

NOFA/Massachusetts Annual Meeting



**January 16, 2010
Worcester Technical High School
Worcester, MA**

**411 Sheldon Road · Barre, MA 01005 · (978) 355-2853
www.nofamass.org**

NOFA/MASS 2010 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA and REPORT

Worcester Technical High School, Worcester, Massachusetts

January 16, 2010 2:45 – 3:45 pm

- 1) Welcome and Year in Review – Lynda Simkins
- 2) Public Health Chorale Performance
- 3) Change to By-Laws* – Leslie Cox
- 4) New Summer Conference Coordinator for 2011 – Julie Rawson
- 5) Member Ideas – Danielle Andrews
- 6) Election of Board of Directors – Sharon Gensler
- 7) Awards – Jack Kittredge and Julie Rawson
- 8) Basket Raffle Drawing – Elizabeth Coe

*The NOFA/Mass Board of Directors proposes a change for the low income membership from \$20 to \$25, effective immediately.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Executive Director: Julie Rawson

The year started with a bang at the NOFA/Mass Winter Conference, followed by a successful advanced farmer event in February. The board-staff retreat, besides adding a new layer of internal management for the staff, spawned plans for expansion: replication of Gardening the Community (GtC), and a focus on colleges. Then the recession caught us. During the next six months we cut \$50,000 from the budget. Proactive organizational work, and overwhelming support from the membership, leaves us at year's end with our important programming in place and a clearer definition of who we are going forward. GtC is transitioning away from NOFA, an opportunity for growth for this five-star program.

Communications: Kathy Litchfield, Director

We've had a busy year! One of our first initiatives was to get NOFA/Mass staff "nofamass.org" email addresses and using our logo/letterhead more widely and consistently. We combined three positions – newsletter editor (formerly held by Jonathan von Ranson and then briefly, by Winton Pitcoff), Summer Conference publicity/outreach (formerly Megan Pacelli) and NOFA/Mass Press (formerly Jassy Bratko) – into a new position of Public Relations Coordinator, now filled by Carol Lake. New OFG coordinator, Michal Lumsden, is working hard to design and implement a brand new online, searchable OFG. We're using new online resources and reaching new audiences. Check us out online!

Press/Publicity: Jassy Bratko, Coordinator

I publicized multiple NOFA events including the 2009 Winter Conference, Sally Fallon Fundraiser, Arden Andersen seminar, practical skill workshops, Summer Conference, Organic Land Care courses, Grazing Workshops, Raw Milk Dairy Day and the Hope and Olive Fundraiser. I publicized NOFA/Mass opinion on Swine Flu and Winton Pitcoff's Raw Milk Survey. NOFA/Mass was included in multiple statewide media outlets. The e-newsletter, *NOFA/Mass News Bytes*, was published every month. I left this position as of December 1 and handed my portion of the work over to Carol Lake, who has taken on the responsibilities of several other positions to become the new Public Relations Coordinator.

Public Relations: Carol Lake, Coordinator

I was hired in late November and hit the ground running to manage the NOFA/Mass e-newsletter, create and publish the regular newsletter (going online as per a Board decision in late September), and to coordinate

Summer Conference publicity and outreach. I gave a PR presentation during the NOFA/Mass retreat in December, introducing board and staff members to online technology including Facebook and Twitter, and I am working to bring NOFA/Mass into the spotlight in more ways than ever before. Watch www.nofamass.org for our first online newsletter, in January 2010.

NOFA/Mass Outreach: Sharon Gensler, Coordinator

The year started with three outreach staffers but dropped to one. In spite of this, we were able to attend over 20 events. We recruited and “trained” nine volunteers who have helped out tremendously. (Thank you all.) It is rewarding to talk with so many of our members and the general public at these venues. There are so many aspects to NOFA that it is possible to connect with any/everyone about the organization and our programs. Our Speaker's Bureau is on hold due to the budget crunch. We also have collaborated with other organizations while working toward mutual goals.

Website: David Pontius, Webmaster

The last year brought updates and changes. Much time was spent trying to add new features (translation tools for example) to the website. After Deb retired, I then focused on utilizing the Thriva system effectively. We've also started using new technologies (Facebook, Twitter, Constant Contact) to communicate and reach new audiences.

Organic Food Guide (OFG): Michal Lumsden, Coordinator

By Spring 2009, the downturn in the economy hit OFG advertising sales hard, causing a shortfall in ad revenue of 40 percent below projections. As a result, the press run was cut from 20,000 to 10,000 and we did not mail it out to NOFA members unless they specifically requested it. In September, the board decided to make the OFG an online publication with the goal to make the site a consumer-based, user-friendly tool featuring four times the listings of farms and organic products within the state of Massachusetts. The online, searchable OFG should be available by March 2010.

Development and Marketing: Bob Minnocci, Director

Corporate Sponsorship Program has grown from \$20,000 to \$24,500 in 2009. An additional \$6,500 was sold in late 2009. Whole Foods Market, a Premier (\$10,000) Corporate Sponsor, gave us an additional \$5,000 grant to conduct a late blight tomato research project. Sponsor revenue doubled during the 2009 Winter Conference and tripled during the 2009 Summer Conference. Revenue from the two appeals and major donors was level with 2008, proving that NOFA/Mass has an enormously loyal donor base. Our membership level is close to 1,200. Previously we have been unable to hold above 1,000.

Extension Events: Jassy Bratko, Director

This department represents the practical side of the organization. The staff reacts to new situations, researches problems, initiates solutions and educates the public about issues relating to organics and decides when an issue has been taken to its end.

Organic Land Care – Kathy Litchfield, Coordinator

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2009! Highlights include a successful 8th annual 5-day accreditation course (Leominster) with 55 students in January; to date in Massachusetts we've educated over 700 professionals (and others). In February I hosted/moderated a “Q&A with AOLCPs” panel that drew about 50 people at the New England Grows trade show (Boston); collaborated with the Ecological Landscaping Association (February roundtable and March conference); organized the 5th annual Organic Lawn & Turf Course at UMass Amherst

(47 students) in August; and networked with new organizations including MOFGA and NHLA; 200 AOLCPs attended the program's Update Course in Sturbridge (December).

Summer Conference: Julie Rawson, Coordinator

Highlights in 2009 included much tighter and more enjoyable arrangements at UMass; an amazing number of sponsors (20-plus); two top-notch keynoters (Will Allen and Paul Stamets - Paul spent the entire weekend with us); a very productive late blight conversation with a packed house; and phenomenal weather after a summer of rain and cold. Workshops were of superior quality, entertainment throughout the weekend was great, the fair parade was the best ever, and conference organizers felt gratified by the fact that, as Will Allen pointed out, the next generation was there in force.

Winter Conference: Jassy Bratko, Coordinator

2009 started with 700 people attending the largest Winter Conference ever. It was the first at Worcester Technical High School and featured a very well attended seminar and keynote by Eliot Coleman. Preparations for the 2010 conference began almost immediately with the announcement of Joel Salatin as the keynote and seminar presenter. Returning assistant conference coordinators are Dennis Cronin (registration) Jen Brunsell (children's program) and Jessica Maillet (food). New to the conference this year are Tom Bratko (exhibits) and Mindy Harris (work exchange). The goal, as always, is that you all leave here today wiser, inspired, uplifted and optimistic!

Bulk Order: Cathleen O'Keefe, Coordinator

Spring Order [Rich Matteson, Coordinator]: In March and April 2009 approximately 265 NOFA members picked up their bulk order items at nine sites in Massachusetts, as well as one each in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Sales totaled over \$157,000.

Fall Order: I coordinated and executed the first fall bulk order with more than 70 participants, \$21,000 in sales, \$500 in new or renewing NOFA memberships, four drop sites in MA, and one in CT. The order was focused around fall application soil amendments, including a New England nutrient density blend. With the help of other staff members I implemented the largest-ever publicity campaign effort around a bulk order.

Raw Milk and Organic Dairy: Winton Pitcoff, Coordinator

The raw milk network completed a survey of the raw milk dairies in MA and released a report about the state of the industry. We organized events including: workshops at the winter and summer NOFA conferences; Raw Milk Dairy Day at nine farms; a roundtable discussion among raw milk farmers and advocates from other states; and two fundraisers. We worked with farmers on technical assistance, and consumers on finding raw milk. We responded to numerous media inquiries and maintained the raw milk section of the website as a resource for anyone interested learning more about raw milk in Massachusetts.

Extension Events: Ben Grosscup, Organizer

Our first annual Advanced Grower's Winter Seminar with Dr. Arden Andersen educated 90 growers on building mineralized and biologically active soils and producing nutrient-dense crops. In May, July, and September, the fully attended Nutrient Density Field Trainings, featuring Mark Fulford and Dan Kittredge, put theory into practice, teaching growers how to apply soil management for maximum nutrition. In April, 200 people participated in workshops across Massachusetts, learning basic organic gardening skills. In September, 75 people attended food preservation workshops at nine sites. We initiated research on organic management of late blight, and entered into a farmer training partnership with Nuestras Raices.

Community Farm Initiative: Ben Grosscup, Coordinator

I organized community farm workshop tracks at the NOFA/Mass 2009 Winter Conference and the NOFA Summer Conference, identified a network of people throughout Massachusetts organizing community farms locally, wrote articles and gave presentations on the value of community farms, and provided advice and

networking to groups seeking models to establish such institutions. The initiative, which began in Fall 2008, was funded as a half-time position until Spring 2009, when funding was cut. My time was re-directed toward extension events, but I continue to maintain communication throughout the network. The program's future will be defined by organizing and funding opportunities.

Social Action: Jack Kittredge, Coordinator

Because of budget constraints, the monthly genetic engineering news update I edit was discontinued. I continue to stay up to date on public policy issues, advise the organization on various bills, regulations, and other pending government programs, and work with the board's policy committee to take positions for NOFA/Mass on various drafts and proposals. I will occasionally speak on behalf of NOFA/Mass to the press or at gatherings where our position on public policy issues is relevant. Some of the most recurrent of those issues are food safety regulations, genetic engineering, and the National Animal Identification System.

NOFA Video Project: Jack Kittredge, Coordinator

This year we initiated a program whereby anyone ordering a video from us can specify whether or not they prefer a VHS format or a DVD format. Since then we have received requests for only DVDs! We also raised the price for purchase from \$15 to \$20 and for rental from \$5 to \$10 (first price increase in 31 years) to account for our increased costs. It is still my intention to keep the costs low and promote the videos as an excellent way to learn a specific body of knowledge. Since adding the DVD option, sales have increased modestly.

Gardening the Community: Kristin Brennan, Coordinator

We grow organic vegetables with Springfield youth on four lots. We hired Ibtihaj Amatul-Wadud, a former program participant, as a coordinator. We sell produce at two farmers' markets and two local restaurants and deliver it by bicycle. We received a grant to assist organizations start gardens in Springfield. We collaborated with local organizations and businesses to form a Food Policy Council which was accepted by the Mayor. With local support, GTC is preparing to meet the needs of a growing interest in food production in Springfield. With the help of The Food Bank of Western MA and others, GTC plans to apply for 501c3 status in 2010.

CANDIDATES FOR THE NOFA/MASS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Danielle Andrews: I have worked in the fields of sustainable agriculture and environmental education for the past 12 years. I have worked on small family farms and for non-profits involved in urban agriculture and food security issues in both Canada and the US. I've been a Boston resident since 2002, and worked for 6 years at The Food Project in Boston as the Dorchester Urban Gardener, managing 2 acres of mixed vegetables. After taking a year off to be home with my daughter, I have returned to The Food Project, working in our urban education and outreach programs.

Jean-Claude Bourrut: I was born and raised in France where I studied agriculture with a specialization in organic agriculture. I worked in agricultural research in France, and 2 years in Africa on a development project. Since I came to the US in 1990, I worked on various organic farms, oftentimes with an educational or social services component. I currently work at the Natick Community Organic Farm, managing production aspects as well as educational components. I am passionate about growing fresh organic food, raising honeybees and a healthy daughter – not in that order ! I have been involved at various levels with NOFA (winter and summer conference, bulk order...) and with the board since last January. I feel the need to give back to the organization, bringing in my skills and experience.

Jennifer Caron: I was lucky to grow up in a family that encouraged my young farmer ambitions. We always had a couple of cows, chickens and a large vegetable garden. I participated in 4-H for many years. As a young adult I worked at many different types of farms including an educational farm that taught traditional survival skills, a large commercial dairy and a small woodland homestead. I moved to Wendell in 1991 where I have been raising my two daughters, a herd of dairy goats, a large garden and too many dogs. I taught agricultural arts to middle schoolers at the Farm School for three years.

This is my third year as the Teen Conference Coordinator for the NOFA Summer Conference. I am deeply inspired by the folks I meet through NOFA. I believe strongly in the importance of passing on the knowledge of how to grow healthy food to all people.

Amanda Cather has been involved with the organic farming and gardening movement since 1996. She has worked in community garden and farm-based education, urban agriculture and food access, and on suburban CSAs in the Boston area and in Colorado. For the past six years she has been the farm manager at Waltham Fields Community Farm in Waltham, where she is grateful for the opportunity to combine all of her interests in a very supportive farm community. She is currently working on several special projects for the farm after the birth of her second child, and looks forward to raising another "urban farm child" at Waltham in the future. She is excited to give back to NOFA after many years of taking advantage of the programs that it offers, and is particularly invested in extension and farmer-to-farmer outreach and education work.

Elizabeth Coe: I live in the Berkshires. I have been convinced of the importance of organic food, environmental awareness and self awareness for over twenty years now (yikes, I am getting old!). This has taken many forms such as having an organic garden or working in one for the many years that this has been possible, working with teenagers, helping to develop a non-profit community health center, acquiring a social work degree and helping to start a Foundation that gives modest grants to organizations involved with organic agriculture, environmental awareness and community development. I am deeply inspired by the work of NOFA/Mass and hope to be able to contribute actively to its mission.

Leslie Cox: I have been the Farm Manager at The Hampshire College Farm, in Amherst, for twelve years, and live there with my wife Elaine and four children. I have been involved with NOFA as a charter member from the first year of its existence in New York State in the early 1980's. I grew up on a large, commercial cash crop dairy farm in western New York state, and have been managing farms and working in professional agriculture

all my life. I realized that I needed to do work in “alternative agriculture” when I was at Cornell University in the mid 1970’s and had an argument with my Animal Science professor over that fact, that he felt that there was no need to put dairy cows on pasture. That put me on a path to explore what new sane alternatives there were to the direction of agriculture that I now showcase at Hampshire College. I am pleased to be on the NOFA board and hope to hear from farmers new and old, what their needs might be, so that their needs will be better served.

Cliff Hatch: I am a farmer in Gill where I farm with my wife and three children. Our farm has been organic certified since 1994 but now there are parts of our farm that are uncertified as we emphasize our local flavor and market direct to our own retail customers rather than through third parties.

I have worked in many agricultural organizations as a founding member and first Chairman of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Nominations Committee of the National Honey Board, President of Massachusetts Federation of Beekeepers, and Director and President of the Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange. My community involvement includes the Gill Selectboard, Board of Mount Grace Land Trust, Franklin County Technical School Committee, and the Board of Greenfield YMCA.

It has been my life’s ambition in my first career as a chef and my current work as a farmer/cheesemaker to help people eat good wholesome fresh local food and live a healthy, joyful life.

Lynda Simkins: I attended the University of New Hampshire from 1974 - 1978 originally majoring in Math, and eventually switching to Plant Science. In 1981, I married local artist Nathaniel Simkins, and we have raised two sons. Erik is 26 in the Army and stationed in Iraq. Leo is 25, an arborist with his own business *Simkins Tree Service*. We have a wonderful granddaughter with whom we love spending time. We reside in Holliston, MA.

I currently serve as the Director of the Natick Community Organic Farm (NCOF), having arrived there in 1980 as the Farm’s Project Director. I have loved every minute of my 30 years at NCOF! NCOF educates about food and nature through the Farm’s livestock, gardens, greenhouses and a sugaring operation. I continue to work with many local and regional resources in order to see the Farm into another successful 30 years and beyond. Prior to my employment at NCOF, I was a 4-H instructor.

I served as the President of NOFA/Mass from 1989 – 2001 and back in 2008. I have high hopes of building a strong organization for the future, and I look forward to all my work and challenges.

Meg Taylor: I have worked in the field of agricultural and environmental education for the past 15 years. I first joined NOFA in 1996 while apprenticing on organic farms in Vermont. Following this, I directed an urban food security project, which included developing community, youth, and market gardens in Baltimore before moving back to New England to pursue an M.S. in Environmental Science. After graduate school, I taught middle school life science and ran a successful school gardening/composting program while serving on the Sudbury Agricultural Commission. Since relocating to western Mass two years ago, I co-founded The Farm Education Collaborative, which develops food and farm-based education programs for all ages and the Pioneer Valley Backyard Chicken Association, an active group of chicken hobbyists and homesteaders. I live with my husband, son, and several animal friends on a small farm on a small hill in a small town. I am interested in the universal human need to connect with plants, animals, and the soil that provides for us. NOFA has inspired me throughout the years and I look forward to continuing my work with NOFA/Mass.

NOFA/Mass FY2009 Financial Summary
October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009

10/1/08 – Account Balances:	\$76,979.03
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	Income	Expenses	Net
NOFA Mass Overhead and Central Functions *	\$146,885.00	\$217,440.47	(\$70,555.47)
Bulk Order	\$157,228.01	\$143,026.06	\$14,201.95
Dairy / Raw Milk / Livestock Resources	\$8,722.00	\$15,672.22	(\$6,950.22)
Extension Education	\$34,507.00	\$36,781.55	(\$2,274.55)
Food Guide	\$5,550.00	\$8,960.20	(\$3,410.20)
Gardening the Community (GtC)	\$39,533.74	\$43,481.93	(\$3,948.19)
Land Care	\$45,996.97	\$46,655.17	(\$658.20)
Outreach	\$650.00	\$10,377.35	(\$9,727.35)
Practical Skills Workshops	\$8,076.00	\$11,687.69	(\$3,611.69)
Social Action	\$0.00	\$20,641.25	(\$20,641.25)
Summer Conference	\$194,259.03	\$165,512.65	\$28,746.38
Video Project	\$940.00	\$1,043.79	(\$103.79)
Winter Conference	\$48,092.41	\$27,575.80	\$20,516.61
TOTALS:	\$690,440.16	\$748,856.13	(\$58,415.97)

9/30/09 Account Balances:	\$18,563.06
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* NOFA/Mass FY2009 Overhead and Central Functions Detail:

Income

Dues	\$50,030.00
Fundraising Event Revenue	\$12,840.58
Gifts	\$50,026.59
Manual Sales	\$1,377.80
Member Appeal	\$16,499.75
Newsletter Ad Revenue	\$3,025.00
Sponsorships	\$12,565.00
Interest	\$520.28
Total	\$146,885.00

Expenses

Central Admin Staff Salaries & Wages	\$69,688.23
Payroll Taxes (All Staff)	\$21,464.89
Board/Staff Training & Development	\$1,825.00
Equipment Costs	\$3,619.29
Fees Paid (Credit Card/Dues/Fiscal/Rent)	\$14,854.76
Insurance (Liability & Workers Comp)	\$6,490.00
Manual Costs	\$814.00
Mileage/Phone/Postage/Printing/Supplies	\$15,242.28
Natural Farmer subscriptions	\$8,142.50
Fundraising Event Expenses	\$7,840.38
Development Expenses	\$40,505.13
Newsletter Expenses	\$8,909.79
Press Expenses	\$10,052.00
Website Expenses	\$7,992.22
Total	\$217,440.47

NOFA/Mass changed the dates of its fiscal year to be the same as the calendar year. This change created a short fiscal year, October 1 - December 31, 2009. The numbers from that “year” are reported below.

**NOFA/Mass FY2009-A Financial Summary
October 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009**

10/1/09 Account Balances:	\$18,563.06
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	Income	Expenses	Net
NOFA Mass Overhead and Central Functions	\$37,367.67	\$44,723.40	(\$7,355.73)
Fall Bulk Order	\$21,822.51	\$20,933.60	\$888.91
Extension Education	\$7,523.00	\$9,531.09	(\$2,008.09)
Food Guide	\$150.00	\$2,050.42	(\$1,900.42)
Gardening the Community (GtC)	\$2,391.50	\$2,482.88	(\$91.38)
Land Care	\$9,315.00	\$6,771.88	\$2,543.12
Outreach	\$0.00	\$1,934.33	(\$1,934.33)
Social Action	\$0.00	\$1,963.54	(\$1,963.54)
Summer Conference	\$1,301.00	\$5,478.16	(\$4,177.16)
Video Project	\$370.00	\$245.46	\$124.54
Winter Conference	\$14,615.00	\$3,963.67	\$10,651.33
TOTALS:	\$94,855.68	\$100,078.43	(\$5,222.75)

12/31/09 Account Balances:	\$13,340.31
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* NOFA/Mass FY2009-A Overhead and Central Functions Detail:

Income

Dues	\$9,505.00
Gifts	\$17,900.00
Manual Sales	\$142.08
Member Appeal	\$7,901.00
Newsletter Ad Revenue	\$1,800.00
Sponsorships	\$110.00
Interest	\$9.59
Total	\$37,367.67

Expenses

Central Admin Staff Salaries & Wages	\$17,916.52
Payroll Taxes (Central Admin Staff Only)	\$1,334.68
Board/Staff Training & Development	\$800.00
Equipment Costs	\$278.01
Fees Paid (Credit Card/Dues/Fiscal/Rent)	\$835.78
Manual Costs	\$0.00
Mileage/Phone/Postage/Printing/Supplies	\$3,851.33
Natural Farmer subscriptions	\$2,119.25
Development Expenses	\$11,246.40
Newsletter Expenses	\$1,098.54
Press Expenses	\$2,637.98
Website Expenses	\$2,604.91
Total	\$44,723.40