



THE ORGANIC CULTIVATOR

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WISCO POP!

Bubbling Up from the Driftless

by Joe Pedretti, Outreach Manager

Austin Ashley has worked his fair share of different jobs: music promoter, restaurant worker, landscaper, and now soda brewer. What is the common thread between these disparate jobs? Entrepreneurship. Austin has always been driven to do things his own way, and he has the vision and perseverance to see it through.

Austin grew up in Texas, where his Grandmother had a massive garden and fruit

trees, which started a lifelong interest food and local production. "When I got a job in a French restaurant they had gardens around the restaurant. That made a big impact on me- local agrarian. That makes so much sense."

After moving around the country, doing various jobs, Austin met, and fell in

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

June has rolled into July, the hot weather has arrived, the days are long, and I keep thinking about that quote from Heraclitus, "the only constant is change". That certainly rings true for me! Just as I get used to doing something a certain way, or seeing a particular sight, or knowing a particular fact, it changes on me. As easy as it is to think things around us are going well, everything is stable, and we've got it all figured out, a change is going to come whether we like it or not. Climate and politics are obvious big-picture items, but there are lots of small, slow, and incremental changes going on around us all the time that eventually add up to something bigger. We can't stop it, and resistance is futile. The best we can do is prepare ourselves for change so that we are in the best position as possible to adapt and embrace it.

As we are fond of saying at MOSA, the organic industry needs more of everything! More producers, processors, inspectors, reviewers...the one thing we seem to have enough of is demand, and that's a good thing for the organic industry, for the economy, and more importantly, for the health



Cori Skolaski
Executive Director



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CERTIFICATION POLICY UPDATE

by Jackie DeMinter, Certification Policy Manager

Proposed Rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices!

UPDATE: Public comment period extended to July 13! As we covered in our last newsletter, the National Organic Program (NOP) of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has published a proposed rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (LPP). They received many requests to extend the comment period, and did, giving until July 13th to submit comments. Here at MOSA we're hard at work drafting our comments. In preparation for making comments, we sent all producers with livestock a survey to gather client feedback regarding the proposed actions. We appreciate the great response we received to our survey! Thank you!

The organic industry has long anticipated the publication of this proposed rule. The implementation of new clarifying rule language is important to strengthen the organic regulations and enable consistency among certification agencies and certified operations. We recognize the difficulty in capturing the intent of the rule into clear, concise and enforceable words. While we intend to offer support for the general direction of the rule, we have significant edits we'll also be proposing. It's important that we land with an enforceable, yet practical final rule. Our comments will focus on three main areas. The implementation timeframe presents some challenges for MOSA and clients that we'll be discussing. We'll answer the NOP's questions as best we can, and we'll explain the reasoning behind the edits we propose. Our comments will be made available on our website once submitted.

The implementation period proposed is a "phase in" approach, enabling clients to make adaptations to come into compliance. The NOP proposed that all producers would need to be in compliance with all requirements within one year, except for outdoor space requirements for birds. For those there would be no compliance requirement for three years. Beginning three years after the rule is published, any new operations applying for certification would need to be compliant in order to be certified. Any operations certified during or before those three years would have a total of five years from the date of publishing in which to come into compliance. While most clients who replied to our survey indicated that they could easily comply during the timeframes proposed, several indicated significant challenge with the initial implementation timeframe. Some clients will need additional time to make indoor building modifications or to add outdoor soil space for mammals. The initial timeframe also presents some challenges with our annual certification review process. We send out update paperwork in February, thus timing of publication is important for us. Changes to the rule will result in new forms, updated Organic System Plan paperwork, new policies, and training for staff and inspectors. We would hope to be able to include changes necessary in our annual cycle of work. Working in changes mid-year would be a challenge.

The NOP has added new definitions, amended the livestock health-care practice standards, amended the livestock living conditions to cover mammals only, and added two new sections - one on poultry living conditions, and another on transport and slaughter. In

our analysis of the rule, we found some redundancy and confusing or otherwise challenging to enforce standards, so we've proposed edits to simplify and revise language. Definitions presented largely codify the existing policies we have, however the new definitions for indoors, outdoors, and stocking density deserve additional consideration by the NOP. For indoor space on laying operations, we feel that accessible nest box space can be calculated, and that for aviary operations, feed and water need not be provided on each level. Outdoor space excludes any solid roof structure that is attached to the building, and includes at least 50% soil access. We've heard a strong outcry regarding the 50% soil access requirement, particularly with regard to swine and while we are not proposing edits to the definition proposed, we are commenting on this new requirement and sharing anonymous feedback from clients. The definition for stocking density is specific to "animals on a given unit of land". Since this term is applied to indoor space as well, we suggest that it not be specific to a "unit of land."

Proposed changes to the livestock health care practice standard offer clarifications to existing rules and adds a new section for euthanasia requirements. We do not believe all revisions and additions are necessary and suggest that several be removed from the final rule. For example, we do not think that "monitoring of lameness and keeping records of the percent of the herd or flock suffering from lameness" and the causes is necessary. This requirement is adequately covered in other standards that we already effectively verify. We also do not feel that the prescriptive requirements for euthanasia methods are necessary and we'd believe that if euthanasia is utilized that animals are "carefully examined to ensure that they are dead" just as a general principle. We suggest striking most of the new section on euthanasia.

The NOP proposes to change the current livestock living conditions through separation of standards into mammalian and avian sections. New standards proposed for mammals include specific requirements for swine management, including access to soil, dairy youngstock, and indoor and outdoor space requirements for poultry. Some additions, such as the requirement that "animals must be kept clean during all stages of life" are impractical and unnecessary. Normal behaviors will often result in animals that are not clean. We feel we already assess cleanliness appropriately, and as relative to conditions on farms, thus we suggest this language be removed from the rule. The new rule requirement that animals have "sufficient space and freedom to lie down in full lateral recumbence, turn around, stand up, fully stretch their limbs without touching other animals or the sides of the enclosure, and express normal patterns of behavior" has been particularly confusing for the industry. Many have questioned whether or not stall barns will still be allowed for dairy. Yes, they will be and this has been clarified by the NOP. We believe that this new language has caused enough confusion and should be removed and also that the new rule should make it clear that dairy barn stalls are allowed. The new requirement for dairy calves to be group housed after wean-

see *POLICY UPDATES* next page

ing supports general farming practices according to feedback we received. Our comments include an allowance for housing individually to six months of age recognizing that not all animals are born at times when group housing is possible.

Swine are now included in this new mammalian section as well. The new additions stipulate that swine are to be group housed, except for sows at farrowing and during suckling, boars, or other animals with documented instances of aggression or those recovering from an illness, and that animals shall have rooting materials indoors and out and access to soil (at least 50% of the outdoor area). While group housing requirements codify existing practices, standards for outdoor access present challenges for swine management. MOSA policy currently does not require the outdoor access area for swine to be soil. We do require rooting materials so animals can exhibit natural behavior, but we recognize the likelihood for degradation of soil swine have access to.

The new avian living conditions section includes a few new requirements including ammonia level testing, artificial light maximums and required dimming of facility lights, indoor and outdoor metrics, specifics for exits and perch space, and litter, scratch and dust bathing requirements. We believe that ammonia should be monitored and request guidance on acceptable monitoring methods. The 16 hour limit on artificial lighting is a reasonable requirement, though may be a slight challenge in some northern areas, but the requirement to gradually lower light intensity is not. We do not observe all barns lowering the lights before bed, and our comments emphasize that the need to do this is dependent on the flock size and individual facility, and as needed to prevent injury. We are not attached to what the specific metrics are, but believe that having these specifics will bring about consistency in the industry. Exit doors and egress requirements as proposed present enforcement challenges. "Exit areas for birds to get outside must be designed so that more than one bird at a time can get through the opening and that all birds within the house can go through the exit areas within one hour." While allowing for more than one bird to pass at a time is reasonable, all birds exiting the barn in an hour would be impossible to enforce. We believe that exits just need to be sufficient so as to allow for all birds to exit in a reasonable amount of time and agree that birds need to be encouraged to exit the building at an early age. Six inches of perch space is required per bird, and we do not believe the metric specificity is necessary here, so long as perch space is adequate for all birds in the facility. Scratch areas and areas for dust bathing must be provided indoors and out, and while we have not specifically enforced this, believe that birds we certify have ready access to materials. The NOP uses the word litter, as in 'litter must be provided and maintained in a dry condition.' This message is confusing. We ask for clarity regarding the definition for litter. It appears they mean bedding, and we recognize that not all barns use added bedding.

The new transportation and slaughter section only has a few requirements that we propose to edit significantly. We do not believe it is reasonable to require that "sick, injured, weak, disabled, blind and lame animals must not be transported for sale or slaughter. Such animals may be medically treated or euthanized." This stan-

dard should be removed. We also do not believe that trailers, or pens within trailers, used to transport organic animals have to be physically labeled as organic so long as animals are clearly identified as organic. It's not required for animals on the farm to be completely separated from conventional animals, so long as there is not a threat to organic integrity, and we do not see issue with transporting them together either.

If you have not yet commented directly to the NOP, we again encourage you to do so following the instructions below.

What Should You Consider as You Prepare Your Comments?

Your comments should clearly indicate whether or not they support the proposed action for any or all of the items in this proposed rule. You should clearly indicate the reason(s) for the stated position. Your comments should also offer any recommended language changes that would be appropriate for your position. Please include relevant information and data to further support your position (e.g. scientific, environmental, industry impact information, etc.).

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search: AMS-NOP-15-0012

Mail: Paul Lewis Ph.D., Director Standards Division, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS-NOP, Room 2646-So., Ag Stop 0268, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0268.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the docket number AMS-NOP-15-0012; NOP-15-06PR, and/or Regulatory Information Number (RIN) 0581-AD44 for this rulemaking.

Dates: Comments must be received by **July 13, 2016**. Please contact our office with any questions regarding this new proposed rule. ■



love with his now wife, Hallie. "She was living in Wisconsin, so we moved to Madison. This is where I became interested in coffee. Hallie's brother Caleb Nicholes and I became friends, and when he decided to move to Viroqua to be closer to his son and to start a coffee roastery, we decided to move too. That was the beginning of Kickapoo Coffee. We earned sweat equity in the business which we later sold to (current co-owner) TJ Semanchin," recalled Austin.

Ever the entrepreneur, he soon decided to put another one of his passions to work- brewing. "I had been making craft beverages for some time. Things like beer and ginger beer. I was working a dead end job making \$10 an hour. I decided that I could make my own soda and make at least that. I said, 'I can do this.'"

With his friend Zac Mathes, Austin and Hallie began their planning for an all-natural, hand-crafted soda enterprise. "Zac began by interviewing beekeepers, probably 60 in total. We wanted to use honey for our sweetener, but we were not interested in corn syrup fed bees. We wanted to find ingredient sources that fit our values. We wanted to make soda as healthy as you can, with natural and organic ingredients."

Austin talked with a lot of experienced brewers. "They all had two key pieces of advice: start by producing kegs, and don't

think twice, just do it. Kegging is much cheaper than bottling, which requires expensive equipment. I took out \$4500 in retirement funds from my last job and bought two pallets of kegs and some brewing equipment. I rented a spot in downtown Viroqua, and in 2012, we were up and running."

At first, they sold to restaurants, but they found that securing a tap line was very difficult, especially with the micro-brew beer boom. While producing kegs was the cheapest and easiest option to get started, they found that in the long-term, they had to start bottling and getting into the grocery stores. To do this however, would take significant planning, a large financial investment, and a more permanent location.

To accomplish this goal, they needed to raise over \$100,000 to buy the equipment they needed. \$25,000 came through their Kickstarter campaign and a "Buy Local WI" grant. The biggest chunk of money came through a USDA grant. "I met Sue Noble a long time ago, and started talking with her when the Vernon Economic Development Association (VEDA) started the Food Enterprise Center in a 100,000 square foot commercial building in Viroqua. She was very good at writing grants and

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cont. WISCO POP! from previous page

was lots of help. She was instrumental in making this work."

It took a year to get everything up and running, but with a new permanent processing location in the Food Enterprise Center, they were ready to make soda in 2014 with a new brewing and bottling system. "At this point we decided to switch from honey to organic cane sugar for our sweetener. Cane sugar is much easier to work with. It is much more consistent. Honey is too variable in taste, and was too costly and difficult to source. It did take research and time to find organic ingredients. We now make Cherry, Strawberry and Ginger flavors, all of them are certified organic."

A key breakthrough in sales came from a new distribution agreement with Cooperative Partners Warehouse, a Twin Cities distributor that works with local producers to access natural food stores, cooperatives and restaurants. "We were delivering in an old painted Toyota van, driving all over the place. We wanted out of delivery, and Cooperative Partners helped us do that."

Starting with 25 customers, Wisco Pop! now has over 150 customer accounts. "We had 400% growth in one year. The reception has been amazing. We are budgeting for another 100% growth in 2016. We are looking at some conventional market breakthroughs, but mostly we are focused on the natural markets," noted Austin. "In the next five years we will start looking for a national distributor like UNFI. For now, our goal is to keep growing, remain transparent and committed to our values, and to be a model for the industry."

They are planning to launch a new soda flavor in 2016- Grapefruit/Hibiscus, and are also planning for a new brand of sparkling beverages called "Sparkle". "We have plenty of room for new products and growth," remarked Austin.

The process for making Wisco Pop! involves a lot of fresh ingredient preparation. After receiving their orders, they start processing ingredients on Monday of each week. The juice is freshly squeezed, and their flavorings (ginger, vanilla) peeled and cut. The juices, flavorings and sugar are added to water and then boiled for three hours in the extraction process. The extract is then allowed to chill overnight at 34 degrees. The next day they filter the extract and then carbonate. From there the soda is bottled, labeled, boxed and put into refrigerated storage.

"Organic is a good choice for us because we have always been committed to land stewardship and healthy ingredients. People are tired of the term 'natural', which doesn't have much meaning. Certified organic helps us leverage our commitment to cooperation and to stand up and do what's better."

To learn more about Wisco Pop!. Visit their website, Facebook and Instagram at: <http://www.wiscopopsoda.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/wiscopop/?fref=ts>
<https://www.instagram.com/wiscopop/> ■



MEET MOSA STAFF MEMBER: KRISTEN ADAMS

What do you do in your position at MOSA? As a Certification Specialist I audit files during the Initial and the Final Review stage and will be conducting on-site inspections this summer. Upon our

clients' request I also review products to determine if they are allowed for use in organic production and am available to answer question via phone, email or in person if you happen to stop by the MOSA office.

What do you do with your time outside of MOSA? My life outside of work is filled with family and food. My husband, our 3 children and I spend time gardening, raising animals, cooking and preserving our harvest. We work hard together but we sure don't sacrifice any fun!

How long have you been at MOSA? Can you tell us one thing that was really different when you started? I started working at MOSA a year ago this June. This past year we have seen tremendous growth in organic agriculture so we have added staff to support this growth. MOSA also recently purchased the building that our offices are located in. We are putting down roots!

Why organic? I grew up on a dairy/vegetable/poultry farm where I was taught to respect and connect with the natural resources and community around me. From a young age, my brothers and I were a valued and important part of our family farm. We spent our summers harvesting cucumbers, making hay, milking cows, raising chickens and playing in good, sweet earth. While the Organic Food Production Act was being drafted in the 90's I was leaving the safety of my family's farm to travel and experience the world of agriculture by doing migrant work on various farms around the United States. Much of what I saw was not a reflection of the farm I grew up on. I saw food being grown with bottles and jugs. I found lifeless soil and fields without the natural buzz of insects. On these conventional farms we, the farmworkers and fieldworkers, came in constant contact with pesticides and herbicides while we harvested and worked the fields. Clouds of pesticides often drifted over us. This way of farming made me physically sick. This system of feeding people and was not in alignment with the principles and values that I was brought up with.

I have a long list of reasons for supporting organic agriculture but tonight, as I snack on strawberries harvested by my children, the answer to "Why organic," is simply because it supports the health of the hands that feed us.

Why MOSA? MOSA is an organization made up of professional, informed, heartfelt people who are committed to great customer service while upholding the organic standards. The expertise of our staff is quite diverse, bringing a variety of experience and insight to our work.

GOOD GROUNDS FOR AWE

by Stephen Walker, Operations Manager

On a Friday night in June, a handful of MOSA staff took part in our local Relay for Life to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. Soon after the events kicked off, a storm front moved in, and what was a 100+ degree temperature-humidity index dropped by about 30 degrees in under an hour. Somewhat called by the storm, I showed up in support of our team, but only just in time to hear the events were delayed (and then eventually canceled) due to the lightning. Some more sensible folks headed for shelter as the skies churned their mix of steel blue, dark grey, and white. Others, like me, waited and looked upward at the rapidly-changing clouds, with reasonable fear overcome by a sort of planetary awe. In the face of big skies, we seem mighty small sometimes, but we are moved by that power.

I moved along home as the storm finally began to spit. Back home, I revisited a book my Dad gave me for Christmas some years ago: *A Private History of Awe*, by Scott Russell Sanders. I'd recalled that the book cover pictured similar clouds. Sanders opens with a recollection of a young childhood day when his father carried him on to the porch of a Tennessee farmhouse and held him while "thunder roared and lightning flared and rain sizzled." Twenty years later he carried his own baby daughter to an Indiana porch to meet another storm, wondering if she too felt the "tingle of power that surges through bone and rain and everything." The book is a recollection of his lifelong moments when he'd been exposed to "the force that animates nature and mind," what the world's religions might call Creator, Allah, Holy Ghost, Great Spirit "...or a host of other names. In physics, it may simply be called energy. In other circles it may be known as wildness." Sanders says, "Without boundaries or name, the ground of being shapes and sustains everything that exists, surges in every heartbeat, fills every breath, yet is revealed only in flashes, like a darkened landscape lit by lightning, or in a gradual unveiling." He notes that Quakers call these awe-filled moments of insight and clarity "openings."

The Friday storm moved through as dusk fell. Folks that stayed through it were treated to a moment of opening. To the west, the setting sun lit half of the sky in a graduated tangerine color; and to the east, a double rainbow framed lightning bolts cutting across a dark blue backdrop. It was a perfectly appropriate conclusion to the Relay events which, this year, had a "somewhere over the rainbow" theme, and which every year celebrate families surviving cancer. The next day, at a neighborhood party across the street from our MOSA office, many people were sharing their experiences of that sky show the evening before. My son's former grade school teacher commented on how she felt true "awe." Yes, I agreed, it was indeed "awesome," a fleeting glimmer that was pretty special and makes us take notice.

Through another conversation with my Dad some years ago, I am now aware of the casual use of the word "awesome" in so

much everyday speech. It seems to him, and now also to me, that "awesome" should be saved for describing openings where we're exposed to something beyond us and within us. Furthermore, these moments should be sought, treasured, and remembered. They help us find home.

I also find that oftentimes, like a glowing orange sky and a rainbow, the fleeting awe comes after a physical or personal struggle, like churning skies or fields beaten by hail, or making tough changes spurred by discontent. Perhaps we have to get through our human work to be ready for clarity. Or, maybe I need to practice clearing the head to find the heart. And then, how many times can we recount seedlings that emerged anyway, the beings we've kept alive, the risky experiments that paid off, or perhaps the silver linings that make all the difference?

For me, a drive in working with natural systems, as in organic agriculture, is that this work offers many, many opportunities for openings, glimpses of clarity where we become a bit more aware of what's at the heart of things. To be sure, I've mostly got an office job. But, I was led here by the soil, by some letting go of resistance to change, and by some trust in expectation. Unlike many who may read this, I'm not pressured to make a living by farming. But still, the heart gets filled most evenings as a privileged steward of a couple small garden spaces. I love working with the little ecosystems, trying new methods for maximizing yield while building soil, doing my part to promote life in many forms. My part often seems pretty inconsequential while the sky seems pretty big. Yet, what *joy* sometimes to "play the sky" and come up with symbiotic victory, like getting the seed planted just ahead of the new moon, and just ahead of an unexpected rain. We work with the earth and the sky and when we do it well, find an opening, life wins.

We do our human work, and make our best guesses at what life wants, and then leave it up to awe to make it work. And in organic agriculture, we rightly move our hands and feet with a global perspective.

In his agrarian essay "A Native Hill" (*The Art of the Common-place*, 2002), Wendell Berry has something to teach about rightly setting priorities. He writes, "We have lived by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. And this has been based on the even flimsier assumption that we could know with any certainty what was good even for us... We have been wrong. We must change our lives, so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and to learn what is good for it. We must learn to cooperate in its processes, and to yield to its limits. But even more important, we must learn to acknowl-

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edge that the creation is full of mystery; we will never entirely understand it. We must abandon arrogance and stand in awe. We must recover the sense of the majesty of creation, and the ability to be worshipful in its presence. For I do not doubt that it is only on the condition of humility and reverence before the world that our species will be able to remain in it."

With reverent perspective and right action, we are more likely to find openings. This can require varying degrees of doing our human work, and surrendering. Preparing good grounds for awe sometimes means listening for whispers of quiet natural cycles. Or, it might mean getting loud, speaking out for our neighbor and planet, or tearing apart stability that leads only to quiet desperation. Whether loud as thunder or quiet as an emerging seed, as we recognize and nurture needed changes, with cooperation, we create openings for awe. In turn, better attention to awe spurs creative change which enables our survival.

So here as we move through the thick of summer and the agrarian challenges and storms come and go, here's hope that you find joy in the privilege of being a good steward, love the mystery in playing the sky, and recognize your part in sustaining life. Have a truly awesome summer. ■

* * *

Milkweed

While I stood here, in the open, lost in myself,
I must have looked a long time
Down the corn rows, beyond grass,
The small house,
White walls, animals lumbering toward the barn.
I look down now. It is all changed.
Whatever it was I lost, whatever I wept for
Was a wild, gentle thing, the small dark eyes
Loving me in secret.
It is here. At a touch of my hand,
The air fills with delicate creatures
From the other world.

by James Wright from *The Branch Will Not Break*.
(Copyright 1992 by James Wright, Wesleyan University Press.)

of our planet. I've been with MOSA for 3 ½ years now and since I started in 2013, we've undergone some fairly significant changes. This has included lots of internal changes, tweaks, and realignments that have for the most part gone unnoticed by our clients, and have focussed on efficiency and customer service. The number of MOSA employees during this period has grown by over 30%, and the number of clients we serve has increased by about that same amount. The organic industry as a whole is growing exponentially. According to the Organic Trade Association, "With \$43.3 billion in total organic product sales, the industry saw its largest dollar gain ever, adding \$4.2 billion in sales in 2015, up from the \$3.9 billion recorded in 2014. For the fourth year running, the industry saw growth in the double digits at 10.8%. To-date, the industry has shown continuous and steady gains since the economic downturn of 2009 with a growth rate well beyond that of the overall food market at 3.3% in 2015."

On that note, I'm happy to tell you that we recently welcomed three new Certification Specialists to MOSA; Myrrh-Anna Kienitz, Terri Wojahn, and Nick Huffman. They come to us with varied and relevant experience in the organic industry, and we are very happy to have them join our team.

Mark your calendars, as MOSA will hold two educational field days this summer; Tuesday, July 26 at Pine Knob Organic Farm in Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin (organic sheep), and Wednesday, September 14 at the Placke Farm in Cuba City, WI (organic field crops and dairy). We are so grateful to Bonnie Wideman and the Placke Family for hosting these events; many of MOSA staff will be in attendance, and we would be very glad to see you there! Feel free to bring a friend or neighbor. For more details, there is additional information in this newsletter.

As always, if you have any questions or comments about anything in this newsletter – or about MOSA – please feel free to contact me at cori@mosaorganic.org or 608-637-2526. Thank you for reading, and thanks for your continued commitment to organic integrity. ■

What are a few great things about your life? We have the sweetest water I have ever tasted at our house in the hollow. I get to have just the right amount of slow Sunday mornings with good strong coffee. We have a pantry and freezer full of food less traveled and many wild acres to explore. Our house is just small enough to teach our children how to co-exist and there are no yard lights to be seen from our front yard! ■

ORGANIC COST SHARE

Help with Certification Costs

by Lexy McManaway, Cost Share Coordinator

WHAT IS ORGANIC COST SHARE?

For many certified organic operations the Organic Cost Share Program plays a critical role in financial planning and helps to defray costs conventional operations do not incur. In 2001 Congress allocated funding in five-year increments to reimburse certified organic producers and handlers for some of the costs of organic certification. In 2014 during the federal budget debates, the Organic Share Program nearly lost its funding, but after a down-to-the-wire Congressional debate, the program was renewed and fully funded (\$11.5 million) for five years. Throughout the debate MOSA consistently advocated to keep Organic Cost Share.

From time to time, since the Organic Cost Share Program began, there has been some debate whether Organic Cost Share is a “government hand-out.” In the 2014 final decision, Congress recognized the organic industry as a significant and growing economic sector.

Funded at the federal level, the program is typically administered by individual state Cost Share Programs—most often through agriculture departments.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The USDA Organic Cost Share Program describes:

To be eligible for organic cost share, operations must possess USDA organic certification or be actively seeking organic certification at the time of application. To be eligible:

1) During the grant period of performance [October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016], the organic operation must have paid fees/expenses related to its initial certification, be actively seeking its initial certification, and have obtained certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

or

2) During the grant period of performance, the organic operation must have paid expenses/fees related to the renewal or be actively seeking renewal of its USDA organic certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

(From Fiscal Year 2016 USDA / American Marketing Service Organic Cost Share Certification Programs Funding Opportunity document, p. 16)

HOW MUCH IS REIMBURSED?

For most states, the amount reimbursed depends upon: 1) the amount the certified organic operation has incurred and paid in allowable organic certification costs from October 1 through September 30 and 2) number of categories or “scopes” for which an operation is certified. Some states do not require that the costs be both incurred and paid between October 1 and September 30—just paid. Check your state Cost Share Program and application for requirements. Allowable costs include certification and inspection fees. An organic operation can be reimbursed up to 75 percent for each category or “scope” of certification with a maximum reimbursement of \$750.00 per scope. Examples of organic certification scopes include crop, livestock, wild crop, and handler. An organic operation certified

for crop only that pays \$1,000.00 in certification costs between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016 can expect \$750.00 in cost share reimbursement. An organic operation certified in crop, livestock, and wild crop that pays \$3,000.00 in allowable costs between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016 can expect \$2,250.00 in Cost Share reimbursement. Typical costs include paid certification fees and inspection fees. Late fees are not reimbursable. The state Cost Share program determines the reimbursement amount.

WHAT'S THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Most states send out their cost share application packets in June - July. The application is typically one-page and includes a required W-9 form. You may have to contact your state's Organic Cost Share program to request an application—particularly if newly certified. Some states require the applicant include a copy of the organic certificate. If your operation is newly certified—between October 1, 2015 and September 2016—you'll need to include a copy of your organic certificate with your Cost Share application. MOSA keeps a copy of each state's Cost Share application. If you need a cost share application, let us know!

WHEN WILL YOU RECEIVE YOUR COST SHARE REIMBURSEMENT?

Some states reimburse first-come, first-serve; some states wait until November - December to distribute reimbursements.

DOES MOSA HELP?

MOSA is committed to simplifying the application process and helping our clients receive their reimbursement. We work closely with the individual state Cost Share programs, making sure that each state has a list of our clients and paid fee information. Clients have asked whether MOSA completes the cost share applications or sends out the reimbursements. MOSA does not complete, submit, accept, or process cost share applications. The applicant must complete and send the application directly to the state Cost Share Program. MOSA is always glad to help with the application process and answer questions.

WHEN TO APPLY? – APPLICATION DEADLINES VARY

For most states the application deadline is October 31, 2016. However, application deadlines vary from state to state and can be earlier than October 31; for some states the Cost Share application process is ongoing without formal deadlines.

If you will be applying for Organic Cost Share, it's best to confirm your state's Cost Share application deadline and application requirements by contacting your state Cost Share Program directly.

As of the date of this article, we know that New York, Iowa, and Ohio are accepting applications. Utah does not presently participate in Organic Cost Share.

Below is the list of state contacts and application deadlines. If you are unable to reach your state Cost Share contact, need the state's website address, or have questions about the Organic Cost Share Program, please contact Lexy McManaway, MOSA Cost Share Coordinator, 608-637-2526, x 121. For more detailed information about Organic Cost Share, see the National Organic Program website: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>. ■

STATE COST SHARE CONTACT INFO AND APPLICATION DEADLINES BY STATE*

**subject to change.*

CALIFORNIA

Sharon Parsons
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
P: (916) 900-5202
Email: SParsons@cdfa.ca.gov

ILLINOIS

Jeff Squibb
Illinois Department of Agriculture,
Bureau of Marketing and Promotions
801 E. Sangamon Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
P: (217) 524-9129
Email: jeff.squibb@illinois.gov
Application Deadline: 11/1/2016

INDIANA

Tammy Butts or Beth Goeb
Indiana Department of Agriculture
One North Capital Ave, Suite 600
Indianapolis, IN 46204
P:(317) 232-8335 or (317) 232-8334
Email: tabutts@lg.IN.gov or
bgoeb@lg.IN.gov
Cost Share Website Application Deadline:
10/15/2016

IOWA

Maury Wills or Tammy Stotts
IA Dept. of Ag and Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
P: 515-281-5783 F: 515-281-6236
E-mail: maury.wills@iids.state.ia.us;
tommy.stotts@iowaagriculture.gov
Application Deadline: 11/15/2016

KANSAS

Josh Roe
Kansas Department of Agriculture
109 Southwest 9th Street, 4th Floor
Topeka, KS 66612
P: (785) 368-6463 C: (785) 410-0958
Email: Josh.Roe@kda.ks.gov
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

MARYLAND

Deanna Baldwin
Maryland Department of Agriculture
50 Harry South Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401
P: (410) 841-5769 F: (410) 841-2750
E-mail: Deanna.Baldwin@maryland.gov

MASSACHUSETTS

Mary Jordan
Massachusetts Department of
Agricultural Resources

251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114
P: (617) 626-1700 F: (617) 626-1850
E-mail: Mary.Jordan@state.ma.u

MICHIGAN

Robin Rosenbaum or Josh Grant
MI Dept. of Agriculture
P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909
Robin Rosenbaum - P: 517-335-6542
Email: rosenbaumr@michigan.gov
Josh Grant - 517-284-5789; F: 517-335-4540
Email: grantj5@michigan.gov
Application Deadline: 10/1/2016

MINNESOTA

Meg Moynihan
Minnesota Dept. of Ag.
625 N. Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55155
P: 651-201-6616 F: 651-201-6120
E-mail: meg.moynihan@state.mn.us
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

MISSOURI

Cindy Thompson
Organic Certification Cost-Share Program
PO Box 630
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0630
573-51-7794
Email: cindy.thompson@mda.mo.gov
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

MONTANA

Breanna Caldwell
MT Dept. of Agriculture
P.O. Box 200201, Helena, MT 59620-0201
P: 406-444-3730 F: 406-444-7336
E-mail: dcrabtree@state.mt.gov
Application Deadline: 10/15/2016

NEBRASKA

Steve Martin
NE Dept. of Agriculture
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4947
P: 800-422-6692 F: 402-471-6863
E-mail: steve.martin@nebraska.gov
Application Deadline: 11/15/2016

NEW JERSEY

Anne Marie Ference or Debra McCluskey
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
369 South Warren Street
Trenton, NJ 08608
P: (609) 777-0098 or (609) 984-2225
F: (609) 984-2508
E-mail: Anne.Marie.Ference@ag.state.nj.us
or Debra.McCluskey@ag.state.nj.us
Application Deadline: 11/16/2016

NEW YORK

Anne St. Cyr

NY Dept. of Ag & Markets
10 B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235A
E-mail: Anne.St.Cyr@agriculture.ny.gov
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

NORTH CAROLINA

Heather Barnes
Marketing Specialist
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1020
P: 919-707-3127 F: 919-715-0155
E-mail: heather.barnes@ncagr.gov
Application Deadline: 9/30/2016

NORTH DAKOTA

Emily Edund
North Dakota Dept. of Agriculture
600 E. Boulevard Ave. - #602
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020
P: 701-328-4759; 800-242-7535
F: 701-328-4567
E-mail: edlund@nd.gov
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

OHIO

OEFFA, Attn: Organic Cost Share
41 Crowell Road, Columbus, OH 43214
614-262-2022; x. 222; x 226
Email: ccameron@oeffa.org;
samira@oeffa.org
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016

PENNSYLVANIA

Jared Grissinger or Kyle Heffner
PA Dept. of Agriculture
2301 N. Cameron St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408
P: 717-705-9513 F: 717-787-5643
Email: Jared Grissinger -
jgrissinge@state.pa.us
Email: Kyle Heffner - kyheffner@pa.gov
Application Deadline: 11/16/2016

SOUTH DAKOTA

Ty Eschenbaum
South Dakota Dept. of Agriculture
523 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501
P: 605-773-5436; 800-228-5254
F: 605-773-3481
E-mail: ty.eschenbaum@state.sd.us
Application Deadline: 11/15/2016

WISCONSIN

Juli Speck, Grants Manager
WI Dept. of Ag. Trade &
Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708-8911
P: 608-224-5134
E-mail: Juli.Speck@wisconsin.gov
Application Deadline: 10/31/2016 ■

CLASSIFIEDS

LIVESTOCK

For Sale: Three organic crossbred dairy cows, two fresh and one springing, would like to keep calf out of her if possible. Asking \$2000 for fresh cows, OBO, and \$2000 for springing cow if I can keep calf, otherwise, \$2500, OBO. McNulty Farms, Black River Falls, WI, 715-896-0213.

For Sale: Fleckvieh Heifer Calves, Fleckvieh/Holstein Bred Heifers, Devon/Fleckvieh Bull, and a 75% Fleckvieh/25% Holstein Bull. Thorpe, WI. Call Allen at: 715-206-0491.

For Sale: 12 Organic dairy springing heifers, mostly holstein some crosses. All bred to 100% Fleckvieh bull, due May through august. \$2550 .Also 2000+ bushels of Organic shelled corn in a bin. D'Huyvetter Farms. Humbird, WI. 715-429-1000 or dhuyvetter1@gmail.com

Wanted: Organic Dairy Replacement Heifers. Holstein or other dairy breeds- can be crossbreds. 175 pounds up to shortbreds. Contact: Ray GINGERICH, 11001 Co. 15, Harmony, MN 55939.

For Sale: MOSA Certified Organic Holstein Heifers. Three to freshen in May, eight to freshen in June & four to freshen in July and early August. All nice looking. Accelerated genetics. Easy calving bulls used. Good records for each that include vaccinations, sires and due dates. We have always had a closed herd. Elk Mound, WI. Call 715-879-5572.

For Sale: Eight, bred Scottish Highland cows (10-14 yrs old). Due to calve summer, early fall. 100% grassfed. On free choice organic mineral and kelp. Pastured year round. SE WI. Asking \$1,500/hd but willing to negotiate. Bull available. Contact Austin at 262-210-9804.

EQUIPMENT

For Sale: New I&J Manufacturing cover crop roller & horse driven implements. Organic Roots Way is a dealer located in Camp Douglas WI. Contact Joel for info and pricing shipped directly to your address. 608-427-3423.

For Sale: Six row Sukup 4200 High Speed Cultivator with 200 Gallon Miller Pro Liquid Fertilizer Applicator. Very good condition. Located in NE WI. Call Scott at 920 427-6663.

For Sale: Allis Chalmers 7060 Tractor. Good condition- 5000 hours. Runs and drives well. Front tires new. Rear tires fair. \$5800. Located in NE WI. Call Scott at 920-427-6663.

MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale: Certified organic molasses. 5 gallon pails. FOB Verona Wisconsin 53593. \$70/pail. Discounts for larger quantities. Pure Sweet Honey Farm 608-845-9601 , psh@chorus.net.

For Sale: Mr.K's garlic tincture & garlic vinegar approved for use as treatment in organic production. Helps with mastitis, scours, etc... 330-674-3999 x3.

EMPLOYMENT

MOSES—the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service—is seeking a dynamic, seasoned leader who is an effective communicator, skilled manager, and successful fundraiser to guide the organization further along its path of success and respected standing in the organic community. Ideal candidates will have a connection to organic/sustainable farming in order to represent the organization credibly. See <http://bit.ly/MOSES-LeadershipOpportunity> for the full job announcement.

Cherry Tree House Mushrooms is a small farm in north-western Wisconsin (about an hour and a half from the Twin Cities) specializing in organic log-grown mushrooms, and we are now raising pastured pork, duck eggs, and produce. We are looking for an assistant farm manager for production work and to manage the work of interns. No mushroom cultivation experience necessary. This is a full time permanent position with a living-wage salary, room and board included. Please go to our website for more details: <https://cherrytreehousemushrooms.com/full-time-farm-manager-wanted/>

VEGETABLES/SEEDS/TRANSPLANTS

For Sale: Certified organic garlic seed. Music, Margean and Northern German. SE Ohio. Call 740-294-3575.

FORAGES & GRAINS

For Sale: Certified Organic 2016 Rye Crop Grain and Straw. Would like to sell out of field. We can Bale 4X5 Rounds or you can bale if wanted. Elk Mound, MN. Please call 715-879-5572 or 715-577-4577.

For Sale: 80 acres of Organic Hay. You bale and transport. Clinton, IA. Call Charlie 563-249-1350.

For Sale: MOSA Certified Pasture Mix Hay, 2015 crop. Large round bales stored inside. Seven left. \$50 each or best offer. Afton, MN. Call Chris at: 651 998-0507.

For Sale: 2016 Organic Rye and Rye Straw. Straw in large square bales. River Falls, WI. Pierce County. Call Jerry at 715-262-5115.

For Sale: 2016 Standing or Baled Organic Hay. Baled in large squares or bale your own. River Falls, WI. Pierce County. Call Jerry at 715-262-5115.

For Sale: Organic Shell Corn. River Falls, WI. Pierce County. Call Jerry at 715-262-5115.

For Sale: MOSA Certified Organic Balage. 1st through 4th crops. RFV 112-152. Protein 17-22%. Price per bale- \$35-\$50. Call Charlie at 608-634-3886 or 608-553-0087.

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

JULY 2016

Organic Field Day

July 6 | Lamberton, MN

The field day will start with a tradeshow and field tour of organic research projects including switch grass, over crops, and oat varieties and fertility. After lunch, four speakers will talk about several topics such as marketing of organic crops, oat production, and organic community farms. Registration fee includes lunch. Please register by July 1. Call 507-752-7372 or go to <http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/2016-organic-events>.

Rural Women's Project Potluck

July 10 | Blue Mounds, WI

Join Holly Deschenes of the Rural Women's Project and the Wisconsin Women in Agriculture Network Chapter serving Dane and Iowa Counties for a field day and potluck. Reverie Valley Farm is hosting this opportunity for you to join with other women to learn, network, and have fun together. Call 715-778-5775 for details or go to <https://mosesorganic.org/rural-womens-project/networking/>.

CSA Vegetable Production with MOSES'

Organic Farmers of the Year

July 11 | Evansville, WI

Steve Pincus and Beth Kazmar of Tipi Produce will discuss production techniques, vegetable pest and disease diagnostics and management, and market opportunities for vegetable farms. Registration required. Call 715-778-5775 or go to <https://mosesorganic.org/events/organic-field-days/july-11/>.

Beef Grazing and Pasture Infrastructure

Field Day

July 19 | Terrace, MN

This field day will cover cover crops and grazing systems, invasive species removal and grazing lands, rainfall simulator demonstrations, and includes an evening meal. Walk-ins are welcome. Please register by July 15 to reserve a meal. Call 320-424-3907 or go to http://landstewardship-project.org/repository/1/1802/july_19_grazing.pdf?cms34sid=tfq4sf1csgql0ths28oo0pc1d4.

MOSA Organic Farm Field Day

July 26 | 1 - 4 p.m. | Soldier's Grove, WI

Join Bonnie Wideman and MOSA for an in-depth look at pasture-based organic sheep production. Topics will include breed selection, parasite control, pasture management, lambing, and marketing meat and wool products. Space is limited. For more details, or to register, call Joe Pedretti at MOSA (608-637-2526) or email at joe@mosaorganic.org.

AUGUST 2016

Cottage Food Tier 2 Sales Workshop

August 4 | Minneapolis, MN

The University of Minnesota Extension created this workshop that will meet the training requirements to register as a Minnesota Cottage Food Producer with annual sales of \$5,001-\$18,000 per year. This advanced course focuses on food safety practices for all processes covered under the cottage food law including drying, baking, confections, jams, jellies, acid and acidified fruit and vegetables and fermentation. Participants also learn packaging, labeling, storage, and transport of safe food products. Graduates of the training will also be qualified for the Tier 1 Sales requirement (applying to sales of \$5,000 or less). Contact Suzanne Driessen at driessen@umn.edu or 320-203-6057.

Organic Dairy Day

August 9 | Morris, MN

This event will be held at the West Central Research and Outreach Center and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Brad Heins at 320-589-1711 or hein0106@umn.edu.

Otter Creek Organic Field Day

August 16 | Avoca, WI

This Midwestern BioAg Field Day focuses on organic practices that build soil fertility and profitability in both the short and long term. It covers a range of topics, including nutrient management, transitioning steps, marketing, dairy production, and more. This event is great for both experienced organic farmers and those who are just considering transitioning to organic. Call 800-327-6012 or go to www.midwesternbioag.com.

Bee Lawns: How to Have an Insect Haven

August 20 | Chaska, MN

In honor of the new Tashjian Bee & Pollinator Center, join Professor Mary Meyer in an interactive discussion and tutorial for Minnesotans who would like to make their yard a more welcoming place for beneficial insects, pollinators, and humans. The class features an hour of informational lecture and then moves outside to view the Arboretum's Bee Lawn with commentary, insights and insider stories from Dr. Meyer who helped create it. Call 612-301-1210 or go to arbedu@umn.edu.

Wisconsin Cover Crops Conference

August 30 | Lancaster, WI

The Michael Fields Agricultural Institute coordinates their annual Cover Crops Conference in partnership with NRCS and University of Wisconsin Extension and Agricultural Research Stations. The one-day conference boasts the theme "Coupling Soil Health and Economics" and features a bus tour highlighting the operations of several local cover crop uses from livestock production to dairy to cash crops. Special emphasis is placed on using cover crops to improve the economic bottom line of producers. For more information please contact Jim Stute, (262) 642-3303 ext. 112, jstute@michaelfields.org.

MOSA Organic Farm Field Day

September 14 | 1 - 4 p.m. | Cuba City, WI

Join Joe, Rita and Kelly Placke for an in-depth look at a successful multi-generational organic dairy. Topics will include diversified cropping systems, managed rotational grazing, farm transfer strategies, and solar power energy integration. Space is limited. For more details, or to register, call Joe Pedretti at MOSA (608-637-2526) or email at joe@mosaorganic.org. ■

MOSA ANNOUNCES SUMMER EDUCATIONAL FIELD DAYS

MOSA is proud to announce two summer field days held in partnership with experienced MOSA certified organic producers. The goal of these field days is to give both new and experienced farmers an opportunity to visit successful certified organic operations to exchange information and learn new production strategies.

MOSA staff will be on hand to answer certification questions. We will also talk about the upcoming proposed changes to Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices from the National Organic Program. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

Field days are free and open to everyone. Beginning farmers are encouraged to attend. Space is limited, so registration is required. To register, or for more information, contact Joe Pedretti, Outreach Manager, at 608-637-2526 or by email at jpeditri@mosaorganic.org

MOSA Organic Farm Field Day

July 26 | 1 - 4 p.m. | Soldier's Grove, WI

Join Bonnie Wideman and MOSA for an in-depth look at pasture-based organic sheep production. Topics will include breed selection, parasite control, pasture management, lambing, and marketing meat and wool products.

Bonnie's farm was featured in the May/June 2016 issue of *The Organic Cultivator*. Visit this link to learn more about her farm: [Pine Knob Farm](#)

MOSA Organic Farm Field Day

September 14 | 1 - 4 p.m. | Cuba City, WI

Join Joe, Rita and Kelly Placke for an in-depth look at a successful multi-generational organic dairy. Topics will include diversified cropping systems, managed rotational grazing, farm transfer strategies, and solar power energy integration.

The Placke Farm was featured in the Nov/Dec 2015 issue of *The Organic Cultivator*. Visit this link to learn more about their farm: [Placke Family Farm](#) ■





MOSA

P.O. BOX 821

VIROQUA, WI 54665

608-637-2526

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Visit us on Facebook: facebook.com/MOSAOrganicCertification

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