



NOFA/Massachusetts · 411 Sheldon Rd · Barre, MA 01005  
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Growing Organically Since 1982

## NOFA/Mass Annual Meeting

January 16, 2016

Worcester State University · Worcester, MA

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### Annual Meeting Agenda

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Welcome .....	Leslie Cox
Announcements .....	Cathleen O'Keefe
Organizational PowerPoint and Introduction of Staff .....	Beth Ingham
Election of Board of Directors .....	Leslie Cox
Policy Report .....	Dan Bensonoff
Drawing for a Free Membership .....	Julie Rawson
NOFA/Mass Person of the Year .....	Julie Rawson
Introduction of Ben Burkett .....	Vidya Tikku

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### 2016 NOFA/Mass Board Members-Elect

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**Paul Bertler:** Originally from the great state of Wisconsin, I have been working to support the sustainable agriculture movement around the country and internationally for 15 years. I currently work with a great group of folks at Heifer International as the Education Manager at Heifer Farm in Rutland. I also stay busy establishing my roots on a piece of land in Paxton. I appreciate NOFA/MA for the sense of community and dedication to the mission and am thrilled to be able to lend my support as a board member.

**Jane Bindley:** Our WWII Victory Garden was my first experience with soil. I majored in Botany in college, leading to vegetable and flower gardening and growing children. I returned to school for Physical Therapy, 25 years ago and am still working. I attended Dan Kittredge's soil classes, which were way over my head. For the past 10 years, I have been working to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>, and as a long time NOFA member I'm excited to participate in the carbon sequestration project.

**Derek Christianson:** I am the farmer/owner at Brix Bounty Farm in Dartmouth. My wife Katie and I raise two young daughters, Mariah and Eula. We operate Brix Bounty Farm to serve as a catalyst, producing nourishing food, creating learning opportunities focusing on sustainable agriculture, and engaging Southeastern Massachusetts in discussion and development of a vibrant local food economy. Ultimately we aim to help establish a deeper community-wide understanding of the relationship between soils, diet, and health.

**Leslie Cox:** I have been involved in farming and managing farms my whole life. I grew up on a large cash crop dairy farm in western New York state, where I first got involved in NOFA. I have been the Farm Manager at Hampshire College for the last 17 years and now work for The Trustees of Reservations as the Farm Director, pleased to work with the present farm staff and looking forward to starting more farms in Massachusetts.

**Laura Davis:** I am a beginning farmer at Long Life Farm in Hopkinton, MA, we started our business in February of 2011. My husband and I enjoy educating or 85 CSA customers about organic lifestyles. Our most important crop, our two daughters age 11 and 13 love the NOFA/Mass Conferences and the friends they have made over the last years. I have been a board member since November 2011 and am a member of both the finance and strategy committees. For the last year I have also been the Organic Certification Assistance Program Coordinator for NOFA/Mass.

**Allison Houghton:** I came to agriculture from a background in geology and environmental engineering because of a stubborn hope that agricultural done well could provide a win-win solution to the many environmental and social crises facing our world. I've worked to understand and implement organic methods in the urban environment as well as larger scale vegetable production. I have also had the opportunity to teach what I've learned about urban agriculture, soil health, permaculture, and food justice in a variety of settings including at NOFA conferences.

**Beth Ingham:** Since the 70's, I have been interested in the connections between food, the environment, and health, and peace and justice issues. This led me to work for 5 years in a Boston soup kitchen, obtain further degrees in Nutrition, Whole Health Education and Spatial Dynamics, and, since 1993, manage our nonprofit Noonday Farm in Winchendon. Over the course of 25 years, NOFA has been my go to for information and inspiration, and I am now thrilled to be a member of the Board.

**Noah Kellerman:** I grew up and live in Essex, on Alprilla Farm. Since graduating from Hampshire College in 2011, I have run an organic (non-certified) vegetable farm, and I have added grains and beef to the farm's crop rotation. I look forward to contributing to the work of the education committee through my academic and applied background in soil science and agronomy.

**Harmonie O'Loughlin:** With 9 years of sales employment in the natural products industry, including the last 6 years at a farmer owned organic dairy cooperative, I continually educate retailers on agriculture as a very real part of the food system. My industry experience brings a diversified viewpoint to the board. I am fully committed to the organic movement beyond career choices and continue to establish my homestead in rural Massachusetts while not on the road slinging milk.

**Sam Perkins:** In 1974 I built some raised beds with salvaged lumber – the first of many gardens over the next 40 years, all organic - at first by instinct and then by passion. My interest in NOFA's activities ranges from the molecular to the macro: from the science of nutrient-dense soil building to carbon sequestration as a path to reverse climate change. I am excited to contribute to the multi-dimensional work of this great organization.

**Vidya Tikku:** I grew up in New Delhi, spending many weekends on my father's agricultural research fields, never realizing this experience was not a common urban experience until I started on my urban design studies and working with communities to plan their neighborhood spaces in Delhi, San Francisco and Boston. I am committed to connect urban residents with local food, open space and look forward to working with the NOFA team to learn more and strengthen connections with our urban communities that are rapidly increasing and diversifying.

### ■ Strategic Planning

The results of a 2 year process to continue to hone our strategic goals as an organization resulted in a longer internal document that addresses our specific programs and activities, and a more succinct set of over-arching goals for the organization going forward.

1. Continue to lead in education and advocacy around organic farming and land-care practices that build soil carbon.
2. Interface and strengthen connections with underserved farming and gardening populations to improve their access to farming information and resources, and include them more deeply in NOFA leadership.
3. Make NOFA/Mass an organization where employees thrive.
4. Prioritize beginning farmer education and support.
5. Improve one-on-one technical assistance to growers.

### ■ Administrative Department

At the end of 2015, **NOFA/Mass has 1,268 members**, including 332 newly joined members. The breakdown by membership category is: 585 Family/Farm; 354 Individual; 236 Low Income; 54 Business; 21 Premier Business; 7 Supporting; and 11 Lifetime members.

This past year we researched and decided to go with **a new membership database, Giftworks**, which will be implemented in 2016. We look forward to utilizing the new database for enhanced information coordination for our donors, members, event attendees and volunteers, as well as integration with Constant Contact email services.

2015 marked the second year of an **organization-wide Registration Coordinator position**, which provided continued support of the education department's conferences, seminars, and education events.

Our **2015 organizational budget was \$744,000**. At the end of 2015 **we have \$100,000 in the reserve fund** that we established in 2013.

### ■ Communications Department

Our outreach efforts continue to grow. **NOFA/Mass was represented at 56 events this year** and sent literature to another 12. We have also collaborated with neighboring NOFA chapters to jointly attend two events. **THANKS to the 22 member volunteers, Staff and Board members** who actively participated in helping at events. We had personal interactions with many hundreds of interested people and distributed literature to hundreds more across the state. Also, a big thanks to the **over 50 farms and businesses who continue to distribute our literature** at their farm stands, CSAs, and stores.

In 2015 **we redesigned the monthly NOFA/Mass Newsletter and website**, to make it easier for readers to find, read and archive stories covering the local, organic food movement in Massachusetts. With great team effort, we put together our **Soil Carbon Restoration resources webpage** in record time ([www.nofamass.org/carbon](http://www.nofamass.org/carbon)). We've also overhauled the Summer Conference and The Natural Farmer websites.

Ten farms and organic production facilities across Massachusetts graciously participated in **several video projects**, debunking the myths of organic certification and documenting the best practices and day-to-day realities of producers in our state. Look our for these videos on our YouTube page this winter and spring - [www.youtube.com/user/nofamass](http://www.youtube.com/user/nofamass).

Between our Soil Carbon Restoration campaign, the work of the GMO Labeling Coalition (of which we're a part), and our other events and initiatives, **we received a great deal of press coverage in 2015** - with over 40 stories on local tv, radio, podcasts, newspapers, etc.

Overall, thanks to the great efforts of the other NOFA/Mass departments, we've been able to dramatically increase our ability to document our successful events, mentorship program's impact, etc., with photos and stories.

### ■ **Development Department**

The **Development Department** works to support NOFA/Mass's programs and initiatives. The money raised by the development team is used directly to support NOFA/Mass's basic organizational structure and the important educational programs that do not generate income.

The **Appeals and Major Donors Program** works to build our individual donor base and in 2015, the total for all member gifts was \$80,467, which exceeded our goal of \$60,500. We are grateful to the unwavering support of our donors. Their support is a strong testament to the value of our work.

The **Grant Program** invites public and private foundations to be a supporting part of NOFA/Mass's work. In 2015, NOFA/Mass raised \$36,172 in grant funds for work in 2015. Thanks to the following foundations for their support: Southeast Regional Training Council, New England BioLabs Foundation, USDA for the Sound & Sensible Grant, Norcross Foundation, FarmAid, Project Bread and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources: Specialty Crops.

We had three **Fundraising Events** in 2015. We hosted a Seasonal Organic Dinner following the Winter Conference in January and a Farm to Table dinner at Many Hands Organic Farm in September. These two events grossed over \$2,600. Our largest fundraiser, which is our 5 K Run "Organic To Heal the Planet", had another successful year, grossing over \$19,000. Many thanks to Worcester State University for hosting our Winter Conference, as well as a huge, tremendous, heart-felt thanks to our online donors, innumerable offline donors, and 23 proud fundraisers for our Team NOFA/Mass Run.

The **Marketing Program** brought in about \$105,000 in 2015 through a variety of sources, including the Corporate Sponsorship Program and our overall Marketing Program. Our thanks to all of our Corporate Sponsors, Sprouting Sponsors and Summer and Winter conference sponsors who provide financial support while receiving a broad array of marketing benefits.

### **Special Thanks to Our 2015 Corporate Sponsors for Their Year-Round Support**

Stonyfield Farm · UMass/ USDA Risk Management Agency  
Agri-Dynamics · Franklin Community Co-op · Greenleaf Foundation ·  
Lancaster Ag· Neighboring Food Co-op Association · Vermont Compost Company  
Acres U.S.A. · ADAK Farm Systems · Ayushi · Boston Organics ·  
Carol's Pasture Raised Eggs · Chelsea Green Publishing  
Dean's Beans Organic Coffee · Eastleigh Farm · Fertrell ·  
Frontier Natural Products· Groton Wellness · Humane Farm Animal Care  
Humane Society of the United States · Johnny's Selected Seeds · Massachusetts Farm  
Bureau · Nutritional Therapy Association · Organic Ag Products  
Organic Valley · Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening · Real Pickles  
The Pfeiffer Center · Willsie Equipment Sales, Inc.

## ■ Education Department

We started 2015 off with a bang with our 29<sup>th</sup> annual **Winter Conference**. On January 10th our largest audience ever gathered at Worcester State to hear rotational grazer and carbon sequestration advocate, Greg Judy. Mr. Judy addressed a captive keynote audience, 100 all-day seminar attendees, and a dinner audience, discussing among other things his mob cattle walks, and winter grazing techniques. Julie Rawson announced Bob Minnocci NOFA/Mass person of the year and the nearly 1,000 attendees enjoyed over 70 workshops!

In 2015 NOFA/Mass **Policy** staff focused their primary efforts on a Massachusetts state bill requiring labeling of genetically engineered food sold in the Commonwealth. Our bill garnered the bipartisan support of 154 of 200 state legislators—probably a record for any such legislation, especially so early in the session. A highlight was the rally and press conference on the bill in September with our GE Labeling Coalition partners at MA Right to Know GMOs, MASSPIRG, and MoveOn.org, which was held before the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture in September.

Concerned by the fact that Vermont's labeling law goes into effect July 1, 2016 and legal efforts to defeat it in court seem stalled, and Massachusetts may not be that far from passing similar legislation, the industry has been trying to get Congress to "preempt" the states on this issue, overruling their power to pass such legislation, via the so-called DARK ("Denying Americans their Right to Know") Act. Thanks to the hard work of coalition staff and our members, however, all Massachusetts Representatives (save for one, who was absent) voted against that bill. Our Senators also heard loud and clear from NOFA/Mass and stood with us in refusing to allow language preventing states from labeling GE foods to sneak as a rider onto December's federal spending bill.

**Policy staff** also worked to support bills allowing licensed raw milk farmers to distribute raw milk, establishing a state-inspected slaughter program, creating a state Livestock Standards Board, and protecting pollinators by regulating the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, among others.

We have also opposed the introduction of an "organic checkoff" tax on organic producers similar to that used to support the 'Got Milk' or 'Pork: the Other White Meat' promotional campaigns. It seems to us the funds would be paid by farmers but primarily benefit processors and handlers.

At the federal level we have also been working with other NOFAs and organic farming groups to keep the bar high on organic standards. For example we are fighting changes the USDA is trying to make to the National Organic Program such as keeping questionable synthetic substances on the National List or allowing hydroponics and soilless growing to be certified as organic.

We offered **Seminars** including: a two-day Soil and Nutrition Conference featuring John Slack, Mark Fulford and Bryan O'Hara, in partnership with the Bionutrient Food Association; a day-long Advanced Grower Seminar with Troy Bishopp, "Managing Grazing Land for Increased Health, Productivity and Profit;" and a day-long Advanced Grower Seminar with Bryan O'Hara, "No-Till & Intensive Vegetable Production: Tools & Techniques."

**Education events** in 2015 included winter greens production, masonry heater building, a fruit growing workshop series, organic cut flowers, vegetable growing for health and profit series, herb preservation, raising pastured poultry, hog slaughtering and butchering, wild

edible walk, Korean Natural Farming, soil resiliency on the North Shore series, cheese making, lacto-fermentation, and season extension techniques. Thank you to the over 475 participants that joined us out in the field, on the farm, in the kitchen and on the homestead for this year's education events!

The **Organic Certification Assistance Program** began in September 2014 when the USDA awarded NOFA/Mass and Baystate Organic Certifiers a contract to help farmers get certified. NOFA/Mass' objective was to assist three operators with their organic system plan in order for them to submit for organic certification. The goal was exceeded and a total of eight operations were assisted and were granted organic certification. In 2016 we hope to assist eight more farms in their work for certification. Will you be one of them? If you are interested please contact [lauradavis@nofamass.org](mailto:lauradavis@nofamass.org).

The **Beginning Farmer Program** provided nearly 100 scholarships to beginning farmers to attend the NOFA/Mass Winter Conference, the NOFA Summer Conference and on-farm education events. Six new farmers were successfully paired with mentors and completed the Beginning Farmer Mentorship program. Our apprenticeship directory was given a boost through collaboration with other organizations and is poised to assist an increased number of farmers.

The **2015 NOFA Summer Conference** had 1,126 attendees and presented a keynote and pre-conference by human health expert, Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride. The Conference celebrated its 41<sup>st</sup> year with the release of a Soil Carbon Restoration white paper and video. This was accompanied by the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a Soil Carbon and Climate Workshop Track, along with over 160 workshops on the full range of topics related to organic farming: from business planning to production techniques to community organizing, farm worker struggles, human health, and food policy.

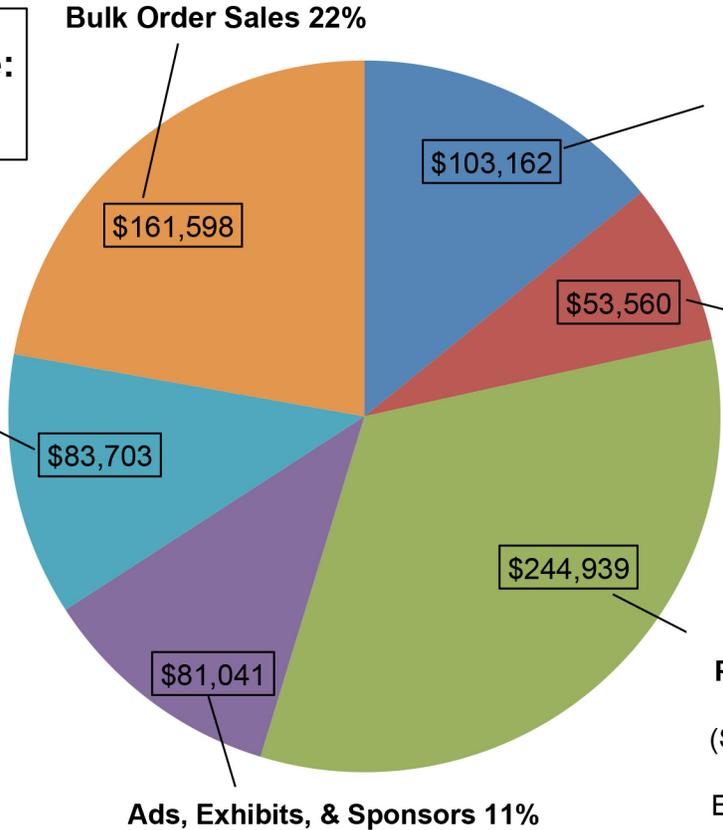
The **Raw Milk Network** began the year with the Raw Milk Farmer Meeting in Warwick, MA, where over 20 Raw Milk Farmers came together to discuss legislative priorities, consumer education and customer awareness campaign, and to strengthen the community. The Raw Milk Network continued its legislative advocacy work, in an effort to pass legislation that would allow farmers to deliver raw milk to customers. We continue to provide 'on-call' resources for consumers looking for raw milk or more information about the product, and maintain an up-to-date directory of farms licensed to sell raw milk.

Regarding **Food Access**, with the continued support of Project Bread NOFA/Mass continued an urban soil restoration project in Springfield, MA with Gardening the Community (GTC), an urban agriculture program that was started by NOFA/Mass in 2002. The project included workshops for staff and youth on soil nutrients and microbial life, soil tests and soil amendments, a mentorship relationship with a NOFA/Mass farmer that included weekly skill building sessions during the season, and scholarships for GTC's farmers and community members to attend NOFA/Mass workshops and conferences. In addition NOFA/Mass has entered into a multi-year collaboration with Groundworks Somerville and Trustees' Boston to conduct trials for improved fertility and production in compost-based soils.

The Tri-State **Bulk Order** had yet another successful year in 2015 with thousands of products distributed to growers across the three states. Sales grew in Rhode Island with a new site (Wishing Stone Farm) and NOFA/Mass board member Caro Roszell took over as Program Coordinator. Lots of groundwork was laid this autumn for a great 2016 Bulk Order, with the addition of a new supplier for soil amendments, new custom cover crop cocktail blends, and a totally redesigned products catalogue!

**2015 Income:  
\$728,003**

**Restricted Donations & Grants: Organizationaly Supported Education Programs 11%**  
(Beginning Farmer, Carbon, Certification, Food Access, On-Farm Research, Policy, Raw Milk, Farm Videos)



**Unrestricted Donations, Fundraisers, Grants 14%**

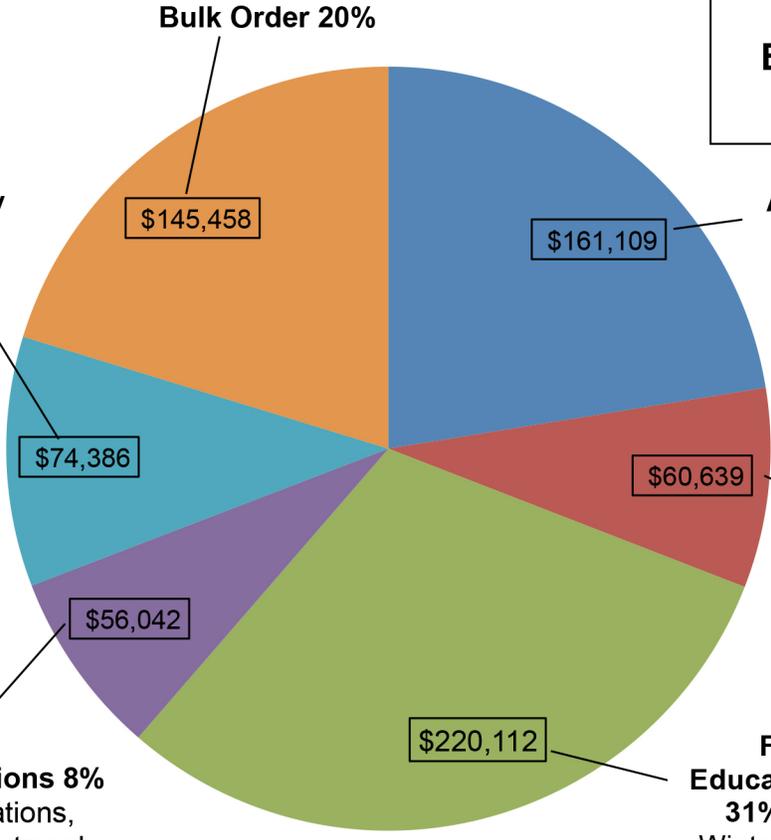
**Membership Dues 8%**

**Fee-Based Education Program Income 34%**  
(Summer & Winter Conferences, Education Events)

**Ads, Exhibits, & Sponsors 11%**

**2015 Expenses:  
\$717,746**

**Organizationaly Supported Education Programs 10%**  
(Beginning Farmer, Carbon, Certification, Food Access, On Farm Research, Policy, Raw Milk, Specialty Crops, Farm Videos)



**Administration 22%**

**Development & Marketing 9%**

**Fee Based Education Programs 31%**  
(Summer & Winter Conferences, Education Events)

**Communications 8%**  
(Public Relations, Newsletter, Outreach, Websites)