

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



Certified Organic

MAGAZINE

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Spring 2011

INSIDE LOOK

Growing a More Sustainable Food Trade

Organic positioned to lead the way



Friendly New Faces at CCOF
OTA's Report from the Capitol
Supporting Organic Interests

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Growing a More Sustainable Food Trade, Organically

"We have an inherently powerful sustainability story to share."
– Natalie Reitman-White, FTSLA Executive Director

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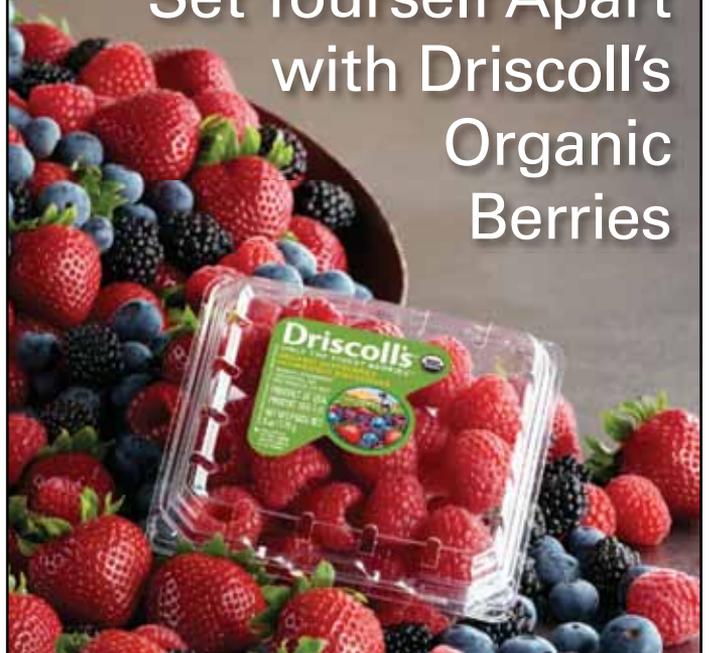
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first
WORDS

Sustainability is a popular word these days. In the world of organic certification, much confusion exists around this word: sustainability versus organic, regulations versus responsibility, etc. In agriculture, we use it as a standard for diversity and longevity in our ecological systems. In everyday life, we use it to define our ability to tolerate, continue, or even conquer a situation, job, or relationship.

CCOF has the capacity to endure, but in this changing political climate, desires not just to endure but to thrive as the leading voice for organic. In accordance with its new strategic goal of keeping organic relevant, CCOF chose to enter into a strategic alliance with the Organic Trade Association (OTA) in February. These two leading U.S. organic agriculture and trade associations will work together to leverage the collective reach of their diverse memberships, and to specifically increase the representation of organic producers in federal legislative advocacy. Together the two organizations will advance organic, providing the industry with more sustainability for future generations. This new strategic alliance will have a powerful impact on organic agriculture—read all about it on page 16.

As organic producers and growers, our livelihoods exist at the forefront of sustainability, and the opportunities to continue improving our practices and decrease our footprint are

growing every day. This edition of *Certified Organic* features organic producers who have committed to take sustainability to a higher level through partnering with the Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association. Read about their efforts on page 34 and start thinking of ways that your organization can implement more sustainable practices.

Innovation is also key to achieving sustainability. CCOF continues to innovate its work in certifying, educating, advocating and promoting organic through strong leadership and creativity. I am happy to welcome Cathy Calfo, the new CCOF, Inc. Executive Director. Get to know Cathy, and other key members of the trade association, on page 38. Also, as you read, take note that this edition (and future editions) of *Certified Organic* may begin to look a little different to you as the magazine gets an innovative look and feel.

So here's to spring and to the opportunity to grow a more sustainable food trade, organically.



Will Daniels
Chairman of the Board, CCOF, Inc.



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OFRF Awards Research Grants Under Seed Matters Initiative

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) recently awarded five grants focused on organic seed and breeding research as part of the Clif Bar Family Foundation Seed Matters Initiative, a five-year project focused on securing genetic biodiversity and farmer access to seed. The Clif Bar Family Foundation donation of over \$50,000 allowed OFRF to award a grant to Kevin Murphy of Washington State University, who proposed a farmer-based participatory plant breeding program for spelt, quinoa, and buckwheat. Another grant recipient, Micaela Colley of the Organic Seed Alliance, will create four organic seed breeding guides for farmers and breeders. These grants further OFRF's mission to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems. Proposals on all topics related to organic farming are welcome, with special funding available for projects related to organic

seed quality or crop breeding. Proposals are considered twice a year; the next deadline is May 16, 2011. Details on applying are available through the OFRF website or contact Grants Program Director Jane Sooby by phone at **(831) 426-6606** or by email at **jane@ofrf.org**.

Former OTA Executive Director Back at USDA

Caren Wilcox, former Executive Director and CEO of Organic Trade Association, has begun a new position at the USDA. Wilcox will serve as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary. This is her second position at the USDA, her previous one

being the Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety, a position she held from 1997 to 2001. Prior to her time at OTA, Wilcox was president and CEO of Caren Wilcox & Associates LLC, a public policy firm. Wilcox is one of many organic advocates and leaders to return to the nation's capital to work towards a better food system. Congratulations to Caren Wilcox for bringing support to organic at the federal level!

Report on Organic Shopping Behavior

A report by SPINS, a company focused on natural food sales data, shows that despite the recession and the pressures it has placed on the budgets of most families, consumers are still committed to buying organic foods. According to the study, the percentage of households purchasing organic products has increased from 67% to 68% within the last year. Although from the outset this increase may not seem substantial, the study makes apparent the good news that households are diversifying their organic purchases. Household purchases of organic grew in 34 categories, with the top growing categories being packaged fresh produce, yogurt and kefir, energy bars and gels, sweeteners, soup, refrigerated condiments, coffee and cocoa, and eggs. Tony Olson, CEO of SPINS, remarked: "Trends indicate that the organic sector will continue to grow as more consumers recognize that purchasing organics is a simple and efficient solution to addressing many of their families' health & wellness and food safety concerns as well as over-arching sustainability goals. An organic shopping strategy becomes increasingly viable for all U.S. households as access is increased through the growing presence of organic products in major conventional outlets."

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Pesticides Shown to Disrupt Male Hormones

A recent study conducted in the UK shows that many agricultural pesticides disrupt male hormones. Out of 37 commonly used pesticides tested by the group, 30 blocked or mimicked male hormones. Until now, 16 of the 30 pesticides had no known hormonal activity. British scientists tested the pesticides by using in-vitro assays to determine the effects of the pesticides on hormone receptors in cells that control gene function. Many of these recently discovered hormone disruptors are fungicides that are applied to fruit and vegetable crops. Applied late in harvest, fungicides are frequently found as residue in food. Fetuses and infants are especially at risk of pesticide exposure. Prior research has linked pesticides to abnormal genital development in baby boys and decreased sperm counts in

men. The study was funded by the European Commission and conducted at the University of London. Scientists picked which pesticides to study based on their prevalence in European fruits and vegetables. These pesticides are approved for use in many other countries, including the United States. This study indicates an urgent need for pesticide screening as many of these chemicals have proven to have serious long-term, negative effects on the human body.

GE Alfalfa Approved by USDA

On February 27, 2011 the organic community was disappointed to learn that the USDA approved the sale of genetically engineered alfalfa seeds. The agency reported that it will fully deregulate Monsanto's RoundUp Ready alfalfa, which is engineered to resist the herbicide RoundUp, also

produced by Monsanto. This decision was controversial, as the genetically engineered alfalfa crop was pulled off the market in 2007 after a U.S. District Court judge, Charles Breyer, ruled that the USDA had not fully carried out a complete Environmental Impact Statement, which details the effects the introduction of the seeds would have on the environment, including the effects on non-GMO plants and organically grown crops. Now that the alfalfa seeds will be introduced into the market and can start being planted this spring, many feel that the legality of genetically engineered alfalfa is a threat to both organic and non-organic growers. The USDA said that its goal going forward is to help "maintain purity of non-GE alfalfa seed" and it hopes to further a discussion of how GE crops can coexist with organic and non-GE crops. Be assured that the USDA's decision is not the end of the battle over GE crops; already the Center of Food Safety is planning to bring the USDA to court over this decision once again, and hopefully have the decision reversed as it has been in many other cases against genetically modified crops.



Take Action! Visit the Center for Food Safety to learn about GE Alfalfa and how you can get involved.

www.centerforfoodsafety.org

Sustainable Farming in West Africa - A Positive Alternative to Conventional Practices

The West African Regional Integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM) Programme is cutting pesticide usage and boosting both yields and incomes

of West African farmers. IPPM, which is executed by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, is benefiting around 100,000 farmers in Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Senegal. The program runs Farmer Field Schools where farmers work in small groups learning to adopt better agricultural practices, many of them in common with organic production, such as natural pesticide and cropping practices and the use of beneficial insects and compost. Farmers are learning these practices through hands-on field experiments, such as comparing training plots using conventional practices to those used with the best practices for the crop and location based on IPPM guidelines. In this

community based project, over 2000 trainers from local government, the private sector and civil society encourage farmers and support them in their use of sustainable agricultural practices. Cotton production in these countries has one of the worst environmental impacts of any crop in the region, but the IPPM program has shown impressive changes: a survey conducted in Mali revealed a 94% reduction in chemical pesticides and a 400% increase in the use of organic materials such as compost and manure since the program's inception. In addition to the use of compost, IPPM teaches farmers to plant leguminous cover crops, which can then be sold to local markets or fed to animals.



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Florida Whole Foods Markets to Serve as CSA Drop Points

Whole Foods Markets recently announced a statewide Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative in Florida to connect consumers with local farmers who supply them with a seasonal box of fresh and local produce. This new program will attempt to bridge the long running gap between local farmers and consumers. As explained by Russ Benblatt, Executive Marketing Coordinator for the Whole Foods Market Florida region, not every local producer can be presented on Whole Foods' shelves; however, this CSA initiative will attempt to represent more producers. The strategy was tested in several Florida stores over the past few months, in hopes to educate shoppers about CSA programs while marketing smaller family farms to consumers. The amount of farms represented in the CSA drop points will be based on storage capacity and a first come, first served basis.

Organic Valley Awarded "Processor of the Year"

One of the country's largest organic brands and CCOF Supporting Member, Organic Valley, was granted the title of "Processor of the Year" by Dairy Foods magazine. The leading dairy publication awarded the cooperative's founding farmer and CEO, George Siemon, on January 23 in Miami. Siemon thanked both the publication and its cooperative members for a great year and for receiving the award. Organic Valley is the largest cooperative of organic farmers and foresees reaching close to \$630

million in sales this year, an increase of almost 20% from the previous year. The brand represents 1,624 farmers in 34 states and four Canadian territories, providing a large variety of organic foods, produce, and other products that are largely sold in natural food stores and supermarkets.

Earthbound Farm's Cookbook Earns Notoriety

Earthbound Farm's Myra Goodman was recognized by the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in January for her organic-inspired cookbook *The Earthbound Cook: 250 Recipes for Delicious Food and a Healthy Planet*. Winning the "Best Innovative Cookbook" category, the co-founder of Earthbound Farm competed against submissions from over 150 countries. Goodman's book has a three-tiered structure, with frequent and informative spotlights, side-notes, and suggestions to educate cooks to make more sustainable food choices, including choices of utensils, preparation, and disposal. Goodman has also distributed *Food to Live By: The Earthbound Farm Organic Cookbook*, which also received ample notoriety. The intention of these books is to show consumers how to cook delicious meals and also to inform about the environmental repercussions of certain food choices.



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Lundberg Family Farms Converts Warehouse Facility to 100% Green Energy

Lundberg Family Farms announced in January that it will be opening a 37,558 square-foot facility completely powered by solar energy. The third-generation producer from the Sacramento Valley is installing 1,690 solar panels, which are projected to generate 500,000 kWh of electricity, an amount that is more than enough to power the warehouse. In conjunction with the other solar energy produced on the farm, 20% of the entire operation is now powered by solar energy. The farm purchases the remaining 80% of the energy used with renewable credits, with the entire facility utilizing some form of "green" energy. The new warehouse is being built to U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Certification Standards and will also have a storm water runoff capture system. Water use in the facility will be reduced by 39%, with waterless urinals, electronic faucets, and dual flush water toilets. These new sustainable efforts will save over 15 thousand gallons of water each year. The new warehouse will be constructed primarily of majority-recycled steel and all recycled aggregate base rock.

powered by biomass. Earth Thirst will be distributed, in limited quantities, beginning in March. The brewery, which was the first certified organic brewery in the United States, produces seven year-round styles of brew along with some limited and seasonal brews that are uniquely handcrafted, organic, and traditional.

EO Products Used Backstage at the Academy Awards



CCOF Supporting Member EO Products, a natural and organic body care line, was selected to prepare some celebrities prior to the 83rd Annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles on February 27. The line's shampoo, conditioner, styling products, lotion, and body oils were used backstage by eight stylists. EO products are free of parabens, polysorbates, disodium EDTA, and synthetic fragrances.

Co-founder Susan Griffin-Black was extremely grateful for the opportunity both to advertise her products and publicize the natural and organic products movement in such a public arena.

Eel River Releases Special Edition Earth Day Beer

To mark Earth Day this year, Eel River Brewing Company is releasing Earth Thirst, a new Double IPA, and donating a part of its proceeds to CCOF. This special edition beverage will display Eel River's commitment to sustainability, the purchase of sustainable and organic products, and the company's support of like-minded non-profits such as CCOF. The Double IPA is brewed with more than 3 pounds of hops per barrel, giving it a refreshing and striking aroma. Earth Thirst is made of locally grown and produced materials. Eel River's beers are 100% organic and 100% sustainable as the brewery's facility is

Is your organization making headlines? We love to share our members' achievements! Email your good works to marketing@ccof.org

CCOF "Likes"

Member News Meets Social Networking



Massa Organics via [Facebook](#): "Hosting an Elderhostel field trip today. Time to get ready for 35 'Elders'! They are usually a fun group."

Great idea, Massa Organics! Hosting a community organization or school on your farm is a great way to share your farm story.



Guayaki Yerba Mate Bar via [Facebook](#): "The Mate Bar will host 5 films this year at the Sebastopol Film Festival. Here is the schedule at the Mate Bar. For more info visit sebastopolfilmfestival.org. See you there."

What a fantastic way to integrate art and organics. The Mate Bar will contribute to the Sebastopol Film Festival as well as sponsor the films.



Fillmore Farms via [Facebook](#): "For years we've been making almond milk and using it instead of dairy. The other day I thought, 'Hello, you have a never-ending supply of walnuts ... what are you using almonds for?' So I tried substituting walnuts for almonds, sharing the recipe with others, and the positive comments just keep on coming!"

With only a few ingredients, all listed on Fillmore Farm's Facebook page, you can enjoy this simple treat. Visit their Facebook page for the recipe.



The Penny Ice Creamery via [Facebook](#): "We are deeply honored to stand in for hardworking small business owners across America at the State of the Union Address."

The business owners created a video to thank the Obama administration for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds which allowed them to open their business, and garnered national attention after posting it on YouTube.



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CCOF Annual Convention A Huge Success!

Despite being hit with two days of rain and hail, over 150 participants, speakers, and exhibitors gathered for the CCOF Annual Convention from February 18-20, in Ventura, CA. *Growing the Organic Market* was the theme of this year's convention, which was packed with three full days of meetings, workshops, panel presentations, and an Ojai Valley farm and market tour.

The convention began with the CCOF annual membership meeting highlighting major advances in certification, policy, chapter innovation, and the launch of CCOF's new online tool, MyCCOF. A reception followed with organic beer, wine, and hors d'oeuvres donated by CCOF certified members.

Saturday was full to the brim with hands-on workshops led by market experts who provided tips and outlined pitfalls to avoid when working in various market channels. The morning began with the "Organic State of the Union" panel, which included Christine Bushway of the Organic Trade Association, who helped lead the day by outlining major trends and challenges facing the growth of the organic market. A key highlight of the day was the "Telling Your Story" panel where presenters shared their experiences in marketing their product and building the organic community through social media tools like blogs, Facebook, and Twitter.

The day concluded with keynote speaker Rayne Pegg, Administrator of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, spoke about USDA programs and resources that support organic. Pegg also discussed the budget challenges facing congress and USDA with implications for organic agriculture.

Sunday morning offered a review of the basic steps to organic certification and a packed tour of Ojai Valley farms, including Earthtrine Farm and Gozo Farm, where participants listened to captivating stories from seasoned farmers BD Dautch and Steve Sprinkel. Tour attendees then enjoyed an organic lunch at the Farmer and the Cook Restaurant and a tour of the Ojai Farmers' Market, which has grown to over 150 stalls.

CCOF would like to thank all of the Annual Convention Sponsors and Exhibitors for their support as well as the CCOF members who donated their organic products to the event.



"I had a great time interacting with all the smart and dedicated folks on Friday and Saturday. I always come away from these gatherings inspired and ready to tackle the big problems and opportunities facing the organic community."

- Rick Lejeune,
Heath & Lejeune

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Promoting Members and Organic Certification at Industry Trade Shows

CCOF recently returned from attending and exhibiting at the 2011 Winter Fancy Food Show, World Ag Expo, and Natural Products Expo West. These trade shows allow CCOF to promote organic and our members while providing the opportunity to meet new potential clients. CCOF Chief Certification Officer, Jake Lewin, spoke to interested attendees about organic certification at this year's Fancy Food Show. Jake also spoke to Natural Products Expo West attendees in the "Innovations in Organic Supply and Sourcing" session. CCOF hosted a reception at Natural Products Expo West on March 12, 2011, for members and potential clients interested in CCOF's online certification management portal, MyCCOF.

CCOF Speaks to Small Farmer Education Program

CCOF Grower Certification Specialists, Rebecca Silver and Cacia Huff, gave a presentation on February 3, 2011, at the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) in Salinas, CA. Programa Educativa para Pequeños Agricultores

(PEPA) or Small Farmer Education Program, is a six-month, bilingual adult education program that assists farmers in starting and operating a small farm business. The presentation, which was given in both English and Spanish, addressed the history of organic agriculture and NOP standards and detailed the steps to organic certification. CCOF is grateful to have had this opportunity to work so closely with ALBA, a certified member since 1992.

Learning and Educating at EcoFarm 2011

CCOF staff members had the amazing opportunity once again to attend the annual EcoFarm Conference at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, CA, from January 26-29, 2011. This conference brings together organic and sustainable agriculture advocates, educators, writers, producers, and farmers to learn about innovative practices and to speak with each other about controversial issues in sustainable agriculture. Devon Pattillo, CCOF Livestock Certification Specialist, spoke to a group of interested farmers about standards for organic livestock certification including feed, living conditions, health care, slaughter, and processing. The group, which consisted mostly of non-certified producers, learned more about what "organic" means and how it differs from other label claims such as "free range," "humane," and "grass fed." Debbie Leverenz, now a CCOF full-time inspector, was also present to answer

additional questions and concerns. While staff members attended panels and discussions, others spoke with potential clients and current members about organic certification at CCOF's exhibitor booth. CCOF staff returned from the three-day event excited and optimistic about the future of sustainable agriculture, already looking forward to EcoFarm 2012.

OTA and CCOF Join Forces!

CCOF is pleased to announce that we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Organic Trade Association (OTA) agreeing to a strategic alliance to strengthen the organic industry's national public policy to benefit our members and the entire organic industry.

The two leading organic agriculture and trade associations in the United States will work together, while remaining independent organizations, to leverage the collective reach of their diverse memberships, and to specifically increase the representation of organic producers in federal legislative advocacy. With over 470,000 acres in certified organic production, California is the nation's leading state for organic agriculture. Now, OTA will bring the voice of over 6,500 organic businesses, more than 2,500 from California alone, to officials in Washington. Together we will advance organic.



As part of the agreement, OTA recognizes CCOF Inc. as a member of OTA's Producers Advisory Council, which provides OTA with input from organic farmers, ranchers, and growers on matters pertinent to the advancement of organic agriculture. OTA, with a permanent Washington, D.C., office, advocates for the organic industry on the national level. This seat at the table will allow CCOF the opportunity to ensure that our members' needs are being heard at the national level. Also in the agreement, OTA has pledged to support CCOF on its national policy positions and political advocacy efforts to protect and encourage organic food and agriculture in the state of California. This new venture gives CCOF/OTA over 60 years of combined experience in marketing and advocating for organic.

CCOF is extremely pleased to be able to work with OTA on behalf of the organic movement and our members. *Certified Organic* will now feature a running column from the OTA entitled *National Policy Update*. See the next page for this new feature and the latest on organic news in D.C.

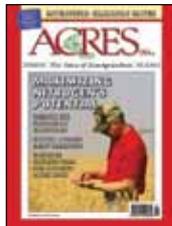
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Predictably, the current climate in our nation's capital centers on budgetary issues. With 2010 election results perceived as reflecting voter disappointment in government spending, Congress and the Obama Administration have been looking at unprecedented cuts to government programs.

The current focus on budgetary constraints is unfortunate for organic because only recently has the sector begun to receive the attention it deserves and needs on the federal level to continue to thrive. In fact, it was not until the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill that the organic sector saw monumental gains.

That bill quintupled mandatory spending on organic programs and authorized additional spending when appropriated. Gains included money for research and certification cost-share programs, for organic data collection, and conservation money for organic producers. Additional authorizations for the National Organic Program (NOP) helped this agency add the staffing and resources needed to be more effective in fulfilling its mission.

Those gains were long overdue, yet now any and all of these could be at risk. In the current and foreseeable budgetary climate it is critical that organic producers advocate together on the numerous federal legislative and appropriations issues that affect our growing sector. The new strategic alliance between OTA and CCOF will accomplish just that.

This alliance is a first step for OTA in establishing a new Producers Advisory Council. Working together, the industry can help protect the gains the sector made in the 2008 Farm Bill and to move organic further. For the organic industry to continue to thrive, it is imperative that the NOP have full funding and staff to oversee and safeguard the integrity of the USDA Organic seal. Data initiatives, research, and certification cost-share are also vital.

"In the current and foreseeable budgetary climate it is critical that organic producers advocate together on the numerous federal legislative and appropriations issues that affect our growing sector."

Organic agriculture is an important boon to rural economies. This was verified by the 2008 Organic Production Survey follow-on to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. Survey findings showed organic farms have an average annual operating profit of \$45,697 compared to non-organic farms' \$25,448 average operating profit. We need to get that message to those in Washington who don't yet understand the value that our sector delivers to U.S. agriculture and rural communities.

OTA's new Producers Advisory Council will play an important role in providing OTA with input from small- to medium-sized organic farmers, ranchers, and growers on matters pertinent to the advancement of organic agriculture. Thus, CCOF's trade association and you, its members, are joining forces with OTA as we advocate for organic interests on the national level.

OTA is well poised to conduct such advocacy. Recognizing the far-reaching impact of federal policies on agriculture, the OTA Board of Directors set these issues as the number one priority for OTA. To ensure that our voice is heard by legislators and regulators, in early 2010 OTA established an office two blocks from the Capitol. Since then we have added staff, started our first-ever Political Action Campaign fund (Organic PAC), and hosted numerous collaborative industry meetings, including our annual Policy Conference in our landmark building, The Hall of the States.

OTA now offers its members, including those within CCOF, the "boots on the ground" expertise of its Executive Director, Legislative and Advocacy Manager, Chief of Policy and External Relations, International Trade Manager, and New Media Manager and Staff Writer in our permanent Washington office.

Moreover, OTA's DC facilities are open to you. Use our conference rooms for meetings or work from our office. Take advantage of the many services and expertise we have available to our members.

Please come see for yourself all that we are doing to advance the wellbeing of the dynamic and growing organic industry.

Christine Bushway is Executive Director and CEO of the Organic Trade Association.





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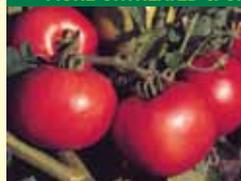


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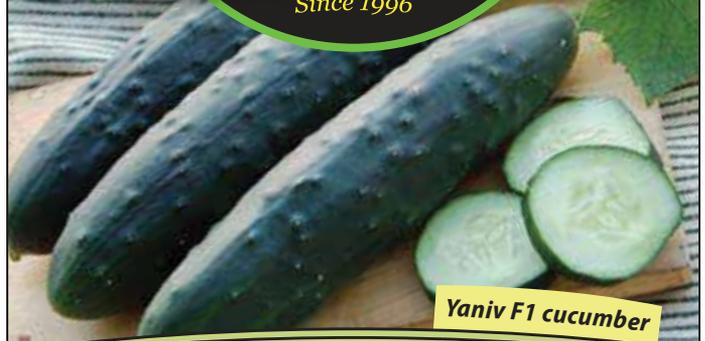


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No Bees, No Food

No one needs to tell farmers and avid gardeners that honeybees are a crucial part of the agroecosystem. Honeybees account for 80% of insect pollination and four out of every ten bites we take results from their work. Honeybees have been selflessly pollinating our crops for hundreds of years since they were brought to North America with the settlers. With honey collection even appearing on cave paintings, the human relationship with bees goes back over 10,000 years to cultures across the globe that recognized the many values of honeybees: pollination, honey, and wax.

The fall of the honeybee population was predicted as early as 1923 by Rudolph Steiner, an Austrian scientist, philosopher & social innovator whose work resulted in the biodynamic method of farming, a form of organic agriculture that minimizes inputs, relies upon the astronomical calendar for sowing and planting, and includes the use of fermented herbal and mineral preparations as compost additives and field sprays. Steiner claimed that bee populations would collapse within 80 to 100 years and unfortunately, that time is now. With the mechanization of agriculture, the spread of crop monocultures, and the development of synthetic pesticides and herbicides, honeybees have struggled to survive and populations have been disappearing over time without explanation. 50% of American bee colonies died or disappeared in 2006 and beekeepers everywhere continue to return to hives to find honey and wax but no bees.

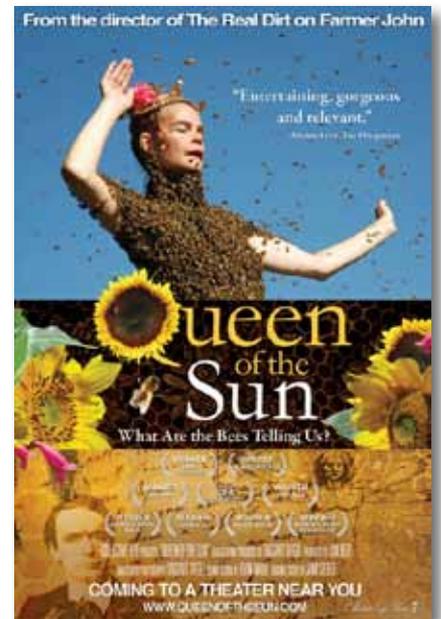
"Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us?" is an engaging and emotional investigation into the long-term causes of the honeybee population collapse. Set to be released this spring and

having won awards at the Maui, Nashville, Red Rock, and Syracuse film festivals, "Queen of the Sun" captivates audiences and inspires action. With awe-inducing cinematography, director Taggart Siegel displays a unique eye for illustrating the encapsulating worlds of both honeybees and beekeepers. Striking creative graphics and animation demonstrate the science behind hive politics. The connection between colony collapse and the growth of crop monocultures becomes startlingly evident as the camera pans over hundreds of acres of California almond trees, a crop which, the audience is told, cannot support bee populations and requires commercial migratory beekeeping for pollination.

Featuring world renowned biodynamic beekeeper Gunther Hauk, activist Vandana Shiva, and writers Michael Pollan and Raj Patel, "Queen of the Sun" takes audiences on a journey across the globe to meet organic and biodynamic beekeepers from Germany to Oregon to learn about bees and beekeeping, discuss the causes of colony collapse, and collaborate on solutions. The love and passion that these beekeepers exhibit for their hives indicate the delicate relationship that exists between humans and bees: we simply cannot survive without each other. These stewards have the vital role of supporting bee populations and Siegel drives home the truth that they cannot do it alone.

Organic advocates, environmentalists, consumers, gardeners, farmers, and students should not miss this opportunity to learn more about the world of honeybees and its direct impact on humans and our food. "Queen of the Sun" inspires audiences to get out of the theater seat and onto the field to support and understand this often-feared life form. The film concludes with uplifting advice for viewers to help save the bees: support backyard beekeeping legislation, become a backyard beekeeper, save swarms by calling a local beekeeper or guild rather than exterminating, promote beekeeping that does not use antibiotics or synthetic feeds, and plant bee-friendly plants and crops without the use of pesticides.

See "Queen of the Sun" in theaters this spring and learn to make a difference, bee by bee.



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The efforts to reinvigorate the CCOF Chapter system have started strongly this past winter with chapters hosting nine meetings between December and March. CCOF Program and Member Services Specialist, Tina Cosentino, has been on the road attending many of these meetings, signing members up for CCOF's new online tool, MyCCOF, and helping chapters brainstorm activities for networking, education, advocacy, and promotion of organic. The CCOF Board of Directors approved the *Chapter Best Practices Guide* at the November board meeting. The guide is designed to help chapters throughout the state develop leaders and raise awareness in their communities. Among other things, the Guide outlines the roles of chapter leaders, clarifies communication procedures between the CCOF home office and chapters, establishes an election protocol for chapter leaders and board representatives, and clarifies treasury reporting requirements. CCOF held the first ever chapter leader webinar meeting in January with 18 leaders representing 10 of the 12 chapters to review and discuss the *Chapter Best Practices Guide*. Here is what has progressed to date:

South Coast (SC) Chapter

The SC Chapter held their annual dinner, hosted by Anna Wilmans at El Capitan Ranch, on December 7. Over 25 people attended and prepared a beautiful meal together of donated items from CCOF farms and ranches. Representatives from the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office attended to speak about conservation programs and funding. South Coast board representative, Allen Harthorn, gave an update of board activities and the CCOF Foundation. SC Chapter also hosted the welcoming reception at the CCOF Annual Convention on February 18 which featured food donated by CCOF members. CCOF would especially like to thank Allen Harthorn for volunteering his time to solicit donations from CCOF members across the state. For more information, contact SC Board Representative, Allen Harthorn, at (530) 893-0360 or aharthorn@earthlink.net.

Sierra Gold (SG) Chapter

The SG Chapter met on January 9 in Placerville. Chapter members gathered for a potluck and discussion of chapter business including a secretary report, treasurer report, and CCOF Foundation report. There was discussion on how to inspire new members to get involved in leadership. Claudia Reid attended, highlighting the progress made to streamline paperwork required by the State Organic Program. Tina Cosentino reviewed the *Chapter Best Practices Guide*. Chapter leaders reached out to all 46 chapter members to run the new election of officers and held a second meeting on February 1.

Pacific Southwest (PS) Chapter

The PS Chapter held a very successful gathering of over 50 processors, handlers, growers, inspectors, and supporting members in Escondido on February 2. NRCS Representative, Cori Calvert, presented on conservation programs and funding. Chapter President, Soleil Develle, presented the idea to hold a table top networking event. "I would like to encourage the chapter members to become involved and together we can provide informative events to promote the organic trade. This summer I would like us to work on an event that will support the local farmer, provide educational opportunities, and have a table top expo of organically approved input companies and other vendors as well as guest speakers that are of interest to this community," said Develle. For more information, contact PS Chapter President, Soleil Develle, at (760) 521-7649 or panoramafarms@gmail.com.

Thank You!

CCOF would like to thank the following chapter leaders for years of dedication:

Fred Rappleye

KE Chapter president, 2000-2010

John Anspach

KE Treasurer, 2000-2010

Terri Wright

KE Secretary, 2009-2010

Claudia Smith

SG Board Representative, 2007-2010; Vice President 2004-2010

Jim Brenner

SG Board Alternate, 2004-2010

Steve Bird

SG Treasurer, 2000-2005 & 2007-2010; SG Board Rep., 2002-2007

.....
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Chapter Leaders**

Brian Fitzpatrick

President, Fitzpatrick Winery

Randy Hansen

Vice President, Stoney Point-Pine Hill Orchards

Allison Deyo

Secretary, Melon Jolly Organics

Michal Lawrence

Treasurer, Goodness Orchard

Randy Hansen

Board Rep., Stoney Point-Pine Hill Orchards

Rich Ferreira

Board Alternate, Side Hill Citrus

Jim Zeek

Cert. Stds. Committee, Goodness Orchard

The SG Chapter plans to have a series of three meetings in different areas of the Sierra Gold region in 2011. For more information, contact Michal Lawrence, at (530) 644-6448 or fraulawrence@yahoo.com.



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North Valley (NV) Chapter

The NV Chapter gathered for their annual meeting and luncheon in Richvale, CA on February 11. Over 35 people gathered for an organic lunch and updates on chapter business including treasurer report and President/Board report. NV board representative, Phil LaRocca, facilitated the meeting and gave a report on his recent trip to an organic wine convention in France. CCOF Policy Director Claudia Reid reported on latest work on the new organic inputs materials law (AB 856), the streamlining of the State Organic Program process, 2011 legislation and regulatory issues, and announced Karen Ross as Secretary for the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Bryce Lundberg led the group in a lively game of "Dang, is that CCOF certified?" where he held up a variety of products purchased at a local natural foods store for everyone to guess which were CCOF certified. For more information, contact NV Board Representative, Phil LaRocca, at **(530) 899-1028**.

Humboldt Trinity (HT) Chapter

The HT Chapter gathered at a pizza parlor in Ferndale on January 25. John Laboyteaux, Chapter President, reports: "There were about 10 people present which was less than I hoped, but still the first time CCOF members have come together here to discuss their organization and mutual interests in at least 15 years. It was a beginning. We have an election coming up this spring and will possibly try for another gathering in the late summer." For more information, contact HT Chapter President, John Laboyteaux, at **(707) 923-2670** or helenthemelon@earthlink.net.

Fresno-Tulare (FT) Chapter

The FT Chapter met on February 15 in Fresno. The NRCS held an organic workshop with 15 attendees just prior to the chapter meeting to review conservation programs for organic practices. Chapter President, Mike Braga, led a review of the chapter business including board report, budget, and chapter updates. Cynthia Ortegon, RSR for FT chapter, presented on certification goals for 2011. Guest speaker, Hunter Nadler, presented on preparing for 2011 NOP and/or GMA inspections. A representative from Republic Services presented on their latest compost products. In true FT style, a raffle was conducted at the end of the meeting - including many donated items from chapter members. The FT Chapter will be meeting again in May. For more information, contact Mike Braga at **(559) 674-6468** or bragafarms@yahoo.com.

Kern (KE) Chapter

The KE Chapter met on March 2 in Bakersfield with 18 attendees. Amy Lamendella, RSR for Kern, Big Valley, and Central Coast chapters, presented on the latest improvements in certification and introduced incoming RSR Laura Murphy. Tina Cosentino presented the *Chapter Best Practices Guide*, and the chapter brainstormed good causes for which to donate chapter funds. The chapter also held a new election.

Yolo (YO) Chapter

The YO Chapter met on March 9 in Woodland, CA to discuss USDA approval of GMO Alfalfa and Sugar beets as well as CCOF's *Chapter Best Practices Guide*. Greenbelt Carriers gave a short presentation on their locally produced, CCOF-certified compost and OMRI listed Nevada gypsum. Tina Cosentino and Yolo/Solano RSR, Becky Witty, also attended.

Processor Handler (PR) Chapter

The PR Chapter met at Natural Products Expo West on March 12. PR Chapter is currently experimenting with a new online tool called NING to connect the 600 plus PR chapter members throughout the country. PR Chapter also discussed the election of new chapter leaders. For more information, contact PR Board Representative, Will Daniels, at **(831) 623-7880** or wdaniels@ebfarm.com.

Congratulations to the New KE Chapter Leaders

Max Jehle

President, Sunview Vineyards

Gisela Wittenborn

Secretary, Sunview Vineyards

Pete Belluomini

Treasurer, Bel Lehr

Ken Stenderup

Board Alternate, Pure Organics

Malcolm Ricci (*continuing*)

Board Representative, Bolthouse Farms

For more information, contact KE Board Representative, Malcolm Ricci, at

(661) 366-7209 ext. 1528 or

mricci@bolthouse.com.

CCOF Honors Elaine Wolfsen

Elaine Wolfsen was born on October 28, 1929, in Takoma Park, MD. A long-term resident of McKinleyville, CA, she passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 16, 2011. Her childhood was spent on a farm in Virginia and Elaine came to California for college where she met and married Herbert C. Wolfsen, Junior in 1949. In 1979, Elaine and Herb began farming trees on their 25 acre property in McKinleyville and a few years later planted 10 acres of organic blueberries. Picking Wolfsen organic blueberries has been a summertime activity for many families for almost 30 years. Elaine was active in the community and served as treasurer of the CCOF Humboldt-Trinity chapter. She also served on the CCOF Board and the Certification Standards Committee. She is survived by her husband, Herb, and two daughters, Connie and Laura.

CCOF is deeply grateful for Elaine Wolfsen's contributions to our organization and to the organic community.

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CCOF and CalCAN Work on California Legislation

As a member of the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN), CCOF has spent some time this spring in California's State Capitol working on two pieces of legislation that could greatly benefit organic farmers and processors. The first bill, SB 237, authored by Senator Lois Wolk (D-Solano), would state legislative intent that a percentage of revenue from emission allowances be made available to fund activities that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture sector.

If passed, a California Agricultural Climate Benefits Advisory Committee would be established to help implement the law, and funds would be allocated to farmers for on-farm benefits from work they performed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This bill is very similar to SB 1241 from 2009, which passed through the first house policy committees without any difficulty but was set aside due to the political climate in November 2010 around Proposition 23, the California proposition that would have set the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) aside. Proposition 23 was overwhelmingly defeated, allowing the California Air Resources Board to move forward with plans to implement the law.

SB 489, also authored by Senator Wolk, is a net metering bill that would open up California's Net Energy Metering Program to all eligible forms of renewable energy. This legislation would allow agriculture, businesses, and homeowners to more easily convert their renewable by-products into renewable energy resulting in an offset of electricity use, reduction in the need for new power plants and transmission infrastructure, and savings on their power bills. Expanding the program will also help the state reach both its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and renewable energy goals. The bill was heard in the Senate Energy and Utilities Committee and CCOF helped to garner support for the legislation amongst its members.

USDA Administrator Meets with Industry Leaders

Rayne Pegg, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Administrator, was the closing keynote speaker at CCOF's Annual Convention, held in February. Following her presentation at the convention, Pegg met with the CCOF, Inc. board and chapter leaders for an informal session. The issues discussed covered a wide range of topics including cost of water regulations in California, increased bureaucracy and paperwork to comply with organic regulation, farmers' market and fertilizer regulations, international trade barriers, the significant loss of seed and germplasm, as well as the recent GE alfalfa decision and the harm it will cause to both organic and conventional agriculture. Participants shared their stories - both good and bad - with Pegg and she explained some of her hopes and concerns as well. CCOF has taken several steps to advance the progress made in this meeting, including informing our members about how to communicate with their congressional representatives on budget cuts that threaten Farm Bill and other federal programs that have a direct benefit to organic.

Asian Citrus Psyllid Rears Its Head

CDFA continues to expand the quarantines for Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP), which vectors Huanglongbing disease, the world's most devastating citrus disease. California's \$1.8 billion dollar citrus industry is working hard with the Citrus Research Board and CDFA to come up with an eradication plan, including significant areas of quarantine, to prevent the pest from spreading. About 30 of CCOF's 65+ organic citrus producers met in Ventura, California, on February 18, 2011, to establish a community for information exchange, determine what the next steps might be if the pest spreads, discuss organic options for pest control, and so on. Unfortunately, the organically approved methods available at this time are not very promising. You can access a list of CCOF members and other organic citrus producers by contacting Claudia Reid at policy@ccof.org.

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This pest is voracious and has destroyed more than half of Florida's citrus industry. California can learn from Florida's experience by not repeating the mistakes that were made in that state. California's regulators and industry representatives have tried hard to proactively address this issue and CCOF will continue to provide updates to our citrus producers about this pest. More information on Asian Citrus Psyllid is available on the CDFA, USDA, and Citrus Research Board websites.

CCOF and OTA Send Two Producers to D.C.

CCOF and the Organic Trade Association (OTA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together on specific legislative issues both in California and nationally. Each organization has characteristics, staff, and skills that complement the other, allowing the union to affect greater change. OTA has been active in supporting the work of CCOF and others in California over the past years on topics such as AB 856, the current fertilizer law. Partly because of OTA's support, CCOF continues to be vocal on this matter and to work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture to resolve confusion and implementation problems related to the law. Conversely, CCOF and its many farmer members allow the OTA to meet with members of congress and represent a wide range of producers when advocating for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program, the EQIP Organic Transition program, or the Organic Research and Extension Initiative.

An exciting opportunity that resulted from this MOU was the opportunity for CCOF Policy Director, Claudia Reid, and two CCOF farmers to travel to the OTA Policy Conference and Hill Visit Days in early April. Steve Koretoff from Purity Organics and Jenny Lester Moffitt from Dixon Ridge Farms attended on behalf of CCOF, meeting with elected officials and regulators to advance the cause of CCOF's members. In addition to the meetings, the conference featured presentations from Representative Jean Schmidt, the chairwoman of the House Nutrition and Horticulture Subcommittee; Cathy Greene, an economist with the USDA Economic Research Service; Dr. Craig Jagger, the chief economist with the House Committee on Agriculture; Rayne Pegg, USDA AMS Administrator; Dan Rotenberg, an agriculture counselor for the European Union Delegation Commission to the U.S.; Ambassador Isi Siddiqui, Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the Office of U.S. Trade; and David Wilmot, Executive Director of Ocean Champions.



California's Budget Crisis will lead to CDFA Budget Cuts

Many of California's agriculture industry representatives met during January to help craft a plan for Governor Jerry Brown's proposed \$15 million cut to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year. This cut is in addition to permanent cuts in 2012 and later, which total \$30 million per year. The CDFA budget comprises approximately \$98 million in general funds so a cut of \$15 million will devastate a department that never fully recuperated from cuts in the early 1990s.

Secretary of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross, distributed a proposal that was crafted after meetings and conference calls by many agriculture organizations, including CCOF. Ross also solicited ideas for how to maintain the crucial tasks of the Department, such as pest exclusion and animal health, while cutting programs that were mostly supported by fees. This difficult task resulted in some worrisome suggestions, including the elimination of all biocontrol and invasive weed work done by the Department, which would result in more weed elimination by use of chemical pesticides. CCOF understands the difficult choices that face the Department and the legislature and will continue to work with other segments of California's agriculture industry to inform our members of these serious issues.

New RSR for Pacific Southwest and Kern Regions

CCOF is pleased to announce that inspector Laura Murray assumed the Regional Service Representative (RSR) role for both the Pacific Southwest and Kern inspection regions, effective March 4, 2011. RSRs assign CCOF inspections and provide an important service interface between CCOF and clients to help clients understand CCOF requests, meet deadlines, and navigate CCOF service offerings. Laura's responsibilities include managing farm inspections in Arizona, Southern California from Los Angeles to San Diego, the desert regions in Southeast California, and Kern County. Laura will continue to perform CCOF inspections from her Vista, CA location while providing improved regional representation to these areas. Contact Laura Murray at (760) 630-1799 or at lmurray@ccof.org.



National Organic Program Releases Handbook for 2011

The National Organic Program (NOP) recently released the 2011 edition of the NOP Program Handbook. This manual includes instructions and guidance for certifiers and organic operations regarding implementation of the NOP. The Program Handbook is an important resource for certifiers and certified operations.

Information Disclosure Instructions

The current manual includes instructions for disclosure of information concerning operations certified under the NOP. These important instructions clarify that formal noncompliance and adverse action (proposed suspension or revocation) notices are subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. This means that all notices that CCOF copies to the USDA NOP may be made public via FOIA processes. The NOP also recommends that certifiers implement full disclosure regarding these notices, except for confidential business information.

We are reviewing options regarding implementation of this guidance. CCOF was founded on and holds among its values the concept of transparency; therefore we recognize the importance of these instructions and believe that there is inherent value in transparency which will protect the organic marketplace and strengthen organic integrity. However, we are concerned about our administrative capacity and legal resources to redact letters and thoroughly protect clients' confidential business information. CCOF is considering a process where formal requests for information regarding noncompliance and adverse action may be made to CCOF. The requestor would likely have to pay a small fee to cover CCOF costs and to discourage frivolous requests. CCOF would then disclose the presence of any noncompliances or adverse action as well as the NOP section numbers cited to both the requestor and the subject client at the same time. Parties wishing to review the actual letters would be required to file a FOIA request at the federal level. We believe that this process respects the intent of the NOP's instructions without increasing costs, risking breaches of confidentiality, or exceeding CCOF's current organizational capacity.

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Inspection Scheduling Basics

CCOF performs about 2,800 inspections per year! That's about 11 inspections per workday. Completing these inspections effectively is crucial to maintaining CCOF's accreditation and ensuring the value of your certification.

When Can I Expect My Annual Inspection?

Every CCOF client must be inspected at least once during the calendar year. Your annual inspection can occur at any time of year and may be only five or six months after the previous inspection. CCOF understands the seasonal changes in workload and income inherent to many types of agriculture and food production. However, as a regulatory agency, CCOF must be able to inspect a certified operation at any time. Seeing different activities at various times of the year helps us provide meaningful certification oversight.

If costs are an issue, CCOF can implement payment plans or delay payment for inspections that happen during lean times of the year. Clients may contact CCOF's Accounting Department to request consideration of one of these options. CCOF can allow some flexibility in scheduling but we generally cannot recognize entire seasons or other broad swaths of time where inspections are not possible. Heavy production season is often an important time for CCOF inspectors to observe operations handling organic products.

Role of RSRs

Regional Service Representatives (RSRs) are the organizational hubs of the inspection process; they assign and track all inspections in their region(s). Whenever possible, RSRs assign inspection groupings based on shared locality of the clients and they often assist inspectors in choosing the best order or route to maximize travel efficiency, passing on the savings to our clients. In other cases, RSRs assign single inspections to meet client needs, meet CCOF goals, address complaints, or respond to other issues.

Role of Inspectors

CCOF employs a team of over 80 regionally-based inspectors. Inspectors are assigned groups of inspections that must be completed by a specific due date. Inspectors are required to maximize travel efficiency and minimize travel expenses. In order to realize this, your communication and cooperation in scheduling is critical.

Your Role

Please contact your RSR as early as possible about any scheduling needs such as impending harvest dates on new parcels, new facilities that must be inspected prior to use, planned absences of three weeks or more, or anything else that might affect your availability.

Please reply promptly to your assigned inspector when they attempt to schedule your inspection. They are frequently trying to contact and balance the needs of many clients at once. To control inspection costs, inspectors schedule with multiple operations on any given trip. The sooner you communicate your scheduling needs to your inspector, the more flexibility the inspector will have to meet those needs. CCOF inspectors will attempt to contact a client at least three times before returning the assignment to CCOF. Failure to respond to the inspector or to agree on a date for your inspection can result in a Notice of Noncompliance and further adverse action.

CCOF's system of scheduling annual inspections using RSRs and regionally-based inspectors is designed to keep scheduling and travel costs as low as possible for our clients. RSRs and inspectors try to recognize legitimate scheduling concerns of certified operations. CCOF is not able to honor all scheduling requests or personal preferences of our clients. However, by communicating with RSRs and inspectors as early and clearly as possible, you can help us meet your scheduling needs and keep inspection costs manageable.

CCOF Improves Letters

In response to client requests for clearer and simpler communication, CCOF has launched new letter formats. These new formats have been tested for the last few months and have been met with improved client responses. Every letter now opens with a clear cover page and attached action items and/or reminders list that can be used as a checklist in your response.

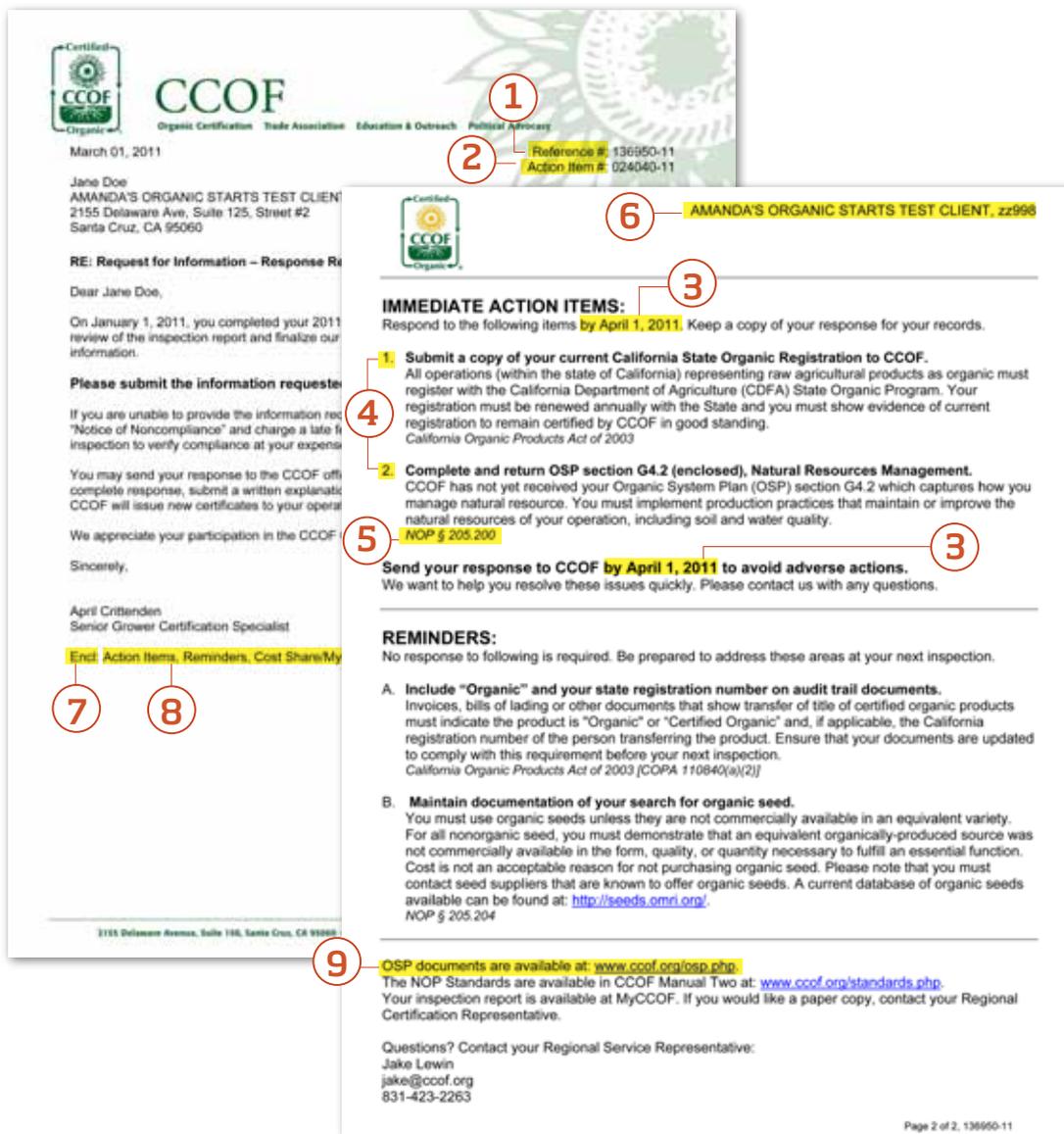
Important Features and Benefits

1. Reference #

Use this number to reference a specific letter for easier communication with CCOF.

2. Action Item #

Identifies the specific action item(s) related to the letter. This allows you to easily identify which action item you're responding to in correspondence with CCOF. This number also appears in the Action Items area of MyCCOF, so you can monitor the status of these items and your submissions online.



3. Clear Due Dates

When a response is required, due dates are located in three places. This helps you respond promptly and avoid adverse actions for non-response.

4. More Direct Action Items

Each paragraph begins with the requested action stated plainly in bold. This bold item clearly identifies the specific action CCOF requires to verify compliance and eases the ability of clients to respond.

CCOF will use three clear sections:

- a. *Immediate Action Items*, typically due within 30 days
- b. *Reminders*, which require review but no response
- c. *Global Market Access (GMA) Summary*, which outlines information needed to achieve or maintain international standards certification

5. Simple NOP Citations

CCOF has simplified legal and regulatory jargon to increase readability. NOP citations are included below each Action Item for reference. RSRs and CCOF staff are available to provide additional clarification.

6. Operation Identification

Every page includes your operation name and code. If you return a page to CCOF, we will be able to identify your response quickly and easily.

7. Enclosures

All enclosed items are listed at the bottom of the first page.

8. Flyers

New standard flyers such as "Certification Tips," "MyCCOF," and "Cost Share" are enclosed with letters. These flyers provide you with access to resources and important information in clear formats with less to read in the letter itself.

9. Resources

All letters include links to Organic System Plan (OSP) documents and the NOP regulations to ensure you can find these useful tools on the CCOF website.

Please give us your feedback as you receive these new letter formats so we can continue to improve them. Contact April Crittenden at april@ccof.org.

Growing a More Sustainable Food Trade, Organically

By Melissa A. Schweisguth

Organic farmers and producers are no strangers to sustainability. Chad Smith, Senior Manager of Sustainability at Earthbound Farm, notes that organic production methods are inherently more sustainable than their conventional alternatives: while the chemical reliance of conventional farming increases impacts both upstream and downstream, organic farming is a more closed system with simply less wasteful impacts. "Certain organic farmers and locations require outside organic inputs to make up for particular deficiencies, but these inputs are primarily produced from otherwise wasted materials," says Smith. "Ideally, the soil is managed in a way that makes outside inputs irrelevant, and this type of closed system soil management can only happen in an organic system."

Organic companies have even deeper reasons to engage in the sustainability arena, since the organic movement emerged out of a desire to have a positive social and ecological impact through commerce, literally from the ground up. "We have an inherently powerful sustainability story to share—the many positive impacts of organic farming and processing for people and planet—and we must begin to quantify and communicate these attributes to garner wider support for these practices," says Natalie Reitman-White, Executive Director of the Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association.

Though organic systems are an essential foundation for broader sustainability, they are not sufficient in themselves. For example, organic standards neither govern social aspects nor regulate many environmental impacts. To this end, entities across the trade have begun to focus on improving their social and ecological impacts to honor and fully apply the values that led them to embrace organics in the first place.

"From a business standpoint, impact management is about efficient use of resources and eliminating waste," Smith said. "What's particularly relevant and critical for most organic businesses is the priority we place on the wellbeing of the planet and its people. A true organic business is founded on the principles of sustainability. Managing our impacts is not only relevant, but deeply embedded in who we are."

Businesses of all sizes and kinds are increasing their investment in



resources to assess and improve their impacts, whether these impacts be social, environmental, or economic. Savvy enterprises realize that sustainability is both an imperative and an opportunity, and their motivations are significant: they face the associated costs and savings of sustainability, government regulations, natural resource limitations, public expectations, and growing marketplace demand for socially responsible products and services.

Organic Leaders Unite for Change

A diverse group of organic companies is involved in the Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association (FTSLA), which focuses on empowering organic food enterprises to adopt leading environmental, social, and economic initiatives. FTSLA emerged as a sustainable business incubator program at the University of Oregon in 2005 and evolved into a formal non-profit trade association in 2008.



FTSLA's Full Members sign on to the organization's "Declaration of Sustainability," a vision and road map for action in 11 key areas: organic agriculture, distribution, facility energy and green building, climate change, water, solid waste, packaging, labor, animal care, education, and governance. This Declaration was developed and vetted with input from hundreds of industry stakeholders across several years.

Full Members also commit to annual sustainability measurement, reporting, and performance improvement in line with the Declaration's areas. Sustainability reports include elements that are most relevant for organic food enterprises and utilize shared metrics that are based on international frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative, Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and organic standards.

Reporting Guidance and Benefits

If you consider yourself among the lean, resource-strapped entities that characterize our trade, sustainability measuring and reporting can feel formidable, and achieving improvements can seem financially challenging. For these reasons, FTSLA focuses on providing tangible, practical and comprehensive support. FTSLA offers guidance documents, consultations, workshops, webinars, networking and other means to help with data collection, reporting and continuous improvement. CCOF members are able to take advantage of those programs available to the industry at large.

For FTSLA, there is no cookie-cutter scorecard for reporting. Members focus their tracking and reporting on metrics that are most relevant and most highly prioritized to their operation. In turn, FTSLA delivers to each entity information that promotes improvement in areas with the most critical impacts.

Smith has found FTSLA's strategic approach to metrics development and selection valuable. "Organizations can trick themselves into thinking that adding another reporting framework is cumbersome and costly, [yet] not managing your impacts carries huge costs and risks. FTSLA helps provide the framework for reporting the impacts you already need to be managing," he comments.

When a business empowers itself with a strategic approach to managing its impacts, the benefits are abundant. The business more easily optimizes its costs and evaluates its return on investments (ROI) on improvements. Challenges and opportunities become more clear, goals become self-evident, and opportunities arise to engage with peers in a concrete way that informs principled, results-driven action.

"By tracking and reporting internally on sustainability impacts such as water use, energy use, and solid waste generation, we get to see how we are doing," Smith states.

Jessica Lundberg of Lundberg Family Farms concurs. "The FTSLA measurements and resources [have] allowed us to be more precise

in setting goals and measuring success. We've seen a heightened awareness among all of us of the resources we're using, and an excitement to be able to apply our core value of continuous improvement to physical operations as well as cultural changes," she explains.

Though FTSLA does not require public reporting, many members choose to produce external reports or undertake other related communications. Publicizing their efforts allows FTSLA members to open themselves up to marketplace support and boosts in reputation while helping to drive leadership across broader sectors. "The customer also wants to know what you're doing to manage your impacts, and having a system in place to do this allows you to have a more in-depth conversation," Smith emphasizes.

Organic Sector Embraces Sustainability Efforts

With members increasingly documenting and communicating sustainability efforts, including the submission of 25 reports, FTSLA has started assembling a clearer view of best practices, challenges, impacts, and opportunities for our sector. These entities comprise produce handlers, ingredient processors, product manufacturers, diversified natural products distributors, and retailers.

Across sustainability reports the most common focus areas are organic agriculture, labor and ethical sourcing, energy, solid waste, water, distribution and sourcing, and climate change. Many of these focus areas relate to the use of critical natural resources and related costs, which are typically the easiest to quantify and address and thus are an excellent place for any operation to start. The prioritization of labor is a strong indicator that industry leaders place equal importance on social justice—in the workplace as well as the supply chain. Disclosures on governance and education are also common, though entirely narrative rather than numeric.

FTSLA's reports and other communications indicate not only that many organic companies are making influential strides in the sustainability of their operations and products, but also that their efforts could be replicated by others in the industry. Organic enterprises are supporting clean energy and a healthy atmosphere through energy conservation, the purchase and generation of renewable energy, and renewable energy credits (RECs). These efforts help reduce fossil fuel use, costs, and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with climate change. Through energy upgrades and conservation, Earthbound Farm estimates it has reduced energy use 20-50% across various processes and facilities.

Lundberg Family Farms generates about 10% of its energy through on-site solar panels and invests in RECs to offset its non-renewable energy use. They've also reduced energy consumption



“A true organic business is founded on the principles of sustainability. Managing our impacts is not only relevant, but deeply embedded in who we are.”

by more than 10% through a lighting retrofit, waste recovery system, and other efficiency measures. Meanwhile, Straus Family Creamery produces more energy than it uses at its dairy thanks to a methane digester that converts cow manure to energy for the farm and its electric vehicles. The system routes excess energy back to the grid and their utility provider pays Straus for its market value, resulting in net revenue—a win not only for Straus but for people, and the planet.

Waste reduction is a priority as zero waste is often cited as the end goal. Many entities note decreases in materials sent to landfills thanks to reuse, recycling, composting, and source reduction that shrinks materials intake in the first place. Heath & Lejeune partnered with local community gardens and others to establish a composting program after it found that local composting programs weren't available. Straus Family Creamery seeks to close the loop on waste at its dairy by separating liquid and solid byproducts from its barns, composting solid matter and returning it to the soil.

To address the complexities of packaging, businesses are focusing strategically and taking steps toward zero waste such as packaging reduction, materials improvements, and innovating reclamation and reuse programs. Lundberg Family Farms cut the weight of one high-volume packaging item by 15%, saving 35,000 lbs of plastic on an annual basis. The popular rice producer also provides comprehensive information online to help consumers identify ways to reuse and recycle various packaging.

Earthbound Farm pioneered the creation of 100% post-consumer recycled PET packaging for its salad clamshells, investing significant resources in identifying and securing a source, testing the materials, and then converting existing packaging. The

company also uses shipping containers made with 99% post-consumer recycled fiber, a leading model for this packaging type. Seeking to reach zero waste at the end of a product's use, Straus Family Creamery offers the majority of its milk in returnable glass bottles that are collected regionally. They report an astounding 95% return rate and a net profit on the costs they've invested in this initiative—another triple win.

Organic leaders are also working to ensure good labor practices in the workplace and supply chain. Employee wellness and commuting programs, profit sharing and stock ownership, training and development, and a strong commitment to safety are just a few of the initiatives seen across these organizations. To address supply chain labor, companies are increasingly investing in international certifications such as Fair Trade Certified, EcoSocial, and IMO Fair for Life, embracing Domestic Fair Trade to support the same standards closer to home, and establishing internal initiatives to provide for needs these certifications don't cover.

Sundance Natural Foods has developed an extensive set of purchasing criteria, including social as well as environmental attributes. Grocery Manager Ron Leppert shared these criteria and the processes involved in their development and implementation in a webinar presentation that can be accessed on FTSLA's website for those interested in following this pioneering path.

In order to extend these social ethics into the community, members make charitable contributions that encompass financial and in-kind giving, match employee donations, and engage in grant making. Volunteerism complements the social ethics program: entities allow community service on the clock, organize team volunteer events, and match employees' individual

These organic leaders and likeminded peers will continue to advance sustainability across our trade and help underscore the value of organic farming as the foundation for greater good.

volunteer hours with charitable donations. Clif Bar & Company, whose affiliated winery is a CCOF member, operates a “2080” program wherein they offer employees paid time off to volunteer, amounting to at least 2080 hours annually—the equivalent of one full-time staff position. At last count, Clif Bar funded over 5,000 hours of employees’ good deeds in a year.

The Road Ahead: Opportunities for Organic

While these companies have accomplished much, they’re focused on moving further, realizing that sustainability is a journey, and the longest part of the road is ahead of us. All plan to expand their measurement as a first step, particularly around organic benefits, climate change, water use, packaging, supply chain, and distribution. Many have set defined performance improvement goals that include quantified targets as well as operational changes such as expanding landfill diversion, switching packaging to compostable and recyclable materials, evaluating supplier impact, and increasing employee sustainability engagement.

Smith says, “We make investments every year to improve our sustainability impacts, [from] relatively small things like rapid roll up doors and changing to more energy efficient lighting [to] big investments like redesigning pack lines or installing sophisticated controls on our refrigeration system to reduce energy consumption. Big or small, these projects never stop.”

“We’ve increased the number of employees who carpool; replaced inefficient equipment with equipment that uses energy more wisely [such as] sensor-activated lights in the warehouses, replaced light fixtures, replaced motors; we invested in more sustainability targeted research such as packaging, biofuel, and waste utilization,” notes Lundberg. Yet, she adds, “We’re setting long-term goals to improve based on the metrics set out by FTSLA, evaluating our waste streams and working to reduce and eliminate waste from our production processes.”

Through continued measurement, reporting, and peer dialogue, these organic leaders and likeminded peers will continue to advance sustainability across our trade and help underscore the value of organic farming as the foundation for greater good.

Lundberg remarks, “I firmly believe our collaboration with FTSLA will help us to be more innovative. An industry group like FTSLA is exciting to be a part of because of the potential to make significant and lasting improvements in our business based on new ideas and innovations provided by the group. The team atmosphere, and being able to talk about our own as well as others’ practices, fosters improvement and discussion.”

“No doubt the food industry faces many pressing sustainability challenges ahead, from climate change and natural resource constraints to addressing social justice issues,” Reitman-White reflects. Yet, equipped with a common framework for evaluation and collaboration and support from staff and peers, organic companies are poised to lead the way toward true sustainability. Lead on—from the ground up—organically!

Learn More

FTSLA
ftsla.org



Clif Bar & Company
clifbar.com

Earthbound Farm
ebfarm.com

Lundberg Family Farms
lundberg.com

Straus Family Creamery
strausorganic.com

Sundance Natural Foods
sundancenaturalfoods.com



Melissa Schweisguth
is Director of Membership Development & Education at FTSLA, and a freelance sustainable business and communications professional

Cathy Calfo



Executive Director

Cathy is CCOF Inc.'s new Executive Director as of April 2011. Before joining CCOF, Cathy was the Executive Director of Apollo Alliance, a coalition of business, labor, environmental, and community leaders that promotes policies focused around clean energy and green jobs. Prior to her work at the Apollo Alliance, Cathy served as California Deputy State Treasurer. She is a founding member of the City of Santa Cruz Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, and has served on the city planning commission and on the board of directors of a local homeless shelter for teens. Cathy has lived in Santa Cruz since 1975 and graduated from UCSC with a B.A. in American Studies. Cathy has three sons, ages 26, 24, and 10.

Jane Wade



Development Specialist

Jane joined CCOF in October of 2009 after working in different nonprofits. In 1996, Jane served as Interim Director of an employment-readiness and job training program based in a CCOF certified urban garden. Her father's family was in agriculture in both California and Kansas and she gained a lifelong interest in agricultural practices that do not require the use of chemicals. As Development Specialist she is the first point of contact for those who seek organic certification. Jane also oversees the Supporting Members program for CCOF's trade association and raises money for education, advocacy, and promotional activities. Outside of CCOF, Jane enjoys reading, riding her bicycle, and spending time with her two sons and their families.

Robin Boyle



Director of Marketing, Member Services, and Development

Robin joined CCOF in November 2010. She previously worked as a marketing director for member-based credit unions for more than 20 years. Robin says she is enjoying overseeing our brilliant and very capable staff of six who produce, coordinate, and implement all of CCOF marketing, member education, and development programs. "Joining CCOF has been eye opening. I have never worked with such passionate people. I'm having so much fun!" Robin and her husband own a small winery in Santa Cruz. Between that and her two kids she doesn't find much time for anything else.

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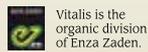


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drycampbranch@vtc.net
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Jerry Kutumian
Fresno, CA
jerrykutumian@comcast.net
Oranges
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Kelsey And Benjamin Perone dba Rain Frog Farm

Kelsey & Benjamin Perone
McKinleyville, CA
rainfrogfarm@yahoo.com
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CCOF is excited to offer customized banners to our certified members as part of our new Member Banner Program. Whether you are starting from scratch or adapting an existing design, CCOF can help. As a CCOF member, you are authorized to use CCOF logos on your banners according to our logo guidelines, which are available at www.ccof.org/logos.php. Price quotes are complimentary and we welcome your design ideas and photos. Our team will listen to your suggestions and work with you to make a banner that showcases your company or product. We also have a portfolio of CCOF-inspired designs and decorative elements for your use. We are also able to source and license photos and illustrations to make your banner design complete. Most designs can be completed within the 1-hour minimum for art work.* Art proofs will be provided to you for approval and the banner will be shipped within 7-10 days of your payment. Any reorders of existing sizes and designs incur no additional art charges and will be shipped within 7-10 days of your payment.

Art Objects Specifications

Please supply your art as 300 dpi resolution in JPEG, EPS, PSD or TIF format.
Banner layout specifications available upon request.

*art charges are billed at \$85/hour with a 1-hour minimum requirement.



Here are samples of the variety of options we created for CCOF Certified Member, Old Adobe Orchard.

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Volunteer on an Organic Farm!

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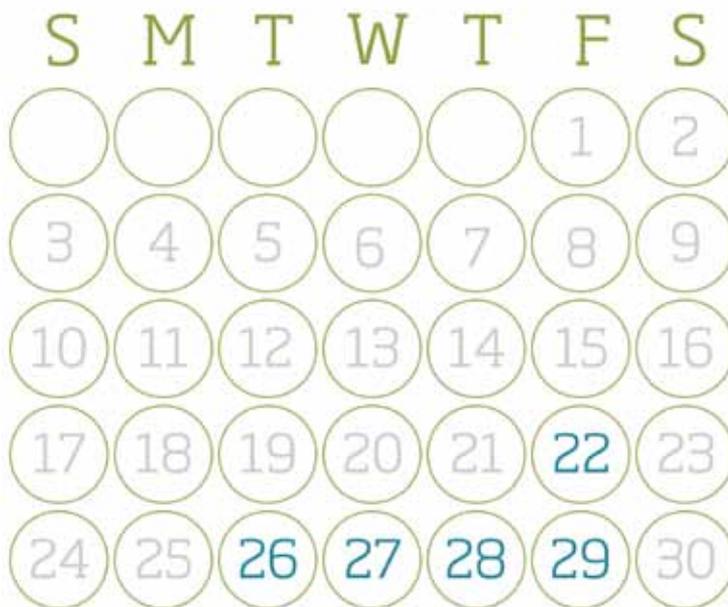
CCOF members may run classified ads for free online and in *Certified Organic* as space permits. To submit your classified, email ccof@ccof.org or fax your ad to CCOF at **(831) 423-4528** with a subject line of "CCOF Member Classified Ad".

4/2011

April 22, Nationwide

**Earth Day 2011:
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This year's nationwide Earth Day celebrations will be organized around A Billion Acts of Green®: personal, organizational, and corporate pledges to live and act sustainably. A Billion Acts of Green® is the largest environmental service campaign in the world and is steadily building commitments by various entities in honor of this year's Earth Day. The goal of A Billion Acts of Green® is to register one billion actions in advance of the 2012 Earth Summit in Rio. Over 55 million actions have already been registered. CCOF will be celebrating Earth Day locally in Santa Cruz, CA, on April 16, 2011. To get involved, find events, and access Earth Day resources, visit www.earthday.org.



April 26-29, Seattle, WA

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Meeting

The NOSB meets several times a year. These meetings have designated in-person comment periods that are available to the public. The upcoming April meeting will be held at Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue in Seattle, Washington. CCOF members should consider one agenda item: NOSB consideration of whether or not to recommend the continued allowance of Sodium (Chilean) Nitrate in organic production. To learn more about CCOF's position on these issues, visit www.ccof.org/nop.php. To view the meeting agenda or reserve a spot for public comment, visit www.ams.usda.gov and look for "National Organic Program." Written public comments can be submitted to www.regulations.gov.

June 18, Clovis, CA

Organic Stone Fruit Jubilee

Taste sixty varieties of peaches, plums, pluots, nectarines, and apricots from a dozen local, certified organic farms. Also enjoy artisan foods, farm tours, workshops, and a kids' craft corner. This event will be held from 5:00-8:30 p.m. with adult admission of \$5 and free admission for children under 12. CCOF members Kaweah Farms, Blossom Bluff Orchards, D.E. Bolt Family Farms, and Olson Family Farms will all be participating. Learn more about this event, sponsored by Slow Food Madera and the Ecological Farming Association, at www.eco-farm.org/events.

*July 20-21 (dates tentative),
 Napa Valley, CA*

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Visit www.ccof.org/calendar.php for more events or to post your own!



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