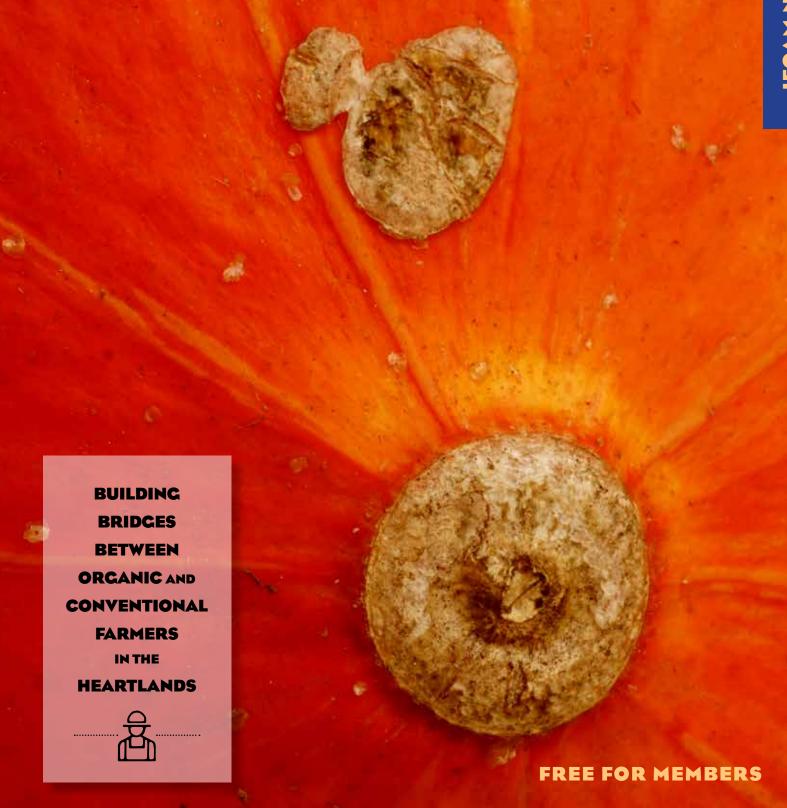
CULTIVATED

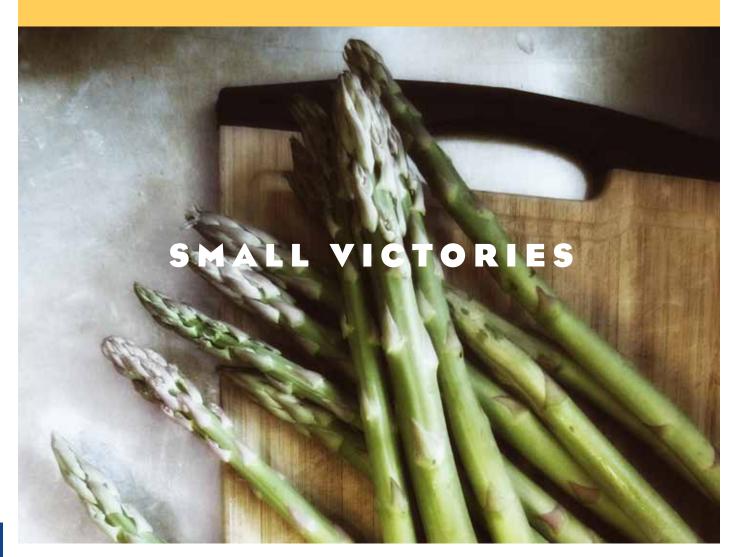
THE NORTH AMERICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY



FALL 2020

CULTIVATED

THE NORTH AMERICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY



We have much to be grateful for this harvest.

Our Victory Gardens are now ripe. This year, millions of home gardeners have pulled together in solidarity to revive the spirit of WWII vintage Victory Gardens.

After the first wave of hoarding and panic at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,

seeds flew off grocery store and garden shop shelves. The mail-order seed companies sold out everything in stock. All the local growing starts sold out, community gardens received unprecedented applications and CSAs blossomed.

It's been a rather tasty grassroots social revolution. As next year's season of *Keeping Up With* the Kardashians was canceled, the general public suddenly began bragging about being on first-name basis with their local farmer. Who would have thought?

Harvest time has now arrived. Our tomatoes are ripe. Peppers are plentiful. We're making zucchini guacamole from the abundance, and smiling quietly inside that canning lids

are not available anywhere, at

any price.

We've proven that victory over a failing and irresponsible food system is also possible. I've enjoyed home-grown sugar peas, vine-ripened Sungold tomatoes, and the tart sweetness of early harvest apples boiled down into applesauce. Even if our movement towards local food self-sufficiency doesn't have enough lids to contain the harvest, we can all claim victory over a pandemic that introduced chaos and panic into our food system.

Now it's time to shine a bright light on the organic community around the world who have overcome catastrophic supply chain and market disruption this year. Our upcoming We-Share webinar will give you a chance to share your own personal farming successes with organic farmers from Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. We may have lost the opportunity to gather at the

IFOAM Organic World Congress, but we'll do all we can to keep sharing our stories with our partners in all the corners of the planet.

Our victory over this pandemic has also given us hope that we can win victories over future challenges as well. Cultivated Quarterly's cover article on Building Bridges with Conventional Farmers in the Heartland illustrates that there's hope for increased conversation between organic and conventional agriculture in North America . All farmers are being hurt by the system of soy/corn crop rotation, requiring huge amounts of expensive inputs and miserly payment for crops. The land doesn't get rich by externalizing costs.

With less and less profit in farming, farmers across North America are embracing regenerative soil practices and increased crop diversity. From Saskatchewan to Iowa, commodity crop farmers are beginning to acknowledge that organic farming is just good

EDITOR'S CORNER



farming. Crop rotations and cover cropping are powerful tools. Maintaining diversity corridors offers important farm benefits. All the hard-earned wisdom that organic practitioners have learned from their farms clearly demonstrates that working with nature is more profitable than working against nature.

And with that hope lies our biggest victory.

Happy harvest.

— Ken McCormick



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In this issue we explore how to build bridges from where we are to where we want to be.

Organic agriculture's transformation from a movement to a niche industry to the mainstream has created challenges at every step. The first phase of organic was led by visionaries. These thinkers had a practical understanding of the soil but were more concerned with finding a path towards an ideal farming system than they were with creating a brand and identity. Before there were standards, these idealists never compromised on the principles, but acknowledged that practices would take some time to reach those ideals. While private standards for biodynamic and organic foods for the European market go back to the I920s, it was not until the 1970s that North Americans made a serious attempt to codify what it meant to be organic. It is no coinci-

dence that this was the decade

that IFOAM was founded. The Rodale Press developed its first private standards around 1972, and organizations like California Certified Organic Farmers and Oregon Tilth adopted those standards. Transnational bodies like the Organic Crop Improvement Association adopted a standard based more on the European approach and the IFOAM Standards in the 1980s.

IFOAM North America

Creating standards and getting legal recognition created a dilemma for the organic movement. Having standards made organic more exclusive. To take organic from an ideal vision to a commercial reality required compromises and working within a legalistic framework. Paradoxically, being less idealistic also made organic more exclusive. By being more exclusive, it created a brand identity that carried value organic agriculture was able to grow and prosper. It also created powerful motivations

for erosion of the standards and fraud. Nicole Boudreau provides a summary of the revised Canadian standards. I will give a brief run-down of IFOAM's responses to the National Organic Program proposal to Strengthen Organic Enforcement.

We face a cultural divide that

is not just limited to the organic community. Nowhere is this truer than in the heartland of the continent. Many conventional farmers are looking for a better way to farm but are reluctant to transition because of cultural differences as well as concerns over economic risk and the production model of their farm. In this issue, heartland pioneers Fred Kirschenmann, Stuart Mc-Millan, and George Naylor talk about how to bridge this cultural gap and address the economic issues that are keeping farmers from better stewardship of the land.

The organic community is



diverse, but members share basic core values. We have seen organic agriculture in the U.S. become more polarized than almost anywhere in the world, and much of the division has been over the technical details of the standards. The resulting conflicts between "purists" and "sell-outs" has created a dynamic tension within the organic community that I see as a healthy debate. Those who want organic to stay true to its ideals and principles—even at the expense of being a marginal fringe movement—still

represent a conscience and legacy that needs to be honored. Those who want organic to grow at all costs—even at the cost of abandoning the most basic principles—represent an opportunity to transform agriculture and food systems on a large scale. Most people in the organic community are found somewhere in in the middle.

Organic 3.0 offers a middle way built on both the principles and standards. The principles of organic agriculture remain the foundation. A clear set of standards consistent

with those principles and reflective of the organic community's values are needed for legitimacy and identity. However, we need to go beyond the principles and the standards. The standards and the market are not the only tools we have. We need to look at encouraging innovation, continuously improving, greater transparency, embracing diversity, empowering the entire value chain, and recognizing and rewarding best practices.



IFOAM North America

Members, Associates and Supporters:

Accredited Certifiers Associ-

Acme Agriculture & Food

Agrisystems International Alliance for Organic Integrity Arnd Zschocke

Bai-Si USA Brian Baker

Canada Organic Trade

Association

Canadian Organic Growers Certified Naturally Grown Certified Organic Association

of British Columbia Compass Natural LLC

Coop Coffees

Coop Solidarite du Cafe Equitable

Dag Falck Denis La France Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps

Dr. Dilip Nandwani Dr. Girish Panicker Driscoll Strawberry

Associates, Inc East Milling International -Quality Organic Food and

Agriculture Ecocert Canada Ecocert ICO Environmental Care &

Share, Inc. Eptimizo

Frederick Ehlert Frey Vineyards

General Mills, Inc. Global Organic Alliance

Global Seed Savers Harriet Behar

Independent Organic Services, Inc

International Certification

Services

International Organic Inspectors Association

Jennifer Taylor Kamut International

Linley Dixon Maracuja Solutions (Lisa Spicka)

Margaret C. Merrill Margaret Scoles Mary Barbercheck Melody Meyer

Mercola Michigan Organic Food and

Farm Alliance Midwest Organic Services

Association

National Organic Coalition Nature's International Certification Services, LLC

Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council

Nurture Growth Bio

Fertilizer Inc. Oregon Tilth Certified

Organic

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, Dalhousie

University

Organic Connections Organic Consumers

Association Organic Crop Improvement

Association

Organic Materials Review Institute

Organic Seed Alliance

Organic Trade Association Organic United Nations Friendship Association

Pennsylvania Certified Organic

Real Organic Project Regeneration International

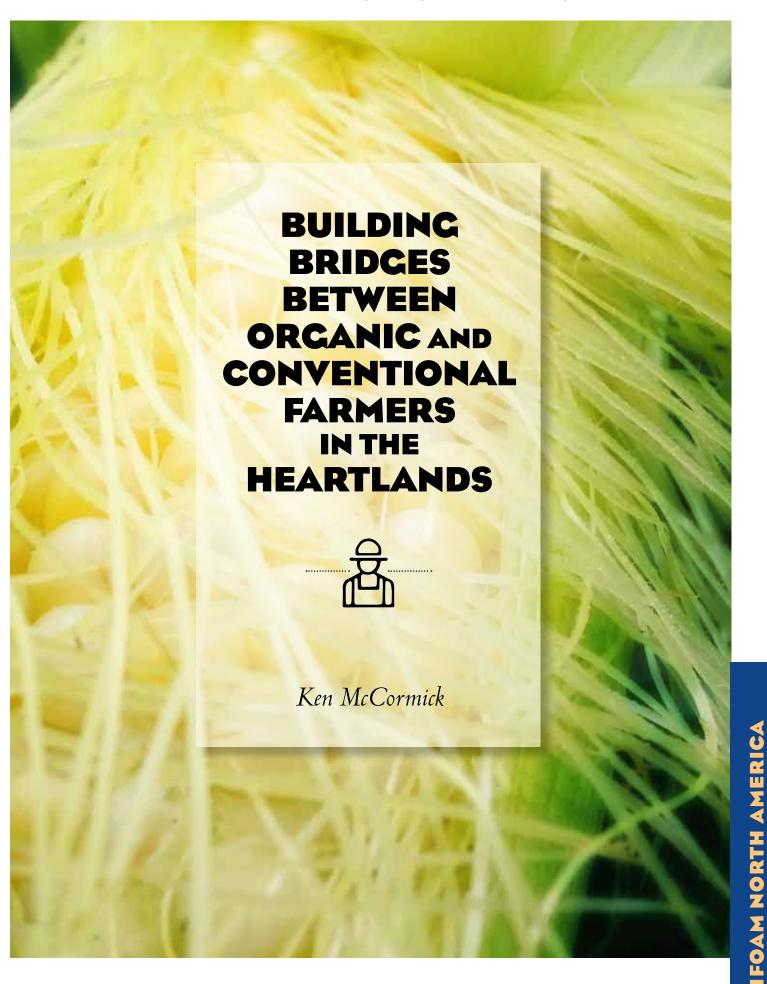
Rodale Institute Textile Exchange The Brice Institute

Vikrant Giri

Westbridge Agricultural Products`

Wolf, DiMatteo + Associates

Cultivated Quarterly is published by IFOAM North America as a service to its members. The IFOAM North America board includes: Brian Baker, Jennifer Taylor, Margaret Scoles, Shannon Jones, Steve Walker, Marla Carlson, and Allison Squires. Copyright 2020. All rights reserved. IFOAM Organics North America, P.O. Box 12256, Eugene OR. All editorial photography not directly credited was produced by Ken McCormick. Please contact us if you'd like to reproduce any of our material, we will generally give permission if you offer us credit for our work.



— Dr. Brian Baker

IFOAM North America



Let's change the **CONVERSATION WE** HAVE WITH CONVEN-TIONAL FARMERS.

In a time of chaos and unrest, good dialog plays an important role in building bridges.

Within the conventional farming community is a growing acceptance that organic farming is really just good farming, Younger farmers in particular have observed that organic farming is profitable, and they are increasingly embracing agroecology practices. Discussions on regenerative, low-till, and poly-cultural practices like agroforestry are becoming mainstream

Current thought among or-

ganic activists suggests that the barriers to increasing the conversion to organic production in the corn/soy belt have more to do with social, cultural, and political policy than economic

For this article, a series of kitchen table discussions were held with three of the most well-respected voices in the North American organic movement. In these conversations, they were asked: What do you think we can do to help move the process of conversion forward?

THE CULTURE CHASM

The cultures of urban-based social progressives on the coasts and more rural-based social conservative culture in North America's heartland differ in significant ways. In the coastal cities:

eating 100% organic has become a social identifier, often by people with little connection to how their food is grown. In the heartland: farmers view organic farming though a more economic lens.

Our question is why are farmers in the American heartland unwilling to transition to organic, even though profits over time are consistently higher?

Fred Kirschenmann: The average age of farmers is now 60 years old, with farmers in their 70s and 80s quite normal. Farms are based on size, and corn and soy make up 90% of

the crop in this area

Stuart McMillan, Culturally, there is a lot of pride in a productive, clean looking field Sometimes it's a bit too clean. Farmers have an ideal of what a field looks like and glyphosate use reinforces a cultural aspect of cleanliness in farm country.

There is a real shift these days on who is being certified. Among farmers, there is also a divide between the conservative farm managers and the risk takers.

George Naylor. Local farmers approach me about organic, often because local folks are not making money on conventional.

Stuart: In the prairies, farmers markets selling local produce are hard to find. There are different kinds of eaters here.

CONFLICTS OCCUR-RING BETWEEN THE CONVENTIONAL **AND ORGANIC** COMMUNITIES

There have been rising levels of animosity between CAFOs and local (continued on next page)



Stuart McMillan, operator of the 5,000 acre Real Organic Project and Regenerative Organic Certified, Legend Organic Farm in Saskatchewan, Canada



Fred Kirschenmann, International leader in sustainable agriculture, distinguished Fellow at The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University and a professor in the Department of Religion and Safety. Philosophy.



George Naylor, organic soy and corn farmer from Iowa, past president of the National Family Farm Coalition and board member at The Center for Food

FOAM NORTH AMERICA

SLOW REVOLUTION



LET'S TALK ABOUT TOTAL LIVING SYSTEMS

—Fred Kirschenmann:

organic farmers. Along with this is pesticide, glyphosate and genetic drift from conventional operations impacting organic operations, sometimes preventing farmers from receiving certification.

Stuart: I seek like-mindedness, and work hard not to villainize conventional farmers. There may be drift spray issues, but community is important. Our kids go to school with their kids.

There are generally few rifts between organic and conventional farmers in our area. We're all farmers. The Prairie organic community might be demonized on tillage, but my advice is: Don't pick fights.

George: I've gotten no grief from my neighbors about being organic. Someday we may all have to go that way. Those of us who own our own farms know that the shift is possible. The average farmer here only owns a small portion of the land they farm, the rest is leased. Farmers are not independent. We're all caught up in the system.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

How can the organic movement better understand the financial issues facing conventional farmers converting to organic production? Conventional farmers already have very little profit margin, and without crop insurance, lots of mid-sized operations would go under.

Fred: Conventional farms are structured to grow crops as cheap as possible, and many conventional farmers are losing money because CAFOs are a marketing concept that require cheap inputs. For their owners, CAFOs are just good business. They're in it for profit, and it's a cheap way to create meat.

IFOAM North America

George: So what is a fair price for farmers? Since I began growing organic, prices for organic corn have dropped from \$10 bushel to \$6 a bushel. Low corn and soy prices only benefit the corporate livestock feeders.

Cheap feed is the problem, and the land is paying the price.

IN OUR COUNTRY IS MORE VALUABLE THAN ALL OF OUR COMMERCIAL LIFE.

—Fred Kirschenmann

Fred: Farmers know that big is losing money, and many farms are losing money who are not big. But the ideology of Get Big or Get Out will die out as many of these guys will retire soon. The question of how the transfer of land will work is part of the change. We are beginning to see it already, as younger farmers in their 30's and 40's are not interested in

I-2 crops.

Younger farmers can't afford to take over large farms. They are farming in a way that recognizes natural fertility enhances diversity. Their diversified farms are self-regulating, and diversity increases profitability.

Stuart: The cost to enter farming is a serious barrier for young farmers. Capital costs to invest in equipment dedicated to organic methods is not always affordable to them. Organic is costly up front and there can be many capital costs in conversions. No-Till is nearly impossible north of Iowa. Roller Crimpers are expensive. And many farmers would like to spend less on inputs, but don't have THE MICROBIAL LIFE enough information or experience to cost-effectively use the tools of organic. They say: "I'm barely making monev now. How can I afford the cost of transitioning my land to organic? How can I stay profitable in my rotations?"

> Fred: What works well for reaching out to conventional farmers is the economics: Restore the health of soil and you spend less money on inputs. The short-term argument is price point. We say: Here's what we're experiencing on reducing our costs and here's what we can market. It's an evolutionary process. An exploration pro

cess for farmers.

George: Cover crop costs are a major expense. I plant rye on the corn crop before harvesting. It will be 5-6 feet tall by May, then a soy crop planted into that. Other than rye, there is red clover for oats. Red clover is important for next year's corn to crop in.

Fred: The larger economic picture is: When you put people on a diet that comes from healthy soil, the cost of health care decreases. Look at the percentage of our GDP that we spend on health care. There is a

major connection between soil health and human health. And aligning agriculture and conservation with human health

Our kids go to SCHOOL WITH THEIR KIDS.

— Stuart McMillan

is one of the most economical things we can do.

The microbial life in our country is more valuable than all of our commercial life.

REGULATORY ISSUES

While the costs of organic certification keep rising, regulatory agencies lack enforcement of pesticide, herbicide and genetic drift. And without crop insurance, lots of mid-sized organic operation would go under.

George: We need a new model of land reform. Present agricultural policy protects the corporations' right to exploit the land and externalize their costs. We're absorbing the costs of big corporations. It's a loselose-lose situation. The land doesn't get rich by externalizing costs.

(continued on next page)



The food system runs by the same rules as the bigger system, and yet there's a huge propaganda machine in place to say otherwise. We have to re-purpose government to make sure that the cost margins of organic are coming back to organic farmers on the land. If we're going to have a sustainable agriculture, then we need policies to counter the market.

Stuart: Municipal Councils should not be allowing CA-FOs next to organic operations. Local zoning is critical to building good relations. Let's reward farmers for good behavior. Offer us grant money for best agricultural practices.

George: In the economics of ag cash cropping, crop insurance is the only real lifeline we get. It's our only subsidy. It includes payments to crop farms that often keep farmers going. But it's only a disaster program created to save the system.

The one good financial support we have is The US Federal Conservation Reserve Program.

The CRP is a land conservation program administered by Farm Service Agency. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. — editor

IFOAM North America

CRP now encourages native grasses and can include growing wildflowers, which are excellent for encouraging beneficial insects and birds.

THE LAND DOESN'T GET RICH BY EXTERNALIZING COSTS.

— George Naylor

It protects quail habitat, pollinator habitat, and we get compensation on buffer zones as well as corridors for larger wildlife too. Let's be proactive here.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

What can be done to improve access to certified organic processing, storage and marketing infrastructure?

George: I see a growing move toward developing more organic infrastructure.

Fred: One of the things that has limited farmers—is their own clientele and a system that gives them direct access to buyers.

Only now there is a new revolution... a cultural revolution of local farming. Black women are starting kitchen farms in cities. Community relationships with farmers are growing. Kitchen farming operations are growing, and after creating new ways to thrive in our pandemic, there is no intention to go back to the old normal.

These relationships are developing a lot of grassroots operations, and this grassroots revolution matters. There is a new dynamic of working with nature and with each other.

STEPS FORWARD **TOWARDS BUILDING BRIDGES**

What builds good farmer-to-farmer relations?

Stuart. There is no animosity towards organic farmers here in Saskatchewan. There are only good farmers and poor farmers. Some just go by the book and don't try to improve their technique.

I speak about organic to the good producers in the area who are always trying to improve their operation. I target farmers who love farming.

I generally don't target older farmers specifically for organic conversion even if there are a significant number of them operating local farms. More farmers are trying organic with a split operation. They're not completely jumping in with both feet, but looking to learn from the experience, often using what they learn as part of improving the rest of their operation, Many are finding that a split operation is profitable.

Fred: I know a local farmer who took over his family farm and saw that corn/soy is not the future. He now has 7-8 crops and animals on his farm, and is so successful that his kids are selling direct sales from the farm.

HOW THE ORGANIC MOVEMENT CAN SHARE VALUES WITH CONVENTIONAL **FARMERS**

(photo complements of Marla Carlson)

How should organic farmers advocate the benefits of improved soil tilth, cover cropping, rotations and reduced input costs? Are you organizing workshops on organic farms tailored for introducing local conventional farmers to organic methodology?

Stuart: Many of us hold Field Days where farmers self-organize tours of their neighbor's farms. We organize groups of farm tours in our area.

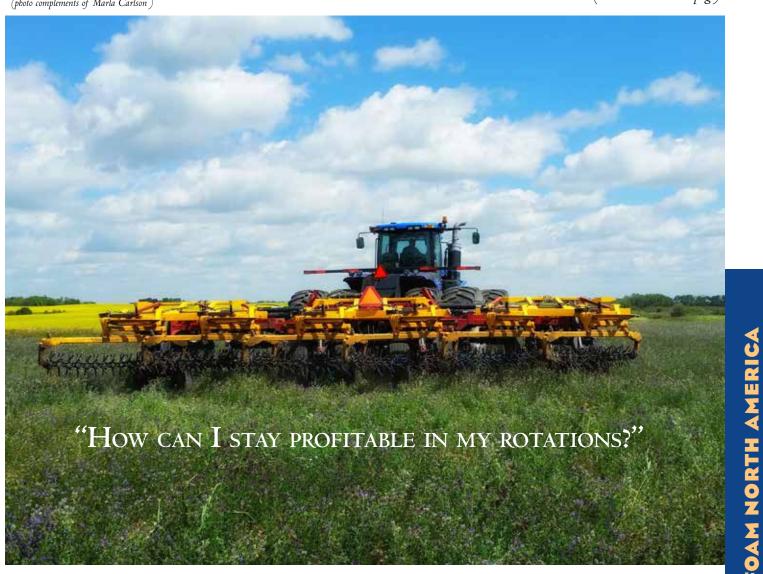
I discuss that there are no cookie-cutter formulas in organic. We talk about using

rotational diversity and show how we plant a diversity of wheat varieties in the same field and we get less disease. Three varieties in the same field reduces disease and past management costs.

There is more and more local interest by conventional farmers on intercropping.

Fred: We're growing a revolution. Conversion to organic might be a 20-year transition, but the good news is that conversion to organic is happening.

(continued on next page)



IFOAM NORTH AMERICA

Farmers are not interested in growing bigger, but in enhancing biological dynamics. It's a step forward for many farmers, with more grasses and more diversity.

Organic is self-renewing. It's a place where we have to work with nature.

Stuart: We should concentrate on what organic farming is, not on what it isn't. Bring in the young farmers fresh out of ag school and talk about the bare bones of organic vs. more innovative methods. Organic is a rational choice for everyone.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE ORCANIC MOVEMENT NEED TO DO?

IFOAM North America

How valuable is it to speak to the common connection that farmers share to their sense of Home and personal identification with the spirit of their land?

Stuart: We should be teaching best practices.

Fred: It's not yet quite a revolution, but it is a cultural shift. Farmers are transitioning to regenerative operations, but not organic.

There is also complexity in certification. The short-term

value is an open question.

Organic is a technical stand

Organic is a technical standard with no ideas of soil health. I see the organic label as not good enough, and if it's still based on input intensive, it's not going to benefit us.

Stuart: It's very unlikely that many farms will convert to organic in 2020 when they can't be certified.

Fred: Let's talk about total living systems. We can talk about plant-based foods, but you take out animals from the farm and you take out all the benefits they offer. Animals are a part of healthy soil life.

Without them, you miss inputs that belong with the system. It's imported inputs vs diversified with animals.

George: There are a lot of pieces needed to put the land back in order. One is that the land needs livestock to function like a natural system. A real organic farm needs livestock.

Fred. Local food is important, and how we feed ourselves has always been local. Plants we ate over the first 190,000 years of humanity have all been local. Slash and burn was the First Agriculture. Then we domesticated natural animals. Larger

scale agriculture began in the Neolithic era around 10,000 years ago, and up until the 1800s we had a whole continent of organic operations practicing good soil health. Input intensive practices began in the 1800s, and what we call conventional agriculture has been around a very short time. Only in the last 20 years have we seen such big changes on our farms.

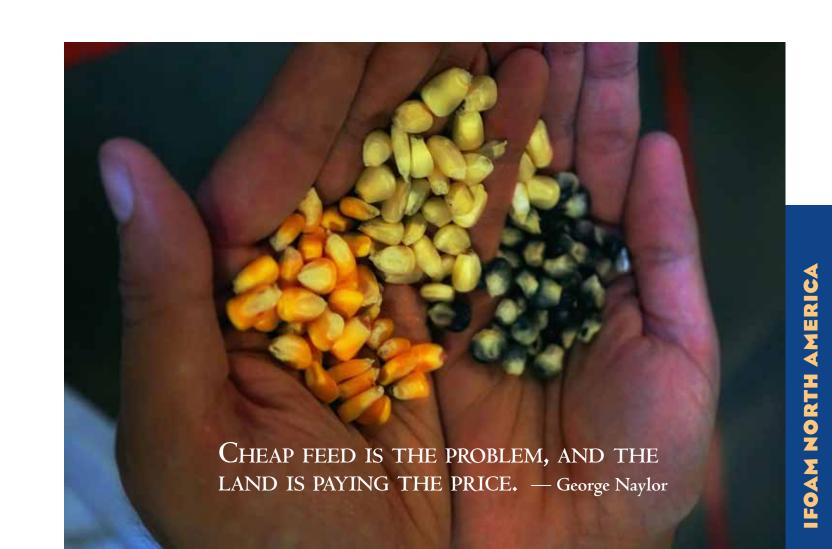
The microbes in soil become a part of the life in ourselves. We create healthy soil and it enriches ourselves. It's the best tasting food. It has a natural flavor from the contribution of the soil.

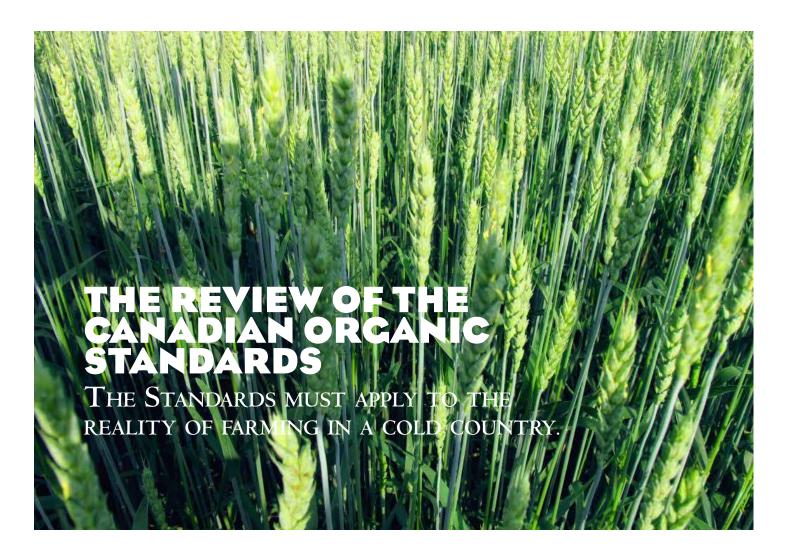
Fred: There's a core that motivates how we see things, a new spirituality in our relationship to nature. This is a new spirituality, not a religions issue. It's about a living system that we are a part of, and it enriches much of our lives.

The big question is: how do we fit ourselves into this relationship?









IFOAM North America

Nicole Bourdreau, Biologist-e

Organic Federation of Canada/Fédération Biologique du Canada

As is the case every five years, revision work was launched in 2018 to analyze and modernize the content of the Canadian Organic Standard (COS). Finding funding was the first step in this work. The Canadian organic industry must raise funds to cover the costs to finance the activities of the working groups respon-

sible for making recommendations to improve the standard and the fees charged by the Canadian General Standards Board, the agency that owns the standard.

After many requests, the Canadian government eventually agreed to provide funding on the condition that industry contributes matching funds and actively seeks funding mechanisms for future reviews. Maintaining the Canadian Organic Standard is not covered

by the federal budget.

The working groups were set up in September 2018 to analyze the 200 requests for amendments submitted by industry; the proposed changes were then submitted for public review. The public reacted with more than 700 comments, which the working groups discussed and resolved. This is necessary to verify that permitted organic production practices (I) ensure the integrity of organic products, (2)

The market disruption due to the pandemic has also influenced the standard.

of birds per building?

The 2020 Standard will

require that broilers raised in

reject new technologies that are not in the spirit of the organic principles, and (3) are acceptable to consumers and to countries that trade organic products with Canada.

The standard must also apply to the reality of farming in a cold country. Chickens are not cold-hardy, plants do not grow at -10 ° C and the foraging season for honeybees is very short. Canadian organic operators must adapt their practices to the climate while strengthening resilience in the face of climate change. So, what are the new provisions governing Canadian organic production?

Outdoor access is a key principle of organic livestock production. But how can this be applied when broiler chickens are slaughtered at the tender age of 40 days, and layers are raised in flocks of thousands

barns have daily access to the outdoors at 25 days of age when there are no weather constraints and that producers seek to increase the number of birds going outside. Layers should have enriched verandas, covered, unheated play areas, equivalent to 1/3 of the barn's surface area with en-

pecking objects, etc.). As for dairy cows, tie stalls, which have been grandfathered in, will be completely banned in 2030.

richments (perches, hay bales,

The market disruption due to the pandemic has also influenced the standard. After a catastrophic event, such as fire or a flood, farmers will be allowed to feed up to 30% non-organic feed for 30 days in case they cannot obtain all



the feedstuffs needed for a complete feed ration within the IO days that were previously prescribed. In terms of regional forage shortages, for example due to drought or flooding, the 2020 COS allows for non-organic forage to make up to 25% of the forage for the entire ruminant herd, including animals destined for slaughter, if the operator documents the shortage and makes contingency plans to avoid this situation in the future.

Greenhouse production was debated at length. To reduce imports from Mexico or California in January, operators proposed allowing only artificial lighting for 60 days to grow greens locally. But here is the question: is growing without sunlight organic? The public said no. Organic plants must be grown under sunlight, with 100% artificial lighting only allowed for shoots, microgreens, sprouts and starting transplants.

Honeybees, which are native to warm countries, use honey reserves to survive the long winter. Beekeepers have adapted practices to the Canadian climate: they provide sugar when preparing hives for overwintering to help prevent starvation. However, many organic beekeepers believe that bees should survive exclusively on the honey they produce. Given the practice of winter feeding is already widespread and bees are subject to great pressure due to the agricultural industrialization, the 2020 Standard will allow feeding with sugar in winter. This practice will be reviewed in 2025.

IFOAM North America

Regarding organic crop production, the Canadian organic sector opposition to parallel production was finally (somewhat) thwarted. The 2020 standard will allow operators who add fields to their operation to produce organic and non-organic annual crops that are visually indistinguishable (i.e., parallel production) when harvested in the last 24 months of the transition

period. This flexibility is intended to facilitate transition to organic production and to support the competitiveness of the Canadian industry in comparison to the U.S. industry where parallel production has been allowed at any time for many years.

In the Permitted Substances Lists, Tables 4.2 and 4.3 for Crop Production have been merged. Soil amendments and production aids will be presented in the same table with details specified about their origin and uses in the annotations. Producers will no longer have to navigate from one table to another to find out which substances they can use for all types of crop production.

They will also see a new

addition: struvite. Phosphorus is becoming limited in organic production. To maintain crop yields, particularly field crops grown on thousands of acres without manure, struvite from livestock urine is now permitted as a soil amendment.

All genetically engineered substances remain prohibited. The 2020 Standard specifies that genetic editing with CRISPR is not allowed.

However, in livestock production, vaccines produced from genetically modified substrates or from techniques related to genetic engineering could be used if non-GE vaccines are not commercially available or are ineffective. Similarly, for monogastric animal feed, lysine and methionine supplements are permitted and, if sources

complying with the standard are not commercially available, an exception allows for the use of all sources of lysine and methionine, even those produced using genetically engineered processes or substances.

These are some of the changes that will affect the work of organic operators when the Canadian Organic Standard is published by the Canadian General Standards Board (GCSB) in November 2020. Certified operators will, of course, need to be aware of the changes to their type of production, and will have one year to adapt their organic production plan to incorporate the revised practices, if necessary.

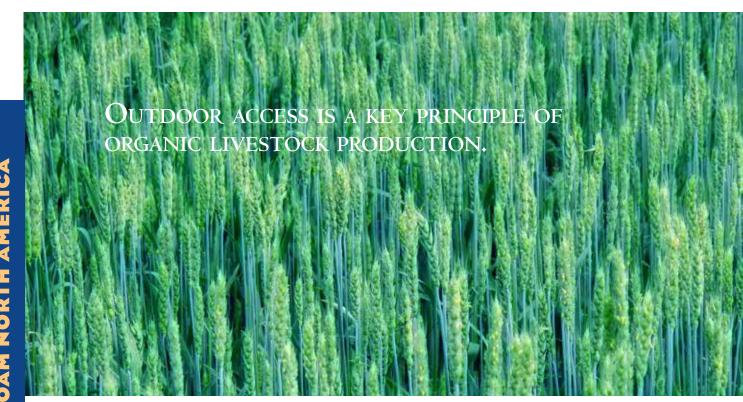
The chairs and members of the working groups, led by the Organic Federation of

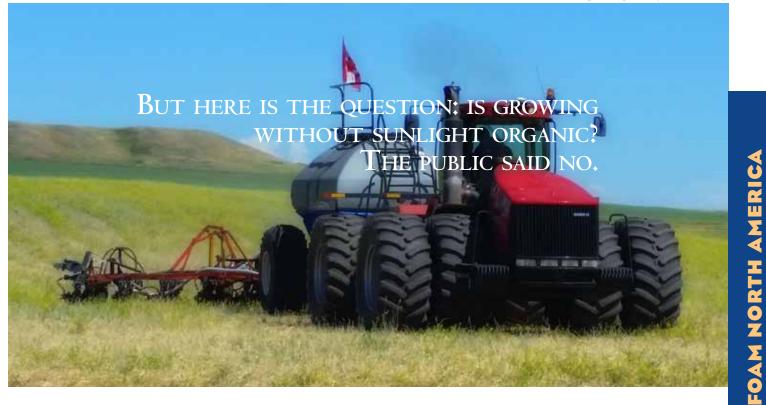
Canada, as well as the voting members of CGSB's Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture, have invested time and energy to clarify and improve the standard governing Canadian organic production. They all hope that this renewal will stimulate Canadian organic production because environmental quality and human health are at the heart of the concerns of organic operators and consumers.

To learn more about the standards revision process in Canada visit: www.organicfederation.ca www.federationbiologique.ca



(photo complements of Marla Carlson







Brian Baker

USDA Moves to Strengthen Organic Enforcement

The US Department of Agriculture recently closed its comment period on the most sweeping proposed changes to the National Organic Program regulations since its final publication in 2000. Titled "Strengthening Organic Enforcement", the proposal sought to address the growing concerns with fraud and other breaches of integrity in the organic supply chain. The comment period closed on October 5, and the USDA received over 1,500 comments, including ones from IFOAM— Organics International and IFOAM North America.

In brief, the proposed provisions seek to:

IFOAM NORTH AMERICA



I. Increase oversight of entities in the supply chain that currently operate without USDA oversight.

IFOAM North America

- 2. Require NOP import certificates to accompany all organic products entering the US, or their equivalent, to create a stronger audit trail.
- 3. Clarify and strengthen the USDA's enforcement authority and provide greater on-going oversight of its Accredited Certifying Agents (ACAs).
- 4. Clarify the labeling required on non-retail containers used to ship or store organic product.
- 5. Specify a minimum number of unannounced inspections that ACAs conduct of the operations subject to their oversight.

- 6. Standardize the certificates issued to certified operations and data entry in the Organic Integrity Database for ACAs.
- 7. Clarify that certified operations only need to submit changes to their organic system plan during their inspection, and that ACAs must conduct annual inspections.
- 8. Set qualification and training requirements for inspectors, reviewers, and other ACA personnel.
- 9. Establish criteria and procedures to determine equivalency with trading partners.
- 10. Clarify and strengthen enforcement procedures, particularly limiting the scope of what adverse decisions can be appealed.
- II. Establish grower groups'



certification requirements.

- 12. Clarify minimum organic content required in multi-ingredient organic products with non-organic ingredients.
- 13. Require improved auditing, record keeping, and fraud prevention procedures.

Many comments praised the USDA for recognizing that the US organic community faces a set of serious problems, and there was general support for the intent and general direction of the proposal. At the same time, commenters recognized the limitations presented by an approach that was largely procedural and administrative. Many comments also found that the USDA did not address the underlying causes of fraud.

Much of the proposal was directed at import fraud, which is seen as a growing problem. Following reports of fraudulent organic grain originating from the Black Sea region, U.S. organic grain producers have faced unfair competition from grain labeled as organic that began pouring into U.S. ports around 2015. Such product was frequently handled by non-certified entities claiming exemption or exclusion under various loopholes in the regulation. Certificates would be used for multiple transactions beyond the production capacity of the producers. While the NOP was designed as a consumer driven truth-in-labeling law, business-to-business labeling requirements have been minimal. and non-certified brokers

were able to relabel containers as organic without it being easily detected.

IFOAM—Organics International's comments focused on grower group certification.
Specifically, IFOAM supported the following:

- Size or turnover should not be used to exclude growers from grower group certification.
- Limiting the size of grower groups is not the best approach to deal with legitimate concerns about the capacity of control systems. Instead, the USDA should adopt the clustered approach proposed by IFOAM—Organics International.
- Grower groups should be in a well-defined

(continued on next page)

geographical region and should not go beyond the borders of one country.

• Grower group certification should be treated as a separate accreditation scope.

In addition, IFOAM supported improved oversight to prevent both domestic and import fraud, as well as better qualifications for ACA personnel, including inspectors and reviewers. IFOAM North America's comments expanded on the valuable experience that IFOAM has gained from working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) and the UN Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to harmonize organic standards and facilitate access to the global organic markets for smallholders.

Both the international and regional comments from IFOAM expressed concerns that efforts to deal with organized international crime on a large scale would unfairly penalize small producers and regional handlers without having adequate enforcement capacity to deal with the fraud. Without a significant increase in qualified personnel

IFOAM NORTH AMERICA

to enforce the regulations and the political will to prosecute fraud cases, those who obey the law will find themselves at an even greater disadvantage to fraudsters.

IFOAM North America

Several commenters, including our own IFOAM member, the National Organic Coalition (NOC), noted that much of the fraud was driven by organic feed demand from Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and retailers supplied with exempt private label brands. These commenters included suggestions that closing loopholes for CAFOs and exemptions from certification would reduce the upstream incentives for fraudulent activity.

The USDA is required to read and respond to every public comment in a subsequent Federal Register notification. However, it may choose not to proceed further with the proposed regulation, even when there is substantial public support. Given that it is an election year, Washington, DC insiders consider it unlikely that the regulation will be finalized soon. In the meantime, the organic community is expected to live with the current situation.



News Updates

Real Organic Project announces new label

The Real Organic Project has announced the official release of the Real Organic Project Label. They have nearly 500 farms approved for certification, and now have a label to identify the program.

The formation of the Real Organic Project began three years ago when The National Organic Standards Board allowed hydroponic operations to be labeled as organic.

The ROP states that farmers are not going to sit back while the National Organic Program continues to degrade the meaning of organic. "Here and abroad, the organic movement is, and always will be, soil-grown and pasture-raised. Organic farmers understand that soil health, crop health, animal health, and planetary health are intimately connected. The Real Organic Project will exist until the USDA National Organic Program understands that too."

While certifying her farm for the Real Organic Project during the 2018 pilot program, former NOSB member, Jennifer Taylor stated, "They can change 'USDA organic,'

but they can't take the organic movement away from

Real Organic Project organic farmer Davey Miskell says, "Farmers know how to get things done." We are unique in that we have a labeling effort that is coming from the farmers, rather than another marketing brand.

Organic Trade Association 30-Year Membership **Milestone**

Congratulations to the Organic Trade Association for their long-standing membership in IFOAM International!

The OTA represents over 9,500 organic business in North America. Their mission is to promote and protect organic with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace.

The OTA helps ensure that all parts along the organic value chain have a strong voice with government and the public, providing legislative advocacy and market analysis, along with a comprehensive directory of organic products an service.

Thank You for your three decades of loyal support.

UN Award For Denmark's Organic Plan

Denmark has been awarded silver in the UN Future Policy Awards for one of the most efficient organic initiatives in the world by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The award celebrates policies that promote the transition to sustainable food and agricultural production – in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. A total of 5I policies from 25 countries were nominated. Organic Denmark is thrilled and continues the fight for defending and further developing Denmark's highly acclaimed organic policies.

The award aims to develop and disseminate policies that encourage sustainable food production and consumption. This year, the award focuses on organic policies, and Denmark has been selected as the silver medalist among a total of 51 policies from 25 countries. The gold medalist was awarded to Sikkim in India - the first organic state in the world. All of its farmland is certified organic.

News Updates

#IGrowYourFood Action Day

Amazing things happen when we share our stories. The IFOAM International #I Grow Your Food campaign offered us all a unique chance to have personal interaction with farmers around the world, sharing their stories and engaged with us personally in North America.

#IGrowYourFood Day was a global action day initiated by IFOAM - Organics International as a public action which invited everyone involved in producing food using organic and agro-ecological practices— farmers, exporters, traders and organizers— to take to social media and share our work, the challenges we face, and how we can support them.

#IGrow Your Food provided us with a platform to share our own personal story, and speak directly to address citizens, consumers and policymakers around the world by sharing this content across social media.

On September 9, we enjoyed a webinar with some pointers on how to use the video capabilities on our own phones to create social change. Personal video is a powerful tool and the webinar offered a toolbox of practical steps to help tell the story of our farming operations with just the tools that we carry in our pockets.

IFOAM North America

September 25 was #IGrowYo-urFood Action Day, where we collectively created a powerful Twitter storm using #IG-rowYourFood and #LuvOrganic to get the topic trending, with posted videos, pictures, memes, and articles linked to our own stories.

Included in the video postings were farmers from: Chile, Kenya, Germany, India, Ecuador, The UK, Samoa, Brazil, and Togo.

The campaign received: 12,458 interactions, 10,665 likes, 1,154 shares, 730 social media mentions, and 38 non-social mentions. In all, there were 484.99% positive mentions.

Congratulations to all IFOAM members involved!

Visit this website to view all the videos:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXmIv0Q_dPnbrOveBC6re2Ci1CWQ_Pn3V

Canadian Organic Growers receive federal funding for an organic food supply-chain project

COG is thrilled to announce receiving a \$640,000 investment from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) for a collaborative, industry-wide project. This 2-year project will identify current barriers in the organic food supply chain, help the Canadian organic industry fulfill its economic potential, and provide Canadians with increased access to regionally-grown, organic food.

As we stand at the juncture of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, the launch of this collaborative, industry-wide project is vital for Canadians. Gaining an understanding of the barriers that exist between organic farmers and consumers will help the organic industry meet the growing demand for organic food in Canada and abroad, and play a prominent role in Canada's economic recovery.

Real Organic Symposium

Join in for five sessions every Sunday in January, 2021, sponsored by the Real Organic Project.

This is a virtual series of talks and live panels with more than 50 prominent organic farmers, scientists, and climate activists, including:

Al Gore, Alice Waters, Bill McKibben, Paul Hawken, Eliot Coleman, Allan Savory, Fred Kirschenmann, Paul Muller, Joan Dye Gussow, David Bronner, Jennifer Taylor, Francis Thicke, Ronnie Cummins, Leah Penniman, Dave Chapman and Arran Stephens. Sessions include topics on

soil health, farming & climate,

health & nutrition, and what we can do.

Find out more at their website: https://www.realorganicsymposium.org

IFOAM 2020 ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS Postponed

In light of recent developments around COVID-19, the organizing committee has decided to postpone the Organic World Congress to September 8-10, 2021. Their ambition remains to offer a truly global and diverse space that inspires positive change through knowledge exchange, learning and the formulation of sustainable solutions, for a better tomorrow for all.

The event website will continue to offer updates on the event and information on registration, reimbursement, program etc. will be published in due course.

World Congress organizers thank everyone for their understanding and support, and look forward to welcoming everyone in Rennes next year.

BIOFACH 2021

The world's leading trade fair for organic food is an important business event, an emotional event for the sector, and both a get-together and an opportunity for positioning, taking place in Germany - the second-largest organic market worldwide!

February 17 - 20, 2021

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Your IFOAM membership fees allow *Cultivated Quarterly* to deliver timely and critical coverage of organic agricultural issues, continue our webinar series, and launch international activist campaigns like #IGrowYourFood

Let's inspire the North American organic community to move forward from simply thinking globally— to actually acting globally.

Every new member we sign up adds momentum to our movement. Every new member

helps advance the goal of 100% organic production across North America. But we'll only get there by speaking out for high-integrity organic standards in one unified voice.

More IFOAM members deliver more economic clout. More members hold governments more accountable. More new members prevent watering down the existing organic standards.

Who in your network would you like to bring into the IFOAM family? Send your thoughts to: Ken McCormick, misterorganic@hotmail.com

