



THE ORGANIC CULTIVATOR

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PETE'S MEAT SERVICE LLC

One Family's Dedication to the Art of Meat Processing

by Joe Pedretti, Outreach Manager

Tim Blokhuis is the second generation owner of Pete's Meat Service located in Rudolph, WI. The business offers complete slaughter, butchering and processing services for organic and conventional clients throughout Wisconsin and beyond.



Founded in 1986 by his father, Peter Blokhuis, the store was the realization of a lifelong dream. Pete had immigrated to the United States from the Netherlands. Pete's father had a butchering plant in the Netherlands and Pete had attended trade school there for meat cutting, a very rigorous training that would serve him well as he established his skills and reputation upon arriving in Sheboygan, WI. Pete's first job was working in the meat department at Prange's, when it was still a grocery store. When Prange's eliminated the grocery and went fully to a department store, Pete found work as a sausage maker at Old Wisconsin Meats. Wanting to do more than just make sausage, he took a job with Central Wisconsin Meats in Wisconsin Rapids in 1976 and later with Andy's Supermarket.

In 1986 Pete had the opportunity to buy the Rudolph IGA supermarket, a small grocery store

located between Wisconsin Rapids and Stevens Point. The store had a small meat department to start, but Pete quickly focused on developing and expanding this area, and had soon developed quite a reputation for quality and service in the area.

In time, the grocery part of the store began to fade away as new, ever larger box stores made it difficult to compete. Pete put more and more focus on the meat side of the business.

When Pete's son Tim graduated from college in 1991, he came home to work for his dad while trying to figure out what to do with his career. After working for his father for six months, Tim was presented with a ten year plan; learn how to run the business, and Pete would give Tim the opportunity to buy him out and take over. Tim noted, "I came to the conclusion that being my own boss by age 36 was pretty appealing".

They soon added mobile on-farm slaughter and meat processing; becoming a state inspected facility servicing many farms in the area. By 2002-3, they were ready to start the final transition to Tim's ownership. During this time, they decided to build an on-site slaughter facility with USDA (federal) inspection, so they could sell their products across state lines. They also chose to focus completely on meats and processing and gradually eliminate the grocery.

It was at this time that they got their first experience with organic meat processing. While building the new slaughter facility, they were approached by Mike and Lorna Caldwell and Mike and Deb Hansen, MOSA certified livestock

FROM THE DIRECTOR

As of this writing, the Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, WI is right around the corner. MOSA will, as always, have a booth there. Please drop by and say hello!

You know what else is right around the corner? The time to start thinking about

updating your organic system plans! As always, your updated paperwork is due in our office by May 1; if you'd like an extension give us a call before May 1 and for a small fee we can extend your due date by a couple of weeks. Last year we implemented our online system, MyMOSA, where you can view and update your account and paperwork online, pay your fees, view your inspection report, and even print off your organic certificate! Visit mymosa.org or give us a call at 608-637-2526 and we'll help you with the initial set up.

Recently, we welcomed two new Certification Specialists, Benjamin Caldwell and Erik Gundersen. Ben worked as an independent farm inspector for three seasons before joining the certification team at MOSA. He moved back to the driftless area last fall with the goal of homesteading and developing a small permaculture farm. He likes hunting, cooking, home brewing, music and motorcycles. Erik was born and raised in a city, and began farming five years ago. His time farming gave him an appreciation for all the energy and care organic farmers put into their work. He is excited to be a part of MOSA and to help guide producers through the certification process. MOSA also welcomed Joe Pedretti to our staff as the new Outreach Manager. Joe has worked in the organic world for 16 years as the Outreach Manager for Organic Valley, as a staff inspector and reviewer for MOSA, and most recently as an Organic Specialist for MOSES. Joe is an avid musician and gardener. He and his family live on a homestead near Readstown, WI. ■



Cori Skolaski
MOSA Executive Director

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW – POLICY UPDATES AND MORE

by Jackie Townsend, Certification Policy Manager

Biodegradable bio-based mulch film will now be allowed for use (section §205.601 synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production) (b) As herbicides, weed barriers, as applicable, but only with significant definition and restriction. MOSA will require OMRI listing for this category of mulch. *However at this time, OMRI is unaware of any products in current production that will be able to comply with this standard.* If you plan to use a biodegradable mulch product that is not OMRI listed for use in the Bio-based Mulch category, you will be required to remove the mulch at the end of the season before it breaks down.

Changes have been made to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. Listings for **nonorganic hops (*Humulus lupulus*)** and **unmodified rice starch** on 205.606 have been removed.

The listings for **Streptomycin** and **Tetracycline** for fire blight control in apples and pears in §205.601 synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production (i), as plant disease control expired on October 21, 2014. Both are now prohibited for use.

Two nonorganic agricultural ingredients (**curry leaves and *Citrus hystrix* leaves and fruit**) that were presented in the proposed rule, will not be added to the National List.

Since the petition for phosphoric acid was withdrawn, the NOP has clarified that the use of **phosphoric acid** and **other synthetic acids** for pH adjustment of aquatic plant extracts is prohibited. Certifiers should ensure that previously approved aquatic plant extract products be phased out from use no later than March 12, 2015. If you use materials with aquatic plant extract, we may need to review the ingredients again.

As pasture season approaches, remember that the parasiticides listed on §205.603- synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production- are allowed with restrictions. **Fenbendazole**, **ivermectin** and **moxidectin** are the *only* three active ingredients allowed for use. **Fenbendazole** is only allowed for use by or on the lawful written order of a licensed veterinarian and moxidectin is allowed for internal parasites only. **All parasiticides** are prohibited in slaughter stock, and are only allowed in emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when organic system plan-approved preventive management does not prevent infestation. Milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as organic for 90 days following treatment. In breeder stock, treatment cannot occur during the last third of gestation if the offspring will be sold as organic and must not be used during the lactation period for breeding stock. Contact MOSA if you are considering treatment to ensure compliance.

Biosecurity and avian influenza are topics worth paying attention to. While not currently impacting the Midwest, please be aware that in December of 2014, the USDA confirmed cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the Pacific flyway. The disease is NOT found in U.S. commercial poultry and there is no public health risk. The HPAI is circulating in wild birds. Some backyard flocks with outdoor access are also being impacted. The National Organic Program (NOP) has received questions regarding the confinement of organic poultry flocks due to potential outbreaks of avian influenza and the impact such confinement would have on the organic certification of those flocks. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has provided guidance to poultry producers, including free range and organic producers, regarding bio-security considerations for their operations. This guidance titled "*Biosecurity Guide For Poultry and Bird Owners*" is

available in English and Spanish at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/pub_bioguide_poultry_bird.pdf

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/pub_bioguide_poultry_bird_spanish.pdf

If Federal or State animal health authorities determine that more prescriptive actions are required, organic producers could be required to adhere to those actions. Provisions for these types of emergency measures are described in NOP regulations under paragraph 205.239(b) of the Livestock Living Conditions section. This section allows for the temporary confinement of organic livestock because of conditions under which the health, safety, or well-being of the animals could be jeopardized.

Organic producers and certifiers should review the APHIS guidance on this issue and determine any actions necessary to protect organic poultry flocks. If it is determined that temporary confinement of birds is needed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of organic flocks, then producers and certifiers may work together to determine an appropriate method and duration of confinement without a loss of organic certification. The method of temporary confinement used must be approved by the certifying agent and should provide the necessary protection to the birds while meeting the remaining requirements of the NOP standards. Continuous total confinement of any animal indoors is prohibited. The NOP will provide additional information on this situation as it becomes available.

In other news, the Agricultural Marketing Service recently issued a proposed rule for the exemption of organic products from assessment under a commodity promotion law. This proposal would modify the organic assessment exemption regulations under 23 federal marketing orders and 22 research and promotion programs. The current regulations would be amended to allow persons that produce, handle, market, or import certified organic products to be exempt from paying assessments associated with commodity promotion activities, including paid advertising, conducted under a commodity promotion program administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). The exemption would cover all "organic" and "100 percent organic" products certified under the National Organic Program regardless of whether the person requesting the exemption also produces, handles, markets, or imports conventional or nonorganic products. Currently, only persons that exclusively produce and market products certified as 100 percent organic are eligible for an exemption from assessments under commodity promotion programs. The final rule is expected soon.

The NOP recently announced they are now happy to provide the Spanish version of the USDA organic regulations and program handbook. The Spanish version will make it easier for Spanish speaking farmers, handlers and certifiers to understand and comply with the USDA organic regulations.

El NOP es feliz de presentar versiones en español de la USDA reglamento orgánico y Manual del Programa. Las versiones en español, será más fácil para los de habla española agricultores, manipuladores y certificadores de entender y cumplir con el reglamento orgánico del USDA.

If you would like a copy, contact MOSA or access them online at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5109866>

View and update your organic system plans anytime at mymosa.org! ■

“MEATING” OF THE MINDS: ORGANIC MEAT SUPPLY CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

by Stephen Walker, MOSA Compliance Manager

In January, I was presented an opportunity to represent MOSA at a meeting in Berkeley, California, to discuss current challenges with organic meat production, processing, distribution, and supply. The meeting was organized by Jude Becker, a MOSA-certified organic pork producer from Iowa, and by the office of Alice Waters and staff at her famous Chez Panisse restaurant. Approximately 40 folks attended this Sunday meeting, representing various roles in the meat distribution chain, including producers, processors, brokers, buyers, chefs, and some authors. The goal was to discuss challenges and identify potential solutions.

Jude Becker opened the meeting by discussing his experiences, which got the ideas and discussion flowing. I gave a short presentation on the role and requirements of organic certification, specifically as it applies to meat, and identified some additional challenges and solutions. We continued sharing thought-provoking and passion-stirring ideas over a Chez Panisse meal. This meeting of the minds enabled planting some ideas I trust will continue to grow in new forums.

Becker gave a history of his farm's development since 2000, noting that the recent high grain prices were contributing to cash flow issues, which presented challenges with lender expectations. However, his customer base seems unlimited, with few organic meat producers available to meet high demand.

In preparation, I gathered perspectives from many organic community colleagues. We came up with some common challenges, but recognized opportunities. In all the discussion, I see a perennial push and pull: international markets vs. local production, monoculture vs. diversity, and a continued need and desire for relationships.

FEED AVAILABILITY

The challenge of feed prices was noted by a number of folks. Becker strongly emphasized how skewed organic markets have driven up grain costs, which especially affects producers of hogs and poultry. Large organic entities buy up significant organic grain quantities, altering markets. Specifically in the poultry sector, farms buy all their feed and are not in proportion to acres of grain needed to support them. Becker reminded how Rudolph Steiner said meat must be produced in relationship and in balance with a farm's grain output. He contrasts the US organic standards with those of the EU (889/08 Art. 19), which require livestock farms to produce a significant portion of their own feed, creating a different market paradigm.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC SLAUGHTER AND PROCESSING ACCESS

For years, we've recognized the need to encourage the development of organic processing infrastructure, including certified organic meat processing facilities. In the Midwest, we now have a partner in this effort. Elena Byrne is the Outreach Coordinator for the Madison-based Organic Processing Institute. OPI engaged in many conversations with regional meat producers, processors, distributors and retailers.

OPI sees situations where meat is raised organically, but is processed without certification, but they've also heard cases where a processor is willing to obtain organic certification to meet the needs of a handful of producers with organic product.

Byrne referred to a couple of existing research reports on the challenges, including a report by the Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network (NMPAN) called “From Convenience to Commitment: Securing the Long-



Term Viability of Local Meat and Poultry Processing” (www.nichemeatprocessing.org/nmpan-research) and a short version of the report published by the USDA Economic Research Service: “Solving Processing Issues a Key to Successful Local Meat Marketing.”

Some of the themes in those reports were echoed by Pam Saunders, Quality and Industry Relations Manager for Organic Prairie. Pam said it's not hard to get any plant certified for organic production, but the costs for small and mid-sized plants are magnitudes higher than for large plants. She also noted that it's not so much about processors' existence, but the appropriate match between producer and plant. Even a larger company like Organic Prairie struggles with this balance. As of this writing, they had no plans to market chicken in 2015, due to a lack of a processing partner, yet they do have producers willing to raise broilers. Saunders noted that small scale poultry producers have a very difficult time competing against larger vertically integrated operations.

Slaughterhouse operators that choose certification typically do not have issues with demand for their service. Scott Bittner runs Eureka Locker, Inc. in Eureka, IL, certified with MOSA since 2005. Upon obtaining certification, he reported that new organic customers came from great distances. Scott said, “As far as the organic product goes. I have noticed that there is a very big demand for organic product especially in the bigger cities. The unfortunate part is that the supply is not there! I know that on my end that the clients that I have that are processing with me have everything sold before it is even brought in”.

DISTRIBUTION DEMANDS AND THE ORGANIC DIFFERENCE

By nature, by size, and maybe by choice, organic producers have struggled with unique distribution challenges.

Harriet Behar, an Organic Specialist with the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), notes that there is a “continual dance of finding the right dollars to keep the organic producer and processor in business, while not driving away organic consumers from prices that are too high for their budgets”. She reminded me that transportation, processing and storage costs also need consideration in organic product pricing. These increase as the meat business consolidates into larger, more distant operations, and lower organic volumes also drive up delivery and storage costs.

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MEET MOSA STAFF MEMBER: ROBERT CALDWELL

What do you do in your position at MOSA?

I am a member of the Certification Team. I mainly review files for compliance with the USDA Organic program, and I go on inspections every now and then. I especially enjoy answering client's questions on the telephone or when they visit the office. Our awesome clients deserve a quick, straight answer to their questions. They are working hard and their organic certification is an important link in their success.



What do you do with your time outside of MOSA?

In the summer I have a large garden and we process and store a lot of our own food. In the winter I am an artist, creating spiritual based altars and paintings. I study different religions, and attempt to understand their similarities.

How long have you been at MOSA? Can you tell us about one thing that was really different when you started?

I started work with MOSA in 2001, and then left to teach at our local Waldorf school, graduating a class there in 2007. During the time that I was teaching, I worked for MOSA as a contract inspector during the summer breaks. I began to work for MOSA full time again in 2011, first as a staff inspector, and then as a member of the Certification staff. I have been inspecting since 1993 (prior to MOSA and the USDA NOP) and I have seen a lot of changes. Prior to the USDA NOP, each certification agency had their own standards, and often there was not agreement among agencies regarding what was meant by "organic" so it was more difficult for organic farmers to market their products. It is clear to me that the current USDA standards are not perfect, but they are very very good, and still the best game in town.

Why organic?

Because this is the only world we have. There is a natural biological order to our planet, and we help ourselves when we work in harmony with Nature. Conventional agriculture (for the most part) attempts to control nature with synthetics, and with that approach the ultimate result will be our undoing. We cannot control nature for very long. Nature has a plan that is beautifully designed and divinely inspired, and I want to promote that.

Why MOSA?

MOSA is a non-profit that is dedicated to sustaining a healthy and vibrant relationship between our clients and the USDA organic standards, as well as with their employees. MOSA has integrity with all of their processes, and I have witnessed this first-hand. Our staff and management are incredibly cohesive and cooperative. I am thankful to work for a company that resides in clarity and fairness, and is not just strictly concerned with making the most profit. MOSA strives to create a sustainable environment for all of us.

What are a few great things about your life?

My children are all making straight paths in their life and are successfully finding their own way. It is especially gratifying that my son Ben is now working at MOSA doing the same work as me. I have a long term partner, and we have discovered forgiveness and joy in being together while raising our children. I have good friends, and a good dog that adores me. I have found peace with life and death, and God. I find people and life interesting, and I am learning to hold all of this with an open hand and heart. I am a blessed man who has been graced with abundance. ■

WHAT TO EXPECT AT INSPECTIONS

by Jenny Cruise, Inspection Manager

As winter comes to a close, it's a good time to consider how to prepare for your 2015 organic inspection. One thing to remember is that, since each operation is different, organic inspectors might not always view exactly the same processes and records from one place to the next. However, you can be assured that there are some specific "show stoppers" that will put a wrinkle in the certification process for any operation. Reviewing the information below can help you prepare for your organic inspection, speeding up the process and putting you in the best position for a quick certificate update.

Here's what everyone needs to know, whether you run a farm or a facility that assembles organic pizzas:

First, know that the inspection must be done when an authorized, knowledgeable representative of the operation is physically present and at a time when it is possible to observe all land and facilities.

Next, no matter what kind of farm or handling facility you run, one of the key things all inspectors will ask is, "Have you resolved any noncompliances or issues of concern since your last inspection?" For this reason, it's best for you to review your most recent certification determination letter(s) before the inspection so you can easily answer this question. For example: "I was required to install a setback fence in pasture A. Look, there it is!" If you struggle to answer questions about how previous issues were resolved, this will complicate your inspection. The same is true about any questions that may have been asked in the Initial Review letter that comes from the office before the inspection. If you received a letter that says, "Have Document A ready for your inspector to collect," then rest assured, the inspector will ask you for that piece of documentation. This is true even if it's something they've never needed to collect in previous years. Inspectors are required to follow up on requests that come from the office.

Understand that the inspector does not make decisions about who gets certified. This happens back at the office. The real job of the inspector is to report on the extent to which the operation matches (or does not match) the description given in the Organic System Plan (OSP). Many inspectors will start with the tour of the farm or facility. This is usually every inspector's favorite part of the inspection because they really enjoy seeing how you do things in real life. If they notice that anything looks different than the OSP describes, you will be asked to explain the change. If there are deviations from the OSP, were they intentional or accidental? Permanent or temporary? Is there anything new that needs to be added to the OSP? Is there anything that is obsolete and needs to be removed from it? As you can see, the focus shifts to documentation. The paperwork component is the part of the inspection that most people like the least, but there are some things you can do to make it easier.

FOR FARM INSPECTIONS:

- Have updated copies of maps and field plans. Many times, considerable time is spent at the kitchen table making field plan updates with the inspector when they could have been done in advance, thus saving time during the inspection.
- Have copies of receipts for all inputs and seeds.
- Have a completed Seed Table. This is an absolute must for most growers. However, sometimes growers have dozens, or hundreds of different seed

see INSPECTIONS next page



photo Harriet Behar

varieties. In these cases, alternative documentation can be used. Talk with someone at the MOSA office if you have questions about your options.

- Have a bag or tag for each seed variety. All non-organic seeds must be shown to be untreated (or treated with allowed materials). If a crop type has the potential to be available in genetically modified varieties, then non-GMO documentation will be needed.
- If non-organic seeds are used, you'll need to show that you conducted an organic seed search. If you're not sure what this means for your particular operation, contact the MOSA office and talk with a certification specialist about your options.
- Have product labels and ingredient information for inputs not OMRI listed or previously approved by MOSA. MOSA must review all the ingredients within a product before they can allow use of that material. For inputs that don't have a label (like a load of ag lime) provide purchase documentation and contact information in case there are questions about ingredients or potential additives.
- Make sure field activity logs and records of harvest and storage are complete, up to date, and accessible to read.
- Have sales records on hand. Sometimes growers are surprised by the need to produce sales documentation for the previous year, but often-times it is necessary. For example, if an inspector wants to do an audit of your corn sales, but he or she visits in June, then last year's records are the most complete and current ones available. Additionally, the inspector may ask to verify prior year sales to make sure that the correct certification fees have been paid. To be safe, have all sales documentation for the current and prior year available for audit.
- Have on hand any paperwork showing that, on your particular farm, organic integrity was maintained. For example, if you have custom combining work done by a conventional farmer, then you'll need documentation showing that the combine was cleaned out. Similarly, equipment cleaning records are also required for your own equipment if they are used on any non-organic land, including buffers.
- If you have livestock, have an updated Livestock List. For 2015, you can start with your 2014 list and then cross off any animals that have been removed from the herd, adding any new livestock.
- If you have ruminants, have a copy of your Livestock Winter & Summer Rations. Also provide any changes you have made to your main rations over the season. You may find MOSA's Grazing Season Ration Worksheet helpful to track ration changes for a group of animals throughout the grazing season.
- Have receipts and certification documentation for all purchased feed and supplements.

- Have updated individual herd health records for dairy animals, herd health records or flock records for slaughter or egg operations.
- Have certification documentation for purchased livestock and receipts for all livestock inputs.
- Have pasture & confinement records.

The average farm inspection takes 2-4 hours when the operation is fairly straightforward and the operator is well organized. If you have lots of land, off-site facilities, or a system that is more diverse or complicated than average, then it is best to allot more time. Also, please note that livestock operations must ensure that their animals are accessible for up-close observation by the inspector.

FOR PROCESSING/HANDLING INSPECTIONS

For processing/handling facilities, equipment proposed for use must be in place and functional at the time of inspection. Here's what you can do to prepare your paperwork:

- Review and outline changes to previously submitted forms and documents. Be prepared to update the inspector on such changes.
- Have a map of your facility indicating the location of major pieces of equipment and storage areas. Your product flow chart will help your inspector understand how processing is managed.
- For Product Profiles: have labels, receipts, ingredient information, organic certification verification or affidavits for all inputs including organic ingredients, non-organic ingredients, non-agricultural ingredients, flavors and processing aids.
- Have audit trail documentation accessible, showing how products are tracked from ingredient receiving all the way through sales and shipping.
- Have supporting documentation available: pest management and employee training logs; quality assurance protocols and procedures; sales invoices; and composition and source information for pest control products, boiler chemicals, cleansers and sanitizers. Have verification of current organic certification for all certified organic ingredients and organic products received for further handling.
- Have current verification to show compliance with any National List restriction/annotation for any ingredients or processing aids used from the list.
- If organic and non-organic products are handled in the same operation (parallel or split production), have records (such as equipment cleaning logs) that show there is no commingling or contamination.
- Be prepared with the total dollar amount of net sales (gross sales less the cost of organic ingredients) made on MOSA-certified products or services.
- Have current or proposed retail and non-retail labels for all products making an organic claim.
- Have current licenses and/or permits as required by other regulatory authorities.

AT THE END OF THE DAY...

Many MOSA farmers and processors find their inspections to be enjoyable experiences, and our inspectors often feel the same way. Inspection is a challenge, but it doesn't have to be a chore! Set yourself up for success by preparing as much as possible and asking MOSA any questions you might have in advance. You can also find a more detailed description of our record keeping requirements in MOSA's Program Manual. ■

Nate Lewis, the Senior Crops and Livestock Specialist with the Organic Trade Association (OTA), commented that processing is a missing critical link in the supply chain. "The loss of America's small abattoirs has created an insurmountable challenge to smaller organic producers who end up selling their animals for lower prices to accumulators who can then deliver enough animals for the larger plants, or they're going with a custom slaughter approach which prohibits them from selling to restaurants or retail shops."

Like Scott Bitter, Lewis was among several folks noting challenges with supply of organic animals, including stock for sale to finishing operations. MOSA Staff Inspector/Certification Specialist Lynne Haynor affirmed that those raising feeder pigs or feeder cattle may not be able to locally source organic feeders, and if their market doesn't require it, they are not likely to drive many hours to try to get organic calves or piglets. Haynor also noted timing challenges when producers try to sell to aggregators: "I know lots of folks don't sell organic cull cows because there is a long wait and the price difference doesn't justify the inconvenience when they can call Equity and have them gone today. If a cow is being shipped because she is not 100% healthy, a wait doesn't make sense."

Saunders noted that aggregators like Organic Prairie are now being compelled to offer long term contracts (3-6 years) to attract a stable supply of animals, especially in pork, as larger players enter the market as buyers. It's more difficult to gain the commitment from livestock producers, compared to producers of commodities with quicker production timeframes.

Rebecca Goodman is a livestock producer in Wonewoc, WI. With her husband Jim, she's been certified with MOSA since 2010, but has been selling meat raised on her organic farm since 1997. They don't use a certified organic processor, for reasons of relationship with her local uncertified facility, and logistics/economics. Rebecca and I both sit on the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council. When I asked Council members about organic meat challenges, she gave some seasoned grassroots perspective:

"First of all, the life of an organic producer is no panacea. Each year the struggle to be profitable gets more difficult. Controlled markets, increased costs and climate change are major factors.

We sell our dairy steers through direct marketing. We generally have 12-14 animals/year to sell and have 2.5-3 years invested in them at the time of slaughter. I have dealt with many chefs who want my product but seem to have very little understanding of scale and don't seem to care what I would do with the rest of the animal (other than the prime cuts they use) or me wanting to put my farmers market customers first. They want what they want, when they want it or what we call, 'buying off the organic Sysco truck.' Retailers want me to deliver and sell to them for less and then add their 30%+ markup. There is no satisfaction or profit in either of these situations.

We have sold our beef at the Dane County Farmers' Market for 16 years. We sell by the piece and move 75-80% of what we have to sell there. Our customers do not care that we are not certified because they can ask their questions and get the assurance they want directly from me. Selling in this way is the only way we can be profitable.

From a producer standpoint, organics, by its very nature, does not allow an organic parallel system where everything is standardized, cheap and accessible. Organic animals are not widgets. Organic principals dictate that each one is an individual and should be allowed enough freedom to perform its instinctive behaviors, not confined in an organic feedlot.

If there was an organic "Sysco" truck, it would be the end of all small producers because it would be stocked by large vertically integrated producers who were in organic production for profit first and foremost and following the ethics of organic production only because they had to. Organic farming was seen by many as a way out of the conventional system, for ethical

reasons and as a means of economic survival by farming in a way that gave them some control again. An organic system that parallels the conventional system and puts everything on the "Sysco" truck will take that all away, again."

Michelle Miller is the Associate Director of Outreach, with the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at UW-Madison. CIAS is working on supply chain barriers to regional food for regional markets. Michelle noted, "Marketplace scale is a huge issue. The commodity system works because of efficiencies of scale, but it also reduces the number, depth and quality of relationships. We haven't yet found the sweet spot for organic meat".

Miller listed many questions that could come into play in finding a fair, organic supply chain for meat: "How many people within a particular radius are necessary to make a processing facility economically viable, socially just (think labor and ownership issues), and at what price? Then, what are the market constraints? What wholesale price is needed to not only pay producers and processors fairly, but also to invest in business growth? Transporting truckloads of anything into an urban area is crazy hard. Are the drivers for the carrier companies fairly compensated for this stressful job? Are the carriers innovative in addressing greenhouse gas emissions? Is there adequate consumer demand and willingness to pay for a premium product in regional cities under 100,000? Is it necessary to sell to more affluent buyers in suburban markets or through high end restaurants to build the business? Is there an opportunity to further process meat for added value? Are there buyers who make particularly good supply chain partners and some to avoid? Can the communities that host meat producers and processing facilities afford to purchase their products?"

CARCASS UTILIZATION

Rebecca Goodman noted her challenges selling the full animal. Providing enough of each type of cut of meat sought by buyers can leave extra of something else that may not be able to find an organic market. Restaurants can support organic producers by buying whole animals, utilizing slow cooking methods, and featuring different cuts. Nate Lewis of the OTA noted that market acceptance of ground meats and frozen product is also important for successful organic livestock farming, which tends to follow the seasons more than conventional production, due to pasture requirements, overwintering expenses, and limitations on health treatments.

ANIMAL HEALTH TOOLS

The organic standard's prohibition on antibiotics and synthetic parasitides were also noted as a challenge in organic meat supply. MOSA Certification Specialist and Staff Inspector Angela Davidson commented that since dewormers cannot be used, she's observed that some organic beef are smaller physically. Organic producers are challenged to find good alternatives to conventional parasiticides.

EDUCATION, LABELS AND COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC

I have often warned of the negative effects of various idealistic battles within the organic community. Too many times we have allowed the perfect to be the enemy of the very good, and the resulting news about organic's challenges gains the headlines and creates consumer confusion. I think the typical organic consumer has grown up with a mostly healthy indoctrination of questioning authority. So, when an authority like the National Organic Program is challenged, consumers are quick to doubt, and may be swayed by alternatives. Organic meat suffers more than other market sectors by an illegitimate comparison to other, often unregulated claims like "natural," non-GMO, or antibiotic-free. Those claims also bring a market premium, but likely do not utilize organic feed and shortcut some of the other organic production requirements.

cont. MEATING OF THE MINDS from previous page

Mark Geistlinger is a veteran staff inspector with MOSA. When he sometimes hears complaints about certification costs, it's always relative to the gains from certification. A farmer that sells \$300,000 of milk to Organic Valley or Horizon never complains about their certification fee, because they know that certification has enabled a doubling of the market value of their product. But, a meat farmer does not immediately see anything close to a doubling from the certification fee they're assessed.

SOLUTION- PROMOTION

There is a great opportunity to make a difference in the marketplace; by promoting the story of what the organic standards require. Rather than questioning authority, we can tout our unique authority.

Mark Geistlinger put it well: *"Organic meat has a great story, just like organic milk. Organic meat offers stacked benefits to the consumer. The best way to support these practices is to support the farmers that purchase these products. No other environmental label comes close."*

Mark also criticized how we all sometimes fail to boost our label.

"(We're) myopically focused on the Standards, forgetting that the organic movement came before, and is larger than, the National Organic Program. (We) seem to be uncomfortable promoting organic foods, or simply don't have time for it, or assume that the OTA or someone else is doing it. We focus on making sure our customers aren't violating the Standards, but miss opportunities to encourage them toward what they could do to expand their organic markets. As an example, we make sure that the farmer who has her steers slaughtered locally at an uncertified facility doesn't advertise the cuts as organic, but do we provide her with an information sheet listing the certified facilities, or steps toward getting her local facility certified, or how to sell the live animals to her customers as organic even though they are processed locally?"

"Our farmers are best-positioned to tell the organic story, and too many of them are taking shortcuts and not doing the work of educating their customers about the larger organic movement and what it means in terms of meat standards. Or, worse, farmers are misleading their customers into thinking that the meat products are just about as organic as other elements of their operation, when in fact, the livestock products are not certified. The uninformed customer would have no idea that the animals consume 70-80% of their diet in GMO, herbicide-grown, soil-eroding corn and soybeans because the marketing emphasizes the pasture component of the diet. Finally, retailers could do more to promote organic meat, and instead muddy the information waters by bragging about their non-organic, natural meats because these sell even though these meats typically have nothing close to the environmental/husbandry standards of organic and are not 3rd-party verified."

"All members of the organic foods movement need to get on board boasting about the organic difference. Local? First off, local doesn't necessarily mean less energy use. Secondly, local doesn't mean anything about quality or environmental standards. It's at least partially based on a naïve hope for a simpler food system and the belief that the customer can find out from the food producer all they want to know about how the food was grown/raised. I don't go to a local restaurant and ask the waiter if the cooks wash their hands or use sanitizer on the dishes or have rat turds in the mixing bowls. I depend on the health inspector to do that. Yet, people think they don't need the organic inspector because they have a relationship with the farmer. How many customers ask the farmer if they bought organic feed and have receipts? Or if their cattle grazed for at least 120 days?"

SOLUTION- PROCESSING DEVELOPMENT

As we promote our label, we need to think about how we can improve our part in the delicate dance of relationships which gets meat to market. MOSA is well-poised to make a difference. We're currently the #1 livestock certifier in the country, certifying over 700 organic livestock operations.

We encourage producers to consider certifying meat products, by involving their local meat processor. Certification of a meat processing facility is relatively simple, with few organic control points, and cost share dollars are available. For years, with the aim of encouraging this needed infrastructure development, we have offered a special low fee that enables a local meat processor to get certified to offer processing services for a single MOSA producer. Due to changes requiring independent certification for such processors, that fee is going up this year, but it still is a significant savings, and offered to encourage producers and meat processors to work together.

The International Organic Inspectors Association received a \$106,000 grant, in part for development of a self-guided and online learning module for slaughterhouse inspections. This will be completed by September.

SOLUTION- MORE TALK

We'd like this discussion to continue. While the problems are complex, we hope to bring more great minds to the challenge. There are indeed solutions, and these need to be collaborative. It's in this spirit that this information is offered, to continue a conversation, to plant more seeds, and to encourage new networks. The time is ripe to start a movement for certified organic meat. The latest word is that Richard McCarthy of Slow Food USA is planning a Slow Meat Symposium for June 4-6, in Denver. Please contact MOSA with your thoughts. ■

cont. PETE'S MEATS from page 1

producers who were looking for a certified processor to work with them. "I owe a big thanks to the Hansens and the Caldwells. They helped me understand the process and the market for organic meats, and they stuck with me," remarked Tim.

"Right away Dad thought that organic was a great idea. We thought with two interested organic farms, there must be more out there. The first three years were tough though. The sales projections were not being met. I kept thinking, 'Is it worth it?', but it has paid off now."

From 2003 until 2010, organic was only about 3% of the business. Now, 11-12% of the business is organic and steadily growing. "More and more people are calling with interest, and a lot more from out of the region," said Tim. A key component to that growth was the addition of Tropical Traditions, an internet retailer of organic foods. "They called us in 2010 looking for organic lamb processing. They had growers in Hillsboro, WI. We did 100 lambs for them that first year. By 2014, we were doing 600 lambs and over 300 beef."

Tim estimates that they have 20-22 steady organic clients and several more that use them on a sporadic basis. "I don't advertise. I rely on word of mouth and I am looking for more organic customers."

Going organic has not been without its challenges. "The slaughtering and processing part was easy to implement. My biggest learning curve has been in sausage making. It was tough to find certified organic ingredients at first," noted Tim.

Pete's Meat Service now offers a full line of organic beef and pork products- fresh and smoked. For processed meats, they offer summer sausage, ham, bacon, sausage and Hungarian bacon.

Tim recently updated the retail area of the business. Customers still come from miles around for organic, grass-fed and conventional meats in the store. "Sausage is our specialty; that and the quality of our cuts."

Tim employs 11 full time staff and another four staff part time. They also do some wholesale and restaurant sales, but the majority of their sales come from custom work for others. "Business is good. We plan to expand the sausage-making area, we have a new website coming, and we are looking for more customers," said Tim. ■

INDUSTRY NEWS

SURVEY REQUEST FOR MIDWESTERN ORGANIC FARMERS

The Qualtrics questionnaire is being administered as part of study by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University so that we can better understand motivations of organic farmers in the Midwest to create social, environmental and economic value. The results of this study will help create awareness of the role of Midwestern organic farmers as green/environmental entrepreneurs in promoting sustainable development. Little is known about the link between organic farmer motivation and economic, social and environmental value. This research is designed to be supportive of the global organic farming movement.

The questionnaire, which can be accessed through the Qualtrics link below, will take 15 minutes or less to complete.

Follow this link to the Survey:

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9vLLOPATgF7bV3L

Your answers will be strictly confidential. Only summary results will be examined. We will ensure that those who have returned the questionnaire are not contacted again.

MOSA NEWS

MOSA OFFICE HOURS AND FOCUS DAY

At MOSA we do our best to work smart. This encompasses everything from hiring some of the most motivated and knowledgeable staff to creating an Easy Organic System Plan form, drastically reducing the time it takes our clients to fill out update paperwork each year. Working smart also means using our time as efficiently as possible in order to do what we enjoy most; helping people comply with the National Organic Standards.

To accomplish this goal, we are consolidating most staff trainings and meetings to one day of the week—Thursday. As an agency bound by strong and sometimes complex regulations, meetings are an essential part of our work; however it is equally important for us to be available to our clients in a predictable and consistent way.

Beginning Feb. 19, MOSA staff will have limited availability on Thursdays. Someone on staff will be available by phone on Thursdays unless in a required meeting. If you are planning to stop by the office on a Thursday, please give us a call to make an appointment. Any other day of the week, just drop in during our office hours:

Mondays – Fridays: 8:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursdays by appointment.

NEW MOSA OFFICE DROP BOX

Beginning March 1, MOSA will have a locked drop box located outside of the Viroqua office front door. The drop box will allow clients to drop off documents at their convenience. The drop box will be checked daily, except on weekends. Please put your documents in an envelope with your name clearly marked and a note if the information is for a specific staff member.

CLASSIFIEDS

LAND/FARMS

For Sale: R-1130 Westby: Ridge top Hobby Farm on 41 Acres! 34 Acres ORGANIC tillable with a SPRING, Morton buildings including a pole shed & insulated and heated garage. There is also a retired dairy barn. Very rural & private but located not far from town between Viroqua & La Crosse. Septic sized for 3 bedrooms. \$355,000 - For additional information, please call Dan Kiedinger, United Country-Oakwood Realty, LLC at 608-606-5344 or email: dan@oakwoodrealty.com.

Home/land for sale: Rare opportunity for land this close to Madison. 1966 2bedroom/1bath Ranch house, 1000 sq feet, 15.6 acres, on dead end road. Very quiet & secluded. 12 miles to Madison, 3 to Oregon, 8 to Stoughton. Mostly oak floors, stone fireplace in livingroom, large picture windows. New furnace, AC (2004); new water heater, 2010 new pump, Semi finished 12X22 room in full basement. Two (one car) garages; mature trees—oak, apple, pine; land is a mixture of former fields & woods. Surrounded by fields, woods & DNR land. Two out-buildings. Will consider renting. 608 298-3995/realOest@hotmail.com (zero, not the letter O)

Business/Home opportunity: Farm family wanted to work into our direct market farm business. We are in our late fifties and looking at a 2-4 year exit strategy, so the ideal couple will be willing to take financial ownership of one or more of our enterprises initially and possibly add new dimensions. Sale of the business with land (up to 247 acres) is the ultimate goal. We've emphasized organic, pastured meats (beef, meat chickens, turkeys, lamb), dairy and eggs and other organic whole foods in a 9 year old established on-farm organic food store with over 500 active members. New Holstein, WI. kwrcraig1980@yahoo.com.

For Rent/Lease: 90 to 100 acres of tillable organic certified farm land for rent/lease near Freedom/Kaukauna/Appleton, Wisconsin. For more information, contact Joe at 608-283-1733, 608-839-9111, or 608-516-6054.

For Sale: 80 Acres of MOSA-certified land. 50 is tillable, 30 is wooded. Possible building site or sites. Highway 82 access, DeSoto, Wisconsin. Would consider splitting it up. \$6000 per acre. 608-648-3377

EQUIPMENT

Wanted: Row crop flamer, 6 row minimum, preferably 12 row. Complete or just the burners and hoses—we can mount. Call 641-673-6964.

For Sale: Premium Cal. 33 0-0-4-33 Cal. 5 G. \$175. Phos. Cal. 0-10-0-12 Cal. 5 G. \$188. Free Shipping. Approved for Organic Production. Complete line of Living Stone Products available. Ask for prices. Daniel Yoder. Morning Star Farm, E14994 State Road. 82, La Farge, WI 54639

For Sale: TR 70 New Holland combine, no heads, 5542 Oliver self-propelled combine with 16 ft. straight head both combines. Have alfalfa sieves, 484 New Idea round baler makes 4X5 ft. soft core bales. Kevin Koester Faulkton, SD 605-460-1545

For Sale: DeLaval 1500 gallon bulk tank. Swing eight parlor equipment. 3D line. 715-449-2239.

For Sale: Used standard spring steel hoops, 64" long – need to be put in by hand. Great for season extension in the hoop house or field. FYI – 5 pieces weighs 1lb. We have about 1,000. \$.15 each plus

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For Sale: Iston Pax bulk bin includes auger and motor. asking \$600. Nine-ton schuld bulk bin. Includes auger and motor. asking \$400. 608-634-3760. Ask for Mike.

For Sale: Two 6080 Allis Tractors. One with a open station, one with a cab. One Ford 4600 tractor; a 715 International Combine with both heads; New Holland 310 baler with thrower; two 8x16 steel bale racks; New Holland 352 grinder-mixer; John Deere 115 12-foot disc; 2006 John Deere 240 Skid-steer; Fox 2100 Chopper with corn and hay heads; New Holland 40 blower; New Holland 310 spreader. Wayne Cook 715-427-0186.

For Sale: NO SPRAY signs, heavy corrugated plastic. \$3.00 each. Contact Curtis Miller, 17866 State Hwy 33, Ontario, WI 54651.

MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale: Cranberries – Certified organic by MOSA. Contact Shirley at 715-305-4532.

For Sale: Agricultural Grade Local compost. 50 lb. of N, 120 lb. of P, 60 lb. of K per ton plus micronutrients and organic matter. Commercial fertilizer value is over \$150 / ton. Price is: \$90 / ton. Minimum purchase: 20 tons. Hurry, limited quantity available! Sustane Natural Fertilizer, Inc. (Kenyon, MN) Call Kyle Lilly: 507-263-3003, Email: kylel@sustane.com We can help you develop the most effective nutrient management plans for your crops and soils.***OMRI certified granular, dry, organic fertilizers also available.

For Sale: Pelleted chicken manure. Delivered anywhere in the Midwest. Consistent supply, good quantity, and reasonable price. 920-660-5686. No bedding. No arsenic.

EMPLOYMENT

ASSISTANT FARMER needed for 45-acre vegetable farm near Madison, Wisconsin. Broad range of interesting machinery, crops, jobs, and responsibilities. Expect to be involved with tillage, cultivation, irrigation, and other tasks. This is a good next step for someone with 3 to 5 years farming experience. Experience with farm machinery necessary, plus willingness to learn. Learn more at www.tipiproduce.com/employment/.

FARMHAND (several positions)

Join our lively work crew! FT/PT, from mid-May into early November, at vegetable farm near Madison, WI. Jobs include greenhouse seeding and watering, weeding, harvesting, washing and packing produce. Prior farming experience is valuable but not required. Must be physically fit. Competitive wage, catered lunch two days per week, subsidized carpools from Madison, plus lots of organic veggies to take home. Friendly work environment. Learn more at www.tipiproduce.com/employment/

TRANSPLANTS/SEEDS

For Sale: Certified Organic High Moisture Corn. Hybrid is from Charlie Brown Seed Co. VP3912 High Protein and High Oil Corn. Contact: Pechacek Organics by Jerry 715-262-5115 or 715-821-0793

For Sale: Certified organic vegetable and herb starter plants from Gardens of Eagan is second nature to us with over 20 years of experience growing certified organic transplants to our own exacting standards. Gardens of Eagan's experience and expertise will guarantee you get the best

and most vigorous, healthy plugs ready to thrive. Choose from our proven varieties or let us grow your favorites. Bare root allium and grafted tomatoes also available. Visit our website at www.gardensofeagan.com or call us at 507-645-2544.

American Organic Seed Dealer: For seed needs, call Rich at 608-485-2756.

FORAGES/GRAINS

Buyers Wanted: Custom Crop Growers Available. Certified Organic. We will plant vegetable and/or grain crops to supplement your needs. Experienced producers. Boaz, WI area. Call John or Craig at 608-536-3187. (2-13-2015)

For Sale: CERTIFIED – ENTIRE LOT OF 330 SMALL SQUARE BALES OF ALFALFA/GRASS MIX @ \$3.00/BALE. Smaller quantities @ \$4.00/bale. ENTIRE LOT OF 240 SMALL SQUARE BALES OF GRASS MIX @ \$2.00/BALE. Smaller quantities @ \$3.00/bale. Contact Dennis 608-221-8180 ext. 13, 608-469-2486 cell, 608-455-1746. dennis@in-paksystems.com. Brooklyn, WI

For Sale: Certified organic alfalfa baleage. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cuts. Wrapped, a little on the dry side. Also some oats/peas baleage. Price negotiable. Call Paul Proksch. Stoddard, WI. 608-498-2882. (1-14-2015)

For Sale: Certified Organic High Moisture Corn. Hybrid is from Charlie Brown Seed Co. VP3912 High Protein and High Oil Corn. Contact: Pechacek Organics by Jerry 715-262-5115 or 715-821-0793

For Sale: MOSA-certified good, clean ear-corn in wood crib; 2000 small square bales hay – 1st and 2nd crop in barn, grass/alfalfa mix; oat/pea baleage – 1000 lb round, individually wrapped, cut at boot stage. Priced reasonably, take all or part. Located near Bangor, WI. Call 608-790-6461

For Sale: Certified organic baleage, alfalfa/brome-grass mix. 4x4 round bales individually wrapped. High quality, reasonably priced, delivery available. Located in SE WI. Call 262-728-2256

For Sale: Seven large round bales of organic pasture mix hay for sale. Afton MN. Not able to deliver them but I can load them onto a trailer. Price is flexible. Chris Bliska, Elm Tree Farm, Afton, MN. 651-998-0507

For Sale: Certified organic dry hay and corn shreds. 3 x 3 x 8 bales. Stored inside. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cuts. Call Paul Proksch. Stoddard, WI. 608-498-2882. (1-14-2015)

For Sale: Organic hay, 450+ small square bales second crop alfalfa, 179 RFQ. Full lab report available. Call Brad 262-305-7623 Allenton WI.

For Sale: Certified organic round bales. 1st crop. No rain. Nice tight bales. Approx 150 4x4 bales of grassy hay, \$50 ea. Approximately 53 4x5 bales of alfalfa hay, \$90 ea. 608-606-4369 Viroqua area.

For Sale: OCIA-certified organic wrapped alfalfa hay, 1st, 2nd and 3rd crop. Big squares and 5 foot rounds. Also, 150 round bales of Oatlage. Test results available. W Central MN 320-491-0788.

For Sale: Custom Grazing of organic dairy heifers and steers. 280 acres of managed pasture near Antigo. Bio security and volume discounts are a possibility. Michael Haugen 715-623-0404.

For Sale: First crop round bales, grassy hay 4x6. Also for sale, second crop small squares. Loyal, Colby area. Call 715-255-9865 or 715-255-2052.

Buy and Sell: Quality certified organic grains and proteins. Custom feed milling and soybean roasting. Bulk auger delivery in Wisconsin. Golden Grains, Sparta, WI. Call 608-269-5150.

For Sale: Certified organic rolled roasted soybeans. Also buying organic feed grade soybeans. Andersen Feeds, Inc., Galesville, WI 54630. 608-582-2595.

For Sale: Organic hay, round bales, quality tested. Dry and sileage bales. Trucking available. Caledonia, MN. Call 800-533-2215.

For Sale: 1st, 2nd, 3rd cut baleage. In-line wrapped, on the dryer side. Large SQ (he wants to use SQ) corn shreds. Stoddard WI area. 608-498-2882.

For Sale: Round bales 1st crop clover grass hay. 4x6 net wrapped, located in central Wisconsin. Not rained on, made right, looks good contact Ed at 715-255-9865. gieseedsue@aol.com.

For Sale: Organic oat straw, 50 inch round bales, net wrap, roto-cut. Wonewoc area. Trucking available. Kent Wolf 608-553-1136.

To submit an ad to be posted in the printed version of the Organic Cultivator and on the MOSA website, send it to MOSA, PO Box 821, Viroqua, WI 54665, or email to mosa@mosaorganic.org. All ads will be posted for 60 days free of charge for MOSA clients (100 words max). For non-clients, cost of an ad is \$5.00 for 40 words, and \$0.10 per word over 40 (max 100 words).

MOSA does not guarantee that all products posted on this page are certified organic, and MOSA is not responsible for the accidental purchase of non-organic products through the use of this page. Always check to guarantee the certification status of any product before purchasing or using. ■

EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Organic Farming 101

Feb. 2-Mar. 30 | Minneapolis, MN

Join the Women's Environmental Institute to learn the How-To for full scale organic farming along with the science that explains it. Learn to plan your farm season intentionally with forethought and mindfully for the unexpected. Contact us: Email: wei@w-e-i.org; Phone: North Branch: 651-583-0705; St Paul 651-206-651; <http://w-e-i.org/project/organic-farming-101/>.

Introduction to Markets

**Feb. 25 | 6-8:15 p.m.
\$25 | St. Paul, Minn.**

Hosted by the MN Food Association, the discussion of what markets are available for local produce and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each. Most detail will be about Farmer's Markets – what is available and how to sell successfully at Farmer's Markets. Call us 651-433-3676 or go online to <http://mnfoodassociation.org/classes-and-farm-tours>.

26th Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference

Feb. 26-28 | La Crosse, WI

The MOSES Conference is the largest event in

the U.S. about organic and sustainable farming. This event includes 65+ workshops, inspiring keynote speakers, and a two-floor Exhibit Hall with more than 170 exhibitors open exclusively to conference attendees. This farmer-focused conference is celebrated as the foremost educational and networking event in the organic farming community. Call us at 715-778-5775, toll free at 888-551 4769 or go online to <http://mosesorganic.org/conference/>.

Spring Fruit Tree Pruning
Feb. 28 | 1–3 p.m. | \$30 | Newburg, WI

Learn best practices for spring fruit tree maintenance and pruning to enhance yield. Registration is \$30 by February 25 or \$35 after. Call us at 262-675-6755 or go online to <http://www.wellspringinc.org/horticulture>.

MARCH

Season Extension
Mar. 2-4 | \$375 | Champaign, IL

Hosted by the Land Connection, learn the essentials of season extension from farmers and other professionals in a classroom setting, visit farms that have made season extension a vital component of their success, and get a hands-on demonstration in high tunnels. Call us at 217-840-2128 or go online to <http://thelandconnection.org/farmers/farmer-training-intensives/season-extension>.

Small Fruits Workshop
Mar. 9 | 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. | Free
Fairmont, MN

Hosted by Rural Advantage, learn about elderberry production, making vinegar, blue fruits, and how to reduce chemical use and inputs in cold climate grape harvest. Call us at 507-238-5449 or go online to <http://mosesorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/Events/2015-3rd-Crop-Winter-Series3.pdf>.

Midwest School for Beginning Apple Growers
Mar. 13-15 | \$300 | Madison, WI

Sponsored by CIAS, the course will prepare participants to grow and sell apples using a variety of management strategies and tools. The school emphasizes sustainable and organic production methods, including integrated pest management strategies, and helps students understand the full cost of establishing an orchard. Call us at (608) 262-520 or go online to <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/midwest-school-for-beginning-apple-growers/>.

Building a Regenerative Farm
Mar. 14 | 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. | \$75
Amery, WI

Join Hungry Turtle to explore the inner workings of the regenerative farm and how to design, stage and manage perennial crops. Look at the farm from a whole systems perspective delving deeply into the nuts and bolts of specific crops and creating a viable financial plan based on

your assets, your site, and your community networks. Contact us online at http://hungryturtle.net/cal_single/establishing-a-perennial-farm-economy/.

Minn. Lamb and Wool Producers 2015 Spring Workshop
Mar. 28 | 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | \$15
Kensington, MN

Day will include on-farm sessions, lamb lunch, virtual tour of Dennis Leiser's farm and producer questions. Call 320-760-4696 or go online to <http://mosesorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/Events/spring-workshop-2015.pdf>.

Marketing Workshop
Mar. 30 | 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. | Free
Fairmont, MN

Hosted by Rural Advantage, learn about accessing wholesale markets, building a resilient food system, building a website for direct marketing and how to save seeds. Call us at 507-238-5449 or go online to <http://mosesorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/Events/2015-3rd-Crop-Winter-Series3.pdf>

APRIL

IAC Great Lakes Intertribal Food Summit
Apr. 14-16 | Green Bay, WI

Hosted by the Intertribal Agriculture Council, spend three days of working sessions, hands-on workshops, tours and more. Summit focus is on accessing USDA programs as a Tribal member or Tribal farming operation. Please call 800-333-3333 or go online to <http://iacgreatlakes.com/events/summit/>.


Organic Trade Association's Policy Conference
Apr. 14-16 | \$349 | Washington, D.C.

Join OTA with this conference comprised of three activity days. Events include a day for members to conduct trade association business, an informative and thought-provoking policy conference, and a final day, when members will take the organic message to legislators on Capitol Hill during hundreds of pre-organized Hill Visits. Call OTA at 202-403-8520 or go online to <http://www.cvent.com/events/ota-s-policy-conference-and-hill-visit-days/event-summary-242df4d9411649c995d066bdc074db9b.aspx?i=8b4f748d-fbff-45e5-95fe-550a1c597bb9>.

Farm Skills 101
Apr. 17-May 1 | Alexandria, MN

Organized by the Sustainable Farming Association, the Deep Roots Farmer Development Program is a much-needed beginning-farmer curriculum that emphasizes all three tenets of sustainability, plus provides extensive skills training. Contact the Sustainable Farming Association to learn more: Online: <http://www.sfa-mn.org/contact/>; Phone: 763-260-0209; Mail: SFA of MN, Box 192, Princeton, MN 55371; Email: gro.nm-afs@ofni. ■

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