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24 Organic Giving Back

"It's incredible! There's so much interest for being on the farm. ... We provide the catalyst for people in the community to be able to participate in a direct way with something they believe in."

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Doing Well by Doing Good

This month's feature article focuses on how organic improves our world—through the nature of organic production, by the nature of those who chose to farm and produce food organically, and through the good work of individual organic producers.

In 2011, the Organic Farming Research Foundation published *Organic Farming for Health and Prosperity*, which outlines the contributions of the expanding organic farming sector to human health, the health of the economy, and the health of the planet. This year, CCOF will take this compilation of existing research a step further. Our new *Roadmap to an Organic California* project will evaluate the economic and environmental benefits that will accrue as more agricultural acreage in California transitions to organic production methods. We will also calculate the benefits created by the existing 3.5 percent of agricultural acreage in the state that is farmed organically and project what those benefits would be if 10 percent—or *all*—of the agricultural land in the state were farmed organically as well. We believe this report will further contribute to making the case for expanding organic agriculture in California and across the nation.

In this issue, we're featuring individual CCOF-certified organic enterprises that magnify their environmental and economic benefit through their work to turn around the lives of homeless men and women and foster youth, and to ensure that healthy organic food is broadly available in their communities. Our CCOF-certified organic members are giving back to the organic community every day, not just through the healthy food they grow and produce, but also through choosing organic certification. Did you know that 2 percent of certification fees paid by CCOF members are donated to the CCOF Foundation? That 2 percent enables the CCOF Foundation



Rockside Ranch has an intensive job and life skills apprenticeship program aimed at helping young men become contributing community members. Read more on Page 24.

to advance organic agriculture through its Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund, Organic Training Institute, and other educational programs.

Organic and the many organic operations like those featured in this issue underscore the notion of doing well by doing good. For them and us, that's what it is all about.



Cathy Calfo
CCOF Executive Director/CEO

Issue Contributors

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Rosie Parker is a writer on all things food, farming, fermentation, and culture. A native New Englander, she likes to complain of missing home while living the California high life—surfing, hiking, and working for a delicious craft brewery.

She is based in Santa Cruz where she is also a writer/editor for *Edible Monterey Bay*.

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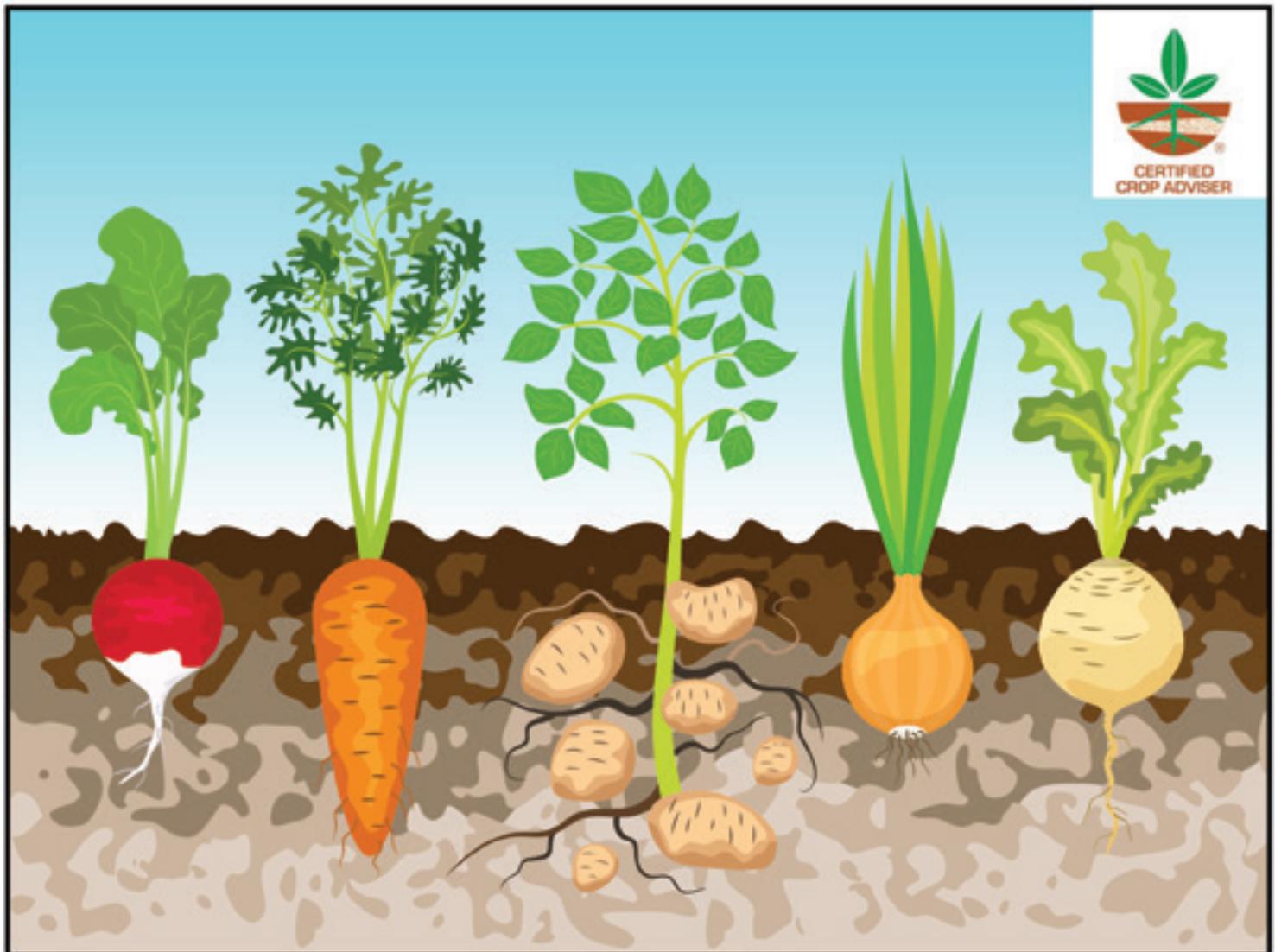
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Matt Seeley (left) and Tonya Antle (center) of the Organic Produce Network present CCOF Foundation Chair Allen Harthorn (center) and CCOF Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo (right) with their donation.

Organic Produce Network Donates \$50,000 to CCOF Foundation

The Organic Produce Network (OPN) and the CCOF Foundation are pleased to announce OPN's \$50,000 donation to the CCOF Foundation. OPN presented the gift at the CCOF Foundation's We Are Organic dinner at the inaugural Organic Grower Summit on December 13 in Monterey, California.

The highlight of the dinner was OPN's presentation of their donation to the CCOF Foundation. "The Organic Produce Network's generous gift to the CCOF Foundation will enable us to continue supporting organic farmers, students and teachers of organic, and organic producers in need," said CCOF Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo. "We extend our tremendous gratitude to Tonya Antle, Matt Seeley, and the entire OPN team for their support."

OPN's donation will support the CCOF Foundation's programs that invest in new organic farmers and businesses and build consumer demand for organic, including the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund, the Organic Training Institute, the Brimont Hardship Assistance Fund, and consumer education campaigns.

The We Are Organic dinner brought together more than 100 supporters of the CCOF Foundation and the community's

collective work to advance organic agriculture. Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross spoke about the importance of organic agriculture to California and the nation's economy. Dinner guests also had a chance to hear from two of the CCOF Foundation's Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund recipients, David Robles and Pascal Brooks. Get to know all of our Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund recipients at www.ccof.org/future-organic-farmers.

The dinner set the tone for an exciting first Organic Grower Summit the following day. More than 800 leaders in organic agriculture attended the summit to hear from experts on topics ranging from cannabis regulation to investment in the organic market. The day was capped off with a sold-out trade show that connected organic growers with a range of service providers.

Learn more about the Organic Produce Network at www.organicproducenetwork.com. For more information about the CCOF Foundation, visit www.ccof.org/foundation.

Whole Farm Revenue Protection: Crop Insurance for Organic Farms

It's been years in the making: Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) is a new USDA Risk Management Agency program that offers insurance coverage for organic farms. The coverage is available for transitional and certified organic acreage and covers damage caused by insects, disease, or weeds if organic

farming practices fail to provide an effective control. The WFRP plans cover revenue loss from all commodities produced on the farm, including fruits, vegetables, berries, nuts, and commodity crops, as well as animals and animal products. It is available nationwide.

Benefits for organic and diversified farms include:

- Crops are insured at their operation's historical price, not a national or county average.
- Sales records from farmers' markets and roadside stands count as sales history documentation and can be used.
- All crops grown and sold can be protected under one plan, rather than purchasing a policy for each commodity.
- Diversification is rewarded under this policy, and farmers with two or more commodities receive a premium rate discount.
- WFRP is currently subsidized by the USDA.

"The unique thing about WFRP is that an organic grower can get an organic price for their crops," said Ryan Baley, agent for Monte Johnson Insurance Services out of Tulelake, Oregon. "Growers just need five years' sales history (with receipts) or a contract for the specific product. If you have a contract, it's a slam dunk."

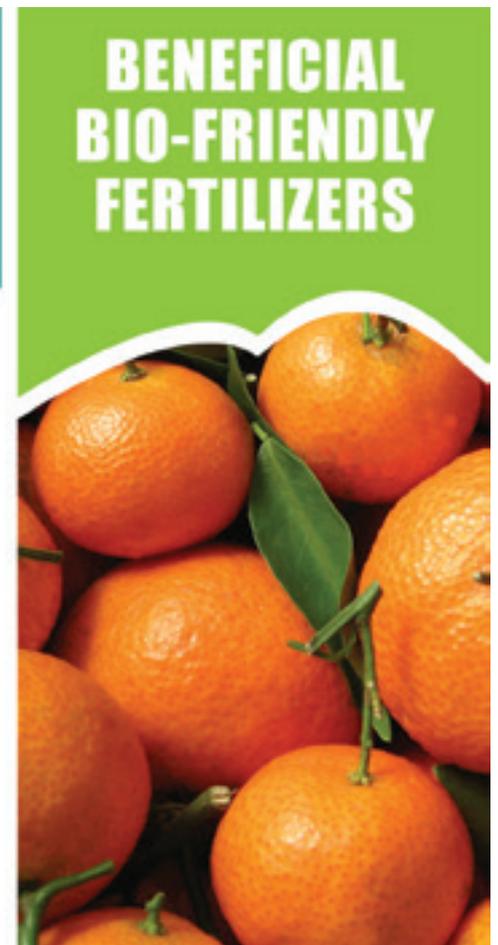
Beginner farmers may also qualify with fewer years of Schedule F tax filings. "If the grower keeps good records, filing is really simple," said Baley. "If you have a claim, it's basically a tax audit; everything is based on the farm's Schedule F."

To be able to qualify for WFRP, growers must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or resident and eligible to receive federal benefits;
- Earn 50 percent or less of total revenue from commodities purchased for resale;
- Meet the minimum diversification requirements (farm operations with two or more commodities will receive a whole-farm premium subsidy); and
- Have no more than \$1 million expected revenue from animal, animal products, greenhouse, or nursery.

"There is a lot to learn and plenty room for improvement," said Javier Zamora, diversified organic farmer from the Central Coast of California.

Baley stresses that the program has been slow to gain farmers because farmers just don't know about the program. "People are skeptical of any new product," explained Baley. To help inform people about this program, CCOF is co-hosting several educational programs in collaboration with California FarmLink on crop insurance. On May 23, 2018 there will be a webinar on Financial Planning, Risk Management, and Crop Insurance 101 for Farmers, and on June 19, 2018 there will be an online webinar on Access to Crop Insurance: The Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) Program and Other Opportunities. Find out more about these programs at www.ccof.org/events.



CCOF will continue advocating on our members' behalf to support the organic community.

To find an insurance agent who may offer WFRP in your area, use the RMA's Agent Locator Tool at www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html.

This material is funded in partnership by USDA, Risk Management Agency, under award number RM17RMEPPS22C037.

CCOF Advocates for Commonsense Water Regulations

California's policies often lead the nation in adopting regulations that protect natural and human resources. For example, California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 set the stage for the federal Clean Water Act of 1977, which regulates pollutant-discharging industries.

Discharges from California agriculture received a blanket waiver from regulation for at least 30 years after passage of the Porter-Cologne Act. During that time, it was common practice for farmers to over-apply nitrogen fertilizers and animal manures in an effort to maximize yields. The unfortunate result was nitrate contamination of groundwater beneath agricultural lands.

A 2012 report to the legislature by a research team from the University of California, Davis¹ found that in two areas where agriculture is concentrated in California—the Tulare Lake Basin and the Salinas Valley—an estimated 254,000 people are at risk for nitrate contamination of their drinking water due to legacy nitrogen applications.

As a result, California's State Water Board and the nine regional Water Quality Control Boards, which are responsible for water-related permitting and enforcement in their geographical areas, are under intense pressure to firmly regulate nitrogen discharges from agricultural lands. The regional water boards are replacing agricultural waivers with waste discharge requirements (WDRs) to regulate agricultural discharges to surface and groundwater.

As the WDRs are implemented, farmers are finding themselves subject to increasingly onerous monitoring and reporting requirements. In 2017, growers in the Central Coast region were required to report all of their nitrogen fertilizer applications on all irrigated acreage and to provide rationale for each application. The State Water Board recently approved WDRs for growers in the Eastern San Joaquin River watershed who belong to a coalition² that requires each farm to develop an Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan that reports all sources of nitrogen applied per crop, as well as residual levels in soil. These WDRs also require that growers' plans include crop

evapotranspiration, anticipated crop irrigation, projected yields, and actual primary and secondary crop yields per field (with secondary yields including rice straw or orchard and vineyard prunings).

In addition, growers across the state will be subject to mandatory drinking water well testing for nitrate levels starting in 2019, unless a state law is passed before then establishing a drinking water monitoring program.

CCOF's policy team is participating in the water boards' rulemaking process to advocate for reduced regulations for certified organic farms and ranches. Certified organic farms are already regulated under federal law, which requires that these farms manage fertility inputs so they do not contribute to contamination of water by plant nutrients, a requirement that is verified annually by accredited certifiers such as CCOF.

Organic farmers are also not allowed to use the highly soluble synthetic fertilizers that are the primary source of nitrate leaching into groundwater. Numerous studies have found that long-term organic management decreases nitrate leaching from soils compared to conventional management.³

CCOF advocates that regional water boards acknowledge the unique characteristics of organic farms and ranches as they develop agricultural WDRs. Specific requests include:

- Develop a template for mixed vegetable production that simplifies reporting for farms that produce multiple fresh-market crops throughout the year.
- Accept proxy measures of yield that are utilized by accredited certifiers to verify yield, such as crop sales or CSA box records.
- Reduce data reporting requirements to the minimum needed to accomplish water protection goals.

CCOF will continue advocating on our members' behalf to support the organic community. To learn more about our policy and advocacy efforts, visit www.ccof.org/policy.

NOTES

¹ Harter, T., J. R. Lund, J. Darby, G. E. Fogg, R. Howitt, K. K. Jessoe, G. S. Pettygrove, J. F. Quinn, J. H. Viers, D. B. Boyle, H. E. Canada, N. DeLaMora, K. N. Dzarella, A. Fryjoff-Hung, A. D. Hollander, K. L. Honeycutt, M. W. Jenkins, V. B. Jensen, A. M. King, G. Kourakos, D. Liptzin, E. M. Lopez, M. M. Mayzelle, A. McNally, J. Medellin-Azuara, and T. S. Rosenstock. 2012. *Addressing Nitrate in California's Drinking Water with a Focus on Tulare Lake Basin and Salinas Valley Groundwater. Report for the State Water Resources Control Board Report to the Legislature. Center for Watershed Sciences, University of California, Davis. 78 p. <http://groundwaternitrate.ucdavis.edu>*

² In many of California's Water Quality Control regions, resource management experts have formed coalitions that conduct the required water monitoring and reporting on behalf of its members.

³ Snapp et al. 2010; Kramer et al. 2006; Burger and Jackson 2004; Poudel et al. 2002; McIsaac 2001

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Revitalizing California's Hop Heritage from Farm to Pint

Beer is traditionally made from four things: hops, grain, yeast, and water. Each component serves an essential purpose (flavor, function, or both), and a minor adjustment to the ingredients can mean the difference between a hop-forward IPA and a sweet lager. Over the past five years, craft breweries have surged in popularity; their patrons seek higher quality ingredients and more creativity in flavor than those offered by "big beer." Rising interest in craft brewing has dovetailed with the Farm to Table movement, leading to what could be called a Farm to Pint movement. While overall beer sales have grown modestly over the past five years, at a rate of 2.4 percent annually, sales in the craft beer category have grown at a rate of 13 percent annually.

California is a leader in the craft brew space. The state is home to a number of hop and grain growers and features more craft breweries than any other state. Brewers from Crescent City to San Diego have a ton of competition; it is imperative for them to be able to distinguish their brews. This has led to greater demand for unique, high quality ingredients.

Several CCOF members grow organic hops or grain for sale to both certified organic and non-organic brewers. One such member is Hops-Meister, LLC, operated by Claudia and Marty Kuchinski out of Clearlake, California. The Kuchinskis started

their hop ranch in 2004 and now operate on 25 certified organic acres. After years spent trialing 26 different hop cultivars, they settled on the nine that are best suited for their environmental conditions and the marketplace. These include more ubiquitous varieties like Centennial and Chinook, but also varieties found only at Hops-Meister: Gargoyle® and Ivanhoe®.

The history of hop production in California is perhaps the most interesting subplot in the chronicle of California beermaking. The Gargoyle® and Ivanhoe® cultivars were first developed in California during the Gold Rush. Many unique hop varieties were bred across the state during this period. Then, when Prohibition was enacted in 1920, the California hop industry collapsed and production moved predominantly to the Pacific Northwest. Interest and resources shifted to wine grapes, which remain California's premier high-value crop. However, the Kuchinskis and others were interested in revitalizing California's hop heritage. Claudia Kuchinski says that she and her husband became fascinated by the history of hops in California. "We did our research and we decided we wanted to bring [the Gargoyle® and Ivanhoe® cultivars] back. They are heirloom, they are historical, and it was a lot of fun."

Luckily, the Kuchinskis were able to make friends with farmers who still had viable plants growing on their properties in Sonoma and Lake counties. Hops are dioecious, meaning the plants are propagated through rhizome cuttings of the female, cone-producing hop plants. Claudia Kuchinski says she named the Ivanhoe® cultivar after the farmer who provided the original cuttings, along with mentorship and encouragement. The Kuchinskis were "rather surprised by the outpouring of people who had such experience and were excited for us to bring the product back." Hops are a hardy crop; the Gargoyle® and Ivanhoe® rhizomes took well to the sandy clay loam soil and



CCOF "Likes"

Member News Meets Social Media



Rowdy Mermaid Kombucha via Facebook:

Have you tried Smoky Badger yet? Born from musings of memorable trips south, Smoky Badger is an enticingly clever mix of chipotle, hibiscus and cinnamon. We heard it caused one grad student to abandon his thesis, change his name to Bernardo and spend his days paddling the Amazon. Drink with care. Currently available at our taproom!



Rockside Ranch via Facebook:

At night and when the weather is really bad, the pigs march in from the pasture and bed down in the barn. We never close them into the barn, so they can always go outside whenever they want to. Most nights you can hear them outside getting a midnight snack, but they always have a nice warm place to come in and sleep. This old barn has been keeping animals warm and dry for over 130 years! #piglife #rocksideranch



LaRocca Vineyards via Facebook:

March 15, 2018 welcoming the snow and cold before spring #organicwine #organicsnowday #nosulfites



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temperate climate conditions of the Kuchinskis' ranch. As a result, the Kuchinskis were successful in scaling up production. This is the first time these hops have been available on the commercial market since before Prohibition.



Gargoyle® hops have low alpha acids (in the 4 to 6 percent range), meaning they are less bitter. Their aroma and flavor are tropical, and reminiscent of mango. Marty Kuchinski says these hops are comparable to the common Cascade variety and are best suited for an American-style pale ale, amber ale, IPA, or lager. By contrast, Ivanhoe® hops have higher alpha acids (in the 6.5 to 9 percent range). Their aroma and flavor are more herbal, with hints of tomatillo, and are best suited for a pale ale, lager, or stout. Both hop varieties are available pelleted or dried whole, year-round. And in the summer months, they are available "wet," meaning they are fresh off the vine and must be used within 24 hours of picking. Because wet hops are not heated, they maintain their full oil profiles and taste greener.

Hops-Meister is also unique in that they sell their premium organic hops farm direct, rather than via broker. This allows them to build better relationships with their buyers and predict their needs. They receive direct feedback about their products, can customize orders, and reduce waste.

Check out CCOF member Hops-Meister, LLC at www.hopsmeister.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/hops-meister, or on Instagram at @hops_meister.

Join CACOCO in the Chocolate Revolution

CACOCO is a Santa Cruz-based certified organic drinking chocolate company co-founded by Liam Blackmon and Tony Portugal. They met in Nevada City in 2013, and bonded over their interests in

"CACOCO chose to source heirloom cacao from one co-op, which has allowed them to sustain the farmers they work with."

food, nature, and travel. Portugal had recently left a corporate job and was looking for opportunities to start a sustainable business. Blackmon was working as a chef in a raw food café and was passionate about vital foods. Blackmon's experience with cacao combined with Portugal's background in business gave them the tools needed to enter the chocolate industry. They soon embarked on their cacao journey, which eventually led them to Santa Cruz.

One of the initial challenges was finding suppliers that could provide the quality and quantity of cacao needed. Being a smaller company, it wasn't easy to find sourcing partners. On a trip to visit their initial supplier in Ecuador, a friend introduced them to a cacao regenerative agriculture project. This motivated them to buy exclusively regenerative cacao.

To increase their capital, they started a Kickstarter project in 2016. Raising twice their requested funds enabled them to reach their goals of sourcing only regenerative cacao and developing compostable packaging. Environmentalism is an essential part of their business model, and they follow the impact of their product from the sourcing of ingredients to the disposal of packaging.

Heirloom cacao used in CACOCO's drinking chocolate is sourced from northwestern Ecuador. This cacao, referred to as Arriba Nacional, is grown upriver of the Guayas River. It's known for its terroir, and is not often used in large-scale chocolate production. Heirloom cacao has a small pod, and the flavor can vary depending on region and season. Most cacao used in the chocolate industry today is hybridized and developed for yield, size, and consistency. CACOCO chose to source heirloom cacao from one co-op, which has allowed them to consistently sustain the farmers they work with and support their regional cacao regenerative ecosystem.

After the unroasted cacao reaches Santa Cruz, it is minimally processed with additional beneficial ingredients and enclosed in a wood cellulose bag within a recycled paper box. This choice of packaging presents a challenge, as the cellulose packaging has a limited window before it starts to visibly break down. It must be purchased frequently and received in small batches to ensure that it will maintain its structural integrity through the lifespan of the product. The resulting packaging is completely compostable, and beautifully designed.

Inside of the Mayan temple-inspired box is a drinking chocolate modeled after the elixir enjoyed in early Mayan civilization. Referred to as the food of the gods, it was consumed during ceremonies, celebrations, and daily life. As CACOCO describes on their website, "The traditional preparation was to grind the cacao bean into a rich paste and blend it with water, herbs, and spices to create a rich nutritive beverage that offered strength

and vitality for an active life." Eventually adopted and changed by the Spaniards, drinking chocolate was continually altered as it traveled around the world. The result is the sweet hot cocoa many of us associate with childhood campfires. CACOCO wants to bring back the taste and experience of Mayan drinking chocolate to consumers today.



When asked about marketing their unique products in a highly competitive market, Portugal recalled, "We were really challenged at first with the word 'drinking chocolate,' because people have this idea that chocolate isn't healthy. It started as an amazing native food of the Mayans. The word 'drinking chocolate' can be confusing for people". When I asked Portugal where he would like to see CACOCO in the future, he said, "We want everyone to have a true cacao experience. I would love to see more people bring cacao into their lifestyle, and to see an end to hot chocolate."

To prepare CACOCO, the cacao clusters are combined with water and shaken, blended, or whisked together. "We're selling the preparation and experience as much as the product," Portugal explained. The clusters of cacao contain cacao butter, which emulsifies to form a frothy top. The resulting product is a rich molten chocolate elixir, an energizing alternative to coffee or tea. There are currently five formulations, each with a distinctive flavor profile highlighting beneficial ingredients.

CACOCO products include 55% Rich Dark, 80% Extra Dark, 65% Golden Dark, 75% Mint Dark, and 70% Spicy Dark. They can be found at Northern California Whole Foods stores, independent grocery stores around the country, and online. To learn more about CACOCO and their drinking chocolate revolution, visit www.drinkcacoco.com.

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Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund recipients (left to right) Sophia Schlentz, Ava Mosely, and Bennie Hesser with Melody Meyer (center left) and Karen Ross (center right).

Supporting Organic: CCOF's 2018 Annual Conference

On February 22 and 23, CCOF hosted our Annual Meeting and Conference and CCOF Foundation Awards Feast in Sacramento.

At the CCOF Foundation Awards Feast, Melody Meyer was awarded with CCOF's Organic Champion Award by Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross. The Organic Champion Award recognizes an individual or organization that has helped make the work of the CCOF Foundation possible. Meyer was instrumental in establishing CCOF's Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund (FOFGF), and her steadfast support of the fund has helped ensure its success. To date, the FOFGF has given 247 grants to students and teachers of organic agriculture, totaling \$400,000. We are so pleased to honor Meyer and her influential career in organic!

Calaveras High School teacher Kevin Hesser and three of his students who have received FOFGF grants also spoke at the event about the opportunities these grants created for them to learn about organic production. One student, Bennie Hesser, spoke passionately about his dedication to the work on their school farm where they are motivating younger students to get involved in organic agriculture. "If we get these kids thinking about organic in the classroom and at school, they'll go home and ask their parents to buy organic when they shop," he said. All three students were enthusiastic about the benefits they see in organic beyond the work they do in their school garden, and their

desires to pursue careers in organic agriculture. CCOF joins these students in gratitude for the generous support of the FOFGF sponsors and Foundation Members that make these inspirational stories a reality.

Friday, February 23 began with CCOF's Annual Meeting where CCOF Board of Directors Chair Phil LaRocca, along with Executive Director/CEO Cathy Calfo and President of CCOF Certification Services, LLC Jake Lewin, updated folks about the constructive work CCOF is doing in advancing organic. Brian Leahy, director of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, presented on the many challenges facing organic farmers. Leahy emphasized the importance of the department's work on a science-based approach with strict enforcement to ensure market integrity, stating, "This is a \$50 billion industry because people believe in that seal."

The conference led into panels that covered many factors contributing to the positive phenomenon of Organic Hotspots, including the roles of business, education, and policy. The first panel of the day offered insight into a gamut of successful organic business models, from specialty crops, to rangeland, to tofu production. Each speaker carried a similar message: treating their employees fairly and re-investing in local environment and economies strengthens community. Minh Tsai from Hodo Soy emphasized that his superb employee retention rate is a result of treating them with utmost respect. He said, "I try to treat each one of my employees with the respect I give my parents."

Gary Hirshberg of Stonyfield Yogurt gave a rousing speech stressing the importance of the Environmental Protection Agency in protecting us beyond the scope of the USDA's capacity. He urged all participants to understand that "This is our moment to consolidate our wins and our know-how and push forward."

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Financial Planning, Risk Management, and Crop Insurance 101 for Farmers

JUNE 19, 2018 _____

Online Webinar (in collaboration with California FarmLink)

Access to Crop Insurance: The Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) Program and Other Opportunities

AUGUST 21, 2018 _____

Online Webinar (in collaboration with NCAT)

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SEPTEMBER 12, 2018 _____

Online Webinar (in collaboration with NCAT)

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PSA-Approved Food Safety Workshop in English and Spanish

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Top leaders in organic higher education spoke about how public institutions are creating socially relevant programs where critical training and research for organic is occurring. Speakers from the University of California, Davis; the Berkeley Food Institute; Santa Rosa Junior College; and California State Polytechnic Institute, San Luis Obispo compared notes from their experiences in agricultural education.

Sergio Núñez de Arco gave a truly inspiring presentation about the way his business, Andean Naturals, has helped thousands of Bolivian quinoa farmers rise out of poverty. He explained how coordinated, cooperative efforts between growers has led to more economic stability and food security for their communities.

A panel on the voice of organic in policy and with elected officials included former California Secretary of Agriculture A.G. Kawamura, President of the California Farm Bureau Federation Jamie Johansson, General Counsel for Driscoll's Tom O'Brien, and the Organic Trade Association's Director of Legislative Affairs and Coalitions Meghan DeBates. Panelists underscored the important effort we must continue to make in connecting farmers with their representatives to educate elected officials about organic. As Johansson said, "The biggest challenge we have is farmers willing to get outside the fence, getting more farmers in the Capitol."

Glenda Humiston, vice president of the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, gave a passionate closing keynote speech wherein she discussed the impressive scope of programs and alliances that work to strengthen organic businesses and education. She brought to light the discrepancies that call for a change in the way counties are assessed for allocating crucial USDA resources for rural areas in California.

This year's event covered a wide spectrum of subject matter in an effort to address the many ways organic helps strengthen our communities and our economy. CCOF is proud to offer a unique venue for our members and the public to learn, connect, and continue strengthening the future of organic. We hope you will join us for our 2019 event. Sign up to receive the CCOF Newsletter at www.ccof.org/subscribe for updates about the next Annual Meeting and Conference.

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Winter Chapter Activity

CCOF's chapter system continues to show its strength as a grassroots mutual support network amidst a tough year of serious environmental challenges, including the devastating fires in Northern and Southern California. Chapter meetings have also been fertile breeding grounds for developing relationships with buyers and allies in support of protecting and developing policy for the future of organic.

The Pacific Southwest Chapter held a potluck and meeting on December 5, 2017 at the San Diego Farm Bureau in Escondido. Chapter Board Representative Karen Archipley was grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of their Organic Symposium held in September. Archipley also introduced the Interim Chapter Secretary Jessica Black, who is also an inspector for CCOF, and Mike Reeske from Rio del Rey who now serves as the marketing and education leader for a chapter-specific subcommittee. They also announced the launch of their new chapter website at www.ccofpswchapter.org. The meeting also provided an introduction between Barons Market buyers and CCOF growers in attendance. The chapter continues to innovate with the development of and recruitment for subcommittees like Grower/Buyer Relations and Organic Agri-Tourism for the Pacific Southwest Area.

The North Coast Chapter met on a brisk and sunny morning on December 12, 2017 at the Traditional Medicinals (TM) office in Rohnert Park. Blair Kellison, CEO of TM, gave a brief overview of the company, including interesting points about the work they do supporting the communities from which they source ingredients. Kellison gave the example of five schools constructed in India where, as part of the deal, people must send their daughters to school or TM will not buy their products.

The North Coast Chapter would like to acknowledge and express thanks for the \$1,000 donation from the Central Coast Chapter and the \$2,400 from CCOF staff to Community Alliance with Family Farmers, both intended to help with fire relief efforts. The North Coast Chapter would like to match the donation. The group recognized a few of the CCOF members affected by the fires, including Joey Smith from Let's Go Farm, who led a successful campaign to raise funds for his home and farm's recovery. Attendees spoke about the impact the fires have had on them personally and on their business or businesses they work for. Among the issues circulating in conversations were smoke taint, water toxicity, consumer confusion, and profound emotional stress and fatigue for many. Several representatives from organizations that support growers attended to present briefly on ways in which their groups can help. Kerry MacGrath from California FarmLink, Ski Allender from the USDA Risk

Management Agency, Lisa Velasquez from the Farm Service Agency, and Jennifer Walsh from the National Resource Conservation Service each gave brief presentations about the ways their organizations can help farmers.

As the former Board Representative Andrea Davis-Cetina is taking a sabbatical, all chapter leadership positions went up for nomination and successful elections took place in January 2018. We would like to congratulate and welcome the new Chapter President Dawn Russel of Treats for Chickens, new Board Representative Genevieve Albers of TM, new Treasurer Eve Priestly of The Olive Press, and thank Carrie Hendrickson and Ian Serrano who have been re-elected as chapter vice president and chapter secretary.

The North Valley Chapter held a meeting in Richvale at the Lundberg Family Farms headquarters on February 12, 2018. Lee Altier from California State University, Chico organic farm gave an overview of the university's organic farm programs and activities. Ryan Fillmore of Fillmore Farms took the audience on a PowerPoint tour of his organic walnut farm, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that being organic has presented to his fourth-generation operation. CCOF Board of Directors Chair Phil LaRocca gave an update on board activities and on the extensive work he continues to do on strengthening and protecting organic standards.

The Kern Chapter met on February 15, 2018 in Lamont. As part of CCOF's advocacy for the 2018 Farm Bill, CCOF invited staff from both Congressman David Valadao's and Congressman Kevin McCarthy's offices to attend the meeting, and Congressman Valadao's field representative Perry Finzel attended the meeting to connect with organic constituents. The chapter also discussed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and how growers can achieve compliance with the laws. Chapter members discussed required FSMA trainings and both Board Representative Malcolm Ricci and Chapter Treasurer Peter Belluomini encouraged members to attend CCOF's discounted FSMA trainings. Find more information about these trainings—held in English and Spanish—at www.ccof.org/psa-food-safety-workshops. The chapter also held a discussion on the activities of the California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC). Kern Chapter President Ben Diesl is a member of COPAC as a producer alternate.

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

Let the CCOF community know what your chapter is doing!

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



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ORGANIC GIVING BACK



“There are many ways that organic gives back,” says Cathy Calfo, executive director/CEO of CCOF. “Organic gives back to our environment by enhancing soil and biological diversity, and to our society by creating new forms of economic activity and prosperity in the agricultural sector.” The CCOF Foundation was formed to expand organic agriculture in order to keep growing these benefits.

WRITTEN BY Rosie Parker

Two percent of certification fees paid to CCOF is donated to the CCOF Foundation, so CCOF’s members support the Foundation’s work simply by being certified by CCOF. The Foundation’s priorities are to inspire a next generation of organic producers, explain to consumers why they should buy certified organic, assist organic farmers in need, and provide ongoing training for organic and prospective organic producers. During the past five years, the Foundation distributed nearly \$400,000 in Future Organic Farmer Grants and provided tens of thousands of dollars to producers who suffered hardship due to natural or personal disasters. Nearly 3,000 participants enrolled in the Foundation’s training programs, and hundreds of thousands of consumer education postcards were distributed in farmers’ markets and retail establishments across the United States.

In addition to the direct economic and environmental benefits of organic farming, individual CCOF-certified members give back in even more ways to make their communities flourish. Here, we profile four different CCOF-certified operations working to meaningfully address homelessness, addiction and incarceration, obesity in foster youth, and food justice. Their work is truly amazing.

Homeless Garden Project

For 28 years, the Homeless Garden Project (HGP) has been serving the Santa Cruz community by providing job training, transitional employment, and support services to people who are experiencing homelessness.

HGP was founded in May 1990 by Paul Lee, who worked with the Citizens Committee for the Homeless (CCH), to begin HGP on a small piece of land in a residential part of town after he worked with the CCH to open the first homeless shelter in Santa Cruz County. “The way I’ve heard it told,” says Darrie Ganzhorn, HGP’s executive director, “the energy in the shelter was always so raw that Paul wondered how anybody could dream of a better life without a place of sanctuary and beauty in their life. He knew that people who are experiencing homelessness would benefit from both the structure and the self-respect that farming offers. It provides you with a clear purpose in society because you are providing such a basic need.”

The hallmark of HGP’s work with the homeless community is their trainee program on HGP’s three-and-a-half-acre urban farm. Trainees are paid minimum wage for a 20-hour work week, and the program can last up to a year. They rotate through different posts on the farm to learn a variety of skills with a more concentrated focus. The program teaches trainees other life skills important for employment and gives them a way to serve the community by growing food for other community programs. HGP also runs a job search skill workshop series and dedicates time to digital literacy training. Ganzhorn explains, “We provide the opportunity and the setting; trainees create their own success through their work in the program.” To date, HGP has trained over 650 homeless individuals. Of last year’s graduating class, 92 percent have located stable jobs and housing.



In 1992, HGP formed a CSA program to help provide stable resources to better serve their larger purpose. In 1994, the Women's Organic Flower Enterprise was started to provide additional work opportunities for homeless women. Now known as the Value-Added Enterprise, and serving both men and women, the Enterprise's dried flower and herb wreaths and a wide variety of products made in the program can be found online, at the HGP store in Santa Cruz, and in various retail locations. Through farm dinners, countless volunteer opportunities, and special events, HGP has also worked to foster connections among their trainees, staff, and the larger community.

In 2017, HGP had 2,963 volunteers participate with the program in some way. "It's incredible!" exclaims Ganzhorn. "There's so much interest for being on the farm. This is because we provide wide access to our program, and because the community understands how strong the connection is between social purpose and environmental purpose. We provide the catalyst for people in the community to be able to participate in a direct way with something they believe in. And the trainees credit the sense of community that is fostered for being their biggest source of hope and stability."

Increasing capacity in the trainee program is HGP's next venture. In 1998, the city of Santa Cruz adopted a master plan for the 614-acre open space greenbelt at Pogonip—an public open space with hiking trails and open meadows, woodlands and creeks in Santa Cruz—which would include a nine-acre permanent site for HGP. This will allow HGP to triple the number of trainees they can host at a time—a huge boost for a county that, according to the 2017 census, had 2,249 individuals living in homelessness. Ganzhorn says their goal is to serve up to 50 trainees per year by 2025.

"Organic is life-giving," says Ganzhorn. "At HGP, we value the well-being created by helping social and natural ecosystems—organic is definitely part of that. It's an ethic that pervades everything we do at that farm, and I know that it impacts everyone that goes there. It's been our commitment since the beginning and it's really a foundation of our work to respect

the land and all life and respect interconnectedness. Organic means that you're looking at the big picture, and that's how we're trying to promote well-being within our community."

Learn more about the Homeless Garden Project at www.homelessgardenproject.org.

Rockside Ranch

Craig and Jen Thompson founded Rockside Ranch in 2011 out of the desire to provide a refuge for teenagers in crisis. "My wife and I had a real desire to farm and work in agriculture," says Craig Thompson, a fourth-generation California farmer. "But we were also very aware of this widespread need to help youth that are struggling with addiction and homelessness. Farm work offers so many skills and structure—job training, life training, working with animals, and understanding a responsibility for life—that really go hand in hand with what is needed to find success in the workplace or school."

CCOF-certified Rockside Ranch is comprised of 100 acres in Etna, California. The farm not only produces a variety of fresh produce, but also raises pastured chickens, pigs who forage in the woods, plus turkeys, ducks, and sheep.

Rockside Ranch uses the farm as a platform for their apprenticeship program, a four- to eight-month intensive job and life skills training for men, ages 18-24, who are coming out of homelessness, rehab, or jail. The faith-based residential program can host three apprentices at a time, and has the young men up at 5:30 a.m. to help with farm chores and labor. Midday, the program switches to class time where everything from healthy habits, to finance management, to practical skills is covered. "The best part of farming is waking up in the morning and knowing that I'm doing the right thing," reflects Brandon, a 2017 graduate of the apprentice program at Rockside Ranch who was homeless for two years prior to coming to the farm.



Thompson believes it's the day-to-day activities of the farm that provides the apprentices with their biggest emotional transformations. "There's something that's unique to the animal husbandry aspect of agriculture. We've noticed that individuals who have a hard time relating to other people can more quickly relate to animals," Thompson shares. "We had an apprentice once who was in jail just days before he came to Rockside. His guard was definitely up, and he didn't easily relate to other people at that time. Yet on day one, he's holding a baby chick in his hands and feeling compassion and a sense of responsibility to meet the basic needs of that animal. Those feelings are being practiced in his daily duties, and then they spill over into his relationships with other people as well."

"We're figuring out how to bring someone from a place of desperate need to being successful in society," Thompson says. The moment apprentices arrive, Thompson and his hardworking team are focusing on what will come after Rockside Ranch for them. Thompson knows that the day after they graduate is when his apprentices have the highest chance of going backwards, so apprentices work hard to have a job or school program secured by the time of graduation. The Rockside team also helps apprentices create action plans to take with them that include transportation, housing, employment, education, and how to be a contributing member in the community.

Rockside follows a direct-to-consumer model through farmers' markets, on-site sales, and deliveries to the Bay Area, so apprentices get to interact with people who are buying the farm's products. The ranch has also opened itself up to farm stays that can be booked online at www.hipcamp.com. "It's a huge part of the community element at Rockside," Thompson explains. "The guys realize really quickly that there's a whole world out there that cares about them. The guys love the interaction and the opportunity to engage and maybe share their story—it's positive reinforcement."

Many of the apprentices are used to believing that their actions are only tied to negative outcomes. "That's a tough pattern to break," reflects Thompson. "But farming is such a powerful way

"A farm is such a strong community, and there is so much structure and wisdom to be learned from this kind of environment. If we can pair that knowledge and support with the people who are looking for it, then there is no end to the impact we can have."

to demonstrate that your work has value." Rockside gets calls from all across the country from judges, prosecutors, and others who work in the justice system who recognize the benefit of sending at-risk individuals to Rockside, or a similar program. In California, 70 percent of inmates released from prison will be back in the system within three years. Today, 80 percent of Rockside graduates are employed or in school full time. "A farm is such a strong community," Thompson affirms, "and there is so much structure and wisdom to be learned from this kind of environment. If we can pair that knowledge and support with the people who are looking for it, then there is no end to the impact we can have."

Learn more about Rockside Ranch at www.rocksideranch.org.

Dragon Organics

San Pasqual Academy, a residential education campus in Escondido, California designed specifically for foster teens, opened in 2001 with the mission to find a healthy, sustainable food source for the community. By 2003, the Academy started farming 14 of the 238 acres of their campus through Dragon Organics, in collaboration with New Alternatives, Inc. and Access' work-readiness program.

CCOF-certified Dragon Organics provides daily food for the campus cafeteria as well as direct delivery to campus housing where students live with house parents. The salad bar always

"Community farms embody an incredible opportunity to bring agriculture and food back to the forefront of our lives, and to exemplify the significance of food and land in building strong, thriving, more self-reliant communities and a more healthy and sustainable environment."

has some fresh ingredients, and there's usually a vegetarian option in the hot bar. "Primarily, everything we grow is for the kids," Emma Frantz, farm manager and agriculture teacher, explains. "We want them to know we are here and that they are our priority." All extra produce is sold at markets or through a year-round CSA.

The second function of Dragon Organics is to promote agricultural education and sustainability by providing learning opportunities for the students to gain agricultural literacy and hands-on job skills. "The hope," Frantz says, "is that not only will students learn where their food comes from, but will also be able to cultivate independent living skills." The farm offers agricultural elective courses as well as an after-school paid internship program where students work alongside the farm staff planting seeds, harvesting crops, and then selling their products at farmers' markets. "They get to see everything from seed to sale!"

With a large campus with a capacity for 183 students and a farm on the outskirts of the grounds, the biggest challenge is making the farm known to the entire San Pasqual population. "The kids who take our class and work with us—I see them being

empowered. Farming is a medium where you can see the results of your hard work, and that's big for these students." Frantz plans on having more campus-wide events in the future in order to have a further reach with the students. "It's all a matter of interest when you're working with kids. Teenagers can be tough in that way. But it is amazing when we have a student really take to it who has never been on a farm before."

Frantz tells me that one day, one of her students ran through the strawberry field, pulling off the row cover and filling her hands with the first berries of the season to take to her next class. "Because we're certified organic, there is a lot of transparency to what we're doing, from ordering to recordkeeping. For the kids, for them to see the accountability that goes into being certified, they're learning how to be held accountable with customers as well as themselves," Frantz reflects. It also means that kids can harvest berries and eat them on the spot. "They're very aware as to what it means to be organic and it's exciting that they understand and value that."

Learn more about Dragon Organics at www.dragonorganics.blogspot.com.

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Coastal Roots Farm

“We’re a community farm created by the community, for the community,” says Sharyn Goodson, director of philanthropic strategy at Coastal Roots Farm, a nonprofit community farm and education center in Encinitas, California. “To us, that means we have a very high priority of being accessible to everyone, no matter their resources or demographics.” Coastal Roots Farm integrates sustainable agriculture and ancient Jewish practices to support their food justice mission: growing food in a way that’s responsible, healthy, and fair for everyone.

This mission means that more than half of what’s grown on the farm’s 15 acres is donated into the charitable food system. Sara Telzer, social enterprise manager, explains that since the farm began in 2014, “We have provided the North County of San Diego with nearly 90,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce, approximately 60,000 pounds of which have been donated at no cost to the food insecure.”

“We strive to address a real need to meet our community members where they are,” Telzer continues, “especially when food-insecure individuals may lack the time and transportation necessary to travel to our farm or to other areas where organic produce is more accessible.” In partnership with Jewish Family Service and Helping Hand Worldwide, Coastal Roots Farm runs mobile farm stands at Camp Pendleton for Marine Corps families struggling to afford San Diego’s cost of living and at Vista Community Clinic, a high-quality health clinic that provides services to patients on a sliding scale, based on their ability to pay. The farm also offers a produce delivery program at no cost to San Diego residents who are survivors of the Holocaust and donates additional produce to food banks and other local social service agencies.

The principles of food justice are present at the farm, as well, through a pay-what-you-can farm stand. “There’s no membership structure here,” Goodson explains. At the on-site farm stand, there is a suggested donation price, but the customer discreetly pays what they can. “Dignity is very important to us,” adds Goodson. Launched in 2016, the pay-

what-you-can farm stand was Coastal Roots Farm’s first social enterprise initiative. “We didn’t know how the community would react to our model, but we have been incredibly pleased to see how well it has been embraced and to see our community going above and beyond to support each other,” shares Telzer. “Many people pay over our suggested donation in order to support those who are not able to pay for their food.”

A Jewish community farm with a strong message of welcoming all, Coastal Roots Farm celebrates ancient Jewish traditions that connect people to community, food, the land, and social justice. “Ultimately,” says Telzer, “we hope to become a valued community asset where not only are we a source of food for all, but a place to grow together as a community.” There are many opportunities for all ages to find ways to engage with the farm, including workshops, community events, Jewish Agricultural festivals, volunteering, and school field trips, which are all also on a pay-what-you-can system.

“Community farms embody an incredible opportunity to bring agriculture and food back to the forefront of our lives,” Telzer continues, “and to exemplify the significance of food and land in building strong, thriving, more self-reliant communities and a more healthy and sustainable environment.”

Learn more about Coastal Roots Farm at www.coastalrootsfarm.org.

Planting the Seeds of Change

The exemplary work of these CCOF-certified members deepens our understanding of how organic farming can serve a community. More importantly, they are creating a blueprint for others to follow and are inspiring farms nationwide to structure their work around a philanthropic pursuit.

Organic farming is about growing community through the act of growing food, and the farms that are profiled here are planting the seeds of social change that have the ability to affect a nationwide community of organic farmers.

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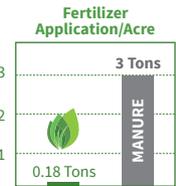
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CCOF's 2018 Policy Priorities

These 2018 policy priorities serve as talking points for CCOF members and organic advocates when engaging with officials and elected representatives. The priorities are organized into focused themes with statements that match CCOF's advocacy.

CCOF members guide our advocacy work and the priorities reflect our members' interests, regulatory challenges, and more. The priorities will evolve and develop with time as CCOF and our members continue our advocacy work.

CCOF encourages members to engage with their local chapter and to sign up for the weekly emailed CCOF Newsletter for advocacy and engagement opportunities. Sign up to receive email updates at www.ccof.org/subscribe. Please contact policy@ccof.org for suggestions and additions to the 2018 priorities.

Protect Organic Integrity

- The California State Organic Program (SOP) should share crop data it receives from organic producers with other relevant agencies, and it should establish a system for organic certifiers to register their clients with the SOP to reduce duplicate paperwork for producers.
- Meetings and information about the California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC) should be easily accessible and widely distributed among organic stakeholders.
- The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) should fully implement the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule because it would ensure that all organic producers are held to the same high animal health standards that CCOF has always required of its producers.
- If the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommends container production standards, then it should incorporate CCOF's recommended standards on recycling materials, mitigating impacts to natural resources, and fostering biodiversity.
- The next farm bill, a comprehensive package of agricultural legislation, should ensure the NOP has resources to oversee a growing and increasingly global organic marketplace. CCOF supports H.R. 3871, the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017, because it would strengthen NOP technology and oversight systems.
- Funding for the NOP should match the growth of the organic sector, domestically and abroad. Therefore, the farm bill

should authorize 10 percent annual funding increases above the current authorized amount of \$15 million annual funding.

- All state and federal agencies, including the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), should recognize USDA-accredited organic certification as sufficient to make non-GMO claims.

Incentivize and Advance Organic Farming Practices

- The California State Legislature should fund the California Department of Food & Agriculture's (CDFA) Healthy Soils program at a minimum of \$25 million annually because it provides funding to growers who use new practices to build soil health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The California State Legislature should pass, and the governor should sign into law, AB 2377 authored by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks). The bill would provide funding to help farmers complete applications to programs that fund on-farm practices that build soil health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve water.
- The farm bill should fund the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (Cost Share) at \$11.5 million mandatory funding annually because Cost Share helps organic producers offset the costs of certification fees and inspections. In California, the SOP should continue to administer the funds and coordinate with certifiers to reimburse as many producers as possible.
- The farm bill should increase mandatory funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) from \$20 million to \$50 million annually through H.R. 2436, the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017, because it funds critical research on biologically based inputs and organic management tools.

Safeguard California's Agricultural Water Supply

- The California Department of Natural Resources and CDFA should ensure sufficient oversight over the use of produced water (filtered wastewater from oil production) in irrigation districts, including testing for potential impacts to long-term soil health.
- The California Legislature should fund the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program at \$40 million annually because it provides funds to help growers improve their irrigation efficiency.
- The California Department of Water Resources and

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The Organic Agriculture Research Act is critical to the success and growth of organic crop production.

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies should consider the effects on and needs of organic producers as they implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

- The State Water Board and the nine regional water quality control boards in California should simplify and reduce reporting requirements under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, also known as agricultural orders. They should consider the needs of organic farms, especially small and highly diversified farms, who use low-nitrogen inputs and must manage their inputs to protect water quality under NOP standards. Growers should have sufficient time to comply with new requirements.

Preserve Organic Farmland

- The California State Legislature should fund the Sustainable Agriculture Lands Conservation program at current levels because it protects vulnerable agricultural land from development.
- The National Park Service should maintain organic farm and ranch leases on public lands; for example, it should renew current leases with organic dairies on Point Reyes National Seashore.
- Federal, state, and local agencies should not use prohibited substances to manage invasive pests or weeds on or near certified organic operations.

Support a Stable, Legal Agricultural Workforce

- The California congressional leadership should work to reform immigration policy as it relates to agricultural workers to ensure a viable means for the current unauthorized, experienced agricultural workforce to legally work in U.S. agriculture.
- Congress should establish a guest worker program that

provides sufficient flexibility for California's growers to use the program while also providing for the fair treatment of workers. Specifically, the program should not: establish a cap on the number of allowed workers, contain a touchback provision, use a mandatory e-verify system, set wages higher than state and local minimum wage requirements, or withhold a portion of workers' wages until they return to their countries of origin. The program should also allow farmers to hire at will and to provide housing vouchers for guest worker housing.

- The California Labor & Workforce Development Agency should consult with organic producers in the implementation of state minimum wage and overtime requirements to ensure reasonable implementation timelines and fair interpretation of standards regarding unique situations such as family member employees.

Help Establish a California Cannabis Certification Program

- Ensure that CDFA consults with COPAC and other organic stakeholders on the development of a cannabis certification program, which CDFA must establish by 2021 pursuant to SB 94, the Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act.
- The cannabis certification program should align with national organic standards and uphold organic integrity.
- CDFA should recognize NOP accreditation as sufficient for certifiers like CCOF to certify to the cannabis certification program.
- To ensure that requirements do not duplicate SOP or NOP requirements, the cannabis certification program should streamline requirement for certified organic producers who may incorporate cannabis production into their operations.

Develop a Roadmap to an Organic California

- Policymakers, statewide officeholders, producers, non-government entities, and other stakeholders should join CCOF in developing policy recommendations to increase organic from 3.5 percent to 10 percent of the state's agricultural land by 2030.
- Policy recommendations should focus on, but not be limited to, the following: supporting the next generation of producers and transitioning conventional agricultural land to organic production; strengthening market opportunities for California grown organic crops and products; promoting a regulatory framework that incentivizes organic farming; and maximizing benefits of organic farming systems for socially disadvantaged communities.

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Engagement, Relevance and Investment: The Must-Haves for Organic Research

Science-based research solves problems, discovers solutions, develops new products, and is one of the keystones for advancement. And so it is with organic. A growing array of diversified and innovative research projects on organic agriculture is underway now throughout the country, helping advance organic.

But the real success of research depends on the results of that hard work being effectively communicated to—and used by—the stakeholders for whom the research is intended. Based on outcomes from its 2017 Organic Confluences Summit, The Organic Center released "Making Organic Research Count," a white paper that makes specific recommendations to ensure that organic agriculture research really does make a difference, contributes to the success and growth of organic agriculture, and provides an economic opportunity for farmers in a sustainable manner.

The white paper made the following recommendations on how to improve organic research:

1. Improve communication to organic stakeholders.

Researchers must involve farmers in the development of research questions. Clear lines of communication must be maintained among farmers, academics, industry, and policy influencers to make research results accessible.

2. Engage underrepresented groups.

A comprehensive effort must be made to involve minorities, transitioning farmers, and young or new farmers in the process of research needs gathering, cooperation in study design and execution, and results dissemination. Multiple formats should be used to distribute outreach materials.

3. Design relevant research studies that reflect organic.

Organic research needs to reflect the whole systems approach of organic farming so that the research results are useful. Funding must increase for long-term research and for research that addresses the complexity of organic systems.

4. Make research results accessible, understandable, and actionable.

Researchers must have a clear understanding of their different audiences and recognize their differing needs. Funding should be increased to cover creating materials that convey research results in a compelling and understandable manner.

5. Provide adequate research funding and resources.

Applied organic research is dramatically underfunded in the United States. Specific suggestions include increasing the number of private-public partnerships, securing federal research funding for the organic sector that is proportional to organic's market share; renewing funding in the next farm bill for USDA's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative; creating large-scale partnerships among multiple companies, non-profits, and researchers; and establishing an organic check-off research and promotion program to help set federal grant priorities and match funds for federal grant programs.

Looking at Knowledge Transfer

The Organic Center will bring farmers, scientists, extension agents, industry members, and key policy influencers together on May 21-22 for what will be the third annual Organic Confluences Summit. The theme of this year's summit is Evaluating and Advancing Knowledge Transfer in Organic. The summit will gather diverse organic stakeholders to assess the state of extension and education for organic and transitioning farmers, explore current innovations in information dissemination, and address barriers that constrain knowledge transfer within the organic sector.

Examining innovative, effective ways to transfer knowledge to farmers is absolutely critical for the continued success of organic. By looking at the challenges that face the pathway between practical solutions to on-farm issues and producers, we will be able to overcome a major barrier keeping new farmers from transitioning to organic, and current farmers from succeeding.

This summit will take place Monday, May 21 and the morning of Tuesday, May 22 in Washington D.C. The event will be held in conjunction with Organic Week in Washington D.C., which includes the Organic Trade Association's annual Policy Conference and Hill Visit Days, a Capitol Hill Reception, and more.

For more information, including how to register for this year's summit, visit www.organic-center.org.



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Be Prepared for Additional Review of Uncertified Handlers

Without the additional oversight provided by the certification process, uncertified handlers are a source of potential fraud in the organic supply chain. Beginning in late 2017, CCOF increased oversight of uncertified handlers by verifying additional audit trail records during inspections and with an Uncertified Handler Affidavit (UHA). The UHA helps us determine if an uncertified handler is legitimately excluded from certification. This change is in line with National Organic Program expectations and other certifiers' reviews of supply chains.

Legitimate excluded uncertified suppliers to CCOF operations must demonstrate that audit trail records for each shipment disclose the certified source and trace directly back to records from the last certified operation. **These records must be available at the CCOF-certified operation during your inspection. This is the only way that the organic certification system can have an intact audit trail for all ingredients, etc. in the supply chain.**

If you source organic ingredients or products from any uncertified broker, trader, wholesaler, or distributor, submit a UHA for each uncertified supplier at or before your next inspection and be prepared for additional audit trail

verification during inspection. Review the UHA for specific information that must be included in uncertified handler audit trail records. Remember that all certified suppliers must be approved by CCOF as part of your Organic System Plan (OSP). If an uncertified supplier has a new certified source, you must add that source to your OSP as well.

To cover the cost of staffing needed to provide additional oversight, there is a fee for each uncertified handler, described in the CCOF Certification Services Program Manual. You can avoid this fee by sourcing from certified suppliers.

We understand that this adjustment will take time and that your suppliers may be unfamiliar with these new requirements. Whenever possible, we will provide reasonable time to come into compliance. As we work together to strengthen the organic system, we appreciate the hard work of certified operations.

RESOURCES:

- CCOF Uncertified Handler Affidavit, found at www.ccof.org/documents/uncertified-handler-affidavit
- "Strengthening Oversight of Uncertified Handlers in the Supply Chain - Uncertified Handler Affidavit," article found at www.ccof.org/strengthening-oversight-uncertified-handlers-supply-chain-uncertified-handler-affidavit
- NOP Guidance 5031, found at www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook
- USDA NOP supply chain resources, found at www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/handbook



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We're open to your feedback and suggestions as we work to integrate this evolving area into the existing organic standards.

Reviewing Websites Now a Bigger Part of Inspections and Certification

As organic operations and the internet have matured, we are now faced with many businesses that have a website or whose entire sales and marketing are based on an online presence. We are adopting a new approach toward the websites of certified operations to ensure a level playing field and avoid consumer confusion.

We review websites of CCOF-certified operations periodically to ensure that organic claims are truthful and not misleading about the status of organic and non-organic products. We look for any use of the word "organic," as well as the CCOF logo or USDA seal. We will be reviewing the websites of e-commerce businesses annually and asking inspectors to look at websites of all businesses periodically.

To learn more about what CCOF looks for on a website to help you design a compliant website and prevent consumer confusion, visit www.ccof.org/documents/organic-claims-websites.

We're open to your feedback and suggestions as we work to integrate this evolving area into the existing organic standards.

Unknown Inputs Status Must Be Resolved or Removed from Your List

During material re-reviews, CCOF may not be able to determine the status of a material. Often this is because the manufacturer is unresponsive or the material is no longer in production. However, it is also possible that the material no longer meets organic standards.

When CCOF is unable to make a compliance determination regarding a material, it is classified as "Unknown" on your OSP-Materials List (OSP-ML). While a material may be in "Unknown" status for a short time while we seek information, it is not an appropriate long-term status for an input we include on your allowed materials list. Therefore, effective February 2018, materials will only remain in the "Unknown" status for 18 months at most.

We will work with you to make every effort to either remove the material or get enough information to allow it as soon as possible.

Clients with materials in "Unknown" status for more than 18 months will be notified via action items on your Compliance Report. To address the action item, please let us know whether you are still using the material. If you are not, we can simply remove the material from your OSP-ML. If the material is still in use, please provide us with sufficient information for us to complete a review. The details of what we'll require to review the material are located on your OSP-ML, under the Restriction language for that material.

If you are unable to provide a sufficient response by the due date indicated on your action item, you will be notified to cease use of the material, and it will be removed from your materials list. As new materials in "Unknown" status reach the 18-month deadline, we will notify you by issuing an action item on your Compliance Report.

We work hard to notify you of materials that are subject to re-review each year. You can help us keep costs low and avoid needless communication and response by removing materials you do not need on your materials list.

Inspector Joe Montecalvo Retires

CCOF recognizes and thanks Dr. Joseph Montecalvo upon his retirement from 24 years of organic inspections. A professor of food science at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Montecalvo has uniquely contributed to the credibility and rigor of methods for organic food processing and handling inspections. Montecalvo's contributions to the International Organic Inspectors Association—instruction, textbooks, curricular development, and serving on the board—have resulted in widespread benefits to the quality and training of organic inspectors everywhere. Impressively, Montecalvo has performed over 3,000 organic inspections, predominantly for CCOF and Oregon Tilth.

The organic industry owes Montecalvo a debt of gratitude for his dedication, passion, and distinguished contributions. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors!



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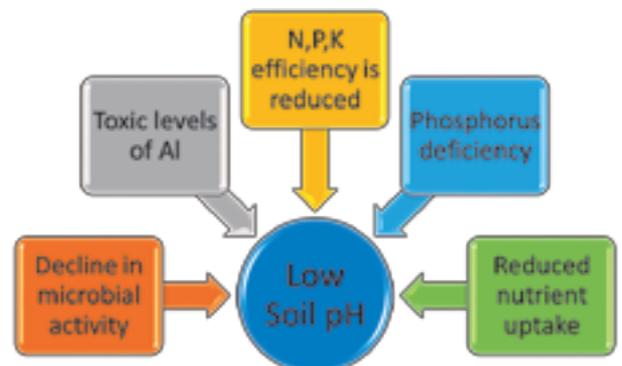
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