



Organic MATTERS

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OAEC/WARC Farm Tours in Bitterroot Valley

Review article and photos by Susan Waters, Organic Matters' Editor

It was a perfect mid-July day, the kind that lures even the most committed introvert outside—80 degrees and sunny, with just a hint of breeze, and not a wisp of wildfire smoke anywhere. It was the ideal setting to tour organic farms in the Bitterroot Valley, just south of Missoula, Montana.



Bitterroot Mountain Range overlooks the fertile Bitterroot Valley south of Missoula.

Running along the Bitterroot River and flanked on both sides of Hwy 93 by the majestic peaks of the Bitterroot Range to the west and the more rounded Sapphire Mountains to the east, the Bitterroot valley was carved by movement of the glaciers and the filling and emptying of Glacial Lake Missoula more than 13,000 years ago. The deposits from this geologic age contributed to the agricultural fertility of this valley, which is rich with agricultural endeavors.

The Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) teamed up with Montana State University's (MSU) Western Agriculture Research Center (WARC) to organize this year's Farm Tours and Organic Principles Review, focusing on integrated weed management, soil fertility,

and sustainability in organic grain, fruit and vegetable production.

“OAEC has been working directly with MSU, funding research projects for four years now,” stated Sam Schmidt, member of both OAEC and MOA's Board of Directors, “and review of this work during a field day is one

of the formats of sharing this information.”

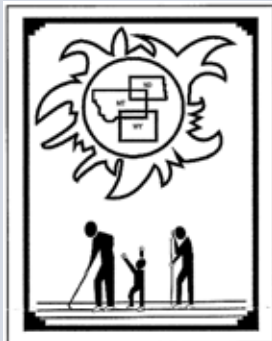
Our first stop on this beautiful, farm tour day was **Luna Llena Vineyards**, tucked on the east side of Highway 93 between Florence and Victor. Rich Torquemada, Head Weed Puller and Novice Viticulturist, was our guide as he explained his operation, including a vineyard profile, plantings and a history of plant experimentations. A retired Fish Biologist, Rich claims he is a winemaking hobbyist, at least for now, but has aspirations to bottle soon. Rich is also the President of the Montana



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**Montana Organic Association is a
501(c)6 non-profit**

organization dedicated to advocating and promoting organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and the State economy.

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Organic Matters occasionally includes guest articles and opinions. While we review these for relevance to our mission, the opinions in these articles may not reflect the opinions or policy of the Montana Organic Association.

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Grape and Winery Association, which was established in 2015 to promote viticulture (grape growing) and enology (wine making) in the state.

Rich embarked on his dream in 2014, starting with a mere 21 plants (Marquette, Frontenac, Frontenac



Blanc) in two test plots. He now has about 303 vines (with added varieties such as St. Pepin, Petit Pearl and Itasca), with plans for expansion to 500

plants (65% red / 35% white wine varieties and other fruits) on one working acre of sloping terraces. Luna Llena Vineyards is not certified organic yet, but Rich

uses predominately organic techniques whenever possible. The physical deterrents were hard to miss: barricades, electric fencing, and netting were all clearly visible and appeared to be working well. Rich



uses drip irrigation, using about seven gallons per week per plant with future plans for a rainwater catchment system.

The next stop on the OAEC/WARC tour route was across Hwy 93 on the west side and a little further south toward Corvallis. The Bitterroot Range, with its majestic craggy mountain peaks, overlook the **Tucker Family Farm** and adds significantly to the pastoral atmosphere. Tyler and Kendra Tucker, with Tyler's parents, Jerry and Kim Tucker, purchased the



84 acres spread in the spring of 2012. Within two months they started raising nearly 800 animals: chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, cows,

lambs and pigs. The Tuckers started a cheese making operation in 2015, and the Head Cheesemaker, Allison Dembek, guided the 40 tour participants through the fields, creamery, and aging cellars of



their seven-year old lamb/sheep operation and dairy.

Although Tucker Family Farm is not certified organic, they use mostly organic techniques. (Alison explained that they currently do not gain a premium for organic sheep milk or organic cheese.) The



current lamb and sheep operation/dairy uses 130 animals, who were far out in the field during the tour, grass feeding on a pasture rotation plan. The operation is currently



milking 72 sheep and net approximately 17 gallons per day, 20% of which is curd. They milk from April to November and are currently freezing the milk successfully for the cheese operation the rest of the year. They

are looking to expand to freezer capability as they are aiming to provide milk to the cheese making for most of the year.

Another quick trip across Hwy 93, back to the eastside, took us to the newest site of **Mill Crick Farm**, adjacent to the Teller Wildlife Refuge, in Corvallis. At the



original homestead on Dutch Hill Road in Hamilton, Mill Crick Farm has the greenhouse, farm stand and high tunnels for hot crops and season extension. Dutch Hill is also where they grow asparagus, strawberries, and mushrooms.

In 2017, Mill Crick Farm, owned by Randi Mark and Lindsey Auhal, joined forces with Fourth Wave Farm, formally of Stevensville, on



this exciting new nine-acre field just across the river on Chaffin Lane in Corvallis. This new location will allow them to scale up on a few diversified vegetable crops and experiment with different cultivation systems. The operation cultivates cut flowers and less than a dozen vegetable

crops such as potatoes, onions, zucchini, tomato and melon. We walked the fields, spoke to the field hands and were given equipment demonstrations. Mill Crick Farm is currently transitioning to Certified Organic and plan to be compliant by Summer 2019.

The last location of the day was **MSU's Western Agriculture Research Center in Corvallis**. Conducted on 29 acres of irrigated land, research at the site includes a wide range of production studies in fruits, vegetables, forages and grains. A local advisory board made up of area producers, MSU



Extension agents and industry representatives provides guidance on establishing WARC research priorities. The mission of the Western Agricultural Research Center is to serve the specific needs of the clientele in WARC's production area and the broader needs of Montana agriculture in general. This is accomplished through applied research directed to the problems and impacts of agricultural production.

Once we arrived, we were treated to a sumptuous lunch made from organic and local ingredients.



WARC's Produce Market Researcher and Sales Coordinator, Amy Hutton, prepared the feast with ingredients from area producers B-Bar Beef, Red Rooster Artisan Bakery, Mill Crick Farm, Tucker Family Farms, Lifeline Farm, Homestead Organics, WARC and more local producers. Their contributions were greatly appreciated and consumed with gusto.

After lunch, we made our way across the fields to a barn-like structure that serves as a modern



classroom. Here Dr. Ellen Mallory and Dr. Eric Gallandt, organic specialists from the University of Maine, talked about their research on grain fertility and weed

control methods. They varied inputs, undercut red clover and monitored nitrogen cycling as part of their research. Both specialists are great proponents of cultivating and hitting weeds with "many little hammers," such as crop/weed competition (species/cultivar, seed size/quality, transplanting, seeding density, row spacing, resource placement, and nutrient source), weed/seedling control (cultivation, flaming, hand weeding, mulching), and weed seed control (pre-empt seed rain, germination, solarization/tarping, and seed predation).



The presentation segued to Montana Organic Association's Treasurer, Heather Estrada, Ph.D., who spoke about her role as Agriculture Program Director at Flathead Valley

Community College in Kalispell. She pitched the comprehensive education program there, which covers agricultural business, sustainable food and bioenergy systems, and plant science. She also spoke about multiple expansions of the program, including a Brewing Science and Brewery Operations AAS degree.

Zach Miller, the superintendent of WARC and Assistant Professor of Horticulture at MSU, was the co-organizer of the tour and guided us throughout

the day. WARC is his territory and he graciously guided us and answered our various questions. Zach took the tour out of the classroom and back out onto the research

farm where we taste tested many varieties of Haskap berries. Wildly successful in Canada, WARC is looking to elevate the profile of these berries and others in the United States. We toured the net-enclosed berry plot where they are testing various varieties, growing methods, fertilizers, harvesting techniques and yields.



Katrina Mendrey, Orchard Program Coordinator from WARC (and former Ravalli County Extension

Agent), showed us WARC's new apple orchard test plots. They are currently testing six varieties of apples and are trying to break the Fire Blight grip, as well as testing high density planting for higher yields.



Zach Miller returned to the stage for a foray into integrated weed management for chickpeas. They used multiple weed control methods including variety (Black Kabuli and CDC Orion varieties), seeding rates, pre-emergent measures and the planting date. The takeaway from their early research is that using Black Kabuli, increasing seeding rate, and shallow tillage works well, and to "stack" the approaches for an effective knock out punch to the weeds.

Next up were Dave Oien and Joseph Kibiwott from Timeless Seeds, whose specialty is organic pulses, particularly lentils and chickpeas. (See Liz Carlisle's book, *The Lentil Underground*, for a compelling read about Dave and company's early organic lentil journey.) They spoke about the versatility of the lentil—as a nutritional, protein-packed food, a nitrogen-rich ground cover that enhances soil fertility and improves yields, and a low-water crop compared



with other protein sources. Timeless Seeds' research showed that treating the legume seeds with Rhizobia bacteria can help develop healthier plants with early nodulation and increased nitrogen fixation. The Rhizobia bacteria supplies the plant with carbohydrates that allows them to capture more atmospheric nitrogen. Joseph showed us two chickpea plants, including their roots, to demonstrate how the inoculated nodules were a healthy pink while the untreated plant's nodules were small and gray.

An appropriate close to a successful day of learning was demonstration of WARC's commitment to research methods on how to deal with Montana's biggest nemesis—field bindweed.



Bindweed is a significant factor for organic farmers who quit their organic certification, and for good reason. One of the reasons bindweed is so hard to get rid of is

that it has a large and hardy root system. Zach Miller reprised the mantra of “many little hammers” of weed control here as well. From their research started in 2015, the results show that winter wheat and safflower was highly suppressive. WARC is becoming sure of what doesn't help—fallow and till-around patches. They found by trial that the bindweed flourished under these circumstances. To reassure Montana growers, WARC's research on bindweed will continue.

There were many lessons to be learned from the combined years of research and experience of the tour presenters and the participants.

“Most of the organic acres in the state are grain farms and ranches. Our tour aimed to showcase a variety of smaller scale and higher value organic farms, vineyards, and dairies,” said Zach Miller. “Touring and talking with these farmers is a great way to learn new approaches and to build the community and connections that sustain us.”

Joseph Kibiwott summed up organic production perfectly: “What organic is really about is cultivating relationships, taking care of each other and growing healthy food for everyone.”

Listening to the generous veterans of this challenging profession who shared stories and experiences that the younger set can apply and build upon, as well as the genuine care and concern expressed at the ups and downs of organic growing, demonstrated that this IS a community of caring. And, caring for the soil, the plants, the air, the water and the multitude of creatures that inhabit the land is at the very core of organics. 🍀



Links to more information about the operations toured:

Luna Llena Vineyards: Rich Torquemada's email: richtorque@gmail.com

Tucker Family Farm: <http://www.tuckerfamilyfarm.com/>

Mill Crick Farm: <http://www.millcrickfarm.com/>

WARC: <http://agresearch.montana.edu/warc/index.html>, (406) 961-3025

OAEC: <http://www.oaecmt.org/home.html>, mtoaec@hotmail.com, (406) 733-6633

Susan Waters runs Northern Lights Communications, located in Missoula, Montana, and has been MOA's Communications Contractor and Organic Matters' Editor since 2009.





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MOA 2017 Annual Financial Report

With the close of the 2017 fiscal year, it is time for the Montana Organic Association to report our financial condition to our members. We officially closed our books on December 31, 2017 and completed MOA's tax report and 1099 forms for our contractors in January. MOA received confirmation from the IRS that we are in full compliance as a non-profit for 2017. We also renewed our status as a non-profit in Montana with the Secretary of State's office.

As you can see from the table below we generated income in the 2017 year, due to the success of our annual conference and continued member support. We also received a notable grant of \$2,500 from the USDA RMA Risk Management Education Partnership.

Notable in our 2017 expenses, newsletter and communication costs were reduced by about \$7,000 thanks to the effective work of Susan Waters (Communications) and Patti Gregerson (Membership and Event Support) and through

our shift to electronic delivery of our newsletter. As we move forward, the Board is focused on increasing membership and lowering costs for our 2018 Conference in Great Falls.

With our limited means, the Montana Organic Association continues to be an efficient organization. We provide our members with education and outreach, representation for Montana's organic farming industry at the state and federal levels, and networking opportunities at the lowest possible cost.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions or comments—we are happy to hear from you and appreciate the opportunity to represent our constituents.

Kind regards,

Heather Estrada
MOA Board Treasurer 

MOA Income and Expenses					
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Income					
Advertising and Sales	2,800	1,805	843	2,950	1,342
Events	39,563	46,148	51,841	46,972	41,292
Membership	8,142	5,654	11,744	7,125	6,885
Grants, Donations	2,575	750	3,781	2,115	1,560
Lindquist Memorial Scholarship	300	500	610		
TOTAL	53,380	54,857	68,818	59,162	51,079
Expenses					
Administration	2,496	2,811	3,443	2,852	3,728
Membership Services	4,628	2,028	2,430	1,096	11,170
Events	28,315	22,282	33,418	32,404	16,036
Communications and Outreach	13,044	20,338	13,228	7,978	1,858
Board Expenses	1,346	2,291	1,969	627	1,413
TOTAL	49,829	49,750	54,488	44,957	34,205
NET	3,551	5,107	14,330	14,205	16,874

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2018 MOA Conference

by Jamie Ryan Lockman, MOA Board, Kamut®

Every year, the Montana Organic Association (MOA) gathers its members and invites the public to join them in celebrating the organic movement that came about 30 years ago. Montana now ranks among the top states in the production of certified organic wheat and other grains along with peas, lentils and flax.

“Montana Organic Agriculture: Regenerating Community” is the theme of the 16th Annual Conference of the Association. It will be a gathering of a diverse but like-minded people who have dedicated themselves to living by organic standards that convey trust and transparency to the consumer. They will come together to share their stories, learn from each other and confront the many challenges that face them at this time in history.

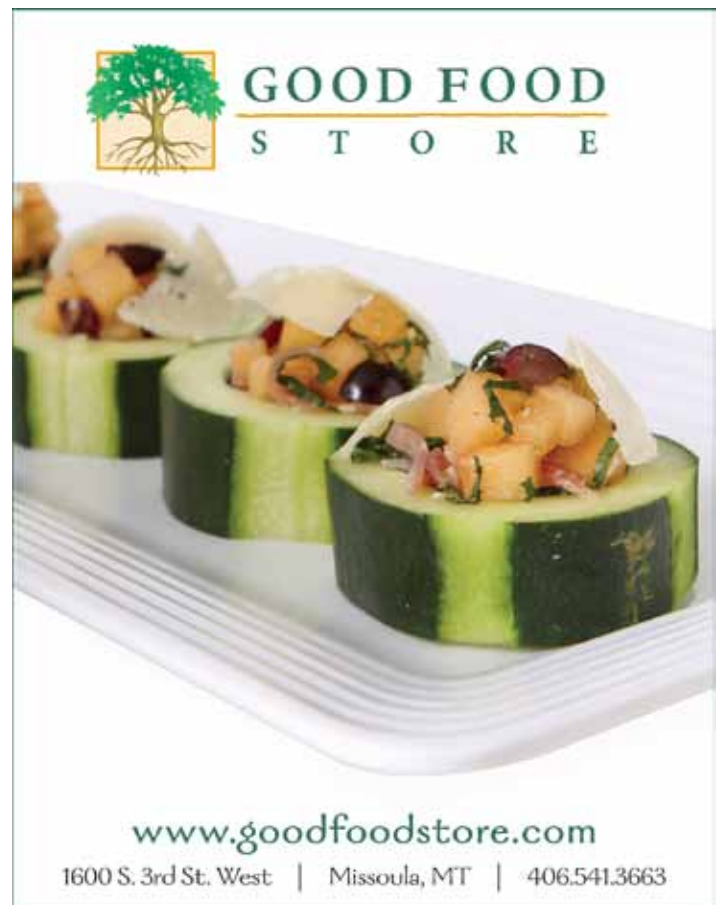
The conference keynote address will be given by Dr. Jill Clapperton, soil scientist and internationally recognized lecturer, on how to create and manage the long-term health and productivity of soils. Dr. Clapperton was the Rhizosphere Ecologist at Agriculture and Agri Food Canada Lethbridge Research Centre, studying the interaction between soils, plants and soil organisms. She also developed and implemented the Worm Watch program for Environment Canada.

MOA will present more than 40 speakers over the three-day conference, including Dr. Jennifer Swanson, University of Providence (formerly called University of Great Falls); Dr. Pat Carr

from the Agricultural Department of Montana State University (MSU); Dr. Bruce Maxwell, MSU Professor of Agroecology and Co-director of the Montana Institute on Ecosystems; and Dr. Bob Quinn of Kamut International.

Area farm and facility tours are a staple of MOA conferences (the 2018 Conference Tours are pending finalization) and typically include farms, ranches, processing and research facilities. A free movie screening is planned that will be open to the public. There will be live and silent auctions, entertainment provided by Jim Sargent, and networking opportunities with other organics professionals. Chandee Bomgardner will provide meals using locally sourced, organic ingredients, so the food is guaranteed to be amazing.

Visit [MOA's website](#) or [MOA's Facebook page](#) for updates on the 2018 Conference as planning continues throughout the summer and fall. If you'd like to sponsor, volunteer, or speak at the conference or have any other questions, please contact Jamie at jamie.lockman@kamut.com or Patti at moamembership@gmail.com or phone (406) 333-1054. 🌱



OTA Growing Organic Industry Award

The Organic Trade Association has announced this year's Organic Leadership Award winners. These awards are given to those who make a difference in organics, have a strong belief that organic practices are the way to go and a commitment to mentoring others.

This year's award honorees are: MOA member

Margaret Scoles of International Organic Inspectors Association, Growing Organic Industry Award; **Javier Zamora** of JSM Organics, Rising Star Award; and **Stephanie and Blake Alexandre** of Alexandre EcoDairy Farm, Organic Farmer of the Year Award.

"Each has proven that they have what it takes to inspire others and uphold the integrity and practices that make organic agriculture the standout way to manage our food system," said Laura Batcha, Executive Director and CEO of the Organic Trade Association. "The theme for this year's event is 'Recipe for Leadership' and each of our honorees has used their own unique blend of ingredients and masterful techniques to serve up a style of leadership that is advancing the organic sector."

Margaret Scoles, who started out as training manager and coordinator in 1999 for the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) subsequently became Executive Director, a title she still holds. But she has been a tireless educator, advocate and ambassador for the organic world even before that.

Scoles' involvement in agriculture and the organic movement began in the late 1980s. After graduating from the University of Arizona, she was an Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) reviewer and inspector. In 1991, she was a founding member of the then-named Independent Organic Inspectors Association.

"Any person on Earth who has taken an IOIA training has been affected by Margaret's indefatigable efforts to improve the integrity of organic farming, production, distribution and sales. She has grown IOIA's training, membership, programs and influence, such that graduates of these trainings are not only professional inspectors. IOIA students can be found among employees of major companies, certifiers, the USDA National Organic Program, members of the National Organic Standards Board, IFOAM and Organic Trade Association Board members. While not every certifier around the world requires their inspectors to

be externally trained, IOIA is considered the highest achievement for inspector and certifier education," her nomination letter explained.

It added, "It is not an exaggeration to say that most every certified organic product on earth is only a few degrees of separation from Margaret. Whether it's food, textiles, beauty care products; whether it is Europe or Asia or the USA--the chances are that each item was

inspected, certified and/or produced by someone who attended an IOIA training, or was trained by someone who attended an IOIA training. The reach of Margaret's leadership has touched all sectors and corners of organic production around the world."

The primary nomination and 67 additional letters of endorsement give testimony to how Scoles has affected their lives, both professionally and personally.

"This is a feather in Montana's cap," said Margaret Scoles. "It is the third time in eight years that someone from Montana has won one of the OTA awards. Bob Quinn was honored in 2010 and Doug Crabtree was

Farmer of the Year in 2014. I am quite astonished to be recognized in this way. It is deeply meaningful that I was nominated by a former apprentice of 20 years ago, and I will be introduced by another former apprentice of almost that long ago. I am not proud of many things, but I am proud of having mentored others who went on to become good inspectors."

"Most of what I know, I learned from the people and operations I inspected," Margaret continues. "I am very grateful for my Montana roots, the start I got here in inspection, and where that work has taken me. In 1988, Jim Barngrover called me up to tell me that based on my cover letter and resume, I looked like I might make an inspector. The work fit like a glove. That was 30 years ago. It ended up being my life work, inspecting, teaching inspectors, bringing the inspectors' voice to the table, and promoting rigorous inspections, qualified inspectors and integrity in the organic certification process. I have been to Korea, Australia, Russia, Europe, India, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and all over Canada and the US. It always amazes me how common the concerns of inspectors are and how common those of farmers are. Organic is truly a global community."

The Organic Trade Association's [2018 Leadership Awards Celebration](#) will take place Wednesday, September 12, at the Columbus Center in Baltimore, Maryland. 🌱



Growing Organic Industry Award winner Margaret Scoles. Photo by Lana Smith.


Farm Bill Update by National Organic Coalition

Last week, NOC delivered a [letter](#) to the House and Senate Ag Committee leaders, detailing our requests for the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee process. In the letter, we also express strong opposition to Farm Bill changes to the authority and structure of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). These changes undermine the integrity the Board and the procedures used to ensure full stakeholder input into the USDA organic standards.

The House has now appointed [47 Conferees](#) and we expect the Senate to follow suit in the near future. While Ag Committee staff are already beginning to prepare for the Conference Committee process, the full Conference Committee may not meet until after the August recess. The House will go on recess the first week in August, but Senators will remain in town because Senator McConnell has canceled most the August recess for the Senate.

June was a big month for the Farm Bill – the House passed its version of the Farm Bill on June 21 in its second attempt. The Senate bill passed on June 28. [NOC has created a score card to grade each of these bills on key organic priorities.](#)

Congress is now approximately half way through a lengthy process to enacting a bill by the September 30 deadline, though significant hurdles remain. Now Congress must reconcile substantial differences between the House and Senate versions through a Conference Committee process, in which senior members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees hash out a path forward. While the Republican-only House bill overhauls the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and makes deep cuts to conservation programs, the bipartisan Senate bill leaves these programs intact. The wide gulf between these major policy decisions in the two bills will make reconciling them a formidable process.

Once reconciled, both the House and Senate must pass a final Farm Bill Conference Report and secure the President's signature to enact the legislation. If Congress fails to complete the process by September 30, expiration of the current law poses major challenges for the organic sector because key organic programs like the OREI program and the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program lack baseline funding and may lapse if Congress passes a short-term extension (this happened previously when the Farm Bill lapsed at the end of 2012 and a short-term extension failed to fund organic programs during 2013). Source: [NOC](#) 

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Organic Fraud: USDA's Oversight

The National Organic Program (NOP) protects the integrity of USDA organic products in the United States and around the world. NOP's primary role is to regulate and enforce national standards to protect the farms and businesses that have invested in organic, and ensure consumers can continue to trust the USDA Organic Seal. AMS has posted a new [Summary of Activities and Overview Action Plan](#) that provides: a summary of significant recent actions NOP has taken to protect the integrity of organic imports and an overview of the plan of action to implement new practices that strengthen the National Organic Program's enforcement and oversight capabilities.

For an overview of enforcement actions taken, visit the USDA's NOP website to view their [quarterly enforcement reports](#).

NOP hosted an interactive webinar engaging the organic community about NOP's Strengthening Organic Enforcement rulemaking. The webinar can be viewed at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/reports/strengthening-organic-enforcement-town-hall-slides> 


In the last five years, organics has grown approximately ten percent annually and accounts for over five percent of food sold in the United States.

Source: Organic Trade Association

NOC Joins Livestock Rule Lawsuit

In May, the National Organic Coalition joined with the Center for Food Safety and other nonprofit public interest organizations, in a lawsuit to challenge a decision on March 13 from USDA and Secretary Sonny Perdue to withdraw the organic regulations for animals on certified organic farms, called the "Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices" rule.

NOC has long advocated for this new regulation to bring clarity and consistency to the organic standards and to level the playing field for organic livestock producers, the vast majority of whom are already in compliance with the new regulations. NOC, Center for Food Safety (a NOC member organization), and other NOC member organizations have submitted hundreds of pages of detailed testimony and public comment in support of the regulations and to suggest improvements to the regulatory text.

"The National Organic Coalition is deeply alarmed by the USDA's decision to scrap the long-awaited standards on animal welfare for organic livestock operations," says Abby Youngblood, executive director at the National Organic Coalition. "NIC is joining this lawsuit to protest the integrity of the organic seal. The new rules represent more than a decade of work to clarify and improve animal welfare standards in organic and have the support of thousands of stakeholders, including farmers, consumer advocacy groups, and other members of the organic industry. Consumer trust in the label is vital and assures the success of the organic seal in the marketplace. Failing to enact these new rules puts consumer trust in jeopardy." 



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Organic Advisory & Education Council

WANTED (AGAIN)

- SICK BINDWEED/THISTLE PLANTS -

Perennial Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle are the primary weeds that producers have issues with in Montana's organic systems. There is ongoing research at Montana State University and the Organic Advisory and Education Council is working with them to explore the usage of natural bio-controls for problematic weeds and *progress from last years samples have been made.* *We are again this year asking your* help to identify and collect sick bindweed and thistle plants. We are asking you to scout your weed patches EARLY this season, to find local diseases, especially root-type diseases where there may be a yellowing of the leaves, and a discoloration of the roots. When you find a diseased bindweed or thistle plant – please do the following:

1. Write down the location, date, and take a picture.
2. Dig up the plant down to the roots, shake off dirt and look for discolored roots.
3. Put the sample in a paper bag. Do NOT use a plastic bag. The humidity in the plastic bag will affect the sample. A paper bag makes it easier for the lab team to deal with a dry sample. If you have multiple samples, place each one in an individual bag with the location information clearly indicated for each.
4. Fill out the attached Sample Donation form, including your name, address, phone number, email, and sample location.
5. Mail sample(s) to:

OAEC
475 Vixen Ln
Shonkin, MT 59450
406-733-6633

We are asking everyone to help find a workable organic solution to this issue. The samples you provide may move forward the ongoing research that is needed. Detailed instructional sampling information is available at oacemt.org. Thank you for supporting this vital research.

Update: Early spring emergence of weeds and detection of their diseases can have stronger bio-control potentials than late season sampling!

The Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) is a non-profit organization made up of Montana certified organic farmers whose mission is to assess priority needs for research and education specific to Montana's organic farming community. OAEC's mandate is to identify and to target funds for most needed projects. In an equally important role, OAEC provides information and advice to researchers and educators on areas of critical need in the organic community.

OAEC Plant Material Donation Form

Name/Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

1. Record the location, date, and take a picture of the site from which you take the sample(s).
2. Dig up the plant(s) down to the roots, shake off dirt, and let dry. Look for discolored roots.
3. Place each sample in a numbered **paper** bag with the location information clearly indicated for each. DO NOT use a plastic bag. The humidity in a plastic bag will negatively affect your sample.
4. Fill out this form for each sample species of weed, Bindweed or Thistle, (use additional pages if necessary) and mail it and your samples to:
OAEC, 475 Vixen Ln, Shonkin, MT 59450, 406-733-6633.

I hereby donate this/these Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) sample(s) to the Organic Advisory and Education Council for organic research. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for this donation.

I hereby donate this/these Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) sample(s) to the Organic Advisory and Education Council for organic research. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for this donation.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Sample #	Date	Physical Location (GPS Coordinates acceptable)	Species

The Organic Advisory and Education Council Montana is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to supporting research and education in organic agriculture. Our tax ID is 45-2308574.

Timeless Seeds' Field Day Review

Article and Photo by Sam Schmidt, OAEC Board Member, Montana Milling

Timeless Seeds, Inc. held a Field Day on June 28th, 2018, with multiple organic tour stops of farms and operations in northwest Montana.

The day was kicked off at [Mehmke Farms](#), located 7.5 miles east of Great Falls. Tour host, Nick Mehmke,



gave an overview of the family's history on the farm and their initial use of steam powered equipment to help break native sod in the area.

The tour then moved on to

two different fields of lentils raised by Nick. Jim Barngrover and Joseph Kibiwott from Timeless Seeds gave demonstrations of "plant population" counts in a French Green Lentil field, and also dug up root systems in search of nitrogen fixing nodules. At the second location, agronomic comparisons were



made within a Black Beluga Lentil field of differing rhizobium inoculation rates, showing the benefits of using the proper type and amount of inoculant.

Carpooling participants traveled a short distance off Hwy 87 to [Ole Norgaard's](#) fields to look at three different types of inter-seeding practices. The first



field of Spelt and Yellow Sweet Clover led to plant health and weed control discussions, followed by Black Beluga Lentils with Oats and

Barley, where varying tiller plants were identified and an overview of the inoculants and inputs used were described. Ole identified spring wheat inter-seeded with alfalfa, pollinator strips established in 2017, and his Black Indian Corn plot. Ole also shared marketing challenges and successes of his [North Frontier Foods' Cornbread and Pancake Mixes](#).

Guests relocated to Lassila Farms, where host [Daryl Lassila](#) led guests to winter wheat production that

was cover crop inter-seeded with Black Beluga Lentils, explaining how the unexpected



lentils' survival over the winter has now led to both crops in the harvest schedule. Next observed were late-spring-seeded Richlea Lentils with the intent of green manure termination, and the advantages of both winter snow pack and late spring moisture, to all his crop. Daryl also pointed out the challenges of Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle in the area, which led to all three hosts giving their thoughts and concerns.

Ole Norgaard gave an update on the [Organic Advisory and Education Council's](#) ongoing work and projects with Montana State University for both mechanical and bio-controls of these problematic weeds.

The early evening schedule concluded with a potluck supper and social at Lassila Farms, where David Owen introduced Timeless Seeds guests from [Patagonia Provisions](#) and displayed high nutrition food packs with the use of lentils and other cover crop ingredients.

[Timeless Seeds](#) would like to think all of the Field Day hosts, growers, and participants for the successful day. 🌱



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New NOP Deputy Administrator Appointed

Dr. Jennifer Tucker has been appointed as Deputy Administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) National Organic Program (NOP).

"Dr. Tucker's work to strengthen enforcement and improve customer service has already earned her the respect and trust of the program's many diverse stakeholders," said AMS Administrator



Bruce Summers. Dr. Tucker has served as Associate Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program since 2011. Before joining USDA, she served as a group facilitator and organization development consultant, working primarily with scientific and technical government and non-profit organizations. She earned a B.A. in Environmental Science from Wesleyan University, an M.S. in Management from Purdue University, and a Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Virginia Tech. 🌱

New NOSB Board Appointments

Dr. James Greenwood from California, has been appointed to fill the open environmental protection and resource conservation seat. Dr. Greenwood is an organic avocado farmer and handler and has served on the board of directors for the USDA Hass Avocado Board. He has served on the Faculty of the School of Public Health at University of California, Los Angeles where he has been actively engaged with UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and the Center for Public Health. Dr. Greenwood holds a Master's in Public Health, a Master's in Microbiology and a Doctorate in Microbiology.

Mr. Eric Schwartz, also from California, has been appointed to fill the open organic handling seat. Mr. Schwartz serves as the chief executive officer for the United Vegetable Growers Cooperative. Before that, he served in a number of roles at Dole, including as senior vice president for operations. He served on several panels and boards, including the California Healthy Soils Initiative, and co-chaired the start-up of the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement. Mr. Schwartz also served as a board member for the Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement. He has been involved in different aspects of organic growing, harvesting and processing for over twenty years. He holds a bachelors in Logistics Management from Penn State University. 🌱

Organic Matters, Summer 2018



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MOA Member Profile: T&T Farm Supply

MOA welcomes new members Tyrel and Tara Hendrickson of T & T Farm Supply, LLC. Their seven-year old family-owned operation is located in Chester, Montana, and serves north central Montana and beyond.

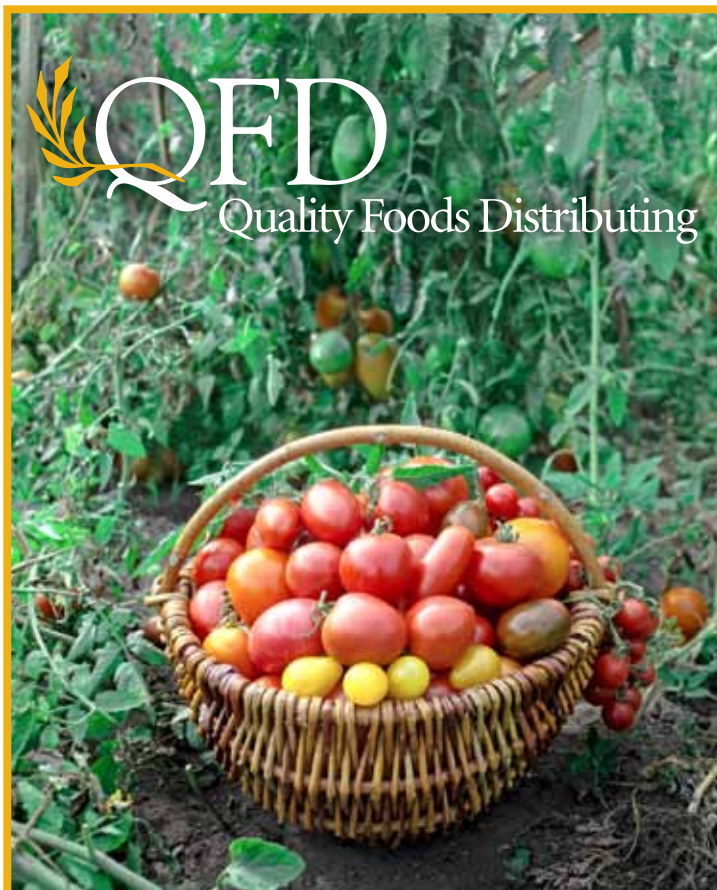
Tyrel grew up on his family's fifth generation farm in the Chester area before attending the University of Montana COT in Helena, where he studied aviation maintenance. Great Falls was home to Tara before she studied athletic training at the University of Montana, Missoula. Tyrel and Tara wed in the fall of 2010 and settled into Chester permanently. With a great interest in agriculture, Tyrel and Tara continued to help with the family farm and also began leasing farm ground of their own. A very successful farm supply business opportunity was presented to the duo in the summer of 2010 and the rest is history.



Tyrel, Tara and Jozi Hendrickson. Kylie Richter Photography

T & T Farm Supply supplies a diverse variety of farm and ranch needs. Current companies that T & T Farm Supply represent are: Honey Bee (headers/rod weeder), BATCO/REM (conveyors/grain vacs), Bourgault Tillage Tools (discs/points/cultivator sweeps), LEMKEN (vertical tillage), AWS (air reels), Cray (air reels), MAV Choppers, Flexfinger, and also General Distributing (general farm supplies).

When Tyrel and Tara are not busy in the field or at the parts store they enjoy making memories with their two-year-old daughter, Jozi, traveling, hunting, and volunteering with their local volunteer ambulance and fire departments. Tyrel and Tara enjoy working with individuals in the agricultural industry and look forward to promoting quality farm machinery and sales. They value the hard work and dedication of farmers and ranchers, near and far. Visit [T & T's Facebook](#) page or phone (406) 759-5006. 🌱



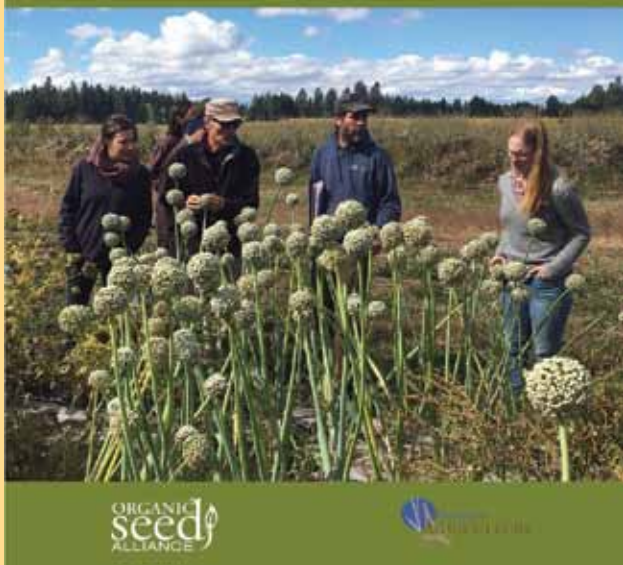
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Seed Quality: Best Practices for Vegetable Seed Handling in Montana



In 2016, Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) conducted a survey of organic specialty crop growers in Montana and found that 60% of respondents said there are vegetable crops they won't grow because of disease and insect problems. More than half of respondents said there are varieties they wish they still had access to but can no longer find in catalogues. Nearly half of respondents report growing seed for on-farm use and nearly a third are selling seed to a wholesale market.

Organic Seed Alliance has published *Seed Quality: Best Practices for Vegetable Seed Handling in Montana*, a comprehensive look at the many facets of producing high-quality organic seed. The free, downloadable manual includes specific guidelines and recommendations, but also instructs growers and businesses on how to implement procedures that are right for them, whether they're developing a new seed business or professionalizing a current commercial seed operation.

Organic News

EU Bans "Organic" Hydroponic Imports

Beginning in 2021, the European Union will no longer accept produce labeled "organic" that has been produced hydroponically, including so-called "container production." European hydroponic producers who use approved organic inputs will still be able to export their produce to the U.S., although their produce will not be eligible for organic status in their own country. It remains to be seen whether this will increase hydroponic exports from the EU to the U.S. Many organic farmers and organizations continue to insist that soil-less hydroponic production of vegetables and fruits should not be eligible for sale in the U.S. as organic. Source: [Cornucopia Institute](#)

Locavore Montana


According to the current issue of *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, locavore means one who eats foods grown locally whenever possible. America's locavorism leaders are the states of Vermont, Maine, Montana and Oregon, in that order, according to the 2018 Locavore Index, which is researched and compiled by *Strolling of the Heifers*, a non-profit food advocacy organization based in Vermont. Rounding out the top 10 in the seventh annual Index, in order, are New Hampshire, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, Hawaii,

Wisconsin and Rhode Island. Vermont has led the Index since its inception in 2012. Source: [Strolling of the Heifers](#)

Court Rules Against Monsanto's Challenge to California Listing Glyphosate as Probable Carcinogen

California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment announced its intention to add glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup, to its list of known and probable carcinogens after the International Agency for Research on Cancer deemed it a probable carcinogen in 2015. Monsanto has been fighting California in court, and the courts recently ruled against the agribusiness behemoth. Products containing glyphosate must now bear a warning label in California. This is a victory for the public's right to know when it is being exposed to toxins. Source: [Cornucopia Institute](#)

EU Bans Neonicotinoids for Outdoor Use

European Union member states have backed a proposal to restrict outdoor use of the pesticides imidacloprid, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam. All outdoor use of the substances will be banned. The neonicotinoids will only be allowed in permanent greenhouses where no contact with bees is expected. The [regulation will be adopted by the European Commission](#) and become applicable by the end of the year. Source: [NCAT/ATTRA](#) 

Organic Resources

Experienced Farm Worker Directory

Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC) has introduced [Western Montana Freelance Farmhands](#), a listing of experienced farm workers who have been recommended by a previous employer in the region. These workers can be contacted about short term work opportunities on farms and ranches in Western Montana. This shared pool of workers provide farmers and ranchers easy access to experienced workers who can assist regular staff for short-term projects. The List shares farm worker information among farmers in Missoula, Lake, and Ravalli counties. The Community Food and Agriculture Coalition hopes to build a management guide for this tool to share with other farm regions after the 2018 season. Source: [Community Food and Agriculture Coalition](#)

Organic Management Fact Sheets Available


Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) has released two new fact sheets, [Managing Soil Fertility in an Organic System](#) and [Organic Pest and Disease Management](#). The first addresses soil organic matter, synthetic fertility, soil testing, fertilizers, compost, cover crops, and more best practices. The

second offers an overview of simple and effective practices you can implement on your farm to minimize pest and disease pressure. Source: [Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service](#)

USDA-NRCS Montana Offers Funding for Conservation Gardens, High Tunnels

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for grants to establish community gardens, pollinator gardens and seasonal high tunnels through the Montana NRCS Conservation Garden Project. Proposals will be accepted from eligible entities for projects located in Montana. **Applications for the Montana NRCS Conservation Garden Project are due by Aug. 10, 2018.** The Notice of Funding Opportunity is available at www.grants.gov. The Opportunity number is USDA-NRCS-MT-18-01. Questions can be directed to [Lori Valadez](#), (406) 587-6969. Source: [NRCS](#)

Using Social Media to Grow Your Farm Business

NCAT/ATTRA presents a [free recorded webinar](#) on how to grow your customer base and market your products. They cover use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They also discuss strategies on how to develop content and engage your customers. Source: [NCAT ATTRA](#) 



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Calendar of Events

Find the organic events in your area by visiting www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm.

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