



# Organic MATTERS

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## Lookin' Good!

As you can see, MOA is celebrating its second decade by introducing a new MOA logo and a redesigned *Organic Matters* with more color and a new look. We've had numerous requests to make our newsletter available via email, while many still want to receive the hard copy. Starting with the Fall issue of *Organic Matters*, the electronic version will be full color throughout and the print copy will be full color on the front and back and the interior pages will be in black and white to save significantly on print costs. And as always, we're looking for appropriate and timely content to share with you. We hope that you're as excited about the changes as we are. Please let us know your thoughts, as this is your MOA!

## All's Well on the Farm: Part One

### Alger Farm Tour Report by Susan Waters, Editor

Jess Alger is always doing something innovative at his farm and ranch. Apparently a lot of folks know that because almost 80 people made it to the MOA Farm Tour at the Alger Ranch back in June to see what he's been up to.

Some participants from Wyoming traveled over 350 miles to attend the tour, but most were from Central Montana, including 60 farmers, eight researchers and many MOA members.

It had rained so much prior to the event that the entire farm and ranch grounds were vibrant and colorful with flowering Sainfoin, nearly-ready-to-harvest hay and plowdown cover crops.

Participants got to see some problem weed areas while they discussed vinegar treatments and were able to see how the treatments were working. Jess has been involved with a multi-year research project with MSU using vinegar to control Bindweed, White-top and Canada Thistle. Jess has had success with this technique but admits that it takes multiple applications and time

to see results. (You can read the summary of the vinegar project at <http://bit.ly/1JWecOl>.)

Guest speakers included Dr. Perry Miller, MSU agronomist, and Dr. Clain Jones, MSU Extension's soil fertility specialist, who spoke

about soil health, particularly adding sulfur and gypsum to the soil. Prior to application, the foliage was yellow and deficient, but after the application of 90 lbs. of sulfur per acre, the foliage bounced back and greened up, even though soil tests didn't show the increase (heavy rain might have

caused this). They also discussed using cattle in grain and legume cropping systems to build the health of the soil, as well as providing rotations to break up disease and weed cycles.


Timeless Seeds' Dave Oien and Jim Barngrover joined Jess to talk about lentils, which produced a lively discussion with the tour participants. The economics of lentils were examined, as they can provide a more stable income for producers who might otherwise be

*continued on p. 2*



Jess Alger with his Noble Blade.  
Photo by Rosie Goldich.

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*Organic Matters*  
Montana Organic Association  
PO Box 570  
Eureka MT 59917  
mtorganic@hotmail.com  
(406) 297-7588

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Editor: Susan Waters  
MOA Newsletter Committee:  
Seth Swanson - Chair  
Nate Brown  
Casey Bailey  
Heather Estrada  
Rob Knotts  
John Larmoyeux  
Linda Lassila  
Sandi Shanks  
Michael Vetere

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Alger Farm Tour *continued from p. 1*

reliant on commodity grains. Lentil plowdown makes for great fertilizer and can supply up to 40 lbs. of nitrogen per acre. Another plus for lentils in general is that they are quite drought tolerant.

MSU agricultural graduate assistant, Devon Reagan, joined Jess to speak about Alger's organic grass-fed cattle's high intensity mob grazing system, a form of rotational grazing in which cattle graze in small paddocks for short periods of time. According to the USDA, benefits of mob grazing include: allowing more cattle on the same or fewer acres, better weed control, less fertilizer cost, extended grazing season, improved livestock health, more plant diversity, and better soil health through built-up organic matter and reduced erosion.



*Alger's portable electric fencing keeps cattle in their temporary paddock. Photo by Rosie Goldich.*

Regan and Alger also explained the movement of the cattle through the pastures, the water system to support the cattle, and Alger's portable shade structure and electric fencing design to protect the cattle and to keep them in their paddock. Alger suggested that ranchers put together a system that works all year long, not just for the short term.

This informative farm tour was videotaped, courtesy of a grant secured by NCAT's Jeff Schahczenski and will be available on YouTube and the MOA website later this summer.

Of course, the food served at the tour was amazing. The Alger Ranch crew provided beef burgers cooked to perfection, as well as several fresh salads and homemade desserts, to round out this highly successful and informative farm tour.

Many thanks to Jess and his family and staff for generously opening up their successful operation to all of us. Jess stated that he would do it again because he always learns something new at the farm tours, even the ones he hosts. 🌱

# All's Well on the Farm: Part Two

Lassila Farm Tour Report by John Larmoyeux, MOA Board Member

In the center of a horseshoe bend of an unnamed creek stands the aged remains of the original Lassila farmhouse—as picturesque as one might expect a Montana homestead to be. A few hundred yards away on a ridge overlooking the site stands the home of fourth generation farmer, Daryl Lassila, son of Robert and Earlyne Lassila. Seventy-five guests and their vehicles line the driveway, awaiting a tour of Daryl's organic farm east of Great Falls.

Daughter Trista Lassila (owner of The Next Level Salon in Great Falls, and always willing to help on the farm) comforts the sweaty crowd with bottles of cold water while Daryl holds a microphone to his mouth and in his direct yet gentle manner, asks, “Why are you here?”

The group was silent.

Unfazed, Daryl smiles and asks again, “Why are you here? Why did you come here today?”

“To get a day off,” chuckles one farmer to another. “To learn.” peeps a brave participant.

“About what?” Daryl asks, compelling his pupils to engage.

“Cover-cropping.” “Weed control.” “Soil building.” “How to get 60 bushel-an-acre crop.”

“Well I'd like to know that too,” Daryl responds, with a satisfied smile. And like a seasoned teacher who has engaged the minds of his students, he gives a quick itinerary of their tour, and invites the crowd

to caravan with him to a field of mixed cover crop. The convoy rolls past a display of vintage farm equipment and eases their way through a coulee, past old wooden boxcars, and across the rippling creek. After passing a group of



*The Canada thistle hole.  
Photo by Nate Brown.*

bright metallic grain bins, the group parks along a field and finds Daryl one hundred yards in, near a freshly dug hole in the ground.

Neverminding the 8'x10' pit

beside him, Daryl asks if anyone noticed the stack of beehives beside the grain bins. With that he introduced Brian Rodgers of the Great Falls Beekeeping Club. Brian shared how Daryl had requested bees for his organic farm five years ago and how delighted area beekeepers were to grant his request.

Whereas the farmer potentially benefits from better seed sets and higher yields, bees foraging on a chemical free polyculture are healthier, happier, and potentially produce better quality honey.

Recognizing this mutually rewarding partnership, the group of farmers had a barrage of questions regarding bees, the construction and winterization of their hives, windbreaks, production figures, and CCD (colony collapse disorder). Brian pointed out that most quantitative

data is only available from conventional sources as organic beekeeping is a relatively small niche.

Daryl directed the conversation back to farming and asked who had seen the wilting patch of Canada thistle on their way up the road. He told of having just sprayed it that morning with vinegar. To demonstrate the tenacity of Canada thistle he finally turned our attention to the hole in the ground beside us, pointing out that Canada thistle roots were still present at the deepest point of the hole 3' to 4' deep. Many farmers hopped down to scrutinize the soil and returned with renewed distain for the weed.

As the crowd sent up a volley of questions about Canada thistle, Daryl invited Sam Schmidt to speak about the forming of Organic Advisory & Educational Council (OAEC). Sam noted a lack of research about critical organic

agronomy issues and how OAEC was able to direct research funding to Montana State University for this and other suggested research topics.

After brainstorming with Prairie Grass Ranch's Jody

Manuel about sourcing bulk vinegar for organic farmers, Daryl answered questions about legumes, the history of this particular field, and plant diseases. Lassila family members passed out another round of cold water and dismissed the crowd to other fields down the road.

*continued on p. 4*

Lassila Farm Tour *continued from p. 3*

Once there, Daryl displayed his fields of spelt and winter wheat with the same depth of insight as before, answering dozens of questions about these and nearby barley fields along the way. Like an open book, Daryl shared specifics of tillage, planting, crop rotation, crop varieties, plow down, top dressing with manure, pests, and how to incorporate livestock grazing.

As the tour concluded, Daryl pointed out a thoughtful neighbor who maintains a buffer zone between their conventionally farmed fields and his, without them ever having discussed the

matter. His neighbor likely never thought a border of his remote field would represent conventional farming to a world of organic farmers, but it did, and it might just represent the respect organic



*Lassila's winter wheat on left, spring wheat on right. Photo by Nate Brown.*

farmers are earning, one neighbor at a time.

When the tour returned to the Lassila home, the afternoon was far from over. Daryl's wife, Linda, and his son Brady, (a structural engineer at KLJ in Great Falls and one of the main truck drivers for harvest), served up a plethora of

treats from 2J's Market alongside Brady's wife, Gracie, on the back lawn where dozens of varieties of flowers were in full bloom and colorful as the personalities of speakers Daryl had arranged

for. While the guests lounged in the shade of willow trees and snacked on chocolate lentil cake, Alden's organic ice-cream, gluten free cookies,

coffee, and sweet tea, a lineup of top notch speakers appealed to the audience on behalf of their organizations.

Jim Larson of Montana Ag Safety shared sometimes humorous (but mostly horrific) stories of agriculture accidents occurring in Montana. He educated the

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audience about the Montana Safety Culture Act (1993) and encouraged every farmer to create a culture of safety by using “pre-task analysis” and other philosophical methods of accident prevention.

Max Blodgett and Matt Crampton of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encouraged Montana farmers to use multi-species cover crops as a means to achieve microbial diversity and a balance between fungi and bacteria in the soil.

Ron de Yong, Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture, promoted the Regional PULSE Crop Diagnostics Lab at MSU. He referenced changes in climate, the increase in extreme weather events, and efforts to establish crop rotations to fit these conditions.

He concluded by referencing the value of soil-building in terms of sequestering carbon and efforts being made to include carbon credits for farmers in pending farm policy.

Dave Oien, CEO of Timeless Natural Food, gave a brief history of his company, introduced his staff in attendance from Ulm, Montana, and gave a summary of the book tour for *Lentil Underground* and its promotion of Montana’s organic agriculture to 40 universities nationwide.

The speakers concluded with Ron Milio, Director of Supply Chain for Dave’s Killer Bread. He introduced his staff in attendance from Portland, Oregon; expressed appreciation to MOA and OAEC; introduced new products and growing opportunities for organic producers; and announced that

Dave’s Killer Bread is in all 50 states, as well as in Japan.

Despite the long afternoon of complex matters, the farm tour impacted the audience like a pep rally, as if what was occurring was truly monumental. A woman with a copy of *Lentil Underground* was glowing with delight as she buzzed through the crowd, meeting each respective farmer from the book and receiving their autographs. With her book now closed, held down to her side, she sighed with euphoria and said, “This is amazing...truly amazing. And this is just the beginning...”

Well-said, organic fan.

Thank you, Lassilas, for your hospitality, for an inspiring afternoon, and for being great representatives of Montana’s organic community. 🌱





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## 2015 MOA Conference

by Lou Ann Crowley, Conference Coordinator

Cultivating Soils, Opportunities and Relationships is the theme of MOA's annual conference to be held this December 4-5 in Bozeman at the Holiday Inn. Organic University, and local tours will be held the previous day, on December 3.

The keynote address will be given by David Granatstein, who holds the position of Statewide Coordinator for Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources (CSANR). He brings a wealth of knowledge from his many educational and research projects, including: soil erosion control in furrow irrigated fields; on-farm research of biosolids and compost; integrated fruit production; and soil quality studies. He spends a significant portion of his time in support of the expanding organic farming sector in the state and is helping to develop the BIOAg (Biologically Intensive and Organic Agriculture) program within CSANR.

While the number of topics to explore for farmers, ranchers, vegetable and fruit growers is endless, here are some that are under consideration: sessions on potential business opportunities; discussing the challenges of expanding a current business or launching a new one in the context of emerging markets; and the state of organic seed and how to grow, adapt, and protect more organic seed for the success of farmers and future generations.

The benefit of being in Bozeman is access to research that's being done through MSU in areas of interest to our audience. We expect to have an open exchange about adapting to a changing world.


In addition to the Conference, there will be a Kids' University, a variety of tours on and off campus, lifetime achievement awards given for Service and Leadership, entertainment to keep you up all night and the best organic food in the State.

We have heard from our members that they would like more time to network and have hands-on sessions and we have incorporated those wishes into the agenda.

This Conference will be the setting for bringing together the best thinking on where organics stands today in responding to change, adapting to outside forces and shaping the future—in Montana and across the globe. 🌱


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# Growing Montana Farms, One Beer at a Time

by John Larmoyeux and Heather Estrada, MOA Board Members

It's a good time to be a beer enthusiast in Montana! Our brewing industry is one of the fastest growing in the nation. Today, there are 53 licensed breweries in the State and at least ten more breweries in planning.

With almost 6 breweries per 100,000 residents, Montana ranks 4th nationally in breweries per capita. Our brewers collectively produce over 140,000 barrels of beer each year—great tasting beers that consistently bring home medals from national beer competitions.

Montana brewers work together to improve industry through the Montana Brewers Association and the Master Brewers Association of the Americas - Northern Rockies District. With strong ties to hospitality, tourism, and agriculture, Montana's brewing industry has an annual economic impact of \$60 million, which translates into tremendous statewide economic growth. This year, Flathead Valley Community College will launch the first-ever brewing degree program in the state, aimed at preparing individuals for entry into our flourishing brewing workforce.

With all of this in mind, the economic climate is ripe for Montana's farmers to ramp up production of beer's main raw ingredients: barley and hops. Further potential also exists for local farmers to produce wheat, oats, rye, honey, and

specialty fruits for the increasingly sophisticated beers that are being created in Montana. In this four-part series on Brewing in Montana, we will present a variety of beer-related topics, including Montana's nascent hop industry,

malting barley production, custom malting, and the brewer's perspective on the emergent organic brewing market.

Travelers heading North from Great Falls any summer are quick to notice endless fields of wheat. But South of Havre, a few miles east of the

MSU Northern Agricultural Research Center, an independent

study is under way. Jody Manuel, third generation farmer, is out to find if his diversified organic farm can produce a new commercial crop—hops. A devoted organic farmer and a craft beer enthusiast, Jody has been wading into the domain of hop farming by planting 17 varieties of hops along Beaver Creek on what was formerly used as hay ground. His goal is to discover which high-demand varieties will grow best on his family's beloved Prairie Grass Ranch.

Most backyard gardeners and home brewers have long known that hops thrive in Montana.

In the Flathead Valley, Gallatin Valley, Milk River Valley and other microclimates, wild hops abound. And not to be snubbed, it is precisely wild hops that are used in proprietary hop breeding programs by replicating their traits of vigor and resistance to pests and diseases. Located in the 48th parallel, it is no coincidence that Montana's climate is hop-friendly. Perhaps the most widely known hop-growing region in the world is Hallertau in Bavaria, Germany, located at 48°N. The world's largest hop yard, Elk Mountain Hop Farm is also located at 48°N in Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

As an organic farmer, innovation is a way of life for Jody Manuel. But credit for the first commercial hop yard in Montana goes to professors Tom and Victoria Blake who established a research hop yard

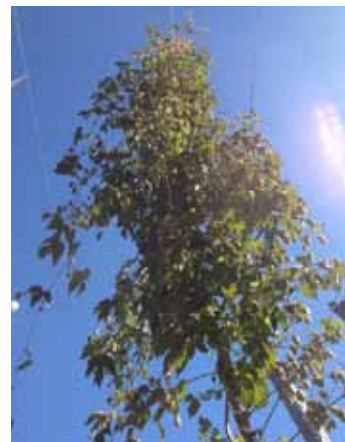
at MSU in Bozeman in 2007, funded by a USDA grant. By 2010, the MSU hop yard was supplying 14 varieties of fresh hops to breweries and local home brewers. Unfortunately, the program lost its federal funding and the hop yard was dismantled.

Following suit in 2012, the Montana

Department of Agriculture sponsored an experimental hop yard, Glacier Hops, on the property of Tom Britz near Whitefish, where over 40 varieties of hops are being grown conventionally under the watchful eye of local entrepreneurs and brewers alike. *continued on p. 10*



Jody Manuel's experimental plot. Photo by John Larmoyeux.



A hop bine at Glacier Hops. Photo by John Larmoyeux.

# 2014 Annual Financial Report by Jonda Crosby, MOA Treasurer

The Montana Organic Association officially closed our books on December 31, 2014. We completed MOA's tax report and 1099 forms for our contractors in January. MOA received confirmation from the IRS that we are in full compliance as a non-profit. We also renewed our status as a non-profit in Montana with the Secretary of State's office.

MOA's other official duty as a non-profit is to report our financial condition to our members and supporters. As you can see in the charts below and to the right, our income has continued to increase in 2014, due primarily to a very successful MOA Annual Conference and judicial management of MOA resources by your Board of Directors. Because we are using Cash Basis bookkeeping, about \$7,000 income from the Annual Conference that came in after January 1 or 2015, was not counted toward 2014's income. So MOA actually did a bit better than the numbers reflect.

A couple of reasons we did so well again this year was because MOA continues to receive tremendous support from our sponsors and vendors for our Annual Conference. We had more participants overall in part because of the pre-conference outreach and press, the great line-up of speakers and the pre-conference tours. The meals prepared with Montana organic farm and ranch products – most of which were

generously donated – made the meals outstanding once again at the conference. Thank you to all who donated. Without organic products from our vendors, sponsors, farmers and ranchers, we simply would not be able to provide the quality of ingredients for the conference meals—a hallmark MOA has come to be known for.

An area we need to continue to improve is our membership support. In 2014 we gained some ground and the Board addressed this issue at our annual retreat in January. With feedback from our membership, the Board has reconfigured our membership dues and benefits to better match our membership needs, interests and contributions. You can see the new fee schedule on page 14 of this newsletter.

For 2014, we have three independent contractors for MOA services. Susan Waters manages the *Organic Matters* quarterly newsletter's editing, layout, design and publication; maintains MOA's website; and produces outreach materials for farm tours, special events and the Annual Conference. We also retained contractor Sandi Shanks as our Membership Services Coordinator. In 2014,

we added Lou Ann Crowley as MOA's Annual Conference contractor.

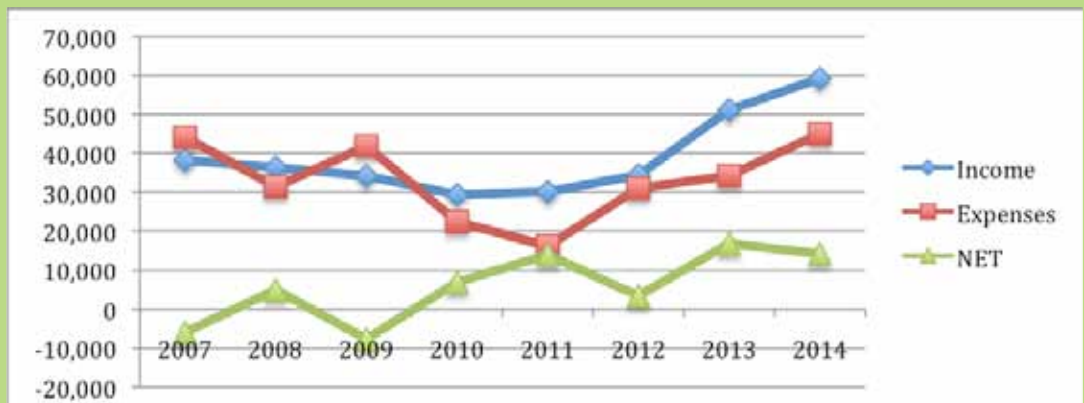
The Newsletter and Communications Committees continue to improve the newsletter and website. Thanks to members for your feedback and contributions relating to these two critical outreach pieces of MOA. Thank you especially to our writers and sponsors for making this part of our organization financially viable.

The Conference Planning Committee is in full swing too, lining up an exciting array of speakers for our Annual Conference in Bozeman this year. Hope to see you there!

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

If you have suggestions for improving MOA, do not hesitate to contact any one of us—your representatives!

Best Regards,





## MOA Income and Expense

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
<b>Income</b>									
Advertising & Sales	2,950	1,342	120	1,799	1,066	1,306	1,633	974	898
Events Income	46,972	41,292	23,320	20,710	20,050	27,485	27,596	31,218	32,070
Membership	7,125	6,885	8,775	6,235	6,635	3,860	4,515	5,905	4,960
Grants, Donations	<u>2,115</u>	<u>1,560</u>	<u>2,130</u>	<u>1,336</u>	<u>1,536</u>	<u>1,477</u>	<u>2,570</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>3,800</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59,162</b>	<b>51,079</b>	<b>34,345</b>	<b>30,080</b>	<b>29,287</b>	<b>34,128</b>	<b>36,314</b>	<b>38,122</b>	<b>41,728</b>
<b>Expenses</b>									
Administration	2,852	3,728	3,385	3,400	3,215	4,048	2,634	2,616	1,899
Member Services	1,096	11,170	8,370	4,770	8,230	12,457	9,530	7,839	5,000
Events	32,404	16,036	15,753	5,076	8,188	21,635	12,136	29,212	28,561
Newsletter, Website	7,978	1,858	2,775	2,685	1,890	3,385	6,443	4,370	3,088
Board Expense	<u>627</u>	<u>1,413</u>	<u>678</u>	<u>233</u>	<u>849</u>	<u>272</u>	<u>609</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>270</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44,957</b>	<b>34,205</b>	<b>30,961</b>	<b>16,164</b>	<b>22,372</b>	<b>41,797</b>	<b>31,352</b>	<b>44,086</b>	<b>38,818</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>14,205</b>	<b>16,874</b>	<b>3,384</b>	<b>13,916</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>-7,669</b>	<b>4,962</b>	<b>-5,964</b>	<b>2,910</b>

## Sharon Marie Lindquist, October 3, 1951 - May 13, 2015

Last May, MOA received the devastating news that longtime member, supporter and volunteer, Sharon Lindquist, had passed away. MOA Board member, Judy Owsowitz, remembers Sharon as, "...so positive, cheerful and supportive of MOA through all the volunteer work she did, such as organizing the annual auction, manning the conference registration desk in the early days, writing the occasional newsletter article, and being the first MOA historian." With some humor, Judy adds, "She was the only one who always knew where things were."

"With Sharon gone, there is now a hole in the heart of MOA," says communications contractor Susan Waters. "Not alone was Sharon incredibly insightful and dedicated, she always showed kindness and caring in all that she did for MOA and its members." Sharon was happy being behind the scenes making things happen. She always stepped up to the plate when she was asked to help. She collaborated with her husband Jim at many organic events across the state and they helped numerous organic farmers, especially ones just starting out. There are probably a hundred more stories like these about how Sharon

positively impacted all the things she believed in and those she worked with.

Forty years a teacher and she loved it. She helped countless children in those four decades. Her



Sharon Lindquist

student, Dalton Carpenter, expressed, "You came up to me, grabbed my hand and told me to follow my dreams. No teacher has ever said such kind words like that to me in my life... and I will always keep those words...locked in my heart."

"We will always have the wonderful memories of one of the most unselfish and caring individuals we have ever met," states Larry and Roxie Veverka.

Sharon loved family and friends, gardening, cooking, dogs, cats and horses. She was a wonderful wife, mother and friend to all. Sharon fought hard against her cancer all the way to the end. She will be greatly missed but never, ever forgotten.

MOA extends its heartfelt condolences to Sharon's husband, Jim, and her daughters Lauren and Julia, as well as to her extended family and friends. You can read Sharon's obituary at [www.rangerreview.com/obituaries/sharon-marie-lindquist](http://www.rangerreview.com/obituaries/sharon-marie-lindquist).

While all indications suggest that hops will perform well in Montana, the initial startup costs, annual operating expenses, and processing demands are immense. And, as with any perennial monoculture, hops are highly susceptible to disease. To further complicate matters, the U.S. hop industry has market dynamics very similar to U.S. food companies, where a few large syndicates control the entire industry from patenting genetics, planting, and harvesting to processing, storing, and distributing. These same hop companies also control both the conventional and organic hop market.

These are precisely the daunting conditions that excite renegade organic producers who are determined to operate outside

the dominance of corporate agribusiness. Thus, Jody Manuel and his staff are networking with three other hop growers who collectively have over fifteen years experience growing hops organically in Montana with



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little publicity and without public funding (Clark Fork Estate Vineyard & Hopyard, Rockin' Lazy A Ranch, and Royal Jack Hops). These organic growers are passionate about increasing soil fertility and

creating biodiversity without using conventional fertilizers and pesticides. They are poised with a unique understanding of the soil microbiology necessary to grow hops.

Since the same consumers driving the "Slow Food" and "Farm-To-Table" movements are the powerful force behind the craft beer movement, ingredients in beer are being scrutinized as closely as any other food product—hence the emergence of organic beer. Many studies have shown that pesticides used on conventional hops remain in beer even after boiling and fermentation. These same reports are quick to conclude, "...the detected levels of active agents do not represent a matter of concern for consumer safety..." however, conscientious consumers strongly disagree.

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When U.S. hop supplies were scarce, standards for organic beer allowed for the use of non-organic hops. However, after a torrent of letters from consumers and brewers, the National Organic Standards Board announced that all beer labeled organic must use only certified organic hops effective January 1, 2013. If you doubt the demand for organic beer, Montana beer aficionado's may be familiar with Bayern's Organic Amber Ale, Blackfoot River Brewing's Organic Pale Ale, all beer brewed at Wildwood Brewing (Bodacious Boc, Krumholz Ale, Mystical Stout, Ambitious Lager, White Bary Wheat), and the not yet open Lewistown Brewery who plans to brew organic beer (and organic root beer). Because the proponents of hop yards in Montana are strongly rooted in conventional agriculture, there may be a unique opportunity for organic hop growers to meet the craft brewing demands in Montana and beyond.

Although this grassroots movement is fraught with risk, challenges, and unknowns, it has the potential to diversify agricultural production, stimulate local economies, support individual farms, and create new organic markets with value added organic products. Clearly Montana is on its way to becoming a credible hop growing region, and as a testament to Montana's spirit of collaboration, credit goes to a host of gardeners, farmers, brewers, and entrepreneurs who have brought us this far. Let's be sure that organic hop growers are a part of this conversation in an effort to offer conscientious consumers a choice when it comes to the ingredients in beer. 🌱

## Can GMOs Be Used in Organic Products?

by Miles McEvoy, National Organic Program

The use of genetic engineering, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), is prohibited in organic products. This means an organic farmer can't plant GMO seeds, an organic cow can't eat GMO alfalfa or corn, and an organic soup producer can't use any GMO ingredients. To meet the USDA organic regulations, farmers and processors must show they aren't using GMOs and that they are protecting their products from contact with prohibited substances, such as GMOs, from farm to table.

Organic operations implement preventive practices based on site-specific risk factors, such as neighboring conventional farms or shared farm equipment or processing facilities. For example, some farmers plant their seeds early or late to avoid organic and GMO crops flowering at the same time (which can cause cross-pollination). Others harvest crops prior to flowering or sign cooperative agreements with neighboring farms to avoid planting GMO crops next to organic ones. Farmers also designate the edges of their land as a buffer zone where the land is managed organically, but the crops aren't sold as organic. Any shared farm or processing equipment must be thoroughly cleaned to prevent unintended

exposure to GMOs or prohibited substances.

All of these measures are documented in the organic farmer's organic system plan. This written plan describes the substances and practices to be used, including physical barriers to prevent contact of organic crops with prohibited substances or the products of "excluded methods" such as GMOs. On-

site inspections and records verify that farmers are following their organic system plan. Additionally, certifying agents conduct residue testing to determine if these preventive practices are adequate to avoid contact with substances such as prohibited pesticides, antibiotics, and GMOs.

Any certified organic operation found to use prohibited substances or GMOs may face enforcement actions, including loss of certification and financial penalties.

Consumers purchase organic products expecting that they maintain their organic integrity from farm to market, and USDA is committed to meeting these expectations. No matter where it was grown, if a product has the USDA Organic label on it, it wasn't produced with GMOs.

*This article has been excerpted from USDA's Organic 101 Blog at <http://blogs.usda.gov/tag/organic-101/>.*



# Member Profile: Two Bear Farm

by Sage Brinckerhoff, FVCC Ag Studies Student

Located on the west side of Whitefish, Montana, Two Bear Farm stands as an edifice of hard work and initiative met with opportunity for the sake of community welfare. The dual-desire to offer fresh, nutrient dense veggies to the community through responsible practices and to teach and train young, aspiring farmers along the way is at the heart of the farm.


In 2008, Todd and Rebecca Ulizio began their farming operation initially as Ten Lakes Farm in Eureka, Montana, on less than an acre. After six years of consistent growth peaking at 150 shares on that parcel of land, it was time for the couple to relocate and find a new plot of land to farm. This need was met by philanthropist Mike Goguen, who partnered with Todd and Rebecca, who provided them a place to land their operation with some added infrastructure so that the community would continue to be blessed by fresh farm food. The farm's name was changed to Two Bear Farm, which now services 200 CSAs, three farmers' markets, and some wholesalers.

If much is required from those who are given much, then the Ulizio's have a large order to fill—a demand they meet with calculation and confidence. According to Todd, good stewardship entails being able to farm a piece of land without degrading the soil or ecosystem and actually improving both of these elements. As Ten Lakes Farm, the Ulizio's were certified organic for six years. Since becoming Two Bear Farm, they

have entered into a transition period to certify once again. With a reputation of good practices well known by the community, the farm could get by without certifying, but they choose to do so because they believe that it is important to give voice to the values they hold.

Todd and Rebecca have a lot to offer their apprentices. As a student at Flathead Valley Community College in the Integrated Agriculture and Food Systems program, I have had the opportunity to jump on as an additional intern on the farm. The combination of having the experience of building a farm up from the bare essentials and establishing a customer base from nothing, with Todd's history in accounting and Rebecca's degree in organic farming, provides a deeply-rooted education which is rounded out by the experience of working with optimum infrastructure and equipment. A high standard of quality and a strong work ethic are impressed on each apprentice throughout the daily run.

Every farm has unique qualities that it shares with the farmer who operates, manages, and invests his livelihood into its production. Todd and Rebecca's operation is no exception. Order, forethought, efficiency, and quality are just a few traits a visitor would notice.

The Ulizio's love what they do because they are passionate about good food and educating the next generation of farmers. We are excited to welcome them back to the Montana Organic Association. 

# Breaking Ground

by Kiki Hubbard, OSA

Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) recently broke ground at a new research farm in Chimacum, Washington. This farmland will serve as OSA's main research hub for the next five to ten years, allowing the organization to conduct organic plant breeding, variety trials, and seed production at one central location. The research team is managing more than an acre of trials and OSA will be publishing data from these trials in the coming months

Variety trials are an important, although often overlooked, strategy for managing risk. Choosing the right crops and varieties for the local climate, field conditions, and market can significantly minimize loss and increase agricultural success while avoiding the expense of investing in poorly adapted or poorly performing varieties. *OSA's On-farm Variety Trials: A Guide for Organic Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Producers* provides training in basic, on-farm experimental design, as well as tools to efficiently and effectively manage on-farm trials and use trial results. You can download this guide at [www.seedalliance.org/publications](http://www.seedalliance.org/publications).

OSA is also a partner in the Organic Variety Trial Database—the only searchable website of its kind that includes hundreds of organic variety trial results from across the country. If you have trial results to share through this database, OSA wants to hear from you! Please contact OSA's Jared Zystro at [jared@seedalliance.org](mailto:jared@seedalliance.org). You can access the database at <http://varietytrials.eorganic.info/>.

# Organic Advisory and Education Council (OAEC) Update

by Lise Rousseau Silva, OAEC Board Member

Perennial Bindweed and Canada Thistle are problematic weeds in organic small grain production systems, which was made clear when OAEC surveyed organic grain and vegetables producers in 2012-2013. These surveys were written into two comprehensive Summary Reports. Based on this information, several research projects at the university level are now under way.

In 2014, Montana State University (MSU) initiated meta-analysis studies of previous Field Bindweed and Canada Thistle control and management practices for organic cropping systems in the Northern Great Plains region. This OAEC funded project will be completed in the summer of 2015, with a research report available this fall.

In 2014, MSU initiated the study, "Ecological management of field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) in cereal systems." This project is currently taking place at the MSU Corvallis Research Extension Station and was funded by the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. An expansion of this project, "Expanding the understanding of the impacts and management of field bindweed (*Convolvulus*

*arvensis*) in organic small grain production" is being initiated in the summer of 2015, based on direction from OAEC in cooperation with MSU. The expanded project will include on-farm soil sampling and analysis in and around field bindweed areas at eight different organic farms at three different intervals over the next two years. This expansion project was funded by OAEC and the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee.

The OAEC youth program continues this year with a \$500 grant to an FFA student in south central Montana. The project will look into the effectiveness of two different soil amendments on an organic ranch. A research report will be available this fall.

OAEC wants to thank the organic community for its direction and financial support on these projects. To help insure the organic community has a say in future agriculture research, we ask for your continued support. To make a contribution to OAEC, please go to [www.oaecmt.org](http://www.oaecmt.org), or contact an OAEC Director. Donations are tax deductible, and OAEC has added both a grain donation and farm machinery (auction) donation as funding options. 🌱

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# New Fee Structure for MOA Memberships and Conferences

MOA is pleased to announce changes in membership opportunities for our members. We are offering new membership levels, such as the premium annual silver and gold memberships that include conference sponsorship fees at a discount. We are also offering a new Annual Publication/Media Bundle. Please see the fee structure tables below to see which opportunity fits your needs.

MOA still offers incredible benefits with every membership. 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 and the annual conference, 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 memberships give 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. The new annual Silver and Gold memberships have many of the Lifetime perks, but also include the full media package and premium conference registrations and sponsorships.

Use the sign up form on the far right and join MOA today! You'll be joining like-minded folks dedicated to organics.

## 2015 MOA Memberships

	Cost	Annual Membership	Newsletter Quarterly Ad	Website Directory	Full Media	Conference Registration
Membership - Individual	\$30	Yes x 1	-	-	-	-
Membership - Household	\$50	Yes x 2	-	-	-	-
Membership - Farm/Ranch	\$75	Yes x 2	-5% Off	Yes	-	-
Membership - Organic Business	\$250	Yes x 2	-10% Off	Yes	-	-
Membership - Lifetime	\$750	Yes x 2	-10% Off	Yes	-	-
(NEW) Membership - Lifetime Business	\$2,500	Yes x 2	-10% Off	Yes	-	-
(NEW) Annual Publication/Media Bundle	\$500	-	Full (x4)	Yes	Yes	-
(NEW) Annual Silver Membership (-5%)	\$1,650	Yes x 2	Full (x4)	Yes	Yes	Yes x 2 (lunch sponsor)
(NEW) Annual Gold Membership (-10%)	\$2,000	Yes x 2	Full (x4)	Yes	Yes	Yes x 2 (dinner sponsor)

\*\*\*\* Premium Annual Memberships (Silver/Gold) Reduced by \$75/\$250 for Lifetime Members

## 2015 MOA Conference

	Cost	Registration Plus Meals	Conference Booth	Speaking Option	Program Ads	Media/ Web Page	Conference Recognition
Conference - Student	\$65	Yes x 1	-	-	-	-	-
Conference - Member	\$110	Yes x 1	-	-	-	-	-
Conference - Non-Member	\$140	Yes x 1	-	-	-	-	-
Conference - Late Registration	+\$10	Yes x 1	-	-	-	-	-
Conference - Sponsor	\$300	Yes x 1	-	-	1/4	Yes	Standard
Conference - Vendor (Booth)	\$400	Yes x 1	Yes	-	1/4	Yes	Standard
Conference - Sponsor (Booth)	\$500	Yes x 2	Yes	-	1/4	Yes	Standard
Conference - Sponsor (Session)	\$600	Yes x 2	Yes	-	1/2	Yes	Standard
Conference - Sponsor (Lunch)	\$1,000	Yes x 2	Yes	Lunch	Full	Yes	Premium
Conference - Sponsor (Dinner)	\$1,500	Yes x 2	Yes	Dinner	Full	Yes	Premium
(NEW) Annual Silver Membership (-5%)	\$1,650	Yes x 2	Yes	Lunch	Full	Yes	Premium
(NEW) Annual Gold Membership (-10%)	\$2,000	Yes x 2	Yes	Dinner	Full	Yes	Premium

\*\*\*\* Premium Annual Memberships (Silver/Gold) Reduced by \$75/\$250 for Lifetime Members

# Organic Matters Ad Rates

Ad prices and dimensions:

- 1 page ad --- \$110 (Size: 7-1/2W x 10H")
- 3/4 page ad --- \$90 (Size: 7-1/2W x 6-1/2H")
- 1/2 page ad --- \$65 (Size: 7-1/2W x 5H") -OR- (3-1/2" W x 10"H)
- 1/4 page ad -- \$40 (Size: 3-1/2W x 4-1/2"H)
- Business card ad --- \$30 (Size: 3-1/2W x 2H")

\*\*\*If you are a Farm/Ranch Business level member, you will receive a 5% discount on your ad. If you are an Organic Business or Lifetime member, you will receive a 10% discount on your ad. All ads must be print ready. See [www.montanaorganicassociation.org/omadrates.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/omadrates.htm) for details or call Seth Swanson at (406) 258-4205.

## Calendar of Events

[www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/events.htm)

## MOA By-law Changes Coming


The MOA Board of Directors is proposing some By-law changes for 2016 that will better reflect how we have been operating as an organization, and will help make future work a little more efficient. These proposed amendments will be published in our fall newsletter, and then voted on at our next Annual Membership Meeting on December 5 in Bozeman. We look forward to seeing you during the 2015 Annual Conference and we look forward to hearing your feedback on all the work we have accomplished so far in 2015. Thank you for your continued support.

## Join MOA on Facebook

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

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## Join MOA Today!

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Please sign me up as a MOA Member!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Membership Levels:

- Individual.....\$30
- Household.....\$50 (includes two memberships)
- 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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## A View From the Chair

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer. This is a busy time of year on our farm and I'm sure it's the same for most of us.

The month of June had two MOA Farm Tours that were a huge success and I'd like to talk about those in this issue.

The first tour was at the Alger Ranch in Stanford, where nearly 80 participants got to tour Jess's operation and see his small grains and mob grazing cattle operation. His crew cooked an excellent lunch. Also in attendance were MSU researchers, MSU Dean of Agriculture Dr. Charles Boyer, MTDA Director Ron de Yong, and staff from NRCS.

The second tour was at the Lassila farm in Great Falls. This was also well attended. Daryl introduced his dryland small grains farm and we drove in a big convoy around his farm to see the crops. There was discussion about crop rotations, nutrient and weed management practices, seed selection, moisture retention and reducing weed, disease and pest issues.

I'd like to thank Jess Alger and his crew, the Lassila family, everyone who participated in the tours, the SARE Mini Grants Program for funding support, and the Farm Tour committee for making these MOA events so great. There is a tremendous amount of interest in

how we farm the way that we do and I think the high attendance at these events proves that. Bringing people together at Farm Tours is a big part of the work that MOA does and learning from each other is pivotal to our continued success as organic producers.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for this year's MOA Conference in Bozeman, December 3-5. We'll have more information and registration on MOA's website later this summer.

Be well,

Nathan Brown, MOA Board Chairman