



MICHIGAN ORGANIC FOOD & FARM ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS 2004

As MOFFA begins year twelve of its mission, we can look back over our accomplishments and be proud. From a slow start with little funding and relatively few supporters, but a very dedicated, working Board of Directors, we have definitely come a long way. The past two years have been especially productive. With two years of funding from Risk Management Grants from the Michigan Department of Agriculture we have been able to reach out to current and potential organic growers in ways never before possible for us. We have sponsored, co-sponsored, supported and attended more events, for consumers, farmers, environmentalists and policy makers. High quality, informative publications have continued to be a priority for MOFFA, keeping members as up to date as possible on the issues that concern us all, such as genetically modified organisms contaminating our farms and our food supply, and events in the state that are of interest.

MOFFA started 2003 deep in the planning for the Michigan Conference on Organic Agriculture and for the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference. The planning and implementation for the 2004 Risk Management Grant was also started very early in the year. These were primarily grower oriented events and efforts, designed to help bring the organic farming idea to more producers. We also participated in organic programming at The Great Lakes Expo at the end of the year, answering questions and providing information for the farmer participants.

2004 was certainly a great year for regional Harvest Festivals co-sponsored by MOFFA. Growing Connections Festival continued for a third year in the Detroit metropolitan area, The Grand Rapids Organic Festival also made its third appearance. The newcomer to our growing series of locally oriented festivals was the Southwest Michigan Community Harvest Festival held in Kalamazoo. All of these were well attended and considered by all involved to be an enormous success at introducing eaters to organic growers; at educating all about growing food, about nutrition, and about the importance of choosing local organic whenever possible; at beginning to build support for the local food systems MOFFA espouses.

MOFFA's Board of Directors is especially proud of all we accomplished in the year 2003. For more information about some of our many accomplishments and our current financial status, check out the following pages. We, the Board, are wishing for an equally productive 2004 and hope you, our members, will continue to support us in that effort.

Pat Whetham, Chairperson
MOFFA Board of Directors

Promoting the development of food systems that rely on organic methods of food production and that revitalize and sustain local communities

MOFFA, P O BOX 626, GAYLORD MI 49724
WWW.MOFFA.ORG
810-659-8414

Some of MOFFA's Accomplishments in 2003

- ▶ Co-sponsored the Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference in January. Over 400 farmers and others attended the 4th annual conference. For the past 4 years, Carol Osborne has served as a MOFFA volunteer on the planning committee for this conference.
- ▶ Major sponsor and organizer of the Michigan Conference on Organic Agriculture which featured Mark Ritchie (President, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy), Dr. Walter Goldstein (Michael Fields Agricultural Institute), Dr. Francis Thicke (Radiance Farm, Fairfield IA), and Jim Riddle (National Organic Standards Board) as well as other well-known speakers from both inside and outside Michigan. The Friday evening Special Guest Speaker was Percy Schmeiser, Canadian Farmer in the midst of a drawn out battle with Monsanto over the accidental spread of genetically modified canola onto his farm. The conference was well attended by both current organic growers and those considering organic production for the future. The Schmeiser event brought out consumers and environmentalists as well as organic growers.
- ▶ Held the MOFFA Annual Membership Meeting in Grand Rapids with speaker Barry Bursak, a consultant working with Sustain and the Local Organic Initiative in Chicago. The organic and local foods potluck dinner was sensational, and conversation was lively.
- ▶ Produced a new *Eating Organically* Guide to the Organic and Sustainable Farms in Michigan. Planning for this began in January, information forms went out to growers and related businesses in March. Much work was done by a number of volunteers - MOFFA Board, MOFFA members, and others - and the finished booklet, in a new, smaller format, was ready for debut at the regional Harvest Festivals in September.
- ▶ Completed second grant through the Michigan Department of Agriculture Risk Management Program, with funding from the USDA Risk Management Agency. This grant project provided education and outreach about organic farm planning and other aspects of managing risks for organic production. Activities in 2003 included a series of farmer roundtables with 48 farms throughout Michigan described in *Michigan Organic and Community Farmer Roundtables 2003—Summary Report & Recommendation*; a set of 3 farm tours and educational sessions in late summer/fall that highlighted farm planning, organic farm and holistic farm management, in collaboration with the Kellogg Biological Station, Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association and Project GREEN, production of a special Growers Issue of the *Michigan Organic Connections* newsletter (in October 2003) and production of two new brochures to help farmers with local, organic food marketing—*Choose Local, Organic Food* and *What is Organic?*
- ▶ Continued to provide the MOFFA Processing Trailer for use to growers. In 2003 Bernie and Sandy Ware of Ware Farm in Bear Lake used this mobile processing kitchen to explore a number of possibilities for value-added enterprises from their farm products. Jams, pickles and pies were among the products produced during the year at Ware Farm.
- ▶ Participated in two stakeholder meetings (in January and July) with MSU representatives and organic growers and organizational representatives from around the state. Discussions centered around Michigan State University's support for organic production on various levels, including curriculum, extension awareness and support of organic farm research.
- ▶ In July MOFFA Chair Pat Whetham and Advisory Board member Ken Dahlberg attended and participated in a Homeland Security workshop focusing on agriculture.
- ▶ Produced a new MOFFA brochure, in addition to the *Choose Local, Choose Organic* and *What Is Organic?* Produced as part of the Risk Management Grant. We also continued to produce our newsletter, *Michigan Organic Connections*, including a special issue geared towards farmers that went out in October.
- ▶ Sponsored the second annual Great Lakes Bioneers Conference in Traverse City in October; through volunteer Ken Dahlberg, MOFFA participated as a planning member for the Seeds of Prosperity entrepreneurial agriculture conference held in Thompsonville in November; exhibited for the third year at the Great Lakes Expo conference for fruit, vegetable & farm market producers; developed additions to MOFFA's website designed specifically for growers with the help of volunteer webmaster Brian Thomas.
- ▶ Sponsored three regional harvest Festivals and began planning a fourth for 2004! Growing Connections Festival and Grand Rapids Festival continued to grow, Southwest Michigan Community Festival had a rousing start; and this year Mid-Michigan Organic Food Festival will join the lineup of MOFFA sponsored or co-sponsored events in the Organic month of September.
- ▶ And there was so much more! MOFFA Board members and member -volunteers were out and about around the state in a variety of places and events, as we hope to continue to be this year and in the future!

Promoting the development of food systems that rely on organic methods of food production and that revitalize and sustain local communities

MOFFA, P O BOX 626, GAYLORD MI 49724
WWW.MOFFA.ORG
810-659-8414