



Organic Matters

Two Organic Farms Featured on Summer Tours

One of the true joys of summer is the opportunity to view Montana farm and ranch operations in full swing. Farm tours are events that allow participants to see how food is produced and hear how diverse farms and ranches deal with the day-to-day challenges of running an efficient and successful endeavor. And, of course, it's an even better way to get a taste of amazing local food.

The focus of this summer's tour lineup is cover crops. Farmers and federal agencies are talking more and more about using cover crops in crop production. But it's a topic about which there are still plenty of questions regarding precipitation, yield, costs, grazing integration and regulations.

The Montana Organic Association has been working with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service, Montana State University and Montana Farmers Union on a USDA Risk Management Agency supported project to explore cover cropping and crop insurance issues. As part of that project, there will be four farm tours offered, two at the operations of well-known MOA members. The tours will also include information provided

by Jeff Schahczenski from NCAT on relevant crop insurance issues concerning the use of cover crops.

June 13, 2014: An organic farm tour and workshop at Vilicus Farms near Havre,

Montana, with Doug Crabtree and Anna Jones-Crabtree.

Vilicus Farms is a 6,400 acre organic dryland farming operation in Hill and Liberty counties.

Doug and Anna grow a variety of heritage and modern small grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, broadleaves and cover crops.

They are bringing 2,600 acres of former CRP land into production and are leasing a long-term organic farm to maintain its organic status. They also have an ap-

prenticeship program and are currently training Laurel Johnson and Nathan Austin-Powell, two young farmers who plan to establish their own organic farm operations in Montana.

Some of the highlights of the Vilicus tour include: A diverse cropping system with 15 crops to be harvested; 12 green manure/cover crop species; 20% of the farm's land base devoted to conservation; and extensive field borders, which include wildlife habitat, pollinator-friendly plantings and beneficial plants for pest control.

June 13, 2014: An organic farm tour at Vilicus Farms near Havre with Doug Crabtree and Anna Jones-Crabtree

July 8, 2014: A conventionally managed farm tour and USDA-WSARE study on cover crop cocktails near Conrad

July 16, 2014: A conventional farm tour in Toole County with mixed livestock and small grain grower Griff Bye

August 16, 2014: An organic farm tour with Judy Owsowitz at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish

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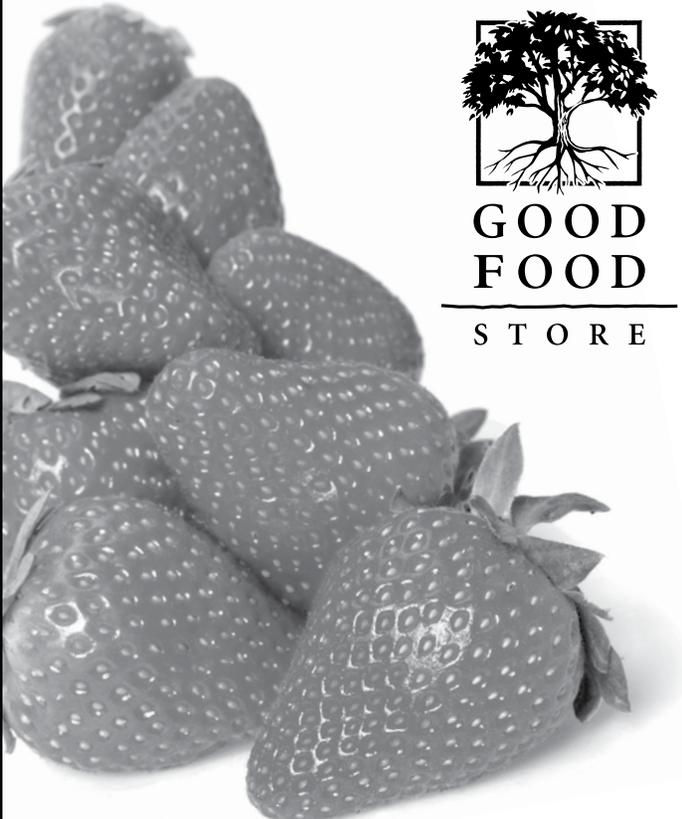
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Organic Matters occasionally includes guest articles and opinions. While we review these for relevance to our mission, the opinions in these articles may not reflect the opinions or policy of the Montana Organic Association.

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Farm Tours *continued from p. 1*

“This is a great opportunity to see a large scale diverse organic cropping system with enthusiastic young farmer-trainees,” says Crabtree. “We are striving to build an organic farm with diversity on a scale that matters. It’s a work in progress that we are excited to share with others.”

July 8, 2014: A conventionally managed farm tour and workshop near Conrad, Montana, on cover crop cocktails. This tour is based on a USDA-WSARE study headed by Perry Miller, Cathy Zabinski, and Clain Jones and is in its third year out of four (2012 was cover crops, 2013 spring wheat).

The tour will highlight May-seeded cover crops consisting of different ‘functional groups’ including fibrous rooted, nitrogen fixers, tap rooted, and brassicas. The full mix contains eight species and there are also spring pea and fallow controls. Spring wheat was planted across the site last year at three different nitrogen rates including a 0 N control. Tour participants will have this unique occasion to compare and discuss various cover cropping options.

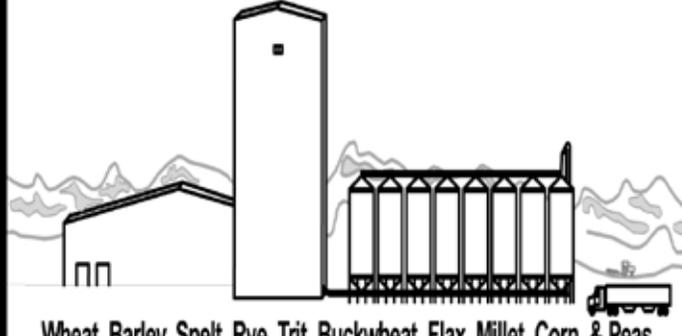
July 16, 2014: A conventional farm tour and workshop in Toole County with mixed livestock and small grain grower Griff Bye, who is developing a unique cover cropping and livestock system.

Although he has never experimented with cover crop cocktails before, Griff Bye is going about in a big way, with ten percent of this year’s 11,000 crop acres being planted to covers in some form. Griff obviously believes in the potential of cover cropping and realizes that it will be a few years before he sees results.

At this tour of his farm, participants will see a cool season cover of 11 species that is being grazed by 150 pairs, a warm season cover of 10 species, and a nine-species cover crop intermixed with the sunflower cash crop. This will be an excellent opportunity to see grazing cover crops and to hear about one man’s startup experiences.

August 16, 2014: An organic farm tour and workshop with Judy Owsowitz at Terrapin Farm in Whitefish, Montana. Judy is a long-time organic producer who has extensive knowledge of cover cropping in diverse vegetable production systems. With over 20 years of certified organic production, Terrapin Farm is comprised of over 500 varieties of diversified vegetable, herb and seed crops, incorporating greenhouse, hoop-house and high tunnel production. Judy interplants her cover crops. She also oversees over 30 varieties of seed production, some of which are Terrapin Farm exclusives.

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This tour will also include a presentation on cover cropping in diverse horticultural operations by Andy Pressman, a farmer and NCAT specialist from New Hampshire. "In addition to viewing the farm," Owsowitz says, "we are also working on a fabulous farm feast to follow the tour."

If you are interested in attending these farm tours, please pre-register at: <https://www.ncat.org/tours/>. We will send you the details. If you have other questions, please contact Jeff Schahczenski at email jeffs@ncat.org or phone 406-494-8636.

Information for this article was provided by Jeff Schahczenski, Dave Scott, Clain Jones, Doug Crabtree and Judy Owsowitz.

You can view a cover crop presentation Doug Crabtree made at the 2013 Montana Farmers Union Conference at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mIV8Vt0Lxk> You can also find other great webinars on the general topic of cover cropping at: <https://attra.ncat.org/video/>.

Organic Certification: Livestock Feed

by Jonda Crosby, Training Services Director, IOIA

There is a great deal of information in the NOP regulations, and it is constantly being reviewed, redefined and periodically changed. It's a lot for producers to keep track of. In each issue of *Organic Matters*, I will present a short article to update and clarify issues related to a specific certified organic topic. I welcome your questions about today's topic or issues related to crops or livestock certification. I hope to use your feedback in future articles, so send your questions and comments via email or by phone, found at the end of this article.

In this issue, I'd like to clarify some information regarding livestock feed. **As of March 4, 2014, kelp must be certified organic if being used in organic feed.** Check your kelp tags to be sure all of the kelp being used is certified as of this date. The phase out period to use up what you had in stock is over. Because the NOP considers kelp an agricultural product, under 205.606 in the Federal Regulation, kelp must be certified organic to be included in livestock feed after March 4, 2014.

The American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) has approved dried kelp from the families Laminariaceae and Fucaceae for use as ingredients in livestock feed. Kelp is added to livestock feed to provide minerals and trace elements that are nutritionally important for balanced rations.

Mineral Oil is not allowed for use in organic livestock feed. Not a drop, not a dribble. I picked this input for clarification because sometimes livestock feed products have very small amounts of mineral oil in them and its important to remember to really look at the labels, especially on mineral supplement tags and mineral blocks.

Under the NOP Federal Regulation, mineral oil is only allowed for use under 205.603(b)(5). Specifically: 205.603 synthetic substances allowed: (b) specifically as topical treatment or as an external parasiticide: (5) mineral oil—for topical use and as a lubricant.

Mineral oil is a liquid by-product of the distillation of petroleum to produce gasoline and other petroleum-based products from crude oil. In non-organic systems, mineral oil is often used as a dust suppressant in feed and to serve as a lubricant in the production of pellets.

Kelp must be certified organic if being used in organic feed

Mineral Oil is not allowed for use in organic livestock feed

Synthetic Methionine is allowed in poultry feed in specific limited use amounts

Synthetic Methionine is allowed in poultry feed in specific limited use amounts at the following maximum levels: laying and broiler chickens – 2 pounds per ton of feed; turkeys and all other poultry – 3 pounds per ton of feed.

Methionine is classified as an essential amino acid for poultry because it is needed to maintain viability, specifically for proper cell development and feathering. The National Organic Standards Board determined that while wholly natural substitute products exist, they are not presently available in sufficient supplies to meet poultry producer needs. Therefore, some allowance for synthetic methionine is necessary to comprise a nutritionally adequate diet for organic poultry.

Jonda Crosby is the Training Services Director of the International Organic Inspectors Association and an Independent Contract Organic Inspector. Prior to becoming an organic inspector she was a certified organic farmer and livestock feed processor. Send your certification questions via email at jcrosby@mt.net or phone (406) 227-9161.

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we did not need to lime for the 1st time ever. This savings alone more than paid for the Fish we used.

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Farm Bill Includes Support for Organic, Including Certification Cost Share

By Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Specialist

After more than two years of painful and extraordinary legislative maneuvers, a 5-year farm bill was signed into law on Feb. 7, 2014. While the bill does not contain much reform to large commodity payments, there are many wins for the organic and sustainable agriculture community. Your phone calls, letters or emails to Congress made a difference!

The big news is that the national Organic Certification Cost Share Program is funded at more than double what it was in 2008-2012, allowing more producers to apply. The maximum amounts a producer can receive are the same; unfortunately, no retroactive funding will be provided for the 2013 crop year.

Additional policies and programs in support of organic and sustainable farming include:

- Increased funding for competitive organic research grants;
- Increased funding for organic data collection and reporting, such as biweekly organic crops, forage, vegetable, egg and dairy reports;
- Increased funding for the National Organic Program, as well as a one-time infusion of dollars to improve the NOP website, including a “real-time” listing of certified organic operations;
- Exemption for organic producers from conventional “check-off” programs;
- Funding for a variety of programs serving beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, farmer markets, specialty crops, farm-to-school, value added agricultural production, and renewable energy projects for agricultural producers.

The farm bill also gives direction to the Risk Management Agency to move quickly in providing organic price crop insurance payment options for a greater number of organic crops. It also provides the NOP with additional enforcement tools to protect organic integrity in the marketplace, with safeguards protecting due process for producers.

On the downside, large cuts were made to conservation programs. The Conservation Reserve Program took the largest cut; people with expiring CRP contracts will find it more difficult to renew for another cycle. Ten million fewer acres than last year will be enrolled in the coming year. This is a great loss, as this program took many highly erodible and marginal farm lands out of production, providing wildlife habitat and improved water quality in many regions.

The Conservation Stewardship Program also was cut, with provision for fewer acres to be enrolled in the coming five years. This program has helped farmers who are already good stewards of the land maintain and improve what they are doing. With protection of our soil, water and other natural resources a foundation activity that leads to long-term productivity, these cuts are short-sighted.

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“food stamps”), was cut by 1%. Although a much smaller cut than originally proposed by the House of Representatives, this will cut the food stamp dollars received by over 70,000 low-income households.

Needed reforms to the commodity crop payment program were not included in the final bill, even though they were included in both the original Senate and House bills that went to the conference committee. Powerful interests pushed for retention of these payments, including those to multiple entities for the same operation, and millionaires who may or may not be farming the land. However, one unnecessary program was eliminated: the direct payment program tied to commodity base acres on the farm.

The final bill included an allowance for the organic sector to propose its own “check-off” program to be administered by the USDA. A proposal must be submitted, then a vote put before all stakeholders with a majority “yes” vote before there would be an organic check-off. Many questions will need to be settled before there could be a vote, such as: what type of research and/or market promotion would the program fund, who would pay into the program, how much would each entity pay, and who would be on the governing board? There will be a lot of discussion on this topic—it will be important for all organic producers to participate and make their voices heard.

In this new bill, crop insurance represents by far the largest agricultural payment segment, taking up 45% of funding. Significant reforms were not made to this program, and taxpayers end up funding more than 60% of the premiums and many of the insurance company fees.

On the positive side, those accepted in this program must show at least a minimum amount of conservation compliance, protecting the most vulnerable and least productive lands from being subsidized by crop insurance. Organic producers no longer must pay a surcharge for crop insurance, and can elect to pay a higher premium in order to insure their crop at organic prices. More “organic price selections” will be provided for crop insurance in 2015. If you are a long-time organic farmer, you will be able to use your historical yields as the base for your crop insurance coverage.

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Farm Bill *continued from p. 5*

Unfortunately, if you only have a few years of growing the crop you want to insure, you will be penalized by only being able to insure your organic crop yield to 30% of the average of conventional yields of that crop in your county.

The Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program is no longer in effect, and no dairy supply management policies were put in place. A new insurance product for milk producers may or may not be useful for organic dairy farmers. The new Margin Protection Plan (MPP) insurance provides coverage when the margin between the average national conventional milk price and the average national dairy feed stuffs price is small. Dairy producers can choose how much of their milk production they wish to insure, and premiums paid for the insurance are adjusted to match the margin gap they wish to insure. Projected roll-out of this new program will be no later than September 1, 2014, with more clarification on how farmers could participate forthcoming. Learn more at www.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/lgmdairy.html.

Vegetable, fruit and other specialty crop producers will have access to new whole farm revenue crop insurance. This should help growers who direct market their production at a higher price than commodity prices, as well as those who have unique production activities such as planting successive crops in the same field. Current crop insurance products are difficult for these small and mid-sized operations to access. This new program is supposed to be more user-friendly for those that were previously difficult to insure.

While the bill passed with bipartisan support, it also had many nays from both sides of the aisle. Many Democrats did not support the bill due to the lack of commodity reforms and/or cuts to food stamps. Many Republicans did not like the bill due to its overall high cost, and wished to see a much smaller bill overall. Even with this farm bill in place, there are many implementation and funding issues that will need careful scrutiny over the next five years. Keep informed by visiting these websites:

mosesorganic.org/policywork/take-action
sustainableagriculture.net
nationalorganiccoalition.org

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Harriet joined MOSES in 2006. Her encyclopedic knowledge of organic rules and practices comes from 16 years as an organic inspector, 30+ years as an organic grower, and her current work with the National Organic and National Sustainable Agriculture coalitions. She has a biodynamic farm with her husband near Gays Mills, Wis.

MOA's Response to Monsanto's Proposed Wheat Research Facility Near Great Falls

The Montana Organic Association would like to make a public comment regarding the efforts of the Monsanto Corporation to locate a wheat research facility near Great Falls.

While we realize that decisions about the re-zoning of the property to locate the lab in Great Falls must be left to Cascade County residents, we feel everyone should be aware that the location of Monsanto's research lab in Cascade County may have future consequences to both organic and non-organic farmers in Montana.

The Monsanto Corporation is one of the world leaders in developing, promoting and marketing genetically-modified seed. Even though the Monsanto Corporation has stated its current plan is to carry out traditional wheat-breeding experiments in the central Montana region, there is nothing to prevent Monsanto from carrying out whatever research it desires, now or in the future. The Monsanto Corporation's stated goal is to continue to develop and eventually introduce and sell genetically-modified varieties of wheat into the food chain. What better place to do that than in Montana?

Over the last year, a discovery of genetically-modified wheat plants in Oregon proved that Monsanto cannot contain its GMO genetic material or products, even in a research setting. Pacific Northwest farmers quickly discovered how US wheat customers abroad felt about the potential of GMO wheat in their food supply. Sales of PNW wheat were immediately suspended by our biggest customers, Japan and the Republic of South Korea. Four months of rigorous testing finally convinced the Asian markets that US wheat being offered for sale did not contain more GMO wheat.

But that was just one field, one location and one farmer. How will Montana protect thousands of acres, farmers and fields from GMO wheat? And if our wheat can as easily be contaminated, where will we sell the wheat? Could it even be sold at feed prices? That may be the choice many will be facing if GMO wheat production is not paired with transparent, 3rd party auditing and controls, that will regulate protocols, procedures, and testing.

The bottom line is there is a considerable risk to all farmers and their ability to market their wheat if GMO wheat development continues. The risk is even greater for Montana's wheat farmers as our keystone wheat markets overseas do not accept GMO grains and likely never will, and why would they? There are three other countries perfectly able and willing to export non-GMO wheat to our markets.

From the organic standpoint, Montana is the largest organic wheat producing state in the nation, and the USDA's National Organic Program mandates the exclusion of GMOs in organic production. GMO contamination of organic production, through cross-pollination or physical mixing, renders the product unacceptable to organic consumers and increases costs for organic producers. These costs include testing for GMO material and sometimes losing a premium price for these products, to name a few.

What about the United State's own consumers? An ABC News poll has found that two-thirds of the United States' consumers feel that genetically-modified food is unsafe and that most of them would not buy the food if they knew it contained GMO ingredients. Nationwide efforts to create GMO food labeling laws have proven that consumers are concerned. Both California and Washington tallied at least 45% of their population in favor of GMO labeling of food. Though these legislative efforts did not pass under majority rule, both showed that consumers want to know, and if not for the 4-to-1 monetary campaign by GMO supporters to defeat the initiatives, GMO labeling could very well already be in effect.

We hope that both the governing bodies and residents of Cascade County, and the State of Montana, carefully consider these points of view as decisions are made that affect the future of this region. The Montana Organic Association believes producers of both non-organic and organic production need to find ways to successfully coexist and grow in the future, but preventative measures must be put in place when it comes to how one's activities can affect another, and these controls cannot remain voluntary and left up to the private companies.

*Nathan Brown, Chairman of the Board of Directors
Montana Organic Association*

MOA Announces Conference Dates

Mark your calendars to attend MOA's 12th Annual Conference, which will be held December 4-6, 2014, in Great Falls. More information will be included in the next issue of *Organic Matters* and on MOA's website at www.montanaorganicassociation.org.

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In the News

NOSB Call For Board Nominations

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is a Federal Advisory Committee that provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on the implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act. Each member is appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to a five-year term. USDA intends to renew the NOSB's charter, and seeks nominations for the following seats on the NOSB:

- Individual with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation
- Organic Producer who owns or operates
- Organic Handler who owns or operates
- Retailer with significant trade in organic products

Written nominations must include a cover letter, resume, and an AD-755 Application Form and **must be postmarked on or before May 15, 2014**. Materials at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/NOSBNominationProcess>

JOBS! USDA'S Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program (NOP) will be recruiting for multiple positions in 2014. Announcement at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5106790> or on <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Farmer Advisory Committee

Organic farmers are being recruited to join the Organic Trade Association's Farmer Advisory Committee (FAC). This is a great opportunity for MOA members to influence national policy and make our voices heard on the national stage. For more information on FAC, visit <http://www.ota.com/pics/documents/FACOperatingGuidelines.pdf>. Interested persons can also contact Doug Crabtree at doug@vilicusfarms.com or (406) 394-2469.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Pgm

\$19 million in funding is available for beginning farmer training grants through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP).

Applications are due June 12 and can be found at: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmersandranchers.cfm>. Organizations can apply to BFRDP for grants to provide education, training, technical assistance and outreach for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and managers of non-industrial private forest land who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or less and those who aim to start. Priority will be given to projects that are partnerships and collaborations led by or including non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and school-based agricultural educational organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach.

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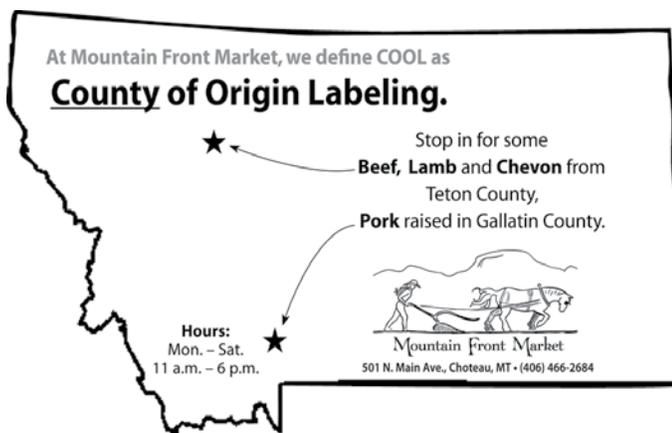
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Eat the Right Fats for Great Health

by Laura Leibner, MOA Member

Grass-finished beef is lower in fat with a higher percentage of healthful fats, fat-soluble vitamins, and antioxidants when compared to grain-finished beef. CLA (Conjugated linoleic acid) and the Omega-3 fatty acids have been studied the most. CLAs are very beneficial fats that have been demonstrated in high-quality peer-reviewed human trials to reduce type-2 diabetes and arteriosclerosis, prevent irritative conditions of the bowels (IBS, Crohn's disease), and are strongly anticarcinogenic. We obtain CLA in our diet mainly from milk and meat; the ruminant digestive system efficiently produces it from unsaturated fatty acids.

Grassfed beef has a healthier saturated fat profile than grain-finished beef; while it varies considerably, the percentage of fat that is saturated is usually 30%-50% lower and the steric acid content is usually higher. This is good news because steric acid is one saturated fat that does not raise cholesterol. Our bodies break most steric acid down into oleic acid (Omega-9), the fat found in olive oil. Omega-9 is famously healthy, in part because people who consume it usually do so in the form of olive oil, which is rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds.

Omega-6s cause inflammation while Omega-3s do not. While Omega-6s are necessary for health, diets that contain only two to five times as much Omega 6 as Omega 3 seem to absolutely protect against all heart disease and diabetes. Most Americans consume 12 to 18 times as much Omega 6 as Omega 3 due to use of cottonseed, peanut, soybean, and safflower oils. Flax seed oil and canola oil contain much healthier Omega-6 to Omega-3 ratios.

Fats and cholesterol are not categorically bad for us. They are building blocks of cells and hormones, energy sources, and cell messengers. There is much widely accepted misinformation about fats and their effect on us. For instance, low-cholesterol diets are encouraged as healthful, but in reality the body breaks down dietary cholesterol and creates its own cholesterol out of the component fats, and dietary cholesterol has been shown to have very little effect on blood cholesterol. Polyunsaturated fats need to be consumed in the proper ratio for good health. High fat meals need to be consumed with an antioxidant (such as fresh fruits, vegetables, CLA) to prevent harm to the body. And of course, eating certified organic guarantees you'll be eating non-GMO.

Cheers to your health!

OAEC Update

The Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) board met in Bozeman in early February to continue the development of the organization. At the meeting, we honored Steve Baril, who retired from the board this winter. Steve has been extremely instrumental in the foundation work for OAEC as well as the person who wrote the survey report on the "Research and Educational Needs of Organic Vegetable and Herb Producers in Montana." We also welcomed Charles "Chaz" Holt as our newest board member. Chaz Holt is the program Farm Coordinator for the Sustainable Foods and Bio Energy Systems program at Town Harvest Garden at Montana State University. He brings valuable insights and vital connections within the University system to the board.

It is with great pleasure that we announce that we have launched the Organic Advisory and Education Council website at www.oaecmt.org. On the website, you can find the survey reports as well as other information about what we are doing and how to help us out through donations. The website will be updated and expanded as we keep moving forward.

We are currently working on a Request For Proposal (RFP) for two meta-analyses that we are planning to do over the summer. One study will be on Perennial Bindweed and the other on Canada Thistle. These meta-analyses should give us a very clear picture on all the information that currently is available on these two weeds and will help us determine future organic research priorities. We are planning to make this information available through our website.

A research proposal from MSU on "Ecological Management of Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) in Cereal Systems" was recently funded through the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. We congratulate Judit Barroso on getting funding for this important research project. We also want to say "thank you" to the organic farmers who wrote letters in support for the proposal as well as the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee members.

In early April, OAEC sent out a livestock survey to organic livestock producers in Montana. We ask those producers to please fill it out and return it to us as quickly as possible. The survey report will set the direction for research and education related to organic livestock in Montana. Your input is essential and appreciated.

Calendar of Events

www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm

Join MOA Today!

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A View from the Chair

I'd like to share some organic market numbers I came across recently. In Montana, according to a 2011 USDA Certified Organic Production Survey, there were 99 organic farms totaling 203,000 acres. 159,000 of these acres were cropland of which 85,000 acres were harvested. There were also 44,000 acres of pastureland. Montana's total organic sales in 2011 were \$29.3 million dollars with 80% (23.5 million dollars) of that being winter wheat, spring wheat, dry peas, lentils, and durum wheat. Sales of Montana's organic vegetables, potatoes, and melons accounted for \$329,000 and organic fruit and tree nuts were about \$45,000. The state's biggest organic livestock inventory was cattle with sales totaling \$2.9 million dollars.

Most of Montana's organic farmers and ranchers used wholesale markets to sell their products and 82% of all organic sales went through processors, mills, or packers. 13% were distributors, wholesalers, and brokers and a small percentage were farmer's markets, on-site sales, and direct deliveries. Montana ranks 1st and 2nd among states in production of certified organic wheat, dry peas, lentils, and flax.

There are also some exciting national figures and trends happening that I think we all should be aware of. The USDA survey also stated that in the United States there were 17,750 organic farms and 5.4 million acres of

organic farmland with 3.1 million acres being cropland and 2.3 million acres being pastureland. From 2005 to 2011, organic cropland expanded by 80% and from 2002-2011 organic food production increased 240%. The United States has the highest demand for organic food worldwide and an Organic Trade Association survey found that 8 out of 10 parents are buying organic food. In 2012, sales of organic food topped \$31.5 billion dollars. Organic revenues are being projected to increase at an annual yearly rate of 14% from 2013-2018 and certified organic agriculture is the fastest growing segment of agriculture in the country. Revenues are now 4% of the overall food market and are expected to climb.

I think we should be really proud of the work that is being achieved in organics and these numbers tell that story well. It is my hope that you are able to use them to tell friends, neighbors, and others about what organic agriculture means to you and why you are passionate about it. Since spring has arrived, it is daunting to think about all the work that needs to be achieved in the coming year. I hope this news gives you a little extra motivation to continue to do the great work you do.

Onwards and Upwards!

Nathan Brown, MOA Board Chairman