

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



# CERTIFIED Organic

**INSIDE LOOK**

## Urban Roots

Separating the hype from the hope when city farming seems to be all the rage



**New Member Spotlights**  
**2014 Bus Tour Sneak Peek**  
**The Importance of Protecting Bees**



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## Urban Roots

*"A bit of dirt under the fingernails helps people to see that eating is, as Wendell Berry famously said, 'an agricultural act,' and a reminder that we pay too little for the food we eat."*

## Departments

### 05 First Words

Letter from CCOF's Executive Director

### 07 In the News

Organic making headlines

### 11 Member News

Members doing great things

### 15 Education & Promotion

CCOF at work

### 18 2014 Bus Tour

Sneak preview of the farms

### 23 Chapter Update

Staying active with your chapter

### 29 Organic Advocacy

Supporting organic interests

### 35 National Policy Update

OTA's report from the capitol

### 37 Certification News

Keeping you compliant

### 42 Member Listings

New certified members

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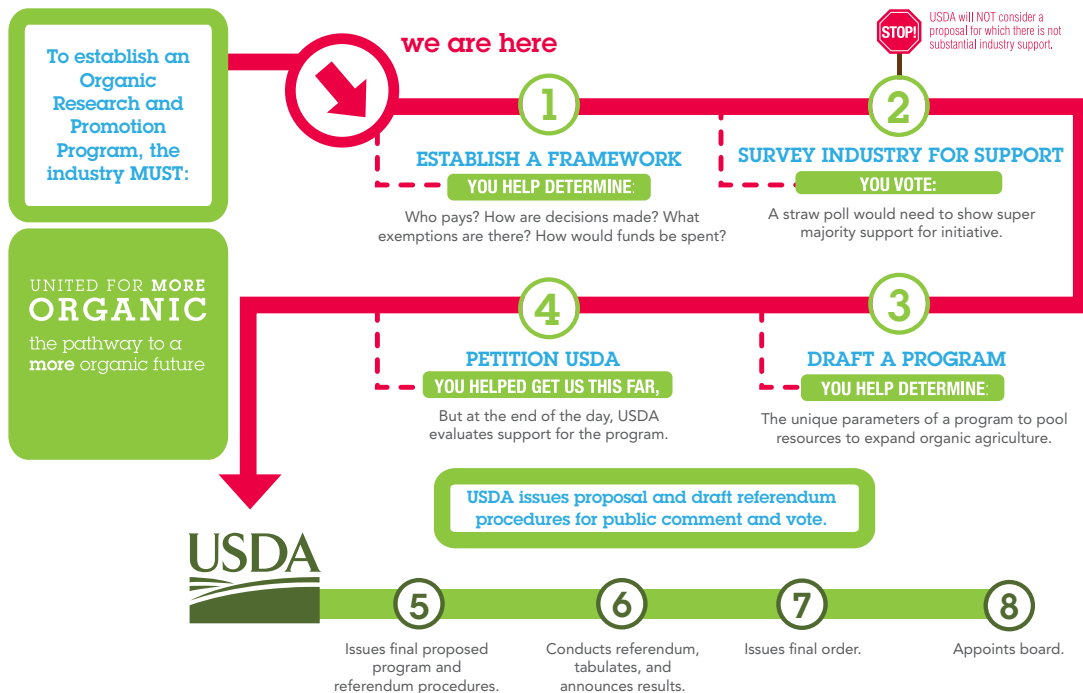
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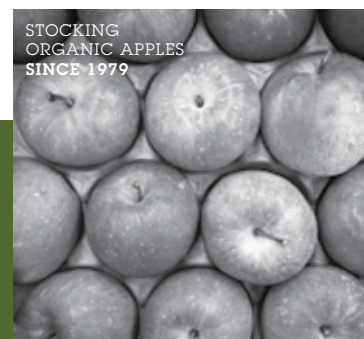
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## Connecting Farms to Skylines

Jason Mark writes in our feature article about urban farming and renewed American interest in connecting to the food we eat and ensuring it's good for us. Eighty percent of the U.S. population now lives in urban America, and many are disconnected from where their food comes from and how it is produced. The urban agricultural renaissance, albeit on a small scale, is reconnecting many – through schools, restaurants, farmers' markets, and specialty grocers – to their food.

Moreover, as Mark points out, urban agricultural renewal is extending beyond city borders and into suburbs and surrounding areas.

At our upcoming annual meeting (March 5, 2014) in Anaheim, California, author Rachel Surls will describe the transformation over time of Southern California's rancheros, to lush agricultural production, to urban landscape. Surls is an advisor to the University of California Cooperative Extension and author of the soon-to-be history of Southern California agriculture, *From Cows to Concrete*. Following Surls' remarks, annual meeting participants and others are invited to join a tour of today's Southern California agricultural landscape with an emphasis on how urban dwellers are connecting with food production and how producers are, yet again, re-inventing the agricultural landscape of urban America.

Stops on the tour include the Orange County Great Park (former home of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station), which now houses a backyard garden demonstration site, a veteran's farm re-training program, and 100 acres of organic fruit and vegetable production managed by former California Secretary of Agriculture A.G. Kawamura's Orange County Produce. The tour will also head to 123 Farm at Highland Springs Resort, once

frequented by Albert Einstein as he sought to restore his own health and well-being while residing in Southern California. And, we will visit an urban farm situated just minutes from downtown Riverside where grapes, oranges, peaches, and other fruits are grown for wholesale. At Y&V Organic Farm, we will hear from Dr. Raju Pandey regarding his research on eradication of Asian Citrus Psyllid, which has ravaged Florida citrus, prompting CDFA to call for non-organic treatment methods in some parts of California.

I hope you will join us for this series of special events that will culminate in our organic beer and wine reception featuring food and beverages from California organic producers. Executive Chef Frank Caputo of the Cancer Treatment Centers of America will be joining us from Phoenix, Arizona, for a special food preparation demonstration.

Visit [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org) to register for this exciting event.

See you in Anaheim!



**Cathy Calfo**  
CCOF Executive Director

## Issue Contributors

*Urban Roots*, page 24



*Jason Mark is a cofounder of San Francisco's Alemany Farm ([www.alemanyfarm.org](http://www.alemanyfarm.org)) and editor of the quarterly magazine Earth Island Journal ([www.earthislandjournal.org](http://www.earthislandjournal.org)). Portions of this article previously appeared in Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture.*





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## *U.S. Organic Acreage Rebounds*

According to new USDA estimates, the United States reached 3.1 million acres of organic cropland and 2.3 million acres of organic pasture and rangeland in 2011. While these numbers initially seem impressive, organic cropland comprised barely .7 percent of all U.S. cropland that year. Thankfully, after slowing during the recession (2008-2010), acreage has rebounded and maintained an upward trajectory. Organic vegetables comprised 6 percent of U.S. vegetable acreage while organic fruits & nuts reached 4 percent. Organic fruits and vegetables account for 43 percent of all organic food sales but only 16 percent of certified-organic cropland. Commodity crops like corn and soybeans earned top spots in organic acreage, followed by hay, wheat, and fruit & nuts. With 2012 organic sales reaching \$31.5 billion and organic acreage continuing to rise, we look forward to further growth and success of the organic market for years to come.

## **Kauai County Moves Towards GMO Bill**

After an attempt by Mayor Bernard Carvalho to veto Bill 2491, the Kauai County Council overrode his veto in November, freeing the bill to move towards implementation. Bill 2491 passed on October 16 and will force agricultural companies in Kauai to disclose the location and time of pesticide applications,

restrict spraying near public areas, and release details on their use of genetically engineered crops on the island. Violators would be subject to fines and even jail time. With five votes needed from the County Council, it was unknown if they would get the votes necessary to overturn Carvalho's veto in time for the vote. After quickly appointing a seventh member and delaying the vote, the council voted to override the veto by a count of 5-2. The bill will soon become county ordinance. This is important legislation in the face of many failed GMO labeling bills throughout the nation and we hope it will pave the way for other cities, counties, and states to pass similar laws. At the time of writing, the Hawaii County Council had just approved a bill (6-3 vote) restricting the planting of genetically modified crops on Hawaii's Big Island to enclosed structures. The bill is pending approval by Mayor Billy Kenoi. We will have to see how the implementation of this bill plays out, so keep your eyes on the news for updates.

## **Ag Contributes up to 30% of Human-Caused GHG Emissions**

Agriculture contributes between 14 and 30 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions due to land, water, and energy use, according to a new report from the United Nations' Environment Programme. This contribution is more than the combined effect of all cars, trains, and planes worldwide. While these numbers are indeed scary, the agriculture industry has significant opportunities to adapt to and combat climate change. The *Emissions Gap Report 2013* involved 44 scientific groups in 17 countries and measured the difference between pledges countries have made to cut emissions and the targets necessary to keep global temperature change below 2°C. Though the current trajectory is fearsome, opportunities to reduce emissions in agriculture abound and may help to close the emissions gap. Investments in no-till farming, water conservation, cover cropping, alternative energy, agroforestry, and urban farming can greatly contribute to reduction in GHG emissions. Many of these sustainable practices are incorporated into organic systems and the National Organic Program regulations, making organic producers particularly equipped to mitigate their climate impact.

The report presents the latest estimates of the emissions gap and provides information on current and projected levels of GHG emissions, implications of starting decided emissions reductions now or in the coming decades, and international cooperative initiatives that can complement the pledges and help bridge the emissions gap. Learn more at [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org).





# *Bringing you the Earth's Delicious Organic Harvest for 28 years*

Back in 1984, we started an unexpected journey in a 2½-acre garden in Carmel Valley that has connected us with kitchen tables and dining halls, supermarkets and corner stores. Since the beginning, we've had a passion to produce the healthiest food possible — food that nourishes and delights — while consciously conserving our land and its resources. Since the beginning, that's meant organic food and farming.

We invite you to visit us at our Farm Stand, now in its 20th Anniversary year, just down the road from our original farm. Come share our handmade organic food, bountiful organic produce and flowers, gourmet groceries, beautiful organic gardens, and the gratitude we have for our community.



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## USDA Deregulates GE Soybean

The USDA has deregulated a soybean genetically engineered by Monsanto Company for increased yield. As stated in a November 2013 *Federal Register* (FR) notice, the USDA has evaluated company data, scientific data, and public comments and determined that the soybean is “unlikely to pose a plant pest risk.” In other FR notices around the same time, the USDA announced the release of environmental assessments that find no issues with deregulating two other GMO crops: another soybean (engineered to resist certain herbicides) and the browning-resistant Arctic® apple. While the department sought public comments on the potential deregulation of these crops, it seems that the pipeline for genetically engineered foods has opened. Unfortunately, with these decisions and proposals made in the wake of Washington’s (and other states’) failed GMO labeling legislation, a GMO-free future is starting to seem unlikely. CCOF believes in agriculture free of GMOs and strongly disagrees with the deregulation of a GMO crop engineered for no reason but consumer convenience and aesthetic, like browning-resistant apple varieties. Follow the news for updates on how the regulation of these crops proceeds.

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## Sustainable Food Trade Association Gets New ED

Katherine DiMatteo, former executive director of the Organic Trade Association, has joined the Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA) as its new executive director. SFTA, now in its fifth year, is a coalition of U.S. organic companies based in Portland, Oregon. With over 60 member companies, SFTA has a goal of transitioning the organic food industry into a sustainable food system.

“We are very excited by the opportunity to have Katherine lead the Sustainable Food Trade Association. Her career path and passion for the organic food industry is a wonderful asset to the association and its members,” stated SFTA Board President Nate Morr in a press release.

DiMatteo was a founding member of The Organic Center’s board of directors and is currently managing partner and senior associate of consulting group Wolf, DiMatteo + Associates. “I am pleased to be able to assist the organic sector, through SFTA, to move forward towards greater sustainability practices in their businesses and on their farms,” she said.



## As Lawsuits Pile Up, “Natural” Labels Removed

PepsiCo Inc., Campbell Soup Co., and others are removing the “natural” label from their food products amid a number of lawsuits challenging the legitimacy of such a claim. Organic saw impressive sales of \$31.5 billion in 2012 but foods labeled “natural” banked more than \$40 billion over the last 12 months. A survey last year by market research company Mintel found that 51 percent of Americans seek out the “natural” label while food shopping. And while the “organic” labeling claim is backed by a set of federal USDA standards, “natural” has no clear legal meaning and can deceive consumers into believing the product they are purchasing is healthy and free of unwanted ingredients, GMOs, and additives. According to the FDA website, it is “difficult to define a food product that is ‘natural’ because the food has probably been processed and is no longer the product of the Earth.” The agency generally accepts, however, that the term is used to describe foods that do not contain “added color, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances.” A surprising 22.1 percent of food products and 34 percent of beverage products launched in the United States in the first half of 2014 claimed to be “natural,” says Datamonitor, and that number is actually down from 2009.

Products like Ben & Jerry’s ice cream, Naked brand juices, Frito-Lay snacks, and Goldfish crackers no longer carry the “natural” claim. But even after at least 100 lawsuits over the last two years, consumers will still find “natural” processed foods containing artificial and GMO ingredients on shelves. This year the “naturalness” of Mission tortilla chips and Nature Valley granola bars was debated in courts – but litigation is complicated without a federal standard for the “natural” claim.

This hotly debated topic is only one of the many reasons to buy certified organic foods. Find more reasons at [www.ccof.org/organic](http://www.ccof.org/organic).





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## New Member Spotlight - Humboldt Distillery

Humboldt Distillery is the first micro-distillery on California's North Coast, focused on small-scale craftsmanship and organic ingredients. Owned and operated by Abe Stevens, the distillery is located off Main Street in his hometown of Fortuna, California. As a fifth generation native of the North Coast, Stevens attended Fortuna High School and went on to the University of Chicago, where he graduated with degrees in chemistry and biochemistry. After working for years in the biotechnology industry, Stevens returned to Fortuna to start Humboldt Distillery in 2012. Stevens produces Humboldt Distillery organic sugar cane-based vodka (soon to be available in raspberry and orange blossom flavors) and organic rum, soon to be released. His "very dry" vodka is distilled four times, 80 proof, 40% ABV, free of additives and glycerin, and perfect for a good classic cocktail. Find cocktail recipes and learn more about Humboldt Distillery at [www.humboltdistillery.com](http://www.humboltdistillery.com). Humboldt Distillery vodka is available at select locations on the North Coast and in some Costco stores.

## New Member Spotlight - Custom Assembly & Packaging

The California Autism Foundation runs Custom Assembly & Packaging (CAP), an employment program and newly certified member that provides "top quality assembly, labeling, packaging, and fulfillment services to a variety of businesses." Operating from a 60,000 square foot Richmond, California, warehouse, CAP helps companies solve outsourcing needs at a reasonable cost while providing employment to autistic adults. According to the foundation, 88 percent of working age adults who have a developmental disability are unemployed. Prejudice, discrimination, and fear are some of the barriers experienced by individuals with developmental disabilities seeking to secure employment. CAP offers a solution to these challenges. The facility is certified organic, bonded for wine, and approved for food and drug handling, with 21 loading docks and 15 insulated storage units. The program supervises and trains their dependable workforce, provides timely project completion, and compensates employees through payroll and insurance. From Peet's Coffee & Tea to Safeway and El Pollo Loco, many businesses are supporting CAP and making use of their excellent services. Learn about the California Autism Foundation at [www.calaustism.org](http://www.calaustism.org). If you are interested in



using CAP's custom assembly and packaging services for your business needs, email [contactcaf@calaustism.org](mailto:contactcaf@calaustism.org) or call (510) 758-0433.

Welcome to CCOF, California Autism Foundation, and thank you for your good work!

## New Leaf Community Markets Joins New Seasons Markets

Announced in November, New Leaf Community Markets will join Portland, Oregon-based New Seasons Market as a wholly owned subsidiary. While the combined company will be based in Portland, New Leaf's management team will remain in Santa Cruz. New Leaf founder/co-owner Scott Roseman will join the New Seasons Board of Directors.

"Joining with New Seasons Market will advance both companies' missions and values, and creates smart scale on our own terms," said Roseman, in a press release. "When we determined it was the right time to consider options to support our healthy growth, we wanted to align with a company that was committed to our values, to local operations and decision making, our support for local communities, and our passion for high quality food. For all of these reasons, New Seasons Market is a great match, plus, they are the only other grocer in the world other than New Leaf to become a certified B Corporation," he added.

Both companies share a number of values, including dedication

to great customer service and a commitment to giving 10 percent of profits to community nonprofits. Combining will allow for sharing best practices and collaboration while growing each business sustainably.

New Leaf Community Markets in Felton, California, is a CCOF-certified organic retailer.

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## Vivienne Harr Rings NYSE Opening Bell

Vivienne Harr, superstar of CCOF-certified Make A Stand Lemon-Aid, had the distinct honor of ringing the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange on November 7, 2013 - notable for being the Twitter IPO day. Nine-year-old Harr, who was chosen because she epitomizes how Twitter's creators believe the service should be used, has more than 23,000 Twitter fans and sported a blue tutu at the event. She was joined by actor Patrick Stewart, who credits Twitter for helping to change the public's opinion of him, and Boston Police bureau chief of public information, Cheryl Fiandaca, who used Twitter to relay emergency information to the public during the Boston Marathon attack in April. In a thank-you note to Twitter Co-founder Biz Stone, Harr wrote: "With Twitter, you don't have to be big or powerful to change the world. You can be just like me!"

"#standwithme," a documentary produced by STILLMOTION on Make A Stand, will hit theaters in February after premiering at the Sundance Film Festival.

Head over to [www.twitter.com/vivienneharr](http://www.twitter.com/vivienneharr) for company updates.

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## Lundberg Family Farms Launches Line of Boxed Entrees

CCOF-certified member Lundberg Family Farms has released 11 varieties of boxed entrees featuring their signature certified-organic brown rice. Each entrée is Non-GMO verified, vegan, kosher, and gluten-free, and can be prepared in less than 40 minutes. The Organic Whole Grain and Rice Seasoning Mixes range from Whole Grain Lentils & Rice to Wild Porcini Mushroom Whole Grain & Wild Rice. There's even a Jambalaya mix and Southwestern-style rice option. Find these easy-to-make dishes at a grocer near you.

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## 'Ohana Organics Tattoo Butter Heals You Fast

Healing a new tattoo can range from feeling sore to itchy,

which is why certified member 'Ohana Organics has whipped up an organic Shea butter-based tattoo cream, Tattoo Butter. Containing organic Shea butter and olive oil, calendula, plantain, lavender, aloe, and vitamin E, Tattoo Butter can be applied immediately after your tattoo session and for weeks afterward to heal and enrich your skin. Tins start at \$5.00 and range in size from ½ oz. to 2 oz.

'Ohana was created out of owner Tara Cooper's love for the Hawaiian islands. After moving to California from Hawaii, Tara "found herself missing the scents and beauty of the islands." She started 'Ohana Organics in 2000, creating organic body care products made with organic herbs straight out of her own garden. Along with Tattoo Butter, 'Ohana offers organic salves, solid perfumes, and Shea butter creams, all made to soothe dry or sensitive skin while smelling great.

Find Tattoo Butter and other 'Ohana products at [www.ohanaorganics.com](http://www.ohanaorganics.com).

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## Whole Foods Debuts Produce & Flower Rating System

In fall 2014, CCOF-certified Whole Foods Market will launch a flower and produce rating system to help shoppers make more-informed purchases based on their beliefs and values.

"We are driven by our core values and are always looking at ways to enrich our customers' experience, improve our communities and support our supplier partners," said Edmund LaMacchia, global vice president of perishables for Whole Foods Market, in a press release. "The new produce ratings will provide deeper transparency to our shoppers, helping them make conscious choices while also celebrating the great work and responsible practices of growers beyond their organic and local efforts."

The three-tier system will debut in September 2014 with ratings of "good," "better," and "best." For the ratings, Whole Foods developed a "science-based index" to measure performance on a number of topics: pest management (including prohibited and restricted pesticides), farmworker welfare, pollinator protection, water conservation and protection, soil health, ecosystems, biodiversity, waste/recycling/packaging, energy, and climate. Organic growers will be recognized for their "investment and achievement represented by organic certification."

We look forward to the implementation of this rating system throughout Whole Foods stores in 2014 and are glad to see organic producers recognized for their commitment to sustainable agriculture production. To learn more about Whole Foods, visit [www.wholefoods.com](http://www.wholefoods.com).



## CCOF "Likes"

### Member News Meets Social Networking



**Bennett's Honey Farm** via Facebook: "Honey has some very strong antibacterial properties which is used in the hive to help them control infection and can be useful to humans. It has been used in place of antibacterial cream in emergencies, and was even used in some early surgeries to control infection."

*Those are some sweet facts but we're pretty glad that surgery is a bit less sticky now! The benefits of honey seem to be endless!*



**Tikvah Organics** via Facebook: "Hooray! Tikvah is switching to biodegradable, compostable labels on our soap bar wrappers (which are made from biodegradable and compostable cellophane). While we'll put full info (and wordage) on the website, what is the best short line to put on the labels themselves? We want our customers to know the entire thing can go right into their compost bin."

*Tikvah, great choice to switch your packaging to be 100% biodegradable/compostable. These types of updates are a great way to solicit feedback from your fans while improving your product.*



**Santa Cruz Farmers' Market** via Facebook: "Welcome our newest vendor to the Westside market! The Walnut Farm has organic Howard walnuts in shell from Corralitos for good eatin' in the holiday season! They are a sweet, firm, beautiful golden nut. The 'quintessential' walnut & they are a perfect gift!"

*Yum, those walnuts sound delicious. Welcome to the Westside, Walnut Farm! Our office is only a few blocks away :)*



**The Love & Hummus Co.** via Facebook: "We are thrilled to celebrate another birthday at The Love & Hummus Co. today and we'd like to use our birthday wishes to send all of you amazing folks that choose to bring home Love & Hummus products everyday a huge heart felt THANK YOU! You Rock!"

*Happy birthday, Love & Hummus! There is no better way to celebrate than by thanking the customers that made you who you are today. Here's to many more birthdays to follow!*



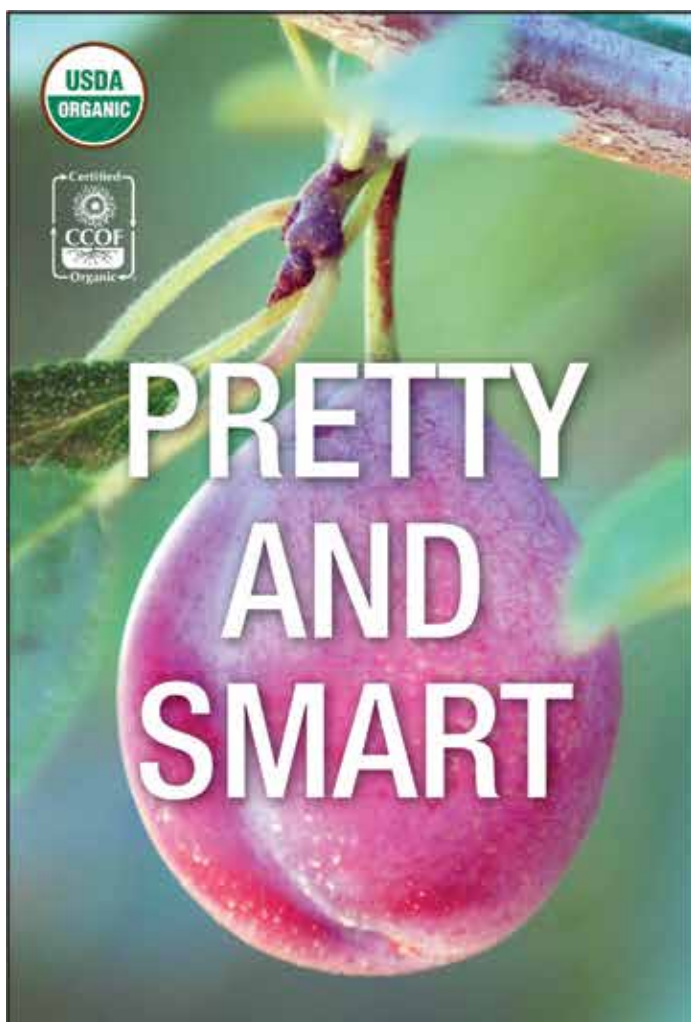
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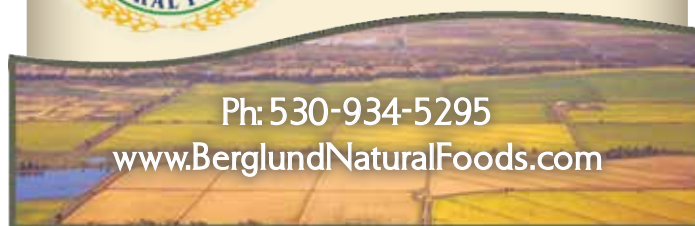
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## ***San Francisco Wholesale Market Tour Focuses on Organic***

.....

The San Francisco Wholesale Market Tour, our major field day of the fall, was a raving success. Just fewer than 35 CCOF members and a handful of public attendees joined our policy and programs team for a whirlwind day encompassing the organic parts of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market and long-time organic distributor, Veritable Vegetable.

The day started in the dark CCOF parking lot in Santa Cruz just after 5:30 a.m. Barney Skelton of Rock Front Ranch (a true hardcore farmer) had already been up for four hours having driven from Santa Maria to meet the van! The rest of the Central Coast participants met us, sleep still in their eyes and coffee in hand, and together we took off for the San Francisco (SF) Wholesale Produce Market, where we were joined by farmers and food systems professionals from around the Bay Area, Central Valley, and foothills.

Michael Janis, manager of the SF Wholesale Produce Market, together with staffers Eddie and Sergio, gave participants an overview of the market's structure before splitting the group into two sections. Michael and his team toured participants through the four major houses that specialize in organic produce. There, various experts greeted them: Paul, owner of VegiWorks, Inc.; Dale, director of procurement for GreenLeaf; and Jack, Tony, and Nathan from Washington Vegetable Company. Each explained the scope, specialties, and buying procedures of their respective businesses. Attendees asked

questions and exchanged business cards with staff at each wholesale house.

After the short tours at VegiWorks, GreenLeaf, and Washington Vegetable Company participants and guides headed across the street to the newly expanded facilities of Earl's Organic Produce, where Earl himself gave an introduction to his company within the larger context of the organic wholesale market in California. Standing on a stack of pallets, Earl's six foot-plus figure towered over the crowd. His genuine enthusiasm for the organic wholesale market business was contagious. Participants walked through the Earl's cold storage units and asked questions of the food safety manager.

The last stop on our tour was Veritable Vegetable (VV), stalwart wholesaler of organic food since the early 1970s. Karen Salinger, who was part of the founding team, led us through VV's entire facility, covering organic supply chain management and giving tour attendees a well-rounded view of just how VV wholesales produce throughout the western states. Wendy Strong finished off the day with a detailed talk on box integrity and "good pack, bad pack." Lunch and conversation ensued in one of VV's warehouses, catered by Ian Humphrey. Tina Cosentino (former program specialist with CCOF who now works with VV's purchasing department) came out to network with growers over lunch.





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As participants finished lunch and loaded into their vans, everyone agreed it had been a day well spent. Guest speaker Tony Serrano of Alba Organics spoke with folks on the van ride home about their experience. Attendees, exhausted by the time we pulled into the CCOF parking lot, piled out of the van surprised that we had packed in the whole tour and arrived home before the end of a regular workday.

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## **Crop Planning Webinar**

CCOF's November 7 *Crop Planning* webinar connected 40 growers to resources to help plan and execute a mixed vegetable plan for an organic farm. Doug O'Brien, adjunct professor at Cabrillo Community College, gave the theoretical background for why crop planning is important and what major tenets one should consider when creating a crop plan. Farmer Ned Conwell, formerly of Blue House Farm in Pescadero, California, shared the story of the three organic farms that he has been involved in building over the last 10 years and how he tailored the business and crop plan to each operation. Find upcoming CCOF events at [www.ccof.org/education](http://www.ccof.org/education).

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## **Central Coast Town Hall: Packed House Discusses Central Coast Water Issues**

An open-forum meeting hosted by CCOF about controversial water issues including nitrate pollution, water monitoring, and legislation known as the Ag Waiver drew CCOF members, farm advisors, and farmers from the far reaches of the Central Coast on November 20. Held in the agricultural conference room of the UC Cooperative Extension in Salinas, Monterey County

Agricultural Commissioner Eric Lauritzen and CCOF farmer Steve Pederson welcomed the crowd, stressing the importance of the Monterey agricultural economy and the necessity of clean water. Pederson told a touching story about reading stories to his two daughters about rural families who could eat from the waterways that bordered their lands, and having to explain the contradiction that the waterways that ran through their own farmland weren't safe because of runoff.

CCOF Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo gracefully stewarded the introduction of the speaker panel: Monica Barricarte with the Central Coast Water Quality Control Board's Agricultural Regulatory Program; Michael Cahn, farm advisor and irrigation specialist; and Eric Brennan, research horticulturalist in organic crop production with the USDA-ARS. Barricarte's presentation reviewed the set of regulations known as the Ag Waiver, addressing what organic growers should consider when determining how to remain compliant with current Water Quality Control Board requirements. Find additional information on the Ag Waiver requirements at [www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov). Cahn focused on types of nitrogen used on organic farms, the stability of that nitrogen, and innovative ways farmers can monitor runoff. Brennan spoke of organic techniques farmers can use to minimize water runoff from their fields. He detailed the innovative research currently conducted at the USDA site on cover crop density, the effect of watering depth on pelleted fertilizer leaching, and how planting furrowed cover crops in strawberry production may catch runoff from understory plastic. Brennan invited all CCOF members and the public to visit the USDA agricultural research station in Salinas to learn more about their organic data.

The afternoon ended with a reception hosted by the CCOF Central Coast Chapter. Refreshments were served as CCOF members and participants networked about all things water.



# CCOF Farmers on the Urban Edge: 2014 Bus Tour Sneak Preview

..... *Join us in March!* .....

## Organic Agritourism

123 Farm, nestled into the parched hills of the San Geronio Pass (or the San Bernardino Mountains) in Riverside County, is part of the historic Highland Springs Resort. A portion of a Spanish Land Grant deeded in the early 1800s, the resort has passed through the hands of many stewards, morphing from a traditional cattle ranch into a frequented stagecoach stop, a health spa focused on juicing and cleanses in the 1920s, and a famed Jewish family retreat.



Today, the Highland Springs Resort produces certified-organic olives, lavender, livestock, and vegetables under the banner of 123 Farm. The farm and the resort have a set agreement that the resort purchases all products produced on site, giving the farm a guaranteed market. The resort then produces lavender and olive oil products for client services and its gift shop. The vegetables, herbs, eggs, and lamb meat are used by the resort's restaurant, the Grand Oak Steakhouse & Bar. Head Chef Stefan

Weck is dedicated to the use of organic produce. He not only sources from 123 Farm but also works with other local farms in the area when products are not available on site. The restaurant uses organic ingredients because Chef Weck and the crew believe they are better for the environment and the health of the consumer. You won't find any organic marketing gimmick here; though the ingredients for a meal may be up to 90 percent organic and in-season, the restaurant rarely advertises that that's the case.

Farmers Tina Kummerle and Jan Kielmann came to 123 Farm through circuitous paths. Tina graduated from Colorado College in environmental science with an emphasis in biology and went to work for a variety of related causes before ending up in New York City. Fed up with city life, she was on the job hunt when she found a posting for a "farmer" at Highland Springs Resort. That was in 2001. Only a few months after Tina took the job, the president of the resort stepped down and, recognizing her leadership skills and vision, the board asked Tina to become the new president of Highland Springs Resort. Under her leadership, the resort has become one of the largest organic lavender farms in California. Their annual lavender festival draws 10,000 visitors! Originally from Germany, Jan Kielmann is a trained landscape architect. A recession in Germany in 2007 prompted him to apply on a whim for a grounds management position at Highland Springs Resort. Once in the position, Jan was quickly integrated into managing both the grounds and the farm. He professes to have learned everything by doing.

Once rural, Highland Springs Resort has been thrust into an epicenter of suburban development. Formerly a region known for its stone fruits like peaches and cherries, "Cherry Valley,"







as the region is ironically known, has undergone huge changes in recent years. Beaumont, the closest town, was reportedly one of the fastest growing metro regions in the United States in the early 2000s. According to Tina and Jan, the arid region always had water shortages, but officials created “paper water” to show there was enough water to support the exponential development. The city expanded from a population of less than 20,000 to one that is now projected to reach 100,000. After much of the development was completed, the city began experiencing massive water shortages. The rates for water last year alone doubled for all area farmers. The problem has gotten to a point where many cherry farmers have turned off their water and are letting their orchards die. While 123 Farms has not been affected like other farms due to their onsite spring, Tina and Jan have remained active in the conversation around more sustainable development in their area. They realize that while aggressive development might harm the views, temper the rural character of the surroundings, and strain the limited natural resources, there are also positive aspects of development. Highland Springs is an active resort, dependent on customers to come and stay, eat at the restaurant, and use the facilities. 123 Farm has agritourism programs such as their public lavender festival, farm camp, and a science program for children. All of these activities depend on a population of active clientele who live in close enough proximity to patronize the site. As farmers and businesspeople, Jan and Tina hold to that contradiction: continuing to welcome and educate the local population while maintaining responsible city planning that supports agricultural businesses and protects wildlife habitats and natural resources is an integral part of a sustainable cityscape.

## Urban Production and Research

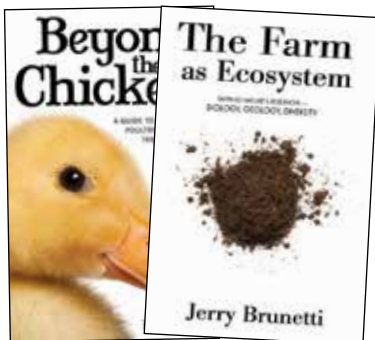
Yianni and Victoria Michaelides grew up in Greece and Romania respectively, surrounded by cultures that respected the earth and good organic food and wine. They now own 50 acres of CCOF-certified organic citrus and other fruits on the edge of the city of Riverside. Their farm, Y&V Organic Farm, is the largest contiguous agricultural parcel next to the city of Riverside. Just a few miles from downtown, it's hard to believe the peace found within the boundaries of their property.

The two bought the property in 2003, but the trees range in age up to 100 years old. Their orchard was reportedly created by forward-thinking Canadians who planted the whole of Riverside County in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The former owners were speculators and had not kept up the property. When the couple took over management, they replaced many trees and put in drip irrigation.

Like much of Southern California, Y&V Organic Farm has been fearing the scourge of the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP). Proactively, they have partnered with Dr. Raju Pandey, an entomologist with the Citrus Research Board. In a joint project between USDA, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and UC Riverside, Dr. Pandey is breeding the Pakistani parasitic wasp *Tamarixia radiata* in contained areas at Y&V farm. CDFA is in the process of doing controlled releases of the insect in hopes that it will prey on ACP instars and slow the progress of the virulent pest.



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Victoria is pleased that she and Yianni have been able to bring the orchard back to life while responsibly managing the land. When asked of any challenges that come up because of their urban location, the ongoing battle with ACP is an obvious answer. While Victoria has received pressure from other conventional citrus growers in the region to use conventional methods for fighting the Psyllid, she is proud to contribute to research for organic solutions and hopeful that a remedy will be found.

## Envisioning 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agriculture

A.G. Kawamura (former California secretary of agriculture) and his brother Matthew are third-generation produce growers and shippers. Their company, Orange County Produce, has been farming a diverse set of urban and peri-urban parcels in the greater Los Angeles area for more than 50 years. At the time of A.G.'s birth, the family business, then called Western Marketing Company, was based in Glendale (Arizona), National City, and the area surrounding what would become Los Angeles International Airport. Before the building of the airport, the area was prime agricultural land. The family primarily grew vegetables, specializing in lettuce, cabbage, and celery. Rail was the primary way to ship vegetables at the time, so the family owned packing facilities close to the area's tracks.

A.G. and Matt's father saw the writing on the wall regarding urbanization in the L.A. basin. He moved the company south to Orange County where there were still rail lines and renamed it Orange County Produce. Because of the milder climate, the family consolidated their diverse production and bought a citrus packing plant. They were still growing and specializing in row crop vegetables until a glut in the strawberry market in 1959 brought a handful of small-scale, local, Japanese-American farmers to their doorstep. Taken advantage of in the Los Angeles market, they recognized the strength that Orange County Produce had in its ability to ship and market goods beyond the immediate surroundings. A deal was struck and Orange County Produce began to ship strawberries; it wasn't until many of those Japanese-American farmers retired in the early 1990s that Orange County Produce began to produce its own strawberries. The move towards strawberries (a high-value crop) was pushed in part by the need to generate greater revenue as the cost of land in Orange County continued to rise.

Today, Orange County Produce leases 100 percent of their land. The company rents from a variety of landowners (utilities, military, private, municipal entities) in a myriad of lease agreements ranging from crop-to-crop to one-year leases, the longest at 15 years. However, all of these leases, no matter how long, are contractually interruptible, meaning the property



owner can cancel or change the agreement at any time. Therefore, regardless of the length of the lease, their now-urban farming operations are still on precarious ground.

Their new project, 100 acres of CCOF-certified organic farmland at The Great Park in Irvine, is a way to give back to the community and demonstrate the potential of 21<sup>st</sup> Century agriculture. Their goals include the challenge of sustainably working with live systems and natural resources while trying to sustain a projected worldwide population of 9.6 billion by 2050. Alongside The Great Park project, Orange County Produce wanted to create a tangible vision for how the future of farming might unfold. They believe that urban agriculture will be integral to the success of agriculture in this coming century and that cities will surprise society by becoming nexuses of energy and food production. A.G. Kawamura and Orange County Produce look forward to being a part of that conversation.

## Join us in March!

These three farms and their respective experts will provide a unique opportunity at our 2014 Annual Meeting and Bus Tour to see how urban agricultural production and organic in particular is evolving to meet demands of one of the world's largest urban marketplaces. Don't miss your chance to be a part of this unique event! Visit [www.ccof.org/annualevent2014](http://www.ccof.org/annualevent2014) to register for the full tour.



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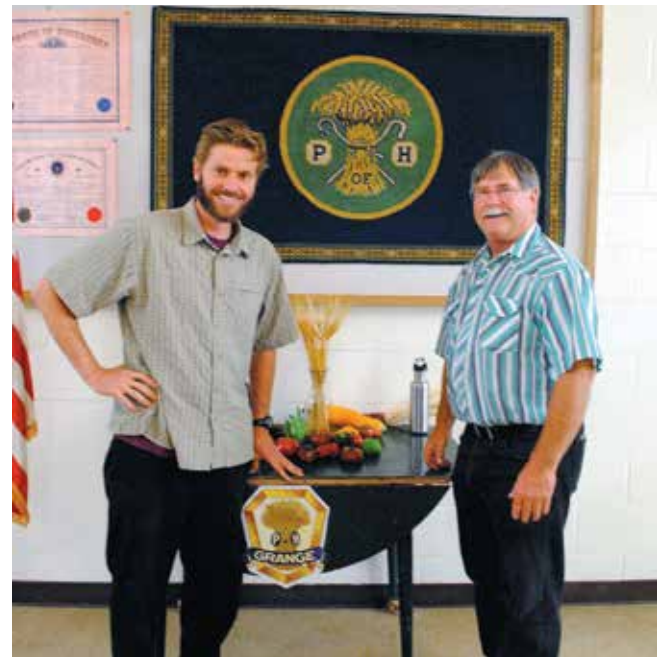
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*At left:* Pacific Southwest Chapter leadership and members (from left): Soleil Develle, Scott Murray, Mary Page, Tom Page, David Smith, and Karen Archipley.  
*At right:* Brian Coltrin, CCOF Certification Service Specialist, and Eric Michielssen, San Luis Obispo Chapter Treasurer and Secretary.

This fall was a busy time for the CCOF chapters. Meetings and elections took place statewide, food and drinks were shared, and CCOF members, leaders, and staff came together to talk over a range of issues including the new Mexico organic program, regional pest issues, and CCOF developments. These fall meetings were great examples of the magic that comes with bringing CCOF members together to talk about things our membership feels deeply about: food, organizational direction, and politics.

### San Luis Obispo (SL)

Highlights included a full-house meeting at the San Luis Obispo Grange where members put on a potluck and heard from local co-op representatives about purchasing procedures and procurement for local produce. Nominations for chapter leadership took place at the meeting and elections were held online. All past leaders were re-elected to their posts and Ron Labastida of Babé Farms was nominated and elected for the vacant vice president position. CCOF Certification Specialist Brian Coltrin and Outreach and Policy Specialist Jessie Beckett attended the meeting, presented, and answered questions from potential and current members.

### Pacific Southwest (PS)

The leadership of the Pacific Southwest chapter held a meeting on the evening of November 8 to talk about hosting the 2014 Annual Meeting, Bus Tour, and Beer and Wine Tasting event. Nominations were held and elections will soon be conducted

online. Hot topics included the new Mexico organic program and the Asian Citrus Psyllid. Growers were concerned about the lack of organic options to spray the virulent citrus pest as well as the conventional methods used in the state-mandated spraying. Scott Murray from Edge of Urban Farm shared about a new farm program for the Encinitas Union School District that he is helping to develop.

### Kern (KE)

The Kern chapter also held their meeting this fall. While eating comfort food from Hodel's Country Dining, the membership came together to hear from their board representative, Malcom Ricci, about current CCOF happenings, as well as CCOF's Jessie Beckett, who came down to Bakersfield to talk with members about policies and programs of the organization. David Haviland, entomology and pest management farm advisor with UC Cooperative Extension, attended the meeting and gave a rousing talk about Asian Citrus Psyllid and other pests that are currently troubling the area. Congratulations to Kent Stenderup and Mike Beagle, who were re-elected and elected respectively to chapter leadership.

***Let the CCOF community know what your chapter is doing!***

Write to [programs@ccof.org](mailto:programs@ccof.org) and we will publish your chapter update in the next edition of *Certified Organic*.

# URBAN ROOTS

Written by Jason Mark

Bob Short has lived in San Francisco's Excelsior neighborhood since 1979, and he remembers when the empty lot on Cotter Street was what he calls a "terra incognita." For years, the third-of-an-acre parcel was a mess of eight-foot-tall fennel, dog waste, and litter. The place seemed "kind of scary." Then, in 2009, the landscape dramatically changed. A pair of aspiring urban farmers, Brooke Budner and Caitlyn Galloway, got permission from the absentee landowner to turn the property into a vegetable patch. They created Little City Gardens, which today is a thriving agricultural enterprise. The weeds and trash are gone, replaced by tidy rows of Swiss chard, carefully mulched lines of lacinato kale, and hedges of artichokes, the kinds of crops that thrive in the foggy precincts of San Francisco. As one of the garden's neighbors, Short can't believe his good luck. "It absolutely rules," he says. "I'm in this big city, and I'm living next to a farm."

Little City Gardens' creation story perfectly follows the urban farming script that makes the media swoon: an eyesore, transformed into an oasis. Yet the garden's history can also be

read as a cautionary tale about the challenges and obstacles facing urban food production.

Although Little City Gardens sells to some of the city's fanciest restaurants (Frances and Bar Tartine, among others), owner-operator Galloway has struggled to pay herself a living wage and has held down various other jobs over the years. (Budner now lives on a sheep farm in Washington.) When it first opened, Little City Gardens was handicapped by outdated municipal ordinances that did not allow for the sale of city-grown food; the farmers had to spearhead a campaign to rewrite the local laws. And Galloway's aspirations for her farm remain hamstrung by a worry that bedevils many small farmers across the country: land tenure. Real estate values in San Francisco are astronomical (and ever-rising) thanks to the newly minted millionaires of the dot-com boom. Galloway could lose her land at any moment.

"We have a generous landlord but our insecurity has made it hard to make investments in trees, in other perennials, in a







## *Urban farms' most valuable crop is the lessons they share with their volunteers, customers, and visitors.*

---

hoop house," the 33-year old Galloway says. "It's also hard to make the emotional investment. Farming takes time – it's not enough to have sharp tools and seeds – and we don't know how much more time we'll have here."

A new California law might give Little City Gardens a little more breathing space. In September 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act (AB 551), which will give urban property owners a possible tax reduction if they lease their land to food producers. The law is loosely modeled on the Williamson Act, a state law that has long given tax breaks to landowners who lease to farmers or ranchers. Assemblyman Phil Ting, a former San Francisco assessor, sponsored the bill in the hopes that it would provide landowners with new incentives to take vacant properties and put them into a productive use.

"I'm hoping that property owners in cities and counties across California will take advantage of this law," Ting said at an October 2013 news conference held at Little City Gardens to celebrate the law's passage. "It's another tool in our toolbox to spur the growth of urban agriculture. I can't wait to see other properties transformed like this."

Ting's law is smart public policy: strategic in its broader goals and focused in its mechanics. However, it's possible that the excitement around the law may outpace what it ultimately delivers given that California counties have to decide to opt in to the tax re-evaluation scheme. In that sense, the law is not all that different from urban agriculture itself – a phenomenon whose media hype often seems to eclipse the accomplishments on the ground. As 21<sup>st</sup> Century urban farming leaves its salad days and enters a new stage of maturity, it is worth stepping back and examining what exactly urban farming can accomplish.

The first answer, obviously, is food production. Urban farming occurs in city neighborhoods (or, in the case of Detroit, an entire city) that have suffered from neglect and abandonment. It's the leftover places – the vacant lots, freeway right of ways, and unkempt parks – that make the best spots for farms and gardens. Such locations are usually found in poorer communities where residents have little or no access to fresh produce. The grow-it-yourself drive is first about addressing the crisis of food insecurity that grips impoverished neighborhoods. "In these so-called food desserts," Sarah Rich writes in the book, *Urban Farms*, "it is often easier to plant vegetables than to alter the inventory of mini-marts and liquor stores."

This strategy of neighborhood-scale food production has been shown to work. For example, the six greenhouses at Will Allen's Growing Power in Milwaukee annually grow thousands of pounds of salad mix, beet greens, arugula, seedlings, and sunflower and radish sprouts. The farm also harvests honey from a 14-hive apiary and has a flock of laying hens. The produce is sold at an onsite store as well as through a CSA-like "market basket" program. In Oakland, City Slicker Farms hosts a weekly farm stand with a three-tier pricing system that asks customers to self-select as either affluent, middle income, or low income. With its constellation of small market gardens scattered through west Oakland (and a larger, two-acre farm under development), City Slicker Farms is providing fresh fruits and vegetables to people who might not otherwise have access to such food.

Or take a look at San Francisco's largest food production site, Alemany Farm, which I co-founded. This year we'll grow about 12,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables, all of which are distributed for free to farm volunteers or families in need. Not bad for a patch of land wedged between a freeway and a public housing complex.



## *Urban farms turn people into good ecologists. Farmers, especially organic farmers, are well aware of the lessons taught by nature.*

---

But let's keep it real. While we're growing food for a lot of people, we're not coming close to feeding San Francisco. The six tons of produce we grow each year is a fraction of what passes through the San Francisco Produce Market or the warehouse of Veritable Vegetable *every day*.

It's important to remember that urban culture has never centered around farming. We have cities to be centers of art and science and commerce, not the foundations of our foodsheds. We aren't going to grow corn in LA's MacArthur Park or graze sheep in Golden Gate Park (as cool as that might be). Even were we to reach the food production levels of the World War II Victory Gardens, when backyard plots and community gardens were producing 40 percent of Americans' fruits and vegetables, urban agriculture wouldn't be able to sustain our cities.

So, yes, at the community garden level, urban agriculture is little more than a nice add-on to people's diets. But in some places, like Fairview Gardens in Goleta, California, a suburb of Santa Barbara, urban farms are operating at significant scale, growing tons of high-quality fruits and vegetables. Just as important, some sizable city farms also serve as local economic engines in impoverished communities. Urban farming, then, can be a kind of green jobs program, a way of creating good jobs with meaningful work.

One example is Greensgrow Farms in Philadelphia. Three different income sources – an onsite farm stand, a CSA program, and a nursery – generate close to a million dollars a year. Nineteen employees work at the farm, and for founder Mary

Seton Corboy, job creation is a central part of the mission. "When you become an asset to your community or neighborhood, then you've done something," Corboy has said. "I don't do this just to be tan."

In the course of that food justice and grassroots economic development work, urban farms accomplish another goal: they help demolish the tired stereotype of who cares about food. The American foodie is supposed to be educated, affluent, and white. The success of urban farms shows just how shallow and inaccurate that image is. By way of proof, just look at who comes to harvest at Alemany Farm. They are almost all working class or poor families and are every bit as committed to feeding their kids good, clean food as are the swells who shop at the San Francisco Ferry Building farmers' market. Chinese families come for the choy and green beans; Latino families come for the squash and peppers; African-American families come for the collard greens and mustard greens. The neighbors often end up doing a little weeding in the course of their harvest. The Chinese families, I have found, put lamb's quarters into their soups, while the Latino folks love purslane, which they call *verdulaga*. All of this goes to show that community engagement makes a great substitute for herbicides.

The viral success of Ron Finley, a guerilla gardener in South Central Los Angeles whose March 2013 TED Talk has been viewed 1.6 million times, is another inspiring example of organic agriculture's cross-cultural appeal. Finley's neighborhood is a place where, as he says, "the drive-thrus are killing more people than the drive-bys." So Finley responded by planting "food





forests” in the strips of open ground next to the sidewalk. “This is my gospel,” Finley says in the talk. “I tell people: ‘Growing your own food is like printing your own money.’”

Finley then pivots and says, “I’m manufacturing my own reality. You see, I’m an artist. Gardening is my graffiti.”

Finley’s vegetables-as-paint metaphor points to one of the other accomplishments of urban farming: the way in which it improves urban spaces. For many urban farms and gardens, the outlandishness of the whole endeavor is the point. The incongruity of the city-farm oasis forces us to rethink our ideas of what is possible in a city, as well as what is possible for agriculture. Exhibit A is rooftop farms in Brooklyn, whose views of staked tomatoes backgrounded by the Manhattan skyline have become the symbol of urban farming’s provocativeness. Farming in the ‘hood is a kind of horticultural performance art. Like much art, it’s meant to shake people out of themselves and encourage them to see the things in a fresh light.

Most of the urban farmers I know are very deliberate about their efforts to prompt a rethinking of how and where we can grow food. There’s hardly an urban farm in the United States that doesn’t boast some kind of educational component, whether for school children, homeless people, or recent immigrants. It turns out that urban farms’ most valuable crop is the lessons they share with their volunteers, customers, and visitors. Public education is the heartbeat of urban farming, and that education mission represents a major contribution to the larger push for a sustainable food system.

Urban farms turn people into good ecologists. Farmers, especially organic farmers, are well aware of the lessons taught by nature. Spend a few months taking a broccoli from seed to

harvest and you’ll soon have a much deeper appreciation for the ecosystems on which we depend. Watch the crops grow (or fail) and our connection to the earth becomes obvious. At an urban farm, this process happens in front of an audience. The garden produces a harvest of teachable moments about what it means to live in an environment.

Even more important, the urban farm or garden creates good citizens. Yes, I’m talking about the much-ballyhooed way in which gardens foster collaboration: the dot-com executives, city kids, and new immigrants working together at age-old tasks. But deeper than that, I mean the way in which even a tiny amount of self-grown crops changes our relationship to food. A volunteer at an urban farm might spend an afternoon, say, turning the compost for a broccoli bed, and by the end of the day she understands that farming is hard work, demanding of intelligence. That alone (or so I hope) creates a new appreciation for the value of food. A bit of dirt under the fingernails helps people to see that eating is, as Wendell Berry famously said, “an agricultural act,” and a reminder that we pay too little for the food we eat.

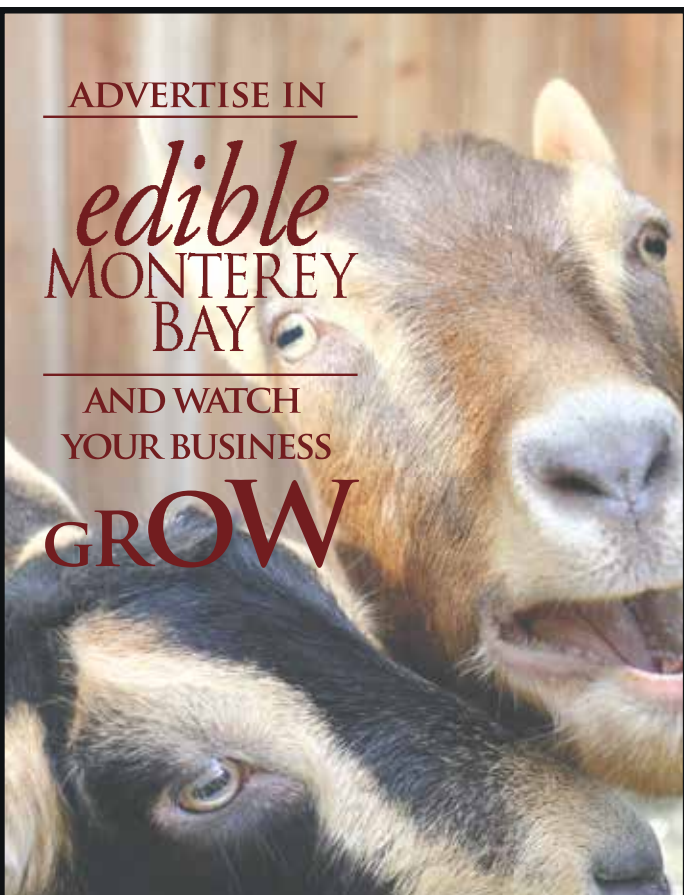
At its best, urban farming cultivates an appreciation for the hard work and conscientiousness of the farmers in the fields far away from any city. It helps make people into more thoughtful eaters. No, urban farming will never feed a city. But it accomplishes something just as important. Urban farming forces the city dweller to think about all of the people who feed us: the farmworkers, the truck drivers, the processors and the packagers, the prep cooks, all of whom work for next to nothing and have little time themselves to play in the dirt.



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## *Food Safety Comment Period Success*

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The Food Safety Modernization Act will have significant implications for farmers and processors across the nation. CCOF has been committed to engaging with organic farmers about the potential impacts of these regulations. During the open comment period on the proposed regulations, we sponsored listening sessions with the FDA, offered webinars, and co-hosted farmer workshops around the state with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers. These workshops were a particularly great format for growers to ask questions, share their input about how the proposed regulations might affect their operations, and learn how to make comments on the proposals. CCOF partner organizations including the Wild Farm Alliance spoke about the work they are doing on food safety. Issues such as co-management of food safety and wildlife, water testing requirements, and the proposed change in interval between application of compost or manure and harvest got particular attention.

While we do not yet know what will be in the final regulation or if the FDA will decide to offer a second version of the proposed regulation for the public to comment on, we do know that organic farmers were paying attention and sharing their perspectives with the FDA. We hope that the final rules will take this input seriously and offer solutions that will ensure public health while making sure any regulatory requirements are compatible with the realities of organic farming.

## **Farm Bill Discussions Continue**

CCOF farmers have been actively advocating for organic farm bill programs. At the time of writing, Congress has been “conferencing” the farm bill, negotiating the differences between House- and Senate-passed bills. Many organic programs are up for grabs during this process but CCOF members are not sitting idly by! In fact, CCOF has facilitated 63 meetings this year between organic farmers and policymakers, almost all of which have been around farm bill issues.

In November, just as the negotiations were really heating up, CCOF grower and former board member Steve Koretoff of Purity Organics went to Washington D.C. to represent CCOF and organic growers’ concerns in the farm bill. There, he visited 10 congressional offices and spoke to members of Congress and congressional staffers about key programs like the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, other organic programs, conservation programs, USDA beginner farmer programs, and rural development initiatives. Of particular note was a meeting with the staff of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who has been a key player in the farm bill debate. Steve also met the office of Representative Sam Farr, ranking member of the House Agriculture Appropriations Committee and co-chair of the House Organic Caucus; the office of Representative Jeff Denham, farm bill conferee; and many others. Steve had strong rapport with these offices and did a great job speaking from the heart about the importance of USDA programs better serving organic farmers.

In addition, Brad Samuelson and Michael Fagundes of Fagundes Dairy joined Policy Director Brise Tencer at an in-district meeting with Congressman Jim Costa. They were able to personalize the message of supporting organic farmers, which is key as we look to Representative Costa to champion some of our organic farm bill priorities.

On November 19, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack visited California and held an open forum-style meeting on the farm bill in Fresno. Five CCOF growers from our Fresno-Tulare chapter participated. Other producers came to a grower roundtable we co-hosted with ALBA in Salinas for USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Administrator Anne Alonzo. There we discussed the farm bill and other needs and issues facing the organic farming sector.

While the political issues that have stalled the farm bill are broader than organic policy priorities, you can be sure that organic priorities will not be forgotten in the debates, thanks to our many active CCOF members.



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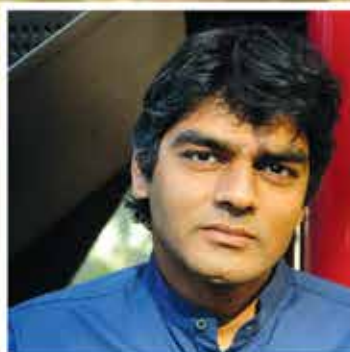
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## ACP Continues to Spread

The Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) continues to spread. Recent findings in Strathmore and Porterville, California, this fall resulted in eradication zones. Growers within these zones were required to spray with organic-prohibited materials. There were five organic parcels within these two areas, so those growers will not be able to sell any present fruit as organic. We have been working with other members of the Organic Trade Association (OTA) Citrus Task Force to prevent devastating consequences to the rest of the organic citrus industry in the future. This involves releasing research conducted on an organic protocol for ACP to the public and having organic options added to the list of approved materials for these ACP eradication efforts. CCOF and organic citrus growers attended meetings of the Scientific Advisory Panel for ACP and the Citrus Research Board in December. As soon as the organic protocol becomes public, we will post it on the CCOF blog, [www.ccof.org/blog](http://www.ccof.org/blog).

There had been ACP finds in Dinuba, Exeter, and Wasco, California, earlier in the fall, which resulted in the expansion of quarantine areas into parts of Kern and Fresno, and Tulare County. In order to move bulk citrus out of any quarantine area there must be a special permit obtained from CDFA. This involves either cleaning product of stems and leaves or treating postharvest with an organic-prohibited material. Access details and maps of eradication and quarantine zones at [www.cdfa.ca/plant/go/acp-quarantine-sjv](http://www.cdfa.ca/plant/go/acp-quarantine-sjv).

The efforts to raise *Tamarixia radiata*, a bio-control insect, have ramped up significantly in the last few months, with the first releases beginning in August in Los Angeles and Riverside

counties. A new facility for mass rearing the insects began production in December. Research is also well underway for rearing the insects in field cages: a whole citrus tree is caged and the pest and beneficials are then released into the cage so that feeding and breeding will occur. Meanwhile, the OTA Citrus Task Force met by webinar with the scientific branch of USDA-APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) to go over alternative protocols that are used successfully in Florida and Texas against ACP and Huanglongbing. Techniques involving nutritional balancing, beneficial releases, and timing of organic sprays are all acknowledged as viable options by the APHIS scientists. However, they are not accepted as an approach to the eradication efforts that are prevalent in California. Organic growers need to be vigilant and raise the healthiest trees possible in order to withstand the spread of this pest. More information can be found on the CDFA website for ACP. Follow our blog at [www.ccof.org/blog](http://www.ccof.org/blog) for updates on this and other pests.

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## Spring NOSB Meeting Scheduled

As a result of the 16-day government shut down, the October meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) was cancelled. Because of the challenges of rescheduling a fall meeting, the next NOSB meeting will be the regularly scheduled spring meeting in San Antonio, Texas, April 29 through May 1.

Although the meeting was cancelled, CCOF submitted written comments to the *Federal Register* notice on an array of issues. Those comments can be viewed at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) by searching for AMS-NOP-13-0049.



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## *The Importance of Protecting Bees*

The global decline in honey bee populations has become a concern lately, and with good reason. Without bees, many important crops including apples, almonds, blueberries, cherries, avocados, and organics would disappear.

One of the easiest ways to help bees is by choosing organic. Organic farms not only avoid using pesticides that are toxic to honey bees, they also provide habitat and greater numbers of flowers to feed on.

There are also measures that can be taken on the national level to help curtail the threats to pollinator species. In fact, the Organic Trade Association (OTA) and other advocacy groups have signed on to a letter encouraging congressional farm bill conferees to include an amendment designed to protect honey bees and other pollinators.

This fall, the Center for Food Safety circulated a letter addressed to Senate and House farm bill conferees to support this amendment first offered to the House Farm Bill by Rep. Alcee Hastings of Florida and Rep. Marcy Kaptur of Ohio. Passing by an overwhelming margin of 273-149 in the House, this language was subsequently added to the House's agriculture-only bill.

Provisions in the amendment are aimed toward ensuring the

long-term viability of populations of honey bees, wild bees, and other beneficial pollinators. Initiatives provided include:

- Establishing better inter-agency coordination on pollinator health;
- Creating a USDA task force on bee health and commercial beekeeping;
- Directing federal agencies to provide guidance on issues related to pollinator health;
- Monitoring and reporting on health and population status of managed and native pollinators, including bees, birds, bats, and other species; and
- Assessing the feasibility for new public bee research labs.

OTA believes it is critical to pollinators' health to have these provisions included in the final farm bill.

The Organic Center, OTA's affiliated nonprofit, has been tracking the latest research on Colony Collapse Disorder. A recent study published in the journal *PLOS-ONE* showed the combination of insecticides and fungicides can adversely impact bees' immune systems, resulting in decreased ability to resist infection by a parasite implicated in Colony Collapse Disorder, which has been cited as a cause of the recent decimation of honey bees. Researchers found that the pollen bees collect to feed to their larvae contained an average of nine different pesticide contaminants and made bees three times as likely to be infected by the parasite.

Additional studies have looked at neonicotinoid pesticides and their toxicity to bees. Neonicotinoids, which are often applied to seeds, become systemic through the growing plant. This class of insecticide has been held responsible for massive bee die-offs, and researchers continue to document proof of its toxicity to bees. For example, research by Chensheng (Alex) Lu, a professor in the Department of Environmental Health at Harvard School of Public Health, has shown that 94 percent of hives fed corn syrup containing low doses of neonicotinoids died within 23 weeks.

OTA and The Organic Center recognize the importance of bees in agriculture and the high threat level of Colony Collapse Disorder. As a result, we will continue to promote systems and policies that support biodiversity and pollinator health. We will encourage best practice standards such as crop rotations, diversified planting, and hedgerows to increase pollinator resources on farms. At the same time, we will discourage the use of pesticides, particularly systemic pesticides such as neonicotinoids.

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## Certification and Inspection Fees Changing January 1, 2014

After several years with no changes, we are modifying our inspection fees to keep up with rising costs and ensure excellent service. Effective January 1, inspection fees are \$65 per hour for preparation, inspection, and report writing time. Travel time will be billed at \$44 per hour. These increases are intended to be modest and to minimally affect the majority of CCOF operations. At the same time, we are implementing a new inspection report writing system to drive new efficiencies so you experience better service from CCOF as a whole, including lower costs and better inspections.

## Mexico Organic Standards Finalized

The final section of the Mexican government's organic program, the revised production guidelines, was published at the end of October 2013. The guidelines ("Lineamientos") join the regulations ("Regulamentos") published in 2010 and the law ("Ley") published in 2006 to complete the Mexican organic certification program. The official documents are currently available only in Spanish but we are working on obtaining English versions and will make them available as soon as possible.

This new national organic program requires that all organic operations in Mexico become certified to the Mexican standard by a certifying agent approved by the Mexican government. CCOF-certified operations will have until April 29, 2015, to meet this requirement. (The requirements go into effect six months after publication, or April 29, 2014, but operations with "voluntary certification" such as the USDA National Organic Program are given an extra year.)

We are working hard to analyze the new program and its requirements and develop a certification program that will meet the needs of organic operations located in Mexico and their U.S.-based partners. We are also communicating with stakeholders and government officials to gain clarity on important sections of the program and hope to have more concrete and detailed information to pass along soon.

CCOF will be communicating specifically with certified clients in Mexico about the details of this upcoming requirement; however, operations in the United States may be affected if they buy organic products from Mexico and should be aware

## MyCCOF Certification and Supplier Management Improvements

CCOF has recently improved the MyCCOF: Supplier Management service and expanded our rollout. New improvements:

1. MyCCOF: Supplier Management is now free to all client MyCCOF users. We have decided that all authorized contacts of CCOF-certified clients may use Supplier Management free of charge with their MyCCOF account. Simply click the "Supplier Management" link at the top of MyCCOF to stop chasing certificates and easily see the current certification status of CCOF-certified operations. Visit [www.ccof.org/myccof](http://www.ccof.org/myccof) for more information.
2. Filters and dates in Supplier Management allow you to see when certificates were last updated.
3. MyCCOF: Certification Management now includes quick renewal and payment links throughout the system, as well as the ability to print copies of invoices.

We are considering additional features and improvements throughout our systems in the coming months and welcome your thoughts and feedback.



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of the upcoming changes. Note that this new certification program applies to all operations in Mexico, even if they are only producing product for export to the United States or abroad. Please look for additional information in upcoming CCOF publications. We will be sure to share as much information as we can, as soon as we can, to all affected parties. If you have questions, concerns, or information about your needs in Mexico, please contact [ccof@ccof.org](mailto:ccof@ccof.org). We remain firmly committed to meeting the needs of our clients in Mexico, and elsewhere, to ensure ongoing market access.

## Updates from Certification News Online

We are including these recent changes and updates that appeared online and were included in Certification News emails.

### Significant Changes to Certification Manual - All CCOF Clients Affected

We have made some substantial changes to our Certification Services Program Manual.

These changes affect all CCOF clients and you will be asked on your 2014 Continuation of Certification Contract (renewal contract) to verify that you agree to the policies described in this manual. Changes:

- The ability for CCOF to charge clients for unannounced inspections if the client is given prior notification that they will be charged (see manual page 8)
- Clarifications to the "Indemnification" and "Limitations of Liability" clauses to more specifically describe who is covered by these clauses (see manual pages 27 & 28)
- Increase of the new application one-time fee from \$275 to \$325

Please take a moment to review the current Certification Services Program Manual. Contact your Certification Service Specialist if you have any questions.

### Updates Made to NOP Standards Manual

The USDA has published Final Rules that, effective November

3, 2013, update the USDA organic regulations. These three changes are about materials allowed for use in organic handling and processing. We have updated our NOP Standards Manual to reflect these changes. Download our updated manual at [www.ccof.org/clients/standards](http://www.ccof.org/clients/standards).

- Amendment to silicon dioxide annotation in 605
- Removal of annatto color from 606
- Removal of tartaric acid made from malic acid from 605(b). Note that tartaric acid made from grape wine is still allowed per 605(a).

### U.S.-Japan Bilateral Export Agreement

Great News! Just recently, the USDA National Organic Program and the Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) signed a bilateral equivalency agreement, going into effect January 1, 2014. This agreement eases the process for organic exports to Japan by eliminating additional requirements for exported products and providing new options for use of the Japanese organic seal ("JAS seal").

Previously, we had to conduct additional verification through our Global Market Access program of all farmers whose crops were used as ingredients in products exported to Japan. To everyone's benefit, this additional program enrollment and verification will no longer be necessary for anyone except companies that directly export to Japan. This will result in an annual savings of \$125 in certification fees for a large number of farmers and ingredient suppliers. CCOF has already removed the previous MAFF/USDA verification program from approximately 650 clients who no longer need it.

Visit CCOF Certification News online at [www.ccof.org/certification-news](http://www.ccof.org/certification-news) for more information about how you are affected.

### Korean Import Restrictions Going into Effect January 1, 2014

After at least two extensions for processed organic products entering Korea, it has become clear that the Korean government will enforce its regulation requiring certification to Korean standards effective January 1, 2014. Fresh products are already subject to this requirement.

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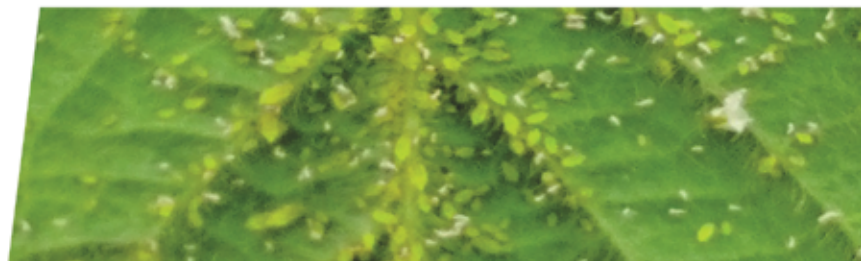
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