



MOFFA
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2019 Annual Report

Each year the Chairperson of the Board of Directors prepares an annual report to share with the Board and membership. The purpose of this report is to document and review accomplishments and growth while providing inspiration for the next year of activity.

Perspective and Context

2019 marked our 27th year of existence as a 501(3)(c) non-profit, statewide, organization. We continued to build on our long-standing commitment to education and outreach in pursuit of our mission of *"Promoting organic agriculture and the development and support of food systems that revitalize and sustain local communities"*. MOFFA members can be very proud of their organization as a valuable contributor to the long term growth of healthy soils, healthy crops and livestock, and healthy people.

Education Programs

2019 also marked the fifth year of the "Organic Intensives" (OI). The OI was modeled after the successful MOSES Organic University with the goal of allowing more in-depth presentation and discussion of a smaller range of topics. This year's [Organic](#)



[Intensives](#) was held on January 12th at the Plant and Soil Sciences Building on the MSU campus. The topics included:

- Healthy Organic Livestock
- Organic Mushroom Cultivation
- Technology in Organic Field Crops
- Advanced Organic Soil Management

The OI is a project and event that all of the Board of Directors work on together. It requires advance discussion and selection of topics and speakers, working with the speakers on content and supplemental materials, and coordinating the myriad details necessary to produce this kind of event. One goal has been to select a range of topics that will interest all of our members—large scale farmers and businesses, medium scale diversified farmers, smaller scale urban and homesteading farmers, and gardeners and consumers of organic food. Discussion of who will be the next year's OI speakers begins almost before the current year's sessions have concluded, sometimes as a result of suggestions from the attendees. Participants provided overwhelmingly positive comments and reviews of the 2019 event and speakers.

Farm Tours

In 2019 MOFFA organized four farm tours, in collaboration with the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Alliance, which currently lists over 30 tours in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Michigan in its annual brochure. The farm tours are well suited to new and experienced growers, though consumers can find them informative also. Participants gathered at Nature and Nurture, an organic farm and seed company near Ann Arbor, on August 18th, then a week later at the MSU Horticulture Teaching and Research Center for a hands-on session on compost and vermicompost and growing in containers. In late August Plymouth Orchards hosted a tour of their organic farm and orchards as well as two workshops on grain production, one for large farms and another for small-scale operations. In September Crane Dance Farm near Grand Rapids hosted a tour of their rotationally grazed livestock farm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are tentatively planning an abbreviated farm tour schedule for the fall of 2020.

Policy Efforts

MOFFA is active as a member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). This year Jessica Smith took over from Julia Christianson as Chair of the Policy Committee. Jessica is the primary contact who participates in the calls and keeps the Board informed of developments with the organization.

The integrity of the organic label continues to be questioned, because of the reticence of the USDA National Organic Program to adopt the recommendations of the National Organic Standards Board, its lackadaisical enforcement of existing regulations, especially in the area of dairy and poultry operations and hydroponic production, and its failure to identify and reject large shipments of grain from overseas which are falsely labeled as organic. MOFFA supports the Real Organic Project, the Organic Farmers Association, and other organizations which are working to hold the NOP to its legisla-

tively mandated function. While MOFFA sees ecologically sound agriculture as ever-evolving, we continue to support the use of the word “organic” and the organizations that work to maintain the integrity of organic agriculture principles.

Organic Connections Newsletter

The quarterly [Michigan Organic Connections](#) newsletter continues to be a core method of connecting and reaching our membership and many more organic supporters. Leah Smith served as Editor in 2019, and has contributed many hours and much thought toward improving the newsletter's content and reach. In 2019 we were relatively successful at attracting articles from experts and thinkers outside the MOFFA board. We continue to request contributions from members and others. The year 2019 included the themes of Homesteading and Online Education, as well as a review of the OI sessions on January 12, 2019 and an issue of articles contributed by the presenters for the 2020 OI. The complete archive of the newsletter from 1992 through 2019 is available on our website. At the end of the year, the newsletter was reaching over 1,750 email addresses, and is mailed to members who do not have internet access.

Website

The [website](#) has continued to grow into a reliable source of information about organic farming and gardening, local food and business related events and announcements. Historical aspects including past newsletters and annual reports are available. Information about educational and employment opportunities and land available for organic production is maintained up to date for the community.

Publications

At the end of the year, the Farm Guide listed 153 farms all over the state, 98 of which were certified organic. [The Organic Movement in Michigan](#), published by MOFFA in 2017, along with the paper version of the [Farm Guide](#), are available for purchase through the website, and royalties from these publications provide a small but consistent source of revenue. We continue to add to our collection of [fact sheets](#), which are available on the website free of charge and provide a convenient source of information for consumers and growers new to organic practices.

Conferences and Meetings Attended

Michigan is fortunate to have a diverse and distributed array of organizations that support ecological and local farming initiatives and the development of beginning farmers. While distributed systems are a hallmark of sustainability, to be more effective the organizations also need to be networked and responsive to each other. To that end, a standing MOFFA goal has been to be a trusted collaborator and partner that encourages sharing of information. In 2019 we continued to participate in the diversity of educational activities in Michigan where we could share organic ethics and methods. These conferences include:

- Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (January)
- Michigan Family Farms Conference (February)

- Mid-Michigan Seed Swap (March)
- The Earth Day celebration in Kalamazoo (April)
- Washtenaw Conservation District Ag Field Day (July)
- Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit Conference (September)

An important contribution of MOFFA at these conferences is providing friendly conversation and answers to questions about organic farming and gardening and certification methods. A wide range of books is also made available to stimulate learning and discussion as well as to help support our activities. In 2019 book sales totaled \$3,731. Our thanks to Board member John Hooper who most often is the friendly face that conference participants greet at the MOFFA table.

Membership

Membership numbers were up slightly in 2019 at 120. The membership included 57 individual or family memberships (\$40 per year), 22 small business memberships (\$60), 8 larger business memberships (\$100), and 6 students or persons with limited resources (\$20). We added two more life members in 2018, for a total of nine. Total membership revenue was \$5,100 in dues with an additional \$317 in donations members included when paying their dues, for a total of \$5,417.

Board of Directors

The [Board of Directors](#) lost three members through resignation, but gained three new members. Continuing members include: John Biernbaum (2009), John Edgerton (2017) John Hooper (2009), Dan Rossman (2015), Jessica Smith (2017), and Dane Terrill (2012). New members were Tony Browne, Kido Pielack, and Linda Purdy. The board continues to be the sustaining force in the organization. Officers were Jessie Smith, Chair; Dane Terrill, Treasurer; and John Hooper, Secretary. Our goal for 2020 is to attract more members in order to keep the Board at a minimum of 12 members and to improve the diversity of the board.



Tony Browne, Kido Pielack, Linda Purdy

Board Meetings

To facilitate involvement of members from across the state, the Board of Directors uses a combination of in person and conference call meetings. We have established a schedule of eight meetings per year with three in person and five conference phone calls. The Annual Meeting is held in the Lansing area during April. For the July in-person meeting we included a social component, enjoying a meal together in the afternoon. A [schedule of meetings](#) for 2020 is available on our website, and we invite members to join us for any meeting.

Financials

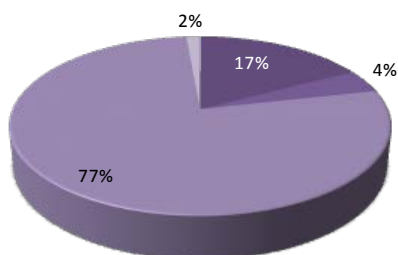
In 2018 we began to consider our sponsors—previously focused solely on Organic Intensives—as contributing to the support of not just OI but all of our programs. We would like to recognize the support of the following organizations in 2019:

Whole Foods	Blue River Hybrids	Plymouth Orchards
North Central SARE	Bay Shore Sales	Organic Valley
Herbruck's	GreenStone Farm Credit	Grice Farms
SunOpta	Services	Ruesink Organic Farms
Morgan Composting	George and Anne Bird	The Fertrell Co.
Everbest Organics	MSU CRFS	

MOFFA received a very substantial donation from Whole Foods in the form of proceeds from their April “5% Day”, which represented 5% of their sales in all Michigan stores on April 18th, amounting to nearly \$30,000. After discussion, reaching out to other friends of MOFFA, the Board decided to dedicate a portion of this to improving our name recognition and, hopefully, the number of members, in 2020. We also used some of this money to bring in nationally known speakers for Organic Intensives 2020, and we are looking at perhaps an additional major educational event in the fall.

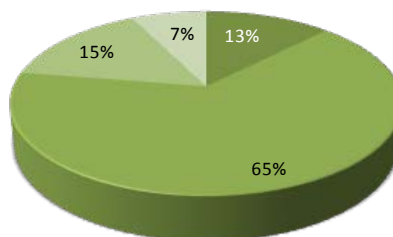
Expenses by Class, 2019

Admin Membership Education Fundraising



Sources of Revenue, 2019

membership donations oi revenue book sales & royalties



Total revenue for the year was \$51,283 on a cash basis. Total expenditures were \$25,020 (almost exactly what we budgeted) resulting in net revenue of \$24,352.

Emerging Priorities for 2020

Priorities for 2020 include:

- Continue the Organic Intensives program with a date of January 11, 2020 at the Plant and Soils Sciences Building at MSU
- Consider possible regional Organic Intensive type events on other dates and at other locations
- Maintain and increase membership and member involvement
- Add at least three new members to the board of directors
- Four to six farm tours arranged and publicized in partnership with OEFFA
- Improve the website’s visibility and ease of use

Respectfully Submitted by Jessica Smith, Chair