



Going Organic Project Fact Sheet

Project Background

The Going Organic (GO) program was started in 2003 by the CCOF Foundation to protect the environment and promote human health through the production and consumption of nutritious organic food. With the initial pilot funding from the Clarence E. Heller Foundation, three CCOF Chapters (Fresno/Tulare, North Coast, and North Valley) held meetings, selected mentors, solicited trainee farmers, and completed surveys exploring the barriers to organic farming.

In 2004-2005 the pilot chapters held five meetings, including four GO kickoff meetings to solicit and link trainee farmers with experienced mentors. In all, 15 new organic farmers were linked with 9 mentors who hosted the trainees on their farms. The mentors have both large and small farms and grow a variety of crops including almonds, winegrapes, market gardens, olives, and flowers.

In 2005 the CCOF Foundation was awarded a two and a half year grant by the California State Water Board to expand the Going Organic project to the North Coast Chapter and all CCOF Chapters in the Central Valley (Fresno/Tulare, North Valley, Yolo, Sierra Gold, and Kern). This effectively continues the project in the 3 original pilot chapters and expands to four new ones. The Water Board recognizes the “use of organic farming practices” as a management practice to improve water quality and therefore has supported this landmark program.

Plans for 2005-2006

The expanded program will provide funding for up to 25 mentors to help 40 non-organic farmers learn about organic farming and certification. Through a series of regional seminars and local on-farm meetings, the mentors, trainees, CCOF chapter members, non-organic farmers, advisors, and agricultural neighbors will be given information about the benefits and challenges of organic farming, helped to overcome the perceived and real barriers to farming organically. Speakers will discuss fertility, compost, cover cropping, wildlife habitat, natural pest control, the certification process, erosion control, marketing, Organic System Plan (OSP) development, federal cost-sharing incentive applications, and more.

Additionally, The San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), www.sfei.org, will conduct watershed health assessments. Farm watersheds will be selected to give a representative assessment of organic farming practices compared to similar non-organic farming run off sites and regional monitoring stations.

Schedule of Events

Fall 2005: A series of fall meetings will ‘kick off’ Going Organic in both the continuing and new chapters. Pilot watershed assessment and monitoring will begin and continue on a regular schedule for two years based upon initial assessment results.

Spring 2006: In each of the seven chapters five mentors will be paired with seven new trainee farmers and visit each other’s farms. Local meetings will be held at mentors’ ranches and other locations to provide information and training for all farmers, land managers, educators, advisors, agencies, policy makers, and agricultural commissioners on organic farming.

Fall 2006: After harvest, the first trainees will complete their first year and some new trainees may be accepted. New mentors will be selected based upon interests, time, and crops of the previous year's mentors. A series of winter seminars and additional Going Organic kick off meetings will expand outreach to the new trainees and the local farm community.

For Further Information and to apply:

Visit the Going Organic program online at: www.ccof.org/programs.php

- GO Meeting Schedule
- Fact Sheet
- Mentor Application
- Trainee Application
- Chapter Contacts
- GO Management Team Members

Contact Information:

Project Coordinator

Fred Thomas, CERUS Consulting
2119 Shoshone Ave. Chico, CA 95926.
530-891-6958 fred@cerusconsulting.com

Big Valley Chapter

GO Management Team Member:
Glenn Anderson
209-667-7494 andalm@earthlink.net
GO Chapter Leader: TBA
Chapter President: TBA

Fresno-Tulare Chapter

GO Management Team Member: Mike Braga
559-675-1743 bragafarms@yahoo.com
GO Chapter Leader: Cynthia Ortegon
559-664-0471 omtibet@sbcglobal.net
Chapter President: Mike Braga
559-675-1743 bragafarms@yahoo.com

Kern Chapter

GO Management Team Member: TBA
Going Chapter Leader: TBA
Chapter President: TBA

North Coast Chapter

GO Management Team Member: TBA
GO Chapter Leader: Debby Zygielbaum.
707-251-0469 walkthevine@robertsinskey.com
Chapter President: Julie Johnson
707-967-8027 jaj@tressabores.com

North Valley Chapter

GO Management Team Member: Carl Rosato
530-589-1696 woodleaffarm@sbcglobal.net
GO Chapter Leader: Carl Rosato.
530-589-1696 woodleaffarm@sbcglobal.net
Chapter President: Denise Carter
530-458-7566 carter.b@colusanet.com

Sierra Gold Chapter

GO Management Team Member: Randy Hansen
530-626-9696 hansenrr@pacbell.net
GO Chapter Leader: Steve Bird
530-647-0690 celticgardens@netzero.com
Chapter President: Randy Hansen
530-626-9696 hansenrr@pacbell.net

University of California Cooperative Extension

GO Management Team Member: Benny Fouche
209-468-9491. bfouche@ucdavis.edu

University of California Davis

GO Management Team Member:
Mark Van Horn
530-752-7645. mxvanhorn@ucdavis.edu

Yolo Valley Chapter

GO Management Team Member: Greg House
530-753-3361. greg@cocoranch.com
GO Chapter Leader: TBA
Chapter President: TBA