

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



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INSIDE LOOK

Growing Organic Futures



CCOF Policy Day a Success
New "Non-GMO & More" Certification Seal
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22

Growing Organic Futures

"The CCOF Foundation and its partners are proud mentors to a new generation of aspiring organic farmers through the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund."

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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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As a unified voice for the diverse organic sector, OTA represents 1,000 members and 6,500 organic businesses across the organic supply chain. OTA is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with staff on the ground across the country.

OTA is proud to partner with CCOF to strengthen the organic sector's national public policy impact. Because of this unique alliance, sole proprietorship farmers* may join OTA for \$50. Please contact Nathaniel Lewis, OTA Senior Crops and Livestock Specialist ([360.388.6422](tel:360.388.6422)) to learn if you qualify for this deeply discounted rate.

**Gross annual organic revenue limitations apply*

Visit www.ota.com to learn more about our work and join us in our efforts to **promote and protect organic food and farming.**

SINCE 1985
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Growing Future Organic Farmers

This issue's feature author, Ellen Farmer, describes the "inspiration and perspiration" it takes to make a living in food production. This point is supported by the incredible stories of CCOF's Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund recipients and their projects.

The birth of the fund through a first-of-its-kind partnership between CCOF and organic leaders coincides with a new set of U.S. farm demographics that are based on 2012 data. The newer figures suggest that while the average age of farmers is going up, there are other changes afoot: slightly more people are farming as their primary occupation and the farmer population is becoming more diverse. As the nation's largest agricultural producer, California saw an 8% increase of Hispanic farmers between 2007 and 2012, an increase of 31% among Asian American operators and an 8% increase among African American operators. There was also an increase in the number of Native Americans operating farm enterprises during this same time span.

The organic sector is growing faster than the overall agricultural economic sector, and is expanding opportunities for farmers—new and old—across the nation and around the world. The growth is driven by vigorous consumer demand and by investment—like that of the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund—to boost the supply of healthy, organic products.

The Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund invested \$50,000 last year, and more than \$100,000 has been raised for 2015! The fund awarded scholarship grants to 10 individuals pursuing careers in organic agriculture with nearly four times that number applying. Similarly, 10 grants were awarded to elementary school teachers who will focus "Ag in the Classroom" lessons on organic production methods this year. These recipients will be educating more than 300 young people and their families on what it means to produce food organically. Three times more teachers applied for our grants than we had funds to award. The most interest of all came from Future Farmers of America. Nearly 70 high school students competed for our initial 10 grants to support organic projects.

We hope you enjoy this issue's stories about our grant awardees (see page 22) and are inspired to join us in training our future organic food consumers and producers.



Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director/CEO



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Shortage Looms as Organic Milk Demand Skyrockets

.....

Organic is growing! A slew of media outlets are reporting organic growth, CCOF has seen an increase in organic production, and our members and the organic community are rejoicing. But what happens when demand exceeds supply? This is the current predicament with organic dairy across the United States.

From 2014 to 2015, Americans spent a staggering \$35 billion on organic groceries. \$5.1 billion of that sum went to organic dairy products, which in turn spurred a 9.5% increase in organic milk consumption over the year according to data gathered from the Nutrition Business Journal. Consumers are learning about the benefits of organic milk, including that the cows are not treated with additional hormones; that they eat non-GMO feed; and that organic milk has higher amounts of vitamin E, beta-carotene, omega-3s, and antioxidants. The market opportunity for organic milk is high right now as consumers are paying double for a half-gallon of organic milk compared to conventional, while retailers nationwide are reporting shortages of organic dairy products.

A decade ago, demand outpacing supply would have never happened. Looming shortages of organic products are a marker of significant progress in the organic movement. Consumers

are embracing the idea of “voting” with their forks, and in this case, are choosing to pay the premium for a healthier alternative for both their families and the environment.

Although demand for organic dairy products is increasing, it may be a while before the supply can catch up. Conventional dairy producers transitioning to organic may need to significantly modify their operation practices and ensure their grazing land meets organic standards. For dairy producers who are already certified organic, now is a great time to consider expanding production!

.....

CalCAN Provides State Climate Change Recommendations

CCOF’s 2015 Annual Meeting and Policy Day took place in Sacramento, California in February and was a huge success! CCOF-certified members, Business Partners, sponsors, and staff took over the state Capitol to celebrate California as the “Capital of Organic” (read more on page 27). This year’s meeting included a surprise visit from Governor Jerry Brown, who addressed the attendees and recognized the importance of organic agriculture in the state of California. This sentiment is echoed by a recent report released by the California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN) regarding sustainable agriculture and its place in state policy. The report, titled *Growing Solutions: Climate Change and Agriculture Recommendations to the California Governor*, focuses on current steps and future recommendations to sequester carbon emissions and usher in sustainable agriculture practices.

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To embrace a more sustainable food system, organic practices are the key!

As the report states, there have been some important steps taken to combat climate change. Governor Brown led an agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a collaborative effort with China. California is the first U.S. state to embark on this initiative. Another step has been developing the first climate change and farmland conservation program that supports intelligent development of land and prevents urban sprawl from eating away at farmland. Additional steps have been taken by Governor Brown to increase renewable energy, incentivize a decrease in California's water usage, and draw attention to agriculture's vulnerability to climate change. There has been immense support for fighting climate change by Governor Brown and his administration, but more can always be done.

CalCAN recognized these steps and upped the ante by challenging Governor Brown to include sustainable agriculture practices in the climate change initiatives.

California is a major agricultural hub for the world, with over a quarter of its landmass devoted to agriculture. CalCAN stated in the report that there are some sustainable practices being taken by conventional producers, but these practices need to be more uniform across all of California agriculture. As reported, "specific practices include compost applications, cover cropping (i.e., green manures), crop rotation, managed grazing of livestock, hedgerows, riparian plantings, biological pest control, renewable energy production, and energy and water use efficiency measures."

Through adopting and implementing sustainable agriculture measures, the United States and Canada can save 374 metric tons of CO₂ emissions from entering the atmosphere per year by 2030—the equivalent of taking over 80 million cars off of the road every year!

CCOF is ecstatic that CalCAN is taking the initiative to urge Governor Brown to include sustainable agriculture practices in climate change initiatives. One way to ensure sustainable agricultural practices is to promote organic farming, Governor Brown!

Read the entire report at bit.ly/CalCANreport.

Veggie-Heavy Diet Recommended to Combat Climate Change

The United States Agriculture Department and Department of Health and Human Services recommend widespread dietary changes to combat climate change.

According to the recommendations, "a dietary pattern that is higher in plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds, and lower in animal-based foods is more health promoting and is associated with lesser environmental impact (greenhouse gas emissions and energy, land, and water use) than is the current average U.S. diet."

The recommended diet styles include vegan, vegetarian, and Mediterranean-style diets. A Mediterranean-style diet consists of:

- Basing every meal around fruits, vegetables, whole grains, olive oil, beans, nuts, legumes, seeds, herbs, and spices
- Fish/seafood at least two times a week
- Poultry, eggs, cheese, and yogurt daily to weekly
- Meat and sweets consumed no more than a few times a month as recommended by the Mayo Clinic

The Mayo Clinic also determined that this diet reduces the risk of heart disease. The goal is to focus on more than six servings of "antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables" and reduce red meat intake by roughly 50%.

In addition to the diet recommendations, the report mentions that these dietary patterns have extraordinarily high estimated sustainability scores. This score takes into account energy and water consumption, usage of agricultural land, and greenhouse gas emission levels. The report also ventures into the difference between conventionally-grown versus organically-grown agriculture. They studied both conventionally- and organically-grown vegan, vegetarian, and omnivorous diets, and found the organically-grown vegan diet to have the most potential health benefits and the conventionally-grown average Italian diet to have the least. The organically-grown vegan diet also had the lowest estimated environmental impact, while the average Italian diet had the greatest.

Although organic farming may not always match the high yields that conventional farming practices can provide, it creates a healthier earth that wards off climate change. Organic production promotes ecological wellbeing, soil diversity, water conservation, uses 30-50% less energy than conventional production, and provides a multitude of other environmental benefits.

A majority of CCOF membership and readers likely have healthy eating habits, support organic processes, and recognize organic benefits in relation to the environment, but average American diet patterns are important to consider. To embrace a more sustainable food system, organic practices are the key!

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Andean Naturals Provides Stable Future for Family Farmers of Bolivia

In one of the most unlikely places lies a CCOF-certified member that is providing a fiscally-sound future for a group of Bolivian family farms. Nestled against Lake Michigan in the small town of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, is Andean Naturals. This group imports, distributes, and exports quinoa from small Bolivian family farms to the rest of the world.

This grain crop is grown for its edible seeds and has gained popularity around the world as a highly nutritious staple for cultures in need of food security, for gluten-free consumers, and for individuals who love its nutritional benefits. The history of quinoa goes back some 7,000 years to when highland settlers of South America's Andes mountains would harvest this sacred grain for spiritual and nutritional reasons.

The increasing popularity has been great for some farms, but the rising prices and increase in global demand have also created an opportunity for big investors trying to cash in on the blossoming profit potential. So how does Andean Naturals fit into the growing market of quinoa?

Andean Naturals provides over 700 families in the Andean highlands with proper technology and equipment to compete on a global level. Andean Naturals supports a structural

alignment for the farmers to become Fair Trade certified, bringing additional profit into their communities for investing in social, educational, and health programs. In addition to social investment, Andean Naturals provides assistance with organic farming techniques and guidance on making sound business decisions by looking at the whole financial picture.

Andean Naturals imports 1.5 million pounds of quinoa per month and distributes across the world. They are a certified Best for the World B Corp and are a great example of a CCOF-certified member working for good on a global level.

Colorado Micro-Distillery is a Cultural Gem

Did you know that Colorado's first certified organic whiskey was created by a CCOF member? Still Cellars is a micro-distillery based out of Longmont, Colorado. Their operation embraces traditional distilling techniques and community-oriented gatherings. The business includes a schedule chock-full of interesting and engaging events, such as live music, storytelling, movie nights, art exhibits, and much more.

Their line of spirits is simple but crafted with a very discerning touch that ensures each bottle is up to par. They create the single malt, single-grain whiskey barley; vodka derived from fruit and grain; and un-oaked apple, apple ginger, and apple cinnamon brandy.

If you are interested in trying their artisan spirits you can visit their tasting room on Wednesdays and Fridays, and other



evenings when they are hosting events. Fridays are generally open for live music and every other Monday is reserved for Movie Monday! To see their list of events visit bit.ly/StillCellarsEvents.

If you're in the greater Denver area, be sure to visit Still Cellars and take in an art show with some incredible craft spirits.

The New Stewards of the Earth: Morris Grassfed Beef

According to the owners of CCOF-certified Morris Grassfed Beef: "We've all heard the reports that eating less meat will help the earth and that cattle are the main cause of deforestation, global warming, methane emissions, etc. We disagree, and so do scientists who have found that cattle are an essential tool in creating soil health. It's not the cattle that are the problem, it's poor management!"

This is a bold statement, especially with multiple reports stating that beef production is a large contributor to climate change. However, Morris Grassfed Beef in San Juan Bautista, California, believes that there is too much blame placed on the cattle and not enough focus on the management of the entire system.

Morris Grassfed takes a holistic approach to cattle management. Every day the cattle turn and fertilize the soil, which they say encourages "the growth of deep-rooted native, perennial grasses that store sunlight, capture water, and slow the runoff that causes soil erosion." In turn this builds up the soil and creates a carbon sink that sequesters carbon from the atmosphere.

This newly-certified CCOF member is taking calculated measures in day-to-day operations to better serve the earth. Recently, Morris Grassfed was profiled in one of 45 case studies focusing on excellent farm stewardship examples by the *American Farmland Trust*. They have also been mentioned by *The Wall Street Journal*, PBS, and NPR for their holistic land management practices.

Another interesting point about Morris Grassfed is that they distribute their meat without a storefront. They keep their system simple by cutting out middlemen, butchering and packing the meat in conjunction with small butcheries, and providing a farm-to-table delivery service. Morris Grassfed packs up their white trailer and travels the California coast, stopping at pre-arranged locations from Santa Monica all the way up to San Francisco to distribute online orders.

Join us in welcoming Morris Grassfed Beef to the CCOF family, and if you're ever in the San Juan Bautista area, stop in—they love to give tours of their ranch!

Take a SIP at Holman Ranch

Holman Ranch is located in the Carmel Valley along California's Central Coast. The ranch grounds include vineyards, olive groves, horse stables, a tasting room, and a gorgeous setting for events. Their 100% estate-grown organic wine varietals are planted on approximately 21 acres of terrain. The wines they produce are unrefined and crafted to deliver the true varietal of the grape from harvest to bottle.

Since 2010, Holman Ranch has won over 15 awards for their varietal wines and is Sustainability in Practice (SIP) certified as a sustainable vineyard. SIP certification evaluates the entire vineyard and looks at farming practices, sound business practices, and how workers are treated. This additional certification is utilized in the wine world as a way to ensure the fruits are of the highest quality and are coming from a single point instead of multiple grape producers. It also measures whether workers in the vineyards are being treated with respect by looking into business practices.

To add to their accolades, Holman Ranch has been recognized as one of the top Rustic/Vintage Wedding Venues by Wedding Spot as well as the 2014 #2 Top Wedding Venue in the World by Wedding Industry Experts. The ranch gives you a panoramic view of the Santa Lucia Mountains from their restored 1928 Carmel stone hacienda.

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Member News Meets Social Networking



Napa Smith Brewing via Facebook: "We made a bunch of friends in Nashville, TN this week and we drank a bunch of great beers, but when it starts snowing it's time for this California guy to head home. Keep your eyes out Nashville--on the shelf and behind the bar--for Napa's only brewery. Welcome to Beer Country!"



We enjoy when our members get out and network with folks from their industry and applaud Napa Smith Brewing for expanding their organic reach to the east coast!



Central Coast Lavender Farm via Facebook: "Want to Gain Others' Trust? Wear the Scent of Lavender"



Central Coast Lavender's recent blog post shares research data about lavender's effect on someone's trust. Researchers had participants in a lavender-scented room, a peppermint-scented room, and a non-scented room play a "trust game" involving the voluntary transfer of money from one person to another. The researchers found that those in the lavender room were more trusting and willing to give their money away. These results sure are interesting, and we love the idea of different organic scents and their possible connection to human emotions.



Beach Organics Skin Care via Facebook: "Skin is the human body's largest organ. That's right ladies and gents, your skin is an organ! Are you treating it the way you would treat your heart, liver, or kidneys? Not only does our body wash give your skin impeccable care, but our soft lavender scent is calming to the soul. Treat yourself!"



Beach Organics is right! We take extra steps to properly nourish our bodies with delicious, nutritious organic products--why not treat our skin with the same loving care and attention? The product seen here is "First Light", a certified organic lavender (see a pattern forming?) soap. Beach Organics Skin Care also has organic deodorants, body powder, makeup remover, lip balm, and lotion.



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The Organic Training Institute

The CCOF Foundation's Organic Training Institute serves growers, livestock operations, handlers, and the public by creating educational opportunities focused exclusively on organic.

Wholesale Market Tours

Last year's Organic Training Institute slate was rounded out with the ever-popular San Francisco Wholesale Market Tour. The tour highlighted premier San Francisco wholesale shops that focus on organic. Organic food distributor, Veritable Vegetable, brought tour participants through their new facility and their older warehouse, showcasing what being a certified organic handler looks like in practice. With a more than 40-year track record of helping organic producers grow and thrive, Veritable staff had much to share with organic producers who are looking to sell wholesale. Participants were also delighted by the personalities and procurement practices of Earl of Earl's Organic Produce and Michael Janis of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market. The Foundation's next wholesale market tour will be in Los Angeles on April 24, 2015. The tour will feature CCOF-certified members Heath & Lejeune and Better Life Produce, as well as the Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market, and we invite you to join us!

In addition to the Los Angeles Wholesale Market Tour, the CCOF Foundation's Organic Training Institute will host these great educational programs in 2015:

Food Safety Workshop with CAFF

Together with with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) we will be offering a free training on food safety and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for small- to medium-scale growers in the Central Coast of California. The goal of this training is to provide growers with a solid understanding of what GAPs are and how to get started on developing a food safety plan. The workshop will include examples of food safety practices and participants will see those practices in the field through a farm site visit. The day will also include in-depth presentations and group discussions. Growers will leave with resources, tools, and templates.

April 14, 2015 - Aromas, CA

Nitrogen Management Workshop for Growers (in Spanish)

On-farm organic nitrogen management can be complex. This in-person workshop—presented in Spanish—will cover nitrogen management, budgeting, and measurements on organic farms, as well as research on organic farming methods that have been shown to mitigate nitrogen runoff. We'll also highlight a decision support tool that farmers can use to build a nutrient budget. This timely topic will help growers succeed as they are under increased pressure to create nitrogen budgets and monitor possible nitrogen seepage into waterways. Speaker Karen Lowell, Ph.D., is an agronomist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and a California Certified Crop Advisor. This workshop is co-sponsored by ALBA and the NRCS.

May 12, 2015 - Salinas, CA

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Pictured left to right Cesar, Lupe, Roy Jr., Roy and Ilse

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companies make with their organic labels and will provide a step-by-step process for developing labels that comply with organic standards. After this webinar, you will understand the relevance of product composition and percentage calculations to your product claim, the correct use of the CCOF and USDA seals, ingredient listing, and the steps in the CCOF label approval process. This webinar was created through a partnership with Organic Education Solutions LLC. *July 2015 – Online*

Organic Greenhouse Certification

As farms move toward year-round production, urban farms continue to blossom, and specialty greens houses sprout up around the country, CCOF receives more inquiries about the intricacies of organic certification for greenhouses. This webinar will cover what is necessary to certify your organic greenhouse operation. The course will be taught by a CCOF Grower Certification Specialist and an organic farmer. *August 2015 – Online*

Demystifying Organic Certification: A Two-Part Webinar Series for Processors

Part I of this two-part webinar series will be an organic certification overview. It will include a brief history of organic certification in the United States and define the terms commonly used in organic. In addition, this webinar will focus on the basic principles of certified organic farming and processing, plus a step-by-step breakdown of how the organic certification process works. The workshop will also explain the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations involved in organic certification (United States Department of Agriculture, National Organic Program, National Organic Standards Board, CCOF, etc.).

Part II of the series will focus on how to write an Organic System Plan (OSP). An essential part of becoming a certified organic grower or processor, the OSP is often seen as the most difficult part of certification. This webinar will cover the numerous OSP forms, what they mean, and how to fill them out successfully. It will also cover certification processes and common deadlines for becoming and staying certified organic.

Those who participate in both parts of the webinar course and pass a review at the end will receive a Certificate of Completion. This course will be taught by CCOF Handler Certification Specialists. *October 2015 – Online*

Welcome our New Staff!

The CCOF Foundation is pleased to announce that Meaghan Donovan joined us at the beginning of 2015 to coordinate Organic Training Institute events. Donovan brings diverse sustainable agricultural experiences including two years at CCOF ally Wild Farm Alliance and a master's degree from Tufts University. Join us in welcoming Meaghan Donovan!

Interested in Going Organic?

In addition to Organic Training Institute educational programs, the CCOF Foundation will host seven workshops and field days in 2015 for growers who are interested in going organic. These workshops are made possible through funding by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program. Please encourage your friends and neighbors who are thinking about organic certification to come learn from CCOF-certified members, extension staff, and CCOF about getting certified!

Upcoming Going Organic: Sound Certification Made Simple Workshops

Kingsburg, California

This workshop will include farm tours and presentations from CCOF staff and organic growers. The focus will be on growing organic stone fruits, grapes, almonds, and mixed vegetables. *April 10, 2015 – Kingsburg, CA*

Rutherford, California

This workshop organized in partnership with Napa Valley Grapegrowers will include farm tours and presentations from CCOF staff and organic growers. The focus will be on growing organic wine grapes and mixed vegetables. *May 5, 2015 – Rutherford, CA*

Salinas, California

This workshop will include farm tours and presentations from CCOF staff and organic growers. The focus will be on growing organic berries and leafy vegetables. *June 22, 2015 – Salinas, CA*

Chico, California

This workshop will include farm tours and presentations from CCOF staff and organic growers. The focus will be on growing organic rice, dairy, and mixed vegetables and fruits. *Date TBA – Richvale, CA*

These upcoming events are in addition to Going Organic workshops that took place in Fresno, California, at Harvest Fields Organic Farm on February 23, 2015. There, farmers from the Hmong community in Fresno took part in a translated event put on in collaboration with the Asian Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance, NRCS, UC Cooperative Extension Fresno, and California FarmLink. Two other workshops took place in North Carolina in a collaborative effort with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, New Sprout Farm, Down 2 Earth Farms, and North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

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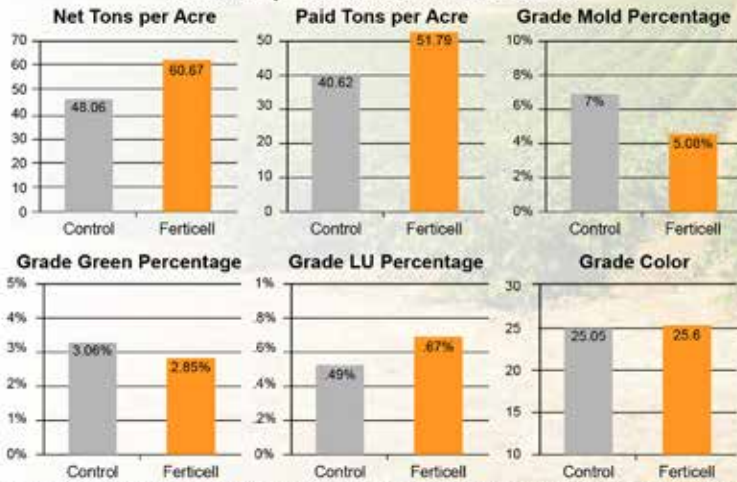


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Petition Submitted to Form CCOF Mexico Chapter

Citing the new organic standards in Mexico and the growth in certified organic operations in the country, members in the region submitted a petition to the CCOF Board of Directors requesting that it acknowledge formation of a Mexico Chapter.

Bagrada Bug and Strawberry Starts Highlighted at Central Coast Chapter Meeting

Close to 60 members attended a meeting at the Aromas Grange in mid-January, where they ate a delicious Mexican meal accompanied by greens and beverages donated by chapter members. The program was packed with information. Chapter President Steve Pedersen of High Ground Organics opened the meeting and introduced Cathy Calfo, CCOF Executive Director/CEO, who provided an overview of upcoming activities and plans for the year.

Grant Brians of Heirloom Organic Gardens gave a talk on his experience at the Terra Madre Slow Food event in Italy in October 2014. He was surprised at how few vegetable varieties were on display compared to processed foods such as sausages and cheeses.

Pedersen next introduced Lisa Bunin of the Center for Food Safety by commenting that the use of methyl bromide to produce strawberry starts for use in organic is “not acceptable” and that he personally is committed to using organic starts.

Bunin gave a presentation on her effort to organize organic strawberry growers to develop sources of organic strawberry starts. Six growers pledged to use organically-produced starts though the price was \$1.00 per plant compared to the 12-15¢ typically paid for strawberry starts. Scientists have volunteered to gather data from the plots where these starts are growing, but they need funding for travel to the plots. The presentation led to a lively discussion among chapter members.

Shimat Joseph from the University of California Cooperative Extension in Salinas, California, gave a talk on the Bagrada bug. This pest originates in the Middle East and does well in warm conditions. They lay their eggs in the soil and tend to hang out

in cracks in the soil. They can detect germinating seeds and move in and feed on them so the seedling germinates with damaged leaf tissue. Bagrada bugs aggregate and may release a pheromone to attract others to a food source. There is a strong edge effect: most damage occurs on the edges of fields (except for some mustard crops that are entirely wiped out).

Potatoes and cucurbits are being attacked in addition to brassicas. The pest leaves telltale “starburst” markings on the leaves. Joseph has conducted studies on potential controls and has not found chemical controls to be effective. “Spraying may not be the way to go,” he said. “Landscape level management may be more effective.”

John Pedigo of the California Certified Farmers’ Market Program presented information on the new California farmers’ market law—AB 1871—that goes into effect this year. The law “creates a level playing field for producers selling at markets.” All growers selling at markets must be registered with the county and sell product they’ve grown themselves. In 2014, 1,100 notices of noncompliance were issued and 12 growers were suspended from selling at farmers’ markets. Pedigo answered questions from the audience.

North Coast Chapter Holds First Meeting

The meeting room at the Petaluma Creamery was packed with members of the newest CCOF chapter eager to meet once again. Members provided a wide array of snacks including popcorn, ice cream, cheese, gluten-free bread, kombucha and maté drinks, and wine. CCOF Senior Outreach & Policy Specialist Jane Sooby presented an update from the CCOF Trade Association while CCOF Certification Services President Jake Lewin provided a certification update. CCOF Board President Phil LaRocca spoke and noted that the chapter has a lengthy and productive history with the organization. A brainstorming session was held on educational activities that members would like to see the chapter organize. Chapter members voted to approve the chapter bylaws and nominations were accepted for the alternate Board representative. After the meeting, an online election was held and Ellen Roggemann of McEvoy Ranch was elected to the seat.

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*.

GROWING ORGANIC FUTURES



Deciding to make your living by providing the world with food requires as much inspiration as perspiration.

WRITTEN BY Ellen Farmer

Deciding to make your living by providing the world with food requires as much inspiration as perspiration. Working with nature, you're part scientist, part alchemist, and part gambler. Encouragement from your peers and mentors can be the difference between success and giving up.

Time-honored farming organizations like the Grange, 4-H, and FFA depend on encouragement from mentors. The CCOF Foundation and its partners are proud mentors to a new generation of aspiring organic farmers through the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund. The fund supports young adults in professional ag training programs, secondary students pursuing FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects, and K-8 teachers creating organic-focused lesson plans.

The idea of such a fund started as a "nugget" in the mind of Melody Meyer, Vice President of Policy and Industry Relations for UNFI, the largest distributor of organic food in the United States, and author of a blog called *Organic Matters*. She credits a young venture capitalist with suggesting that she could do more for aspiring organic farmers if a group of like-minded people joined forces.

Investment in agricultural education is skewed toward conventional agriculture and agribusiness. However, as the organic sector expands, more and more institutions are creating opportunities for learning about organic production. To help address the lack of direct financial support to those who wish to pursue projects or studies related to organic agriculture, the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund was established.

"About a year ago we formed the Organic Funders Alliance, and several of us, working with CCOF Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo, paved the way for grants to be awarded," Meyer relates.

"We have to put some excitement back into farming. And organic provides a great opportunity. Local, regional food, health, obesity—that's the motivator; carbon sequestration and climate change, if you want to get deep," she says. "We want to create passion in farming, and organic agriculture is a pathway."

Over the last two years, UNFI, Driscoll's, Organic Valley, Clif Bar Family Foundation, Lauren and Eric Schiermeyer, Bradmer Foods, and the National Co+op Grocers (NCG) have pooled resources and joined forces with the CCOF Foundation to provide these ongoing grants. The excitement of working on organic issues for the first time with traditional organizations like Future Farmers of America (now known as the National FFA Organization) is apparent.

"Because organic industry and community partners were able to fund these scholarships and grants, there is now a bridge between students interested in organic and more traditionally conventional agricultural education entities," said Jessy Beckett Parr, who manages the program for the CCOF Foundation.

"If you're reading this, look around! You may have people in your community who you could inform about this project, and they are encouraged to apply."

This year's deadlines are May 15 for the K-8 and higher/vocational education grants and Fall 2015 for the FFA grants.

Teachers Share Excitement of Science and Creativity

Look at Agriculture...Organically! K-8 Grants

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom took on a new emphasis this year by joining forces with the CCOF Foundation to offer \$1,000 grants to 10 K-8 teachers.

"Everybody eats and everybody brings something different to the table—literally! We use this message to create high self-esteem as we focus on agriculture," says Ag in the Classroom Executive Director, Judy Culbertson.

"When students are introduced to hands-on experiential learning, they create memories that will last the rest of their lives. Ag in the Classroom's mission is to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students. By partnering with CCOF on this grant, we further demonstrate that we educate about all methods of farming—conventional, organic, animal ag, et cetera. We want students to be informed and educated decision-makers as they grow up."

Samantha Stuller of Valley Oak Middle School in Visalia, California, has a master's degree in Agriculture Education from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Her science students are participating in a series of mini-lessons focusing on how science is important to improving organic farming methods. They will test soil, conduct a bioassay for water toxicity, graft their own fruit trees, and dye flowers to see how plants uptake nutrients.

"Tulare County is the second largest agricultural economy in the state and our students live in the rural areas of Ivanhoe and Visalia. They live among a wealth of agriculture and natural resources, yet they themselves don't really know how food is produced and they face extreme food insecurity in their own homes."

“We want to create passion in farming, and organic agriculture is a pathway.”

According to Stuller, almost 70% of Valley Oak students are on free and reduced-cost lunch programs.

“Many of our students come from poverty-stricken homes. However, they are resilient, intelligent, and they have proven that they learn at high levels. Middle school is a pivotal point for most kids. Their minds are still curious and open to many possibilities.”

Kevin Hesser, an art and agriculture teacher at Toyon Middle School in San Andreas, California, has run a district-wide gardening program through a nonprofit called Gardens to Grow for the past six years. He believes younger students look up to the high school students who come back to help. “High school guys are so much cooler than us teachers,” he laughs.

His grant is funding a very popular Organic Pizza Garden project. Besides growing the peppers, tomatoes, basil, garlic, onions, eggplant, and even kale used to create toppings, the students use the home economics kitchen classrooms to bake the pizzas from scratch. They then sell slices or give them away at lunch and after school.



Hesser's students harvest basil and tomatoes from the Organic Pizza Garden.

Hesser likes to emphasize the healthy nutrient value of organic vegetables through the project. He notes success when a student says, “I told my parents why we should buy this organic product at the grocery store and they did!” Students also develop a seventh-grade understanding of organic regulations by giving oral reports and learning about the environmental impacts of various agricultural methods.

Taking the Organic Challenge

Organic-Focused SAE Projects

Imagine yourself as a high school student—that vital time when you grasp the enormity of the world and need to figure out where you fit in. You overhear worries about GMOs and climate change. What's up with that? School gives you the basics, but maybe you have questions you want to put to the test, like a scientist or entrepreneur. You wonder, “What would happen if I had enough money to complete my project? Expand my idea? Serve more people? Test my hypotheses?”

For more than eight decades, the National FFA Organization has existed to support young people interested in agriculture-related careers. Dedicated adult volunteers sponsor Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs) all over the country. A look at the historic timeline on the FFA website gives an overview of agriculture in 20th century America. The originally all-male organization founded in Missouri in 1928 morphed into a diverse group with more than 7,000 chapters and over half a million members from places as far flung as Puerto Rico, Micronesia, and Guam as well as the 50 states. By the 1970s, girls began winning “Star Farmer of the Year” awards and women served in FFA leadership roles. The only missing element has been a track focusing specifically on organic farming.

CCOF contacted the FFA in early 2014 to find out if we could develop a line of \$1,000 grant awards to support FFA members with interests in organic practices. They said “Yes!” and a partnership was born. Now the CCOF Foundation and our partners have taken a place beside Monsanto, Caterpillar Tractor Company, Rabo Agrifinance, and other large corporations, all in support of future farmers. To provide scholarships alongside conventional ag companies shows aspiring farmers that organic is a strong pillar in agriculture and that there are viable opportunities in the organic industry post-graduation.

Daniel Williamson is a 13-year-old eighth-grader at Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City Junior-Senior High School in Grove City, Minnesota. He wanted to investigate whether a wetland can remove contaminants in the water from a conventional field before it reaches his family's organic farm. Williamson is working cooperatively with a water scientist to design his investigation and analyze his data while borrowing equipment and sharing results with various local water agencies. Many lab tests are required to draw reliable conclusions about whether the wetland is removing phosphates and nitrates from the water, and they cost money. The grant is allowing him to accomplish thorough testing and analysis.



Williamson (also pictured on page 22) collects water samples to test for contaminants.

“I have a pretty strong interest in science,” Williamson admits. “My hypothesis is that the wetland will help improve the quality of the water from conventional farms before it gets to our organic farm.”

“We grow corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, and mixed hay as feed for our cows, sheep, goats, and chickens.” His mother, Christa, says the farm will celebrate its 20th anniversary as a certified organic farm this spring.

Shyla Cook is a 15-year-old living with her family on a two-story barge docked at Kupreanof Island in southeast Alaska. She is using her grant money to create an organic rabbit meat business and will make winter hats with the fur. While her mother was raised in the lower 48, Cook’s dad was raised in the Alaskan bush and teaches her what it takes to survive in the wild. They have already tanned the hides of moose and bear. Cook predicts that families who don’t hunt will provide a ready market for reliable sources of organic protein like her rabbit.



Cook’s organic rabbit meat will provide organic protein for local stores.

The Cook family is building 60 rabbit hutches that will act like floating chicken tractors, moving the rabbits to wild grass habitats eight months of the year while protecting them from wildlife. The other four months of the year, the rabbits’ diet is supplemented with organic feed. Their hutches are designed to be humane, with slanted floors so the manure rolls off and can be collected for organic gardening.

Liliane Watkins is a 15-year-old sophomore at St. Thomas More Academy in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her family of seven recently moved to what she calls “a neglected farm,” and Watkins discovered the site of an abandoned greenhouse she plans to refurbish. With help from her father, she selected a water pump to purchase with some of her SAE grant money so the drip irrigation system can be recovered. She plans to install hoop houses and grow organic starts this spring and “make something of what was once there.”



Watkins’ water pump will be used for drip irrigation in her refurbished greenhouse.

When asked why she wants to work in an organic hoop house, she says, “People can’t find organic starts around here at the big box garden stores, so we think they will buy ours.”

Education as a Key to Organic Leadership

Organic Vocational & Higher Ed Grants

A quick glance at up-and-coming college majors like agroecology, horticulture, and organic agriculture—increasingly available across the country—is a hopeful trend. But not everyone can afford the tuition.

Future Organic Farmer grantees were awarded \$2,500 and were required to be enrolled in either a college or vocational program focusing on agriculture.

What motivates them to go organic?

Octavio Garcia (shown in cover photo) was born in Mexico and came to the United States with his family at the age of 14. He attended Alisal High School in Salinas, California where he learned English, and eventually enrolled in the Plant Sciences program at Fresno State University.

“I’ve been working for organic farmers since I came [to the United States]. They told me about ALBA (Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association), and I took the training there.”

By the age of 18, Garcia was running his own half-acre farm.



Garcia (also pictured on cover) aspires to be a Pest Control Advisor (PCA).

“Now I lease five acres in Salinas, growing strawberries, broccoli, kale, celery, cucumbers, and other vegetables. ALBA helps market my produce as well as Coke Farm. I’ve needed to hire three or four people to help out. I couldn’t run five acres by myself and go to school at the same time,” he explains.

“I am also a senior at Fresno State, focusing on crop management, and will graduate this spring. You learn about pest problems and how to run a successful business. My goal is to become a Pest Control Advisor (PCA) to work with both organic and conventional farmers to advise them on various ways to deal with pests.”

Sarah Spear, currently majoring in Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems-Agroecology at Montana State University says she inherits her deep interest in learning about alternatives to conventional farming techniques from her dad.



Spear aspires to manage or own her own organic farm.

"He was always reading everything he could find. I really enjoyed reading agricultural books and magazines and then discussing them with him. I want to explore the big picture of ranching and farming."

Spear is one of seven children in a homeschool family, which now partners in managing a 5,000-acre ranch, partially leased and partially deeded.

With agroecology as an emphasis in both her community college and four-year college programs, Spear feels her studies bridge the gap between production and nutrition. She has also been able to study energy and sustainability, a new emphasis only recently available at her schools. She says, "New mindsets are taking hold from when my parents were in college 30 years ago."

Spear is currently an intern on the three-acre organic farm at Montana State. They offer a CSA program to the Bozeman, Montana, community with 80-100 shares and contribute to the Gallatin Valley Food Bank. Spear's goal is to learn all she can about food production and agriculture in various parts of the world, but after five years, to return to Montana to own or manage her own organic farm.

To Grow Organic, We Must Cultivate the Next Generation

The United States is facing an epidemic shortage of farmers. Meanwhile, the U.S. organic sector is going strong with sustained annual growth of over 10%. More than 80% of U.S. households report purchasing organic products, but demand continues to outpace the supply. The need for new organic farmers and entrepreneurs is a major challenge to meeting the rising demand for organic products that are healthy for both people and the planet.

The direct financial support provided by the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund is just the beginning. Continued partnership within the organic community is necessary to keep momentum. Mentoring young farmers, supporting beginning farmers, and reducing barriers to enter the marketplace will help swing the pendulum and grow a new alliance of organic professionals.

To learn more about the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund, please contact us at ccoffoundation@ccof.org or visit www.ccof.org/foundation.

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A Cause for Celebration: CCOF Policy Day at the State Capitol

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Taking the message of California: The Capital of Organic to Sacramento.



CCOF members met with over 30 elected representatives and public officials.



Even California Governor, Edmund Gerald "Jerry" Brown, Jr., joined the celebration!

On February 11, a dedicated group of individuals came together in Sacramento to represent and advocate on behalf of organic at CCOF's Policy Day. Over 100 members of the organic community met with elected representatives and public officials to hammer home the message that organic is a significant and growing part of the California and national economy.

The dedication and diversity among Policy Day participants was truly inspirational. The list of advocates included some of our longest certified members, new and beginning farmers, interested consumers, and people involved in food and agriculture for years who are just now learning about organic. Additionally, the diversity of businesses in attendance painted a vibrant picture—seeds, sprouts, veggies, nuts, berries, dairy, poultry, eggs, mushrooms, tea, chocolates, wine, and more. Together, we brought our dedication, our diversity, and our collective knowledge to the California State Capitol.

WRITTEN BY Kelly Damewood

California is the Capital of Organic

Policy Day was not a day of demands or complaints; rather, Policy Day was a celebration. We celebrated California as the Capital of Organic. We celebrated that California produces more organic product than any other state in the United States. We celebrated that California organic creates jobs, brings in significant revenue, improves the environment, and provides communities with nutritious, healthy foods. Policy Day was about bringing these causes for celebration to the state Capitol to ensure that our policy makers understand that organic is a significant and growing part of our economy.



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Please stay tuned, because we will need your help to further represent and advocate organic!

Why did we take this message to the Capitol? Why did we focus on the economic value and celebration of organic in California? We took this message to the Capitol because now, more than ever before, it is critical that our policy makers understand the value of organic. It is no secret that demand for organic is sky high. But it is also no secret that we struggle to source enough organic domestically. That means even California—the Capital of Organic that produces more organic product than any other state in the United States—cannot keep up with the rising demand. So Policy Day was an opportunity to come together with our policy makers and find solutions to sustain and grow organic in California.

Meetings and Lasting Impressions

At Policy Day, we met with over 30 elected representatives and public officials. For example, we met with offices from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, including Secretary Karen Ross, who helped us identify pressing issues such as organic research needs.

Additionally, we met with almost every legislator, or their representative staff, who sits on the Senate or Assembly

Agriculture Committees. We also met with representatives whose districts are urban or suburban and drove home the message that their constituents are demanding organic more than ever before, and that organic is providing a service to environmental quality and public health.

Celebrating Success

Our policy makers received our message loud and clear. We successfully represented the value of organic, and we have generated an impressive amount of legislative interest. At each meeting, we requested that the Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees convene or attend an informational hearing on the economic opportunities and challenges of organic agriculture in California. Overall, the offices were welcoming, interested, and willing to help make an informational hearing a success.

Right now, CCOF is working to implement a hearing or another related opportunity so that we can continue to work with our policy makers to sustain and grow organic. So please stay tuned, because we will need your help to further represent and advocate!



Keynote speaker, Secretary Karen Ross, spoke to the opportunities and challenges for organic.



Boxes filled with CCOF-certified organic products were taken to each legislative meeting.



Attendees discussed the importance of California organic with representatives and public officials.

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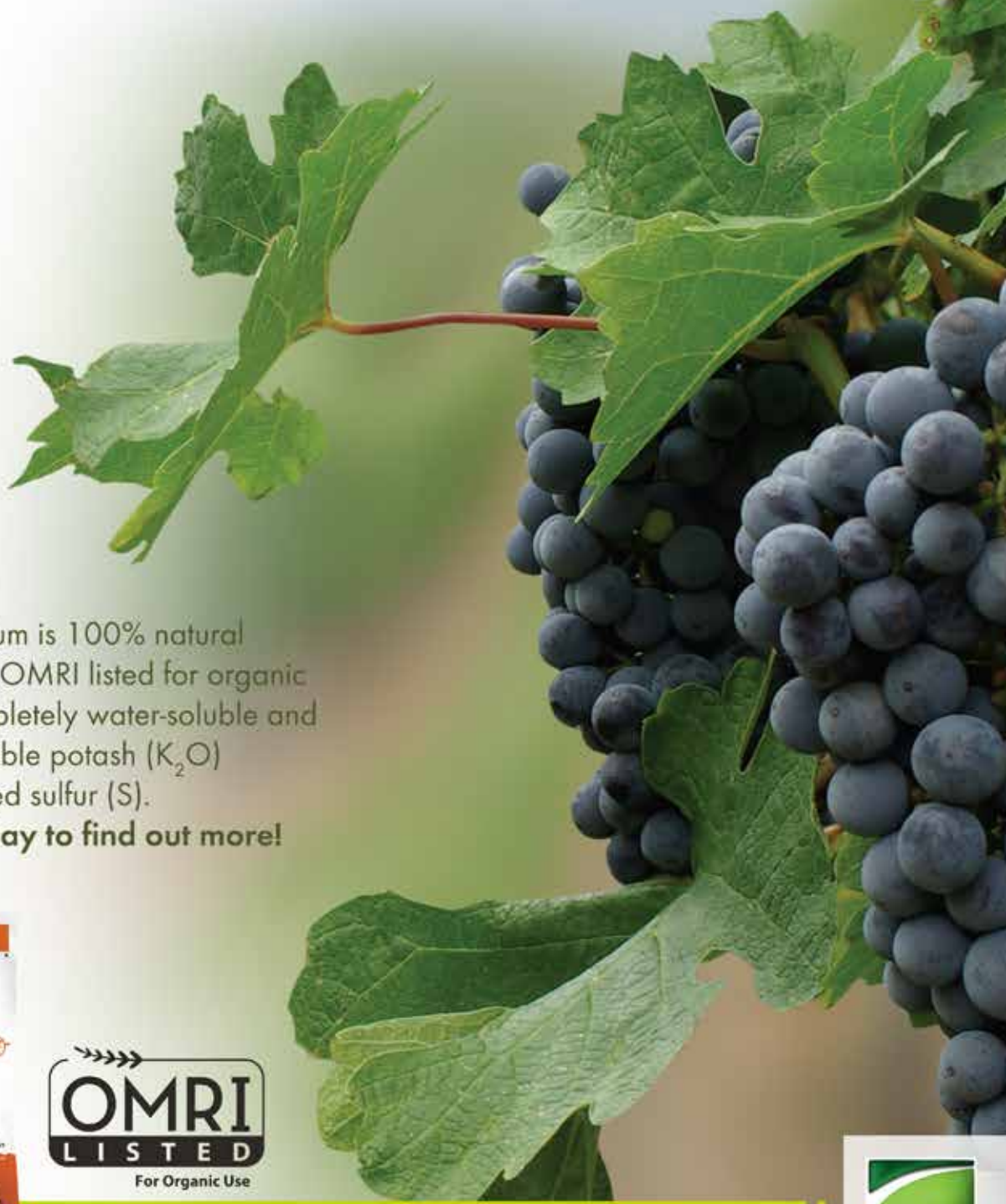
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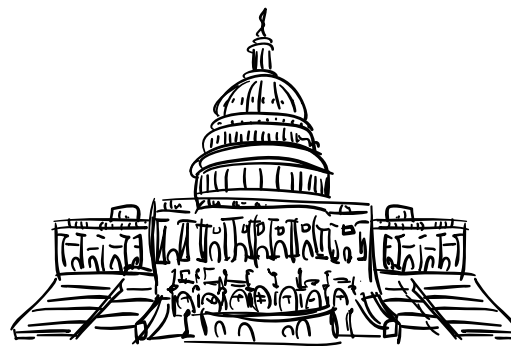
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Addressing Critical Research Topics for Organic

From fire blight to citrus greening and from soil health to human health, The Organic Center focuses its research and communications to help address critical issues to support the growth of organic agriculture and trade.

Fire Blight Control

In a project completed last spring, The Center collaborated with David Granatstein at Washington State University to examine antibiotic-free alternatives for controlling fire blight in organic apple and pear orchards. This resulted in a document of tried-and-true holistic protocols for controlling disease and new organic materials being tested. An unmitigated success, this project has resulted in 900 downloads of the online publication, distribution of 500 hard copies, and outreach to nearly 5,000 individuals.

Arsenic Uptake in Organic Rice

The Center has also looked at decreasing arsenic uptake in organic rice systems. This work, in collaboration with USDA's Agricultural Research Service at the Dale Bumpers Rice Research Center, includes variety trials exploring natural arsenic uptake due to the effects of rice variety, annual variation, farming systems, and milling, and examines such agricultural techniques for reducing arsenic uptake in organic systems as soil amendment type, fertilizer rates, and cover crops. Preliminary findings show that annual differences account for most of the variation in arsenic uptake seen in rice.

Citrus Greening

Meanwhile, organic growers need holistic solutions to citrus greening that take multiple factors into account to be effective in the long run without harming beneficial insects or causing other damage to the growing systems. The Center is collaborating with university professors, USDA scientists, farmers, and other nonprofits to examine organic alternatives for controlling citrus greening disease. This research continues to investigate the efficacy of organic materials, methods for using organic materials that support pollinator and natural predator health, and resistant rootstocks.

Pesticide Residues

In a separate collaboration, Dr. Chuck Benbrook is exploring methods to protect organic agriculture from inadvertent pesticide residue contamination. Despite lower pesticide levels

on organic products, there are still incidences of low-level pesticide residue contamination on a small proportion of organic farms. Such unintentional pesticide residue occurrence could be brought about by many contamination vectors, such as airborne drift, soil contamination, water contamination, and via food processing, handling, and storage equipment and facilities. The Center's project will determine the most common areas in the supply chain where pesticide drift to organic food occurs, and identify methods to avoid low-level inadvertent pesticide contamination altogether.

Human Health

The Center is also conducting a study looking at the health effects of dietary pesticide exposure in collaboration with Dr. Lu at Harvard University. Dr. Lu's team conducted a metabolic analysis of urine of children who ate an organic diet for a week, then switched to a conventional diet for a week. They then examined the differences in metabolites found in the urine between the urine samples collected from the organic week and the conventional week. The results of this study should be published soon, so keep an eye out!


Soil Health

Another focus of research is in highlighting the environmental benefits of organic agriculture. A soil health project underway in collaboration with the National Soil Project at Northeastern University is comparing sequestered carbon in organic versus conventional farms. Researchers have developed an innovative technique separating sequestered carbon into its component humic and fulvic acids. While fulvic acids are water soluble and fluctuate from year to year, humic acid represents the long-term storage of carbon in the soil and is a much more accurate measure of soil health. This project is the first time that anyone has compared humic acid levels in organic versus conventional soils, and it has the potential to show a distinct health advantage of organically managed soils.

Nitrogen Pollution

Meanwhile, The Center is exploring the effects of organic farming practices on nitrogen pollution, in collaboration with Dr. Galloway's lab at the University of Virginia. Preliminary findings show that the average personal nitrogen footprint for conventional crops introduces 50% more new reactive nitrogen to the system than organic crops.

These research projects are bringing some exciting findings which we all can share to help document the science behind organic farming and food.



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NEWS

CCOF Launches “Non-GMO & More” Organic Seal

To support the needs of CCOF clients who wish to clearly communicate to consumers that organic products are not only non-GMO but also farmed ecologically, CCOF has produced new optional seals for use by CCOF-certified members. CCOF’s existing seal will also remain viable.

No additional requirements must be met by CCOF-certified operations wishing to use the new seals. They may be used in any setting or for certified organic product labels where use of the existing CCOF seal is authorized. As always, new labels should be submitted to CCOF for approval. The new seals reaffirm CCOF’s commitment to GMO issues in organic production and standards.

CCOF has a strong position shared by many on genetic engineering in agriculture. CCOF believes organic production is the strongest solution to this issue and is implementing this new seal to provide clarity to consumers on a topic that is often misunderstood. Organic is non-GMO, but also provides additional environmental and social benefits that matter to modern consumers.

CCOF will continue to perform GMO testing within our NOP certification program and will remain engaged on organic standards issues relating to GMOs at the national level. CCOF’s current policy position on GMOs can be viewed at www.ccof.org/advocacy/genetic-engineering.

CCOF is proud of the efforts that CCOF-certified organic operations put forth to farm in harmony with nature and without the use of GMOs. These new seals support your ability to communicate these values and attributes clearly and concisely. To download the new seal, visit www.ccof.org/logos.

CCOF Offers Spanish Services for Processors and Handlers

As the organic industry grows, so do CCOF’s services in Spanish! We now provide services in Spanish for processor and handler operations. Check out CCOF’s Handler Organic System Plan (OSP) in Spanish, available at www.ccof.org/documents. In



addition, see our re-vamped Spanish language resources page, www.ccof.org/espanol, to access a wide variety of forms, flyers, and other helpful documents in Spanish. We are pleased to be able to serve more operations within the organic industry with improved services in Spanish.

Materials List Improvements

To save you time and money, your Materials List in MyCCOF is now grouped by type of material, instead of only being grouped by scope. This means that all fertilizers or additives are grouped together instead of merely listed alphabetically.

New this year, you can also use MyCCOF to export an Excel compatible list for your own use. Simply visit your Materials List in MyCCOF and click the Excel icon.

These changes help you identify the materials that are approved for use more quickly and easily, as well as allow you

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to sort and organize your own list. This will also help CCOF inspectors save time at your inspection.

Look for the change when you receive your next updated Materials List from CCOF. Remember that you can also view, manage, and print your own list in MyCCOF. CCOF's online Materials Search feature allows you to search all materials in the OMRI, WSDA and CCOF internal list and request additions to your OSP quickly, easily, and without cost.

Introducing CCOF Representative in Mexico

We are pleased to introduce Luis Lopez, CCOF's new representative in Mexico. Lopez is representing CCOF throughout the accreditation and approval process under Mexico's new organic standards. He oversees all CCOF inspections in Mexico and is also an inspector.

Lopez's background includes working on organic crop and livestock production in Canada, as well as conducting organic

inspections in Canada, Mexico, and throughout Latin America. He received a degree in International Business from the University of Guadalajara, studied Sustainable Productions at Olds College, Canada, and is an Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) member. He lives with his family near Guadalajara. In his spare time he enjoys gardening and he is developing an organic farm school for local farmers.

He looks forward to working with CCOF to promote organic throughout Mexico. He can be reached at llopez@ccof.org.



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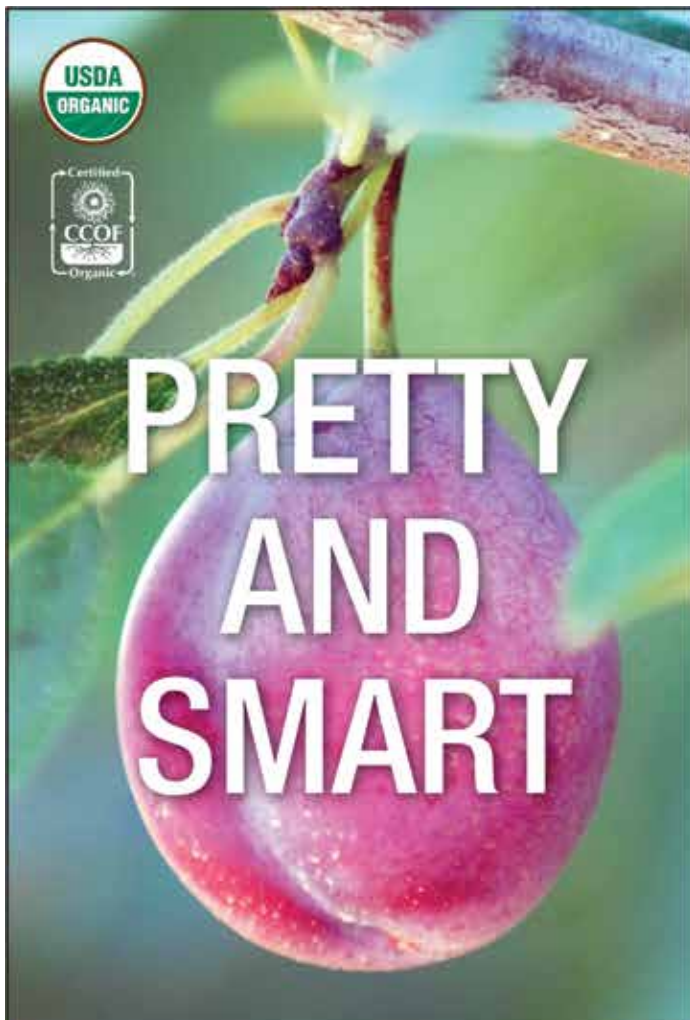
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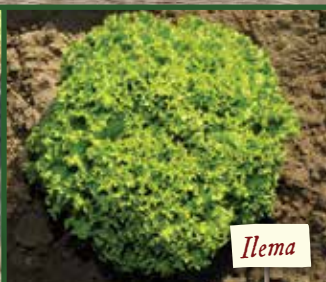
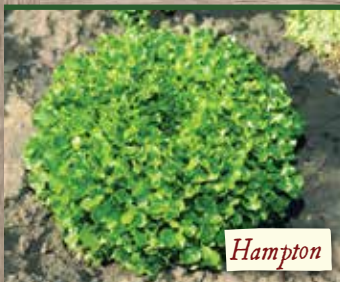


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