

SUMMER 2021

CULTIVATED

THE NORTH AMERICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY

IFOAM NORTH AMERICA

**SPECIAL
EQUITY
AND
DIVERSITY
ISSUE**

IFOAM
— NORTH AMERICA —

**ORGANIC
FOR ALL**



FREE FOR MEMBERS

SUMMER 2021

CULTIVATED

THE NORTH AMERICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY

EDITOR'S CORNER



Cultivated Quarterly is proud to initiate two programs designed to bring equity and fairness to North American organic agriculture.



The top 1% of North American agribusiness has financial control of the seed patents, chemical fertilizers, pesticides & herbicides, as well as the infrastructure that packs our food, delivers it and retails it. The Cargills, Bayer-Monsanto, and the Archer-Daniel-Midlands Group all lobby the government, and fund the trade associations that promote and protect their financial interests. Large agribusiness interests are happy to accept the public's support intended to go to organic farmers, but most of the 50-500% premium we spend at the grocery stores to support organic agriculture adds few, if any environmental benefits to our food system.

This organic premium is how people *vote with their dollars* — for social and environmental change as well as for personal health concerns. Unfortunately, this organic premium is not being returned to the organic community.

Take back our own money

If we really want to support organic food and the environ-

mental benefits provided by organic farmers, we must take back some of what the public is already spending to *support agroecology and expand organic acreage*.

North Americans spend more than \$60 billion a year on organic food, paying at least a 50% premium for this privilege. Often we pay 200% or more for certain items. I certainly do.

But let's take just 50% of that 60 billion dollars a year in organic food sales and call it the premium that people are now paying to enjoy all the benefits of organic food this year. That's 30 billion-dollars-a-year that we pay to help ensure that our food is pesticide-free, help build soil health, provide higher nutritional content, protect our water supply and help create fair working conditions for farm workers.

So how much of the \$30 billion donation we make to organic farming is returned to the organic farmers who actually provide us those benefits? Many organic farmers only get conventional prices for their products.

What do we get for our premium?

If the public is willing to invest \$30 billion a year to protect and develop organic agriculture, what do we get for our investment?

In recognition of the massive public vote of confidence offered to organic farmers—organic manufacturers, distributors and retailers should be held responsible to return a percentage of this back to the organic farming community, even if just for the upkeep and maintenance of the organic margins they collect each year. Only a tiny portion of this \$30 billion is now being returned to the farmers who did the work that created all this value.

On the consumer side, if consumers of organic food pledged 1% of their organic food bill to ensure the necessary education, lobbying and outreach to promote agroecology practices, they too would earn a huge bonus in return. Expansion of organic acreage would contribute to an increase in health and resiliency of our shared environment, while providing an economy of scale that would help reduce the cost of everyone's organic grocery bill.

What's fair for organic farmers?

Fairness is a core component of IFOAM Organic 3.0 requirements, and to implement this component, we would like to extend the practice of Community Supported Agriculture to organic products that are not bought direct from a farmer. (*see our article on CSAs in this quarter's issue.*)

Outside of locally grown, in-season produce, the organic community produces organic grains, beans, dried fruits & nuts, canned vegetables, oil products, juices—and a full range of dried and frozen

help legislate chemical-based agribusiness into taking responsibility for their actions. And that's just in the first year. Here's a list what we could do with just a small fraction of that one-percent premium:

- Fund IFOAM's underserved farmer organic training program
- Provide accurate and engaging organic content to brands for their packaging and social media
- Expand IFOAM news and network coverage on our own website
- Lead an Update the North American Organic Plan
- Create a package of farm marketing collateral which could be personalized for farmers:
- Put our 1% logo in stores, on farms, on organic food packaging and in front of the public everywhere.

We are the umbrella group for the whole organic movement, not just the pack-

aged goods and retail trade. We include farmers and farmworkers in our network. We have many of the key organic organizations on our membership list.

Fairness is our Organic 3.0 mandate and responsibility, and now it's time to act upon that mandate.

[Find out more here.](#)

HOW MUCH OF THE OF THE DONATION WE MAKE TO ORGANIC FARMING IS RETURNED TO THE ORGANIC FARMERS WHO ACTUALLY PROVIDE US THE BENEFITS?

organic Consumer Packaged Goods. You can find them in every natural food and co-op grocer across North America. Increasingly, mass market retailers are producing their own private label organic brands for profitable center-of-the-store sales.

What could we do with this funding?

1% of the \$30 billion consumer organic premium works out to \$300 million. With this kind of budget, we could

CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Jennifer Taylor

We have cause for concern about the upcoming United Nations Food System Summit.

Feedback from the June 2021 INOFO and INOFO North America Independent Dialogue on the UN Summit Dialogues.

Many organizations and individuals are declining any formal involvement in the upcoming UN Food System Summit in Rome on July 26-28.

[Click Here](#)

Some have decided not to act as champions, action track leaders, or members of any formal body in the formal architecture. Still others will take action to boycott and participate in an opposition* to the UN Food System Summit with successful Alternative Summit Conferences and Activities.

Here are some of their stated concerns:

1. The Summit is not building on the legacy of past World Food Summits, which resulted in the creation of innovative,

inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms with the goal of realizing the right to adequate food for all.

2. The Summit was convened by a unilateral decision of the UN Secretary General shortly after he signed a partnership agreement with the World Economic Forum, while the previous Food Summits were convened through an intergovernmental decision.

3. The appointment of Agnes Kalibata, the current President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) as Special Envoy and the role assigned to the private sector confirm the undue influence of the corporate sector on the Summit.

4. *Multistakeholderism* (Defined as a new way for corporations and their new partners to try to govern the world. — Ed.) is the form of governance sponsored by the Summit: instead of recognizing Governments as duty bearers and people as right holders, the Summit promotes a new governance with a prominent role for the corporate sector, without taking into account the power imbalance, conflicts of interest, and the lack of accountability of these actors.

[Link Here](#)

There may be many pathways of dialogues that one can take to share our voices under severe conditions, with participation of underserved small farm populations who represent a diversity of essential food system stakeholders.

The inclusion of the voices of agroecology, organic farming systems and organic Black Indigenous small farmers and farmers of color communities, and their organizations— are seldom reached and seldom heard at the same table or room. This is a place where the initial dialogues are being formed, where decision making is taking place, and where plans and approaches are being strategized to impact and transform nations.

In June 2021, INOFO* and INOFO North America held a recorded Independent Dialogue on the UN Food Summit. This was just one of several recorded INOFO Regional Independent Dialogues – UN FSS Dialogues held across the world during the same time period.

The INOFO North America participatory capacity building session (entitled: *Voices of small farmers on agroecology, organic*

agriculture and food sovereignty in North America . . . Inclusion and Capacity Building) provided an almost unprecedented experience and opportunity for the voices of agroecology and organic BIPOC small farmers and their farmer organizations to share their visions, benefits, wellbeing, wholistic strategies that work and their successes. The participants spoke about their histories, expectations, and hopes as BIPOC small farmers in North America; along with their deliberate actions for change in our communities, change in our food systems; as well as the change needed to transform the food system for everyone. It was a great learning-capacity building session that included the voices of small farmers, Black Indigenous small farmers and farmers of color (BIPOC) communities and organizations — groups that are seldom reached and seldom heard. The session also included a unique musical performance by singer-songwriter, Royce Lovett, whose grandmother was a sharecropper, performed *Up for Love* from his Motown release *Love & Other Dreams*.

Access to healthy, nutritious food is considered a human right. Agroecology and organic BIPOC small farmers are important for local healthy food production, nutritious food security and growing the next

generation of resilient small farmers and their communities. We need to extend the benefits of organic agroecology farming practices to all environments, all communities, and inclusive of all human beings.

The outcomes of the INOFO North America Independent Dialogue is intended to act, in this adverse climate: to inform nations, to provide a learning opportunity, and to help guide actions toward a future of healthy nutritious food that is responsibly grown by Black Indigenous small farmers and farmers of color to promote agroecology farm practices and organic agriculture. These deliberate actions enable agroecology farm practices and organic agriculture, and their benefits that support healthy environments and nutritious food sovereignty, and access to healthy food that is safe, nutritious, accessible, sustainable, equitable, and resilient, for all. These are truly critical days that we are living in. Days of the corona virus pandemic and crisis and surviving the aftermaths. Days of the Black Lives Matter Social Movement and their paradigm-shifting impact on how we see each other, engage with each other, and listen and tolerate each other.

These and related prerequisites are shaping our hope for a better today, and a for a better

future tomorrow. In all this, our hope has not been taken away.

How do we transform food systems while recognizing the essential role of: underserved small farmers, agroecology, organic farming systems, food sovereignty, organic livelihoods, while enabling access to healthy environments, healthy nutritious foods for all?

The INOFO North America Independent Dialogue is just one path that may add the voices of small farmers, agroecology and organic Black Indigenous farmers, farmers of color and their farmer organizations to the global *platform of inclusion, wellbeing, resiliencies, deliberate actions, and hope*. Hope for a better today, and hope for a better *inclusive* tomorrow.

Please take a moment to look at our **Organic For All** program and consider how you can work with us to build a better future for this generation, and for all future generations. Together.

***Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmer Organizations (INOFO) Vision: A World of Regenerative and Sustainable Food Systems for All*

INOFO Mission: To unite organic farmers and support their voices at all levels of food systems development, towards producing healthy, nutritious food and preserve mother earth.— Shamika Mone

[Link Here](#)

CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Marla Carlson

Welcome to the Summer issue of Cultivated!

In North America, many of the COVID-19 public health measures are being lifted and we are looking forward to a more 'normal' summer. I am looking forward to spending time with family and friends that I have not seen in person for the last sixteen months. But many of us are questioning if our post Covid goal should be a return to 'normal', to business as usual.

The pandemic has brought the gross inequalities and injustices that exist in North America centre stage. The world watched the murder of George Floyd by a police officer and the people marching in protest calling for an end to systemic racism. In Canada more recently, the oral histories of indigenous peoples were confirmed when the unmarked graves of hundreds of indigenous children were identified in the school yards of residential schools Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

On top of the pandemic, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that we are in the middle of a climate emergency. Extreme weather events – tornadoes, floods, drought, extended record breaking temperature heat waves, hail, wild fires – are all happening with greater frequency, and non-seasonably. More reasons why we need to fundamentally change the way we live our lives.

So what does this have to do with the organic movement and IFOAM NA? Everything!

The way we produce our food has an important role to play in building an inclusive, diverse and equitable world and addressing the climate emergency. IFOAM's four principles of organic agriculture – health, ecology, fairness and care – provide a policy framework to do the work within. The organization itself connects the organic movement globally, collectively lifting our voices and solutions. We need a co-ordinated global effort to develop the inclusive, diverse and equitable solutions we need right now to address the challenges we are all facing.

The Organic World Congress (OWC) and General Assembly (GA) are taking place in September, in Rennes, France. This is a once in a three-year opportunity to participate in a global gathering of like minded people to discuss policies, solutions and make connections. Due to the pandemic, this will be a hybrid event so all our members can participate virtually. If you have not been able to travel to past events, I would encourage you to take part virtually! If you are an IFOAM member, please make the time to participate in the General Assembly, so you can play your role in setting the organization's policy framework for the next three years.

Have a great summer and I hope to see you at the OWC and GA in September!

Marla Carlson, *Co-President*
Regina, Saskatchewan

Treaty Four – the traditional territories of the nehiyawak, anihsinapek, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Metis/Michif Nation.


Members, Associates and Supporters:

Accredited Certifiers Association
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The IFOAM North America Organic For All Program

Promoting the intersectionality of agricultural biodiversity and human cultural diversity.



The IFOAM Organic For All Program is a consultative education program linking the worlds of social ecology and agroecology to help bridge the cultural gaps between social diversity and agricultural biodiversity.

Our Goals include:

- Resolving the inequities in our food system
- Feeding our communities in a time of pandemics and environmental degradation
- Re-indigenizing our land and our cultures, and
- Decolonizing our soil.

This Program is led by Dr. Jennifer Taylor, IFOAM NA co-president and a farmer Board Member of Organic Farmers Association. She serves on the Rodale Institute Board of Directors, Standards Board for the Real Organic Project, and advisor to the National Organic Coalition.



Terms of Reference

When thinking about diversity it's important to remember that the terminology has vastly broadened. Ten years ago, diversity was equated to racial and ethnic minorities, and human diversity issues were considered unrelated to the diversity issues of ecosystems.

Human Diversity: Includes but is not limited to race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, and mental or physical ability. It can also include how we see our space, interact with our land, environments, water, and even how we see each other. Diversity is how we value sharing & communities, farmers knowledge and the knowledge of our ancestors. It's how we engage to build relationships, demonstrate kindness, justice & equity, and how we give hope to our future generations.

AgroEcological Diversity: Includes but is not limited to the critical role that soil biomass plays in ecosystem sustainability, maintaining interconnected networks of soil microbials, yeast, algae, protozoa, fungi, bacteria, nematodes, arthropods and other higher-level animals in soil ecosystems. These ecosystems thrive using organic agro-ecology practices that encourage good soil health, agroforestry & poly-cultural practices, wildlife & plant diversity corridors, beneficial insect, pollinator & bird populations, preserving wetland & riparian areas and integrating on-farm domestic livestock & poultry into farm management practices. It can include wellbeing from the very roots, how we examine where we are today. Agroecology includes strategies to support healthy soils, environments, and healthy sustainable resilient nutritious food systems. Agroecology and the Principles of Organic Agriculture promote wholistic wellbeing for all – these provide the foundational knowledge and actions that support diversity, equity and inclusion.

These definitions are by no means exhaustive. Rather, they are meant to provide a foundational knowledge in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Organic 3.0 for Farmers of Diversity.

Systemic inequity still rages in North America, and if the organic community is serious about implementing the principles of Organic 3.0, we need to roll up our sleeves and make good on the promise that agricultural institutions must deliver culturally appropriate whole systems agricultural training programs to underserved communities.

While the organic community supports diversity in our fields, we need to provide room for a diversity of farmers in underserved communities.

Including cultural diversity into agroecology practices is long overdue, and **The Organic For All Program** signals a time of change, promising a new day where we practice fairness by actually acting fair. Where we level the playing field for long under-

served farmers by delivering the support and training they deserve.

We can't make up for all the injustices of the past, but we can certainly make sure that these injustices are not transported into the future.

Invisible Farmers. Invisible No More.

Though some progress has been made in enhancing cultural diversity in agriculture, minorities are still underrep-

A NEW DAY WHERE WE
PRACTICE FAIRNESS BY
ACTUALLY ACTING FAIR.

resented in farming.

Most farm outreach programs focus

on large-scale agribusiness, leaving 80 percent of farmers in the United States underserved. Across the American South, many states have an even larger percentage of small-scale and resource-poor farmers. Traditionally, these small-scale farmers lie within minority and indigenous farming communities, and have not benefited from the

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education and training programs provided for agribusiness and larger-scaled farms. Often socially disadvantaged, underserved small farm populations are offered a meager access to their share of training, technical assistance and opportunities to engage in sustainable agricultural practices. Organic agroecology farming systems and the benefits of organic agriculture are often unfamiliar in these communities.

Socially disadvantaged and small-scale farmers are traditionally

resource-poor.

This leads to an ever downward spiral

where underserved populations lack awareness and information about organic agriculture, and they lose the opportunities that go along with it.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 3.0.

To achieve Organic 3.0 equity, inclusion and social justice goals, the organic agricul-

tural sector needs a qualified program that supports underserved small farm populations including African American, Native American, Alaskan American, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, refugee, and immigrant cultures alike. While each group has its unique cultural needs, all stand to gain from a set of agro-ecology tools that increases their farm profitability while protecting local biodiversity and community health.

The Organic For All

Program aims to return these communities a fair share of the benefits

that organic agriculture offers to their farming operations and food security.

Our Program is aimed at initiating this ambitious effort by adapting organic agricultural practices to the unique set of cultural standards of socially disadvantaged farmer groups in the American South using the

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resources that the IFOAM network has developed: targeted distance-learning, organic farm management courses that deliver critical technical and operational training in sustainable agriculture and organic production to both new and seasoned farmers alike.

Organic For All will partner with local farmers groups and will include 1890 Land Grant Institutions and community collaborators throughout the southern US

region. We will identify participants and promote capacity

building learning sessions on a full curriculum of organic agroecology farming practices, with emphasis on its benefits, alternative marketing strategies, and community health support.

This program will also provide access to information and technical assistance on USDA organic certification and other USDA programs by delivering relevant education as identified within the individual

communities.

Following this initial consultation process, we will produce a narrative video which will outline the needs of farmers who have participated in the project, detailing their farm stories, and follow up with what we've learned.

A culturally sensitive Organic 3.0 educational program relevant to local communities.

WITH SUPPORT FROM
DONORS LIKE YOURSELF.

The Program will incorporate a foundation

of inclusion and sensitivity towards social justice issues while identifying the specific needs and barriers of socially disadvantaged farmer groups and the small farm community. We aim to develop successful organic agroecology and organic programs that provide real solutions to common organic farming issues to support the well-being and diversity of communities.

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Add On Your Name as a Sponsor

The Organic For All Program is a big tent effort, binding together the entire organic community to create the Ecology, Health, Fairness and Care that lies at the heart of Organic 3.0.

We ask for your support, recognizing the privilege that many of us have inherited, to help us raise the basic skill level of those who were not born into privilege.

Please be part of this change. Working together, we can take an important first few steps toward healing decades of broken promises and discrimination that has caused the underserved farming community to lose so much of their share in the prosperity of the last hundred years.

☐ Your \$5,000 or more [Founder's Circle](#) sponsorship will give your organization's name and logo prominence in all of our outreach material, with regular updates on our progress and our deepest gratitude.

☐ Your [Stewardship Team](#) sponsorship of \$1000 or more will also offer you a place for your logo in our outreach material.

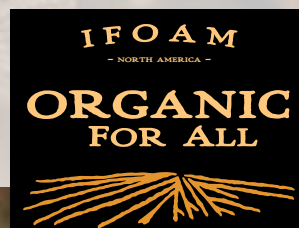
☐ And for a gift of \$200 or more, we will add your name to our distinguished list of [Diversity Supporters](#).

The time has come to engage a community of long underserved colleagues into a respected place in a healthier and more just food system.

We all need to do our part. A co-sponsorship in any amount towards this program helps create hope for everyone's future.

Thank You!

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#)





(photos courtesy
of Elizabeth
Henderson)

I discovered that I love working in nature and so I chose to make a life in organic farming. For 35 years I made my living running a farm.

I also did a lot of policy work for organic agriculture, and I was on the founding board of IFOAM North America, serving two terms.

With regard to the National Organic Program, I wanted to see our program uphold all four principles of Organic 3.0, including fairness. When I saw that fairness was missing, I helped start the *Agricultural Justice Project*, which created an add-on to organic— Food Justice Certification, with standards for fair prices for farmers and fair conditions for farm workers.

Cultivated Quarterly: Do the new standards of Regenera-

tive Organic Agriculture and The Real Organic Program undermine the USDA organic program?

Elizabeth Henderson: I think there is plenty of label confusion. On the other hand, conscious organic shoppers are aware of what is going on, so these labels are really for them. I think the organic movement

THERE ARE NO TWO CSAS THAT ARE EVER EXACTLY ALIKE.

- Elizabeth Henderson

needs a Plan B to fall back on: our community should be ready to replace certification with a combination of Food Justice, the Real Organic Program, and organic standards as a PGS (Participatory Guarantee System).

The concept of CSA came about to enable mid and small-sized farms to survive by attracting people to become loyal members of our farms. Then each farm can shape that idea to their own unique situation— what do we farmers need and what do our customers need? There are no two CSAs that are ever exactly alike. There are certainly trends in the CSA community, but if we look closely, no two CSAs are identical. The CSA concept is supremely adjustable to individual circumstances, and that's the brilliance of it. When people design their CSA to their own personalities and their farm's circumstances, that's when it works. I try not to spend too much time arguing over the definition of CSAs.

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Internationally.

I am the honorary president of *Urgenci, The International Community Supported Agriculture Network*.

Urgenci (<https://urgenci.net>)

There are now CSAs around the world, and they are all adapted to the local culture.

In France, the first CSA was in 2001 when the daughter of a French farming family came over for a visit in the United States. She told her parents about it and then they came over and visited Roxbury Farm and a few other CSAs. Upon arriving home, they created a CSA, but they named it an Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP). This was absolutely brilliant, because the Federation Paysanne had spent the previous 20 years convincing the French public that peasant agriculture was what brought them the great French cuisine. There were thousands of people all over France who wanted to maintain French culture so the number of AMAPs went from 0 to 4000 in just a few years. The design matched French conditions.

Something similar has happened in China, although quite different from the CSAs in France. In China, CSAs are spreading quickly with support from the ecological civilization wing of the Chinese commu-



Elizabeth Henderson farmed at Peacework Farm in Wayne County, New York, producing organically grown vegetables for the fresh market for over 30 years. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY), co-chairs their Policy Committee, and represents the NOFA Interstate Council on the Board of the Agricultural Justice Project. She serves as Honorary President of Urgenci, the International CSA Network.

Elizabeth is the lead author of *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture* and wrote *A Food Book for a Sustainable Harvest* for the members of Peacework Organic Community Supported Agriculture.

nist party and its campaign to empower peasants. Even though not-for-profits in China are not allowed to become national organizations, there is a national CSA network, along with a national Participatory Guarantee System to which many CSAs belong. And during the COVID pandemic,

the number of members has increased dramatically.

East Coast-West Coast differences.

In rural Maine or San Francisco, CSAs are very different because they have adapted to local circumstances.

One of the first CSAs in Maine started with members from all over the state, but as more CSAs were established, its members came from towns near the farm. The *Goranson Farm* in Maine is one of the first farms to create a farm-stand CSA, where members pay a lump sum and then spend down the money by selecting their share from what is available at the farm stand. They've tried to design something that is attractive to their rural neighborhood, so they offer \$100, \$200 and \$400 shares to suit small rural households as well as larger households. I haven't heard of anything similar anywhere else.

I think that a big East Coast/West Coast difference is that most of the CSAs on the East Coast talk about sharing the risk. When you sign up for a CSA share, you agree that you won't get any money back if something unexpected happens on the farm. You get what the farm produces, whatever the weather. Your share will be different from one year to the next, with the

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mix of vegetables depending on the growing season. On the West Coast, there is a lot more organic food available, so it's more competitive. You can join a CSA for a month or for a week just to try it out and there's no risk-sharing involved. But if a West Coast farm is getting some of the things that it needs from its members, then I think that's legitimate.

The first really big CSA that I discovered was run by Bill Brammer of *Be Wise Farms* in San Diego, and he had something like 1000 members. And I thought—'Whoa! How can you really do that? On that scale?' He told me that when the city wanted to take over some of his land for some reason, he appealed to his members. They supported him, and kept the city from taking his land.

Support for low income members.

There are many CSAs that include low-income people and have developed strategies for supporting their needs. They charge on a sliding scale and accept food stamps, while raising extra money from the community. All of the CSAs in Ithaca, NY put on annual fundraising dinners to support low-income shares. NOFA Vermont (Northeast

Organic Farming Association of Vermont) has run a Farm Share program for over 20 years. Once a year, restaurants around Vermont have a special dinner with the proceeds going to subsidizing CSA shares.



THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR ANY OF US TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE COMMUNITY FARM IS THAT IT IS AN AFFIRMATION OF THE KIND OF WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN. IT IS A POSITIVE CHOICE FOR THE FUTURE.

— WINTER GREEN COMMUNITY FARM

NOFA Vermont pays 1/4 of the price of the low-income shares, the farmer pays 1/4, and the low-income members pay half-rate for their share.

At *Rock Steady Farm*, an LGBTQ CSA, 57% of their shares go to low-income people. The farm can afford to do that by partnering with organizations who service HIV patients and other marginalized people. Together with those organizations, *Rock Steady Farm* raises the money so that the farm gets

the full value to cover the cost of a share, but the HIV patient gets the share either free or at very low cost. The thickest chapter in my book, *Sharing the Harvest*, is on the many ways CSAs have found to serve people

with diverse incomes and ethnicities, an area to which CSAs have made enormous contributions.

My own farm.

My own farm had about 300 members, a number of shares that allowed the farm to support four farmers with a modest living, but we were happy with the way we lived.

We charged on a sliding scale: the people who paid at the top rate almost exactly offset the people who paid at the bottom rate. We also accepted food stamps.

We were able to design a CSA that was highly participatory, where all of the members took a role. They either took part in the core group or came and helped harvest three times a season and helped with distribution at the *Abundance Food Co-op* two times a season. That was one of the ways we kept the price lower; the farm needed less labor because the members were doing their share. Our core group did administrative jobs— schedul-

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ing members' work at the farm and at distribution, collecting share payments for the farm, putting out the newsletter and helping with the website.

CQ: So it worked as a partial work-trade agreement with an alternative-to-cash economic base?

Elizabeth: We call this *solidarity economics*. There is an increasing number of farmers who think in terms of solidarity economics, cooperative enterprises and associative economics. There are quite a few biodynamic CSAs but there have always been many that are not biodynamic. In CSAs globally, biodynamics and the cooperative movement have been strong influencers. In Japan, where CSAs started in the 1970s, they were all farmer-member and multi-farm cooperatives.

Operating a CSA

I think that it's too bad when farmers take on all the work of farming when there are so many opportunities for having people to help them. What I've observed is that farms who ask more of their members also get more loyalty back with the involvement. Just having a veggie box might let you do better for your farm, but by embellishing it with some sharing of the risks, you will share the abundance of the CSA as well as getting help with some of

the work.

CQ: How important is it for CSAs to share decision making?



IF YOU WANT TO
KEEP YOUR MEMBERS,
YOU BETTER FIND
OUT WHAT THEY
LIKE TO EAT.

- Elizabeth Henderson

Elizabeth: I don't know if it's decision-making, but if you want to keep your members, you better find out what they like to eat—and try and grow that! Don't impose a diet upon them that isn't to their taste or else you won't have them as members for very long. Due to COVID and all the increase in on-line ordering, more CSAs are putting their order systems on-line to allow members to

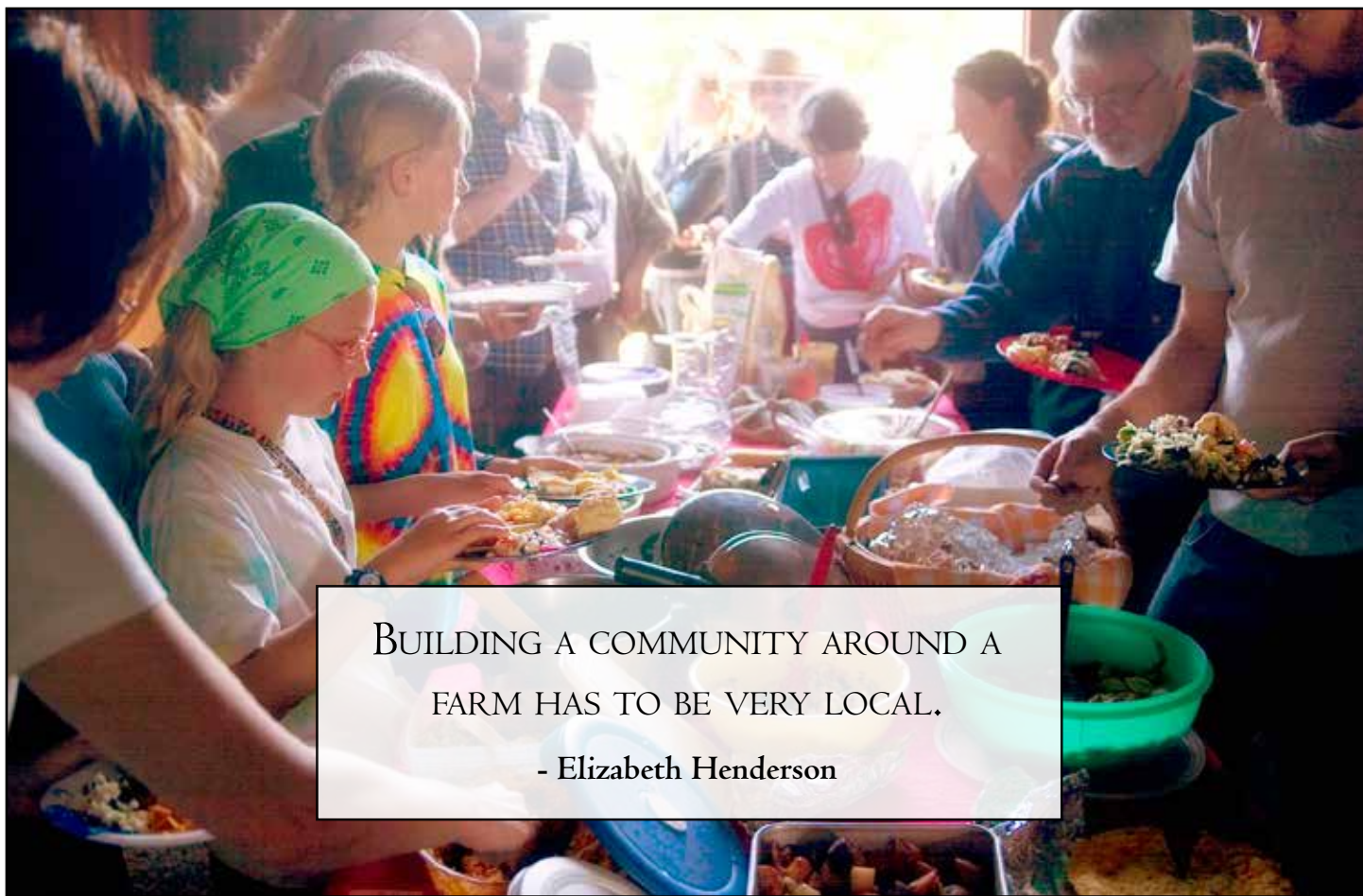
order exactly what they want, rather than taking what the farmer gives them. In your set box, I think it's smart to give people a choice. Members can either have a set Farmer's Choice or allow for more personal selection. But this process really depends on the personality of the farmer and the members. I remember an unfortunate disconnect when *Just Food* signed on a young farmer to provide a CSA for a Latino neighborhood. Most of the food he was growing was perfect for Japanese-style *teikei* shares, so it didn't work out so well for Latinos.

CQ: How does decision-making work in CSAs?

Elizabeth: In our CSA, we divided decisions very clearly. Anything that had to do with how to grow crops or what equipment to use, how deep to plant seeds, where to buy the seeds, what alignment to plant the seeds in—all of this was made by the farmers. Anything about the CSA, we discussed with the core group and our members. We had regular annual quizzes asking our people how satisfied they were. Occasionally, we had focus groups and group meetings where we invited everyone to participate and talk about how it worked for them, what kinds of changes they wanted, and how could it work better in their lives.

Temple-Wilton CSA in New

(continued on next page)



BUILDING A COMMUNITY AROUND A
FARM HAS TO BE VERY LOCAL.

- Elizabeth Henderson

Hampshire is probably the most radical in terms of associative economics. The farmers present the members with the farm budget and the members bid on what they can pay. If the bids cover the budget, that's it. Members pay very different amounts and take different amounts of food. The land is held by a land trust, and a new generation of farmers has taken over, though I haven't talked to these new farmers to see how it is going. Most CSAs are either run by the farmer or by a collective of customers or some kind of non-profit organization. I think *Temple-Wilton* is a beauti-

ful model, but there are hardly any CSAs organized like that.

Building Community

CQ: Food security and food justice require solutions far beyond good soil management practices. How can we build more community into community supported agriculture?

Elizabeth: Building community requires bringing groups of farmers together with their direct customers. Building a community around a farm has to be very local and very much based upon finding out from the people you farm for what it is that they want and need. Then you as a farmer have to look at your own skills and

talents. Are you a farmer who loves farming? If you're happy being alone in nature, then you better find somebody else to help you organize the people in your CSA.

My own skill is as an organizer. I love dealing with people and figuring out what people want. I like to solve things together and organize community participation, so I was the staff person for our core group, which grew to include 28 people. We thought of the many different jobs that people could contribute, and we assigned two people for each job so that no one got burned out. It takes a team to make it

(continued on next page)

work, and each team member has to be assigned to a task appropriate for their skills and personality. There are some very successful cooperative CSA farms. *Rolling Prairie* in northeast Kansas, for example, has been operating for 30 years. *Local Harvest* in New Hampshire is another cooperative CSA.

Building a more fair food system.

Our whole country's food system is based on cheap food, and that didn't happen just out of the blue. It's a system that's perfectly accommodated to late-stage capitalism, with a tremendous amount of consolidation by a very few large companies. I am involved with the *Disparity to Parity Project* which is campaigning for fair pricing and updating supply management to build a racially just, economically empowered, and climate-resilient food system.

<https://disparitytoparity.org>

Somehow, a big enough movement of people, farmers, farm workers and working people has to organize the power to take the food system back and rebuild it as a system that's based on parity and supply management instead of the lowest possible price. Food has to stop being a commodity and be treated as a human right.

CQ: Can mature, organic CSA

operations with economies of scale compete on an equal footing with conventional agriculture?

Elizabeth: A well-run organic farm can certainly out-yield a conventional farm, particularly if the organic farm has a diversity of crops. An organic farm probably can't compete on yield-per-acre of corn and soy beans, but why would it want to? This isn't how we are growing food. We can compete very well in terms of calories and quality, and vitamins & minerals per acre. Probably better than conventional agriculture. Can we compete in the conventional marketplace? That's difficult, and because of today's cheap food policy, conventional farms are also going out of business. Even the very big ones. So unless we change that cheap food policy, food will get imported from somewhere else, as more and more of our food is now.

CQ: How can our food system account for the true value of the environmental services that organic farms provide local communities? Conventional agriculture is certainly not paying for it.

Elizabeth: I think we can do that at a very local level through a CSA. You can create a group of farms who appreciate those qualities and support them. Doing it on a vast scale in this

country will not happen until we take power away from the big corporations.

CQ: Is there a way for communities to take back that power?

Elizabeth: I think the way we can do that is town-by-town, and I'm involved in an experiment to do just that. In New York State, we're looking on at the cities of Rochester, Buffalo, Utica and others and passing local and county ordinances banning all toxic pesticides. The Farm Bureau is not involved in those cities, and if we get enough of the cities and their suburbs to do that, then we can go for a state-wide ban. We'll have to fight with the Farm Bureau over control, but if we try this at the state level or in DC, agribusiness will beat us. We have to be very shrewd about how we go about it. NOFA in Massachusetts has been passing these bans town by-town, and I think that's the way to go—on a local level. If we get enough localities, then we put the whole state together. And then the nation, and take back our food system.



Membership Resources

A New Study of True Cost Accounting

Governments, farmers, corporations, and investors must break from the status quo.

This new book gives us a holistic lens to view our current food metrics, both in policy and in practice. It evaluates the actual costs and benefits of different food systems, along with the impacts and dependencies between natural systems, human systems, agriculture and food systems. Authors from around the world have highlighted the potential for our food system to be more human-centered than profit-centered.

True Cost Accounting (TCA) is an evolving holistic and systemic approach to measure the positive and negative environmental, social, health, and economic costs of our policy decisions. Join the authors at the Organic World Congress (OWC 2021) for a forum discussion in the leadership track titled: *True Cost Accounting and its use in organic agriculture: Reality check on the magic bullet.*

[Click Here](#)

Free: Real Organic Project Podcasts

The 70-plus conversations

from the 2021 Real Organic Symposium last January have now been edited into highlights of the Rebel Alliance, the Resistance, and the loyal opposition to the USDA failures. They discuss organic's origins and impacts, and imagined a reality in which we can come together and create something better, something that we actually want.

[Go Here](#)

Critical To-Do list for Organic Agriculture

The Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems has published *The Critical To-Do List for Organic Agriculture. 46 Recommendations for the President.*

As today's organic industry faces a number of challenges, this report seeks to provide policy recommendations to better support the growing organic industry and its positive impacts on human health, the economy, and our climate. Organic agriculture protects consumers and farmworkers from dangerous pesticides. It also provides opportunities for young farmers and for a vibrant local economy. Organic agriculture is a critical component of a successful climate strategy, as it promotes healthy soil, protects biodi-

versity and reduce greenhouse gases emissions.

[List Here](#)

New Pesticide Findings

Brian Baker, Charles Benbrook and Susan Kegley have just published *Organic Farming Lessens Reliance on Pesticides and Promotes Public Health by Lowering Dietary Risks.*

[Article Here](#)

Regenerative International Farm Map

Listing worldwide certifications for: Demeter Biodynamic, Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC), American Grassfed Association (AGA), Savory Ecological Outcome Verification (EVO), USDA Organic, and Real Organic Project (ROP)

[Map Here](#)

News Updates

Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on June 17 that the agency will reconsider the Trump administration's interpretation that USDA is not authorized to regulate the practices set forth in the 2017 Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule. The controversial animal-welfare rule was finalized in the Obama administration and killed in the Trump administration. It included new standards for raising, transporting and slaughtering animals.

FAO says indigenous people provide pointers to save planet.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said in a June report that indigenous people living on the frontline of climate change could offer potentially ground-breaking insight into biodiversity protection and sustainability, but they urgently need help to withstand a growing number of threats to their way of life.

After an analysis of the growing threats confronting the communities and their sustainable ways of life, the

authors of the report maintain that indigenous peoples worldwide play a vital role in countering global threats such as the destruction of nature, climate change, biodiversity loss and the risk of future pandemics.

There are some 478 million indigenous peoples in the world, according to FAO, but their traditional ways of life are at high risk from climate change and the expansion of various industrial and commercial activities.

European Organic Congress 2021

Take-aways from the online Congress include:

- The European Commission and European Parliament agree that organic farming is part of the solution to reach the European Green Deal's objectives.
- To reach the EU's 25% organic land target, co-legislators of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must ensure that strategic plans and regulations mention the need to develop and adequately support organic farming.
- The new European Organic Action Plan is a great step to

promote organic production and consumption across the EU.

- Biodistricts can contribute to developing rural areas and help reach the 25% organic land target by 2030.
- Europe needs a systemic approach to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. Organic farming is part of the solution to transition to a European food and farming system that is resilient and mitigate its effects on the environment.

More than 660 participants from all over Europe and the world attended this hybrid Congress.

ORGANICBC launches new website

Organic BC (formerly COABC) is growing the organic movement in British Columbia from the ground up. Their grassroots network of organic certifiers, farmers, processors and consumers is working to build healthy soil, ecosystems, people and communities. Check out their new website at: organicbc.org.

Growers of Darjeeling Tea going Organic

Darjeeling tea is famed for its lightness and aroma, and is in

demand around the globe.

Around 80% of the tea is produced annually in Darjeeling, West Bengal and surrounding areas in the Himalayas, and planters are now switching over to organic production. Planters confirm that organic production helps maintain soil fertility, even if it means lower

production.

Out of the 74 tea gardens operational in Darjeeling district, around 50 have now completely turned to organic production.

Researchers say that rampant use of chemicals in tea gardens began in the 1960s when

farms faced a drop in production due to aging tea bushes.

Because the producers felt this would mean severe financial losses, they resorted to the use of chemicals to enhance the life expectancy of the bushes. The chemicals added another 20-25 years to the bushes but destroyed the soil ecosystem.

Calendar

IFOAM Organic World Congress. Rennes, France, September 6-10th.

Come join more than 2,500 organic stakeholders, farmers, researchers and policymakers to address questions around resilience, societal transformation, health, and food sovereignty during the world's largest organic gathering.

It's been four years since the last World Congress, and *Organic World Congress 2021* will offer a global, diverse space that will help inspire positive change through knowledge exchange, learning, and the formulation of organic, sustainable solutions.

IFOAM is committed to maintaining this 20th edition of the Organic World Congress in a safe, inclusive way. To this end, the OWC2021 will be hybrid event, taking

place both digitally and on-site in Rennes, France.

If you're participating remotely, our digital platform will allow you to experience the Congress as if you were on-site in Rennes. You'll have access to all content and be able to attend live plenary conferences, interact with participants and speakers via chat or video, and build your own personalized schedule.

If you're attending in person, you'll be offered access to all digital content and be able to attend the on-site sessions, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies.

There will also be spaces available for you to comfortably connect to the digital platform and enjoy the full added value of combining the online and face-to-face experiences.

[General information:](#)
[Conferences:](#)

The General Assembly of IFOAM - Organics International

The membership of IFOAM - Organics International meets every three years for the General Assembly (GA), following the Organic World Congress. The GA is the highest organ of the organization open to our membership, with members holding the right to vote, and associates and supporters being welcome to attend as observers.

[If you're a member of IFOAM- Organics International, find more about participating here.](#)

[And the Motions here.](#)

HELP OUR 1% OFFSET THEIR 1%

Here's how the organic community can bring the reforms of Organic 3.0 into the mass marketplace.

To offset the 1% of agribusiness that dominates the world's food system, our 1% Organic Share Program is designed for fairness.

Unfortunately, most of the huge margin we spend on organic food supports large-scale private industry players, and only a tiny fraction of the \$60 Billion we spend on organic products adds any environmental benefits to our land and soil.

We've been promised that the huge premium we spend to support organic agriculture would

support agroecology practices on organic farms, but that hasn't happened, and our *1% Organic Share Program* is designed to bring fairness back to the farm.

**One Percent.
That's a fair share.**

Let's send a message to big agribusiness about what Community Supported Agriculture really looks like by starting to act sustainably ourselves.

[Sign up here, and read more details about our program on line.](#)



**Bringing fairness to
systemic inequity in the
organic food movement**

HERE'S WHAT YOUR 1% LOOKS LIKE



If you're in the business of selling, distributing or processing organic food, you should be returning 1% of your total sales to support the collective growth of the organic sector that makes your business exist. It's only fair that you return your fair share back.

[**CLICK HERE**](#)



We appreciate the contributions of students, people of color and underserved members of society with acknowledgment that there is systemic inequality throughout the social economy. If you have the financial resources available, please return half the price of a share.

[**CLICK HERE**](#)



1% of the organic premium is a \$40 a year contribution per person. \$160 per year for a family of four. Add in what you can afford for your fair share.

[**CLICK HERE**](#)



Farmers are already doing enough and not being adequately compensated. Let them proudly post this logo on all their farm outreach material.

[**CLICK HERE**](#)

YES! My 1% percent beats their 1%

Most of the extra premium you pay for organic food at the supermarket ends up in the pockets of middlemen, without delivering any of the environmental benefits of healthy soil, water and diversity provided by organic farmers.

If you're buying direct from the farm, your Organic Premium goes direct to them. But if you want your grocery store food dollar to provide the environmental benefits and services that organic offers, put aside one percent of your food budget to support agroecology directly.

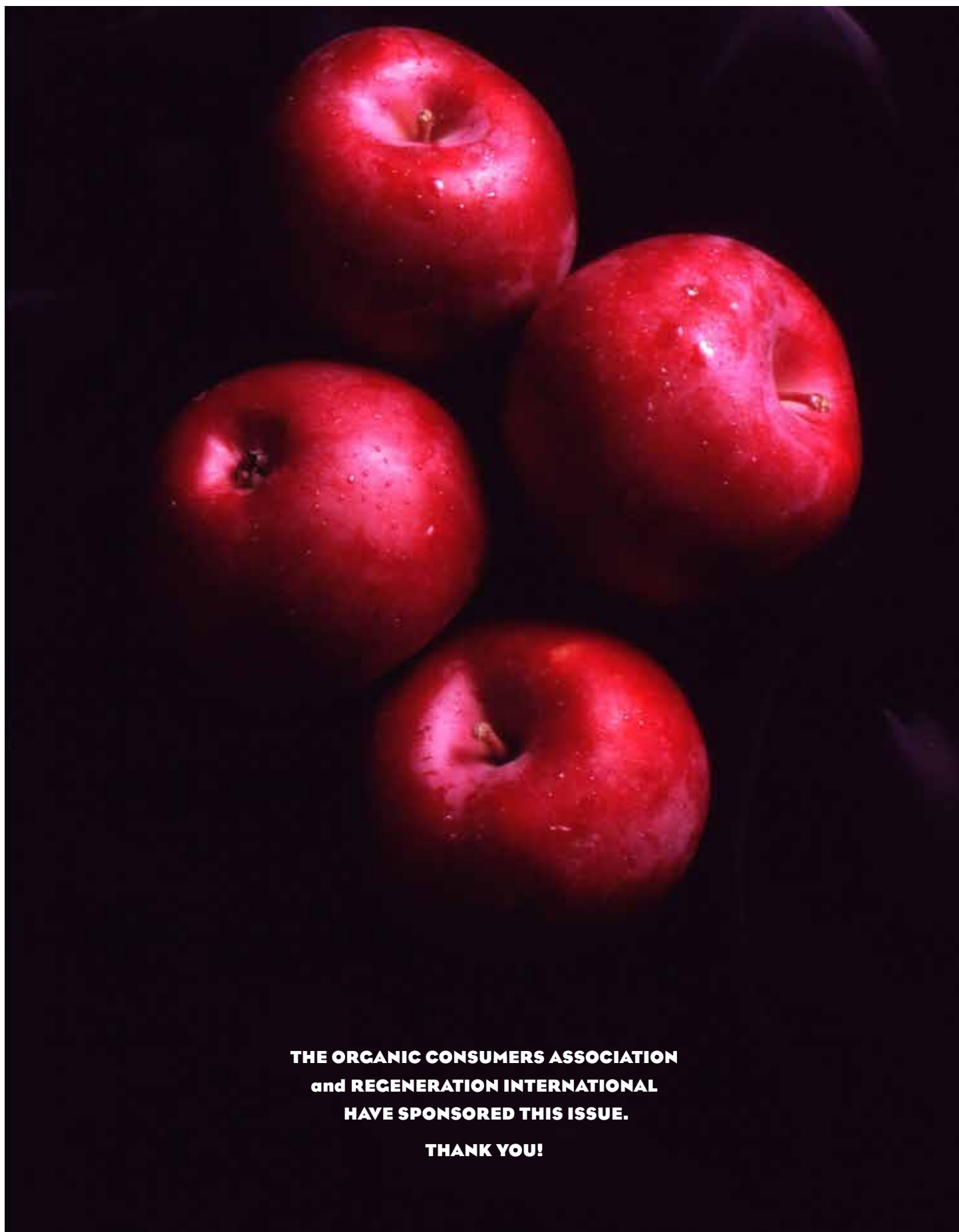


IFOAM will use your 1% to:

- Create a package of farm marketing collateral where farmers call for more fairness in the conventional food distribution system.
- Send a message to Big Agribusiness by putting our 1% logo in participating stores, and on organic food packaging to identify clearly who is and who is not preserving the health and sustainability of our food system.

Go to our Facebook donation page for more information.

[More Information Here](#)



**THE ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
and REGENERATION INTERNATIONAL
HAVE SPONSORED THIS ISSUE.**

THANK YOU!