



NOFA/Massachusetts
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NOFA/Mass 2010 Annual Report

Our mission: NOFA/Mass is a community including farmers, gardeners, landscapers and consumers working to educate members and the general public about the benefits of local organic systems based on complete cycles, natural materials, and minimal waste for the health of individual beings, communities and the living planet.

Our vision statement: To be the resource that others look to in Massachusetts on the fundamentals of organic production and the benefits of organic consumption.

This report highlights our work in 2010 to build consumers' education and self-reliance while providing educational opportunities and other support to farmers, homesteaders, gardeners, and landscapers.

Building Consumers' Education and Self-Reliance

The NOFA/Mass **Organic Food Guide** moved online in 2010. Our new site, www.theorganicfoodguide.com, got 6,844 unique visitors this past year, helping consumers locate certified organic and sustainably grown food and products in their communities.

Outreach staff represented NOFA/Mass at 18 events this past year while volunteers covered another 22. We had personal interactions with many hundreds of interested people and distributed literature to hundreds more. Thanks to the 18 members and 10 board & staff members who took the opportunity to serve as **Outreach Volunteers** Extraordinaire.

NOFA/Mass **policy initiatives that particularly impacted consumers** in 2010 included a survey of candidates for legislature and governor on their opinions on raw milk sales, genetic engineering regulation, and poultry slaughter; support of the phasing out of the use of BPA (a potentially toxic chemical) in jars and cans; encouragement of the creation of a state Food Policy Council; showing opposition to a requirement that recipients of US AID must allow work on genetic engineering in their country; and speaking against the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed.

We offered opportunities to learn **practical skills for home-scale food production**, including a statewide spring and fall **cheese making** workshop series (11 workshops filled to capacity); nine hands-on **organic gardening** workshops that taught 115 people basic gardening skills; a **backyard poultry** workshop day (for both home and commercial scale production) that drew 119 people to five workshops; a workshop on sustainably **harvesting wild edibles**, drawing 40 participants; and eight hands-on **food preservation** workshops.

The 2010 **NOFA Summer Conference**, with 1,300 attendees, focused interest in raw milk and traditional foods with keynoter and raw milk symposium leader Sally Fallon Morell. Catherine Murphy stood in at the last minute for Fernando Funes, bringing us in touch with the organic agricultural scene in Cuba.

The 2010 NOFA/Mass **Winter Conference** boasted 875 attendees, 60 exhibitors and 50 workshops. Some workshops that catered to boosting consumer education and self reliance include learning how to make cultured dairy products, cooking & baking with maple syrup, gardening in small spaces, and keeping chickens in the city.

Through a \$10,000 grant from the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) the **Organic Land Care** program reached out to the municipalities of Ayer and Stoneham to teach organic lawn care techniques, working in partnership with a number of like-minded organizations. The Organic Land Care program distributes consumer brochures and the **Guide to Organic Land Care** statewide and on the internet: www.organiclandcare.net.

An effort by regulators to crack down on raw milk buying groups early in 2010 prompted the **NOFA/Massachusetts Raw Milk Network to launch a campaign** that drew hundreds of people and ultimately defeated the proposal. Our media outreach around this issue also proved fruitful, with extensive radio and newspaper coverage highlighting the need to protect access to raw milk and support small local dairies.

In August we organized the **Northeast Raw Milk Symposium**, bringing together consumers, farmers and advocates from around the region to hear from nationally-known advocates Sally Fallon Morell (Weston A Price Foundation) and Pete Kennedy (Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund) and discuss the urgent need to educate the public about raw milk and the issues that surround it.

In 2010, **Gardening the Community**:

- Grew 250 pounds of food, shared with our youth crew and their families and sold at the Mason Square and Shriners Hospital farmer's markets; all food was delivered by bicycle
- Hosted plots and provided gardening technical assistance to 20 families participating in Baystate Health System's MIGHTY (Moving, Improving and Gaining Health Together at the YMCA) program, a child obesity management program
- Supported eight garden plots for Mason Square area neighbors on our land
- Hosted 200 volunteers, two schools and five community service groups for work and educational sessions on our land
- Played a leadership role in both developing a community garden ordinance proposal for the city of Springfield and establishing the Springfield Food Policy Council

Note: As of November 1, 2010, Gardening the Community successfully transitioned to become an organization independent from NOFA/Mass.

An **increased focus on publicity**, combined with substantially more media coverage, filled most of our events to capacity in 2010. We developed and expanded our databases of potential and new constituents throughout the region, according to target interests and in conjunction with our educational offerings. We switched to an **online newsletter** format with a monthly theme; we published 12 issues in 2010. The newsletter goes out to over 5,000 constituents each month in both the online magazine format and in PDF form, along with some hard copies to non-internet users.

A high priority for 2010, as well as 2011, is the **redesign of the NOFA/Mass website**. We will work with a Washington, DC-based company, and we are gathering the rest of the funds necessary to start this project.

Farmer, Gardener, Homesteader, and Landscaper Education

In 2010, NOFA/Mass offered farmers, gardeners, and homesteaders educational events to help them **improve quality, yield, and farm profitability**, including:

- Winter and Fall Advanced Grower Seminars, with Paul Dettloff and Jerry Brunetti, which drew 156 farmers from around the Northeast to learn about soil building methods that improve animal and human health
- A six-part course on Nutrient Dense Crop Production, in partnership with the Real Food Campaign
- Workshops on growing and selling greens and root crops in winter, organic dairy management, and efficient CSA management
- A four-part on-farm training series for beginning immigrant farmers, in partnership with Nuestras Raíces

The **NOFA Summer Conference**, in its 36th year, remains one of the major entry points for new and aspiring farmers, and serves as a “think tank” and re-inspiration for veterans of the movement.

The **2010 Winter Conference** was our largest conference in 23 years. 150 participants attended Joel Salatin’s all-day intensive seminar on "Introducing Livestock to your Farm." The conference provided opportunities for 53 organic educators to share their insights & expertise as workshop presenters.

In January 2010 the NOFA/Mass 5-day **Accreditation Course in Organic Land Care** educated a total of 76 students, mostly professional landscapers. The course was taught by 18 scientists, landscape professionals and experts and held at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Newburyport, MA. 72 of the 76 students chose to become NOFA accredited upon passing the annual examination, joining a total of over 350 presently accredited in Massachusetts.

The 2010 **spring bulk order** was the largest in our history, with almost 300 people participating. The second annual **fall bulk order** continued to grow as well, reaching 85 individuals. In the fall, we worked with additional suppliers to satisfy a growing demand for BPA-free lids.

NOFA/Mass **policy efforts in support of farmers** – and not mentioned elsewhere in this report – included opposing aerial spraying of Sumithrin for mosquito control; drafting legislation to set up a state meat and poultry inspection service to enable sales without USDA inspection; supporting establishment of a Livestock Care and Standard Board; putting forward nominations for the USDA's Animal Health Advisory Committee working to replace NAIS with a "voluntary" program; and opposing the deregulation of GMO alfalfa.

The Raw Milk Network works with farmers as they navigate the complex web of regulations that govern raw milk sales, and communicates regularly with elected and agency officials, advocating on behalf of raw milk dairies. We also serve as the best resource in Massachusetts to connect consumers seeking raw milk with farmers that produce it.

Gardening the Community:

- Assisted in the development of six community gardens run by local faith-based and community groups in Springfield through the Food Bank of Western MA’s Springfield Food Access Project
- Educated our 30-member Springfield urban farming youth crew about urban agriculture and the racial and social inequities shaping our food system; taught organic farming, water conservation and composting skills as well as sustainable living strategies
- Attended the National Conference for Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners in Brooklyn, NY

In 2010, NOFA/Mass listed on its website **apprenticeship opportunities** in Massachusetts and across the country.

The NOFA/Mass **Organic Food Guide** in 2010 more than doubled the number of certified organic and sustainable farms listed in this statewide directory. Currently 125 farms populate www.theorganicfoodguide.com. Operations range from small homesteads selling small quantities of dairy products to CSAs with hundreds of members and farms raising specialty crops for wholesale.

We thank our **corporate sponsors** for their generous support:

- Whole Foods Market • Stonyfield Farm
- Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange
- Farm Family Insurance • Jeff Clements (Clements Law Office) • Greenleaf Foundation
- Boston Organics • Franklin Community Co-operative
- Groton Wellness Dental Spa and Medical Center • Suzanne’s Specialties

