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An Organic Feast

"It makes sense for people to come to where the food comes from ... good food, good wine, beautiful landscapes – it's kind of irresistible."

– Jim Denevan, Founder, Outstanding in the Field

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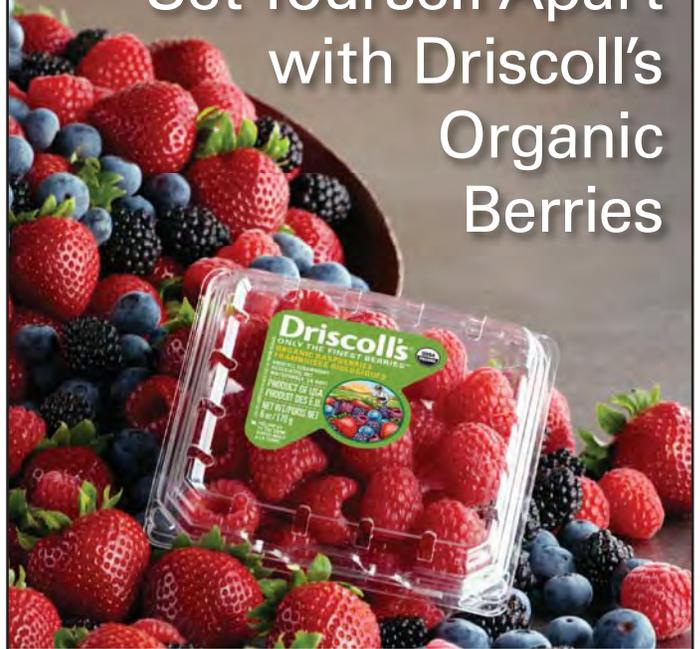
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We're not getting older, *we're getting **better.***

On the eve of our 40th birthdays, CCOF and Oregon Tilth will become CCOF Tilth. Together, we will become a better certifier, a more powerful advocate for organic, and a leader in shaping the future of U.S. agriculture.

Oregon Tilth and CCOF run two of the most respected organic certification programs in the country. Prior to discussion of this merger, each had prioritized client acquisition in its strategic plan as a hedge against continuing pressures to raise certification fees. Merging will allow us to spread certification program costs across a much larger number of members and maintain our commitment to serving the full range of organic producers, handlers, and processors. Our goal, affirmed by the CCOF Board of Directors, is to stabilize certification costs.

With a combined membership of more than 4,200 certified and 550 supporting members, CCOF Tilth will sound a strong voice in the halls of Congress and State Houses where agricultural policy is made. We will be a strong advocate for our members and give them the tools and information they need to speak for themselves. Together, we will let policymakers know that we are the future of agriculture in America.

CCOF and Oregon Tilth have been pioneers in the organic movement since the early 1970s, solidly committed to preserving organic integrity and growing organic and sustainable agriculture. A new CCOF Tilth Foundation will be allowed to raise charitable contributions to support organic educational and research programs. The merger will also preserve investment income for these purposes from a charitable bequest previously granted to Oregon Tilth.

To reach these goals, we need participation and support from our members, who will be asked to ratify the merger in votes that take place by October 15, so that we can begin operations as one organization on November 1, 2012.

A new board of directors will be elected by our combined membership within 24 months of the merger. Until then, an interim board comprised of current CCOF and Oregon Tilth board members will govern CCOF Tilth, Inc. and appoint members to the Certification Management Committee and foundation board.

Your continued input and feedback through chapter meetings, webinars, www.ccoftilthmerger.org, or in conversation over a farm-to-table dinner is welcome and appreciated.

These are exciting times!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy".

Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director



California Senate Select Committee Looks at Sustainable Food

The newly created Senate Select Committee on California Food: Local, Organic and Sustainable Systems will study sustainable food production in the state of California, including farmers' markets and farm stands, cottage foods, heirloom and artisan foods, organic and sustainable practices, and food safety.

"California is one of the top food producers in the world and leads the nation in organic food production," said Senator Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa), who will serve as chair, in a press release. "But people today want to know where their food is coming from, how it's being grown and how it supports their local community. This committee will shed some light on the challenges local, organic, and sustainable food systems face daily to provide communities access to healthy foods from farms that are environmentally conscientious."

The select committee will make policy recommendations on food regulations, local food distribution and access, the protection of agriculture land, and the encouragement of sustainable agriculture practices. This year, the committee will hold an informational hearing on issues facing local food systems. They plan on hosting an artisanal and heirloom foods tasting for World Food Day, October 16.

Evans will serve as chair with Senators DeSaulnier (D-Concord), Hancock (D-Berkeley), Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) and Wolk (D-Davis) as members. There are currently two vacancies. We are excited to follow the work of this committee as their efforts get off the ground!

"Age of Enforcement" Generates \$130,000 in Fines

Over 21 civil penalties have resulted in more than \$130,000 in fines since the National Organic Program's (NOP) "age of enforcement" began in November 2009, according to NOP Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy. USDA organic regulations give the NOP authority to issue penalties for organic fraud in amounts up to \$11,000 per violation to protect the integrity of the USDA organic seal. If the case involves alleged large-scale fraud, the NOP supports the USDA Office of Inspector General and the Department of Justice in investigating. NOP received 182 complaints in the past fiscal year and investigated and closed 129; over 135 complaints have been closed in the last six months.

Harold Chase of Springfield, Oregon, was recently sentenced to 27 months in federal prison for selling 4.2 million pounds of corn falsely labeled as organic to Oregon companies for more than \$450,000, doubling his profits. This is the fifth Office of the Inspector General investigation pertaining to NOP that resulted in federal indictment or conviction. In February, Peter Townsley, owner of California Liquid Fertilizer (CLF) in Salinas, California, pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud in connection with the sale of fertilizer to organic farmers. Townsley engaged in a scheme to misrepresent the true ingredients in CLF's fertilizer, Biolizer XN, as approved for use in organic production. CLF made over \$6.5 million in gross sales from the sale of the product.

Investigating complaints is a crucial aspect of the NOP's work. If the complaint is about a certified operation, certifiers like CCOF are requested to investigate. Then, if the noncompliance is not properly addressed by the operation in question, the certifier will issue a suspension or revocation of certification, which can bar the operation from organic certification for up to five years. Learn more about the complaint process by visiting www.ams.usda.gov/nop.



OFRF Report Ranks U.S. Universities

A recent Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) report, *Organic Land Grant Assessment*, measured research, education, and outreach in the land-grant system, a federally funded program that includes universities, research stations, and Cooperative Extension. OFRF evaluated the maintenance of organic research land; student organic farms; the offer of an organic minor, major, or certificate; and the presence of dedicated organic staff or faculty. The report also highlights the need for investment in organic research and education, and provides data relevant to farmers, students, advocates, policy makers, and scientists alike.

The report sought to determine the readiness of America's institutions for the growing organic sector, which has quadrupled in size in the past decade. Campuses scoring a perfect "8" include Colorado State University, University of Florida, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, University of Tennessee, and Washington State University. Eight land-grant universities now offer a major in organic agriculture, up from one school, Washington State University, five years ago.

"We look to the Land Grant system to be responsive to public needs, economic growth, rural communities, and ultimately, access to healthy, safe food," said OFRF Executive Director Maureen Wilmot, in a press release. "While land dedicated to organic research has nearly doubled from 2003 to 2011, and universities providing organic programs have grown from zero to eight, public universities must do a great deal more in order to meet the growing needs of organic demand."

Congratulations to the campuses with perfect scores! We salute your efforts at encouraging the next generation of organic producers. Visit www.ofrf.org to read the report.

Organic Industry Creates 572,000 Jobs in 2010

An Organic Trade Association study produced by M+R Strategic Services noted that the organic food industry generated 572,000 jobs in 2010: we're a job-creating force!

The study said that for every \$1 billion in sales of organic food and beverage products, 21,000 jobs were created throughout the U.S. economy. These sales were over \$26.7 billion in 2010, and surpassed \$31 billion in 2011. Greater labor intensity on organic farms, smaller farm size, the need for an organic certification industry, and reliance on smaller retail outlets result in a greater number of jobs. *2010 Impacts of the U.S. Organic Foods Industry on the U.S. Economy* also notes that the U.S. organic food industry created jobs at a rate 21 percent higher than the conventional food industry that year.

"This report and OTA's *2012 Organic Industry Survey* reinforce the positive contributions of the organic sector to U.S. agriculture and our economy, and emphasize how important it is to maintain funding for programs in the farm bill that encourage the spread of organic farming," said OTA Executive Director/CEO Christine Bushway in a press release. She added, "The message is clear - federal organic food and agriculture programs are job-creation programs."

Organic food and beverages account for 4.2 percent of all U.S. food sales but generate hundreds of thousands of jobs a year, so it's crucial that policy makers support organic production and the expanding organic market.

Visit www.organicnewsroom.com to read the full press release or www.capwiz.com/ccof to get involved in advocating for policies that support organic.



Riverhill Farm Makes Shopping Easy

Recently-certified member Riverhill Farm is a 10-acre farm and produce stand owned by Alan Haight and Jo McProud in Nevada City, California. These enthusiastic producers grow a variety of organic produce through a community-based model. Most of their produce is sold within ten miles of the farm or at the farmstand itself, the hub of their farm activities. Their goal of making Riverhill economically viable while maintaining and enhancing the natural environment is noticeable through the impressive number of species seen on the farm: bears, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, hawks, raccoons, herons, geese, ducks, and more! Haight and McProud grow over 50 crop varieties on their land and work to build the soil and conserve water in the process.

Riverhill created a unique program to encourage customer loyalty and build on their community-based business model. The Riverhill Farm "Friend of the Farm" card was created to provide flexibility to customers and increased access to the farm's many crop varieties. This alternative to the standard CSA model allows farm supporters to pre-pay for delicious organic produce by purchasing a debit card available in three monetary amounts. Friend of the Farm cards are used like debit cards at the Saturday Nevada City Farmers' Market and on the farm, where farm lovers can take advantage of u-pick produce - organic strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, cherry tomatoes, and more. Cardholders can also place special orders and buy bulk produce for canning and food preservation. We're excited to feature this unique and highly original method and

encourage farmers to approach sales methods in a creative way to generate loyalty and keep customers coming back season after season. Riverhill successfully ran their CSA for five years but listened to the needs of their community and decided to make a change. The Friend of the Farm card, like a CSA model, helps Haight and McProud stay in business: early season funds from dedicated shoppers help keep their small farm running.

Friend of the Farm cards sold out in April (everyone can still shop at their market stand or farmstand). We're excited to hear what comes next from Riverhill Farm! Visit

www.riverhillfarm.com to learn more about this newly certified member.

Frieda's Inc. Celebrates Awards and 50th Anniversary

Certified member Frieda's Inc., the first wholesale produce company in the U.S. to be founded, owned, and operated by a woman, has had an exciting year. The company was awarded Vendor of the Year for Produce Merchandising by the Central Division of Kroger, which awards vendors each year for their efforts in increasing Kroger's business and customer service, on February 29. Kroger recognized Frieda's Produce University® promotion that provided produce manager training and store-level customer engagement events led by each manager at all Kroger Central stores in November 2011.

On the brink of Frieda's 50th anniversary, a few months after the Kroger award, company founder Frieda Rapoport Caplan was honored at the Los Angeles National Association of Women Business Owners 26th Annual Awards Luncheon on March 23. Awarded for her role as the first woman to own a U.S. produce business, Caplan is also known for her efforts at advancing the role of women in the business world and her women's rights activism. Frieda's mission is to change the way America eats fruits and vegetables, and has introduced over 200 specialty items to U.S. produce departments. Caplan is most known for introducing the kiwifruit to America in 1962. Frieda's has also welcomed Spaghetti Squash, Habanero Peppers, Black Garlic, and other items to the country since the company's opening in 1962.

Frieda's Inc. continues to be a family- and women-owned business with over 75 employees based in Orange County, California. Congratulations to Frieda's Inc. and to Frieda Caplan for her award. We wish you many more successful years! Learn more about Frieda's Inc. at www.friedas.com.



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UNFI Launches Charitable Foundation to Boost Organic

United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI) has created a new foundation to boost organic food production and consumption, and promote sustainable farming. The UNFI Foundation, which will launch on August 1, supports organizations that promote transparent labeling, provide research, organize events, protect and develop organic seed, teach sustainable farming or promote conservation of resources, or provide nutrients to at-risk populations. To assist and support these organizations, the foundation will provide funds on a quarterly basis to a variety of program types, including those that educate consumers on making healthy food choices and the relationship between food and personal health and wellbeing. Melody Meyer, vice president of Global Initiatives for Albert's Organics, a UNFI subsidiary and CCOF member, has been named executive director of the new foundation.

"The establishment of the foundation speaks to UNFI's core values," said Meyer in a press release. "This initiative provides another wonderful opportunity for UNFI to make a meaningful difference, right at the beginning, where it counts. Everything we do starts at the farm."

Learn more about the foundation or applying for the grant program at www.unfifoundation.org.

Straus Family Creamery Satisfies Even the Lactose-Intolerant

A delight for all west coast lactose-free shoppers, certified member Straus Family Creamery introduced organic, lactose-free, reduced fat cream-top milk to their retailers in May. The delicious new product is a bit sweeter than other cream-top milks because the lactose has been turned into easily-digested sugars.

"This is as delicious and rich as all of our other organic, cream-top milks," the Petaluma, California-based company said in a press release. For the estimated fifty million people in the U.S. who suffer from symptoms of lactose intolerance, this milk will be a welcome organic addition to lactose-free options at natural food stores and supermarkets. If your favorite grocer offers Straus products but you haven't seen the lactose-free version reach their shelves, be sure to request it - you'll be eating cereal in no time! Head over to www.strausfamilycreamery.com to learn more about their new lactose-free cream-top milk.

CCOF "Likes"

Member News Meets Social Networking



Two Dog Organic Nursery via [Facebook](#): "Sending off \$478.96 to the L.A. Food Bank... the combined efforts of everyone at Two Dog and all our wonderful customers who came to the Spring Sale & Food Drive on the rainiest day of the year!! Plus we collected at least 300 lbs of food donations! YAY & MANY THANKS!!! We'll do it again in the Fall."

Great job, Two Dog! We're so glad to hear about members doing good work for others. A combined sale and food drive is an excellent idea and brings customers together for a good cause.



Serenade Garden Disease Control shared a link via [Facebook](#): "10 Natural Fertilizers to Improve Crop Production." Check out our product spotlight at the bottom."

Sharing an informative and useful article is a productive way to engage with your readers and lead them to resources. Feel free to point out your product spotlight but make sure the information in the article is relevant with or without your company's mention.



Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards via [Facebook](#): "Here's to our founding winemaker, George Cooper, as we celebrate his 96th birthday! (There's something about that glass of red wine with dinner...)"

Happy birthday, George! Sharing a personal event or celebration with your fans shows them that you care about involving your community in your company's past and present. Everyone loves a personal touch!



McEvoy Ranch via [Facebook](#): "Customer love continues in our SF Ferry Bldg this week... Spend \$20 & take home a FREE tomato plant or bearded iris stem!"

What a great incentive to get customers in the door! Sharing special deals will keep your readers interested and engaged with your page. Share photos and events often, but be sure to also write posts relevant to the community at large, who may not be able to get to your retail store.



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Two New Wallet-Friendly Wines from Barra Family

Certified member Barra Family Wines has introduced two new “value wines under \$20” under their Girasole Vineyards brand. The 2010 Pinot Noir and 2010 Chardonnay, priced at \$16 and \$13 respectively, are vegan-friendly (no animal products were used in making the wine) and available at retail. Both wines are made from estate-grown grapes.

The Pinot Noir has aromas of strawberry, cherry, and clove, while the Chardonnay offers aromas of kiwi, Granny Smith apples, and lemon-lime. Girasole suggests pairing the Chardonnay with egg dishes, seafood, creamy pastas, and poultry. The Pinot Noir pairs well with lean beef, lamb, pork dishes, and ahi tuna.

Look for the yellow sunflowers embossed on the newly redesigned Girasole label at a specialty store near you, or visit www.facebook.com/GirasoleVineyards to hear what fans have to say about the new releases.

Berkeley Olive Grove Wins “Best of Show” - Again

When the Griecos began producing Berkeley Olive Grove 1913 extra virgin olive oil in 2008, their goal, says Darro Grieco, was to make “the best and most healthful olive oil we can.”

Their oil - produced from hand-picked, certified organic, sustainably farmed heirloom Mission variety olives - has won “Best of Show” at the Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition as the premier delicate olive oil made in America. This repeats a 2009 Best of Show.

In its 13th year, the annual L.A. event is one of the world’s premier international olive oil competitions. Other high awards garnered annually since the company’s inception have been from California Olive Oil Council’s Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition, Yolo County Fair’s California Olive Oil Competition, and the Paso Robles Olive Festival. Berkeley Olive Grove produces three different flavor intensities for versatility: Delicate, Medium, and Robust.

Congratulations to Berkeley Olive Grove on their numerous awards! Keep up the good work. Visit www.berkeleyolivegrove.com to shop online.

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Farm-to-table Fresh

Get inspired by our CCOF member recipes. Or if you're feeling really adventurous, create a menu for your own farm-to-table dinner. See our feature on page 20 for more insight on hosting an event.



Summer Squash Fritters

Courtesy of Happy Boy Farms (Watsonville, CA)

Squash fritters are a perfect way to rework the summer squash textures that can start to seem redundant during the long peak of this abundant crop's harvest. Give your palate a break and shred some squash.

4 cups summer squash, grated
2 tbsp nuts (cashews, almonds, hazelnut, etc.), chopped
2 eggs
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup all-purpose flour (or use almond flour as a gluten free option)
2 tsp salt
½ tsp baking powder
2-3 cloves garlic
spices/herbs to taste: thyme, cayenne, cinnamon, cumin – experiment!

- ▶ Preheat oven to 200°F.
- ▶ Grate the summer squash in a bowl.
- ▶ Add salt to the grated squash and let sit 10 minutes.
- ▶ Absorb some of the moisture that is now beading on the squash with a paper towel.
- ▶ Stir in the rest of the ingredients, looking for a pancake batter-like thickness.
- ▶ Heat a large pan to medium-high heat with high-heat cooking oil.
- ▶ Place balls of mixture in the heated pan and press down slightly to give it a cake-like shape. Turn over each cake after the bottom has turned golden. Once cooked, relocate the cakes to the warmed oven until you've cooked them all.

Watermelon Mint Cooler

Also courtesy of Happy Boy Farms (Watsonville, CA)

On a hot summer day there is nothing that hits the spot quite like a watermelon cooler. It simply defines summer: spending a lazy afternoon in the garden sipping watermelon mint cooler from a tall glass, under a shady tree. It is truly refreshing with just the right amount of sweetness.

large red watermelon, seeded or seedless (one 9-10 lb. watermelon = 2 quarts liquid)
⅓ cup mint leaves, washed
squeeze of lime (optional)

- ▶ Cut the watermelon into cubes and discard the rinds. Some seeds are okay.
- ▶ Place several cups of watermelon cubes into the blender and mix. If you need to add a bit of water to get it to blend that is fine. Keep adding watermelon until blender is full.
- ▶ Muddle mint: add ⅓ cup mint to bottom of pitcher and muddle.
- ▶ Strain juice into pitcher with thick cheesecloth, doubled over a fine mesh strainer.
- ▶ Add optional squeeze of fresh lime.
- ▶ Serve chilled or over ice and garnish with whole sprigs of mint.

Find other delicious Happy Boy Farms recipes at www.happyboyfarms.com/recipes.php.

Summertime Strawberry Salad with Creamy Basil Vinaigrette

Courtesy of Old House Farm (Scotts Valley, CA)

4-6 cups Little Gem salad greens
6-10 strawberries, sliced
1 cucumber, diced
2 carrots, diced

For Dressing (makes about 1 cup):
1-2 garlic cloves
2 scallions (green onions), chopped
½ cup olive oil
¼ cup balsamic or champagne vinegar
1 cup packed basil leaves
salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

- ▶ Blend all dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth.
- ▶ Toss the lettuce with the cucumbers and carrot, and as much dressing as you would like.
- ▶ Arrange the strawberries on top and enjoy!





Summer Gazpacho Done Three Ways

Courtesy of *The Olive Press (Sonoma, CA)*

Gazpacho is a truly seasonal summer dish – it requires fresh produce at its best to be any good. Ripe tomatoes, green herbs, and lots of spice make up a good gazpacho, and the one and only thing to finish it off? Extra-virgin olive oil!

For “Heirloom Green” Gazpacho:

¼ cup Ascolano Olive Oil
 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tbsp paprika
 1 tsp sea salt
 1 pound green heirloom tomatoes, cored and chopped
 1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
 ½ cup celery, chopped
 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
 ½ jalapeño, seeded and minced
 ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped

For “Spicy Olive” Gazpacho:

¼ cup robust olive oil
 1 tbsp Sherry Balsamic Vinegar
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tbsp paprika
 1 tsp sea salt
 1 pound tomatoes, cored and chopped
 1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
 ½ cup Kalamata olives, pitted
 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
 ½ jalapeño, seeded and minced
 ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped

For “Lemony” Gazpacho:

¼ cup Limonato Olive Oil
 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tbsp paprika
 1 tsp sea salt
 1 ½ pounds tomatoes, cored and chopped
 1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
 ½ jalapeño, seeded and minced
 ¼ cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
 ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped

- ▶ Combine all ingredients in a food processor; pulse until well chopped but not completely pureed.
- ▶ Cover and refrigerate 2 hours, or up to overnight, for flavors to combine.
- ▶ Serve chilled topped with crusty bread, chopped veggies, and other picnic favorites.

Lavender Scones

Courtesy of *Central Coast Lavender (Paso Robles, CA)*

Lavender isn’t just for potpourri anymore! Culinary lavender is gaining popularity for the summery, floral note it lends recipes. Find certified organic culinary lavender online at www.centralcoastlavender.com.

2 cups flour
 1 tbsp baking powder
 4 tbsp butter
 ¼ cup sugar
 2 tsp fresh lavender florets (or 1 tsp dried culinary lavender), roughly chopped
 about ⅔ cup milk

- ▶ Preheat oven to 425°F.
- ▶ Sift together the flour and baking powder.
- ▶ Rub the butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- ▶ Stir in the sugar and lavender florets, reserving a pinch of lavender to sprinkle on top of the scones before baking them.
- ▶ Add enough milk to make a soft, sticky dough. Bind the mixture together, then turn the dough out onto a well-floured work surface. Shape dough into a circle, gently patting the top to give a one-inch depth.
- ▶ Using a floured cutter, stamp out 12 scones and place on a baking sheet. Brush the tops with a little milk and sprinkle with the reserved lavender.
- ▶ Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden.
- ▶ Serve warm with plum jam and clotted cream.

TCHOColate Gelato

Courtesy of *TCHO (San Francisco, CA)*

2 ounces TCHO chocolate, coarsely chopped
 ¾ cup fine granulated sugar
 1 cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
 2 ¼ cups whole milk
 ⅓ cup heavy cream
 4 large egg yolks

- ▶ In a 2-quart heavy saucepan, bring milk, cream, and about half of sugar just to a simmer, stirring until sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from heat and add Dutch-process cocoa powder and chocolate, whisking until mixture is silky smooth.
- ▶ In a bowl with an electric mixer, beat yolks and remaining sugar until thick and pale.
- ▶ Add hot chocolate mixture in a slow stream, whisking, and pour into saucepan.
- ▶ Cook custard over moderately low heat, stirring constantly, until a thermometer registers 170°F. Do not boil.
- ▶ Pour custard through a sieve into a metal bowl, set in ice water, and cool.
- ▶ Chill custard, covered, until cold.
- ▶ Freeze custard in an ice-cream maker. Transfer to an airtight container and put in freezer to harden, 1 to 3 hours.
- ▶ Serve immediately or keep frozen to serve later.



Events & Trainings to Serve You!

CCOF served over 150 participants through five educational webinars this spring: *Marketing 101*, *Organic Sales Basics*, *U.S.-EU Organic Equivalency*, and *Organic Labeling* for processors.

We continue to push the envelope to bring more interactivity to these trainings by creating supplementary videos and incorporating special guest speakers. Our *Marketing 101* webinar now has a supplementary video featuring 30-year farmers' market veteran Jeff Larkey of Route One Farms. Filmed from his stand at Santa Cruz's Westside Farmers' Market, Jeff shares his expert tips on how to set up a dynamic display to help your produce fly off the tables. Special guest speaker Jeff Bordes, marketing director at Frog Hollow Farms, joined the March 15 webinar to share how he manages online sales through the farm's website and integrates social media into Frog Hollow's marketing and sales scheme.

Our *Organic Sales Basics* webinar on April 11 featured a special bonus video with New Leaf Community Market Produce Manager and Buyer, Bert Brown, and Dina Izzo of Bludog Organic Produce Services demonstrating a sales pitch to a local retail produce buyer. This practical training video helped participants gain a basic understanding of the sales process and prepared them to participate in a live role-play of their sales pitch with organic produce expert Dina Izzo. Participants in the role-play included a certified organic micro-greens producer pitching her product to restaurants in New York, an organic grass-fed beef producer selling to a local butcher shop, and a mixed vegetable producer selling to a local retail produce buyer.

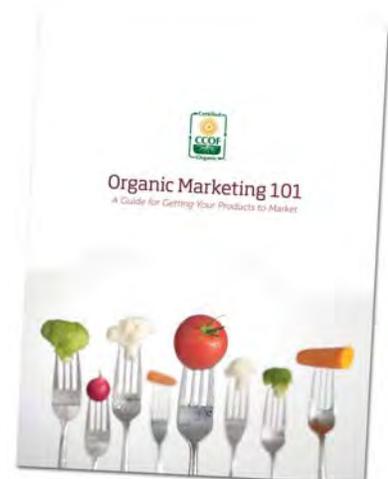
CCOF offered a special webinar on the historic U.S.-EU Equivalency Agreement that was signed on February 15, 2012. CCOF Chief Certification Officer Jake Lewin, who served on behalf of CCOF as a member of the task force that helped make this agreement happen, presented on how this new arrangement will reduce overall fees and complexity of organic certification beginning June 1, 2012. For more information on the new EU organic requirements see www.ccof.org/eu.php.

Partnering with Organic Education Solutions and Foerstel Designs, CCOF offered another run of our *Organic Labeling* webinar on May 9 and May 16. This webinar provides processors and handlers new insight into the most common mistakes companies make with their organic labels, and defines a step-by-step process for developing labels that comply with the USDA National Organic Program. After this webinar, participants understand the relevance of product composition and percentage calculations to product claims, the correct use of the CCOF and USDA seals, ingredient lists, and the steps in the CCOF label approval process.

CCOF Debuts Organic Marketing Guide

Organic Marketing 101: A Guide for Getting Your Products to Market

This 36-page guide debuted this spring with a print run of 6,000 and was distributed to certified members, producers, agricultural offices, colleges, and trade groups at no cost to them. The ever-growing organic marketplace requires a strong grasp of marketing strategy, which starts by determining the right market channel for your operation. It can be challenging for many certified organic farmers and producers, as well as those transitioning to organic production, to develop these skills. This guide was designed to help organic producers overcome that gap. Featuring leading organic market experts like Bu Nygrens of Veritable Vegetable and Mark Mulcahy of "An Organic Conversation"™ and CDS Consulting Co-Op, this guide walks organic producers through six market channels and provides expert advice on how to determine the right market channel for your certified organic operation. Contact programs@ccof.org to get your copy today!





Fall Encore: Must-Attend CCOF Trainings

Marketing 101 Webinar

September 26, 9:30-11:00 a.m. (PDT)

This webinar is designed to help organic producers bring their products to market and identify the best market channels for their business. Review key criteria and competencies that need to be considered to market through wholesale, retail, farmers' markets, CSAs, brokerage, and online sales. You will be asked to fill out a pre-webinar self-assessment to evaluate key aspects of your business and current marketing plan to prepare you to choose the right market mix.

Sales Basics Webinar

October 3, 9:30-11:00 a.m. (PDT)

Discover the key elements for establishing continued marketplace presence, including tips and tricks on how to determine a fair price for an organic product and create an attractive availability list that will grab your buyers' attention. This webinar also stresses the importance of good recordkeeping, and how to make an invoice. A worksheet will be provided ahead of time to develop your "sales pitch" and participants will have the opportunity to role-play their sales pitch live on the webinar and receive expert feedback!

Wholesale Market Tour

October 16, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (PDT)

Walk the docks of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market and tour the warehouses of Earl's Organic Produce and Veritable Vegetable where you will learn the importance of pack standards, box quality, and cold chain management in preserving the integrity of your organic product. See firsthand a variety of NOP compliant labels. This is your opportunity to glimpse behind the scenes of wholesale operations, learn about the varieties of fruit and vegetables currently in the marketplace, and see what your competition is doing.

See what others had to say about last year's Wholesale Market Tour at the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market:

"I took the tour to learn about the SF produce market and the wholesale produce chain as a whole. The tour was very informative and met my expectations."

"When are we touring another produce market?"

"We gained insight on the produce industry and gained produce connections."

Crop Planning Webinar

November 7, 9:30-11:00 a.m. (PST)

Crop planning is infrastructure for a farmer's progress and profitability. Knowing expected yields and harvest dates plays a major role in marketing and sales. This webinar will review the basics of how to develop a crop plan, setting up farmers for a successful season of growing and meeting market demand.

Please check CCOF's Events & Trainings for full details and registration: www.ccof.org/programs.php.

chapter UPDATE

The CCOF chapters have been busy this spring building the organic brand and providing more organic education opportunities through chapter webinars, consumer tabling at retail stores, and co-hosting an organic farming conference!

Processor/Handler (PR)

The Processor/Handler (PR) chapter held the first of a series of webinar meetings on April 17 with 32 participants. This meeting featured informative updates, CCOF's 2012 Vision, and certification news from Executive Director Cathy Calfo and Director of Handler Certification Jody Biergiel. Laura Batcha, the executive vice president of the Organic Trade Association (OTA), provided an overview presentation on the proposed Organic Research and Promotion Program, which has the potential to promote the expansion of the organic industry and increase organic market opportunities. The final speaker was chapter member Russ Lester of Dixon Ridge Farms, who presented on the novel green energy processing programs that are in place and in development at his company.

The PR chapter hosted a second webinar session focused on food safety on June 14 with Gwendolyn Wyard, the associate director of organic standards and industry outreach at the Organic Trade Association. If you have a topic you would like included in the webinar series please contact Joelle Mosso at JMosso@ebfarm.com.

Fresno-Tulare (FT)

The 2012 San Joaquin Valley Organic Farming Conference was held on April 4 at Fresno State University. This event was a partnership between Fresno State University (Dr. Mint Pasakdee), UC Cooperative Extension (Richard Molinar) and the CCOF Fresno-Tulare chapter. There were 48 people in attendance for the day-long conference that included a lunch with organic ingredients from Fresno State and T&D Willey Farms. In the morning, four speakers discussed plant pathology 101, food safety on the farm, the soil food web, and organic certification. The afternoon included topics about biological insect control, organic weed management, and a tour of the student store. Ron Whitehurst with Rincon-Vitova Insectaries demonstrated the "bug vac" for determining beneficial and bad bug ratios (*at right, second from top*). Dr. Anil Shrestha of Fresno State discussed the research trials with paper mulches and white and black plastic mulches (*at right, top*). Presentations from the meeting are available for viewing at www.ucanr.org/sites/Small_Farms_and_Specialty_Crop under "Meetings and Presentations."



Pacific Southwest (PS)

Pacific Southwest (PS) chapter leaders participated in an anniversary celebration of Jimbo's Naturally Grocery by tabling at each of their four stores. Chapter Treasurer Mary Page tabled at the 4S Ranch store, Karen Archipley spoke with customers about CCOF and Archi's Acres at the Carlsbad store, Chapter President Soleil Develle tabled at the Escondido store, and Chapter Vice President Tom Page covered the Carmel Valley store. Chapter leaders spoke with Jimbo's customers about the importance of supporting certified organic farmers and processors, and passed out CCOF magazines and flyers and information on the GMO labeling initiative.

Let the CCOF community know what your chapter is doing!

Write to programs@ccof.org and we will publish your chapter update in the next edition of *Certified Organic*.

Thank you to this issue's contributors: Joelle Mosso (PR), Soleil Develle (PS), and Richard Molinar (FT).

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AN ORGANIC FEAST

Farm-to-Table Dinners

Written by Melinda Clark



It's hard to imagine a better way to celebrate summer's bounty than with a farm-to-table dinner.

The popularity of farm dinners has exploded in the last few years as farmers and diners alike have discovered the joy and mutual benefits of these meals. For farmers, farm-to-table events provide an additional source of income and the opportunity to share what they do with the community, while foodies and novice eaters get the chance to enjoy delicious food made with premium ingredients, often just steps from where it was grown.

For those considering hosting their own farm-to-table event or participating in a farm dinner series, the amount of work involved can be a bit daunting. Executing a dinner for anywhere from 10 to 300 guests requires a different set of skills than growing produce and getting it to market. Fortunately, we found a few farm dinner veterans who were kind enough to share their expertise on exactly how and why to go about hosting a farm-to-table meal.

About Our Experts

Rich Everett owns and operates CCOF-certified Everett Family Farm with his wife Laura and their three kids, Hailey, Hannah, and Annie. The farm hosts a variety of events, from weddings to fundraisers, in Soquel, California. It specializes in growing and selling organic free-range pastured eggs, flowers, and berries, as well as heirloom apples, pomegranates, pears, and plums in its numerous orchards.

A working farm, Everett Family Farm is also what the Everetts call an "incubator for young farmers" - amateur horticulturalists from the University of California Santa Cruz often come to the farm to gain real-world experience running a farm. Almost all of the farm's managers go on to either own their own farm or work in the agriculture sector in some way.

Chef/artist Jim Denevan founded the farm dinner series Outstanding in the Field (OITF), which has inspired interest in the farm-to-table movement across the country since 1999. Now in its 13th season, OITF has welcomed nearly 40,000 diners to its long communal table in nine countries, and all but seven U.S. states. The mission of the series is to reconnect diners with the people and land behind their food. Ingredients for the meal are almost all local - often sourced within inches of the table - and prepared by a celebrated chef of the region. After a tour of the host site, everyone settles in: farmers, culinary artisans, and diners serving each other at the communal table.

Why Farm Dinners?

Everett Family Farm started hosting events on the farm for a number of reasons: first and foremost to help the community by raising money for different organizations through fundraisers. They also wanted to expose people to how farming works at

the family farm level, including the amount of time and labor it requires.

Farm dinners were also appealing financially. In a sector where it can be difficult to turn a profit, additional revenue sources are always welcome.

"A lot of farms talk about 'sustainability,'" explains Rich Everett. "It's a really great buzz word ... but there's one thing that's not really talked about, especially with new farms, and that's financial sustainability. We all work really hard, sun up to sun down on most days, seven days a week during the on season. It's a labor of love but you also need to make a living wage. ... This is just one of many other ways to increase your revenues and be diversified at any farming level."

Farm-to-table dinners are also a great opportunity to sell the crops and produce generated by the farm. Everett Family Farm serves apple juice from its orchards at fall events and tries to incorporate eggs into the meals, as well as whatever is growing on the farm that season.

Plus, says Everett, "We try and have fun." He adds, "We love meeting our guests: if there are 150 we try to get to all of them. Everyone has a great story about why they wanted to come out."

A longtime participant in Outstanding in the Field, Everett Family Farm hosted its seventh OITF dinner on June 16 of this year. Everett explains that one of the best things about OITF events is that they take attendees on tours of the farm before the meal and explain every step of how, for instance, the lettuce that they're about to eat got to the table, including all of the work that went into taking it from seed to dinner.

"We get a lot of satisfaction introducing people to how things grow," he says.

Jim Denevan echoes that sentiment. "It makes sense for people to come to where the food comes from." He says he's not surprised by the growing popularity of farm-to-table events.

"It's the right recipe in terms of people's interest in food and farming ... good food, good wine, beautiful landscapes - it's kind of irresistible."

In addition to bellies full of fresh, local food, diners often walk away with a feeling of connectedness and a better understanding of what it takes to get food from seed to table.

"This kind of access to the farm is fulfilling to people," says Denevan. "When people sit down and enjoy the fruits of the farmer's labors and hear something about farm work, it



complements their interest. ... It makes them feel good. And they're satiated in a way, dining in an environment like this - that's meaningful."

Farm-to-Table Tips

When hosting an event, whether your own or something like OITF, Everett says the first thing to do is decide on a date, and the second, the amount of attendees.

"A lot of that is predicated on how much parking you have," says Rich. "If you have a great farm but no parking, you're going to have a small event."

Everett Family Farm's maximum capacity is about 150 to 175 people, which Everett says typically means about half that many cars on the farm. He cautions that since these events are normally in the summer, you need to be aware of fire danger with all of the cars and exhaust present.

"One of the first things is safety. Are the grasses low enough where they won't spark any fires? Is the ground pothole- and gopher hole-free so people can walk around?"

For an event like OITF, it's generally very clear what the farmer is responsible for and what OITF and the chef are in charge of.

Explains Everett, "What the farmers typically do is prepare the farm and the land to host anywhere from 10 people to 300 people. It's making sure the roads are free and clear, or watered down to make sure there's no dust that gets on your crops. Also, putting up signs ... because we don't want people running amok."

While the chef typically determines the menu, it helps for the farmer to be prepared. "At the beginning of the year we look at the events we're going to do. We guess at what the chef wants to have," says Everett. "Depending on the time of year, the chef will ask us what we have available for the amount of people he's cooking for. It's the chef's call. ... The farmer can say, 'Hey I have this, it's really great.' We love to make those suggestions."

For their own events, Everett says they try to think of every

detail beforehand. For instance, if the meal involves drinking, they try to have extra security on hand to keep an eye on things. And, says Everett, "We make sure keys are out of tractors."

Of course, the farm wasn't always that organized.

"In the early days, I can remember scrambling around: it's sunset and dark and all of a sudden people need to get around. I remember scrambling around hooking up lights, trying to get people from the table back to their cars."

He recommends hiring a party planner to make sure all of those details are taken care of. "Party planners really are experts at pulling the whole thing together and not forgetting anything," says Everett. He adds, "Anything you plan ahead for will work out way better than if you just say 'Hey, let's just do the event.'"

Another important consideration: insurance. Everett insists that anyone wanting to have an event on the farm get a one-day insurance policy, with a minimum liability of one million dollars. Parking attendants are also mandatory because without them, Everett warns, people will block each other in. If another group or organization is putting on the event, you'll need to figure out whether you or they are in charge of things like staffing the parking, greeting new arrivals, and cleaning up the next day. Do what you can ahead of time, such as setting up recycling bins, to minimize cleanup later. If you're the one providing these services, be sure to take that into account and charge for it.

Denevan shares another financial tip for successful farm-to-table events: "There's no volunteering at our events," he says. "That's the dirty secret of farm dinners as far as I'm concerned. ... If you're gonna do these kinds of things week to week, month to month, year to year, everybody gets paid. They get paid well. They'll actually work for you the next year because you pay them." He says that while people often use volunteers for this type of event, if you're going to make a business out of it, workers need paychecks. "If you want to have good relations with people, it's a no-brainer really."

Another thing to keep in mind? County ordinances. It's typically the farmer's job to look into permitting, and know the local rules, such as when noise needs to stop.

Location is Everything

While location often gets overlooked, the placement of the dinner table (or tables) is an important consideration.

"In the case of OITF, Jim Denevan tries each year to pick a unique site on the farm where people will have an experience," says Rich. "Last year for example ... we have a river that runs through the farm so we set the table up three feet from the river's bank. People were eating right on the water. It was really a magical setting."

For Everett's own events, they try to do the same. And, depending on the event, they'll add fun touches like moving the farm's chickens or baby goats where diners can see them. They also like to set up the kitchen as close as they can to where people eat, Everett says, because people get a kick out of seeing how the meal is truly farm-to-table.

Location is huge to Denevan. "We've never repeated a location in maybe like seven times," Denevan says of the dinners at Everett Family Farm. He notes that many farmers, and even the diners themselves, don't necessarily realize how much the experience can be influenced by something like the placement of the table. "They're thinking, 'Well this is a farm,'" says Denevan. "They don't really care about what shape the table is or how it fits in the landscape. For me it's a huge part of the event."

Other Considerations

Everett says to first ask yourself, "Why do you want to invite a lot of people to your farm, and is that what you want to do? Why do you want to do it?"

"Not many weeks go by where someone doesn't ask us if they can do something at our farm," he says. "Requests come all the time. You have to decide what you can handle, what's worthwhile, and what fits with your goals. It's such hard work, so it needs to be a fun event; if it's a pain in the butt, don't do it."

He adds, "The biggest challenge is fitting in the amount of work it takes for any event, even OITF. These events are an absolute disruption to a daily farm. You spend a lot of time cleaning up the farm, getting things ready."

His top tip? "Find people who are good at different things." He continues, "Farmers are good at growing things. Find someone who's good at organizing things. OITF is a great organizer. Find people who are good at that stuff."

Above all, you want attendees to feel like they're getting a good value for the ticket price.

"When they leave here after an event, we want them to say, 'That's a great farm; those are really great people,'... and to go away saying, 'I have a whole better understanding of how things grow and how farmers get their produce to market.'"

Denevan points out that things will happen that are beyond your control, so the ability to be flexible and "just go with it" comes in handy. "Don't panic regarding weather issues," he says. "Figure out what you need to do, if you need a shelter. Don't freak out if it rains. People love that. They love that's it's not temperature-controlled."

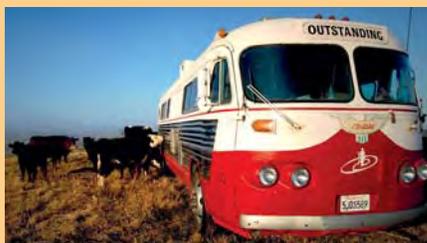
"The more you do them, the more you learn," says Everett. "At every single one we learn more and more. Ask people on their way out and they'll tell you. People are really honest. If something was good, they'll tell you; if something was bad, they'll tell you."

He adds, "We've never had an event where people don't go away shaking their head, going 'What a great evening! What great people.'... The people who work on the farm, the farm managers, we try to get them to attend the event. We try and get people to talk about what they do here."



Everett Family Farm

To sample Everett Family Farm's delicious strawberries and raspberries, learn about what makes their eggs so extraordinary, or take a whiff of their sweet-smelling bouquets, come visit the farm during the season. The Everett Family Farm stand is located on the farm at 2111 Old San Jose Road in Soquel, California. They are currently open 7 days a week. Learn more about the farm at www.everettfamilyfarm.com.



Outstanding in the Field

In July, Jim and the OITF crew will be doing dinners in the Pacific Northwest. In August they head east, then continue working their way through the Midwest, New England, Mid-Atlantic and across the South. In early November, they'll arrive back in California and do dinners in the southern part of the state before working their way back home to Santa Cruz. Check out the full tour schedule at www.outstandinginthefield.com.

Dining with Route One Farms

CCOF-certified Route One Farms, a longtime fixture in California's Central Coast farming community, hosts a summer farm dinner series that takes place on its 65 acres of Santa Cruz coastal valley farmland. Jasmine Roohani-oh, who organizes the dinners, was kind enough to provide detailed tips on hosting a farm-to-table dinner.



What would you say should be the main considerations when planning a farm dinner?

Making sure you have everything you need and all your bases covered. Our dinners happen on Sunday afternoon/evenings and can be in remote locations, so running out and picking up something you might have forgotten is not an option. You also want to consider backup plans for inclement weather and lighting for the after-dark walk back to vehicles. Also, having more than enough food! It's awful when you run out before everyone has had some.

Can you give a quick breakdown of your planning process for putting on a farm dinner?

The things I and the farm are in charge of are all of the rentals (tables, chairs, dinnerware, logistics, port-a-potties, etc.), staffing for set up, parking, check-in, dinner service, cleanup, errands, hiring a local chef, coordinating the menu with the chef and the harvest with field workers, bringing on a guest winery and beer, marketing of event, registration of guests, menu printing, fee collection. We hire the chef; they bring their own staff and plan the menu with us in regard to what is available at that time.

Our events this year are July 1, August 12, and September 30. I have already gone to the rental company and placed my orders for all the tables and whatnot. It usually takes two weeks to get everything else together (mind you we are still running a fully functioning farm at the same time so I do dinner things in between everything else). We start planning with the chefs about a month before each dinner. Since this is my second year planning the dinners, it's a bit less stressful because many of the procedures are in place.

In your opinion, what makes a farm-to-table dinner a success?

For one, not losing money on the event. While we do events as a way to bring our community together and not as a money maker, we also don't want to be in the hole because it takes a lot of time

and effort to organize. That did happen to us, though, on our first dinner last summer, so we learned from that experience. That's the financial side of it.

A success is bringing your customers, friends, family, and the community at large to the farm to see where their food is grown and to hear about how it is grown. We do a tour before dinner and then have a question and answer session. Our hope is that they will walk away from the dinner with a greater understanding, and appreciation of the importance of locally and organically grown foods. Of course, we also want them to enjoy themselves, their meal, and the new friendships that can form. It's always encouraging when folks who have attended one dinner sign up again!

What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of planning a farm-to-table meal? What is the most rewarding aspect?

The most rewarding aspect is seeing our community enjoy themselves during a very special evening. It's not often you get to even go to a farm, so to get the chance for a tour by the farmer him/herself and then to eat in the fields is very, very special. Our farms are gorgeous and it's been a joy to share them with folks.

As for challenging? I can't pinpoint one thing really. I think just making sure you have every last detail thought of and taken care of is the challenge. Oh, and making sure there is more than enough food!

Do you have a favorite farm dinner memory?

I think a nice memory of each dinner is just hearing people talk, laugh, and enjoy his or herself. I also enjoy the time spent with all the folks who help at the dinners. We have a regular crew who know each other pretty well and it's nice to work together to make such magical evenings happen. Having folks tell us that they had a lovely evening always makes me happy too!



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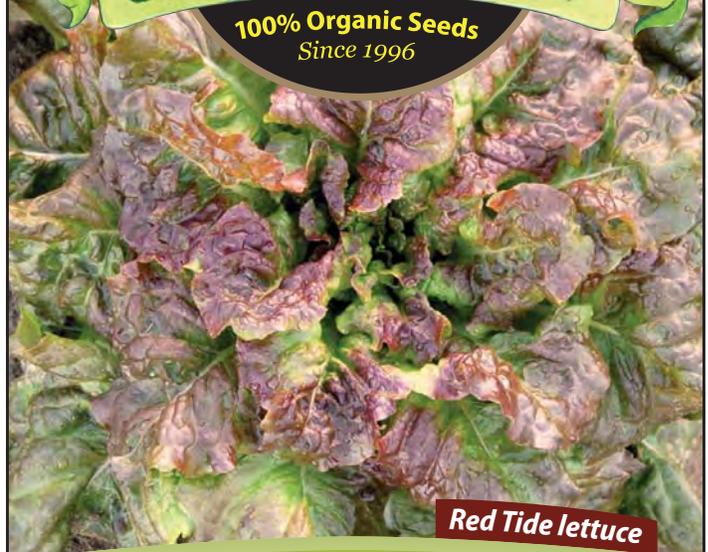


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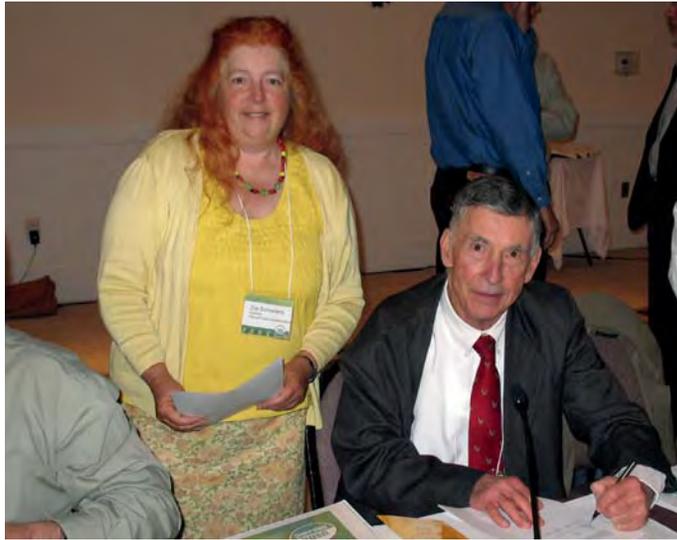
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NOSB Joins Efforts Combating GMOs

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) took up the issue of genetic engineering in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 22. Members of the NOSB formed a GMO subcommittee to provide some visibility for the organic community in the efforts to stop the spread of GMOs.

The Ad hoc GMO Subcommittee seeks to “examine all the areas where GMO contamination poses a threat to organics” by providing “leadership in clarifying what excluded methods actually are, and how compliance to the provisions of the rule can be monitored.” They see the possibility of GMO contamination as a “critical issue” for organic producers and consumers and seek to ensure that GMOs are prohibited in organic production.

The GMO subcommittee is developing a five year work plan and will tie together work from the other NOSB subcommittees as it pertains to GMOs. They will also examine definitions of “excluded methods” within the NOP rule and compare them to definitions in other countries and standards. In addition, the committee will look at issues such as preventative practices, the role of testing, and where to draw the GMO line in crop inputs, processing inputs, and livestock.

The first year will prove busy for this group: their activities will include creating a seed purity discussion paper, providing input to the National Organic Program on the role of testing for feed and forage, increasing consistency among certifiers through preventative measures to protect against genetic drift, providing decision tree formats for evaluating inputs, and exploring plant breeding topics.

The first activity of the subcommittee was to write a letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on the subject of contamination by GMOs. This powerful letter states: “Organic farmers must no longer be held solely responsible to prevent contamination from practices outside their control. We feel the developers of the GMO technology should share the burden that organic farmers now assume in mitigating the gene flow between farms and should compensate organic farmers for genetic drift.”

CCOF, with a history of leadership in fighting GMOs in organic, was instrumental in the creation and passage of this letter. It is gratifying that in these days of polarization and division within organic proponents, this is one area that everyone in organics agrees on. We hope to keep this fight against GMOs moving forward until we prevail.

Organic Farm Bill Programs Benefit CCOF- Certified Producers

2012 marks the last year of National Organic Certification Cost Share Program funding that was authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill. The funds disbursed have increased every year as organizations like CCOF have assisted organic producers and handlers in accessing the reimbursements, which can total 75% of certification costs, up to \$750.

Over 8,000 organic operations received more than \$5 million in total reimbursements in 2010, up from less than \$3.5 million disbursed in 2008. California has budgeted over \$1 million for 2012 reimbursements; funds are now available in 49 states. According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, nearly a fourth of these funds have already been distributed, including reimbursements for over 350 CCOF-certified organic operations.

Farm bill programs that lower entry barriers for new organic farmers promote the growth of the industry and support environmentally-friendly production practices. Brenton Patrick achieved certification in 2011 for his farm in Merced, California, Hip Hops Incorporated, with the help of the Certification Cost Share Program:

“My total costs for last year’s certification was \$850, and my reimbursement from the cost share program was \$650. My certification only cost me \$200 and I’m very happy to see that I can get this cost share reimbursement every year.”

Organic farmers, ranchers, and processors pay for certification to guarantee to consumers that their production practices protect natural resources. In the words of Todd W. Hirasuna, of Sunnyside Packing Company, a CCOF-certified organic bean,

eggplant, and squash grower in Selma, California:

“For centuries, our families and fellow patrons have been tending to our nation’s rich and blessed soil that feeds people around the world. ... As a prideful group, we seldom ask nor want for anything we don’t have to. ... Whether it aids in offsetting input costs or allows us the ability to solicit new markets and opportunities, the assistance that the cost share program provides is often the type of spring board that allows many of us to further grow and expand our dreams and passions. ... It is absolutely imperative that as a nation and as consumers of these nutritious products we support our agricultural community.”

As the farm bill moves forward it is more critical than ever that members of Congress hear directly from farmers and other food producers about the USDA programs that are important to them. We want to hear about your experience with farm bill programs like Organic Certification Cost Share and the EQIP Organic Initiative. Contact us at policy@ccof.org with your stories!

CCOF at Work

CCOF has been stepping up its advocacy on behalf of its members and the organic sector as a whole. We have also been ramping up efforts to engage our members more directly in policy issues that affect them. A few highlights:

Advocating in D.C.

In late April CCOF staff, four board members, and a number of CCOF-certified members traveled to Washington D.C. to advocate for organic farm bill programs and participate in the OTA Policy Conference & Hill Days, which coincided with the Senate Agriculture Committee consideration of the 2012 Farm Bill. We visited numerous House and Senate congressional offices and one of the overarching messages we heard from members of Congress and their staff is that they want and *need* to hear directly from farmers. The OTA Hill Days showed the strength of the organic sector, while strong representation by CCOF raised our profile in D.C.

Sending out Action Alerts

We have increased our capacity to advocate for policy on behalf of our supporters and members by investing in software that sends policy updates and action alerts. Now, CCOF members can weigh in more easily and directly on regulatory or legislative issues that affect them, such as the farm bill. We also offer public comment opportunities to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and NOP about organic standards. Help make this tool a success by signing up to receive these action alerts and encouraging your friends and family to do the same: www.capwiz.com/ccof.

Getting Farmers to Farm Bill Listening Sessions

On April 28, two Central Valley Democratic lawmakers, Rep. Costa and Rep. Cardoza, held a forum in Fresno to gather input from farmers on the 2012 Farm Bill. We had a strong showing of CCOF members in attendance. We also worked with Rep. Costa’s office to ensure the organic sector had formal representation with a CCOF farmer presenting on organic priorities. John Teixeira of CCOF-certified Lone Willow Ranch agreed to take on the responsibility and did a great job advocating for USDA programs that help organic farmers on the ground.

Meeting with the Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee

On April 1, Director of Policy and Programs Brise Tencer, Executive Director Cathy Calfo, and long-time CCOF member, Dale Coke of Coke Farm, met with Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (MI). We spoke to her about the growth of the organic sector and ways she can help organic farmers succeed with support from USDA farm bill programs. In particular, we spoke to Stabenow about the importance of the Organic Certification Cost Share Program and directing USDA research dollars to plant breeding. The Senator shared her vision for the next farm bill. CCOF staff had a follow up meeting with the Senator on May 19 to thank her for the organic programs that were included in the Senate Agriculture Committee-passed version of the farm bill, and to discuss what priorities we are still hoping will be addressed as the bill moves forward.

Educating Congressional Organic Caucus

CCOF worked with OTA, NOC, NSAC, and OFRF to organize a briefing to the Congressional House Organic Caucus in Washington, D.C. Chief Certification Officer Jake Lewin was one of the six presenters and spoke about the need for sufficient funding for the USDA National Organic Program, while farmers and other advocates addressed other farm bill priorities. By jointly hosting the event, the organic groups showed a unified front for key priorities of the organic community. The event was well attended by congressional staff.

California Assembly Select Committee on Sustainable and Organic Agriculture

This relatively new committee held an informational hearing on May 15 entitled *The Future of Sustainable and Organic Agriculture in California: Opportunities and Challenges in Promoting Agricultural Conservation*. Director of Policy and Programs Brise Tencer testified before the committee, offering an overview of the organic sector’s market trends and policy barriers.



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Possible Organic Research and Promotion Program

Organic sector stakeholder dialog has now begun on an initiative exploring an organic research and promotion program (ORPP).

An informative Town Hall meeting, held in late April in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the Organic Trade Association's (OTA) Policy Conference and Hill Visit Days, opened the discussion. Since then, there have been webinars and additional Town Hall meetings, including a May 31 Town Hall with CCOF members in the Watsonville, California, area.

Research and promotion programs engage in such activities as research into consumer benefits provided by specific commodities, and other market research. Currently, there are 18 such programs in place. OTA's role is to facilitate this exploration process for the organic sector. All substantive decisions regarding the parameters of a potential organic program will be made by the industry itself. Thus, it is crucial that those from across the value chain join in the dialog and help shape the outcome of this exploration.

Guiding Principles for the Initiative:

1. An ORPP should support and not burden organic farmers first and foremost, thus, assessments would not be made at the producer level.
2. All parameters would be determined by the industry itself, not by OTA; OTA's role is to facilitate the process.
3. All stakeholders need to be engaged in the dialog.
4. The effort will include proactive communication and transparent political work.

There are two technical fixes that need to happen in order for an ORPP to even be possible.

First, it is necessary to fix the existing exemption for organic operations from conventional check-offs so that more producers and handlers can participate, while reducing the paperwork burden of exercising the exemption. The goal is to allow the organic sector the same opportunity as the rest of agriculture to decide whether pooling funds through an industry assessment for the purpose of establishing a self-governing ORPP makes sense. This requires legislation by Congress to clarify and broaden the exemption to all organic production.

In addition, under current research and promotion legislation, the organic industry does not qualify to create a research and promotion program because it is multi-commodity. This requires amending research and promotion legislation to accommodate multiple-commodity programs.

Once these two steps are resolved, the organic industry will still need to establish a framework (governance, programs, assessments and exemptions), survey the sector for support, draft a program/order, seek USDA advice and counsel, and get USDA's support for creating the order.

Whether this is a viable vehicle to grow organic agriculture and trade will be evaluated throughout the entire value chain during 2012 and into 2013. All members of the sector are encouraged to participate in a webinar or Town Hall meeting to learn more and add their voices to the discussion.

More details about the proposed ORPP are available online at www.ota.com/orpp.html. You may also contact Laura Batcha (lbatcha@ota.com) or reach out to Steering Committee Chairs Kim Dietz (Town Halls), at kimdietz.mail@gmail.com, or Robynn Shrader (Communications), at robynn@ncga.coop.

Cooperation and communication are critical in this discussion. You are encouraged to be part of the dialog to help shape the final decision and direction on a possible organic research and promotion program.

Upcoming Webinars

- July 23, 2012 @ 3:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Aug. 7, 2012 @ 3:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Sept. 10, 2012 @ 3:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Sept. 26, 2012 @ 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

RSVP to cstrong@ota.com to reserve your spot.

Upcoming Town Halls

- Sept. (date TBD), 2012 - OFARM Annual Meeting (NE)
- Sept. 27-28, 2012 - NODPA Field Days/Annual Meeting (VT)
- Sept. 20, 2012 - Natural Products Expo East (MD)
- Oct. 16-19, 2012 - NOSB Meeting (RI)
- Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2012 - MOA Conference (MT)

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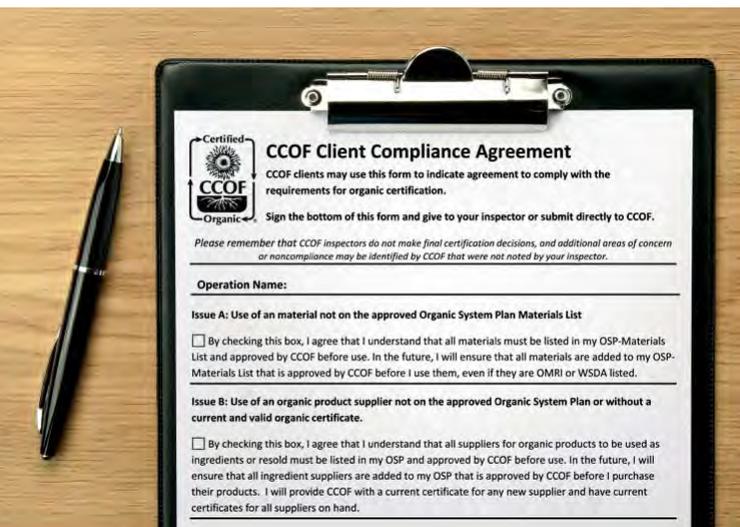


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We want to improve the certification process, address issues in person, and provide simple and coherent mechanisms to communicate with you. However, please remember that CCOF inspectors do not make final certification decisions and additional areas of concern or noncompliance may be identified by CCOF after your inspection. While minor issues may be addressed by completing the CCOF Client Compliance Agreement at inspection, major or repeated issues will continue to result in Notices of Noncompliance and/or the need for an additional onsite inspection.

One of the most common sources of frustration for certified operations is being issued Notices of Noncompliance for minor paperwork issues, such as using an OMRI-listed material without first having written approval from CCOF. Our staff is committed to finding ways to work better with clients to prevent such problems and reduce the paper chase post-inspection. A new idea that we are introducing is the CCOF Client Compliance Agreement.

CCOF staff continues to look for ways to make the certification process more cooperative and less confrontational. While we are bound to uphold the regulations set forth by the federal government, we believe that we can find ways to approach certification that continue to uphold the highest level of integrity for farmers, processors, and consumers by focusing on the practices of certified operations more than the paperwork generated to document those practices. We appreciate your feedback on how we are doing!

.....

The CCOF Client Compliance Agreement can be quickly completed during your inspection and submitted directly to your inspector, who will include it in your inspection report to CCOF. If your CCOF inspector has identified one of the situations listed below as a potential cause for concern during your inspection, you can use the agreement to bring your operation into compliance quickly and painlessly. Situations where the CCOF Client Compliance Agreement may be applicable include:

Tracking Inbox Items Online and Rush Service

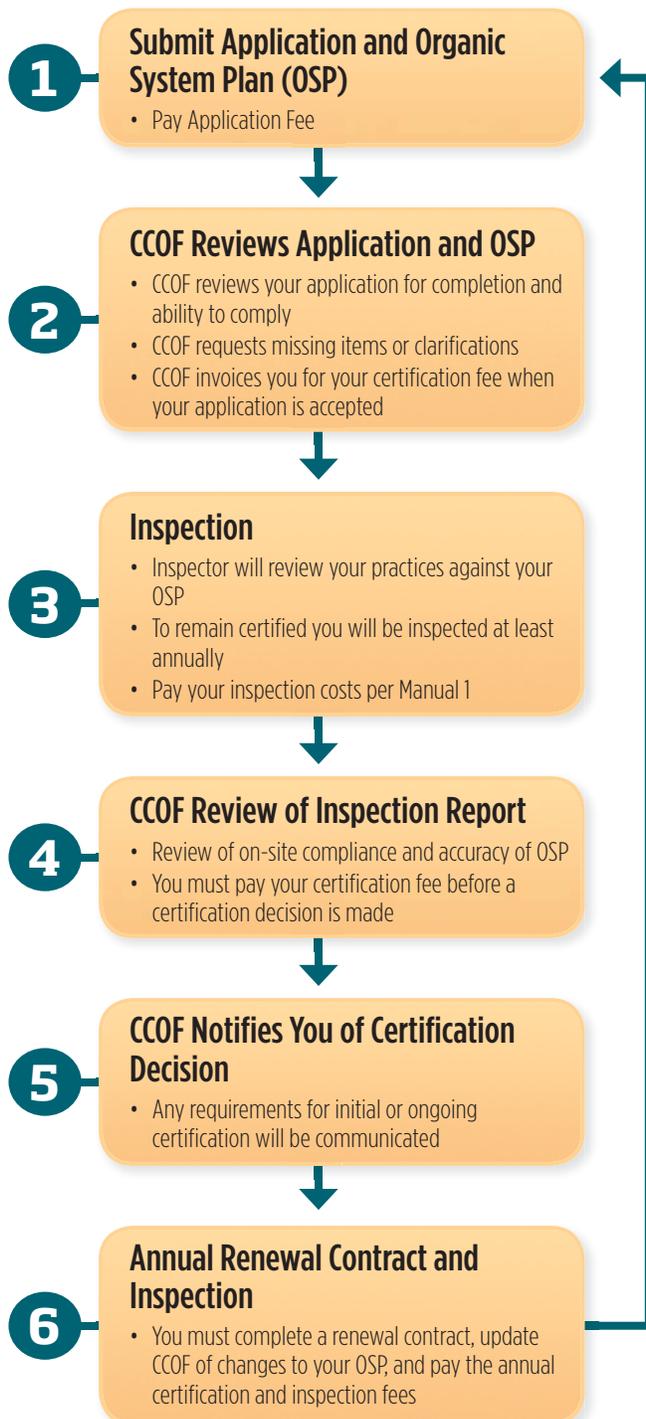
- **Use of an acceptable material not on the approved Organic System Plan Materials List**
- **Use of an organic product supplier not on the approved Organic System Plan, or failure to have a current organic certificate on hand**
- **Not having some minor records available at inspection**

Did you know that every time you send an update or request to CCOF, we create an inbox item, assign it a due date, and track how quickly it's completed? Even better, did you know that you can follow this process online? The MyCCOF "Action Items" tab shows you "Cert Staff Responsibility" inbox items and can show you if they're in process, who is working on them, and when they're due to be completed. Many clients are already using this system to monitor their submissions and review outgoing action items, such as letters that require a response by a particular due date. CCOF receives about 10,000 action items per year. We work hard to prioritize important items such as input/materials or label review requests. If you require immediate rush review, CCOF's rush review service can guarantee quick turnaround.

While these situations do not put the organic integrity of your product at risk, we may be forced to issue a Notice of

Clarification of the Certification Process

The image below appears in the revised CCOF Manual 1: A CCOF Guide to Certification. It helps you understand the certification process and what to expect each year. While we hope to see improvements, simplifications, and refinements in the future, this basic process is likely to remain.



Document Scanning Gives You Better Access

CCOF is scanning all client files and eliminating our use of paper records. Our client files equate to a length of more than two football fields and almost three quarters of a million pages!

The move to electronic files will present challenges for CCOF and our inspectors but will significantly reduce our use of paper and provide new opportunities for better service. We began scanning and uploading all incoming letters and OSP updates from clients in early May. These materials are now available to you and inspectors as a real-time record in the “Files” area of MyCCOF, allowing your inspector to see items you’ve recently submitted while maintaining an ongoing record of your updates and submissions to CCOF.

Your inspection reports, letters, and other documents are already available in MyCCOF. As we scan the remaining parts of your files we hope to provide new ways for you to access them.

A Word of Thanks

Too often in the certification process we don’t get the opportunity to tell you how much all of us at CCOF appreciate your hard work producing organic products. All of us appreciate the work you do and are committed every day to making certification as pleasant as possible. We realize that certification is not an end in itself but a step along the way to your success in the organic marketplace. While we must ensure strict organic standards are maintained, we also feel that we are on this journey with you.

For us, the certification process is about guaranteeing that the final organic certification is meaningful to you, consumers, and others. We work to implement continuous improvement as a concept on the national stage and concentrate wherever we can on practices over paper. As we look to the future of the merged CCOF Tilth organization, you have our commitment that we will remain focused on customer service, high integrity, and valuing your contribution and effort producing organic foods.

For us, the certification process is about guaranteeing that the final organic certification is meaningful to you, consumers, and others.

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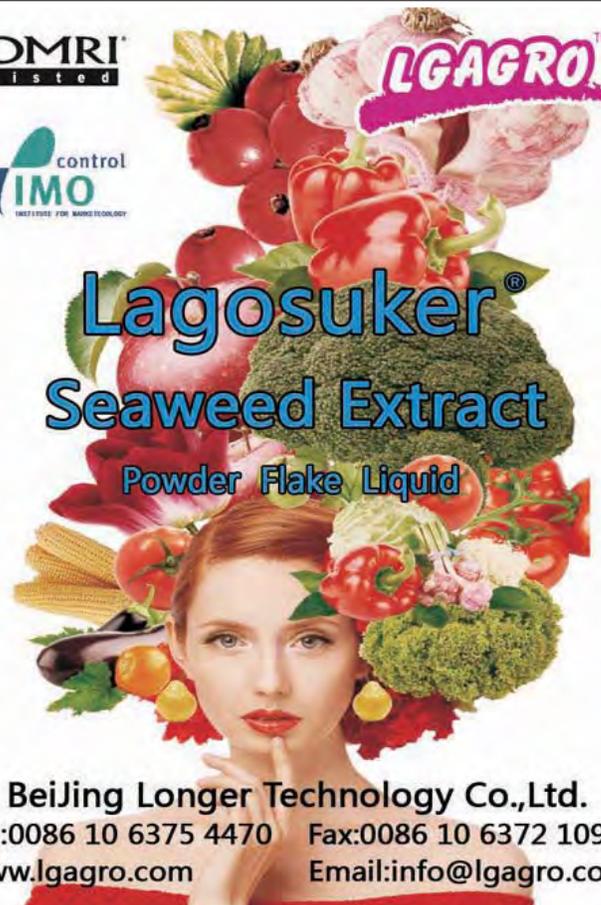
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The mission of the Organic Trade Association is to promote and protect organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy.

*List of investors as of 5/24/12

To see a complete list of Annual Fund investors, please visit www.ota.com.

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LISTINGS**Employment****Farm Workers Needed for 2012 Season**

Paradise Valley Produce grows six acres of certified organic vegetables and sells at three farmers' markets in Marin County, California. The work needed is seeding in the new greenhouse; transplanting; watering; weeding; harvesting; going to markets; and making plant extracts, compost teas, microbial brews, fish and kelp extracts, and applying to field crops. Also involves helping with school tours on the farm. The crew shares a kitchen and bath and has private rooms. For more information, call **(415) 868-0205** or email dennisadierks@gmail.com.

Farmer-Educator at Soil Born Farms

Soil Born Farms is an urban farm and education center located in Sacramento, California. From two urban farm sites on over 50 acres of certified organic ground, Soil Born Farms is working to educate people about the connections between food, health and the health of the environment. Every day Soil Born Farms produces and gleans healthy fruit and vegetables, educates youth and adults through hands-on farm experiences, and improves access to healthy food for everyone, including the most underserved communities. To learn more about Soil Born Farms, visit www.soilborn.org. To view the full job description, required experience, and information on how to apply, visit <http://goo.gl/tgaQJ>.

For Sale**Stanhay Planters for Sale**

Four planters with two ground drive units, electronic monitor, and extra belts and parts located in Humboldt County, California are for sale for \$2,500. For more information, contact John at **(707) 923-2670** or helenthemelon@earthlink.net.

Boer Goats and Great Pyrenees X Andalusian Pups

CCOF certified Boer goats for sale: 30 three-year-old does, 40 6-month-old doe and whether kids. Pastured on year-round, ocean view green feed in the Mattole Valley near Petrolia, California. Also available are Great Pyrenees X Andalusian pups ready to work for \$400 each. For more information, call **(707) 629-3506** or email evenson@igc.org.

Land for Sale/Lease**Farm House and Land for Rent in Madera County**

4 +/- acres of row crop land and/or 12 acre shared irrigated pasture for pastured poultry is available on a certified organic, 95 acre, diversified farm (pasture, orchard, hay, row crop) located in Madera County, California. Pasture is currently being used for grass-fed beef and lamb; someone seeking irrigated pasture land for small pastured poultry operation is an ideal fit. 2 bedroom/1 bath plus bonus room house with a garage is included in the rent; water for the crop land is additional and not part of the lease. Farm currently sells at two farmers' markets in the Bay Area in addition to retail outlets. Marketing assistance is available for beginning farmers, including adding products to our meat CSA. For more details, please contact casarosafarms@gmail.com.

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organic EVENTS

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Organic Winegrowing Conference

The only event of its kind in the industry, the Organic Winegrowing Conference offers the wine industry first-hand insight and networking opportunities that lead to an increase in wine quality and the promotion of sustainable practices. Respected voices in research join forces with industry names synonymous with pioneering organic winegrowing to provide comprehensive insight and support on the details of organic and sustainable farming. More information is available online:

www.napagrowers.org/events.

September 7-9, Milwaukee, WI

Growing Power Urban & Small Farm Conference

Growing Power's mission is to support people from diverse backgrounds, and the environments in which they live, by helping to provide equal access to healthy high-quality, safe, and affordable food for people in all communities. This year's conference will have plenty of breakaway sessions, speakers, and tours. Over 3,000 participants are estimated to attend, and 200 of the nation's most well-known food-system experts will share their knowledge. The conference will provide guidance on how to plan, develop, and grow small farms in urban and rural areas. 17 conference tracks have been organized to provide a thorough learning and networking experience for all, including Urban Farming, Urban Aquaculture, Farmers of Tomorrow, Food Policy, and more. Visit www.growingpowerfarmconference.org for conference details.

September 11-13, Santa Rosa, CA

National Heirloom Exposition

The National Heirloom Exposition is a nonprofit event centered on the pure food movement, heirloom vegetables, and anti-GMO activism. The first annual event held mid-September 2011, in Santa Rosa, California, drew more than 10,000 people from around the country and beyond. With more than 70 speakers and 250 natural food vendors, the event was the largest gathering in pure food history! This year's speakers include Vandana Shiva, Jeffrey Smith, and Percy Schmeiser, among many. Be sure to visit CCOF's booth! Adult admission is \$10; children under 17 admitted free. Visit www.theheirloomexpo.com for event information.

September 19-22, Baltimore, MD

Natural Products Expo East

Join a vibrant community of natural, organic, and healthy products industry members! Find new products, education, and networking to take your business to the next level! Expo East has an expected 2012 attendance of over 22,000. The Organic Summit, held September 19, is an open discussion on breaking organic industry issues, and is included with attendee registration. Take advantage of this opportunity to network with industry professionals, discuss key issues, and consider the future of the organic sector. Learn more about the event at www.expoeast.com and www.theorganicsummit.com. Get your booth now!

January 23, Pacific Grove, CA

Join Us in Celebrating the History of Organic in 2013!

SAVE
the DATE

CCOF is celebrating our 40th anniversary and the history of the organic movement. Help kick off the celebration by joining a tour with pioneers of the organic movement from California's Central Coast.

This historic bus tour will take place as a pre-conference event to the 2013 EcoFarm Conference on Wednesday, January 23, 2013. Save the date!

Share Your Event

Visit www.ccof.org/calendar.php for more events or to spread the word about your own!

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