



Iowa Organic Association Box 185 Ames, IA 50010 www.iowaorganic.org

Spring 2014



Ryan, of Farmer's Hen House, promotes organic eggs at the IOA booth at the Iowa State Fair.

Volunteer in IOA's booth at the State Fair!

The Iowa State Fair is just around the corner, August 7-17th and for the seventh year in a row, the Iowa Organic Association will have a large booth on the second floor of the Agriculture Building.

Please stop by and say "hi," or even volunteer to work in the booth. We're looking for volunteers to work in the booth on all of the fair days. Hours are flexible.

Working in the booth is fun! You can talk to people about organic food and agriculture.

For more information about volunteering, contact Amber, our executive director, at iowaorganic@gmail.com or 515-708-1813.

Practical Farmers of Iowa's 2014 Field Day Guide is available; season features more than 30 events around Iowa

What do cover crops, grazing management, soil tests, refugee farmers, on-farm research and cabbage pests have in common? They're all topics that will be explored during Practical Farmers of Iowa's 2014 field day season. This year's roster of events includes 35 field days showcasing diverse farming,

livestock, land management, farm business and on-farm energy and conservation practices at locations across Iowa.

See which events are happening near you in Practical Farmers' freshly printed 2014 Field Day Guide, an annual publication that details on-farm learning events that take place during the spring and summer (PFI also hosts several late-winter and early-spring events that occur outside of the timeline of this guide). This year's field day guide also lists

12 events organized by partner organizations.

The 2014 Field Day Guide is available to view or download for free at www.practicalfarmers.org, and features a map of Iowa showing where events will take place. All Practical Farmers field days are open to the public, occur rain or shine and most are free to attend. To request a guide by mail, call the PFI office at (515) 232-5661.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Back about 9 years ago my sons Derek and Leighton and I were working in the fields one day, the corn needed hoeing and the beans needed to be planted. I asked my boys if they could hoe the corn for me, without hesitation they both replied yes (they have never done this by their selves before) so I gave them a few simple instructions and sent them on their way. I began planting beans in the field next to them and did not see them for a long time. When I came over a hill, I saw the tractor stopped, at first this was a concern, but then I saw my two sons kneeling on the ground with their faces about a foot off the ground checking on the operation they were doing. At that point I knew they had the farming bug and I was the happiest a farmer could be at that moment. My friends in organic agriculture, besides producing healthy food for consumers, being able to leave the land to the next generation in better shape than we got it, that is what organic is to me!

Wishing everyone a healthy and productive growing season.

Roger Lansink, President

Updated CSA directory puts more Iowa producers on the map.

Consumers interested in eating local have more resources to do so with the updated directory, *Iowa CSA Farms: 2014 Statewide List of Iowa CSA Farms and Organizers*.

Produced by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, this publication identifies local producers who operate Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprises that supply consumers with local, fresh, organic and sustainably produced food during the growing season. The directory will be updated annually.

"There are already some great Buy Fresh Buy Local guides to finding CSAs in Iowa, but with the help of regional partners, we were able to collect farm info that I don't think is listed anywhere else," said Savanna Lyons, graduate research assistant at the Leopold Center.

Seventy-five farms and organizers are listed in the 2014 directory, with contact information, website links, available produce and distribution range. The listings are searchable by name, county and Extension region—18 of the 20 regions in the state have CSA producers. For comparison, the 2006 directory covered 16 regions, with 49 CSA producers.

The publication is available by title on the Leopold Center website at www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs (look for Iowa CSA Farms). It also is available at the ISU Extension Online Store, <https://store.extension.iastate.edu> (use reference number PM 1693).



Iowa ranks 10th among US states that best support locally grown food.

When it comes to supporting locally grown foods, Iowa is one of the top states in the US, ranking 10th, according to the third annual Locavore Index, a state-by-state ranking of commitment to local foods.

The index is compiled by Strolling of the Heifers, a Vermont-based local food advocacy group, which hopes to strengthen local farms and food systems by encouraging efforts across the country to increase the use of local foods in homes, restaurants, schools and institutions.

The 2014 Locavore Index incorporates four measures: the number of farmers markets, the number of consumer-supported agriculture operations (CSAs), the number of food hubs — all compared on a per-capita basis — plus the percentage of each state's school districts with active Farm-to-School programs.

The top three states for locavorism, are (in order) Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire. Oregon moved up to fourth place, and Hawaii came in fifth. Rounding out the top 10 were Rhode Island, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Montana and Iowa.

Reversing climate change achievable by farming organically



Pictured: Jason Wells, organic farmer, Milton, Iowa

The Rodale Institute recently announced the launch of a global campaign to generate public awareness of soil's ability to reverse climate change, but only when the health of the soil is maintained through organic regenerative agriculture. The campaign will call for the restructuring of our global food system with the goal of reversing climate change through photosynthesis and biology.

The white paper, entitled "Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change: A Down-to-Earth Solution to Global Warming," is the central tool of the campaign. The paper was written by Rodale Institute, the nonprofit agricultural research institute widely recognized as the birthplace of the organic movement in the United States.

The white paper states: "We could sequester more than 100% of current

annual CO₂ emissions with a switch to widely available and inexpensive organic management practices, which we term 'regenerative organic agriculture.'"

Regenerative organic agriculture is comprised of organic practices including: cover crops, residue mulching, composting, and crop rotation. Conservation tillage, while not yet widely used in organic systems, is a regenerative

organic practice integral to soil-carbon sequestration.

"We know that correcting agriculture is an answer to climate chaos, and that it hinges on human behavior," said "Coach" Mark Smallwood, executive director of Rodale Institute. "The future is underfoot. It's all about healthy soil."

AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING SEEN AS ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE

Benefits to water and soil quality plus climate stabilization achieved with good crop yields

By changing row-crop management practices in economically and environmentally stable ways, US farms could contribute to improved water quality, biological diversity, pest suppression, and soil fertility while helping to stabilize the climate, according to an article in the May issue of *BioScience*. The article, based on research conducted over 25 years at the Kellogg Biological Station in southwest Michigan, further reports that Midwest farmers, especially those with large farms, appear willing to change their farming practices to provide these ecosystem services in exchange for payments. And a previously published survey showed that citizens are willing to make such payments for environmental services such as cleaner lakes.

The article is by G. Philip Robertson and six coauthors associated with the Kellogg Biological

Station, which is part of the Long Term Ecological Research Network. The research analyzed by Robertson and colleagues investigated the yields and the environmental benefits achievable by growing corn, soybean, and winter wheat under regimes that use one third of the usual amount of fertilizer—or none at all—with “cover crops” fertilizing the fields in winter. The research also examined “no-till” techniques. The regime that used fewer chemicals resulted in more than 50% reductions in the amount of nitrogen that escaped into groundwater and rivers, with crop yields close to those of standard management. Nitrogen pollution is a major problem in inland waterways and coastal regions, where it contributes to the formation of “dead zones.” The no-till and reduced chemical regimes also mitigated greenhouse warming by taking up greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The practices also led to more fertile soil.

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EATING ORGANIC FOOD DRAMATICALLY LOWERS PESTICIDE INTAKE

A recent study from RMIT University in Australia found that consuming an organic diet for one week lowered pesticide levels—dialkylphosphates (DAPs)—by nearly 90% in adults.

While recognizing the possibility of other sources of the pesticides, the dietary change suggests that most of them came from food consumption. DAPs represent 70%-80% of organophosphate pesticides.

People living outside of urban areas had higher exposure, although they were less likely to eat food contaminated with chemicals. Dr. Liza Oates, who led the study, noted that pesticides are absorbed through skin and inhaling.

Most Australians had low—or no—pesticide levels, especially groups not exposed to spraying of Ops.

Nutritionist Rosemary Stanton of University of New South Wales hopes the study is replicated with larger samples, as it indicates the health benefits of eating organic food. The organic diet in the study consisted of 83% certified organic and another 10% “likely organic” food.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

The IOA welcomes SCOTT AUSBORN as the newest board member



Scott grew up on a small diversified farm near Ida Grove, IA. Along with row crops, his family also raises beef cattle and sheep. Scott graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in Environmental Science, focusing on soil and water conservation. Scott became employed with Blue River Hybrids Organic Seed in the summer of 2008. He has held various job roles from inventory coordinator to regional sales management. He currently is the Business Development Manager for Blue River, working with organic producers across the nation.

Scott and his wife Melissa make their home in Ames, IA and enjoy fishing, camping, and various outdoor activities.



Tests show PuraMaize successful in minimizing GMO contamination

For the second straight year, independent tests have verified that PuraMaize corn, sold by Iowa-based Blue River Hybrids, is effective at mitigating contamination from genetically modified corn.

Achieved through natural breeding, the PuraMaize gene system makes it possible to resist GMO contamination and other impurities by highly favoring its own PuraMaize pollen.

During the 2013 harvest, customers from six different states submitted samples of their PuraMaize corn for testing. Each grain sample was evaluated for every possible GMO contaminant, and every grain sample was negative for all contaminants.

Fund established to encourage more organic farming

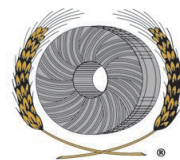
The CCOF Foundation and UNFI Foundation, along with other industry leaders Driscoll's, Organic Valley, and Bradmer Foods are supporting the education of new farmers, ranchers, and food processors by establishing the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund.

The fund will focus on three target areas: K-12 educational projects, individual grants for higher and vocational education, and disadvantaged communities.

"Among the challenges to meeting the rising demand for organic products is the need for new organic farmers and entrepreneurs. More than 80% of Americans now purchase organic products, and demand continues to outpace the supply," explains Cathy Calfo, CCOF Executive Director/CEO.

To address this challenge, the CCOF Foundation, UNFI Foundation, Driscoll's, Organic Valley, and Bradmer Foods have pooled their resources to provide up to \$50,000 in direct financial support for the education of future organic farmers and agricultural professionals. Grants will be awarded to students who aspire to lead careers in organic agriculture.

Contact the CCOF Foundation for more information about the application process or to contribute to the fund.



GRAIN MILLERS

For more than 20 years Grain Millers Incorporated has been a leading manufacturer and supplier of organic whole grain ingredients used in cereals, breads, bars and many other food products served domestically and around the world. We are a family oriented business that works directly with producers on a daily basis. Our commitment to producing quality product begins with you. Please contact us for marketing the following grains or with any questions.

Oats
Corn
Flax
Barley
Wheat
Mustard
Lentils
Soybeans

PRODUCTION FACILITIES

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Marion, IN, USA
Newton, WI, USA
Yorkton, SK, Canada

10400 Viking Drive Suite 301 Eden Prairie, MN 55344, USA
Phone: 800-328-5188 www.grainmillers.com



US organic sales top \$35 billion

New survey shows organic sales jump nearly 12% in 2013 to a new record

Sales of organic products in the United States jumped to \$35.1 billion in 2013, up 11.5% from the previous year's \$31.5 billion and the fastest growth rate in five years, according to the latest survey on the organic industry from the Organic Trade Association (OTA).

"The US organic market is experiencing strong expansion, with organic food and farming continuing to gain in popularity. Consumers are making the correlation between what we eat and our health, and that knowledge is spurring heightened consumer interest in organic products," said Laura Batcha, executive director and CEO of OTA.

A niche industry in the huge food sector just a decade ago, consumer purchases of organic food first broke through the \$30 billion mark in 2012 and now account for more than 4% of the \$760 billion annual food sales in the United States.

More telling, the growth rate of organic food sales, which has averaged almost 10% every year since 2010, has dwarfed the average annual growth of just over 3% in total food sales during that same period.

A product breakdown of the organic food sector shows that the fruit and vegetable category continues to lead the sector with \$11.6 billion in sales, up 15%. With more than 10% of the fruits and vegetables sold in the United States now organic, the \$1.5 billion in new sales of organic fruits and vegetable represented 46% of the organic sector's \$3.3 billion in new dollars.

But as demand for organic continues to boom and accessibility to organic products increases, the industry is facing some critical challenges.

Farmland in the United States is not being converted to organic at the pace needed to meet the growing demand for organic. Supplies of organic feed and organic grain have been tight and costly, which could limit growth especially in the organic dairy and meat sectors.



Walmart will sell more than 100 Wild Oats organic food items in its stores

Walmart, Target aim to bring organic food to the masses

Retail giants Walmart and Target both recently announced major initiatives to bring affordable organic foods to more Americans. Walmart is working with organic pioneer, Wild Oats, to launch 100 organic food items in its stores and aims to save customers 25% or more on organic groceries. Target is introducing "Made to Matter – Handpicked by Target." The collection brings together 17 leading natural, organic, and sustainable brands to introduce new products and make them more accessible to Target's customers.

Originally introduced in 1987, Wild Oats relaunched its brand name products at Walmart in April with a new, more affordable price point on products covering a broad variety of categories—from salsa and pasta sauce to quinoa and chicken broth.

Target's Made to

Matter brands include Annie's Homegrown, Burt's Bees, Chobani, Clif Bar & Company, Ella's Kitchen, EVOL, Horizon Organic, Hyland's, Kashi, Method, Plum Organics, Seventh Generation, SheaMoisture, Target's Simply Balanced, Vita Coco, Yes To and Zarbee's Naturals.

The organic push by the two retail giants could lead more conventional farms in the US to transition to organic, but experts such as Phil Howard, an associate professor who studies food systems at Michigan State University, warn that there could be pressure to weaken the organic standards.

(Source: Christian Science Monitor)

Survey finds 84% of Americans buy organic foods

A recent survey commissioned by Consumer Reports found that 84% of US residents buy organic food and 45% do so at least once a month. The survey of 1,016 US adults also found that 81% think the USDA organic seal means no toxic pesticides were used and 61% think that no antibiotics were used.

The majority of consumers, 91%, think organic produce should not have pesticides or antibiotics (86%).

Nearly all consumers, 92%, want at least one federal standard for organic fish.

An overwhelming percentage of consumers, 84%, think the use of artificial ingredients in organic products should be discontinued, if not reviewed, after 5 years. (Source: *Food Safety News*)

Texas supermarket chain offers more affordable organic options

Texas-based supermarket chain H-E-B is introducing H-E-B Organics™, the company's own line of organic products offered at everyday low prices. The company believes making organics more prevalent and affordable will create better access to a wide variety of food choices for all Texans.

After years of vision and planning, the March introduction of H-E-B Organics™ will significantly increase the availability and affordability of organic products in Texas. The new line, comprising hundreds of organic items, will focus on everyday pantry staples such as canned tomatoes and vegetables, cereal, crackers, fruit and specialty spreads, coffee, salad dressing and potato and tortilla chips.

Organic industry will begin to skyrocket, says advocate of sustainable agriculture

On February 26th *The Motley Fool* published an article titled "5 Reasons to Buy Into the Organic Market," discussing the growing trend of organic food consumption and how it eventually will generate an industry that will acquire the largest market share in food sales.

The article states that the main drivers of growth are the growing customer base, the enlarging global trend of organic consumption, the new Farm Bill's positive impact on organic agriculture, an upward trend to buy locally, and naturally minded wholesale food giants. These factors add a huge growth potential to an already strong organic food industry. Other indicators of the growing organic industry are that 81% of US families are buying organic and strong growth in Europe, India, and Southeast Asia.

Philippe van den Bossche, an impact investor and advocate of sustainable agriculture, says that the current organic trend provides a bright future for the organic farming movement. "The consumer trend is significant," says van den Bossche. "Now is an opportune time for those farmers who have been considering shifting from conventional to organic farming practices. Strong demand seems to be there."

Annie's to purchase Safeway's manufacturing facility in Joplin, MO

Annie's, Inc., a publically owned natural and organic food company, agreed to purchase Safeway, Inc.'s snack manufacturing plant in Joplin, Missouri. The plant has been Annie's primary manufacturer of cookie and cracker products since the inception of its snacks business in 2002.

Annie's products produced in the Joplin plant currently account for over 50% of its overall snacks net sales and represent the majority of the plant's total production volume.

Annie's executive vice president, Amanda Martinez, said: "Having overseen the Joplin plant during my tenure with Safeway, I can speak firsthand to the focus on quality at the plant as well as the caliber of its workforce. We look forward to welcoming the plant's employees to the Annie's family."

Seeds of Change awards \$190,000 to support sustainable community and school garden programs across the US

Seed of Change, maker of organic foods and organically grown seeds, recently announced the 17 recipients of the 2014 Seeds of Change® Grant Program. The DeKalb County Community Gardens in DeKalb, Ill. and Medway Community Farm in Medway, Mass. will each receive a \$20,000 grant, while 15 additional organizations will receive \$10,000 grants to support new or existing community-based gardening and sustainable farming programs. Each organization has developed a program that works to empower communities to grow a healthier, more sustainable relationship with food from seed to plate.

The Seeds of Change® Grant Program is funded by the brand's 1% Fund, the company's commitment to donate one percent of its global net sales to sustainable, community-based nutrition, gardening and farming programs.

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IOWA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION

BOX 185

AMES, IA 50010