



Montana Organic Association <moamembership@gmail.com>

Re: Montana Organic Association: Invitation to Montana Candidates To Share Positions

1 message

mike@blackformontana.com <mike@blackformontana.com>
To: Montana Organic Association <moamembership@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 15, 2020 at 2:31 PM

Jamie:

Thank you for getting back to me. Those are all good questions but they deal with public policy rather than issues a judicial officer or candidate can address, so I would generally respond by expressing no opinion. I hope the candidates for policy-making offices respond. Take care.

Mike

On 2020-09-15 16:06, Montana Organic Association wrote:

Hi Mike: Thanks for your response and interest in Montana's organic community. You can find a pdf of the questions attached to this email. I'm pleased to answer questions you may have about the questionnaire or MOA.

Warm regards-

Jamie

On Tue, Sep 15, 2020 at 12:31 PM <mike@blackformontana.com> wrote:

Jamie:

I am running for the Supreme Court, which is a nonpartisan office, so I do not take any positions on matters of public policy. I am generally in favor of organic farming but I would like to see all of the questions you are asking before I start responding. Would you please send me all of the questions in an email or an attachment?

Thank you.

Mike Black
(406) 546-0017

On 2020-09-14 16:29, Montana Organic Association wrote:

Dear Montana Candidate:

The Montana Organic Association invites you to share your positions and thoughts on issues relevant to Montana's organic agriculture and rural communities. MOA is a non-partisan trade association representing more than 200 members who hold diverse political views but are united in a shared mission to farm and ranch without chemicals. MOA does not endorse candidates but will instead share your answers with our members who come from all corners of Montana. You will find a link below to a few questions that should take you about 10 - 20 minutes to answer.

Please reach out to me if you would like to learn more about Montana's

organic community.
Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely
Jamie Ryan Lockman
Executive Director

Montana Organic Association State Candidate Questionnaire 2020

[1]

About the Montana Organic Association

Since 2002, The Montana Organic Association has been the voice of Montana's organic community. MOA is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization

that provides education, information, support, assistance, promotion, and representation for organic producers, processors, handlers, retailers, consumers, researchers, agricultural service providers, and other interested parties.

The MOA membership believes that the organic movement is the one best

hope for keeping small family farms viable while providing clean, nutritious, and safe food to the community; helping secure our food

system by supporting farm diversity, and contributing to a healthier

environment which helps protect our precious wildlife and natural resources.

Learn more about MOA at www.montanaorganicassociation.org [1] [2]

and

contact us with questions at (406) 546-6572 or moamembership@gmail.com

[3]

Organic Food Production Act of 1990

Part of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (1990 Farm Bill), the Organic Food Production Act created the National

Organic Program (NOP) within the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

(AMS). After considerable public input, the USDA published a final rule in December 2000. The rule went into effect in April 2001 and

was

fully implemented in October 2002 after a waiting period to allow time

for producers to comply with the new regulations.

Since October 2002, the word "organic" is regulated, and all agricultural products labeled organic must follow USDA organic regulations.

The NOP develops the rules & regulations for the production, handling,

labeling, and enforcement of all USDA organic products. This process,

referred to as rulemaking, involves input from the National Organic

Standards Board (NOSB), a Federal Advisory Committee made up of fifteen members of the public. The NOP also maintains a Handbook

that

includes guidance, instructions, policy memos, and other documents that communicate the organic standards.

The NOSB is a Federal Advisory Board made up of 15 dedicated public

volunteers from across the organic community. Established by the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the NOSB considers and makes recommendations on a wide range of issues involving the production, handling, and processing of organic products. The NOSB also has special responsibilities related to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

This USDA program is unique in that those under the onus of the federal program rules, determine their own rules through the NOP rulemaking process and the undertakings of the NOSB. Each NOSB member, who is selected based on their role and experience within the organic industry, is appointed by the US Secretary of Agriculture for a five-year term. USDA publishes a call for nominations each year.

It takes three years for a farmer to transition from non-organic production to certified organic production. During this transition time, the farmer pays for organic production costs but is not able to sell this transition production for the premium organic value. The current Farm Bill approved by the House and Senate will modify the Department of Agriculture's existing voluntary agricultural conservation programs to better assist growers who want to switch to organic. Among the provisions that will help farmers transition to organic include providing transitioning growers with additional technical and financial assistance, as well as make more farmland available to those who want to farm organically. The bill will also provide increased funding for USDA's organic certification cost-share program. And it will provide nearly \$400 million in permanent funding for organic research and extension programs over the next decade to ensure that farmers transitioning to organic have greater access to high-yielding organic seeds as well as the resources necessary to address weed, pest, and soil health challenges. Further, there are provisions for increased scrutiny of organic imports, which will better position American farmers and ranchers to meet the growing demand for organic food here at home – a win-win-win for organic businesses, consumers, and the environment.

Montanans on the NOSB

- Barry Flamm, Ph.D., Conservation Consultant, Polson, MT, Environmentalist, 2008 – 2013

- Nathaniel Powell-Palm, Cold Spring Organics, Bozeman, MT, Organic Farmer/Producer, 2020 – 2025

Environmental Considerations of Organic Farming Systems

From the National Organic Farming Handbook (Completed with contributions from Jeff Schahczenski, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Butte, MT)

While the environmental benefits vary by farm, in general, organic systems can benefit environmental quality in several ways:

- Soil.—Soil-building practices such as crop rotations, cover crops, organic fertilizers, residue management, and minimum tillage

are central to organic practices. These practices replenish soil organic matter, feed soil life, reduce erosion, improve soil structure, and enhance nutrient cycling and water retention. A-4

Title

190 – National Organic Farming Handbook 190–612–H, 1st Ed.,

Nov

2015

- **Water.**—Well-managed organic systems rely mainly on slow-release forms of nutrients, which reduce the risk of nutrient runoff and leaching. Enhanced soil structure, water infiltration, and better nutrient retention also reduce the risk of water quality impairment.
- **Air and Climate Change.**—Organic farming practices increase the return of carbon to the soil, thus removing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and mitigating global warming.
- **Biodiversity.**—Organic systems enhance biodiversity at several levels. A variety of seeds and breeds are preferred for their greater resistance to diseases, climate, and pests. Producers employ diverse combinations and rotations of plants and animals. The maintenance and planting of natural areas within and around organic fields and the minimal use of synthetic inputs create suitable habitats for wildlife.

Organic farming systems also present some distinct environmental challenges:

- **Soil Nutrients.**—Organic nutrient sources release slowly, and it is difficult to calibrate application rates for optimum production. A reliance on manure and compost to provide adequate nitrogen (N) for organic crops can lead to nutrient imbalances, especially a buildup of excessive soil phosphorus (P). Inadequate crop-available N, especially in early spring when the soil is cool, is a common production constraint for organic farms. Legume cover crops can address this constraint without adding P or other nutrients.
- **Tillage.**—Without broad-spectrum herbicides, organic annual crop production is more reliant on tillage and cultivation for weed management and seedbed preparation. This can lead to soil erosion, compaction, and organic matter loss. Integrated, ecological weed management strategies, including cover crops and crop rotation, can reduce reliance on cultivation, and additions of organic matter to the soil can mitigate negative impacts of tillage. Awareness of this issue has led an increasing number of organic farmers to implement flame weeding, mulches, reduced-till, and sometimes no-till systems.
- **Soil Residues.**—Some specialty crop rotations may not provide sufficient crop residues to replenish soil organic carbon or control erosion. Farmers producing high-value crops on limited acreage may find it challenging to implement a crop rotation with substantial residue return because of financial or logistical constraints.

- Transition.—The required three years free of NOP-prohibited materials can create an incentive for a farmer to break sod if existing cropland has had recent use of NOP-prohibited materials.

In contrast, areas in sod have not (see appendix 2 of this handbook for information about converting Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land to production). Breaking sod located on sloping land, highly erodible land (HEL), or high conservation value (HCV).

GMO's

The use of genetic engineering, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), is prohibited in organic products. This rule 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.

Farmers, ranchers, processors, and manufacturers must show they aren't using GMOs and that they are protecting their products from contact with prohibited substances from farm to table to meet USDA organic regulations.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)

Beginnings in the United States can generally be traced back to the advent of the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Acts. But, for the first time, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub .L. No. 110-234, Section 7410) appropriated \$75 million for FY. 2009 to FY. 2012 to develop and offer education, training, outreach, and mentoring programs to enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers.

The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional \$20 million per year for 2014 through 2018. The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are as follows: the rising average age of US farmers; the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018; and the growing recognition that new [programs are needed to address the needs](#) of the next generation of beginning farmers and ranchers.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (aka the 2018 Farm Bill) reauthorized the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and provides mandatory funds for which supports education, mentoring, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers.

The funding is \$15 million a year for Fiscal Years (FY) 2019 and 2020, \$17.5 million for FY. 2021, \$20 million for FY. 2022, and \$25 million for FY2023.

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Jamie Ryan Lockman
Executive Director

Montana Organic Association

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Links:

[1]

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDkJButSALynCZU3KOGBK4fZIJhu39xssXaCNKzP-BkhSFOQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

[2] <http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/>

[3]

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd9uz3NO4juxppXXnHhiAer_YLPn4pmQpRoauXeA8NpNrKv7w/viewform?usp=sf_link

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