Choosing Early Season Cover Crops

By Nick Schneider, Heidi Johnson, and Ken Schroeder

Begin with the end in mind!

This popular saying, written about extensively in Stephen R. Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, is especially pertinent to a producer’s decision to grow cover crops. There are two specific questions that should be explored before planting cover crops.

Question 1: What benefits will an early season cover crop contribute to the crop rotation?

Numerous reasons are cited for growing cover crops. These reasons include: scavenging nutrients, fixing nitrogen, fighting erosion, suppressing weeds, providing forage, breaking compaction, attracting beneficial insects, and quick growth. In order for an early season cover crop to be successful, it must express two traits: cold tolerance and quick growth. Cold tolerance is necessary because an untimely frost will destroy many cover crops. Quick growth is also important because planting an early season cover crop targets a specific, narrow gap during spring.

Let us examine a few species. Buckwheat is one of the quickest growing cover crops. Buckwheat’s broad leaves and quick growth make it a favorite choice for short-term weed suppression. However, in spite of buckwheat’s ability to germinate at 45°F, it has poor frost tolerance. Poor frost tolerance makes buckwheat a risky choice as an early season cover crop.

Crimson clover and berseem clover have gained popularity as nitrogen fixing cover crops. They meet the cold tolerance criteria with minimum germination soil temperatures of 42°F, but both grow slowly, making them inferior choices as early season cover crops also.

Looking at these examples, it becomes clear that choosing an appropriate cover crop may not be easy. The Midwest Cover Crop Council has created an excellent online tool for producers to sort through numerous individual cover crops and mixtures. This tool can be found at MOSES.

Help Grow Organic Representation: Respond to the Census of Agriculture

By Lisa Kivirist

While organic food is one of the fastest growing sectors in the U.S. food marketplace, our voices as organic and sustainable farmers need to be more accurately heard and represented.

Every five years, all farmers across the country have the opportunity to stand up and be counted by taking part in the Census of Agriculture. Conducted by the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), this Census captures a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches and those who operate them. For Census purposes, a farm is any place from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year, encompassing many small-scale, diversified operations. Participating in the Census is something all farmers can individually do to accurately represent the size, trends, and dynamics of agriculture, including sustainable agriculture, explains Ariane Lotti, Assistant Policy Director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), an alliance of grassroots organizations including MOSES.

“The Census is the leading source of facts about American agriculture,” said Renee Picanso, Census and Survey Division Director at NASS. “The wealth of data available from the Census includes statistics on small family farms to large farms; information on young, beginning farmers to older, experienced farmers; and insight into traditional, rural farming versus trends in areas such as lifestyle and urban farming.”

“Signing up for and participating in the 2012 Census of Agriculture is important for accurately representing the size, trends, and dynamics of agriculture, including sustainable agriculture,” explains Ariane Lotti, Assistant Policy Director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), an alliance of grassroots organizations including MOSES.
Welcome to the first issue of the Organic Broadcaster for 2013. I hope that 2012 ended well for you, and that you are looking forward to what 2013 brings. We’ve had our first big snow here in Central Wisconsin, giving us all a chance to test snow plows and winter weather systems. With a few adjustments, both of my systems passed, a comforting start to the season.

In this issue we’ve been drawn to a few controversies: Harriet Behar and Jim Riddle confront those surrounding Gently Modified Organisms (GMOs) on pages 3 and 4. And, we present two sides of the organic “check-off” issue starting on page 12. The best response to any controversy is information-which is what we’re providing with these viewpoints.

We’ve also brought you several articles offering a preview of activities at the upcoming 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 21-23 in La Crosse, Wis. Look for the conference presenter symbol to see which of our authors will also be presenting at the Conference.

We’ve planned more than 70 workshops, but there is so much more in store at the 2013 MOSES Conference. Each year gets more spectacular with the quality and diversity of offerings. You should have received a registration booklet in the mail a few weeks ago–if you didn’t, contact the office at 715-778-5775 or info@mosesorganic.org, and we’ll get one right out to you. All of the Conference offerings may also be viewed on the MOSES website, at www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html.

Here are a few details we want to be sure you don’t miss:
• New this year is help with carpooling: we’ve added carpooling to the Conference website. Workshop Presenter Feb. 21-23, 2013 La Crosse, Wis. From our exhibitors, sneak preview of activities at the upcoming 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 21-23 in La Crosse, Wis. Look for the conference presenter symbol to see which of our authors will also be presenting at the Conference.

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• New this year is help with carpooling: we’ve added carpooling to the Conference website.
• New farmers will want to check out the many offerings in our “New Organic Stewards” program. Specialized workshops, social gatherings and roundtables are customized to fit your needs.
• The “Wine and Dine with MOSES” dinner is moving: to the award-winning Waterfront Restaurant overlooking the Mississippi River. Look forward to a mouth-watering meal preceded by organic wine, beer and hors d’oeuvres.

The Silent Auction is moving back to our own MOSES, plan to indulge in a little competitive betting on a limited collection of exclusive items.

The Networking area is also moving! The network connection tables will now be down in the north hall lobby, across from the north workshop areas. Free literature tables and bulletin boards for buy-sell-hire-opportunities postings will still be at the north end of the upper concourse.

Although food lines move at a pretty fast clip, 200 new seats in the Dining Hall will help speed meal access.

Also new are two Thursday Pre-Conference Short Courses. These half-day intensives are held during the Organic University, which means you can take one of the new short courses OR a full-day Organic University course.

• The 2014 MOSES Conference will be our 25th. Don’t you think we should celebrate? If you have ideas of how to celebrate in 2014, share them this year. Look for the flip chart or posterboard in the Networking area designed to collect your suggestions.

There is much to see and do at this fantastic event. Study your registration booklet, or go online at www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html to check it all out. And, don’t forget, you get the best prices by registering by January 16th.

We hope to see you in February in La Crosse!

Happy New Year,
Jody Padgham,
Organic Broadcaster Editor

News From MOSES

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(includes a link to the online version of the bimonthly Organic Broadcaster)

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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.
In November, the USDA Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (also called AC21), delivered its report, titled “Enhancing Coexistence,” to USDA Secretary Vilsack. This committee of 23 members representing universities, commodity groups, trade associations, businesses, government and farmers met five times. I’d consider approximately six of the members to be unsupportive of biotech seeds or crops, the rest are very pro-genetically engineered (GE) crops.

The task of this committee was to address the following issues. A mandate decreed that the first two be addressed before the third: 1. What system, if any, would work best to compensate farmers whose crop values are reduced by the “unintended presence” of GE materials? 2. How would that system determine which claims would be eligible for compensation? 3. What other actions could facilitate coexistence among different agricultural systems in the United States? (The committee defines coexistence as: the concurrent cultivation of conventional, organic, IP and genetically engineered (GE) crops consistent with underlying consumer preferences and farmer choices.)

I’d like to bring some of the elements of the report to your attention.

The Good: Recognition that GE has some problems

The biotech industry is very strong and politically influential in the U.S. Up until now unwanted GE drift on crops and fields from neighboring GE crops has not been recognized as needing regulatory attention. I give Secretary Vilsack credit for starting this discussion, with the formation of the AC21 committee, and also for his attempt to limit the deregulation of GE Roundup-Ready alfalfa. Although the many biotech lawyers successfully challenged and won on GE alfalfa, it is a small consolation that limitation on a GE crop was at least considered.

The AC21 report wisely addresses the need to protect seed quality, and unadulterated seed germplasm free of GE contamination. The need for an ample supply of “regionally adapted, high quality” seeds to meet all farmers’ needs is necessary for “the associated agricultural sectors to flourish.” This reference includes organic seed production. The entire committee agreed that useful tools include isolation areas for the protection of specific types of seeds to prevent genetic drift.

This plan could have a chilling effect on the growth of organic agriculture.

The Bad: Limited view of what GE damage looks like

The Secretary’s specific mandate to the AC21 Committee required a compensation mechanism to address farmer economic losses caused by GE crop production. The mandate did not take into account the many difficulties that the introduction of GE crops have had on those who do not use this technology. For example, non-GE farmers who feed their crops to their own livestock may not have a quantifiable economic loss, but have been damaged just the same by genetic drift. Costs and challenges of planning and land-use limitations to avoid contamination of non-GE farms is not addressed. Only monetary losses experienced at the sale of the product are considered. Many GE supporters on the committee questioned whether or not financial damages are really occurring, since organic farmers do not lose organic certification if their crops test positive for GE.

The Ugly: Victim pays

The compensation mechanism, as proposed, asks the USDA to set up a crop insurance program that non-GE farmers can buy into against losses. Non-GE farmers can lessen their insurance premium by working out agreements with their neighbors to plant GE crops later or earlier or in a different location.

This plan could have a chilling effect on the growth of organic agriculture. Organic farmers want to farm the way they choose. They do not want to negotiate management decisions with a community that may view their practices as crazy, or judgmental of non-organic practices. The committee felt that this type of communication between GE farmers and non-GE farmers would build community and lessen problems. However, in my opinion it could lead to more, not less, friction. First, it will put a significant burden on non-GE farmers to actually find their GE neighbors (much farmland is now rented out on an annual basis). Additionally, a non-GE farmer will need to ask a GE farmer to change farming practices in order to accommodate a neighbor. Another level of challenge occurs if the plan is not adhered to by the GE farmer. We all know that rain, broken equipment, running out of seed, and many other reasons can affect when and what a farmer can plant. What happens to the plan then? If the plan to avoid GE contamination is not followed by the GE farmer, does the insurance premium for the organic farmer rise?

The Very Ugly: More to GE than just economic impact

Why are the patent-holders of the technology not being held accountable for the unwanted genetic drift their GE crops are causing? Why is there a lack of concern for the purity of our crop seed germplasm as well as wild plants affected by windblown GE pollen? The belief that GE crops actually mean less chemical herbicide and pesticide use has been shown to be completely false. In actuality, the biotech industry wants to introduce more problematic herbicides for use on resistant crops. Imagine all of the acreage currently sprayed with...
Citizen Groups Take Up Battle for Labeling GMOs
By Jim Riddle and Nancy Brown

The defeat of California’s ballot initiative to label genetically engineered foods, known as Prop 37, has strengthened the resolve of citizens, health advocates, and farmers nationwide who are vowing to step up the fight for truth in labeling. Citizen-led campaigns for disclosure of genetically engineered ingredients have formed a 30-state “Coalition of States for Mandatory GMO Labeling” and boycotts of GMO food companies are underway.

Genetic engineering is the process of inserting genes from one species into another (for example, fish genes into tomatoes). It differs from traditional breeding in that it breaches the natural barriers between species, and even kingdoms.

With the recent rise of genetically engineered soybeans, corn, canola, cotton, alfalfa, sweet corn, and sugar beets, it is now estimated that a majority of foods in U.S. grocery stores contain genetically engineered ingredients. More than 60 countries require labels on foods containing genetically engineered ingredients. Some European Union countries ban cultivation of GE seeds.

Mandating disclosure of GE ingredients acknowledges the serious concerns that persist about the effects of GMOs on the health of humans and the land. In animal studies, consumption of genetically engineered foods is linked to allergies, immune system disorders, cancers, infertility, and other problems. Cultivation of GE seeds has led to herbicide- and pesticide-resistant “superweeds” forcing farmers to resort to more and more toxic chemicals. As a recent report from Washington State University shows, the planting of GMO crops has led to a significant increase in the amount of pesticides applied by farmers in the U.S., with 404 million more pounds of pesticides being applied since GMO crops were first introduced in 1996. (http://news.cahners.wsu.edu/2012/10/01/pesticide-use-rises-as-herbicide-resistant-weeds-undermine-performance-of-major-ge-crops-new-wsu-study-shows/)

Since pollen is airborne and uncontrollable, non-GMO fields are vulnerable to contamination by unwanted GMO pollen. This puts U.S. farmers at a competitive disadvantage when exporting to nations that have already rejected GMOs. Shipments of U.S. corn and soy are turned away at European ports when they are found to be contaminated with genetically engineered material.

Despite consistent public support for GMO labeling (upwards of 90 percent) and support for GMO labeling voiced by then-candidate Barack Obama in 2007, the overwhelming influence of the biotech, pesticide and processed food industries at the federal level have thwarted efforts to require labeling nationwide.

Last spring, the “Just Label It” campaign delivered a record-setting 1.3 million public comments to the Food and Drug Administration demanding GMO labeling. The FDA’s failure to act convinced labeling advocates across the nation that change would have to come from the states.

Connecticut, Vermont, and Hawaii are among the 19 states that ran campaigns last year. This year advocates are back with new energy and lessons learned from the Prop 37 campaign. In Washington State, San Juan County recently banned the growth of any GMOs – including crops, animals and other organisms. (www.wakingtimes.com/2012/11/12/washington-county-hans-growing-of-gmos/) Washington State and Michigan are working to have GMO labeling ballot initiatives on the ballot in 2013, and Right to Know legislation is being introduced in Minnesota. (www.righttoknowmn.org/)

Industry opposition remains fierce. In California, the biotech, pesticide, and processed food industries spent more than $50 million to defeat Prop 37, outspending labeling advocates by more than 5 to 1. Yet despite Prop 37’s defeat, California food labeling advocates are rightly claiming victory. They know that the state’s newly informed consumers will vote with their dollars against food containing genetically engineered ingredients. To help in that effort, a non-GMO shopping guide is available at www.nongmoshoppingguide.com.

The Organic Consumers Association and other groups have organized a boycott of organic and “natural” brands whose parent companies donated millions of dollars to defeat Prop 37. To see the companies that are being boycotted, visit the OCA website at www.organicconsumers.org.

Both GMO and non-GMO farmers need to take steps to avoid contamination. The University of Minnesota has released a helpful guide, “GMO Contamination Prevention - What Does it Take?” (http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/cfans/swroc/documents/article/cfans_article_390283.pdf)

In many ways, the Prop 37 campaign was a significant, but early step on the road for the U.S. joining the growing internationalization of allowing its citizens to be informed as to whether or not the foods that are offered for sale contain genetically engineered ingredients. We and many other activists advocate allowing the free market to determine the success or failure of GMO foods.

To learn more about the issues with GMOs, visit these websites:
www.non-gmoproject.com
www.centerforfoodsafety.org
www.non-gmoreport.com
www.centerforfoodsafty.org

Jim Riddle is a long-time organic activist and contributor to the Organic Broadcaster. Nancy Brown is a mother and co-founder of Right to Know Minnesota, a coalition working to make labeling of genetically engineered foods the law in Minnesota.

Jim will present a workshop at the MUSES Conference on Friday morning titled “Messages Matter: How to Talk (& Think) Organic.”
Wholesale Success

A Farmer’s Guide to Food Safety, Selling, Handling, and Packing Produce

Edited by Jim Slama and Atina Diffley
Published Dec 2012 by FamilyFarmed.org
Review by Jody Padgham

When I opened a pre-print copy of Wholesale Success I was thrilled to find the newly updated third edition to be a huge improvement over the previous version. This new Wholesale Success, published by FamilyFarmed.org, is a must-have for those who sell any produce at all, large or small-scale, wholesale or retail.

One of the reasons that this third edition is such a gem is that long-time wholesale grower Atina Diffley (formerly of Gardens of Eagan, now of Organic Farming Works) undertook the revision. Her experienced on-the-ground knowledge shines off the pages. I imagine this is the kind of book she would have liked when she first started farming. I can hear Atina’s wisdom as she helps me understand how to prioritize time, develop skills to succeed, and grasp the requirements for selling into wholesale markets. In the introduction, Atina and co-editor Jim Slama note “Ultimately, the information in this guide will help you develop new profitable business relationships, increase product quality, maximize shelf life, and successfully manage wholesale sales.”

Although the name of the book is Wholesale Success, and the content is designed to be most relevant to small and mid-sized operations that sell produce into wholesale markets, the wealth of information on harvesting, post-harvest handling and food safety is equally valuable. When doing education for new farmers, I always emphasize “find your market first.” And so, I was pleased to see that the book opens with a substantial section on marketing, covering pricing, working with buyers, contracts, profit margins, labeling and more.

This book has the information needed to get us there.

It’s been a long time since I’ve picked up a book with a four-page table of contents. But, this 300+ page book has a lot of information to share. The last 150 pages are titled “crop profiles,” in which over 100 fruits and vegetables, from coconuts and peaches to rutabagas and horseradish, are detailed. Each profile explains harvest tips, packing recommendations (including box sizes and grades), cooling and cleaning techniques, ideal storage conditions and common diseases and pests. The information is comprehensive, straightforward and well presented.

But, I have prematurely wandered to the back of the book, when the front half is equally valuable. When doing education for new farmers, I always emphasize “find your market first.” And so, I was pleased to see that the book opens with a substantial section on marketing, covering pricing, working with buyers, contracts, profit margins, labeling and more.

Section two, titled “Preharvest Preparation,” is basically a quick primer on good production practices – from soil prep to irrigation and row covers. This section is short – a few valuable tidbits to add to your knowledge, but obviously not the core of the book.

The harvesting section is filled with photos of ripe and unripe produce, plus tips about tools, containers and handling techniques useful in harvesting. “Cooling and Curing” is my favorite section because it is extremely comprehensive, with lots of photos and very in-depth suggestions and plans for methods and equipment. One example of this is the explanation about the changes that occur when produce cools and cures, illustrating why the recommended techniques and standards are so critical to success. I like that we are taught why as much as how, so we can make informed decisions when presented with the ever-present “non-textbook” situation in the field.

Other sections of the book include “Cleaning and Drying,” “Sorting and Packing,” “Storage and Transportation,” “Packing Shed Design,” “Post Harvest Sanitation,” and the ever-important “Food Safety” section. If you pick up this book for no other reason, get it for this well done section on food safety. The first paragraph of the section explains its value well. “Food safety is something that every farm, no matter its size or financial position, must attend to. Having a food safety mindset does not necessarily mean having state-of-the-art equipment or extra staff people to run a food safety program. In fact, food safety should not be something separate from your day-to-day operations.”

FamilyFarmed.org supports the book’s food safety section with a free online tool that helps fruit and vegetable growers create a food safety plan specific to their operation. Users work through a decision tree, answering questions about their operation. Based on the answers, record keeping templates and policies are generated in the format of a comprehensive food safety plan.

With lots of color photos, charts and diagrams, this comprehensive book presents...
Sign Here: Written Agreements Keep Buyers, Suppliers, and CSA Members Happy

By Rachel Armstrong and A. Bryan Endres

For many farmers, winter certainly does bring the white stuff. But it isn’t snow. It’s paper. While shoveling through a blizzard of sales records, receipts, and orders, farmers might find themselves either smiling or cringing as they take stock. Perhaps a favorite customer significantly increased their purchases or the CSA survey delivered glowing reviews. On the other hand, maybe a single high-maintenance buyer drove down efficiency.

What can a farmer do about sales that aren’t being worth the time spent on them? Tinkering with the pricing structure, product mix, or delivery route is one way to try and lose the time-wasters. However, the sales agreement presents an often-neglected opportunity in the search for high-quality buyers.

A well-written sales agreement can be a very powerful tool because it sets the stage for a positive relationship. Many people might reflexively assume that a sales agreement implies fine print and deception. But, that is not necessarily true. A sales agreement is an opportunity for clear communication. We don’t need to leave the farm to see the value of that! How many relationships do you know that might have been salvaged if the two people involved had simply clearly expressed their needs? It’s the same way with a purchasing relationship. Think back to that high maintenance buyer. If he knew exactly what you needed, might he have provided it?

Whether you write your own sales agreements or use the one provided by your buyer, take a moment this winter to look over the terms. Are you happy with the advance notice your buyer gives you? Is your buyer consistently dropping below your minimum order? Do buyers make unexpected changes or inconsistent demands? These are all issues you may be able to resolve with your own sales agreement or by modifying your buyer’s.

A sales agreement is a legal document, (and this article will get to that) but the legal aspects of a sales agreement are not necessarily the best place for an individual farmer to begin when developing one. Most farmers never want to see the inside of a courtroom, so let’s start with the things farmers do want to achieve.

Your first step in developing a sales agreement is to outline your minimum standards for a financially viable sale. Minimum volumes and order deadlines are important elements, as is a clear refund policy. Next, outline the actions that will protect your product’s value and increase your customer’s happiness. For example, when and where does delivery occur and how should the customer handle the product to preserve its value? If the list of needs is supplemented with the traditional sales receipt terms (date, quantity, price), that signed sales agreement is a permanent record that both farmer and buyer can consult.

Many farmers work with large buyers that supply their own written agreement. In this case, a farmer shouldn’t hesitate to cross out the terms to which they object and write in better terms. If a buyer does not respond, those handwritten terms may control the sale. If a buyer does object, however, you might need to negotiate. The conflict-adverse farmer should not fear a negotiation—think of it as a mutual discussion of shared needs. After all, the buyer wants a successful sale as well.

Using written sales agreements that contain price, quantity, refund, and product handling information is a basic task, but a surprising number of farmers simply are not doing it. For example, the authors’ survey of CSA farmers across Illinois and Wisconsin found that only 24% of CSA farmers use a written agreement with their members or shareholders. Many CSA farmers are wary of using a formal written agreement because Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is based on trust between farmer and eater.

A written CSA member/sales agreement can foster the trust that is characteristic of CSA, and of local food sales as a whole. Many farmers are looking for a greater commitment from their buyer. A written agreement is a polite and welcoming way to acknowledge what buyer and seller are trying to build—a healthier and more accountable food system. Farmers may find that their CSA customers actually trust them more after reading a thoughtful and thorough CSA membership agreement.

Written sales agreements may be essential to grow the market for local and organic products. Sue Kirby and her husband, Mike, are beginning CSA farmers near Chicago. Sue found that a written agreement was essential for her farm. “Many of our customers are brand new to CSA. We needed a written agreement just so we can explain how it works and what the customer is getting.”

Of course, fostering trust and increasing sales is not the only purpose of a written sales agreement. This document protects the farm if a dispute does go to court. In many states, a sales agreement totaling $500 or more will not be enforceable unless the other party signed it. Farmers should always hold onto a copy of the agreement with the other party’s signature, just in case.

Remember that only the terms actually contained in that agreement are enforceable. If the parties had an unwritten understanding, it will not necessarily ride in on the coattails of the contract. Write everything down. If a written agreement is impractical at the time, send a letter to the other party outlining the deal as soon as possible. That written confirmation may work just as well. Also, if you and the other party agree to any changes, write those down, too.

Written sales agreements can be a powerful tool to build a trustworthy and profitable sales relationship. A little time spent on sales agreement this winter is an investment for years to come. For more details on the special aspects of a CSA member agreement specifically, read our Model CSA Member Agreement and Guide at www.farmcommons.org.

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. Bryan Endres is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Law at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.
Research Shows Flaming and Cultivation
Key to Weed Control

By Stevan Knezevic, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

The Flame Weeding Team from the University of Nebraska (Drs Knezevic and Gogos) will be presenting this research as part of the Organic Research Forum at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in February 2013.

Rationale for Research and Goals
Weeds are one of the major yield limit factors in both conventional and organic crop production systems. Controlling weeds in organic farming is especially challenging and requires the use of many techniques and strategies to achieve economically acceptable weed control and crop yields.

Mechanical cultivation is a widely-used method for removing weeds between crop rows (inter-row space). However, that method leaves a strip of weeds uncontrolled within the crop row (intra-row space). Thus, the weeds that grow close to the crop row present the greatest challenge for mechanical weeding, as they directly influence crop yield. A combination of methods is therefore necessary to maintain satisfactory weed control within the entire crop row (both inter-row and intra-row space).

Propane flaming is one of the most promising alternatives for weed control in organic cropping systems. Flaming is a thermal weed control method that can kill weeds within and between crop rows using heat generated from propane burners. Propane flaming should not be a single practice for weed control, other measures are still needed in the tool box of weed management. For example, many organic farmers typically utilize at least 4-5 weeding operations per season, including a combination of multiple cultivation, harrowing, and/or hand weeding. Reducing the number of weed control operations (e.g., trips across the field) can provide significant savings to the production costs and reduce soil erosion.

Research Goal: To determine the level of weed control and crop response to flaming and cultivation conducted up to two times per season.

Materials and Methods
Field experiments were conducted in 2011, 2012, and 2013 at the University of Nebraska, Concord, Nebraska. Corn and soybean were planted in 30-inch rows with a four-row planter in 30-foot long plots.

The weed control treatments consisted of a weed-free control, which was not burned but kept weed-free by hand weeding; a plot that was planted with crop but not weeded all season; and six weed control treatments that included: cultivation once (fourth leaf [V4] for corn and cotyledon stage [VC] for soybean), cultivation plus flaming once (V4 for corn and VC for soybean), cultivation plus flaming twice (V4 and V6 for corn, and VC and V4 for soybean), full flaming once (V4 for corn and VC for soybean) and full flaming twice (V4 and V6 for corn, and VC and V4 for soybean).

Flaming was conducted with flame weeding equipment developed by the University of Nebraska, driven at a constant speed of 4 MPH with the ‘four-row full flamer (4-R FF)’ and the ‘four-row flamer/cultivator (4-R FC)’.

The 4-R FF had eight torches shielded with hoods to keep the heat close to the ground and targeting weeds. It uses propane at a rate of 10 gallons per acre (GPA). In the “early season setup” the hoods were kept closed.

Contact Hesco if you are interested in forwarding contracting your 2013 Organic Hard Red Winter Wheat

“Make sure you have a solid outlet for your crop each year and Hesco can provide that for you.”

For more information please contact Jay Johnson or Kevin Darling at 1-605-884-1100
Cover Crops... from page 1

online at http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php. Twenty to thirty species are listed for Midwestern states, including cool and warm season grasses, broad-leaves, brassicas, and legumes. The tool was evaluated and vetted by university and agronomy professionals across the Midwest and Canada to ensure that it works for choosing cover crops for local soils and distinct climates. There are years of research data and grower experiences behind the recommendations.

The tool allows growers to select a state and county for regionalized results. The grower enters the cash crop that the cover crop will be planted around (before, after or interseeded), including planting and harvest dates of that crop and the soil conditions of the field, such as poorly drained or well drained. Users of this online tool have an option for selecting three goals of the cover crop that are important for narrowing down results. Examples of goals include quick growth, erosion fighter, and soil builder.

Once these criteria are selected, a table pops up that provides the different cover crops and cover crop mixtures that could meet your specifications and planting window. The user then can select from a pull down menu to see an information page about that particular cover crop or mixture. These information pages provide planting information, termination recommendations, potential advantages and disadvantages of the particular cover crop and more. This tool can be extremely helpful in making the best possible cover crop decisions for your farm.

Based on the criteria of early season planting (for example April 1 to May 1) and quick growth, the MCCC Decision Tool identified these species as best choices in Wisconsin: spring barley, spring wheat, oats, annual ryegrass, oilseed radish, canola/rapeseed, forage turnip, red clover, and forage/field pea. Mixtures with these species such as oilseed radish + annual ryegrass or oats are also identified as potential options for early season cover crop planting. All of the plants listed previously have a quick growth score of 3 to 5 in the attribute table. Species that grow well in Wisconsin by Johnson, Colquhoun, and Bussan found that an early season pea cover crop provided only minimal nitrogen to a sweet corn crop due to the short window of time for root development and nodulation. Lack of sufficient time for growth and development would likely be an issue for other leguminous early season cover crops.

Question 2: How will the cover crop be terminated so the primary crop can be established? This question is more difficult to answer in organic systems than conventional systems because herbicides are not an option. Many fall cover crops are killed by winter, but as discussed previously, frost is an enemy to early planted cover crops. The most likely methods for killing the early season cover crop are frost, mowing and crimping. Crimping might have low success with the cool-season small grains because they will still be soft and pliable. Mowing will only be successful if the growing point is removed during the process. Tillage is the most likely tool for killing these cover crops. Keep in mind this rule of thumb about cover crops: if it takes many tillage passes to kill a cover crop, from a soil conservation point of view, the cover crop was not very beneficial. The Soil Conditioning Index, a model for predicting loss or gain of soil organic matter, decreases as more tillage is performed in a field.

Cover crops rightfully have grown in popularity. But there are challenges with establishing an early season cover crop prior to the primary crop. Growers need to have a clear idea of what benefit they hope to achieve with the cover crop and a timely plan for removal.

Nick Schneider is Winnebago County Agriculture Agent, Heidi Johnson is Jefferson County Agriculture Agent, and Ken Schroeder is Portage County Agriculture Agent, all at the University of Wisconsin Extension. Nick and Ken will give a workshop on cover crops at the 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference.
Pheromone: A musical compound, produced and excreted by organic animals that will influence your behavior and development with members of the same species.*

Wait, is that REALLY the Webster’s definition?

Well, it’s close; this defines the “digging deep in the gut bucket rock, jump blues and rockabilly” music that you can expect to hear at the 2013 MOSES Organic Farming Conference. The Minnesota-based band the Pheromones will play dance music from 8 p.m. to midnight Friday, Feb. 22 in La Crosse. "We named the band the Pheromones because that is the influence we want to have on our audience," the band’s manager, Martin Diffley, explains. "We play to create a social response, to send out a musical message, to get people to dance." And dance we will!

The band is excited to return to the root of its origins at the MOSES Conference. And “root” is an appropriate term relating to this group of farmer-musicians. “Each band member started out with music as a teenager, thinking we’d make a living playing music. But then we all became organic farmers, and use our music to support our farming!” Martin claims.

The band members, John Navazio on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, Martin on guitar and vocals, Glen Borgerding on bass and vocals, Gene Mealhow on drums, David Edminster on vocals, Glen Borgerding on bass and vocals, Meg Moynihan on vocals and percussion, are all long-time participants in the MOSES Conference. In fact, the band “germinated and grew” at the conference. Martin pulled together his jamming buddies, with John to sing lead vocals, and the country-wide ensemble was formed. With John in Washington state, Glenn in western Minnesota, Gene in northern Iowa, and David, Meg and Martin in the Twin Cities area, getting together to practice isn’t an easy feat. The group has not recorded, making their rare live performances even more special.

“We love playing at the MOSES Conference. Farmers attending aren’t used to sitting all day. They thrive on activity, and need to shake it loose. The Pheromones provide that needed break.” Martin claims.

The Pheromones performance at the 2013 MOSES Conference is free for all conference attendees.

* (Webster’s definition) Pheromone: A chemical compound, produced and excreted by animals, that will influence behavior and development with members of the same species.

Shake it Up with the Pheromones at the MOSES Conference

By Jody Padgham

With a college degree in music, David is the resident musicologist and “go-to guy” for musical questions, but Martin and John’s long-time passions guide the group’s musical diversity. The group focuses on country blues, swing jump and 50s, 60s and 70s rhythm, and blues rock and roll.

As organic farmers as well as musicians, the Pheromones consider the MOSES Conference their true home. But they’ve been asked to play at other conferences around the country as well. John and Martin are the core players at these events, with others joining as they can, or local musicians hired to fill in. One of their favorite events is an annual August corn-breeders meeting, for which they developed a popular Corn Dance. Some may remember enjoying the corn dance at the 2010 MOSES Conference, a very fun (but messy, and so, unfortunately, not to be repeated) activity. The group has not recorded, making their rare live performances even more special.

“”We love playing at the MOSES Conference. Farmers attending aren’t used to sitting all day. They thrive on activity, and need to shake it loose. The Pheromones provide that needed break.” Martin claims.

The Pheromones performance at the 2013 MOSES Conference is free for all conference attendees.

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The Virtuous Circle
Carmen Fernholz and his wife, Sally, received the 2005 MOSES Farmer of the Year award. In this column we highlight wisdom from recipients of the award. The 2013 award will be announced in February at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference. The new Farmer of the Year will speak at the Conference on Thursday evening. Carmen will give a keynote presentation on Saturday morning and present a workshop Saturday afternoon.

Over the past several months I have again had a number of opportunities to speak to college classes at the University and other state colleges about organic agriculture, production and marketing, as well as the future of the organic food production system.

To say that these have been some very stimulating discussions would be an understatement. I am truly amazed and invigorated by the deep interest many of these students have in food and in organic systems invigorated by the deep interest many of these students have in food and in organic systems. Invariably the discussion comes around to the retail costs of organic food on the grocery shelves. There is deep concern that the price for many of these food shelf items is too high for a good number of average or below average income consumers who cannot afford to pay these prices. The question invariably rises if there is some way that we can keep organic food prices more in line with non-organic food prices.

This is a concern I have expressed many times from more than college students, but it seems to be a bit more urgent coming from this sector of our society. These people will be the parents of the future, making decisions not only about what they will be eating, but what habits they will be helping their children form. It is critical that this question about price for organic food be addressed with them whenever possible.

In carrying on this discussion I harken back to the early days of the formation of the Organic Farmers’ Agency for Relationship Marketing, Inc. (OFARM) in the late 1990s. It was at this time that organic farmers, more specifically, grain farmers were beginning to experience a serious erosion in their ability to maintain an organic farming operation as prices for grains were disrespectfully close to non-organic grain prices. The message being sent to organic farmers was that organic food really had little additional economic value over the rest of the food we were able to buy. The end result was the formation of a marketing body to better define the need for, and the rationale for, significantly higher grain prices for organic grains in comparison to non-organic grains.

Much of this may appear to be quite straightforward and logical, but the true rationale for the formation of this marketing body has been best spelled out in the bylaws a group of organic farmers drew up defining the necessities for higher prices when it comes to organic grain production.

Let me quote from the preamble to the bylaws of OFARM: “We recognize that in order to establish and maintain a viable production system for the social and environmental infrastructures of our total food production system for succeeding generations.”

In short, what these organic farmers were redefining was what Henry Ford had learned over a century ago, namely the concept of the virtuous circle. In recent years the same concept has been stated by such notable politicians as the late Paul Wellstone when he said many times “Everybody does better when everybody does better.”

This is a very simple philosophy, but one that we too often lose sight of too easily as consumers shopping for food or farmers neglecting to share in our marketing strength. Too often we opt for independence instead of interdependence when it comes to maintaining our future and that of those we want to hand the future to.

As many of us have learned in our holistic management courses and in other aspects of our childhood and adult lives we must continue to strive for and move toward interdependence rather than independence. Everyone truly is doing better when everyone does better.
During a trip to the Farm Service Agency a couple of years ago, Jesse Schwarz happened to see a notice on the wall about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He learned that along with dollars to make improvements, the program offered the help of various Natural Resources Conservation Program personnel, including grazing specialist Jean Stramel. These staff could provide technical assistance to design a rotational grazing system that would be good for his land, good for his animals and make his own life a lot easier and rewarding.

At the time, Jesse was pasturing his herd in three permanent pastures that did not provide the high quality forage he wanted. He was spending almost 4 hours a day messing around with fences to simulate rotational grazing, but his system just wasn’t working. He invited Jean to come out to the farm, and together they developed a plan to take 60 acres of land that had been cropped fields and turn it into 30 grazing paddocks.

He was able through the EQIP Program to complete his plan. Now his 100-cow herd can move around the farm for a whole month before returning to a paddock. Jesse claims that the improvement over his previous system “is just awesome!” The paddock sizes were planned so the cattle have enough to eat, but not too much. This prevents them from picking around and taking just some of the forage, so they eat it down evenly. Jesse is getting much more feed out of his pastures now. Things would have been a lot worse during this droughty summer if he had not had this system in place, he said. This December the young stock were still out on the pastures, allowing him to feed much less from his stored feeds than he had in the past at this time of year.

Not only did numerous NRCS personnel provide free technical assistance for planning the rotational grazing system, Jesse also applied for and received cost-share funds under the EQIP Organic Initiative. He used the funds for “built to last” perimeter and interior cedar post high-tensile fences.

The NRCS also designed and cost-shared a 1250-foot cow lane that services the padlocks, sloped just right so muddy cows will be a thing of the past.

A 4000-foot water line was also paid for by EQIP, on top of the ground under the fence where the cattle can’t trample it. Wherever there are padlock gates, the hose is buried. The hose is blown out for winter, and just stays in place. Jesse has two 54-gallon tanks with floats that he can move with his 4-wheeler, and reconnect with a 50-foot hose to one of the water couplers installed throughout the line. The system is well designed and easy to manage, and makes Jesse feel that he can “farm organically there forever.”

Jesse found his NRCS office to be appreciative and understanding of organic. Having the government share the cost of his farm’s improvements benefited more than just his farm. By protecting his land from soil erosion, keeping the ground water and surface waters clean, the improvements contribute to a healthy environment for all to enjoy. Jesse has a well-functioning farm, which also contributes to a healthy regional farming economy.

There are still some issues on the farm that Jesse may look to the NRCS to help him with, including manure handling and storage. Who knows, maybe a composting facility is in his future. Jesse recommends talking to your NRCS local office, and adds “if you are lucky enough to have your application approved, you will be very happy!”

EQIP sign-up deadlines by state:
- Illinois – Feb. 3, March 30, and June 1
- Iowa – Feb. 15, and April 19
- Minnesota – Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15 and April 19
- North Dakota – already closed
- South Dakota – Feb. 15
- Wisconsin – Jan. 18

Harriet Behar is a MOSES organic specialist. She can be contacted at harriet@mosesorganic.org.
Organic Promotion?

Should organic producers and processors support a research and promotion program? Developing a pool of dollars, funded and governed by the organic community with or without USDA involvement, is discussed in the articles below. There will be two opportunities to discuss the various options at the MOSES Conference: a workshop at 2 p.m. on Friday Feb 22 at the La Crosse Center and an OTA-sponsored Town Hall meeting at the adjoining Radisson Hotel at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Feb 23.

Sector Explores Pooling Resources to Expand Organic Agriculture

By Melissa Hughes

According to a recent survey, only one in ten consumers understands the difference between natural and organic labels. Other studies show that consumers trust the “natural” label more than the organic label, believing “natural” means no pesticides, no herbicides and no genetically modified organisms. Meanwhile, a study from Stanford University, an American Academy of Pediatrics’ clinical report and a Dec. 3 Time magazine article have all required responses to clear up confusion about the attributes of organic products.

Despite incredible growth in the organic sector, we cannot ignore that many consumers do not grasp the meaning of the USDA Organic seal. Many companies—in fact, most—have been forced to include basic organic education in their marketing.

At Organic Valley, we must educate consumers about the value of organic first, and then about organic milk. With hundreds of other companies each developing their own messaging about organic, the combined effect upon consumers is dilution of the information.

For this reason, Organic Valley is among the businesses working with the Organic Trade Association (OTA) to explore the creation of an Organic Research and Promotion Program (ORPP). Last year, the OTA Board authorized exploration of this idea as an opportunity to create a unified voice for educating consumers. The main focus has been the structure of “check-off” programs.

Check-off programs are peculiar “quasi-governmental” entities. Industry asks for the program, USDA provides the structure and collects the funds, and the sector governs it within the confines of government regulation. It is up to the sector to determine who pays into the fund, who the stakeholders are, and how the funds are distributed. Many of these questions get answered in the formation process.

For the most part, check-off programs have been unwilling to promote organic choice, and, in fact, ignore organic. An organic-specific research and promotion board could help promote organic as a choice for consumers today.

Research is also covered by a research and promotion program. There are many examples of nutritional and research studies used to promote commodities in the check-off programs: milk has been promoted as a source of calcium, and eggs as a good choice for protein. In the meantime, the check-off programs have also included research specific to helping organic farmers improve and return check-off dollars to organic producers and processors to allow all organic producers and handlers to opt out of the NRPP, and return check-off dollars to organic producers and processors to use as they wish. Furthermore, if legislation advocating for only the technical fix is supported by the whole organic community, including Washington-based advocacy groups, sustainable agricultural organizations and leading processors and retailers, we believe it will find the necessary congressional support to become law either as an amendment to the Farm Bill, in an appropriations bill or attached to an omnibus bill. This can return more choice to organic producers and processors in how their check-off dollars are spent.

Any discussion on funding for organic research and promotion needs to happen within an industry-wide discussion that has a format that aggressively works to include all stakeholders, especially those producers who are already paying into the NRPP, in a process similar to that used to develop the Organic Action Plan.

Creating an ORPP

There are two “technical fixes” that need to happen in order for an ORPP to come to existence.

To Hughes on page 13

The Organic Check-Off Program – Another View

By Ed Maltby

The whole organic community agrees that we need to promote organic agriculture and fund research into production practices that improve efficiency and sustainability of farmers who become organically certified. However, the best path to that end currently is being debated. A significant percentage of the organic community are seeking a technical regulatory fix that allows organic farmers to withdraw their check-off dollars from supporting conventional agriculture but does not support legislation that lays the groundwork to the establishment of an Organic Research and Promotion Program. We believe that legislation creating a pathway to a federal, mandated, USDA, multi-commodity “Organic Research and Promotion Program” is premature and that the National Research and Promotion Programs (NRPP) model is not a viable option for the organic industry.

The agricultural community is well aware of the short-comings and pitfalls of NRPP, also referred to as check-off programs, especially for the farmers. With a governing committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, NRPP funds are typically controlled by processors and manufacturers rather than farmers. We feel that this has led to consolidation and lower prices for the raw products. Our research shows that existing regulation prohibits NRPP from discussing the benefits of one farming system over another (comparative promotion), so an organic program would not be able to combat negative comments about organic. Currently, only those producers that market 100% organically certified product have the ability to opt out of these check-off programs.

The organic community recognizes and supports the need to find a technical fix, via legislative language, that will broaden the exemption to allow all organic producers and handlers to opt out of the NRPP, and return check-off dollars to organic producers and processors to use as they wish. Furthermore, if legislation advocating for only the technical fix is supported by the whole organic community, including Washington-based advocacy groups, sustainable agricultural organizations and leading processors and retailers, we believe it will find the necessary congressional support to become law either as an amendment to the Farm Bill, in an appropriations bill or attached to an omnibus bill. This can return more choice to organic producers and processors in how their check-off dollars are spent.

Any discussion on funding for organic research and promotion needs to happen within an industry-wide discussion that has a format that aggressively works to include all stakeholders, especially those producers who are already paying into the NRPP, in a process similar to that used to develop the Organic Action Plan.

These discussions should:

• Analyze the advantages of pooling check-off funds against possible restrictive guidelines, heavy bureaucracy, lack of accountability and cost of administration.
• Examine in depth the different models that can be used to organize and govern the decisions on assessments and disbursement of funds,

To Maltby on page 13
Hughes... from page 12
The First Step: In the 2002 Farm Bill, Congress enacted an exemption from commodity orders for persons who solely produce and market 100 percent organic products. The implementing regulations for this exemption made it difficult for producers to access the exemption and impossible for some groups, like dairy processors. Therefore, some have continued to pay into the check-offs. This requires legislation to clarify and broaden the exemption to all organic production.

The Second Step: In addition, under current Research and Promotion legislation, the organic industry does not qualify to create a research and promotion board because it is multi-commodity. This would require amending the Research and Promotion legislation to accommodate multiple-commodity programs.

This two-step process will simply get the organic sector to the starting block on possible creation of an ORPP board. Once these steps are completed, the industry will still need to establish a framework (governance, programs and plans, assessments and exemptions), survey the sector for support, draft a program/order, seek USDA advice and counsel, and get USDA’s support for creating the order. Although OTA is fostering the technical fixes and ORPP conversation, an ORPP, if established, would be governed by a board of directors chosen by the greater organic industry. It is estimated that the entire process (if the industry decides to create the ORPP), could take up to three years.

Getting involved
Cooperation and communication are important to everyone involved in this conversation. In fact, having a successful discussion throughout the sector is crucial. OTA is encouraging this conversation through an OTA list serve for input and updates (www.OTA.com/orpp.html), and by holding Town Hall meetings and webinars.

We encourage you to be part of this dialog to help shape the final decision and direction on a possible ORPP.

Melissa Hughes is General Counsel for Organic Valley.

Maltby... from page 12
some of which are:
- Create a regional response similar to the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education model (SARE), which can promote geographically diverse research and promotion;
- Replicate the Organic Valley farmer controlled program (Farmers Advocating for Organics (FAFO)) that may be replicated in other commodities;
- Allow the individual producers and processors could direct their check-off monies directly to the educational and organic promotion programs initiated by producer and consumer-controlled organizations like OFARM, NOFDA, WODPA, MODPA, NOC, COCO, NOFA, ORRP and MOSIES.
- Reach consensus on who will be assessed, what will be assessed and how the assessment will be collected,
- Ensure that these promotional dollars would assist with keeping family farm producers in business.

For more information please go to: www.nodpa.com/checkoff_opposition.shtml.

Ed Maltby is the Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Producers Alliance.

• Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM Inc.), Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) umbrella organization for Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA); Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (MODPA); and Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) for Organic Dairy; Beyond Pesticides (DC); Buchuether Growers Association of Minnesota (MN); Cornucopia Institute (WI); Food and Water Watch (DC); Hoosier Organic Marketing Education (IN); Kansas Organic Producers Association (KS); Midwest Organic Farmers Cooperative (IL); Montana Organic Producers Cooperative (MT); National Farmers Organization (NFOrganics); Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc. (NOFA-NY); Northeast Organic Farming Associations Interstate Council (NOFA-IC); Organic Consumers Association (DC and MN); Weston A. Price Foundation; Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance (WOMA).
while flaming during the early vegetative growth stages of crops: V4 for corn and VC for soybean. In the “late season setup” the hoods were opened to create a 4 to 6-inch gap between the two hoods, allowing the crop row to pass through the gap.

The 4-R FC was designed by retrofitting flaming torches and hoods onto a Noble Four-Row-Runner cultivator. The hoods are 12 inches wide and centered over the crop row, using a propane rate of 5GPA. Similar to the above full flamers, the hoods were kept closed while flaming at the early growth stages. During late-season flaming, the crop passed through a 4-inch opening (gap) between the two halves of the hood.

Results and Conclusions
Effect of flaming and cultivation in corn
A single cultivation at the V4 stage provided only 33% weed control in corn when plots were rated at 28 days after treatment. This is compared to 92% control with the combination of cultivation and banded flaming conducted twice (at the V4 and V6 stages). Corn cultivated once at the V4 stage had the lowest yield (130 bushels/acre), while the plots with the combination treatment of cultivation and banded flaming applied twice (V4 & V6 stages) yielded 172 bushels (Table1).

Full flaming conducted twice (V4 & V6 stages) resulted in 83% weed control in corn when plots were rated at 28 days after treatment. This is compared to 92% control with the combination of cultivation and banded flaming conducted twice (at the V4 and V6 stages). Corn cultivated once at the V4 stage had only 30% weed control rating compared to the 88% control in the plots receiving the combination of cultivation and banded flaming twice (VC and V4 stages) (Table 2). The combination of cultivation and banded flaming applied at the VC and V4 stages provided only 83% weed control due to the regrowth of grassy species within crop row. There was no regrowth of broadleaf weeds.

There was an initial injury of soybean (data not shown), but the crop recovered well after flaming, regardless of the treatment. Full flaming conducted once at the VC stage resulted in the lowest yield (22 bushels) due to weed competition from subsequent weed flushes. The highest yields were obtained in the season-long weed-free plots (45 bushels) and the plots flame and cultivated twice at the VC and V4 stages (42 bushels). Full flaming conducted twice at the VC and V4 stages yielded 36 bushels.

In corn, the most promising weed control methods were the combination of banded flaming with cultivation or full flaming, both conducted twice per season, which provided satisfactory weed control of 92% and 83%.

In soybean, the most promising weed control strategy was the banded flaming plus cultivation conducted twice which provided satisfactory weed control of about 85%. An additional weed control operation in soybean might be needed to obtain close to 90% level of weed control.

From a practical standpoint, these results are encouraging and need to be verified further in a larger crop production setting. Reducing the number of weed control operations to only two per season can result in a significant savings to organic crop production.

In both corn and soybean, none of the treatments provided over 95% weed control, suggesting that there is a need for more than two weed control operations per season. Some may argue that such high level weed control (>95%) may not be necessary from both economic and environmental standpoints, and the fact that most organic growers are satisfied with about 90% weed control. In order to achieve such high levels of weed control (>95%), an innovative combination of weed control tools and timing of their use are needed. Such strategies might be highly dependent on the field-specific characteristics and cropping history. Additional studies are needed to test such a hypothesis.

Dr. Stevan Knezevic is Professor of Integrated Weed Management at the University of Nebraska.

Members of the Flame Weeding Team at University of Nebraska are: Stevan Knezevic, Avishek Dutta, Strahinja Stepanovic, and George Guguei, Brian Neilson, and Chris Bruening.

Haskell Agricultural Laboratory, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Concord, NE 68728.
Mechanical Engineering Department, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588.

Table 1. Effect of flaming and cultivation treatments on weed control (28 DAT) and yield in corn

<table>
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<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Weed Control (%)</th>
<th>Yield (bushel/yr)</th>
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<td>Weed-free control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivation once (V4 &amp; V6)</td>
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<td>171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full flaming once (V4 &amp; V6)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full flaming twice (V4 &amp; V6)</td>
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<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woody season-long</td>
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<th>Treatment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weed-free control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woody season-long</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apply the laws of nature on your farm.
We believe that there’s a better way to reduce insect and weed pressure than using chemicals.
We believe that nature knows best and that, if we work with her, we can restore balance and health to our farms and to the world’s food supply.
Support Mother Nature.
Feed your soil, free the nutrients for your plants; build natural resistance to disease and insects.
Inside Organics... from page 3

Roundup being sprayed with 2,4-D instead? Why are the long-term negative environmental and human health impacts of these GE crops not studied before they are released into our environment?

Meaningful GE review and control

Europe and other areas of the world have approached GE crops with extreme caution. It is time that real dialogue and GE control begins in the U.S. to address all aspects of GE crops, from ecosystem impacts to the health of our communities. GE is not essential to feeding the world. Rather than thinking we can manipulate nature, organic farmers know that when we respect nature, we benefit from the abundance present in web of life. I recommend that you continue to be informed on this issue by visiting some of the websites listed in Jim Riddle’s article on page 4. You can also let USDA Secretary Vilsack know that as an organic non-GE crop producer, you do NOT believe crop insurance, paid for by the victim, is the mechanism to cover damages caused by a technology that has been carelessly introduced without true safeguards.


Wholesale Success... from page 5

Clear recommendations that are well founded and straightforward. I imagine there are things that are left out, but with information on every fruit and vegetable from apples and apricots to watermelons and winter squash (with guavas, southern peas and watercress in between), I couldn’t find it. This is one of those books that would be great to read cover to cover, but will still be very valuable for those that won’t do that. The elaborate table of contents will easily get you to the section you are looking for.

Although still expensive at $70.00, I guarantee that you will learn something valuable for your produce operation in Wholesale Success. FamilyFarmed.org is offering workshops on food safety around the country to coincide with the book’s release. Participants receive a copy of the book included with the workshop fee. For details on the dates and locations of those workshops, see the listing on page 20 in the MOSES calendar, or go online to www.familyfarmed.org/wholesale-success. Book purchasing information is on the website, too, along with FamilyFarmed.org’s online food safety plan tool. Reduces prices are available for those using the book as a training resource. MOSES will also be selling this great book, through both our online and conference bookstores.

Census... from page 1

That advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities. “The results of the 2012 Census of Agriculture will directly influence policy decisions for agriculture. By participating in the Census, farmers show that the sustainable agriculture movement is vibrant and growing, and needs to be prioritized in all agricultural programs, both federal and state.”

Farmers will start to receive the Census by mail in December. Responses are due by February 4. If you are a farmer who received and completed the Census in the past and are still operating, you should automatically receive a Census in the mail. You have the option of completing the paper version and returning the Census via postal mail, or, helping save administrative and postage dollars by completing the survey online. You will need to use your Census ID code when completing the Census online; this code is a series of 17 numbers and letters on the label of the Census form mailed to you.

NASS uses a variety of USDA lists and sources to generate the list of farmers who will receive the Census. If you are a new farmer or unsure if you have received the Census in the past or perhaps have moved your operation, the best way to ensure you are counted is to sign-up online at www.agcensus.usda.gov. A Census form will be mailed to you. While the deadline for responses is February 4, NASS is particularly sensitive to wanting to ensure that all farms are counted. If you miss this deadline or have any other questions, call the Census directly at 1-888-424-7828.

This census is the broad, encompassing and official Census of Agriculture that counts all farm operations. This is different from the Organic Production Survey conducted in 2009, which for the first time captured more detailed information to better understand organic operations. If you completed this Organic Production Survey, you will still need to complete the upcoming Census.

“It is particularly important for minority farmer groups such as women to be counted in this census,” explains Leigh Adcock, Executive Director of the Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFA). “We are a national group representing women in sustainable agriculture. For decades, women have not been accurately represented in such agricultural data for their contributions and positive impact on our food system. The tide has turned in the last Census of Agriculture, which counted a 29 percent increase in women-owned and operated farms, fueled by women launching small-scale, diversified, sustainable operations. We want to make sure these numbers continue to represent an accurate picture of women farmers today, numbers which can then potentially lead to stronger priority funding within USDA programs.

In an effort to better represent these women and other minority farmers, and to record farms with multiple operators, the Census includes a question for responders to list the total number of operators on a farm. An “operator” is defined as someone who helps make business decisions but doesn’t necessarily need to be a land or business owner. Additionally and importantly, there is space to list more detail on up to three of your operators. This additional information includes gender identification, which is the place to include female partners such as wives and siblings.

Part of the challenge for organic and sustainable farmers is completing the actual Census, as many of the questions are written for larger, commodity-based operations and we don’t always readily “fit” into existing boxes. NASS is available to answer any questions you may have while filling out the Census. The agency has a commitment to ensure all operations—including small-scale, diversified operations—are accurately counted and represented.

“We organic farmers are part of a growing movement within American agriculture, and it’s important for us to be counted and our voices to be heard in all venues formal and official,” explains Peg Sheaffer, co-owner of Sandhill Family Farms, a diversified CSA farm with farms in Brodhead, Wis. and Grayslake, Ill. “We need to be committed to the process and answer the questions as best we can.”

“This is about more than just the Census,” adds Beth Osmund of Cedar Valley Sustainable Farm, a meat operation based in Ottawa, Ill. “As a new, non-traditional farmer, I need to help advocate and fight to be included in the current dominant mindset that favors large-scale, conventional agriculture. Otherwise, we will be excluded from programs and opportunities that we could potentially benefit from.”

Resources:


Lisa Kivirist is the coordinator of the MOSES Rural Women’s Project. She can be reached at lisa@innerseardinity.com

Jody Padgham is the Organic Broadcaster editor. She can be reached at jody@moseorganic.org.
**Organic Food Health Advantage**

The American Academy of Pediatrics has a new research paper about organic food which states "In terms of health advantages, organic diets have a convincing demonstrated ability to expose consumers to fewer pesticides associated with human disease." Read it at [http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/10/15/peds.2012-2579.full.pdf+html](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/10/15/peds.2012-2579.full.pdf+html).

**Pesticide Exposure in Children**

The annual policy statement on pesticides by the American Academy of Pediatrics was recently released. From the abstract: "Epidemiologic evidence demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems. Related animal toxicology studies provide supportive biological plausibility for these findings. Recognizing and reducing problematic exposures will require attention to current inadequacies in medical training, public health tracking, and regulatory action on pesticides. Ongoing research describing toxicologic vulnerabilities and exposure factors across the life span are needed to inform regulatory needs and appropriate interventions. Policies that promote integrated pest management, comprehensive pesticide labeling, and marketing practices that incorporate child health considerations will enhance safe use." Read the report at [http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/11/21/peds.2012-2757](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/11/21/peds.2012-2757).

**OPS Hosts Incubator Farms**

Organic Field School (OFS) at Gardens of Eagan will be home to two new incubator farms, Bossy Acres and Humble Pie, both focusing on organic growing practices and community involvement. OFS is the only farming incubator program in Minnesota to offer up to three acres for new organic farmers to launch their businesses, and one of just a handful of such programs in the country. For more information about OFS, visit [www.organicfieldschool.org](http://www.organicfieldschool.org).

**Pesticide Drift Petition**

Representing Minnesota organic farmers Oluf and Debra Johnson, Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc. (FLAG), has filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari asking the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn part of a Minnesota Supreme Court ruling that decreases the integrity of the organic food chain by allowing increased pesticide contamination on organic farmland. The Johnsons' petition focuses solely on the Minnesota Supreme Court's interpretation of the federal National Organic Program regulation regarding pesticide drift on organic farmland. The petition does not seek to overturn the Minnesota Supreme Court's ruling that pesticide drift cannot constitute trespass. More information and the Petition at [www.flaginc.org](http://www.flaginc.org).

**NOP Final Rule on Periodic Residue Testing**

On Nov. 9 the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) published the Final Rule on Periodic Residue Testing in the Federal Register. Organic certifying agents must now test samples from at least 5% of the operations they certify on an annual basis. Certifying agents may test USDA organic farms and processors for any prohibited substances and methods, including prohibited pesticides, arsenic or other contaminating metals, genetic engineering, synthetic hormones, or antibiotics.

**EQIP Application Deadlines List**


**FSA Guide to Farm Loans**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces the online publication titled “Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans.” The guide, written in “plain language,” provides information about FSA’s farm loans and loan servicing options. Available online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/dfsl](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dfsl).

**Organic Dairies Contribute More**

The organic dairy sector in both Minnesota and Vermont provides more economic opportunity to farmers, businesses, and one of just a handful of such programs in the country. For more information about OFS, visit [www.organicfieldschool.org](http://www.organicfieldschool.org).

**Loans for Ohio Sustainable Farms**

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) has partnered with a group of socially-motivated local investors making $500,000 available through the OEFFA Investment Fund. The Fund will accept applications Nov. 1, 2012 with the first funding decisions expected in January 2013. Information and applications at [http://www.oeffa.org/invest.php](http://www.oeffa.org/invest.php). The fund is only open to Ohio-based OEFFA members in good standing.

**Buy and Sell**


**Organic Processing Institute Fact Sheets**

OPI offers four new free fact sheets for organic farmers, producers, and processors. Three fact sheets address the waste disposal needs of mobile processing units in three Midwestern states, a fourth provides tips in sourcing ingredients for organic processing. See [www.organicprocessinginstitute.org](http://www.organicprocessinginstitute.org).

**Marketing Webinar Series Offered**

A new series of webinars on marketing is now available, “Marketing for Profits: Tools for Success.” The webinars are free, and each is offered twice. Over three years the series will cover five categories of marketing concepts. Six webinars this winter will focus on Market Assessment and Customer Assessment. Info at [www.nyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com).

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Ask an Expert 2.0 Launches
If you have a question about organic farming, you can use the Ask an Expert service at http://extension.org/ask, and you'll usually get an answer from Land Grant universities around the country within 48 hours. Both questioners and responders are able to make their questions open to the public for comment, but they also have the option of keeping the questions private. In Ask an Expert, you can upload a photo, and provide additional information such as your location in order to get an appropriate answer.

Value-Added Agriculture Youth Curriculum Offered Online
The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC) offers a new, free curriculum to educate youth on opportunities for rural development through value-added agriculture. The curriculum provides instructors with full lesson plans on agritourism, aquaculture, livestock, biomass, and renewable energy. Additional materials will be added throughout the fall. The full curriculum is available at www.agmrc.org/curriculum.

eOrganic Recordings from the International Organic Fruit Research Symposium
Fifty-five recorded presentations from the 2nd International Organic Fruit Research Symposium in Leavenworth, Wash. on June 19-21, 2012 on a wide range of organic fruit production and research topics are now available for viewing at www.extension.org/pages/64359. View the presentations as a single playlist on the eOrganic YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE816E610DF986E58.

Fact Sheet on Integrating Pastured Poultry into Farming Enterprises
Rodale Institute has released a new fact sheet titled Establishing a Small-Scale, Sustainable, Pastured Poultry Operation offering guidelines on successfully integrating poultry into a farming enterprise. The fact sheet discusses the benefits of raising pastured poultry and provides step-by-step instructions on pastured poultry production, as well as a list of resources for further information. See www.rodaleinstitute.org.

Minneapolis 2012 Greenbook Available
The 2012 edition of Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Greenbook is now available, highlighting the results of projects funded by the MDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program. Seventeen sustainable agriculture projects are featured in four major topic areas: alternative markets and specialty crops; cropping systems and soil fertility; fruits and vegetables; and livestock. The Greenbook is online at www.mda.state.mn.us.

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Long-time organic farmer Carmen Fernholz shares his vision of the ideal organic food production system.

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Or use the mail-in form in your registration booklet.

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Pre-Conference Calendar: Feb. 1, 2013

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Organic Broadcaster Classified Ad Form

All ads must be pre-paid by Oct 1, Dec 1, Feb 1, April 1, June 1, or Aug 1 to run in the next issue! We encourage you to place your classified ad online at www.mosesorganic.org/broadcaster.html! or email it directly to broadcaster@mosesorganic.org.

If you have questions, contact Jill at 715-778-5775 or broadcaster@mosesorganic.org.

Write your ad in the blanks below. Each blank can hold a word or a number. Punctuation is free.

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Up to this many words for only $12.00 up to 15 more words for an additional $6.00

Amount due: 25 words or less, $12.00-
Up to an additional 15 words $6.00=
Total per ad = $

Payment Information:

Your Name: ________________________________

Mail Address: ________________________________

City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: __________

Phone: __________________ email: __________________

Method of Payment (please check one)
☐ Check (enclosed) ☐ Credit Card (MC/Visa only)

CC number: ____________________________ Expiration date: ____________________________

signature (needed for cc payment): ____________________________

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For Sale: 20 Kovar Drag with hydraulic wings. Has the long times. $2500.00 OBO. Buffalo, MN. Call 763-682-1389.


LIVESTOCK


Help Wanted: Soper Farms, Emmetsburg, IA, seeks organic vegetable farm manager, 45-100 acre retail and wholesale production. Desire experience with equipment, drip irrigation, personnel management, record keeping, greenhouse production, organic practices, production and processing a wide range of vegetables. $35,000 - $50,000 salary, based on experience. Call 712-330-1690 or email dennismcdonald@soperfarms.com

For Sale: SUSTAINABLE LIVING NEAR THE BWCAW! Small town homestead for sale at edge of Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness – Ely end. Well-insulated, two BR, one bath, 1955 rambler on a 60 X 180 foot lot. Fenced yard has 200 feet of raised beds, drip irrigation, 10 X 22 greenhouse, chicken coop with 12 bird capacity, and a woodshed. Inside has hardwood floors, Heathstorne “Heritage” woodstove on main floor, and Vermont Castings “Encore” in the basement. Huge wood room downstairs with study, work room, and partial bathroom. Ricing beds, whitefish/tulibee netting, and public access all nearby. $62,500.00. Call Jan Erchul, Bear Island Real Estate, 218-349-2574 or email dennismcdonald@soperfarms.com

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 baths. Three barns and an older unoccupied house. North Central, WI. $495K. Call 715-297-0974 or email TheComingOfTheLordIsNear@gmail.com


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Hit your target! With more than 9,500 readers, your classified ad appears BOTH in the Broadcaster and in our Organic Classifieds at www.mosesorganic.org.

Congratulations to Becky Adams, winner of the final ad drawing!
Organic Commodity Pricing Resources

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

Rodale Organic Price Report
http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/
Organic-Price-Report

Organic Milk Prices
NODPA
30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342
PHONE: 413-772-0444
http://www.nodpa.com/payprice.shtml

Organic Livestock Prices
CROPP Cooperative Organic Trader
Newsletter
http://www.farmers.coop/feeds-pro-
gram/organic-trader/
1-888-809-9297

Where to Buy and Sell Your Organic Products
MOSES Organic Resource Directory
http://www.mosesorganic.org/resour-
cedirectory.html
or request a hard copy by contacting
MOSES, 715-778-5775

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Compared to two weeks ago: Feed grade prices trended mostly steady. High trading period on slow market activity. Demand for current ship appeared to be light to moderate. However, deferred delivery into 2013 demand was good as USDA Livestock and Grain Market News
Jodee Inman, Market Reporter Phone: 515-284-4460
desm.lgmn@ams.usda.gov
www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketNews

end-users remain concerned about availability of inventories second and third quarter of the year. Prices reported on wheat this period were higher as supplies remained scarce. In addition, increased demand was noted from the feed industry as producers look to reformulate their rations.

Visit MOSES on the web for lots of information, our online bookstore, conference information and online registration, too!
www.mosesorganic.org

Connect with the Organic Farming Community on Facebook and Twitter!
Find MOSES on Facebook as Midwest-Organic-and-Sustainable-Education-Service-MOSES. Just click on the Facebook “f” on our website, www.mosesorganic.org. Then “like” us!

To make sure you see our posts on your Facebook news feed, hover over the “Liked” button on the MOSES Facebook page near the cover photo. A menu will appear. Select “show in news feed.” Now you’re connected!

Our Twitter handle is @mosesorganic. Find us fast: click on the blue bird at www.mosesorganic.org.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

UPCOMING WINTER CONFERENCES


Jan. 18-20, Wisconsin School for Beginning Market Growers, Madison, Wis. An intensive three-day course that demonstrates what it takes to set up and run a successful market garden or small farm. Instructor include experienced growers and UW faculty and staff. Practical know-how, enhanced with real-life stories of experienced growers and networking with peers who share a dream. www.cis.s. wisc.edu or (608) 255-3704.

Jan. 25-27, The North Central Biodynamic Group Gathering, Viroqua, Wis. Dr. Mark Kamler, a founding physician of True Biotechna, will speak about the spiritual dimensions of nutrition. For more information contact Beth Schadalbach, (608) 366-3904, treewearfarm@att.net.

Jan. 22 through Feb. 3, Perennial Harvest and On-Farm Food Safety Workshops. Join Nina Diffley, organic farmer and educator, for a day-long workshop devoted to learning about per-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables: cleaning, cooling, packing, storage, transport, sanitation, food safety and more! Workshop attendees will receive a free copy of Wholesale Success: A Farmer’s Guide to Selling, Post-Harvest Handling, and Packing Produce, published by Family Farm. (www.familyfarm.org) Normally a $95 fee. The 150-page manual is newly updated and revised. Wisconsin Workshops contact us for more info on registration.

Jan 22, Wisconsin 12, 12-43/Annie Nivern, 920-478-3852, annienivern@ ford.com

Jan 24, Venya, 8:30-3:00 Nicole Pettit, 608-637-0815, vonnecille@email.com

Jan 25, Madison, 8:00-2:30 Laura Wiberg, 608-224-3710, wibergj @countyofdane.com

An online registration form for the Wisc. workshops is at http://datcp.wi.gov/.

Jan 23 through Feb 27, Annie’s Project Workshops, Baldwin, Wis. Modeled after a successful program now in over 20 states, Annie’s Project focuses on the risk management educational needs for beginning farm women and/or farm women who are considering a direct marketing or value-added enterprise in Dunn, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix and surrounding Wisc. counties. The program will be on six consecutive Wednesdays, Jan 23 & 30 and Feb 6, 13, 20 & 27. More at http://dun. uwex.edu or 715-322-1636.

Feb. 12, Southern Minn. Organic Crops Day, 3 p.m., Steele County Community Center, Owatonna, Minn. Organic crop research updates, information on cover crops, pest management and alternative crop options. Cost $15, includes an organic supper. Pre-registration is not necessary, more information at 507-444-7685.

Feb 23, Organic Check-off Town Hall, 8:30 a.m., Radisson Hotel, La Crosse. A possible checkoff program for organic producers has been suggested in the latest farm bill to provide funding for promotion and research. Join OTA members Robynn Strader of the National Cooperative Grocers Association, Melissa Hughes of Organic Valley and OTA staff Laura Batcha for an open discussion concerning the positive impact and pitfalls of this type of future program.

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