



Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance

MOFFA

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Annual Report To Members 2005

MOFFA's continuing challenge has been to define its focus and direct its energies to those areas that best represent the interests of its members while maintaining its mission and goals. Please read the enclosed Annual Report which, in summary, gives you an idea of our activities and involvement over the past year (2004).

As your board of directors, we continue to study our mission and goals as we attempt to do the work of the organization through the help of volunteers and other organizations. I enclose here a review of our mission to help us measure our success this past year.

MOFFA, as a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to promoting an environmentally sound and socially just food and farming system in Michigan. Recognized as a charitable organization, MOFFA seeks and receives grants and tax-deductible donations. Encouraging farmers to use organic methods, helping them produce for local consumption and improving the availability of locally grown organic foods are major parts of our work.

MOFFA supports food systems on a local scale and advocates programs that address the food and nutritional needs of Michigan residents on a long-term basis. We support direct grower – consumer relationships, community supported agriculture, value-added farm enterprises and food self-reliance on a local and regional basis.

MOFFA was one of the first organizations in Michigan and the United States actively promoting local food and farming systems. Since 1992, we have been working for public awareness about the need for a decentralized, earth-friendly and people-friendly food system. Our only agenda is to promote organic food and farming in Michigan with emphasis on locally grown and locally sold, environmentally safe food.

Activities and Accomplishments

Education and Outreach

This past year, during September, MOFFA continued its support of the grower-consumer relationship by supporting the Michigan Organic Harvest Festivals. These 4 major festivals highlighted locally grown/organic produce, consumer education about food and healthy communities. On September 11 & 12, we had the first Mid-Michigan Organic Harvest Festival at Al-Mar Orchard in Flushing (near Flint). It was the first MOFFA co-sponsored festival to be held on a working, organic farm. There were hayrides, educational workshops and tours of the orchard and workareas. On September 19, there were 2 festivals: One in Grand Rapids, The 4th Annual Organic Harvest Festival and one in Scotts (near Kalamazoo), The 2nd Annual Southwest Michigan Community Harvest Festival. These two festivals featured farmers markets, educational exhibits and workshops for adults and children. Growing Connections Organic Harvest Festival was held on September 25 at Springfield Oaks Park near Davison, a new location that could serve a growing festival. This festival featured farmers markets, lectures and workshops for adults and children. It was an event shared by about a thousand people and is quickly becoming an annual tradition in Southeastern Michigan. Some of the sponsors for these festivals

included: Michigan Land Trustees, Kalamazoo Community Foundation/John E Fetzer Institute Fund, Third Coast Chapter of Organic Growers of Michigan, CVK Farms, Westwind Milling Co., Al-Mar Orchard, Healthy Traditions Network, Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association, Garden of Life and Greater Health Stores.

Other outreach and educational efforts in which MOFFA participated included farm tours with visits to the Koenigsknecht dairy farm, Evergreen Lane Farm and Eaters Guild Farm all certified organic farms in Southwest Michigan and Briar Hill Farm, A.J.'s Garden Produce and Green Acres Farm in Northeast Michigan. Funding for these projects came from Michigan State University Project Green, Kellogg Biological Station Land and Water Program, MIFFS and Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association.

MOFFA also co-sponsored several conferences this past year including: The 5th Annual Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference in Gaylord in January featuring Eliot Coleman and Sally Fallon; The First World Congress on Organic Food: " Meeting the Challenges of Safety and Quality for Fruits, Vegetables and Grains" at Michigan State University in March and "Growing Together" a conference for community supported agriculture (CSA) which provided workshops for experienced and new CSA farmers in November. MOFFA contributed support to several educational programs: a presentation about the Appleton School nutritional program in the Michigan's Thumb and a presentation by Jeffrey Smith about GMOs in Oakland County at the Great Lakes Bioneers Conference in Traverse City in October.

Advocacy & Grants

MOFFA distributed more than 1000 copies of the updated version of "Choose Local Organic Food: Good Food for the Right Price and distributed an updated version of "Eating Organically" a guide to Michigan's organic and sustainable food producers and related business. We collected 125 signatures from Oakland County voters on letters to Senators Levin and Stabenow to support funding for the federal farm to cafeteria program. MOFFA participated on the April 22 Earth Day exhibit as part of the Michigan Environmental Council's event on the lawn of the State Capitol by distributing free food samples donated by Eden Foods along with organic apples and materials.

MOFFA was funded by a small grant from the Michigan Environmental Council in September/October 2004. We organized the Oakland County Food & Water Democracy Project to recruit citizens interested in advocating for clean water and healthy organic food. MOFFA collaborated on this project with the East Michigan Environmental Action Council. As part of this project, MOFFA participated in a September 24 Oakland Eco-Citizen 'Green' Blood Drive for the American Red Cross and we presented "The Future of Food", a new documentary film critique of genetically engineered foods to residents in Bloomfield Hills and Madison Heights.

Membership and Volunteers

MOFFA membership is continuing to grow with 40 new members this past year bringing our total membership to 223. We have 23 business members and 115 members that subscribe to our MOFFA News Group.

We wish 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 you. Special thanks go to all those hundreds of volunteers that organize the harvest festivals. These events are becoming a tradition in Michigan. Thank you to MSU and MSU Extension for the help and resources you provide to the farming community through programs, projects and farm tours. And thanks to our MOFFA members for supporting and participating in those activities that are born from our mission.

The 2004/2005 MOFFA Board of Directors presents this report

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