Consumer interest in organic products drives ‘banner year’

By Maggie Michal

Consumers are eating more organic food and using more organic products than ever before. The U.S. organic sector posted a banner year in 2019, with organic sales in the food and non-food markets totaling a record $55.1 billion, up a solid 5% from the previous year, according to the 2020 Organic Industry Survey released in June by the Organic Trade Association.

Sales of organic food and non-food products shat-
tered major benchmarks and posted new records— the organic market is now more than double its size just 10 years ago. Last year saw increases in every organic category and every part of the store. From organic produce and organic meat, organic pasta sauce and organic spices, to organic house bedding and mattresses, consumers were buying more organic.

Organic food sales hit $40.1 billion, breaking through the $50 billion mark for the first time. Organic food products can be found now throughout traditional food retail outlets and are gaining ground in the online and delivery markets. As the organic market has matured and penetrated more deeply into the main-stream, the pace of its growth has slowed, but the 4.6% growth in 2019 was still double the 2.3% growth reported for the overall food market.

Organic non-food sales totaled just over $5 billion, up a strong 9.2%, and easily outpacing the growth rate of just 3% for total non-food sales. As more consum-
ers become aware of the benefits of organic and the positive impact organic can have on their health, they are increasingly including organic non-food items in their overall purchases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>2019 SALES</th>
<th>2019 GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic Food</td>
<td>50,065</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Non-Food</td>
<td>5,013</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Organic</td>
<td>55,078</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic this year —and its enormous impact on our everyday lives— has had dramatic consequences for the organic sector in 2020. Never before has the food we provide our families been more important, and consumers have turned to the trusted Organic label.

“Our 2020 survey looks at organic sales in 2019 before the coronavirus outbreak, and it shows that consumers were increasingly seeking out the Organic label to feed their families the healthiest food possible. The pandemic has only increased our desire for clean, healthy food,” said Laura Batcha, CEO and Executive Director of the Organic Trade Association. “Our normal lives were brought to a screeching halt by the coronavirus. The commitments to our health and the Organic label has always resided at the intersection of health and safety, and we expect that commitment to strengthen as we all get through these unsettled times.”

Agriculture Resilience Act intends to build resilient farming, food systems

By Cristel Zoebisch

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulner-
abilities of our current food and farming systems to sudden disruptions. Long term, the foremost disruption we face is climate change. Farmers and ranchers work at the frontlines of climate change, as they face increasingly extreme droughts, floods, and temperatures, shifting crop yields, and changing pest and disease pressures. As stewards of our land and natural resources, they are also in a unique position to mitigate climate change and build resilience by sequestering carbon through best management prac-
tices for soil health, crop and livestock integration, and agroforestry.

Federal farm policy needs to support farmers and ranchers by equipping them with new and expanded tools and resources to mitigate the effects of climate change and transition to more biologically diverse farming systems that can better withstand disruptions.

Fortunately, far-sighted Members of Congress have joined the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), MOSES, and many other organizations to take the first steps in building more resilient food and farming systems. Earlier this year, the Agricultural Resilience Act (ARA) was introduced by Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME) to start the process of bringing federal policy in line with the goal of transforming American agriculture to better rebound and adapt to disruptions, including climate change.

The ARA is the first comprehensive piece of leg-
islation introduced in Congress addressing climate change and agriculture. It contains six primary build-
ing blocks to support farmers and ranchers in address-
ing climate change by:

- Building soil health
- Increasing investment in agricultural research
- Supporting pasture-based livestock
- Reducing food waste
- Promoting on-farm renewable energy
- Ensuring farmland preservation and viability

This article summarizes the first three NSAC blog posts in a series covering various provisions in the ARA and will be followed by another article in the next Organic Broadcaster with more details.

ARA Goals

The first blog covered the goals section of the ARA, and it was co-authored by Jim Worstell, Coordinator of the International Resilience Project and Delta Land & Community in Arkansas.

The ARA establishes a set of aggressive but real-
istic climate goals for agriculture, starting with the overarching goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. agriculture no later than 2040. Each of the ARA’s building blocks is summarized below with corresponding goals set by the legislation.

Soil Health

Healthy soils that are not susceptible to erosion are fundamental to resilient agriculture. However, inten-
sive row-crop agriculture has caused the loss of an aver-
age of 30 to 50 percent of carbon and organic matter in

U.S. agricultural soils. Farmers can restore most of that lost carbon and help reverse climate change through diverse crop rotations, cover cropping, conservation tillage, and other practices to build soil health.

Thus, the ARA sets a national goal of increasing cover crop acres to at least 50 percent of cropland acres by 2040, with at least 75 percent covered by crops, cover crops, or residue year-round by 2040.

Farmland Preservation and Viability

As urbanization demands increase, agricultural land is at risk. Converting agricultural land to devel-

oment negatively impacts our ability to reduce green-

ehouse gas emissions and store carbon in our soils, and it could also pose a threat to our food security in the long run.

The ARA sets the goal of eliminating the conver-
sion of agricultural land and grassland by 2040, pro-
tecting one of our most valuable natural resources and one of the best tools we have to sequester carbon and build resilience in food and farming—our soil.

Pasture-Based Livestock

Most animals in the U.S. rarely see a pasture, living instead in large confinement facilities that generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Adaptive graz-
ing methods improve soils while reducing methane emissions. Moving toward carefully managed grazing-
based systems and re-integrating livestock with crossing systems will lead to better climate mitigation results. Methane emissions produced by confinement facilities can also be reduced through the conversion of wet manure handling and storage systems to dry storage and composting.

The ARA sets goals to establish advanced grazing-

management on 100 percent of grazing land, reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to feeding of rumi-
nants by at least 50 percent, increase crop-livestock integration by at least 100 percent over 2017 levels, and convert at least two-thirds of wet manure handling and storage to alternative management by 2040.
MOSES educates, inspires, and empowers farmers to thrive in a sustainable, organic system of agriculture.
Guest Essay: Radical garden spaces and the social lives of seeds

By Christian Keeve

In early June, amongst a historic spate of uprisings in an already unprecedented year, a man in Seattle started a garden. In an “edible act of resistance,” Marcus Henderson transplanted basil into what had until recently been a Seattle public park. A community garden quickly arose as part of the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP), a claiming of urban space that for a few weeks provided a small glimpse of abolition in practice. In the end, it proved ephemeral, but what is an uprising but a germination of things once buried? An opportunity for radical speculation about worlds that may be brought into being? In an interview with Crosscut (crosscut.com/2020/06/seattles-chaz-organizing-community-garden-takes-root), Henderson further explained the particular salience of food, farming, and land for Black folks historically cut out of ownership, access to, and knowledge of growing spaces.

Food has always been part of the Black radical tradition. In recent years, scholars and activists including Monica White, Leah Penniman, Ashante Reese, and Ashley Gripper have brought to light the urgency and possibility of contemporary food justice work and its historical lineage in building connections to the land, feeding the people, and forging, as White urges in Freedom Farmers, “collective agency and community resilience” through “everyday resistance.” That quotidian resistance often comes in the form of bolstering community health, building local and regional networks of food sovereignty in the face of industrial food systems, and building a material nutritional base to support the work of radical movements. In my own work, I think through the role of seeds as the material basis for the reproduction not only of food movements, but also as a way of finding place, historically, ecologically, and geographically.

The radical potential of a garden invokes the inter-related politics of human and nonhuman labor. When talking about farming, I look to Monica White’s expansive definition, attending to all who work the land, be it a backyard hobby space, a community garden, or a production operation. Keeping an inclusive approach to those who grow all manner of things allows for a focus on the work that does not necessarily fit into large, systemic analyses of agriculture. Much of the work done with and against each other to bring the site of a garden into being.

It is the last two that reveal historical resonances at work. In addition to material things that humans leave behind, bits of twine, lost trellis clips, broken stakes, there is also the bank of live seed and root mass hanging out in the soil. This could be seed produced by wild plants that grew in or around the site in previous seasons, as well as that produced by cultivated plants whose seed was lost in small amounts during harvest and processing. A kind of natural archive, these are volunteers, popping up of their own accord as a reminder of what grew in seasons past, in places where they were not intended, and often not wanted; many facets of the past making themselves known and laboring in the garden with everyone else.

Thinking at the intersections of culture and ecology, seeds and their keepers, what is freedom supposed to taste like? How is it supposed to look? What growth habits does it display as it establishes itself defiantly in the dirt?

In the essay “Fugitive Seeds” (edgeeffects.net/fugitive-seeds), I explored the importance of alternative forms of ecological and historical narratives for Black Americans, notably through practices of seedkeeping, which entails the preservation and growing out of open-pollinated and culturally significant heirloom varieties, otherwise known as ancestral foods. These counter-narratives and alternative archives are wrapped up in an environmental history that includes the soil, the people, and what they grew together. In Trace, Laurent Savoy works through these “countless landscapes of memory” to reveal co-existing histories that go on to labor in the sites that get produced and reproduced.

In putting these histories into practice through seed work, one may find oneself disoriented by a spatial organization that feels antithetical to the farm work of more traditional vegetable production; fruits that appear strange at first glance, or crops living out their full life cycles and dying dramatic, slow deaths. I explored this last summer through an apprenticeship with TrueLove Seeds, a Philadelphia-based seed company that works for racial and economic justice through seedkeeping, profit sharing, and rematriation of Indigenous varieties.

Spaces like this, being seed farms, are primarily concerned with the material ways that plants reproduce themselves into new generations, meaning they are strategically negotiating the relationships between subspecies during the growing season to prevent cross-pollination. With heirloom tomatoes, whose flower structure tends to be more open to pollinators than newer, commercial varieties, one must make sure they’re kept apart by at least 50 feet apart to prevent the trade of genetic info through bees, wasps, beetles, and bumbling humans. Corn, a tall and promiscuous plant, is wind pollinated, necessitating at least 700 feet of genetic isolation, which one may or may not have on their small farm or backyard plot, so one would consequently stagger their grow outs through the season, each corn bed reaching sexual maturity at different points in time. In contrast, lettuce strongly prefers to pollinate with itself, and potatoes, which reproduce clonally, are largely uninterested in engaging with this cacophony of reproductive activity.

Isolation, spatially and temporally, is fundamental to the survival and success of a seed operation. It ensures that lines maintain some semblance of genetic consistency and will breed true in the following season, which translates into sensory consistency for the those buying and growing the seeds. The Mikado tomato has a specific confluence of appearance, taste, smell, texture, and growth habit that makes it identifiable as a Mikado, determining what someone expects when growing and eating it.

When plants produce an off-type that doesn’t match what is expected, for example if the Mikado is cat faced or doubled, the politics of humans, defiant and defiant against any rules imposed or guidelines suggested. The off-type shifts between novelty and nuisance as one must make a decision about if, and to what extent, they want that fruit’s genetic material to impact, and possibly destabilize the rest of the population of that heirloom variety. From the lens of in-situ agrobiodiversity conservation, it is essential for an heirloom seed grower to produce seed that breeds true, producing fruit that looks, tastes, and behaves as
“How has the pandemic impacted your farm?”

Answer by Organic Specialist Kevin Mahalka

As an organic dairy farmer with the MOSES on-farm specialist team, I have talked to many farmers about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their farming operations and the precautions they are taking to ensure the health and safety of their families, farmworkers, and customers. We all recognize the importance of being vigilant in our farm practices—what we produce and how we produce it is even more vital now to the people who rely on us for food. Here is a brief look at how the pandemic has impacted my own family farm.

Like everyone else, we needed to learn about the virus and the guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the state department of agriculture. Farming was designated an “essential business.” Once we found out the seriousness of this pandemic, we emphasized the rules to everyone in our farm family, everyone coming to the farm, and anyone working on the farm, as well as encouraging others to follow distance guidelines, wear masks and gloves, and disinfect surfaces.

When the Wisconsin governor instituted a “Safer at Home” order, we shifted to online preservations, limited personal interactions, and reduced social trips to an absolute necessity with protective gear in use. Fortunately, working outside as most farmers do turns out to be a healthy practice.

We had a family member who needed pacemaker surgery during the first week of the lockdown. This situation had to be handled carefully with consulting doctors and taking every preventive measure into account. Some health issues cannot wait, and in talking to the medical professionals, the local system is under massive financial challenge with the sharp decrease in visits and elective procedures. We went forward with the surgery, confident that our hospital was following public health guidelines.

We have witnessed much disruption in the livestock markets due to infections of workers at various meat processing facilities because of close working conditions and coronavirus spread. In much of the food supply chain, direct sales from grocery and markets have increased for consumers. There were weeks when they were not picking up cattle; bull calf markets have been terrible for a few years now. We have spoken to political leaders asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers and leadership asking for some action to train butchers.

In the larger conventional markets that process some livestock, disruptions have been severe at times. Sickness in large processing plants has made national news, extending from the farm to the consumer.

Organic Prairie and Premier Livestock in Wisconsin both buy organic beef and, for the most part, have been a steady market. They are looking for beef from their members or suppliers.

In the larger conventional markets that process some livestock, disruptions have been severe at times. Sickness in large processing plants has made national headlines and led to some shortages of meat and price increases for consumers. There were weeks when they were not picking up cattle; bull calf markets have been terrible for a few years now. We have spoken to political leadership asking for some action to train butchers and encourage a move to more small- and mid-size processing and butcher shops.

MOSES Organic Specialists answer your questions about organic production and certification.

CALL: Organic Answer Line 888-90-MOSES (906-6737)
SUBMIT: Click “Ask a Specialist” button at mosesorganic.org/ask.
READ: Browse answers to questions at mosesorganic.org/ask.
DOWNLOAD: Fact Sheets at mosesorganic.org/organic-fact-sheets.

Our farm has had to change shipping dates on livestock a few times this year. This has led to increased feeding costs and costs to raise these livestock while we search for markets. For Direct Market custom beef processing we are waiting about two months longer than normal, and we scheduled all we could ahead of time. Many smaller processors are now fully booked for months ahead. We are limiting direct sales to smaller amounts to serve our regular customers well.

As a member of the Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative, I have been impressed with their COVID response and the massive effort of co-op employees to work from home and institute an array of safe processing and handling procedures, adaptations that are a lot of extra work throughout a very complex supply chain extending from the farm to the consumer. The pandemic has highlighted the connection to food. We in the sustainable organic community have been proving the link between a healthy diet and good health for decades. We all play a role in promoting good health and helping people survive this pandemic.
Resilience Boot Camp offers place for women farmers to build capacity

By Lisa Kivirist

As organic farmers, we prioritize resilience when it comes to our plants. A hardy and strong summer squash seedling will grow into a strong plant, bear an abundant harvest, and be in a better position to fight off squash bugs. Knowing this, we take great care in nurturing that zucchini to help it be as robust and resilient as it can be.

Too often, though, we don’t take the same approach to that most important asset on our farm: ourselves. Especially as women farmers, with sometimes competing priorities of child and elder care, fostering our own resilience often takes a priority back-seat, especially during the busy summer season.

To help women farmers build resiliency, the MOSES In Her Boots project is offering “Resilience Boot Camp,” an 8-week campaign focused on different aspects of physical and mental health, self-care, communicating—topics women have asked for at previous In Her Boots events.

“With COVID-19 causing us to pivot from our planned on-farm MOSES events, including our In Her Boots workshops, we saw an opportunity to create these new resources for women farmers,” said Stephanie Coffman, MOSES Presentation Coordinator.

For over 10 years, the award-winning MOSES In Her Boots project has brought a variety of resources and networking opportunities to support women farmers, educators, and entrepreneurs. The new Resilience Boot Camp enables us to go further into supporting that most important asset—we ourselves—and to bring a diversity of new voices and perspectives into this collaborative virtual space.

The Resilience Boot Camp runs through July and August and includes a weekly webinar focused on a different theme of mental health and self-care, including gratitude, communication, and ergonomics, and featuring “from the field” tips and ideas shared by our women farmer community. The weekly In Her Boots podcast, now the longest-running podcast dedicated to the voices of women in sustainable agriculture, will showcase personal advice and insights on these topics from women farmers and educators.

Additionally, two webinars dig deeper into these topics. The first webinar on July 28 features Charlotte Smith of 3 Cow Marketing. She’s a dairy farmer in Oregon and founder of a marketing firm focused on helping farmers. She will share ideas on setting priorities and time management for women. A second webinar on August 11 showcases the cooperative learning and mentorship between women farmers. This will be led by Denise O’Brien, an organic farmer from Iowa and founder of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN).

All of these resources are available free online from MOSES at mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots/events. If you aren’t already getting the Boot Camp weekly enews, sign up at mosesorganic.org/sign-up and indicate that you’re interested in receiving news about In Her Boots programming.

Curating Resilience

“In the winter of 2019, I was too often exhausted and ending up sick trying to manage it all by myself on the farm. It took me years to realize it’s not only okay but necessary to retrain myself and realize it’s not only okay but necessary to take the time to truly appreciate the beauty of the place, taking an evening walk around the farm, for example, can go a long way. "Getting into the habit of growing gratitude, communication, and ergonomics, and prioritizing your life, you need to prioritize yourself in the process," Smith offered. “Our thoughts create our feelings which drive our actions. “This topic of resilience is particularly important for women as it is the foundation of everything we do,” added Charlotte Smith who will be hosting the July 28 webinar on time and priority management. Smith brings her personal story and experience to the topic. “Early in my farming career, 30 years ago at age 30, I was too often exhausted and ending up sick trying to manage it all by myself on the farm. It took me years to retrain myself and realize it’s not only okay but necessary to set boundaries and ask for help. “This summer’s Resilience Boot Camp, like all the In Her Boots Programming, is rooted in the research on women’s preferred learning styles and that women learn best in a collaborative, learning circle environment. On that note, here are some starter tips and perspectives on resilience from women farmers:

1. Think Differently

“A first step in developing resilience is to shift your mindset to one where you realize you have an obligation to care for yourself and that in order to best support your farm business, family, and all the other elements of your life you need to prioritize yourself in the process,” Smith offered. “Our thoughts create our feelings which drive our actions.”

During the July 28 webinar, Smith will go more into this concept from a gratitude lens, touching on ways we can make the time to more fully appreciate the farm lives and livelihood we create. “Too often, when we look inside and outside our farm, we can see is the never-ending to-do list of unfinished projects,” she said. “Instead, by developing the mental space to simply be present without the need to feel productive can be a real asset.” Getting into the habit of taking an evening walk around the farm, for example, to simply observe and relish the beauty of the place, can go a long way.

2. Set Boundaries, Manage Expectations

Different life phases call for shifting priorities, especially during those years of raising young kids on the farm. But within that is also accepting the reality to let go of that expectation to do it all and instead establish pragmatic expectations for the different stages and roles of your life.

“With COVID-19 causing us to pivot from our planned on-farm MOSES events, including our In Her Boots workshops, we saw an opportunity to create these new resources for women farmers,” said Stephanie Coffman, MOSES Presentation Coordinator.

For over 10 years, the award-winning MOSES In Her Boots project has brought a variety of resources and networking opportunities to support women farmers, educators, and entrepreneurs. The new Resilience Boot Camp enables us to go further into supporting that most important asset—we ourselves—and to bring a diversity of new voices and perspectives into this collaborative virtual space.

The Resilience Boot Camp runs through July and August and includes a weekly webinar focused on a different theme of mental health and self-care, including gratitude, communication, and ergonomics, and featuring “from the field” tips and ideas shared by our women farmer community. The weekly In Her Boots podcast, now the longest-running podcast dedicated to the voices of women in sustainable agriculture, will showcase personal advice and insights on these topics from women farmers and educators.

Additionally, two webinars dig deeper into these topics. The first webinar on July 28 features Charlotte Smith of 3 Cow Marketing. She’s a dairy farmer in Oregon and founder of a marketing firm focused on helping farmers. She will share ideas on setting priorities and time management for women. A second webinar on August 11 showcases the cooperative learning and mentorship between women farmers. This will be led by Denise O’Brien, an organic farmer from Iowa and founder of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN).

All of these resources are available free online from MOSES at mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots/events. If you aren’t already getting the Boot Camp weekly enews, sign up at mosesorganic.org/sign-up and indicate that you’re interested in receiving news about In Her Boots programming.

Curating Resilience

“In the winter of 2019, I was too often exhausted and ending up sick trying to manage it all by myself on the farm. It took me years to realize it’s not only okay but necessary to retrain myself and realize it’s not only okay but necessary to take the time to truly appreciate the beauty of the place, taking an evening walk around the farm, for example, can go a long way. “Getting into the habit of growing gratitude, communication, and ergonomics, and prioritizing your life, you need to prioritize yourself in the process,” Smith offered. “Our thoughts create our feelings which drive our actions. “This topic of resilience is particularly important for women as it is the foundation of everything we do,” added Charlotte Smith who will be hosting the July 28 webinar on time and priority management. Smith brings her personal story and experience to the topic. “Early in my farming career, 30 years ago at age 30, I was too often exhausted and ending up sick trying to manage it all by myself on the farm. It took me years to retrain myself and realize it’s not only okay but necessary to set boundaries and ask for help. “This summer’s Resilience Boot Camp, like all the In Her Boots Programming, is rooted in the research on women’s preferred learning styles and that women learn best in a collaborative, learning circle environment. On that note, here are some starter tips and perspectives on resilience from women farmers:

1. Think Differently

“A first step in developing resilience is to shift your mindset to one where you realize you have an obligation to care for yourself and that in order to best support your farm business, family, and all the other elements of your life you need to prioritize yourself in the process,” Smith offered. “Our thoughts create our feelings which drive our actions.”

During the July 28 webinar, Smith will go more into this concept from a gratitude lens, touching on ways we can make the time to more fully appreciate the farm lives and livelihood we create. “Too often, when we look inside and around our farm, we can see is the never-ending to-do list of unfinished projects,” she said. “Instead, by developing the mental space to simply be present without the need to feel productive can be a real asset.” Getting into the habit of taking an evening walk around the farm, for example, to simply observe and relish the beauty of the place, can go a long way.

2. Set Boundaries, Manage Expectations

Different life phases call for shifting priorities, especially during those years of raising young kids on the farm. But within that is also accepting the reality to let go of that expectation to do it all and instead establish pragmatic expectations for the different stages and roles of your life.
Organic produce maintains its top position. Say “organic” to food shoppers and the first things many of us think of are organic apples and strawberries, organic carrots and lettuce. In other words, produce. Organic generally still matters most to us when we're shopping in the fresh produce aisles. Organic fruit and vegetable sales in 2019 were up nearly 5%, hitting $118 billion, as the category continues to be the star of the organic sector, and often the starting point for organic food buying habits.

Millennials and younger generations have grown up with organic, and remain the growth drivers for this category. Organic produce makes up almost a third of all organic food sales, and organic fruits and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned, and dried, have now captured 15% of the overall fruit and vegetable market in this country.

Organic dairy is working its way out of oversupply. Growth was slow for organic dairy in 2019, but late in the year, the category slowly started to move away from the period of oversupply of skim milk and not enough butterfat that hampered growth in 2017 and 2018. Overall, the $6.6 billion category grew at a rate of almost 2%. Organic dairy is holding its own and growing faster than the conventional market, with the overall dairy category growing only 0.2%. Organic dairy and eggs accounted for just over 8% of the total dairy and eggs market.

Organic meat and poultry are showing robust growth. While organic meat, poultry, and fish remained the smallest organic food category in 2019 with $4.4 billion in sales, the segment saw almost 10% growth—the highest growth of any organic food category. Organic poultry remained the organic protein of choice, and the $865 million poultry market made up more than half of the sales for the organic meat, poultry, and seafood category.

Home cooks are spicing up meals with organic condiments. What to have with your organic meat? Organic ketchup, of course, or maybe organic chipotle or curry sauce for the more adventurous. Although it is the second smallest organic food category, the products in the organic condiment category saw some of the biggest growth. Sales of organic ethnic sauces—curry, chipotle, sriracha, Korean BBQ—reached $77 million in 2019, and organic ketchup sales also spiked in 2019 to $57 million, up almost 10%, thanks to healthier living and meal preparation.

COVID-19 Impacts

The coronavirus pandemic has caused major upheavals in our lives and our work, and in the organic sector. The country is slowly “reopening” now, but for more than three months, we’ve been stay-at-home households. The food we’re purchasing and preparing for our families is not just a source of nutrition, but of comfort and security, and consumers want the cleanest, highest quality food and products for their families in these stressful times.

Organic produce sales, after jumping by more than 50% in the early days of kitchen stocking, were up more than 20% in the spring of 2020. Other categories experiencing softer growth have been seeing big boosts in demand: the run on groceries meant organic milk was in high demand, for example, and sales of organic eggs skyrocketed. Packaged and frozen organic foods saw double-digit growth as consumers upped at-home meal preparation.

While there were certain growth trajectories taking shape going into 2020, the onset of COVID-19 turned the organic food marketplace upside down. Prior to 2020, the organic market has been growing steadily year over year. The U.S. economy has been battered by the pandemic, and experts say there are a few ways that could play out for organic. Because people are price-sensitive, there could be a slowdown in the growth of organic sales. Or, because people are increasingly aware of their health and looking for cleaner products, they may be willing to invest in premium products.

Influenced by COVID, all of the staple categories, from dairy and eggs, to breads, pastas, rice and grains and baking supplies, such as flour and baking yeast, are expected to see increased growth in 2020, provided supply can meet demand. In the non-food organic market, organic vitamins and immunity-related products are expected to see strong growth, as are organic household products.

“It’s hard to know what’s ahead of us, but consumers will continue to trust in and depend on the Organic label,” said the Organic Trade Association’s Batcha. “Organic producers and processors—indeed the entire organic supply chain—have been working around the clock through this difficult time to keep our stores filled with healthy, toxic-free, and sustainably produced organic food and products. Organic is going to be there for the consumer.”

Maggie McNeil is Director of Media Relations with the Organic Trade Association, the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 9,000 organic businesses across 50 states.
Mhonpaj Lee joins MOSES organic specialist team

By Bailey Webster

I caught up with Mhonpaj Lee, MOSES’ newest on-farm organic specialist, on a 20-minute phone call in which she talked a mile a minute. My furiously typing fingers could barely keep up and, by the end, my head was spinning with her many accomplishments and the roles she juggles simultaneously. Mhonpaj (pronounced môn-PAH) is a mother of five, realtor, farmer, farm advocate, conference organizer, Land Access Navigator, interpreter, and all-around badass.

Relevant to her new role at MOSES, she has a lifetime of experience growing vegetables with her parents, May and Chue Lee, who are Hmong immigrants. As with many Hmong families in Minnesota, farming was a way of life for the Lee family when Mhonpaj was growing up. Mhonpaj laughed when she says she “didn’t really like farming as a kid.” After graduating from high school, she attended Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, where she majored in political science. Living in the dorm and eating cafeteria food, she gained 15 pounds in the first semester. “My stomach was in food shock,” she said. “I wasn’t used to eating pizza and pasta.” At home, her mom always cooked traditional Hmong foods with lots of fresh vegetables and herbs.

After that first semester, she realized she needed to make some changes to stay healthy. She switched to eating mostly from the salad bar and became a “gym rat.” She also added a second major in health education and health fitness. This was the first of several wake-up calls about the unhealthy aspects of American culture that eventually led her back to farming.

In addition to the shock of such a dramatic dietary change, she started to experience anxiety. “My spirit was depressed,” Mhonpaj said of her college days. With the addition of her second major, she was taking a lot of difficult biology classes, and while she was doing the addition of her second major, she was taking a lot.

“ok academically, the stress was having negative health impacts. I knew, based on her cultural upbringing and college experience, that so much more goes into the health of a human being than the pills they pop every morning. It was a predictable cycle brought on by their inability to lift themselves out of poverty. Becoming more and more distressed by the stories she was hearing, Mhonpaj started having panic attacks. She herself ended up in the hospital for an EKG because she thought she was having a heart attack. She knew that something had to give. She left her work at HCMC feeling that she was unable to continue to support a system that just wasn’t treating the whole person. Having come full circle, Mhonpaj now wanted to help families get out of poverty. She believed that the root of the problem for so many families was financial, so she and her husband started teaching families how to improve their financial situation. They helped families look at their finances holistically, with a cultural sensitivity that took into account partnership dynamics and personalities.

Through it all, she had kept her connection with her parents’ farming operation, which is named Mhonpaj’s Garden. In addition to helping with day-to-day operations, she took on responsibility for the marketing and administrative side of the business. Fifteen years ago, Mhonpaj’s Garden transitioned to organic production, becoming the first Hmong certified organic farm in Minnesota. They received their organic certification as part of Big River Farms.

As the group of Hmong people have been through unspeakable horrors, which makes their vibrant presence in Minnesota a testament to their resilience and tenacity as a community. They are largely responsible for the vital farmers market scene in the Twin Cities metro area, and Mhonpaj’s family is a prime example.

Learning about what her family and her people had been through, Mhonpaj was inspired to advocate for her community. She found a calling in activism. When she graduated from Gustavus, she took an Americorps internship with Hennepin County. This eventually led to a 6-year career as a medical interpreter.

At the Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC), she worked in the trauma center. There, she helped people of more than 70 different languages and dialects navigate the healthcare system. This training allowed her to develop a deep understanding of people of various cultures and has informed all of her consecutive work.

During her time as a medical interpreter, her favorite part of the hospital to work in was the alternative health department. She became increasingly frustrated by conventional doctors quickly prescribing medications for every ailment her clients had. She knew, based on her cultural upbringing and college experience, that so much more goes into the health of a human being than the pills they pop every morning.

Mhonpaj was seeing unhealthy patterns playing out in many of her clients’ lives. Trapped in a cycle of poverty, parents would be at work all day, leaving their children to fend for themselves when they got home from school. Families increasingly abandoned traditional foods and lifestyles in exchange for more convenient options. It was a predictable cycle brought on by their inability to lift themselves out of poverty.

 singing the “Secret War.” When the war ended, the Laotian communist government launched a genocide against the Hmong people, in retaliation for assisting the U.S. government. Many Hmong families fled Laos in the late 1970s and early 80s to seek refuge in the United States and elsewhere around the globe.

As a group, the Hmong people have become more and more engaged by the U.S. government.

Mhonpaj Lee, pictured here with her mother, May Lee, has joined the MOSES on-farm organic specialist team.

Photo submitted
Agriculture Resilience Act — from page 1

On-Farm Renewable Energy
Another way to increase resilience in agriculture is to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy while increasing energy efficiency and generating on-farm renewable energy. Farms can reduce costs by increasing efficiency and create new income streams by using the sun and wind to generate energy. The ARA proposes tripling the level of on-farm renewable energy production and installing and managing on-farm renewable energy infrastructure in a way that does not adversely impact farmland, natural resources, or food production.

Food Waste
Food waste has long been ubiquitous in our food system. The ARA provisions, such as making composting a conservation practice eligible for support under federal conservation programs, creating a grant program to support large-scale food-waste-to-energy projects, and supporting schools to reduce food waste, create a forward path to reducing food waste across our food supply chain by at least 75 percent by 2040.

Agricultural Research
None of the above goals can be reached without significantly expanding investment in research on climate change adaptation and mitigation—the ARA building blocks—and related topics to accelerate progress toward net-zero emissions by 2040. Federal funding for food and agriculture research has stagnated for decades, hindering our ability to innovate in ways that improve farm viability, rural vitality, public health, and food security. The ARA sets a goal to quadruple total federal funding for food and agriculture research and extension by 2040.

Carbon Markets and Ecosystem Services

The second blog post focused on provisions on ecosystem service markets and was co-authored by Tara Ritter, Senior Program Associate at the Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy. Carbon markets have become a popular recommendation for climate policy proposals, but many questions remain regarding measurements, payment levels, beneficiaries, and permanence.

It is essential to fully understand the implications of carbon and ecosystem service markets before supporting them through direct public benefits. The ARA does not include a direct proposal to sanction or provide public subsidies for such markets. Instead, it directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put in place the infrastructure that could serve as the basis for paying farmers for ecosystem services, including carbon storage, via public programs or private initiatives.

By implementing conservation practices on their land, farmers and ranchers provide ecosystem services such as clean water, improved air quality, and carbon sequestration. Ecosystem service markets aim to pay those carrying out ecosystem services to generate “credits,” which can then be sold to buyers (individuals or companies) interested in reducing their environmental footprint. Carbon markets and water-quality trading programs are two common venues of ecosystem service markets operating currently.

The ARA would set up the infrastructure for farmers and ranchers to engage in ecosystem service programs or markets by:

- Establishing a National Soil Health and Greenhouse Gas Federal Advisory Committee
- Directing the Secretary of Agriculture to evaluate and issue guidance on existing outcomes-based measurement systems for greenhouse gas emissions and soil carbon sequestration
- Creating a nationwide soil health and agricultural greenhouse gas emissions inventory
- Establishing criteria for payments for ecosystem services that promote soil carbon sequestration or reduce greenhouse gas emissions

The ARA approaches ecosystem service markets with caution due to the many unknowns. Carbon markets to-date have not resulted in overall greenhouse gas emissions reductions and may not be the best option to incentivize farmers to implement climate-friendly practices.

Soil carbon storage is imperative—any carbon sequestered in the soil can be released with a change in land management or through severe weather events. Additionally, although soil carbon measurement is advancing, the tools required to measure soil carbon to the degree of accuracy needed to issue reliable offsets do not currently exist.

Furthermore, offset projects designed to meet the needs of carbon markets tend to work best for large-scale farms that have enough land to implement practices that would generate a profit from accruing carbon credits. Without the infrastructure and investment in carbon markets could contribute to further consolidation of agricultural land. Some of the biggest backers of carbon markets are agribusiness companies and other major corporations looking to purchase carbon credits as a way to sidestep reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions. Without the ability to guarantee accurate measurements and permanancy of soil carbon storage, offsets can allow companies to greenwash their operations, without net carbon reductions.

Our country’s farmland has the capacity to store immense amounts of carbon, but more clarity is needed on which farming techniques sequester carbon, how much, and how they sequester, and whether such practices can be carried out over long enough periods of time to provide net climate benefits.

The ARA directs USDA to further research ecosystem service markets and put infrastructure in place to facilitate farmers’ participation in public programs or private markets. Without the infrastructure and clear standards, we risk overestimating carbon farming’s contribution to our efforts in combating climate change. Without appropriate protections and oversight, farmers and ranchers may not be the ultimate beneficiaries of ecosystem service markets.

Alternative Manure Management
The third blog in the series focused on alternative manure management. It was co-authored by Jeanne Merrill, Policy Director of the California Climate and Agriculture Network.

Managing and storing manure is a critical issue for any livestock system. Roughly half of agriculture’s greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. comes from manure management and enteric fermentation (the belches from livestock). The ARA looks to reduce potential methane emissions in livestock operations through a new program that incentivizes the transition from current wet manure handling and its significant environmental footprint to more climate-friendly alternatives.

Based on California’s Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), the ARA would create a federal program to support dry manure management and pasture-based strategies to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximize environmental benefits. Examples of eligible practices in the new program include converting from flush to scrape systems, solid separation technologies, open solar drying or composting of manure, conversion of dairy and livestock operations to pasture-based management, and compost-bedded-pack barns. Moving away from storing manure in wet, anaerobic conditions to dry handling and storage reduces methane emissions, runoff, and other environmental impacts.

The program would provide 90 percent cost share (including up to 50 percent in advance for equipment and materials), totaling up to $750,000 in any 5-year period. The bill would also provide an option for cluster applications for centralized composting facilities as well as mandatory funding of $1 billion a year for the program beginning in fiscal year 2021.

The California version of AMMP has become a popular program among the state’s dairy and livestock producers, where demand for the program continues to exceed state funding levels. Since 2017, the program has funded over 100 projects, totaling $63 million. Among the most popular practices are install- ing solids separation and converting to compost-bedded-pack barns. Two-thirds of AMMP program recipients are now composting their manure.

What Comes Next
The ARA is a first step toward aligning policy with a transformation of our food system to make it less susceptible to disturbances, whether from a virus, climate change, or other disruptions. It sets a path forward for agriculture to thrive and be part of the solution to the climate crisis.

There are multiple benefits of a climate-friendly agricultural system, including healthier soils, clean water, wildlife habitat, and farm resilience to drought and flooding. Research shows that integrated systems of practices based on sound agroecological principles have the greatest potential to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, sequester and stabilize soil carbon, and achieve a resilient agricultural system.

Policy solutions need to acknowledge the critical role of agriculture in addressing climate change and empower farmers to implement practices that sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide environmental benefits—helping to build resilience into our food and farming systems.

Cristel Zoebeis is the Climate Policy Associate at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in partnership with the Organic Farming Research Foundation. Both organizations advocate for federal policy that advances sustainable and organic agriculture.

Resources: Agriculture Resilience Act
Congresswoman Pingree Introduces ARA (news release)
Federal Register H.R.5861
bit.ly/AgResilienceAct
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition policy paper on agriculture and climate change
bit.ly/NSAConAg-Climate

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition blog: A Plea for Food and Agriculture Research Funding
https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/plea-food-and-agriculture-research-funding

Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy: Don’t Believe the Carbon Market Hype
https://iatp.org/Carbon-Market-Hype

MOSA ORGANIC
Practical, reliable, and friendly organic certification services
MOSAORGANIC.ORG  |  608-637-2526
Researchers focus on oats, wheat varieties adapted to organic production

By Melanie Caffe-Trelm and Jonathan Kleinjian

Corn and soybeans are, by far, the most dominant crops in the Northern Great Plains of the United States. In South Dakota alone, corn and soybean planted acres jumped from around 4 million in 1950 to close to 11 million in 2018, while the area planted to small grains declined from around 8.2 million acres in 1950 to 2.2 million in 2018.

Over time, the limitations of a cropping system with limited diversity (i.e., corn and soybeans) have become more and more evident. The lack of biodiversity has impacted soil health and beneficial insects. The systemic use of a limited number of herbicides has impacted soil health and beneficial insects. The use of chemical inputs to mitigate problems associated with limited diversity (i.e., corn and soybeans) has led to the development of herbicide-resistant weeds. The use of chemical inputs to mitigate problems caused by the lack of diversity has had a negative impact on both the environment and our health and has begun to affect the economic returns of producers.

The importance of using crop rotations as a tool to manage weeds and pests is well understood by organic farmers. Highly diverse crop rotations have been shown to improve soil health by favoring soil microorganisms and beneficial insects, decrease the prevalence of insect pests, and interrupt weed and disease cycles. The addition of a small grains crop into a corn and soybean rotation has been shown to provide these types of benefits. This is not new knowledge; an extension publication from South Dakota State University dating from 1928 reports that “a rotation including corn, oats, and a legume provides excellent yield.” Crop rotations tend more diverse at that time and South Dakota producers planted more small grains. For example, 76 million bushels of oats were produced annually in the state compared to 7.8 million bushels in 2018.

Small Grains Characteristics

Oats are grown for forage and grain production. The oat grain is highly nutritious and can be used for either human consumption or livestock feed. Oats contain higher levels of protein, oil and beta-glucan than other cereal grains. Beta-glucan is a soluble fiber which has been shown to reduce risks of heart disease, lower cholesterol, and reduce risks of type 2 diabetes. The protein in oats has a balanced amino acid composition. In addition, oats contain antioxidants that have been associated with various health benefits.

Producers appreciate the fact that oats require relatively low inputs. The oat plant’s fibrous root system is desirable to improve soil structure. Oats provide a quick-growing, weed-suppressing biomass. In organic systems, oats are a great nurse crop for alfalfa. Due to the grain’s soil-building and weed-suppression characteristics, oats are commonly used as a cover crop.

Winter wheat provides a cover in the fall and early spring that can help control weeds. Winter crops possess a few advantages over spring cereals that make them highly desirable in crop rotations. These advantages include higher water use efficiency, greater ability to compete with weeds, reduced soil erosion, and the ability for producers to spread out their workload. In addition, because the grain filling occurs earlier in the season (hopefully at lower temperatures), an increase in yield potential may be expected for fall-sown cereals in comparison to spring-sown cereals.

Spring wheat is grown primarily for the high protein content of its grain. It produces flour with desirable functionality for making bread, as well as a wide range of other food products. Domestic demand for organic spring wheat, oats, and winter wheat has been increasing as consumers are becoming more aware of and more interested in products made with organically produced ingredients.

Breeding Organic Varieties

Organic farmers require small grains varieties that are well-adapted to their production system, able to resist potential pathogens and pests, and have near-term economic benefits.

Corn, a legume provides excellent yield.” Crop rotations tend more diverse at that time and South Dakota producers planted more small grains. For example, 76 million bushels of oats were produced annually in the state compared to 7.8 million bushels in 2018.
Insects are an essential link in Earth’s ecology. While a small number of pest insects tend to capture most of a farmer’s attention, the overwhelming majority of insects are not only beneficial, but also critical to our survival. For example, insect pollinators are essential to the production of more than two-thirds of the world’s crop species and contribute $20 billion annually to U.S. agriculture. Similarly, despite chemical-based pest management, beneficial (predatory and parasitoid) insects provide at least $4.5 billion in free pest management to U.S. farms annually. Beyond agricultural economics, pollinators play a critical role in maintaining the diversity and function of our natural ecosystems.

Despite these (and numerous other) contributions, many insects are in serious decline. Habitat loss and degradation, as well as pesticide use and climate change, are driving the loss of insects to the point that one-quarter of North American bumble bee species are currently facing extinction and even some of our most common species, such as the monarch butterfly, have experienced declines of roughly 80% over the past 20 years.

To help reverse these declines, The Xerces Society has been working with farmers across Iowa to create a network of on-farm demonstration sites that showcase a wide variety of pollinator habitat options and installation methods. This project, supported by a Conservation Innovation Grant from the Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), seeks to not only boost local insect populations on each individual farm, but also to design projects and test ideas that other farmers in the community and across the Midwest can learn from. Many of the participating farms are serving as sites for field days and workshops, where, already, hundreds of farmers and community members have had the opportunity to learn about habitat establishment methods, maintenance, organic weed control, plant identification, pesticide drift protection, edible/saleable native plants, and more.

Happily, “pollinator habitat” often does much more than support insects. Our farmer partners consistently emphasize the value of insect habitat in addressing other common concerns on the farm, such as soil health, nutrient management, water quality, farm aesthetics, farmer quality of life, and wildlife conservation more broadly.

When it comes to habitat on farms, there truly is something for everyone, ranging from relatively simple annual flowering cover crops and cut-flower gardens, to more complicated orchard understory plantings and native prairie restorations. A few of the habitat options we’ve been focusing on with our Iowa farm partners are highlighted below.

### Beetle Banks

Beetle banks are long, linear strips of native plants integrated into crop fields to provide shelter for predatory ground beetles and other insects. These creatures, in turn, help support natural pest control and pollination on farms. Historically more common in Great Britain, this practice has recently been gaining momentum in the U.S. Upper Midwest.

Beetle banks are especially well-suited for organic farms since these cropping systems are often highly reliant on beneficial insects for pest control, yet also often utilize regular cultivation for weed control. Establishing strips of habitat directly within or adjacent to crop fields offers ground-dwelling predators a critical refuge from soil disturbance, and promotes the movement of pollinators and predators into crop fields where their pollination and pest control services are most needed.

Beetle banks are typically composed primarily of native bunch grasses (such as little bluestem, side-oats grama, and prairie junegrass) but may also include a wildflower component. For our Iowa farms, we included wildflowers in all of our strips at a rate of about 40% wildflowers, 60% grass. Of course, this ratio could change depending on what insects you are trying to support and the resources you have on your farm. For example, if your farm has limited nectar and pollen supplies, you may wish to have a stronger wildflower component but still include grasses for structure, nesting habitat, and to help the planting resist invasion from grassy weeds.

When selecting plants, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with the natural plants in your area and use this knowledge, along with soil conditions at your site, to guide your plant selection. For the flowering component, try to include representatives from as many different plant families and genera as possible in order to support a wider range of insects, including bees and butterflies that may be specialized to feed only on certain plants. Check the bloom-time of the species in your selection to make sure you have at least a few species blooming in early spring, late spring, and onward throughout the growing season.

Strip length and width will vary depending on the cropping system, space available, and other factors. On vegetable farms, we have been planting strips as narrow as 4 to 8 feet; on grain farms, as wide as 25 feet or more. Several farmers have expressed a preference for placing strips on the edge of a crop field rather than the interior so that one edge can be mowed to manage weeds while the other edge is up against crops.

Although large native habitat plantings are best established from seed, smaller plantings can be established using plugs (small plants). The plug approach requires less weed control in advance of the planting (since the plants will have a better competitive advantage over the weeds) and in the early years of establishment (spot-weeding rather than regular mowing). In addition, plug plantings establish far more quickly than seed plantings, often flowering in the first growing season or certainly by the second. The downside of starting with plugs is, of course, higher cost. However, most vegetable growers are well-equipped to grow plant starts; they can grow out at least some native plant species fairly easily and purchase harder-to-grow plugs from a local native plant nursery.

Here is just a short list of a few wildflowers, grasses, and sedges that are native to much of the Midwest and relatively easy to grow out for use as transplants:

**WILDFLOWERS**

- *Achillea millefolium* (yarrow)*
- *Agastache spp.* (hyssop)*
- *Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed)*
- *Aster spp.* (New England aster and others)*
- *Astragalus canadensis* (Canada milkvetch)*
- *Coreopsis spp.* (coneflower)*
- *Dalea spp.* (prairie clover)*
- *Desmodium canadense* (Canada tick trefoil)*
- *Echinacea pallida* (echinacea)*
- *Epilobium spp.* (boneset)
Beneficial Insect Habitat — from previous page

Eutrochium spp. (Joe Pye weed)
Eryngium yuccifolium (rattlesnake master)
Helianthus spp. (native sunflowers)
Helenium autumnale (sneezeweed)*
Heliospermum helianthoides (early sunflower)
Monarda spp. (bee balm, spotted bee balm)*
Pyranthemum spp. (mountain mint)*
Solidago speciosa (showy goldenrod and others)
Silphium spp. (compass plant, cup plant, etc.)
Tradescantia spp. (spiderwort)
Verbena spp. (vervain)
Vernonia spp. (crownweed)
Zizia aurea (golden Alexanders)

GRASSES and SEDGES:
Andropogon gerardii (big bluestem)*
Bouteloua curtipendula (side-oats grama)*
Bouteloua hirsuta (hairy grama)*
Bromus kahmi (prairie brome)*
Carex brevier (pains oval sedge)
Carex vulpinoides (fox sedge)
Elymus spp. (wild rye and bottlebrush grass)*
Eriophorum vaginatum (sweet grass)*
Schizachyrium scoparium (little bluestem)*
Sorghastrum nutans (Indian grass) *
Sporobolus spp. (prairie dropseed and others)

*Seed does not require any treatment (e.g., cold moist stratification) to break dormancy.

If you are new to growing native plugs, it’s worth noting that native plant starts tend to grow much more slowly and irregularly compared to vegetable starts. For example, germination may be staggered over several weeks, and it can take many months to get from a seed to a plant that is ready to be transplanted. However, this longer growing time typically isn’t a problem, since native plugs can be out-planted at any time during the growing season, as long as they are watered at the time of planting and receive additional watering as needed. On that note, some farmers prefer to place drip irrigation on their strip plantings during the first growing season as the plants are getting established.

As far as plant spacing, we typically plant plugs on one-foot centers, and try to design the planting to have smaller-stature species clustered together in patches so they do not get out-competed by taller species. For example, if you were planting a 100-foot linear strip planting that is five feet (and five rows) wide, you could start by dividing your larger and smaller plants into two groups and then plant 10 linear feet (50 plants) of taller grasses and wildflowers followed by 10 linear feet of shorter plants, and so on, throughout the planting for a “wave-like” effect when the plants reach maturity.

At Grow: Johnson County Farm in Iowa City, the beeke banks were designed to match the standard bed-width used on the farm in order to utilize equipment regularly used for vegetable production. A tractor-mounted water-wheel transplanter was used to streamline the process of transplanting. Weed control during the first growing season was also streamlined at this farm, using tractor-mounted finger weeders designed for in-row cultivation. After the first growing season, native plants are typically filled in enough to not require anything more than occasional spot-weeding by hand.

Site preparation is one of the most important and inadequately addressed components for successfully installing pollinator habitat. Pre-planting weed control is especially critical when starting from seed, but also can be important when starting from plugs, depending on the weed pressure. As all farmers know, not all weeds are created equal, and some can be particularly trying. In the Midwest, we typically plan on at least one growing season of organic weed control prior to planting native perennial habitat—an up front investment that really pays off in the long-term success of the planting. The Xerces guidebook Organic Site Preparation for Wildflower Establishment (xerces.org/publications/guidelines/organic-site-preparation-for-wildflower-establishment) outlines a variety of organic methods for weed control, including pros and cons of each method, step-by-step instructions, and regional timelines and checklists for preparing both small and large sites.

The following list highlights a few of the many native flowering shrubs with high value to pollinators. Almost all of these plants have fruit or other parts that can also be eaten by humans and offer a great opportunity for us to diversify our own diets.

NATIVE FLOWERING SHRUBS:
Amelanchier spp. (Juneberry)
Amorpha spp. (leadplant and false indigo)
Aronia melanocarpa (aronia) Ceanothus americanus (New Jersey tea)
Corokia opulifolia (dogwood)
Crataegus crus-galli (cockspur hawthorn)
Prunus americana (wild plum)
Ribes spp. (currants)
Rosaceae spp. (roses)
Rubus spp. (raspberries and blackberries)
Salix spp. (willow)
Sambucus spp. (elderberry)
Spiraea spp. (meadowsweet)
Viburnum dentatum (nannyberry)
Viburnum opulus var. americanum (highbush cranberry)

The Xerces Society team plants buckwheat to smother weeds prior to planting insect habitat. This planting from 2019 set seed (unintentional) and came back as a very dense ground cover shortly after the plugs had been planted. In the 2020 growing season, the buckwheat seed-set from the previous season was not problematic; in fact, it served as a “nurse crop” to hold other more challenging weeds at bay while the native plugs were getting established. 

Photo by Sarah Foitz Jordan

Lately, our go-to methods for site prep are smother-cropping (growing a densely planted cover crop—typically buckwheat—to smother out existing vegetation), and solarization (smothering existing vegetation with clear, UV-stable 6 m high-tunnel plastic). At River Root Farm in Decorah, we had great luck using a new (to us) approach of stale seed bedding (using irrigation and silage tarps to encourage the germination and subsequent death of weed seeds). On another farm (Nature Haven Farm in Garnavillo), we are continuing to explore the use of pigs for rooting up difficult weeds prior to planting.

Native Flowering Hedgegrows

Native flowering shrub hedgerows are another favorite habitat option on farms. We typically recommend hedgerows when spring bloom is limited on the far, edible/saleable products are desired, and/or weed pressure is such that it would be very difficult to get smaller wildflower plants established. Native shrubs not only support wildlife with abundant food (nectar, pollen, foliage, fruits), but also provide nesting and overwintering shelter in their branches, stems, older trunks, and undisturbed soil at the ground level. Hedgegrows also can be used to provide visual screening from roads or adjacent fields, reduce wind and dust, capture snow, intercept pollution, and more. These living fences simultaneously beautify farms and provide supplies to make a variety of products, such as jams, juices, syrups, tinctures, teas, wicker for basket weaving, branches for floral arrangements, and other products.
Mhonpaj Lee — from page 7

a nonprofit immigrant farm incubator program in Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota. Big River Farms is dedicated to supporting immigrant and refugee farmers by developing their skills to farm organically. Mhonpaj supports her parents with their organic certification paperwork. Mhonpaj’s mom, May— an activist herself— didn’t stop at getting her own farm certified. She has been engaged as an educator at Big River Farms, supporting other immigrant farmers and screening new farmers to incubate with the organization. She also volunteers her time as a Ramsey County Master Gardener. Through her work with her parents, Mhonpaj also began working for Big River Farms as a farm specialist. For 10 years, she has assisted with their food shelf and helped organize the annual Emerging Farmers program. For 10 years, she has assisted with their food shelf and helped organize the annual Emerging Farmers program.

As parents of five young kids, she and her husband began to dream of owning a farm and living a less hectic lifestyle. Mhonpaj researched property, with the help of a realtor. She looked at many properties but never purchased anything. “Eventually I was fired by my realtor,” she laughed. Mhonpaj took it upon herself to figure out how to buy land herself, which led to her becoming a full-time realtor. Ever the activist, she now helps others buy land herself, which led to her becoming a full-time real estate agent. She looked at many properties but never purchased anything. Eventually I was fired by my realtor. Ever the activist, she now helps others buy land herself, which led to her becoming a full-time real estate agent. She looked at many properties but never purchased anything. Eventually I was fired by my realtor. Ever the activist, she now helps others buy land herself, which led to her becoming a full-time real estate agent.

Mhonpaj and her husband are still looking for the right farm for their own family, and have recently decided to take the leap and sell their house in the city to finance their dream. She will be leaving full-time work as a realtor to focus on a better quality of life for her family and putting more of her energy towards living sustainably. When MOSES approached Mhonpaj about joining its on-farm organic specialist team, she took some time to think about the job before realizing it was a no-brainer. While she acknowledges that she’s not an “organic pro” yet, she already spends countless hours connecting people with resources and helping them figure out how to turn their dreams into reality. As a cultural bridge between the immigrant farming community and local agricultural institutions, she’s constantly taking calls about soil fertility, crop quality, land access, and financial management. She’s an expert at figuring out what resources people need and how to help them access them. Taking the job with MOSES is a way to formalize work she has already been doing for a while.

Mhonpaj’s unwavering commitment to helping others achieve their dreams (and identifying the practical steps to help them get there) will undoubtedly be a major asset to MOSES.

For help with your farming dreams or vegetable production questions, contact Mhonpaj through the Organic Answer Line (888–90-MOSES) or email mohonpajlee@mosesorganic.org. Bailey Webster writes about farming issues from her farm in Prescott, Wis. She also is an Organic Certification Specialist at MCA.

Christian Keeve is a geographer finishing up their masters at the University of Wisconsin and starting a doctorate at the University of Kentucky. They are on Twitter as @christiankeeve.

It should. This is an economic imperative for the seed producer as well as a cultural imperative for someone trying to maintain cultural history and ancestral memory through ecologically messy heirloom populations. Thinking at the intersections of culture and ecology, seeds and their keepers, what is freedom supposed to taste like? How is it supposed to look? What growth habits does it display as it establishes itself deftly in the dirt? Is it not what you expected? Do you work around it? Or do you realize that it always had a place in your tiny adorable farm, waiting patiently in the soil for the right moment. We’re in a moment of worlds being made and unmade, new sites and new forms of relation coming into being through collective and interdependent labor.

This growing season, I’m working on another sort of collective and ad hoc project started with two colleagues, Rue Genger, a potato researcher, and Yusuf Bin-Bella, a chef specializing in Afro-culinary. The Trade Roots Afro-Culinary Diaspora Gardens Project seeks to craft an experiment station of sorts at multiple sites in Madison, Wisconsin, growing out heirloom varieties from the Black Diaspora, whether the seeds were brought over to the Americas, co-opted from other foodways, or bred on this continent through the labor of generations of Black farmers. The short-term goal is getting food to people who need it. The long-term goals include keeping and distributing the seeds year after year, adapting these mainly warm climate crops to southern Wisconsin, and maybe even breeding a landrace okra.

Although the human labor was driven with a clear mission in mind, the nonhumans had other ideas: a row of potatoes from last season made themselves known and quickly bushes right next to the col- lards; we interplanted tomatoes and fescue/alea among the volunteer asparagus and its prolific rhizomes, providing a spatial baseline for the okra, celosia, and dandelions; the sunflower that popped up in the middle of the Garden Egg beds is one of many volunteers that we welcome, as well as the milkweed, purslane, and dandelions; and the anise hyssop, Thai basil, pak choi, eggplant, field pumpkins and several tomato starts were given to us by generous humans we couldn’t refuse, mixed in amongst the mustard, fish peppers, black-eyed peas, sorghum, and sweet potatoes. It can make one nervous to see the full complexity of life beyond the order that one tries to impose. To realize, finally, that you are only one facet of interlocking eco- systems, shifting day by day, season by season. This isn’t only to say that the ecological politics of garden spaces can provide exciting and urgent connections to human politics, but also that the ecological potential of any growing space, human and nonhuman, living or not, is inextricable from the social and political formations that nourish, sustain, hold memories, and bring new worlds into being. Garden politics have much to tell us about the radical potential of collective labor, and vice versa, not just by planting the seeds, but by keeping them.

Bailey Webster writes about farming issues from her farm in Prescott, Wis. She also is an Organic Certification Specialist at MCA.

Christian Keeve is a geographer finishing up their masters at the University of Wisconsin and starting a doctorate at the University of Kentucky. They are on Twitter as @christiankeeve.

Mhonpaj Lee — from page 7

a nonprofit immigrant farm incubator program in Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota. Big River Farms is dedicated to supporting immigrant and refugee farmers by developing their skills to farm organically. Mhonpaj supports her parents with their organic certification paperwork. Mhonpaj’s mom, May—an activist herself—didn’t stop at getting her own farm certified. She has been engaged as an educator at Big River Farms, supporting other immigrant farmers and screening new farmers to incubate with the organization. She also volunteers her time as a Ramsey County Master Gardener.

Through her work with her parents, Mhonpaj also began working for Big River Farms as a farm specialist. For 10 years, she has assisted with their food shelf program, supporting immigrant and refugee farmers, and helped organize the annual Emerging Farmers Conference, which is put on by the Minnesota Food Association (the umbrella organization of Big River Farms).

At the same time, Mhonpaj was again looking for more balance. Like any true activist, she was spreading herself too thin between all of the things she was passionate about, and her family was feeling the strain. As parents of five young kids, she and her husband began to dream of owning a farm and living a less hectic lifestyle. Mhonpaj researched property, with the help of a realtor. She looked at many properties but never purchased anything. “Eventually I was fired by my realtor,” she laughed.

Mhonpaj took it upon herself to figure out how to buy land herself, which led to her becoming a full-time realtor. Ever the activist, she now helps others (particularly immigrants with limited English) to access land through her real estate work. She also has a contract position with Renewing the Countryside as a Land Access Navigator, helping farmers to pursue their dream of farming and being on the land. Mhonpaj and her husband are still looking for the right farm for their own family, and have recently decided to take the leap and sell their house in the city to finance their dream. She will be leaving full-time work as a realtor to focus on a better quality of life for her family and putting more of her energy towards living sustainably.

When MOSES approached Mhonpaj about joining its on-farm organic specialist team, she took some time to think about the job before realizing it was a no-brainer. While she acknowledges that she’s not an “organic pro” yet, she already spends countless hours connecting people with resources and helping them figure out how to turn their dreams into reality. As a cultural bridge between the immigrant farming community and local agricultural institutions, she’s constantly taking calls about soil fertility, crop quality, land access, and financial management. She’s an expert at figuring out what resources people need and how to help them access them. Taking the job with MOSES is a way to formalize work she has already been doing for a while.

Mhonpaj’s unwavering commitment to helping others achieve their dreams (and identifying the practical steps to help them get there) will undoubtedly be a major asset to MOSES.

For help with your farming dreams or vegetable production questions, contact Mhonpaj through the Organic Answer Line (888–90-MOSES) or email mohonpajlee@mosesorganic.org.

Bailey Webster writes about farming issues from her farm in Prescott, Wis. She also is an Organic Certification Specialist at MCA.

Christian Keeve is a geographer finishing up their masters at the University of Wisconsin and starting a doctorate at the University of Kentucky. They are on Twitter as @christiankeeve.
Benchmarking project offers organic farmers reduced tuition for state farm business management programs

By Joleen Hadrich & Pauline Van Norden

The number of certified organic farms has increased by 55 percent from 2011 to 2016 in the U.S. (USDA-NASS, 2012; 2017). This statistic includes all organic production—vegetables, fruit, row crops, and livestock. In the Upper Midwest, organic production of row crops, forages, and dairy has experienced even greater growth. For example, certified organic corn production has increased by 165% in Minnesota. Similarly, certified organic alfalfa production has increased by 184% in Minnesota, 156% in North Dakota, and 336% in Wisconsin (USDA-NASS, 2012; 2017). Soybeans, wheat, and dairy production continue to increase in the Upper Midwest over the same time period.

Despite this large growth, organic producers have had few economic resources available to assist with enterprise analysis, cash flow planning, projected profitability statements, and farm management decisions. To meet those needs, the University of Minnesota is leading a multi-year, multi-state organic benchmarking effort in partnership with state-level farm business management (FBM) programs to collect and analyze organic financial data. Through this multi-state effort, organic farmers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota can receive a 25-50% cost-share for farm business management participation. Funding for this benchmarking effort is provided through the USDA-Organic Research and Extension Initiative Program (2019-51300-30484) for 2019-2022.

The organic benchmarking cost-share program creates the opportunity for certified organic producers to participate in an FBM program at a reduced tuition rate now through 2022. Organic producers are eligible if they have an organic dairy farm or raise any of the following organic crops: alfalfa, corn grain, corn silage, hay/haylage, soybeans, or wheat.

Farmers enrolled in an FBM program reap a number of benefits, including:

• Working one-on-one with a financial expert to enhance management and financial capacity on their organic farm;
• Individualized organic benchmarking reports for their farm;
• Improved communication with lenders and other agricultural professionals that support their operation;
• 50% cost-share for new FBM farms and 25% cost-share for existing FBM farms.

Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin FBM programs contribute data to FINBIN (finbin.umn.edu), the national database for farm financial data. All organic data submitted through this cost-share effort will be included in FINBIN and used in an aggregate form to provide regional benchmark reports and build Extension programming and curriculum regarding the financial stability of organic dairy and crop production.

Right now, the benchmarking program needs additional farms to meet the minimum number needed for an aggregate benchmark to be generated and reported on FINBIN. Each participating farm will receive individualized benchmark reports, financial analysis, and cash flow reports working with their FBM instructor.

An example of an organic dairy farm FINBIN benchmark report is available at finbin.umn.edu/Output/724665.pdf.

Learn more about the organic benchmarking cost share program at agcentric.org/organic/farming/resources. To learn more about the FBM program in Minnesota, contact Bethany Halverson (Bethany.halverson@clcmn.edu); in Wisconsin, contact Brad Sirianni (SirianniB@westerntc.edu); in North Dakota, contact Jason Fewell (jason.fewell@ndscs.edu).

For questions about the USDA-OREI grant (2019-51300-30484) or contributing data to FINBIN, contact: Joleen Hadrich (jhadrich@umn.edu) or Pauline Van Norden (pvannard@umn.edu).
Resilience Boot Camp — from page 5

“Setting clear boundaries proved to be an important part of my farming journey, which I learned the hard way,” said Sheri Doyel, owner of Tiny Tempest Farm in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. “I wanted to do everything 100%, from running my farm business, which I had all kinds of ideas for, along with being involved with my kids’ school stuff and my off-farm job, which I also loved, along with my other family roles. It took a couple seasons of crazy-making when I was overtired, running ragged, and easily frustrated that I recognized that I could not pursue every idea I had and to reduce my expectations,” Doyel explained. “Especially when it comes to the farm business where I was always developing more ideas and seeing new opportunities, I needed to realize I could not pursue all of them and that was totally OK and to focus on my most important things.”

3. Break Things Down
“It’s easy to feel completely overwhelmed with everything that needs to be done on the farm, which can cause us to just stare at that to-do list and feel crushed before we start,” echoed Smith. “When you feel like you have too much to do, break the cycle and prioritize and identify the three key things that must be done that day.”

Smith suggested taking it a step further and looking at that list of three things and asking if you can let one of the things go. Does it really need to be done? Also, identify one thing that can be delegated to others.

“When prioritizing, remember to keep the farm bottom line top of mind and that you have an obligation to yourself to focus on your farm’s profitability in order to be around a year from now.” Smith sets weekly time every Sunday to plan her week, including blocking out time strictly focused on marketing her business.

4. Prioritize Body Care
Remember to take care of that most important tool: your own body. This is a particular challenge for women as most farm tools and equipment are not ergonomically designed for female bodies. Stay tuned for an In Her Boots podcast episode as part of our Resilience Boot Camp with the women behind Green Heron Tools and innovatively creating new tools designed specifically for women. We’ll talk about everything from how to properly lift that 50-pound bag of feed (hint: break it down into two 25-pound loads) and how to avoid doing too many repetitive tasks.

“I find 30 minutes of yoga stretches every morning makes a huge positive influence on my farm work the rest of the day,” added O’Brien. “Now that I just turned 70, I find those stretches even more important and am grateful I have more time to be able to do that daily. But even for women juggling young kids and busy schedules, just a few stretches go a long way and serve as a reminder to care for our bodies.”

5. Connect with Others
“When I’m feeling overwhelmed with everything that needs to happen on the farm, I find stepping back and doing something to support others keeps me grounded,” offered Noreen Thomas of Doubting Thomas Farm in Moorhead, Minnesota, where she and her family grow organic wheat, grains, and beans. Thomas suggests something as simple as doing something nice for a neighbor—sharing some of her products like her oats—goes a long way. “It’s all about surrounding ourselves with hope and light versus darkness.”

Thomas also regularly connects through organizing various events and gatherings for women farmers in her community. She has an event planned this September to tour a women-led commercial kitchen, a spot with space so social distancing and safe practices can be used and still bring women together.

We’ll continue the conversations brought up in our Resilience Boot Camp podcast episodes and enews through our In Her Boots Facebook Group. If you haven’t joined the group yet, now’s your chance! Go to www.facebook.com/groups/MOSESRRWP. You’ll need a Facebook account. (You can create one just to get access to groups like this.)

Lisa Kivirist founded and coordinates the MOSES In Her Boots project. She is the author of Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers and Homemade for Sale. Reach her at lisa@mosesorganic.org.

Beneficial Insect Habitat — from page 11

As always, be sure to choose plants that match your soil moisture levels and other site conditions. For more information on native hedgerows and the process for getting them established, see our article in the May/June 2016 issue of the Organic Broadcaster (online at mosesorganic.org/hedgerows).

Farmer Partners
We are currently seeking farmers in western Wisconsin (especially the Southwest and Driftless regions) who may be interested in creating or enhancing habitat on their farms. For more details, email sarah.soltz-jordan@xerces.org.

Additionally, the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service offers two programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), that could help fund your habitat projects. Contact your local NRCS field office (see nrcregional.gov) to ask about opportunities.

The Iowa farmers who participated in this project include: Helgeson Farms in Lake Mills, Grinnell Heritage Farm in Grinnell, Genuine Faux Farm in Triplps, Blue Gate Farm in Chariton, Mustard Seed Community Farm in Ames, Mugge Family Farm in Sutherland, Smart Farm in St. Charles, Scattered Farm and School in West Branch, Grow Johnson County Farm in Iowa City, Partridge Family Farm in Wall Lake, River Root Farm in Decorah, Rose Farm in Norwalk, and Nature Haven Farm in Garnavillo.

Sarah Foltz Jordan works for The Xerces Society as the Senior Pollinator Habitat Restoration Specialist for the Great Lakes Region. Eric Lee-Mäder co-directs the Xerces’ pollinator program. Sarah Nizzi is a Xerces-NRCS Partner Biologist in Iowa, focused on pollinator conservation on agricultural land.

“Michael can resist a Buffalo Cultivator”

Norfolk, NE 800-345-5073 www.henkesbuffalo.com 1-800-345-5073
A Global Equipment Company, Inc.
Illinois small town pulls together to dig out of food desert

By Audrey Alwell

A new store in the tiny town of Mount Pulaski, Illinois, is being hailed as a model for other rural communities in food deserts.

The town—home to fewer than 1,500 residents—sits pretty much smack dab in the middle of the state. The town square includes the historic Eighth Circuit courthouse where Abraham Lincoln carried out much of his practice of law.

Mount Pulaski’s only grocery store closed in 2016, leaving much of Logan County without convenient access to fresh food—a trend that’s only too familiar in many parts of rural America. The town’s Economic Development Planning Board (EDPB) approached three large grocery chains, asking each to open a store in Mount Pulaski. None of the chains thought a town that size could support a store.

Undaunted, the EDPB looked for other options. The board convened a group to discuss how they could feed their community. The group included organic farmer Dave Bishop from PrairieErth Farm, about 20 miles from Mount Pulaski.

“The town didn’t take the closing of its only grocery store lying down,” Bishop said. “I was honored to participate in the discussion about how the town might feed itself.”

One of the ideas the group came up with was to look into the Environmental Protection Agency’s Local Foods, Local Places program. The program supports community-driven efforts to protect air and water quality, boost economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses, improve access to healthy local food, and promote childhood wellness.

In 2018, the Mount Pulaski EDPB applied for and received one of only 15 Local Foods, Local Places planning grants to be awarded in the country. Mount Pulaski then became a 2019 EPA “Partner Community” and began work on developing a community-owned grocery store.

“Both the EPA and the USDA sent experts from Washington D.C. to meetings in Mount Pulaski,” Bishop explained. Ken Meter, an economist with Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis, also took part in the planning meetings.

Interest in the project was high; in less than three months, the EDPB raised all of the money needed to launch the new store.

“I sat in a tent during the first fundraising event and watched community members write checks totaling $60,000 in a matter of minutes,” Bishop said.

The new store, called Market on the Hill, opened in June—in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, which has highlighted the need for local food systems.

The store is owned by 126 community members who invested $120,000 to create the new business. It features a full range of grocery products, including some meat, produce, and other value-added items from local farms.

The chair of the EDPB, Tom Martin, is a crop farmer in the area. He donated nine acres of his land to help Kyle Reed launch Hilltop Community Gardens, which is now one of the store’s produce suppliers.

Shoppers can expect fresh greens and seasonal produce from Hilltop Community Gardens, honey from Sasse’s Apiaries, and beef from Shaun and Kim Tyson’s Farm, with more local farm products to be added regularly. As an incentive for Market on the Hill shoppers to purchase more food from local farms, the store offers a place to purchase more food from local farms, the

unique extension program serves the niche meat industry

By Rebecca Thistlethwaite

The coronavirus pandemic has caused both meat shortages due to shutdowns at large-scale processors and unprecedented demand for small-scale meat processing. As small-scale processors struggle to get processing times at their local butcher, many are looking for long-term solutions. The Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN) offers a way for these producers and processors to connect and share information to support the development of a stronger small-scale meat processing industry.

NMPAN is an Extension program at Oregon State University that provides technical assistance and support to niche meat producers. It offers a place that producers and processors can collaborate to solve problems for the industry. The community of practice has grown to over 1,600 members since the service was created in 2008. Membership is free and open to those in the niche meat industry, or associated suppliers, consultants, academia, nonprofits, and government agencies.

Conversations happen daily via a Google Groups forum. With one staff member and an advisory board of 15 experts from across the country, NMPAN is a unique model of a small, nimble organization that has a wide impact.

The core of NMPAN’s education and technical assistance is provided via the website, webinars, videos, office hours, case studies, and one-on-one. NMPAN also has a small pool of funds to offer more in-depth consulting for existing meat processing facilities that have a challenge they want to solve or an opportunity they want to grasp. NMPAN has cultivated a pool of experienced consultants deployed around the country.

NMPAN is invaluable in creating community and connecting people in what can otherwise be a small and isolated field. The network has been tremendously successful at facilitating relationships, collaboration, and information exchange between people who otherwise might not meet, including giving new and aspiring processors access to experienced processors. NMPAN provides access to a wealth of knowledge and information, whether in resources collected on the website, in webinars, or through the collective wisdom of the listserve community. Processors and non-processors alike said that if they have a question, NMPAN likely has the answer.

During the pandemic, NMPAN has pivoted to offer more support in new ways. As NMPAN’s Director, I have been offering bi-weekly office hours for folks considering building or buying a new meat plant. The NMPAN website has a page dedicated to curated information related to coronavirus and employee safety. We also created a page for consumers to find producers who can ship meat or deliver to their front door since grocery stores have been a less than reliable source for meat. We organized a popular webinar on the logistics of setting up online meat stores and shipping meat.

We will also be sponsoring a bilingual podcast (Meatspad) on how meat processors can adapt to coronavirus and continue to produce safe, quality products while protecting employee health. Over the coming year, NMPAN will be collaborating with a USDA AMS-funded national collective of organizations serving different parts of the food system in helping their stakeholders adapt to COVID, keep their workers and consumers safe, and pivot to new market opportunities.

Learn more about NMPAN and membership at www.nichemeatprocessing.org or watch the webinars at www.youtube.com/user/nmpan.

NMPAN Director, Rebecca Thistlethwaite, can be reached at thistle@oregonstate.edu or by phone at 541-806-1526.
Breeding Small Grains — from page 9

produce grain with good end-use quality and nutrition characteristics. Plant breeders strive to improve crops not only for grain yield, but also for diseases resistance, lodging resistance, processing characteristics, and nutritional characteristics. The important role that plant breeding can play in making small grains production more economical is not always fully recognized by the consumer. In reality, net returns per acre for producers can vary significantly depending on the choice of the variety. For example, the oat variety trials performed by the South Dakota State University Crop Performance Testing program report an average difference of $2.82/acre (over 5 years [2016-2019]) of testing at three eastern South Dakota locations) between planting the oat variety Deon versus planting the oat variety Jerry. At a price of $5.50 for organic oats, this equates to a difference of $235.40 per acre. This example examines just differences in grain yield based on trials managed conventionally. The difference in return per acre may be even more pronounced under organic management as chemical inputs cannot be used to “balance out” the inherent drawbacks of certain varieties (e.g., crown rust resistance). Grain quality characteristics also become more important in the organic system.

Most small grain varieties have been developed and evaluated only under conventional management practices. Limited information is available to producers regarding the adaptation and performance of small grain varieties for organic production systems. A team of researchers at South Dakota State University including breeders, extension specialists, agronomists, and a cereal chemist was granted multi-year support from General Mills Foundation to enhance the sustainability of farming systems in the Dakotas by improving small grains.

The grant is focused not only on organic management systems but also regenerative agriculture practices, and a portion of this grant requires evaluating small grain cultivars and breeding lines under organic management. The goal is to provide recommendations to organic farmers on which variety is best adapted to their system and to identify breeding lines adapted to organic production. Emphasis will be placed on identifying breeding lines and varieties that have good resistance to prevalent diseases, quick early growth to compete against weeds, and that can perform well with limited nitrogen availability. In addition, these varieties and breeding lines will be evaluated to determine if they produce grains with desirable milling and end-use characteristics so that they fit the various food markets available to producers and are nutritious for consumers.

In 2019, organic variety trials were conducted at the Southeast Research Farm in Beresford and Charlie Johnson’s farm near Madison, SD. In 2020, organic variety trials were planted again at the Beresford farm, the Johnson farm, and the BJ McNeal’s farm near Wessington, SD. The oat variety trials were showcased at the field tour organized by MOSES at Johnson’s farm in 2019.

When choosing a variety, it is important to study data across locations and years. A single season or location may not always provide an accurate picture of how a variety will perform. Results from the 2019 oat and spring wheat variety trials can be accessed at extension.sdstate.edu/oat-variety-trial-results. Future testing will provide more accurate recommendations for organic farmers.

This year, researchers are testing to see if a drone can quickly and precisely assess differences between breeding lines in term of ground cover/canopy closure. The goal is to use drone imagery to select breeding lines that have better ability to provide shade on the ground and therefore have a better ability to compete with weeds.

Melanie Caffe-Treml is the oat breeder in the Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science Department at South Dakota State University. Jonathan Kleinjan is an Extension agronomist with South Dakota State University.

### Agromonic Characteristics

Oat varieties and breeding lines under organic management in Madison, SD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Relative Heading* (Days)</th>
<th>Relative Height** (Rushto)</th>
<th>Lodging A</th>
<th>Crown Rust†</th>
<th>SDW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deon</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Days to heading compared to Sarno (153 Julian days).
**Height in inches compared to Rushto (23 inches).
†Lodging scored as percentage: 0% = no lodging, 100% = completely flat.
‡Crown rust scored as percentage: 0% = most resistant to 100% = most susceptible.

When choosing a variety, it is important to study data across locations and years. A single season or location may not always provide an accurate picture of how a variety will perform. Results from the 2019 oat and spring wheat variety trials can be accessed at extension.sdstate.edu/oat-variety-trial-results. Future testing will provide more accurate recommendations for organic farmers.

This year, researchers are testing to see if a drone can quickly and precisely assess differences between breeding lines in term of ground cover/canopy closure. The goal is to use drone imagery to select breeding lines that have better ability to provide shade on the ground and therefore have a better ability to compete with weeds.

Melanie Caffe-Treml is the oat breeder in the Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science Department at South Dakota State University. Jonathan Kleinjan is an Extension agronomist with South Dakota State University.
Virtual Field Days
Now that we’re offering our field days online this season, the completed events are available to watch anytime through our field day page (mose.org/organic-field-days) or YouTube channel (youtube.com/user/MOSESorganic). Topics have included roller-crimping, cereal rye, resources for conservation planning, the economics of organic dairy, and transition to organic row crops. The final field days of the season are:

- Kernza® Trial Results, July 22
- Medicinal Herb Production, Aug. 1

For the Kernza field day, we’re talking to the farmers who’ve been growing the perennial crop as well as the breeders at The Land Institute and the University of Minnesota’s Forever Green Initiative. They cover the progress that’s been made in developing the wheatgrass and the variety, MNC Clearwater, that was just released for commercial production. Farmers Carmen Fernholz and Luke Peterson share their experience growing and harvesting the grain. Six short videos posted at mosesorganic.org/kernza-july-22 provide background on Kernza while the live field day July 22 offers the chance to ask your specific questions.

On Aug. 1, we’ll take a virtual tour of Four Elements Organic Herbals with owners Jane Hawley Stevens and David Stevens, the MOSES Organic Farmers of the Year. They’ll discuss plant identification, field production, harvest, drying, and wellness products created with medicinal herbs. They’ll also share their recommendations on hand tools to get the job done. Sign up to join in the virtual event at mose.org/medicinal-herb-production-august-1.

Organic Farming Podcast
MOSES Organic Specialist Chuck Anderson has recorded more than a dozen episodes for the MOSES Organic Farming Podcast. In one recent episode, Dr. Jon Winsten, an ag economist with the Pasture Project, outlined three key metrics to look at when considering a dairy farm’s financial viability: feed efficiency, labor efficiency, and capital efficiency. As a follow-up to that, organic dairy graziers Thelma Hesel-Baker and Ricky Baker shared how they’ve built a financially viable 60-cow dairy. Chuck also talked to Paul Dietmann from Compeer Financial about the financial considerations of the transition to organic grain production. Jon Jovanov, a farmer near Austin, Minnesota, shared his thoughts on transitioning his farm to organic. Find the show in your podcast app or listen at mose.org/moses-podcast.

2021 MOSES Conference
The 2021 MOSES Organic Farming Conference will take place online in February. Given the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, our team, board of directors, and our community (through our annual survey) agree that it’s wise not to gather in person in February. We must prioritize the health and safety of our community. We are excited about the possibilities for this online event. We’re planning content right now. One new feature for this virtual event will be the chance for farmers to film and share aspects of their work as speed presentations. See details below. We’ll keep you updated about other conference plans through the Organic Broadcaster and the conference webpage (mose.org/moses-conference).

Farmer-Share Speed Presentations
Farmers, we want to hear from you! In a 4-minute or less video presentation, tell us about your farm or a project related to farming/the food system that you are involved with. Get specific with tips on production/techniques/tricks that you use on your farm. As part of our virtual 2021 MOSES Conference content, we will group these into hour-long recordings according to 10 different farming categories. These speed presentations will be followed by live virtual roundtables to give presenters and viewers the chance to network. The deadline to submit speed presentation videos is Oct. 31. Learn more at mose.org/moses-conference.

In Her Boots Resilience Boot Camp
The MOSES In Her Boots project is in the middle of its “Resilience Boot Camp,” an 8-week campaign to help women farmers build capacity to manage the many curve balls of farming. (See the story on page 5 of this issue for additional details.) The boot camp includes a weekly newsy, resiliency-focused conversations on our In Her Boots podcast, and two webinars to dig deeper into topics. On July 28, Charlotte Smith of COW Marketing shares “How to Set Priorities & Manage Time.” The August 18 webinar, “She’s Got Your Back. Tip in the Conservation Support Network,” showcases cooperative learning and mentorship between women farmers, hosted by Denise O’Brien, Iowa farmer and founder of the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (WFAN). To see all that’s included in Resilience Boot Camp, go to mose.org/moses.org/In_Her_Boots/events.

Women Caring for the Land Resources
We’re taking our conservation training for women landowners online this season with a combination of new resources to support you in stewarding your land. Go to our Women Caring for the Land resource page at mose.org/women-caring-for-the-land to read the “Conservation Conversations” with helpful Q&A from experts, listen to the related episodes on our In Her Boots podcast, and watch the recent webinar with women conservation experts talking about resources to help you improve and protect your land.

Award Nominations
Nominations are open for the 2021 MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year award. This prestigious award recognizes organic farmers for outstanding land stewardship, innovation, and outreach. See mose.org/organic-farmer-of-the-year for more information. Given the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, this year’s award will be announced in the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in February.

Ambre Blends Donation
MOSES recently received a second donation through the give back shopping program at Ambre Blends, a women-owned online business that produces and sells organic essences. We’re so grateful to Ambre Blends for selecting MOSES for their give-back program to help us provide the training, resources, and practical support farmers need to succeed in organic production.

Special Offer from GEMPLER’S
MOSES events and our podcasts are sponsored by GEMPLER’S, your online outdoor general store for commercial-grade tools, clothing, and supplies plus other outdoor gear. During the month of July, GEMPLER’S is offering 20% off orders placed with the code M20ES20. Some exclusions apply. See details at gemplers.com. Help GEMPLER’S give back with “Locally Grown” T-shirts. GEMPLER’S donates a portion of shirt sales to MOSES and Farmer Veteran Coalition. And to celebrate the people who serve this country, they’ll double the giving through July.

MOSES EVENTS AND PODCASTS ARE SPONSORED BY GEMPLER’S.

MOSES EVENTS AND PODCASTS ARE SPONSORED BY GEMPLER’S.
USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

There's still time to apply for the USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) direct payment plan for farmers. The application period runs through Aug. 28. CFAP provides financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a price decline of 5% or more, or who had losses from market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs. The USDA recently expanded the list of commodities eligible for payment. For the list and application instructions, see www.farmers.gov/cfap.

Farmers’ Legal Action Group (FLAG) has published an updated Farmers’ Guide to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. This edition includes more information on the possibility of farmer appeals of USDA decisions on CFAP and USDA’s discrimination complaint process. Find it at bit.ly/FLAGguideCFAP.

The National Organic Coalition (NOC) is seeking feedback from organic farmers to better advocate for meaningful support. If you’ve applied for aid or found you weren’t eligible, please share that with NOC through this short survey: bit.ly/NOCcfapSurvey.

Dicamba Ban

After years of litigation, a Federal Court last month banned Monsanto’s toxic pesticide dicamba. In the ruling, the court cited “enormous and unprecedented damage” caused by dicamba in the last few years that has “torn apart the social fabric of many farming communities.” Dicamba is notorious for drifting to neighboring farms, damaging crops, and wild plants and trees. Following the court’s decision, the Environmental Protection Agency said it would allow dicamba use through July 31.

The ruling applies to the use of these herbicides on other non-Xtend crops that may be listed on their labels. The ruling does not apply to Syngenta’s over-the-top Tavon herbicide.

USDA Agricultural Innovation Agenda

Dozens of farmers and ranchers took part in a recent online listening session organized by the Organic Seed Alliance, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. The listening session was prompted by the USDA’s invitation to comment on its Agricultural Innovation Agenda, which will inform priorities for the next three decades. USDA’s call for stakeholder input focuses on four innovation areas: genome design, digital/automation, software tools and data management, and systems-based farm management.

The listening session also aimed to capture additional research and innovation needs that go beyond that list, including: Crop production and crop genetics; Livestock production & livestock genetics; Soil conservation and soil health; Water use efficiency and productivity; Marketing and farm economic viability; Resilience to climate change/other stresses.

USDA is accepting public comments through Aug. 1, 2020, at bit.ly/FederalRegisterCommentAgAgenda. The recording of the recent listening session is posted at attra.ncat.org//shape-future-innovation.

Free Training Program on Organic Production

The Organic Farming Research Foundation is creating a self-directed course on organic production that will contain six learning modules: 1) soil health; 2) weed management; 3) irrigation and water management; 4) insect pest management; 5) disease management; 6) economics and marketing. See bit.ly/OrganicCourseOnline for the first two modules.

Organic Transition

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach just published “Evaluating Organic Transitions at the Field Level,” a four-page publication on the need for a transition crop plan, the importance of individual crop budgets, and evaluating results. See store.extension.iastate.edu/product/15851.

Benefits of Organic Meat

The Organic Center’s latest report shares data from scientific literature to show the differences in the way organic meat is produced, and how those differences impact livestock health, consumers health and safety, soil health, and climate change. The report shows that organic meat provides more omega-3 fatty acids, less cholesterol, and more antioxidants; reduces consumers’ exposure to antibiotics, growth hormones, and pesticides; and has fewer negative effects on the environment and is less of a contributor to climate change. See organic-center.org/site/benefits-organic-meat.

FairShare CSA Fundraiser

FairShare CSA Coalition hosts its first-ever Routes to Roots summer adventure to raise funds to support FairShare’s critical work of helping families eat and local farmers thrive. They’ve created an app for exploring Southern Wisconsin food hotspots through biking, walking, and driving tours. The app includes a variety of route lengths, a calendar of activities from June-September, audio commentary from local farmers, fundraising opportunities, and more. The choose-your-own-adventure foodie fun will culminate in a virtual celebration Sept. 20, 2020. Learn more at www.csacoalition.org/routesrootors.

Local Food Movement in Minnesota, Wisconsin

The new Local Food is Essential campaign is designed to educate consumers about the issues many local food growers face due to COVID and encourage buying from local growers to help small-scale, local farmers survive this crisis. The campaign is a collaboration between The Good Acre, Mill City Farmers Market, Lakewinds Food Co-op, Minnesota Grown, Driftless Grown, Minnesota Farmers Union’s Minnesota Cooks Program, Renewing the Countryside, and others. To share information with local consumers, see www.localfoodisessential.org.

Small Grains Partner Program

Pipeline Foods, the Bionutrient Food Association, and the Real Food Campaign are collaborating on a new project focused on connecting soil, plant, and human health to improve the nutritional quality of the planet’s food supply. Their “Small Grains Partner Program” is looking for farmers who grow wheat and oats to submit soil and grain samples (they’ll provide free test kits) in exchange for a detailed report on the levels of protein, polyphenols, minerals, and antioxidants in the grains and total carbon, respiration, pH, and mineral content of the soil. If interested, complete a survey at bit.ly/SmallGrainsPartners and a representative from the program will reach out to you.

Benefits of Birds on Farms

Wild Farm Alliance has posted a short video on the benefits of birds on the farm. It shows how to attract birds and install hedgerows. See bit.ly/BirdsONFarms.

Do you need parts for your Lilliston cultivator? I can help with any parts or service that you need:

• New & Rebuilt Baskets
• Whole Cultivators
• New & Rebuilt Cultivators
For: Kinze liquid fertilizer tanks and brackets. Complete system includes 8 inch furrow tubes used to apply organic liquid fertilizers. Adaptable to other models. 920-887-7491.

For sale: Einbock 40’ Time Weedier. 3 point, hydraulic fold to 10’ wide, hydraulic top link to adjust pressure, excellent condition. $10,000. Also Bla-Jet 40’ liquid sidedresser, 1000 gallon tank, John Blue piston pump with rebuild kit, set up for applying compost extract. $8000. Located in North Central SD. 605-649-6327.

Lilliston 8 row Folding Cultivator. Very good condition. Also Lilliston 4 spider baskets, used in very good shape, new bearings. 715-289-4866.

For Sale: 260 Owatonna Swather w/ 6 cylinder industrial engine. 16.5 ft. draper head; purchased new. Asking $15000. 320-287-1721 or jschwagerl@gmail.com

Kewanee 15’ CultiMulcher w/shanks. Solid machine w/4 transport tires. No wands with this one owner machine w/tow wear. Very nice condition. Delivery available depending on location. $3,400 OBO. 765-918-1666 Indiana.

The Ahimsa Alternative, Inc. For all things Neem & Karanja

16 row 30” JD485 toolbar with Winch heavy duty tines. Option Orbie shields for each row. Parking stands equipped.

NICE! $5,000. International 183 12 row 30”/tender foot L Knives. $3,000. Allow 8 row 30” x 2 5250 each. Buffalo 4630 8 row 30’ no tilt cultivator with shields, ridging wings & liquid behind barrowing off discs. $5,900. 608-490-0925.
markc.cloudah@gmail.com

For Sale: Goose island 16 row 30”/tender foot L Knives. $3,000. Allow 8 row 30” x 2 5250 each. Buffalo 4630 8 row 30’ no tilt cultivator with shields, ridging wings & liquid behind barrowing off discs. $5,900. 608-490-0925.
markc.cloudah@gmail.com

For: Kinze liquid fertilizer tanks and brackets. Complete system includes 8 inch furrow tubes used to apply organic liquid fertilizers. Adaptable to other models. 920-887-7491.

For sale: Einbock 40’ Time Weedier. 3 point, hydraulic fold to 10’ wide, hydraulic top link to adjust pressure, excellent condition. $10,000. Also Bla-Jet 40’ liquid sidedresser, 1000 gallon tank, John Blue piston pump with rebuild kit, set up for applying compost extract. $8000. Located in North Central SD. 605-649-6327.

Lilliston 8 row Folding Cultivator. Very good condition. Also Lilliston 4 spider baskets, used in very good shape, new bearings. 715-289-4866.

For Sale: 260 Owatonna Swather w/ 6 cylinder industrial engine. 16.5 ft. draper head; purchased new. Asking $15000. 320-287-1721 or jschwagerl@gmail.com

Kewanee 15’ CultiMulcher w/shanks. Solid machine w/4 transport tires. No wands with this one owner machine w/tow wear. Very nice condition. Delivery available depending on location. $3,400 OBO. 765-918-1666 Indiana.

The Ahimsa Alternative, Inc. For all things Neem & Karanja

16 row 30” JD485 toolbar with Winch heavy duty tines. Option Orbie shields for each row. Parking stands equipped.

NICE! $5,000. International 183 12 row 30”/tender foot L Knives. $3,000. Allow 8 row 30” x 2 5250 each. Buffalo 4630 8 row 30’ no tilt cultivator with shields, ridging wings & liquid behind barrowing off discs. $5,900. 608-490-0925.
markc.cloudah@gmail.com

For Sale: Goose island 16 row 30”/tender foot L Knives. $3,000. Allow 8 row 30” x 2 5250 each. Buffalo 4630 8 row 30’ no tilt cultivator with shields, ridging wings & liquid behind barrowing off discs. $5,900. 608-490-0925.
markc.cloudah@gmail.com

For: Kinze liquid fertilizer tanks and brackets. Complete system includes 8 inch furrow tubes used to apply organic liquid fertilizers. Adaptable to other models. 920-887-7491.

For sale: Einbock 40’ Time Weedier. 3 point, hydraulic fold to 10’ wide, hydraulic top link to adjust pressure, excellent condition. $10,000. Also Bla-Jet 40’ liquid sidedresser, 1000 gallon tank, John Blue piston pump with rebuild kit, set up for applying compost extract. $8000. Located in North Central SD. 605-649-6327.

Lilliston 8 row Folding Cultivator. Very good condition. Also Lilliston 4 spider baskets, used in very good shape, new bearings. 715-289-4866.

For Sale: 260 Owatonna Swather w/ 6 cylinder industrial engine. 16.5 ft. draper head; purchased new. Asking $15000. 320-287-1721 or jschwagerl@gmail.com

Kewanee 15’ CultiMulcher w/shanks. Solid machine w/4 transport tires. No wands with this one owner machine w/tow wear. Very nice condition. Delivery available depending on location. $3,400 OBO. 765-918-1666 Indiana.

Field is a small farm near the Twin Cities specializing in log-grown organic mushrooms. We’re hiring for seasonal and year-round positions to start immediately: mushroom worker and production lead. Benefits include free housing and mushrooms, $11 to $15 per hour. Find more details at northwoodmushrooms.com or call Jeremy at 612-205-8599.

Executive Director: MOSES is seeking a new executive director to lead the nonprofit, which educates farmers about organic and sustainable production. The current head of the organization, Lauren Langworthy, has accepted another role outside the organization and is leaving at the end of the summer. Qualified candidates should have experience managing a nonprofit and a passion for organic and sustainable farming. The executive director opening is posted at mosesorganic.org/job-postings. It will remain open through Aug. 14, 2020 or until the position is filled.


For Sale: Edenbrooker 13’ Tine Weeder. 3 point, hydraulic fold to 10’ wide, hydraulic top link to adjust pressure, excellent condition. $10,000. Also Bla-Jet 13’ liquid sidedresser, 1000 gallon tank, John Blue piston pump with rebuild kit, set up for applying compost extract. $8000. Located in North Central SD. 605-649-6327.

Lilliston 8 row Folding Cultivator. Very good condition. Also Lilliston 4 spider baskets, used in very good shape, new bearings. 715-289-4866.

For Sale: 260 Owatonna Swather w/ 6 cylinder industrial engine. 16.5 ft. draper head; purchased new. Asking $15000. 320-287-1721 or jschwagerl@gmail.com

Kewanee 15’ CultiMulcher w/shanks. Solid machine w/4 transport tires. No wands with this one owner machine w/tow wear. Very nice condition. Delivery available depending on location. $3,400 OBO. 765-918-1666 Indiana.
Finland Food Chain ZOOMinar: Product of the Farm July 25 | 7:30 a.m. | Free
You can sell your fresh produce directly to consumers, to restaurants and Co-op. They'd cover what is and isn't allowed as “Product of the Farm” and how this differs from Cottage Food and also touch on the rules related to selling on-farm processed poultry directly to consumers. Email your questions to cindy@ahf@friendsoffinland.org.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Elderberry Propagation July 28 | 9 a.m. | Online
Ellie Sullivan, Lily Springs Farm will talk about best practices for elderberry propagation and best time of year for planting and propagation. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

Farms to Food Banks July 28 | 2 – 3:30 p.m. | Online
Prior to the pandemic, various food banks were already buying food from farmers. In a moderated discussion, this conversation will explore these new and old programs and how farmers are participating in them. Participants will also address the implications of these efforts for USDA nutrition policy and programs. Hosted by Eco-Farm. Call 831-763-2111 or email info@ecofarm.org to learn more.

Improving the Vitality of Your Soil through Organic No-Till Practices July 28 | 2 p.m. | Online
Take a virtual tour through Lovin’ Mama Farm, where owners Cornine and Matthew produce flowers, vegetables, eggs, and microgreens in an intensive no-till system for CSA, wholesale, sale, farmers markets, and events. This field day will include a demonstration on how you can assess signs of health within your own soils. Learn more at nofany.org/programs-events/field-days/.

In Her Boots: Resilience Boot Camp Webinar July 28 | 7 p.m. | Online
Discussion topic - How to Set Priorities & Manage Time In Her Boots: Resilience Boot Camp Webinar

July 28 | 2 – 3:30 p.m. | Online
This webinar will answer basic questions about types of licenses a business may need, standards for a food production facility (and tips on locating space for rent), food safety plans, and resources to help small-scale food entrepreneurs get business licensed in Wisconsin and up and running. Please email info@extension.wisc.edu. to learn more.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Silvopasture & Supply Chain Food Safety for Beginning and ESL Farmers August 10 | 1 p.m. | Online
Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, Regenerative Agriculture Alliance, will present on how to safely incorporate livestock and tree crop production, food safety best practices and common questions for beginning and ESL farmers, and how we can work towards a justice oriented, safer food system. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

2020 Midwest Berry Grower Webinar Series August 11 | 11 a.m. | Online
Spotted Wing Drosophila; Prepping Strawberry Beds For Winter will be considered at this webinar which is hosted by the University of Minnesota Extension and University of Wisconsin-Madison. 30 minutes of Q & A time is scheduled after presentations. Email Anne@klooddarm.umn.edu to learn more.

UMASH Online Expo: A 20/20 Look at Ag Health, Safety, and Wellness August 11 | 11 a.m. | Online
Hosted by the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center, this virtual event will feature exhibitions, safety demonstrations, and speakers on a number of health and safety topics. To learn more, email umash@umass.edu or call 622-655-8836.

In Her Boots: Resilience Boot Camp Webinar August 18 | 11 a.m. | Online
Discussion topic - She’s Got Your Back: Tap into a Support Network With Denise O’Brien of Rolling Acres Farm. To learn more, go to mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots/events/ or call 888-90-MOSES.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Exploring Elderberry Benefits August 19 | 1 p.m. | Online
Presenters Terry Durham and Chris Patton, Midwest Elderberry Cooperative, will talk about elderberry history, medicinal uses, nutrition benefits, and the ecological benefits of incorporating elderberries on your farm. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Elderberry Harvest September 7 | 7 p.m. | Online
Presenters Terry Durham and Chris Patton, Midwest Elderberry Cooperative, will talk about proper harvesting techniques for elderberries and equipment needed, and proper storage techniques for small scale and commercial elderberry production. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

7 Seeds to Sow in September September 9 | 6 p.m. | Online
Whether you have a greenhouse, high tunnel, raised bed or a few feet of empty garden space, there are a surprising number of seeds you can sow this September to surround yourself with abundance for months to come. Learn more at nofany.org/programs-events/field-days/.

4th Annual Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day – Part 1: Drone Wars September 11 | 12:30 – 11:55 a.m. | Online
Watch the set-up of a camera-guided cultivator with finger weeder in corn and beans. See which field conditions need to be entered into the computer for a camera-guided cultivator as well as how the tools are calibrated for field conditions and run in crops. They will also look at conventional front-mounted cultivation. This will be streamed live on The Land Connection’s and Practical Farmers of Iowa’s Facebook pages. To learn more, call 217-840-2128.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Silvopasture Food Safety September 15 | 6 p.m. | Online
Presenter Steve Gabriel, Wellspring Forest Farm, will talk about incorporating animals and food production safety, and share common questions and answers for producers. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

4th Annual Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day – Part 2: The Awakening September 18 | 12:30 – 11:55 a.m. | Online
Watch preliminary Tool Set-up in the shop – starting with a bare toolbar, see the measurements and progression of adding parallelogram units and tools to exactly match a crop spacing. Then watch all of the preliminary adjustments that can be made more accurately in the shop so that by the time you arrive at the field your machine only needs limited adjusting. This will be streamed live on The Land Connection’s and Practical Farmers of Iowa’s Facebook pages. To learn more, call 217-840-2128.

Learn about precision cultivation of direct-seeded vegetables. Once the weeding tool has been mounted and adjusted in the shop (episode 2) watch the first run in the field and see how results are judged and adjustments are made to correct issues in order to quickly achieve accurate weeding in direct-seeded crops. This will be streamed live on The Land Connection’s and Practical Farmers of Iowa’s Facebook pages. To learn more, call 217-840-2128.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Elderberry Processing and Market Opportunities September 29 | 12 p.m. | Online
Presenters Terry Durham and Chris Patton, Midwest Elderberry Cooperative, will talk about processing for commercial and small scale use, food safety compliance with GAP and FSMA, retail direct marketing opportunities for new and existing growers, wholesale/contracted berry and/or flower sales opportunities, River Hills Elderberry Producers, and the Midwest Elderberry Cooperative. Email info@savannainstitute or call 608-448-6432.

ORGANIC SEED TREATMENT

• EPA Registered for soybean white mold, SDS and rhizoctonia root rot/damping off
• Consistent yield benefit
• Broad spectrum, systemic plant defense activator
• Can be applied commercially or on farm
• Available pre-treated on all dry bean seed - sourced from the Pacific Northwest

www.headsupST.com | (866) 368-9306

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

-Save the date and event links online- mosesorganic.org/community

SFA Silvopasture Workshops August 6 | 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Becker, Minn.
These workshops will illustrate how this farming system can improve soil health and water quality, enhance wildlife and prevent erosion – all while providing short- and long-term farm income. These events will take place outside with social distancing guidelines in effect; space is limited to 20 people per site due to Minnesota COVID-19 guidelines. For other dates and locations call Tyler at 320-249-1841.

Starting a Food Business in Wisconsin August 10 | 9 a.m. | Online
This webinar will answer basic questions about types of licenses a business may need, standards for a food production facility (and tips on locating space for rent), food safety plans, and resources to help small-scale food entrepreneurs get business licensed in Wisconsin and up and running. Please email info@extension.wisc.edu. to learn more.

Savannah Institute Webinar: Silvopasture & Supply Chain Food Safety for Beginning and ESL Farmers August 11 | 6 p.m. | Online

Discussion topic - She’s Got Your Back: Tap into a Support Network With Denise O’Brien of Rolling Acres Farm. To learn more, go to mosesorganic.org/in-her-boots/events/ or call 888-90-MOSES.