



Michigan Organic Connections

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A Message from the Chair

Thank you for taking the time to read the harvest season edition of the Michigan Organic Connections Newsletter. I hope the information and ideas presented provide nourishment and motivation for your farming and gardening journey.

The theme of “*fairness and care*” for this edition is the third in a series focusing on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) principles of Organic Agriculture. The principles of fairness and care as described on the IFOAM website are presented below.

While the principles of fairness and care are hard to find in the USDA National Organic Program rules for certification, they are at the foundation of what the organic movement means internationally and at the grass roots/community level. While our vision tends to be very United States centric, the Organic Movement is clearly an international/global agriculture production priority. Over the past two decades our need to be just and respectful of all people and our environment is even greater in the face of growing discrepancy of wealth and access to resources. A farming system based on understanding the essential nature of biological and



ecological diversity is attempting to exist in a climate of racial and wealth disparities, insensitivity, and exclusivity. What does a fair and just food system look like?

Fairness and care is particularly relevant at this moment in time. Protests by the Black Lives Matter movement in response to police killing of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and many others has brought to light the unfairness and racism people of color still experience in this country today. In response there is a call for those of us that have not experienced racial discrimination to listen to those who have. There is an obligation for us to look for organizations and movements by people who have experienced racial bias for their entire lives that we can support by our action and/or financial support for their efforts. What can we respectfully and actively do right now, while we continue to listen and learn more about appropriate action? One priority goal that was recently shared with me is to endorse and promote organizations that are already actively working to support Black, Native, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian people that are treated unfairly.

As an organic food and farming organization, MOFFA can and will highlight and advocate for organizations already doing the necessary work to support diverse farming and gardening communities.

Some examples include:

- A program announced earlier in the summer called the Black Farmer Land Fund with a goal of raising funding to support the development of new black farmers and access to land and equipment. The initial funding goal of \$5,000 was funded into the \$20,000 range in the first week. <https://detroit.eater.com/2020/6/23/21299661/detroit-black-farmer-land-fund-program-fundraiser-urban-agriculture>.
- Detroit People's Food Co-op, a program of the Black Farmers Food Security Network. The number of members have grown to 500 and 700 and recently the goal of 1,000 members was reached. The plan is to build a building that will meet the community needs. Learn more here: <https://detroitpeoplesfoodcoop.com/>.
- The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network has nurtured projects like D-Town Farm, The Food Warriors Youth Development Program, and the Detroit People's Food Co-op mentioned above. See more at <https://www.dbcfsn.org/>.
- Keep Growing Detroit has supported Detroit Gardeners and Farmers through the Garden Resource Program and many other efforts. Their home page (<http://detroitagriculture.net/>) has a listing of many other organizations to support in Detroit.
- Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) has a long history of multicultural programs and efforts. The Women in Agriculture Network, the Red Productores Hispanos Network, and the Ag Veterans Network are three examples. See more at <http://www.miffs.org>.
- We the People Opportunity Farm in Ypsilanti is working to create a sustainable farming system which could support a workforce of formerly incarcerated men and women. They are fundraising to grow their relationships and food production. See information at <http://www.wtstof.org>.
- Edible Flint (<http://www.edibleflint.org/>) has a 10 year history of supporting food access, gardening, and farming resources for the Flint Community. Check out their Impact Report, available at their website.
- Our Kitchen Table (Grand Rapids): <https://oktjustice.org/>.
- New City Neighbors (Grand Rapids): <http://newcityneighbors.org/farm/>.
- Zoo City Farm and Food Network (Kalamazoo): <https://www.zoocityfood.com/>.
- Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (<https://nativefoodalliance.org/>) is a national program that includes the Indigenous Seed Keepers Network and a Food and Culinary Mentorship Program.
- Michigan Tribal Farming programs include efforts at Bay Mills Community College in Brimley (<https://www.bmcc.edu/>) and the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College in Mount Pleasant (<https://www.sagchip.edu/>)
- MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/index>) has developed an annotated bibliography about racism in the food system which is available here: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/structural_racism_in_us_food_system. They also published an article in June with a list of additional organizations led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are advancing just and equitable food systems: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/acting-against-anti-black-racism-and-amplifying-bipoc-food-systems-work>.
- Showing Up for Racial Justice (<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org>)—get involved with

undoing racism with organizations such as SURJ. There are a few regional chapters in Michigan and lots of different ways to plug in.

MOFFA is looking to grow this list of organizations. Can you help? What other organizations need to be recognized with our activism, our voices, and our dollars? [Let us know!](#)

One other thought in the interest of sharing recent information that has helped me broaden my perspective, here are two to consider.

- Oprah Winfrey’s “The Oprah Conversation” has highlighted some thought provoking interviews on race and inequity. I have listened to three of them on Apple TV. See if you can find them. One of her conversations is with Emmanuel Acho, a former professional football player who also is offering his own teachings under the banner of “Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man.”
- Emmanuel Acho’s podcasts are available and a book is on the way. I found the podcasts informative and impactful. Three thoughts that he shared and that I wrote down follow:
 - “People do not care what you know, until they know that you care.”

- “Racial reconciliation is not a finish line that we will cross, it is a road that we will travel.”
- How do you effect change in people? You hurt them deeply; or you love them profoundly.

Each of us can reflect personally and thoughtfully as to what we can do. Is it a time for us to speak up? A time to take action? When we don’t know, we can look for others that do know, and have the patience to listen and learn.

Three action items:

1. Offer your knowledge where it is needed and desired in the way(s) you are capable.
2. Look for new opportunities and organizations where you can make a difference.
3. Cultivate awareness in others.

—John A. Biernbaum

Dr. John A. Biernbaum is finishing 35 years as a Professor of Horticulture at MSU at the end of 2020. He is looking forward to spending more time at Pear Tree Farm growing food, flowers and herbs, being healthy and helping others find health. He has been a member of MOFFA for over 15 years, and served as MOFFA’s Chair from 2015 to 2018, a position he is now returning to.

IFOAM Principles—Fairness and Care

[IFOAM](#) was started in 1972, around the same time that MOFFA’s predecessor organization Organic Growers of Michigan was coming together in Southwest Michigan. It has since grown to encompass more than 700 affiliates in over 110 countries across the globe. IFOAM brings together organic growers from many different environments, and one of its most valuable functions is to formulate answers to questions like “What is Organic?” To begin to address this, the organization formulated four guiding principles of organic production: Health, Ecology, Fairness, and Care. In this issue we highlight the final two.

The IFOAM principle of Fairness:



Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice, and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings.

This principle emphasizes that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties—farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders, and consumers. Organic agriculture should provide everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products.

This principle insists that animals should be provided with the conditions and opportunities of life that accord with their physiology, natural behavior, and well-being.

Natural and environmental resources that are used for production and consumption should be managed in a way that is socially and ecologically just and should be held in trust for future generations. Fairness requires systems of production, distribution, and trade that are open and equitable and account for real environmental and social costs.

The IFOAM principle of Care:



Organic Agriculture is a living and dynamic system that responds to internal and external demands and conditions.

Practitioners of organic agriculture can enhance efficiency and increase productivity, but this should not be at the risk of jeopardizing health and well-being. Consequently, new technologies need to be assessed and existing methods reviewed. Given the incomplete understanding of ecosystems and agriculture, care must be taken.

This principle states that precaution and responsibility are the key concerns in management, development, and technology choices in organic agriculture.

Science is necessary to ensure that organic agriculture is healthy, safe, and ecologically sound. However, scientific knowledge alone is not sufficient. Practical experience, accumulated wisdom, and traditional and indigenous knowledge offer valid solutions, tested by time.

Organic agriculture should prevent significant risks by adopting appropriate technologies and rejecting

unpredictable ones, such as genetic engineering. Decisions should reflect the values and needs of all who might be affected, through transparent and participatory processes.

Here in the United States, producers must meet the standards of the [USDA National Organic Program](#) in order to use the word “Organic” to describe their products. The USDA standards were developed over the ten-year period 1992-2002, and in some respects meet the IFOAM definitions in the areas of Health and Ecology. The NOP does not address the principles of Fairness and Care, although these ideas have been part of the understanding of the organic way from its beginnings.

We can hope that in future years our government will show more interest in bringing our regulations into line with those adopted in most other areas of the world, particularly in the areas of hydroponic production and animal welfare practices, as well as going farther toward incorporating the principles of Fairness and Care. Meanwhile, new organizations with add-on certifications ([Real Organic Project](#), [Regenerative Organic](#)) have formed in the United States to give producers who are truly organic—who actually follow the IFOAM principles—an opportunity to identify their products as having been produced in the true organic way—beyond “Organic” as currently [incompletely] defined by the USDA NOP.

Just One Vote?

By John Hooper

It seems very prescient today that many months ago the MOFFA board made a decision to focus our newsletter themes in 2020 on the IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements) [principles](#). This issue of *Michigan Organic Connections* addresses Fairness and Care.

Please take a moment to reflect on how Care is center stage in the current evolution of humankind. Through the act of practicing regenerative organic agriculture responsibly we “protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.” By being allowed to conduct ourselves as good stewards of our shared space we collectively have the ability and a mutual agreement to foster positive change (when necessary) and to maintain in situ (most often) our beloved planet earth. Unfortunately, the rights and privileges of the

many have been usurped by the few; and the cost and prognosis currently are beyond alarming.

There is only one issue above all others in this unprecedented Anthropocene sixth extinction. We, all homo sapiens, must slow down our assault on the environment and in time reverse this unprecedented wanton disregard for the health and well-being of all life. Even the most casual and novice observer of the state of our world cannot but notice unprecedented change. There is no case for dispute or denial.

Early on during the Democratic primary season one candidate stood out from all the others on the basis for his desire to lead this nation. Jay Inslee, governor of Washington state, focused his candidacy for the office of president on climate

change. While to most this may seem to be very myopic, Inslee understood that until we place our full attention on the environment the other issues confronting us will matter little in the near future years.

It is quite easy to feel overwhelmed. Many of us are probably closer to the end of our time here than embarking on the adventure—that should matter not either way. With benevolent consciousness and the quest for information that brings us to the MOFFA newsletter we know participation is within us and essential.

The path forward resides through the right, privilege, and obligation to participate in the voting process in November of 2020. Our voices matter now more than at any time within our lives. Farmers, growers, and those who have embraced nature have always been at the forefront of positive change. The choosing of a national election day in November was done in conjunction with the traditional end of the harvest season—the roots of an agrarian history. Now we must choose how best to make each individual voice heard in this country. The challenges are many.



We will vote, those of us reading this. The question is how best to bring all voices to the fore. If this nation had allowed and encouraged and actualized participation by all citizens in the voting process, our decisions in the past as a people would have been more just and caring and fair. And the world likely would have

benefitted immensely. Many opportunities to assist are available in the next few weeks even as we limit our movements considering this pandemic. Calling and emailing family and friends, volunteering to work through a phone bank encouraging hesitant and non-voters, communicating with our elected officials to make mail-in voting available to all with deadlines extended to polling hours (just like getting those income taxes postmarked by midnight on April 15!), volunteering to drive those less likely and able to get to their voting location, volunteering as a poll worker to lessen the wait for those in long lines, encouraging companies to allow time-off for their workers to be able to vote at a decent and convenient time, providing child care for family and friends, working with county clerks to count and process mail-in-ballots, and

You can vote many times if you actively engage with your fellow citizens.

“Voting is not about participation. Voting is about power!”

Step forward to make a difference – this may be the most pivotal moment in our lives.

Fairness and Care – how righteous and compassionate will our legacy be?

For over 40 years John Hooper has been an advocate and practitioner of the organic method of food production. He has been a member of MOFFA's Board of Directors since 2009 and served as its Chair from 2011 through 2015.

Welcome to the MOFFA Board

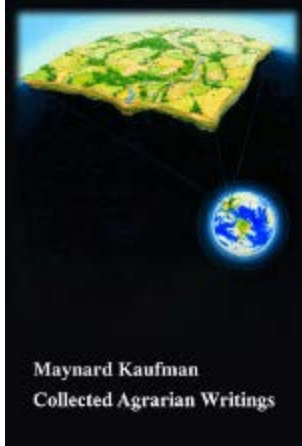


The MOFFA Board would like to announce and welcome Stacey Wilcox to our group of committed volunteers. Stacey began volunteering her time with MOFFA in July of 2019 and has shown herself to be a perfect fit for our organization. Wilcox is a marketing and business professional with 20 years of experience working with health and wellness, food, and technology companies. She is in the process of completing a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems from Tufts University. She has an MBA from Northwood University, and graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Communication Arts. Stacey is also a certified health coach and yoga instructor. She is passionate about helping others understand the origins of their food.

Visit our website to read more about our [current board members](#).

Book Review – Maynard Kaufman's Collected Agrarian Writings

By Laura B. DeLind



Maynard Kaufman is equal parts scholar, activist, and farmer, which is to say that he knows what he is talking about, and he practices what he preaches. This volume of papers, Maynard's Collected Agrarian Writings from the late 1960's through the present day, showcases his work, words, and wisdom as he grapples with major issues of our times –

everything from fossil fuel dependency, climate change, technocracy, disembodied education, and corporate domination to the myth of progress and our ultimate survival on earth.

Maynard does this through an agrarian lens, and his belief in the virtues of small-scale, subsistence-oriented, organic farming. Embedded in this orientation, he argues, is an earth-centric awareness, a wholeness of being, and a spirituality born of humility and care. It is an argument for a healthy food supply, a balanced way of living, and a resilient planet.

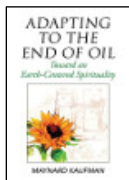
This insight has guided him throughout his long and productive life. He offers it as a way for the next generation and the next and the next to live well in place (and in diverse places). But to do so, he cautions, requires developing a sense of sufficiency, a sense of 'enough,' or as Maynard puts it in his essay, "The End of the Myth of Progress," "an attitudinal turn-around, from expecting more to affirming less" (p. 127).

To this end, Maynard demonstrates that such a turn-around is possible – his own life choices providing clear examples. At the same time, he challenges us to take action before shortages, pollution, disease, and chaos make meaningful life choices impossible. He fears this is happening.

Here is a dense and dappled volume to be read slowly and respectfully – and ultimately to be acted upon. There is no time to waste.

Laura B. DeLind, Emerita (MSU Department of Anthropology and the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities) is also a co-founder of the Lansing Urban Farm Project.

Both Maynard Kaufman and our reviewer Laura DeLind were founding members of MOFFA. Dr. Kaufman has published several books in the past few years that are of interest to those who subscribe to MOFFA's mission and values:

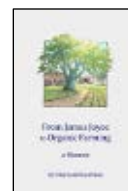


Adapting to the End of Oil: Toward an Earth-Centered Spirituality (2008). This book encompasses the two subjects that were integral to Kaufman's life, ecology and spirituality. While the end of oil didn't come quite as soon as he anticipated in 2008, it is clearly on the horizon and his thinking on the subject remains valuable today.



The Organic Movement in Michigan (ed., 2017). The 19 chapters in this book encompass a wide variety of information: historical summaries of the major organic organizations, reports on various organic activities,

and essays about the past, present and future of organic farming.



From James Joyce to Organic Farming: A Memoir (2018). Maynard's long life has encompassed high literary art as well as a commitment to environmentalism both on the farm and in the wider community. His memoir combines his scholarly interests with the practical life of one of Michigan's earliest organic farmers.



Collected Agrarian Writings (2020). This book reprints sixty-five papers, reviews, and pamphlets written over the past fifty years on the subjects of ecological and societal change, the prospect of an agrarian revival, and the history of the organic movement in Michigan, as well as some of the practicalities of homesteading and organic farming.



Evolution of a Post-Christian Theology: A Selection of Theological Essays 1963-2015 (2020). This book focuses on Dr. Kaufman's academic life as a professor of religion at Western Michigan University (and earlier work at the University of Chicago), but his growing interest in ecological matters over time is evident, with chapter titles such as "From Holy Spirit to Earth Spirit."

Editorial—Organic AgriCULTURE

By Linda Purdy

In the past few months, our country has been "awakened" from a long slumber of denial about systemic racism that has not only existed, but frankly created and shaped this country since its inception about 4 centuries ago. I don't mean to hit people over the head with this and make them feel defensive about the history of our country, and perhaps their own lineage; it's, in fact, the opposite I hope to communicate. It's that we ALL NEED to come together to create a better country OUT OF the one in whose history we ALL share. It's the only history we have, so it is this history we must come through. If we were to continue along the same path we have been on, we would all be doomed; as a country, and likely as a planet as well.

Now, what does this have to do with organic agriculture, gardening, farming, etc.?? Well, everything! The tenets of organic farming support a philosophy of life in its most basic form—sustaining and nurturing life. This is something all humans need, and all life needs, and the two are not separate. Life is life. Very simple, and very true. The type of agriculture that has evolved in our society, however, especially since the advent of the petrochemical industry during World War 2, is "industrial" agriculture. Industry, agricultural or otherwise, has developed in a way that follows our history. It has always followed a very short-sighted path, one that emphasizes profits over the quality of life of the people who create their products, and promoting division amongst who gets paid more or less for their work, or who gets to work at all. In addition, industry has often completely ignored the consequences of their profit-oriented actions upon "smaller, less important" life such as animals, water, air, and land. Organic agriCULTURE, is just the opposite.

We need to get back to basics. Here are a few examples of the difference in philosophies... Instead of the industrial method of trying to dominate the land by killing insects and plants whose goals



compete with ours, organics works to create healthy soil by planting and turning under "cover crops" which add nutrients to the soil, or by adding composted animal manure from herbivorous animals to the soil. The resulting enriched soil in turn increases the plants' health. Disease and "pests" usually attack those plants that are unhealthy already, just like in people. Healthier soil is more balanced nutritionally, which does not eliminate insects that we don't want, but increases the diversity of insects to include those that benefit our needs as well as their own. For example, some "good" bugs parasitize "bad" bugs, or outright eat them. This increases instead of decreases the biodiversity of the area being farmed, and thus increases the success and diversity of many plants grown in that area. People need to eat a diversity of plants, which gives us the variety of nutrients we need to truly thrive. Healthy human bodies create healthy people that are well equipped to help us reach our full potential as human beings, which is why we are here in the first place. In industrial ag, people over the past 6 or 7 decades have diminished the ecology of the soil, seeing soil as "dirt," a planting medium and not a living organism that feeds the plants which feed us. A vast majority of the many corn and soybean "factories" we see here in Michigan while driving through "the countryside" are producing corn for either animal feeds or high fructose corn syrup, a cheap, highly addictive, and concentrated empty calorie ingredient found in most processed foods. Soybeans are similar, either grown for animal feeds or added to processed foods. Both are also exported. This is not

FOOD that we need to eat, and it depletes our very beautiful soils into dust. AND—who EATS these non-foods the most? Yes, all of us. From the middle class to working class to the working poor, we have been eating the chemicalized “foods” that industry has marketed to us. As in other areas of life, those who are poor with a lack of access to real healthy foods, either due to food deserts in urban areas, money, or just straight marketing, have suffered the most from this, as well as environmental pollution that industry has decided to put all their toxic this or that into. In raw numbers, these poor people are largely white. When you look at percentages of people in our country, these poor people have traditionally been, and continue to be, Black, Hispanic, and Native American.

As Americans and human beings, we need to realize that the way we have gotten here is not the way we can continue on. Most Americans want the best, not only for themselves, but for our society as a whole. In order to heal our country and move towards helping EVERYONE thrive and find their true human potential, we must apply the ideas of working together with Nature and thus with each other, as we are all a part of Nature and this world. We need to address the wrongs of the past, but not in partial or stilted ways. We must embrace completely a new philosophy of life. There is no better place to start this than in the garden or on the farm.



As a small farmer who farms organically as a main source of income in this industrialized world, this may sound like a happy panacea, involving a lot of swimming upstream. Well, this is true, no question. However, this life has meaning! I care so much

about our own future generations, the world my daughters are inheriting and their children's future, along with the Earth that has given me the knowledge of the wonder of this amazing life. I have found no other thing that I would want to do more. I get to expose others to the beauty of life, which is right in front of us trying to tell us how much we all belong. I get to learn more ways to help keep the Earth in harmony and try to communicate this to anyone who will listen.

It is my belief that there are many more people out there who would like to be a part of creating a better world for ALL.

We can start by reaching out to our fellow Americans on whatever side of the many divides who want to start with the basics and have many conversations from there. I'm sure that we will all find that we have so much more in common than we are apart. The basics are FOOD. We all eat. Are we eating whatever industry has given us, which was produced with their bottom line in mind, or do we eat what we ourselves can grow from what the land, water, and air supplies? Our choices here and now will be the starting point for choices that will determine if we have a future..

Linda Purdy, has been an organic grower, and an active member of Organic Growers of Michigan as well as MOFFA, for the past 30 years. She and her husband grow specialty crops as well as their own grain, and are milling grain both from their own farm and other organic farms in the region at Westwind Farm in Swartz Creek. In addition to the milling, they operate a CSA and host educational sustainable living events at the farm. Linda joined the board in October, 2019.

Policy Corner

There is one eclipsing event in the world of organic policy right now and that is the proposed Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule (SOE), published August 5th. Described by the [National Organic Coalition](#) (NOC) as “the most significant change to the regulations since they were written 20 years ago,” the scope of the rule is intended to crack down on fraudulent imports of organic grains and other areas where the supply chain is breached by non organic ingredients. Below is a statement of the topics covered by the SOE rule, as published by the AMS-USDA, also available [on their website](#).

“The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) proposes amending the USDA organic regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement of the production, handling, and sale of organic agricultural products. The proposed amendments are intended to protect integrity in the organic supply chain and build consumer and industry trust in the USDA organic label by strengthening organic control systems, improving farm to market traceability, and providing robust enforcement of the USDA organic regulations.”

Topics addressed in this proposed rule include:

- applicability of the regulations and exemptions from organic certification;
- import certificates;
- recordkeeping and product traceability;
- certifying agent personnel qualifications and training;
- standardized certificates of organic operation;
- unannounced on-site inspections of certified operations;
- oversight of certification activities;
- foreign conformity assessment systems;
- certification of grower group operations;
- labeling of nonretail containers;
- annual update requirements for certified operations;
- compliance and appeals processes;
- and calculating organic content of multi-ingredient products.”

When it comes to proposed changes to organic regulations, many are reminded of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule and the Origin of Livestock rule, both of which we are still waiting to see accepted and enforced. There is a hope that as this rule concerns ending fraud in the organic industry, it will receive much support from the current government and administration. Public comments may be submitted until October 5. Instructions for submitting comments can also be found on the [AMS-USDA website](#).

"The Fruits of Your Labors"

by David Kline

[The following is an essay written by David Kline in the autumn of 2019. When asked if MOFFA could reprint a few of his previously published pieces, David was kind enough to send several along. We chose this particular one for the "Care and Fairness" newsletter because it seems hard to think of anything that can better represent caring for and enriching the lives of those in the current and future generations than apple trees and apple orchards.]

Even though this is the Fall newsletter, I'm writing here in the waning part of summer—that time of the year when eating from the fruits of one's labor is at its finest, and freshest. The list is almost endless with new potatoes topped with salt and pepper and butter and cucumber salad; red and yellow tomato slices the size of a piece of bread; sweet peppers (with peanut butter of course); sweet corn on the cob buttered and served with chilled milk.



The orchards likewise are practically overflowing with abundance—we already put up a lot of apple sauce from our Lodi and now the McIntosh and Cortlands are ready to be sauced, and the Galas are eaten by the grandchildren even before fully ready. Our Gala apple was a

gift from Stark Bros Nursery early in our farming life. We had ordered some peach trees from Stark's and they included the Gala. The apple was newly developed and hadn't reached the popularity it enjoys today. We were pleasantly surprised when the semi-dwarf tree produced its first fruit. The apple had a mild sweetness and a crisp bite that we all loved. Actually, the Galas were so popular in our school that our children could trade them for candy bars.

The first Gala apple tree was one of many seedlings resulting from a cross between a Golden Delicious and a Kidd's Orange Red planted in New Zealand in the 1930's by orchardist J.H. Kidd. Donald W. McKenzie, an employee of Stark Bros Nursery, obtained a U.S. plant patent for the cultivar on October 15, 1974. It was soon after that that Stark Bros sent us one of their new cultivars that we're still enjoying today. In 2018, the Gala surpassed Red Delicious as the apple cultivar with the highest production in the United States, according to the U.S. Apple Association. It was the first time in over 50 years that any cultivar produced more apples than the Red Delicious. Our grandchildren would vote for the Gala.

Our one local French Catholic prune/plum tree is again loaded with its pretty maroon/yellowish and sweet freestone fruits. This may be the last tree of its kind in the world. It still grows true from seed. Eighty

years ago a French Catholic neighbor had a row of the trees in his orchard and when the fruits ripened he would run an ad for one day in The Daily Record and people from Wooster would come to his farm and pick the popular prune/plums. With the passing of the family, the trees fell into neglect and eventually died. The Japanese beetles finished off the few stragglers. I found one sprout growing from the root of a dying tree and transplanted it and it survived. Schlabach Nurseries in New York has now grafted from the tree and sent us two seedlings and they are growing.

The fruits of your labors may be reaped two generations from now. Trust, even when

you don't see the results.
~Henri Nouwen [1932-1996]

David Kline is a naturalist, writer, and semi-retired farmer. He and his wife, daughter, and son-in-law farm 150 acres and operate a 50-cow organic dairy near Mt. Hope, Ohio. David and his wife, Elsie, have five children, all married and all are involved with organic dairy farming. David is the author of four books, Great Possessions (1990), Scratching the Woodchuck (1997), Letters From Larksong (2010), and The Round of a Country Year (2017). They also publish Farming Magazine, a quarterly publication supporting small-scale family farming.

Update on MOFFA Organic Intensives and Education Opportunities

This fall/harvest edition of the Michigan Organic Connections newsletter is where we like to announce our plans for the January Organic Intensives. We have had topics selected and a plan for a primary Organic Intensives speaker for several months, but now we sense we need to alter the plan.

I recently checked in with other Michigan or Midwest farming and gardening related organizations regarding their plans. ACRES USA Conference, The Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Expo, The Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference, and the Michigan Farm Market Association (MIFMA) are all going virtual. The Family Farms Conference organized by MIFFS is being postponed until next year while the conference organizers are looking at other options for winter 2021.

During our September 8 Board meeting, we came to the following informed decision. We will not host in-person Organic Intensives as originally planned on January 9. We will seek to reschedule a day with Jean Martin Fortier on Market Gardening for 2022. Our perception is that there are multiple on-line opportunities to learn about organic market farming that are affordable and a good return on investment.

In recent newsletters we have identified some of the online/electronic opportunities. Our OI priority has been to offer live and in-person learning opportunities and although we will not be able to do that this January, we hope to be able to plan for farm tours in the following summer.

Each year we have offered one of the Organic Intensives with speakers and content that would benefit homesteaders and serious gardeners as well as farmers. Our plan for 2021 included a session to support a new cohort of organic gardeners and those looking to grow some of their own food, perhaps for the first time due to current conditions. Our perception is that more gardeners growing food will mean more interest in quality fresh vegetables, and more interest in local farmers' markets. Our session planned for the topic on organic gardening will be developed as a set of recorded presentations to be made broadly available. The date of availability is yet to be determined.

MOFFA Board members are excited about working on developing these presentations. As always, we welcome the ideas and help of MOFFA farmer and gardener members and future members..

Wheat Wanted!



The Stone Mill at Westwind Farm is seeking certified organic hard red spring wheat, preferably Alson, for purchase in up to a

supersack (over one ton) increments. Please call or text Lee at (810) 730-2865, or email <mailto:themillers@westwindfarm.com>.

If you are [looking for an item](#), have a piece of [equipment](#) to sell, or [land to rent](#), we are glad to post your notice on our website.

The MOFFA website also has a page for [job postings](#) and we encourage you to visit it. Eden Foods in Clinton, Michigan has several job openings



available. If you are interested in joining this natural foods company, visit our [Employment and Internship Opportunities](#) page to see where you might fit in.

From the Editor

First, I would like to offer a special thank you to David Kline for allowing us to reprint his essay in our newsletter. Though brief, it talks about the passing of time and the passing on and sharing of fruits and, I think, ideas. His piece fits quite nicely into our theme for this newsletter, namely IFOAM's principles of Fairness and Care. The first stresses positive relationships and the need to strive for fairness with regard to opportunities. The second refers to agriculture being conducted responsibly to protect the health and well-being of generations now and to come (and the environment).

The observation has been made ad nauseam that these are unprecedented, unusual, radically different times we are currently finding ourselves in. I think it is being said so much because it seems to be true in so many different ways; life seems to be changing in several different arenas. In some cases, the obdurate lack of change up to this point is what has led to a strong demand for change. While preparing this newsletter, I reflected on IFOAM's principles of organic, but instead thought of them on terms of the larger world picture. Are the planet's weather patterns and their results (droughts, soaring temperatures) changing for the worse? Is the Gulf under siege from increasingly strong storms and

California on fire perpetually? Have we taken care of the environment, agriculturally or otherwise? What about fairness? A rather harsh light has been thrown on the relative positions occupied by members of this society recently. Whether the question is medical, political, juridical, social, and no doubt agricultural, I think the answer to the question of fairness is clear.

I had hoped to include a pitch for OEFFA's mentorship program in this newsletter, but they have pushed back opening for applications due to "unprecedented times." And MOFFA's next OI's are to be postponed due to "unprecedented times." Though these "unprecedented times" appear to making it more challenging to realize many of our goals for society (agriculturally and otherwise), they are at the same time highlighting why these goals are so important.

— Leah Smith

Leah Smith is the MOFFA Newsletter Editor and a Michigan State alumna (B.S., Crop and Soil Sciences). She works at her family's farm, Nodding Thistle, and is a freelance writer.

MOFFA News

Michigan Organic Connections Newsletter – Our series of newsletters for 2020 have corresponding themes, which all focus on the principles of IFOAM. But, as always, we are interested in featuring new voices in the newsletter. If you are interested in contributing, or if you have a suggestion about future content or can recommend someone who would be interested in contributing, please [contact Leah](#), our newsletter editor. If you're not interested in writing an article, please consider contributing photos of your farm or your harvest; we're always looking for more illustrations.

Sponsors – MOFFA is now accepting Sponsorship from organizations and individuals who are willing to demonstrate their support of our mission with a financial contribution. The change to soliciting sponsorships generally, rather than specifically for Organic Intensives, will enable us to increase our activities throughout the year. Please take a moment to view the logos of those who have already pledged their support at the end of this message, and let them know you appreciate their sponsorship. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for 2021, please [email us](#) or view the [sponsorship page](#) on the website.

WHY JOIN MOFFA : To position yourself and every dollar you donate toward spreading a wholesome, just, ecologically focused organic ethos across all of our local Michigan communities. Join online at <http://www.moffa.net/membership.html> or call 248-262-6826.

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