



Organic Matters

MT Organics & Climate Change

by Jeff Schahczenski, MOA Board Member

The warming of the earth over the next twenty to thirty years poses significant challenges to the ability of farmers and ranchers to sustain food production. Montana farmers and ranchers will contribute to and will be impacted by global climate change. In November of 2007 the Governors' Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) released its findings and developed 54 recommendations on how greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can be reduced in Montana to 1990 levels by 2020. Only a few of these recommendations resulted in proposals by the Montana legislatures' Environmental Quality Council.

The CCAC recommended seven policy options (listed below) that specifically address the role Montana agriculture could play in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:

1. Agriculture Soil Carbon Management-No Till
2. Ethanol Production
3. Programs to Promote Local Food and Fiber
4. Biodiesel Production
5. Preserve Open Space and Working Lands for Agriculture
6. Agricultural Soil Carbon Management-Organic Practices
7. Enhancing GHG benefits of Federal Conservation programs

Two recommendations relate to the production of biofuels (2 & 4) and two relate to soil carbon management (1 & 6). The preservation of open space and working agricultural lands recommendations (5) along with the enhancing GHG benefits of federal conservation programs (7) relate to keeping land

in agricultural production and keeping the amount of private land not in agricultural use stable. Finally the recommendation of programs to promote local foods and fibers relate to limiting "food miles" (3) and hence reducing GHG emissions by having Montanans provide more of their food from in-state production.

While the report does recommend an expansion of organic production, it does not properly quantify the clear climate friendly benefits of organic production despite ample and growing evidence that is readily available. The CCAC did not fully recognize or account for the contribution of organic systems of production to the future reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It did quantify the climate benefits of no-till and suggest significant increases in no-till farming practice.

Current evidence would seem to warrant placing a greater emphasis on organic systems as a means to meeting GHG emissions reduction from agriculture in Montana. At the very least it would suggest an immediate need for research to examine Montana organic systems to provide estimates of GHG reductions which appear likely to be much more significant than those that can come from the adoption of no-till systems.

Many of the CCAC's findings are of particular interest to the Montana organic community. In my full report, located on the MOA website at www.montanaorganicasociation.org/organicclimatechange.htm, I have analyzed two which have the greatest impact, namely those related to soil management and land use issues.

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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.

News Fresh Off The Shelf

Food Co-op's 4% Day Grant Applications for 2009-2010 Available Now!

For years, 4% Day has been a grant program for local non-profit, non-sectarian organizations whose goals complement or support the Co-op mission statement. Every fourth Friday of the month, 4 percent of the day's sales go directly to one such organization, designated by the Co-op's Board of Directors.

This year, the Board has modified the eligibility criteria in an attempt to encourage what many members consider to be one of the Co-op's greatest strengths, the support of local growers and agriculture. Going forward, priority will be given to those organizations, farmers and producers whose projects support the advancement of local agriculture, including local food distribution and processing, community education, school programs and connecting the community to food production. The Co-op is also emphasizing that now an organization need not be a 501c(3) non-profit to apply.

So, if you believe your mission, or that of your organization, meshes with the Co-op's with regard to nutrition, ecological principles, basic needs, moving toward sustainability, fostering community and/or supporting the advancement of local agriculture, pick

up an application for 4% Day at the customer service desk beginning Dec. 1, 2008. Applications must be returned to the Co-op postmarked on or before Feb. 1, 2009 to be eligible for consideration. Questions? Call Alison Grey at 587-1919 ext. 76 or e-mail her at alison@bozo.coop.

MOA Classifieds

For Sale: 450 ton Organic Alfalfa-Grass Hay. 125-160 RFQ, 14.5-18.5 Crude Protein, No Noxious Weeds, No Rain, 3x4x8 1270 lbs. Squ. bales, \$150- \$180 Ton. B Bar M Ranch, Lewistown, MT 406-538-3749.

For sale: Certified organic dried sweet cherries. \$14/pound. As also available: 1 and 5 gallon pitted and frozen cherries. Contact Lise @ Fat Robin Orchard & Farm at 887-2869 or liserousseau@bresnan.net.

Winter is the time of promise because there is so little to do ~ or because you can now and then permit yourself the luxury of thinking so.

Stanley Crawford

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MOA's 2008 Conference

by Helen Athowe, MOA member and MSU Extension-Missoula County

I just returned from the Montana Organic Association Annual conference in Bozeman. We have been getting many questions about organic gardening and farming in Missoula County for the past 11 years. Recently we have seen even more interest in food production without the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. This is what most people think of as "organic." Actually, organic means much more than that. Organic is a systems approach and farmers (who go through the certification process so that they can legally call their crops organic), must create a "farm systems" plan. The plan includes exactly how the farmer will manage insects, diseases, and weeds. It gives details on the farmer's soil management methods for short term plant nutrient availability and long-term soil health. An independent inspector reviews the plan and then visits the farm to ask questions and actually see the farmer's methods for him or herself. For information on organic certification, you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program (www.agr.state.mt.us/certification/organicProgram.shtml).

This 2008 Montana Organic Association Annual conference was one of the most interesting I have attended. We had a spirited discussion about reduced tillage methods for producing organic crops and how to maintain long-term soil health without compromising short-term crop yield. Just like organic gardeners, organic farmers have to figure out when and how much animal or plant residue (such as manure or tilled in clover) to add in order to avoid the problems associated with too much residue addition. Too much manure applied to soils in the fall or early spring can result in loss of nitrates into the groundwater, where not only does it NOT help our plants, but it becomes a drinking water pollutant. Too much clover residue tilled in too late in the spring can steal water and nutrients from the crop that follows, as soil microbes work hard to break it down. On the other hand, the backbone of organic farming and gardening is to provide the soil with a regular addition of organic residues to maintain and build the soil organic matter foundation upon which a healthy soil is built. It's a tough balance and we are still trying to figure out how to do it well. What is exciting about the Montana Organic Association is the commitment of members to become, not only economically sustainable, but better stewards of the land.

The meeting was held in Bozeman to focus on the growing connection between Montana State Uni-

versity research and extension personnel and the Montana Organic community. MSU has research and education programs to help organic farmers with weed, insect, and soil challenges. There are also nutrition, plant breeding, and economic programs at MSU to help organic farmers, as well as a new major for students interested in studying organic farming. For information about the new major, contact Bruce Maxwell at MSU.

The Missoula County Extension Service is also committed to providing information for those interested in organic farming and gardening. We will soon have video clips about our organic vegetable production research on our website at missoulaeduplace.org. Click on Plant Clinic, then Publications for video clips on composting, using living mulches, and providing habitat for beneficial insects.

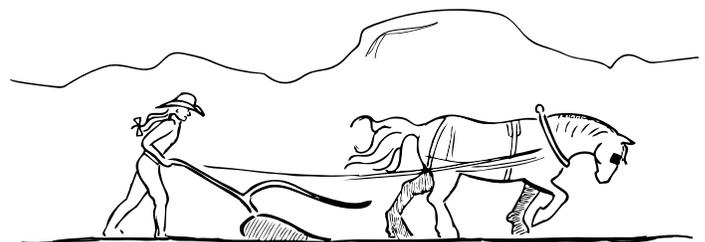
For more information on organic farming and gardening, you can go to a new national extension service website at www.eOrganic.info, the Organic Farming Research Foundation website at www.OFRF.org, or the ATTRA website at www.attra.org.

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A View from the Chair, continued from back page

come the new board members; Tara Blyth and Laura Garber, that will be helping move the Association forward. There also should be big thanks to Matt Johnson and Kathryn Beagle that willingly have given their time these past years, and we wish them the best in their endeavors. The big thanks should also go to the rest of the board that is working hard with the resources we have to make it happened. Lise Rousseau, who been our coordinator/contractor the last four-plus years, is moving on in her endeavors and leaving some big footsteps behind that we currently are working on filling out. Lise needs to have a big thank you too. Thanks, Lise.

All that being said, remember to keep your feet on the ground and your head high, as the world keeps changing.

Ole Norgaard



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Annual Business Meeting Minutes

by Wes Henthorne, MOA Board Vice-Chair

Steve Baril, Chair, convened the annual business meeting at 1:25 PM on December 6, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in Bozeman, Montana. After a brief review of the agenda, Steve distributed copies of his annual report which is included in the full minutes which can be found on the MOA website.

Treasurer's Report

Ole Norgaard presented the treasurer's report for the Fiscal year that ended 12-31-2007 that showed total income of \$38,122.05 and total expenses of \$44,084.79 for a net income of -\$5,962.74 in Fiscal 2007. Our bank balance at the end of 2007 was \$9,224.63. The Treasurer's Report is included at the end of these minutes. Doug Crabtree moved and Judy Owsowitz seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. David Oien asked Ole, "How are we doing financially?" Ole explained that we probably will see enough cash to operate but may have some cash flow problems during the coming year. The question was called and the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report passed unanimously.

Elections

Judy Owsowitz, chair of the Nominations Committee, recognized the current board members and stated that serving on the board is a privilege and responsibility. She reported that there are four positions open on the board which have been held by Steve Baril, Matt Johnson, Jim Lindquist and Kathryn Begeal. Steve and Jim both agreed to stand for reelection and were nominated by the board. Dee Turner then nominated Tara Blyth and Jonda Crosby nominated Laura Garber for the remaining positions. The candidates gave brief introductory statements to the members. Margaret Scoles moved and Robert Boettcher seconded a motion to elect the nominees by a unanimous ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Newsletter – Margaret Scoles suggested that we offer a newsletter only subscription rate and maintain a very short list of free subscriptions for agencies and other organizations. Lise Rousseau said that there will be an envelope in the next issue of the newsletter for people to join MOA and let them know that this may be their last newsletter if they do not join. Steve Baril referred this issue to the committee looking into this issue. The committee consists of Jeff Schahczenski and Ole Norgaard. Bob Quinn asked that we make sure to not eliminate folks in public service from the list. David Oien asked what happens to the newsletters that are sent to the Montana Department of Agriculture. Doug

Crabtree answered that the newsletter starts at the Director's office and is then passed to others in the Department eventually reaching him.

New Business

Bob Quinn introduced a resolution to "encourage MOA Board of Directors to ask for MOA representation on appropriate MSU advisory committees, the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, and other appropriate state and county advisory committees." Doug Crabtree moved and Ole Norgaard seconded a motion that the resolution be adopted. Doug then suggested that the board limit its scope to state wide boards. The motion passed and the resolution was adopted.

Jonda Crosby said that a group of six members (herself, Jacob Cowgill, Bob Quinn, Dave Christensen, Judy Owsowitz, and Andre Giles) met at lunch and developed a list of five concerns regarding GMO issues and suggested that they be named as a committee to work proactively on GMO issues and asked for board participation. After a good deal of discussion, Doug Crabtree moved the membership to encourage the board to create a committee to work on GMO issues. Jonda seconded the motion. The question was called and the motion passed with three abstentions.

Bob Quinn moved and Lise Rousseau seconded a motion that requested the board to publish a current list of MOA policies for review by the members at each annual conference. The motion passed unanimously.

David Oien observed that MOA has a great website and that Barry Flamm, a current NOSB member, has been disappointed in the timeliness of the reaction of MOA members to his newsletter columns. Dave suggested that we use the website to expedite the flow of information both to and from Barry Flamm. Jeff Schahczenski asked if we have an email list to communicate with our membership. Lise Rousseau replied that there is not currently a list to email all members and suggested that we invite members to join a list that would allow this.

Jeff Schahczenski moved that we adjourn and Jim Lindquist seconded. The motion passed unanimously and we adjourned at 2:39 PM.

Complete minutes, including detailed reports, can be found on MOA's website at www.montanaorganicassociation.org/minutes2008.htm.

What cannot be achieved in one lifetime will happen
when one lifetime is joined to another.

Harold Kushner

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Certification Cost Share Assistance Available

The Montana Department of Agriculture is offering cost share assistance to certified organic operations from one of two separate programs. Reimbursements will be mailed to certified organic growers of "specialty crops" within the next 30 days. These payments will offset a substantial portion of the certification cost for eligible growers.

The exact percentage of reimbursement will be determined by the number of eligible growers and the total of their certification costs. Each eligible grower will receive an equal percentage reimbursement. Specialty Crops are defined by Federal statute and a list of eligible and ineligible crops is maintained by the USDA. Specialty crops grown in Montana include fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, potatoes, peas, and lentils.

To be eligible for the Specialty Crop Cost Share, you must 1) Be a grower of specialty crops; 2) Be certified organic by a USDA-accredited agency; and 3) Have total gross income from farming of less than \$100,000 (in 2008).

The department is also administering a Federal Organic Certification Cost Share program. All certified organic producers and handlers in Montana

will be eligible for a reimbursement of 75% of their certification costs incurred between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2009- representing two certification "seasons." The total reimbursement for a single certification may not exceed \$750. But, an operation certified as both a producer and a handler may receive up to \$1,500.

Applications for the federal cost share program will be available from the department by January 31. For more information, contact Doug Crabtree at (406) 444-9421.



Wheat Proteins

by Sam Schmidt, Montana Milling, Inc. and MOA Board Member

Organic grain demand has really taken off the last few years. Volatility is in the market place, and with the nature of any market, supply is likely to grow, but it is important to remember that quality is needed, for successful growth. If new production was to supply poor quality, it is likely to find its way to consumers, but at what cost is it to the organic industry?

So what is quality when we talk about wheat? Plump berries? Protein? Both? The genotype of different plants determines which proteins can be present, but growing conditions during any plants life cycle affect how much starch, and quality protein, its fruit will yield. There are four types of wheat proteins:

Albumins = soluble in water, a physiological protein

Globulins = soluble in dilute salt solution, a physiological protein

Prolamins = soluble in 70% ethyl alcohol, a storage protein

Glutelins = soluble in dilute acids or bases, a storage protein

Gliadins = extremely sticky when hydrated, gives dough its cohesiveness

Glutenins = multi-chained and varying molecular weights, gives dough resistance to extension

Proteins are synthesized throughout the fruiting period of the plant. First are physiological proteins, so the fruit can survive. Once stable and later in the fruiting stage, then the plant will synthesize the storage proteins, along with starch synthesis, which accelerates to the maturity of the kernel. During good growing conditions (adequate moisture and nutrients), the plant yields high starch content. This allows for higher wheat yields, but the increase in starch yield also lowers the total protein percent. The amount of protein content doesn't change, but the ratio of starch to protein does, and protein is not as concentrated. Is this diluting of protein bad for wheat quality? Not necessarily.

During poor growing conditions (deficient moisture and nutrients), a high percentage of Albumins and Globulins (physiological proteins), make up total protein content. If growing conditions were improved, this allows the total protein content to increase, and Albumins and Globulins increase as well, but only at a smaller percent of total protein, and they do not increase as fast as Prolamins and Glutelins (storage proteins). This occurs because of the protein that is produced, less is required for physiological functions,



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and more is available as the storage proteins.

One misperception is that during conditions of stress, such as drought, disease, deficient nutrients, etc., total protein quality can be even higher, but these factors stopped the normal starch and storage protein synthesis, and the physiological proteins are just more concentrated now in the starch protein matrix. Thus you have higher protein quantity, but not higher protein quality. Again, with less starch yield, you get a higher ratio of protein content versus starch, but it is physiological proteins, and not the storage proteins. Mother Nature has a lot of control over stress, but plant health is influenced by the nutrient base of the soil, such as a form of nitrogen. Excess nutrients available in a plant's growth cycle help increase yields, as the added nutrient suffices the plants physiological needs, and allows for storage protein and starch synthesis. The conclusion, plump berries and protein quality go hand and hand, and adequate nutrients are needed to get a plant past its physiological synthesis.

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.

Chinese Proverb

MOA Awards Presented to Oien & Lund

by The MOA Awards Committee Members

Each year, the Montana Organic Association presents a Lifetime of Service Award and a Leadership in Organics Award to two members of the organic community who are judged to be outstanding in some way. This year's awards were presented, at MOA conference in Bozeman, on December 8, 2008.

The "Lifetime of Service" award goes to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service provider (or other) who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to organic agriculture in Montana. MOA was pleased to present this year's award to David Oien for his outstanding contributions to the adoption and advancement of organic agriculture in Montana.

David was selected in recognition of his unwavering support of organic agriculture and organic farmers in Montana. As the manager of Timeless Seeds, based in Ulm, David has provided seeds and markets for a diverse array of organic pulse (legume), oilseed and specialty grain crops. Without his support and encouragement, organic crop rotations in Montana would be decidedly less diverse; organic farmers would have fewer marketing options; and their soils would be less healthy and productive.

In addition to his work at Time-



Mikel Lund

provider (or other) who demonstrates an on-going commitment to advancing the adoption, practice and success of organic agriculture in Montana. This year

the MOA was pleased to present Mikel and Nancy Lund with the Leadership in Organics Award.

Mikel and Nancy, who own and operate an organic crop and livestock farm near Scobey, were recognized for being innovative

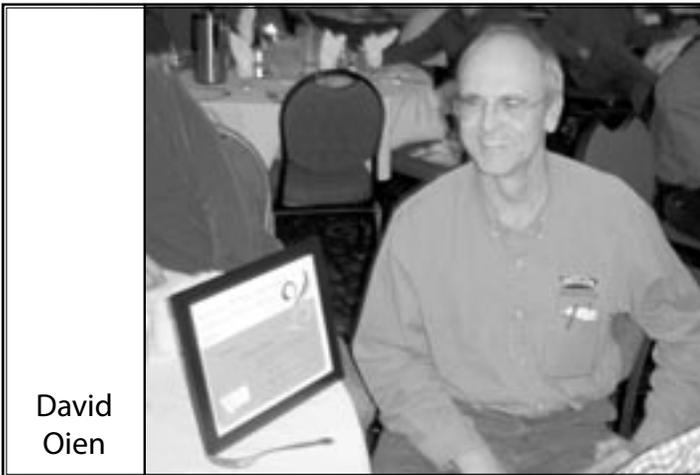
and inspirational organic growers. They have hosted numerous tours on their farm to share their practices with other farmers. The Lund's have been recognized for their conservation efforts, receiving numerous grants and awards from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Mikel was a founding member of the Northeast Montana chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association. He also served on the Montana Organic Commodity Advisory Council.

In addition to their farm, community service and conservation efforts, Nancy somehow found time to operate a Health Foods store in Scobey, where she helped to bring natural and organic foods to their community. In his acceptance speech, Mikel recognized his mother- who was in attendance- for making it possible for he and Nancy to farm and his son, who is returning to work the farm homesteaded by his great grandfather in 1913. Previous recipients of the Leadership in Organics Award are: Margaret Scoles (2005), Jon Tester (2006) and Jonda Crosby (2007).

MOA again extends its congratulations to both of our award winners as well as our deepest appreciation for all of their hard work on behalf of organic agriculture in Montana. Keep up the good work, David, Nancy and Mikel!

If I have seen farther than others,
it is because I was standing on the
shoulder of giants.

Isaac Newton



David
Oien

less, David has volunteered his time in service with MOA, the Montana Organic Commodity Advisory Council, and the Alternative Energy Resources Organization. In his acceptance speech, David recognized several farmers who pioneered organic agriculture in Montana. Previous recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award are: Bob Boettcher (2005), Barry Flamm (2006) and Bob Quinn (2007).

A "Leadership in Organics" award goes to an organic producer, handler, retailer, researcher, service

NOSB News

by Barry Flamm, NOSB Board Member

First, I want to say what a tremendous Conference was held in Billings. Congratulations to the organizers and all that did so much to make another get together a big success. It is an honor to be part of such great organic community.

The last National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting was held November 17-19 in Washington, DC. It was a busy meeting with a large public turn out and participation.

The final approved recommendations by the Board will be posted soon on the NOSB website, probably by the time you read this.

The Compliance, Accreditation, and Certification Committee (CAAC) recommendation involving certifying operations with multiple production units (i.e., Grower groups) was approved after amendment to include the minority opinion that new growers to be added to the group were a risk factor for inspection.

The joint CAAC and Crops Committee recommended guidance on the availability and use of organic seed, with minor amendments, was approved. The document recommends:

1) NOP role in promoting use of organic seed; 2) ACA's role in enforcing commercial availability; and 3) the Certified Growers role in increasing organic seed use requiring more diligence in the search for organic seed and better documentation of that effort.

The most hotly discussed topic on the agenda may not be of interest to Montana growers, but should be to consumers, was the Livestock Committee's aquaculture recommendations, particularly on net pens. The concerns involve pollution and ecological effects especially to wild fisheries. Many commenters expressed concern for the Pacific salmon fishery. The LC committee recommendation was modified, but did not fully address the concerns of some, and passed with dissent.

The so called "Pasture Rule" of much interest to many MOA members was not on the meeting agenda for NOSB as this is in the formal regulatory process. The ball is, in other words, in NOP's court. NOSB had made its recommendations to NOP previously, before I was a member. At the MOA conference I learned of the many concerns of the Montana community and that these concerns would be communicated to the NOP along with request for more time to review and comment further.

The OTA (MOA is a member) prepared a comprehensive summary of the Board meeting which you can read at <http://www.ota.com/standards/nosb/index.html>.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 4-6, 2009, location yet to be determined. Final recommendations from the Board committees will be posted and Federal Register Notice published March 30. The written public comment period closes April 20.

Committees are presently finalizing their work plans for the May meeting. Among other issues of interest, CAAC will be examining the need for further guidance for Retail establishment certification.

Among other topics, I will be working on a recommendation for the Joint CAAC and Crops Committee for the "Implementation of Biodiversity Conservation in Organic Agriculture Systems." A discussion paper of this title was posted and presented at the last meeting. It received over 60 written and oral comments. I must now prepare a draft, addressing public comments, for the Joint Committees initial review by January 12.

I would value your input on this topic and others. Because time is always so short, regular means for us to communicate may be inadequate. With this in mind, we are exploring a Blog on the MOA site so that I can advise you in a more timely manner and you can also communicate your ideas and concerns more quickly. I think there will be more on this in an upcoming issue of Organic Matters.

I look forward to hearing from you.



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Upcoming Events

Organic Farming Workshops

Sales of organic products have increased annually by an average of 20 percent during the past decade, which has benefited Montana processors and created opportunities for Montana farmers of wheat, peas, lentils and other crops.

To take advantage of this rapidly growing market, some Montana farmers have taken steps to establish certified organic crops on land previously enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, and by transitioning fields from conventional farming practices. Both methods of converting to organic production will be explained during full-day workshops hosted by the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) during February.

Workshops will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the following dates:

- February 3 - Lewistown, Fergus County Sheriff's Complex basement meeting room, 121 8th Avenue South. (Registration deadline: January 22)
- February 10 - Great Falls College of Technology Heritage Hall, 2100 16th Ave. South. (Registration deadline: January 29)
- February 16 - Scobey, Nemont Friendship Meeting Room, 701 Second Ave. West. (RSVP deadline: February 4)

Representatives of the MDA and the MSU College of Agriculture will discuss organic production economics, organic standards, organic certification and inspection, organic farming practices, weed management, nutrient management, and tools available to assist farmers including assistance from the MSU Extension Service.

A panel of local organic farmers will share their experiences and answer questions. Organic grain buyers will be present to discuss market trends and opportunities to sell Montana-grown organic crops.

Lunch will be provided at all three workshops. To register or get more information, contact the Montana Department of Agriculture (406) 444-2402 or by email at agr@mt.gov.

Ag Research Centers Field Days

June 30 ~ Northern Ag Research Center Field Day ~ Havre 265-6115

July 8 ~ Western Triangle ARC Field Day ~ Conrad 278-7707

July 9 ~ Central ARC Field Day ~ Moccasin 423-5421

July 16 ~ Eastern ARC Field Day ~ Sidney 433-2208

August 12 ~ Western ARC Field Day ~ Corvallis 961-3025

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For me winter is the time when you can fool yourself into thinking that you have lots of time to get things done before the unending work of the spring. It's also the time of year when I crave the "comfort foods" of my youth, warm, cheesy casseroles with a hint of the "South of the Border." This one is

borrowed from Cooking Light Magazine. It's quick and easy and sure to give you lots of energy for the work of winter. Enjoy!

Chicken and Green Chile Casserole

- 1 1/3 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup chopped canned (or frozen) green chiles
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 cans condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 garlic clove (Just 1? I'd go with 4)
- Oil
- 24 corn tortillas
- 4 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 2 cups finely shredded cheddar or jack cheese (try Pepper Jack for a little more zing)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the first 9 ingredients in a large sauce pan and stir with a whisk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Spread 1 cup of the soup mixture in a 13 x 9 inch baking dish coated with oil. Arrange 6 tortillas over the soup mixture, and top with 1 cup chicken and 1/2 cup cheese. Repeat layers 3 times, ending with cheese. Spread remaining soup mixture over cheese. Bake for 30 minutes or until bubbly. Serve with refried beans and Spanish rice and an organic Montana brew.

Submit your favorite recipe using Montana-based ingredients to lars@montanaorganicassociation.org.

If organic farming is the natural way, shouldn't organic produce just be called "produce" and make the pesticide-laden stuff take the burden of an adjective?

~Ymber Delecto

Here's Looking at You

In this issue, we continue our series profiling MOA members, to give all of us a better understanding of just who makes up the MOA. In our seventh installment we'd like to introduce you to Jacob & Courtney Cowgill of Missoula and Big Sandy...



Name: Jacob & Courtney Cowgill

Dogs/cats/pets: We have 3 cats, 1 dog, and until recently, 30 turkeys

Where do you live? For the past 2 years, we've split time between Missoula and Big Sandy, but hope to move closer to home in central Montana.

Time in organics? About 2 years.

Occupation: If the word occupation means that which occupies my time, then I'm a writer, artist, farmer, researcher, runner, dreamer, eater, sleeper, and reader. I'm definitely not a money-maker.

What do you grow or produce? In the past I've grown a variety of vegetables, raised a couple pigs, a few chickens, 15 ducks, and 30 turkeys. In the future, I hope to continue all that but also grow specialty crops like heritage grains, lentils, amaranth, and whatever else strikes my fancy. Maybe I'll throw in some goats or sheep for good measure.

Why are you involved in organics? In my short time in organics, it has been all about the community to me. I appreciate the organic program and what it guarantees my customers, but I am involved for the network of Montanans in the local organic movement, a movement with values and principles beyond a mere label.

What is your perfect day? Rise early in the morning, drink a cup of strong black coffee, read, then run for an hour and a half with my dog on a mountain trail. The rest of the day I'd spend recovering from the run.

Who or what inspires you? I have too many inspirations to mention and more coming in on a regular basis.

Words of wisdom: I have none. I'm a seeker of words of wisdom, not a dispenser of them.

Dear Friend of MOA

In order to streamline our budget and live within our means it has become necessary to restrict our distribution of the newsletter to those individuals who have joined the MOA as members.

The newsletter represents a significant expense, and there is general agreement among MOA board members that freeing up some of those funds will allow us to focus our efforts on some of the other priorities indicated by the membership. This decision was not easily made, but was strongly supported at the recent MOA annual membership meeting in Bozeman. The board feels that the distribution of organic information and news of MOA's efforts is vital, but the financial viability of the organization needs to be improved.

If you are not a MOA member, this will be your final issue. To see if you are a member, check your mailing label. What appears in the upper right hand corner, membership level (see list at right) or nonmember, indicates your status.

If you are already a member, THANK YOU. As a member-driven and supported organization MOA couldn't exist without you. As a member, you need do nothing at this point...just remember to renew your membership when the time comes. And please know that you have the board's and other members' most sincere appreciation for your ongoing support.

If you are not a member, we strongly encourage you to join, not only to keep receiving the newsletter, but to take advantage of the benefits membership brings like reduced rates on conferences and farm tours or a free listing for your farm or business on our website, among others. But perhaps more importantly, membership brings you the knowledge that you have joined with others in supporting Montana's only organization focusing solely on advocating, promoting, and educating about organic agriculture in our state.

If you choose not to become a member, we are sorry to lose this vital connection with you. You can keep up with MOA through our website, which includes back issues of the newsletter, current events, farm listings, etc. But please consider becoming a member today. Thank you.

Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

Name: _____

Farm or Business: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Levels:

- Living Lightly . . . \$15
- Individual \$25
- Household \$40 (includes two memberships)
- Business \$50 (5% discount on newsletter ads)
- Contributing \$120
- Lifetime \$500

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has

~Margaret Mead

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A View from the Chair

by Ole Norgaard, MOA Board Chair

As the world changes around us with incredible speed, our world as food producing people also changes fast. What once was, has changed, and then that has changed again, and will probably change again tomorrow. We are in a business where we are very fortunate, because what ever happens, the sun still comes up, and we still have to eat every day, and we are the people that make that happen, in our own unique way.

This uniqueness of people is what makes up the foundation of our Association, a thing that we need to remember as we move forward in this fast changing world.

We just had our annual conference in Bozeman. We had a great number of people from the MSU come to tell us about their piece in the farming puzzle, and it gave us the opportunity to both learn, but also very importantly, to tell them about our problems in our systems of producing food. This opportunity accorded here was and is of great importance to both us and the MSU people because it shows the willingness to open the door to different approaches of unique ways

of farming, that over time will influence the next generation of young people involved in producing food. We all have a responsibility to let our unique voices be heard and keep being heard, as well as a responsibility to learn from each other, the people close to us, and the land and animals that we work with every day, to keep improving the production of healthy food, for the well being of all of us.

In the next months as the Montana legislature is meeting to keep forming the future of Montana, there are more drafts and bills than anytime in the past. We will do our best to make your voice heard to the best of our ability, and with the resources we have. Please keep in mind that we are the new kids on the block, and we are still learning how to do this.

Regarding resources, in the past we have sent out this newsletter to all we thought would benefit from information like this. A lot of you are members but for those that are not, we would encourage you to become members so we can keep you informed and provide opportunities for your unique voices to be heard. Please see elsewhere in this newsletter.

I would like to take the opportunity here to wel-

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