Montana Organic Association

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Summer 2013

Organic Matters

MOA's 11th Annual Conference Coming in December

The Montana Organic Association is pleased to announce the 11th Annual Conference on December 12-14, 2013, at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell. This year, the conference will center on the theme, "An Organic Perspective: Facts and Fiction of GMOs."

Other topics that will be covered include techniques of growing organic food, saving seeds and improving soil.

Mark Your Calendars

MOA's 11th Annual Conference
December 12 - 14, 2013

Flathead Valley Community College
Kalispell, MT

Among this year's notable presenters are: Theresa Marquez of CROPP Cooperative and Organic Valley; John Navazio, author of *The Organic Seed Grower: A Farmer's Guide to Vegetable Seed Production;* Martin Diffley, founder of Gardens of Eagan; and Bill Dyer, Professor and Researcher in the Weed Physiology lab at Montana State University.

To help sort through all the food politics and misinformation about GMOs, MOA will present the myths and facts of GMO food and how organic operations can compete in such a divisive market.

As the health consequences of chemical and biotech-based farming comes more into question, consumers are demanding information and food labeling and, in the absence of those, are turning to organic as the best source of healthy and sustainable food.

In response to consumer demand for more organic food, as well as to further the practice of organic farming, ranching and distribution, MOA will present interactive sessions focusing on: breeding and saving seeds for organic systems, cover cropping for weed and pest control and improving the health of the soil; and other informative and timely topics.

"Conference participants always walk away with knowledge and enthusiasm that they can apply to their own endeavors," says Sam Schmidt, MOA Board and Conference Committee member.

As well as being informative, MOA conferences are a great way to network, have fun and gain some inspiration.

Conference participant and MOA member, Sandi Shanks, agrees and adds, "We always have a great time and get the chance to relax a bit while we're learning and making new friends. And of course, the food is always spectacular."

As a special treat, the band The Pheromones will be playing Friday night.

If you're in eastern Montana, consider taking the scenic train route along the highline to Whitefish, where transportation will be available to the conference in Kalispell.

A full agenda, hotel information and registration information is coming soon. Visit the web at www.montanaorganicassociation.org for details as they develop.

For more information or to sign up as a vendor, sponsor or volunteer, contact Daryl Lassila at (406) 452-0565.

Inside This Issue

Montana Organic Association is a 501(c)6 non-profit organization dedicated to advocating and promoting organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and the State economy.

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

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MOA Farm Tour Report by Nathan Brown, MOA Board Member / Photos by Chaz Holt

Three Bozeman area organic farms hosted the 2013 MOA Farm Tour on June 29.

The tour started at Brian Goldhahn's C-5 Organics. 25 participants walked through different cattle pastures consisting of various grasses and legumes, including blooming sainfoin, birdsfoot trefoil and orchard grass.

Brian explained that his cows are moved to different pastures depending on how the pastures are looking as the cattle graze. He said he tries to finish his cows at 24 months and markets beef to area stores and a few restaurants. He also sends live cows through the Montana Organic Producers Co-op.

Brian showed us a cover crop mixture of tillage turnips and camelina and explained that any weed problems are dealt with using the cows to graze the weeds or by using flail mowers.

The second stop on the tour was just down the road at Amaltheia Organic Dairy. There the Brown family explained how by-products produced from their dairy goats have helped to diversify their farm. The composting of the goat manure has helped to fertilize hay and pasture fields along with vegetable fields and high tunnel crops. The Browns also have pigs that drink the whey by-product from the goat cheese-making creamery.

Participants walked through the high tunnel greenhouse filled with tomatoes and basil, the compost area where manure, straw bedding, and any leftover hay are mixed together and turned to make compost, and the pasture that the pigs graze. It was explained that the pigs are let out into a pasture and legume mix for 4-5 hours a day so they don't root up the pasture.

The final stop was at Montana State University's Towne's Harvest Horticultural site. There the MOA tour group was greeted by the researchers at MSU working on the farm for Towne's Harvest's Field Day.

Participants gathered in the MSU vegetable packing barn where Towne's Harvest manager, Chaz Holt, told of how the students in the Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems degree program work on the farm as part of their curriculum. Holt also researches all aspects that go into producing an organic crop to build a truly sustainable farm.

Participants were then allowed to freely walk the farm, and students and professors explained their research at different sites throughout the farm. Off in the distance, a storm was building and participants had to take shelter in the packing barn. Luckily, MSU catering had an array of food prepared from organic and local ingredients that participants were able to enjoy. Plenty of visiting was done as the storm rolled through Bozeman.

A special thanks go to Montana State University, the farm tour hosts, Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, and Rocky Mountain Supply for their donations to make this event a success.

GE Wheat: Ensuring Montana Grain Integrity by Amy Grisak

It's like something out of a horror movie: Wheat that should've been dead, wasn't. When a farmer in Oregon discovered wheat emerging after spraying a fallowed field, he knew something was greatly amiss. The ensuing realization that genetically engineered (GE) wheat turned up in a place where it never should have been created a firestorm of concern and outrage over bioengineered crop testing protocols and the integrity of non-GE crops.

MOA recently released a statement on the situation: "In light of recent news regarding the discovery of unapproved genetically engineered wheat in Oregon, and potential genetic contamination in the US soft wheat supply, the Montana Organic Association is very concerned about the current and future integrity of both organic and conventional grains in Montana. We urge that more oversight be put in place to prevent future contamination issues, both at the field trial stage and during commercial production. The nation's farmers and our trading partners should receive assurances from private and government entities that the integrity of our seeds and markets will be preserved."

> ***"We urge that more oversight be put in place to prevent future contamination issues, both at the field trial stage and during commercial production. "***
>
> **MOA statement regarding GE wheat**

"It's a major concern," says Tara Blyth, of Kamut International, Ltd. "I'm personally concerned about the future of organics." And this is coming at a time when Blyth points out that the demand for organic products is increasing. "The production side has a hard time keeping up," she says. "The challenge is to keep the organic farmers in organics."

Besides the normal challenges, organic farmers now face the possibility of cross-contamination from GE test sites. While the USDA investigation continues on exactly how the wheat ended up in the Oregon farmer's field (since there were no reported test sites in that region since 2001; nor was the test conducted in that particular field), the entire situation caused overseas markets to pull back and demand testing. As a result, as the reliability of U.S. wheat, both organic and conventional, is questioned, growers and marketing entities need assurances that their crops are safe. Unfortunately, a cloak of mystery falls over the entire testing process.

Even Ron de Yong, the director of the Montana Department of Agriculture, is waiting on an answer from the USDA on the termination procedures once a test crop is finished. "The USDA sets all protocol," noted de Yong.

When de Yong started his position in 2007, he was given a list of the test crops as far back as 1991. Monsanto, MSU and other private organizations conduct tests ranging from wheat to sugar beets under the regulatory requirements of the USDA. "(The USDA) will provide a list (of test sites) without the location," de Yong says. "The last one was sugar beets in 2012. So we don't have anything going on right now."

de Yong states, "If we're going to feed the world, diversity is the key." He recognizes that GE crops are in the driver's seat at the moment, but strongly believes we need to have all types of crops to create a successful agricultural program. "You want it to be a balance," he says, and, as a farmer, understands the importance of raising the type of wheat the customer wants. This includes organic production.

Sam Schmidt of Montana Milling says, "Every one of our customers were very concerned, and are still very concerned. The biggest problem is not knowing. I feel there's a lack of information." In order to ensure the quality of the wheat to their customers, Schmidt recognizes a need for some sort of testing. "It's not logical for us to send samples to DNA labs. They need to come up with quick strips, like they have for the corn and soybean industry. They're not foolproof, but they're the only way the grain industry can handle testing protocol."

There are field tests strips for corn, cotton and soybeans, and tests for GE wheat are on the horizon, although the entry date is still unknown. Yet, even testing does not solve this issue that growers didn't want in the first place. "Testing is not good for the producers. The farmer will bear this burden," says Blyth.

"None of the genetically modified organism (GMO) tests are cheap," says Daryl Lassila, a grower in Great Falls and MOA president. "When the point comes to where I have to have every load tested and cleared, that's going to come at a terrible cost."

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GE Wheat *continued from p. 3*

Organic growers do their best to ensure the quality and integrity of their crops, yet the threat of genetic contamination is an increasing frustration.

Lassila says in articles he's read, the Oregon situation has been called an act of terrorism because some believe the GE wheat was purposefully seeded as anti-GMO sabotage. Lassila says, "So anybody who is against GMOs is a terrorist. I would like to reverse that." Instead he views the GMOs as a terrorist threat since they utilize what is basically chemical warfare.

And while he's been told he can buy insurance to protect his crops, Lassila believes it's the responsibility of the GMO growers to insure their crop isn't going to contaminate his. "There's a bigger dollar pushing the GMO," he says, which means help is not likely in protecting organic and conventional crops.

While the U.S. wheat market is currently declared clear from GE wheat, the ramifications of continued testing is a concern. And it doesn't help that the reasons behind the GE wheat being found in Oregon are still not known.

"This isn't just an organic issue," says Blyth. She says European and Asian markets don't want the GE crops. "They're more aware and discerning. I know it's going to have an affect on the export market."

"The farmers are doing everything they can to raise their crops with integrity," Blyth says. "But government and regulatory agencies aren't regulating the way they should."

The best result of the Oregon situation is a call for transparency from these agencies to allay the concerns of growers and customers. People want to know how GE crops are tested, how the sites are cleared once the tests are completed, and what is done to ensure there is no risk of cross-contamination with non-GMO crops. It's a tall order.

"You just have to stay after it," says Lassila. "GMO is not wanted by the majority. The world can feed itself if you teach them how."

Amy Grisak is a freelance writer in Great Falls specializing in gardening and agricultural-related topics. Read more about Amy and explore her work at www.amygrisak.com.

Organic Control of Perennial Weeds with Vinegar and Biologicals

2012 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Grant Report Excerpt

by Jess Alger, Project Coordinator

Summary
The purpose of this project was to determine effective, sustainable ways to control perennial, noxious weeds with biologicals and vinegar on organic farms and ranches. We found that vinegar was a very effective organic control for bindweed, Canada thistle, spotted knapweed and whitetop. We learned that 15% vinegar solution was strong enough to be effective and that timing and treating, especially first year growth, increases treatment success. Re-treatment is also necessary for these persistent weeds; for best results, re-treating as often as four times in a growing season. Also, it is important to flush vinegar out of spray equipment to lengthen its life. Biological controls were effective treatments for leafy spurge and Canada thistle, though patience is required to see full benefit.

Introduction
Noxious weeds are persistent and hard to kill, even with the best technology. On organic farms and ranches, there have not been any good techniques demonstrated for effective long-term control of these types of plants. This project was developed to help determine what techniques might prove effective enough to be reasonable and sustainable so that a working organic farm or ranch might find them to be beneficial and economically justifiable.

Objectives/Performance Targets
The objective of the project was for each of the producers to try new ways of treating their respective weeds of concern and find acceptable methods that would meet organic producer and economic targets.

Methods
The project was conducted on four separate private ranches in Montana. Each ranch treated the noxious weeds present on that ranch with a variety of methods of organic controls, including vinegar applications, biological insect releases, mowing, hand pulling and black plastic.

We used a 30% strength vinegar from Fleishmann Vinegar from Sumner, WA. We added equal parts of water to make a 15% solution to spray on the weeds. The vinegar only burns down what it contacts, so the weeds need to be thoroughly wet.

CANADA THISTLE
Casey Bailey, on his farm near Ft. Benton, investigated controlling Canada Thistle using biological pests and alfalfa. He released stem gall wasps and stem weevils. He purchased a variety of alfalfa designated for irrigation fields with a tested winter hardiness for our area. The purpose of this was to enable an easier termination of the alfalfa at the end of its rotation and an easier transition back to annual grains. Termination is a problem with old varieties of alfalfa bred for dryland strength and winter hardiness.

He underseeded 40 acres of safflower with alfalfa on June 1st. This was a tremendous success. Both the safflower and the alfalfa did well despite the dry summer. The safflower set 700 lbs/acre of seed, yet remained quite short, most likely due to water limitation. The alfalfa underneath had plenty of light since safflower is a non-competitive crop.

He also seeded a 50-foot swath of alfalfa on the edge of a 270 acre field, hand-spinning alfalfa seed were thistle extended beyond 50 feet. This was seeded into a standing crop of peas, Kamut® and lentils. The alfalfa was very small through the season and did not receive much rain after harvest until late in the fall. Next year will show the results. This is the first year alfalfa was seeded into established crop and established Canada thistle patches. It will be interesting to see if the small alfalfa plants can germinate and outgrow crop and thistle that has a head start.

Two more fields were seeded to alfalfa that have a history of both Canada thistle and bindweed. This begins the first year of transition to be organic.

Within the alfalfa fields that are hayed twice a year, the Canada thistle is disappearing. Year two, after the bugs were released, there was one gall and minimal apparent activity.

The hand-spun field edges and draws contain both alfalfa and thistle. In these locations the fight begins. The alfalfa is certainly holding the thistle back, but the question is, will it outcompete it enough so the thistle recedes even in the unfarmed ground?

FIELD BINDWEED
The efforts to combat Field Bindweed on the Alger Ranch by Stanford have simply consisted of spraying the plant wherever it occurs, usually only once a year, with 15% Vinegar. Sometimes Field Bindweed has gone to seed unnoticed in a wheat field; then we combine around the bindweed, spray it with vinegar and mow it with a bagging mower to remove the seeds.

We did find Tortoise beetles munching up Bindweed. These beetles look very much like orange ladybugs. At the slightest disturbance, they drop to the ground and hide. The beetles remove circles from the leaves and some Bindweed vines were nearly defoliated. Despite the damage the beetles had done, the vines they were on had already set seeds.

WHITETOP
We buy 55 gallon barrels of 30% strength vinegar from Fleischman's in Auburn, WA, and use it diluted with half

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MOA's 2012 Financial Report by Jonda Crosby, MOA Treasurer

I am pleased to report that the Montana Organic Association had the highest membership income ever in 2012. This increase represents 40% higher membership income than our last six years averaged. Thank you, members, for making MOA a priority organization each year. Please continue to encourage everyone who shares the goals of MOA to join and participate. A special thank you to Sandi Shanks who contract manages our membership program with good cheer and professionalism.

In addition to our membership income, the table on the right (p. 7) also shows how important our conferences are to our financial health each year. The Conference Committee, with membership input, once again organized an educational and dynamic event in 2012 and did it at a moderate cost. The Conference Committee is lining up an exciting agenda for the Flathead Community College this year and encourages you all to attend. Please also extend an invitation to others you know are interested in "all things organic."

The Communications Committee continues to improve the newsletter and website. Thank you for all your feedback and contributions relating to these two critical outreach pieces of MOA. Thank you especially to our writers and sponsors for making this part of our organization financially feasible. With the expertise of Susan Waters, MOA's contract communications director, we have been able to expand our educational and membership services through both of these important venues.

As your representatives, the MOA Board of Directors will continue to be frugal while bringing you, our members, the highest value possible for your membership investment.

Best Regards,

Jonda Crosby, MOA Treasurer

MOA Income and Expense

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	Average
Income								
Advertising	120.00	1,798.50	1,065.77	1,350.71	1,633.10	974.25	898.00	1,120.05
Events Income	23,320.41	20,710.00	20,050.00	27,485.11	27,596.40	31,217.80	32,069.56	26,064.18
Membership	8,775.00	6,235.00	6,635.00	3,860.00	4,515.00	5,905.00	4,960.00	5,840.71
Grants and Gifts	2,130.00	1,336.00	1,536.72	1,476.63	2,570.00	25.00	3,800.00	1,839.19
TOTAL	**33,663.41**	**30,079.50**	**29,287.49**	**34,172.45**	**36,314.50**	**38,122.05**	**41,727.56**	**34,864.14**
Expenses								
Administration	3,335.25	3,824.87	3,214.97	3,729.89	2,633.84	2,540.89	1,859.09	3,019.83
Promotion- Website	8,420.00	5,130.77	8,229.50	12,456.82	9,530.00	7,838.50	5,000.00	8,086.51
Conference-Farm Tours	15,753.11	4,575.76	8,187.66	27,718.50	11,839.37	27,623.69	28,561.05	17,751.31
Newsletter	2,093.26	2,684.90	1,890.02	3,384.62	6,443.48	4,369.56	3,088.49	3,422.05
Board Expense	677.87	232.85	848.93	272.25	608.90	49.15	269.81	422.82
TOTAL	**30,279.49**	**16,449.15**	**22,371.08**	**47,562.08**	**31,055.59**	**42,421.79**	**38,778.44**	**32,702.52**
NET	**3,383.92**	**13,630.35**	**6,916.41**	**(13,389.63)**	**5,258.91**	**(4,299.74)**	**2,949.12**	**2,161.62**

Montana Farmers Union Conference Report by D'Anna Lambert

June 6 and 7 were two days worth remembering for farmers traveling far and wide, or maybe from just over the mountain tops to Bozeman to attend the 2013 Montana Farmers Union (MFU) Conference. My partner Nathan and I had an extraordinary experience at the conference. The scenery around Bozeman is beautiful as well as the city itself. It seemed like the perfect place to hold such an event.

I am from Louisiana and Nathan is from Ohio. We recently worked at a newly established, large-scale organic farm in Alexandria, Louisiana. We both have intern experience on various organic farms in the United States. As young farmers the opportunity to take part in the MFU Conference was very beneficial.

The first stop of the Conference was at the breeders' plots of Montana State University. Speakers explained the 12-year process for developing new varieties of wheat. Desirable traits from common lineages and crosses are tested and then bred to make new varieties. There was discussion about how climate change is affecting local spring wheat production in a positive way, however it is not foreseen to last.

Sheep were on display near the plots. Researchers were investigating their capability of foraging Kochia, a damaging weed, with intent of further research with livestock foraging other invasive species.

Next, was the Towne's Harvest tour, which is part of the Sustainable Foods and Bio-energy Systems Program. Chaz Holt, the farm manager, discussed the fertility and field operations plan for the vegetable field and the green houses. He also informed us about their CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. At lunch, Dean Folkvord, CEO of Wheat Montana, spoke about the development of his company and the marketing strategies they have employed.

The last stop of the day was at the Marsh Labs. At the Seed Certification Lab we learned how seed samples are packaged upon arrival to the lab. Lab techs sort weed seed and inert material from viable seed to consequently determine overall seed germination rate. The Insect Museum was hosted by two graduate students who talked about several insect species on display and answered open-ended questions. Greg Johnson at the Vet Entomology Lab spoke about insect borne diseases, vectors and affects diseases have on livestock as well as wildlife. We learned some interesting information about the physiological characteristics of wire worms, their damage to crops, and challenges of developing effective methods of control.

Day two of the Conference was at the labs of the Plant and Bio-Science Building. The Schutter Diagnostics Lab focuses on identification and control methods of weed species. The Cereal Quality Lab informed us about how new grain varieties are tested for marketable qualities such as baking or milling. The Seed Potato Certification Lab's purpose is to identify local plant disease and eradicate those plants from farmer's fields. The lab also propagates seed potatoes from uncontaminated cuttings with the intent of distributing them to farms in the state. The Plant Growth Center included an explanation of various plant species and containment facilities used by the center. The last event was an inspirational speech from Toby Day, a horticulturist for MSU's state extension office.

During the MFU Conference, it was a delight to see young people our age. Farm Conferences are for every age range and every type of farmer. Mingling with older couples who had been farming since before Nathan and I were born was awe-inspiring. Bringing farmers together for such an event is genius.

Organic Matters Ad Rates

See www.montanaorganicassociation.org/omadrates.htm for details or call Wes Gibbs at (406) 622-3401.

Organic Control of Weeds *continued from p. 5*

water to make a 15% solution. The vinegar burns down only the foliage it contacts. The effect is quite rapid; before one hour has passed the foliage will be wilted, and within five hours on a warm sunny day, the sprayed area will be brown. All of the patches that I have knowledge of that have totally disappeared, the plants were pulled by hand or dug up by hand.

Outcomes and Impacts

The potential impacts of this project are far-reaching. The use of herbicides is negatively affecting water quality world-wide. The cost of these chemicals is often prohibitive and based on continued increasing use, largely ineffective. This project demonstrates that vinegar application and use of biological controls can make weed management economically viable and many times safer for the environment.

The black plastic used at Jess Alger Ranch was about 90% effective. Just a few plants survived outside of the plastic. Basically, a dead spot was left in the field and the alfalfa needed to be replanted.

Accomplishments

We made a new partnership with the BLM Biological Weed Coordinator Kenny Keever, who was a very valuable resource to the project and will continue to be in the future. We looked at Canada Thistle plants at Bob Herdegen's. Some of them had big galls from the Gall Wasp. Kenny Keever taught us to look for crooked stems on the

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Sec. Vilsak Unveils Vision
for U.S. Organic Agriculture

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack discussed his vision for U.S. organic agriculture and USDA efforts to ensure its continued success during remarks to the Organic Trade Association in May.

Vilsack announced a number of changes and new initiatives to support the continued growth of organic agriculture, including that the USDA's Risk Management Agency's (RMA) federal crop insurance program will increase coverage options for organic producers this year and provide even more options in 2014, including a contract price addendum as well as new premium price elections for organic crops. Additionally, RMA will remove the current five-percent organic rate surcharge on all future crop insurance policies beginning in 2014.

Vilsack also said USDA will be providing new guidance and direction on organic production to all USDA agencies in support of organic agriculture and markets. USDA is now asking each agency to routinely address the needs of the organic sector in their programs and services where appropriate.

For more information, visit the USDA website at: www.usda.gov and type "organic vision" in the search bar in upper right corner.

Barry Flamm Elected
to Cornucopia's Policy Advisory Panel

Dr. Flamm was the first certified organic sweet cherry grower in Montana. He served on the Governor's Council to develop the Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program, was a founder and vice chair of the Montana Organic Association and was presented the Montana Organic Association's Life Time of Service Award. He is also the former National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Chairman.

The Cornucopia Institute is a Wisconsin-based farm policy research group which acts as an organic industry watchdog.

"Since my five-year appointment on the NOSB concluded in January," said Dr. Flamm, "I was available and interested in continuing to be involved in organic policy making. The Cornucopia Institute has been an aggressive defender of organic integrity, with special concern for small farmers and the organic consumers. Therefore, when asked, I agreed to lend my experience and expertise to their important work."

Farm Bill Update
by Wes Gibbs, MOA Board Member

Farm Bill observers continue to wonder about the fate of any new Farm Bill legislation soon. On July 11, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a deeply divisive version of a Farm Bill that removed the food stamps and nutrition title from the bill. This version included all the House floor amendments to the Farm Bill of the previously defeated bill.

Since the U.S. Senate has already passed it's version of the bill, a conference committee would normally now try to hammer out differences in the two vastly-different Farm Bills into one comprehensive piece of legislation. The current Farm Bill extension expires on September 30.

The respective versions of each bill differ in aspects directly related to organic agriculture. For example, funding for organic agriculture research and extension (OREI) is considerably higher in the House version. However, funding for organic agriculture data gathering is only contained in the Senate version. And there are other stark differences related to NOP funding, crop insurance and organic certification cost sharing.

In early June, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) was quoted as promising that a Farm Bill would not contain a provision known as the "Monsanto Protection Act." The now infamous rider to the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill passed in March protects developers of biotech seeds from litigation in the face of health concerns.

It remains to be seen how a conference committee will deal with the exclusion of the food stamps and nutrition portion of the House bill. Most observers expect the nutrition title to be included in the conference version of the Farm Bill.

Organic Control of Weeds *continued from p. 9*

Thistle to find where the Thistle stem weevil had been working on the plants.

On the Leafy Spurge plants Bob released the flea Beetles, which did great damage to the Leafy Spurge. We also found Hawk Moth Caterpillars eating the Leafy Spurge plants. These were released in the 1960s as a bio-control. Kenny Keever advised adding longhorn beetles to the leafy Spurge for a bio-control.

Bob released weevils on his Russian knapweed; Mr. Keever informed us that the weevils are species specific to Diffuse and Spotted knapweeds and do not affect Russian knapweed.

The Biological insects take some years to do their work but are very effective over the long haul.

Potential Contributions
We made several advances in our understanding of the most beneficial use of vinegar in treating weeds. First, we determined that a 15% solution of vinegar was adequate to treat even these persistent weeds. We recognized that to be effective treating new growth, treating the whole plant, treating around the edges of a weed patch and re-treating as many as four times in a year was instrumental in having the best treatment results. We also believe the use of an organic surfactant will increase the effectiveness of the treatments.

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Love It or Improve It?

This is your newsletter, so let us know what you think of *Organic Matters*. Write us at PO Box 570, Eureka, MT 59917 or email a note to moa@montanaorganicassociation.org.

Join MOA on Facebook

If you haven't logged on yet, visit www.facebook.com/montanaorganic. Full of MOA event photos, organic news and informative comments, it's an entertaining page as well.

Calendar of Events

www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm

Join MOA Today!

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, 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.

The business level categories offer discounts on advertising in our print publications and an online directory listing on the MOA website. The Lifetime Membership gives you permanent access, listings, discounts and the satisfaction that you're supporting the farmers, ranchers, processors, distributors, retailers, students and researchers who make organic food available and accessible.

Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

Name:_____

Farm or Business:_____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Type of Work: _____

Membership Levels:

☐ Individual.....$30
☐ Family.....$50 (includes two memberships)
☐ Farm/Ranch/Business....$75 (includes a 5% discount on newsletter ads and an online directory listing)
☐ Organic Business.....$250 (includes a 10% discount on newsletter ads and an online directory listing)
☐ Lifetime.....$750

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A View from the Chair

It's been a busy couple of months. I started seeding in the dry dust and finished in the rain soaked fields.

MOA promoted a farm tour this past month and has always put education up front, but one question stood out and educated me. One gentleman asked, "This organic stuff is really neat but what does it and the Farm Bill do for you, the farmer?" He explained he knew nothing about farming and nothing what so ever about a Farm Bill except that it's in the news all the time.

We need to not only educate on how and why growers manage the farm, but also educate the public on how the Farm Bill helps both the grower and consumer, both of which are voting tax payers.

The other thing that's grabbed my attention are all the "THANK YOUs for providing organic." The three hosts providing the farm tour locations were thanked by all for many reasons.

I also have been thanked by so many different groups of concerned citizens and consumers of all types. They reach out and put their hand on my shoulder or grasp my hand and look me in the eyes and say, "thanks." Most of them give a very valid explanation for their thankfulness. More than one has stated that because of me, they know what they are not eating. That made me think back to years ago when I farmed with chemicals and fertilizer. I always thought I was doing a good job. But yet, I never got a thank you for spraying someone's food.

A big thanks to all involved in the farm tour success this year. Warm thoughts to my fellow board members and their families for the loss of their loved ones.

Be safe.

Daryl Lassila, MOA Board Chairman