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CERTIFIED Organic



22

Organic Road Trip

"There's nothing quite like smelling the salty ocean air as you pick your own organic strawberries and bite into a red, juicy berry that's still warm from the sun."

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New CCOF members

CCOF Inc. Board of Directors

Phil LaRocca, Chair, LaRocca Vineyards; Malcolm Ricci, Vice Chair, Bolthouse Farms; Vernon Peterson, Treasurer, Abundant Harvest Organics; Jenny Lester Moffitt, Secretary, Dixon Ridge Farms; Stephanie Alexandre, Alexandre Ecodairy Farms; Grant Brians, Heirloom Organic Gardens; Allen Harthorn, Harpos Organics; Neal MacDougall, California Polytechnic State University; Randy Hansen, Stoney Point-Pine Ridge Orchards; Karen Archipley, Archi's Acres; Brad Samuelson, Fagundes Bros. Dairy; Renee Thresher, Lundberg Family Farms

CCOF Certification Services, LLC Management Committee

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CCOF Foundation Trustees

Allen Harthorn, Harpo's Organics; Karen Archipley, Archi's Acres; Lee Altier, Ph.D., CSU Chico College of Agriculture; Phil LaRocca, LaRocca Vineyards; Malcom Ricci, Bolthouse Farms

Magazine Production

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Laura McKissack

EDITOR/WRITER Jon Knapp

ART DIRECTION/DESIGN Sarah Watters

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

Advertising

For over 40 years, CCOF has been a trusted source of information on organic farming and food production. Our information resources include full-color publications and online media targeted to all segments of the organic sector throughout the United States and beyond. For more information, visit www.ccof.org/advertise or contact advertising@ccof.org.

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Paper

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



Organic Trade Association knows the foundation of organic: **FARMERS**

Organic farmers' voices are heard through OTA Farmers Advisory Council

Organic farmers access resources & expertise with affordable OTA Farmstead memberships

Organic farmers priorities are represented in U.S. agricultural policy thanks to OTA leadership and advocacy on Capitol Hill

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

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

**Gross annual organic revenue limitations apply*

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

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This Summer's Issue

Thank you to Sarah Watters for leading us on this issue's Northern California Organic Road Trip. In just a few short minutes this month's feature story took me far from my desk to CCOF-certified operations all over the state. Watters' road trip guides readers from California's Central Coast to the San Francisco Bay Area and into Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Reading it feeds a desire to be on the road, picking berries, exploring the frontiers of agroecology, sampling the specialties of San Francisco's Ferry Building Marketplace, and tasting the best of California wines and cheeses. Our road trip will ignite the explorer in all!

Also provided for readers looking to add agritourism to their operation is a great list of handbooks and other helpful resources for getting started – take a look on page 22.

Thank You for Responding to the CCOF Member Survey

Nearly 35% of CCOF members responded to CCOF's member survey, giving important feedback about our work. Ninety-seven percent of survey respondents reported that organic certification is valuable to their operation and 82% gave high ratings to the certification experience with CCOF. Seventy-seven percent of members feel that we keep them well informed regarding organic issues and 73% told us that they are most interested in advocacy related to materials allowed or prohibited in organic production. Other important advocacy areas that were identified are food safety (57% ranked number one), farm bill (55% ranked number one), and GMO issues (48% ranked number one). While no one likes to pay for organic certification, about 60% of members felt that the cost of CCOF certification was "about right," acknowledging our commitment to keeping services as affordable as possible, especially for smaller producers.

Organic Trade Association (OTA) Policy Conference

As part of CCOF's strategic alliance with OTA, CCOF Chairman Phil LaRocca, board member Grant Briens, and member Steve Koretoff all sit on the OTA Farmer Advisory Council. The council met at OTA's annual Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., and discussed a range of issues affecting the organic marketplace. Among these issues is the challenge of expanding organic production to meet rising demand. There is no doubt that this challenge will be the focus of future policy discussions as processors and retailers seek to source organic products domestically rather than overseas.

As part of the conference, more than 100 OTA members hit Capitol Hill to meet with congressional representatives regarding pending Food and Drug Administration guidance on GMO labeling, accreditation of Materials Review Organizations (MROs), and requirements for organic labeling of non-agricultural products. With organic sector growth of 11% during the past year and sales of \$36 billion, Congress members seemed to be all ears and ready to work with us to expand the organic marketplace to meet expanding consumer demand.



Cathy

Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director/CEO

Issue Contributors

Northern California Organic Road Trip, page 22



Sarah Watters is the Graphic Designer for CCOF. She is passionate about graphic design and is committed to supporting sustainable food systems. She is always looking for ways to combine creativity and visual communication with environmentalism — saving the world one design at a time.

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CalCAN Supports Renewable Energy Policies for Farmers

California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN) has been a reputable leader in advancing renewable energy policies for California farmers. A post on the CalCAN website details their most recent obligation to maintaining renewable energy policy for farmers. There are multiple pieces to this conversation, so here is a brief history:

The conversation started in 2011 when the California Renewable Energy Equity Act was signed into state law. This law recognizes homegrown clean, renewable energy which reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Some of the methods were never recognized, but this law fully recognizes bioenergy tactics and allows operations to feed self-generated energy back into grid and receive Net Energy Metering (NEM) credits.

In 2012, the Senate Bill 594 was signed and allowed for the aggregation of metering systems for farmers that produce clean energy on one parcel but consume a significant amount of electricity on a different parcel or meter. This helped farm operations utilize all of the renewable energy they were creating.

With worries that the lost revenue for the utility companies would be shifted to increased costs for other customers, the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 327 in 2013. As

reported by CalCAN, new language was entered into the bill at the last minute which addressed the cost shift to consumers but would provide lower long-term savings for those feeding energy into the grid.

However, CalCAN, California Farm Bureau Federation, the Agricultural Energy Consumers' Association, and the Wine Institute jumped in to represent agriculture interests. They argued that "...due to the size, complexity and costs of their systems, it often takes agricultural customer-generators much longer to recoup their investment and realize savings. They also build systems in tandem with other management practices, including irrigation and processing schedules that vary widely month-by-month. Changing the rules of the game too quickly could therefore jeopardize a balanced approach to on-farm energy production and consumption."

While there is a lot of negotiating left to happen, CalCAN stated they will continue to represent agricultural interests in renewable energy policy. To learn more about CalCAN's work on renewable energy and keep up with this topic, visit www.calclimateag.org.

Antibiotics are Losing Effectiveness Worldwide

A recent article in *The Guardian* features a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) that focuses on the increasing lack of effectiveness of antibiotics in treating diseases that affect humans.

The WHO report found that resistance of certain bacteria to antibiotics is being exacerbated in part by the failure to test patients to determine which antibiotic will be most effective. Physicians then prescribe a series of different -- and ultimately unnecessary -- antibiotics in an attempt to find one that is effective.

WHO team lead Dr. Carmen Pessoa Da Silva told *The Guardian* "No single country even with the best possible policies in place can address this issue alone. We need all countries to get together and discuss and put in practice possible solutions."

The report recommends that all countries should, "be more sparing in their use of antibiotics in humans and in animals and improve hand hygiene.

Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are never fed antibiotics or hormones. Purchasing organic meat and dairy combats the overuse of antibiotics and provides healthier options for consumers.

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Now is a great time to convert land to organic farming, grow the organic movement, and engage your organic community.

California's Drought Leads to Price Increases

The recent California drought has consumers nationwide pondering the effects to supply and pricing of produce in their local grocery stores. Research from Arizona State University (ASU) states consumers will find "avocados, berries, broccoli, grapes, lettuce, melons, peppers, tomatoes and packaged salads" in short supply. ASU professor Timothy Richards thinks there will be a 10 to 20% decrease in crops harvested in California, the largest domestic produce provider. It's expected that the short supply will give these specific fruits and vegetables higher-than-usual prices.

Richards teamed up with Nielsen Perishables Group to properly estimate the price differences because of the drought. Possible changes include: avocados are likely to go up 17 to 35 cents to as much as \$1.60 each; berries likely to rise 21 to 43 cents to as much as \$3.46 per clamshell container; broccoli likely to go up 26 to 40 cents to a possible \$2.18 per pound; grapes likely to rise 26 to 50 cents to a possible \$2.93 per pound; lettuce likely to rise 31 to 62 cents to as much as \$2.44 per head; packaged salad likely to go up 17 to 34 cents to a possible \$3.03 per bag; peppers likely to go up 18 to 35 cents to a possible \$2.48 per pound; tomatoes likely to rise 22 to 45 cents to a possible \$2.84 per pound.

Since the supply of produce has decreased, there will be an increase in "imports from places like Chile and Mexico, which may be an issue for certain grocery customers who want domestic fruit and vegetables."

We know it has been a tough year for most of our organic growers in the western United States. While we hope for a rainier future, it is a good practice to always plan ahead for water shortages and be frugal when consuming our water resources.

Farm Fresh Foods: Closer Than Ever!

Not everyone has the luxury of buying farm fresh foods straight from the source. Those in the remote dusty plains and bitter north often have difficulties purchasing fresh organic produce.

A new partnership between the USDA and Chicago-based **FamilyFarmed.org** will address this issue by creating regional food hubs across the United States. FamilyFarmed.org is an ideal organization to be spear-heading this operation to expand access to locally and responsibly grown food because they offer technical assistance to connect growers and wholesale buyers and help create infrastructure to build regional food systems.

Not only will this bring fresh food closer to those who live in remote areas, it will also create greater job opportunities. The USDA reported that each new hub will generate 20 jobs and approximately \$4 million in annual sales. President of FamilyFarmed.org, Jim Slama, stated on their blog that, "This partnership with USDA will play a key role in informing and inspiring existing and aspiring food hub operators to grow their businesses. Doing so will help farmers sell much more food and meet the burgeoning demand for good food from supermarkets, restaurants, institutions, and consumers."

This is great news for organic farmers, handlers, and processors, and CCOF is excited that our certified members will now have better access to organic buyers.

Certified Organic is Growing in the United States

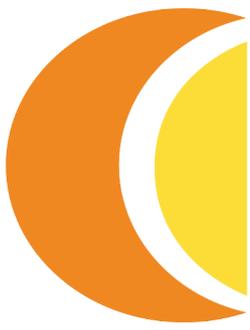
The numbers are in, and organic businesses in the United States are growing! A report released by USDA's National Organic Program in March shows that from 2012 to 2013, the number of certified organic crop, livestock, and handling operations increased by 4% to 18,513. The list of certified operations also shows that CCOF certifies the largest number of U.S. organic entities. The recently released Ag Census shows similar numbers with an increase in organic farms of 4% between 2012 and 2013.

USDA agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack said in a prepared statement, "With retail sales valued at \$35 billion last year, the organic industry represents a tremendous economic opportunity for farmers, ranchers and rural communities."

CCOF believes that this number will continue expanding and one catalyst to this growth is the 2014 Farm Bill. The bill is supportive of organic farmers across the United States and includes:

- \$11.5 million annually for certification cost share assistance for organic farmers and livestock producers; 75% of certification costs are refunded, up to \$750 each year
- Increased crop insurance options to organic farmers
- \$20 million annually towards organic research and organic education

Now is a great time to convert land to organic farming, grow the organic movement, and expand and engage your organic community. For more information on the cost share program, visit www.ccof.org/financial-assistance.



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Hand-blended to Order Tea is Hot!

A recent Facebook post summed up how hot this CCOF member is right now: "We're working very hard to get all of your orders out to you as soon as possible. Please bear with us while we deal with the huge influx of sales orders from last week. Hand blending to order takes time but it will make it all the more delicious when you receive your teas!"

Art of Tea was founded in 2004 in Los Angeles, California. Since inception this member has grown to become an extremely well-known importer and wholesaler of tea. Their hand-blended tea is featured in Whole Foods Markets throughout the southwest region of the United States and their organic iced tea is featured nationwide at Benihana restaurants.

Such success can be attributed to founder and CEO Steve Schwartz and his mastery of blending tea. Amongst other reasons, Steve's heartfelt journey to become an "authoritative figure" in the tea industry started after his mother lost her battle with cancer when he was 19. He gained strong interest in alternative Eastern wellness practices. Steve's "tea-venture" began at the Ayurvedic Institute in New Mexico where he excelled as a student studying natural healing and wellness. He now travels the world searching for and selecting the finest and most distinctive teas. He is passionate about sharing his

CCOF "Likes"

Member News Meets Social Networking



Bird Rock Coffee Roasters via Facebook: "About to jump on a plane bound for Panama! On Tuesday, we are cupping coffee with Esmeralda Estate and Elida Estate. We have purchased Esmeralda's famed Geisha in the past but this will be our first visit to Panama and we are looking forward to cupping coffees at these wonderful farms."

Sounds like a great trip! It's not just about the final product. Visiting the sources of your ingredients and meeting the people who produce them strengthens the connections it takes to create your product and shows commitment to quality.



Brassica & Brine via Facebook: "And here is one of our lovely ladies working hard to make the best honey. (Credit where credit is due)"



We are so thankful for the hardworking bees that make delicious honey (and do so much more)! It's great to spread awareness about pollinators and their importance in the food chain. They definitely deserve a lot of credit!



Casa Rosa Farms via Facebook: "I just opened our etsy shop! <https://www.etsy.com/shop/casarosafarm>"

Congratulations! Selling your products online - even at a small scale - is a great way to reach customers who don't live close enough to purchase locally but want to support your business.



ThirstyBear Brewing Company via Facebook: "We love letting our fans do the talking! Reply here with your feedback, and we may feature it as a testimonial on all of our social media profiles!"

Asking your customers for feedback through social media is a great way to collect testimonials and learn more about what matters to them. You know they like you since they're already following you, so ask them to tell you why!



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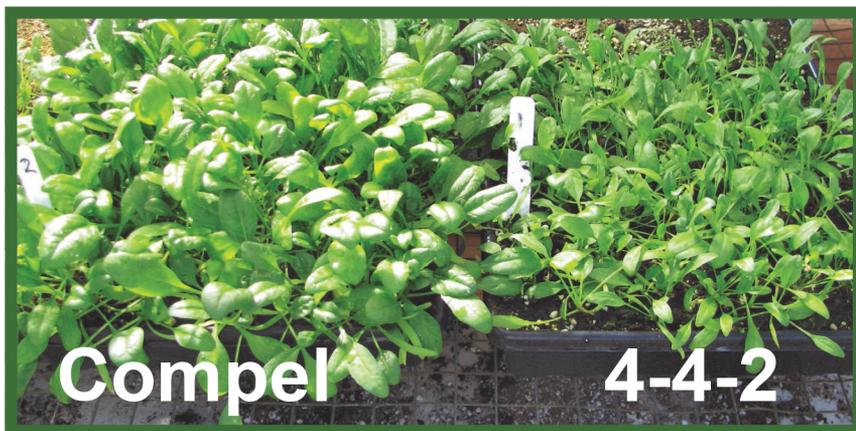
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Healing tea ingredients can help with stress reduction, post-workout recovery, digestion, and skin issues.

wealth of knowledge with the public and is revered as one of the leading purveyors of fresh and eclectic tea blends.

Art of Tea has gained immense popularity and has been mentioned in *Food & Wine Magazine*; *Patterson's Beverage Journal*; *Vegetarian Times*; *LA Weekly*; *Yogi Times*; *The Chalkboard Mag*; and even *O, The Oprah Magazine*! The most recent mention in *The Chalkboard Mag* includes a list of eight healing tea ingredients that can help with stress reduction, post-workout recovery, digestion, and skin issues.

If you are interested in purchasing anything from Art of Tea, make sure that you act quickly and give them time to fulfill your order!

Friendly Wager is a Win for Food Banks

The National Hockey League's Stanley Cup Finals began on June 4. This year's finals featured the Los Angeles Kings and the New York Rangers, plus a friendly wager between California

Governor Jerry Brown and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. The bet was not extravagant by any means, but still gained national attention.

Why did this story deserve any attention from CCOF? One of our members was highlighted in this slightly humorous wager!

If the Kings win the Stanley Cup, they will receive a New York "foodie" basket including cupcakes, wine, marinade, and a hockey puck to celebrate Governor Cuomo's three straight years of on-time state budgets; a feat that he describes as a "hat trick." If the Rangers win the Stanley Cup, they will receive a book titled *California: A History* by Kevin Starr and a pack of CCOF-certified Lundberg Family Farms Organic Brown Rice Cakes.

There has been criticism surrounding the bet, with one news outlet calling the bet "a bummer." Regardless of the outcome, Governor Brown is going to donate 100 cases of the organic rice cakes to Los Angeles and New York food banks once the season is over. In the end, everyone wins!



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Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund

The Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund, a major priority of the CCOF Foundation in 2014, has gotten off to a great start! CCOF has gathered \$50,000 in donations from donors such as United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI), Driscoll's, Organic Valley, and Bradmer Foods to support students of organic. The CCOF Foundation will be making grants in three educational categories in 2014. Partnering with the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, CCOF will award 10 grants of \$1,000 to kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms in California to teachers who create in-depth projects focused on organic agriculture. Partnering with the National Future Farmers of America (FFA), CCOF will award 10 grants of \$1,000 to high school students for their Supervised Agricultural Experience projects. In addition to this, CCOF will award 10 students in vocational education programs grants of \$2,500 to pursue their education in careers focused on organic agriculture. Find out more about these grants at www.ccof.org/foundation.

Organic Training Institute

The CCOF Foundation supports current and prospective certified organic producers, processors, and handlers by providing a series of low-cost field days, workshops, and webinars to help improve and grow their operations. Thus far, 2014 has been packed with in-person and virtual events, connecting producers and processors across the state and the country with the organic knowledge they need to succeed.

The CCOF Foundation kicked off the 2014 educational calendar at Archi's Acres in Escondido, California this February with a workshop on *Field-Level Food Safety* for 46 small to medium scale organic growers. Growers were walked through the basic aspects, terms, and concepts used in the creation of a food safety plan. They were also familiarized with the new GLOBALG.A.P services that CCOF is in the process of launching. The class was co-taught by Cathy Carlsen, Tony Lattner (Archi's Acres), and Amy Lamendella (CCOF), and included a food safety-focused farm tour of Stehly Farms Organics from Noel Stehly and food safety manager Jared Bray.

Small Farm Financing was the subject of a webinar in March. Forty-five participants joined the CCOF Foundation, John Oosterman of the USDA Farm Service Agency, Anthony Chang from California Farmlink, Justin Renfro from Kiva Zip, and James Hall from the Wells Fargo Business Banking Group to hear

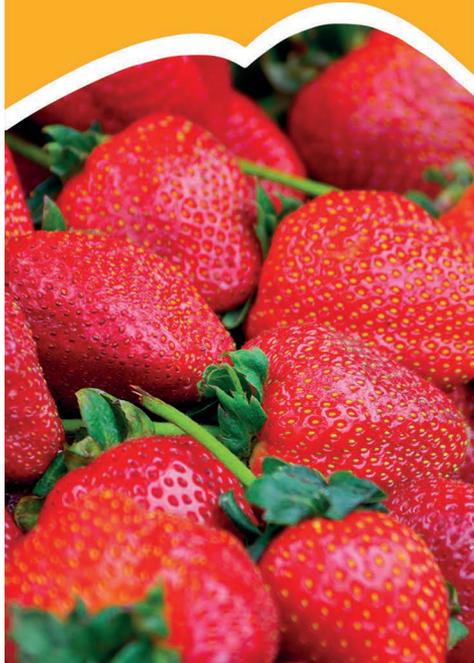


Tomatoes line the walkway at the Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market (top). Participants listening intently at the Conservation Funding Workshop for Spanish-speaking growers (bottom).

about the plethora of creative options for financing small to medium scale organic farms. Presenters covered collateral and credit requirements, loan structures, as well as crowdsourcing options and opportunities.

In April, 27 CCOF members and interested parties joined the CCOF Foundation in Los Angeles, for the annual tour of the *Los Angeles Wholesale Market*. Andy Difani, a long time organic produce broker with Better Life Organics, led the tour group through the Los Angeles Wholesale Market. As the business of "produce hustling" bustled around the tour, Difani described the origins and evolutions of organic produce in the market, stopping at various produce "houses" throughout the market to talk to buyers about their view of organics. The group then traveled to Heath & Lejeune where they were given an in-depth tour by David Weinstein, Harland Heath, and Rick Lejeune. Weinstein went through each part of the warehouse describing box handling, food safety, traceability measures, and what they look for in purchasing. Tour attendees were able to check out standard packs, as well as pallet requirements and shipping policies. Harland Heath made it a priority to bring some levity to the tour and joined the group for a few brief moments to tell jokes. Rick Lejeune, who was responsible for shaping the company into the organic leader that it now is, participated in the tour and was able to share the history of the company and answered participants' broad reaching questions about the organic wholesale market.

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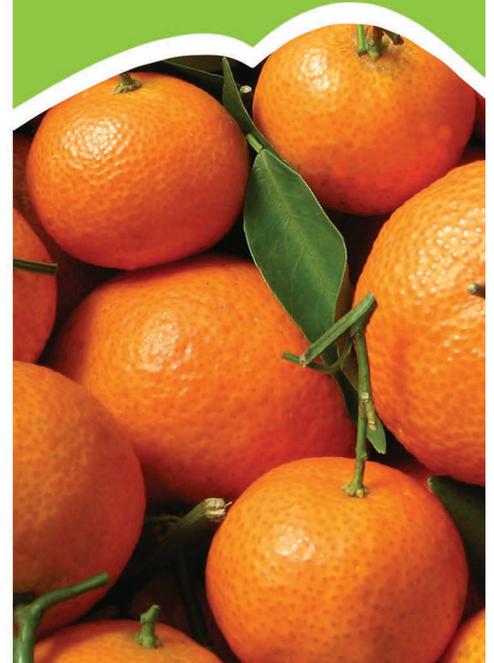


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FRIDAYS

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Valley*

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10AM - 2PM

SATURDAYS

*Santa
Clara*

**JACKSON &
HOMESTEAD**

9AM - 1PM

SATURDAYS

Sunnyvale

**MURPHY &
WASHINGTON**

9AM - 1PM

SATURDAYS

Temescal

**DMV LOT ON
CLAREMONT**

9AM - 1PM

SUNDAYS

Montclair

LA SALLE AVE

9AM - 1PM

SUNDAYS

Campbell

**CAMPBELL &
CENTRAL**

9AM - 1PM

SUNDAYS

*California
Ave*

**CALIFORNIA &
EL CAMINO**

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SUNDAYS

MAY
THROUGH
SEPT

Cambrian Park **CAMDEN & UNION**
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Learn more about the CCOF Foundation by visiting www.ccof.org/foundation.

In May, the CCOF Foundation partnered with the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Monterey County Resource Conservation District (RCD) to present a **Conservation Funding Workshop** for Spanish-speaking organic growers on how to access conservation funding and technical assistance for their farming operations. The inspiration for this workshop came from an analysis completed by the CCOF Policy Department which looked at rates of use for conservation funding among Spanish-speaking certified growers. Spanish-speaking growers certified by CCOF were found to have nearly non-existent participation in these federal programs, which are popular amongst English-speaking organic farmers. The program was funded in part by a grant from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) and was held free of cost. Twenty Spanish-speaking growers attended and received information about resources from Ben Burgoa (RCD) and Karen Lowell (NRCS). Javier Zamora, a CCOF-certified organic farmer from Royal Oaks, spoke about his experiences using these types of assistance and urged farmers to make use of the abundant local human resources available to support them.

How to adequately budget for and manage nitrogen content in soil is a constant learning curve for organic farmers. Given the difference in management techniques and allowable inputs, it is also a question that also comes up for many conventional growers who are considering transitioning to organic. In our **Nitrogen Budgeting and Management** webinar, presenters Amigo Bob Cantisano and Karen Lowell spoke about practical aspects of nitrogen management such as what types of plants to grow, carbon to nitrogen ratios, how to measure nitrogen in irrigation water, and how to calculate application rates for climate or soil type. They also presented hands-on budgeting tools to help growers measure the total amount of nitrogen applied over time from various sources. Forty-three participants (CCOF clients, agricultural professionals, and non-certified operations) joined us on the call.

Forty-five processor/handlers and growers participated in the **Breaking into Retail** webinar on June 3. The crowd enjoyed technical information from Harv Singh and Jade Burnham about how to sell to Whole Foods Market. Donna Sky of the Love & Hummus Company and Jessica Rolph of Happy Family shared stories of trials and tribulation and spoke of the tenacity necessary to sell retail.

We are excited to have connected with so many producers and handlers over the course of the 2014 season. We look forward to continuing to learn with you all as the year progresses. Please be in touch with the CCOF Foundation if there are any courses you would like to see implemented in the future.

Join Us for Upcoming Educational Events!

Farm Habitat Restoration Tours

CCOF is pleased to be co-sponsoring two half-day tours of restoration projects from Wild Farm Alliance, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF). For more information, contact Meaghan at info@wildfarmalliance.org.

Riparian Restoration along Tres Pinos Creek on CCOF Certified Hain Ranch: Tour streamside habitat restoration sites planted to stabilize the stream bank, increase plant biodiversity, and provide habitat for wildlife on a walnut orchard/pastured poultry operation. Learn about pollinators, native plant installation, irrigation, and maintenance issues.

When: October 15, 2014, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Where: 608 Bolado Road, Tres Pinos, CA

Habitat Restoration at Monkeyflower Ranch: Tour native oak tree hedgerows planted to provide shade for livestock, as well as reduce soil erosion, increase water infiltration, and provide wildlife habitat on a 40-acre sheep dairy. Learn about pollinators, invasive plant removal, as well as hedgerow installation, irrigation, and maintenance issues.

When: October 16, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Where: 1408 San Miguel Canyon Road, Watsonville, CA

Alternatives for Fire Blight Control

With the phase-out of antibiotics for Fire Blight control in organic pears and apples, growers need to explore all alternatives available to fight this deadly disease. Cultural and nutritional considerations will be covered, as well as details of timing and use of biologicals, copper, and lime-sulfur for control. Presenters Rachel Elkins from UC Cooperative Extension in Lake County and Ken Johnson from Oregon State University will share their most current research on organic remedies for Fire Blight control in this riveting webinar.

When: November 21, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (PST)

Where: Online

San Francisco Wholesale Market Tour

This trip will address key factors in wholesale, including requirements for packing, shipping, and labeling. In addition, attendees will gain an understanding of how to maintain organic integrity through the supply chain, along with food safety requirements. We'll examine the specialties of each organic wholesaler and provide tips on how to build long-lasting relationships with wholesale clients.

When: December 11, 2014, time TBA

Where: San Francisco, CA

Thank you

*to Farm Aid & CCOF Chapters
for contributing to our Drought
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Drought Disaster Assistance Program

Our CCOF chapters teamed up to double the size of a grant from Farm Aid to provide financial assistance to certified organic farmers and ranchers experiencing hardship due to the drought in the western United States.

The original \$5,000 grant from Farm Aid was matched by contributions from seven chapters. This allowed CCOF to help a total of 20 organic operations struggling this year with variety of challenges including loss of pasture and trees, decrease in herd size, increased water and electric bills, and need to borrow money to pay household expenses.

CCOF's partner in the program, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, was able to accept two of the applications submitted to CCOF, resulting in assistance to 22 organic farming families.

The need for such support was illustrated by the fact that 37 applications were submitted for consideration.

The drought disaster assistance program was one facet of an overall effort that CCOF has made to help its members get through hard times. Other actions taken by CCOF include obtaining a variance from the pasture rule for livestock producers who had no grass to graze in February and March due to drought, offering free classified ads to members who have processing residues or crop wastes that could be utilized as livestock feed, and creating a regularly updated drought resources page on the CCOF website (www.ccof.org/drought-resources).

The day this article was written, the temperature in coastal Santa Cruz reached a record-breaking 95 degrees Fahrenheit.



At Woodleaf Farm's field day, Helen Atthowe explains how to manage a permanent, undisturbed weed/grass/clover living mulch. Soldier beetles, lacewings, and parasitic wasps are found among the peach leaves, and 97% of the crop is pest-free.

We anticipate that farming challenges due to drought will increase throughout the year. CCOF will continue to explore ways to support its members and work with the chapters to be proactive in getting through this historic drought.

Other Chapter News

The Sierra Gold chapter held a meeting in March and Fresno-Tulare met in April. In May, Carl Rosato held a North Valley field day at his farm in Oroville to share results from on-farm research conducted over the past three years. A small but dedicated group of CCOF farmers attended to learn about how to manage living mulch to keep pests out of fruit trees.

The Processor/Handler and Humboldt-Trinity chapters held elections early in the year, bringing all chapters up to date in their leadership.

Chapters received their first quarterly incentive payments in April. Each chapter receives \$5 for every renewing member at the beginning of the year and a \$10 incentive payment for each new member that joins.

A group of motivated members is organizing to reinvigorate the North Coast Chapter, which includes operations in Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties. See the next Chapter Update for more details!



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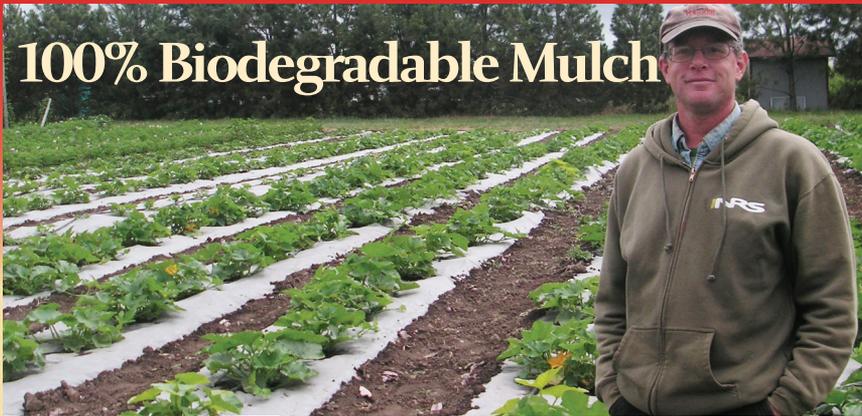
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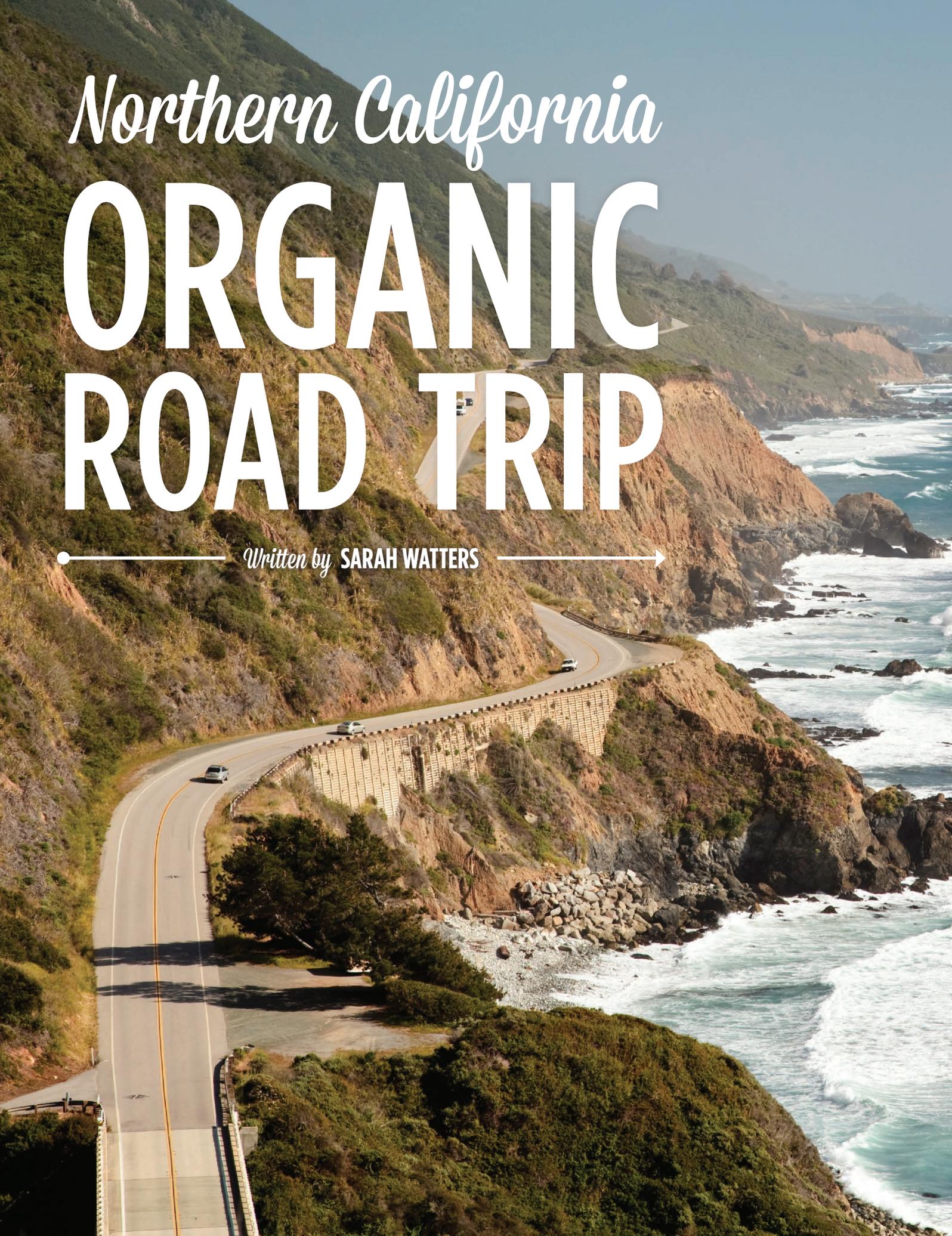
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Northern California
**ORGANIC
ROAD TRIP**

Written by **SARAH WATTERS**



Hop in the car to explore all the organic bounty Northern California has to offer.

Fall may be just around the corner, but in California, the warm summer weather lasts well through September. Travelers are burnt out on the beach and ready for a new adventure. For many, this adventure centers on food. More and more people want to experience where their food comes from, get their hands dirty, and taste what organic agriculture has to offer.

Considering the mild temperatures and beautiful natural scenery, Northern California's bountiful harvests are the perfect way to squeeze every last bit of adventure out of the sunshine-filled season. With California leading the nation in organic production – more than 20 percent of U.S. organic farms call the Golden State home! – it is only natural that agritourism is growing at a rapid pace statewide. Through agritourism, travelers are exposed to the natural, cultural, historic, and environmental assets of the land and the people working on it.

CCOF-certified members, from farms and processing facilities to wineries and education centers, are taking advantage of this growing trend to share their organic products, diversify their businesses, and help people reconnect to their food. Whether you're ready for your own adventure or looking for ideas to add value to your business, our inspiring road trip through Northern California will let you experience all the bounty organic has to offer.

Central Coast

Crystal Bay Farm in Watsonville is the first stop on the itinerary – it's open to the public and has a lot to enjoy! Their self-serve, honor system farm stand is filled with fresh, organic produce. Stop by in late summer or fall to enjoy U-Pick raspberries, tayberries, olallieberries, and blackberries. When you're here, don't forget to say hello to the farm animals, and feel free to bring a picnic (or just stuff your face with organic berries and veggies) and relax for a while. In the fall, the organic pumpkin patch is a treat with over 40 varieties of pumpkins! They also host several events including live music, movie nights, and pumpkin patch sleepovers during the fall. For those looking to get more in touch with the land (and with a flexible itinerary), Crystal Bay Farm offers a variety of retreats that include learning farming techniques, cooking with the harvest, yoga, hikes, and overnight stays on the farm. www.crystalbayfarm.com.

Next you'll head up to Santa Cruz, home of the CCOF office! Most tourists come for the city's beautiful beaches, forests, and of course the Boardwalk amusement park – and we won't blame you for enjoying those, too – but for the organic enthusiast, there is much more to explore. **Beckmann's Old World Bakery** has been delivering fresh-baked artisan bread to local area stores since 1985. Over the years, they have expanded to serve grocery stores throughout Northern California and sell at over 45 farmers' markets per week, all while maintaining their dedication to producing high-quality organic bread. Tours are available by appointment. If you don't have time to stop by, find their loaves (and a lot of other organic producers' goods) at one of the **Santa Cruz Community Farmers' Markets**. www.beckmannsbakery.com; www.santacruzfarmersmarket.org.



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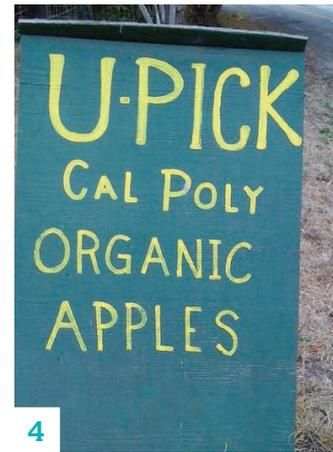


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Now you'll head up to the "City on a Hill" and dig into a little organic history. The **UCSC Farm and Alan Chadwick Garden** are nestled in the rolling hills of the UCSC campus with Monterey Bay ocean views on one side and redwood forest on the other. Many consider this idyllic setting to be one of the birthplaces of the organic movement. It all started in 1967 with the garden, which now features a wide variety of organic fruits and vegetables on 3 acres, including over 120 varieties of apples. The 30-acre farm, founded in 1971, produces a variety of organic annual and perennial crops, provides plots for organic research, and hosts UCSC student classes as well as a renowned apprenticeship program that is growing the next generation of organic leaders. Grab a self-guided tour brochure at the entrance of the farm to learn about building soil fertility and biodiversity, or take advantage of a free docent-led tour on the first Sunday of the month. <http://casfs.ucsc.edu>.



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Agritourism Resources for Organic Operations

Are you looking to add an agritourism aspect to your organic operation? The University of California Cooperative Extension's Small Farm Program offers a wealth of resources to get you started:

- *Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California* – Workbook to assist farmers and ranchers in developing an agritourism enterprise
- *Planning and Managing Agritourism and Nature Tourism Enterprises: A Handbook* – Articles on topics related to starting an agritourism operation including how to create a business plan
- *Agritourism enterprises on your farm or ranch: Where to start* – Peer-reviewed article with a step-by-step introduction to dealing with regulations for agritourism operators
- Factsheets and worksheets for getting started: *Assessing Your Assets; Assessing Your Preferences, Options, and Goals; Adding Value and Personalizing Your Services; From A to Z: Potential Enterprises for Agricultural and Nature Tourism; Creating a Business Plan; Conducting Farm and Ranch Tours; Safety and Risk Management*

Browse all their agritourism resources at www.sfp.ucdavis.edu/agritourism.

The next leg of the journey is a classic part of any California road trip: heading up Highway 1's winding road surrounded by breathtaking cliffs, pristine ocean views, and green farmland. There's nothing quite like smelling the salty ocean air as you pick your own organic strawberries and bite into a red, juicy berry that's still warm from the sun. The **Swanton Berry Farm** U-Pick strawberry fields and farm stand are located along the coast just north of Santa Cruz in Davenport. The first organic strawberry farm in California, Swanton is a pioneer in this now thriving Central Coast industry. The strawberry U-Pick is open daily whenever berries are in season and the farm stand is open daily year-round. Stop in and enjoy some strawberry shortcake, strawberry lemonade, and hot coffee to help fuel the rest of your journey, or bring your own meal and set up on the picnic tables outside. If you just can't get enough of their organic berries, Swanton Berry Farm has a second U-Pick site further north in Pescadero that offers organic kiwis, olallieberries, and blackberries seven days a week (season and weather permitting). www.swantonberryfarm.com.

If you have the time, add this third coastal stop to your itinerary. Whether you're gearing up to bake pies, make apple butter, or just want a few apples to snack on during the rest of your road trip, **Swanton Pacific Ranch**, located just past the first Davenport berry U-Pick, has 16 varieties of organic apples to choose from. <http://spranch.calpoly.edu>.



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1. One of the many squash varieties grown at Crystal Bay Farm.
2. Swanton Berry Farm's strawberry U-Pick and farm stand.
3. Blackberry picking at Swanton Berry Farm's Coastways Ranch site.
4. Swanton Pacific Ranch's U-Pick apple orchard with 16 varieties of organic apples.
5. An evening at the Ferry Building Marketplace (photo by Stacie Daoust).
6. Woodleaf Farm peaches are sold at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market (photo by Paul Alvarez).
7. The Hodo Soy Beanery in Oakland.
- 8.-9. Some of the flavor combinations from Tara's Organic Ice Cream (photos by Jennifer Esperanza).

San Francisco Bay Area

You probably don't need us to tell you that San Francisco is a great place to stop on a trip through California. There is a near-infinite amount of sights and activities to enjoy, so we'll focus on the organic ones of course! Located on the Embarcadero waterfront, the **Ferry Building Marketplace** showcases the artisan food community and regional producers. Get energized with an organic drip coffee at Blue Bottle Coffee, then check out the amazing mushroom varieties from Far West Fungi and consider picking up a "Mini-Farm" to grow your own mushrooms at home. Stop by Frog Hollow Farm's "urban farm stand" to try their famous peaches and pastries, and pick up a bottle of fresh olive oil at the McEvoy Ranch shop. www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com.

The popular **Ferry Plaza Farmers Market** held just outside the Ferry Building on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays is a magnet for Bay Area foodies and chefs. The huge variety of vendors varies seasonally, but some CCOF-certified organic producers you may find include Dirty Girl Produce, Farmhouse Culture, Heirloom Organic Gardens, Hunter Orchards, Lagier Ranches, Massa Organics, Saint Benoit Creamery, and Woodleaf Farm – and that's not even half of the CCOF members that sell at this market! www.cuesa.org/markets.

You may not have expected this road trip to include such urban areas, and admittedly, this leg of the journey could be better defined as foodie-tourism, but "the sunny side of the bay" has some delectable and innovative organic cuisine to explore.

Hodo Soy Beanery in Oakland crafts organic soymilk, tofu, and yuba. They work to "demystify tofu" through education and transparency. If you think tofu is bland and boring, Hodo Soy is ready to prove you wrong. Stop by for one of the Beanery's "first Friday" monthly tours to see how their unique production process and craftsmanship is reinventing tofu by bringing back flavor and culinary diversity. Tours include a viewing of their artisanal Beanery process and a sampling of their products. Check their website for more tour details, or inquire about a private tour if a first Friday doesn't fit into your trip schedule. www.hodosoy.com.

If Oakland's warm weather leaves you craving a refreshing treat, head over to **Tara's Organic Ice Cream** shop. Their ice cream comes in such an unbelievable variety of flavors that you won't be able to choose just one. Whether you crave the unconventional (Adzuki Black Sesame, Avocado, Beet Balsamic, Bitternut Curry, Edamame Lemon...) or prefer more classic combinations (Apple Pie, Chocolate Chocolate Chip, Peanut Butter Swirl, Vanilla Bean...), you're bound to find the perfect scoop. If you fall in love with a flavor you can't find back home, never fear – you can order online! www.tarasorganic.com.



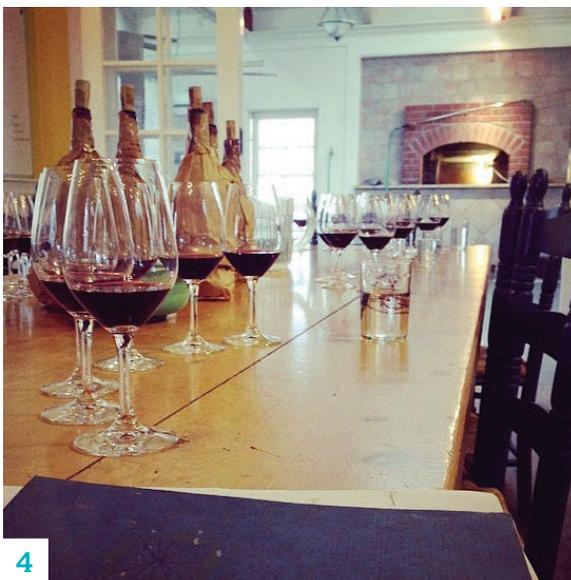
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1. The Petaluma Creamery is a big part of the area's agricultural heritage. 2. Peach blossoms in bloom in spring at Dry Creek Peach & Produce. 3. Peaches for sale at the Dry Creek Peach & Produce farm stand. 4. Wine tasting at Preston of Dry Creek. 5. Lambs huddle together for warmth at Preston of Dry Creek. 6. A cold bottle of Chardonnay at Terra Sávia. 7. Chickens taking a stroll at the Solar Living Institute.

Need a little sour to balance out all the sweet? Stop by the **Cultured Pickle Shop** in Berkeley and learn how they are redefining the pickle (hint: it's not just a sour cucumber). Sample dozens of varieties of organic, naturally fermented pickles, including sauerkraut, kimchi, and seasonal specialty pickles. Don't forget to pick up some of your favorites to snack on for the rest of your road trip. www.culturedpickleshop.com.

Sonoma County

As you continue north into Sonoma County and find yourself surrounded by the grassy rolling hills that California is famous for, it's easy to see why California cows are so happy. On your way through Petaluma, stop by the **Petaluma Creamery**, home of **Spring Hill Jersey Cheese**, and sample organic artisan estate cheese that comes from locally pasture-grazed Jersey cows. With varieties like Sage Cheddar, Jersey Monterey Jack, and Garlic Jack, you might not be able to get enough, and there's a good reason why: Jersey cows produce milk with a higher butterfat content, resulting in delicious, rich, creamy flavor. Sign up for a tour of the creamery to learn more about the cheese making process (and taste some cheese!) and how the creamery, founded in 1913, has been part of the area's rich agricultural heritage. www.springhillcheese.com.

In a *New York Times* article that asked "What Would You Order for Your Last Supper?", Alice Waters answered with "I would have a Last Chance peach ... in late August or September." Upon visiting the next farm stand on the itinerary, you may find that you agree. **Dry Creek Peach & Produce** in Healdsburg's beautiful Dry Creek Valley is a treasure in an area that has been mostly converted to vineyards. Their farm stand is open from July through the first half of September (call ahead to confirm) and carries the latest varieties of organic peaches, other stone fruits, jams, peach chips, and seasonal organic produce. Sip on a glass of homemade lemonade while you enjoy the orchard views, snag some of their Dry Creek Peach Bellini mix to make peachy summer cocktails year-round, and make sure to bring some of these goodies with you when picnicking at the next stop. www.drycreekpeach.com.

Some say that Sonoma Valley now has Napa Valley* beat as the ultimate "Wine Country" destination. If you want to weigh in on the debate, stop by **Preston of Dry Creek** while you're in Healdsburg to taste some of the best wine Sonoma has to offer (not that you needed an excuse). At Preston – a family farm, vineyard, and winery – you'll find more than the standard

*Want to really dig in and experience all of California's Wine Country?

Make it the focus of your road trip by adding Napa County to the itinerary! There are some amazing organic offerings in the Napa area – check out our blog post on *From Field to Forum* for a list of suggested stops and locations.



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wine tasting experience. In addition to estate-grown, organic, Mediterranean style wines, their tasting room features fresh-baked bread and estate-grown olive oil and cured olives. You can also visit the farm store to browse their organic fruits, veggies, nuts, estate-laid eggs, sauerkraut, salami, and artisanal cheeses. Their picnic area is a great place to relax, enjoy some of the delicious food you've been collecting along your trip, and sip some Preston wine. After you eat, play a game at the bocce ball court or take a self-guided tour of the farm. www.prestonvineyards.com.

Mendocino County

As you continue up Highway 101, stop by the Solar Living Institute's **Solar Living Center** in Hopland if you want to expand on your sustainability skills. The majority of the Center's landscaping consists of edible or useful crops, and the organic garden is planted in zones that represent the ecosystems of different latitudes. Take a scheduled or self-guided tour of the Center to learn about a range of topics including solar and wind power, environmentally friendly building materials, passive and active solar design in architecture, organic gardening, and permaculture. If you really want to dig in, the Center also offers a variety of sustainability workshops like "Raising backyard goats and chickens," "Build a straw bale house," and "Install a greywater system," so check their website to see what's on the schedule during your trip. Don't forget to bring your camping gear – workshop students can camp at the Solar Living Center campsite. www.solarliving.org.

If you've enjoyed the area's natural beauty during the last leg of your road trip, a stop at **Terra Sávia** while you're in Hopland is a must. Terra Sávia is committed to land conservation and wildlife preservation and a portion of their proceeds is donated to wildlife rescue in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties – so you can give back just by wine tasting! Their tasting room is open on the weekends or by appointment and features organically grown estate wines, organic estate grown and produced extra virgin olive oils, and local wildflower honey. Take a tour of their



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organic olive milling facility or wander the nursery and organic garden before enjoying a picnic on the deck outside of their rustic "tasting shack." If it's just too beautiful to leave, don't worry! Terra Sávia has a two-bedroom vacation rental home with a pool and hot tub that overlooks the vineyard for the perfect peaceful stay. www.terrasavia.com.

If you want to bring home some Northern California flavor, stop by the **McFadden Farm** farm stand and tasting room before you leave Hopland. In addition to a variety of organic wines to taste, you'll find organic cooking herbs and spice blends, garlic braids, bay leaf wreaths, and grass fed organic beef. www.mcfaddenfarm.com.

Depending on your path home, you might skip this final stop, but if you're thinking about enjoying the coastal route, you'll want to keep it in mind. **Oz Farm** in Point Arena grows pears, veggies, and antique espaliered apple varieties on 17 acres. This tranquil 240-acre property bordered by redwood forests is the perfect place to rest before making the drive home. Book one of their rustic hillside cabins and use the community kitchen to prepare seasonal fresh produce grown on the farm. Electricity is limited – Oz Farm is off-the-grid and uses solar and wind power only – so use this as an opportunity to unplug, enjoy nature, and reflect on your trip before returning to the hustle and bustle of everyday life. www.oz-farm.com.

While this suggested road trip itinerary is meant to inspire you to embark on your own organic adventure, the stops listed are by no means comprehensive of the diverse CCOF-certified members located throughout Northern California. To find more stops to add to your trip or plan a road trip of your own, use the searchable online directory (www.ccof.org/directory) to find certified members by location.

For full information about each stop including addresses, hours of operation, and contact information, view our blog post on "An Organic Road Trip: Northern California" at www.ccof.org/blog/road-trip.



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GMO Action Plan for CCOF

CCOF believes that genetic modification is fundamentally incompatible with organic production and that organic producers and markets must be protected from GMO contamination. CCOF also believe that GMO products must be labeled.

Historically, CCOF has advocated to protect farmers from genetic contamination and to strengthen federal regulation of GMOs (genetically modified organisms), including labeling requirements for food that contains genetically modified (GM) ingredients.

During the 1990s CCOF fought to ensure that GMOs would not be allowed in the Organic Foods Production Act and the National Organic Program (NOP) standards. The CCOF Board of Directors formally affirmed its position on GMOs in 2001 and did so again in 2005. CCOF Certification Services has been rigorously looking out for and excluding GMOs during materials review, ingredient sourcing, seed documentation, and other facets of the organic certification process. CCOF and its members have long been at the forefront of non-GMO activities – supporting educational events, submitting public comments, participating in protests and demonstrations, and developing strategies to keep GMOs out of organic food.

CCOF's GMO Action Plan for 2014 builds on this strong track record through continued and expanded work to protect organic producers from GMO contamination and promote organic as the best non-GMO option.

2013 and 2014 Action Plan activities include:

Enforcing the existing practice standards for excluded methods.

Farmers and processors must demonstrate that they are not using GMOs and they are protecting their products from contact with GMOs.

Marketing organic as the alternative to GMOs.

Distributing "Buy Certified Organic" postcards at farmers' markets throughout the state that inform consumers about organic standards and how buying organic stops the spread of GMOs.

Participating in USDA public comment periods on GMOs and related topics.

CCOF staff consistently submit public comments coinciding with our stated policy principles as USDA solicits input on GMO-related issues. Recently submitted comments include opposition to genetically engineered apples, support for a National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Seed Purity standard, and comments regarding "coexistence" of GMO crops with organic crops.

Supporting state and local GMO policy initiatives.

CCOF staff continue to monitor GMO policy initiatives in California and beyond and lend support as appropriate.

Developing GMO and Non-GMO Labeling Guidelines.

CCOF is participating on the Organic Trade Association (OTA) Organic = Non-GMO Plus Task Force, which was formed in part to weigh in on the FDA's guidance for voluntary labeling of GMOs. The FDA Draft Guidance on this issue was first released in 2001. While the draft remained un-finalized for over a decade, the FDA has indicated that they intend to issue a Final Guidance on voluntary GMO labeling in 2014. We strongly support FDA moving forward with this guidance and see it as a critical time to weigh in to ensure that "certified organic" could carry the voluntary "non-GMO" label without additional requirements.

We believe that the ability to label all certified organic products as non-GMO without additional verification will strengthen consumer confidence in the organic label. CCOF will work with OTA to communicate directly with the FDA and will engage our members at critical intervals.

At the same time, CCOF will vigorously oppose legislation aiming to block mandatory GMO food labelling by states as proposed by U.S. Representative Mike Pompeo from Kansas.



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Leading NOSB advocacy on GMO issues.

CCOF Policy Specialist Zea Sonnabend has been leading efforts at the NOSB to create clearer definitions of “excluded methods” (the term used in the standards to refer to genetic engineering), and to develop a recommendation to the USDA on the creation of a Seed Purity standard. Staff have taken the approach that ensuring the availability of seeds free of genetic contamination is a critical early step in protecting organic producers and consumers. At the spring 2014 NOSB meeting, CCOF lent its organizational support to the Seed Purity standard being turned into a recommendation. For the fall 2014 NOSB meeting, Sonnabend will work on a Discussion Document on the Terminology for Excluded Methods. The NOSB will also take up advising the National Organic Program on prevention guidance for stronger and clearer strategies to keep GMOs out of organic farms and food, something that CCOF strongly supports.

Advocating for classical breeding.

CCOF is a represented member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), which advocates on federal policy on behalf of its members. NSAC increasingly has significant influence in both farm bill and USDA administrative policy. CCOF was extremely pleased that NSAC member organizations voted to make advocacy for classical plant and animal breeding a top level priority in 2014. We are optimistic that through working with NSAC and others, we can get USDA to refocus some of its breeding efforts away from genomics and biotechnology

and toward the development of publicly held, locally adapted cultivars suited to organic farming systems.

Working with the Government Affairs Committee (GAC) on longer-term GMO policy goals.

CCOF staff and GAC will continue to monitor and evaluate new opportunities to engage in policy and marketing to enable organic to succeed as the best non-GMO option.

CCOF firmly believes that genetic engineering is not compatible with organic food, and the organic community needs tools to help counteract GMO proliferation and trespass. In an environment where GMOs are widely distributed throughout the food chain, there must be shared responsibility for the exclusion of the methods and products of genetic engineering. The organic community portion of this shared responsibility is extensive and can be further strengthened with guidance from the NOP. The other share of this responsibility belongs to the owners and users of GMO technology.

Concerned consumers are rejecting GM products, and retailers want to assure consumers that products are free of GMOs. Improved policies for non-GMO labeling in organics and continued diligence related to certification and processes will continue to strengthen consumer trust in the organic label as equivalent to a non-GMO claim.

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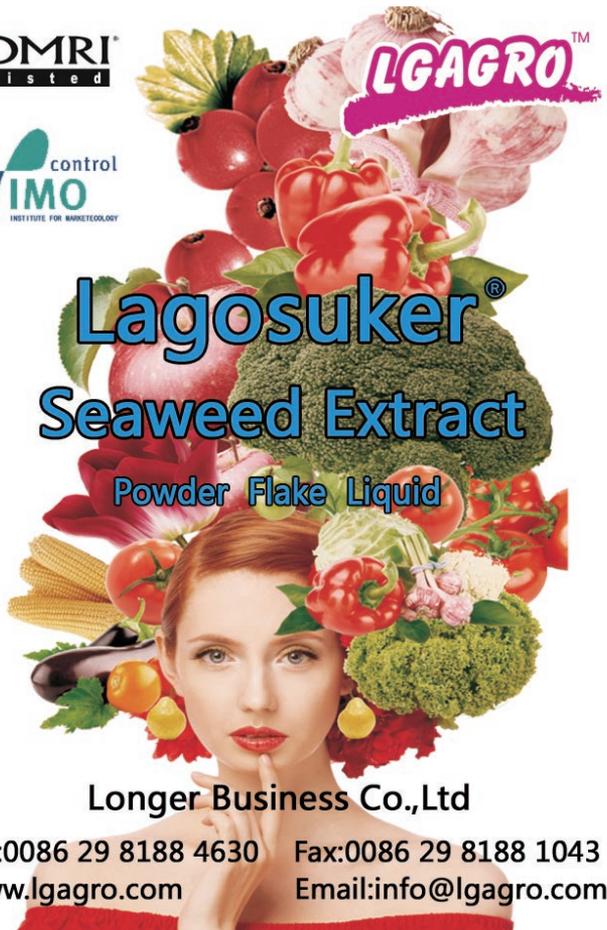
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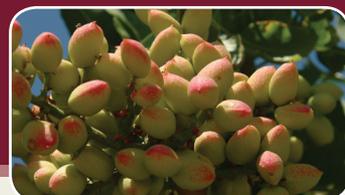
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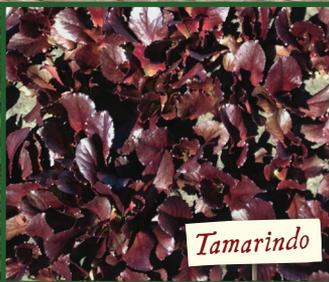
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It is Important to Convey Organic = Non-GMO Plus

One of the hallmarks of being certified organic by the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) is that organic products may not be produced or handled using genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As concern has grown over the presence of GMOs in foods and in our environment, more and more consumers are choosing organic products as the way to avoid this exposure.

Preliminary findings from OTA's *U.S. Families' Organic Attitudes & Beliefs 2014 Tracking Study*, for instance, confirm that buying organic foods in order to avoid genetic modification is important to organic buyers. Regardless of their organic buying experience, 43% of organic buyers feel that buying organic products in order to avoid genetic modification/engineering or bioengineering is "extremely important." An additional 43%, on average, feel it is a "very important reason."

Meanwhile, a critical national issue facing the organic industry centers on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) guidance on GMO labeling.

In January 2001, FDA released for public comment draft guidance on voluntary GMO labeling. That guidance indicates a preference for the term "bioengineering" rather than "GMO" or "GM", uneasiness with a label representing that a product is free of GMOs, and that organic certification is all you need to substantiate a non-GMO claim. After 13 years but no advertised public comment period other than the one in 2001, FDA has signaled it is moving toward final guidance.

Why This is a Problem

The draft guidance is inconsistent with NOP regulations, industry practice, and consumer understanding. For instance, all communications regarding this issue from NOP since 2000 refer to "GMOs", not "bioengineering", and industry and consumers also use the term "GMO" or "GM".

The Solution

In submitting comments recently, the OTA urged FDA to:

- Use acronyms "GMO" or "GM" since they are in line with NOP regulations, industry practice, and consumer understanding
- Allow a "non-GMO" claim to represent the **process** is free of GMOs

- Confirm that organic certification alone substantiates a non-GMO labeling claim

OTA, through its recently convened Organic = Non-GMO Plus Task Force, is actively working to reinforce consumer understanding that to be organic means – among other things – to be non-GMO.

In order to ensure that organic certification and corresponding NOP certified labels remain the gold standard and to further communicate the benefits of organic, the task force is creating communications resources designed to help suppliers and retailers further understand the organic label and the GMO prevention practices required under NOP. Some, for instance, do not understand that with the use of GMOs prohibited in all organic products, all ingredients – including both organic and non-organic minor ingredients such as flavors, yeast, and corn starch contained in the products – in all organic label categories must be produced without genetic engineering. Thus, the organic label alone provides non-GMO choice.

In addition, only organic products offer a full suite of benefits that consumers are seeking:

- Environmental stewardship through building healthy soils and promoting biodiversity
- Promotion of public health and the health of the environment by prohibiting the use of toxic and pervasive pesticides and petroleum-based fertilizers
- Animals raised organically must not be treated with antibiotics or growth hormones and must be fed only organic feed
- Some organic foods have more beneficial nutrients, including antioxidants, than their conventional counterparts
- Processed organic products are produced under strict certification standards and must not contain artificial preservatives, colorings, or flavor, and ionizing radiation is prohibited

To learn more about how you can use the work and resources being developed by the Organic = Non-GMO Plus Task Force or for any other questions about organic or food safety regulatory matters, do not hesitate to contact Gwendolyn Wyard, OTA's Regulatory Director for Organic Standards and Food Safety at gwyard@ota.com.



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New Director of Farm Programs Certification

CCOF Certification Services is pleased to announce the promotion of Amy Lamendella to the position of Director of Farm Programs Certification. In this role Amy will oversee all CCOF farm and livestock services, as well as the field-level food safety programs for CCOF's 2,000 farms and ranches. Amy brings a wealth of experience and history with CCOF to this position. She will support CCOF's ongoing service improvements and paperwork reduction initiatives.



Many CCOF operations recognize Amy from her storied history as an Inspector, Regional Service Representative, Inspection Supervisor, and most recently, as the face of the CCOF food safety initiatives. Amy has been among CCOF's most valued inspectors and has contributed to CCOF inspection and certification systems for more than 10 years. She also holds a B.S. degree from UC Davis in Agricultural Systems and the Environment. Amy can be reached at amy@ccof.org and extension 24.

Everyone at CCOF also wants to take this opportunity to wish Robin Allan Foster, Amy's predecessor, bon voyage. Robin played a pivotal role in the development of CCOF's certification programs over the last decade. She has accepted a position with Whole Foods Market in their new Produce Rating initiative, and all of us at CCOF wish her well and immense success in her new role.

Saving You Money: EU Program Disappearing

Many CCOF operations are enrolled in a program they do not need. CCOF is saving 600+ operations \$125 each during the 2015 renewal by processing this withdrawal internally.

Why? After reviewing our records we discovered that 600+ CCOF growers have not withdrawn from the US/EU Equivalency status under CCOF's Global Market Access program, even though they no longer require the program. The historic

US/EU Equivalency Arrangement, that CCOF worked directly to help achieve, requires that you enroll only if you:

- Export CCOF certified organic products to the EU from the United States
- Design labels for products that will be sold in the EU
- Grow apples or pears, or make products containing apples or pears, that are exported or used in products exported to the EU
- Produce wine that may be exported to the EU

More information about CCOF International Programs is available at www.ccof.org/certification/international-programs.

Increasing GMO Testing

As described in our blog post "CCOF Focused on Moving Forward", CCOF will be expanding GMO testing within the Periodic Residue Testing requirement of NOP 205.670. CCOF firmly believes that organic is non-GMO. In an effort to ensure effective measures are implemented, CCOF will be integrating GMO testing in addition to current pesticide residue testing efforts. As with other residue norms where contamination is found, CCOF will always investigate and work with all involved parties to identify prevention measures and any potential system failures that can be improved upon.

CCOF will be presenting the findings back to the National Organic Program (NOP) and National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) as part of a broader discussion regarding seed purity standards and other GMO exclusion measures. See CCOF's comments to the NOSB about Seed Purity and GMO testing on our website.

Our intention is to use testing to effectively implement the NOP standards and to support CCOF operations in the development, implementation, and improvements that will ensure organic products are the gold standard for non-GMO.

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WHAT TO DO:

- Make sure the auditor is comfortable
- Take your auditor to your best crew
- Have a practice audit the day before your auditor arrives
- Deep clean before the audit or schedule the audit right after your regular annual/seasonal cleaning
- Do a walk-through two hours before the audit

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Tell the auditor you have no food safety problems and don't need an audit
- Argue with the auditor about down-scores
- Rush the auditor and act like you have more important things to do (phone calls, interruptions, etc.)
- Try to hide things
- Spend time searching for documents

Taken from *The Dos and Don'ts of Food Safety Audits* by Stephen Bird. Stephen Bird is an experienced organic and food safety auditor who provides trainings for creating food safety plans and USDA approved HACCP certificates. He also provides consulting services on-site to create individualized HACCP plans and food safety plans.

www.OrganicAndFoodSafetyConsulting.com

As a result, CCOF is working to meet client needs by modifying some systems and giving you certificates when you need them.

We will reduce friction in the certification process by issuing fresh copies of certificates to operations awaiting inspection review. This will provide the certificate you require while reducing pressure on the review and compliance process. Whenever an otherwise standard review is going to extend beyond 45 days from the date of inspection, CCOF is going to work to send you a new copy of your certificate automatically. You will receive a review letter later with any compliance matters to address, but you will not be waiting for your certificate.

If you ever need a fresh or current copy of your certificate, you can access it in MyCCOF. If you require a new version with a recent "issue date," feel free to email inbox@ccof.org with your operation name and code, or contact your Certification Service Specialist.

Program Manual Updates

CCOF has recently revised important sections of the CCOF Certification Program Manual available at www.ccof.org/certification/standards.

These changes include the following:

- Updated accreditation body to the Committee on Accreditation for Evaluation of Quality (CAEQ) for the CCOF Canada Organic Regime and EU International Standard Programs, and ISO 17065 (formerly ISO Guide 65).
- Clearer identification of mediation processes and the criteria for accepting mediation to adverse actions.
- Updated fee structure.
- Clarified information about which certification information is deemed public.
- Clarified processes and expenses for bulk certificate and/or residue testing result requests. Requests for 10 or more documents may incur processing or other charges, at \$10/document or result requested, or \$60 per hour.
- Updated processes for additional locations, to come into compliance with NOP Instruction Document 4009
- Improved description of the CCOF Contract Partner Program, which can be used to meet client business needs when working with suppliers seeking certification in partnership with CCOF clients. This program allows the CCOF client to maintain involvement in their supplier's certification and achieve reduced certification costs.

Annual Certification Fee Changes

We strive to provide our clients with excellent service. To help us continue to provide this high level of service, it is essential we implement changes to the CCOF certification fee schedule. New fees take effect for most currently certified operations during the 2015 renewal. Effective June 1, 2014, these fees will only be applied to new applicants and fee adjustments. See the updated fee schedule below. For a complete breakdown of CCOF fees please visit www.ccof.org/certification/fees and read through the CCOF Certification Program Manual on the CCOF website.

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10,000	20,000	300	
20,001	50,000	375	
50,001	100,000	575	\$650
100,001	200,000	650	725
200,001	300,000	775	775
300,001	400,000	950	950
400,001	500,000	1,200	1,200
500,001	600,000	1,650	1,650
600,001	700,000	1,850	1,850
700,001	1,000,000	2,375	2,375
1,000,001	1,500,000	3,500	3,500
1,500,001	2,000,000	4,100	4,100
2,000,001	2,500,000	4,650	4,650
2,500,001	3,000,000	5,200	5,200
3,000,001	3,500,000	5,750	5,750
3,500,001	4,000,000	6,500	6,500
4,000,001	5,500,000	7,750	7,750
5,500,001	10,000,000	11,000	11,000
10,000,001	15,000,000	18,750	18,750
15,000,001	150,000,000	27,500	27,500
Greater than 150,000,000		38,500	38,500
\$375	Minimum fee for mixed organic and non-organic (all types, all crops).		
\$525	Minimum fee for livestock operations with greater than 10 mammals or 200 poultry.		
\$1,350	Minimum fee for clients outside of the 50 United States.		
\$38,500	Maximum fee		

CCOF Inspection Efficiencies Mitigate Impact

In 2014, CCOF implemented new, efficient inspection and review systems. As a result, CCOF can now provide more thorough reports in a shorter amount of time. Most of CCOF's small operations will only see minor to no net increases in cost. We are extremely pleased by this development and are looking for ways to repeat it elsewhere.

We are also thrilled to announce that refunds through the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, laid out in the farm bill, will provide 75%, up to \$750 per scope, back to organic operations. Between these elements, we expect net certification fees to dramatically decrease for all small CCOF operations.



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www.hilaryseatwell.com

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www.duncanfamilyfarms.com

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Farmer Leo's
Encinitas, CA
www.farmerleo.com

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www.gobean.com

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www.handlebarfarm.blogspot.com

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www.tastefulselections.com

The Produce Exchange
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www.agfarm-bcs.com

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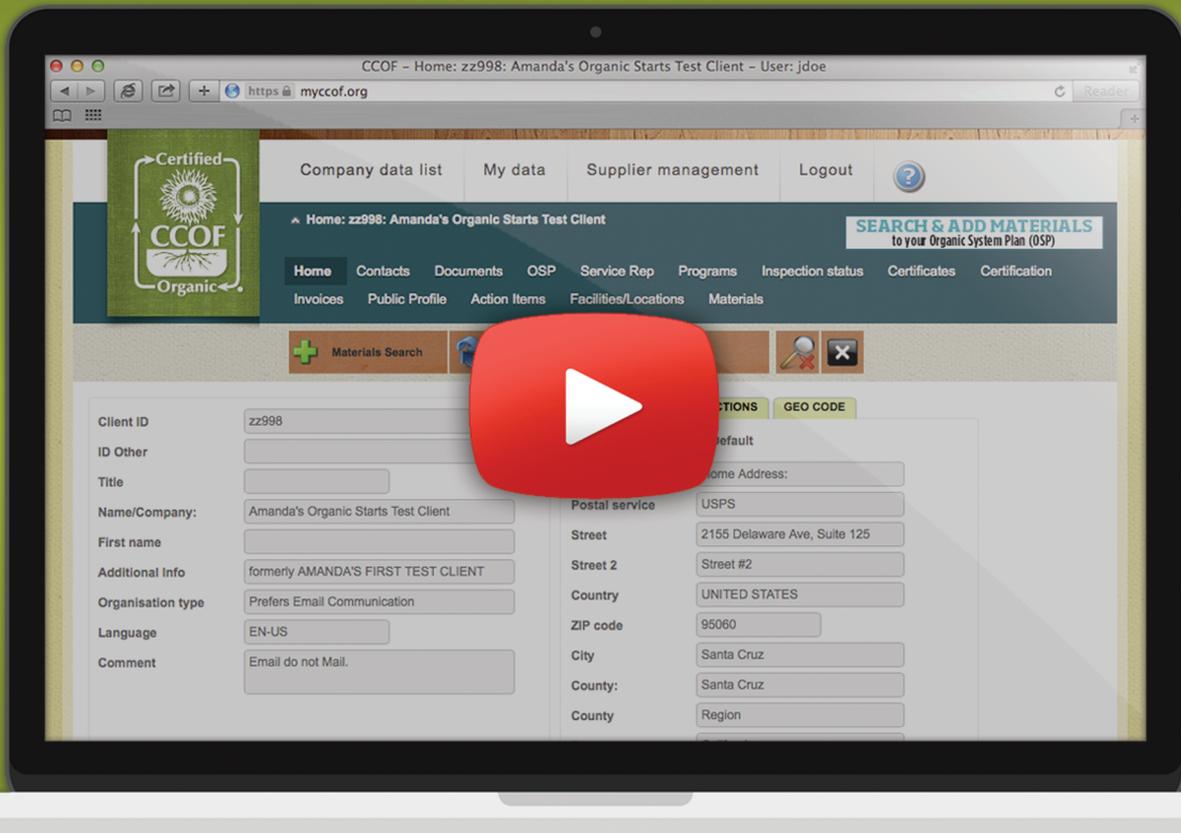
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