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2013 MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year:
Charlie Johnson
By Jody Padgham

Volume 21 · Number 2
March - April 2013

Increase Tomato Plant Vigor and Yield through Grafting
By Jody Padgham

P.O. Box 339
Spring Valley, WI 54767

The Bi-Monthly Periodical of the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service

Tomeatoes on page 14
News From MOSES

Happy almost spring, everyone. I am glad that the birds know that spring is coming, it helps to hear their cheerful voices on these long-lasting snowy days.

Although I am writing this week before the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, you are most likely reading it after. I hope that you were able to join myself and the other 3,000+ fricklers in La Crosse, but if not, hope that you can plan to join us next year. We always hear that the camaraderie, learning and fun gives a very needed boost to inspire folks onto the final push to the growing season.

Once again we have a lot of great content in this issue to help you make decisions and succeed at your farming business. We have introduced two new regular features: “Ask a Specialist” with answers to common questions from our three organic specialists, and “New Farmer Corner.” If you have a question you’d like the specialists to answer, let us know. See “Ask the Specialist” on page 10.

We highlight articles specific for new organic farmers in the “New Farmer Corner” on page 11. Although most of our content is generally appropriate for both new and experienced farmers, in this corner you can find articles specifically targeted to those new to the land. Again, please send any suggestions to us at jody@mosesorganic.org.

Enjoy the spring, Jody Padgham, Editor

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Information about the annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference
If you’d like to change what you get by email from us, email info@mosesorganic.org or call us at 715-778-5775.

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Editor
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MOSES will publicize events that are of interest or relevance to our community. To submit an event, go online to http://www.mosesorganic.org/calendar or e-mail a notice to info@mosesorganic.org. We reserve the right to deny any submitted event for any reason.

The Organic Broadcaster™ is a trade-marked bimonthly newspaper of the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), a nonprofit organization working in the Upper Midwest to promote sustainable organic agriculture. Opinions expressed in the Organic Broadcaster are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publishers. We do not endorse the products of any advertiser, but appropriate advertising. We reserve the right to change our advertising policy.

Submissions, inquiries, ads, and calendar items may be mailed to: MOSES, P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, Wisconsin, 54767. Relevant calendar items will be printed without charge, space permitting.

Please contact us for a writer’s guide. MOSES, P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, WI 54767 (715) 778-5775 broadcaster@mosesorganic.org www.mosesorganic.org

SAVE PAPER
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It seems almost every month over the past few years there has been a large recall of fresh produce, meat or processed foods due to the presence of microbiological health hazards. Some have had limited effect, and others have caused numerous deaths, sicknesses and long-term health problems for people located across the U.S. who consumed tainted foods distributed by one large food handler or another.

The government’s response to this serious problem resulted in the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) by Congress more than two years ago. In January 2013, the FDA released its proposed regulations to implement that law. These regulations consist of numerous interrelated parts outlined in over 1,500 pages of text.

Typically, consumers have been on the same side of small-scale, organic, and local foods, but this law has challenged these diverse interest groups to find common ground. Consumer groups want the strictest rules possible, but those producing the food say it is just not that simple.

The FMCSA Offered Fair Guidance
There were some “wins” for sustainable and organic farmers in the FSMA. The law included some exemptions to strict food handling documentation and traceability requirements for small-scale farms, especially those that sell their products within a narrow geographic area. In addition, the law includes requirements to provide training for safe food handling, giving smaller-scale producers the knowledge to do things right, protecting their customers from illness and farmers from liability if their food does cause illness.

The law also stated that these food safety regulations should not directly oppose organic regulations. Organic producers should have the same market access as all other food producers, and not be put in the difficult position of trying to meet two contradictory laws.

Under Review
MOSES is working with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the National Organic Coalition to review the proposed regulations. We will post action alerts on our website before the May 16, 2013 deadline for public comment on these proposed food safety regulations. http://www.mosesorganic.org/actionalerts.html.

Will a “one-size-fits-all” nationwide regulation damage the economic viability of small and mid-sized operations...

Although at the writing of this article, I have not read all 1,500+ pages, there are some areas of concern that have already arisen. Parts of the regulation need more scrutiny to ensure they are consistent with each other.

Many areas of the rule contain vague language, giving the FDA and its inspectors great leeway in how the regulation might be enforced out in the countryside. There is concern that different regions of the country will have differing interpretations, as well as uneven enforcement within states.

There could be a variety of unfunded mandates, including a possible requirement that at least one person on every farm have a specific type of food safety training. There are numerous sections that deal with both wildlife and domestic animals on the farm, and these need to be carefully reviewed to make sure that folks who use draft horses will still be allowed this type of production.

We also must make sure that our agricultural working lands allow for wildlife habitat, both for the health of our environment as well as the quality of life and recreational opportunities these provide to the public. In the past few years farms in California took on a “scorched earth” type management style, tearing out wildlife habitat feared to be a potential source of contamination, a judgment based on fear rather than fact. Promoting biodiversity generally provides protections rather than risks.

The proposed regulations have a requirement that human-consumed food not be harvested sooner than nine months after the application of manure. This is a much longer time than required by organic regulations, although the wording is somewhat different. The organic community should be able to present a strong challenge to this requirement, using both our decade of experience as well as science-based statistics.

There are some documentation requirements that appear to place a significant burden on operations, no matter their size. Depending on how they are finally implemented, these could significantly stifle the rapidly growing local food movement, where food is produced by small and mid-sized producers.

The regulations not only affect on-farm production, but also all food processing facilities. This could lessen the availability of scale-appropriate and regionally located processing facilities that allow individual farmers to sell processed meats and other foods directly to consumers.

Concerns for Family-Scale Farms
Everyone can agree that we want the food we sell and/or consume to be free of sickness-causing pathogens. All sizes and types of operations can accomplish this task. Will a “one-size-fits-all” nationwide regulation...
New Farmers Find Loan Support From ‘Old’ Source
By Lisa Kivirist

While beginning farmers make up the heart of the growth in organic and sustainable agriculture, a big hurdle to launching these operations remains lack of capital. Young farmers have immeasurable amounts of enthusiasm and commitment, but lack the financial resources to start their own operation. Increasingly, today’s small-scale, diversified and locally-focused farm businesses are finding strong partnerships and funding opportunities through one of rural America’s more traditional farming resources: the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The FSA, with offices throughout the Mid-west and the country, is the department under the USDA that supports farmers and ranchers and other partners in a variety of agricultural programs, including various farm loans. While this agency supports all types of agriculture, including large-scale commodity operations, more beginning farmers within the sustainable community are connecting with and finding strong support and assistance within FSA.

“We’ve worked hard within the FSA toward outreach to and support for all types of agriculture, particularly young and beginning farmers championing the growing organic and sustainable food movement,” explains Sheri Houtakker, the FSA Farm Loan Manager covering six counties in northwest Wisconsin. Houtakker has worked for the FSA for over 20 years, and also runs a sheep operation with her husband, working towards organic certification. “Beginning farmers are a key priority to the FSA, and thereby receive organic certification. “Beginning farmers are a key priority to the FSA, and thereby receive organic certification. ‘We’ve worked hard within the FSA toward outreach to and support for all types of agriculture, particularly young and beginning farmers championing the growing organic and sustainable food movement,’ explains Sheri Houtakker, the FSA Farm Loan Manager covering six counties in northwest Wisconsin. Houtakker has worked for the FSA for over 20 years, and also runs a sheep operation with her husband, working towards organic certification. ‘Beginning farmers are a key priority to the FSA, and thereby receive organic certification. “Beginning farmers are a key priority to the FSA, and thereby receive organic certification. “Beginning farmers are a key priority to the FSA, and thereby receive organic certification.

The FSA offers a portfolio of various loan programs, both for farm purchase and capital acquisition. There are three key distinctions of FSA loans:

1. Farmers Denied Traditional Credit
The FSA calls itself the “lender of first opportunity.” In essence this means these loan programs are intended for farmers who are unable to obtain a loan through a traditional bank because of things like poor credit history or lack of the required down payment. If a bank will give you the full loan to purchase and start your farm operation, you probably won’t qualify for an FSA loan.

2. Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Groups
 Applicants from minority farmer groups that are classified as “Socially Disadvantaged (SDA)” groups by the USDA receive priority status. SDA farmers include groups like African Americans, Hispanic, Native Americans, women and others who, for various reasons, have been discriminated against in the past.

3. Extremely Favorable Interest Rate and Terms
One big appeal of FSA loans is a low interest rate and more appealing terms than regular banks—as low as 1 to 2 percent. The FSA has flexibility to work with young farmers who do not have the savings toward a down payment.

Additionally, the FSA understands and supports farm businesses from a loan payment perspective. There is flexibility on payment schedule. The FSA does not require equal monthly payments, rather can base payments on the type of enterprise and when produce or livestock is sold. For those interested in exploring the possibility of an FSA loan, here are a few things to keep in mind:

• Acquire Related Experience
“FSA beginning farmer loans require a minimum of three years experience in the field you are going into,” Houtakker clarifies. “The FSA has limited funds that come directly from taxpayers’ dollars, so it is very important that we steward these funds wisely and ensure beginning farmers have a portfolio of various related education, particularly hands-on experience.”

To better work with small-scale, diversified young farmers, the FSA has broadened the agency’s definition of what qualifies as “experience.” They now look beyond a two-year degree at an agriculture college to include this “portfolio” idea of amassing various experiences. These can include programs like the Land Stewardship Project’s Farm Beginnings™ Program, Extension’s Annie’s Project, on-line curriculum, internship and apprentice programs (particularly with management responsibilities), the MOSES Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring program and attending events like the MOSES Conference. The key is to create and customize an “experience portfolio” based on what it is you desire to do, developing your business plan as part of the process.

“As we compiled our experience for the FSA loan application, we realized the diversity of experiences we had racked up over 10 years, and how important it all collectively is to our future business success,” offers Vanessa Herald. She and her partner, Nikki Lennart, are aspiring young farmers in their 30s currently going through the FSA loan process as they look for property to start their diversified farm operation in south central Wisconsin. They’d like to raise goats, heritage pigs and have fruit orchards. “Any earlier and we honestly would not have been ready,” Herald adds.

Vanessa Herald and Nikki Lennart’s experience included things like participating in the University of Wisconsin School for Beginning Farmers and attending various related education, particularly hands-on experience.”

To FSA on page 13
MOSES Conference Sheds Light on New Books!

Although media might make us think that books are becoming passé, we sure aren’t seeing that trend in the organic farming world. Several authors of new books presented at the 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference.

Conference attendees could purchase the new books at the MOSES Conference Bookstore. We hope to also offer these soon on the online MOSES Bookstore. Check out this great new collection of titles:

Feeding Pasture-Raised Poultry, by Jeff Mattocks, 100 pages, February 2013, $11.95. Jeff Mattocks, animal nutritionist at the Fertrell Company, has collected the wisdom of his many years of work with pastured poultry producers into this great little book. Whether you grind your own feed or want to be sure the local mill is preparing a ration that is exactly what your birds need, you’ll find this book offers a wide base of information and several useful tools to help.

Musings of an Old Country Vet, by Dr. Paul Dettloff, DVM. 225 pages. 2013. $38.50 A collection of thoughts, musings, poems and cartoons from over 45 years of being a country vet.

Natural Beekeeping, 2nd Edition: Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture, by Ross Conrad, 275 pages. March 2013, $34.95. Revised and updated with new resources and full-color photos throughout, Natural Beekeeping offers all the latest information in a book that has already proven invaluable for organic beekeepers. The new edition offers the same holistic, sensible alternative to conventional chemical practices with a program of natural hive management, but offers new sections on a wide range of subjects.

The Organic Seed Grower, A Farmer’s Guide to Vegetable Seed Production, by John Navazio, 390 pages, December 2012, $49.95. The Organic Seed Grower is a comprehensive manual for the serious vegetable grower interested in growing high-quality seeds using organic farming practices. For both serious home seed savers and diversified small-scale farmers who want to learn the necessary steps involved in successfully producing a commercial seed crop organically.

Restoration Agriculture, by Mark Shepard, 344 pages, January 2013, $30. Restoration Agriculture explains how we can have all of the benefits of natural, perennial ecosystems and create agricultural systems that imitate nature in form and function while still providing for your food, building, fuel and many other needs—in your own backyard, farm or ranch. This book, based on real-world practices, presents an alternative to the agricultural system of eradication and offers exciting hope for our future.

We also have several good books published within the last few years by folks who presented at this year’s MOSES Organic Farming Conference:

Advancing Biological Farming, by Gary Zimmer and Leilani Zimmer-Durand, 242 pages, 2011, $25. This book offers invaluable scientific support for committed organic farmers as well as conventional farmers who’d like to reduce chemical inputs and use natural processes to their advantage. Advancing Biological Farming updates and expands upon Gary Zimmer’s classic, The Biological Farmer.

Farmstead Chef, by John Ivanko and Lisa Kivirist, 256 pages, October 2010, $24. Re-discover homegrown and homemade cooking, preserving the harvest, stocking the pantry and building local community around your kitchen table. Lisa and John launch a return to our roots of independence, self-sufficiency and frugality, blended with the spice of modern living for the kitchen gardener, urban homesteader and farmstead chef in us all. This book includes recipes and stories to nourish and inspire.

Fearless Farm Finances: Financial Management Demystified, 266 pages, February 2012, $19.95. Published by MOSES and written by a team of authors including Chris Blanchard, Paul Dietmann, Craig Chase and editor Jody Padgham, this book simplifies the concepts and techniques of successful farm financial management, from setting up data collection systems and designing a QuickBooks bookkeeping program to understanding standard financial statements such as the balance sheet and income statement. Numerous examples from a diversity of working farms are used.

Attracting Native Pollinators: The Xerces Society Guide, by Xerces Society staff. 384 pages, February 2011, $29.95. A comprehensive guidebook on how to protect and encourage the activity of the native pollinators of North America. This book presents positive solutions to provide bountiful harvests on farms and gardens, maintain healthy plant communities in wildlands, provide food for wildlife, and beautify the landscape with flowers.

Organic No-Till Farming, by Jeff Moyer, 204 pages, March 2011, $28. Organic No-Till offers a map to an organic farming system that limits tillage, reduces labor, and improves soil structure. Based on the latest research by pioneering agriculturists, this book offers new technologies and tools based on sound biological principles, making it possible to reduce and even eliminate tillage. Field-tested over many seasons, these methods make cover crops into a source of fertility as well as a tool for weed management.

The Seasons on Henry’s Farm: A Year of Food and Life on a Sustainable Farm, by Terra Brockman, 310 pages, December 2010, $17. Terra Brockman tells the story of her family’s five generations of farmers—which is a year-long memoir (with recipes) that takes readers through each season of life on the farm.

Turn Here Sweet Corn, by Atina Diffley, 335 pages, March 2012, $24.95. “Atina Diffley’s compelling account of her life as a Minnesota organic farmer is deeply moving, not only from a personal standpoint, but also from the political. Diffley reveals the evident difficulties of small-scale organic farming, but is inspirational about its value to people and the planet.”—Marion Nestle, author of What to Eat.

We are blessed by many knowledgeable and talented authors in our organic world, including several novelists and others not mentioned in this review. Let’s support these important authors by buying their books!”

Reviews compiled by Jody Padgham, Organic Broadcaster editor.

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Is it Time to Reevaluate your Business Structure?

By Rachel Armstrong

Chances are, your farm is organized as a sole proprietorship, just like 94% of all farms surveyed in 2007.

Although there is comfort in joining the ranks of other farmers, farmers themselves are being left behind by the vast majority of non-farm businesses that are choosing the better liability protection offered by other incorporation structures. This article takes a look at the differences between the various business entities, discusses the conversion process, and provides a few additional resources for farmers to move forward in shielding their personal property from farm liabilities.

Choosing the right business structure for your farm operation is an important decision because it determines the scope of the farm’s liability and the farm’s ownership composition. Most business entities are quite simple to establish and operate, although some are easier than others. Further, whether the farm is organized as a Limited Liability Company (an LLC) or a corporation, a farmer can achieve the same effective tax responsibility as if the farm were a sole proprietorship. This makes the choice to convert a little easier by eliminating taxes as one potential factor.

For a busy new farmer, the sole proprietorship offers one important benefit: it’s simple to establish. Unlike a limited liability company or corporation, one piece of paperwork generally does the job. Because it’s generally easier to understand legal issues with a concrete example, I’ll use my fictional farmer, Nell, to explain. If Nell wants to start a sole proprietorship, all she needs to do is register her trade name, generally speaking. In most states, the Secretary of State’s office handles this duty with a convenient online form.

In exchange for its simplicity, the sole proprietorship has a serious drawback. In a sole proprietorship, there is no difference between the business owner and the business. If, for example, a buyer writes a check payable to Nell or her farm, it’s all the same thing. This lack of distinction comes with a problematic side. If someone has a claim against Nell or the business, then there’s no distinction between the farm’s assets and Nell’s personal assets in that case either. From debt collection to liabilities, such as a school tour on the farm that results in a kid with a broken leg, Nell could end up with a liability judgment satisfied with both the farm’s assets and her personal property.

By contrast, an LLC and a corporation protects personal assets from business liabilities under normal circumstances. Both LLCs and corporations offer the same level of protection. The biggest difference between a corporation and an LLC is that corporations have more formal requirements. The business must elect officers, hold meetings, and comply with specific shareholder requirements. These responsibilities are not particularly burdensome, but they can be difficult to remember.

The LLC is now the small business structure of choice since its creation in the 1990s. State legislators created this option to combine the convenience of sole proprietorship with the protection of a corporation. As a result, the LLC has very few paperwork obligations and offers personal liability protection. However, because it is relatively new, and because farmers tend to learn about starting a business from other farmers, many aren’t familiar with this entity.

Whether or not an LLC is the right choice for a specific farm is a careful decision that can’t be made based on this article alone (the conversion from a corporation to an LLC is a particular caution), but after that decision is made, the process to convert is quite simple. An LLC is created by filing articles of organization with the state. As a result, the LLC has very few paperwork obligations and offers personal liability protection. However, because it is relatively new, and because farmers tend to learn about starting a business from other farmers, many aren’t familiar with this entity.

Because an LLC is an exceptionally flexible business entity, and a farmer can structure ownership in a variety of ways, it is especially important that someone like Nell write an operating agreement to govern the business.

Creating an LLC (or a corporation) isn’t the only thing required to protect personal assets. The farm needs to follow through by acting as if there is a distinction between business and personal. To take Nell’s example, she shows a distinction between herself and her business by never mixing personal and business accounts. When Nell takes in CSA sales, that money gets posted to her farm business account, not her personal checking account. When Nell wants to buy some personal groceries or new clothes, she pays from her personal account.

For a farmer used to paying with whatever credit card is handy, the obligation to distinguish between farm and personal assets can be a hassle. It might dissuade some farmers from choosing an LLC or a corporation. But, there is a plus side for the farmer that chooses the extra time and attention that an LLC or corporation might require. An accounting system that distinguishes between person and farm is very helpful in analyzing revenues and expenses or in considering a new crop or food venture. It also might make it easier for the farmer’s accountant to help optimize the farm’s tax situation.

Farming might want to take a moment this tax season to reevaluate their structure and ponder whether a different entity may better suit the farm’s objectives. The Farm Commons website has more information on several of the most common business entities and details on the LLC conversion process (www.farmcommons.org). A sample LLC operating agreement is also available from Farm Commons by request.

Disclaimer: This article does not provide legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship between the reader and author. Important information may be excluded in the interest of space or clarity. Always consult an attorney regarding your specific situation.

Rachel Armstrong is the Executive Director of Farm Commons, a nonprofit legal organization dedicated to farmers. 608-616-5319
Most of us have the perception that input costs rose slowly and steadily through 2006 before taking a big jump in 2007 due to major increases in the prices of inputs directly related to energy costs. Grain-price increases had the most impact on livestock and dairy producers. This jolt caused dairy farmers—especially grazing and organic farms—to question if it pays to feed grain to dairy cows. Another perception among dairy graziers is that their feed costs are substantially lower than those for confinement herds. There is also the belief that the “grazing advantage” increased with the 2006-2007 grain-price jolt.

Are these perceptions supported by evidence? In an attempt to find out, data was analyzed from Wisconsin confinement and grazing herds from 1995 through 2010, and organic farms from 1999 to 2010, on a hundredweight (cwt.-sold) basis.

This study used the Wisconsin Agricultural Financial Advisor (AgFA) data set. AgFA is a sample of Wisconsin dairy farms from which financial and production data are collected annually. Data were originally collected by a number of providers: Lakeshore and Fox Valley Management Association, Wisconsin Farm and Business Management Inc., other independent consultants, UW-Extension agricultural agents, Wisconsin Technical College System instructors and Center for Dairy Profitability staff. Personnel affiliated with these associations helped individual farm managers reconcile their financial data.

The grazing data included 12 to 41 observations per year. Until 2006, a few organic graziers were included in the grazing group, but they represented 25% of the grazing herds in 2004 and 2005, and less than 14% in any previous year. The annual average grazing herd size ranged from 50 to 67 cows. The confinement herd summaries ranged from 441 to 928 farms per year, with annual average herd size ranging from 76 to 172 cows. The organic herd summaries ranged from 6 to 17 herds with an annual average herd size of 48 to 76 cows. Not all organic herds were intensive graziers.

AgFA categorizes expenses much like they are categorized on Federal Tax Schedule F. Since many Wisconsin dairy farms attempt to raise most of their feed, and since few farms do enterprise accounting, the routine AgFA summaries don’t attempt to provide a total feed cost number. However, one can do a reasonable job of estimating feed costs for Wisconsin dairy farms from the AgFA data using the following steps.

Purchased feed cost was figured first. Next came direct feed raising costs, which include chemicals, custom machine work, fertilizer and lime, gas, fuel and oil, seeds, plants and an “other crop expense” category. Finally, indirect feed raising costs were estimated by taking half of the expenses for interest, non-livestock depreciation, paid labor compensation, rent and repairs. Combined, these costs are called “estimated feed costs.” No opportunity costs were included in this calculation.

Net Farm Income from Operations (NFIFO) was also calculated by subtracting from gross income all costs, with the exceptions of family labor and management (both paid and unpaid), along with equity capital. NFIFO thus represents the return to equity and family labor and management.

The accompanying graphs tell much of the story. Here are some of the highlights:

1. Estimated feed costs/cwt. sold were always highest for organic herds and usually lowest (not by much) for grazing herds with confinement in between. Estimated feed costs/cwt. sold trended upward throughout the period for all groups.

2. The data suggest that the changes in input costs from 2006 to 2010 may not favor either system (based on NFIFO per cwt. sold). The 12-year estimated feed cost per hundredweight sold was $8.38 for graziers, $8.65 for confinement, and $11.01 for organic. The same values for 2006 to 2010 were $10.10, $10.24, and $13.09 for grazing, confinement and organic respectively. The organic feed cost increased a bit more in absolute terms, but the percent increase was similar. The feed cost number is probably higher than what many graziers might have thought was the case. Pounds of milk sold per cow appears to play a large role in this outcome. Since 1999, average milk sold per cow increased by about 2400 lbs. for the confinement group, about 1700 lbs. for graziers, and actually decreased 1,832 lbs. for organic herds. High production doesn’t guarantee profitability, but low production is even less of a guarantee.

3. For the 12 years, estimated feed costs used 47.32% of the income on confinement farms,
Farmer of the Year... from page 1

Proper care of the land begins with a strict six-year crop rotation: two years of hay, one each of soybeans and corn, soybeans again and then a planting of oats with alfalfa. Rotations help support soil fertility and provide weed control. Weeds are also managed through timely planting and mechanical management, including early tillage to flush and destroy weeds. Favored equipment includes an Einbock tine weeder and a rotary hoe.

Charlie claims to probably spend more time on a row cultivator than any other operator in his county. Cover crops, such as winter rye into soybeans, are used to increase organic matter, currently at 3.5%, improve soil tilth and also help with weed control. Alfalfa in the rotation has done away with any thatch in the fields, Charlie claims. The farm also relies on “Walking Herbicide”—local high school students, family members and a custom crew that scout and hand-pull weeds—keeping the weed seed bank low.

The diverse crops are sold though National Farmer’s Organization (NFO) Organics, a member of the Organic Farmers’ Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM). The Johnsons appreciate the benefits of collective marketing, including access to a steady and reliable market outlet with good service and dependable payments back to the farm. Soybeans are feed grade, and generally used for soynuts or soymilk. Corn, soybeans and oats have recently been sold for livestock feed, to help service high demand.

Two hundred head of Black Angus-Gelbvich cross beef are maintained in the farm’s cow-calf operation. Cattle are rotationally grazed in paddocks through 10-day rotations on 400 to 500 acres of pasture. “The animals take care of the land and the land takes care of the animals,” the farm brochure states. Cows are divided up into small groups in the summer, small groups mean fewer flies and health issues, Charlie says. The farm brochure restates a commitment to community, the Johnsons are involved in many organizations and several boards, including Dakota Rural Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM). The Johnsons appreciate the benefits of collective marketing, including access to a steady and reliable market outlet with good service and dependable payments back to the farm. Soybeans are feed grade, and generally used for soynuts or soymilk. Corn, soybeans and oats have recently been sold for livestock feed, to help service high demand.

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Charlie closely follows NRCS regulations to ensure not to damage the wetlands on the farm. Hundreds of trees have been planted, and several dams and dugouts have been created, supporting birds and other wildlife. Crop fields are small for the area—the largest is 60 acres—meaning more field edges and ecosystem diversity.

Proper care of the land begins with a strict six-year crop rotation: two years of hay, one each of soybeans and corn, soybeans again and then a planting of oats with alfalfa. Rotations help support soil fertility and provide weed control. Weeds are also managed through timely planting and mechanical management, including early tillage to flush and destroy weeds. Favored equipment includes an Einbock tine weeder and a rotary hoe.

The Johnsons excel in land stewardship and conservation practices. The farm was honored in 1996 by the South Dakota Soil and Water Conservation Society for its conservation efforts. Numerous tree belts, sloughs, meadows and grass waterways are located throughout the farm. A 10-acre greenway is maintained on one farm where five different watersheds are drained. During spring melt, a lot of water comes through, creating flood and erosion potential, which is alleviated by the greenway.

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With a commitment to community, the Johnsons are involved in many organizations and institutions. The farm has participated in numerous research studies led by South Dakota State University on cropping systems, wildlife habitat, farm economics and wetlands. Several groups have toured the farm, and it has been featured in many articles, videos, and radio and TV spots. Charlie has been on several boards, including Dakota Rural Action and Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society.

“Farming, service and land stewardship extend beyond the farm fields of Johnson Farms,” Charlie says. “As farmers and stewards of the land, the best crops we can plant are the seeds of opportunity for the next generation of farmers. Cultivating the future is the most important function of stewardship.”

In advice to novice farmers, Charlie recommends that transitioning land be put into alfalfa or some other permanent cover so the land is allowed to heal, and the soil can start to become more biologically active. He says that aligning with like-minded individuals, near or far (he is a fan of Facebook: Johnson Farms Natural Farming) helps with moral support and the sharing of information. “You need to have a thick skin in organics, as you are going against the grain,” Charlie concludes.

Showcasing stellar environmental conservation, simple yet powerful organic production practices, and leadership within his community, Charlie Johnson of Johnson Farms represents the values of the MOSES Farmer of the Year award well. Congratulations, Charlie, on being named the 2013 MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year.

Jody Padgham is the editor of the Organic Broadcaster. She can be reached at jody@mosessorganic.org.

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8 Organic Broadcaster • March - April 2013
Buyers and Producers: From Both Sides of the Fence

By Dani Lind

There's no relationship more intimate than the one between eaters and the food they eat. Beautiful, nutritious, and tasty food is fulfilling. Knowing that food came from a clean source, grown by good people who are making a living growing it satisfies something even more: our sense of place and belonging, of being a part of something larger than ourselves and contributing to our community. We are what we eat, indeed.

Three years ago I started a small catering company called Rooted Spoon Culinary in Viroqua, Wis., with a business partner who shares my philosophy of conscientious food sourcing and preparation. We buy most of the food we serve locally, either directly from dozens of produce, cheese, meat, and bread producers that we know, or from local producer co-ops and processors. Not only does it make us feel good to build relationships with the people who produce our ingredients, but these people produce amazing ingredients. Amazing ingredients make tasty and beautiful finished dishes, which in turn creates a successful catering business.

I was fortunate enough to meet most of the folks who provide our food during my 10-year stint as the produce buyer at the Viroqua Food Co-op. During part of that time, I also served on the Valley Stewardship Network’s Food and Farm Initiative, which works to help farmers sell to local institutions like schools and hospitals. Halfway through my career at the Co-op, I married one of my farmers who co-owns a vegetable farm and a small grass-fed beef operation. Being privy to the intricacies of both these types of businesses—the producer and the buyer/retailer—I’ve gained a lot of insight into the relationship they can have.

Some producers prefer to sell only direct to consumers at farmers markets or through a CSA program. Others would rather avoid direct marketing, prefer to spend more time in the field, or want to grow on a bigger scale. They may choose to be a part of a grower cooperative like CROP or Westby Co-op Creamery. Or they will sell directly to wholesale markets like restaurants, grocery stores, institutions, or distributors. Many successful operations do some of both—direct marketing and wholesale.

One farm that chooses to sell to both markets is Driftless Organics, the farm in Soldiers Grove, Wis., that Noah and Josh Engel run with my husband, Mike. They direct-sell certified organic vegetables at the Dane County Farmers Market in Madison almost year round, and to 630 CSA members in Viroqua, Madison, and the Twin Cities. In addition to these direct markets, they pursue a wide variety of wholesale markets: restaurants and caterers in Viroqua and Madison; food co-ops in Wisconsin and the Twin Cities; wholesalers like Co-op Partners and Whole Foods, and non-profit food distributors like REAP and Emergency Food Shelf Network that supply food to farm-to-school programs and food pantries. A few years ago Driftless expanded its product set to include Mike’s beef and Josh’s sunflower oil, which they sell direct at the farmers market and through the CSA as well as wholesale to stores, restauranteurs, and caterers like me.

Maintaining all these different direct and wholesale outlets offers Driftless Organics and many farms like them a degree of security in an unpredictable market; but coordinating it all is no small task. A very wide variety of vegetables are needed at the market stand and for CSA customers. For these 100+ different varieties of vegetables, they need to source seeds, plant and transplant, cultivate, harvest, wash, and package for delivery, much of which requires specialized equipment. The coordination of the CSA program requires a lot of marketing, advertising, and custom-built member management software to administer.

For their wholesale markets, Driftless Organics grows much fewer varieties, but in larger quantities and as efficiently as possible to be able to sell at a lower cost. They have to meet with all of their wholesale markets’ buyers in the winter or spring to discuss what they’re (hopefully) going to buy, quantities and prices, order and delivery schedules, etc.

From those meetings, past experiences, and just plain guess work they have to decide what and how much to plant, where and when and how to plant it. Weekly or biweekly availability needs to be sent out throughout the season to each buyer, sales calls and emails have to be made, the right produce harvested and washed, orders packed, invoices and deliveries made. All this amidst unpredictable and sometimes disastrous weather, equipment breakdowns, employee management, weeds, pests, certification requirements and paperwork. The list goes on and on.

Growing food for many different markets is extremely complicated, but so is buying from lots of different producers for a business. I may have made the idea of buying locally sound romantic in the beginning of this article, but it really can be a pain. It means keeping track of lots of different contacts and how best to reach them, who has what, order and delivery schedules, what and how much to buy, customers’ priorities, competitive pricing, what promises you’ve made to who.

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MOSES organic specialists receive a wide diversity of questions from farmers. In this column we will provide answers to common questions so that a greater audience can benefit. Feel free to give MOSES a call; reach Harriet at 888-551-4768, or the MOSES office at 715-778-5775, with any questions about organic agriculture you’d like answered...We will do our best to help! These answers are provided by MOSES specialist Harriet Behar.

Must I use organic seed?

If you are still in transition to organic, you are not required under the organic regulations to plant organic seed. However, you cannot plant seeds that have prohibited synthetic treatments applied, such as a fungicide or insecticide (ie: Captan, Maxim, Thiram). Nitrogen-fixing rhizobial bacteria, used as a treatment on leguminous seeds, is allowed. You must make sure this bacteria is not genetically modified, and the bacteria is not sold with a prohibited synthetic carrier or fertilizer.

You must keep documentation that the seed planted during your transition meets these requirements as part of your application for organic certification. If you plant a corn seed treated with capitan after two years of transitioning to organic, for instance, you must start the 36-month clock on your transition, and it is not available on organic land. Other than this, animals could have been fed genetically engineered (GE) feed, or given antibiotics or hormones, and the manure is still allowed on organic land.

However, if the manure includes bedding, it cannot contain prohibited synthetics, like treated wood shavings or glues/paints/heavy metal-based inks. On the other hand, GE corn stalks, or any conventionally raised crop is allowed as bedding in manure that can then be spread on organic land.

Piles and Lagoons: You must obtain a documented report from the manure supplier that a manure pile or manure lagoon did not have prohibited synthetic items used in or on the manure. For example, no-approved fly sprays or herbicides may be used on manure piles, or non-approved synthetics put in manure lagoons to control odor. A natural lactobacillus bacterium is allowed as a manure lagoon additive, as long as it does not grow.

Can I use my non-organic neighbor’s manure on my organic field?

It is not required to use manure from organic livestock on organic fields. If you are growing livestock feed, ornamentals, or fiber, then you can apply manure at any time on your organic cropland.

Feed and bedding: Arsenic is the only prohibited feed input that could have been fed to non-organic animals, which would prohibit use of manure on organic land. Arsenic has at times been added to conventional broiler chicken feed. It is an element, and will remain in your soil once it does not break down. You must document that this is not in the feed if you are using broiler manure. Other than this, animals could have been fed genetically engineered (GE) feed, or given antibiotics or hormones, and the manure is still allowed on organic land.

To Ask a Specialist on page 15
The New Farmer Corner highlights issues of particular interest to those new to farming, no matter what age. For more resources see the New Organic Stewards webpage at www.neworganicstewards.org.

Our nation finds itself in the midst of a Wild West land grab—a fracking boom and therefore a frac-sand mining boom. The process of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) uses sand, water and chemicals to open fissures in the earth to extract oil or natural gas. Wisconsin’s geological history as an ocean provides the perfect crystalline silica sand used for the hydraulic fracturing process. In the last three years, Wisconsin sand mining has grown exponentially, quickly changing the landscape.

“We didn’t completely understand how this issue could affect us so quickly. We were building our farm business; moving, harvesting/planting, learning the community, we thought we didn’t have time to keep up with the frac mining issue around us,” young Wisconsin farmer Andrew French explains. In the list of things new farmers need to keep tabs on—add frac sand mining. Andrew and Khaiti French own Living the Dream Farm, (L.T.D. Farm, Inc.) in Clayton, Wis., located in Barron County.

Andrew and Khaiti are two impassioned young farmers and compassionate carnivores, stewarding 39 acres of land in western Wisconsin. Barron County, like much of Wisconsin, is known for rolling hills, bucolic trout streams and good farmland. “Our land is one of the most important elements of our farm, of course, if the mine operation starts up here—all the smog, noise, and silica dust will cause health issues for us and our animals.” The L.T.D. farmers raise pastured ducks, chickens, turkeys, rabbits and goats, and produce vegetables for a CSA operation.

“The frac sand issue came to our attention this summer. Our neighbors five miles away started to fight a mine next to their property. Then, a week before Christmas, boring started on the property next to ours. We got up to do chores early morning in December and heard a loud noise. It was a big drill like the ones used to drill wells. A mineral company was drilling test holes for mineral extraction. We are now well aware that we have frac sand in this area. This obvious threat to our land and neighborhood concerned all of our neighbors and we almost immediately began to meet and talk about what we could do. We are now just understanding what actually happens in the frac sand mining process.”

Andrew and Khaiti have stepped up to organize and inform their neighbors about the issue, even asking for a moratorium for time to learn more, but have been very frustrated by conflicts of interest and lack of support from their town board. As of now the board is very pro frac-sand mining, with no change to that stance on the horizon.

L.T.D. Farm has equity in their property. They have a great community of small-scale sustainable food producers. “We don’t want to pack up and move. We are one of the three unzoned townships in the county—so we are a big bulls eye,” says Andrew. “We are organizing our neighbors and fighting for a voice in this pressing issue. This winter we are working on our pastured poultry plan, seed orders, etc. It’s hard to plan for the long-term future of our farm—if a sand mine goes in, our health and our animal’s health will suffer almost immediately.”

As in all community matters, this issue is complicated and involves neighbors, families and farm futures. Andrew explains, “We have a neighbor who is actually employed by the frac sand mines as a trucker. Even he doesn’t want a sand mine in his own backyard.”

“Regardless of what happens—we are going to do the best we can. We will continue here or somewhere else, this will not deter us from farming.” Here you have it—the perseverance of new agrarians in the small-scale farming revolution. Clean air, soil and water must be protected in order to grow good food and farming communities. The time is now to come together, to support each other and to keep our food system healthy!

It is vital for farmers (and new farmers looking for land) to take some time to find out what is happening around them:

Meet neighbors. Talk to the community about this issue. Know zoning rules. Organize. Find out if any organizations are actively opposing frac sand mining in the area. Find out where the DNR has permitted new mines. Come up with a plan on what to do to keep frac mining out of the community. Go to the town board, ask for a moratorium. Build coalitions of larger statewide groups.

If you are in Wisconsin and Minnesota check out: Hills Angels and Hay River Frac Watch on Facebook; The Frac Sand Frisbee; Save the Hills Alliance; SandPoint Times; Save the Bluffs; The Frac Sand Weekly

If you have any advice, experience or help to lend to L.T.D. Farm—please email farmers@ltdfarm.com. Follow along in their farming life online at www.ltdfarm.com.

Lindsay Rebhan coordinates the New Organic Stewards, a joint project of MOSES and Renewing the Countryside.

L.T.D. Farm: Frac Sand and Farming
By Lindsay Rebhan

MOSES New Organic Stewards 2013 Field Days
Hosted at the Organic Field School in Northfield, MN

• June 2 – Farm Hack
Calling all new farmers, makers, tinkers, inventors & builders to convene for a day of tool building and design for small scale agriculture. Do you have a new tool, implement or design you’ve been working on? Join us to share, design and build farm innovations. Bring your hacks!

• September 15 – Transition to Organic
Making the commitment to farming with organic methods is a great first step - but what is it like to start out on land that was previously farmed conventionally? Learn from the first-hand experience of organic vegetable farmers from Gardens of Eagan and the Organic Field School’s incubator farmers (Bossy Acres, Fazenda Boa Terra and Humble Pie Farm) after their first growing season on new land. A unique opportunity to hear lessons learned by both experienced and new farmers, with practical tips and a farm tour showing a variety of crops and layouts.

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NEW FARMER CORNER

By Lindsay Rebhan

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Our nation finds itself in the midst of a Wild West land grab—a fracking boom and therefore a frac-sand mining boom. The process of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) uses sand, water and chemicals to open fissures in the earth to extract oil or natural gas. Wisconsin’s geological history as an ocean provides the perfect crystalline silica sand used for the hydraulic fracturing process. In the last three years, Wisconsin sand mining has grown exponentially, quickly changing the landscape.

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data is not precise enough to determine what proportion of the feed cost was used for forage versus grain. As important as feed costs are, they don’t totally determine profit levels.

The organic herds were easily the highest cost producers on a per cwt. sold basis with a 12 year average allocated cost (all but opportunity costs) per cwt. sold that was $5.23 and $5.12 higher than the grazing and confinement herds respectively. However, the organic herds also had the highest and most consistent milk price which provided them a 12-year average milk income per cwt. sold that was $5.93 and $8.33 higher than the grazing and confinement herds respectively. Therefore, all of the 12-year average milk income per cwt. sold advantage over the grazing and confinement herds respectively came from the income side of the equation.

In comparing the financial performance between any groups, it is much more common to find the advantage of one group spread across many items as opposed to one or two items. That clearly was the case in comparing Wisconsin grazing to confinement herds. A nickel per cwt. sold per item doesn’t sound like much, but if found in enough places, they can add up to a significant difference. Every dollar of a cost saved per cwt. milk sold can add $10,000 to NFIFO on a farm selling 10,000 cwts (1,000,000 lbs) per year. A herd of 67 cows selling 15,000 lbs milk per cow per year would sell about 10,000 cwts.

Much of the graziers’ 12-year average advantage over confinement NFIFO/cwt. sold also came from the income side of the equation.

The estimated feed costs were spread between basic and non-basic costs and accounted for $0.27 of the grazier 12 year average advantage in NFIFO/cwt. sold. (Table 2) Consequently grazing herds had more of an advantage in feed costs than from other costs. Most of this advantage came from the indirect feed costs which include the non-livestock depreciation and interest expenses associated mainly with capital investments such as buildings, equipment, and land. Graziers and organic herds also typically achieved higher NFIFO per cow and NFIFO as a percent of income. However the average confinement farm may achieve higher total NFIFO per farm because the average confinement farm has been about twice as large.

However, graziers regularly talk about productivity problems with their pastures. The Wisconsin data shows that compared to confinement farms, graziers often use about one more acre per cow to produce forage, even though the confinement herds sell more milk per cow. Pasture can be a low-cost feed if grown productively and harvested at optimum quality, but that won’t be the case if the land was purchased for $10,000/acre and/or yields or quality are low.

Possible declining productivity per acre and per cow could also diminish organic profitability in the future.

Overall, the data indicate that there are many similarities and differences between the Wisconsin dairy systems. They also suggest that neither Wisconsin system is gaining any major advantage because of higher feed costs.

### Table 2

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The author thanks coworker Ken Bolton for reviewing the document and making helpful suggestions. A shorter version of this article was prepared for Graze magazine.

This research was presented as part of the Organic Research Forum at the 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 21-23.

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**Organic Broadcaster • March - April 2013**
FSA... from page 4

Dairy and Livestock Farmers (www.caes.wisc.edu/dairysch.htm) and the New Entry Sustainable Farming Program in Massachusetts, various on-farm internships, and attending the MOSES Conference and the Rural Women’s Project Boots workshops.

I’d recommend any young farmer collect and keep reference letters or certificates of completion as you complete any farm training experience.”

“If you choose to someday apply for a FSA loan, you will need such documentation. It would have been much easier for us if we had just asked for that at the time,” Herald says.

Give the Process Time
The reality is the FSA farm loan process can be slow and tedious.

The FSA can start processing a loan application only once you have an accepted offer. The process can take longer than at banks, which can be less appealing to a seller who wants to close the deal. For this reason, it’s important to start the process early, develop a relationship with your FSA loan officer, and have all your paperwork ready to go when the offer is accepted. FSA is trying to accelerate this process; the processing time for approval in Wisconsin is now down to 16 days. However, after approval, a loan still goes through the property appraisal process, requiring additional time.

“I often talk to beginning farmers years before they actually apply for an FSA loan,” shares Houtakker. “This works out great and I encourage young folks starting out in farming to do this because it both starts to build a relationship and enables us to work together to address any educational and experience gaps or other issues that might slow down your eventual application submission.”

Given this lengthy loan processing time (it can take several months), FSA loans work well in situations where time is not of essence, such as farm transitions between family members, or if the seller is committed to the young farmer and willing to wait. That was the case with Rebecca Claypool, a young farmer in her early 30s who ended up purchasing the farm she was working on, after racking up a decade’s worth of experience working on farms from Maine to Minnesota.

“I heard the owners were interested in potentially selling this place, and working there gave me the opportunity to get familiar with the place and property,” explains Claypool. “The situation ended up being good for both of us as they didn’t have to go through putting their property on the market and were committed to selling to me, so that gave me the time to go through the FSA process.”

Claypool purchased her Avoca, Wis., property in 2009, tapping into the SDA FSA loan funding pool, and opened Yellow Barn Farm where she grows diversified vegetables. “There were lots of steps throughout the whole loan application process, but my FSA loan officer was very helpful and supportive and was a real partner throughout,” adds Claypool.

Likewise, while Herald and Lennart are still going through the process and looking for farm property, they, too, have found support from their FSA office. “Our farm vision doesn’t fit the typical box of most conventionalfarms in our area, but our FSA loan officer wonderfully gets that, and is helping us use our experiences and business plan to our advantage to fit within the FSA system,” shares Herald.

For those interested in researching FSA loans further, first understand the general FSA loan programs. “Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans” is an easy-to-read, online resource that synthesizes various loan and loan serving options (www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl). If you generally qualify and think this may be in the future for you, contact the FSA loan officer covering the area where you plan to purchase property.

“At the FSA, we’re not just committed to the farm loan process, but see ourselves as long-term partners in your business success,” sums up Houtakker. “Remember we’re investing taxpayer dollars in you, and want to know where you see yourself in five years, and how can we work together to get you successfully there.”

Lisa Kivirist is the coordinator of the MOSES Rural Women’s Project.
Tomatoes... from page 1

and fewer disease problems.” Leck points out that at GOE they have struggled with speck and spot bacterial problems. “Now we see healthy grafted tomato plants right next to diseased un-grafted plants. The stronger rootstock allows the plant to develop to its full potential.”

“Grafting is a great technology for organic growers specifically,” adds Andrew Mefferd, Trial Technician specializing in tomatoes at Johnny’s Selected Seeds, of Winslow, Maine. “Grafted plants are resistant to many soil-borne diseases, which organic systems struggle with due to limited alternative controls.” For instance, root stock seed available this year from Johnny’s is listed as resistant to Fusarium Wilt, Fusarium Crown and Root Rot, Nematodes, Corky Root Rot, Tobacco Mosaic Virus and Verticillium Wilt. “Even growers that have never seen these diseases will benefit from the resistance in these root stocks,” Mefferd claims. “They provide insurance, and help the plant to overcome adversity.”

Grafting Increases Yield

Grafting onto any rootstock will enhance the yield of a tomato, but certain top stocks respond better than others, and some combinations will do subtly better in different growing situations. Research done by Johnny’s in 2010 clearly shows that grafted tomatoes “greatly increased yield possibilities” with average yield per plant of the same species increasing as much as 40 to 60% over non-grafted plants. (Table 1)

Mefferd did research in the 2012 growing season comparing two types of grafted (double leader) plants to un-grafted plants, both single and double leader, and found grafting again almost doubled yield. “Even though these yields aren’t that spectacular for the variety, they clearly show the advantage of grafting,” he says. (Table 2)

The Grafting Process

Those interested in using grafted tomatoes have the choice of creating their own grafted plants or purchasing grafted plants. “Grafting can be tricky, and takes some practice,” Leck says. “Anyone trying it will want to allow time for trial and error.” Keys to success include choosing appropriate root and top stock and matching top stock; planning planting dates of both root stock and top seeds so that the stems will be similarly sized; making good cuts; connecting the two plants so that the tops don’t come off; and proper care of the grafts in a healing chamber. To help producers succeed, Johnny’s offers a seven-page grafting guide (see details on page 15.)

Johnny’s also sells seed specifically bred to provide disease-resistant root stock.

Leck points out that the timing of planting both the rootstock and top stock must be managed carefully. You must pay attention to the specific growth habits of each seed in order to have closely sized stems of both species two weeks after seeding. Johnny’s recommends overplanting by at least 25% to be sure that you have enough stock of both kinds to choose from in making your grafts. At GOE, Leck plants seeds over a 3- or 4-day period, so that he has a variety of seedling sizes to choose from. He explains that the root seed is expensive, and at times hard to get, so he’s learned to plan well in ordering.

To make the actual graft, two-week old seedlings of both root and top are carefully placed “as soon as possible,” catalog or custom, must be ordered, either from the customer, either using your seed chamber the plants must be specifically maintained for up to a week in a “healing chamber.” This chamber must be specifically controlled at 80-82°F, 80-95% humidity, with no drafts, and moderate, indirect light. In this chamber the plants must heal, while not actually growing or transpiring. If moisture is too low or light too stimulating, the plants will continue to transpire and the tops “pop off.” Mike Leck says that getting the healing chamber “just right” at GOE was one of the biggest learning curves.

“Grafting is part art and part science, and an additional investment is well worth it. Those interested in using grafted tomatoes have the choice of creating their own grafted plants or purchasing grafted plants. “Grafting can be tricky, and takes some practice,” Leck says. “Anyone trying it will want to allow time for trial and error.” Keys to success include choosing appropriate root and top stock and matching top stock; planning planting dates of both root stock and top seeds so that the stems will be similarly sized; making good cuts; connecting the two plants so that the tops don’t come off; and proper care of the grafts in a healing chamber. To help producers succeed, Johnny’s offers a seven-page grafting guide (see details on page 15.)

To make the actual graft, two-week old seedlings of both root and top are carefully placed “as soon as possible,” catalog or custom, must be ordered, either from the catalog or custom, must be placed “as soon as possible,” Mike Leck says. Growth from seed to ready-to-transplant seedling takes about five weeks.

Other nurseries also offer grafted tomatoes, but be sure that they are certified organic if you are an organic producer. Increased costs of production will make the costs of grafted tomato starts 50-100% higher than non-grafted, but with increased vigor and yield, Mike and others are positive that the additional investment is well worth it.

“Grafting is part art and part science, and won’t be for everyone,” Mefferd of Johnny’s Seeds concludes. “Ideally, we will start to see regional growers that can raise grafted tomatoes for those in the area. Then everyone that wants them can gain the benefits of grafted tomatoes.”

The benefits of using grafted tomatoes are clear, but the challenges of producing the plants may lead you to decide to buy grafted plants rather than make your own. Luckily they are now becoming available from many nurseries growing starts and transplants.

Buying Grafted Starts

Gardens of Eagan is in its second year of selling organic grafted tomato transplants. This year they will have two varieties available, “BHN 589” and “New Girl.” With at least eight weeks notice, GOE is also willing to custom graft plants for you, either using your seed or theirs, depending on your needs. Orders, either from the catalog or custom, must be placed “as soon as possible,” Mike Leck says. Growth from seed to ready-to-transplant seedling takes about five weeks.

Table 1: Grafted Tomato Yield Data, Johnny’s Selected Seeds, 2010 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Yield in Pounds of Rippe Fruit</th>
<th>3 plant total</th>
<th>Avg yield/plant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2944 Corks grafted</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2944 Corks</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2710 A1-A10 grafted</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2715 A1-A10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2333 Trust</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2323 Trust</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2714 Devonian grafted</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2715 Graft</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2333 Big Beef</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2333 Big Beef</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other nurseries also offer grafted tomatoes, but be sure that they are certified organic if you are an organic producer. Increased costs of production will make the costs of grafted tomato starts 50-100% higher than non-grafted, but with increased vigor and yield, Mike and others are positive that the additional investment is well worth it.
Tomato Grafting... from page 14
* Table 1 Detail: In 2010, Johnny’s research farm in Albion, Maine used the hoophouse tomato trial to quantify the yield boost resulting from using a vigorous tomato rootstock grafted to a desirable fruiting variety. Sets of three plants of each variety were grown, with three grafted to Maxifruit (92700) and three grown on their own roots. As you can see, yields averaged over 40% higher for the grafted plants, depending on the fruiting variety. Geronimo, for example, responds very well to grafting, showing a 66% yield boost when grafted to Maxifruit. Individual results may vary, but this is a good illustration of the greatly increased yield possibilities of using grafted tomatoes. This trial was planted in an unheated hoophouse on May 21, 2010, and harvested until the beginning of October. Compost and organically approved soil amendments were used and plants were spaced two feet apart and trained to a double leader. No supplemental fertilizer or fertigation was used other than the original soil prep, which was amended to meet soil test recommendations for greenhouse crops.

To Learn More Tomato Grafting Webinar from eOrganic www.extension.org/pages/32969/grafting-for-disease-management-in-organic-tomato-production-webinar


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Ask A Specialist... from page 10
contain non-approved synthetics. Manure that has been piled outside or in a barn for 10 years with no turning and/or no documentation that it reached the high temperatures required for compost (see below) is still considered raw manure, and can only be used according to the manure restrictions on human consumed crops.

Human-consumed crops: If you are growing crops for human consumption, and the manure is not composted or processed, the manure must be incorporated either 120 days before harvest of the crops where the crop has contact with soil (either growing in or on the ground, or where rain might splash soil on the crop, such as beets, tomatoes, peppers), or wait 90 days before harvest where the crop does not have contact with soil (i.e. corn or soybean seed).

Compost and processed manure: Manure that has been composted (documented temperature of over 131 degrees for 15 days and turned 5 times) or processed (150-165 degrees for one hour and tested to have less than 100 most probable number (MPN) of fecal coliform and 3 MPN salmonella per gram sample) can be used up until day of harvest with no restriction. If you are composting only vegetative matter, without any animal by-products, then there is no requirement to track the compost reaching a specific temperature. Non-animal product compost can be spread this on your organic crops at any time.

Using manure: Be aware that raw manure that has not reached the high temperatures of composting or processing will contain viable weed seeds. You will be adding more, and possibly different, weed seeds to your fields. It is a good idea to obtain an analysis of the manure you are using so you can better manage for the nutrients it provides.

Harriet Behar will be sharing this column from page 10 with Joe Predetti and Angie Sullivan, all MOSES Organic Specialists.

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Buyers... from page 9
If retailing certified organic product, keeping up to date organic certificates on file for each grower; if buying for an institution, making sure that GAP food safety licenses are up to date; if buying meat or processed food, making sure it was processed in a state or USDA licensed facility.

Businesses have to be very committed to the local food movement and providing top quality food to make the extra effort to buy direct from a bunch of local sources, because it’s just so quick and easy (and most times cheap) to buy from a single distributor. The easier you as growers can make it for buyers, and the more you can build a relationship with them over time, the more likely they’ll keep buying from you.

If you’re a new grower or are expanding into wholesale markets and want to build rapport with a buyer, you first need to be persistent and make personal contact. By all means, share your farm or business story with them, either in person or through your website, social media, or other literature. Next, be reliable in your communication—have regular availability lists (with product descriptions, case sizes, and prices), order days and delivery times. Be consistent with your quality, packaging, labeling, and invoicing. Be flexible and willing to try new things, but figure out what you enjoy growing and find buyers that fit your business.

Don’t take too much on too soon—it takes years to build a reputation and just a few out of stocks or missed deliveries to break it. Best to start with one or two buyers, build a strong connection and good systems, and expand from there with a good name for yourself and your product.

Local food has become quite the trendy movement the last few years, and there are as many businesses joining it as there are new growers. To keep these businesses as inspired and committed to this movement as you are will take a team effort. It takes time to build a good working relationship and standing with wholesale buyers, but when you do, then the food you so painstakingly produce can fulfill its highest destiny—to sustain your business and feed and nourish more and more of your community.

Dani Lind co-owns a catering business, Rooted Spoon Culinary, in Viroqua, Wis., specializing in local seasonal menus. She lives on an 80-acre certified organic farm in Soldiers Grove, Wis. with her husband, Mike.

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Organic Farming Increases Soil Carbon

Analyzing data from 74 field comparison studies measuring carbon levels in soils under organic and conventional farming systems throughout the world, international experts headed by scientists from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in Switzerland conclude that organic agriculture provides environmental benefits through carbon sequestration in soils. The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, confirms higher organic carbon concentrations and stocks in top soils under organic farming. Scientists credited mixed farming practices using a net stock and crop production and recycling organic matter and forage legumes in crop rotation as major factors in these higher levels. www.pnas.org

Grazing Soils Research

A long-term southern Wisconsin cropping systems study shows that soils under managed grazing have a number of positive characteristics compared to soils under other cropping systems. The Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trial (WICST) provided data on three cash grain cropping systems and three forage systems. The study found some interesting differences between the systems in terms of erosion potential, earthworm counts, water stable aggregates, soil carbon, and the Soil Quality Index. http://www.cias.wisc.edu

Watch Out for GMO Sweet Corn Seeds

Organic sweet corn producers will want to be especially wary this year when looking for seeds—several new round-up ready and Bt sweet corn varieties are now available, and not well marked as such in advertising. Organic growers should source organic seed if possible, and are not allowed to use GMO seed. If you do use non-organic seed, be very careful to ask your seed supplier if any sweet corn seed you plan to buy is non-GMO.

Farmer-Veteran Coalition Revamps Website


New Forage Production Fact Sheet

Alternative Continuous-Cover Dairy Forage System for Profitability, Flexibility and Soil Health, based on a SARE-funded study in New York, describes a resilient system where farmers can grow their own high-quality dairy forage in corn- and alfalfa-based cropping systems. Search for the free downloadable publication at http://www.sare.org.

Upper Midwest Local Food Prospectus

Local Food Prospectus for the Tri-State Region was recently produced by the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. This analysis of the wholesale fruit and vegetable industry in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin will be of interest to those involved in agriculture, local foods, and economic development. Read the full report at http://swwrpc.org.

New Poultry Publication

Handbook Guides Livestock Mentors

The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, based on a SARE-funded study in New Mexico, offers best practices of Fresh Culinary Herbs

Safety Guidelines for the Production, Harvest, Post-Harvest, and Processing Unit Operations of Fresh Culinary Herbs, offers best practices to address identified potential food safety issues. You will find a list of reference documents providing background information on how to develop food safety programs. The 186-page PDF file is available at www.wga.com.

USDA Microloan Program

A new program was unveiled in January to expand access to low-interest loans for small-scale farmers and veterans to communicate. The American Lineback aAa 423561

76LD0557 Rosybrook SHOTLIME ‘RC’

Shottle X Mohican-Red

American Lineback aka 423561

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Organic Farmland Still Lagging Worldwide

Despite the growing worldwide demand for organic food, clothing, and other products, the area of land certified as organic still makes up just 0.9 percent of global agricultural land. In 2010, the latest year for which data are available, 37 million hectares of land were organically farmed—an area that has grown more than threefold since 1999. Reliable data are lacking for land that is farmed using organic principles but that is not certified organic. Many farmers, particularly subsistence farmers or those selling to local markets, farm organically but do not acquire organic certification. Read more at http://blogs.worldwatch.org.

New Non-GMO Sourcebook Now Available

The 2013 Non-GMO Sourcebook, a “farm to fork” directory of suppliers of non-genetically modified (non-GMO) products is now available. In its 12th year of publication, this year’s edition of The Non-GMO Sourcebook features more than 700 suppliers of non-GMO and organic products and related services. $27.95. Order at www.nongmosourcebook.com or 800-854-0586.

NOP Fact Sheet on Organic Livestock

The NOP has created a new fact sheet, Organic Livestock Requirements that covers standards for all livestock, allowed and prohibited substances, ruminant pasture requirements, benefits of organic and pasture-based management. http://www.owa.gov/11EygV7

Food Safety Guidelines for Fresh Culinary Herbs

A new publication, Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Production, Harvest, Post-Harvest, and Processing Unit Operations of Fresh Culinary Herbs, offers best practices to address identified potential food safety issues. You will find a list of reference documents providing background information on how to develop food safety programs. The 186-page PDF file is available at www.wga.com.

Energies and Available

Farmers with small to mid-sized operations may apply for grants to incorporate energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy measures to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. The grants of up to $2,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses, essential tools, irrigation, delivery vehicles, and annual expenses such as feed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for an operating loan up to the maximum amount of $300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA’s Guaranteed Loan Program at the current interest rate for Microloans is 1.25 percent. Producers interested in applying for a microloan or other FSA farm loan program should contact their local Farm Service Agency office, http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSAA/stateOffices

University of Minnesota Seeks Two Organic Faculty

The University’s Horticultural Science Department is looking to hire two Assistant Professors, each 60% research, 40% teaching. One focuses on Biological Principles of Sustainable & Organic Food Systems, (http://z.umn.edu/ bpe) the second on Sustainable & Organic Hor-
Open Seats on Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council
The Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council has four open seats for: an organic farmer, an organic business, a consumer representative and an ‘at-large’ seat. Members serve a three-year term and are eligible to serve more than one term. Interested individuals should complete the short two-page application form and provide two letters of support by March 8. Applications to Laura Paine, 608-224-5120 or laura.paine@wi.gov. http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming/Advisory_Council.

Business Development Facilitator Position
The Organic Processing Institute is announcing recruitment for a (Half-time) Business Development Facilitator. This position is key to providing client services to, and program delivery for, food processing entrepreneurs, processors, and farmers/producers to build competitive and sustainable food processing in the Upper Midwest. Email Carla@organicprocessinginstitute.org with a resume and cover letter to apply. Call 608-833-5370 with questions.

New Way for Antibiotic Resistance to Spread
Washington State researchers have found that a mixture of cow manure, soil and urine infused with metabolized antibiotic will kill the normal e.coli in soil, but that anti-biotic-resistant e.coli will survive and recolonize in the cow’s gut through pasture, forage and bedding. Given that about 70% of the drug is excreted in the urine, this can have a large effect on bacterial populations that reside both in the gut and the environment. Read the study, “Urine from Treated Cattle Drives Selection for Cephalosporin Resistant Escherichia coli in Soil,” at http://bit.ly/S9jTBM.

Out to Pasture by Luke Wassink

Inside Organics... from page 3

damage the economic viability of small and mid-sized operations that sell their production within a limited geographic region?

We need to protect the viability of our vision for the future of agriculture in the United States. One that does not promote larger and larger operations, squeezing out family scale farms and processors. We have made progress in the past few years, revitalizing rural America and bringing young people back to the profession of farming. The attraction of selling directly to consumers and local stores, as well as using organic production practices have contributed to this revitalization.

Stay tuned to MOSES and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org), as we present the issues and grassroots actions you can take to make your voice heard on this important regulation. It is essential that farmers of all types present their opinion in public comment to the FDA, since we all will be affected.

You can find the proposed regulation at these two web links

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

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For Sale: Certified organic hay, first crop, $4.75 per bale. Certified organic straw, fine chopped, $3.50 per bale. Ray Borntreger, N2955 State Rd 54, Melrose, Wis. 54642-6133.

FOR SALE: 4-row flamer with tank, field ready, $500.00 OBO. 100” Howard rotovator with good blades. 1000 rpm’s PTO shaft, asking $2500.00 OBO. Have 30 to 80 gallon LP tanks, call for prices. Nashua, Iowa. Call 641-435-4071.


FOR SALE: Certified organic hay, $4.50/bale. Rudy Bernterger, E25590 Cty Rd RR, Fairchild, Wis. 54741.


FOR SALE: Quiet living: 74 acres, 20 wooded, 35-40 pasture/tillable, 20,000 sq ft expanding retail greenhouse operation. New home: 5 bedrooms, 3 ½ baths. Three barns and an older unoccupied house. North Central, Wis. $495K. Call 715-297-0974 or email TheComingOfTheLordIsNear@enycountryspeed.com for more information.

FOR SALE: Ninety acre homestead. Chemical-free 35 years. Twenty acres open, 70 acres managed forest program. Off-grid house. 1200-watt photovoltaic system. Springhead provides water to house. Non-conforming septic. Outbuildings. Richland County, Wis. $300,000. Email bneyergen@countryyspeed.com for more information.

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For Rent: 5-10 acres of organic land for gardening in north/northeast Lafayette County, Wis. Call 608-776-2592.

MISCELLANEOUS


For Sale: IMPRO Products for animal health. Dealer for 25+ years. MOSA member for 10+ years. Also carry homeopathic human line of Beaumont products. Contact Randy Osley at 608-488-7000 or visit website: Improveway.com

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National Organic Grain and Feedstuffs Report
(see current report on this page)
CROPP Cooperative Grower Pool/ Organic Trader Newsletter
http://www.farmers.coop/feed-program/organic-trader/
1-888-809-9297

Rodale Organic Price Report
http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/
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February 28, Farm to Cafeteria Workshop. Bloomington, Minn. Designed to help break down barriers to Farm-to-School for school food service professionals, school administrators, institutional buyers, wholesalers, farmers, grocers, Statewide Health Improvement Program coordinators, and other community partners. Session on post-harvest handling, farm-to-school community, Farm-to-School promotion, opportunities for networking and a locally sourced meal. www.extension.umn.edu/farm-to-cafeteria-workshops


March 1, Women Landowner’s Conference. Clear Lake, Iowa. “Sorting Out the Pieces” several workshops and panel discussions for women landowners on topics such as using leases, setting rent, fencing and drainage issues, land stewardship, dealing with wind energy developers, and how to work productively with your tenant. http://wlfm.org

March 4-5, Farm Transitions and Estate Planning. Frontenac, Minn. The two-part, four-day workshop will assist farm families to plan for the eventual transition of their farm. The workshops are planned as a multi-generational event for current farm owners and for their heirs or non-family members to whom they hope to transfer the farm. info@rtcinfo.org 612.910.7601

March 4, Indigenous Farming Conference, White Earth, Minn. “They Are Gathering To Protect The Seeds.” A wonderful time of sharing and learning. Info at wesoeasly@gmail.com (218) 375-4466

March 4, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Workshop. Urbana, Ill. 8-30-4. Designed to educate fresh fruit and vegetable producers in food safety practices, topics on creating a food safety plan, produce-safety risk factors and impacts, and auditing farms for GAPs/food safety, as well as water-quality testing, soil and manure management, and worker health and hygiene. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/calendar.cfm. More information 815-732-2911.

March 5, Local Produce for Foodservice Meeting. Madison, Wis. 9-2. A meeting is for producers farm that wants to sell to Vicks; foodservice operators, foodservice professionals that want local produce, and distributors. These groups will have the opportunity to meet and share ideas. More information at www.michaeelfields.org, 262-642-3303

March 5, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Workshop. Dubuque, Iowa. Intensive, three-day course giving you a realistic picture of what it takes to run a successful orchard operation—including capital, management, labor and other resources. Topics include soil fertility, pest management, business planning, risk management, marketing and economic growth. Grower-instructors primarily teach the course, with featured presentations and hands-on labs by UW faculty and other specialists. Grower-instructors’ farms vary in scale, marketing strategies and growing methods. See www.csrees.ars.usda.gov/midwest-school-for-beginning-apple-growers, or contact John Hendrickson at jhendric@wisc.edu, 608-265-3704.

March 5-17, Midwest School for Beginning Apple Growers, Bayfield, Wis. Intensive, three-day course giving you a realistic picture of what it takes to run a successful orchard operation—including capital, management, labor and other resources. Topics include soil fertility, pest management, business planning, risk management, marketing and economic growth. Grower-instructors primarily teach the course, with featured presentations and hands-on labs by UW faculty and other specialists. Grower-instructors’ farms vary in scale, marketing strategies and growing methods. See www.csrees.ars.usda.gov/midwest-school-for-beginning-apple-growers, or contact John Hendrickson at jhendric@wisc.edu, 608-265-3704.

March 6, Season Extension Workshop, East Troy, Wis. Focused primarily on hoop house production, other technologies such as low tunnels, cloches, prefabrication, etc. Contact Ray for more info. 507-557-2246.

March 12, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Workshop. Springfield, Ill. 8-30-4. Education for fresh fruit and vegetable producers in food safety practices, creating a food safety plan, produce-safety risk factors and impacts, and auditing farms for GAPs/food safety, as well as water-quality testing, soil and manure management, and worker health and hygiene. More at 815-732-2911.

March 13, NOP Update Webinar. Join oracblers for a webinar by Miles McIlvory, Deputy Administrator of the USDA National Organic Program, with an update about National Organic Program (NOP) priorities and key projects. Updates of interest to organic producers, handlers, and certifiers. Register at www.extension.org/pages/97199

March 14, Fearless Farm Finances: Where to invest your money first! Webinar. Investment Analysis, Partial Budgeting and other tools will be presented. Based on the MOSES book Fearless Farm Finances http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy/Wisconsin/BLBW/Workshops

March 15, CSA Expert Exchange Online Conference, 12-5 p.m. CST. Presenters include Elizabeth Henderson, discussing the importance of community involvement within her CSA in Newark, NY. Other topics: CSA farm profitability, use of specialty equipment and “rightscaling” the farm, successful techniques for retaining members, and member education beyond sharing recipes. www.csafarmconference.com/

March 15-17, Midwest School for Beginning Apple Growers, Bayfield, Wis. Intensive, three-day course giving you a realistic picture of what it takes to run a successful orchard operation—including capital, management, labor and other resources. Topics include soil fertility, pest management, business planning, risk management, marketing and economic growth. Grower-instructors primarily teach the course, with featured presentations and hands-on labs by UW faculty and other specialists. Grower-instructors’ farms vary in scale, marketing strategies and growing methods. See www.csrees.ars.usda.gov/midwest-school-for-beginning-apple-growers, or contact John Hendrickson at jhendric@wisc.edu, 608-265-3704.

March 16, Tri State Living Green Farm and Home Show, Dubuque, Iowa. Hosted by Organic Valley and Dubuque Conservation Society, with more than 25 local and sustainable vendors. Discussions, speakers and displays. Contact Ray for more info. 507-557-2246.

March 19-20, Road Map for Resilience: Empowering Iowa’s Local Food Economy Conference, Ames, Iowa. Join Anupama Joshi, executive director of the National Farm to School Network; Diane Endicott of Good Naturally Family Farms; and Susan Furell, from Red Tomato in Boston. Learn the latest about business management, beginning and minority farmers and new opportunities, including Food-to-School and Farm-to-Institution. www.aep.iastate.edu/roadmap

March 22, Season Extension Workshop, East Troy, Wis. Focused primarily on hoop house production, other technologies such as low tunnels, cloches, prefabrication, etc. Information will be aimed to a beginner level audience and will include information such as site selection, economics, crop selection, and pest management. www.michaelfields.org 262-642-3303.

March 22, Pest Management for Vegetable Growers Workshop, East Troy, Wis. Learn about ecologically-based management strategies, compliance with the National Organic Program standards, insect management, disease management, and weed management. Aimed to beginer farmers, with both systems-based and specific recommendations for key crops. www.michaelfields.org 262-642-3303

March 25, Farm Transitions and Estate Planning. Frontenac, Minn. The two-part, four-day workshop will assist farm families to plan for the eventual transition of their farm. Planned as a multi-generational event for current farm owners and for their heirs or non-family members to whom they hope to transfer the farm. info@rtcinfo.org 612.910.7601

April 6, Beekeeping, the Second Year and Beyond, East Troy, Wis. For those who have already kept bees for one or two years and have questions. Topics: bee behavior, equipment beyond the basics, inspecting hives, queens, splitting hives/making increases, swarm capture, preparing for winter, and more. www.michaelfields.org 262-642-3303

April 15-18, Food Sovereignty Summit, Green Bay, Wis. Hosted by the Oneida Nation, First Nations Development Institute, & Intertribal Agriculture Council. Our ancestors discovered the value of creating an environment to maximize sustenance. Like the Three Sisters, we will create a structure of collaboration and support for all First Nations’ people to flourish. www.firstnations.org/summit. 920-496-1743

April 19, Tractor Safety Workshop, East Troy, Wis. For new or potential tractor owners. Learn basic safety rules, operational procedures, and maintenance. www.michaelfields.org, 262-642-3303

April 20, Introduction to Biodynamic Agriculture Workshop, East Troy, Wis. Inspired by Rudolf Steiner, hands-activities include preparation-making, plant observations, and applications to compost and fields. www.michaelfields.org, 262-642-3303

April 24, Holistic Dairy Care Workshop, East Troy, Wis. Dr. Paul Detwiller will discuss the importance of soils, high forage diets, use of organic vet tools, and the three pronged biodiversity approach to animal health. www.michaelfields.org, 262-642-3303

MOSES New Organic Stewards 2013 Field Days Hosted at the Organic Field School in Northfield, MN

• June 2 – Farm Hack Calling all new farmers, makers, tinkers, inventors & builders to convene for a day of tool building and design for small scale agriculture. Do you have a new tool, implement or design you’ve been working on? Join us to share, design and build farm innovations. Bring your hacks!

• September 15 – Transition to Organic Making the commitment to farming with organic methods is a great first step - but what is it like to start out on land that was previously grazed or tilled? Learn from the first-hand experience of organic vegetable farmers from Gardens of Eagan and the Organic Field School’s incubator farmers (Boosy Acres, Fazenda Boa Terra and Humble Pie Farm) after their first growing season on new land. A unique opportunity to learn from both experienced and new farmers, with practical tips and a farm tour showing a variety of crops and layouts.

Look for additional events and updates at www.mosesorganic.org/events.html.