
Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance

MOFFA 2002 Accomplishments Report

Education and Outreach

- MOFFA continued its newly created Southwest Michigan New Farmer Forums. With leadership from MOFFA Board members Maynard Kaufman and Jan Ryan, four forums were held from January through April 2002, with guest speakers on small-scale local marketing, growing for restaurants, meat processing, and farm business management. The forums concluded with a July tour of cover crops and organic research at the Kellogg Biological Station.
- One of MOFFA's biggest successes was our second year of regional fall harvest festivals with the Growing Connections Festival on September 14 at Kensington Farm Center, and the West Michigan Organic Harvest Festival on September 15 at the Grand Rapids Township park. We estimate that about 1800 people attended these events. MOFFA is blessed to have excellent partners for these events--the Healthy Traditions Network in metro-Detroit and the Third Coast Chapter of Organic Growers of Michigan in west Michigan.
- In September 2002, MOFFA's on-farm processing trailer was moved to Westwind Milling, operated by Lee and Linda Purdy in Argentine, near Flint. The trailer was used as a licensed bread bakery, with Lynn Bowden, a family friend, as the baker, using flour milled at Westwind. We appreciate the opportunity to work with Westwind Milling as we explore how the trailer can best be used to support small-scale on-farm processing.
- In partnership with the Michigan Department of Agriculture Risk Management Program, MOFFA conducted four workshops in February, March and April on the basics of organic certification for 82 participants in Lapeer, Van Buren County, Gaylord and East Lansing. As part of a new risk management grant program for 2002/2003, MOFFA exhibited for the 2d year at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo in Grand Rapids.
- MOFFA published a comprehensive summary of its partnership with Michigan State University (MSU) for a series of on-farm grants. The February 2002 *Organic On-Farm Research Demonstration and Education Grant Program Project Summary* describes 33 projects conducted in over 20 Michigan counties and northern Indiana from 1998 through 2001.
- MOFFA organized a half-day workshop in Gaylord on organic greenhouse production featuring Dr. John Biernbaum from MSU. A total of 98 participants attended the programs. Some participants came early for a local organic lunch provided by the Inn the Woods restaurant.



- MOFFA co-sponsored the 2002 Organic Alternatives Conference during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at MSU. Our 2002 Annual Meeting was held the evening of March 8. During summer and fall 2002, several MOFFA members actively participated in planning meetings for the 2003 conference.
- MOFFA continued its e-mail News Group service, with about 52 members receiving monthly announcements from Pat Whetham, the coordinator.
- MOFFA welcomed Chris Treter to Michigan as the Organic Consumers Association Midwest Field Organizer. Chris is working from an office in northern Michigan. We have enjoyed the opportunity to share OCA's excellent materials, and to invite OCA's Michigan supporters to our events.
- MOFFA provided presentations, displays and materials at a variety of group events: Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference--Gaylord; Food Matters program--Kalamazoo; Back to the Roots Concert--Ferndale; Mattawan Garden Club--Mattawan; Body, Mind & Spirit Festival--Macomb County; West MI Environmental Action Council religion and environment program--Grand Rapids; Ferris State wholistic wellness class--Big Rapids; Pine Island Elementary School assembly--Grand Rapids; Great Lakes Bioneers Conference--Traverse City; Great Lakes United conference--Chicago; Kalamazoo Community Gardening initiative--Kalamazoo; Michigan State Fair Organic Day--Detroit; September local and organic food dinners at MSU dorms--East Lansing.



Advocacy

- MOFFA Board Member Merrill Clark continued to serve on the State of Michigan Organic Advisory Committee which met several times in 2002.
- MOFFA opposed a ballot initiative in Lapeer County intended to create a mosquito control program that may have implemented county-wide pesticide spraying. MOFFA congratulates the People Against Chemical Contamination (PACC) group organized in Lapeer County for their successful campaign to defeat the ballot initiative. They have demanded that alternatives to widespread pesticide use be considered as a first resort.
- Through the efforts of Merrill Clark and others, MOFFA was instrumental in organizing a policy meeting with Dr. Jeffrey Armstrong, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU. This June meeting initiated a continuing dialogue with MSU to improve communication about, research in and support for local organic agriculture and food systems at MSU.

- MOFFA members and others in the Michigan organic community were featured on a Michigan Farm Radio Network segment about organic farming.
- MOFFA represented organic agriculture interests at the July Conservation Summit with leaders of Michigan's conservation and environmental community.
- MOFFA submitted organic research priorities for grants to be made under the 2003 State of Michigan Project GREEN agriculture research program.
- Several MOFFA members participated in meetings with the new Granholm administration transition team to advocate for local and organic agriculture.



Grants, Donations, Membership and Volunteers

- The Michigan Land Trustees provided grant support to MOFFA for the Southwest Michigan New Farmer Forums. The USDA Risk Management Program and the Michigan Department of Agriculture Risk Management Partnership provided a grant in 2001 and 2002 that funded staff and expenses for our organic certification workshops and the Great Lakes Expo exhibit.
- MOFFA appreciates the many financial and in-kind donations we've received from members and others in 2002. We're particularly grateful to those members who contribute each year as a continued show of support for our work. This year, we were surprised and honored to receive a first-time donation of \$1,158 from the Back to the Roots concert held in Ferndale organized to support sustainable agriculture and the Earth Works Garden in Detroit. Brother Rick Samyn, coordinator of Earth Works, spent several months serving on MOFFA's Board. We look forward to an on-going partnership with him as he continues his garden and good food ministry in Detroit. We also were excited to see our 2002 Growing Connections Festival featured on a donated full-color back page ad of the September *Healing Gardens Journal* (HGJ). We thank Brad Lundy and others at HGJ for their work in promoting organics and healthy living. Finally, we'd like to thank JoJo's Natural Market in Gaylord for its support of our April 2002 Organic Greenhouse Workshop.
- We want to acknowledge numerous in-kind and other donations from businesses, educational institutions, governments and their agencies, and dozens of individuals. You provide space for events and meetings, goods, programming and materials for local community events. This is an invaluable community service for which we are grateful. Thanks to these organizations, individuals and dozens of others not named here: Organic Valley, Eden Foods, Whole Foods, the Good Food Company--East, Kensington Metropark, Rodale

Institute, Grand Rapids Township, the Van Buren ISD Conference Center, Lapeer County, Hayes Grinding, MSU and MSU Extension.

- MOFFA membership is continuing to grow, with 210 members as of December 2002. Our members come from about half of Michigan's 83 counties, including some in the Upper Peninsula, demonstrating the widespread and diverse amount of interest in organics. About 30% of our members are farmers, helping us build a true alliance to support local organic food systems that benefit all of us.
- MOFFA wishes to thank our volunteers for their help throughout the year. For many of the MOFFA Board members, this includes family and friends. We couldn't function without this invisible force. You really are the wind beneath our wings. Special thanks to these MOFFA volunteers: Gail Campana, for managing our newsletter layout and website, John Masterson and Patty Withey, for handling our newsletter bulk mailings, Susan and Ivan Witt, Brother Rick Samyn, Amanda Klain, Sarah Huffman, Kathy Houston, Joe Scrimger.
- MOFFA expresses its appreciation to Betty Edmunds, whose Board term expired in March 2002, for her years of service to MOFFA as Treasurer, festival coordinator and general keeper of the MOFFA stuff.



This report is presented by the 2002/2003 MOFFA Board of Directors.

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