



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

## NOFA/Mass Annual Meeting

January 14, 2017

Worcester State University · Worcester, MA

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### Annual Meeting Agenda

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Welcome .....	Laura Davis
Announcements .....	Jason Valcourt
Organizational PowerPoint and Introduction of Staff .....	Paul Bertler
Election of Board of Directors .....	Laura Davis
Why I Donate Weekly to NOFA .....	Bob Banning
Policy Report .....	Dan Bensonoff
NOFA/Mass Person of the Year .....	Julie Rawson
Introduction of Paul Kaiser .....	Jen Salinetti

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### 2017 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/Mass 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/Mass member I'm excited to participate in the carbon sequestration project.

**Bill Braun:** My entree into farming was twofold: a fortified sense of autonomy, and service to the greater good. I was wholly inspired by the degree to which agriculture is hinged to the world; so much so that I walked away from grad school and never looked back. My darling and I run Ivory Silo Farm in Westport. We grow vegetables, flowers, herbs and perennial fruit with reverence for biodiversity, working to create closed-systems wherever possible. We also run the Ivory Silo Seed Project, a regional effort to foster resilient seed through preservation, rehabilitation and new breeding of open-pollinated crops.

#### Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts Chapter, Inc.

*Through education and advocacy NOFA/Mass promotes organic agriculture to expand the production and availability of nutritious food from living soil for the health of individuals, communities and the planet.*

**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 our 85 CSA customers about organic lifestyles. Our most important crop, our two daughters age 12 and 14, 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 the finance, policy and strategy committees. Since the fall of 2014 I have also enjoyed assisting NOFA/Mass farmers with their Organic Certification questions. In 2017 I will take on the role of President of the NOFA/Mass Board of Directors.

**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.

**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.

**Jen Salinetti:** For the past 16 years, I have been actively involved as a vegetable grower and educator in the Berkshires. My husband and I are proud to own and operate Woven Roots Farm, a CSA and community wholesale operation that focuses on bio-intensive growing using no-till and regenerative farming practices. I have been a member of NOFA since I was in college and I have always appreciated NOFA's leading role in education and policy. I would be proud to be a representative of no-till agriculture for NOFA/Mass and to be a part of its influence in the regenerative agriculture movement.

**Jim Schultz:** I studied small-scale, regenerative agriculture at Sterling Institute, New Alchemy Institute, and The Evergreen State College and apprenticed on several small farms around New England. I put farming on hold to raise two children with my wife Annie while teaching, coaching and administrating in the local public schools for 26 years. I now farm full-time on ten acres in the Berkshires raising vegetables, pastured pigs, heritage chickens for meat and eggs, and heritage turkeys.

**Vidya Tikku:** I grew up in New Delhi, India, 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 connecting urban residents with local food, open space and look forward to working with the NOFA/Mass team to learn more and strengthen connections with our urban communities that are rapidly increasing and diversifying.

### ■ Administrative Department

**At the end of 2016 NOFA/Mass had 1,123 members**, including 268 newly joined members. The breakdown by membership category is: 541 Family/Farm; 328 Individual; 175 Low Income; 42 Business; 19 Premier Business; 6 Supporting; and 12 Lifetime members.

In 2016 we continued to hone our **membership data documentation and renewal systems**, and to refine our central registration infrastructure.

Our **2016 organizational budget was \$787,519**. At the end of 2016 we have \$70,000 in the reserve fund that we established in 2013.

### ■ Communications Department

With wide-ranging programs and geographies, our work is as varied as the people and projects in the NOFA/Mass community. **Telling the NOFA/Mass story is the job of the Communications Department**, comprised of four team members: the webmaster, outreach coordinator, public relations coordinator and communication director.

2016 saw **improvements in our homepage and the new Summer Conference page**, which we launched in late 2015. We've also made the Winter Conference workshops more user-friendly and searchable online. Progress was made towards a reboot of our organic food and products guide, [TheOrganicFoodGuide.org](http://TheOrganicFoodGuide.org).

This year **we were well represented at 40 events**, spanning the state from Pittsfield to Fall River. With the help of 35 volunteers we were able to talk with thousands of people, exposing them to the programs, benefits and mission of NOFA/Mass. **Over 75 farms, co-ops and businesses received our literature** to distribute to their customers. 2017 is a year of transition as we bid adieu to Sharon Gensler, who is retiring from this role after many years. Thank you Sharon – we're glad to know we'll still be seeing a lot of you!

We have had many successful educational and advocacy projects this year. You've likely seen **emails and social media posts** sent by our team. Our publicity work also involves collaborating with our network of educators, members, partners and allies to spread the word. We've received much **media coverage** this year, lending the NOFA/Mass perspective on issues like organic certification, carbon sequestration, GMO labeling, organic growing and much more. In 2016 we welcomed **our new PR coordinator LaDawn Strickland** to the team.

### ■ Development Department

The **Development Department** generates financial support for the mission and work of NOFA/Mass.

The **Appeal, Major Donor, and Family Foundation Program** keeps the foundational support of NOFA/Mass broad and strong. In 2016, the total for member gifts was \$81,500.

The **Grant Program** invites public and private foundations to participate in and support NOFA/Mass's work. In 2016, \$33,905 was received in grants. Thank you to the following Foundations for their support: Patagonia, Simply Organic Foundation, New England Biolabs Foundation, FarmAid, Norcross Foundation, and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

The Development Department organized three **Fundraiser Events** in 2016: the Winter Conference fundraising dinner (\$2,365), the Earth Day restaurant campaign (\$1,596), and the NOFA/Mass "Organic to Heal the Planet" 10K/5K Run/Walk (\$22,460).

The **Marketing Program** at NOFA/Mass is designed to provide businesses and organizations with an effective means of promoting their products and services across our many channels, including our conferences, seminars, publications and website. Revenue derived from marketing helps to pay for the education, policy and advocacy work of NOFA/Mass. The marketing program generated \$77,500 in 2016.

### **With Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors**

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## ■ **Education Department**

The **Organic Certification Assistance Program** is available for NOFA/Mass members, to help new applicants progress through the process of organic certification for crops, livestock and value added processing. In 2016 we had three farms move forward to receive their certification. If you are growing organically and are curious about how to move to the next step, or if you are growing organically and simply want to see if you are in fact following the National Organic Program, send your questions to [lauradavis@nofamass.org](mailto:lauradavis@nofamass.org).

In 2016, the **Bulk Order** distributed thousands of products to 350 growers located in five states with minimal overhead, via a volunteer-driven distribution network of eight pick-up sites across three states. We also utilized the knowledge base of our staff and board and our strong relationships with suppliers to design new custom products to meet the specific needs of our growers like our cover crop cocktail blends and small-packs of mineral blends for community gardeners, both of which were very popular. In 2016 we were busy improving the bulk order by sourcing new products, redesigning our order form and building a new website for online ordering!

The **Beginning Farmer** program provided 10 mentees with mentor matches in 2016, and scholarships for 90 beginning farmers to attend on-farm workshops and conferences. It also provided newsletter articles and a summer conference workshop aimed at helping beginning farmers define and organize their career goals into a distinct learning plan. Our newest

program, "Inspiring Ideas from Experts in the Field," a free webinar series, ran monthly from January – December. Each workshop had 15-50 participants, and most are now available to stream on our website, making high quality farm management education easily available, and hopefully inspiring greater participation in our conferences and workshops.

**The Carbon Program (new in 2016)** had two foci this past year:

**1) Education:** We gave presentations on the role soil can play in sequestering carbon and spoke about the farming practices – tillage, synthetic chemicals, leaving soil bare, etc. – that destroy soil carbon, and the ways to avoid these practices with cover crops, season extension, mulching, rotating crops and animals, and using only natural products.

**2) Metrics:** We developed and purchased instruments and materials for 10 different simple soil tests (from NRCS, Cornell, OSU, Woods End Lab) designed to measure soil biology and evaluate efforts to build carbon, and we raised money to subsidize these tests for participating farmers and gardeners.

The **Food Access** program completed its Soil Restoration program with Gardening the Community (GTC) in 2016. A Best Practices document will be created that details the soil work that took place during the three years of the Project Bread/NOFA/Mass/GTC collaboration. NOFA/Mass is completing the first year of a three-year grant through MDAR to increase the production of Urban Specialty Crops, in partnership with Groundwork Somerville and Trustees Boston.

The 2016 **NOFA Summer Conference** had 885 attendees and presented Leah Penniman from Soul Fire Farm and Andre Leu, President of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) as keynote speakers. Along with Andre Leu's intensive seminar, we featured four half-day intensives on Gut Health (Beth Colon), Homesteading (Ben Hewitt), High Tunnels (Andy Fellenz) and Grazing (Sarah Flack). The weekend of over 150 workshops also featured two panel discussions on Racial Justice and Carbon Sequestration, as well as workshops ranging from farm economics, social justice, beginner and advanced farming techniques.

The 2016 **NOFA/Mass Winter Conference** had 925 attendees and presented Ben Burkett, fourth generation Mississippi family farmer, as the keynote speaker. Mr. Burkett held a community-building workshop during one of the three workshop sessions. Over 70 presenters shared their work ranging from farm economics, herbalism, soil biology and animal husbandry, a two-part beekeeping course and a panel discussion to explore "Everything you want to know about accessing land for your farm enterprise." The annual trade show, teacup raffle, children's conference and fundraising dinner were well attended.

We ran **25 Education Events** in 2016 including a day-long intensive on organic high tunnel management, seminars on biochar and multi-species silvopasture, and an intensive on Korean Natural Farming. We were also lucky to work with Jake "The Roving Butcher" Levin, to organize a multi-day event, "Pig to Prosciutto", that took people through the process of slaughter, butchering, and processing a whole pig right on the farm where it was raised. Other educational offerings included: workshops on "Growing Cut Flowers," a "cocktail cover crop" workshop that brought together farmers, soil scientists, and urban gardeners, a two-part series on raising grass-fed cattle, and more.

2016 was a year of recalibration for **our policy work**. After years of NOFA/Mass and many other groups organizing and advocating for **a label on foods that are genetically modified**, the federal government passed a bill that requires such a label. Unfortunately, that disclosure will not necessarily be on the actual label, as industry groups successfully lobbied for a more discrete, online option.

We had a successful **meeting with Representative Jim McGovern** at Winter Moon Roots Farm in Hadley at which we urged him to support federal funding for programs within USDA that encourage climate-smart farming. At the state house, NOFA/Mass continued to lobby for legislation that would **protect pollinators from neonicotinoids**, allow for off-farm **raw milk delivery**, and allow farmers to earn **tax credit for food donations**.

