NONSYNTHETIC NEWS

MONTANA **O**RGANIC **A**SSOCIATION TO ADVOCATE AND PROMOTE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE FOR THE HIGHEST GOOD OF THE PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND STATE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

WINTER 2005

GATHERING OUR ORGANIC COMMUNITY BY LISE ROUSSEAU

Two hundred years ago, Lewis and Clark set out to explore the uncharted West. It was a bold venture, fraught with many perils and filled with opportunity. They weren't sure of the outcome, but they were sure of their purpose. They placed their trust in their companions and were thankful for unexpected assistance along their way.

Today's organic farmers, ranchers and producers have much in common with those bold adventurers. Not satisfied with the conventional status quo, they are leading the way in discovering and implementing sustainable ways to bring

healthy and quality products to the marketplace. The challenges are many and diverse, but through sharing, cooperation and strong certification programs, Montana now enjoys at least one organic producer for nearly every crop grown or animal raised in Montana. Montana is number one in organic wheat production and number two in total certified acres. And we are moving forward.

MOA's 2nd Annual Conference brings together organic producers from all fields of agriculture, from ranchers to vegetable farmers and wheat growers to orchardists. The conference provides a valuable opportunity

for producers to meet with vendors; for researchers to share their latest findings; for farmers to share information; and for all of us to celebrate our unique, diverse organic community.

This year's conference will feature keynote presentations by Bob Quinn, Fred Kirschenmann, State Senator Jon Tester and MT Secretary of Agriculture, Nancy Peterson. We are also hoping for visits from our new governor, Brian Schweitzer, and many of our state legislators.

Highlights of the numerous and varied breakout sessions are green manure, buyer's panels, biodiversity, vinegar, transitioning, beef, legislation, and many more.

Attendees will surely relish the rich assortment of an All-Montana organic menu featuring the best our state has to offer of meats, grains, vegetables and fruit.

Montana Organic Association was formed "to advocate and promote organic agriculture, for the highest good of the people, the environment, and the state's economy." MOA accomplishes these goals through education, information, support, assistance, promotion and representation for organic producers, processors, handlers, retailers, consumers, researchers, agricultural service providers, and other interested parties.

Please join us for this year's conference and in the invaluable work of sustaining Montana's organic community.

KEY-NOTE SPEAKERS SELECTED

Bob Quinn, Fred Kirschenman and Montana State senator, Jon Tester have been selected as the 2nd annual Montana Organic Association conference keynote speakers.

Fred Kirschenmann is the director if the Leopold Cen-

ter for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State, an organic/biodynamic farmer in North Dakota, founder of the Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society, founder of the certification agency ICS/FVO and founding member of the National Organic Standards

ture at Iowa State, an organic/biodynamic farmer in North Dakota, founder of North Dakota, founder of Soundaries or our Community."

Board (NOSB). His Saturday morning keynote address is "Expanding the Boundaries or our Community."

Bob Quinn of Big Sandy, MT (Kamut International) is a farmer, plant researcher, founder of Montana Flour and

(Continued on page 10)

Nancy Peterson, Director of the MT Dept. of Agriculture, will address the MOA conference twice. Saturday she will join Senator Jon Tester at 1:30 to address The Future of Organic Agriculture in Montana. Then Sunday at 1:30 she will join The Policy Panel. Be sure to attend.

STOP AND SMELL THE COW-PIES BY R.R KNOTIS

I'm amazed at what gets done when a deadline looms. Things coalesce into a single finite point and suddenly the proverbial ducks all march in a row like dominos ready to fall. A single tip of the finger and a beautiful pattern emerges.

My previous lives seldom encountered deadlines of the traditional sort. They were more along the lines of "we'd better fix that fence before something gets out." That's one of the reasons I've so enjoyed watching the MOA conference come to life.

The folks responsible for this shindig

have such well-trained ducks you'd think they were Marine Corps drill instructors. It inspires awe in lesser beings like myself.

The Internet fairly crackles with communications and their phone conferences last well

into the night. Every day something new lurks in my mailbox demanding attention. It's a full-time job just sorting the mass of information into a readable format.

Overall the process is rather exciting. There's



R.R. Knotts & Co.

enough spit and polish on this year's conference to detail a battleship. A lowly scribe just stands back and wonders at the staggering load the conference organizers have shouldered. Someone should make organic Wheaties so we can put these folks on the box.

And the proof is in the pudding, as the old-timers say. If you want to see the result of their efforts you'll have to make the trek to Helena in February with the rest of us. I guarantee you won't be disappointed. At the very least you can hang-out with me.

IMPORTANT DATES:

January 14, 2005 is the deadline for vendors and participants to register for the MOA Annual Conference without a late fee.

January 17, 2005 is the deadline for people to reserve sleeping rooms from the block of rooms set aside at the Red Lion Colonial Inn (406) 443-2100 or (800)733-5466

Childcare is also available onsite during the conference.

ORGANIC BEEF PRODUCTION

By Margaret Scoles

Sunday afternoon's 2-hour Organic Beef Production workshop will be split into two segments moderated by Margaret Scoles (Director, Independent Organic Inspectors Association). Panelist are Clay McAlpine (Valier MT), whose organic products include pork and grass-fed beef, and Wes Henthorne (Big Timer MT), manager of B-Bar, who will speak about the challenges and opportunities in organic meat marketing, including his plan to certify heirloom White Parks cattle.

The second hour is a buyers/ marketing panel and will feature several potential organic meat markets. Panelist are retired cardiologist Dr. Steve Atchley (Mesquite CO) who buys and sells organic grassfed beef, Allan Moody (Organic Valley WI), Karalee Bancroft (Helena MT) owner/operator of Caroline Ranch marketing organic lambs and meat, and a representative from Wholesome Harvest (IA).

Mel Coleman of Coleman Natural Products and a representative from Dakota Beef have also promised to attend.

The demand for organic meat is a rapidly expanding market and buyers report interest in both grass-fed animals and traditional grain-finished products. Several organic beef buyers will be in attendance, as well as members of the Montana meat packing industry, looking to buy weaned calves and finished animals.

If you have organic livestock, or are looking to certify your livestock, don't miss this workshop.

LOCAL YOKELS TO PERFORM

BY CRISSIE McMULLIN

In the spring of 2004, inspired by fond stories of a 1970's alternative energy road show, six members of Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) were awarded a \$500 grant from AERO to create a new "road show" to promote local food systems. This seed money was used to build recycled props and set, purchase

(Continued on page 10)



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HELPING BRING VALUE BACK TO THE AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THIS SEASONS UP-COMING RED LODGE FARMERS MARKET CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION

WHAT'S IN A NAME? BY R.R. KNOTTS

It has been mentioned that some people object to my arbitrary selection of "NONSYNTHETIC NEWS" as the title of this publication. These objections have been duly noted.

It was suggested at the same time that perhaps the most democratic approach would be to hold a contest among the membership to select a more appropriate name. It was further suggested that since the name *Nonsynthetic News* began with a negative (non) it lent a less-than-positive aura to the newsletter.

Consider this the official announcement of The Naming Contest.

In support of the current title I would submit that all of the news contained between its

covers is in fact not synthetic, and allusions to the contrary are patently false. I petition that any name should be a succinct and accurate description of the named object.

Enough of that. Contest entries should be sent to the editor via email or at the mailing address listed several places in this publication. The prize is yet to be determined.

Comments? rek@midrivers.com

MEMBERSHIP DUES

MEMBERSHIP DU
INDIVIDUAL— \$25
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DEADLINES VARY FROM ISSUE TO ISSUE AND SPACE IS AVAILABLE ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS. CONTACT THE EDITOR FOR FUTHER DETAILS,

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VENDOR INFORMATION

In addition to the scheduled programs and breakout sessions, the MOA conference will host a vendor trade-show in the Red Lion throughout the event.

To date, organic grain processors, cattle buyers, veterinary suppliers, coffee roasters, mushroom processors and compost producers are ex-

pected to display their wares.

A variety of vendor packages are available and include 8' display areas, conference registration for one person and ad space in the conference brochure.

Conference registration for vendors includes meals and breakout sessions. Space is limited and early registration is highly encouraged.

For more information and specific vendor package details contact conference organizer Lise Rousseau at:

MOA Conference, 346 Finley Point Rd. Polson MT, 59860 phone (406) 887-2869 MOAConference@aol.com

A NEW MOA LOGO IN THE WORKS? BY R.R. KNOTTS

Wheels are in motion to select an appropriate logo for the Montana Organic Association. To aid in this task the MOA Board of Directors has decided to hold a contest among the membership. This contest is being held concurrent with the naming contest

Montana

Organic

Association

(see article on page 3) with the winners to be selected at a later date.

To form an appropriate logo we

should first determine A) what a logo is, and B) what a logo does. A) is fairly simple, Webster's defines it as an identifying statement. B) is a little more ambiguous.

If we look to the root of the word logo we find it is from the Latin word Logos which states in part, 1: the divine wisdom manifest in the creation, government, and redemption of the world. 2: reason that ancient Greek philosophy is the controlling principle in the universe.

Wow. That's pretty heavy sentiment

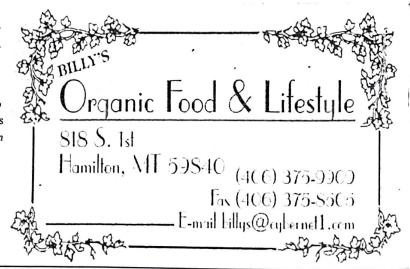
and quite frankly way more information than I wanted to know. But there is an underlying merit to its meaning. I'm not suggesting we should use our logo to control the universe but the part about divine wisdom and redemption certainly strikes a cord.

Mostly we should think about what we want our logo to say. Should it be a grandiose testament to the superiority of organic production in general, or merely statement of who we are and what we do?

The logo shown here was created and submitted by Olivia Kvaalen, MOA Board-member Jon Kvaalen's 13 year-old daughter. I find it pleasantly succinct. Who we are, where we're at. You can't get much better than that.

If you have a submission feel free to drop it in the mail or shoot it over the Internet to my email address, or any board member's address as well. Your input is needed and in the end you'll even win a prize. What that prize might be we haven't decided yet.

Comments? rek@midrivers.com



THE CHAIR SPEAKS BY JUDY OWSOWITZ

"The Chair"

This is supposed to be the slow time of (or maybe we should be committed, year, right? Long cold nights and short I won't get into that...). It is amazing

cold days thicken the oil in our vehicles and the grease in our joints. As busy as all of us organic folks are this winter must be a sign that organic agriculture sure isn't slowing down any in the near future!!

One thing adding to the busyness is the preparations for the

ness is the preparations for the upcoming annual conference. This is sure one committed group of people

(or maybe we should be committed, but ducers to consumers, from east to I won't get into that...). It is amazing west, from talkers to listeners from

how much hard work it takes to get an organization organized. Everyone on the conference committee, (see how that "commit" word keeps showing up), and everyone we can catch with our nets, is putting there all into this, and it shows.

If you haven't had a chance to look over the agenda, do it now. There is something for everyone, from producers to consumers, from east to west, from talkers to listeners, from watchers to dancers!! I am so darned excited I can't sit still!! We will get to meet some of our new and old government officials, listen to what they have to say, and have the opportunity to bend their ears a bit. We can learn how our Montana land-grant university is stepping into organic research, and what we can do to urge them along.

(Continued on page 10)

DANCE TO ERIK "FINGERS" RAY



POETRY BY JIM MURRAY

I've been asked to write a column

Our readers to review

Told I could set the volume

On my biased point of view

By way of introduction I'm just an ole Hayseed who has a strong compunction to fill an entertainment need

Now it was a big election with Politics abrew

The sum of their ingredients

Made a mighty rotten stew

The air was thick and heavy

With Ode-d'-Peppy LePew

Wish we had a good wind to Blow this foul air through

You'd think the populace

Would dump that kettle out

Ain't that what elections

Are supposed to be about?

Ah, Well, I think I'll end this yarn

I know where I can clean my

I'll go and clean the barn

Conrad Montana high-school math teacher and rancher, Erik Ray, will be performing at the MOA conference Saturday night at 7:30 PM. Ray (whose full name is Erik Ray Gustafson) has played in and around Montana since the 1980's and packs an amazing array of talent into his oneman show.

Anchored to the stage by a battered bass drum and top-hat cymbal Ray can just as easily belt out Jonnie Cash or Mick Jagger, then slip into an old-time country ballad from an age when country and blues weren't all that different from one another.

"The early country-western music, like Hank Williams and George Jones and all that stuff from back in the '40s and '50s, that was based on blues," says Ray. "Since then, country music has just gone downhill. Fortunately, there are still enough people out there who appreciate the old-time music that I can get out there and play what I love."

Ray has performed around Montana for more than twenty years, and earned his share of accolades. In 1980, his old rock band won the Montana State Battle of the Bands, a contest put on by Missoula radio station KZOQ.

The next year, Ray quit the rock scene and began performing country music as front-man for Erik Ray & the Skates. Around these parts, Erik Ray performs over 100 nights a year in bars and night-clubs from Miles City to

LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

By Barry Flamm

The upcoming MOA conference presents an excellent opportunity to meet and present your views to legislators and other policy makers. Sunday's legislative session will present and discuss the most important issues for the organic community. Bring your concerns and ideas for policy initiatives to the session.

Most important. Plan to stay over on Monday and participate in the LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH. MOA members will attend legislative sessions, testify on important measures and visit personally with Legislature members.

All legislators are receiving an invitation to attend speaking sessions as an honored guest of the MOA. Legislators like to hear from their constituents. You are encouraged to follow up with your own personalized letter or note urging them to attend this important event.

Don't miss this great chance to learn and also educate legislators about the important current and future issues facing organics. Legislative addresses and district maps are available at their web site: http://www.leg.state.mt.us/css/





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GIVING YOUR BUSINESS THE EDGE IT NEEDS

By R. R. Knotts

For a low-cost input that provides maximum returns you can't beat attending the 2nd annual MOA conference. This logic is based on the concentration of organic players sure to assemble at the Red Lion in Helena. Everyone knows that success in the organic marketplace depends on an established network of industry contacts. Some of the potential contacts certain to attend would be:

- Strategic partners—folks
 that are not exactly competitors
 but offer a complimentary or
 similar product to the same customer base.
- Referral sources—these are people who work with the same kind of customers as your business in a different capacity and can refer prospective clients.
- Prospective customers there is certain to be a significant showing of potential customers in a city as large as Helena.
- Potential employees—you never know who may be at the conference looking for a new job.
- Vendors—this works both ways, businesses looking for additional vendors, and vendors looking for new clients.
- Mentors—perhaps one of the most overlooked and highest values in organic production is the base of experience available to newcomers. Mentors can be found in all aspects of organics; marketing, production, vendors

and exhibitors.

The MOA conference is the best prospect this year to capitalize on such a variety of contacts in two short days. In the information-based society of organics, success is measured by the size of our network.

Another great benefit of the MOA conference is the opportunity to attend the workshops and breakout sessions. Life is essentially one long learning event and the conference is no different. Every new thing we learn, each new contact we make or demonstration we see teaches the best (or worst) practices in the industry.

Where else would direct competitors freely share the ideas that work so well

for them? A single successful new approach can repay the cost of attendance many-fold. It is no wonder that conventions and trade shows are so popular as cost-effective marketing strategies in all segments of business.

And when you think about it, your business is worth the investment of a few days. That's what business is all about, shifting and expanding boundaries to increase sales or profit. Would knowing more about your competition provide a basis upon which your own business could improve?

Attending the MOA annual conference is a very effective strategy within your business plan to better assess yourself and define the competition. It will also help attract new,

convert a competitor's, or retain your own customers.

Attendance alone is no guarantee of success though. You'll also need to get out and mingle. Visit the demonstrations, take flyers from the vendors, stay up until all hours of the night gabbing with your friends and new acquaintances.

No other Montana event provides as diverse an opportunity for the organic community.

Bring the family, tell a friend, drop the dog off at your mother-in-law's and get to Helena.

Comments? rek@midrivers.com

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Montana Organic Association

2nd Annual Conference

February 4-6, 2005 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel, Helena MT

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Address					
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CONFERENCE REG	GISTRATI	ON (PER PERSO	ON)		
Full conference and meals			X \$85\$		
Late Registration for full conference after January 14 (meals cannot be guaranteed for very late registrants or walk-in.			X \$100 \$		
Registration for one day, includes sessions and meals					
MOA Membership deduction					
Food Preferences: Carnivore Vegetarian Vegan	MOA MEMBERSHIP Individual \$25 \$ Household \$35 \$ Supporting \$60 \$				
	Contributing \$ 120				
	Life				
Scholarship Fund (L Please consider a donati	imited scholars	nips available based on need -			
	Total (please make checks p	payable to: AERO)\$		
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MOA Conference 346 S Finley Point Rd POLSON, MT 59860		I'd like to donate an item to the silent auction. Item description: U 406 887 2860			

For further information or questions, please call 406.887.2869 or email liserousseau@aol.com

Montana Organic Association

2nd Annual Conference

February 4-6, 2005 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel, Helena MT

Vendor/Sponsor Registration Form

Sponsor ½ page ad in brochure, full 8' disp	ORSHIP play space, registration for 1 person	\$500 \$			
Full Vendor 1/4 page ad in brochure, full 8' dis	play space, registration for 1 person	\$300 \$			
Half Vendor Listing in brochure, ½ of an 8' dis	splay space, registration for 1 person	\$150 \$			
Advertiser // page ad in brochure, registration	on for 1 person	\$150 \$			
MOA MEMBERSHIP					
Individual\$25\$					
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Living Lightly\$15\$					
Scholarship Fund (Limited schola Please consider a donation to the S		payable to: AERO) \$			
Please return this form to: MOA Conference 346 S Finley Point Rd Polson, MT 59860	I can help by hanging flyers in my local area. Please send me flyers.	Food Preferences: Carnivore Vegetarian Vegan			

THE CHAIR (CONTINUED PAGE 4)

Break-out sessions will cover everything from how to grow it, to how to sell it, to how to nurture it and certify it along the way. If you don't see a session that answers your particular question, the chances are that there will be someone in the halls between sessions that may know the answer, or know how to find out.

Oh, yes. And we will share the harvests. We'll be dining on the best of what Montana has to offer. Food that was grown by the person on your left, and processed by the person across the table. We have worked hard to search out what is available across our land of abundance, but it will be worth all the

effort.

But I think what excites me the most is the people. Our population may be scattered, but it is the richest treasure in The Treasure State. A smile comes to my face just thinking about gathering with our incredibly diverse organic folks. From Scobey to Hamilton, and Broadus to Whitefish, they will be coming to share the seasons stories. The successes and failures to learn from and laugh over

So whether you come for a technical question or for a hug, put on your snow shoes or your studded tires, and come join the soiree!!! I can't wait to see you there!!! Judy

YOKELS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

bio-diesel for the truck, and travel expenses. From June to September, the Local Yokels performed at ten venues from West Yellowstone to the Yaak.

Audiences delighted in the entertaining and energetic style of the performance, heartily responding to the cuecards, and requesting more information about local food after each show.

Audience comments included, "Wow, I had no idea Montana had 60,000,000 acres in agriculture!" or "I had never thought of asking restaurants and grocery stores for local food!"

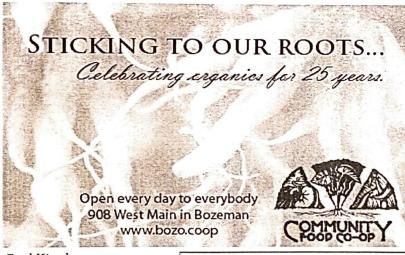
The Local Yokels will perform at the conference Friday night at 8:15.

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Childcare is also available onsite during the conference.



Fred Kirschenmann

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE I)

Bob Quinn

Grains, and founding member of the NOSB. He pioneered Kamut grain production and marketing. Bob is also the recipient of the Montana SBA Small Business Exporter of the year award. His Friday night keynote address is "Organic Frontiers—History & Possibilities at 4 levels: International, National, State, and My Farm."

Jon Tester is also from Big Sandy and President of the Montana State Senate. He is an organic farmer and a leader in establishing the Montana Department of Agriculture's organic certification program. In addition to taking part in a discussion panel Saturday afternoon, Senator Tester will also present a keynote address Saturday evening entitled "Economic Opportunities in Or-

ganic Agriculture; Montana's Bright Frontier."

The keynote speakers will be in attendance throughout the conference and participants are encouraged to seek them out for further comments and questions. The aggregate experience represented in these individuals is phenomenal and well worthwhile.

WHAT THE BLEEP IS GOING ON? BY OLE NORGAARD

Hello everyone, I am Ole Norgaard, one of the people who raised their hand at the Ursline Center in Great Falls last year to volunteer for the Montana Organic Association interim board. It has been a very busy year for those of us involved.

I know what your thinking, what the BLEEP is going on, and why do I have to write MOA and AERO on the check.? What does AERO have to do with MOA? As I understand it AERO is a grassroots organization that is the temporary fiscal agent for MOA.

All of us who raised our hands at the 2003 meeting: farmers, ranchers, horticulturist, consumers.... know very little about laws, regulations and tax exemptions, 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (3) 5 or 6 or 11 and who knows what.

So AERO volunteered to be the temporary fiscal agent for us, so we could work within the structure of their organization to get all these things in place. In essence they are a temporary channel for donations and grants to Montana Organic Association using their tax exempt status so all legal aspects will be done right. It has worked well and we, as MOA, would not have

THE GREATES PART
IS THAT ALL THE
BRICKS HAVE BEEN
LAID AND WE ARE
NOW MOVING
BEYOND THE
FRONTIER FOR
ORGANICS HERE IN
MONTANA.

been able to function and receive money without this help.

At this time MOA is in the process of obtaining our 501 (c) (3) through the Internal Revenue Service. If everything goes right this will be complete by spring 2005 and MOA will stand on it's own organic feet.

So why has this whole process taken a year to complete? It got to be interesting over the first part of 2004. A lot of multi-hour conference calls to build the foundation of Montana Organic Association. The other people that raised their hands that day are truly amazing, dedicated and filled with vision and energy.

I remember Judy Owsowitz (chair) in the spring 2004, pushing things forward fast because she had to plant 50,000 onions. Or was it carrots? And Jon Kvaalen stopped on his tractor somewhere in a field in eastern Montana, joining in on a conference call until it got too dark and he could not see his notes. I myself have several times ran to the phone and sat in my dirty work clothes on the conference call from 7 to 9 PM.

The amazing part is that some of these people I have only met over the phone. If I met them on the street, I would

not know them unless they spoke.

And our organic feet are most definitely working on it because this fall the conference committee got under way. How do these people do it? The skills and talent to put a conference/tradeshow/meeting together is really amazing. There has truly been put a lot of energy into this big "Organic Event" that is happening in Helena in Feb. 2005.

I can only say that these people are making it happened for you! We need more people to join in and make these things happen in the future; it is a task for the many, not the few.

The greatest part is that all the bricks have been laid and we are now moving beyond the frontier for organics here in Montana.

DON'T FORGET THE KIDS! CHILDCARE WILL BE AVAILABLE ONSITE.

FARM CONSERVATION PROGRAMS SLASHED

On December 8, Congress passed and the President signed an omnibus appropriations bill that created the following cuts in farm conservation programs:

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program cut by \$182 million.
- The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program cut by 55% (\$38 million).
- 100,000 acres (38%) cut out of the Wetlands Reserve Program.
- The Conservation Security Program cut by \$80 million.

 The Farm and Ranchland Protection Program cut by \$12 million

The preceding article has been reprinted from the December 31st edition of *Organic Bytes*. To sign up for a free monthly electronic newsletter go to their website at

www.organicconsumers.org/ organicbytes.htm

The main office can also be contacted by letter or phone at the following:

ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
6101 Cliff Estate Road
Little Marais, MN 55614
Phone: (218) 226-4164 Fax: (218) 353-7652

MONTANA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION

TO ADVOCATE AND PROMOTE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE FOR THE HIGHEST GOOD OF THE PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND STATE ECONOMY.

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 Dave/Dee Turner—Sec
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 Jon Kvaalen
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 Ole Norgaard—Treasure
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Nonsynthetic News is a semi-regular publication of the Montana Organic Association. Submit all queries, suggestions, letters and requests for information to the editor: Rob Knotts PO Box 252 Lambert, MT 59243 email:rek@midrivers.com

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The purpose of the Montana Organic Association is to provide education, information, support, assistance promotion and representation for organic producers, processors, handlers, retailers, consumers, researchers, agricultural service providers and other interested parties.