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Cover Crops Bring a Diversity of
Benefits to the Farm

Diversity is the foundation of any sustainable agriculture system, and cover crops are a great management tool for bringing diversity to the farm. The addition of cover crops increases plant diversity and helps to support biodiversity in soil microbes and beneficial wildlife. Cover crops also help produce biodiversity off the farm by holding nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus in the fields, which protects water and other downstream ecosystems. Crucial for building soil and preventing erosion, cover crops also are important for increasing fertility and water-holding capacity, and controlling weeds, disease, and insect pests of organic crops.

Diversity can come to the farm in many ways. There is diversity in space—having multiple plant and animal species occupy the same plot of land at the same time. There is diversity across scales—having multiple land covers and animal species occupy the same plot of land at the same time. There is diversity across time—having multiple land covers and animals occurring on different parts of the farm. There is also diversity across time—having harvested cover crops can contribute to income diversity, an important part of making a farm more resilient to financial shocks such as market volatility, increased input costs, or unfavorable weather.

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned

Soil health was on his mind when North-Central Illinois organic farmer, Tom Yucus, first started thinking about cover crops. An Organic University course at a MOSES Organic Farming Conference some 15 years ago really

Food Safety in the Packing House

As produce farmers, we can’t eliminate the risk of microbial contamination in our food production. We sell a product that we grow as part of the real world—a world filled with the microbes that can make people sick. We can, however, take steps to reduce food safety risks, work to develop our food production systems in ways that reduce the risk of contamination, and restrict the spread and growth of human pathogens if contamination occurs.

The good news for produce growers is that the steps we take to prevent contamination of our produce with microbial pathogens can also reduce the spread and growth of rot and disease organisms. This will result in higher quality products that last longer on store shelves and in our customer’s refrigerators. There are aesthetic advantages, too; nobody really wants to get a CSA box with mud caked on the bottom, or that was nibbled on by mice.

Exclusion the Creatures You Can See

The area where we pack our produce should present an inhospitable front to all creatures great and small (with the exception of ourselves). So should the spaces where we store our packaging materials. Rodents, birds, and insects all have the potential to carry pathogenic microbes, as do domestic animals—I’ve seen different plants or animals in a certain plot of land at different times of the year. Cover crops can be used to bring greater diversity to your farm in each of these ways.

Added diversity also helps the farm’s bottom line. While cover crops are often cast as being a non-income-producing crop—contributing to long-term sustainability but adding a short-term cost—when used in a whole farm system, their value can be immediate. Beyond biodiversity, harvested cover crops can contribute to income diversity, an important part of making a farm more resilient to financial shocks such as market volatility, increased input costs, or unfavorable weather.

To Cover Crops on page 16

To Food Safety on page 10
Options Make it Easy to Show Support

Charities are making it easier than ever for donors to support them. MOSES, too, has expanded donation options. Say, for example, you want to show your appreciation for this free newspaper by making a donation, you can give online (just look for the “Donate” button), sign up to be a monthly “MOSES sustainer,” mail us a check, or call us with a credit card number. Plus, you might be able to get any gift matched by an employer.

A majority of our readers are full-time farmers, but we know that many of you have spouses that work off-farm, are part-time farmers with a daily job as well, or work for ag organizations with an interest in organics. Those with off-farm jobs may find that your employers offer matching funds through a “charitable giving program.”

This doubles your contribution and helps us meet our mission of serving organic and sustainable farmers. Most companies with matching gift programs should have no trouble adding MOSES, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, to their list of qualified charities. Why not ask them today?

MOSES is now on the official list of charities supported by companies who have joined 1% for the Planet. This is an international organization whose members contribute at least one percent of their annual sales to environmental causes. If you run your own company or have some influence in your workplace with those who make financial decisions, please have your company choose MOSES as your designee. Find out more about 1% for the Planet at http://onepercentfortheplanet.org.

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- Information about the MOSES Organic Farming Conference
To change what you get by email from us, call us at 715-778-5775 or email info@mosesorganic.org.
Anyone who cares about locally grown food—and everyone who grows it—should be alarmed about the Food and Drug Administration’s proposed food safety regulations. These complex rules, created to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act (FMSA) passed more than two years ago, are meant to prevent food-borne illness. While written with good intent, the proposed rules threaten small- and mid-sized farms, compromise access to fresh, local produce, and cripple on-farm conservation practices.

Problems with the Proposed Rules

The proposed food safety regulations govern the handling of fresh and processed foods. The rules are similar to those for meats, which must have in place a system referred to as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points). I find it especially unsettling that the meat laws are used as a model, as many of the recent food recalls have been related to meat processing facilities that use the HACCP system of documenting activities to control hazards.

These regulations treat every fresh produce roadside stand or small-scale commercial kitchen making pickles and salsa the same as a massive food processing facility handling hundreds of tons of raw and finished products per day. Although there are some protections in the law for small- and mid-sized farms, including those that are organic, the proposed regulations at times ignore the letter, and many times the spirit of the law through heavy-handed rules. Testing, documentation, and restrictions replace common sense food handling. The proposed regulations do not use science to assess the level of risk, nor do they tie the strictness of the rules to the prevalence of that risk. Farmers should not have to follow arbitrary rules that treat every situation as equally dangerous.

Through these rules, the FDA shows that it does not have an understanding of how food is actually grown or handled on farms. The regulations reflect FDA expertise, which has been honed in large food processing facilities and pharmaceutical operations. I understand the need for a regulation to address the inherent risks of large-scale industrial food production, but am opposed to this “one-size-fits-all” regulatory approach.

No producer—especially not one who has face-to-face relationships with customers—wants customers to get sick. A provision of the law requiring trainings for farmers on understanding good food handling practices is not outlined in the proposed rules. The current atmosphere in Congress does not bode well for funding this necessary training, which would go far in preventing problems. It is backwards to expect farmers to meet mandated food handling practices without teaching them what they are.

The regulations also ignore due process. If a complaint were to be filed against an exempt small farming operation, there is no appeals process. There is no way to regain a small farm exemption once it is lost.

Your Help is Needed

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) has put together a stellar tool kit to help individuals and organizations make clear and hard-hitting comments to the FDA targeted at changing the bad provisions of this proposed rule. The toolkit contains templates and background material to help you craft a personal letter, which will carry a lot more weight than a form letter.

Through these rules, the FDA shows that it does not have an understanding of how food is actually grown or handled on farms.

The NSAC toolkit provides clear information on the following troublesome issues with the proposed regulations.

Manure and compost: The application of manure on land used for growing food for human consumption is restricted to 9 months before the harvest of the crop. In contrast, the National Organic Program regulates 4 months between application and harvest. The regulation encourages the use of “sterilized” compost, as opposed to biologically active compost, which organic farmers know is valuable for soil health. Neither of these proposed restrictions have clear science behind them. If not changed, these could drive conventional farmers to use more synthetic fertilizers and drive organic farmers away from organic certification in order to maintain sufficient fertility to grow acceptable crops.

Precarious small farm exemption: While there is an exemption for small- and mid-sized operations, there is also a provision that the FDA can arbitrarily take away the exemption without any proof of a public health threat. If not covered by the exemption, a tremendous process of documentation and handling restrictions must be complied with for a farm to sell produce. In large operations, this compliance documentation is typically overseen by full-time employees hired specifically to do the work. There is no appeals procedure, nor a way for a small operation to eventually retrieve their exempt status after revocation. Due process is the law of the land and must be part of this regulation as well. The exclusion of an appeal process from the final regulation will have a chilling effect on all small farms, as they will operate in the shadow of a very real threat to their livelihoods.

Cost: Complying with the documentation requirements has been estimated by the FDA to require 4-6% of a farm’s gross receipts. Surveys estimate that the net profit of farms with gross incomes under $500,000 is approximately 10%. Leaving just 4-6% of the gross as net farm income, the cost of this regulation would take a significant portion of smaller farms’ very marginal profit. Farms that use surface waters to irrigate fields would be subject to burdensome costs of weekly water testing, regardless of the identification of any risks associated with that water.

These costs will make it harder for new farms to enter the marketplace. The highly popular consumer-driven local foods movement would no longer have access to the diversity of farmers they seek at farmers markets, CSAs and
Ten Tune-Up Tips for Your Farm Business

By Paul Dietmann

While the work on a farm never ends, most farmers have a stretch of “not-quite-so-busy” time between fall harvest and spring planting when things ease up a bit. This is a great point to assess your farm’s financial performance in 2013 and start the business planning process for 2014. Below is a list of 10 items that you might want to do this winter to tune-up your farm business and have it running as smoothly as possible in 2014.

Estimate your 2013 taxes before the end of the year—By November, most of your operating expenses for 2013 should be known, and your income through the end of the year can be estimated. This is an excellent time to sit down with your tax advisor to get a sense of your tax situation for the year. By getting a handle on your taxes in November, you’ll still have plenty of time to do the next two tasks on the tune-up list: 1) make year-end capital purchase decisions; and 2) decide whether or not to prepay some of your 2014 operating expenses.

There are several things you can do to get the most out of your appointment with your tax advisor. First, pull together a good summary of income and expenses for the year. Second, gather records for any capital purchases or sales you made during the year. Finally, review your 2012 federal tax return so that you are ready to compare this year’s estimate to last year’s results.

Decide whether or not to make year-end capital purchases—With a good estimate of your 2013 tax liabilities, you will be in a much better position to decide whether buying a new piece of equipment before the end of the year makes sense from a tax standpoint. However, tax management should not drive your capital investment decisions. You first need to determine whether the asset is really necessary and if you can afford the purchase. You also need to decide how much cash to use for a down payment and how much of the purchase should be financed. (To learn more about making capital investment decisions, see the chapter on investing in the book Fearless Farm Finances: Farm Financial Management Demystified. It is available on the MOSES website at www.mosesorganic.org/fearless-farm-finances.)

If you decide to go ahead with a capital purchase this winter, you can ask your tax advisor to help you figure out whether to make it in 2013 or hold off until after the first of the year. Changes in state or federal tax rules may influence your decision. For example, the Wisconsin Dairy and Livestock Investment Tax Credit is ending on Dec. 31, 2013. So if you live in Wisconsin and are buying dairy or livestock buildings or equipment, you might want to pay for those improvements before the end of the year.

Consider prepaying some of your 2014 operating expenses—There can be some big advantages to prepaying operating expenses before the end of the year. First, many suppliers offer big discounts for early purchases. Second, prepaid expenses will show up as a “current asset” on your balance sheet, which means the prepayment won’t hurt your working capital position (more on this below). Finally, the prepayment can reduce your income tax liability in 2013 if your estimates show that you are going to owe income taxes. However, if your farm is showing a loss for 2013, you might not want to prepay expenses because it could increase your tax liability in 2014.

Evaluate your risk management strategies—Obviously, farming can be a risky business. While it’s impossible to eliminate every risk, some of the most critical risks can be reduced. Make sure that your farm insurance coverage is sufficient to cover any losses that your farm business can’t absorb. If you haven’t been carrying health insurance because you felt it was unaffordable, now would be a good time to take another look at your options. The health insurance market has recently undergone significant changes.

Do you have life and disability insurance? Even a minimal amount of coverage will protect your family in the event of a tragedy. Are your crops or livestock insurable? If not, you may be able to reduce weather risks to your crops with irrigation or season extension strategies. You may reduce livestock production risks by contracting feed purchases or livestock sales.

Update your balance sheet on January 1—One of the most important things you can do to accurately assess your farm’s financial performance is update your balance sheet as of January 1 every year. Preparing the balance sheet on January 1 eliminates much of the seasonal variation in crop inventories. It allows you to make an accurate comparison between the most recent year’s balance sheet and prior years. It also lets you make “accrual adjustments” to your farm’s income statement for changes in inventories, prepaid expenses, and other changes that occurred between one year’s balance sheet and the next. The ability to make these accrual adjustments will give you a more precise calculation of net farm income and profitability.

A couple of things to keep in mind as you update your balance sheet. First, take a good physical inventory of stored crops, feed, market livestock, and supplies. Second, try not to make changes to market values from one year’s balance sheet to the next. The goal is to measure changes in inventories, not changes in market prices. Finally, be sure that any new equipment purchased during the year gets added to the balance sheet, and any equipment sold gets taken off.

Calculate a few simple financial measures—With your estimated taxes and an updated balance sheet, you’ll be able to calculate a few useful ratios that measure your farm’s financial health.

Working capital—Subtracting current liabilities from current assets will give you “working capital.” Working capital should be at least 15% of your annual gross farm income. Current ratio—Dividing current assets by current liabilities will give you “current ratio.” The current ratio should be two or more. Debt-to-asset ratio—Divide total liabilities by total assets to get your “debt-to-asset ratio.” Your debt-to-asset ratio should be less than 50%, although it will typically be higher than 50% if you’ve recently purchased or significantly expanded your farm operation.

Rate of return on assets—Take your estimated net farm income, add back the farm interest that was paid during the year, and divide the resulting number by the total assets on your balance sheet to get your “rate of return on assets.” The rate of return on assets should be higher than the interest rate you are paying on farm loans.

To Ten Tips on page 13
I was looking for a way to add-value to our dairy farm, thinking about things to do with our bull calves,” Inga laughs. While researching what other people were doing, she became enamored with the many diversified small farms in the region. “We saw so many small-scale producers doing amazing things, we wanted to be the voice to highlight these great farmers, to introduce people to them.”

And so, rather than do something with bull calves (which they now sell for someone else to raise), Inga and Joe decided to create a television series showcasing small-scale Wisconsin farmers.

Advertised as “dedicated to connecting consumers to small, thoughtful producers through storytelling, forgotten recipes and entertainment,” the show combines interesting and entertaining commentary. Each episode makes her the perfect host for the show.

Although neither Inga nor Joe have a background in film or TV production, their excitement and passion for their goal drew them to the project. “Ultimately, we want more people to support small farms,” Inga concludes. “If our show can make this connection, then we have succeeded in our dream.”

Although now deep into finishing the milking season on their 15-cow organic seasonal dairy, Inga and Joe plan to get back to TV production in January once the cows dry up. WPT has committed to the first four episodes in November, and are open to running more if the show proves itself with viewers.

Watch Around the Farm Table on Wisconsin Public Television at 7:30 p.m. Thursday nights starting November 7. The shows also stream online at http://wpt.org. Visit the Around the Farm Table website at http://aroundthefarmtable.com to view several shorts and find recipes. If you find yourself as thrilled as this reviewer by Inga and Joe’s work, definitely call, email or write Wisconsin Public Television to let them know that the series should continue.

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Review by Jody Padgham.
Question: Is it possible to still get my farm certified for the first time this year?  
Answer by Organic Specialist Joe Pedretti:

Whether or not you can get certified now depends on the crop or livestock products you want to sell as organic. All certification agencies are required to see at least some of the requested crops growing in the field or greenhouse/hoophouse. If the crops you wish to sell as organic are already harvested and in storage, then there is no way to get retroactive certification. If, however, your corn is still in the field, or if you are actively growing crops in a greenhouse or hoophouse, then it may be possible still to certify.

Dairy farmers who want to ship organic milk and apply for first time organic certification during the winter months may need to have two inspections in one year. The first would be to review livestock activities and growing systems during the winter, and the second to actually view crops and pasture during the growing season in the summer.

Meat producers might need to purchase organic forages and grains this coming winter or spring in order to produce or sell organic animals next year. Brood animals must consume certified organic feed while they are in the last third of gestation. The second would be to actually view crops and pasture during the winter months in the summer.

The ability to get certified this year also depends upon the certification agency's workload and the inspector schedule. Most certification agencies can handle a limited number of "rush" applications. However, if the timeline is too short, or if the agency is already at capacity, it may be too late. In general, even a rush application will take a month to process from the time you submit your application to the date you receive your organic certificate. The initial review, the inspection and the final review are all required, and while they can be prioritized, they still take time and effort to be done correctly. A simple operation with only a few crops stands a better chance of getting a late season rush done than does a complicated farm with several crops, livestock and crops, or farms with processing facilities.

Ultimately, only the certification agency can tell you if you can obtain a late season organic certification. Call your potential certification agencies immediately, explain your situation, and find out what your options might be.

Question: Should I trademark my farm’s name?  
Answer by Organic Specialist Harriet Behar:

If you sell retail or direct-to-consumer products or plan to add value to your farm’s production with a packaged product carrying the farm name, it might be a good idea to trademark your farm’s name. A trademark creates legal protection for your farm or product name. It is completed at the national level, and involves research to ensure that you’re not using a name that someone has trademarked already, which would create a challenge to your use of that name.

If you sell bulk products with no retail label, you probably don’t need to go through the expense and time of registering a trademark—this is especially true if your farm name includes your family name, such as Smith Family Dairy or Johnson Farms.

The first step in getting a trademark for your farm name is to register the name with your home state and surrounding states if you plan to do business there. For many farms, this step provides enough protection and a national trademark is not necessary—you’ll need to assess your own risk to determine if state registries are sufficient.

To find a state registry, search the Internet for "trademark registry [state name]." These registry websites have a search feature that lets you enter the name you want to trademark to see if someone else has already registered that name in that state. If the name is available, you can follow the instructions on the website to register your farm name. The cost to do this can range from $15 to $100, depending on the state. Registering your farm name this way gives you legal protection to challenge others who try to use the same name. It does not guarantee that someone would not use your name outside of the registry system.

To obtain broader legal protection for your farm name, you would need to trademark it on the national level. Start by searching for your farm name in the Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS) at www.uspto.gov/trademarks. In fact, it’s worth your time to conduct a search even if you’re only going to enter your name in state registries. You could run into trouble, as I have, if you use a trademarked name even locally.

I have used my farm’s name for more than 20 years without a trademark or state registry. I recently received a “cease and desist” order from a company in California who had federally trademarked “Sweet Earth” 25 years ago in numerous food categories, including fresh produce. I am now in the midst of changing my farm’s name, a difficult and time-consuming process, but better than a lawsuit that I would lose if I tried to keep my farm’s name.

To Specialists on page 17

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**Organic Certification?**

No Sweat.

Now you can efficiently keep the detailed records required to be a certified producer of organic crops or livestock, without even breaking a sweat.

Developed by farmers for farmers, COG Pro makes collecting your agricultural data and generating reports for certification inspection a snap—right from your laptop, tablet or smart phone.

Visit www.cog-pro.com to find out more about COG Pro’s low cost, easy-to-use online notebook—try it out for free by logging in as a guest!
An amazing amount of new organic research is being conducted at both public land-grant universities and private institutions. The Organic Research Forum at the 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference helps bring that research directly to the organic community. The Organic Research Forum offers a unique opportunity for farmers, students and researchers to connect and discuss current issues and developments in organic agricultural research. The Organic Research Forum at the 2014 MOSES Conference will consist of seven cutting-edge workshops and over 30 research posters.

**Organic Research Forum Workshops**—The 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference will highlight seven workshops where researchers, and often the organic farmers who assisted, will present the findings and implications of their recent work. We have selected a broad range of agronomic, horticultural and livestock research projects from research institutions throughout the Midwest and beyond.

**Precision Cover Cropping - Results and Opportunities**, Joel Gruver, Western Ill. University  
**Evaluation of Soil Compaction and Cover Crops in Organic Farms**, Maria Villamil, University of Ill.  
**Enhancing Use of Dried Beans in Organic Production Systems**, Craig Sheaffer, University of Minn.  
**Labor Requirements on the Diversified Market Farm**, Tim Reinbott, University of Mo.  
**Flaxseed as a Year-Round Source of Fat and Protein**, John Hendrickson and Erin Silva, University of Wis.-Madison  
**Organic Dairy Forages: Focus on Cool and Warm Season Annuals**, Heather Darby, University of Vt.  
**Precision Cover Cropping - Results and Opportunities**, Joel Gruver, Western Ill. University

**Organic Research Poster Display**—In addition to the workshops, over 30 organic research projects will be featured in a poster display at the conference. Check them out at your leisure, or stop by to discuss the work with the researchers in person from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb 28 and Saturday, March 1.

Full details about the 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, including the Organic Research Forum, can be found at www.mosesorganic.org/conference and in the MOSES Conference Registration Guide, which will be mailed to you in late November.

MOSES is proud to announce the 5th Annual Organic Research Poster Display held in conjunction with the 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb 27 through March 1 at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wis.

Researchers, including government scientists and staff, academic faculty and staff, graduate/undergraduate students and farmer researchers are invited to submit poster proposals for display at the conference as part of the Organic Research Forum.

The poster session will document completed and on-going research projects related to organic and sustainable agriculture.

Submission of poster abstracts devoted to the following topics will be accepted for review:

1. Organic fruit, vegetable and row crop production (including bio-fuels & fibers)
2. Organic dairy production
3. Economic and marketing research in organic agriculture
4. Organic livestock production (other than dairy) and crop-livestock integration
5. Insect and disease management strategies on organic farms
6. Nutritional quality of organic foods
7. Consumer and market trends

Research abstracts/summaries submitted for consideration should be clear, descriptive and not longer than 300 words. They should contain the following specific information: purpose of study, experimental treatments used, results obtained, significance of findings, conclusions, and implications of results. Keep in mind the Organic Research Forum audience will predominantly be farmers, so focus on the implications and applications of your work and less on methodology.

Please submit summaries and/or abstracts to joe@mosesorganic.org either as a Microsoft Word compatible attachment or simply in the text of your email on or before Friday, Jan 10, 2014. Please include your full contact information in the email. Summaries will be reviewed and the owners will be notified if their posters have been accepted for presentation at the conference. MOSES reserves the right to not accept any poster that does not meet the criteria of the Organic Research Forum and/or the Organic Farming Conference. Space is limited.

All posters must be on display before the opening of the conference at 8 a.m. Feb 28. Poster presenters must be present from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at the conference to answer questions and discuss their work. Posters must remain on display until 4 p.m. Saturday, March 1.

A limited amount of funds are available for student scholarships to cover or offset the cost of attending the conference (hotel and travel stipend). If you would like to be considered for a scholarship, please submit your request along with your poster abstract/summary.

For more information please contact Joe Pedretti, MOSES Workshop and Presenter Coordinator at: joe@mosesorganic.org or call 608-629-5010.
Many organic producers in the Upper Midwest once again had weather challenges in 2013, and so may be looking to cushion their production capabilities by leasing a little extra land for crops or pasture in 2014. Conventional farmers are out looking for cropland, too. High demand makes it difficult to find land to rent, much less at a reasonable price within a workable distance of your farm.

However, organic farmers should not get discouraged entirely by the current difficult land rental climate, as their type of production may be attractive to a unique type of landlord.

Finding Organic-friendly Land

Approximately 30% of the farmland in the U.S. is owned by people who do not work the land. In certain areas of the Midwest this average is much higher. These landowners may be absentee or living in a house on the land, and often have an emotional attachment to seeing the land protected and stewarded in an environmentally beneficial way. Some may have inherited the family farm, others hope someday to retire on recently purchased land.

We also see landowners who are organic consumers, who have different priorities than getting top dollar for every acre of land they rent. They would take pride in knowing their land is farmed organically.

Many acres of former Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fallow land is coming out of the program this year and next. The majority of this land has not had a prohibited substance on it for more than five years, making it immediately ready for organic production. Keep in mind that this fallow land probably will not be immediately ready for organic production. Keep in mind that this fallow land probably will need soil amendments, since you will be improving their resource. You may need to educate the landowner about the positive effects of organic production, and the need for time, commitment and dollars to build and maintain productive soils. Sharing a few facts that prove this point may help make your argument—find them at http://mosesorganic.org/publications/factsheets.

You can write up your own agreement, but it would be a good idea to have an attorney review it before you both sign on the dotted line. Many of these landowners may never have had a written farm lease agreement before, and may be more comfortable if you start with a template that can be customized—look for them at http://mosesorganic.org/publications/factsheets.

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Put it in Writing: How to Set up a Smart Organic Land Rental Agreement

By Harriet Behar

Rent on page 15

Organic Land Rental Agreement

Sustaining organic producers by coordinating marketing groups.

Organic Seed Finder provides thousands of variety listings for farmers, gardeners, uncertified individuals, and others looking for certified organic seed. Sourcing seed to meet the demands of our growing organic industry just got easier.

Find organic seed at www.organicseedfinder.com

By Harriet Behar

Rent on page 15
With cold weather on the way, farmers with animals are setting up their winter feeding systems. One important issue to consider when exploring options is how the manure will be managed. Feeding means congregating animals in one place, and that means the collection of manure in a centralized area. This is something folks who have grazing animals generally don’t have to think about during the green part of the year, as the animals are naturally dispersing the manure as they move through paddocks and pastures. A natural concentration of nutrients, manure in any congregation form must be managed carefully.

Jim Greenberg of Greenberg Farms, LTD in Stratford, Wis. has had his 550 organic milking cows and the dry and young stock on composted bedded packs since 1994. A few years ago, he built a 160 ft. by 660 ft. Coverall building to hold the pack and cows, as well as some hay storage. A concrete floor and tall side walls accommodate the 4 to 5 feet of pack that accumulates by spring. The original pack, in a large lean-to shed, is still used nearby by the young stock and dry cows.

Value for Manure Management

“With our farm right on the outskirts of our village, the composted pack is an important manure management tool,” Jim says. “We don’t want to be spreading liquid manure.” Using rotational grazing for half the year, Jim doesn’t want any smell from winter manure accumulation and spring spreading to disrupt the bucolic atmosphere of the town. Jim also appreciates the quality of comfort for the cows, and maintenance of cow health and milk quality through the quality of comfort for the cows, and maintenance of cow health and milk quality through

The composted pack starts with about a foot of kiln-dried sawdust spread on the cleaned concrete floor. Pack from the previous year is not reused, although 8 inches to a foot of the old pack is taken off and integrated into the new pack to “inoculate” the bedding with bacteria. “The inoculation really helps to start the bacterial action each year,” Jim says.

Cows are brought in at the end of the grazing season and allowed to lounge in the comfortable bedding. Twice a day, when the cows go into the parlor for milking, the farmers stir up the top 8 inches of the pack with a spring-tooth drag. Three times a week, they add new bedding. Jim explored different kinds of bedding, but has found that kiln-dried sawdust works the best. “We’ve tried hay and straw, even cornstalks, but it is hard to get the quantities we need and the material must be very finely ground to work properly,” he says. The farm gets semi-loads of sawdust delivered from nearby mills.

In the composting system, the bedding heats up as the cows add manure and the stirring adds oxygen. “We see temperatures of about 110 degrees,” Jim says, “not enough to be called compost according to the Organic Rule, but enough to really break things down.” The warmth is nice for the cows, too, during the cold Wisconsin winter.

Success with Careful Management

There is an art to managing the pack, as variables such as weather affect how much additional bedding should be added. “We’ve found it best to keep the pack a little drier than many people recommend,” Jim says. He tests the moisture by digging in 8 inches and squeezing the material; he likes to see only 50-60% moisture. A lack of attention to the balance of moisture can create issues with milk quality, which is some operators’ complaint with the system. “If the bedding is sticking to the animals, it is too wet, and there can be problems with somatic cell count. The pack should always look dry on top,” Jim explains. Dry weather means less bedding will be needed; wet snow or fog causes reduced evaporation from the pack, and a need for more sawdust.

Throughout the winter, the farmers scrape the alleys and pile up excess material in a nearby yard. They turn these piles four times during the summer, and in August haul them out to next year’s corn fields. Once the cows go out onto pasture in May, the pack in the Coverall and shed is allowed to rest. It will decrease in volume by about a foot over the summer. In October, right before the cows come back off pasture, the areas are cleared out and the bedding mixed with manure is spread on crop land. It lays on the land over winter and is tilled in in the spring. “I believe that the sawdust ties up the nitrogen, and so we don’t grow super corn, but the carbon breaks down and we have seen a real increase in soil fertility and organic matter as the compost material slowly breaks down,” Jim claims. Soil tests on every five acres every four years have proven the value of the compost to the soil.

Jim recently did calculations to see what the system cost for his 550 cows and additional dry and young stock. His estimate of 6 tons of sawdust per cow per year comes to $2.15 per cow per day. “This system isn’t cheaper than a free-stall,” Jim says, “but we prefer it for the environmental reasons. We can spread the manure anytime and anywhere.”

Non-composted “simple” packs work on most of the same principles, but are not stirred and use a larger quantity of bedding. In these systems diverse bedding can be used—including

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Food Safety... from page 1

feel unwelcome by eliminating or illuminating these spaces. A significant gap between the wall and anything stored near it will leave mice and rats feeling exposed, and make it easy for you to monitor for the presence of feces with just a glance.

Birds can be discouraged with predator decoys and “scare eye” balloons—large balloons with a bulls-eye pattern that resembles a raptor’s eyes. Place these around the packing area to discourage birds from coming near, then staple bird netting against open rafters to deny the brave ones the opportunity to roost above the areas where you handle food and store equipment and supplies.

Limiting food and water sources also can discourage rodents, birds, and other undesirable additions to your packing area. Produce trimmings should be removed from the packing area at the end of every day, hopefully to a compost pile located at a distance from the packing house. Concrete floors make it easy to sweep and wash away even small scraps, and facilitate good draining. Packing on gravel or grass makes in almost impossible to remove all of the food waste from the packing area, and surface puddles can attract and sustain rodent populations.

Constant moisture also provides a fertile breeding ground for organisms like Listeria monocytogenes. Porous ground coverings such as dairy brick or gravel can allow moisture to build up below, and pathogens have the potential to move across the porous layer. A cantaloupe-sourced outbreak of Listeria monocytogenes at Colorado’s Jensen Farms, which killed 33 people in 2011, was caused by bacteria harbored in puddles on uneven concrete floors and floors with an inadequate slope. If your concrete floor doesn’t drain well, use a large squeegee to move water towards a floor drain or out the door after a day’s work, so that the floor can dry out.

Pests that do get into the packing area should be killed or captured and removed. For insects, I’ve had good luck using Mr. Stache Fly Tape System to significantly reduce fly populations in the packing area. This sticky sticky tape runs from one reel to another above the packing area, and can be wound onto a spool when it’s full, exposing fresh sticky tape to more flies.

Poisons—even OMRI-approved poisons—should not be used to control rodents in the packing house. Most rodenticides need time to work, and poisoned mice and rats may crawl off to die in a place you don’t want them—like a bin of carrots, or in the middle of your box storage. At Rock Spring Farm, we use “tin cat” repeating mouse traps to monitor and control rodent activity; the kind with a window in the lid make it easy to check traps weekly. If we find any evidence of rodent activity, such as a trapped mouse or feces, we label the area a “hot spot” and upgrade trapping and control efforts until the area is rodent free for 10 days. Shortly after we instituted our monitoring program, we expanded it to include our cover crop seed storage and our greenhouses, and dramatically cut down on rodent damage in those areas.

Manage to Control Bacteria
In the same way that we want to make packing areas inhospitable to the critters we can see, we want to make them inhospitable to the critters we can’t see, too.

The equipment you use for harvesting and packing produce, from knives and totes to tables and wash lines, should be easy to inspect, maintain, clean, and sanitize. Small cracks and rough surfaces can hold small amounts of water, which allow bacteria to survive by shielding them from full contact with sanitizers. Cracks and rough areas allow pathogens such as E. coli 0157:H7 and Salmonella to persist and reproduce.

Even smooth surfaces such as stainless steel can be contaminated with microbes. Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces—especially food contact surfaces like tables, tanks, and wash lines—keeps microbes from multiplying on small particles of nutrient-rich soil and drops of plant sap. It is best to clean and sanitize all of your harvest and packing equipment at the end of every day, and to sanitize again before you use them in the morning.

Most sanitizers don’t work in the presence of soil or detergents, so it’s important to remove these before you apply a sanitizer. Sanitizing is usually a four-step process: rinse, clean, sanitize, and rinse. Rinse to loosen the initial soil and remove some of it. Use plain old elbow grease and sanitize. Rinse to loosen the initial soil and remove some of it. Use plain old elbow grease or a detergent like Simple Green to loosen any soil that remains on the surface. Rinse away the detergent and remaining soil with more water, then apply the sanitizer.

In the packing house, sanitizers are used both to sanitize hard surfaces and to sanitize wash water. Like any pesticide, the sanitizer you use must be labeled for its intended purpose, and you need to use it at the correct concentration. Weak solutions aren’t effective, and solutions that are too strong can damage the surface you’re sanitizing.

For a hard-surface sanitizer—for killing microbes on work surfaces and containers—I prefer a hydrogen peroxide-acetic acid blend such as BioSafe’s SaniDate 5.0 or Ecolab’s Oxonia Active. The combination provides effective control over a wide range of water pH, and breaks down into water, oxygen, and acetic acid. Both products are OMRI-approved for organic production.

If you submerge produce in water, you should use a wash-water sanitizer. Wash-water sanitizers won’t eliminate pathogens on contaminated produce, because plant surfaces are full of crevices and cracks where bacteria can avoid contact with the sanitizer—but they do keep bacteria from spreading from one piece of produce to another. Many growers use Ecolab’s Tsunami 100 or BioSafe’s SaniDate 5.0 also is labeled for use as a wash-water sanitizer. Both are hydrogen peroxide-acetic acid blends, and approved by OMRI for use in organic production.

Because they are so often moist and dirty, floors always should be considered contaminated. In the ideal food-safety world, produce containers would never touch the floor. Small and large pallets can elevate produce off the floor so that draining water and soil don’t contaminate the container or its contents. This also keeps your boxes clean and presentable for customers, and eliminates dirty crates at farmers market.

Chris Blanchard provides consulting and education for farming, food, and business through Flying Rutabaga Works. He has worked in farming for the past 24 years, managing farms and operations around the country. As the owner and operator of Rock Spring Farm since 1999, Chris raised 20 acres of vegetables, herbs, and greenhouse crops, marketed through a 200-member year-round CSA, food stores, and farmers markets.

www.flyingrutabagaworks.com
How to Navigate Cottage Food Laws
By Lisa Kivirist

If you regularly have an abundance of tomatoes you’d love to turn into salsa to sell at your local farmers’ market, or you make an amazing strawberry pie your neighbors and friends clamor for, now could be the time to launch a business producing these items in your home kitchen. New attention to state legislation that supports small-scale food businesses based in home kitchens is making it easier to be a “cottage entrepreneur.”

These state-specific laws, often referred to as “cottage food legislation,” focus on regulations that enable the production of various nonhazardous, food items processed in home kitchens for public sale. Typically, the businesses developed are small-scale, independent and family-run, and use their own equipment. Producers operating under cottage food legislation gain cost savings and the ease of working from home rather than renting or building a commercial kitchen, as required in commercial food processing regulations.

“While everyone from the media to Capitol Hill keeps spinning wheels trying to find the perfect panacea for job creation, especially in rural areas, they really need to look no further than our nation’s kitchens,” explains Patty Cantrell, founder of Regional Food Solutions LLC, a Missouri-based consultancy that supports cottage food legislation. “Our American history [has] roots in this idea of cottage businesses, from the butcher to the baker and other food artisans who create things at home that service their local community.”

More than 30 states currently have some form of cottage food legislation in place, with many of those becoming laws within the last two years or so.

“It is inspiring to see an entrepreneurial movement gaining momentum nationally that has such a potentially positive economic impact on small-scale farmers,” says Wes King, executive director of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, a grassroots nonprofit organization that championed cottage food legislation in Illinois. “These new cottage food laws, like we now have in Illinois, remove barriers that historically have impeded farmers’ abilities to launch small-scale, value-added businesses. It is now much easier for aspiring entrepreneurs to start new local-food enterprises and tap into selling at one of Illinois’ over 300 farmers’ markets.”

Know Your State’s Cottage Food Laws
Cottage food regulations vary tremendously among states, covering from what you can and can’t produce to how much gross income you can bring in. There is a patchwork of rules and regulations, and not all states have laws in place.

“Individuals need to research, understand and operate under their specific state regulations,” advises Judith McGeary, executive director of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, which worked on the legislation in Texas. “Start by reading the specific law, and then connect with like-minded organizations familiar with your state’s situation, such as local foods groups or farmers’ market associations, for advice. Ask people already producing under your state’s laws about their experiences and advice.”

Potential food-safety issues generate the loudest complaints against cottage food legislation, stemming from concern that most of these laws do not require home kitchens to be inspected or regulated. However, food safety problems have not been documented to date.

“I have not heard of any significant problems or increases in food-borne illnesses within the states that have cottage food laws in place,” McGeary notes.

Launch Your Home-based Food Business
If you think you’re ready to go public with your food business, here are six key steps to launch your home-based start-up:

1. Identify your food business’ purpose.
   “As a first step, put some time into thinking about and defining what it is that you want to make and who you want to sell to,” advises Quincella C. Geiger, author of Bringing Home the Baking: How to Start a Licensed Home-based Baking Business (self-published, 2007) and a national expert on home-based baking start-ups. “This may determine if your state’s cottage food laws even cover what it is you envision and are passionate about doing.”

   For example, a wedding- or birthday-cake business may be allowed in states with laws for home-based baked-goods, as these products are sold directly to one person. On the other hand, if you envision selling your jams to a local food co-op for distribution, you’ll discover that most legislation does not allow wholesale sales.

   “My motivation to start doing home-based processing of jams and breads came from seeing other folks at the farmers’ market I sell at,” explains Regina Dlugokencky, an organic and sustainable farmer who runs Seedsower Farm in Centerport, N.Y. “I noticed their jams were flying out of their booths, and in talking to my farmer friends about their experiences, the process to start such a business didn’t seem that hard.”

   Beauty also motivates: Dlugokencky harvested an abundance of raspberries and realized she could diversify her off-season income sources by selling jam at winter markets.

2. Understand your state’s cottage food laws.
   While each state’s laws will vary on specifics, they generally include some form of the following:

   Labeling requirement: Most states require labels notifying the consumer that the product was processed in a home kitchen. For example, according to Wisconsin’s current cottage food law, the label must include the sentence: “This product was made in a private home not subject to state licensing or inspection.” Additionally, the label must include the name and address of the person who prepared and canned the product, the date it was processed, and a list of ingredients.

To Cottage Food Laws on page 21

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NEW FARMER CORNER

Resource Highlight: Agrarian Trust

By Lindsay Rebhan

The New Farmer Corner highlights issues of particular interest to those new to farming, no matter what age. If you have an idea for an article, contact Lindsay at neworganicstewards@gmail.com. See the New Organic Stewards webpage www.neworganicstewards.org.

The agricultural landscape in the U.S. is at another turning point in history. The number of people who lived on farms peaked in 1935, 54% of the nation’s citizens lived on 6.8 million farms. Today, farmers make up less than 1% of the population. Despite this historical move away from farming, we have seen a revival recently as young people choose to reclaim their agrarian roots.

According to the USDA, since 2002 the percentage of farmers under 35 has doubled (New Ag census figures are expected in February 2014). While the average age of the American farmer is 57, the average farmland owner is over 70. (USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture)

As a result of this aging population of owners, an estimated 70% of farmland will change ownership in the next 20 years! Land access remains a key component in helping people get back on farms. We are at a crossroads—a time in history that young people can reclaim a connection to the land.

The new agrarian movement is vibrant with energy, and the latest mover and shaker is Agrarian Trust. Agrarian Trust is a resource that helps sustainable, next-generation farmers access land. The Trust has a mission to help people get back on farms. We are at a crossroads—a time in history that young people can reclaim a connection to the land.

Agrarian Trust is a resource that helps sustainable, next-generation farmers access land. The Trust has a mission to help people get back on farms. We are at a crossroads—a time in history that young people can reclaim a connection to the land. The Trust’s website (http://agrariantrust.org/access-land/) offers a profusion of innovative strategies. Anyone with an interesting land access story is encouraged to share it on the website.

Co-founder and Agrarian Trust Advisory Board Member Severine von Tscharner Flemming explains, “With our next publication, we’ll be looking to history to look at models, to contextualize this issue. Four hundred million acres are changing hands and we can’t afford it, this is an issue of homeland security.”

New Agrarian Trust

Severine also quotes Joel Salatin’s latest book, Field of Farmers, which states, “If young people can’t get in, old people can’t get out.” Severine adds, “It’s acknowledging that it’s a reciprocal dilemma. It’s not just that we want in. Our generation’s commitment to farming is a part of a lineage of commitment, both cultural and economic. For everyone’s sake, our country needs continuity of family farming. That’s the best framework for this discussion. How do we conceive of an inter-generationally respectful relationship around land transfer?”

Agrarian Trust plans to convene a kind of “young farmers’ congress” to collectively draft and set down a list of land agreement principles. “Imagine if we had a set of principles for land access deals, focused on long-term agreements, with baseline soil health as a part of the equation; long-term stewardship transparent and clear; a mediation process written down for leases or lease-to-own; a clear agreement for how equity is to be managed,” she proposes. “Can the replacement value of investments be captured by the farmer should roads diverge—is it fair and sensible?” Despite regional differences and personal preferences, many of the land access experiences and challenges new farmers face have commonalities. A collective set of principles as a guide for land agreements will absolutely be a boon to new farmers and landowners.

Agrarian Trust will move forward in providing toolkits, legal and financial documents, trainings for service providers, mini-readers and other communication tools. The first publication, Affording Ourland: A Finance Literacy Guidebook for Young Farmers is a useful resource available to read online. The introduction notes, “Consider this a primer on ways to approach finance for your farm, and an invitation to do more research on your own time once you have an idea of which trajectory makes...”
Ten Tips

Operating expense ratio—Dividing your total farm operating expenses (excluding interest payments and depreciation) by gross farm income will give you “operating expense ratio.” In general, the operating expense ratio should be less than 75%, but it can vary depending on the type of farm enterprise. More important with farm expense ratio is that it not swing more than 5% from year to year. If it does vary by more than 5% from one year to the next, dig a little deeper into your financial statements to find out why.

Establish or evaluate a revolving line-of-credit—If, at certain times of the year, you find yourself putting farm expenses on credit cards or having to decide between paying the feed bill or paying the utility bill, it would be a good idea to establish a revolving line-of-credit (RLOC) for the farm. It typically doesn’t cost anything to establish a RLOC. The interest rate on a RLOC will be much lower than credit card interest rates. And, interest only accrues on the amount you owe, not the entire credit limit appropriate for your needs? Are you only using the line for operating expenses, or have you been using it to make capital purchases that should really be set up on a term loan? Have you been able to pay the principal balance on your RLOC down to zero at least one month each year?

Develop 2014 enterprise budgets—Winter is a great time to put together enterprise budgets with income and expense estimates for the major operations you plan to run in 2014. Your budgets can be set up in whatever manner best fits your farm: per acre; per head; or per marketing outlet. Your enterprise budgets can help you decide where you can most effectively invest your time, effort and money in 2014.

Prepare a 2014 cash flow projection—When you’ve completed your enterprise budgets, and made your production and marketing plans for the upcoming year, the next step is to map out all of your estimated cash inflows and outflows on a month-by-month basis through 2014. The purpose of the month-by-month cash flow is to predict the months when cash shortages are going to occur. It will allow you to develop a plan ahead of time to get through the lean months. You may want to increase your working capital reserve during months with strong cash flow rather than paying off principal on longer-term loans. You may choose to establish a RLOC. You might shift enterprises to even out cash flow. Or, you may want to generate more cash inflow from custom work or an off-farm job.

Check over your retirement plan, will, and other long-range planning documents—Many farmers consider their farms to be their retirement plans. They either don’t ever intend to retire from farming, or plan to rent the farm out at some point to generate retirement income. Unfortunately, life events don’t usually follow the plan. Illness or injury could make it impossible to continue farming. Cash rental rates might not provide an adequate income to cover family living costs in retirement. Perhaps you have a child who farms with you and other children who don’t. You want your assets to be divided fairly among all of your children after you are gone. Investing some funds in an off-farm retirement plan can help under any of these circumstances.

Do you have a will and other related estate-planning documents? It is easy to procrastinate when it comes to estate planning. If you already have an estate plan in place, review it to make sure that it still meets your intentions. If you don’t have a plan, put it on your to-do list this winter.

Don’t feel as though you need to complete this whole list at once. Start with your tax planning in November. Make decisions about capital purchases and prepayment of expenses in December. Take your feed, crop and supply inventories in early January. Complete your balance sheet after you receive your year-end bank statements. Once your balance sheet is done, you can calculate the financial ratios. Everything else can be done in February or March.

Accomplishing these 10 tasks will help you see how your farm business has performed over the past year, and get it tuned up and ready to roar in the years ahead.

Paul Dietmann is the Emerging Markets Specialist at Badgerland Financial, and a co-author of the MOSES book Fearless Farm Finances. He will be presenting a day-long Organic University course titled “Understanding your Farm’s Finances.” Look for information in the Conference Registration Guide, mailed to you in late November, or visit the MOSES website, www.mosesorganic.org.

Fearless Farm Finances Workshops

Attend an in-depth training about the concepts featured in the MOSES book Fearless Farm Finances:

Nov. 15-16, 2013 —or— Dec. 6-7, 2013
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Register at www.mosesorganic.org/farmfinances.html or 715-778-5775
Deadline to register for East Troy workshop: Nov. 8, 2013
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These workshops are jointly organized by MOSES, Badgerland Financial, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, and UW-Extension.

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MOSES’ New Website Helps Farmers Grow Organic
By Audrey Alwell

Where’s a place you can go 24/7 to learn about organic and sustainable farming? The MOSES website! This organic farming resource hub gets more than 35,000 views each month. Beginning Nov. 1, visitors to www.mosesorganic.org should have an even better experience. We have reorganized content and added new sections to make it easier than ever to find information to help you succeed in organic and sustainable farming.

A new navigation bar with drop-down menus leads you to the wealth of information on the site. For example, if you want details about the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, point to Events in the navigation bar, and click on the conference tab. If you’re looking for the Guidebook for Organic Certification, point to Publications and click on the Guidebook tab.

Say you read about the Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring Program in the last Organic Broadcaster and want to apply—just point to Projects to locate the program. You can get to the mentoring program, the MOSES Conference and other popular pages through the photo carousel on the website’s homepage, too.

Application forms—forms in general—are more user-friendly on our new website. You can fill out forms securely right on the website, or download printable forms if you prefer to fill out and mail in a paper copy.

Our previous site’s popular “Event Calendar,” which lists organic and sustainable farming events happening all over the Midwest, has a new name and location on the new site. This new “Community Calendar” is under Events in the navigation bar. We’re telling other organizations that have linked directly to the old calendar about the new link. But, if you come across an outdated link to the MOSES website on other sites, please let us know.

New Farming section provides practical content for farmers
MOSES’ mission is to help you thrive in a sustainable, organic system of farming. The website’s new Farming section provides a centralized place to access the information you need to do just that—grow and thrive.

Under “Farming by Topic,” we’ve grouped practical articles from this newspaper plus additional resources according to farming topics: farming (in general), field crops, livestock, market farming, orchard, season extension, and soils and systems. Each topic’s main page provides quick access to related Broadcaster articles, MOSES Fact Sheets, and answers to questions on that topic from our Organic Specialists.

Currently, these “Ask a Specialist: Answers” are reprinted from the Organic Broadcaster. Going forward, this section will include responses to questions you submit by clicking on the “Ask a Specialist” button on the new website—it’s on every page. That way, if you’re reading an article that prompts a question about your farm, you can go right to the “Ask” button and type in your question while it’s on your mind. You’ll get a response in the format you select (email, phone, mail). If the answer applies to other farms, we’ll add it to the “Ask a Specialist: Answers” section on the appropriate topic page.

Another button on every page is “Shop the Store.” If you’re reading about a topic and find you want to go more in-depth, you can click on the store button and quickly find a book. When you buy through the MOSES Store, you not

MOSES’ new website has drop-down menus to direct you to the resources and information you need to grow organic successfully.
only get great books at good prices, you also support educational opportunities and resources that help farmers thrive using ecologically sound practices.

The Farming section also includes several other topics to help you farm effectively. “Business and Marketing” provides information about the financial aspects of farming. “Certification” walks you through the initial steps and the annual process for organic certification. “Organic Classifieds” offers you a place to buy and sell farming products. This page also includes a link to job postings. “Land Link-Up,” our free service to help farmers find land to rent or buy, now has its own tab so it’s easier to find the land you need to grow organic.

The other tab under Farming is “Beginning Farmers,” which connects new farmers to our New Organic Stewards page (also found under Projects). This is where beginning farmers find our “Organic Starter Packet” with MOSES Fact Sheets and publications, plus links to training programs, funding sources, and other new farmer organizations.

Online resource directory connects farmers to suppliers and more

Our Upper Midwest Organic Resource Directory has always been a popular publication. It lists certification agencies, suppliers, buyers, processors, and other organic-related organizations in the upper Midwest. Now, we’ve made it searchable online so you can find the listings you want quickly and easily.

You’ll find the “Organic Resource Directory” tab under Publications. We’ve also placed “Search the Directory” buttons on other pages where accessing the directory seems like the next logical step.

This online directory provides continuously updated listings—something that isn’t possible with the printed book. We’ll continue to provide the printed version of the directory, which was updated this summer.

Other new sections add content for organic advocates

As concerns grow about GMOs and pesticides in our food, as well as the environmental impact of conventional farming, more people are becoming advocates for organic food and sustainable farming. Our new website provides information for these organic advocates.

The new Policy Work section explains the work we’re doing on local and national levels to encourage policies that support organic and sustainable farming. “Take Action” outlines the latest issue before Congress, and arms you with information you can use to incite action from your senators and representatives in Washington. MOSES has many active partners in the organic movement. We link to their websites through the “Policy Partners” tab.

We’re also reaching out to consumers and non-organic farmers through Why Organic? This section features information about the benefits of organic and sustainable farming for each of these groups. We’ve put a “Find a Farm” tab here to help farmers locate neighbors who are using organic practices, and who might answer questions and offer encouragement. Consumers can use these resources to find a nearby farm that sells directly to them. This section also includes links to new research that proves the value of organic and sustainable farming.

We can help you locate information

We’ve tried to create a website that is easy to use and provides answers to your farming questions. The search box at the top of every page can help you locate information. However, if you have trouble finding resources you accessed on our previous site, just call us. We would be glad to guide you through our new website.

Major funding for the creation of our new website came from the USDA Risk Management Agency, which supports our work to educate farmers about organic and sustainable farming methods.

Audrey Alwell is the Communications Director for MOSES. audrey@mosesorganic.org

Rent... from page 8

would be open to you subletting this land to another organic producer. 13. Be sure to outline a clear method to solve disputes. It would be ideal to solve a dispute with mediation, moving to binding arbitration, rather than going to court, which is much more expensive. 14. Outline a mechanism for modifying the farm lease contract during the term of the lease. 15. Clarify that the tenant has possession of the land, and can use it according to the terms of the contract.

This is just a start for writing a clear contract for leasing farm land. Here are some additional resources:

Farm Rental Agreement Checklist—Ohio State Extension http://ohiozone.osu.edu/fr-fact/pdf/005d.pdf

Fixed and Flexible Cash Rental Agreements—North Central Regional Extension—NCR75 http://waushara.uwex.edu/files/2012/10/lease_FixedandFlexCashRentArrang...NCRExt-Pub-25.pdf

Crop Share Rental Arrangements—North Central Regional Extension—NCR 105 www.ag.purdue.edu/counties/montgomery/Rent...l%20Resources/CSorCSCASHRENTALArrang...forFarmPDF.PDF

Tips for Farm Leases and Contracts—ATTRA www.attra.ncat.org/marketing.html


Sustainable Farm Lease Website—Drake University www.sustainablefarmlease.org

Farm Leases—University of Minnesota www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/df2583.html

Improving your Farm Lease Contract—Iowa State Extension www.extension.istate.edu/Publications/FM1564.pdf


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ignited his thinking on the matter. At the time he was farming conventionally. No-till was the first step in his journey to organic. The organic price premiums solidified the decision to transition his farm to organic 9 years ago.

"Always have something green out there," Tom says. Good cover protects the soil between crops and builds soil fertility when incorporated in the soil as a green manure. His first cover crop attempt, planting spring oats, unfortunately wasn’t a great experience for Tom. The cover crop went to seed and the volunteer oats became a weed themselves. But Tom stuck with it, and over time learned to manage cover crops more effectively. For instance, he is now using a heavier disk, which is less likely to skip on the surface when he is shallow disking at two to four inches to terminate the cover.

As Tom has experimented with other cover crops and mixes of multiple species, other benefits have become apparent. When farming conventionally, Tom was often concerned about his own health. He got sick every spring, and was concerned also about using anhydrous with the insecticides in the planter boxes. He was still learning about cover crops. Universities and areas prone to concentrated flow might be of interest. Start simple. While many experienced cover crop users eventually turn to planting diverse mixes, keep it simple at first. Many suggest a cover that is prone to winter-kill for starters, oats for instance, to eliminate the extra management needed for spring termination. Don’t give up. Cover crops might not germinate fully and fail in drought years. Or in a mild winter, the spring termination might be more of a hassle.

The quest to increase farm income often leads farmers to expand their land base. David Biishop, an organic farmer from central Illinois, suggests that “doing more with what you have is better than just getting more land.” Cover crops help Dave achieve an important rule-of-thumb on his farm, “I want to get three incomes from the same field every year,” he says. Considering that his main cash grain crops are annual plants grown in monoculture, cover crops are integral to achieving this goal.

For example: when wheat is the main cash grain crop, red clover will be frost-seeded in the spring. The clover germinates and is ready to grow as soon as the wheat is harvested. Wheat is the first income harvested from the field. In the fall, beef cattle are turned into the field and allowed to graze the clover; most becomes the second income from the field. As the leguminous clover is grazed, the roots slough off into the soil while at the same time beef are spreading manure across the field. Between the clover and the cattle manure, 160 units of nitrogen becomes the third “income stream” or benefit gained for the field that year. While the wheat crop may bring in $360/acre, the benefits of grazing and nitrogen fixation for future crop success easily double the net income.

Using cover crops to improve soil health makes each acre of Dave’s land more productive over time, too. But it didn’t happen right away. The Bishop Farm is on sandy soils than the rich, deep soils that surround him. At first his organic corn fields didn’t yield quite as well as surrounding farms. Over time, though, with the use of cover crops and other organic techniques, his soil has improved dramatically. When Dave transitioned his land to organic in 2004, the soil organic matter was 1.7%. Today, the soil organic matter is 3.5% and Dave’s corn yields match or beat conventional averages for the area.

Advice for Getting Started with Cover Crops

Cover crops are gaining popularity in both organic and conventional farming systems across the Midwest. This is an important step in agricultural sustainability, but it doesn’t come without added management challenges. While there is great potential for both short-term and long-term gains, there’s potential for headaches, too. Here is some advice from Tom and Dave on bringing cover crops into your farming system:

- Decide on your purpose for using cover crops in a given field or part of a field. There are many benefits to cover cropping, we’ve touched on just a few of them here. You will be well served to decide explicitly which benefits you hope to gain. Erosion control, growing nitrogen, providing forage—all can be part of the plan, but you must decide what is most important in each field.
- Find a good cover crop decision tool for your area. Cover crops behave differently in different places, especially concerning the rainfall gradient from east to west in the Corn Belt, and difference in growing calendar from south to north. While some general information is useful, it is important to seek out local specific information as you make cover crop decisions. The Midwest Cover Crops Council has developed a Cover Crop Decision Tool that posts regular data updates useful for 8 Midwest states and Ontario, Canada crops and conditions. www.mccc.msu.edu/selectorNTR.html
- Start slow. There is a learning curve to cover crop management, and it’s best to learn on small acreages rather than starting big on your hands. If you are hoping to get forage value out of your cover crops, perhaps the crop field next to the pasture is a good place to start. If you are looking for erosion control, hill slopes and areas prone to concentrated flow might be best for experimentation.
- Start small. While many experienced cover crop users eventually turn to planting diverse mixes, keep it simple at first. Many suggest a cover that is prone to winter-kill for starters, oats for instance, to eliminate the extra management needed for spring termination.
- Don’t give up. Cover crops might not germinate fully and fail in drought years. Or in a mild winter, the spring termination might be more of a hassle.
- Learn from other farmers through workshops, field days and on-farm demonstration. As you gain experience with cover crops, open your farm so that others can learn from you. There will be workshops on cover crop management at the 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, watch for the Conference Registration Guide in your mailbox soon, or visit www.mosesorganic.org. MOSES also will be planning at least one cover crop field day in 2014.
- Support on-farm research. We are all still learning about cover crops. Universities and farmer groups, such as Practical Farmers of Iowa, are helping to minimize the learning curve. There is nothing more valuable than on-farm research to increase farmer knowledge on proper management of cover crops.

More about cover crops from Practical Farmers of Iowa

Practical Farmers of Iowa provides farmers and agency personnel with information, anecdotes and research about adding cover crops to conventional, organic or other farming systems. Much of the information, and all research results are available on the cover crops section of the PFI website, http://practi-calfarmers.org/programs/Field-Crops_cover.php. This year PFI is offering a new cover crop email discussion list, (for PFI members only), where farmers share stories and research results and ask questions of experienced farmers and service providers.
straw, old hay, mature grass, even goldenrod. Non-composted packs will be 6 to 8 feet deep, almost twice what the composted pack will be at the end of the winter. In these systems the holding area is cleaned out in the spring, the bedding placed into windrows and turned several times to create compost, which is then applied to fields in the fall. Depending on where the bedding material is obtained, simple packs can be more cost-effective, and take less day-to-day management, but do create more material to be managed at the end of the winter.

As excellent systems for managing manure, bedded pack systems will generally qualify for support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with cost-share dollars. The publication “Compost-Bedded Pack Barns in Kentucky” has comprehensive information on all of the considerations in building and managing a bedded pack system. www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id178/id178.pdf. Information about simple bedded packs from Cornell University can be found at http://bit.ly/1bgHzaz.

Jody Padgham is the MOSES Organic Broadcaster Editor.

Specialists: Trademark from page 6

Obtaining your own national trademark involves a lot of searching, documentation and time. You can go through numerous confusing steps on the national trademark website and do it yourself, but I recommend hiring a lawyer that specializes in trademarks. The cost to hire a trademark lawyer to set up a national trademark will be $1,000 or more.

Once your name is trademarked, you must maintain that trademark by periodically informing the state or federal agency that it is still in use. This might be every three, five or ten years depending on the agency. Typically, there is not a fee for renewal of trademarks, but that might change.

Take time to think about potential future endeavors involving your farm name. If you decide you’ll market products under your farm name, do a thorough trademark search and register that name. Consider getting a trademark for your logo at the same time—it can save you time and money to do both trademark searches and applications together.

If you have more questions, you can contact a law firm. Here are two that specialize in working with sustainable and organic farmers in the upper Midwest: http://farerunge.com and http://farmcommons.org/

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Applications due Nov. 15, 2013.

Inside Organics... from page 3

roadside stands, and restaurants and institutions would not find fresh, healthy, local produce for their menus.

Stifling diversification: The proposed regulation, as written, stifles the diversification of farm operations. Many young people settle on the farm with their parents, starting up a different type of operation. The proposed regulation would penalize these operations by combining the income from all activities as one farm unit when assessing if the farm meets the small farm exemption criteria. For example, if a son or daughter starts up a pick-your-own strawberry operation on the farm where the parents have a 100-cow dairy, the total gross income from that farm operation would probably go over the $500,000 exemption limit. This is unfair and removes opportunities for next generation farmers to start up their own operations. This is not the direction we need to go. Instead we need to build opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers if we want to retain vibrant rural communities and maintain a strong population of U.S. farmers to provide our food. Homeland security means home grown food, not food from Brazil or China.

Please take a few moments to address some or all of these issues by submitting comments to the FDA. Ask your customers, friends and family to make comments, too! We do not want to lose the progress we have made at building a stronger food system that provides healthy food for consumers while allowing family farmers to make a living on their land. It is up to us to flood the FDA with strong comments NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 15 and bring change to this proposed regulation. The future of farming is truly at stake.

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition’s Food Safety Modernization Act comment toolkit can be found here: http://sustainableagriculture.net.

Harriet Behar (harriet@mosesorganic.org) is a MOSES Organic Specialist.

Your Comments are Essential to the Future of American Agriculture

Write the FDA no later than November 15, 2013. Better yet, do it today!

The proposed regulation to enact the Food Safety Modernization Act must be significantly changed to protect farm diversity and sustainability. The voice of farmers will be heard if we all work together to change this proposed rule, which ignores many of the small farm protections set out in the FSMA law.

- New food safety regulation costs could drive many farmers out of business!
- Rules stifle farm diversity and cooperative marketing between farmers!
- Restrictions on the use of manure and compost conflict with NOP and pushes the majority of food producers to use synthetic fertilizers!
- Farm-to-School and local food initiatives will become more difficult, if not impossible!

Please read the “Inside Organics” article starting on page 3 for details. Visit the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website for templates and information on how to write a compelling letter.

http://sustainableagriculture.net

Comments may be submitted online, or mailed (a single copy) to: Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061, Rockville, MD 20852.

The organic and sustainable agriculture community must present the message loud and clear to the FDA: these regulations must not be implemented as written!
Have you ever wished that you could spend a whole day learning about organic agriculture? Your dreams can come true—if you attend a course offered through the MOSES Organic University.

Offered the Thursday of the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, these courses cover diverse topics that you can really dig into. Presenters are hand-chosen experts in their fields—farmers and researchers and specialists who are deeply steeped in first-hand knowledge about their topics. Classroom set-up with tables allow for interaction and answers to questions relating to your specific situation. A resource book custom created for each session allows you to continue learning even after the classroom session ends.

These exceptional learning opportunities take place Feb. 27, 2014 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wis. For more details and to register, visit the updated MOSES website at www.mosesorganic.org, or look for the MOSES Conference Registration Guide in your mailbox in late November.

The following is a list of the 2014 Organic University Courses:

**Overcoming Weeds Organically**

–Jeff Moyer

Ask any farmer, “What’s your biggest concern next to money?” The answer almost always is “weeds.” If that is your response as well, here is your chance to learn how to create systems to prevent problems plus how to deal with problems once they arise. We’ll discuss the use of cover crops, crop rotations, tillage and other management systems along with cultivators, flamers, and roller/crimpers as tools in the tool box for managing weeds. Bring your own problems and solutions to add to the discussion.

**Improving Life Below Your Feet: Healthy Soils**–Joel Gruver and Matt Ruark

The complex interaction of biological, physical and chemical processes in the soil affects the health and yields of the crops you grow. By understanding the basics of soil science, you can take steps to continually improve your soil’s fertility and tilth, resulting in a more resilient crop production system with improved management of pests, weeds and disease. Learn how to work in cooperation with the incredible diversity of life below your feet.

**Good Start: Organic Dairy Calves and Replacements**

–Dr. Guy Jodarski and Jim Langmeier

Learn what it takes to get your calves and dairy replacements off to a good start for long-term success. This course covers nutrition, management, housing, and a wide variety of calf-raising systems, including: group feeding and raising, nurse cow groups, extended cow-calf pairing, as well as no-grain feeding and traditional calf-rearing systems. We’ll discuss starting calves on pasture, grazing management and parasite control strategies, plus how to promote health through good organic practices.

**High Tunnel Issues & Opportunities**

–John Biernbaum and Erik Gundacker

As high tunnel use increases, issues and opportunities are emerging. The issues include long-term soil health and fertility, pest and parasite control strategies, plus how to work in cooperation with the incredible diversity of life below your feet.

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how you can put it all together, from irrigation and weed control to employee management and organizing your life. With practical examples and big ideas from farms and businesses around the Midwest, this engaging session will help you understand and control the factors that lead to a profitable market farm that won’t drive you and your family crazy.

**Five Ws of Transitioning Field Crops**
—Carmen Fernholz and Charlie Johnson

In this all-day session we will cover the who, what, where, when and why to take you all the way from the “idea” of transition to preparations for your first inspection after the fields are ready to be certified as organic. We will spend time on rotations, weed management, nutrient sourcing and marketing. You’ll get lots of support and resources to help you through the process from start to first inspection—and beyond.

**Restoration Agriculture: Intro to Farm-Scale Permaculture**—Mark Shepard

In this introductory course, learn the vocabulary and tools available to redesign your farm into a diversified, resilient perennial polyculture with tree crops, livestock, fruits and vegetables, and more. We’ll discuss techniques such as Farm-scale Permaculture design, keyline design for water management, staple food crops, alleycropping, silvopasturing, multi-storied cropping, and how to put it all together into a sustainable and profitable farming system.

**Organic Hog Production: Keys to Success**—Tracy Harper, Tom Frantzen and Joe Scholze

Whether you want to set up a successful farrowing operation or rear just a few feeders each year, you need to master several keys to succeed with hogs. Learn about animal health and welfare, stress management, rationing and reproduction issues. We’ll highlight pasturing and deep bedding systems, along with fencing and housing choices. We’ll also cover options for small-scale direct marketing.

**Understanding Your Farm’s Finances**—Craig Chase and Paul Dietmann

Did your farming operation have a profitable year? Many farmers struggle to answer this important question accurately. We’ll explore which numbers to track and how to compile them to assess the financial health of your operation. Using real-life examples, we will take you from data collection to the development of income and cash flow statements and balance sheets. You’ll learn about numerous valuable tools and analyses. Each participant receives a copy of the MOSES book *Fearless Farm Finances*.

**High Yield Organic Brambles and Berries**—Tom Galazen and Jim Riddle

Everyone loves berries, making them a good choice for a main enterprise or a complementary crop. Learn about a wide range of berries, including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries, plus the less common aronia, elderberry, currants, gooseberries, serviceberries, and honeyberry. We’ll discuss varieties, selection, fertility, weeds, diseases, and pests, including the SWD fruit fly. We’ll cover cultivating and harvest options, marketing, and value-added products. This course is good for both novice and seasoned growers.

We hope to see you at one of these great courses in February!
Study Needs Organic Soil Samples
Researchers with the National Soil Project at North- eastern University need soil samples from organic farms to evaluate soil health and productivity against conventionally managed soils. The National Soil Project is collaborating with The Organic Center on this research with the goal of creating a reference data-base that proves the value of organic management for carbon sequestration and the long-term health of soils. The project needs 0.2 oz. air-dried organic top soil samples. See http://organic-center.org for details and a sample submission form.

Opposing GMO Donors
A consumer petition has drawn more than 125,000 signatures from those demanding that major food and chemical companies stay out of the corporate campaigns opposing voter initiatives to require label- ing of genetically engineered (GE) foods around the country. 65 companies donated more than $45 mil- lion last year to narrowly defeat a labeling initiative (Proposition 37) in California. Nearly half of those companies have contributed $17 million to the “No on 522” campaign in Washington state. For updates, visit the Just Label It website, www.justlabelit.org.

SARE Producer Grants
2014 North Central SARE Farmer Rancher Grant proposals must be submitted by Nov. 14. This is a competitive grants program for farmers and ranchers who want to explore sustainable solutions to prob- lems through on-farm research, demonstration, and education projects. Info at www.northcentral.sare.org.

Success with Farm to School
USDA’s first-ever Farm to School Census shows that schools participating in farm to school activities dur- ing the 2011-2012 school year purchased and served over $350 million in local food. More than half of par- ticipating schools plan to purchase even more local foods in future school years. Forty-three percent of public school districts across the country reported having a farm to school program in place, and another 13 percent of districts plan to launch a program in the near future. www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census.

Water Rocks Website
Water Rocks is a new fun-filled website developed for kids by Iowa Learning Farms with a special three- year grant from the Leopold Center. The website, www.waterrocks.org, has videos, music, treasure hunts and even an online game that lets you plan your own watershed.

Cover Crop Reports
Two new reports from the National Wildlife Founda- tion encourage farmers to turn their fallow season into a growing season with cover crops. Cover crops are used on less than two percent of cropland in the Mississippi River Basin, even though the practice im- proves soil and keeps nutrients in the ground and out of streams. www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Me- dia-Center/Reports/Archive/2013/10-01-13-Count- ing-Cover-Crops.aspx

Legal Guide for Farmers
Guide to Illinois Laws Governing Direct Farm Mar- keting is a Illinois-specific reference produced by the Illinois Stewardship Alliance on taxing, zoning, liabil- ity insurance, cottage food laws, and regulations that pertain to specific foods. www.ilstewards.org
Market specification: Cottage food legislation generally supports sales venues where the pro-
ducer has direct contact with the customer, such as farmers’ markets, community events and
on-farm stands. Wholesale or online sales are typically not included.

Registration: Registration may be as simple as filling out some paperwork (as is the case in
Michigan) or as intense as an on-site kitchen inspection (like Dlugokencky needed in New
York).

Submitting your recipes might be required as part of the registration process. For example,
your state might require the use of specific university extension-approved recipes. Don’t
assume you can sell a product made using Grandma’s 50-year-old pickle recipe under cot-
tage food legislation. Ask questions and adhere to all recipe requirements.

Food safety: “To sell my products direct from my kitchen to my customers is really the ul-
timate form of trust,” Erin Schneider says. She and her husband run Hilltop Community
Farm in LaVille, Wis., and have been selling a variety of high-acid foods approved under the
state’s cottage food legislation, including sweet pickle relish, salsa and jam. “I make sure to
adhere to all the needed safe food-handling procedures, like good hygiene and proper can-
ning procedures; keep all required records and use approved recipes.”

States may designate certain ingredients as “potentially hazardous” and not allow them.
For example, pies, such as banana cream, lemon-
orange meringue or custard, that require refrigeration
to assure safety are generally not included.

“Think about how to frame your questions and
get in the right frame of mind before calling your state agencies for information on legis-
lation and requirements in your state,” Gei-
ger advises. “Remember you are calling an
overtaxed governmental agency. Patience and
kindness on your part can go a long way in get-
ting the information you need.”

3. Get down to business.

Those who’ve always loved making jam or bak-
ing cakes and sharing tasty results with neigh-
bors or donating them to local bake sales must
treat the venture accordingly in the move from
“hobby” to “business.”

“Farmers can grow beautiful produce, but they
do tend to underprice the value of what they are selling,” Cantrell says. “Remember to price
[your] products accurately, taking into account everything from your labor in the field to the
cost of the jars and containers.”

With that in mind, a cottage food business can
profitably address the need to boost to their farm’s bottom
line. Schneider grosses approximately $1,500
to $2,000 in annual sales from her processed
products, and finds her canned goods a partic-
ularly strong seller at winter farmers’ markets,
when folks are looking for holiday gifts.

4. Brand your product.

After you comply with your state’s regula-
tions, there is room to add creative, personal
touches to your products. A colorful label with
a photo of the farm or a ribbon tied around a
jar or package are inexpensive yet distinct and
memorable ways to brand your product.

To increase potential future sales, share ways to
use your product, including your favorite recipes. Offer unexpected uses for your prod-
uct, such as a layer-cake filling or a sweet fruit
dip made with your jam. Give your customers a recipe for homemade croutons, and they may
go home with an extra loaf of your bread.

“We are able to sell approved canned goods dur-
ing local holiday fairs and community events,”
Schneider says. “Producing and selling these
canned goods is a win-win for us: We have an
added income source that keeps us diversified,
but it also helps support our bigger mission of
helping our members and community eat sea-
sonally year-round.”

5. Grow, if you want to.

At its core, cottage food legislation intends to
help micro food businesses launch without the cost of a commercial kitchen. You’re the one
managing and directing your business and shaping its future. If you have a consistent,
quality product and loyal customer base, it’s possible that your volume might outgrow what
your state’s regulations will let you produce in
your home kitchen.

Dorothy Stainbrook of Forest Lake, Minn.,
ranto into that problem after she started Heath-
Glen Farm in 1998. “I wanted HeathGlen to be
more than a hobby; I wanted to make a living
on the farm,” Stainbrook explains. “I got into
fruit preserves because I wanted to develop a
part of the farm business that would take me
through the whole year financially, especially
the winter months.”

Taking advantage of her garden abundance and
Minnesota’s cottage food laws, Stainbrook
started making fruit preserves to sell at the St.
Paul Farmers’ Market.

“I did a ton of sampling at the market to get
feedback from customers on what they liked
and developed a unique distinction by keeping
the sugar as low as I can, which really accents
the fresh-fruit flavor,” she says.

Stainbrook also tapped into her former bar-
tending expertise and blended liqueurs into the
preserves to further enhance the fruit fla-
vor. Volume and sales snowballed to the point
that Stainbrook eventually needed to build her
own on-farm commercial kitchen.

“My preserve business succeeded because I could start out processing at home,” Stainbrook
adds. “As a farmer, I didn’t have the money or
the time resources to go into the city and build
a commercial kitchen when I got started. I found
Minnesota’s laws very straightforward and
easy to understand.” Even when Stainbrook
eventually needed to build her own commercial
kitchen, she remained committed to building it
on-farm and continued to work at home, avoid-
ing the fuel costs and the need to lug equip-
ment and product to an off-farm setup.

6. Raise your voice.

The motivation behind every state’s cottage
food legislation comes from individual citizens
and grassroots organizations passionate about
supporting home-based food businesses. If
your state does not have such laws currently
on the books, consider taking a leadership role
to make it happen. Even if your state does have
legislation in place, be aware those laws can
change at any time—whether expanding cot-
tage food opportunities or scaling them back.

Questions and get involved.

“After curious why my New York regulations do
not allow me to include fruits or vegetables in
my breads,” Dlugokencky says. “During the
winter when I have more time, I want to in-
vestigate this further and perhaps see what it
would take to change that. I would love to do
something like zucchini bread and showcase
more of what I grow on the farm in my baking.”

Remember, legislators need your eyes and ears
on the farm to help inform their decision-mak-
ing.

The cottage food movement represents more than
just a diversified farm-income stream. By
growing the ingredients and processing these
items on your farm, you’re directly contribut-
ing to growing the local-food movement and in-
creasing the opportunities for your neighbors
to support community agriculture, one jam jar
or bread loaf at a time.

Lisa Kivirist is the co-author of Farmstead Chef
(New Society Publishing, 2011), along with the
award-winning ECopreneuring (New Soci-
ey Publishing, 2009) and Rural Renaissance
(New Society Publishing, 2009). She and her
family run Inn Serendipity bed-and-breakfast
on their Wisconsin farm, completely powered by
the wind and sun. Kivirist also leads the
MOSES Rural Women’s Project.

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April 2012 issue of Hobby Farm Home (www.
hobbyfarmhome.com). Adapted from the origi-
nal.

Wisconsin Law Update

Cottage foodies in Wisconsin are on the edge
of their seats as they watch the progress of a
proposed “Cookie Bill” amendment to the suc-
cessful three-year-old “Pickle Bill.” The amend-
ment, authored by Janis Ringhand (D-Evan-
ville) and Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg), passed
out of committee in September, is expected to
reach the floor of the state Assembly and then
the Senate soon. Wisconsin residents inter-
ested in the bill should call their state senators
and representatives and ask them to sign on as
cosponsors in September, as the more cospon-
sors, the more likely the bill will move along
through the legislative process.

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Equipment


For Sale: Certified organic alfalfa and alfalfa/grass hay, 4’ X 5’ tightly wrapped round bales, 1st & 2nd crop. Harvested and baled without rain. Forage tests available upon request, 190 tons total. Trucking arranged, FOB farm. Gerald, 715-473-2154 or medow@medowfarmsorganic.com.

For Sale: Tested & certified organic: large square alfalfa-grass bales, large round alfalfa-grass bales, small square alfalfa-grass bales, large round oat straw bales. Mark Tjelmeland, Central Iowa, 515-336-0151.


For Sale: Certified organic alfalfa and alfalfa/grass, east central Iowa. Delivery available. Scott, 563-343-5434 or sarochaufarms@live.com.

Opportunities

Looking to work on the cutting edge of grass-fed beef production? Grass Run Farms, producer and wholesaler of 100% grass fed beef, seeks a beef production manager for the coordination and execution of its grass-fed beef finishing and custom grazing operations, to be based in/near Dorchester, Iowa. This position is an opportunity to manage and build many enterprises within our grass-fed beef production company. We’re looking for someone with a fondational expertise in cattle production and a desire to be accountable for the growth of a business. Previous employment in the cattle industry, animal nutrition and/or business management preferred. Visit www.grassrunfarms.com/jobs for more information and to apply.

For Sale or Rent: Land in Southwest WI. Not sprayed in over 8 years. Over 22 acres, 8 acres tiltable. Small creek. Perfect for grazing animals, grain, or small areas of vegetables. $58,000 asking price. Contact Katie 612-824-1140 or Katie.sherman@gmail.com.

Opportunity: We are a certified organic, pasture-based dairy farm in SE Wisconsin, looking for a sharemilking couple, starting in February of 2014. Call or e-mail for more information: Altfrid and Sue Krusenbaum, 262-642-7312, krusen@kusengrass-farms.com.

Miscellaneous

For Sale: Surplus insulated glass – perfect for greenhouses, solar homes, sunrooms or ag buildings. Also hardwood butcher block 30”x100”x1-1/8” for sustainable countertops or bar tops. Oak, ash, cherry, maple, mahogany from $129. www.kissourglass.com or 715-639-3762 before 9 p.m. Joe Bacon. Arctic Glass since 1979!

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Organic Commodity Pricing Resources

Organic Grain Prices
National Organic Grain and Feedstuffs Report (has been discontinued to the lack of a 2013 Farm Bill)
CROPP Cooperative Grower Pool/Organic Trader Newsletter
www.farmers.coop/feed-program/organic-trader/ 1-888-809-9297
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Nov 5, Ashland, Wis.
Nov 6, Black River Falls, Wis.
Nov 7, Green Bay, Wis.
Nov 8, Madison, Wis.
Join Wis. DATCP’s Carl Rainey to learn about practical strategies for testing your business idea in the marketplace, hear examples of other local food business start-ups, and gain knowledge in the principles of lean business strategies. http://i1.usa.gov/1fghonic

Nov. 6-8, Cultivating Our Food, Farms and Future: 4th National Conference for Women in Sustainable Agriculture, Des Moines, Iowa.
Gather with women farmers, advocates and landowners from across the US engaged in healthy food and farming for a unique mix of sharing, learning, field tours, and seasonal food from Midwest women farmers! http://wfan.org or 515-460-2477

Nov. 8-10, 14th Annual Fall Harvest Gathering / For Women in Sustainable Ag, Whalen, Minn.
Join a group of like-minded women for an intimate gathering of sharing and delving into the experiences of other women and their lives and operations on their farms or other parts of the food system. http://wfan.org or 515-460-2477

Soils 101 Workshop

Nov. 13, Winona, Minn.
Nov. 14, Arlington, Minn.
Nov. 19, Rogers, Minn.
An intensive, 8-hour class that provides a hands-on teaching environment for producers who want to learn more about the soils they farm. Understand soil chemical, biological and physical characteristics, to help manage soil quality, improve soil structure, decrease tillage operations and understand nutrient cycles in the soil. http://bit.ly/1TOALSJ

Nov. 15-16, (La Crosse, Wis.) or Dec. 6-7, (East Troy, Wis.) with a follow up meeting on Jan 10 (Prairie du Sac, Wis.), Fearless Farm Finances: Farm Financial Management Demystified. This three-day course will help you develop a comfort and understanding of the basics of farm financial management. Participants will receive a copy of the popular MOSES book Fearless Farm Finances. Choose the date and location best for you. Offered by MOSES, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, University of Wis. Extension and Badgerland Financial. More at www.mosesorganic.org/finmenu.html or 715-779-5775

Nov. 17-18, Iowa Organic Conference, Iowa City, Iowa.
An event directed towards organic and conventional students who want to learn more about science-based enterprise development and more. Keynote by Mark Kastel, Comucopia Institute. www.rivercountryrd.com 715-579-5229

Workshops and presentations on marketing, food safety, and their lives and operations on their farms or other parts of the food system. http://bit.ly/1TOALSJ

Jan. 15-18, Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference, Mobile, Ala. The 23rd annual Southern SAWG conference is for serious organic and sustainable producers, farm to school participants, urban farmers or those interested in creating more vibrant community food systems. http://sawg.org/

Jan 23-24, 15th Annual Midwest Value-Added Agriculture Conference, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. The conference is for serious organic and sustainable producers, farm to school participants, urban farmers or those interested in creating more vibrant community food systems. http://sawg.org/

Dec 2 through March 25, Legal Webinar Series

Farm Commons, a nonprofit organization, is hosting eight free webinars this winter on a variety of legal issues faced by farmers who sell direct to consumers. www.farmcommons.org/webinars, 608-616-5319.

Dec. 3-6, Understanding the Legalities of Your Business, Multiple Locations in Wis. Rachel Armstrong of Farm Commons and Courtney Bemer from the UW-Center for Cooperatives will address the legal issues involved with starting and running your own food or farm business in an interactive setting. http://1.usa.gov/17OBIPS


Jan. 10-11, Minnesota Organic Conference, St. Cloud, Minn. Lots of great food and fun with your fellow Minn. organic enthusiasts. www.mda.state.mn.us/food/ organic/conference.aspx 651-201-6012

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Workshops and presentations on marketing, food safety, enterprise development and more. Keynote by Mark Kastel, Comucopia Institute. www.rivercountryrd.com 715-579-5229


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