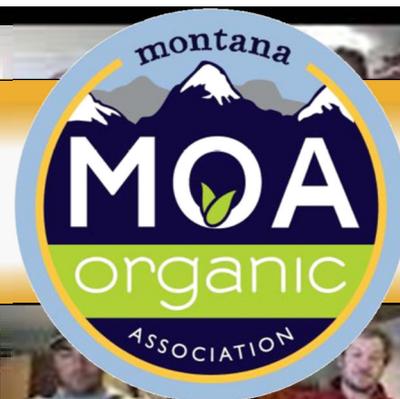


# Organic Matters



*Adapt and Thrive!*



*Photo: John Wicks, Ledger, MT*



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## MOA Conference Goes Virtual!

For the first time, the MOA Annual Conference and Business meeting will be delivered online via Zoom. While not an ideal situation, the Conference Committee determined that it is valuable to connect as members and pivot to hosting MOA’s usual research updates, discussions, practical workshops, Organic University, and even student sessions online. It is hoped that you understand the new nature of trying the new format and that there will be bumps along the way. The MOA By-laws requires that it have an annual meeting. There will be **NO CHARGES** to attend any of these virtual events. Please register online or download and send pages 47–48 to MOA to receive invitations to the events.

There are scheduled sessions throughout the days when the conference was scheduled, December 3–5, but sessions are also scheduled throughout this Fall, into December, and the New Year. The Annual Business Meeting is scheduled for December 5 at 12:30 PM.

The schedule is much lighter than MOA’s usual offering and sessions will be recorded for later viewing. See pages 3–12 for schedule and descriptions of the sessions. Find FAQ on page 13 and Zoom instructions on page 15. A practice session with Zoom is scheduled for Monday, November 23 at 7 pm.

Have you renewed your MOA membership?

CONNECTING MONTANA'S ORGANIC COMMUNITY

# Adapt... and Thrive!

MOA is adapting to new realities with nimble plans to keep you connected and thriving as public health conditions allow.



## MOA Announces the 18th Annual **Virtual** Conference Programming and Business Meeting

Planning for MOA's virtual annual conference is nearly complete for a full slate of conference events delivered on Zoom, beginning in November and culminating December 3–5, 2020.

- The MOA Business Meeting will take place virtually at 12:30 pm on December 5.
- More than 20 sessions!
- Policy discussions will occur on November 18, 2020 at 7 pm.
- Election and Policy Proposal Ballots are available via GoogleDocs.
- There are NO CHARGES to attend conferences sessions.
- Register to attend Online.
- Make sure to renew your memberships!
- Check out the conference sponsors!

**Please follow us on Facebook for the latest news.**

# MOA Conference Session Schedule and Preview

November	Time	Title	Presenter
Wednesday, November 4	7:00 – 8:30 PM	Zoom Practice Session	Jamie Lockman MOA Executive Director
Wednesday, November 11	7:00 – 8:30 PM	Cooking with Sarah!	Sarah Manual Chef, Farmer Meets Foodie & The Streatery
Thursday, November 12	12:00–1:30 PM	Organic Certification of Montana Fruits	Led by Katrina Mendrey, Orchard Program Manager, Western Agricultural Research Center. Various speakers.
Wednesday, November 18	7:00 – 8 :30 PM	MOA Policy Proposals Discussion Forum	MOA Board Members and Policy Sub-Committee Chairs, Doug Crabtree, Nate Powell-Palm
Monday, November 23	4:00–5:30 PM	MOA Zoom Practice Session	Join MOA to practice using Zoom!

## MOA Virtual Conference Speaker Selected Previews

Take a peak at descriptions of the virtual conference sessions MOA is hosting. To attend, register at NO COST on the MOA website or using the document included in this newsletter. You will receive an email notice with the Zoom link.

Trouble connecting? Contact Jamie [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)



### Wednesday, November 4, 2020

#### 7:00–8:30 PM Zoom Practice Session

Join a fun and friendly Zoom practice session to give Zoom a test drive.

Schedule descriptions continue on next page.

---

## MOA Conference Session Schedule and Preview

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Wednesday, November 11, 2020

7:00–8:30 PM “Cooking with Sarah!”

**Sarah Manuel, Chef/Owner, Steatery and Farm House Dinners**

Just in time for the holidays, learn how to make a decadent dish of chocolate lentil mousse. Join me for a live zoom demonstration where I will walk you through each step of my original mousse recipe. I am the chef/owner of Farmer Meets Foodie. In everything we do, we believe in challenging the way society has taught us to eat. We believe in maintaining the integrity of local and organic agriculture. The way we maintain and challenge is to promote authenticity and transparency by utilizing local, organic and seasonal ingredients to prepare creative cuisine. Are you hungry for change?



Thursday, November 12, 2020

12:00–1:30 PM “Organic Certification of Montana Fruits: Virtual discussion with Montana Fruit Growers, Distributors & Certifiers”

**Katrina Mendrey, Orchard Program Manager, Western Agricultural Research Center**

While Montana producers may face many challenges to growing fruit, our relatively low pest pressure makes organic production attainable. Many producers are already practicing organic management in their orchards and vineyards, but is it worth the effort and cost to certify? This virtual panel discussion will provide growers with information on the organic certification process including cost, resources through the Montana Organic Association, as well as perspectives from recently certified Montana fruit growers and the Western Montana Growers Co-op, a distributor I involved in marketing Montana produce across the state.

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

7:00 –8:30 PM “MOA Policy Proposals Discussion Forum”

MOA Policy Committee Co-Chairs Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm provide a description of the policy proposals that have been submitted to the MOA membership for approval. They’ll be able to answer your questions about supporting or not supporting the proposals and provide instructions on how to submit your virtual ballot.

Monday, November 23, 2020

4:00 –5:30 PM “MOA Zoom Practice Session”

Join a fun and friendly Zoom practice session to give Zoom a test drive.

# Organic University

Organic University (Organic U) is offered to beginning farmers and those new-to-organic as a **virtual** workshop as part of the MOA Annual Conference and Business Meeting. It offers the chance to meet seasoned inspectors, producers, and other professionals to learn about how organic certification and production can work for you. The instructors have experience in diverse operations; from small scale direct-to-market to large scale grain, pulse, and livestock operations, as well as experience with alternative crops such as hemp and other oilseeds. Are you a long-time farmer or rancher? As part of Organic U, Organic Inspector Margaret Scoles will help you develop your own Organic System Plan. Other presenters include Judy Owsowitz, Terrapin Farm; Jess Alger, Alger Ranch; Doug Crabtree, Vilicus Farms; Nate Powell-Palm, Organic Inspector and Cold Springs Ranch.

*The sessions with stars (\*) are also appropriate for long-time certified farmers, ranchers, or anyone with questions about organic certification and farm programs.*

November	Time	Title	Presenter
Monday November 30	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	The Story of Vilicus Farms*	Doug Crabtree Farmer and Founder, Vilicus Farms
	4:00 – 5:30 PM	Systems Thinking: Holistic Farming*	Becky Weed, MOA Board Chair & Tim Seipel, Professor, MSU
December	Time	Title	Presenter
Tuesday, December 1	9:00 – 10:30 AM	OATS Update*	Mallory Krieger, OATS National Program Director and Nate Powell Palm, OATS Trainer
	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Introduction to the Organic System Plan	Margaret Scoles Exec. Director, International Organic Inspectors Association
	4:00 – 5:30 PM	Organic Standards, Inspection, and Certification: Fitting It All Together	Georgana Webster, Montana Organic Program & Nate Powell-Palm, National Organic Standards Board
Wednesday, December 2	9:00 – 10:30 AM	Crop Insurance for Organic Operations*	Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural & Natural Resource Economist, NCAT
	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Developing and Preparing Your Organic System Plan	Margaret Scoles, Nate Powell-Palm, Judy Owsowitz, Doug Crabtree
	4:00 – 5:30 PM	Accessing Federal Working Lands Programs*	Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural & Natural Resource Economist, NCAT
Thursday, December 10	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Ranching Organic Discussion Session	Jess Alger, Rancher, MOA Board & Ty O'Connor, O'Connor Crops & Cattle

## **Organic University! November 30–December 11. All are welcome.**

See schedule, page 5,

### **Monday, November 30, 2020**

#### **11:00 AM–12:30 PM “The Story of Vilicus Farms”\***

**Doug Crabtree, Farmer/Owner Vilicus Farms, Havre, MT**

Vilicus Farms officially started from scratch in 2009 when Doug and Anna purchased 1,280 acres of Northern Great Plains prairie off the open market with 20 years of savings and lots of hutzpah. The vision for Vilicus began years earlier when Doug, whose family’s grain farm in Ohio had been lost in farm crisis of the 1980’s, began looking for a viable way to return to farming. Without the existence of a traditional family farm base, options were limited. In 2005, Doug and Anna recognized the emerging opportunities in the organic market and began drafting their vision of a model organic farm that would push the boundaries of conservation and sustainability. Since 2009 Vilicus has seen a full cycle of its crop rotation, and grown from 1,280 to 7,400 acres. Doug and Anna have begun an organic farmer apprenticeship program to mentor beginning farmers through the challenges of starting a midscale, dryland organic farming operation.

#### **4:00–5:30 PM “Systems Thinking: Holistic Farming”\***

**Becky Weed, MOA Board Chair & Tim Seipel, Professor, MSU**

What is Systems Thinking? And how does it apply to organic farming. Becky Weed shares her knowledge and wisdom about the bigger picture of farming and ranching organic. Dr. Seipel will focus on weed management in organic cropping systems and will discuss using cropping systems and rotations to manage weeds. He will present information on weed communities across different management systems and crop rotations during a 5-year organic research project.

### **Tuesday, December 1, 2020**

#### **9:00–10:30 AM “OATS Is On Its Way to the Rocky Mountain West”\***

**Mallory Krieger, Program Director, Organic Agronomy Training Services (OATS)**

Mallory Krieger introduces “the train the trainer” virtual and in-person education opportunity headed to Montana and surrounding states. The goal of this program is to increase domestic organic production by strengthening the educational support network of agronomists, certified crop advisors, extension agents, and technical service providers serving certified organic producers.

#### **11:00 AM –12:30 PM “Introduction to the Organic System Plan”**

**Margaret Scoles, Executive Director, International Organic Inspectors Association**

Experienced inspector and producer Margaret Scoles will help you develop an organic system plan for your operation. At the end of this session, you will walk away ready for your organic inspection.

#### **4:00–5:30 PM “Organic Standards, Inspection, and Certification: Fitting It All Together”**

**Georgana Webster, Montana Organic Program And Nate Powell-Palm, National Organic Standards Board**

What are Organic Standards and who determines what they are? What are the mechanics of becoming “Certified Organic?” How do organic inspections work? This session is hosted by a veteran organic certifier and inspector who are also organic producers. They will give you the information you need about organic certification.

# MOA Conference And Business Meeting Schedule

December	Time	Title	Presenter
<b>Thursday December 3</b>	9:00—10:30 AM	Uncovering Profitability in the Organic System	Moderated by Nathan Irons Founder & CEO, Bluestone Life
	1:00— 2:30 PM	Mobile Meat Processing & Taking on Behemoths	Mike Callicrate, Owner, Ranch Foods Direct
	3:00—4:30 PM	MSU Research Update with OAEC	Pat Carr, Jed Eberly, David Sands, and others  Ole Norgaard, Chair OAEC
	7:00—8:30 PM	The Secret History of Montana Women’s Community Cook-books	Randi Tanglen, PhD, Exec. Director, Humanities Montana
	Time	Title	Presenter
<b>Friday December 4</b>	9:00—10:30 AM	Year-Round Grazing Management (Gra-ze Anatomy)- Taking Stock of the Situation!	Rick Caquelin Area Range Specialist, NRCS
<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b>	<b>1:00— 2:30 PM</b>	<b>Let Feed and Food Be Our Medicine</b>	<b>Fred Provenza Professor Emeritus Utah State University</b>
	3:00—4:30 PM	Montana Food Providers Project: AERO & MOA Respond to COVID	Robin Kelson, AERO Jamie Ryan Lockman and Becky Weed, MOA
	7:00—8:30 PM	Catching Up with Bob Quinn	Bob Quinn Organic Farmer, Quinn Organics, Kamut International
	Time	Title	Presenter
<b>Saturday December 5</b>	9:00—11:00 AM	Student Presentations	Organized by Tim Seipel and Kara Hettinger
	12:30—2:00 PM	Montana Organic Association Business Meeting	MOA Board & MOA Members

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

**9:00—10:30 AM “Crop Insurance for Organic Operations”\***

**Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural & Natural Resource Economist, NCAT**

Crop insurance for organic crops can work a bit differently than non-organic farmers and ranchers are used to. Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural and Natural Resource Economist, National Center for Appropriate Technology, provides a review of major crop insurance options for larger and smaller-scale organic and transitioning to organic farmers and ranchers. Also discussed is the Whole-farm Revenue Protection update including recent changes for hemp growers and direct market farmers. Expect real-life examples that illustrate the complexities of organic crop insurance.

**11:00 AM —12:30 “Developing and Preparing Your Organic System Plan”**

**Margaret Scoles, Nate Powell-Palm, Judy Owsowitz, Doug Crabtree**

Expect to leave this session with a good start on your farm or ranch's Organic System Plan. Led by Margaret Scoles, Nate Powell-Palm, Judy Owsowitz, and Doug Crabtree.

**4:00—5:30 PM “Accessing Federal Working Lands Programs”\***

**Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural & Natural Resource Economist, NCAT**

This presentation will update and teach organic farmers and ranchers how to optimize access to millions of dollars available for conservation efforts that support organic production systems. This presentation will specifically feature the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. These working lands programs have been used by hundreds of organic producers nationwide to support the many beneficial practices that are used by organic producers. This presentation by Jeff Schahzcenski, Agricultural and Natural Resource Economist, NCAT, will help organic producers gain support for their current and potential conservation efforts which are part of being a certified organic producer.

**Thank You MOA Conference Sponsors!!!**



**Conference Sponsorships Available!!! Sponsor MOA today!!!**

**Purchase online or see page 49 in this issue.**

## Thursday, December 3, 2020

### 9:00–10:30 AM “Uncovering Profitability in the Organic System”

**Moderated by Nathan Irons, Founder and CEO, Bluestone Life**

What does profitability mean in organic food systems? This panel will explore financing (both traditional and non-traditional) as well as access to new markets and new ways to think about profitability. Panel includes Jennifer Dees, Northwest Farm Credit Services, Havre, Mara Fleishman, CEO, Chef Ann Foundation, and others.

### 1:00– 2:30 PM “Mobile Meat Processing & Taking on Behemoths”

**Mike Callicrate, Owner, Ranch Foods Direct**

The US food system does not work for ranchers, small businesses, and consumers. Mike Callicrate offers his prescription for creating a new system. Be prepared to break assumptions, re-think models, and be inspired.

### 3:00–4:30 PM “MSU Research Updates with OAEC”

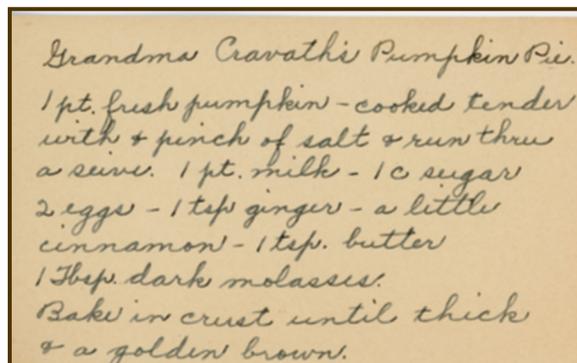
**Pat Carr, Tim Seipel, David Sands, Chelsey Roper, Jed Eberly, Ole Norgaard, and others**

Updates on MSU Research including, “CREEP STOP: Progress Report on Our Project to Develop Strategies for Suppression of Creeping Perennial Weeds;” “Bioherbicides: How to get them to work effectively against Canada Thistle and Bindweed, in Montana.,” “Canada Thistle Biocontrol in Organic Cropping Systems.”

### 7:00–8:30 PM “The Secret History of Montana Women’s Community Cookbooks”

**Randi Lynn Tanglen, Ph.D. , Executive Director, Humanities Montana**

Many Montana families have a well-worn collection of church and community cookbook passed down by grandmothers, aunts, and female friends and family. While these books contain nostalgic time-tested recipes and family traditions, they also have much to tell us—as historical and literary documents— about the lives and stories of the women who created them. In this presentation, Dr. Randi Tanglen discusses her research on women’s community cookbooks in eastern Montana, and the unexpected role of cookbooks in promoting women’s influence and leadership. Audience members are invited to bring their own community cookbook(s) to share and discuss.



“Recipe Card Library file box,” Montana Historical Society, Digital Vault, accessed October 19, 2020, <http://digitalvault.mhs.mt.gov/items/show/21993>.  
“Grandma Cravath's pumpkin pie.,” Digital VaultIt, accessed October 19, 2020, <http://digitalvault.mhs.mt.gov/items/show/21992>.

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## Friday, December 4

### 9:00—10:30 AM “Year-Round Grazing Management (Gra-ze Anatomy)- Taking Stock of the Situation!”

**Rick Caquelin, Area Range Specialist, NRCS**

Discuss ways to extend your grazing season while improving grass health, plant diversity, water and carbon storage and do it profitably. Includes discussion of integrated grazing on field crops.

### 1:00— 2:30 PM “Let Feed and Food Be Our Medicine”- KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Fred Provenza, Professor Emeritus, Utah State University**

Fred Provenza, originally from Colorado, earned a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University. He worked on a ranch in Colorado for several years then pursued a PhD in Range Science at Utah State University, where he taught as faculty member in the Department of Range Science from 1982 to 2009. He currently is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Wildland Resources at Utah State University.

For the past 30 years, his group has produced groundbreaking research that laid the foundations for what is now known as behavior-based management of landscapes. That work inspired researchers in disciplines as diverse as chemical ecology, ruminant nutrition, human nutrition and biopsychology, animal welfare, landscape restoration ecology, wildlife damage management, pasture and rangeland science and management, and rural sociology and eco-development.



Fred Provenza, Professor Emeritus,  
Utah State University

### 3:00—4:30 PM “Montana Food Providers Project: AERO & MOA Respond to COVID”

**Robin Kelson, AERO Interim Executive Director & Jamie Ryan Lockman, MOA Executive Director**

The COVID 19 crisis is an ugly and difficult awakening, but it is also an inspirational one. MOA and AERO established a collaboration, The Montana Food Providers Project, to connect local farmers and ranchers producing healthy food to Montanans experiencing food insecurity. Learn more about how MFPP has worked with local farmers and ranchers as well as community social service organizations, the successes, the challenges, and where to go from here.

### 7:00—8:30 PM “Catching Up with Bob Quinn”

**Bob Quinn, Organic Farmer, Quinn Organics, Kamut International**

Farmer, scientist, entrepreneur Bob Quinn shares his wisdom and inspiration. Catch up with his latest projects that include construction of a new on-farm greenhouse that will house citrus and other cold sensitive trees.

## Saturday, December 5

9:00–11:00 AM Student Presentations

Organized by Tim Seipel, MSU Assistant Research Professor and Kara Hettinger, MSU Graduate Student

Student speakers and presentation titles will be announced later.

12:30–2:00 PM “Montana Organic Association Business Meeting”

MOA Board & MOA Members—Agenda TBA.

Thank you MOA Sponsor Northwest Farm Credit Services!!



## Opportunity: Organic Research Focus Group

The Montana Organic Association is seeking certified organic producers OR producers transitioning to organic production to participate in a virtual focus group (small group discussion) some time in January or February (time and date to be determined by Doodle Poll). The virtual focus group is part of a national survey led by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) to identify the top challenges facing organic farmers and ranchers. The discussion will be hosted on Zoom and participants will be able to join via computer or phone and will take approximately an hour and a half.

After attending the virtual focus groups and completing the survey, participants will receive a **\$25 VISA gift card**. If you have already participated in a focus group discussion associated with this project, please disregard this open-call.

The virtual focus group is an opportunity to describe the biggest agronomic, economic, and social challenges you are facing. In particular, we would like to understand what kinds of research, information, and technical assistance programs are needed to support your organic production practices.

Your views will be used to help build a comprehensive roadmap for future research investments to advance organic agriculture across the U.S. Results will be published in updates of OFRF’s National Organic Research Agenda (NORA) report and OSA’s State of Organic Seed (SOS) report.

Participation is voluntary and any information you might share during the virtual focus group will be kept confidential.

*If you are interested in participating in the virtual focus group please submit your response by December 10, 2020. Participants will be randomly selected. If chosen, participants will be asked to participate in a two-hour Zoom call and respond to a brief online survey.*

Contact Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) or visit: [Organic Research Focus Group](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Virtual MOA Conference

### What do I need to know about attending a virtual conference?

Basic Zoom instructions are included in this issue of the Organic Matters Newsletter there is also a lot of resources on the Zoom website including the 1-minute video "[Join a Zoom Meeting.](#)" MOA is scheduling at least one Zoom session a week over the coming months and one practice session on Monday, November 23 at 4 pm. MOA pays for the Zoom service, but there are no charges for those attending meetings.

### Where can I find the schedule?

Find the MOA schedule in this newsletter, on the MOA website, and in the MOA website calendar found on right side of the website landing page. MOA will be hosting additional sessions through the winter. Follow MOA on Facebook and visit the website to stay up-to-date with the latest news.

### How do I get a meeting link?

Register using the form in this newsletter on **INSERT PAGE** or online at: [MOA Conference and Organic University Registration](#) Please indicate the sessions you'd like to attend.

### How much does it cost?

There are NO CHARGES for the MOA Conference Sessions for 2020. Because the virtual platforms are new for MOA, this first year, we decided not to charge for sessions. We do ask that you renew your membership! The rates have not changed! Without our conference, MOA's biggest fundraiser of the year, MOA is facing financial hardship that can be made up with membership and sponsorships.

### How can I learn more about using Zoom for the MOA Conference?

MOA has a practice session scheduled for Wednesday, November 4 at 7 PM and Monday, November 23, 2020 at 4 PM. There are also many online tutorials available at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) and other websites.

### Why are the MOA Conference sessions an hour and a half long?

Experience with Zoom events has proven that meetings tend to start a few minutes later while people join in and to not to start on the hour (starting time) and frequently go over an hour with really great discussion and questions. Presenters typically won't use the entire time to present their work.

### Will there be a MOA Membership meeting?

Yes. MOA's bylaws require that it hold an annual membership meeting. This meeting will take place December 5, 2020 at 12:30 PM.

### How do I vote for policy proposals and the board election?

Voting will take place virtually via Google Docs beginning November 5, 2020 and closing December 5, 2020 at 8 AM. The virtual documents are set up so there is only one vote per email account. Additional information about voting can be found in this newsletter. The links to vote are:

- [MOA 2020 Policy Proposal Ballot](#)
- [MOA 2020 Board Election Ballot](#)

### Is there a trade show?

MOA opted not to host a virtual trade show due to mixed reviews about such events. It is offering enhanced listings in the Business and Resource Directory as part of memberships and sponsorships. **Support MOA Members and Sponsors!!**

### When will MOA have an in-person event?

An in-person event will be scheduled when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, be safe, be well, and be organic!

### Where can I get more information?

Contact Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)



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3



*"In these challenging times, Columbia Grain is taking numerous measures to ensure all of our farmers and employees are supported and safe. We are increasing processing hours at our specialty pulse processing facilities, following all CDC guidelines, following Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), maintaining stringent Food Safety Programs, and adding more team members at our elevators to help farmers stay in their trucks while delivering their grains and pulses. The food supply chain is essential, and we are doing everything necessary to keep all safe and food flowing to nourish the world."*

**Jeff VanPevenage**, President and CEO

# Instructions

## What is Zoom?

Like many schools, businesses and organizations, MOA has turned to Zoom when events shut down for the pandemic. More than 300 million people turned to Zoom in order to have video meetings using their computers, smartphone and tablets as in-person events have been canceled.

Zoom is one of the leading video conferencing software systems on the market. In addition to using Zoom with video, you can call in to the Zoom event with a phone number, meeting code, and password.

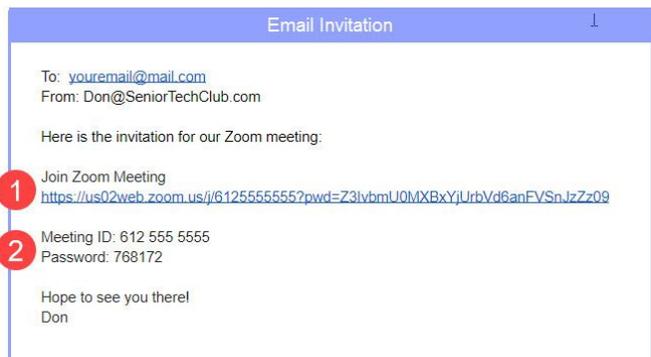
**DO I NEED TO INSTALL THE ZOOM APP?** It is recommended that you install the Zoom app for the best and easiest Zoom connections. It is possible to participate in a Zoom meeting using only a web browser like Safari or Chrome. But if you are going to be using Zoom to connect more than a couple of times, experts advise installing the app.

**DO I NEED A ZOOM ACCOUNT?** No. If you are attending a Zoom meeting set up by another person, you do not need a Zoom account. You do not need to register with Zoom to attend a meeting. If you plan to schedule and host your own Zoom meeting, you will need to have a Zoom account. It is possible to use a free account to host a meeting.

**YOUR ZOOM INVITATION:** A Zoom meeting typically starts with an invitation that arrives by email.

In addition to the date and time for the meeting, the Zoom invite that you receive will have 3 important pieces of information for you meeting, the meeting link, the Meeting ID, and Password.

**Join Zoom Meeting** is a URL link (internet link) that you can click on to take you to your Zoom meeting. Clicking or tapping on this link is the recommended and easiest way to join the Zoom meeting.



1. Meeting ID & Password. If you have the Zoom app installed and running on your computer or device, you can use the Meeting ID to take you to the Zoom meeting.
2. You can also call in to the meeting with any of the numbers that are included in the Zoom invitation and provide the meeting ID and Password.

For more tips on using Zoom, visit <https://nerdschalk.com/how-to-join-a-zoom-meeting-for-the-first-time/> MOA is hosting a Zoom Practice Session on November 23, 2020 at 4:00 PM. Indicate you are interested in attending it when you register for the conference.

**Tip; Some internet connections are weak. If your system has trouble, cut your video feed. You can still see the session and talk when you use your mic, but by reducing the bandwidth you're using, you will get a better connection. Remember to mute your mic if you are not speaking.**



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## MOA Policy Subcommittee Is Working for You!

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Currently, the Policy Subcommittee just posted answers candidates submitted in response to an election year questionnaire. These answers are posted on the MOA website: [MOA 2020 Candidate Questionnaire Responses](#)

The Policy Subcommittee has also submitted [twelve policy proposals](#) to be considered by the MOA membership. It will host a discussion session on November 18, 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom, to discuss or answer any questions about these twelve proposals that range on topics from research to cost-share funding, to broadband internet and more (see pages 22–24 in this issue). You will receive an electronic ballot to vote on these twelve proposals.

MOA works with organizations like the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Organic Trade Association (OTA), Organic Farmers Association (OFA) and more, to stay up-to-date with the latest policy issues and to take deep dives on issues with their very knowledgeable policy staffs. These organizations also help to amplify Montana's voice through their very effective networks.

If you are interested in becoming more active in MOA policy, please consider joining the MOA Policy Subcommittee. It generally meets once per month via Zoom video or phone access. You must be a MOA member to participate in MOA policy discussions, as well as to vote on policies.



Contact [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) to learn more and to join the subcommittee.

### MOA Policy Update Opportunities

**October 27, 2020, 4 PM,** Organic Farmers Association Policy Update and Opportunities for Action with Patty Lovera, OFA Policy Director. Find a recording of the robust discussion on MOA's YouTube Channel.

**November 18, 2020, 7 PM,** Montana Organic Association Policy Subcommittee Policy Proposal Discussions with Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm. Register for the conference or contact Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) for meeting link.

*Recording will be made available after the event.*



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## MOA Queries Montana Candidates

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The Montana Organic Association for the first time has put together a candidate questionnaire and invited state-wide and local legislative candidates to share their positions and thoughts on issues relevant to Montana's organic agriculture and rural communities.

There were more than twenty candidates who responded to the questionnaires. The answers and statements that state legislative candidates, as well as those from candidates for governor, judge, State Superintendent, and Public Service Commission, can be found on the MOA website: [MOA 2020 Candidate Questionnaires](#)

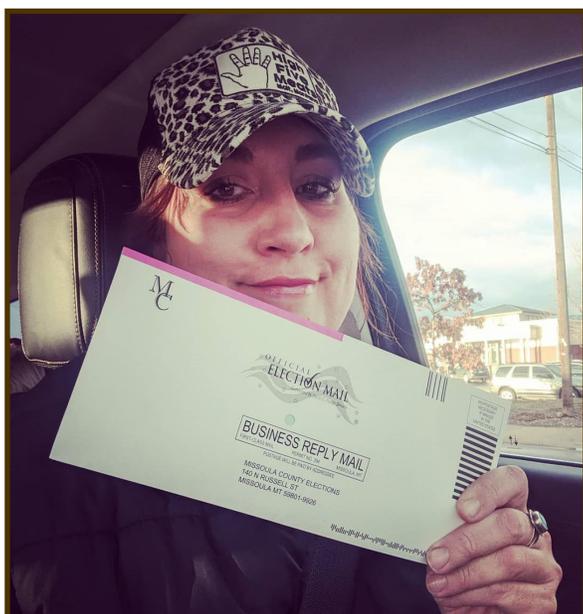
MOA is a non-partisan trade association representing more than 200 members who hold diverse political views but who are united in a shared mission to farm and ranch without chemicals. MOA does not endorse candidates but instead shares candidates' answers with its members, who come from all corners of Montana.

As a 501 (c) 6 Trade Association, MOA has flexibility to focus efforts on lobbying public officials and become more involved in political issues than other nonprofits are able to do.

MOA has an active Policy Subcommittee, co-chaired by Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm, that works on policy, conducting outreach and lobbying, querying candidates, sending letters to our representatives in Washington, DC, Helena, and even locally, on a variety of issues relevant to Montana's organic community.

---

Montana's congressional delegation wants to hear from you. Let them know what's working, let them know what's not.



*Dropping off the 2020 Ballot—photo credit Jill Hanson Taber*

### **MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

#### **GREG GIANFORTE, REPUBLICAN**

Washington, DC Office  
1419 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-3211

E-Mail: [US Representative Greg Gianforte](#)

#### **STEVE DAINES, REPUBLICAN**

Washington, DC Office  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2604  
202-224-2651

FAX: 202-224-9412

E-Mail: [US Senator Steve Daines](#)

#### **JON TESTER, DEMOCRAT**

Washington, DC Office  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2604  
202-224-2644

FAX: 202-224-8594

E-Mail: [US Senator Jon Tester](#)

## MOA Policy Proposal Submission Process

As a trade association, part of MOA's mission is to lobby for issues relevant to organic. The MOA Policy Sub-Committee has been busy since the start of the year refining procedures, documenting passed resolutions, and publicizing its positions and processes.

Co-chaired by Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm, the committee has established guidelines for submitting policy proposals for consideration of adoption by the MOA membership at the annual meeting. In the recent past, the Policy Sub-Committee has strived to move proposals forward, only to learn that membership frequently did not have enough information to pass a resolution.

MOA can provide sufficient background information for a given proposal so that the membership is well-informed about the issues put before the membership.

To submit a proposal for consideration in 2021, please submit by **August 31, 2021**, and to view the complete MOA Policy Procedures, visit the MOA website.

[MOA Policy Page](#)

Find resolutions passed by the MOA Membership on the following page.

VOTE FOR THE MOA 2020 Policy Proposals [HERE](#).

## MOA is Pleased to Welcome



**Fred Provenza  
Professor Emeritus  
Utah State University**

**Keynote Speaker for the  
2020 MOA Conference on  
Friday, December 4  
at 1:00 PM MST  
“Let Feed and Food Be  
Our Medicine”**

**Register Today for  
Online Access on the MOA website  
[www.montanaorganicassociation.org](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org)**

## **RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE MONTANA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION**

*To date, the following resolutions have been passed by the MOA Membership at its annual meeting.*

**Resolution 1.** Montana Organic Association supports the GMO liability for either the company that produces, develops or releases those organisms or livestock products. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 2.** Montana Organic Association supports the establishment of organic acres at the Montana Research Centers. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 3.** The Montana Organic Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture to provide funding to assist the Montana Department of Agriculture to become an ISO 65 accredited certifier. *Adopted February 6, 2005. To be retired.*

**Resolution 4.** The Montana Organic Association supports the inclusion of mobile slaughter units in the definitions in the Montana Codes of licensed inspected slaughter establishments. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 5.** The Montana Organic Association supports a preference for Montana grown or processed food for State-funded institutions. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 6.** Whereas the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee has funded organic projects in Montana, the Montana Organic Association supports the voluntary check-off for organic wheat raised in Montana, and its continued support of organic research, projects, and education. *Adopted December 2, 2007.*

**Resolution 7.** MOA supports the position that seed patent holders to demonstrate that their GMO seeds contain mechanisms to prevent genetic drift or outcrossing as well as to prevent contamination of non-GMO crops in the food handling system before any new GMO crops are approved. *Adopted December 6, 2014.*

**Resolution 8.** MOA supports the current proposed farmer/consumer protection act which gives more power to the National Organic Program to control fraudulent imports of organic grains and other products. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 9.** MOA supports organic research being funded closer to the percentage of organic food sold in the US. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 10.** MOA supports the enactment of the proposed livestock rule. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 11.** Montana Organic Association is a registered non-profit membership organization 501(c) 6 and does not discriminate in its employment, membership acceptance or board selection practices on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, color, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political ideas, creed, or disabilities. *Adopted December 7, 2019.*



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# MOA 2020 Policy Proposals

## Twelve proposals submitted to the MOA Membership for voting.

Each MOA member has one vote to be submitted no later than **December 5, 2020 at 8 AM**. Voting is done by electronic form that limits the number of submissions by email address. You may also request a printable ballot and submit with your signature. Contact [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) for more information.

1. MOA supports tying the percentage of research devoted to organic agriculture at the federal and state level to an amount equal to or greater than the percentage of food which is sold in the US as organic. – *Submitted by Bob Quinn*
2. MOA supports federal, state, and private efforts to improve broadband internet across the state, in both urban and rural areas. – *Submitted by Jamie Lockman*

**Contributions to MOA's Mission?** This proposal demonstrates that MOA supports efforts to improve broadband internet service across the state that is essential for business and education.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** Members will be better connected and better able to conduct business, participate in educational opportunities, connect with others, and more.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** Montana ranks 50th or last of all the states for internet service, which includes broadband, DSL, Dial-Up, Cable modem, satellite, and others. Of the over 26,000 farms in Montana, only 21,000 of them have any internet access. Our rural communities still lack reliable broadband internet service and enough cell phone coverage for both household and business needs. Many governmental, marketing services, and education resources rely on the internet, but it is tough for rural Montanans to participate if they have inadequate service. With the COVID pandemic, more business and schoolwork have moved online.

3. MOA recognizes organic farming as a means to mitigate the effects of unpredictable and extreme weather events. – Submitted by Jamie Lockman

**Contributions to MOA's Mission?** Promotes organic farming for the highest good of the people, the environment, and the state's economy.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** Demonstrates MOA's support of initiatives that recognize organic agriculture that mitigates the effects of climate change, unpredictable and extreme weather events.

**What are the possible objections to adopting your policy proposal?** Some MOA members do not accept the scientific evidence of human-caused climate change.

**What support do you have for your proposal?** MOA works with several organizations including OTA, the Organic Center, NSAC, OSA, OFA, and others that recognized organic farming as a means to mitigate the effects of climate change. There are numerous studies that confirm organic farming methods mitigate and are more resilient to unpredictable and extreme weather events and continuing research that investigate the benefits of soil health, crop diversity, crop resilience, etc.

4. MOA supports the Organic Certification Cost Share Program reimbursement rates to at least those set forth by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill for 75% of organic certification costs or \$750 maximum for each certification scope (crops, livestock, wild crops, and handling) or higher.

MOA 2020 Policy Proposals—Continued on next two pages.

## MOA 2020 Policy Proposals—Continued.

**Contributions to MOA's Mission?** MOA promotes organic farming. OCCPS helps organic farmers obtain and maintain USDA organic certification.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** Organic farmers, ranchers, and handlers will receive financial support to obtain and maintain USDA organic certification. It can be an incentive for those considering transitioning to organic certification.

**What are the possible objections to adopting your policy proposal?** Some members may not want to support federal tax dollars being spent on support such as this.

**What support do you have for your proposal?** More than 50% of Montana's certified organic operations use this program.

5. MOA supports having all county extension agents in Montana receive adequate instruction on organic methods so as to be able to advise they constituents on this subject. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
6. MOA supports focusing on the value of nutrition, environmental benefits and dollars produced per acre or animal unit for organic production. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
7. MOA supports all efforts to process more of the organic food in Montana which is produced in Montana and encourages the development of better distribution of these Montana products to local, regional, national and international markets. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
8. MOA supports all efforts to perfect organic biological controls of disease, weeds and pests. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
9. MOA supports all efforts to improve soil health building practices in organic production. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
10. MOA supports the development of a nutrient density label so farmers might have a way receive or demand higher prices for higher values of what they produce. – Submitted by Bob Quinn
11. MOA supports the US Postal Service's mission is to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, universal mail service; that it adheres to the basic functions to bind the nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people; and that it shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities. – Submitted by Jamie Lockman

**Contributions to MOA's Mission?** This proposal demonstrates that MOA supports the USPS for national and international service for essential governmental, business, education, and networking purposes.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** It is essential that members are able to conduct business via USPS with affordable, reliable, and timely mail service.

**What are the possible objections to adopting your policy proposal?** N/A

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** In 1792, Congress passed the first major postal law that encouraged the exchange of printed news by allowing publications to travel through the US Mail at extremely low rates of postage – in some cases for free – to ensure the success of the democracy. Many MOA members rely on the US Mail to stay connected to family and friends, to ensure the success of their businesses, and to participate in governance and other activities, as an active citizen.

MOA 2020 Policy Proposals—Continued on next page.

## MOA 2020 Policy Proposals—Continued.

12. MOA supports the USDA implement the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) as approved by the National Organic Standards Board. Submitted by Jeff Schahczenski.

**Contributions to MOA's Mission?** Promotes a robust National Organic Program that strengthens family farms through meaningful and coherent regulations.

**What are the possible benefits to adopting your policy proposal?** The National Organic Standards Board recognizes that consumers' trust of the organic label and industry growth depends on the strength and consistent application of the organic regulations. NOSB has an integral role in advising USDA in its promulgation of these volunteer standards, and strives to seek consensus among organic stakeholders in its recommendations to USDA and the secretary. The recently finalized Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule was based on a unanimous NOSB recommendation to USDA in 2011. The NOSB recommendation was the product of a decade of public NOSB meetings, lengthy discussions, public comment periods and consultation from organic producers, processors, consumers, and the veterinary and scientific community. According to a survey by Organic Egg Farmers of America from 2014, the majority of organic egg producers representing the majority of organic egg production already adhere to the practices and standards set forth in the rule. A recent Consumer Reports survey found that 83% of consumers who frequently purchase organic products believe that organic eggs should come from hens that have access to the outdoors. Additionally, USDA APHIS has found no significant differences in mortality rates between organic and conventional laying hen operations. Support for this rule has been expressed through public comment by major and growing organic brands<sup>4</sup>. The rule is supported by organic producers, consumers, the industry, and the NOSB

**What are the possible objections to adopting your policy proposal?** Large-scale operations who do not comply with the rule.

TO BE RETIRED:

**Resolution 3.** The Montana Organic Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture to provide funding to assist the Montana Department of Agriculture to become an ISO 65 accredited certifier. Adopted February 6, 2005.

*This resolution is no longer relevant.*

Explanation: The purpose of this resolution was to enable the Montana Department of Agriculture to become an accredited certifier under the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service International Standards Organization Guide 65, in part to facilitate exports. In February 2007, the Montana Department of Agriculture under the direction of organic program manager Doug Crabtree, received approval to certify organic products under guidelines accepted worldwide and required for exports to customers in Europe. ([Organic Matters, August 2007, p. 5](#)).

In 2012, the European Union and the United States signed an equivalency agreement. Under the agreement, the EU and United States work together to promote strong organic programs, protect organic standards, enhance cooperation, and facilitate trade in organic products. ([Organic Matters, Spring 2012, p. 8](#)). Today, organic equivalency agreements vary, with some market-specific requirements. For more information visit:

[USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: How Does USDA Assess Organic Equivalency with other Countries?](#)

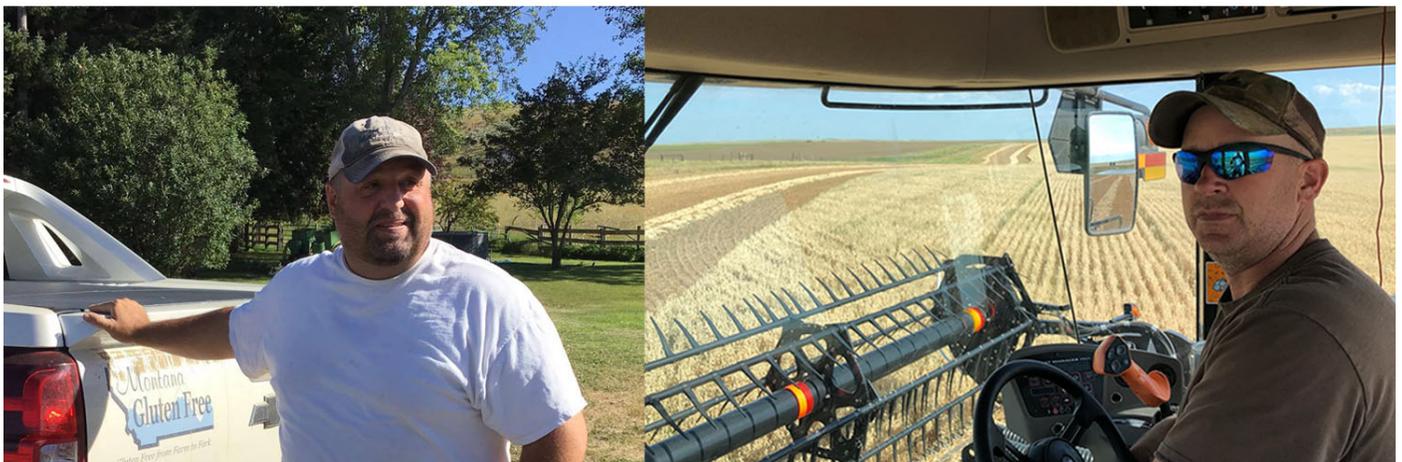
[USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: EXPORTING ORGANIC PRODUCTS FROM THE U.S. Fact Sheet](#)

**Votes must be submitted by 8 AM on December 5, 2020:**  
**[VOTING LINK](#)**



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# DIGGING DEEPER



## Montana Farm to School SUMMIT 2021

### Seeking Presenters for MT Farm to School Summit

Proposals are now being accepted for one- and two-hour workshop sessions during the 2021 **Montana Farm to School Summit: Digging Deeper** on August 11-12. Proposals must be submitted online by December 31 at: <http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/summit.html>.

Learn and share how schools and programs across Montana are embracing the core elements of farm to school — serving local foods, growing school gardens, and providing nutrition, agriculture, and food education. Workshops, experiential learning, and networking opportunities will provide inspiration, ideas, and resources.

All individuals interested in farm to school programs are encouraged to attend, including school and summer food service personnel, afterschool program coordinators, educators, school administrators, preschool and childcare providers, parents, students, food producers and vendors, farm to school practitioners, and groups that support farm to school efforts. If you have a story to tell or lesson to teach, we encourage you to apply for a workshop session. This opportunity not only provides a platform for discussion, it also serves as a way to dig deeper into farm to school through collaboration.

For more information visit <http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/summit.html> or contact: Aubree Roth, Montana Farm to School Coordinator at [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu) or (406) 994-5996.

## Opportunity:

### Western SARE Administrative Council Vacancies



The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (WSARE) is seeking immediate nominations or self-nominations for a qualified individual to represent non-government organizations involved with underrepresented agriculture groups. There will also be an opening for a second position to represent agri-business (preferably in the processing sector) available in early March 2021.

The Western Region SARE is part of the National Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program administered by the USDA. Created in 1990 this program has a two-fold charge; fund innovative research on agricultural and natural resource sustainability and move that new knowledge directly into the farming/ranching sector.

More information about Western SARE and a list of current Administrative Council Members can be found on our website.

Oversight of research needs, competitive proposal reviews and budget allocation are carried out at the regional level by an Administrative Council. This Council is composed of representatives from federal and state government agencies, producers (2 individuals), NGOs (1), agribusiness (1) and faculty from land grant institutions (1862, 1890 and 1994).

#### Job Description

Minimal qualifications: 1) have background knowledge and experience to advocate for sustainable agricultural practices and issues, 2) be available to serve on subcommittees and proposal review panels and 3) be committed to meeting at least twice a year (typically winter and summer) to formulate calls for proposals (CFPs), act on review panel recommendations and provide a vision/leadership in the creation of regionally important research and education targets. Applicants must also have the capacity to work effectively as a team member.

Preferred qualifications: In addition to the minimal qualifications the successful candidate will also have served on one or more Technical Review Panels for WSARE invited proposals.

The term of service is 4 years but members can be re-appointed. Council members who are not salaried employees are offered compensation for their participation in semi-annual Administrative Council meetings and technical review panels (TRPs). Travel expenses also are paid/reimbursed per institution travel policy.

#### Application Process (Applications due annually on 8 January)

Please send a letter of interest outlining your area of expertise and reasons for wanting to serve on the Western SARE Administrative Council to the Western SARE Program, PO Box 172840, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717-2840 or by email to the Regional Coordinator, Clayton B. Marlow, [cmarlow@montana.edu](mailto:cmarlow@montana.edu)



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## Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition Releases Legislative Survey Results

To help inform voters about where Montana’s legislative candidates stand on Montana food and agriculture issues, the Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition today released survey responses provided by 53 legislative candidates. The survey results indicate strong bipartisan support for strengthening Montana’s resilient food system and increasing Montanans’ access to healthy Montana-grown foods. Despite this broad consensus, there were key differences among candidates that may be important to voters before they cast their ballot.

“Our coalition is pleased by the responses we received from legislative candidates across the state, and we encourage voters who care about Montana’s food systems to find out where their candidates stand on the issues,” said Maura Henn, coalition coordinator.

The survey’s eight questions focused on the following areas:

- ◆ Increasing access of Montana students to beef and farm products grown in Montana.
- ◆ Expanding mid-scale meat and other food processing in Montana
- ◆ Policies that encourage farmers to invest in

management practices that build soil carbon, reduce erosion, and improve water retention

- ◆ Opportunities to strengthen equitable food access and food security for all Montanans.

Forty-six House candidates and seven Senate candidates responded to the survey. The public can access survey results and learn where their candidates stand at <https://growmontana.ncat.org/>.

Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition formed in 2005 to advocate for state policies that would strengthen Montana’s food and agriculture economies. The coalition has since led foods systems research, produced educational materials, and stewarded significant policy changes to support Montana’s food producers. Its past successes include leading legislative campaigns to:

- 1) authorize the Montana Department of Livestock to inspect mobile meat slaughter units,
- 2) authorize the creation of Montana’s Food and Agricultural Development Centers
- 3) create more flexibility for public institutions to buy Montana-grown or processed food
- 4) implement cottage food in Montana and streamlining regulations related to mobile and temporary food vendors. In 2020,

### Grow Montana Coalition

Grow Montana is coordinated by the National Center for Appropriate Technology, based in Butte.

- [AERO \(Alternative Energy Resources Organization\)](#)
- [Blackfeet Agricultural Resource Management](#)
- [Community Food & Agriculture Coalition](#)
- [Farm Hands – Nourish the Flathead](#)
- [FoodCorps Montana](#)
- [Governor’s Office of Economic Development](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#)
- [Lake County Community Development Corporation](#)
- [Montana – No Kid Hungry](#)
- [Montana Cooperative Development Center](#)
- [Montana Department of Commerce](#)
- [Montana Farmers Union](#)
- [Montana Food Bank Network](#)
- [Montana Office of Public Instruction](#)
- [Montana Organic Association](#)
- [Montana Team Nutrition](#)
- [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#)
- [Natural Resources Defense Council](#)
- [Northern Plains Resource Council](#)
- [Open & Local](#)
- [River Valley Farmers Market](#)
- [Salish Kootenai College Extension](#)
- [Western Montana Growers Co-op](#)



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Do you know that MOA has a Business and Resource Directory on its website?

As a membership benefit, Farmer/Rancher, Organic Business, and Premium Members receive a listing in this searchable directory, one of the most visited pages on MOA's website.

Each listing includes space for a logo, a photograph, contact information, list of products and services, and an operation description.

- Please support the farms/ranches and businesses that support MOA.
- Please check your listing and send in any updates, including a logo and photo, social media accounts, or anything missing from your listing that would help others know about your operation.

[MOA Business and Resource Directory](#)

## Nominations and Notice of MOA Board of Director Elections—Virtual Ballot

The Board of Directors election begins with electronic balloting open on November 5, 2020 and close at 8:00 AM, Saturday, December 5, 2020.

Results of the virtual Google Docs balloting will be announced at MOA Conference Annual Business Meeting on December 5, 2020 at 12:30 pm. The ballot can be found at the link below:

[MOA 2020 Board Election Ballot](#)

Current directors seeking re-election for the 2020 Business Meeting are:

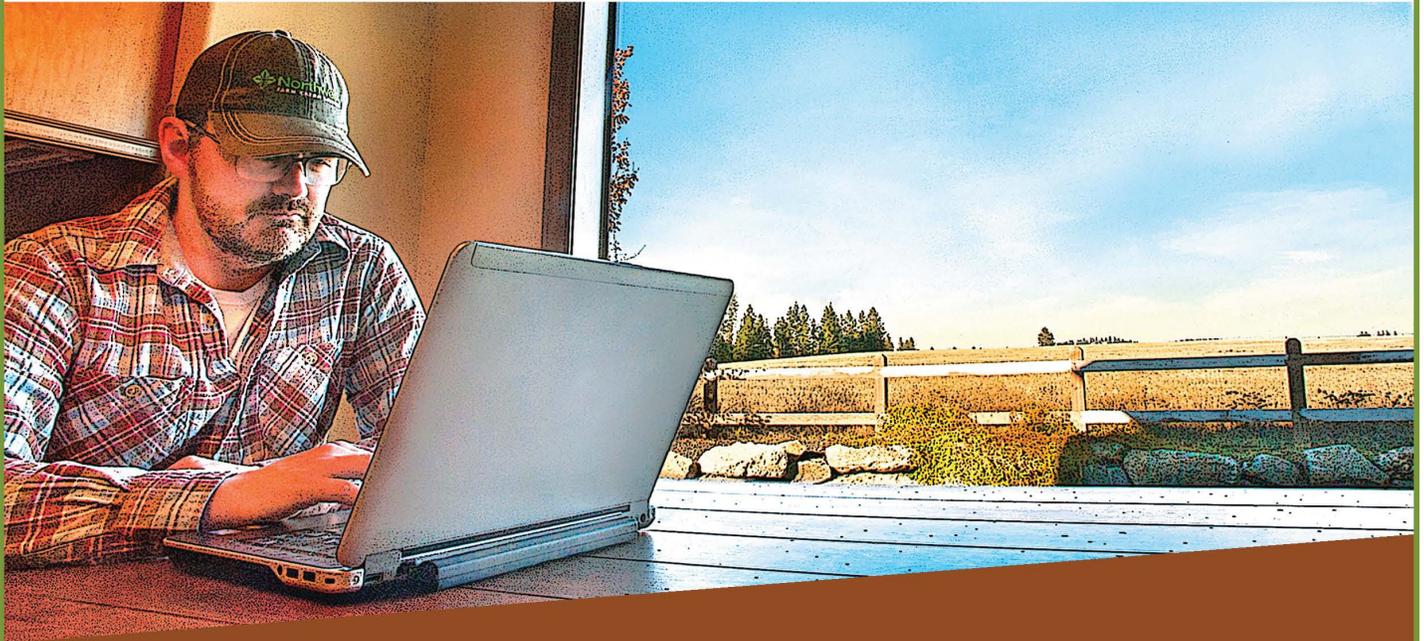
- Gary Iverson, Montana Gluten Free
- John Porterfield, Hemp Holding Company, dba Woolen Hemp
- Becky Weed, Thirteen Mile Lamb & Wool

Directors seeking re-election, or anyone interested in serving as a new Director, should contact the MOA Nominations and Election Committee Chair Sam Schmidt at [sam@montanamilling.com](mailto:sam@montanamilling.com). It is encouraged that anyone seeking a nomination to the board spend time volunteering on one of MOA's committees.

Results will be published in the Winter issue of [Organic Matters](#).

Questions? Contact

[moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)



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# OAEC's Bio-Control Project Funded for the Next 3 Years!!!

## An Update from OAEC

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In the end of September 2020, the USDA approved the State of Montana's Specialty Crop Block Grant to the Department of Plant Science and Plant Pathology at Montana State University under the leadership of Professor David Sands to continue the work started by OAEC on bioherbicides for control of Canada thistle and field bindweed. The grant is \$255,000 and most of these funds will go to pay for a fulltime technician to continue the work.



Strain FETH2-2, Bozeman, Fall of 2020

For the last several years, OAEC has been funding this organic bio-control research (initiated by OAEC) at MSU. Let's be very clear that this has only been possible through generous donations from organic farmers, ranchers, and processors and handlers, as well as those producers who have been writing letters of support for this grant and scouting for sick plants on their farms. A big **THANK YOU** needs to go out to all these folks. It is only with their support; this has become possible.

### Where are we now after over two years of work?

Professor Dave Sands and his students have been working from the sick plant samples sent to them to find a precise set of characteristics of *Fusarium oxysporum* with high host specificity, preferably necrophilic or extremely inhibitive, that is rapidly replicating and safe to use. This work has involved developing new protocols for Strain Harvesting and Purification, Strain Enhancement, Strain Preservation, Seed Treatment, Inoculum, and Field Testing.

The last two years have laid a solid foundation for the further work that now can kick into a higher gear with the new grant. These efforts, and the decisions from the OAEC board over the years to keep the momentum and focus on perennial weeds, have now taken a quantum leap forward with the new funding for finding a biocontrol solution. It is of extreme importance that we all keep scouting our fields for sick Canada thistle and bindweed plants as an ongoing effort. Please send these plants to OAEC.

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## OAEC Update—Continued

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Sick Canada Thistle plant by Great Falls  
June 2020 – Picture by Daryl Lassila

On another front of perennial weed research, we want to highlight Superintendent Pat Carr and his team's great work on the big multistate "Creep Stop" project as well as the "Thistle Rust" project led by Jeb Eberly, Tim Seipel, and Dan Chichinsky. Watch for updates on these important projects at the MOA virtual conference in December.

As we move forward, the OAEC Board wants to focus on "Organic Nutrition Research." We will be consulting with food scientists, plant geneticists, agronomists, nutritionists, and others to create a comprehensive, robust, and meaningful framework, to improve the nutrition levels in the things we grow, as well as exploring the benefits of organic agriculture to human health... More to come.

Again, we want to say **THANK YOU** to all the organic farmers, ranchers, processors, and handlers making these projects possible. We deeply appreciate all contributions and will continue to focus on achieving the best results possible at the lowest possible cost for whatever organic research projects we are working on. Please help us continue by sending your tax-deductible contributions to:

**OAEC**  
**c/o Ole Norgaard**  
**475 Vixen Ln**  
**Shonkin, MT 59450**

Thanks again, *sincerely,*

Ole Norgaard, President and Board Chair  
On behalf of the entire OAEC Board of Directors

# Montana Food Providers Project

One of the projects MOA and AERO - Alternative Energy Resources Organization- Alternative Energy Resources Organization have worked on together this year is the Montana Food Providers Project. This collaboration's goal is getting local, Montana grown and processed food to families in need - for various reasons, made even more complicated by COVID-19.

One of the latest projects brought goat meat from Farm 51 to thirty of Montana's refugee families, The project that also included Amsterdam Meat Shop and Soft Landing Missoula came together through conversations, and the work, generosity, and commitment of many people.

This project highlights the value of raising livestock with care, processing animals in a humane way with respect and consciousness, and supplying families in need with culturally food that they are seeking. Not only did the families want split carcasses so they could further butcher it for their preferred cuts, but they also wanted the organ meat.

There's a lot to unpack and think about with a project like this.

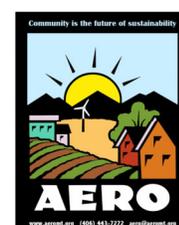
Who grows the food that you eat? Does the food that you eat contribute to or detract from your (or someone else's) community? Does the person you purchase the food from have any connection to the person who grows that food? Processes that food? Delivers that food? Why? Or why not?

Is the person who works to provide or process your food able to support their family? Are their working conditions healthy and safe?

When it comes to food relief: Is the food being made available culturally appropriate? Is the food being provided to families in need, nutritionally dense and healthy? Is the food purchased for the lowest cost in the highest quantity, with little concern for nutrition? How much relief food is wasted?

Our communities have been upended by CV-19. It's time to pause and rethink what we rely on, how we're structured, and how we act.

Many thanks to the State of Montana for COVID relief funds, as well as numerous donors and contributors to the Montana Food Providers Project, and Clem Lockman for the use of his pickup!





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## Just in time for holiday shopping! A Montana Grown and Made ORGANIC Gift Box!!!

MOA teamed with [The Last Best Box](#) to put together an Organic gift box that features a collection of some of Montana's finest organic products just in time for holiday gifts!

The Last Best Box is a subscription gift box program that sends out a box of Montana-grown and made products every two months. It also provides custom boxes like [The Montana Organic Box](#). Your purchase directly supports MOA's organic farmers and processors. The box is offered at \$39.99 plus shipping. MOA does not receive any proceeds from this purchase, rather it is pleased to support Montana businesses committed to organic.

[The Montana Organic Box](#) includes Organic Hot Fudge Sauce from [King's Cupboard](#) (Red Lodge), [Organic Kracklin' Kamut®](#) from Big Sandy Organics (Big Sandy), Organic Raw Oatmeal from [Montana Gluten Free](#) (Belgrade), Organic Petite Crimson Lentils from [Timeless Seeds](#) (Ulm), Organic Cherry Jam from [The Orchard at Flathead Lake](#) (Bigfork), and Big Sky Organic Coffee from [Hunter Bay Coffee Roasters](#) (Lolo).



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# Certified Organic Farm For Sale: Lower Valley Farm

## Kalispell, MT - \$80,000

Lower Valley Farm, a certified organic CSA farm in Kalispell Montana, is currently for sale and seeking a new land steward as soon as possible. The next farmer can move onto the farm after Thanksgiving. Currently interviewing farmers via phone or zoom and can set up a socially distant in person meeting to see the farm after an initial interview.

In 2020 the farm was 225 member CSA, one high traffic farmers market, robust online sales, and one strong account with an independent grocer. The farm employs four seasonal full time and four seasonal part time employees.

The brand of Lower Valley Farm is recognized and respected in the community for high quality and great customer service. Our CSA retention rate is 85%. Transfer of the farm can come with extensive mentoring from the current owner/operator as she wants to see the farm and the next farmer set up for success. The farm would not have to stay at the same scale and could be scaled down and still support the owner operator. For the grower with more experience the farm could continue to grow at 20% per year and always sells out of everything we grow. The limiting factor on exceeding current production size would be the 25 gallon/minute well.

\$80k

The sale of the farm comes with 21,000 square feet of crops under cover including 3, 100 foot high tunnel (2 rimol tunnels, one of which is double poly/heated) 6, 100 foot cat tunnels. A Kubota tractor, walking tractor, implements, paper pot transplanter, flame weeder, barrel washer, wash/pack shed, walk in coolers, market trailer, and all hand tools essential for running a successful market farm. Also included is the brand of LVFarm and all software including the Local Food Marketplace software, our engaged email marketing list hosted through convert kit, an online CSA membership Academy I built in teachable.com and all of the content I have created for members (eBooks, recipes, tutorials) and Neversink Farm master course. The sale of the farm includes the deed to a very well cared for single wide mobile home.

\$500/month in rent to the land owners.

The farm has water rights, a 25 gallon/minute well, a new well pump in 2019 and a new septic pump in 2020.

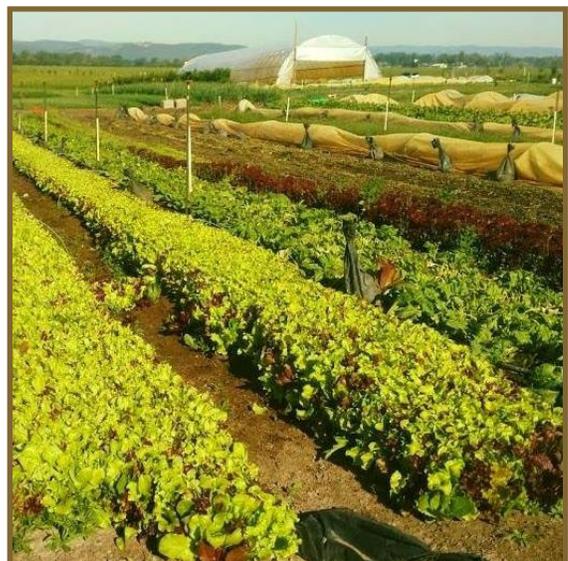
Please contact farm owner Mandy Gerth at [info@lowervalleyfarm.com](mailto:info@lowervalleyfarm.com) 406-471-9538.

CFAC Farm Listing Link: [https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/land\\_owner/4017/](https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/land_owner/4017/)

Lower Valley Farm: [lowervalleyfarm.com](http://lowervalleyfarm.com)

[instagram.com/lowervalleyfarm/](https://www.instagram.com/lowervalleyfarm/)

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## MOA has a YouTube Channel!

This year, MOA had a virtual field tour and needed a place to post the videos. Thus, MOA gained a YouTube Channel.

In addition to videos of the farm tour at Mark and Jane Smith's Aspen Island Ranch, you'll find recorded presentations from this Fall. Make sure to subscribe to the MOA Channel to stay up-to-date with the latest videos.

Do you have a video you'd like to share on the channel? Let's do it! Reach out to Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)

Click [Montana Organic Association YouTube Channel](#) here to connect to MOA's videos.

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ACH17-21/October 2020

Sales of certified organic commodities continue to increase, with sales up 31% from 2016, the year of the most recent survey of certified organic agriculture. The number of operations producing certified organic commodities was up 17%, and land used for certified organic production was up 9%.

16,585 farms



5.5 million acres



\$9.9 billion sales



## Organic Sales

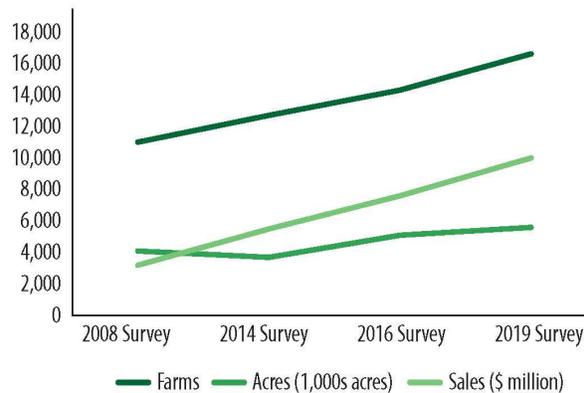
Sales of organic commodities overall rose 31%, from 2016 to 2019, but varied by sector. Livestock and poultry products, primarily milk and eggs, increased by the smallest amount (12%). Crops and livestock and poultry increased by larger amounts (38% and 44% respectively). The share of sales of organic products from crops rose slightly from 2016 to 2019. In 2019, 58% of organic sales came from crops, led by vegetables and fruits (including berries and tree nuts).

	2019 Sales (\$ million)	% Change Since 2016
Crops	5,787	38
Livestock and poultry products	2,476	12
Livestock and poultry	1,663	44
Total	9,926	31

### Top Organic Commodities, 2019

	Sales (\$ million)
Milk	1,585
Broiler chickens	1,115
Eggs	887
Apples	475
Lettuce	400

Organic Farms, Acres, and Sales, 2008 to 2019



Since the first organic survey in 2008, the number of organic farms, the acres used for organic production, and the value of organic products sold have all increased, with value of sales more than tripling between 2008 to 2019.

Top States: Organic Sales and Acres, 2019

Sales		Acres	
	\$ million		thousand
California	3,597	California	965
Washington	886	Alaska	(D)
Pennsylvania	742	Montana	356
Oregon	454	New York	323
Texas	424	Wisconsin	251
North Carolina	370	Texas	246
New York	298	Nebraska	232
Wisconsin	269	Vermont	203
Michigan	231	Oregon	196
Idaho	206	Idaho	181
Arizona	203	Minnesota	173

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

California produced 36% of the total U.S. value of certified organic agricultural products sold, with more than four times the value of any other state. Eleven states sold more than \$200 million in organic products, or 77% of the U.S. total.

The USDA—NASS released the 2019 Organic Survey, October 22, 2020. The Census Special Study was conducted as a follow-on survey to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, is the sixth comprehensive organic survey NASS has conducted, and the first since the 2016 Organic Survey. This survey contains value of sales information at the commodity level along with acreage, production, and practices data for a variety of certified organic crop and livestock operations.

A quick analysis reveals that Montana remains the number two state in certified organic acreage in the US, with over 356,000 acres. Montana remains the number one organic wheat producer, as well as the number one organic lentil, organic chickpea, organic dried pea, and organic spelt and emmer producer and Montana is the number two organic flaxseed producer. For complete information as well as presentation slides provided by the USDA, visit: [Organic Agriculture, Current Surveys](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Current%20Surveys/).

[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide to NASS Surveys/Organic Production/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide%20to%20NASS%20Surveys/Organic%20Production/index.php)

### Commodity Sales

Milk and broiler chickens were the top two organic commodities, with more than \$1 billion each in sales, followed by eggs at almost \$900 million. Sales of broiler chickens increased sharply from 2016, up almost 50%. Sales of milk and eggs increased at slower rates. Sales of the major crop categories (vegetables, fruits, and field crops) were all up, with sales of field crops increasing by more than 50%. Among crops, the top selling commodities were apples, lettuce, grapes, and strawberries.

	Sector Total (\$ million)	Sales (\$ million)	% Change, 2016 to 2019
<b>Livestock and poultry products</b>	2,476		12
Milk		1,585	14
Eggs		887	9
<b>Vegetables in the open</b>	2,084		27
Lettuce		400	44
Spinach		179	52
Potatoes		155	3
Tomatoes		132	-24
Carrots		132	49
<b>Fruits, tree nuts, and berries</b>	2,023		44
Apples		475	45
Grapes		332	52
Strawberries		321	33
Blueberries, cultivated		205	104
Raspberries		92	197
<b>Livestock and poultry</b>	1,663		44
Broiler chickens		1,115	49
Cattle		293	26
Turkeys		139	68
<b>Field crops</b>	1,180		55
Corn, for grain		278	70
Hay, alfalfa		154	45
Wheat		149	39
Soybeans		109	39
<b>Mushrooms</b>	161		45
<b>Vegetables under protection</b>	133		49
<b>Nursery, propagative materials, and floriculture</b>	115		2
<b>Maple syrup</b>	91		39
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,926</b>		<b>31</b>

**\$2 billion** The amount of sales organic producers reported as being direct to retail markets, institutions, and food hubs.

### Farm Characteristics

Sales Class	% of Farms	% of Sales <sup>a</sup>
< \$10,000	11%	0.1%
\$10,000 - \$99,999	38%	3%
\$100,000 - \$249,999	22%	6%
\$250,000 - \$499,999	12%	7%
\$500,000+	17%	84%

The largest organic farms (sales of \$500,000 or more) accounted for fewer than 20% of farms but more than 80% of sales.

<sup>a</sup> May not add to 100% due to rounding.

### Plans for Future Production

The 2019 survey asked organic farmers about their plans for organic production in the next five years. The survey also asked about any acres they may have in transition to organic production. Before becoming certified, the land used must go through a three-year transition period in which no organic-prohibited substances are applied.

	% All Farms <sup>a</sup>
Maintain current level of organic production	44
Increase organic production	29
Unknown future intentions	20
Decrease organic production	4
Discontinue organic production	2
Discontinue all ag production	2

Certified organic farms reported an additional 255,060 acres currently transitioning to organic production. Other farms (not currently certified) reported 60,611 acres transitioning.

<sup>a</sup> May not add to 100% due to rounding.

# Going **beyond** sustainability.

“Sustaining our natural resources is not enough. We need to play an active role in regenerating them.”

*- Mary Jane Melendez, Chief Sustainability and Social Impact Officer*



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### 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 is published quarterly by the Montana Organic Association. Send queries, suggestions, letters, and requests to:

Montana Organic Association  
3312 Hollis Street  
Missoula, MT 59801  
(406) 546-6572  
moamembership@gmail.com  
www.montanaorganicassociation.org

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

Editor: Jamie Ryan Lockman

## Advertise in Organic Matters

MOA's Quarterly Newsletter

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

### Please Support MOA Advertisers and Sponsors!

*The Montana Organic Association (MOA) brings together people, businesses, organizations, and agencies who are working to develop Montana's organic industry. MOA is proud of its legacy that has led Montana to be a national leader in organic production. But MOA is more than organic production; it also serves to educate about organic products including food, fiber, and non-food items like personal care items and household supplies, and ways to limit the use of chemicals in everyday life. MOA also advocates for policies that protect the environment, promote healthy living, and support individuals, farms and businesses who are actively engaged in developing sustainable businesses and communities. MOA accomplishes this through hosting events, serving as an educational resource, providing network opportunities, and communications.*

*Do you want to support MOA's work?*

*MOA has several affordable membership options. Visit the MOA website to learn more.*

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



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## Conference and Membership Form

All Memberships renew on December 1, 2021.

Purchase online or use this form to be mailed with your check to:  
MOA, 3312 Hollis St., Missoula, MT 59801.

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

Farm or Business: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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MOA communicates via email several times per year.

Please check this box to receive email notifications:

Membership Level (select one):

Basic Memberships		Premium Memberships	
Individual - \$30		Lifetime, two memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$750	
Household, two memberships - \$50		Lifetime Business, two memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$2500	
Farm/Ranch/Business, two memberships, 5% discount on ads & website directory listing - \$75		Not becoming a member or renewing my membership. Conference sessions are free this year. \$0	
Organic Business, two memberships, 10% discount on ads, & website directory listing - \$250		Conference Sponsorships and MOA Sponsorships are available! See website or the next sections in this newsletter.	

Tell us more about what you do. Farm? Ranch? Researcher? Student? Supplier?

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Return form (s) with your membership dues/donation to:

Montana Organic Association, 3312 Hollis Street, Missoula, MT 59801

If you have questions, call Jamie Lockman at (406) 546-6572 or email her at: [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) OR to pay online, visit [www.montanaorganicassociation.org/commerce.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/commerce.htm)

Rev. 10/27/20

## MOA Conference Session Preference

Online registration is available on the MOA website. This form is for individuals who prefer not to register online.

In an effort to minimize the number of emails you receive about the MOA Conference and Organic University, please indicate the sessions you would like to attend. There are no limits to the number you may select.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Sessions: Please see this newsletter for session descriptions. Schedule subject to change.**

- Nov. 4, 7 pm, Zoom Practice Session
- Nov. 11, 7 pm, Cooking Demo with Sarah Manuel
- Nov. 12, 12 pm, Organic Certification for Montana Fruits
- Nov. 18, 7 pm, MOA Policy Proposal Discussions
- Nov. 23, 7 pm, MOA Zoom Practice Session
  
- Nov. 30–Dec. 2, Organic University—Times vary
  
- Dec. 3, 9 am, Uncovering Profitability in the Organic System, Bluestone Life, NWFCs, Others
- Dec. 3, 1 pm, Mobile Meat Processing, Mike Callicrate
- Dec. 3, 3 pm, MSU and OAEC Research Update
- Dec. 3, 7 pm, The Secret History of Montana Women’s Community Cookbooks, Randi Tanglen
  
- Dec. 4, 9 am, Year-Round Grazing, Rick Caquelin
- Dec. 4, 1 pm, Let Feed and Food Be Our Medicine, Fred Provenza
- Dec. 4, 3 pm, Montana Food Providers Project Update, Robin Kelson and Jamie Lockman
- Dec. 4, 7 pm, Catching Up with Bob Quinn, Bob Quinn
  
- Dec. 5, 9 am, University Student Presentations
- Dec. 5, 12:30pm, MOA Membership Business Meeting



# MOA Virtual Conference Sponsorship Packages

## MOA 2020 Business Membership & Virtual Conference Sponsorship - \$350

Year-long Business Membership with voting rights for two individuals that includes a Business and Resource, Directory Listing (\$250 value).



- Video or advertisement added to your business listing
- Video added to MOA's YouTube Channel
- Logo on conference slider
- Certificate of Appreciation

*If you are already an Annual MOA Business Member or a Lifetime Member, add the 2020 Virtual Conference add-ons for one year at \$100.*

## Virtual Conference Sponsorship - \$200

- Temporary Business and Resource Directory Listing until December 31, 2020
- Video or advertisement added to your temporary business listing
- Video added to MOA's YouTube Channel until December 31, 2020
- Logo on conference slider
- Certificate of Appreciation

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MOA communicates via email several times per year.

Please check this box to receive email notifications:

Package	Select one
MOA Business Membership + Conference Sponsorship—\$350	
Already a MOA Business or Lifetime Member—Conference Sponsor Only—\$100	
Virtual Conference Sponsor Only— \$200	

# Montana Organic Association Annual Sponsorship Levels

MOA has affordable annual sponsorship rates that range from \$500 to \$10,000. All MOA Premium Organic Sponsorships include recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, a listing in [MOA's Business and Resource Directory](#), a website listing as an Organic Sponsor at the level selected, and additional amenities. These sponsorships do not include membership in MOA. Business Memberships are available for \$250; includes voting rights for two individuals.

[MOA Organic Champion Sponsorship: \\$10,000](#) - This sponsorship includes one year of recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, a listing in [MOA's Business and Resources Directory](#), and a website listing as an Organic Champion Sponsor on the MOA website. Also included is a special thank you certificate, a one-night stay at the [Grand Union Hotel](#) Fort Benton with accommodations for two (1 room), one dinner for two, and a MOA Organic Gift Box from [Last Best Box](#).

[MOA Organic Abundance Sponsorship: \\$5000](#) - This sponsorship includes one year of recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, [MOA's Business and Resource Directory](#), and website listing as an Organic Abundance Sponsor on the MOA website. Also includes a special thank you certificate, a dinner for two at the [Grand Union Hotel](#) in Fort Benton, and an MOA Organic Gift Box from the [Last Best Box](#).

[MOA Organic Big Sky Sponsorship: \\$2000](#) - This sponsorship includes one year of recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, [MOA's Business and Resource Directory](#), and website listing as an Organic Big Sky Sponsor on the MOA website. Also receive a thank you certificate and two MOA Organic Gift Boxes from the [Last Best Box](#).

[MOA Organic Legacy Sponsorship: \\$1000](#) - This sponsorship includes one year of recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, [MOA's Business and Resource Directory](#), and website listing as an Organic Legacy Sponsor on the MOA website. Also, receive a thank you certificate and MOA Organic Gift Box from the [Last Best Box](#).

[MOA Organic Challenge Sponsorship: \\$500](#) - This sponsorship includes one year of recognition in MOA's quarterly newsletters, [MOA's Business and Resource Directory](#), and website listing as an Organic Challenge Sponsor on the MOA website. Receive a thank you certificate.

Please call Jamie at (406) 546-6572, send an email to [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com), or purchase online at: [Become a MOA Annual Sponsor](#)

Thank you for supporting MOA!!





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Dear MOA Members: MOA works with organizations like the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), the Organic Trade Association (OTA), and more on policy issues. Many times questions are asked about how farmers are interacting with federal programs; are sign ups going well? Are you being sufficiently notified of programs for your farm? What programs do Montana's organic farmers use? Are there problems with requirements for organic farmers?

Help MOA know what works for you and what doesn't work for you, at any time, by dropping a line. The squeaky wheel really does get the grease. These organizations have the capacity to amplify MOA members concerns with research, collaboration with other organizations, and with excellent contacts in Washington, DC. [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)

*Jamie*

[jamieryanlockman@gmail.com](mailto:jamieryanlockman@gmail.com)



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(406) 546-6572  
moamembership@gmail.com

### Do you have questions about COVID-19 and your business?

ATTRA has a wealth of resources available to help you including a [COVID resource page](#) that is regularly updated. ATTRA also has Agriculture Specialists producing a series of [videos](#) and [blogs](#) to connect you with real-time solutions to these challenging times.

NCAT is collaborating with partners across the nation to hear from farmers in listening sessions and will consolidate and share broadly information on challenges, opportunities, and innovation.

Please reach out to NCAT/ATTRA with questions or to participate in their listening sessions. They can be reached at: [askanag@ncat.org](mailto:askanag@ncat.org) or 800-346-9140.

## *A View from the Director*

*Jamie Ryan Lockman, MOA Executive Director*

Who would have thought a year ago, that so much of our daily lives and long-term plans would be disrupted by a dangerous virus?

In 2020, people have radically or not, shifted the way they live and work to ensure their health and the health of their family, friends, and neighbors. Montana's organic farmers and ranchers have faced many unforeseen demands and disappointments, but have carried on, taking on challenges with resourcefulness and goodwill.

The pandemic has highlighted the brokenness of the US agriculture and food systems. The ability of organic farming and ranching to respond nimbly to challenging and changing circumstances has not gone unnoticed. More people than ever are looking to organic. Decision makers, investors, and entrepreneurs recognize the value of the organic brand and the smaller-scale nature of its local markets. And, there's a new appreciation for eating healthy, nutrient dense food.

Hosting the MOA Conference using virtual means is not ideal. Many in MOA's community, myself included, would much rather be in Great Falls this December. The shift to using Zoom, has its benefits though. The MOA Board has been meeting via Zoom video and phone calls. It's connected us in a more personal way. (Becky's beautiful knitted hats have made appearances!) MOA has been able to host events during the year that it hasn't done in the past, like the Resilient Montana Meat Processing discussions. Social distancing prompted MOA to have this year's Farm Tour at Mark and Jane Smith's Aspen Island Ranch filmed and posted on MOA's new YouTube Channel.

MOA has become involved with supporting its members and Montana community in different ways including the Montana Food Providers Project, The Last Best Box, and working with Grow Montana on soil health legislation.

I look forward to when we can meet again in person. In the meantime, the Conference Committee and I are doing the best we can to connect to each other. The schedule has been truncated, but we've tried to include a variety of sessions to teach and inspire. We're still having Organic University and are honored to welcome Dr. Fred Provenza and the many knowledgeable and esteemed speakers to address the MOA membership. The plans call for all sessions to be recorded, so if you're unable to attend at the scheduled time, you'll be able to watch it at your convenience. Stay tuned for more informative virtual sessions, like those on organic seeds and seed saving, agriculture education, and other relevant topics, being scheduled in 2021. Don't forget to vote for MOA Policies and for the MOA Board Elections!

Montana's organic farmers and ranchers are used to tough times, whether its drought, flood, grasshoppers, or bindweed. These times are difficult. Through it all the MOA community has served to support one another.

I have no doubt that the MOA community will emerge from 2020 and ultimately the pandemic, stronger than ever to serve its members and the organic mission.

Jamie