



CERTIFIED

# Organic

## BRINGING ORGANIC TO THE SHELVES

*Retailers Driving Demand for Organic*



**Meeting of the Minds: Connecting the Organic Value Chain**  
**The Organic Farm Bill Timeline**  
**Updates for Importers in the United States**

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## Bringing Organic to the Shelves

*What the consumer might not realize as they wander the aisles of their favorite market is the incredible effort over many years by grocers to bring organic into their stores.*

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## Change on the Horizon

This month's feature story is about change—change in consumer preferences that favors organic products and change in retailer practices that both responds to and fosters that change.

I joined CCOF at the beginning of one of the organization's periods of change in 2011, as the organization approached its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. The organization had grown from a loose collection of several hundred farmers across California who wrote the manual and inspected each other, to an organization of 2,400 organic businesses spread across North America, all certified to the USDA organic standard. Barely a decade old, the new USDA label was serving its purpose of providing consumers with a verified definition of what makes food organic, and spurring demand for organic products.

No longer occupied by developing their own standard and certification process, CCOF members began to re-imagine the organization they founded decades ago, and to set new priorities: Engaging CCOF members in the new standard-setting process at USDA and in state and federal advocacy that impacts the organic marketplace; providing technical support and education to organic producers in a world with relatively few experts in organic agriculture; inspiring a next generation of organic producers as the current generation approached retirement; and continuing to raise the bar for ensuring organic integrity and providing cost-effective organic certification services.

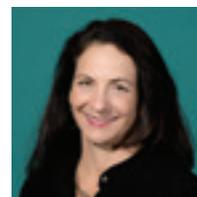
These are questions that CCOF members and staff have worked together to answer since I joined the organization as Executive Director/CEO just a little over seven years ago. This year, CCOF counts 3,600 producers, processors, handlers, and ranchers as our certified members. Hundreds of CCOF members will visit with or write letters to their state and federal representatives this year advocating for funding for

the National Organic Program, organic research, and organic certification cost share. Because of CCOF's work, California's duplicative state organic program registration process has been streamlined and program costs have been capped. The CCOF Foundation has invested in more than 25,000 students studying organic production methods, and in training for more than 2,800 organic producers during the past four and a half years. And on the horizon is a project that will engage the full range of organic and agricultural stakeholders in forging a policy roadmap for California—the nation's leader in organic production—that will increase organic acreage and producers' economic well-being during the decades to come.

An important part of CCOF's organizational legacy is making positive change in the world by advancing organic agriculture. I'm enormously proud to now be part of this legacy and to help set the stage for the next era of CCOF leadership. In May, I announced that I will be moving on from CCOF at the close of the first quarter of 2019. The CCOF, Inc. Board of Directors and staff are at work developing a profile of their next CEO and will undertake an extensive search to find the right candidate.

I'm appreciative for the opportunity to help define this next chapter for CCOF during the months ahead and am excited to find a great new organizational leader.

Thank you!

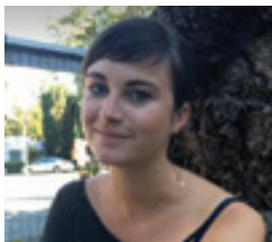


*Cathy*

**Cathy Calfo**  
CCOF Executive Director/CEO

## Issue Contributors

*Bringing Organic to the Shelves, Page 26*



**Lily Stoicheff** is a writer living in Santa Cruz, California, where she enjoys exploring food culture and telling its stories. A fermentation and craft beer enthusiast, Stoicheff keeps her house overflowing with jars of things that look gross but she swears are delicious. She is the 2017 Santa Cruz NEXTie Honoree for Best Writer and a 2017 California News Publishers Association Award Winner.

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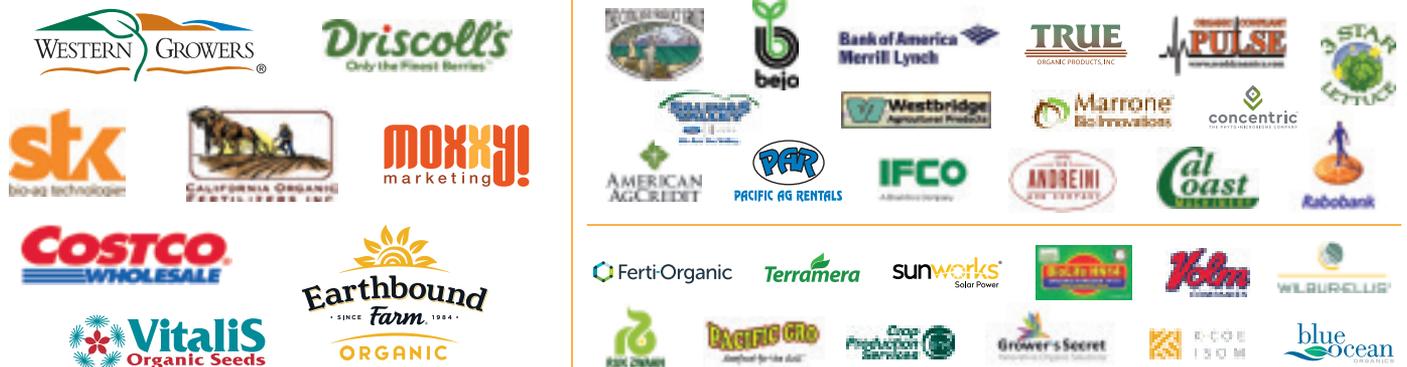
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## *Meeting of the Minds: Connecting the Organic Value Chain*

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Twenty years ago, picking apples on a small organic farm in upstate New York, I never imagined that I would see organic produce in nearly every grocery store I ventured into on my travels. At that time, I was a college student exploring what it would be like to become an organic farmer after years of working on a non-organic farming operation. Organic seemed like the right path forward, but I never imagined it as a mainstream idea. Yet the shelves don't lie—from the coastal marshland of southern Georgia to the mountains of northern Montana, from the coal mines of Kentucky to the California sun, organic has infiltrated the regular shopping lists of 88 percent of American households. However, even with this market penetration and double-digit annual growth, organic still represents only 5.5 percent of the market.

While some may still see a fledgling industry, others see the future and its opportunities. In January 2017, produce industry veterans Matt Seeley, former vice president of marketing for the Nunes Company, and Tonya Antle, former vice president of organic sales for Earthbound Farm, co-founded the Organic Produce Network (OPN). Their goal: connect the facets of the organic produce community through education, information, and live events.

Organic produce providers constitute the largest segment of the organic food business, but this segment often lacks a voice. To help create that unified voice, OPN produces informational and educational online content through their website and newsletter, but their biggest impact in the organic sphere is through two annual events: the Organic Produce Summit and the Organic Grower Summit, each focusing on distinct but related sectors of the organic produce market.

The Organic Produce Summit brings together retailers and buying organizations from across North America to meet with organic growers, shippers, processors, and distributors, while the Organic Grower Summit gathers the entire organic production chain—with a strong grower focus—with service and supply partners at one informative event.

These summits assemble the organic business pipeline under one roof so that the important face to face contact with peers and colleagues can take place. Organic producers, handlers, distributors, processors, wholesalers, foodservice operators, and retailers all find value in their participation, learning from workshops and engaging in direct dialogue.

This past December, CCOF co-sponsored the inaugural Organic Grower Summit. At the first event of its kind, growers, producers, and handlers from fresh produce, dairy, meat, and grain sectors had the opportunity to network and learn with suppliers, service providers, packaging and technology companies, equipment manufacturers, and other companies critical to their success. The 2017 event sold out and the 2018 Summit is currently in the works, to be again held in Monterey on December 12 and 13.

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*"We're interested in making some real change and challenging the conventional wisdom that has historically governed the industry..."*

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While there are several excellent conferences that focus broadly on sustainable food and farming, the OPN events are unique trade shows that focus solely on the certified organic industry and the value chain that connects it all. As OPN co-founder Antle describes, "There is a clear gap in industry-focused resources that inform, educate, and even inspire all constituents about the value and also the values of organic."

"The organic fresh produce community is energized about the opportunity to help change the way we eat and with that, change our health outlook," says co-founder and CEO Seeley. One hundred and fifty CCOF members attended the 2017 event, including Summit sponsors and exhibitors. With so many friends of the organization on site, it was impossible not to talk business while also having a great time. CCOF Foundation supporters Valent, Sambaillio Packaging, Earthbound Farms, and California FarmLink—to name a few—were present, and I spent some time chatting with these folks about how useful the Summit was for everyone involved, for getting everything from business check-ins to family updates.

With so much electronic communication, many of us miss the chance to connect with the other voices in the organic industry. OPN provides the space for businesses to interact in an enlightening and thoughtful way and serves as a conduit to inspiration to help us continue to stock the shelves with organic.

We would love to see you at this year's Organic Grower Summit on December 12 and 13 in Monterey, California. Learn more at [www.organicgrowersummit.com](http://www.organicgrowersummit.com).

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## **A First for the Fast Food Industry: The Organic Coup Adds Ingredient Labels to Their Packaging**

Fast food restaurant chain The Organic Coup, the nation's first 100 percent certified organic chain, is once again upending the industry.

On April 9, the company began rolling out complete ingredient labels that will be placed directly on their food packaging. While many restaurants across the nation decline to provide ingredient information—citing proprietary reasons—The Organic Coup is making the unprecedented move to spearhead greater transparency in an industry that has historically been tight-lipped about ingredients.



Customers at The Organic Coup will know exactly what ingredients went into their tater tots!

The Organic Coup launched two years ago with a specific mission: to re-imagine fast food atop the core values of organic, people first, accountability, and transparency.

The company has produced branded ingredient labels for their most popular items, specifically designed to do two things: to clearly communicate to customers the premium, healthful ingredients used by the company; and to raise awareness of the lack of transparency pervasive in the quick service restaurant and fast food industry.

"To us, it's a simple premise," said CEO and Founder Erica Welton. "It's food first, which means clean, organic, non-GMO, and pesticide-free. And then it's fast. We've solved for both. So why wouldn't we label our food? We're intensely proud of our ingredients!"

"We're very excited about what we're doing here," added Co-Founder Dennis Hoover. "We're interested in making some real change and challenging the conventional wisdom that has historically governed the industry. Erica and I come from a background of clarity and transparency, so for us this next phase felt very natural."

The company is heading each label with the line "You Are Eating History," and including social hashtags for spreading the movement. Additionally, The Organic Coup will engage directly with consumers on the initiative by placing seven-foot posters in all 14 locations and encouraging customers to snap a photo and share their reasons for choosing organic on social media.

To learn more about The Organic Coup or to find one of their restaurants, visit [www.theorganiccoup.com](http://www.theorganiccoup.com).



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## ***Unearthing Potential Via Holistic Management***

The organic certificate for Springs Ranch lists that they are certified for 1,084 acres of native rangeland and pasture in Surprise Valley in northeast California. This acreage is home to various wildlife, from cattle to elk to deer, and a variety of grasses, and is also home to the Jefferson Center for Holistic Management.

The Jefferson Center, led by married couple Abbey Smith and Spencer Smith since 2015, draws land stewards from California and Nevada to establish a Holistic Context which will influence how the stewards manage their land moving forward. With this goal, participants tap into their “absolute most deeply held values,” says Abbey Smith. To approach one’s life from the framework of Holistic Management is to engage in a practice that considers “the triple bottom line: ecological, social, and economic factors” in one’s decision-making, says Abbey Smith. Rather than reacting to a specific issue or seeing components of nature in silos, this decision-making is a practice that focuses on interconnectivity on the farm. Smith distinguishes Holistically Managed operations from commercial, conventional operations in that they do not focus on “extracting from the land, people, and animals.” Per Smith, Holistic Management is “akin to yoga or meditation” in that a daily practice and using the tools and techniques in everyday life will deliver the best results.

The Jefferson Center offers a variety of programs for participants to engage in Holistic Management practices in their daily life. These programs include online courses in topics ranging from Holistic Planned Grazing to Holistic Financial Planning; the Savory Champions program (a global network that includes nutritionists, engineers, accountants, and other professionals interested in advancing holistic management practices); events such as demonstration field days and soil-building workshops; and a Ranch Work Study Program in which participants spend time on Springs Ranch taking part in holistic planning and ranch work. The organization’s largest and most formal annual event, the Grazing for Change Conference, most recently took place on February 24, 2018. Abbey Smith says the attendees’ heartfelt testimonials of hope for their communities left her feeling energized and validated. Whether at formal gatherings or in the online network, she finds that there is a “collaborative, nurturing, inclusive” environment of knowledge-sharing in which participants are “fighting the same fight and sharing the same values” even if their lifestyles and locations differ.

The momentum of regenerative agriculture has been fruitful for Abbey Smith and the Jefferson Center. For Abbey Smith, “nothing is more rewarding than getting to see someone realize their true passion and practice that in the world.” The Jefferson Center has worked with several graduates from Chico State who have emerged from the work study program with jobs in regenerative agriculture. Participants have developed a Holistic Management framework for their lives and found rewarding jobs. Abbey Smith states that for operations seeking organic certification, Holistic Management and organic certification “are very much aligned in that you are celebrating being in the business of working with nature, not against it,” though the practices are different. “Being certified organic means we comply with a set of standards, whereas Holistic Management is the decision-making framework for how we approach our land management,” she explains.

# Consumer demand for organic goods continue to show double-digit increase. Now that's growth.

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Springs Ranch has reaped the benefits of Holistic Management and organic practices with its own increase in forage production. “Spencer’s parents, Patricia Smith and Steve Smith, bought the land in the 1990s when it was in poor shape and did so much work to improve it, from pulling twine out of the ground to improving the pastures. They collaborated with us so we could start the Jefferson Center and together we have realized the growth we are seeing today,” says Abbey Smith. Working through a severe California drought, Springs Ranch saw an increase of 40 percent in forage production as a result of Holistic Management and planned grazing. “We are challenging ourselves to see how we can continue to grow and cultivate the land base, and continually learn.”

For more information about how you can become involved with the Jefferson Center for Holistic Management, visit [www.jeffersonhub.com](http://www.jeffersonhub.com) or send Abbey Smith an email at [abbey@jeffersonhub.com](mailto:abbey@jeffersonhub.com).

## A Sustainable Organic Spray Canister

Spray cooking oils have been in use since the 1960s, but only recently have they been certified as organic products. Traditionally, aerosol sprays contain chemical propellants such as propane, butane, or nitrous oxide, which are not allowed in organic products.

Recently, the Monterrey, Mexico-based company Spray Labs Mexico pioneered the use of Bag on Valve (BOV) technology to manufacture propellant-free spray cooking oils. Previously, BOV found use in chemical, medical, and personal care products such as burn gels and shaving cream. In the last decade, companies like Spray Labs have used the technology to bottle culinary oils. In 2017, Spray Labs’ BOV oils achieved CCOF organic certification.

BOV technology works using air pressure, rather than chemicals, to propel the oil from the can. Quality Assurance Manager Juan Manuel Jiménez Rivero explains, “The Bag on Valve (BOV) format consists of a valve and an attached pouch that is inserted into an outer canister, usually made of aluminum. The oil is introduced into the interior pouch while pressurized air is injected into the space that remains between the pouch and the canister. When the product button is pressed, the valve opens, and the product is squeezed from the pouch because of the pressure exerted by the surrounding air.”

The spray is surprisingly efficient and consistent, coming out of the bottle in a straight-lined stream so it can be easily controlled and applied where desired. It is perfect for lightly oiling a baguette, kale chips, or seasoned fish before broiling. The organoleptic properties of the olive oil are maintained intact because the pouch contains only the olive oil, and the can uses no chemical propellants or anti-foaming agents. It can be eaten raw and can even be sprayed on a salad as a light dressing. This is especially beneficial for those who want the

flavor of quality olive oil but are cutting down on the amount of oil in their diet.

Historically, aerosol spray cans used Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) as the propellant. Scientific studies were published in the 1970s that linked CFCs to the depletion of the ozone layer. Public concern over raising global temperatures led to the Clean Air Act, the Vienna Convention, and the Montreal Protocol. In 1995, the United States officially phased out the use of CFCs.



Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) were introduced to replace CFCs, but many HFCs still contribute to global warming. Some modern propellants also release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), which contribute to ground-level ozone levels and are tied to asthma-inducing smog.

The BOV spray oil from Spray Labs, however, does not release CFCs, HFCs, or VOCs. It’s just compressed air and olive oil. The BOV spray can is also more recyclable than other kinds of spray canisters. It empties all of its contents where typical aerosol canisters do not. These canisters leave a food residue that contaminates the aluminum, making recycling too expensive.

Spray Labs’ innovation in product development finds its roots in a traditional, Spanish, family-run business. In 1930 Spanish entrepreneur and olive oil producer Luis Torres Torres founded parent company Aceites Maeva in the Andalusian region of southern Spain. His son, Juan Francisco Torres, expanded Aceites Maeva, and grandson, Luis Torres-Morente Concha, brought the company to international markets, forming Spray Labs Mexico in 2006. Spray Labs’ innovative BOV products are now sold in the United States, Mexico, Europe, and China. At the moment olive oil is the primary organic oil offered; however, the organic range could be diversified to include avocado, coconut, safflower, sesame, canola, and other fruit and seed oil.

Commercial organic food production proposes to bring healthier, more sustainable food to consumers. Spray Labs’ BOV technology furthers this mission by offering a highly usable, recyclable, propellant-free canister for the organic oil market.

For more information, visit <https://aceitesmaeva.com>.

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Luis Sierra works with a group of organic farmers to understand food safety and FSMA requirements, February 2018, Salinas, California.

## *In Training: CCOF's Organic Education Program*

It's 8:00 a.m. on a cold February morning. Thirty produce growers are serving themselves coffee and finding their seats, steeling themselves for a full eight-hour marathon of PowerPoint slides about food safety. The reason? These producers need to comply with the Produce Safety Rule of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), that gargantuan federal policy that seeks to improve farm and food processor food safety practices across the country.

The timeline for FSMA compliance for produce farms is based on gross annual sales. For most produce, large farm businesses had to comply in 2018, small businesses by January 2019, and very small businesses by January 2020. However, some produce farms qualify for an exemption from FSMA.

Farms may be fully exempt from the FSMA Produce Safety Rule if

- ▶ all of the produce grown is for personal or on-farm consumption,
- ▶ all of the produce grown is on the Food and Drug Administration's list of produce "rarely consumed raw,"
- ▶ all of the produce grown goes through a "kill step" during commercial processing (e.g. processing tomatoes canned as tomato paste), or

- ▶ the farm's average gross annual produce sales are less than \$25,000 for the past three years, adjusted for inflation.

Farms that sell directly to consumers or restaurants may be eligible for a "qualified exemption" from the Produce Safety Rule if the farm meets two requirements:

1. The farm's average sales for all food (not just produce) are less than \$500,000 for the past three years, adjusted for inflation, and
2. The farm sells a majority of the food directly to "qualified end users." The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines a "qualified end user" as 1) the consumer of the food, or 2) a restaurant or retail food establishment that is in the same state or the same Indian reservation as the farm or not more than 275 miles away.

Farms eligible for a "qualified exemption" are subject to some, but not all, of the requirements of the Produce Safety Rule. Farms that qualify for either exemption need to maintain records to prove they are exempt.

For farms that must fully comply with the Produce Safety Rule, one of the requirements is taking an eight-hour Produce Safety Alliance (PSA)-approved training course. And thus, we return to our classroom.

At the front of the class is PSA-approved teacher Luis Sierra. Sierra's primary job is as the assistant director of the California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD), a nonprofit dedicated to bettering the lives of underserved groups through the growth of cooperatives. As many of the groups that CCCD works with are agricultural groups composed of small

The CCOF Foundation's .....

# ORGANIC TRAINING INSTITUTE

Through hands-on trainings, workshops, and seminars, the Organic Training Institute provides resources to aspiring and current organic professionals about the latest organic research and best production and marketing practices.

Trainings focus on topics requested by organic professionals, including organic recordkeeping, food safety practices, and more.

All event dates and locations are subject to change—check online for the latest details.

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## FSMA Produce Safety Rule Compliance Dates

Business Size	Compliance Dates for Sprouts	Compliance Dates for Most Produce	Water-Related Compliance Dates <sup>1</sup>	Compliance Date for Qualified Exemption Labeling Requirement <sup>2</sup>	Compliance Date for Retention of Records Supporting a Qualified Exemption
All other businesses (>\$500k)	1/26/17	1/26/18	1/26/22	1/1/2020	1/26/16
Small businesses (>\$250-500k) <sup>3</sup>	1/26/18	1/28/19	1/26/23		
Very small businesses (>\$25k-\$250k) <sup>4</sup>	1/28/19	1/27/20	1/26/24		

- 1 According to the Proposed Rule issued on 9/13/17, compliance dates for Subpart E, Agricultural Water, allow an additional four years.
- 2 A farm eligible for a qualified exemption must notify consumers as to the complete business address of the farm where the food is grown, harvested, packed, and held.
- 3 A farm is a small business if, on a rolling basis, the average annual monetary value of produce sold during the previous 3-year period is no more than \$500,000.
- 4 A farm is a very small business if, on a rolling basis, the average annual monetary value of produce sold during the previous 3-year period is no more than \$250,000.

producers, Luis has had to become a food safety expert. He leads this class of small organic producers deftly, speaking in the rapid-fire Spanish for which he is known. This class of students are all small-scale organic farmers in the Salinas area, many who have gone through the Association for Land Based Training program that focuses on transitioning farmworkers to farm-owner/operators. The farmers in the class flip through the provided textbook, which covers everything from agricultural water requirements to worker health and hygiene.

This class, like many of those that the CCOF Foundation organizes through the Organic Training Institute (OTI), focuses on getting organic farmers, processors, and livestock operators the information they need to grow successful businesses. Over the last four years the OTI has trained just over 3,000 organic producers through in-person workshops, tours, and online webinars. Many of the classes are paid for by government grants and sponsorships and are offered for free or at a very low cost to producers.

Back in in Salinas, Sierra has the whole class standing. Before the class started, Sierra secretly covered his hand in a transparent substance that glows under black light, and then shook some participants hands, wrote on the board, and got a

cup of coffee from the communal carafe. His invisible “germy” fingerprints are everywhere. He then used a black light to show how the substance (in this case, non-threatening) spread from his hands all over the room. Class attendees laughed when they realized how easy it is to contaminate each other. Not only does this lighten the atmosphere, but it also serves as one of the interactive parts of the class that make the lesson more tangible for attendees.

Interested in attending an OTI training? Visit [www.ccof.org/oti](http://www.ccof.org/oti) for more information.

#### Works Cited:

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FDA Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption; Final Rule, 80 Fed. Reg. 74353 (November 27, 2015) (to be codified at 21 CFR Parts 11, 16, & 112).

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. (2015, December 2). Understanding FDA's New FSMA Rule for Produce Farms – Part 1 [Blog Post]. Retrieved from <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/produce-rule-analysis-part-1>

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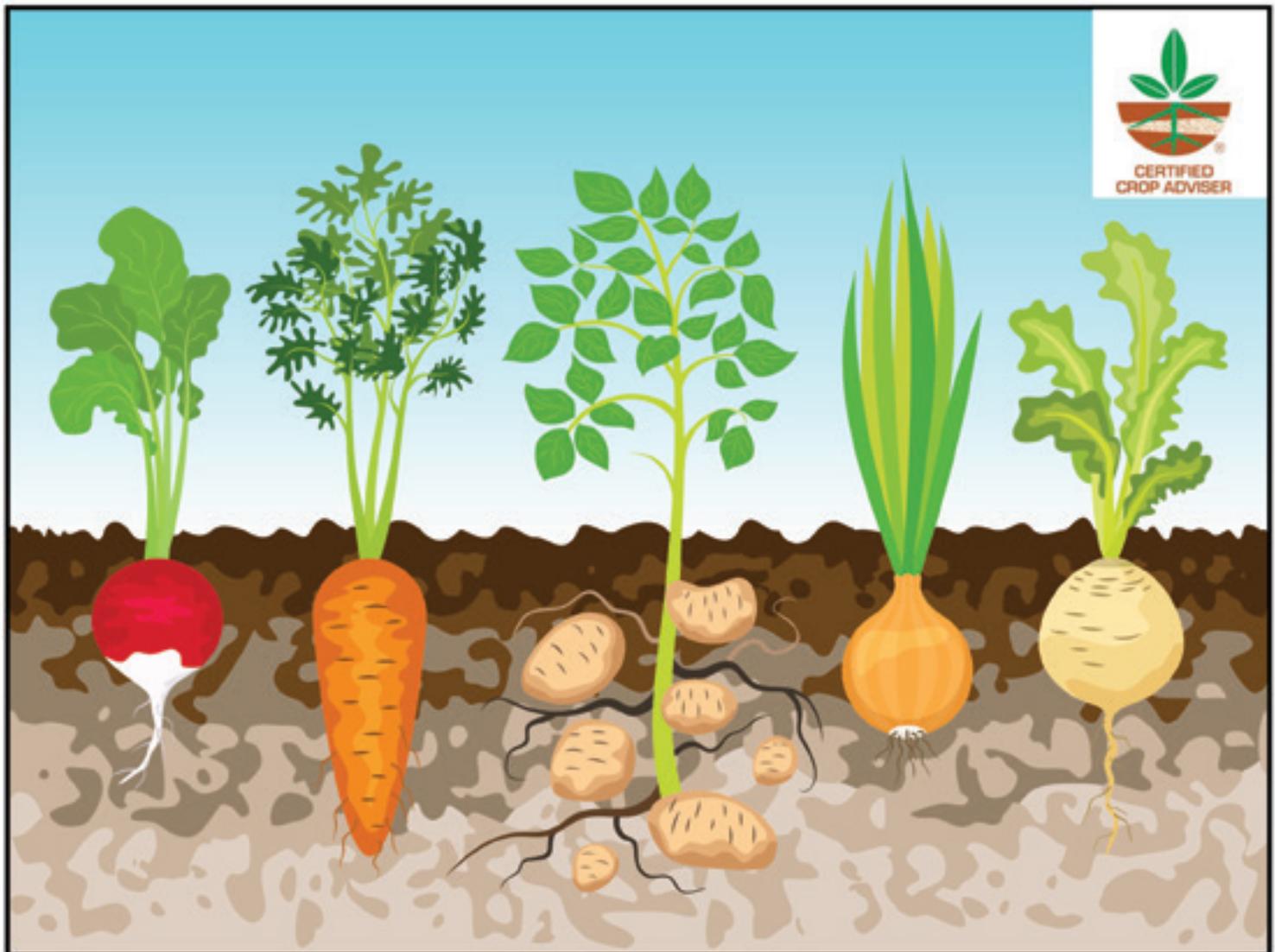
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## *The Organic Farm Bill Timeline*

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Over the past year, CCOF and our members have engaged in advocacy related to the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. The farm bill is a critical piece of federal legislation that sets the nation's food and agriculture policies. The bill funds nutrition benefits, nature conservation programs, crop insurance, organic programs, and much more.

As this article goes to press, the first vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives failed to move the 2018 Farm Bill forward, increasing the uncertainty of when the bill will pass.

Here are some organic advocacy highlights from CCOF and our members:

### **February 2017**

#### **Field Hearings**

CCOF member Hilary Kass of Hilary's Drink Eat Well attends the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry's first field hearing on the 2018 Farm Bill in Manhattan, Kansas.

#### **Organic Farm Bill Priorities**

CCOF staff and members present organic farm bill priorities at the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) farm bill listening sessions.

### **May 2017**

#### **Marker Bill Introduced**

Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME-1), Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA-4), and Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20) introduce the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017 (H.R. 2436), which is a marker that would increase funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative from \$20 million to \$50 million a year.

### **August 2017**

#### **Field Hearings**

CCOF members and staff present organic priorities at the House Agriculture Committee farm bill hearings in Modesto and Salinas, California.

#### **Organic Farm Bill Priorities**

California Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross includes CCOF's organic priorities in her farm bill recommendations to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees leadership.

#### **Joint Letter**

CCOF, the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF), and the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) send a letter to

the California Republican Agriculture Committee delegation requesting their cosponsorship of H.R. 2436.

#### **District Meeting**

CCOF members meet with Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-1) and Rep. David Valadao (R-CA-21) to discuss organic farm bill priorities and request sponsorship of H.R. 2436.

### **September 2017**

#### **Marker Bill Introduced**

Rep. John Faso (R-NY-19), Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI-6), Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM-1), Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL-13), Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE-At-large), and Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-9) introduce a marker bill, The Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017, which would increase enforcement resources to ensure broad oversight over the entire domestic and international supply chain.

#### **Constituent Letter**

25 CCOF members sign on to a letter to Rep. LaMalfa requesting sponsorship of H.R. 2436.

### **October 2017**

#### **Valadao Cosponsors Marker Bill**

Rep. Valadao is the first Republican from the California congressional delegation to join Rep. Panetta as a cosponsor of the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017 (H.R. 3871).

### **November 2017**

#### **LaMalfa Cosponsors Marker Bill**

Rep. LaMalfa cosponsors H.R. 2436.

### **January 2018**

#### **Denham Cosponsors Marker Bill**

Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA-10) cosponsors H.R. 2436.

### **February 2018**

#### **Joint Letter**

CCOF, CFBF, and OFRF send letter to House of Representatives Agriculture Committee leadership requesting cosponsorship of H.R. 3871.

#### **Congressional Staff Attends Chapter Meeting**

Rep. Valadao's Bakersfield field staffer attends the CCOF Kern Chapter meeting to network with organic farmers.

### **March 2018**

#### **Farmer Fly-In to Washington D.C.**

CCOF member Karen Archipley of Archi's Acres and representatives of CCOF-certified Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) attend the National Sustainable

Agriculture Coalition's farmer fly-in to Washington D.C. The CCOF members meet with elected officials and staff from around California.

### Valadao and LaMalfa Cosponsor

Rep. Valadao and Rep. LaMalfa cosponsor H.R. 3871.

### District Meeting

CCOF members meet with Rep. Valadao in Bakersfield.

### Constituent Letters

CCOF members in eight congressional districts send letters to their representatives requesting them to cosponsor H.R. 3871 and support organic priorities in the farm bill.

### NOSB Support Letter

CCOF and CCOF members sign on to a letter to House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders supporting the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).

## April 2018

### Garamendi Cosponsors

In response to a member constituent letter featuring the signatures of 12 CCOF members, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA-3) cosponsors H.R. 3871 and becomes the ninth California representative to cosponsor the bill.

### House Draft Released

The House of Representatives releases their draft farm bill. The draft incorporates H.R. 3871 and increases funding to organic research from H.R. 2436. The draft excludes funding for the

National Organic Certification Cost Share Program and includes language altering NOSB. The NOSB language is removed via an amendment.

## May 2018

### Constituent Letter

111 CCOF members sign a letter to California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris requesting support for organic priorities in the Senate draft farm bill.

### Organic Week in Washington D.C.

CCOF members and staff attend the Organic Trade Association (OTA) Organic Week Hill Visits, advocating to members of congress for organic priorities.

### Op-Eds Submitted

CCOF members Dwayne Cardoza and Grant Briens submit op-eds to their local newspapers highlighting Rep. Panetta's and Rep. Valadao's commitment to organic in the farm bill.

### Full House Votes on Farm Bill

The House of Representatives debates and votes on the House draft farm bill. The bill fails to move forward by a vote of 198 to 213.

## Anticipated Events Summer and Fall 2018

- ▶ The Senate releases their draft farm bill.
- ▶ CCOF and CCOF members engage with senators to advocate for organic priorities.



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## CCOF will coordinate member outreach and engagement ahead of the fall NOSB meeting.

- ▶ The Senate and House reconcile their respective versions of the farm bill.
- ▶ CCOF and CCOF members advocate for the farm bill to pass before the current farm bill expires September 30, 2018.

## NOSB to Vote on Elemental Sulfur on National List

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is currently reviewing the allowance of sulfur on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List) as part of the five-year sunset review process. While some sulfur is mined from natural sources, much of what is used for disease control is a by-product of industrial processes and is considered synthetic.

Elemental sulfur is one of the most commonly used materials in organic production, with over 1,200 CCOF members listing at least one sulfur product on their Organic System Plan (OSP). Elemental sulfur is used as a soil amendment to lower pH and provide nutrients. It can also be used as a spray or dust to control fungus diseases and some pests.

In NOSB's preliminary review this spring, the board pointed to a study<sup>1</sup> showing that children living near areas where sulfur is used often are more likely to develop respiratory problems than other children. Although this study did not distinguish between wettable sulfur and dusting sulfur use, NOSB is pointing to the study as a basis to possibly prohibit dusting sulfur in organic production.

In preparation for the spring meeting, CCOF sent a short poll to members with sulfur on their OSP to ask what issues made them favor dusting over wettable sulfur or vice versa in their operations. The responses informed CCOF's public comments to the NOSB about the varied factors that are involved in choosing materials. Some of the main points made by CCOF members were:

- ▶ Dusting sulfur can be applied when fields are too wet for heavy spray equipment.
- ▶ Wettable sulfur can cause issues with subsequent fermentation of wine grapes.
- ▶ Growers may not own spray equipment for wettable materials and may have already invested significant amounts in dusting applicators.

- ▶ Table grape growers and strawberry growers can have staining issues from using wettable sulfur on grapes and strawberries.
- ▶ Wettable sulfur is less effective getting inside bunches to prevent mildew on stems.
- ▶ Vineyards without water cannot wet the sulfur for spraying.
- ▶ In vegetable crops, dust can penetrate through dense canopies of leaves better than wettable sulfur.
- ▶ Dust lasts longer on the plants than liquid applications.

Given the importance of dusting sulfur to many producers' operations and the safety concerns that have been raised about this material, CCOF urged NOSB to consider whether additional safety precautions or limitations could be required for its use, rather than an outright prohibition. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) issued the following instructions for use of dusting sulfur:

- ▶ The operator of the property and the applicator must establish a buffer zone of enough distance to prevent drift onto non-target areas such as hospitals, clinics, schools, residential areas, and any other sensitive areas.
- ▶ Sulfur shall not be applied when the wind velocity exceeds 10 miles per hour.
- ▶ When applying sulfur dust, best application practices should be utilized. This includes wearing appropriate protective equipment.
- ▶ Material manufacturers set a minimum of 24 hours for workers to enter treated areas. These periods can be adjusted by DPR due to weather or other conditions.

CCOF will coordinate member outreach and engagement on elemental sulfur ahead of the fall NOSB meeting, when the vote will be taken to keep elemental sulfur on the National List, to restrict its use, or to prohibit it. The fall meeting will occur in St. Paul, Minnesota from October 24-26, 2018. If sulfur is an important input for your operation, please consider submitting a written or oral comment to the board. CCOF will share commenting information on our blog at [www.ccof.org/blog](http://www.ccof.org/blog).

<sup>1</sup> Raanan, Rachel, et al. "Elemental Sulfur Use and Associations with Pediatric Lung Function and Respiratory Symptoms in an Agricultural Community (California, USA)." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 125, no. 8, 2017, doi:10.1289/ehp528.



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# Retailers Driving Demand for Organic

WRITTEN BY Lily Stoicheff

Choosing organic has never been easier. The once-niche organic market has officially broken into the mainstream, as health-conscious consumers have more information and more products available to them at more markets than ever before. But what the consumer might not realize as they wander the aisles of their favorite market is the incredible effort over many years by grocers to bring organic into their stores. Retailers have not only worked to bring organic products to their shelves; they've also educated consumers, supported producers, created and installed handling procedures, and even changed the layout of their stores in order to make organic products more accessible.

Sales of organic food hit a record \$43 billion in 2016, up 8.4 percent from the previous year according to the Organic Trade Association's 2017 Organic Industry Survey, whereas the overall food market remained relatively stagnant at 0.6 percent growth. Organic food now accounts for 5.3 percent of total food sales in the United States—a significant milestone for organic. Growth projections expect the organic market to continue its upward trajectory by at least 13 percent every year for the foreseeable future as more people become aware of the health and environmental benefits of organic food and organic prices become more competitive.

## Retail Relies on Relationships

While Whole Foods and Costco have broken ground for organic nationwide, one of the things that sets independent stores apart from larger retailers is their ability to have personal relationships with farmers and producers. At North Coast Co-op in Humboldt County in California, they meet with their local organic farmers annually to ensure as much local produce stocks their shelves as possible.

"We really want to foster our relationship with local farmers. It's a time to check in and make sure that everything is working out—not only for us as their customer, but to find out what's going on out in the fields," says Alisha Hammer, merchandising manager at North Coast Co-op. She explains that the co-op meets individually with 30 farmers from the surrounding area to review how their season went in order to plan for the upcoming year. The co-op uses the information gleaned from these meetings to let their customers know when to start looking for local products like asparagus and melons. "We're really unique and lucky in that we have some farmers who are inland and some who are here on the coast, so we can get a really nice long growing period."



The co-op also encourages local producers to come to them with products. Hammer explains that independent and smaller retailers like North Coast have the ability to meet one-on-one with small producers who perhaps don't have the capacity to fulfill what Whole Foods or Costco need, which can help "get their foot in the door."

Organic meat can sometimes be difficult to come by, but North Coast Co-op has worked with local meat company Humboldt Grassfed Beef for over 20 years. Additionally, their buyers work with the local 4-H program and purchase livestock at auction. Says Hammer, "We really try to make sure that we're staying with the pulse of the community and finding other ways that we can keep agriculture and the meat industry here."

At Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op, donations are taken at the register for their Adopt-a-Farmer program, which helps grow the next generation of farmers by supporting them while they pursue their education. Their customers believe that the co-op's commitment to the community and the natural and organic products they offer is worth supporting, as evidenced by the co-op's continual expansion over four decades in business. "We are increasing our organic products because that's what the customer wants. That's why they come to the co-op, because they know they have organic options," says Jennifer Cliff, marketing director for Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op.

Cliff believes that the success of the co-op is due to its eagerness to support local farms and producers. "We're going into our 40<sup>th</sup> year, and it's always been based on relationships. We are so lucky where we're located in Sacramento because of the access to great farms and ranches right here. Within 200 miles there is so much."

Although produce sales have increased in their 16,000-square-foot market, Cliff reports that food service and prepared foods

have seen the most significant growth, but she's not surprised. "Convenience is key. People are busy. They don't necessarily want to trade off on quality, so it's logical for people to pick up lunch or dinner to come to the co-op and know that the products are made in-house daily. The same standards that we have in the produce department carry over to the food service department."

While maintaining those standards is admittedly costly and laborious, Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op is unwavering in their commitment to high-quality organic products and compensating farmers and producers fairly in order to keep sustainable farms alive. "We're never going to win the price war compared to other retailers, so we just hammer home the quality and standard we have here. We never compromise, and I think that's what we're known for and why our customers come back."

## Making Organic a Household Name

It's hard to deny the profound impact that Whole Foods Market has had on organic consciousness. "Whole Foods, in a lot of ways, normalized organic to the American consumer," says Jamie Katz, global quality assurance coordinator of Whole Foods Market. Since 1980, Whole Foods has been a part of creating a place where organic producers could sell their products, which has led to overall growth of the industry. "Now, you can walk into a CVS and buy organic products, and you just couldn't do that five years ago."

Whole Foods Market prioritized minimally processed foods and complete transparency long before other markets caught on to the organic craze. They also worked with government bodies to help create legislation to define organics. In the



1990s, Whole Foods held the sole retail seat on the National Organic Standards Board and worked directly with the USDA to create the National Organic Program, the federal standards for organic food. The program's launch in 2002 was the result of eleven years of lobbying and brought organic food to the attention of the nation.

In 2003, Whole Foods launched 365 Organic Everyday Value brand, the first national commodity price organic product line featuring pantry staples. "Investing in producers in that way and in the growth of the market has—we think—driven substantial interest from other retailers in providing those same organic products at a lower price range that the commodity private label allows you to do," says Katz. Today, 95 percent of all 365 Everyday Value branded products are organic.

Another way that Whole Foods has helped drive the integrity of organic retailers is by obtaining organic certification for their retail spaces through CCOF, although it's not required under the USDA national organic program. "It's a really unique program in retail and lends credence and integrity to what we're doing with organics," says Katz. "Even though retailers are not required to be certified, we believe this is the best way to walk our talk, ensuring the integrity of organic products in our stores from farm to shelf."

"We ensure that we honor all of the work and effort that have gone into making the product organic, that it stays organic so that consumers are getting something that is authentically organic," says Whole Foods Organic Certification Specialist Angela DeStefanis.

In 2013, Whole Foods made a commitment to uphold transparency in food and began requiring food companies to claim GMOs on their products. "One of the drums we've been beating the last couple of years is that organic is non-GMO—and more," says Ann Marie Hourigan, quality standards coordinator

at Whole Foods Market. "I think there is some consumer confusion about the intricacies of organic certification and a lot of consumers don't know or understand that the organic regulations prohibit the use of GMOs." She believes that the upcoming national Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standards due to be released later this year will help communicate that message because it will include a statute that specifically says that organic products are compliant as being non-GMO.

In August of last year, 37 years after the first Whole Foods Market opened in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Amazon acquired Whole Foods in a landmark deal for \$13.7 billion. The deal underscored to many the consumer desire for organic products while making Whole Foods' private-label products available to a legion of Amazon Prime customers. Many see this as a new era where those living in "food deserts," who do not have access to fresh and organic food products, will now be able to order them online and have them delivered to their homes.

## Organic for the People

While Whole Foods was and continues to be instrumental in educating the consumer on what organic is, Costco's wholesale model exposed organics to an even broader audience. In 2003 Costco began bringing in organic products with the hope of invigorating stagnant sales. Their first big item, organic milk, was a big hit, and encouraged Costco to bring in more organic products. The regional success of organic spread to Costco wholesalers throughout the United States, and by 2015, Costco was selling more than \$5 billion of USDA organic items, surpassing Whole Foods as the largest grocer of organic food.

"The biggest thing we learned was that Whole Foods was really the trailblazer," says former Costco executive Erica Welton. "They were educating everyone along the way. It was Costco's lower margins that made organics affordable for people."

“

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Welton and then-senior vice president for Costco's Bay Area region Dennis Hoover were the driving forces behind bringing organic products to Costco from 2003 until 2015, when the duo left to found The Organic Coup, the first chain of USDA-certified organic fast food restaurants. Welton notes that the biggest leap forward for Costco in organic was during the economic downturn in 2008. "Historically, when you look at Costco, they build market share in tough times. People want to know how to get good value, especially in a down economy, and then to be able to offer organic, that's when things really built a base," says Welton.

Costco didn't have to overcome the same hurdles as grocery stores in regard to handling procedures, since their items are thoroughly packaged and on individual pallets. Hoover says that they found that the more education they did, the faster sales would grow. As they brought in more organic products, they began advertising the organic items in their stores on huge banners. As the program grew, they began to explain what the term "organic" means. As they continued to expand, Costco advertised the environmental benefits of growing food organically.

Costco also invested a lot in educating its employees, says Welton. Costco invited guest speakers to speak to their staff about their production practices, including farmers, crop growers, importers, the local food bank—even a bee expert from the Xerces Society. "We had pork suppliers come in who weren't necessarily organic but talked a lot about animal husbandry and what antibiotics in the conventional hog industry have done," says Welton.

Education was one of the cornerstones of their progress. Says Hoover, "It's about understanding that it's more than just a food—it's a process. We just kept trying to educate our employees and the members of Costco."

They also found that clear communication made a huge difference to the customer. In Costco, the signs for items had traditionally been white, so they decided to make the signs for organic products green. "That really made them pop," says Welton. "Members would tell us, 'I only go down an aisle if I see a green sign.' People were hunting for these organic items."

One area they believe can see growth is in protein. Welton brought in the first certified organic chicken to Costco in 2006 and immediately saw 30 percent penetration in the category, says Hoover. "It's very rewarding to see a shift like that," he says. "Most CEOs don't have time to visit a farm, they don't have time to go to a chicken ranch, and I think if they did, if they saw those pigs living in a warehouse, this whole thing would have happened a lot quicker. Once you experience it then you really can get behind it. It's more than just the food, it's about how the animals and the farmers are respected. Think about those farmers out there having to use chemicals and the effects it has on them, and then the effect it has on the soil, water, and air. Once you understand that, it becomes really easy to be a part of this."

Welton says that there is greater transparency in grocery compared to restaurants, and once the organic products were on the shelves customers were able to compare ingredients on the packages and make more informed decisions. "People were able to start picking up a package of macaroni and cheese from Kraft and compare it to a package from Annie's, and you can actually see the difference in the label," says Welton. "When you combine that with the ability to search Google and greater access to information, that made a big difference. Because, let's face it, there were pioneers in organics for many years, but the big thing is to get that communication out there. A lot of things came together—education, access to information, transparency in grocery and the value at Costco—at the right time."



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## *Participation, Inspiration, and Innovation*

.....

The CCOF chapters' primary purpose is to ensure that CCOF members are represented at the governance level of the organization. The 14 current chapters form a representative democracy that elects the CCOF, Inc. Board of Directors, which governs CCOF. CCOF chapters also offer unique opportunities to network and strengthen organic businesses with educational programming and advocacy efforts for the organic sector.

The CCOF Pacific Southwest Chapter's current leadership is Karen Archipley, president and board representative; Helene Beck, vice president; Jessica Black, secretary; and Linda Antonioli, treasurer. The chapter encompasses Desert Valley, Imperial, South Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties.

On April 10, 33 members of the CCOF Pacific Southwest Chapter met at the Fallbrook Public Library. The meeting was a workshop-style presentation and discussion on distribution led by David Weinstein, director of sales at Heath & Lejeune, and Christian Sutton, an independent distributor for small-scale growers. The conversation focused on the challenges and opportunities in finding distribution solutions for small-scale organic growers. Emphasis was placed on the strength of cooperation between the present group of CCOF growers and the businesses they work with, including retailers, wholesalers, and packers. The chapter also discussed a possible marketing alliance between local North San Diego County organic CCOF growers. The room buzzed with excitement about the possibilities in cooperating to overcome challenges of a smaller-scale grower in an inspiring demonstration of strengthening community and organic businesses through the chapter system.

Humboldt-Trinity-Mendocino Chapter's current leadership is Michael Evenson, president; Ted Vivatson, board representative; Mel Krebs, treasurer; and Whitney Eads, secretary/ vice president. The chapter encompasses the Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity, Mendocino, and Lake counties.

On May 9 the Humboldt-Trinity Chapter—which recently merged with the Mendocino Chapter—held a meeting at Eel River Brewing in Fortuna, California. Kelly Damewood, CCOF director of policy and government affairs, discussed some of the priorities CCOF is working on, from maintaining and strengthening organic integrity to working with the California Organic Products Advisory Committee, to continue improving the California State Organic Program. Other topics included the biodiversity worksheet and how to properly address the

necessary items on the G4.2 Natural Resources form as part of CCOF certification. Eads from Mendocino's Buckeye Ridge Ranch—known for her quail eggs at the farmers' market—was elected as secretary and vice president of the chapter.

Fresno-Tulare Chapter's current leadership is Dwayne Cardoza, president; Vernon Peterson, board representative; and Eldon Thiesen, treasurer. The chapter encompasses Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, and Tulare counties.

On April 12, 23 members of the CCOF Fresno-Tulare Chapter met at California State University, Fresno. Attendees discussed a wide range of issues and topics for advancing organic agriculture in their region. Cardoza highly encouraged folks to sit down with their elected officials and get their support for organic, highlighting the recent meeting he and several other CCOF growers had with Representative David Valadao. Peterson added that being an organic grower can be positive leverage with representatives in Sacramento. Peterson also discussed water board issues, stating that organic growers should be exempt from the orders as they already comply with the objectives of those orders. The chapter also continued its work to establish an organic production systems major and minor at California State University, Fresno. Dean of the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Sandra Witte will provide the CCOF chapter with a proposal to endow a faculty position as advisor for the major and minor. This is a major step in the right direction to ensure that one of the most critical growing regions of the planet has a university that prepares students to enter into the organic sector.

San Luis Obispo leadership is Jutta Thoerner, president and board representative; Ron Labastida, chapter vice president; and Eric Michielssen, secretary/treasurer. The chapter represents San Luis Obispo County.

On May 23, 26 members met at the Avila Valley Barn for the San Luis Obispo Chapter meeting. As the meeting began, Labastida jumped right into a presentation on the Food Safety Modernization Act. He lent his knowledge and advice to participants as both a seasoned farmer and a CCOF inspector, emphasizing the importance of creating a food safety plan regardless of where a farm lands on the requirement spectrum. Labastida also advised members about monitoring and reporting for their biodiversity plans (as outlined in form G4.2 of the CCOF OSP) to make sure they are "maintaining or improving their natural resources and biodiversity" in compliance with the requirements. Jeff Wade from SLOW Money presented on the group's work in creating alternatives for funding and supporting smaller-scale farmers and locally produced food (<https://slowmoney.org>).

We look forward to seeing you at one of the next CCOF chapter meetings!



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## *OTA Kicks Off Pilot Project to Deter Organic Fraud*

The Organic Trade Association has begun a groundbreaking pilot project to prevent and detect fraud in the global organic system.

The trade association's Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity (GOSCI) Task Force, formed last year with 48 member participants, has initiated this far-reaching three-month pilot project to develop a fraud prevention program designed specifically for the organic industry that organic companies will be able to voluntarily enroll in. As the first step toward this program, the task force created a comprehensive "best practices" guide to facilitate the industry-wide implementation of systems and measures to preserve the integrity of organic, both domestically and outside of the United States.

Organic now operates in a global market. Fraud is one of the biggest threats to that market, and it cannot be tolerated in the organic system. Everyone has a role and responsibility to detect and deter fraud. Those participating in the pilot will take the lead in finding constructive and workable solutions.

Participating in the pilot project are 11 members of the GOSCI Task Force, representing the entire organic supply chain, from farm to retailer, and a diverse range of products, services, and commodities including fresh produce, grain, spices, dairy, eggs, meat, beverages, packaged and prepared foods, importers, and consulting services. Pilot participants are:

- ▶ Clarkson Grain Company Inc. (handler/processor/feed grains, oilseeds)
- ▶ Egg Innovations LLC (producer/handler/eggs, livestock feed)
- ▶ Global Organics Ltd. (handler/importer)
- ▶ Grain Millers Inc. (handler/processor/grains)
- ▶ I Was Thinking (importer/handler/co-packer/grains, seeds, legumes, sweeteners)
- ▶ MOM's Organic Market (retailer)
- ▶ Organically Grown Company (distributor/produce)
- ▶ Organic Valley CROPP Cooperative (producer/handler/livestock/dairy, meat)
- ▶ Pipeline Foods, LLC (handler/supply chain solutions/feed grains, oilseeds)



- ▶ J.M. Smucker Company (processor/multi-ingredient)
- ▶ True Organic Products, Inc. (manufacturer/fertilizer)

The pilot program will run from June to September. It is designed to be an intensive focused exercise in which participants will "test drive," in their specific businesses, the fraud prevention and detection strategies developed by the GOSCI Task Force. Participants will concentrate on one product or ingredient, or a specific location to run through the pilot program. During the pilot, the participants will seek comments from other stakeholders in their unique supply chain, then share feedback on their experiences and give recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the suggested strategies.

Collaborating partners in the project are USDA's National Organic Program, the Accredited Certifiers Association, and the Global Food Safety Initiative. The collaborating partners will review and provide feedback on the set of recommendations put forth by the task force, as well as provide continuing support on implementation and adoption efforts, as agreed upon with each participant.

"We've worked for a year to develop a fraud prevention program for organic, and now we need companies to put our recommendations to the test in their everyday business activities to find the elements that have to be further developed," said Gwendolyn Wyard, OTA's vice president of regulatory and technical affairs and staff coordinator for the task force.

The fraud prevention plan, presented to the National Organic Standards Board in draft form at the board's 2018 spring meeting, provides organic businesses with a risk-based approach for developing and implementing a written strategic plan to assure the authenticity of organic products. The plan focuses on identifying and assessing specific weaknesses or vulnerabilities in their business that pose the most risk of fraud, identifying and taking measures to reduce those vulnerabilities to deter fraud, and establishing a monitoring program to ensure the fraud prevention measures are in force. The recommended practices are intended to establish an industry standard for businesses to create continuously improving internal programs and processes for achieving organic integrity throughout their associated supply chains.



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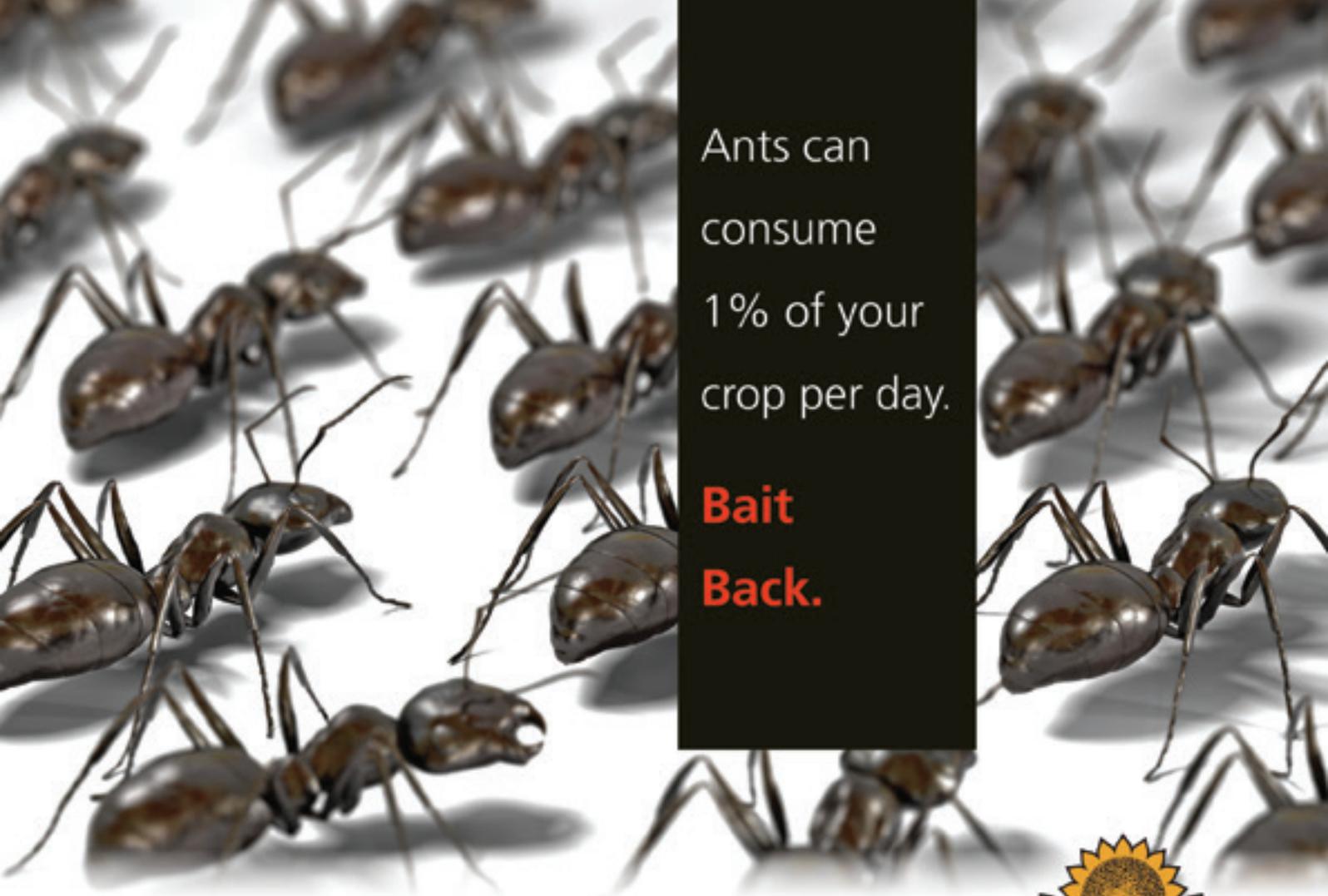
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## ***Updates for Importers in the United States***

CCOF-certified importers should be prepared to provide detailed information during inspections to ensure that they meet the expectations of NOP Interim Instruction 4013. Importers are anyone who directly imports (importer of record), as well as operations who are the first certified organic businesses located in the United States taking title, receiving, or selling imported products.

If you import, be prepared to address the following at your inspection:

- ▶ Know your conditions of entry. Inspectors will look for Import Permits to see if any conditions of entry require treatments that may be prohibited for organic.
- ▶ Keep documentation regarding treatment for pests or pathogens. Inspectors will look for Phytosanitary Certificates to see that shipments were not treated, Emergency Action Notification form 523A for treatment at port of entry, Certificate 203 for irradiation, and other documents where treatments of imports may be disclosed.
- ▶ Keep import certificates and transaction certificates. This includes NOP Import Certificates for products from the EU, Japan, Korea, or Switzerland and TraceNet Certificates for products from India.

- ▶ Make sure documents state the organic status of the product whenever possible. CCOF understands that not all governmental/inspection bodies will designate products as organic; however all certified operations should clearly indicate when products are organic.
- ▶ If you purchase organic goods from uncertified importers or brokers, Uncertified Handler Affidavits may be required.

## **Organic Certification Cost Share Program Now Open for Applications**

The National Organic Certification Cost Share Program is now open for 2018 applications!

You are eligible for a 75 percent reimbursement of your qualified organic certification expenses up to \$750 per scope. This includes organic certification and inspection fees paid between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018, as well as fees paid for California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) registration.

CCOF has made it easier than ever for members to apply for their refund of organic certification fees. We've created summaries with your personalized information to help you complete and submit the required paperwork. If you haven't already, you will be receiving an email from CCOF with everything you need to complete and submit your applications. It will all come in one email, simple and easy!

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## *CCOF would like to see 100 percent of its members participate in cost share, and CCOF staff are available to help you apply!*

Any operation that is currently certified organic within the United States and has paid organic certification fees between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018 may apply and receive one reimbursement per certificate or scope of certification.

### Recognized scopes include:

- ▶ Crops
- ▶ Wild crops
- ▶ Livestock
- ▶ Processing/handling

### Recognized categories include:

- ▶ California State Organic Program registration
  - » CDFA
  - » CDPH

Clients with more than one certification scope may be eligible for more than one refund!

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Deadline for receipt of cost share applications is October 31, 2018.

Visit [www.ccof.org/costshare](http://www.ccof.org/costshare) for guidance on the application process. To request a summary with your personalized information to complete the cost share application forms, please contact us at [costshare@ccof.org](mailto:costshare@ccof.org).

## Compliance Report Refresh

All members can generate a current Compliance Report in MyCCOF at any time to clarify any outstanding items and deadlines. Now, after two years of working with the

Compliance Report, we've made some improvements to streamline the tool and make it more user-friendly. To get a current copy, contact us or download a version in MyCCOF any time using the printer icons in the action items areas.

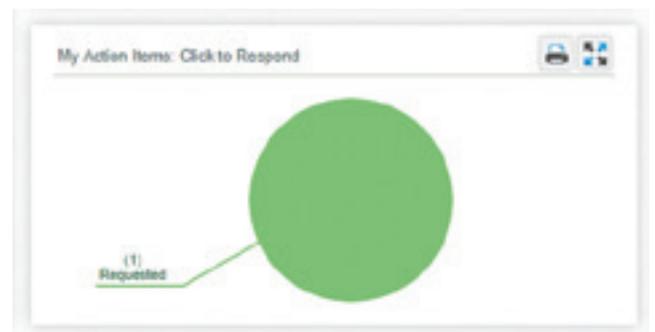
If you need help, ask us for the compliance report help document or click the link in MyCCOF or at the bottom of CCOF reports and correspondence.

## MyCCOF Updates

Based on member feedback, we have updated the names of several areas of MyCCOF to be more intuitive.



Examples include: "Track a CCOF Supplier," formerly called "Supplier Management;" "Company data list" is now "Choose Another Account;" and "Client Responsibility" now includes the clear direction "My Action Items: Click below to respond."



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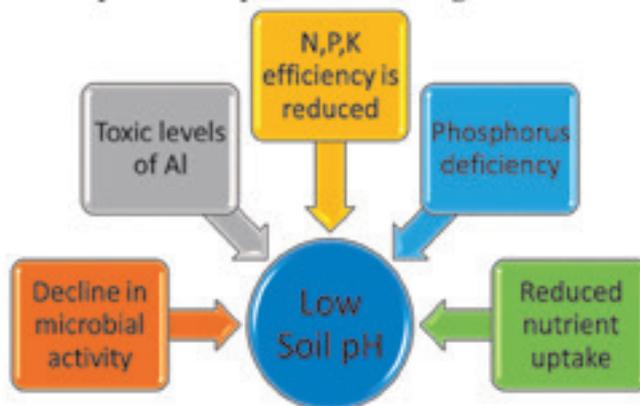
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