

Organic News, Certification Updates, Member Profiles, and More!



CERTIFIED Organic

INSIDE LOOK ■

EVERY DROP COUNTS

**Technology to Make the Most
of Limited Natural Resources**



**CCOF 2015 Annual Meeting
California Groundwater Levels
Future Organic Farmer Grant Recipients**



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22

Every Drop Counts

"Unprecedented drought conditions in the western region are far reaching and hard hitting, even for organic producers."

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New CCOF members

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Magazine Production

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Laura McKissack

SENIOR EDITOR/WRITER Jon Knapp

ART DIRECTION/DESIGN Sarah Watters

Certified Organic magazine is published quarterly by CCOF and serves CCOF's diverse membership base and others in the organic community including consumers and affiliated businesses. Letters to the publisher should be sent to marketing@ccof.org. CCOF reserves the right to edit or omit submissions and letters received. For more information contact CCOF, Inc. at marketing@ccof.org.

Advertising

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For every pound of paper used to print this edition of *Certified Organic*, an equivalent number of trees are planted through Trees for the Future, an organization dedicated to planting trees with rural communities in the developing world, enabling them to restore their environment, grow more food, and build a sustainable future.

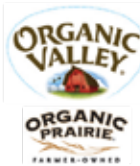
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The Organic Trade Association (OTA) and Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) bring all segments of the organic industry together to protect the integrity of organic standards and promote the benefits of organic agriculture and products. The Annual Fund enables OTA and COTA to carry out the critical government affairs, consumer marketing and media outreach projects necessary to the health and well-being of the organic industry.



The mission of the Organic Trade Association is to promote and protect organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy.

*List of investors as of 6/30/14. To see a complete list of Annual Fund investors, please visit www.ota.com.

Supporting Farmers Facing Drought

Farmers across the Western United States are struggling to meet challenges posed by one of the worst droughts in U.S. history. Farming is inherently risky, but the current drought combined with increasingly extreme weather patterns is testing the mettle of many.

Organic farmers have always employed creative measures to increase their on-farm environmental sustainability, and in this month's feature article, "Every Drop Counts" (page 22), you'll learn about the many ways CCOF-certified members are employing innovative water technologies to cope during the recent water-scarce season.

Earlier this year, the CCOF member community matched a \$5,000 contribution from Farm Aid with an additional \$5,000 that was donated through its chapters to distribute as grants to drought-stricken organic producers.

Twenty farmers received funds that helped them make ends meet in the face of water scarcity and higher-than-ever irrigation costs.

Since 2007, CCOF has also distributed hardship assistance grants through our Bricmont Fund to organic farmers whose operations have been affected by extreme hardship—including drought. This year, the fund will distribute between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to help offset organic certification costs for farmers experiencing hardships in this challenging production year. CCOF is the only organization in the United States that provides hardship assistance to organic producers. The next round of hardship grants will be awarded this November.

If you would like to help us provide financial assistance to more organic farmers affected by drought and other hardship, please consider contributing to the Bricmont Fund by contacting Emily Shoemaker (eshoemaker@ccof.org) or visiting our website to donate at www.ccof.org/foundation.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy".

Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director/CEO





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Neonicotinoids: A National Menace

A recent study conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has uncovered polluted streams throughout the upper Midwest. The main culprits are neonicotinoids, which are insecticides used heavily on farms in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. USGS researchers studied nine rivers and found an overwhelming amount of neonicotinoids that originated from agricultural runoff.

This is not just a regional issue. *The Organic Center* reports, "One of the areas where neonicotinoids are being used heavily is by the conventional citrus industry to control the spread of citrus greening disease. The use of neonicotinoids on citrus is having detrimental effects on pollinator populations."

How are neonicotinoids harming pollinator populations? The Xerces Society published a study explaining some of the facts about exposure to this insecticide:

- Pollinator species consume pollen and nectar. This is where lethal levels of neonicotinoid residue can be found.
- Neonicotinoids can remain in soil for months or years from just a single application.
- Neonicotinoids applied to crops can also taint neighboring plants.
- Exposed honeybees can suffer from reduced taste sensitivity, slower learning, and flying and navigational issues, all of which are integral to the bees' wellbeing.

Also chiming in on the conversation is Emory University, which recently gained media attention for successfully treating two Americans for Ebola. They have banned neonicotinoids from their campus grounds. Director of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives, Ciannat Howett, stated that "protecting pollinators will further Emory's sustainability vision to help restore the global ecosystem, foster healthy living, and reduce the university's impact on the local environment." Even though this ban is a small drop in the bucket, every contribution towards protecting pollinators is a great success.

We appreciate our organic growers who remain committed to organic farming practices in this difficult time, especially for most of our organic citrus operations. Research into organic alternatives to neonicotinoids will be crucial to the future success of the organic citrus industry.

Farmers' Markets Now Serving Wine

Farmers' market wine tastings? Yes, please!

Much to the delight of California farmers' market vendors and visitors alike, wine tasting is now available statewide at farmers' markets. Governor Jerry Brown announced that he signed a measure to pave the way for wine tasting on July 8, 2014. Both houses of the Legislative branch almost unanimously passed Assembly Bill 2488.

The bill will allow California winegrowers to conduct instructional tastings at farmers' markets. On-site locations will be designated by distinct signage and a physical barrier. The measure states that patrons are limited to three ounces of



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This year, farms are pulling 20 million acre-feet from an already historically low groundwater level.



samples per day and that there will be one winery per market allowed. Proponents have touted that the bill will assist small winery operations in building brand recognition and give the general public a chance to try something new instead of the typical “wine of choice”.

Some people have argued that this will add unnecessary ruff-raff to the farmers’ markets. Others stated that the market managers will need to reconsider how to keep children out of the designated areas, and some have mentioned that only allowing one winery to sample their wine is too restrictive.

As a certifier of organic wine, we are excited that this bill has been passed. Now CCOF-certified wineries will have the rare opportunity to bring the tasting room to the market to reach a broader audience.

Next Hurdle for California: Historically Low Groundwater Levels

By this time, almost everyone in the United States has witnessed the effects of the current drought on California’s agriculture industry, from low crop yields to increased produce prices. Californians have been slowly decreasing water use, however some counties are reporting water usage increases. In turn we are moving away from reservoir water and tapping heavily into groundwater and aquifer water.

California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN) reported that California is now up against a groundwater crisis. This year, farms are pulling 20 million acre-feet from

an already historically low groundwater level. Moreover, 40% of Californians rely on groundwater as their main source of drinking water. At this rate, Californians are pulling groundwater out faster than it can naturally recharge. How long does it actually take for natural recharge to occur? The answer is reliant on the amount of precipitation we receive. Since California has not had much rain lately, you can bet that groundwater is extremely low.

To make matters worse, the Department of Health has now flagged over 900 public drinking water sources as being contaminated with nitrates. Nitrates generally get into groundwater from fertilizer runoff, leaky septic systems, and natural deposit erosion. High levels of nitrates can have a slew of different health effects, but it is most dangerous and possibly deadly to infants below six months old.

So what are the next steps? California legislature has recently passed bills that standardize the management of groundwater. These changes will require local government agencies to regulate groundwater usage, and if local agencies cannot properly manage their groundwater, the state will take over. CalCAN is actively joining this conversation to help the smaller farmers who might have difficulties funding irrigation for land, as the bill tends to not threaten larger farmers who have the capital to drill deeper wells.

This month’s feature article, “Every Drop Counts” (page 22), takes a deeper look into farming technology and offers some fantastic options for different organic operations to make the most of finite resources. We will be highlighting a multitude of farming operations that dabble in energy, water, and sustainable building technologies. If you are interested in learning more about these technologies, you can network with other farmers and processors at your regional CCOF chapter meetings or through our extensive directory.



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Aldo Leopold Conservation Award Finalists

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Aldo Leopold is best known for his *Sand County Almanac* and his stance on land ethics, conservation, and thoughtful wildlife management. Even though he passed in 1948, Aldo's legacy lives on in classrooms across the United States, in the minds of the environmentally conscious, and in conservation-based organizations worldwide.

The Sand County Foundation sponsors the Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors private landowner achievement in voluntary stewardship and management of natural resources. This year, two of the finalists are CCOF-certified operations.

Full Belly Farm

Located in the Capay Valley of northern California, Fully Belly Farm has been CCOF-certified since 1985. Their CCOF online directory profile explains, "We are committed to fostering sustainability on all levels, from fertility in our soil and care for the environment, to stable employment for our farm workers. We strive to be good stewards of this farm, so that this generation and future generations may continue to be nourished by the healthy and vibrant food that we produce. Our farm has been certified organic since 1985, and we strive to continue to support local food systems and create a strong local

food economy." Their devotion towards sustainability has been recognized by the Reusable Packaging Association. Full Belly Farm received the Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award for their decision to move from cardboard boxes to reusable plastic totes. In total, they will save 8% on box costs and cut 6.54 tons of cardboard waste per year. Nice work, folks!

Hafenfeld Ranch

This cattle operation is located at the southern tip of the Sequoia National Forest, and has been recognized as a shining example of conservation in action. The Hafenfels have created a thoughtful and sustainable operation, working in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and an Audubon California preserve to control soil erosion and to maintain a healthy riparian habitat.

The ranch has successfully partnered with local, state, and federal environmental groups to actively create a balanced ecosystem that protects the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. The grazing patterns they incorporated not only create a perfect environment for the flycatchers to breed, they encourage other indigenous species to thrive. For these reasons, Hafenfeld Ranch has been rewarded with multiple conservation easements from the California Rangeland Trust and is a finalist for this award.

The 2014 California Leopold Conservation Award is presented in December at the California Farm Bureau Federation's meeting in Garden Grove, California. The award recipient will be presented with a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold and \$10,000.

We are extremely proud of these CCOF-certified members for their recognition as being top practitioners of conservation.

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Small-Batch Organic Distillery Making Big Waves

Hanson of Sonoma is gaining recognition from the beverage community for their small-batch, American made, organic vodka. The goal of this family-operated distillery is to maintain a high level of socially responsible practices that ensure premium quality vodka. The difference between Hanson of Sonoma and other distilleries in the United States is the level of care they put into every single bottle.

Every distillery has a "marketing catch", and this is just another well thought-out marketing ploy, right? Here is some information on this distillery so you can decide for yourself whether you want to check them out.



Their certified organic infusions include Original, Ginger, Mandarin, Cucumber-Mint, Boysenberry-Blueberry, and Espresso.

To begin, they source their varietal grapes locally. Wait, what? Yes! This organic vodka is derived from local organic grapes. By being located in one of the lushest grape landscapes, they cut down on transportation costs and procure the freshest grapes on the West Coast. All of their infusions are certified organic and their varieties include Original, Ginger, Mandarin, Cucumber-Mint, Boysenberry-Blueberry, and Espresso.

The distillery's overall attention to detail is astonishing. The packaging design is simple and clean, yet gripping and thoughtful. Each bottle is carefully inspected by one of the three Hanson family members and signed off on with a ball-point pen. What's more is that they are verified non-GMO, certified gluten-free, and their accolades include:

- Top Ten Craft Vodka Brands in the World – The Spirits Business 2014
- Two Platinum Medals including Best of Show – The Spirits International Prestige "SIP" Awards, Las Vegas 2013
- Two Double Gold and Two Gold Medals – San Francisco World Spirits Competition, 2014
- Gold and Two Bronze Medals – American Distilling Institute, Seattle 2014
- Two Gold Medals and Two Silver Medals – The Vodka Masters, London 2013

Skeptical? If you're in Sonoma, stop by their new distillery to say hello and give them a try. Not in town, but still interested in trying the small-batch vodka? Browse the Hanson of Sonoma website to order a bottle or to find a local market or establishment where it is served!

Cheers!

New Member Spotlight: Soulstice Juice

Soulstice Juice is a mother and daughter venture that packs a combination of love, thoughtfulness, and dietary precision into each bottle of juice they create. Based in El Dorado Hills, California, Soulstice Juice believes in sourcing the most pristine, local produce for their juices.

Let's take a quick journey into how a bottle of Soulstice is created. Their daily blend of certified organic produce is sourced locally from the Sacramento area. They take great pride in ensuring that all of their suppliers are local organic farmers who support sustainable farming. Purchasing a bottle not only helps this duo, it helps all of the small farmers that they get their produce from! Truly, a beautiful relationship.

Once they devise a juice mixture, the juice is extracted using a cold-press system that maintains the freshness and prevents oxidization. The cold-pressed method keeps the sugars, phytonutrients, amino acids, minerals, vitamins, and enzymes intact, and ultimately provides a much more flavorful beverage. Additionally, the juice has a shelf life of 72 hours—much longer than a typical rotary juicer.

If you are in the Sacramento area, make sure to stop by their juice bar, or check their Facebook page for local deliveries to Folsom and El Dorado Hills. Make sure you get your juice quickly, because these bottles are flying off of the shelves. Welcome to the CCOF family, Soulstice!



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Sweet Lucie's Ice Cream and Treats

via Facebook: "Woohoo, that's our Sweet Lucie's truck! Check out the behind the scenes of the Katy Perry music video, 'This is How We Do.'"



Sweet Lucie's Ice Cream had their fully-restored, 1959 ice cream truck featured in the video. While the truck is only shown a couple of times in the video, it's always fun to see CCOF members rubbing elbows with pop culture icons.



Lonely Mountain Farm via Facebook:

"These Miniature donkeys truly are the best guardians! Watch how patient Laya is with the baby Nigerian dwarf goats."

Every so often you catch a special moment and think, "I wish I had taken a picture." Lonely Mountain Farm recorded this hilariously cute video of dwarf goats jumping all over Laya, the miniature donkey. Here's a big "thank you" from CCOF to the cast and crew of Lonely Mountain Farm. You put a smile on our faces!



Koda Farms via Facebook: "Ongoing video documentary based on the history of our farm."



This operation has a rich history. Not only does Koda Farms produce delicious Japanese rice and flour, they've been doing it since the late 1920s. The Koda family's farm survived the internment camps of the 1940s and came back and built a legacy that helped Americans of Japanese descent thrive in American agriculture. They've been CCOF-certified for 10 years. We look forward to the documentary!



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Building Soil through Livestock

Neil Dennis
 1 day — Wednesday

Basic Butchering

Cole Ward
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Mineral Nutrition & Plant Disease

Don Huber, Ph.D.
 1 day — Thursday

Fields of Farmers Workshop

Joel Salatin
 1 day — Thursday

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



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Congratulations Future Farmers!

Demand for organically produced food is growing quickly around the world. Now is the time to increase the supply of organic produce. One way to do this is to encourage conventional-method farmers to transition to organic, but it is equally important to support the next generation of farmers and processors. We should inspire them to pursue organic and sustainable methods of food production. With this in mind, the CCOF Foundation and the UNFI Foundation, in collaboration with partner organizations Driscoll's, Organic Valley, Bradmer Foods, and the National Cooperative Grocers Association pooled their resources to create and administer the 2014 Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund.

With funds appropriated for three different age groups, the CCOF Foundation urges educational institutions at all levels to offer more opportunities for learning and training within the field of organic agriculture. Finalists were selected by an advisory committee consisting of representatives from each of the partner organizations; ten direct grants of \$2,500 were awarded to candidates in the higher and vocational education age group. Grant winners were judged to have the strongest combination of commitment to leading a lifelong career in organic agriculture, investment and participation in the organic community, and dedication to growing the organic movement. Join us in congratulating the ten recipients of the 2014 Future Organic Farmer Grants!



Stephanie Ayoub

Michigan State University, Organic Farmer Training Program

Stephanie spent much of her childhood on a farm with her family, where she fell in love with cows and became heavily involved in raising cattle for 4-H. She was determined to own a farm in the future, so she pursued a double major in Animal Science and Agriculture Business at College of the Ozarks. After pursuing several livestock-related opportunities, Stephanie decided to enroll in Michigan State's Organic Farmer Training Program to learn the vegetable side of organic farming.

Emily Barber

Washington State University, Organic Agricultural Systems

Hailing from Spokane, Washington, Emily's passion for food first led her to earn a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts from Johnson & Wales University. While at culinary school, her interests expanded to food production and agriculture, and her eyes were opened to the beauty and necessity of organic food production. This new found passion is now leading her to Washington State University where she will pursue a Bachelor's degree in Organic Agriculture with the hope of, someday soon, becoming an organic farmer herself.



Carlos Cervantes

California State University, Fresno, Plant Science

Born in the small town of Paracho, Mexico, Carlos moved to the United States with his parents when he was 15. While obtaining his Associate's degree in Psychology from Hartnell College, he was involved with several agricultural operations in the Salinas Valley. This experience developed his interest in food production to the extent that he is now pursuing a Plant Science degree at CSU Fresno. Once he completes this program, Carlos hopes to pursue his interests further by earning a Master's degree.



In California, where over half the nation's fruits, vegetables, and nuts are grown, the average age of a farmer is hovering near 60.



Octavio Garcia

California State University, Fresno, Plant Science

Octavio and his family moved from Mexico to California when he was 14, where he enrolled in high school and spent a year working in the strawberry fields. While finishing school he enrolled in a course offered by the Agriculture and Land Based Training Association (ALBA), and by the time he was 18 had leased his own half-acre to farm. After graduating high school, Octavio enrolled at CSU Fresno to pursue a degree in Plant Science, and continues to farm 6.5 acres of organic strawberries and mixed vegetables.

Kristofor Ludvigson

Washington State University, Organic Agricultural Systems

Kristofor is a former social science teacher with a strong interest in environmental issues, and decided to challenge himself after three years of teaching by joining the U.S. Peace Corps. For four years he administered sustainable agriculture educational programs in the African country of Malawi. After returning to the United States, Kristofor enrolled at Washington State University to pursue a degree in Agriculture and Food Systems, with an emphasis in Organic Agricultural Systems. After graduating, he hopes to continue his work promoting sustainable food systems throughout the developing world.



Anna Mays

University of Vermont, Farmer Training Program

Anna's interest in organic agriculture arises from the intersection of anthropology and food production. With degrees in International Relations and Anthropology of Food from Brown University and the University of London, respectively, she has done extensive research on food security and the vulnerability of producer communities to climatic and market shocks. Anna is enrolled in the Farmer Training Program at the University of Vermont, and is interested in pursuing small-scale organic farming as a promising and personally-fulfilling solution to creating healthy, sustainable communities at a local level.



Fernando Mendez

Columbia Basin College, Crop and Soil Sciences

Fernando, originally from Mexico, lives in Washington where he attends school and is very active with various community organizations, including the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano Latino Americanos (MECLA) Club. He has worked in the fields harvesting produce with his family for many years, and is inspired to one day run his own organic farm. He is enrolled the Crop and Soil Science transfer degree program at Columbia Basin College (CBC), and plans on enrolling at Oregon State University to pursue their Sustainable Double Degree. Fernando is driven by his passion for producing food that is good for the land and good for people.



Among the challenges to meet the rising demand for organic products is the need for new organic farmers and entrepreneurs.



Eliza Milio

UC Santa Cruz, CASFS Farm & Garden Apprenticeship

Eliza is a California native who moved from Los Angeles to Santa Cruz in 2008, to pursue a degree in Environmental Studies and Agroecology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She quickly discovered her passion for food and farming, and began working at Everett Family Farms, a local CSA vegetable farm. This year, she is enrolled in a six month apprenticeship at the Center for Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) at UC Santa Cruz. Eliza is excited to work with such a diverse group of apprentices, and to have a social and practical platform from which to launch her next organic farming endeavor.

Sarah Spear

Montana State University, Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems – Agroecology

Sarah comes from Montana, and has family roots in agriculture and food production, which has fueled her passion for sustainable agriculture. She has recently graduated from Northwest Community College with an Associate’s degree in Agroecology, and has moved on to pursue a degree in Sustainable Food and Bioenergy at Montana State University. She hopes to manage or own her own organic farm once her studies are complete.



Madeline Valentine

Michigan State University, Horticulture

Madeline first experienced her love for food production while volunteering at an eco-community in Nicaragua. Her experience there made a lasting impact, and when she returned home Madeline enrolled at Michigan State University to pursue a degree in Horticulture, with a focus in organic and sustainable agriculture. While at MSU, she works on the Student Organic Farm, which provides her with hands-on experience and has inspired her to start her own CSA-model organic operation upon graduating.



Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund Continues Through 2015

With such a successful first year, the CCOF Foundation plans to continue the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund in 2015 through its partnership with organic industry leaders. More than \$60,000 has already been committed to the 2015 program by industry partners. CCOF hopes that this is just the beginning of a growing pool of resources which can continue to be used to support the next several generations of organic farmers, ranchers, and food processors.

To donate, or for more information on the CCOF Foundation and the 2015 Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund, please visit www.ccof.org/foundation.

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chapter **UPDATE**

Chapter activity has been pretty quiet during growing season. However, a few exciting developments have taken place over the last few months.

North Coast Chapter Formation

In September, the previously deactivated North Coast chapter was approved for reinstatement by the CCOF Board of Directors. Chapter president, Debby Zygielbaum of Robert Sinskey Vineyards, is working with members to reinvigorate efforts in this area. The chapter serves Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties.

Pacific Southwest Chapter Meeting

The recent August meeting of the Pacific Southwest chapter featured special guest speakers and an election. Here is outgoing chapter secretary Lois Christie's account of the event:

The CCOF Pacific Southwest chapter event was held August 22, 2014, at the San Diego Farm Bureau office, where our chapter has met for many years. The meeting featured Miles McEvoy, USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Deputy Administrator, and Phil LaRocca, organic grape grower and winemaker and Chair of the CCOF, Inc. Board of Directors. Our chapter has had a reinfusion of energy over the last two years and has hosted several successful events. This event drew nearly 50 members and supporting members.

Soleil Develle, chapter president, led the meeting with chapter business, followed by a treasurer's report by Mary Page. An election was held and two new chapter leaders were voted into office and introduced: Helene Beck, vice president, filling an open position, and Laura Fairchild, secretary (taking Lois Christie's place, who has resigned to work on organizing a new regional chapter in Mexico). Other Pacific Southwest chapter leaders are Karen Archipley, board representative, and Tom Page, alternate board representative.

Miles McEvoy talked about his history as director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Organic Food Program for over 20 years and what led him to his current position with the USDA. He gave an informative presentation on the NOP structure and regulations. He generated a lot of interest and controversy by commenting on subjects such as non-GMO labeling, the advisory role of the National Organic Standards Board in relation to the NOP, and materials-related issues such as the revised sunset rule and methionine use in organic poultry production.



Phil LaRocca always adds a spark to any meeting! The self-described "Jerry Brown of the organic industry" and second term Chair of CCOF, Inc. talked about the historic structure of CCOF. He also highlighted the CCOF Foundation, which helps fund beginning farmers' education and provides support to primary school teachers teaching students about organics. The foundation's fundraising drive started off with \$25,000, which was matched by industry partners, and they hope to raise \$100,000 this year.

Food was provided by Tom Page and by Jimbo's...Naturally, a CCOF supporting member. Organic turkey wraps and wonderful side dishes, such the Northpark Rumble (yams and kale), were served accompanied with certified organic wine provided by LaRocca Vineyards and a "made with organic grapes" wine provided by Page's Organics. A beautiful mixed green salad and sunflowers for the tables were provided by Lois Christie and Maria DeVincenzo.

The meeting continued after hours and led to an interesting round table discussion between Miles and Phil, and a lively debate with the few who stayed. The meeting finally adjourned at about 9:30 p.m.

Let the CCOF community know what your chapter is doing!

Please keep us posted! While we try to keep track of all chapter activities, there is always more to learn. Write to jsooby@ccof.org and we will publish your chapter update in the next edition of *Certified Organic*.



EVERY DROP COUNTS

WRITTEN BY

Val George

Jon Knapp

Laura McKissack

Ernesto Montenero

Technology to make the most of limited natural resources

Unprecedented drought conditions in the western region are far reaching and hard hitting, even for organic producers. While organic growing methods conserve water and improve soil fertility and water retention, the drought is causing all producers to look for more innovative management practices to make every drop count.

Partnerships, research, and incubation projects are forming throughout California to help mitigate drought impact and CCOF-certified operations are getting in on the technology early. These are some examples of clients that are committing to a higher level of sustainable agriculture.

Wireless Irrigation Network (Project WIN)

Utilizing wireless technology to improve irrigation efficiency

The Pajaro Valley, located on California's central coast, is abundant with berries, mixed greens, and other high water-use crops. In an area feeling the sting of the western drought, a collaboration of the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County with Community Water Dialogue; Hortau, Inc.; landowners; and growers—known as Project WIN—was born to help growers improve irrigation efficiency. Project WIN is developing a valley-wide wireless irrigation network through funding from private donors and a grant from the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District. The goal is to provide a 20% reduction of water use for operations working with the system.

Measurement begins in the field with probes that gauge soil tension—the effort needed for plants to absorb water from the soil. Real-time diagnostics are then sent via cell phone networks to base stations. Growers monitor results through wireless handheld devices, allowing them to accurately anticipate irrigation needs and provide ideal water and growing conditions.

Fields are mapped to determine the total number of probes and base stations required for an operation. Through the WIN network, growers are able to rent or purchase equipment, including the probes and base stations. WIN also provides a network of base stations, sharing costs and making the technology more affordable for all.

CCOF-certified member Reiter Berry Farms grows a variety of berries, focusing almost 400 acres on strawberry production. The 15-year certified organic farm grows for Driscoll's and is on

the edge of high tech as a member of the WIN network. Using the tension-based irrigation monitoring system over the past three years, Reiter Berry Farms has reduced water usage by an average of 30%.

The end result? A ripple effect that can be felt throughout the entire Pajaro Valley. The valley's aquifer has been in overdraft since about 1950 according to Kelley Bell of Driscoll's. More precise water use is aiding aquifer management and will ultimately benefit all growers in the area, and hopefully provide a model that can be used across the western United States. For more information visit www.agwater.wordpress.com.

Water Recycling, Desalinization, and Storage

Water-saving innovations south of the border

In the 1950s, the Heredia Villegas family moved to the region of Colonia Vicente Guerrero, Municipio Ensenada in Baja California and bought several thousand acres of farmland, including a large parcel in the local mountains. In the 1970s, Librado Heredia Villegas began farming tomatoes, peppers, squash, and strawberries.

As time passed, the business grew. In the late 1990s, the farm, Empaque Dos Amigos, saw growth from the booming tomato business of the San Quintín valley. However, water scarcity was already becoming a local issue. Large tomato growers using flood irrigation methods drained the water table, leaving the remaining water too salty for agricultural use.

The lessons learned from over-irrigation inspired a forward-thinking father and son duo to find ways to farm more sustainably. Librado, general manager, and Fortino, son and operations manager, embarked on a transition to organic farming with water-saving systems in 2000. Four years of hard work while building the infrastructure themselves resulted in a desalinization plant, water recycling system with multiple reservoirs, and hydroponic area for strawberries, plus 30 km of piping from neighboring mountains that uses gravity to transport fresh water to the farm. In 2005, the transition was complete and the farm began producing CCOF-certified organic tomatoes and had water-saving practices firmly in place.

Empaque Dos Amigos continued transitioning more and more land and crops to organic with the help of organic consultant Lois Christie of Christie Organic Consultants. Lois has worked



Project WIN uses probes to gauge field soil tension, sending real-time diagnostics to network base stations. Growers monitor results through wireless handheld devices.

with the farm for the past seven years to help implement organic practices that increase productivity, reduce the farm's dependence on water, and add environmental benefits. She says of Fortino, "He is an amazing grower with great cover-cropping systems and beneficial habitat mixed flowers."

Today, one water-saving technique Empaque Dos Amigos uses is growing strawberries hydroponically. The berries are in a covered area with tubing suspended from the roof system. Water is distributed from the above tubing and captured below the berries to recycle for use on tomatoes and other crops. The majority of the remaining farmland is protected with shade cloth that provides pest protection, retains soil moisture, and acts as a wind breaker.

With so many on-farm water-reducing technologies working in collaboration, the business is not feeling the tension from drought as badly as others. "Papa Librado" still works the fields every day, even in his 80s, and with Fortino will continue to grow the business, expand their organic offerings, and find new technology to help them succeed.

Subsurface Dripline Irrigation

Low-tech water reduction at The Farm on Putah Creek

Sprawling over 40 acres, The Farm on Putah Creek boasts lush farmlands, a wildlife conscious demonstration area, teaching kitchens, and a multitude of different beautiful education gardens. Located at the Center for Land-Based Learning in Winters, California, The Farm on Putah Creek has been recognized by CCOF staff for having quite an impressive subsurface irrigation system and provides a great example that water-efficient methods don't always have to be high tech. A

subsurface dripline system was set in place by farm VP Dan Martinez to significantly reduce water usage on the farm.

Drip systems are comprised of a system of polyethylene tubing, or dripline, and are designed to provide the most efficient use of irrigation water. Unlike conventional sprinkler irrigation, drip systems bring water straight to the crop in a single line with low water pressure. The crop is directly soaked and the unnecessary areas around the crop are left unwatered. The unwatered areas between emitters are so dry that they result in lower density of weeds between crops, which in turn means less weeding.

While a small-scale drip system allows flexibility to move the tubing around and how emitters are set, for large scale farming operations, the dripline is installed underground with emitters set apart every couple feet (or as necessary based on crop needs) to allow for heavy machinery to move freely across the field.

Since dripline irrigation systems allow for targeted watering, operations often benefit by decreasing water usage. Drip systems can save up to 25% in water costs and decrease energy use by running low-pressure pumps to move the water to the emitters. Additionally, a dripline irrigation system is simple to install, easily adaptable to changing field types, and after initial set up, offers savings in labor costs by reducing the need for weeding and irrigation maintenance.

Of course, no technology is perfect. Designing and implementing the system can be difficult, and startup costs can be steep. However, in times of rising water rates and uncertainty about future water sources, an investment in water-saving technology will provide significant benefits to operations located in drought-stricken regions.



Empaque Dos Amigos grows hydroponic strawberries and recycles the water for use on tomatoes and other crops.

Movable Sprinkler Irrigation System

Maximizing water efficiency across rangeland

Pete and Pam Talbott of Lakeview, Oregon, have been feeling the negative effects of the recent drought. Since the Talbotts began managing their ranch in 2000, they have implemented exciting energy- and water-saving technologies. Talbott Ranch raises certified organic cattle and sheep that are pasture raised and finished. Their cattle spend summers in eastern Oregon and winters on pasture in California, while their sheep are in Oregon year-round.

Like so many livestock operations, the drought has significantly impacted Talbott Ranch. Most notably, they have seen rising feed costs due to an increasing need to provide supplemental feed to their livestock. Land that would typically have enough pasture to support their cattle has a substantially reduced carrying capacity—Pete estimates a reduction of approximately 30-40% on their ranch ground.

Years ago, Talbott Ranch invested in some changes that have helped them during this difficult time. Pete and Pam changed some of their flood irrigated land to K-Line irrigation after observing the system in practice on a visit to New Zealand. During the trip, they toured beef and sheep ranches and dairies and were able to see the system and its benefits on different kinds of ranches.

Unlike traditional aluminum pipes, the K-Line system is made of flexible polyethylene pipe and durable sprinklers. The sprinkler heads have a protective pod with a weighted base, making it less likely to be damaged by livestock as they graze. The tubing is malleable, which makes it easy to fit any

contours or potential obstructions in a field. Another added benefit is the ease of transporting the system. Using an ATV, the entire system is dragged to the next area to be irrigated.

To make the most of limited water resources, the system distributes water using a slow absorption method, reducing runoff and ensuring that each precious drop is used resourcefully. Prior to installation, Pete noted that he was having difficulty reaching all portions of the pasture with flood irrigation. The K-Line system allows him to irrigate an entire parcel, resulting in significant improvements in pasture growth. In addition to working more efficiently than flood irrigation on the parcels at Talbott Ranch, Pete also noted that the system can run for 24 hours, ultimately reducing labor costs.

Another great energy and water efficiency tool that Talbott Ranch utilizes is a solar water pump (more about solar-powered pumps on page 26). Pete and Pam installed the pump in an area of their ranch that has no access to electricity. Alternative options would have been bringing in a gas generator or getting the local utility company to run a power line nearby. The solar panel – installed on the pump – converts solar energy to kilowatts of energy that can pump about six to eight gallons per minute. The water is pumped to a storage tank on the property and then fed to three water troughs. Pete noted that an added benefit of this system is the ease of maintenance. Using these water storage tanks lets him avoid using a local reservoir to water his cattle, leaving the reservoir area protected as waterfowl habitat.

Talbott Ranch is an excellent example of how innovative technologies can be utilized to save money and conserve valuable natural resources during normal years, but can also be especially important during difficult drought years. For more information on Talbott Ranch, visit www.talbottranch.com.

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The K-Line irrigation system is easily dragged to its next location (left); solar pumps can be designed to meet the needs of different scales of operations (right).

Solar-Powered Pump Systems

Water savings start at the pump

For businesses constantly looking at ways to operate more sustainably, it's important to consider not just how much water is used, but how it is pumped in the first place. The energy costs and the environmental impact of pumping present new opportunities for increasing sustainability.

The most common energy sources for pumping are diesel generators and grid-powered electric motors. Now, with emissions mandates under AB 32 and electricity rate increases on the way, these traditional energy sources may become less viable.

Newer technology can allow operations to harness solar energy to do the bulk, if not all, of the pumping work, without the need for the grid or diesel. Using solar pumping systems not only boosts sustainability, but also can reduce operating costs over time.

Most growers with sustainability goals understand the environmental benefits of renewable energy, but economic benefits are still an important business consideration.

When considering the up-front cost of a solar system, it is important to also consider the long-term economic benefits. A solar array will have panels warranted for up to 25 years. Depending on the size of the system, the type of power source it's replacing, and how much energy is used, the investment can pay off in as little as one year (vs. diesel) or in six to 10 years (vs. grid power).

With most systems eligible for a 30% federal tax credit, as well as for federal, state, and local incentives such as the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) fund, system payback can be even shorter, which means using free, clean energy sooner.

When converting from diesel or going off-grid, here are some factors to take into consideration:

The number of hours per day the pump is running. Solar enables pumps to run about six hours per day at full speed and an additional two to four hours at partial speed, depending on time of year. For pumps that run longer, solar systems can be connected to the grid. Alternatively, consider using a larger pump or even two pumps to reduce pumping time.

Total energy consumption. For diesel-operated systems, determine weekly fuel use and the cost per gallon to estimate operating costs. With a grid-tied electric pump, the replacement solar system will be designed to meet current power consumption, which is determined by using a representative sampling—ideally the previous 12 months—of electric bills.

Eighty-five percent of the lifetime cost of operating a pump will be the energy cost. A solar-powered system harnesses free solar power for years after the system pays for itself and is a simple way to take a big step toward operational sustainability.

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2015 Annual Event: California, the Capital of Organic

CCOF is thrilled to announce the 2015 Annual Meeting, Policy Day, and Reception. The 2015 event will be held in Sacramento, California, on February 11, 2015. The theme for the day is "California, the Capital of Organic."

Join CCOF staff and directors at the Annual Meeting as we share highlights from 2014 and plan for future CCOF certification and advocacy. CCOF is especially excited to feature its new and developing foundational programs, which include on-farm trainings and beginning farmer grants.

The Annual Meeting is not only a well-respected CCOF tradition, but it is also an opportunity for CCOF members to come together, share insights, and highlight each other's achievements. Moreover, the Annual Meeting is a unique space for face-to-face communication and feedback between CCOF staff, directors, and members.

After the Annual Meeting, join CCOF for its first Policy Day in Sacramento! CCOF staff and CCOF-certified members will meet with California state legislators to discuss organic agriculture and food production. CCOF members represent a powerful, diverse group of growers, ranchers, retailers, and handlers. Together, our unique membership can help educate elected officials on the challenges, opportunities, and support needed for organic producers.

We need your help to make this Policy Day a success. Your representatives want to hear from you! Come share your stories, insights, and priorities with a representative from your district. This event is also an opportunity to learn more about policies that affect your operation as well as how you can influence change.

Remember, California is leading the nation in organic production—more than 20% of U.S. organic farms call the Golden State home! Let's take this message to the state capital and work with our representatives to grow organic.

Policy Day will be the same day as CCOF's 2015 Annual Meeting, so plan accordingly, and prepare for an exciting day of events.

Keep an eye on our weekly newsletter for more details about the 2015 Annual Meeting, Policy Day, and Reception!

Apply for Organic Certification Cost Share

Have you applied for the Cost Share Certification Program? If not, now is the time to apply because the application deadline of November 29, 2014 is almost here!

Organic cost share reimburses individual organic operators up to 75% of their 2014 certification costs up to a maximum of \$750 per category of certification. Cost-share eligibility depends upon two main requirements: 1) you must have owned a certified organic operation in the U.S. between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014, and 2) you must be in good standing with your certifier.

CCOF and partner organizations advocated for full funding of the cost share program. As a result, the Farm Bill authorizes \$13 million for cost share disbursement each fiscal year through 2018. Organic operations must submit applications and make good use of the available funds; otherwise, low enrollment may undermine future funding for the program. In other words, now is the time to support and benefit from organic cost share!

Still not convinced? Here are three reasons why you should apply:

1. Decrease your operating costs
2. Increase your profits
3. Participate in one of the few federal programs that specifically benefits organic producers

CCOF would like to see 100% of its members participate in cost share, and CCOF staff is prepared to help your application succeed. For example, CCOF can verify your eligible expenses.

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Wine Grapes: Stronger vines, improved yield with better pH and acidity balance, increased anthocyanin's for color and bouquet.

Almonds: Significantly measurable increase in soil organic matter with accelerated growth identified in young tree transplants.

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Look out for CCOF action alerts and give NOSB the feedback it needs to make informed recommendations on organic standards.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Sooby, CCOF Senior Policy Specialist, at (831) 423-2263, ext. 49, or at jsooby@ccof.org. Information is also available at www.ccof.org/financial-assistance.

Drought Resources for Organic Livestock Producers

CCOF's livestock producers are especially vulnerable to California's current drought conditions because they rely on rainfall for grazing pastures. Many ranchers have resorted to buying expensive hay or hauling water to adequately feed and water their herds. Consequently, CCOF compiled the following list of potential resources for your operation:

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)*

ELAP is accepting applications through November 1, 2014 to reimburse livestock operations for water hauling costs. Eligibility depends upon pre-drought watering systems. The program may reimburse for transportation and labor costs but not for the cost of water itself. For more information contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Livestock Forage Disaster Program*

This program compensates livestock producers who experienced grazing losses during their region's normal grazing period as a result of drought. Compensation is per-head, with an adult beef bull or cow eligible for a \$52.56 payment. The program is accepting applications for grazing losses that occurred between October 1, 2011, through December 31, 2014. The application period closes January 30, 2015. For more information contact your local FSA office.

Hay Net *

Hay Net is a service of the FSA where producers can list a need for grazing acres or availability of grazing acres. The site also provides information on state and federal livestock resource programs.

Emergency Haying and Grazing Program*

This program allows certain producers with Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts to hay and graze outside of the Primary Nesting Season, which is April 1 through July 1, 2014. Monterey County has approval for emergency haying. Glenn, San Luis Obispo, Siskiyou, and Yolo counties have been approved for emergency haying and grazing. For approval, contact your FSA office.

Bricmont Fund - Hardship Assistance

CCOF is accepting applications for the Bricmont Fund, a program that provides direct hardship assistance to certified organic producers, October 14 through November 15, 2014. For more information, visit the CCOF website at www.ccof.org/foundation.

*These resources can be found on the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Organic Standards Update

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) will review a majority of crop, livestock, and handling inputs over the next year and a half. Certified organic operations should be aware of this review process and prepare comments or testimony when appropriate.

Background

NOSB advises the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on which substances should be allowed or prohibited in organic farming and processing based on criteria under the Organic Foods Production Act. Generally, synthetic substances are prohibited unless specifically allowed and non-synthetic substances are allowed unless specifically prohibited. Exceptions to this rule are included in the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (the National List).

NOSB reviews every substance on the National List every five years. This review process is referred to as "sunset" review. When a substance is up for sunset review, the public has several opportunities to comment. The NOSB must review and discuss comments it receives, so members should submit any information they want NOSB to be aware of as it makes its decisions to recommend removal or not.

Action

Public participation is key to sunset review. NOSB needs to hear first-hand from organic operations why certain inputs should or should not remain on the National List. CCOF strongly encourages you to submit comments on your own behalf and on your operation's behalf.

CCOF's Policy Team will keep you informed of all relevant NOSB and materials review updates through its website, blog posts, and email alerts. So please watch for CCOF calls to action and give NOSB the feedback it needs to make informed recommendations on organic standards.

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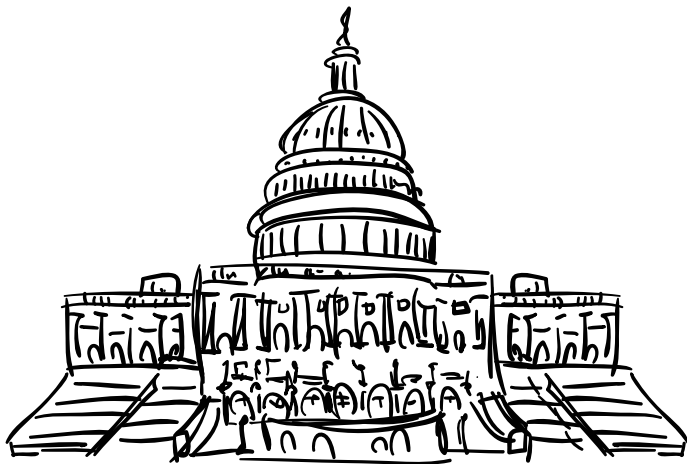
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Parents See Value in Organic Food, and a Way to Avoid GMOs

Even though organic food usually costs a little more than non-organic in the marketplace, the Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) latest consumer survey shows that an increasing number of American parents are willing to dig deeper into their wallets to buy products that carry the organic seal.

OTA's *U.S. Families' Organic Attitudes & Beliefs 2014 Tracking Study*, a survey of more than 1,200 households with at least one child under 18, found that price has become much less of a barrier to purchasing organic products. Fifty-one percent of those parents surveyed said the cost of organic products was one of the key factors in limiting their organic purchases, a sharp drop from the previous year in which 62 percent said organic items were sometimes too expensive for their household budget.

According to the study, families who include organic products on their grocery list on a regular basis spend an average of \$125 a week, compared to \$110 a week for those not buying any organic items. Despite the higher tab, almost half of the parents polled—47 percent—said that half or more of their weekly grocery purchases are organic, while close to 10 percent said they buy only organic.

This is an important finding for organic farmers, whose practices to produce foods without the use of toxic pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and other prohibited methods of ten

require extra labor, time, and care. Consumers' growing recognition of the value of organic foods is a good sign for continuing to grow demand for their products.

Meanwhile, while health is the main motivation to choosing organic, parents also cite their aversion to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as a factor. In fact, consumers' desire to stay away from foods that have been genetically modified has never been greater.

Almost 25% of parents buying organic said that wanting to steer clear of genetically modified foods is now one of their top reasons for selecting organic, the most in the four years the survey has been taken, and up significantly from 16 percent who said the same in 2013. Of the 15 reasons for buying organic that parents were asked to rate, not buying GMOs showed the biggest jump by far from attitudes a year ago.

Demand for organic products is booming, with sales in the United States jumping to \$35.1 billion in 2013, a 12 percent hike from the previous year and a new record. OTA's survey shows that eight out of 10 American families now make organic products a part of their grocery list at least sometimes.

As parents have become more educated on organic issues (seven in 10 parents in the survey said they feel "extremely well informed" or "know quite a bit" about organic), their familiarity of the term GMO has risen. The OTA survey revealed that 73 percent of parents—whether they were buying organic or not—know what GMO stands for. Further, when shopping for organic products, almost 70 percent of moms and dads watch for the "non-GMO" or "produced without GMOs" label to help guide their purchase decision.

Organic producers can be proud that their organic products bearing the USDA Organic seal provides consumers the assurance of being produced without GMOs. In addition, the organic seal conveys a swath of other characteristics that parents value, such as no artificial colors, no preservatives, and no use of synthetic hormones.

The good news? Parents have caught on. The big decider when purchasing organic products appears to be the USDA Organic seal, with nearly three-quarters of parents saying they actively seek out that organic seal.

OTA partnered with KIWI Magazine to conduct the study in late February and early March.



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Renewals are Coming

Every year, you are required to submit the annual Continuation of Certification contract and pay your certification fee. In early November, we will mail your renewal package—including the contract and invoice—and email you all the necessary information.

To complete the renewal process and remain certified in good standing, you **must** complete your renewal contract **and** pay your annual certification fees by January 1 of each year.

Renewals may be submitted by mail or online. CCOF will send you emails with instructions. Also, new this year, we have easy payment and renewal buttons available in MyCCOF!

CCOF has worked hard to provide the shortest and simplest renewal process of all U.S. certifiers. In fact, it has become a model under the NOP's Sound and Sensible initiative. Completing your renewal on time allows us to group inspections so they are as cost-effective and timely as possible. Help us serve you and other operations efficiently, and avoid unnecessary costs by completing your contract and submitting payment by the due date.

If you need to set up a payment plan, please contact our accounting department at accounting@ccof.org. We are happy to work with you. Thank you for taking the time to renew your organic certification with us! We look forward to another year of growing the organic movement with you.

WRITTEN BY Jake Lewin

Complete your renewal by January 1 and get discounts on CCOF merchandise and a chance to win a free inspection!

Complete your renewal (both contract and payment or payment plan) by January 1 and you will be entered to win a free inspection, up to \$500. CCOF will award three free inspections! In addition, you will receive a discount code for 10% off all CCOF merchandise such as signs and stickers to use during the month of January.

Renewal Timeline:

- November - Renewals sent by email and followed up by mail.
- January 1 - All renewals and annual payments are due.
- February 14 - A Notice of Noncompliance and a \$75 late fee will be issued to all operations that have failed to complete the renewal process. This is also the last day to withdraw from certification without accruing certification fees in that calendar year.
- March 15 - A Notice of Proposed Suspension and an additional \$75 late fee will be issued to all operations that have failed to complete the renewal process.
- April 15 - All operations that have failed to complete the renewal process will have their certification suspended. If your certification is suspended and you wish to be certified organic in the future, your certification must be reinstated by the NOP after a costly and lengthy process.

Read our Frequently Asked Questions for more help:
www.ccof.org/faqs.

NOP Strengthens Organic Standards

“Organic” in brand, company, or farm names clarified by NOP instruction document

On August 14, 2014, the National Organic Program (NOP) published instruction 4012 “Use of Brand or Company Names Containing the Word ‘Organic.’” This instruction document is directed at certifiers and clarifies an area of potential confusion while indicating the NOP's expectations and standards interpretations regarding product labeling.

We applaud the NOP's effort to address confusing areas of the standard and taking a direct and important position intended

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to ensure consumers are not misled in addition to providing a strong footing for enforcement of misleading claims in the farm/farmers' market setting.

The NOP's instruction limits misleading or confusing use of "organic" on product packages as part of brand or company name when the product only complies with the "Made With Organic" labeling category or is not certified at all. CCOF has confirmed directly with the NOP that this also strengthens the ability for the NOP and (by extension) California State Organic Program to enforce prohibitions on the use of "organic" in farm names or farms displaying non-organic products in the farmers' market setting.

The NOP instruction, available at www.ccof.org under Certification News, states that where a product is labeled "made with organic (specified ingredients or food groups)":

i. Brand or company names containing the term "organic" should not be used on the principal display panel (PDP) of these products.

ii. Company names containing the term "organic" may be displayed as the name of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor and listed on the information panel as required by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. Nevertheless, the display of such company names should be reviewed in consideration of its potential to mislead consumers about the composition and organic certification of the product. Although this information is required by the FDA, it should not be displayed in a manner that falsely implies an agricultural product meets certification requirements that it does not.

iii. Brand or company names containing the term 'organic' should not be used elsewhere on the labeling of these products."

CCOF's conservative implementation of the NOP labeling standards means that very few, if any, CCOF clients are directly affected by this clarification. However, the entire marketplace can benefit from clear guidelines on labeling.

CCOF will apply these guidelines to marketing materials and websites where appropriate to ensure these vehicles are not misleading.

NOP has encouraged certifiers to implement a "Sound and Sensible" approach to implementation which would include reasonable timelines to bring affected labels into compliance. Any labels that were previously approved remain in good standing, but if they could potentially mislead, certifiers are required to work with the client to bring the labels into compliance. CCOF will review all labels during annual certification cycles.

Mexico Trade Update

CCOF is diligently working to meet the needs of CCOF clients in Mexico and those who sell products to Mexico. Mexico's organic standards are moving forward with a final implementation date of April 2015. CCOF participated in Governor Jerry Brown's Mexico Trade Delegation and is working directly with Mexican officials, CDFA, the NOP, clients and others to ensure the smoothest possible transition and certification to the new Mexican standard.

Under the new standard, operations will be required to meet the Mexican organic standards and for CCOF to become accredited by SENASICA. To meet these requirements and client needs, CCOF is working to open a branch office of CCOF Certification Services in Mexico which will allow accreditation while providing some basic representation of CCOF in Mexico.

Additionally, CCOF is working to provide services in Spanish to processing operations – as we already do for farms – and will be making a Spanish processor/handler organic system plan available in the near future.

Shipping to Mexico? Enroll in CCOF's Mexico Compliance Program!

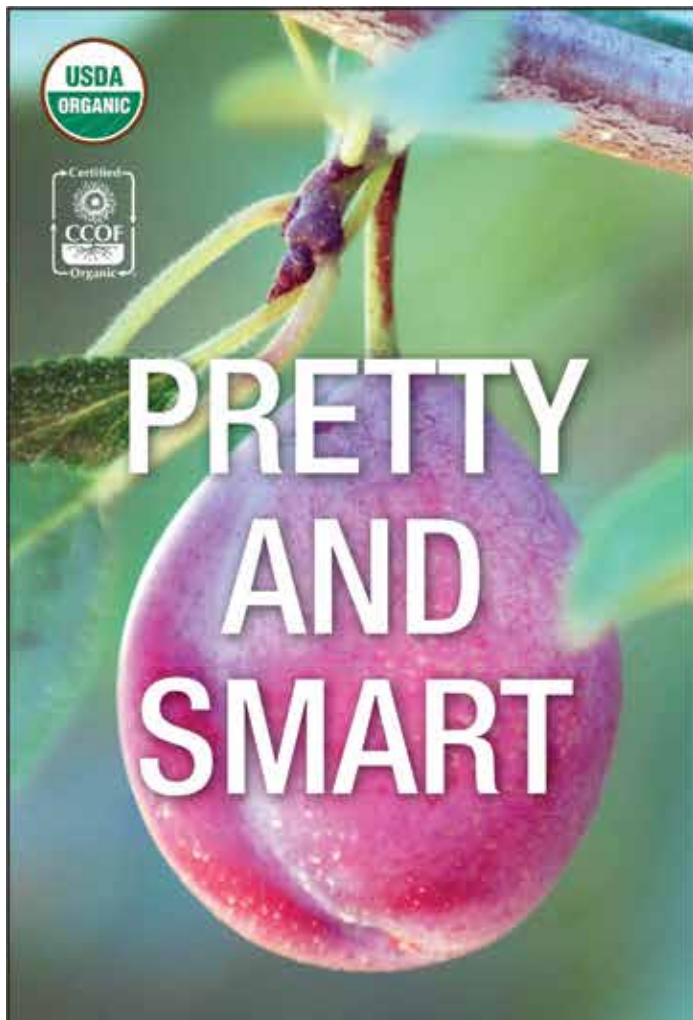
Mexico's organic sector is growing and CCOF is proud to be part of the implementation of the historic Mexican organic standards, which took effect in October 2013. Operations already certified to the NOP have until April 2014 to obtain certification to the Mexican standards. CCOF's new Mexico Compliance Program verifies compliance with these standards, and we are pleased to share that we do not expect any substantive changes for operations that are already USDA NOP certified.

If your operation exports or may export organic products to Mexico, we recommend that you enroll in the Mexico Compliance Program as soon as possible. Operations located in Mexico are already enrolled in the program.

Visit www.ccof.org/mexico for additional information and to download the program application.

As CCOF Grows, So Does Our Staff

CCOF has been growing rapidly in 2014. The rate of new applications has been high in addition to many requests for new service, acreage, or products. To ensure ongoing service and to meet your needs we are expanding our certification staff in both our Farm and Processing departments. We are delighted to have found a variety of bright and qualified individuals who will be introduced to you in the coming months. Also, look for new faces at upcoming events.



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