the public hearing, she stated, “I’m seriously ill. And I had been doing well until...”
MOSES hosts party to highlight local organic movement

By Emma Manley

Music can be a powerful enactor of change. It has the power to bridge the divides between people, places, and ideas. It’s no wonder music is often used to bring awareness to issues and garner support for causes.

In that vein, MOSES hosted a “Party for Organic” last month just prior to the meeting of the National Organic Standards Board in St. Paul, Minn. The event was designed to welcome the national organic community to the Midwest, and to showcase the collective good of the local organic movement. Sponsors included Organic Valley, Prairie Organic Spirits, Peace Coffee, Equal Exchange, Farm Table Foundation, and Mississippi Market.

MOSES contracted Duluth-based band Cloud Cult for the evening’s entertainment. The event sold out quickly, which came as no surprise. Cloud Cult played two sold out nights last April with the Minnesota Orchestra at Orchestra Hall, a venue with a capacity of over 2,000, compared to the Amsterdam’s capacity of about 700. The smaller, more intimate venue seemed to be a huge draw for fans.

“We saw Cloud Cult last spring with the Orchestra,” Sara and Deanna of St. Paul said. “When we saw they would be playing the Amsterdam, we bought tickets right when they went on sale.” Deanna mentioned the group’s overall message, and noted their ability to appeal to a wide audience. “Their music is just accessible to everyone, and it means something to everyone.”

Some in the audience knew of Cloud Cult in passing, but were drawn to the event by the local and organic food options.

“I try to shop as sustainably as possible, I shop at the Wedge and Mississippi Market,” said local teacher Patrick. “It’s hard to live in Minnesota and not know Cloud Cult,” he noted, but added that the food and atmosphere of like-minded individuals were the reasons he attended.

Most of the food was purchased at or donated by local co-ops Seward and Mississippi Market, with Organic Valley donating cheese and dairy products. Peace Coffee, whose mission is to protect the environment and the people that produce their coffee, generously provided their products. Drink specials were made possible through Prairie Organic Spirits, a Minneapolis-based distillery that is committed to eco-conscious practices.

Cloud Cult was the obvious choice for an event to garner awareness for MOSES and its mission. “MOSES and Cloud Cult both understand what the path going forward in sustainable agriculture looks like,” said Tom Manley, Account Service Coordinator at MOSES. “They’re invested and they live it as a part of this community. If any Cloud Cult fans don’t know MOSES, they would be receptive to the ideas. They’re already invested in the message.”

The group’s frontman and his wife, Craig and Connie Minowa, live on a farm near Viroqua, Wis., and own Earthology, a nonprofit dedicated to environmental sustainability. Part of Earthology is the record label, which focuses on making the music industry as eco-friendly as possible.

“Earthology has multiple branches, so we’ve got the record label,” Craig shared. “Then also Earthology Institute, that’s focused on environmental education, although we’re expanding that theme to also address some broad spiritual, therapeutic aspects. We also have Earthology Retreat Center on our property—we have cabins that we rent out and a park that people can come to, spend time by the water.”

The band is deeply committed to staying green; their recording studio is powered by geothermal energy, and was built from reclaimed wood and recycled plastic. Their merchandise is made of 100% recycled or organic materials, and they plant trees to offset the CO2 output of their touring and recording. “We plant four times the number of trees that the output of their touring and recording.”

“We plant four times the number of trees that the (CO2) calculations led to, just to be sure we’re covering it,” Craig said. “His father was an agricultural educator, and noted that growing up with that influence, the sustainable lifestyle became his culture. He spoke to the importance of events like this, and why Cloud Cult was eager to be a part of it. “As far as organic education goes, consumers need the education, but farmers in a big way need it too. They need to understand the importance and methodology of transitioning to a more sustainable practice.”

Beyond their environmentally sound practices and message, Cloud Cult is known for a very unique aspect of their shows. Connie Minowa and Scott West, both professional painters, each craft a one-of-a-kind painting during the concert. At the end, the artworks are auctioned; for this event, the proceeds went to support the mission of MOSES. Cloud Cult is unlike any other band out there today; they are a massive force for good, and use their music to enact change.

It is likely that MOSES will host similar events in the future, Executive Director John Mesko said. “I’d like to continue to introduce our mission and share the organic and sustainable movement with new audiences.”

Emma Manley is a campus representative for First Avenue. She covers local music on her blog, OCD Soundsystem.
Early arrivals feasted on chicken loempia, roasted Brussel sprouts, salads, Bitterballen, house fries, and other treats before Cloud Cult took the stage. The band played crowd favorites from their hearts, enjoying the intimate setting with some of their biggest fans. More than 700 people attended the sold-out event.

Right and bottom right: Scott West and Connie Minowa created original paintings that were auctioned for a total of $5,200 to support organic farmer education.

Photo credits top to bottom: Audrey Alwell, Lauren Langworthy, Emma Manley
Grafting Vegetables — from page 5

vegetable grafting currently goes to seed companies and propagators, given the costs of rootstock seed and grafted plants. Fair point but that is not the whole of it.

Careful, comprehensive analyses of "grafting economics" — the economic feasibility of producing grafted plants as a business and of using them in commercial fruit production — are complete and others are underway. It is clear that producing grafted plants is more costly than producing standard seedlings (transplants) and that increases in production costs depend on the number of plants produced. Also, most agree that the costs of producing grafted plants can be estimated more reliably than the economic benefits of using grafted plants in commercial fruit production, although yield increases exceeding 5-10% are common. Real benefits must be determined one farm, one season, one crop and, maybe, one field at a time. In one experiment focused on organic heirloom tomato production, economic risk of crop loss due to root knot nematode damage exceeded the 46% higher cost of grafted transplants.

The consensus is that grafting economics are not settled and that they are complicated to evaluate but should always attempt to take all related costs and gains into account. Grafting economics appear to be personal (farm-farmer-specific) in that they depend on individual evaluations of the perceived gains and losses resulting from making and/or using grafted plants.

Anecdotally, over the years, in discussing grafted plants as a product (propagator point of view) and tool (fruit grower point of view) with farmers who have experimented with them well and/or analyzed reports about them carefully, it seems that for every four farmers I spoke with, two were generally positive, one was negative, and the fourth was unsure. This mixed perspective on grafting is consistent with the views of people currently most optimistic about the potential of grafting to benefit U.S. vegetable growers and gardeners, including organic. While use of grafted plants has risen sharply in the last 10-15 years, utilization has not reached its expected peak. Improvements in rootstock varieties, identifying optimal rootstock-scion combinations, and grafting methods and supply streams are required, along with better recommendations for using grafted plants more cost-effectively under more conditions on more farms and in more gardens. Seed companies, grower and commodity organizations, private organizations and foundations, universities, USDA and SARE, and others have sponsored an impressive amount and range of studies and extension-outreach activities aimed at strengthening the utility of vegetable grafting. Consider completing your own fair and reliable evaluation, perhaps with extension or another trusted collaborator.

4. Crop vigor and yield are very important, especially to enhance or maintain the farm’s presence in the market.

5. Single plantings will be picked as many times as conditions allow; in other words, total seasonal yield is important and the grower may be willing to tolerate having a smaller early yield in exchange for a greater total seasonal yield.

Learning more about vegetable grafting may be most relevant in the near-term for farms for which one or more of these conditions are true. However, grower experiences and research-based evidence suggest that learning more about this long-standing technology would be useful for many others.

Matthew Kleinheinz is a professor in Horticulture and Crop Science at The Ohio State University.

NRCS CAP138 — from page 7

vegetable operation on the outskirts of Milwaukee. She said she was happy to find her TSP, because "now we have even more knowledge to bring our farming operation to the next level."

Both Leupi and Sherman found CAP138 was a lot of information to wade through, but their experienced TSPs made all the difference in their positive experiences.

"Having the resource and time for producers to take full advantage of programs is an issue," Sherman explained. "I don’t expect to hold on to my farm, but I want the best chance to have it preserved, share practices, and have it in balance with nature."

Another client of Borgerding’s, Jason Lehman, a new organic grain producer from Madelia, Minn., is in his first year of certified organic harvest. "I’ve looked at other programs, but the lack of flexibility and adaptability to organic production has prevented me from using them," he said.

CAP138’s OSP Templates cover all aspects of a farm’s organic system plan and can be submitted to a certification agency after completion of the program. However, successful completion of the CAP138 process does not mean a farm is certified organic. A producer must still submit a completed OSP to an organic certifier for review and inspection prior to being certified organic. The producer is responsible for complying with all of the OSP requirements not addressed by the CAP138 resource concern inventory, erosion control inventory, and summary record of planned NRCS conservation practices.

The CAP138 program is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation to become certified organic once the plan is completed. There is additionally no requirement to submit the NRCS-specific sections (resource inventory, erosion control inventory, etc.) to the organic certification agency for review. It is also incumbent on the producer or landowner to sign up with NRCS first before enlisting the services of a TSP. Any services rendered before a contract is signed with the NRCS won’t be reimbursed.

Matt Leavitt is an organic specialist with MOSES.

Estimated Use of Grafted Vegetable Plants in the USA in 2015 (all sectors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Tomato</th>
<th>Watermelon</th>
<th>Other Crops</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<td>none</td>
<td>cucumber</td>
<td>Canada, Mexico, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Tunnel</td>
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<td>none</td>
<td>melon, eggplant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>eggplant, pepper, potato</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lehman, a new organic grain producer from Madelia, Minn., is in his first year of certified organic harvest. "I’ve looked at other programs, but the lack of flexibility and adaptability to organic production has prevented me from using them," he said.

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By Jennifer Nelson

Access to land continues to be the single largest obstacle for beginning farmers. According to the National Young Farmer Coalition’s 2017 survey of over 3,500 young farmers, it’s also the main reason why farmers quit farming and why aspiring farmers haven’t yet started.

The Land Access Hub is a Renewing the Countryside project in collaboration with MOSES and over 20 other steering committee members working to address the difficult farmland access process for beginning farmers. Funded by a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development grant, the Land Access Hub uses its wealth of partner connections to link beginning farmers with Land Access Navigators in the Midwest to aid them in their process to purchase or lease land. The program is free for farmers.

Average farmland prices have more than doubled since 2004, making it very difficult for new farmers to finance land using farm business profits alone. Despite challenges for new farmers to buy or rent, land is becoming available, at least in theory; two-thirds of all U.S. farmland will need a new farmer over the next two and a half decades as older farmers retire. (NYFCC)

The Land Access Hub includes four Land Access Navigators: Brett Olson, Renewing the Countryside, and Bob Kell, the Main Street Project, are navigators in Minnesota; Kate Edwards, Renewing the Countryside, is the navigator in Iowa; I am the navigator in Wisconsin. We help guide new farmers through the land access process, helping identify action items, and offering education and technical resources.

The large net of community professionals on the steering committee supports and often spearheads the process, guiding new farmers to navigators, and filling in with technical and resource assistance. I recently fielded an inquiry on organic farmland lease pricing from a landowner. I called one of the steering committee members. He in turn referred me to his colleague with expertise in agriculture land appraisal who gave me great insight to address the landowner’s question. My new connection also linked me with a large group of land appraisal experts who will serve as technical support in the future. This is just one of many examples of the benefits of having a large net of community professionals on the steering community.

All the Land Access Navigators bring a different set of skills and experience to the table as we “navigate” clients on the land access path. Drawing on my own experience when buying a farm in western Wisconsin three years ago with USDA Farm Service Agency financing enables me to share, empathize, and access tools and resources to aid clients’ process.

It can be a long process. Identifying viable land options for farmers, then putting the necessary financing in place to secure that land through lease or purchase can take years. So can the relationship-building between incoming and outgoing farmers that is so necessary for successful land transfer.

The Land Access Hub is in its second year, and has a number of in-progress projects that illustrate these points.

Brett Olson has partnered with Katie Kubovcik, a farm education consultant working with Land Access Hub partner Minnesota Food Association (MFA), and the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC). They are working to assist a beginning farm rent a pioneering farm business in Minnesota. The available farm property has highly developed infrastructure located in a prime location for markets, and would be nearly impossible for a new farmer to purchase given the high value. Through her work with LEDC, Kubovcik has helped identify a farm family interested in leasing the farm with the option to buy at the end of the lease. Additionally, the interested farmers are currently receiving technical support from partner organization MFA, assistance applying for organic certification for the first time, selling to wholesale accounts, farm business planning, and general connection to resources and education.

Kubovcik, Olson, the current farm owners, potential farm owners, and other technical support folks as needed have met weekly over the last few months to get to know each other, and agree upon lease terms to ensure success for all involved. John Flory, with LEDC, has also supported the process, providing the lease template and business background support. All parties are hopeful to have a working lease agreement, farm appraisal, and everything in place so the new farmers can begin farming at that location in 2019.

Through the established Land Access Hub partner Main Street Project, navigator Bob Kell has worked with a number of successful new farmers acquiring land and establishing farm businesses. One of his clients, Farmer Antonia of Faribault, Minn., is a Latina producer raising free-range chickens using Main Street Project’s regenerative system. She is in the process of finishing the first of two flocks for which she received $15,000 financing from the Grow a Farmer Fund administered by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Antonia has been raising chickens with Main Street Project since 2014; this is the first independently financed flock that she has raised. She is helping advance the model for independent producers who can secure long-term land access that enables the establishment of their own poultry operations.

I’m also in the process of meeting with a few farmers regarding their land access process. Most are located in southwestern Wisconsin.

Blue Barrel Produce is a certified organic vegetable farm currently located on rented land in Kieler, Wis. The Conleys want to raise their children on a farm, but need close proximity to a good school district and Kristen’s off-farm job, which provides the family’s health insurance. They grew up livestock farming, and this is the second year of operation of their farm business. They’ve been looking for farmland to purchase for five years, and hope to be farm owners in the next year.

There are so many considerations when making a large purchase. Sometimes the best option is to create a lease that works for both farmer renter and landowner. Especially if you are raising a family while farming, it’s very important to consider the community and all it offers. Blue Barrel Produce and I have a meeting scheduled in early November, when we’ll use a variety of resources to look for farms, plug numbers into the finding-farmland calculator to look at cost considerations, discuss deal makers and breakers, and plan next steps in the process.

Finding farmland to rent or own is a path with many twists and turns. I know from experience—it can be overwhelming to even know where to begin. The Land Access Hub is designed to help beginning farmers navigate their way to success. If you are a farm owner looking to retire, or a new farmer looking to rent or buy land, see www.renewingthecountryside.org/farmlandaccess to connect with the Land Access Navigator services.

Jennifer Nelson is an organic specialist with MOSES.

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Relationships. If you think about it, not much happens in life outside of important relationships. Recently, I had a chance to travel to Beijing, China, to speak to several audiences about the work we are doing at MOSES to help farmers start and grow organic farm businesses. The opportunity came my way mainly due to my relationship to MOSES as its executive director but also the relationships I’ve had with several other organizations that share our good work.

That China invitation came via Tianle Chang, who visited our family’s farm in 2015 to see what we were doing to build soil health through high density livestock grazing. Tianle had learned of our farm from Jim Harkness, who I knew through his work with the Institute for Ag and Trade Policy. I met Tianle again in 2017 when she and Jim orchestrated a Chinese delegation to attend the 2017 MOSES Organic Farming Conference. Then, earlier this year, when one of her colleagues asked for a recommendation for a speaker to address sustainable agriculture issues, she recommended me. Life is tied together with relationships.

Through this experience, I’ve gained a new appreciation for the past 30 years of successful education, advocacy, and networking at MOSES. Given the high visibility in China of efforts like this to bring people together from around the world, it’s clear that our work is meaningful and applicable way beyond the Upper Midwest.

Conference Message

New leadership in China is seeking to establish that country as a global thought leader in many areas. Beijing has been host to several large conferences designed to pull the global community together around a central issue to learn, network, and advance new initiatives both in China and around the world. The conference at which I was invited to speak was the “World Conference on Science Literacy,” with over 1500 attendees.

The conference format was similar to those in the U.S., with keynote presentations covering broad topics and calling for sweeping changes, and breakout discussions on subtopics. In the keynote messages, a common theme was expanding science literacy to all human beings regardless of where they live, including women and girls especially. In an extension of that theme, multiple keynote speakers addressed the importance of the “average” person engaging in science education, both as a learner and as an educator.

Sir Martyn Poliakoff from the UK specifically addressed this as he challenged the audience to engage all levels of interest, the true experts, the “rock star” scientists (those who are known for being famous rather than their scientific accomplishments), formal science teachers, and the layperson who has an interest in and is affected by science and its application. He highlighted that we all can be scientists and educators, but the extent to which most people can make an impact is related to how they view themselves and their belief they can have an impact. He called for the world to value its teachers more.

This is where MOSES, and the discussion of our work with farmers comes into the global conversation. The types of education we offer to our community span all of those levels of interest. At the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, we host experts in the fields of soil science, horticulture, agronomy, animal science, and agricultural economics, who can share with us the latest developments in those areas relative to our goal of advancing organic farming practices. We also host well-known speakers who can inspire us with the understanding of how our brand of agriculture can change the world. We engage young people and their teachers, as dozens of high school FFA programs and college and university student farm groups attend our event every year.

At the core of our work is the farmer-to-farmer interaction where farmers not only share knowledge of specific solutions in organic agriculture, but also build community for networking and collaboration. I agree with Sir Martyn that we need to value our teachers more, and I’d say that includes farmers, the original scientists of the soil. Individual farmers are the most creative minds we know. At MOSES, we need to continue to elevate the voices and wisdom of farmers.

I was struck by many similarities between the U.S. and China regarding organic and sustainable agriculture. I met several small- and mid-sized farmers who are struggling to establish markets, and maintain financial viability at a modest scale. Although land ownership structure is different in China, people there as it is here, as there are many in China who are turning to local food production as a second or side career.

I found the farmers I met with eager to learn, but especially eager to make connections. Preconceived notions of the relative freedom in a Communist country led to my shocked surprise when I learned about the growing agritourism industry in China. One farmer I met lost access to the land she was using for hog production due to her father’s death. A fantastic entrepreneur, she quickly focused her operation on agritourism, leveraging her proximity to Beijing. She also leveraged the CSA model she was using for marketing her pork and other crops to make major renovations to her small village home, adding 10 bed/bathrooms, and creating a beautiful space for weekend guests looking to get out of the crowded city for a respite.

Global Impact

For 30 years, MOSES has been creating a network of over 20,000 organic farmers, experts, consumers and advocates who have attended at least one MOSES Organic Farming Conference. This community has been at the forefront of the massive growth of organics in the U.S.

As the global farming community moves organic forward, we need to export and adapt the models we’ve developed at MOSES and within our extended community. If Communist China sees the need for reaching out for help in this, think of the needs of the developing world.

The MOSES Conference draws people from around the world, including China, and will continue to do so. But, our community also needs to send people and content in the other direction.

I’ve been in conversation with several other individuals and organizations on how we can take organic farming experts to places like China that are hungry for models and assistance in moving their organic visions forward. There’s no lack of willingness, for sure, but there is a need for resources and plans for bringing this about. If you would like to be involved in making this cultural exchange possible, contact me at john@moses-organic.org.

John Mesko is the executive director of MOSES.
Good prep keeps farm machinery functioning through winter

By Tom Manley

Winter is coming. That statement strikes fear not only in the hearts of people in the fictional Westeros, but also in farmers. We are all frantically working to check off at least a couple of the pre-winter projects we had on our lists from the spring, and wondering how we always seem to not be fully prepared for what inevitably returns every year. In our rush to batten down the hatches, it is easy to forget about the equipment we are probably using to do it. Now is a good time to consider what your machines might need to survive the winter and be ready to serve us in the spring.

Fuel Systems

The two biggest issues with diesel fuel systems this time of year are fuel blend and water in the fuel system. In the super cold tundra of the Upper Midwest, a winter fuel blend appropriate to our severe cold is absolutely necessary. Fuel dealers will have switched their supply over; but, if you have summer fuel in your tanks, it is time to treat it with a diesel anti-gel additive. I have serviced tractors and skid steers that stopped running with temps in the 40s due to gelled fuel. It can sneak right up on you those first cold days in November.

The other issue is water. Check your inline fuel filters and water traps for moisture and liquid water. Drain and replace filters as needed. An additive, like isopropyl, to capture water and move it through the system is never a bad idea. This is true for gasoline systems as well. Gasoline can go “bad” in a hurry over the winter. If a piece of equipment is being used frequently, this is less of an issue. If that old Ford only gets fired up five times a winter to perform the one task it has been relegated to, you will want to use some additive to stabilize that fuel.

Small gas equipment that won’t run all winter should have some treated fuel run through the system and the remainder drained back into a fuel can. If it will see some use, fill the tank and leave it full.

Cooling Systems

Freese plugs are intended to protect your engine from the extreme pressure of expanding water, but are not a guaranteed safeguard against damage. Use a coolant tester to verify the level of freeze protection. If in doubt, or the coolant is showing its age, drain the system and replace it.

Battery

Batteries can take a beating over the winter. Cold and infrequent use take their toll, and suddenly you can’t move feed on the coldest morning of the year. Check the fluid level and top off as needed on any serviceable/non-sealed battery.

Remove the battery and store someplace warm if the machine will not be called into service over the winter. If the piece of equipment will not be used regularly, but will see some use, disconnect the ground lead between uses to eliminate parasitic loads and sulphation. Use a low-amp trickle charger to keep it—and you—happy.

Engine Oil

If there are any concerns about quality or age, change the oil and filter. Try to get the engine up to full operating temperature every time it is used to avoid problems with condensation in the crankcase.

It is often a good idea to use an oil with a lower base viscosity. Check your manual for the recommended weight for your winter temps.

Remember that oil pressure will be very high on start-up, relief valves will be open, and it will take some time before the oil can really start to do its job. Be kind, and don’t put that engine under load until the oil is thin enough to flow. Most engines will warm up after 3–4 minutes of idling.

Hydraulic Oil

Hydraulic systems will have many of the same concerns addressed above for engine oil. Lower viscosity oils are often available and recommended for extreme cold. Don’t put cold hydraulic oil under load or you run the risk of pump failures. I have replaced many a hydraulic pump in dairy skid-steers where the operator couldn’t wait for the temp to come up before going to work. Also, filters at or well past the service interval should be changed now to avoid a bad day in January.

Miscellany

Some of the little stuff that might bite you if you don’t prep for winter include zerks, dirt, and lights. Hit all those grease zerks while it is still warm enough to displace some of the old grease. Keep the grease gun in a warm place, and lube equipment after using it, when the grease at a pivot point can flow a little.

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Threatened Organic Farm — from page 9

this was thrown at us. I’ve been advised by my medical staff that if I can hear vents or smell the smell [of the proposed hog operation] that I have to stay inside. I am a partner in this business... I run the combine. I do tillage. And you are trying to take that away from me. You don’t have the right. If you allow this hog confinement to be put here, then you are making me abandon what I love.”

In 2016 the Chicago Tribune did an exhaustive investigation into the confinement hog industry in Illinois. The article, “The price of pork: Cheap meat comes at a high cost in Illinois,” reads eerily like the ClaIr’s personal experience. Apparently, it’s a story that has been repeated over and over in Illinois: a confinement hog operation is proposed in a rural farming community. Neighboring residents raise a myriad of legitimate concerns, from environmental risks and health hazards to odor and property value depletion.

These are well-documented problems in confinement operations, and many states and counties have aggressively bolstered regulations to address them. But Illinois’ Livestock Management Facilities Act, adopted in 1996 over and amended in ’98 and ’99, has remained unchanged.

The frustration of the Loraine community comes through in the transcript of the public hearing held for County Line Swine’s proposed confinement hog operation in close proximity. The result was nothing short of catastrophic for rural community members.

November 2nd was the last day that the Illinois Department of Agriculture would accept information about County Line Swine’s proposed confinement hog operation. After 15 days of review, they will have either denied the permit, approved it, or asked for more information. Department of Agriculture would accept information. The vast majority of confinement hog operations to stop spending time outdoors. And when people live and farm in a rural area, spending time outdoors is what they do. To add insult to injury, property values are often cut in half by the establishment of a confinement hog operation in close proximity. The result is nothing short of catastrophic for rural community members.

As so many communities have experienced, it’s almost impossible for neighboring residents to block these confinement hog operations, or to get regulations strengthened. The public hearings, according to the Chicago Tribune, feel like a formality most of the time.

Unfortunately for the owners of confinement hog operations, following the letter of the law does not preclude these operations from having devastating impacts on the surrounding community. Regulations in Illinois are not strong enough to protect the surrounding environment or the health and well-being of neighboring residents. And villainizing the person proposing the confinement operation can feel like the only recourse in a desperate situation.

The smell alone causes neighbors of confinement hog operations to stop spending time outdoors. And when people live and farm in a rural area, spending time outdoors is what they do. To add insult to injury, property values are often cut in half by the establishment of a confinement hog operation in close proximity. The result is nothing short of catastrophic for rural community members.

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Call for Research Posters
The Organic Research Forum at the 2019 MOSES Conference includes a juried poster session highlighting completed and ongoing research projects related to organic agriculture. Researchers, academic faculty and staff, graduate/undergraduate students, and farmer researchers may submit a poster proposal for consideration by Dec. 14, 2018. Space is limited to 25 posters. All accepted poster presenters receive full admission to the 3-day conference. For submission details, see mosesorganic.org/orc-research-forum.

Volunteer Opportunities at MOSES Conference
The volunteer application for the 2019 MOSES Organic Farming Conference opens Nov. 29. Be part of the great “Green Force” that helps this large-scale event run smoothly. Volunteers commit 10-12 hours of work over the course of the 3-day conference, and receive discounted conference admission for just $50 plus all meals. See examples of volunteer shifts and more details at mosesorganic.org/conference/volunteer.

Scholarships for MOSES Conference
The application for scholarships to attend the 2019 MOSES Organic Farming Conference is open now through Dec. 13. Scholarship recipients pay just $50 for full conference admission (a $175 scholarship), or $30 for a one-day pass (a $100 scholarship). MOSES also provides a limited number of scholarships to the Organic University full-day classes offered Feb. 21. These scholarships cover all but $50 of the $180 class fee. See mosesorganic.org/conference/scholarships.

New MOSES Board Member
Clare Hintz just signed on for a 3-year term on the MOSES Board of Directors. Hintz owns Elsewhere Farm in Herbitz, Wis., a 40-acre permaculture farm located near the south shore of Lake Superior. She has a Ph.D. in sustainability education, which she describes as her “fallback” career in case she gets injured or needs to get out of labor-intensive farming at some point. The MOSES In Her Boots podcast recently featured Hintz talking about permaculture, farming solo, and how she got started in farming. See Episodes 40-43 at mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots-podcast.

Fearless Farm Finances Online Course
MOSES presents a Fearless Farm Finances webinar series developed with support from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Project. Farm finance experts Aimee Schomburg, Brad Sirianni, and Dona Goede share their expertise. They all work one-on-one with farmers as Farm Business Management Instructors and have developed tips after seeing many farmers wrestle with how to manage and understand their business’ financial health. The webinars cover subjects ranging from goal setting and recordkeeping system development to developing statements of income and cash flow for bankers and tax purposes. Watch the videos and complete the companion worksheets at your own pace. All materials are free and online at mosesorganic.org/fearless-farm-finances-online-course.

In Her Boots Podcast
The MOSES “In Her Boots” podcast currently features interviews with Lauren Langworthy, the program director at MOSES, who also raises sheep in a rotational grazing system, and serves on the board of the Wisconsin Farmers Union. She and host Lisa Kivirist talk about these roles and more in this 4-part series. New episodes come out every Friday. Subscribe on iTunes or Stitcher, or listen at mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots-podcast.

OGRAIN Farmer Learning Hubs
MOSES, through its OGRAIN partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is bringing together experienced organic farmers and those curious about organic production to talk about how organic works. These local “learning hubs” are on a roll in Wisconsin, where a group met for a second time last week. MOSES also is working on learning hubs in Iowa and Minnesota. To learn about future meetings, email Matt Leavitt, MOSES Organic Specialist, at matt@mosesorganic.org, or call 715-778-5775.

New NOSB Officers
The National Organic Standards Board elected new officers at the end of its meeting last week in St. Paul, Minn. NOSB Chair is Harriet Behar, who has been on the board in an environmentalists/resource conservationists seat since January 2016. Behar worked as a MOSES Organic Specialist for more than 10 years, and now works with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. NOSB Vice Chair is Steve Ela, who has been in an organic producer seat on the board since January 2017. Ela is a tree fruit grower from Colorado. Scott Rice, who has been in the certifying agent seat since January 2016, is now Board Secretary. Rice works for the Washington organic certification program.

Grant Advising
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute offers a free grants advising service to farmers and farmer groups in the Midwest. Services include help with specific federal, state and private grant proposals, periodic grant writing workshops for larger groups, and grants advising “pop-ups” at conferences. Grant advisors Martin Bailkey and Kitt Healy help applicants clarify and articulate ideas, assess which grant program might fit their needs, and help craft a high-quality proposal. For information and resources, see michealfields.org/grant-advising-resources.

Midwest Organic Pork Conference
The Iowa Organic Association hosts the Midwest Organic Pork Conference, the first U.S. conference focused on organic and natural pork production and distribution, March 8-9, 2019, in Waterloo, Iowa. See www.midwestorganicporkconference.org.

Virtual Conference for Beginning Farmers
The National Farmers Union presents a virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers Dec. 3-6, 2018. The free Growing for the Future event includes webinars, live Q&A sessions, a discussion board, an online resource center, and free giveaways— including free registration to the 2019 MOSES Conference! See nfu.org/growing-for-the-future.

OFARM Leadership
John Bobbe, OFARM’s executive director, announced recently that he’s retiring “at the close of the MOSES Conference in February.” Bobbe has been with the organic producer marketing group since 2000. He plans to continue his work to expose organic grain import fraud.

The Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) consists of a group of several cooperatives marketing organic grains for their members. Oren Holle is the organization's board president. He said the group is looking to fill the executive director position, which is flexible in terms of hours and work location. The position provides an opportunity to stand for the integrity of the organic label and the long-term economic sustainability of the organic market, Holle shared. Interested applicants should email oholle@bluevalley.net or call 785-562-7500.

Vermont Valley Community Farm News
CSA pioneers Barb and David Perkins of Vermont Valley Community Farm recently announced they’re retiring from the CSA business after 24 years, having and more than 25,000 farm shares. David, who is currently president of the MOSES Board of Directors, will continue the farm’s organic seed potato business with his son, Jesse.

FSMA Deadline
The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) deadline is Dec. 17 for producers of qualified facilities to register with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. To determine your farm’s FSMA status, see the chart at mosesorganic.org/farming/fsma-safety. This webpage also has resources to help farmers understand FSMA.
Online Data on Vegetable Production

Practical Farmers of Iowa’s new Vegetable Yield and Production Data webpage (data.practicalfarmers.org/crops) lets farmers share yield and production data.

Research Results on Organic Vegetables

The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has released two new research briefs for organic vegetable growers: “Organic Vegetable Plots,” and “Fall-Sown Cover Crops and Weed Suppression in Organic Small-Scale Vegetable Production.” These free publications are available at www.cias.wisc.edu.

Conversations on Soil Balancing

The Ohio State soil balancing team has been host- ing panel conversations about current practices and research efforts on soil balancing. The last scheduled call will be Wednesday, Dec. 12 from 12:30-2 p.m. CST. To register, see offer.osu.edu/SB-call-in.

Organic Transition Resource

The University of Minnesota has completed a website on the Principles for Transitioning to Organic. This website includes free, web-based learning modules and case studies to help farmers understand organic production. The interactive educational modules explain crop production topics, including rotation, soil fertility, and weed and pest management. The project also has several modules that explain how organic markets work and how to access them. MOSES Organic Specialists contributed to this project. See organictransition.umn.edu.

Small Grains Cost Share

Practical Farmers of Iowa has expanded its small grains cost-share support to farms in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The program reimburses farms $25/acre for planting a small grain to harvest and follow with a cover crop that has at least one legume. Farmers can enroll up to 100 acres in the program per year. See www.practicalfarmers.org/blog/sign-up-for-2019-small-grains-cost-share.

Interviews with Organic Pioneers

The National Sustainable Agriculture Oral History Archive includes 37 interviews between Ron Kroese, Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems at the University of Minnesota, and pioneers in organic and sustainable ag, including Ron and Maria Rosmann, the 2018 MOSES Organic Farmers of the Year. See www.misa.umn.edu/publications/sustainableagoralhistoryarchive.

NCAT’s New Director

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) has chosen Steve Thompson as its new executive director. Thompson has more than 30 years of experience in natural resource conservation, journal writing, and project management.

New Farming Book

University of Wisconsin Press has published Wildly Successful Farming by Land Stewardship Project’s Brian DeVore. The book tells the stories of Midwest farmers balancing profitability and food production with environmental sustainability and a passion for all things wild. It will be sold at the MOSES Conference Bookstore. It’s also online at uwpress.wisc.edu/books/3621.htm.

Consumer Guide to U.S.-Grown Grains

The Cornucopia Institute has published a 10-page guide to the issues with fraudulently labeled imports of organic soybeans and corn. The institute also has created an online “buyer’s guide” that identifies brands of organic dairy products, eggs, and poultry derived from animals that are exclusively fed U.S.-grown grains. See www.cornucopia.org/grain-buyers-guide.

Weed Management Research

Researchers at University of Wisconsin–Madison, Iowa State University, and the Rodale Institute have received a Conservation Innovation Grant through USDA-NRCS to find the best ways to control weeds in organic small-grain no-till systems. The $2.2 million, four-year project will include trials and on-farm demonstrations in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Pennsylvania.

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FARMS/LAND


Looking to rent organic farmland in southwest Iowa or southeast South Dakota. Looking for at least 100 acres or more. Already farming organically. Daniel 712-229-0161.

See additional properties for sale or rent online: mosesorganic.org/land-link-up.

FORAGES


Organic 2018 Alfalfa Hay for sale. 3x3x7 Squares - 1st and 2nd cutting. Large Round Net-Wrapped Bales - 1st and 2nd cutting. South Dakota. 605-870-5662.

For Sale: 2018 Organic Alfalfa Hay. 3x3x8 large squares of dry hay. 3x3x5% large squares of wrapped baleage. MOSA certified. Wonenw, WI. Transportation available. 608-553-1136.

For Sale: 2018 Organic Wheat or Barley straw. MOSA certified. 3x3x8 large square bales. Wonenw, WI. Transportation available. 608-553-1136.


GRAINS


JOBS

Dairy Jobs: Grazing/organic farmers in MN, MO, NY, PA, VT and WI are hiring fulltime employees to work and gain skills needed to become dairy farm managers and owners. Visit https://www.dga-national.org/

Field/greenhouse & post harvest crew positions available for 2019. Focus is our 25 acre organic vegetable production. Possible expansion into future seasons. Fulltime from Apr-Nov w/possible part-time work outside of the regular season. Housing available, fair wage, great team! Katie@prairiethfarm.com (309) 212-3104.

See additional job opportunities: mosesorganic.org/job-postings.

LIVESTOCK

For sale: Beef cattle. 100% grass-fed, certified organic Pinzgauer open heifers $1800 (5 animals), Charolais open heifers $1700 (5 animals), certified organic Pinzgauer feeder cattle 400-600# and 600-800# $1.65/lb obo. Pinzgauer open heifers $1800 (5 animals), Certified organic Pinzgauer open heifers $1800 (5 animals), Charolais open heifers $1800 (5 animals).

For sale: Tempered, insulated, double-pane glass. Large panes for sunroomos, solar homes, ag buildings, greenhouses or ??? One hundred fifty thousand sold since 1979. 32” x 74” x 1 double-pane only $49.00. We will be closing or selling Arctic Glass in 12 months. If you need glass now would be a good time! Arctic Glass, www.kissourglass.com, 715-639-3762 or joseph4249@gmail.com.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Organic Seed Garlic. German Red hardneck, organic Michigan-grown past two seasons. Big cloves cleaned and ready. $8.00/lb. Delivery available. Near Kalamazoo. Call or text Matt at 810-701-6522. understoryfarm@gmail.com

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ORGANIC FISH FERTILIZER 15-1-1, 100% dry water soluble, 5-7 times more nutritious than liquid fish. Will not clog drip irrigation. One lb. 5 lb. or 55 lb. packaging, can be shipped UPS. Frommelt Ag Service, Greeley, IA. 563-920-3674.

For Sale: Tempered, insulated, double-pane glass. Large panes for sunrooms, solar homes, agricultural buildings, greenhouses or ??? One hundred fifty thousand sold since 1979. 32” x 74” x 1 double-pane only $49.00. We will be closing or selling Arctic Glass in 12 months. If you need glass now would be a good time! Arctic Glass, www.kissourglass.com, 715-639-3762 or joseph4249@gmail.com.

Nature Safe Fertilizer. We manufacture our own OMRI listed Amino Acid 15-0-1, a dry powder water soluble fertilizer. Use in your sprayer, drip irrigation or pivot. Sold by the ton in 55 lb. bags, super sacks. www.natur safec.com 616-566-0307.

Organic Onion Plants, Sedona, Redwing, Candy, White Wing, yellow and red Capollini, and Leeks. Other varieties available upon request. $7 per 100, 1000 plant minimum, certified by MOSA. Glen 563-379-3951 gitsfesh@gmail.com

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Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training
December 9 | 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. | $25 | Morris, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. 651-539-3648.

MFA: CSA Contracts & Land Meeting
November 29 | 9:45 – 8 p.m. | $20 | Location TBD
Discuss market contracts for the following reason, the Farm Operations budget, and program/policy changes for the following year. 651-433-3676

Raise the Bottom Line: Making More, Keeping More
November 30 & December 1 | 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Albert Lea, Minn.
Albert Lea Seed’s annual Open House with a focus on profitable practices for farmers. Best seed, best practices, best returns. Call 800-352-5247 to learn more.

Growing for the Future Online Conference
December 3 – 6 | Free | Online
The National Farmers Union presents a virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers. 202-554-1600

MINNESOTA FSMA PSR Grower Training
December 5 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | $25 | Hutchinson, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

The Savanna Institute’s Perennial Farm Gathering
December 7 – 8 | All day | $ | Madison, WI
Topics include tree crops, silvopasture, perennial agriculture, and natural resource conservation. Call 608-448-6432.

Ranching for Profit: The 3 Secrets for Increasing Profit December 11 | Redwood Falls, Minn.
SFA and multiple co-sponsors are hosting a workshop series with nationally known sustainable agriculture expert Dave Pratt. 844-922-5573

Ranching for Profit: The In’s and Out’s of Cell Grazing December 12 | St. Cloud, Minn.
SFA and multiple co-sponsors are hosting a workshop series with nationally known sustainable agriculture expert Dave Pratt. 844-922-5573

Soil Balancing Call-in Conversation December 12 | 12:30 – 2 p.m. | Call-In
The Ohio State Soil Balancing team will host a public conversation about current beliefs, practices, and research efforts related to soil balancing. Call 330-202-3528 to learn more.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training December 12 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | $25 | Brooklyn Park, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training December 12 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | $25 | Saint Paul, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Ranching for Profit: The 3 Secrets for Increasing Profit December 17 | Thief River Falls, Minn.
SFA and multiple co-sponsors are hosting a workshop series with nationally known sustainable agriculture expert Dave Pratt. 844-922-5573

Ranching for Profit: The 3 Secrets for Increasing Profit December 14 | Flashwood, Minn.
SFA and multiple co-sponsors are hosting a workshop series with nationally known sustainable agriculture expert Dave Pratt. 844-922-5573

MOFFA Organic Intensive 2019 January 12 | 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. | $30 | Lansing, Mich.
MOFFA Organic Intensives is a day-long, concentrated learning experience for farmers. Call 248-262-6806 for topics.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training January 16 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | $25 | Saint Cloud, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that grow, pack, harvest and/or hold produce and are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training January 23 | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | $25 | Mankato, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that grow, pack, harvest and/or hold produce and are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Contact Event: Deb Jakubek, Contact Organizations: Wisconsin Farmers Union | 715.500.2130

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training January 28 | Cloquet, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that grow, pack, harvest and/or hold produce and are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Webinar: Recognizing and Managing Farm Family Stress January 29 | 6:30 p.m. | Online
Women landowners, farmers, and Ag retailers can learn more about agronomy and related agricultural topics through distance-learning sessions. Call 315-231-2830 to learn more.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training January 29 | 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. | $25 | Saint Charles, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. Call 651-539-3648.

Webinar: Energy and Perennial Crops in Iowa February 6 | 7:30 p.m. | Online
Women landowners, farmers, and Ag retailers can learn more about agronomy and related agricultural topics through distance-learning sessions. Call 315-231-2830 to learn more.

Food Forest and Polyculture Design February 16 & 17 | All Day | $35 | Minneapolis, Minn.
Lead by Dan Hays of PRI-USA, this two-day course will focus on the permaculture design process and drawing skills within that context.

Minnesota FSMA PSR Grower Training February 20 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | $25 | Andover, Minn.
Fruit and vegetable farms that are not exempt must attend FSMA training. 651-539-3648.

Acres U.S.A. Conference Dec. 4 – 7 | Louisville, Ky
Young Farmers Conference at Stone Barns Center Dec. 5 & 6 | Tarrytown, N.Y.
Savanna Institute Annual Gathering Dec. 7 – 8 | Madison, Wis.
Conservation Tillage Conference Jan. 8 – 11 | Indianapolis, Ind.
Minnesota Organic Conference Jan. 10 – 11 | St. Cloud, Minn.
Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference Jan. 17 – 19 | Ames, Iowa
EcoFarm Conference Jan. 23 – 26 | Pacific Grove, Calif.
NPSAS Winter Conference Jan. 24 – 26 | Fargo, ND
Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Conference Jan. 27 – 29 | Wisconsin Dells, Wis.
Organic Vegetable Production Conference Feb. 1 – 2 | Madison, Wis.
Sustainable Farming Association Annual Conference Feb. 9 | St. Joseph, Minn.
MOSES Organic Farming Conference Feb. 11 – 17 | La Crosse, Wis.
Midwest Organic Pork Conference March 8 – 9 | Waterloo, Iowa
Midwest Soil Health Summit March 12 | St. Peter, Minn.

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