



Organic MATTERS

What's Inside

Summer Farm Tours.....	1-3
Last Printed Issue of <i>OM</i>	1
MOA Migrations.....	5
Food Safety Training.....	6-7
NOSB Meeting Report.....	7
MT Cedes Control of Seed.....	9
Wanted: Sick Bindweed.....	10
Virus Workshop Review.....	11
Organic News.....	13-14
Organic Advocacy.....	14-15
View From the Chair.....	16

Last Printed Issue of *Organic Matters*

Organic Matters, MOA's newsletter, will become a quarterly **electronic** newsletter exclusively for MOA members starting with our Summer issue, which is scheduled to be delivered to your inbox in mid-summer. Based on member requests and after much Board deliberation, MOA has decided to stop printing *Organic Matters* and to make it available electronically for you to read on your computer and hand-held devices. Driving factors include costs for printing and mailing each issue and the need for more flexible and quicker-to-produce formats. MOA will continue to provide timely, quality materials to members. MOA has been sending out electronic versions for the last year, so if you have not been receiving it, please send your email address to Patti at moamembership@gmail.com and ask her to get you on the electronic newsletter mailing list.

Farm Tour Season is Open

MOA is pleased to announce the Summer Farm Tour at Manuel Family Prairie Grass Ranch near Havre, Montana, on June 30, 2017, starting at 9:30 am.

The tour will showcase dryland cropping, which includes lentils, KAMUT® wheat, and emmer. Jim Barngrover from Timeless Seeds and Wes Gibbs with Integrity Ag Services will join Jody Manuel to present on these topics. They'll also explore cover crop grazing, a roller crimper demonstration, Bindweed analysis, and soil inputs. Liz Carlisle, author of Montana's Book of the Year, *Lentil Underground*, will discuss the concepts in her book, with additional information presented by Dave Oien. Tour highlights include an overview of lentils and ancient grains, cover crops, grass finishing beef, equipment demonstrations, and a lentil cooking demonstration by Chef Claudia Krevat of Bozeman. There will also be a recognition of OCIA's North Central Montana Chapter #1's 30th anniversary.

Research scientist Fabian Menalled from Montana State University's College of Agriculture will be joined by researchers Peggy Lamb, Zach Miller, and Pat Carr from MSU-Agricultural Research Stations,

and David Kasper with Kasper Enterprises, to present their latest organic research. Mark Smith with the Montana Organic Producers Co-op and Ole Norgaard with the Organic Advisory and Education

Council will provide updates on their recent activities.

The tour is free and open to the public, and lunch and supper will be provided. Please wear weather appropriate clothing and footwear and bring camp chairs.

MOA Farm Tour
Manuel Family
Prairie Grass Ranch

Havre, MT
June 30, 2017
9:30 am
RSVP by June 15

Pre-Registration is required by June 15, late registration is based on availability. Contact Patti Gregerson at moamembership@gmail.com or (406) 333-1054.

Directions: The Manuel Family Prairie Grass Ranch is located 9.4 miles south from Highway 2 in Havre on Beaver Creek Road (Highway 234). Look for signs along the way.

Funding for the 2017 MOA Farm Tour is provided by the Montana Organic Association. Recognition and thank you goes out for the support and co-sponsorship provided by the following: Organic Advisory & Education Council, Kamut International, Montana Flour and Grain, Montana Milling, Timeless Seed, and The Oil Barn. 

More Summer Farm Tours Coming to Your Area

OAEC Presents: Organic Principles Review (OPR) Fort Ellis Field Day **June 13, 2017, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm**

For the last five years, Montana State University (MSU) researchers have been exploring innovative, organic ways to control weeds, increase yields, improve rotations, and integrate livestock into cropping systems at the Fort Ellis Research Station outside of Bozeman. They will be sharing their findings at the Station and at the MSU campus on June 13, 2017, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. The event is a collaboration of the Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) and MSU Extension, along with co-sponsors Montana Farmers Union and the Montana Organic Association.

Presentations by MSU faculty and staff will cover an overview of: five-year rotation using contrasting systems; crop yield and quality; weed management, including bindweed research;

OAEC - Organic Principles Review Fort Ellis Field Day

Fort Ellis
Research Farm and
MSU Campus
June 13, 2017
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

RSVP by June 6

beneficial insects; soil quality and greenhouse gas emissions; assessing climate change impacts; and integrating livestock into cropping systems. In addition, presenters will share an economic overview of the systems and discuss ongoing and future organic research initiatives, including what

the future may hold for food and organic production. Guest speakers will be Director Ben Thomas of the Montana Department of Agriculture, Chris Christiansen from Montana Farmers Union, and Bob Quinn founder of Kamut International.

Directions:

Fort Ellis Research Farm, 9:00 am-12:00pm - 33336 East Frontage Road, Bozeman, MT 59715. From Interstate 90 and Main St. (Exit 309), Research Farm is located 2 miles east on Frontage Road.

Linfield Hall, MSU Campus, 1:00pm-4:30pm - MSU Campus, corner of S. 11th Ave. and W. Cleveland St. From Interstate 90 and N. 19th Ave. (Exit 305), travel south on N. 19th Ave. for 3 miles. Turn east on W. College St. for ½ mile to S. 11th Ave. Linfield Hall is located on south side of campus. Campus parking passes can be bought at Fort Ellis.

The tour is free and open to the public. Pre-Register by June 6: email Fabian Menalled at menalled@montana.edu (preferred), or call 406-994-4783.

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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Send queries, suggestions, letters, and requests to:

Organic Matters
Montana Organic Association
PO Box 9823
Kalispell, MT 59904
mtorganic@hotmail.com
(406) 274-4869

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.

Editor: Susan Waters
MOA Newsletter Committee:
Sam Schmidt - Chair
Heather Estrada
John Larmoyeux
Seth Swanson

Organic Matters is printed on 100% recycled paper.

AERO Presents: Touring the Lentil Underground: A Two-day Tour of Sustainable Farming in Montana's Golden Triangle **June 29-30, 2017**

On June 29 and 30, Alternative Energy Resources Organization will offer a two-day tour of sustainable farms and farming that features the folks Liz Carlisle introduced you to in her book, *Lentil Underground*. Learn about the agricultural practices of Lentil Underground farmers, and more about how and why Montana farmers are choosing sustainable methods. This tour is for readers, eaters, and anyone interested in learning more about where their food comes from,

how to support the local food movement in Montana, and meeting the faces behind the farms.

On June 29, the tour will begin at 8 am in Ulm at the Timeless Natural Foods facility, followed by traveling to and touring MOA members Prairie Heritage Farm in Power, the Casey Bailey Farm in Fort Benton, then Vilicus Farms in Havre, where participants can camp. June 30's itinerary involves travel to Manuel Family Prairie Grass Ranch in Havre (overlapping MOA's Summer Farm Tour) for a full day, in-depth tour, lunch, an address from Liz Carlisle and David Oien of Timeless Natural Foods, along with other special presenters, and a pig roast. The tour's second day is a collaborative event with Timeless Natural Foods, the Montana Organic Association, and Kamut International.

This event is free and open to the public. Vans are provided, and participation is limited. Please bring a bagged lunch for Thursday, and camping gear. The tour is supported by a grant from Western SARE.

Call or email Corrie Williamson at (406) 443-7272 or cwilliamson@aeromt.org. Register for the tour at <https://tinyurl.com/ydhtzjt> or visit aeromt.org for more details. 

AERO - Touring the Lentil Underground: A Two-day Tour of Sustainable Farming in Montana's Golden Triangle

- Timeless Natural Foods in Ulm
- Prairie Heritage Farm in Power
- Casey Bailey Farm in Fort Benton
 - Vilicus Farms in Havre
- Manuel Family Prairie Grass Ranch in Havre

**June 29-30, 2017
(June 29, 8:00 AM to
June 30, 9:00 PM)**

RSVP by June 15



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Daryl Lassila, Organic Lentil Farmer with
David Oien, Owner Timeless Seeds

Montana Organic Association Contractor and Board Member Migrations

Welcome

Many of you will recognize MOA's new Membership Coordinator. Patti Gregerson, who you met at last year's MOA Conference registration desk, joined MOA this year to keep our membership database up-to-date, help prospective members sign up, and will again be spearheading this year's Conference participant and Sponsor/Vendor registration. Patti is a seasoned potter and her



Photo by Robbe Lindsay

original work can be found around the region. She is also an adjunct instructor in the Agriculture Program at Flathead Valley Community College. Patti and her husband, Dan, live on 13 acres in Marion, Montana, where they have a tiny herd of alpacas and cashmere goats, an aviary of honeybees, laying hens, and a fledgling orchard. Patti is looking forward to lending her skills to MOA and has already demonstrated her organizational magic, creative thinking, and outgoing personality. Patti can be found at moamembership@gmail.com or phone (406) 333-1054.

Fare Thee Well

MOA's longtime friend, Board Member, Secretary, and Conference Registration guru, **Sandi Shanks**, has stepped down from her current position as MOA Membership Coordinator to pursue work restoring her 105-year old cottage home in Eureka. Sandi is also excited to expand her garden, which already includes just about every berry grown in Montana, fruit trees, grape and kiwi vines, and raised beds for assorted veggies, herbs and flowers. Sandi looks forward to fishing with her partner and spends a few days every week with her 96+ year old Mom in the Flathead. Thank you, Sandi, for all your years of dedicated service to MOA and organics. Your smiling face and red conference dress will be missed as well.




Also departing is Board Member **John Larmoyeux**, who has enjoyed three years of living his dream and the missionary life of organic farming, but has decided, in the best interest of his large family, to relocate to Austin, Texas, this June. John has accepted a position as a U.S. Equities Trader for a proprietary trading firm in Austin. John has served on numerous MOA committees, including the farm tour and newsletter committees, where he also contributed his excellent writing skills. John's talents, critical thinking, and sunny demeanor will be missed amongst his many friends and colleagues. Many thanks to you, John.



Seth Swanson, MOA Board Member, is also heading for different pastures. Seth will be transitioning into a new career and will be splitting his time between the San Francisco Bay area and Missoula for the next year, but decided to make way for a new Board Member with the time to dedicate to MOA. Seth shared his many talents and experience with MOA and throughout the State with his work on several MOA committees, including the conference committee and as Chair of the newsletter committee, and through his work with MSU Extension. MOA has greatly appreciated Seth's innovative ideas, enthusiasm, and many valuable connections at MSU, in local communities, and throughout the organic world.



Seth expresses that community and grassroots organizations like MOA are more critical now than ever to encourage social change and carry a positive agenda while moving forward through a difficult political landscape. MOA's work would not be possible without the tireless dedication of its Board Members, numerous volunteers and contractors. MOA is always on the lookout for talented and enthusiastic people to bring into the fold, to continue to advocate and promote organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and the State's economy. Let us know if you'd like to lend a hand to further our mission. 

Food Safety Training and Resources for Montana Farmers

by Betsy Miller and Dave Wise, Montana Department of Agriculture

The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently hired Betsy Miller to lead their Food Safety education, training and outreach efforts. MDA is committed to providing technical support to growers as compliance dates get closer for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and Produce Safety Rule. Additionally, David Wise, who works as a Food Safety educator, will provide opportunities for farmers to learn about and write Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Food Safety plans for their farms. David is also trained and experienced with working with farmers to complete on farm food safety plans and internal GAP audits. In March, David led GAP food safety plan writing workshops for 50 farmers in Billings, Corvallis and Kalispell.

“As someone who is generally antagonistic toward such regulations [On Farm Food Safety], the presenters were engaging and articulated the necessity for such protocol,” said one workshop attendee. An additional training is being planned for Bozeman this fall. These workshops have been

funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant and the Montana Farmers Union.

Both Betsy and David have completed extensive food safety trainings that uniquely qualify them for this critical and timely work in Montana. Funding and support for this work is provided by a collaboration of partners including MDA, the Food and Drug Administration, Montana Farmers Union and the Montana Food and Agriculture Development Network.

Wondering if your farm will meet one of the FSMA exemptions? Take 5 minutes to complete the following survey/decision tool. Answering the questions should help you determine if your farm will be exempt or not from the Produce Safety Rule. The survey also gives you a chance to provide input on resources, training, and other information that you need to build a food safety program for your farm.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFCT8HJ> (or on the www.foodsafety.mt.gov page).



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Keep in mind that even if you qualify for one of the exemptions under FSMA your buyers may still request specific food safety measures, including a GAP food safety plan for your farm. Be sure to communicate with them about what they will require in the future. Though similar, FSMA is not the same as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Successfully passing a GAP audit does not ensure your compliance with the FSMA Produce Rule and vice versa. However completing a GAP food safety plan is a great step toward meeting FSMA requirements.

Betsy will be coordinating many of the statewide Produce Safety Rule projects for the Department. You can find more information on the MDA webpage, www.foodsafety.mt.gov. Upcoming training opportunities, guides and federal updates will be posted there.

Please contact Betsy or David with any questions regarding these new food safety rules or if you are interested in attending future trainings or to request help developing a GAP food safety plan for your farm.

Contact Betsy Miller - Phone: 406-444-0131 or email: bemiller@mt.gov

Contact David Wise - Phone 406-396-1723 or email: dave.w.wise@gmail.com 

NOSB Spring 2017 Meeting Report

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met in late April in Denver, CO, for its spring 2017 meeting. Over the course of three days, NOSB, under the leadership of NOSB Chair Tom Chapman, discussed eight proposals, 43 Sunset 2019 inputs and eight discussion documents. NOSB received 2,045 written comments prior to the meeting and listened to oral testimony from approximately 150 commenters (over 13 hours of oral comments) on a variety of topics. Commenters provided wide-ranging perspectives on a number of issues including whether hydroponically grown crops align with organic production principles, how to best strengthen the requirement for using organic seed, eliminating incentives to convert native ecosystems to organic production, and whether Bisphenol A (BPA) should be prohibited from use in packaging that contacts organic food. Although NOSB was scheduled to vote on eight proposals, all but two were referred back to subcommittee for further work. For a complete run-down of votes, proposals, and discussion documents, take a look at OTA's *NOSB Summary Report* at <https://tinyurl.com/ycuoyp3x>.

(Source: OTA's News Flash May 25, 2017)



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Montana Legislature Cedes Control of Our Seed by Kiki Hubbard, OSA

The Montana Legislature passed a bill this session that eliminates local control over one of our most valuable natural resources: seed.

Senate Bill 155, sponsored by Sen. Mike Lang, R-Malta, takes away the rights of farming communities with sweeping language that prohibits local decision-making power. It's an unnecessary corporate solution in search of a problem, and unfortunately Montana now joins a number of other states in mandating this horrible preemption policy.

Proponents say that SB 155 is necessary to ensure consistency in seed regulations. But testimony from both sides at the House and Senate Agriculture Committee hearings demonstrated consensus that current law already provides clear requirements and has worked well for more than a century. There is neither a patchwork of seed regulations at the local level across the state nor are there current plans to create local regulations governing seed.

SB 155 is an indiscriminate reaction to county initiatives in other states that ban genetically engineered crops. The motivation behind this bill is hypothetical – that a ban could pass in Montana and impact the financial interests of multi-national corporations profiting from GE crops. This bill should be viewed for what it is: a gag order on public debate.

This thinly disguised attack on local democracy can be easily traced to out-of-state, corporate interests that want to quash local autonomy. The bill's language is taken from model text developed by the American Legislative Exchange Council. According to the Center for Media and Democracy, ALEC is a pay-to-play operation where corporations buy a seat to advance their legislative agendas and get tax breaks for donations, effectively passing these lobbying costs on to taxpayers. Some of ALEC's key funders include Monsanto and Bayer. These two firms enjoy monopoly power over segments of the seed and chemical markets, and may soon merge to sell nearly one-third of the world's commercial seed and a quarter of all pesticides.

In February, at the Senate Agriculture Committee hearing, the bill's sponsor boasted that seed grown in Montana contributes significant annual revenue to the state's agricultural economy. The potential to grow our state's seed trade is huge. But that growth will require independence and ingenuity and innovation – not a hindrance that this bill represents.

Organic Matters, Spring 2017

Furthermore, as we face some of the most historic seed industry mergers in history, it's unwise to dismantle the infrastructure and systems that allow for decentralized decision-making and power.

There are good reasons to ensure local authority over seed, not the least of which is that seed biology and climatic conditions for seed production vary dramatically by crop and region. Montana is a good example where there are diverse agricultural landscapes throughout the state. The risks and impacts on seed production associated with disease control, weed management, and cross-pollination are therefore different across counties.

Yet, the language in SB 155 is so broad that we have yet to wrap our head around all of the unintended consequences.

Governor Bullock signed SB 155 into law on May 22. He did provide an important amendment that makes the bill less egregious. He removed language that prohibits local government authority over "registration, labeling, marketing, and notification of use." This change is not enough, since it still broadly preempts local authority over seed for no good reason, but it's not insignificant either, especially the notification piece. The amendment ensures a local government can, for example, establish policy that requires farmers be notified of an experimental GE crop being grown in their vicinity, providing growers information that would allow them to better protect their seed, crops, and markets. We're grateful the Governor made this change.

Moving forward, we hope our agricultural community will focus on what we all agree on: growing the diversity of seed available to Montana farmers. Our state's organic community has a critical role to play in this effort given that our climate is conducive to seed production for many crops and demand for organic seed is only increasing. We have an opportunity to create a regional seed system that is truly independent of shareholder interests and more responsive to the ever-changing needs of all growers – regardless of their scale or location or crop of choice. This will take more collaborative research, education, and advocacy to improve organic seed gaps, but it can be done.

Organic Seed Alliance invites growers to participate in our collaborative organic seed projects here in Montana. Go to www.seedalliance.org to learn more. 

Kiki Hubbard is the director of advocacy and communications for Organic Seed Alliance. She's based in Missoula.



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WANTED

- **SICK BINDWEED PLANTS** -

As you well know, Perennial Field Bindweed is one of the primary weeds that we have issues with in Montana's organic systems. There is ongoing Field Bindweed 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.

To move forward we need your help to identify and collect sick bindweed plants. We are asking you to scout your bindweed patches this season starting as early as possible to find local diseases of the bindweed, especially root-type diseases. They may cause a yellowing of the leaves, and if so they may discolor the roots. When you find a diseased bindweed plant – please do the following:

1. Write down the location, date, and take a picture, if you can.
2. Shake off the dirt.
3. Look for discolored roots.
4. 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.
5. Include your name, address, phone number and email.
6. Mail sample(s) to:
Professor David C. Sands
119 Plant Bioscience Building
Montana State University
Bozeman MT 59717-3150

We are asking everyone to help out to help find a workable organic solution to this issue. The samples you provide may move forward the ongoing research in a meaningful way. Thanks you in advance for your help with this vital research.



Wheat Streak Mosaic Workshop Review

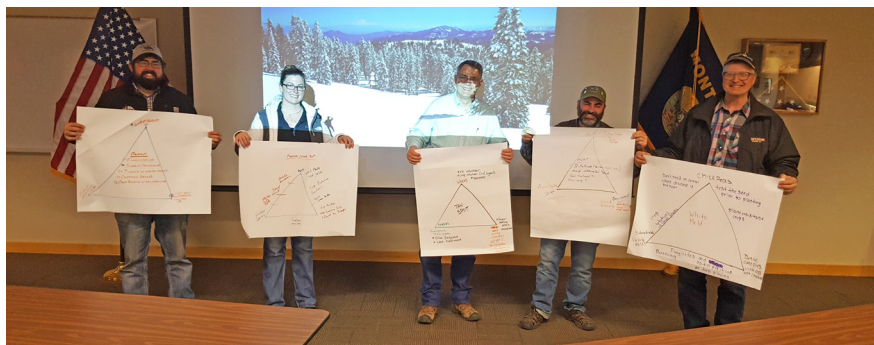
Article and photo by Sam Schmidt, MOA and OAEC Board Member

In late March, 30 participants attended MOA's Wheat Streak Mosaic Workshop at the Northern Agriculture Research Center (NARC) in Havre to learn about the cereal grain virus affecting Montana farmers.

Mary Burrows, Montana State University (MSU) Professor of Plant Biosciences, led the workshop with information on the environmental causes, vegetative and green bridge hosts, and the pathogens transporter—the Curl Mite. Prof. Burrows then focused on options to eliminate

the migration of the Curl Mite by terminating any vegetative bridge from one crop's harvest to another crop's seeding. MSU

and Advisory Council (OAEC) volunteered to identify organic farm sites that will meet Stuhr's research parameters.



The workshop participants were fed a hearty lunch provided by NARC, and Wes Gibbs with Integrity Ag Services wrapped up the workshop with seeding and production

Graduate Student, Uta Stuhr, presented a study on Beneficial Insect Controls and asked for grower participation to further this study. The Organic Education

agronomics of Kamut Khorasan Wheat and Wheat Streak Mosaic's effect on production. This was MOA's first farm tour event of 2017, and was co-sponsored by OAEC, Montana Flour and Grain, and Montana Milling. 

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Organic News

Western SARE Appointment

MOA member, Anna Merriman, has been chosen for the Western SARE Administration Council. SARE's mission is to advance—to the whole of American agriculture—innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education. MOA is proud of members who are stepping into regional and national roles to advocate for organics.

Bee Victory

In response to a case the Center For Food Safety (CFS) filed four years ago, a Federal Court ruled recently that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) systematically violated the Endangered Species Act – a key wildlife protection law – when it approved bee-killing insecticides known as neonicotinoids, finding that EPA had unlawfully issued 59 pesticide approvals between 2007 and 2012. Now, CFS is headed back to court to determine the correct remedy for EPA's illegal actions.

(Source: Center for Food Safety.)

Leopold Center to Close

Iowa State University's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture would be closed under a House-Senate agriculture bill unveiled in April. The bill would cut the state's general fund budget for state agriculture and natural resources programs by 5.6 percent compared to the current fiscal year. Majority Republicans said the \$38.8 million general fund budget for the 2018 state fiscal year would place a priority on water quality, producing food and keeping state parks open. But the legislation specifically proposes the elimination of the Leopold Center and it calls upon ISU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to oversee the process of winding up the center's affairs. About \$1.5 million in money previously directed to the Leopold Center would be shifted to ISU's Nutrient Research Center. (Source: Des Moines Register, April 12, 2017.)

Beware Palmer Amaranth

An invasive species is on the move and may be headed for Montana. Palmer amaranth, a giant pigweed, is known to have spread to at least 28 states, including Minnesota and South Dakota, but has not

continued on p. 14

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Organic News *continued from p. 13*

yet been reported in Montana. To prevent its spread into Montana, landowners are encouraged to check their fields to ensure the invasive weed is not present. (Source: *Natural Resources Conservation Service*)

New Educational Guides

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is excited to announce a new series of educational guides designed to help organic farmers and ranchers enhance the soil health and overall resilience of their operations. Downloads are available at: <http://ofrf.org/soil-health-and-organic-farming-ecological-approach>

App on How Vegetables Perform

A new app by University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension is designed to help growers save and share information about how vegetable varieties perform in different locations. Farmers and gardeners can use the app to rate varieties in terms of taste, yield, and how easy they are to grow. Growers can also record other information about their experiences with a variety. Data will be available for any location in North America.

(Source: *ATTRA's Weekly Harvest, March 15, 2017*)

Organic Agriculture Research Act

The organic industry continues to boom, and not just in the way of increased sales, which now exceed \$43 billion per year, but in the form of a higher return for organic farmers. Organic farmers are 35% more profitable than the average farm, and, in some cases, this difference makes staying on the farm possible. Unfortunately, domestic production isn't keeping up with consumer demand for organic products. One problem is that increased consumer demand hasn't been met with an increase in public research investments. For example, funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), the USDA's flagship organic research program, has been relatively stagnant since 2010. In May, a few members of Congress announced that they aim to change that. Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Dan Newhouse (R-WA), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the Organic Agriculture Research Act to support continued growth of the organic industry. The bill would more than double funding for OREI, increasing it from \$20 million to \$50 million annually. (Source: *Organic Seed Alliance*)

International Monsanto Tribunal Verdict

In April, representatives of the Organic Consumers Association and AlterNet's Regeneration

International project gathered in The Hague, Netherlands, along with members of other civil society groups, scientists and journalists. They assembled to hear the opinions of the five judges who presided over the International Monsanto Tribunal. After taking six months to review the testimony of 28 witnesses who testified during the two-day citizens' tribunal held in The Hague last October, the judges concluded that Monsanto has engaged in practices that have violated the basic human right to a healthy environment, the right to food, the right to health, and the right of scientists to freely conduct indispensable research. The judges also called on international lawmakers to hold corporations like Monsanto accountable, to place human rights above the rights of corporations, and to "clearly assert the protection of the environment and establish the crime of ecocide." (Source: *AlterNet.org April 24, 2017*)

Organic Advocacy: Make Your Voices Heard

AMS Delays Final Rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is again delaying the effective date of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule to November 14, 2017. The USDA is considering indefinitely delaying or even withdrawing the new organic animal welfare rule. We can't let that happen. These new rules are critical to preserving trust in the organic label. The new standards level the playing field and eliminate loopholes that are being used by only a few producers to deny meaningful outdoor access to animals.

Please send the USDA a strong and clear message. The organic animal welfare rule—also known as the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) rule—should become effective without further delay. The USDA has already delayed the rule until November 14—tell the USDA NOT to abandon this important rule after years of effort and widespread support from organic farmers and the organic community.

Here's what you can do:

1. Comment to the USDA at <http://tinyurl.com/y87n7675> and enter docket # AMS-NOP-17-0031; NOP-15-06A
2. Use the talking points at <http://tinyurl.com/ybel9mzw> or share your own thoughts as to why

the USDA should let the OLPP rule take effect in November.

The deadline for comments is June 9.

(Sources: USDA-AMS, National Organic Coalition)

Proposed Biotech Regulations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing proposed revisions to its biotechnology regulations. APHIS is proposing a regulatory program in which it first assesses GE organisms to determine if they pose plant pest or noxious weed risks. If APHIS concludes that a GE organism does not pose a plant pest or noxious weed risk, then APHIS would not require a permit for the importation, interstate movement, and environmental release (outdoor use) of the GE organism. On the other hand, if APHIS determines, based on risk analysis that controls on movement are needed, APHIS will work with the requestor to establish appropriate permit conditions to manage identified risks to allow safe movement. **Help protect farmers, the environment and our communities from the impact of GEs -- send in your comments by June 19 to <http://tinyurl.com/y9gduf48>.** *(Source: National Organic Coalition)*

Calendar of Events

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

MOA on Facebook

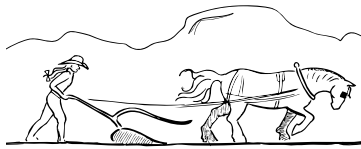
Join the organic discussions on MOA's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/montanaorganic>.

Organic Matters Ad Rates

See www.montanaorganicassociation.org/omadrates.htm for details or call Susan Waters at (406) 274-4869.

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Each membership level delivers a quarterly newsletter devoted to sharing the latest news and information about the association and the organic industry, discounts to MOA events, special mailings on legislative alerts and events, a MOA member vote, and the networking and educational opportunities presented by joining others who share interest and experience in the field of organics. Other member benefits include eligibility for a Workman's Comp premium discount, safety training and other services to assist you in your organic endeavors.

Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

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Annual Membership Levels:

- Individual.....\$30
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- Farm/Ranch/Business...\$75 (includes two memberships, a 5% discount on newsletter ads and a website directory listing)
- Organic Business.....\$250 (includes two memberships, a 10% discount on newsletter ads and a website directory listing)
- Lifetime.....\$750 (includes two memberships, a 10% discount on newsletter ads and a website directory listing)
- Lifetime Business.....\$2500 (includes two memberships, a 10% discount on newsletter ads and a website directory listing)
- Publication/Media.....\$500 (includes full page, quarterly newsletter ads, a website directory listing, and full media coverage)
- Silver (-5%).....\$1650 (includes two memberships; full page, quarterly newsletter ads; a website directory listing; full media coverage; two conference registrations & conference lunch sponsorship)
- Gold (-10%).....\$2000 (includes two memberships; full page, quarterly newsletter ads; a website directory listing; full media coverage; two conference registrations & conference dinner sponsorship)

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MOA, PO Box 9823, Kalispell, MT 59904
(406) 274-4869



PO Box 9823
Kalispell, MT 59904

(406) 274-4869

mtorganic@hotmail.com

www.MontanaOrganicAssociation.org

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A View From the Chair

I am just back from Washington, DC, where I joined fellow MOA members at the Organic Trade Association's Policy Week. We made clear our members' opposition to "organic" hydroponics; stressed the need to complete adoption of the Livestock and Poultry rule; demanded investigation and enforcement against fraudulent grain imports; and urged increased funding for organic research. Our requests were well received by OTA staff, USDA officials and Senators Tester and Daines. I was privileged to join a small group of OTA members at a meeting with new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue. He recognized organic as one a bright spot and pledged his support for all types and scales of agriculture.

Farm Tour season is here in Montana and MOA has its annual event June 30 at Manuel Family Prairie Grass Ranch in Havre, Montana. This tour will overlap AERO's six-farm summer tour in late June, focusing on the concepts in Liz Carlisle's book, *Lentil Underground*. OAEC, along with MSU, is also offering an Organic Production Field Day at the Fort Ellis Research Station and the MSU Campus in mid June.

Details of these tours can be found in this issue of *Organic Matters*, which is MOA's last printed and mailed newsletter. We will still continue to produce *OM*, but in an electronic version emailed right to your computer or device. We have been emailing an electronic version of each issue for about a year now, so

if you've not received the electronic version, make sure you send your email address to MOA and ask to have it included in our newsletter mailing list.

Also in this issue, you can read about some changes on the MOA Board and contracted staff. MOA is very grateful for all the hours of their dedicated service.

Many changes are also happening in our industry. These pages will show you how you can use your voice by sending in comments about organic issues and changes that are currently happening.

Have a great season ahead.

Doug Crabtree, MOA Board Chairman