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for Organic?



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The Farm Bill—What's in it for Organic?

To support existing organic farmers and ranchers and create conditions that will attract new producers to organic, the organic infrastructure must be strong.

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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.

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How the U.S. Farm Bill Impacts Organic Agriculture

In this issue, CCOF Senior Policy Specialist Jane Sooby provides an overview of the United States farm bill and how it impacts organic agriculture. Like so much of the debate in Washington—for much longer than the tenure of the current administration—farm bill discussions are guided by competing agricultural interests instead of by what “the people” want—the people being those who buy food to nourish themselves and their families.

So, it seems fitting as we sit down to read through this new issue of *Certified Organic* to take stock of what kind of agricultural policy the people want. If only it were they, not the lobbyists, who roamed the halls of Congress!

First, the people want good, healthy, and—yes—often organic food. Several farm bills have come and gone since the inception of the National Organic Program. Today, more than 82 percent of American families buy some organic products; yet less than 1 percent of agricultural land in the United States is in organic production. Meanwhile, retailers and processors say they can’t source enough organic products to meet the current demand from U.S. families.

Second, the public wants their good, healthy, organic food to come from local farmers whose stories they know and whose brands they trust. But the reality is that shortages of organic ingredients and a tough farming environment are spurring unprecedented importation of organic food and ingredients. U.S. farm policy should strive to bolster domestic organic producers.

Third, the people are cheering for the revival of rural America and the role that sustainable, organic agriculture can play in creating economic well-being. Studies demonstrate that organic “hotspots” are linked to increased wages and a higher standard of living. The people want smarter economic investments in local food systems—both urban and rural—that generate pride and prosperity.

Fourth, the people want good, healthy, organic food that is affordable, not cheap. In growing numbers, families are putting their trust in food that tastes good *because it is good for them*. Expanded farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture programs, and online food delivery systems are providing new forms of access and opportunities to learn how to prepare good food. Even food banks across the nation are engaging farmers and food recipients in programs that promote good food. True home economics.

During the coming months, we will engage our members and supporters in farm bill advocacy. Let’s remember to advocate for the public interest, as well as our own.



Cathy

Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director/CEO

Issue Contributors

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Jane Sooby has worked in organic farming research and advocacy for over 20 years. A native Californian, she first learned about organic agriculture working with organic farmers in western Nebraska. Her academic degrees are from New Mexico State University and the University of Wyoming. Sooby is an expert in organic research and education programs. She has lived in Santa Cruz for 18 years.

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Left, L to R: Grant Brians, CCOF Board member; Laura Batcha, OTA; Melody Meyer, UNFI; Sam Farr, retired Congressman; Karen Ross, California Secretary of Agriculture; Mark Lipson, organic farmer and OFRF senior policy and program specialist. Right: CCOF members and staff visit with Congressman Doug LaMalfa to discuss organic priorities in the upcoming farm bill.



CCOF Advocates for Bipartisan Bill Supporting Organic Research Funding

As the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture begin drafting the 2018 Farm Bill, CCOF members are asking their representatives to support the Organic Agriculture Research Act (HR 2436), a bill introduced by Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME) with co-sponsors Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA). HR 2436 would increase funding for USDA's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) from \$20 million to \$50 million annually. This flagship program funds researchers who help farmers increase their yields and protect crops from pests and diseases, or who otherwise support organic production. To make the case for organic research dollars, CCOF members are meeting with their representatives, presenting public comment at congressional farm bill listening sessions, and voicing strong support for HR 2436.

CCOF Board Chair Phil LaRocca Awarded Farmer of the Year

Organic champion and CCOF Board of Directors Chair Phil LaRocca of LaRocca Vineyards has been awarded the Organic

Trade Association's 2017 Organic Farmer of the Year Leadership Award!

LaRocca is a pioneering organic wine grape grower and winemaker who uses innovative, environmentally friendly farming practices to produce wines with no added sulfites. He became the first certified organic apple grower in 1975 and then transitioned to grape growing and wine production.

LaRocca has been active with CCOF since its inception and has spent the last 40 years advocating for organic farming. He is a tireless advocate who is often found at meetings, conferences, and events throughout the state of California and the country. He helped create the regulations for organic wine under the National Organic Program and recently helped reform California's State Organic Program by advocating for the passage of the California Organic Food and Farming Act (COFFA). The California Secretary of Food and Agriculture also recently appointed LaRocca to serve on the California Organic Products Advisory Committee.

As chair of the CCOF Board of Directors, LaRocca continuously dedicates time to CCOF's members. LaRocca represents the North Valley Chapter, but goes above and beyond his core duties by attending chapter meetings across the state. LaRocca is also a mainstay at National Organic Standards Board meetings and has represented organic in Washington D.C. and internationally.

"Phil has been an organic champion for decades, and still generously shares his knowledge and passion as chairman of the CCOF Board of Directors. His inexhaustible drive is what continually propels CCOF forward and keeps us thinking about how we can serve the organic community—and especially

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— Lew & Kay Hall, Aloe Organics, Arcadia, Florida



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Organic champion and CCOF Board of Directors Chair Phil LaRocca of LaRocca Vineyards has been awarded the Organic Trade Association's 2017 Organic Farmer of the Year Leadership Award!

organic farmers—better, year after year,” said CCOF Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo. “We are thrilled to see Phil recognized as Farmer of the Year—it couldn’t be more well-deserved.”

Please join us in celebrating Phil and his ongoing success!

Organic Poised to Support California's Climate Initiatives

The climate benefits associated with organic agriculture are no secret, and are poised to become more relevant as California continues to play a leadership role in the fight against climate change. On July 17, 2017, the California Legislature passed AB 398, a landmark bill extending the state's cap and trade program to 2030. Cap and trade is one of many climate-related programs originally implemented under the 2006 Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

Under cap and trade, regulated industries (electricity generators; large industrial facilities emitting 25,000 metric tons of CO₂ or more annually; and distributors of transportation, natural gas, and other fuels) are required to procure an allowance for each ton of carbon they emit. Depending on the industry, allowances are given away for free or must be purchased at an auction. Each year, the cap on carbon emissions—and the number of permits available—lowers. Cap and trade is a market-based approach to fighting climate change, using the theory that providing industries flexibility in accounting for greenhouse gas emissions leads to a healthier economy.

To date, cap and trade auctions have raised nearly \$5 billion, which is funneled into the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and appropriated to state agencies. All programs implemented

with Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund monies must make direct reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Understanding the importance of agriculture in California's economy and its role in climate change mitigation, the state is already investing in numerous agriculture-related programs.

California Department of Food and Agriculture is administering four programs with Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund monies. The Alternative Manure Management Program awards competitive grants to California dairy and livestock operations for technologies and practices that result in long-term methane emission reductions and environmental benefits. The Dairy Digester Research & Development Program funds the installation of dairy digesters on dairy and livestock operations. Dairy digesters turn methane gas—a part of cow manure—into electricity, which can provide clean power to a farm, and be sold back to the grid.

The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program funds grants to implement irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and save water. Examples include micro-irrigation or drip systems, pumps that run on renewable energy, and low-pressure irrigation systems.

The Healthy Soils Program funds the implementation of on-farm conservation practices, such as reduced-till, cover cropping, compost application, contour buffer stripping, and more. Many organic farmers already implement these practices and have long understood the importance of soil health and its ability to simultaneously produce better, more nutritious food while also sequestering carbon.

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation program, administered by the Department of Conservation, funds conservation easements on agricultural lands that are at risk of conversion or development. Agricultural land must be at risk of conversion to qualify, because preservation reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with development projects and lowers vehicle miles.



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Organic production, with its myriad environmental benefits, will be a vital tool to help the state achieve its climate goals.

With a 10-year extension to the cap and trade program, in addition to last year's passage of SB 32 and AB 197, which ratchets up the state's emissions targets to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, organic production, with its myriad environmental benefits, will be a vital tool to help the state achieve its climate goals.

The Inaugural Organic Grower Summit Comes to Monterey, California

The first ever Organic Grower Summit (OGS), a joint production between CCOF and Organic Produce Network, comes to Monterey December 13 and 14, 2017, to bring together organic growers, producers, and processors for two days of education, information, and networking opportunities with organic production supply chain and service providers. The event includes a series of educational sessions, keynote presentations, a variety of meal functions, and a trade show floor.

Educational topics include:

- Issues Facing Organic Farmers Today
- Organic Disruption—Cannabis: The Next Frontier
- Clean and Renewable Technology
- Tools for Plant and Soil Health
- Essentials of Sustainable Packaging through the Supply Chain
- Leveraging Precision Agriculture.

Among participating exhibitors are leaders in the fields of seed, packaging, soil amendments, food safety, and ag technology, who will be connecting with organic field production staff, supply chain managers, pest management advisors, and food safety experts.

Following the opening reception, CCOF will be hosting We Are Organic, a CCOF Foundation dinner to celebrate the accomplishments in advancement of organic agriculture thanks to CCOF members' support. Purchase your dinner ticket at www.ccof.org/weareorganic. The CCOF Foundation advances organic agriculture for a healthy world through programs that educate future organic farmers, help consumers understand organic, assist organic farmers in need, and provide ongoing training for organic professionals.

Additionally, in advance of OGS, a half-day continuing education outreach program for pest control advisors and qualified applicators will be held December 13, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Monterey.

The half-day event will feature guest speaker Brian Leahy, director of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and will be hosted by Monterey Agricultural Commissioner Eric Lauritzen. Among the subject areas to be covered are the new requirements for pesticide application near schools and farm worker advisory committee and worker protection standards. The event is limited to 100 people and registration is available on a first come, first served basis by calling the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner off-duty line at (831) 759-7340. Attendees can earn two hours of approved continuing education credit by attending.

For more information about the Organic Grower Summit or to register, visit www.organicgrowersummit.com.

Organic & Non-GMO Forum: Oilseeds & Grains at the Crossroads

The third annual Organic & Non-GMO Forum: Oilseeds & Grains at the Crossroads is the only domestic event that brings together stakeholders from across the organic, non-GMO, and conventional value chains to address both the practical and business sides of the sector. Taking place November 6 and 7, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri, this event examines the challenges facing the sector as it works to satisfy the growing demand for organic and non-GMO products, and assesses emerging opportunities for specialization in conventional agriculture.

Over the past two years, the Organic & Non-GMO Forum has become the leading event that brings together handlers, buyers, and processors to address current and future challenges to meeting growing demand for organic and non-GMO products and other emerging opportunities for specialization in conventional agriculture.

Highlights of the crucial discussion topics at the one-and-a-half-day conference include:

- CRISPR and the future of seed breeding
- Strategic options and entry points in specialty processing
- Optimizing logistics: improve farmer returns
- Producer's perspective on transitioning to organic
- Non-GMO and GMO labeling initiatives
- How organic imports benefit and create challenges for the organic market.

Register now for overviews and deep dives into important current issues in the sector, including forecasts of emerging trends. Visit www.ongforum.com.

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Organic Counter Culture on Oahu

Six years ago, Rob Barreca was working as a web designer. Today you can find him mucking it up with the ducks or testing a new batch of his certified organic Great White kimchi, made with his own certified organic crops. Counter Culture is a five-acre multi-scope intensive farm on the island of Oahu that includes a diverse cropping system, chickens and ducks, and value-added products. When Barreca left his tech job, he started looking at food policy, particularly food waste recovery. A friend suggested considering GoFarm Hawaii, a beginning farmer training program, and the rest is history—he was hooked.

While completing the 14-month long intensive GoFarm course, Barreca applied for—and won—the Mahi'ai Match-Up Agricultural Business Plan competition. Supported by the Pauahi Foundation, the Kamehameha Schools promotes management and use of agriculturally zoned land to restore and revitalize traditional agricultural systems and locally grown produce. The prize included a sum of cash for startup costs and a five-year rent-free lease agreement.

Farming on Oahu allows for three to four crop cycles each year. However, the downside to this extended season is that there is no break from pest and weed pressure. Oahu does not experience a significant drop in winter temperatures that would force a pest die-off. Counter Culture's solution is to create diversity in soil biology and encourage a beneficial insect population. They are also highly conscious of choosing crop varieties that will persist through pest and disease conditions.

GoFarm and Hawaii's grassroots-driven seed network have been invaluable resources for sharing information on crop varieties trialed for resistance.

Out of the gate, Barreca wanted to focus on developing a market for a value-added product. Production costs run high living on an island and having a product with shelf life was motivation to ensure those costs were covered. He had already been experimenting with perfecting kimchi while in the GoFarm program. The vegetables and fruits unique to a tropical climate have given Counter Culture an assortment of distinctively different crops: papaya, turmeric, ginger, edamame.

In Hawaii, the local and organic food production is lagging behind the foodie-driven movement found in many areas of the mainland. The demand for certified organic produce is just getting off the ground. Starting out, Barreca faced the same questions that many run into when starting a business: How do I market these crops? Who is going to buy this product? Running between individual restaurants, natural food stores, and farmers' markets can pull you in many directions and leave your energy resources stretched.

Ever the problem solver, Barreca applied for a USDA Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grant and Farm Link Hawaii was born. Its mission is to fill the gap between buyers who want local food and the growers who grow it. Every week an email is sent out detailing each farmer's product availability. Buyers log on to the Farm Link website and order by a specified time so growers have enough time to harvest to order. A refrigerated delivery van picks up freshly-harvested produce from farm hubs and delivers directly to the buyers. Farm Link Hawaii supports small producers by aggregating them into a larger



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Morris Grassfed Beef via Facebook:

Thinking of Aldo Leopold. When the sun participated in photosynthesis to grow these trees, it warmed me—or someone like me. As I cut and stack the wood, it warms me a second time. When I sit before the fire this winter, a third time will I benefit from its warmth. #carboncycle #watercycle #holisticmanagement @soilcarboncoalition.org



Charlie & Echo via Facebook:

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Coastal Roots Farm via Facebook:

Did you know? Coastal Roots distributes thousands of pounds of fresh and healthy food every month through donations, pay-what-you-can Farm Stands, and CSA boxes. Last month alone we distributed 2,212 pounds to our community. That's a lot of veggies!

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force and allowing them to focus their time on farming. In the years since founding Farm Link, Barreca has secured a microloan to procure a refrigerated box truck, and a second LFPP grant to expand the reach of Farm Link Hawaii, and increase reliability to growers and buyers alike.

Counter Culture has learned to diversify not just soil health, but personnel as well. Daniel Leas brings years of on-farm experience, and Gabe Sachter-Smith offers extensive tropical ag expertise. Alongside his partner in life, Laarni Gedo, Barreca has used Farm Link to open up a clear path of marketing opportunities for Counter Culture. Additionally, as a recent winner of a USDA Value-Added Producer grant, Barreca sees so much room for growth. He hopes to continue to embrace diversification, perhaps increase their duck egg production, and continue focusing on the things they are doing well.

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Thinking Outside the Box at Encinitas Union School District Farm Lab

For Mim Michelove, farming came after years of work as an artist. As the owner and operator of her own celebrity photography business (“before paparazzi”), she worked for numerous high-profile clients that ranged from rock bands and record labels to authors and politicians. Later, seeking to broaden her creative outlets, Michelove decided to enroll in a welding class at a local college. She was hooked. “I fell in love with all kinds of metalwork, and started another business making my own line of furniture and lamps. I even got to make original pieces for TV shows, commercials, and some well-known movies. I know that you’re thinking, ‘How the heck does that lead you into farming?’”

Michelove says it was motherhood that honed her attention on personal and environmental health. “It was when I became a mom that my interests in healthy food and a healthy planet came into sharp focus, and I realized how a healthy environment can support academic excellence,” she says. “On a personal note, I saw how whole, organic foods impacted my son’s health, and I wanted to share those positive effects with

others. So, I grabbed some shovels and trowels, and got very involved in building educational gardens for my son’s class, and then his whole school. After a steep learning curve, I dug deeper and began to help other garden programs grow, which eventually led me to starting a school farm.”

Heartened by the community’s positive feedback to the school and community gardens she had been developing, Michelove founded and is now the director of the Encinitas Union School District (EUSD) Farm Lab. The Farm Lab is home to an outdoor educational program called DREAMS (design, research, engineering, art, math, and science), which offers all 5,400 kindergarten through sixth grade students in the district an experiential, STEM-based curriculum. Additionally, its several farm plots serve as community gardens and as cropland for the school district; one of these farm sites supplies fresh organic produce to the district’s school lunch program.

EUSD partners with nearby CCOF-certified Coastal Roots Farm to manage this one-acre crops site, from which they produce 300 heads of romaine lettuce and 200 pounds of other seasonal produce each week for school lunches. When EUSD became certified organic in 2016, they unknowingly became the first school district in the nation to have a certified organic farm feeding into its own school lunch program. Michelove notes that EUSD has recently seen an increase in school lunch participation, and that “kids are thrilled to see where their lunch is growing, and can’t believe how delicious the lettuce, carrot, and watermelon crops are!”

Notably, the Farm Lab also acts as a resource for the greater community. Michelove’s goal was to “grow food for the whole district, as well as provide for the underserved neighborhood where the farm was located.” The Farm Lab dedicates three-quarters of an acre to a community garden, and last year broke ground on a Community Food Forest at the garden’s perimeter. Planted with vegetables, berries, and special varieties of water-efficient trees such as coastal olives, loquats, “strawberry jam” figs, and pink and yellow pomegranates, the Food Forest consists of an educational, signed walkway along the road that also allows the public to harvest these diverse crops at no cost. Excess produce not picked by the community is donated to local food pantries.

Michelove remarks that her creative professional background served her well during this launch into farming, which required a wealth of patience and vision as the team converted “blighted” land and compacted parking lots into arable ground. The EUSD, together with their farming partner, Coastal Roots Farm, now take pride in their ability to provide students with fresh, nutritious food from a one-acre plot (although an additional three acres are now in the works), in “keeping toxic chemicals out of ... local water and land,” and in their focus on low water use. Their peak rate of water use is still less than half of that consumed by the average San Diego home.

The Farm Lab itself is a testament to what can happen, as their home page proclaims, when you “think outside the box.” Learn more about the EUSD Farm Lab at www.eusdfarmlab.com.

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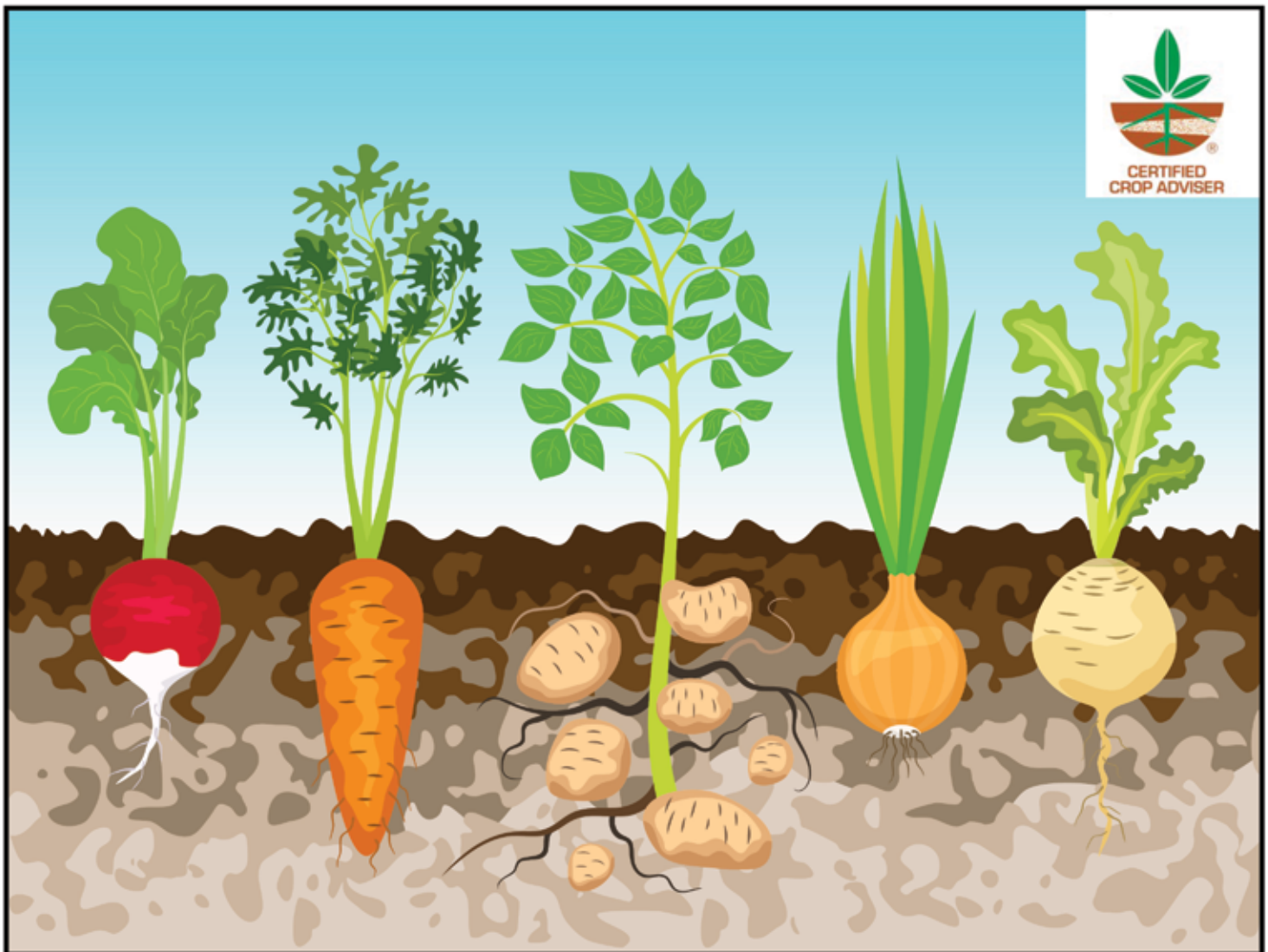
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Future Organic Farmers of 2017

CCOF's Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund (FOFGF) has distributed over \$400,000 in grant funds over the past four years to students and teachers of organic agriculture across the country. By the end of 2017, we will have made 246 grants and reached just over 25,000 people through three programs: kindergarten through eighth grade classroom grants administered in conjunction with the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, grants for high school students completing National FFA Organization (FFA) organic projects, and direct grants to students of organic agriculture enrolled in vocational, junior college, and undergraduate education programs. Thus far in 2017, CCOF has awarded 22 higher and vocational education grants and 22 K-8 grants. Grant applications from high school students designing organic Supervised Agricultural Experience projects through FFA are currently being accepted and are due mid-November. Visit www.ccof.org/fofgf for more information and application instructions.

The following four students each won a \$2,500 grant this year from the FOFGF to apply toward their studies in organic agriculture. These are our future organic farmers!



Gwen Larrow - Go Farm Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii

I believe that pursuing a career in organic agriculture will benefit the people, oceans, and economy of Hawaii. The vast majority of Hawaii's food is imported. I have a responsibility to provide an option of affordable local and organic produce to the people of Hawaii. I want to be actively involved in farming on Oahu and support organic agricultural methods to help lessen the impact

of excessive nutrient runoff and chemicals that enter our waters and pollute the marine ecosystems that are so unique to the Hawaiian Islands.

Lastly, it is my goal to contribute to the economy of Hawaii and supply good paying jobs for future generations. Being part of the organic farming movement will allow Hawaii to keep money in this state rather than paying for food grown thousands of miles away. It will help to create a new market of revenue for exporting local goods within the Islands and aid in re-creating community-based ideals that have been slowly diminishing over time.



Haleigh Jones - California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

I am an agriculture and environmental plant science major at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly). I was born and raised on the Central Coast of California. Growing up, I was surrounded by conventional farming. It is a huge part of the local economy and I never really questioned the production techniques being practiced until I was introduced to organic farming. My first farm job was on an organic farm as a production intern. My experience on the farm was eye-opening, and I fell in love with the practices of organic farming.

When I returned to Cal Poly the following fall quarter I started taking classes in organic agriculture and working on the organic farm on campus to learn more about the science behind the ecological management strategies. Through my experiences working in organic agriculture and my time at the university, I hope to one day operate my own polyculture organic farm with field and nursery operations that are open to the public. I also want to offer CSA membership boxes, farm tours, and educational opportunities for the community to learn about agriculture and sustainable farming.

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Annon Blue - Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina

Much of my academic life has been immersed in the field of North Carolina agriculture. Growing up, I was involved in community and school programs like 4-H, equine rescues, and FFA, which provided me with a foundation and a desire to seek a career in a field where I'm working with people, animals, and the environment. In high school, I discovered the world of organic farming and was immediately taken with its honest and healthy practices.

After graduation, I plan to work with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service as an extension agent in order to support the organic farmers of North Carolina. North Carolina is blessed with many opportunities to create healthier food systems, and I believe that through my work as an extension agent, I can assist organic farmers in making these opportunities more accessible to all North Carolinians.



David Robles - Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, Santa Cruz, California

Both of my grandparents were migrant farmworkers. My father and brother work for Samsbrailo Packaging, and I grew up with a lot of exposure to farming and agriculture. I consider organically grown and socially just food to be a movement, not just an emerging market. Organic agriculture can be utilized as a vehicle for addressing countless ills in our society, including issues surrounding pollution, habitat destruction, species loss, medical treatments, race injustices, gender inequalities, land rights, economic disparities, globalization, workers' rights, and education. Food crosses cultural boundaries, food creates productive conversations, and—most importantly—food empowers the individual to focus on that which ought to be focused on—the physical and mental health of the individual and the social and natural health of the environment.

You can learn more about the future organic farmers supported by the FOFGF by visiting www.ccof.org/future-organic-farmers.

The Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund 2017 grants were made possible by the generous support of CCOF, the UNFI Foundation, the CCOF Processor/Handler Chapter, the Clif Bar Family Foundation, Dr. Bronner's, Driscoll's, Duncan Family Farms, Frey Vineyards, Frontier Co-op, Heath & Lejeune, Gary and Meg Hirshberg, Lost Republic Distilling Co., Organic Valley, SunRidge Farms, and True Organic Products, Inc. Thank you to these organizations for helping us inspire the next generation of organic farmers!

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Fall Breezes In with a Steady Flow of Chapter Activity

The summer brought us plenty of heat in California and the CCOF chapters have been red hot with activity.

San Luis Obispo Chapter

On May 31, the San Luis Obispo Chapter held a meeting at the Atascadero Grange Hall where water issues—such as the regional water board agricultural orders and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act—were discussed. The focus was on the challenges farmers face to comply with the expanding and demanding new requirements. Margy Lindquist from the local Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) office presented on the many ways they can help with both technical and financial assistance. Ron Labastida gave a compelling talk about the need for growers of every scale to prepare for the coming Food Safety Modernization Act enforcement. The group had a brief conversation about finding pathways for young folks interested in getting short-term hands-on experience on a farm. Jutta Thoerner and her World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) guests spoke about their positive experience, highlighting the importance of vetting each other to increase the likelihood of a good match.

Kern Chapter

The Kern Chapter held a meeting in Bakersfield on June 8 where Malcolm Ricci presented on several key topics, including the work of the CCOF Foundation, CCOF policy work, and the importance of getting involved in the run-up to the 2018 Farm Bill to ensure support for organic agriculture is maintained and expands. Ricci also led a discussion about nitrogen management plans and the potential complexities they present. Member Ben Diesl gave an update on the California Organic Products Advisory Committee, which advises the California Secretary of Agriculture. Diesl and several other CCOF members sit on the committee. He focused on the work the committee is trying to accomplish, including the efforts to continue streamlining the organic registration process with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Fresno-Tulare Chapter

The Fresno-Tulare Chapter held a meeting at Fresno State on July 6, where Dwayne Cardoza reported that Tom Wiley and Dave Goorahoo at California State University, Fresno are working on developing a minor in organic agriculture. They are also considering starting a certificate program focused on organic farming. The group also discussed creating superior water storage solutions for the region in order to take advantage of years with higher rainfall. Sheryl Feit from the NRCS spoke about the interagency cooperative agreement with CDFA focusing on the new Healthy Soils program.

North Coast Chapter

Trying something a little different, the North Coast Chapter held a morning meeting at the beautiful CCOF-certified Front Porch Farm in Healdsburg on July 11. A proposal was approved to start a scholarship, using the chapter funds, for anyone looking to advance their skills in the organic industry through a vocational school, community college, and/or four-year undergraduate institution in the United States in 2018. The scholarship will be run by the chapter leaders. Shana Bull, a media and marketing specialist, gave a presentation about strategically integrating social media into a business's marketing strategy.

Humboldt-Trinity Chapter

The Humboldt-Trinity Chapter held a long-awaited meeting on July 27 in Fortuna where special guest Phil LaRocca gave a brief history of CCOF's structure, chapter formation, and the fundamental importance of chapters to CCOF's member-driven uniqueness and strength. Among the topics, the group discussed the decision making of consumers who buy all organic except when it comes to their alcohol of choice. This dichotomy presents a considerable challenge for expanding this section of the organic market. Nominations for chapter leader were presented, voted on, and passed at this meeting. We would like to congratulate and welcome the new Chapter President Michael Evenson of Lost Coast Ranch, new Board Representative Ted Vivatson of Eel River Brewing, and thank Mel Krebs of Flood Plain Produce, who has been re-elected as chapter treasurer.

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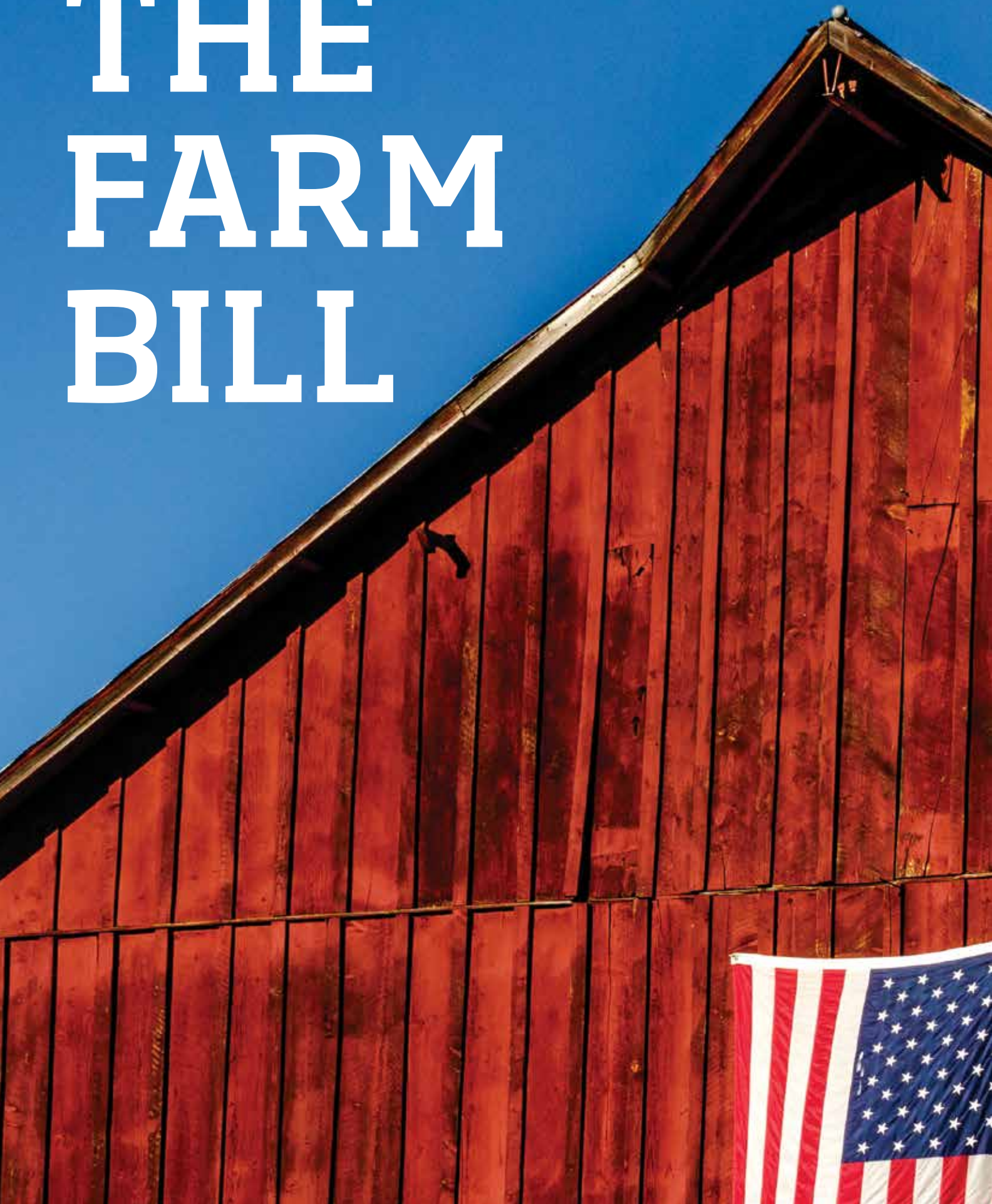
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THE FARM BILL





What's in it for Organic?

WRITTEN BY Jane Sooby

The farm bill is a multi-year federal bill that defines United States food and farming policy. The National Organic Program, organic certification cost share, conservation programs, and other programs important to organic producers are funded by the farm bill.

The 2014 Farm Bill expires in September 2018, and advocacy groups and Congress worked on the bill throughout 2017. Here is an overview of organic farm bill provisions and some of the political dynamics surrounding this farm bill.

Farm Bill Basics

The current Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) authorized \$489 billion for four years of funding in two major categories: farming and nutrition assistance (non-farming) programs. Nutrition assistance programs receive 80 percent and farming programs split up the remaining 20 percent of farm bill funds.

In response to the Dust Bowl disasters, which led to enormous crop losses and mass migration from rural to urban areas and intensified the Great Depression, the United States passed its first farm bill in 1933. Since then, the farm bill has evolved into an "omnibus" bill made of 12 major sections or titles. An omnibus bill is one with many parts.

Because of its complexity, the farm bill is difficult to describe and understand. President Barack Obama quoted his Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in this attempt to explain the farm bill in 2014:

Secretary Vilsack calls it a jobs bill, an innovation bill, an infrastructure bill, a research bill, a conservation bill. It's like a Swiss Army knife. ... It multitasks.

Farming Titles

Historically, the farm bill has emphasized support for commodity crops. The *Commodities* title is important to organic field crop, livestock, and dairy producers. International trade agreements and programs such as the Market Access Program contained in the *Trade* title are extremely important to organic producers and businesses that export.

“They see all kinds of people in their office but they really light up when a farmer from their district shows up. They appreciate the effort of a person who’s coming from a farm and giving them a reality check.”

Today, most of the value of the \$6 billion of U.S. organic farmgate production is in specialty crops (vegetables, fruits, nuts, and nursery crops) rather than commodities. Specialty crops only recently received attention in the farm bill. The *Horticulture* title was introduced in the 2008 Farm Bill and includes many of the programs that benefit organic producers, including funding for the National Organic Program, the National Organic Cost Share Program, and the Farmers’ Market and Local Food Promotion Program.

The *Conservation* title is also important to organic farmers. It funds programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or EQIP, which helps farmers plan and implement conservation practices and includes specific organic and transitional initiatives. Certified organic grower and CCOF member Javier Zamora from Aromas, California, supports continued funding for EQIP. Said Zamora, “Conservation programs help us meet our goal of being more environmentally friendly. We have to make sure that those programs stay in place in order for small growers to succeed.”

The *Crop Insurance* title in the 2014 Farm Bill directed the Risk Management Agency to develop price elections that reflect the actual price for all certified organic crops. It also laid the groundwork for what is now the Whole Farm Revenue Protection program, a crop insurance option for highly diversified producers.

It may be surprising to learn that the *Research* title is the farm bill title in which organic priorities have made the largest gains over the past three farm bills. Though the Organic Foods Production Act was part of the 1990 Farm Bill, mandatory funding for organic programs wasn’t available until the 2002 Farm Bill, which authorized \$3 million per year in the *Research* title for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI).

Encouraged by this advance, the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and other advocacy groups focused their efforts on increasing federal organic research funding and succeeded. In 2008, OREI was renewed for \$15.6 million per year, and it was authorized for a mandatory \$20 million per year in the 2014 Farm Bill.

Though dedicated organic research funds still total just over one percent of *Research* title authorizations, organic advocates had to fight hard for each farm bill to retain and expand organic research funds.

The next farm bill could be a game changer for organic research. Earlier this year, OFRF worked with U.S. Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), and Dan Newhouse (R-WA) to introduce the Organic

Agriculture Research Act, a bill that would increase OREI funding to the \$50 million annually required for a program to have baseline funding. Baseline funding is important because when Congress projects future farm bill costs, programs authorized for \$50 million or more annually are included and all other programs are dropped. Supporters of non-baseline programs must organize to defend their continuation in each farm bill.

Brise Tencer, executive director of OFRF, said, “It’s not just baseline for baseline’s sake, but there is great demand for organic research by the farming and research communities. Vast numbers of good projects go unfunded each year. We need stability for organic research funding.”

If the Organic Agriculture Research Act is successfully integrated into the next farm bill, the \$50 million mandatory funding annually will become the first organic baseline program in the history of the farm bill.

Nutrition Title

Eighty percent of farm bill funding goes to the *Nutrition* title, which funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the largest public food assistance program in the United States. A discussion arises each time Congress renews the farm bill over whether the nutrition and farming programs should be kept together in one bill. Most legislators recognize the natural fit between the nutrition title, which provides markets for agricultural products, and the farming titles.

Farmer and farm group testimony presented at farm bill field hearings early in 2017 were unanimous in supporting a single bill. But the various constituents vying for a slice of the farm bill pie have different opinions, putting their elected representatives at odds with farmers. Arguments over splitting the bill would likely delay passage of the farm bill until after the midterm elections in November 2018.

Farm Bill Fights

The farm bill has become an increasingly contentious piece of legislation over the past few decades. What started as a package of common sense policies to stabilize prices, control supply, and provide food to the hungry has become a national fight over federal funds, often causing tension between big ag and small farms, commodity and specialty crop growers, fiscal conservatives and progressives, and rural versus urban interests. Traditionally, farm bills were passed in four- or five-year intervals, but the past three farm bills have been delayed by partisan wrangling and have taken six years to get through Congress.



Today, many in agriculture seem resigned to cuts in the next farm bill because of the “fiscal austerity” tone coming from the White House and Congress. While the Senate Agriculture Committee under the leadership of Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) in 2014 voluntarily reduced farm bill spending by \$23 billion compared to the previous version (while maintaining strong support for organic programs), the agriculture sector is steeling itself to take even more cuts.

It is hard to predict how this farm bill discussion will play out. Based on recent history, expect plenty of posturing about the need to balance the budget by cutting small programs that help non-commodity producing farmers. Meanwhile, even conservatives argue that agriculture faces unique challenges that warrant government investment. If the bipartisan cooperation so far displayed by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees continues, odds may be in favor of a “low drama” farm bill debate and strong support for organic in the next farm bill.

With a \$50 billion industry, and political clout cultivated over time by organic industry leaders and advocates, the profile of organic is higher than ever before. At the same time, well-publicized controversies during National Organic Standards Board meetings and a series of articles on fraudulent organic imports have attracted criticism of NOSB and the National Organic Program from the media and some high-ranking politicians. In a worst-case scenario, these critiques could gain traction during farm bill negotiations, resulting in decreased farm bill support for organic.

Will a New Farm Bill be Passed in Time?

There are two schools of thought on whether a new farm bill can be passed before the 2014 bill expires in September 2018. Some are hopeful that bipartisan cooperation displayed by both House and Senate Agriculture Committees this year will contribute to ready consensus when it comes time to pass the bill. At the Agri-Pulse Farm Bill Summit in March 2017,

House Agriculture Committee Chair Mike Conaway (R-TX) said, “There’s not going to be a lot of drama this time. We want to get started and get it done.”

Others feel that, due to the partisan mood in Washington D.C., the odds of renewing the farm bill before it expires and midterm elections occur are low. If the bill is not renewed, only basic farm bill programs with baseline funding will continue, leaving out all organic-specific programs. This is what happened in 2012, when Congress failed to pass a new farm bill before the 2008 bill expired. Programs such as OREI and the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program lost their funding for a full year until the farm bill was finally renewed in 2014.

Top Organic Farm Bill Priorities

To support existing organic farmers and ranchers and create conditions that will attract new producers to organic, the organic infrastructure must be strong. CCOF focuses its farm bill advocacy on this crucial infrastructure.

National Organic Program (NOP)

CCOF supports maintaining NOP’s current funding level of \$15 million per year and advocates for a 10 percent increase each year of the farm bill. The NOP is the regulatory platform for organic, and its effectiveness is necessary to maintain consumer trust and attract more growers into organic certification. The controversy over fraudulent organic grain imports reported by *The Washington Post* this year shone a spotlight on NOP’s capacity to oversee the complex global distribution system for organic agricultural commodities. NOP needs adequate funding to maintain strong enforcement at home and abroad and create more opportunity for domestic organic producers.

National Organic Certification Cost Share Program

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Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

Organic research historically has been underfunded. Research is needed to increase domestic production, increase organic cropland acreage, and support farmers making the organic transition. CCOF joins with OFRF and others to support an increase from \$20 million to \$50 million per year for this important source of dedicated organic research funds.

Organic Production and Market Data Initiative

Organic farmers and ranchers have not had routine access to organic price data. Now, the Agricultural Marketing Service uses Organic Data Initiative (ODI) funds to issue price reports for organic produce, grains, and dairy. These price data also are used to set price elections for organic crop insurance. Additionally, ODI funds allowed the National Agricultural Statistics Service to conduct a series of national organic farmer surveys, which provide valuable production and demographic data for the organic sector.

Other Important Farm Bill Programs

While the following farm bill programs are not organic-specific, they help today's farmers stay in business through the vicissitudes of price and weather cycles and provide crucial support for the next generation of beginning farmers.

- » Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (*Research* title). Some of these funds are dedicated to assist returning veterans.
- » Whole Farm Revenue Protection and organic crop insurance (*Crop Insurance* title). The safety net for organic farms is still not perfect, but organic crop insurance now covers many specialty crops and compensates for the organic—rather than conventional—value of the crop.
- » The Market Access Program for export promotion (*Trade* title).
- » Farm ownership and operating loan programs, particularly for beginning farmers (*Credit* title).
- » Outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged, Native, minority, and military veteran farmers; and Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance, which provides catastrophic coverage for crops that aren't insurable under other types of crop insurance (*Miscellaneous* title).

- » Rural stimulus programs such as Rural Business Development Grants, Value-Added Producer Grants, and the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (*Rural Development* title).
- » Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (*Horticulture* title). Each state receives funds for projects that address that state's unique market and research needs.
- » The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (*Conservation* title).

“Organic Has Arrived”

Despite the uncertainty around federal legislation in the current political climate, organic programs and issues have never been so well-funded and prominent in farm bill discussions as they are now. “There is a sense now that organic has arrived,” observed Tencer of OFRF, citing strong bipartisan interest, particularly in organic research. Tencer encouraged legislators to fund organic systems research at a members-only House Agriculture Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research roundtable in June where she was invited to speak.

A Senate Agriculture Committee hearing in July focused specifically on organic and specialty crops—the first time that organic was included in these hearings. “They had an entire hearing on organic,” Tencer noted. “This wouldn't have happened two farm bills ago.”

Your Role in the Farm Bill

The members of Congress who design and approve farm bill policies are elected by you, their organic constituents. Your voice is one of the most important to your congressperson and senator. Get to know your elected representatives. Call them when important issues are being discussed and voted on. Visit them when they are in town and let them know that organic issues are important to your success. Keep informed through the CCOF Newsletter and magazine, other farm media, and social media. Join with others who want to grow the organic movement through democratic engagement.

John Teixeira, owner of Lone Willow Ranch in Firebaugh, California, flew to Washington D.C. to visit congressional offices and talk about how important organic research is to him. About the trip, he said, “They see all kinds of people in their office but they really light up when a farmer from their district shows up. They appreciate the effort of a person who's coming from a farm and giving them a reality check.”

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Congressional Organic Champions

Organic has bipartisan support from a range of congressional representatives, but some stand out above the rest as they take the lead in advocating for investment in and support for organic agriculture.

Chellie Pingree (D-ME-1)

Representative Chellie Pingree began farming on a small island off the coast of Maine during the 1970s. Her experience farming, now on a 200-year-old diversified farm, deeply influences the way she approaches legislation. Pingree previously served on the House Committee on Agriculture and now serves on the influential House Committee on Appropriations, where she promotes the appropriation of funds to organic programs. This year, Pingree introduced the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017 (HR 2436), a marker bill which aims to boost the funding for the Organic Research Extension Initiative (OREI) from \$20 million to \$50 million annually.

Dan Newhouse (R-WA-4)

Representative Dan Newhouse is the former director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture. He operates a 600-acre farm in Yakima Valley, Washington, which he calls a “miniature San Joaquin.” Newhouse is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations. He is also a co-chair of the House Organic Caucus and is the point of contact for Republican members of the House of Representatives looking to join the caucus. Newhouse is co-sponsoring the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017 marker bill.

Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20)

Congressman Jimmy Panetta replaced organic champion Sam Farr as the representative for California's Central Coast, which is the state's fifth leading district for organic production. In his freshman term in Congress, Panetta was appointed to the House Committee on Agriculture where he will play an instrumental role in the development in the 2018 Farm Bill. Panetta is co-sponsoring the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017 marker bill. Read more about Panetta and his work to support organic in the next article.

Jon Tester (D-MT)

In the late 1980s, Senator Jon Tester transitioned his farm to start producing organically. Tester sits on the Senate Appropriations Committee, one of the most influential committees in Congress. As a member of the subcommittee that oversees agricultural appropriations, Tester has been an ardent advocate for organic programs. He credits organic's higher

prices as the reason that he is still able to farm the homestead started by his grandparents. Tester played a critical role in securing organic funds in the 2008 Farm Bill and is essential to the appropriation of organic programs in Congress.

Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

Senator Debbie Stabenow is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. She stewarded the creation of the last two farm bills and led the drive for the inclusion of key organic priorities including securing funding for organic research, technological updates to the National Organic Program, and organic data collection and analysis. Heading into the 2018 Farm Bill, Stabenow's role and influence on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is instrumental in crafting federal agricultural policy.



Interview with Congressman Jimmy Panetta about Organic

Congressman Jimmy Panetta represents California's 20th district: the upper Central Coast and one of California's original organic hotspots. He is a committed organic advocate who spoke with CCOF on the importance of organic to his district and the role of organic in the 2018 Farm Bill.



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"...the best way to develop the tools our growers need is through strong and strategic investments in research initiatives."

CCOF: What does "certified organic" mean to you?

Congressman Panetta: *I think that to countless households across the country, "certified organic" represents integrity and trust. Consumers of organic products support organic growing practices, and the organic label ensures confidence when it comes to those purchases.*

As a proud father of two girls, I often find myself purchasing certified organic products for my daughters. These purchases not only allow me to support the agriculture industry of my district, they allow me to teach my daughters about the way their food was grown.

What is the importance of organic agriculture and food production to your district?

According to the Organic Trade Association, my district is ranked fifth in terms of organic output. To say that organic agriculture and food production are important to my district would be an understatement. Organic production not only allows farmers in my district to diversify their operations, it also allows them to capitalize on a strong—and growing—consumer demand. This organic output, ranging from strawberries to leafy greens, is of tremendous value to my constituents who benefit from access to the products they want.

What do you hope to accomplish during your tenure on the House Agriculture Committee?

An appointment to the Agriculture Committee was my top priority when I first arrived in Washington. I wanted the opportunity to serve as a strong advocate for the growers, shippers, and farmworkers from my home on the Central Coast of California. I was selected for this role at a critical time as the House Agriculture Committee deliberates on the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill.

My focus is now on ensuring that the upcoming farm bill supports our specialty crop production. Programs like the Specialty Crops Research Initiative and Specialty Crop Block Grants are of tremendous importance to California, and I will continue to fiercely advocate for these programs to be strengthened. Additionally, I think there are opportunities within these programs to increase our focus on mechanization, which could help offset issues related to the industry's ongoing labor shortage. It is also my goal to strengthen the National Organic Program by focusing on research and cost share programs.

Though it is not under the jurisdiction of the House Agriculture Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues to address our broken immigration system. During a recent Agriculture Committee hearing on specialty crops, the conversation kept coming back to the challenges associated with

an aging and shrinking labor force. I will continue to work with my colleagues on this committee when developing solutions that provide certainty for our producers and farmworkers alike.

Why are you co-sponsoring HR 2436 – The Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017?

I believe that we should be working to equip our producers with the most effective tools possible. This bill not only makes sense from a business perspective, but also from a conservation standpoint because of the environmental benefits of farming practices that reduce water use, improve soil health, or lessen the amount of inputs required for a crop. As a founder of the Congressional Agriculture Research Caucus, I believe that the best way to develop the tools our growers need is through strong and strategic investments in research initiatives.

HR 2436 is a bipartisan effort to increase funding for organic research through USDA's Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). This bill would double OREI funding from \$20 million to \$50 million in an effort to direct more resources to the needs of the organic community.

This bill does not just benefit the organic community. By expanding the toolbox for organic producers, conventional producers also have the opportunity to adopt these practices or tools. The research supported by this bill has the potential to benefit all producers, and I look forward to continuing my support for this legislation.

With the 2018 Farm Bill discussions in full swing, do you see areas of bipartisan support and opportunities for collaboration among different food and agriculture sectors?

I think that one of the reasons why I enjoy my time on the Agriculture Committee so much is because of the bipartisanship that I see in action every day. On this committee, members seem much more willing to work across the political aisle. The overarching goal of providing this country with a fresh, nutritious, and safe food supply is understood by everyone on the Agriculture Committee, and that is evident when I work with my colleagues.

A perfect example of that bipartisanship in action is the Organic Agriculture Research Act. This bipartisan support also extends to other programs like the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program that help producers expand trade opportunities overseas.

Moving forward, I hope to continue to work across the aisle to produce a Farm Bill that addresses the needs of this country's growers, shippers, farmworkers, and consumers.

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The Organic Trade Association brings 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 the Organic Trade Association 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 Organic Trade Association's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace. The Organic Trade Association's vision is to grow ORGANIC to achieve excellence in agriculture and commerce, protect the environment and enhance community well-being.

*List of investors as of 8/1/2017. To see a complete list of Annual Fund investors, please visit www.ota.com.



Farm Bill Priorities

In late 2016, more than 500 organic operations—from organic fruit and vegetable growers, grain and oilseed farmers, livestock and poultry producers, dairy farmers, organic processors, and food makers across 45 states—participated in a comprehensive farm bill survey conducted by the Organic Trade Association (OTA). This feedback set the groundwork for OTA's farm bill priorities. As Congress deliberates on developing the 2018 Farm Bill, OTA is advocating for policies that promote and protect organic and recognize its important place in the U.S. agriculture economy. The following provides a topline summary of our farm bill priorities. More details are available in the Advocacy section of our website, www.ota.com.

Healthy Markets

National Organic Program (NOP) and Trade Oversight:

While all domestic and imported organic products must meet USDA's strict standards, an emphasis on authority and capacity to conduct investigations will keep organic markets strong and ensure a level playing field.

- ✓ Authorize funding for NOP to keep pace with organic industry growth.
- ✓ Fund a one-time \$5 million to upgrade international oversight systems and trade tracking.
- ✓ Require USDA to report to Congress on investigations and actions taken.

Export Promotion: U.S. organic exports are up 60 percent, creating jobs in the United States and driving demand overseas. Expansion of the Market Access Program will create new opportunities for U.S. farmers.

- ✓ Support HR 2321, the Cultivating Revitalization by Expanding American Agricultural Trade and Exports Act introduced by Representatives Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME).

Successful Organic Farmers

Research: Increased support for the Organic Agricultural Research and Extension Initiative program to \$50 million per year will ensure that organic farmers can continue to meet the unique challenges they face.

- ✓ Support HR 2436, the Organic Agriculture Research Act introduced by Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Dan Newhouse (R-WA).

Risk Management: Organic farmers need USDA to make improvements in the farm safety net to have appropriate risk management tools.

- ✓ Continue Whole-Farm Revenue Protection.

- ✓ Develop organic price elections for storage loans offered.

Expanding Production

Organic hotspots kick-start rural economies. Expanding organic production brings proven economic benefits to rural communities across the United States. The next farm bill should facilitate transitioning to organic with improved access to land and capital, investment in distribution systems and infrastructure, and targeted technical assistance.

Rural Development: Access to capital, infrastructure, technical expertise, and market connections between buyers and sellers are vital. Encourage organic's eligibility within rural development programs:

- ✓ Rural business development grants,
- ✓ Locally and regionally produced agricultural food products, and
- ✓ Value-added agricultural product market development grants.

Conservation Programs: Organic practices strongly align with approved practices within conservation incentive programs.

- ✓ Recognize required organic practices within the full suite of conservation programs, including the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and expand CSP organic bundles to transitioning organic farmers.

Organic Certification Cost Share: The National Organic Certification Cost Share program is important to transitioning farmers and to attracting new and young farmers to organic. The next farm bill should:

- ✓ Maintain funding for national cost share and allow maximum flexibility in administering the program, including the applicability for reimbursing the costs of transitional certification.

Your participation can make a difference with legislative leaders who have the power to shape the final farm bill.

Now is the time to weigh in with your congressional representatives as they begin to develop the 2018 Farm Bill. Here is a simple script that you can make your own to help organic get its voice heard:

The nearly \$50 billion-a-year organic industry is a bright spot in our farm economy. Organic agriculture boosts local economies by raising household incomes, reducing poverty levels, and creating long-lasting benefits for rural areas. Organic provides a profitable option to conventional farmers, a unique opportunity for aspiring farmers, and healthy choices to consumers. Organic thrives when organic's importance to rural areas is recognized. The organic sector relies on well-funded support through USDA's National Organic Program. What we need from the 2018 Farm Bill are policies and protections that strengthen the integrity of the USDA organic seal, boost investment in research, and support expansion of organic acres.

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Renewals are Coming

Every year certified operations are required to submit an annual certification renewal contract and pay certification fees for the next year. In early November, we will mail your renewal package—the contract and invoice—as well as send you an email with your renewal information.

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 January 1.

You can submit your contract and fees by mail, or through our online contract and payment portal at www.ccof.org/renew. You can also complete your contract and pay your invoice through the “Renew now” and “Pay now” buttons in MyCCOF!

Renewal Timeline:

- **November** - Renewals sent by email and postal mail.
- **January 1, 2018** - All renewals and annual payments are due.
- **February 15** - A Notice of Noncompliance and a \$150 late fee will be issued to all operations that have not completed the renewal process (contract and payment). This is also the last day to withdraw from certification without accruing 2018 certification fees.

- **March 1** - A Notice of Proposed Suspension and an additional \$150 late fee will be issued to all operations that have not completed the renewal process.
- **April 1** - All operations that have not completed 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 National Organic Program after a costly and lengthy process. We don't want this to happen to you, so renew as soon as you can!

CCOF is happy to help you set up a payment plan if needed. Please contact our accounting department at accounting@ccof.org.

Consent to Electronic Transmission Program Manual Change

Effective July 2017, the CCOF Certification Services Program Manual and annual renewal contract has been updated to include the following:

In order to send and receive official communications to and from CCOF, Inc. via email or fax, or to participate in meetings or votes conducted by electronic means, you must provide consent by signing the CCOF certification application/agreement and you must provide a valid email address and/or fax number. You are not required to agree to communication via electronic transmission (fax or email). You may request that meeting notices, ballots, and other matters of official business be sent to you via regular postal mail. You have the right to withdraw your written consent at any time by providing CCOF, Inc. with written notice that you are withdrawing your consent relative to the use of electronic transmission. No fee will be charged for withdrawing your consent.

This change brings the organization into compliance with applicable statutes regarding electronic notification and voting. Over time, this will give CCOF, Inc. the tools needed to more effectively build the membership structure and representation for CCOF members.

Strengthening Oversight of Uncertified Handlers

In the United States, selling, labeling, or representing products as organic is considered handling and requires

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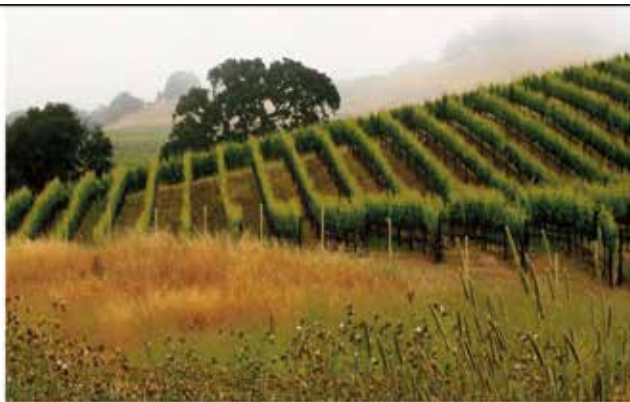
CLEAN SYMSPRAY – A seaweed-based growth promoting fertilizer designed to improve fruit set, size and quality. Use in combination other CLEAN products to maximize plant health and growth.

CLEAN POTASSIUM – A superior foliar potassium spray designed to enhance fruit bulking, sugar/brix, color and quality as well as to help mitigate heat and drought stress.

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organic certification, unless the operation meets the narrow exclusions or exemptions described in USDA National Organic Program (NOP) sections 205.101(a) and 205.101(b). Examples of operations required to be certified include those who break up pallets, add an additional lot code, or repack product in any way. Handlers excluded from the requirement to be certified include operations handling packaged product that remains in the same package without further processing. Potentially excluded operations include storage facilities, brokers, traders, wholesalers, and distributors of organic products.

Without the additional oversight provided by the certification process, uncertified handlers are a source of potential fraud in the organic supply chain. Pursuant to direction from the USDA NOP and our own analysis of risk factors, CCOF is increasing oversight of uncertified handlers by verifying additional audit trail records during inspections and with an Uncertified Handler Affidavit (UHA). The UHA helps us determine if an uncertified handler is, or is not, excluded from certification.

Legitimate excluded uncertified handlers, used as suppliers to CCOF operations, must demonstrate that audit trail records for each shipment disclose the source and certification, and trace directly back to records from the last certified operation. These records must be available at the CCOF certified operation during inspections.

What is Required?

If you source organic ingredients or products from any uncertified broker, trader, wholesaler, or distributor, you are responsible for maintaining clear, complete records.

- Submit a UHA for each uncertified handler.
- For each shipment from an uncertified handler, request and retain audit trail records that allow you to verify the supply chain back to the last certified operation. Review the UHA for specific information that must be included in uncertified handler audit trail records.
- At inspection, be prepared to provide uncertified handler records so CCOF inspectors can verify the supply chain.
- Remember that all certified suppliers must be approved by CCOF as part of your Organic System Plan (OSP). If an uncertified supplier has a new certified source, you must add that source to your OSP as well.

If an uncertified handler is not excluded from certification or cannot provide sufficient records, you will not be allowed to source organic ingredients or products from that uncertified handler.

Note that the UHA replaces the Storage Facility Affidavit (SFA). To cover the cost of staffing needed to provide additional oversight, there is a fee for each uncertified handler, described in the CCOF Certification Services Program Manual. You can avoid this fee by sourcing from certified handlers and using certified storage facilities.

Fee Changes for New Products & Services, and Use of the CCOF Name or Seal on Uncertified Brands

Effective August 9, 2017, the fee for adding a new product or service has increased to \$75 per item. The fee for use of CCOF's name and seal on a non-CCOF certified private label will increase to \$350 for up to five unique products (UPCs). These fees more accurately reflect the necessary staffing that these additions require, and will ensure that CCOF is able to meet the service expectations for clients and their private label owners/marketers. Details are available in the CCOF Certification Services Program Manual.

The National Organic Certification Cost Share Program remains in place, and can help offset certification costs. Learn more at www.ccof.org/costshare.

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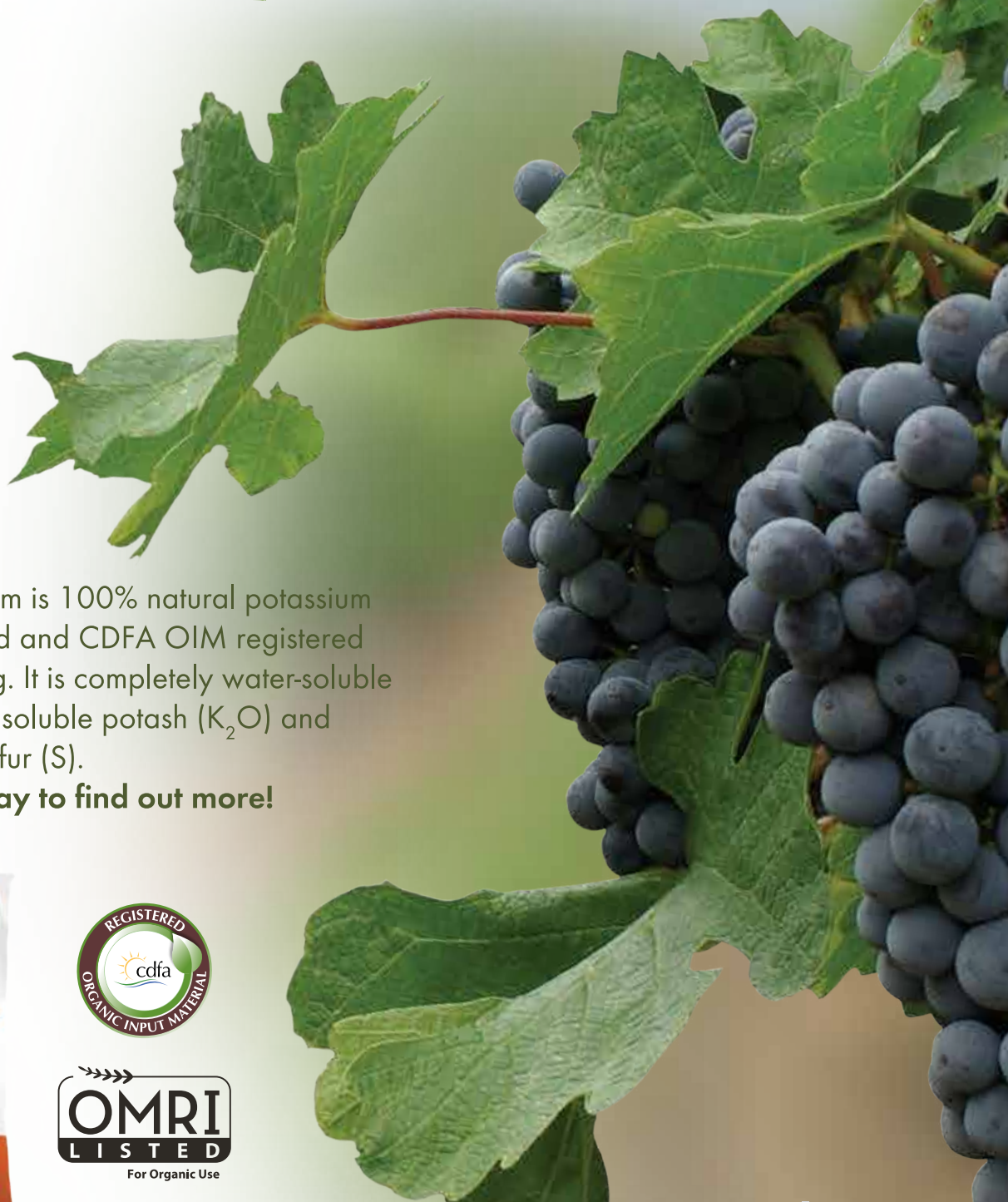
CCOF must periodically review materials to ensure that they have not changed formulation and continue to be appropriate for use in organic production. You can help CCOF reduce costs and wasted effort by removing materials from your OSP that you no longer use or do not plan to use.

Of the thousands of materials subject to re-review in 2017 or 2018, the majority are only included in the Organic System Plan of one or two operations. If the material is not in use, we may re-review for no reason and with no benefit to you instead of meeting your needs in other ways. Removing unnecessary materials will also help inspections be more efficient.

For step-by-step instructions on how to remove unused materials, visit www.ccof.org/remove-materials.

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