From the Editor

Nicole Belanger
NOFA/Mass Public Relations Coordinator

Just having finished an article profiling all five unique Summer Conference preconference presenters for the regional NOFA newspaper, *The Natural Farmer*, and now editing this month’s NOFA/Mass newsletter, one thing resonates with me: none of us can do this work alone.

Where would we be without someone to share her seeds, experience with soil amendments, or knowledge that if one crop doesn’t grow well, something else will grow better than expected? As each season waxes and wanes, this community demonstrates its enthusiasm for sharing experience, curiosity, and excitement about a new technique, savory recipe, or reliable truism gained from years in the fields.

In this issue, Suzy Konecky profiles several mentoring relationships in our Beginning Farmer Mentoring Program; Sharon Gensler shares her approach to achieving balance with the insects on her homestead; and Julie Rawson documents a day on her farm, as well as lessons she’s learned in timing and preparedness from her own experience and insight gleaned from others. You’ll also find three articles highlighting in-depth takeaways from several of our Winter Conference workshops.

So as this year’s growing season takes root, ask questions, answer questions, write down your observations and share them with others. We learn by doing, yes, but also by talking with others, comparing their experiences to our own, and then, ultimately, by getting our hands dirty and trying things out.

Nicole
Timing: Mixing Heavy and Light Work on the Farm

Julie Rawson
NOFA/Mass Education Director, Executive Director, and farmer

I have been saying lately to folks that I have been coming to realize that what I don’t get done in February, or March, or April – or even as far back as January– has a direct impact on what happens as the season really starts to crunch. Of course it is too late to deal with that for 2013, but I have noticed this spring that many proactive steps that we took last year are bearing fruit this year.

Fall

Gathering resources – I have become a maniac over the past few years about gathering resources like leaves, wood chips, cheap hay, cardboard, newspapers, etc. Last year we went so far as to prepare 15 of our 100 foot beds (we have a total of 45 4 x 100 foot beds, 44 that are 150 feet long and 30 that are around 75 feet long) for immediate use in the spring. We chose an area of the farm that can be wet in the spring. Little did we know that this year it wouldn’t be an issue with the lack of rain, but nothing lost.

Misty Brook folks are moving to Maine and had a lot of manure to spare, so we bought $1000 worth of that and they spread it there and on the rest of the farm. We took our 4 foot bed former through and formed the beds, then lightly tilled them, and then lined the pathways with cardboard and then heaped on wood chips, leaves and hay. We then covered the beds with a thin layer of hay and left them. This spring we had a nice section of the farm all prepped and ready to go. All we had to do was remove the thin layer of hay, spread our soil amendments, spray them with our molasses and microbial mixture, and voila – 6,000 square feet of prepared land for the earliest of plantings.

Cleanup – Of course whatever you can, you should do in the fall - organizing sheds and barns, fixing machinery and preparing it for winter, and getting the wood cut and split.

Winter

Organizational – This year we decided to move over to a Drupal based website so we could do our updates in house instead of having to wait. We also added Paypal. Both of these changes took some time, but we started the year with a new and improved website and finally figured out last month how to use Paypal for orders.

Spring

This is where I am thinking and acting proactively.

People structure - I shudder now about how lacking in that department I was for the first 30 years of being in business – perhaps it took that marvelous one day seminar with Paul and Sandy Arnold to get me off my duff. Each paid member of the staff has a certain number of hours for the year, and these numbers are monitored carefully so as to not run out before the end of the year. Lunch makers have to keep to a narrow timeline so as not to spend excessive time in the kitchen when work needs to be done outside.

The budget carefully prepared in the late fall is adhered to and monitored with great scrutiny – perhaps this is the most important item!

Staff management – We work with a lot of different folks on our farm, as I know many of you do. We have middle aged working shareholder women, teens who are in trouble with the law, adults who used to be in trouble with the law, wide-eyed, save-the-world type young adults – you name it, we have it. Each day is different around here with staffing, and I take at least ½ hour per day and a couple
hours on weekends to lay out the daily schedule.

Today 7 teenage institutionalized boys will be here for 1½ hours. I am planning our potato planting around them because it is gross motor. I can get a lot of heavy work covering the potatoes once they have planted them, and they will feel a huge sense of accomplishment to see a field transformed. But yesterday we had a 65 year old woman here, and tasks were planned around her also. I am not always in the field, so I have to consider what jobs are as well done with our paid staff when I am not cracking the whip.

Variety, clear accomplishment in a reasonable time period, mixing heavy work with light work, all make for a day that will go by quickly and successfully for the farm staff. Saul Alinsky, my organizing mentor, used the three words – immediate, specific and realizable – always in the background of my thinking.

Farm management – We raise everything here – vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, worms, hogs, meat chickens, layers, turkeys, cows, and we are soon to have a milk cow again – so everyday is a symphony. Each day’s list has to consider the daily chores, the planting that has to get done, the field prep, the repairs, the latest animal addition, the seedling transplanting, the watering, the weeding, the mulching, the drenching, the foliar feeding, the harvesting, and of course lunch and peanut butter balls.

The weekly overview list starts the process after a careful walk all over the farm on Saturday or Sunday. Checking the biodynamic calendar for handling of crops, I then set a rough outline of the week – also considering which “staff” will be here for how long on which days. We start with Monday, and put a little more than can be accomplished on the list – just a little more. We want creative tension – not to overwhelm. Things get moved to the next day or later in the week if I misread the amount of time needed or someone didn’t show up. Emergency things like broken equipment, rats eating our chickens, the walk in breaking, all have to be considered and added as necessary - and other things taken out.

What I have learned best at the college of hard knocks over the years is to do the maintenance – be it machinery, people management, weeding, mulching, barn cleaning, carpentry – as you go along, a little bit each day. No one likes to be overwhelmed, and no job is fun if it looks too insurmountable. And at the end of the day I want to have had a hell of a time as a farmer – and want it for our staff.

Here is my list for today.

Thursday, May 2

• Root day
• Chores
• Prepare garage for grain coop
  - Open all three houses and water seedlings in and out
  - Cows
  - Move birds – sprout and water them. Be sure to feed them after the grain arrives
  - Check on baby meat birds
  - Start three more shiitake logs
• Prepare garage for grain coop
  - Take out pallets and leave by front door on south side
  - Put away all the cardboard
  - Sweep it out
• Water dahlias and larkspur with 3 jugs of drench
• Use tractor bucket to put bags of rocks on porch of barn
• Fertilize potato beds - 5400 square feet – dump all of these into the tractor bucket while you are up there and mix well
  - 150 lbs spring blend – 3 bags
  - 150 lbs of calphos – 3 bags
  - 300 lbs greensand – 6 bags
  - 25 lbs potassium sulfate – ½ bag
• There are 28 150 ft. rows of potatoes – each row gets 22 lbs of mixed fertilizer – weigh out one pail and then guesstimate after that; imperative to walk carefully right in the rows – on the way back go around the field to keep traffic low
• Spray each row of potatoes – 5 Cifarelli tanks (about 6 rows per tank) – 2 cups Rejuvenate, 2 cups UL 1 T biocoat gold – spray all 6 rows at once as you walk through
• Bring out all the spuds and organize by type
  - 10 2 ½ gallon pails
  - Pail of knives
  - Big ass hoe, all four rakes, the other big hoes
• Plant potatoes – 2 feet apart – staggered in rows - cover
• Ed repairs
• Mary call 2012 shareholders

[Signature]
Come grow with us:
In 2012, we purchased more than $37,000,000 worth of local produce and flowers in our North Atlantic and North East regions—and we’re not stopping there!

If you are, or would like to be a grower of:
• organic broccoli
• organic blueberries
• organic strawberries
• organic melons

Please contact Mike Bethmann, Rich Thorpe or Brian McKeller regarding potential opportunities:
• mike.bethmann@wholefoods.com
• richard.thorpe@wholefoods.com
• brian.mckeller@wholefoods.com

Supporting local farmers, producers and vendors for 30 years and counting.

WHOLEFOODSMARKET.COM
Outreach Updates

By Sharon Gensler  
NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

Hey NOFAites,

THANKS to all of you who helped out this past month: Mary DeBlois, Joan Newtie, Laura Davis, Derek Christianson, Carolyn Young, Leslie Cox, Liza Bemis, Pam Raymond, Lenora Deslandes, Drew Love, Paul Bertler, Alex Houtzager, Javier Gill, and Jessica Cook. I hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as I did.

I represented NOFA at 4 events recently. I was struck by two seemingly opposite reflections. One is the number of people who know about us. Members and non-members alike stopped to chat and say thanks, keep up our good work! And equally, the number of folks who have never heard of us but once exposed, expressed an interest in learning more. We still have a lot of education to do.

We are invited to new events regularly, so please remember to check the outreach website (http://www.nofamass.org/content/outreach) to keep up to date on all of this exciting activity. It’s really a win-win situation as you get to have a great time and help out the organization. Plus don’t forget, you can also get a free NOFA hat OR a $25.00 discount on a NOFA sponsored event for helping with outreach.

Want to help NOFA table at one of these upcoming events?
May 18 - Powisset Spring Farm Fair; Dover  
May 18 - REC’s Spring Garden Festival and Plant Sale; Worcester 
June 1 - Hilltown Spring Festival; Cummington  
August 15-17 - Boston Greenfest; City Hall Square

How else can you help out?
I know helping to table at events is not for everybody. So, how about talking about NOFA to your family, friends, and co-workers? We can be educators on a daily basis, and help create the healthy world we deserve.

We’re also looking for an Outreach Intern. Please consider applying or pass the information on to someone who might. More info: http://www.nofamass.org/content/outreach-intern-sought
Five or so years ago, I was gifted some beautiful blue flour corn seeds grown for generations by a people living in the southwest. Since then those few seeds have flourished in the very different climate here in New England and fed my family well in so many ways.

Our favorite is this simple breakfast, sometimes called atolé, sometimes called “blue corn mush”. (If you are interested in growing any of this corn, please send me an email, Rebecca@nofamass.org, and I’d be happy to send some seeds to you.)

Blue Corn Mush/Atolé

The first step is to toast the corn. Heat an ungreased skillet or clay comale over a hot flame. Add your corn kernels (removed from the cob) and start to stir. Be careful not to add too many, or they will jump all over the floor. Continue stirring, in circles and back and forth. As the corn toasts, it will change color, make popping noises, and start to crack open a bit. This is good. When there is a lot of popping, remove the pan from the heat, but continue to stir. I like to put the corn back onto the fire to toast just another minute or so. Have two baskets ready and pour the hot kernels into one. Then pour the corn back and forth between the baskets to cool.

Once cool, it’s time to grind! Anyone have a stone metate and mano? I use my electric kitchen grain mill, though you can also use a coffee grinder. I recommend only grinding the amount you need so the flour won’t go rancid. The toasted kernels can be stored for later use.

I like to use 1 cup ground corn to 3 cups of water for a good sized meal for me and my son. You can change the ratio for a thicker or thinner porridge.

Boil half the water with a pinch of salt. Meanwhile, mix the remaining water with ground corn, making a slurry. When the water is boiling, add the slurry, stir well for 15 seconds or so, turn the heat down to low, and partially cover. When the porridge is bubbling (well, gurgling kind of) stir some more. When the consistency is just right, it’s done! I like to add milk and honey, or berries and maple syrup. Or make a thicker version and serve with eggs. Leftovers can be formed into patties and fried (but we never have leftovers).
Homesteading Observations: Insects

By Sharon Gensler
NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

I'd like to share with you some of my observations and interactions with insects over the years here on the homestead in Wendell. I started growing here in 1981 and have gone through many insect cycles. We carved out our growing areas from a reforested landscape with 100-year-old trees. Our first few years were relatively pest free causing us to think we were so isolated they’d never find us. Wrong!

Our thoughts and control practices have evolved over the years:

• “Organic” pesticides- didn’t like the options available, as many were broad-spectrum, killing beneficials as well as pests.
• Hand picking- gets awfully gross; especially Colorado potato beetle larvae, plus I hated feeling like my peaceful paradise was a war-zone.
• Pheromone traps- seemed to attract more than we started with.
• Sticky traps- trapped everything that came along, the good as well as the bad and the ugly.
• *Variety choice- some varieties of veggie are more prone to attract pests. Through observation I can choose what works best for us.
• *Chicken moat- a garden surround created with a 4’ wide run /“moat”. Chickens get a good protein boost as they patrol the boarder for insects entering the garden.
• *Meditation- works with the chipmunks but hard for me to connect with insect mind/spirit.
• *All-inclusive, beyond “no-kill”- let them work out their own balance. Definitely feels more like a peaceable kingdom, but has taken years of restraint to get balance with certain insects (The Mexican Bean Beetle and squash bug have yet to fully cooperate).
• *Introduction of and designing for beneficial insects- this works very well, though some think my garden is “messy”. Purposeful planting of plants with small flowers, especially umbels, is important, as is letting things like lettuce and brassicas go to flower. Also, through observation I know which “weeds” certain pests prefer, so I let some grow to become the “sacrificial” offering. You have to be willing to let some of the pests thrive until they can reach a balance with their predators (lady bugs, lace wings, wasps). Nothing so fascinating and rewarding than seeing a tomato horn worm with Braconidae wasp eggs growing on it!
• *Insect barriers- row cover or lightweight insect barrier material over crop until it is big enough to survive; remove before flowering, if pollination is needed.
• *Increasing soil fertility- I’ve been attending the NOFA sponsored Soil & Nutrient Density workshops and discovered my fertility program needed a little tweaking to make our soil healthier. A healthy soil increases the plants’ ability to resist insects and disease. I’ve been working on adding the necessary minerals and hope to report soon that the insects no longer find my fruit and veggies to their liking!

While working toward that perfectly healthy soil, I am also continuing with a diversified approach (using all of the above with an *) to achieve balance. Part of the problem, as I see it, is that with climate change, we are seeing more southern pests on a larger scale and if they have a predator, they have yet to move north.

I spent some time this morning installing hoops to create some low- tunnel insect protection. The easiest hoop is made from #9 gauge wire stuck into the soil on both sides of a growing bed then covered with floating row cover.
I have also used plastic well water tubing as hoops. I choose not to use electrical PVC (poly vinyl chloride) plastic pipe, easy as it is to use, because of concern for possible soil contamination. The sturdiest hoops I make are from aluminum EMT (electrical metal tubing) conduit. These must be bent using a form or bender to shape the pipe. Forms can be purchased or you can rig up one of your own. We bent ours around a large water trough, giving them a croquet hoop shape rather than the typical arc. Be creative.

There are many types, weights and sizes of floating row covers. Some give more protection from the cold as well as insects; others are of very fine weave, designed for insect protection only. Type used depends on time of year, crop to be protected and which insect is of concern. All allow rain and sunlight to penetrate.

It's important to install the row cover before the pests find the plant, usually before emergence or at transplant time. Secure the edges of the material to keep determined insects from finding a way in. Also, if not secured well the wind will take them to Oz. Remember to check on the plants regularly to make sure all is well under their tent. I never want to repeat the time I covered my potatoes, smugly thinking they were safe, only to discover I had waited too long before covering. When I finally looked under, I found the plants covered in the CP beetles. Yuck, I had created a perfect habitat where they were protected from observation.

I’d better stop now and get back to the non-violent protection of my favorite brassica crops! Happy spring!
Bulk Order Potatoes: Growing Happy Tubers

By Cathleen O’Keefe
NOFA/Mass Bulk Order Coordinator

For those of you who just picked up potatoes through the bulk order, here’s some information about the seed, excerpted from Moose Tubers Trouble Shooting Guide:

Seed Certification
All seed is certified by the state in which it is grown. The following details Maine’s Certification Program. Check out Colorado Department of Ag & Cornell University’s website for other state programs.

Field Inspections
Each seed lot is visited by inspectors twice, a month apart, with a third inspection for Bacterial Ring Rot. Here are Maximum Tolerances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st inspection</th>
<th>2nd inspection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaf Roll</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Virus</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varietal Mix</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>¼%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absolutely no tolerance for: Bacterial Ring Rot, Potato Spindle Tuber, Viroid, Root Knot Nematode

Post Harvest Florida Test
Every grower sends 400 tubers, from each seed lot of no more than 40 acres, to the ME Potato Board’s certification farm in Dade Co., FL. The seed is grown out in the field & tested for virus. Only lots scoring 95% clean or better with successful seasonal field readings qualify for the certified standard.

Late Blight
If late blight is found in a field visit, the farmer is responsible to clear it up. Testing in a lab is required in bad years. A visual shipping point inspection allows 1%.

Allowable Defects at Shipping Point Inspection
10% of the surface of the spud may be scab & 10% “waste cut” of Fusarium dry rot allowed. Seed with either of these defects will not grow defective tubers.

Good practices to reduce spud pains
• Cover Crops - Follow harvest with a hardy winter grain: rye, triticale, or winter wheat.
• Crop Rotation - Rotate crop families to reduce accumulation of crop specific pests/diseases.
• Draw up a Nutrient Management Plan.
• Keep a Keen Eye - Watch for awkward looking plants & rogue as you scout your fields.
REQUEST FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

Proposal deadline: September 1, 2013

You are invited to submit a workshop proposal for the NOFA/Mass Annual Winter Conference, to be held on January 11, 2014, in Worcester, Mass. The conference draws about 1,000 people from Massachusetts and neighboring states. Participants include seasoned and beginning farmers, urban homesteaders, backyard gardeners, food activists, and many other engaged learners.

Most workshops are 90 minutes long. This year will also feature several three-hour intensive workshop sessions. Presenters of the 90-minute workshops receive a $50 honorarium, while those presenting a three-hour workshop will receive a $100 honorarium. The honorarium is awarded per workshop and is divided to pay co-presenters. All presenters will also get up to $35 in workshop expenses reimbursed, free conference registration, and a free lunch. Presenters who donate their stipend, which provides scholarships for farmers and young people in financial need, will be recognized in the program book.

We are particularly interested in receiving workshop proposals for the following subjects:

- Beekeeping
- Organic gardening
- Season extension
- Urban gardening or farming
- Farm and food policy
- Healthy food access
- Growing specific crops organically
- Specific livestock workshops
- Farm management, marketing or financial planning
- Irrigation, farm machinery
- Gardening in small spaces such as containers, patios, or balconies
- Homesteading skills, such as food preparation, preserving, or soap making

We encourage you to submit a proposal on any relevant subject, regardless of if it is one of the above subject areas. There are many more topics that we would like to see covered. All proposals will be reviewed by the Winter Conference staff with the objective of coordinating a workshop lineup that provides a variety of beginner, intermediate, and advanced workshops for farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, and landscapers, as well as consumers and advocates.

To submit a workshop proposal, please complete this online form (http://www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/WPform.php) by September 1st. Workshops will be accepted on a rolling basis. If you have any questions or trouble with the above link, please contact Luke Pryjma, Workshop Coordinator, at wcworkshops@nofamass.org or 413-281-2651.
Delivering fresh organic produce to your door

Boston Organics is an independent organic produce delivery service currently serving the greater Boston area.

We deliver boxes of fresh organic fruits and vegetables directly to our customers year-round; and we also offer a wide range of locally produced grocery items.

We’re always looking for additional growers and suppliers!

617.242.1700
bostonorganics.com
service@bostonorganics.com

www.realpickles.com
(413) 774-2600
Greenfield, MA

We’re Going Co-op!

We’re excited about this opportunity to preserve our social mission for the future...

Learn more at
www.realpickles.com

Northeast Grown • 100% Organic
www.realpickles.com

Our Mission
Support local organic farms
Produce healthy nutritious food
Provide good and meaningful jobs
Build a vibrant regional food system

Our Mission
Support local organic farms
Produce healthy nutritious food
Provide good and meaningful jobs
Build a vibrant regional food system

Protecting What You Value Most

Agribusiness Insurance Solutions

Enduring relationships with our clients have resulted in a mutual respect that lies at the heart of how we do business.

Local Offices Throughout the Northeast.

For an Agent Near You Call:
1-800-The-Farm
(1-800-843-3276)
or visit
www.FarmFamily.com

Farm Family
Genetic Roulette Movie Showings - Building Concern over GMOS

by Jack Kittredge
NOFA/Mass Policy Director

Over the past few months I have conducted public showings of the movie Genetic Roulette for NOFA/Mass some dozen times, in towns from Greenfield to Milton, from North Brookfield to Hingham. Attendance has varied, from less than a dozen to 85. Sometimes I set up for free and collect donations at the door. Sometimes a group will sponsor the showing for a $100 honorarium.

Jeffrey Smith, last year’s NOFA Summer Conference keynoter, directed this powerful movie. It raises the question of whether the presence of GMO foods, increasing in the American diet since 1996, with their novel proteins (to which our immune systems have not become accustomed), has resulted in an epidemic of inflammatory diseases.

A number of doctors, clinicians, nutritionists, and other practitioners speak about their experiences with clients suffering from leaky guts, allergies, autoimmune diseases, autism, and other such conditions. They testify that the simple act of weaning these patients from GMO foods and getting them onto organic and non-GMO diets has resulted in miraculous “cures”. We also hear from parents with autistic or highly allergic children, and from farmers who have been feeding GMO feed to livestock. Their experiences are the same: debilitating disease until they eliminate the GMO food. Then, rapid improvement.

After the film ends I normally get 15 or 20 minutes of questions from people. Many are quite grateful for seeing the movie and speak of finally understanding something that had been baffling them about the health of someone in their family. Others are angry that our government capitulated to the biotech industry in 1992 and refused to require any health or safety testing of these novel foods before allowing them into the food supply. Yet others are concerned about the future of the seed supply itself in the face of growing contamination of pure seed with GMO pollen.

Once or twice I have had attendees who appear to be proponents of agricultural biotech try to suggest the movie isn’t based on sound science. They have had no answer, however, when I agree there is little in the way of peer reviewed studies in American journals (though more has been published in Europe) but point out that biotech licenses here specifically forbid using GMO seeds for research. Any professor who bought GMO corn or soy to feed to test animals would be infringing a patent and their institution could be sued. Why, I ask, would such a provision be placed in a license? Are the companies worried about what might be found?

Ultimately most people talk about the two possible solutions to this dilemma – the private one of removing GMOs from their diet, and the public one of passing legislation to label GMO foods. Neither is simple.

• GMOs are widely used in processed foods and folks interested in avoiding them have either to carefully purchase only foods labeled “organic” or “Non-GMO Verified”, or make their own soups, stir-fries, salad dressings, sauces, etc. from simple ingredients. The problem is even worse for pets and livestock as corn and soy are the primary components of most animal feeds, and unless labeled as “organic” they are certain to be GMO.

• Labeling legislation, especially at the state level, is fraught with legal complexities, including the threat of federal preemption and the virtual certainty of Constitutional challenges on several grounds, especially claiming that “compelling speech” by requiring GMO labels violates the First Amendment rights of the food companies.

If you would like a showing in your area, contact me at 978-355-2853 or jack@nofamass.org. I am happy to conduct a showing any day of the week and have all the equipment necessary to show it. You just need a room big enough for the audience and to handle publicity. I can even send you a nice color poster to put up around town. NOFA/Mass wants me to break even on this program, so I need an average of $100 per showing. If a local group wants to subsidize the event, that is great. If not, I can come on a “donation suggested” basis and try to raise the money at the door.
“It all comes full circle when you realize how small and tight the community is,” says Christa Georgeson, referring to the myriad connections between small farmers in Massachusetts. Christa has been one of the mentees in the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Mentoring Program this year. The Mentoring Program pairs seasoned growers with people who have some farming experience but aren’t yet running their own farms. It is a 12-month commitment between mentor and mentee, supported by NOFA/Mass. By pairing mentees with experienced growers who are not their employers, the program enables aspiring farmers to gain farming experiences, skills, and perspectives that they otherwise wouldn’t get in their day-to-day work.

One of the ways in which Christa has benefitted from the Beginning Farmer Mentoring Program is the networking that organically grew out of her relationship with her mentor, Frank Albani. He introduced her to other farmers, and she is appreciative of those relationships.

Christa accepts that there have been some challenges with the Mentorship Program, mainly finding time when both she and her mentor are available to connect. She shares the insight that when working on farm, “there are so many moving parts” and therefore it’s not always easy to make space for something like the mentorship program. Mostly Christa and Frank have connected over the phone, although she did have the opportunity to visit his farm, the Soule Homestead Education Center.

Christa also shares that she has learned some extremely practical skills, such as irrigation. She admits that different irrigation systems can be very complex, but she is grateful that she has gotten to learn about it from such a seasoned farmer. They also had the opportunity to talk about timing of growing different crops. Frank grows a lot of lettuce and perishable greens, for which timing is key.

Julie Weitekamp runs Full Basket Farm and was also a mentee in the Beginning Farmer program this year. This was Julie’s 5th season growing vegetables. Before starting her own operation she was an avid backyard gardener, but had not apprenticed with another farmer. Now she is cultivating 1 acre of vegetables for a CSA program.

Julie decided to participate in the program because she wanted feedback from a more experienced farmer. She was paired with Beth Ingham who has years of experience to share. They visited each other’s farms, “I really appreciated her walking through my fields,” says Julie. At the visit to Beth’s farm Julie was impressed with how clean the fields were. The very low weed and pest pressure that Beth faces inspired her, and this year she is trying out some thick hay mulching in her high tunnel to mimic Beth’s system. In addition to the visits, they corresponded by email and Beth helped Julie with sourcing of various supplies including a new soil mix for starting seeds.

The Beginning Farmer Mentoring Program is a loose arrangement between the mentor and mentee and is to be directed by the curiosity and initiative of the mentee. All of the pairs have been arranged for 2013, but we will be accepting applications for 2014 starting in the fall, so check the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer webpage. If you have any questions about the program email Suzy Konecky, Beginning Farmer Coordinator, at suzy@nofamass.org
For decades, NOFA/Mass has been organizing and hosting winter and summer conferences, offering hundreds of workshops each year to thousands of farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, landscapers, and consumers. The workshops range from policy topics to nutrition to crop management and more, all with an eye toward using and supporting sustainable organic practices that improve the health and well-being of people and their environment.

Thanks to a grant from the USDA via the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), this year we are capturing the teachings from many of the conference workshops – specifically those related to growing fruits and vegetables – and making them available in our newsletter and online. In doing so, we’re making lessons about organic practices more broadly available, building the beginning of what we hope will become a library of essential information for organic growers.

Look for additional installments in upcoming issues, and the full collection online at www.nofamass.org.


By Kyle Foley, Lesley Sykes, and Eva Agudelo Winther

As part of the Enhancing Food Security of the Northeast (EFSNE) project (a USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative grant-funded project involving universities and researchers from around the Northeast), co-investigators Dr. Tim Griffin and Dr. Christian Peters of Tufts University led a directed study course for graduate students in the Agriculture, Food and Environment program. Students chose research topics that would complement EFSNE, and we (Kyle Foley and Eva Agudelo Winther) chose to investigate the specific technological or operational innovations and best practices required of small and mid-scale fruit and vegetable producers interested in accessing regional supply chains in New England.

While there are many activities focused on rebuilding the needed infrastructure for a regional food system, not as much emphasis has been placed on how producers can change their management and operational practices to meet the needs of wholesale markets. Increasing the capacity of small- and mid-scale producers to access regional markets through produce aggregators and distributors has the potential to increase the availability of healthy food to a wider range of people through traditional retail and institutions, and hence, the potential to increase the food security of the region.

Our hypothesis was that the businesses that are involved in transporting, storing, and distributing produce as it moves from farm to store (or institution) would have information and insight into what producers can do on-farm to improve efficiency and better serve or access regional supply chains. Lesley Sykes, co-presenter, is Product and Account Manager at Red Tomato, which was one of the interviewees. Red Tomato coordinates marketing, sales, and wholesale logistics for a network of family-scale, ecological fruit and vegetable farmers in the Northeast. With the knowledge gained from one-hour interviews with Red Tomato and 11 other produce aggregators, distributors and retailers from across New England, recommendations for producers emerged from the results under the broad categories of infrastructure and equipment (i.e. packing, labeling, food safety, storage) and management issues (i.e. product availability, communication, labor capacity). We spoke at NOFA/Mass and other conferences to disseminate our results and recommendations as much as possible to audiences of farmers in New England, as well as those working in other ways to strengthen the region’s food system.
Infrastructure and Equipment Recommendations

Packing & Labeling:
• Most importantly, invest in a packing line/equipment (an opportunity for shared infrastructure among farms).
• Invest in uniform, sturdy, durable packaging.
• Communicate with distributors/buyers about what packaging is preferred/expected.
• Invest in a basic labeling machine.

Key infrastructure/equipment to invest in individually or cooperatively:
• Labeling equipment
• Cold/temperature-controlled storage (critical for creating some flexibility and quality control that will allow you to work with wholesalers)
• Loading dock

Food safety (on the producer end):
• Consider what markets you might be trying to enter and whether you will need to be GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) audited down the line; if so, start taking the steps to move towards those practices and/or requirements.
• Have sufficient liability insurance as defined by intermediate and end buyers.

Industry/Region-wide:
• Develop good reusable packaging (industry-wide).
• Develop and promote uniform standards across the Northeast region in terms of information needed/wanted on labels by distributors, aggregators, wholesale buyers, etc.
• More industry-wide coordination amongst regional distributors/aggregators for increased efficiency with trucking, backhauling etc.

Management and Communication Recommendations

The second major area where interviewees saw efficiencies or room for improvement was around “management issues.” This term refers to best practices surrounding volume and consistency of product availability, labor and management capacity, the use of technology to stay in touch with distributors, and overall communication and professionalism when dealing with buyers. These issues have more to do with operational practices than access to capital-intensive processing or packing facilities and require a certain amount of business acumen and other “soft” skills to navigate efficiently.

Product availability:
• Specialize in a smaller number of products to grow appropriate volume for wholesale markets.
• If you can’t grow enough volume for wholesale buyers, create farmer cooperatives to increase the volume of deliveries to wholesale distributors and buyers.
• Ensure product availability when promised and deliver consistently and on time.
If you cannot meet your commitments, you must communicate this as soon as possible and offer alternatives.
• Give your buyers conservative estimates of what you will have available to ensure your capacity to deliver on your commitments.
• Some wholesale buyers seek out local sources of product that may not be available from other local growers either early or late in the season. Practice season extension to meet this demand.

Labor and Management Capacity:
• Invest in skilled employees with middle management capacity to ensure timeliness and product quality. No one person can be responsible for all the operations on a farm at the scale necessary to meet wholesale demand, therefore you must be able and willing to delegate tasks as needed.
• Invest in sufficient number of staff to deliver product on time and as promised, and plan ahead for seasonal surges in workload. A large volume of product is of no use to anyone if you don’t have the human power to get it out of the field, washed, and on a truck.
• Delegate administrative tasks such as bookkeeping, customer service, human resources, marketing, packaging product sourcing, etc.

Communication and Professionalism:
• Communicate regularly, honestly, and well in advance with buyers about product availability and conditions in the field. If you cannot deliver a promised shipment, you must communicate as soon as possible with your buyer so they can find other ways to meet their obligations.
• Use email, smart phones, and online ordering systems to facilitate communication and timely product deliveries.
You, or someone you employ, must be available for communication with buyers and be able to respond quickly to calls and emails.
• Practice professionalism (flexibility, trustworthiness, consistency, and civility) with buyers and distributors. This builds a functional, pleasant, and ideally long-term relationship based on trust – an indispensable tool in any product-based business.
Building a Foundation for Markets through Value Chains

Presenter: Joe Maxwell
By Hannah Blackmer

Smaller-scale producers are constantly in need of ways to compete with big industrial agriculture and agro-corporations in the market. Some producers have found ways to skirt the stereotypical supermarket by reaching out directly to consumers through CSAs or farmers’ markets. Other producers have found great success in that stereotypical supermarket by creating value chains, a form of co-operative.

Through value chains, producers can find sustainability through market access with products that are differentiated from those presented by agro-corporations. A value chain is a network of businesses that brings farm produce and products to consumers. Each step in the process, from farm production to processing, distribution, and retail, comprises a link in the chain.

Aggregating small- and middle-sized producers and processors creates a body that can successfully compete with agro-corporations. Furthermore, value chains help other small businesses sustain business. Value chains can be a large or small aggregate, but generally those involved in the chain are small to medium scale.

Producer Organized Delivery Systems (PODS) are the building blocks of value chains, and are organized to deliver efficiency at each stage of the chain. PODS are usually separated by region, but can also be divided by differentiation and commonalities. PODS can be built with multiple producers, and each unit has a “lieutenant” who organizes the amount of produce to be delivered each week. Producers share the load, dependent on their size and production ability. Additionally, upon entering their PODS, a producer locks in a certain percentage of what their production will increase or decrease by, depending on the total the co-operative needs to produce that year.

Producers in all PODS grow and shrink together at their own percentage; PODS increase or decrease production as a unit. Transportation costs are a key factor in recognizing PODS’ cost viability. Transport of a farm product can be one of the largest and most inefficient expenditures in any production-to-consumer layout. By utilizing PODS, small-scale farmers can pool together to share the cost of transporting their goods, whether it is to processing, manufacturing, or point of sale.

The primary objective of a value chain is to connect the two end points in the relationship of food production and consumption while developing a sustainable regional food supply that has differentiated itself with responsible, humane practices. It is important not to lose the “family farm” appeal and the humane or responsible practices used; differentiation is critical for value chains. Today, differentiation comes in many forms, including local, antibiotic-free, organic, sustainable, and humane. These buzz words are continuing to become increasingly pertinent in the consumer world, and provide small producers with an edge agro-corporations lack.

Before forming a value chain, it is important to familiarize yourself with the general outline of co-operative development. A co-operative begins as a common interest, which must first prove to be feasible for operation in order to move on in the development process. A feasibility study will determine the relative success or failure, which then can be converted into a business plan. The business plan is followed by an equity drive, the final step before launch. It is crucial to raise more money than you think you will need; projects always come upon financial snags, so over-estimate on the budget and raise a little extra.

Following the co-operative development outline, value chains can form through the subsequent order of events. First, create an aggregate by developing criteria for participation. In this way you define what your aggregate wants to represent, and can set your standards based on market opportunity. Once you have defined your criteria, you can identify participating producers, distributors, manufacturers, retailers, and any other needed parties. Second, you must differentiate your product and maintain consistency. Consistency is key to transparency, which is a foundation for successful value chains. Because they are built with long-term strategic relationships, a lack of transparency may facilitate distrust between participating links, including your customer base.

Finally, you must take your product to market. Find your selected market and/or customer before you launch or you run the risk of having a product with no buyers. A successful marketing program is key to creating a market for yourself; without one you run the risk of not reaching your consumers or creating a buzz around what you offer. Hiring a professional to develop a marketing scheme for you may seem expensive at the outset, but will save you headaches in the future. Remember that the marketing cost will be shared between the producers in your value chain, just as with costs in transportation. In the same
vein, you must nail-down the supply chain, connecting with manufacturers, transportation, and retail outlets while developing a set relationship and expectations. As a capstone to finally launching your product and ensuring a sustainable future, make sure to provide excellent customer management. In the long run, customers must be pleased with the products you offer in order to warrant you a competitive place in the market.

Building bridges between those who care

The State Agriculture Councils of The Humane Society of the United States seek to ensure that animal production is humane and environmentally sustainable.

To learn more, visit humanesociety.org/agcouncils.
Understanding Labor Laws for Beginning and Mentor Farms

By Suzy Konecky

Labor law is an issue that many small farmers would prefer not to think about. The legal issues surrounding farm labor are often misunderstood. Many farmers believe that they lack the understanding, clarity, funds, or ability to operate in compliance with labor laws. It is one of the issues that many farmers don’t think about until an issue arises that brings attention to the situation. Understanding farm labor laws is important to protect both the employee and the employer.

Christy Asbee and Kenneth Miller have decided to use their expertise and experience as lawyers to help farmers and those in the food industry. Their mission is: “Law for Food provides legal counsel and business support to small farmers, food producers, and the local food economy in New England. We make legal services for small-scale farmers and food entrepreneurs accessible, affordable, and relevant to specialized needs.”

Christy and Kenneth focused their presentation on the type of farm labor that many small and organic farmers use. They broadly categorized farm labor as falling into one of four different types of arrangements, each with its own legal consequences. The arrangements are: intern, independent contractor, volunteer, and employee. They also discussed the terminology of the word apprentice in an agricultural context.

Many small farms use the word apprentice to describe an arrangement with beginning farmers in which education is exchanged for labor. Many farmers are concerned about – and even feel passion for – training the next generation, which makes this type of arrangement appealing. Many small farmers also are operating on a small budget and can’t afford to pay high wages, so this offers an affordable source of labor. For beginning farmers, the best way to learn is to work with experienced farmers who have the interest and commitment to answering questions and teaching. How does this fit into our legal structure? Kenneth and Christy explained that the Department of Labor does not recognize an “apprenticeship” in an agricultural context. There are some industries/trades that do have formalized apprenticeships (carpentry, for example), but agriculture is not one of them. Therefore, farmers that work with folks who hold the title “apprentice” can use this term for internal purposes, but should figure out what this form of labor is considered to be from a legal perspective if they want to make sure they are in compliance with the law.

It is also common for farmers to use the word intern to describe a labor arrangement. Intern is often used interchangeably with apprentice, and is also used widely outside of the agricultural context. The Department of Labor does have a legal definition of an intern in an agricultural context. However, the definition of an intern is actually quite narrow, and many farmers would find it hard to be in compliance. In order to comply, the following six specifications must be met:

1. Training is similar to that of a vocational school or college (an established curriculum, time for instruction, books, etc.)
2. Benefits designed for the intern, as opposed to the farmer
3. Work of intern does not displace an employee
4. Business derives no immediate advantage
5. Training does not ensure subsequent employment
6. Terms and conditions of relationship are clearly established

These six considerations are established by the federal department of labor and adopted and accepted by the state of Massachusetts. Number four on this list is where farmers often fall out of compliance. The interpretation of advantage is fairly broad and includes a financial benefit. Therefore, if someone is harvesting carrots that will be sold at a farmers’ market, the business is deriving an immediate advantage from that person and they cannot legally be considered an intern. Therefore, many farmers who hire interns are not in compliance with the legal definition and should consider the interns employees. This person (perhaps called an intern, but actually an employee) is protected by minimum wage requirements, workers compensation, and other laws.

Independent contractors on a farm are relatively easy to define. Independent contractors are often involved with agriculture since many farms need to hire a plumber, electrician, lawyer, etc. in order to make repairs or work on special projects. It the worker is supervised by the farm, uses the farm’s equipment, and does not have
their own independent legal structure, they cannot be considered an independent contractor.

So, if your labor does not fall under the category of independent contractor, apprentice, or intern, what about a good ‘ole volunteer? The term volunteer is only legally recognized if the volunteer is working for the government or a non-profit organization. For-profit farms cannot legally classify their help as a volunteer, even if the person is completely donating their time and energy.

This leaves the classification of employee. Most agricultural workers fall under the term employee, since interns, independent contractors, and volunteers are quite rare from a legal perspective. Employers should know how federal and state laws regulate employee rights and treatments. This includes the payment of minimum wage, payroll taxes, workers compensation, OSHA (occupational safety and health administration) regulations, and other requirements designed to protect employees.

There is an important exemption that may apply to farmers regarding farm labor. This is called the 500 Man-Day Exemption. A “Man-Day” refers to a day on which an employee worked at least one hour. If a farm has four employees who worked for two hours each on a given day, that is considered four Man-Days. If a farm has fewer than 500 Man-Days in a calendar quarter, it falls under the exemption. This means that the business is exempt from many of the wage, housing, worker transportation, and reporting requirements that would otherwise go into effect for employees. This is very good news for small farmers; with a small crew it is likely that many farms fall under the 500 Man-Day exemption. It is important to note that farms are not exempt from OSHA compliance, even if they have fewer than 500 Man-Days.

It is important to understand how to classify your farm labor, and to be honest with yourself as well as your labor about the legal ramifications. If necessary, it is often helpful to seek the advice of a service provider, such as a lawyer, accountant, or government department.
To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and the earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.

vonTrapp Farm, VT
One of the Organic Valley family farms that supply milk for our yogurt
From Field to Fridge

Farms listed in the NOFA/Mass Organic Food Guide have the opportunity to highlight here what they currently have available for sale. Pick up some of their goods and help support your local organic and sustainable farmers today!

If you would like your farm or business listed on the Organic Food Guide website, contact Rebecca Buell at foodguide@nofamass.org or 978-724-3561.

To access a farm’s full Organic Food Guide listing, click on that farm’s name.

Agraria Farm
17 Willard Ave
Rehoboth, MA
508-336-3823
agrariafarm@gmail.com
www.agrariafarm.com
We sell off our website where there is a weekly listing beginning June 1. Our customers either arrange farm pickup or we deliver. This year we are adding to our common and uncommon fruit: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, elderberries, gooseberries, currants, lignonberries, figs, and melons. See our site for when these are in season. We are adding apricots, plums, persimmons, and more blueberries for upcoming years. We also have limited mushrooms, greens mixes, herbs, honey, and eggs, as well as a range of value-added products for sale on farm or delivery.

Billingsgate Farm
6 County Road
Plympton, MA
781-293-6144
farmgirl@billingsgatefarm.com
billingsgatefarm.com
CSA- Join Us! We offer full shares and half shares June thru October. Pickup days are Friday and Saturday at the farm stand. Thursdays are sold out. Please visit our website for all the details. Opening June 1; Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Beans, beets, herbs, lettuce, peas, and radishes.

Bird of the Hand Farm
33 School St
Sterling, MA
978-422-6217
birdofthehandfarm@gmail.com
www.birdofthehand.com
Organic perennials, herbs, and small trees: Canadian Anemone, Jack in the Pulpit, Canadian ginger, butterfly weed, epimedium, sweet woodruff, daylilies, lovage, marjoram, lemon balm, feverfew, blood root, goldenseal, valerian, thyme, veronicastrum, violets. For warm season plants: bromeliads, aloe, big leaf begonia. Call ahead for availability.

Cape Cod Organic Farm
3675 Main St (Route 6A)
Barnstable, MA
508-362-3575
info@capecodorganicfarm.org
Certified Organic Piglets for sale. Large Black and Tamworth crosses. They will be ready at the end of July. Cost is $250.

Chestnut Tree Corner Farm
1581 Pine St
Dighton, MA
sshimm11@gmail.com
chestnuttreecornerfarm.net
Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Self-serve table out front.
Rhubarb, horseradish, garlic scapes.

Couch Brook Farm Greenhouses
184 Couch Brook Road
Bernardston, MA
413-648-9659
couchbrookfarm@verizon.net
www.couchbrookfarm.com
Thursday-Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through June 10. Certified organic seedlings including vegetable, herbs, annuals and perennials. Fresh picked asparagus and strawberries when they’re ready. Also our own stoneware pottery.

First Root Farm
55 Old Bedford Road
Concord, MA
firstrootfarm@gmail.com
www.firstrootfarm.com
We still have a few 2013 CSA shares! $650 for 21 weeks of veggies (June-October), $750 for 25 weeks (June-November). That’s only $30/week! We grow over 30 kinds of vegetables and use sustainable growing practices. Pickups in Concord and Davis Square. Flower shares and bulk winter shares also available. Visit our website for all the details.

Golden Oak Farm
44 Plain Road
Hatfield, MA
May 2013 Newsletter

**dandp2002@yahoo.com**
http://www.goldenoakfarm.us/
Open daily from 8 a.m. to dusk from April 15-Nov 15.
We use sustainable, nutrient density practices to produce the best quality vegetables we can. In May: vegetable, herb, and flower seedlings, greens, radishes, rhubarb, eggs, cut your own: thyme, chives, garlic chives, oregano. Also offering cut your own comfrey for laying hens.

**Heritage Fields**
309 Kidney Road
Orange, MA
978-544-3282
rachelscherer@yahoo.com
Open by appointment
2013 LaMancha kids (does, bucks, or wethers); 2012 yearling does; and frozen chevon.

**High Meadow Farm**
28 High St
Hubbardston, MA
978-928-5646
jassy.bratko@gmail.com
www.highmeadowfarms.com
9 a.m. to dusk daily.
100% grass-fed beef, woodland raised pork, pure raw honey.

**Long Life Farm**
205 Winter St
Hopkinton, MA
508-596-1651
laura@longlifefarm.com
www.longlifefarm.com
Farmers’ Markets in Hopkinton, Sundays 1 to 5 p.m., June 16-Oct 20; Ashland, Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., June-15-Oct 19; and Whole Foods, Mondays 4 to 7 p.m., July 1-Sept 30.
Certified organic vegetables.

**Manda Farm**
25 Pleasant St
Plainfield, MA
413-634-5333
manda@mandafarm.com
www.mandafarm.com
Open all year at the farm (call first).
All cuts of grass-fed, organic beef and pork, including smoked cuts and sausages. Also, we’ve got 14 adorable piglets running around, born mid and late April, so we have a few feeder piglets for sale...an unusual offer.

**Many Hands Organic Farm**
411 Sheldon Road
Barre, MA
978-355-2853
farm@mhof.net
www.mhof.net
We will be at the Barre Farmers’ Market this summer, Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon.

Lard at $20/quart. Comfrey salve at $6. Garlic powder at $8. Eggs at $6/dozen. All of our animals are pasture raised. 2013 CSA, pork, chicken, beef, and turkey information is now on the website. Our beef is not certified organic due to our use of conventional milk replacer (16 months before slaughter). We have CSA pickups in Holden, Worcester, Framingham, Dorchester, and Fitchburg. We now take credit cards for CSA shares.

**Natick Community Organic Farm**
117 Eliot St
Natick, MA
508-655-2204
ncorganic@verizon.net
www.natickfarm.org
Open daily during daylight hours for visits and purchases.

**Natural Roots**
888 Shelburne Falls Road
Conway, MA
413-369-4269
naturalroots@verizon.net
www.naturalroots.com
Starting in June, open Tuesdays and Fridays 3 to 6:30 p.m.
CSA shares from our horse-powered farm are available (forms at the farm or on our website). Walk-in customers are also welcome during CSA hours. In addition to vegetables, we offer our own delicious eggs and pork from our free-range animals. We also carry other local products including bread, cheese, yoghurt, ice cream, beef, pickles and sauerkraut, dressings and salsas, miso and tamari, honey, maple syrup, and kombucha.

**Red Fire Farm**
Granby Farm Stand at 7 Carver St, Granby, MA
Montague Old Depot Gardens Farm Stand at 504 Turners Falls Road, Montague, MA
413-467-7645
thefarmers@redfirefarm.com
www.redfirefarm.com
Farm stands open daily 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Farmers’ Markets at Boston South Station, Tuesdays noon to 6 p.m.; Springfield Forest Park, Tuesdays 12:30 to 6 p.m.; Amherst Kendrick Park on Wednesdays 2 to 6 p.m.
Summer CSA Farm Shares, and Farm Stand Memberships that give discounts at our markets and stands are available now for a summer full of good food. Stands now open and stocking organic garden starts like farm-tested varieties of heirloom tomatoes, summer squashes, lettuces, edible flowers, garden annuals and more. Spring produce is ready like sweet spinach, green garlic, salad mix and asparagus. Plus the stands keep a wide array of local products, like milk, honey, maple syrup, artisan cheeses, jams and more. Come visit!
Robinson Farm
42 Jackson Road
Hardwick, MA
413-477-6988
info@robinsonfarm.org
www.robinsonfarm.org
Farm Stand open daily 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Our “Award winning” Farmstead aged cheeses (cow), grass-fed beef/veal, raw milk, Sidehill Farm yogurt, Westfield Farm goat cheese, Hardwick Sugar Shack maple syrup, honey, jams, “Real Pickle” fermented veggies, and seasonal vegetables from Stillman’s Farm. Visit our website for retail locations and restaurants, or contact us for wholesale cheese orders. New in 2013! Arpeggio, a soft, washed-rind cheese, strong aroma, beautiful finish, aged 60-120 days. Yummy! Also, starting in May we will have raw milk in glass bottles!

Sidehill Farm
58 Forget Road
Hawley, MA
413-339-0033
info@sidehillfarm.net
www.sidehillfarm.net
Our farm shop is open seven days a week, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and you can find us at the Saturday Amherst Farmers’ Market 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Raw Milk, yogurt, and beef in the farm shop. Come visit!
Yogurt and Solar Smoothies at the Amherst Market.

Simple Gifts Farm
1089 North Pleasant St
Amherst, MA
413-549-1585
simplegiftsfarm@gmail.com
simplegiftsfarmcsa.com
Farm stand open dawn to dusk. Amherst Farmers’ Market, Saturdays 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., CSA Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m to 1 p.m.
Strawberries, salad greens, spinach, radishes, bok choy, lettuce, chard, kale, maybe carrots, eggs, and pork. CSA distribution begins June 4.

Steady Lane Farm
144 Steady Lane
Ashfield, MA
413-628-4689
farmer@steadylanefarm.com
www.steadylanefarm.com
Selling from the farm anytime by appointment.
We offer 100% grass-fed beef, dry aged to perfection. All cuts are frozen in roughly one pound shrink wrapped packages, available in small or large quantities. If you are a butcher, we have fresh primal available.

Sweet Autumn Farm
180 Prospect St
Carlisle, MA
978-287-0025
sweetautumnfarmma@gmail.com
Farm Stand open Tuesdays and Thursdays 2 to 6 p.m.
Duck and chicken eggs, seedlings

Sweet Morning Farm
910 Greenfield Road
Leyden, MA
413-773-8325
laurat@crocker.com
sweet-morning-farm.blogspot.com
Pickup at the farm 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Email or call ahead to reserve items.
Farm Shares (3 sizes, Thursday pickup) and early spring crops: eggs, duck eggs, mesclun, arugula, radishes, spinach, snap peas, pak choy, turnips, kale, and lettuce. Email Laura Timmerman to sign up for our Eggs and Extras List.

The HERB FARMacy
30 Elmwood St
Salisbury, MA
978-834-7879
thymeout@theherbfarmacy.com
www.theherbfarmacy.com
Retail greenhouses open to the public everyday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Farmers’ Markets in Lexington, Tuesdays 2 to 6:30 p.m.; Marblehead, Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon; and Newburyport, Sundays 9 a.m to 1 p.m.
Over 1000 varieties of certified organic potted plants – culinary and medicinal herbs, old-fashioned flowers, heirloom veggie seedlings and native plants. We can help you get your garden growing!

Warm Colors Apiary
2 South Mill River Road
South Deerfield, MA
413-665-4513
warmcolors@verizon.net
www.warmcolorsapiary.com
Wed, Fri, and Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Varieties of Honey, beeswax candles, and beekeeping equipment and supplies.
COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

EVENTS

**Microgreens & Energy Conservation at Farming Turtles**
Thursday, May 16
Farming Turtles, Exeter, RI 5:30 p.m.
Participants will learn how this farm grows micro-greens, baby greens and mushrooms. Learn about growing wheatgrass for people and pets. Lauri Roberts will share her ongoing efforts to conserve energy.
Registration is not required.

**iFarm (Imaging For Agricultural Research and Management) Field Day**
Saturday, May 18
Tuckaway Farm, Lee, NH, 12:00pm to 6:00pm
Help and learn about documenting regenerative agricultural systems using open source technology! Folks will be gathering in Lee, NH to test many iFarm technologies and techniques, including NDVI, and Spectral analysis. There will be ample opportunity to put cameras and digital equipment in the air with balloons, kits and aircraft to document cover crop and grain trials and silvopasture treatments (forest management where grasses are being established in the understory). Stick around afterwards to share project ideas and discuss open source hardware and software and for a potluck BBQ around the big grill at the farm.
The event is free.
Please call Dorn Cox at 603-781-6030 to RSVP.

**Seeding Equipment Skills-Building**
Sunday, June 2
Blue Star Farm, Kinderhook, NY, 2:00pm to 5:00pm
Learn how farmer Sue Decker uses the low-tech vegetable European Push Seeder for carrots, beets, spinach, greens, turnips and more. Learn what seeding plates and seeder “driving” rate work best and what sort of germination rate and thinning work to expect. Attendees will watch the equipment in action, and will get to practice on a variety of seeder equipment. Findings about reliable varieties, timing each seeding and other useful production topics will be covered.
Walk-ins must arrive by 1:45pm the day-of event.
Registration Fee: $10/person and $15/two or more people per farm. Deadline noon, May 30.
To register, contact Stephanie at 585-271-1979 ext. 509 or by email at register@nofany.org or register on line at http://tinyurl.com/nofanyevents

**Demonstrating Draft Power in the Working Landscape**
Saturday and Sunday, June 15 and 16 (rain date June 22 and 23)
Merck Forest and Farmland Center, Rupert, VT, 10:00am to 4:00pm
This two-day farm festival is a collaboration between Merck Forest and Farmland Center (MFFC) and Green Mountain Draft Horse Association (GMDHA). It will showcase the importance of draft power within the working landscape. Members of the GMDHA will demonstrate how horses can be used for plowing, tilling, raking, tedding, and more. Much of the work will be based on the haying season. This event is open to everyone interested in learning about draft power for farming. MFFC staff will lead children’s activities related to draft power, our horses, and farm.
This event is free to the public.
Contact 802.394.7836 or visit www.merckforest.org for more information.
**Workshop Series on Gardening and Homesteading**  
Wild Browse Farm, Wendell, MA, 10:00am to 1:00pm

**Gardening Series**  
June 8, August 17, and October 12  
Learn the basics of Organic Gardening through the seasons with lecture, discussion, and hands-on experience.

**Homesteading-Skills Series**  
May 18-Fruits  
July 14-Poultry  
September 21-Harvest and Preservation  
November 9-The Homestead Woodlot

Workshops led by Pru Smith and Sharon Gensler and held at Wild Browse Farm and Sustainability Center. All workshops will be hands-on.  
Fee schedule: $25.00/ class $100 full series  
Space permitting, no one will be turned away for lack of cash. Barter will be considered.  
Register/more info. 978-544-6347 (before 9 pm) or wildbrowse@yahoo.com

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**REC Spring Garden Festival & Plant Sale**  
Join us on Saturday May 18th between 10:00-4:00 to kick off the growing season and celebrate spring! The event will be held at the REC YouthGROW farm on 63 Oread St Worcester, MA 01610. Enjoy free gardening workshops, music, food, and a fun assortment of children’s activities. Libby the Library Express will team up with the REC Mobile Farmers Market to provide lots of hands on learning opportunities for both kids and adults. To pre-order seedlings before the event, visit recworcester.org. Become an REC member for a 20% seedling discount!  
Fore more information, visit: www.recworcester.org, email: ugrow@recworcester.org, or call: 508-753-2303.
Northeast Organic Farming Association
39th annual Summer Conference
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA
August 9-11, 2013

- Over 200 workshops on farming, gardening, land care, nutrition, food politics and more!
- Five pre-conferences: bees, flowers, poultry, profitability and soils!
- Over 100 exhibitors, live entertainment, children’s and teen conference, country fair, organic meals, dorms or camping!
- Keynote address by Atina Diffley: Minnesota organic farmer, land-use advocate, author and educator.
- Debate: Is organic certification right for you?

www.nofasummerconference.org

Save the date!
Thank you to Spring 2013 Appeal donors in April

Neil Anders
John Blanchard
Sherrill A Conna & Mary Lou Conna
Maria Diaz
Jane Duderstadt
Elizabeth Jenewin
Jack Kittredge & Julie Rawson

John La Stella
Margaret A Lynch
Don MacFarlane
Adaela McLaughlin
Richard McNulty
Rachel Onuf
Janet Penn
Casey Ravenhurst
Pamella Saffer

Ros & Dan Smythe
Anthony Walker
Portia Weiskel
Susan Wheeler
Seth Wilkinson

New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in April

Virginia Adams and Diane Johns
Jeremy Barker-Plotkin
Jane Bindley
Gwen Blodgett
Kayleigh Boyle
Tim Buckalew
Andrew Castronovo
Claire Chang and John Ward
Jennifer Collins
Gordon and Christine Cruz
Lenora Deslandes
Down Island Farm, LLC
Jessica Duphily
Kim Erslev
Andrew Ferry
Alden Fish
Katherine Fisher
Peter Friedland
Aleisha Gibbons
Susan Goldwitz
Martine Gougault
Anna Hanchett
Christie Higginbottom

Susanna Hilfer
Rebeka Hoffman
Shelby Howland
Wendy Jensen
Shannon Johnson
Elizabeth Johnson
David Fontaine & Cherie,
Becky, Joey Kerxhalli
Deirdre M. Kimball
Carol Koury
Andrea Lasman
Carol Laurin
Brian Link
Erin & Daniel Matica
Daniel McCullen
Michael McManmon
Kimberly Miller
Vicki Mills
Kathy Morris & Larry Siegel
Piper Mount
Michele Mutschler
Chris Noon
Andrew Pollock
Sally & Steve Pullen
Amy Pulley & Alice Cozzolino
Andrew Mark Quillen

Laura Reiner
Ray & Pamela Robinson
Daniel Rosenberg & Addie
Rose Holland
Michael Rozyne
Attila Sala
Kenneth Santos
Hale Sofia Schatz
Dorothy Siudut
Tucker Smith
Suzanne Smith
Daphne T Stevens
Pauliina Swartz
Jenna Sweeney
Meg Taylor and Andrew Gould
The Turkish Kitchen
Andrew Van Assche
Valerie Walton & Tad Hitchcock
Susan Winkler
Martha Gilpatrick Wolf
Don Zasada
Travis Zimmerman
NOFA/Mass Workshops

Placing for Pollinators
Sunday, May 19; 1:00pm to 2:30pm
Leland Street Community Garden, Jamaica Plain, MA
Cost: $24 for NOFA Members; $31 for Non-Members
The majority of human food depends on insect pollinators for its existence. Numerous species of bees, flies, and other flying insects spread pollen from flower to flower and increase fruit yields of many crops. In the past decade, colony collapse disorder among honeybee populations has brought attention to the fragility of the insect world - and indeed the greater ecosystem - upon which we depend for our food. This workshop will provide an overview of common garden pollinators and a variety of plants that attract and sustain them. Instructor: Sadie Richards

Making Simple Cheeses
Saturday, May 25; 9:00am to 3:00pm
Oake Knoll Ayrshires at Lawton’s Family Farm, Foxborough, MA
Cost: $65 NOFA members; $70 non-members
This workshop provides a general understanding of how milk is made into cheese and what to look for when selecting milk for cheese-making. The workshop is primarily hands-on, demonstrating what the milk and curds and cheese look like at each step of the process. Learn to diagnose and fix problems during the process to produce delicious cheeses, even if things don’t come out precisely as intended. Instructor: Terri Lawton

Managing a Horse-Powered CSA
Sunday, May 26; 1:00pm to 5:00pm
Natural Roots Farm, Conway, MA
Cost: $30 NOFA members; $38 non-members
Natural Roots Farm relies exclusively on horse-power to run a 200-member CSA and to harvest hay and timber. Participants will see live horse-power demonstrations on a variety of traditional and recently innovated horse-drawn implements and will learn how these practices are used in the farm’s vegetable production systems. Instructor: David Fisher

Chickens and the Sustainable Farm
Saturday, June 8; 9:00am to 1:00pm
Golden Oak Farm, Hatfield, MA
Cost: $25 NOFA members; $31 non-members
Participants will learn to select breeds; set up a brooder; raise day-old chicks; deal with predator pressure; improve pasture grass and forbs; and provide adequate housing, feed, and supplementation. Farm systems covered include waterers and feeders; deep litter; chicken tractors; the Salatin pen; the mobile coop; fencing; rotational grazing; and butchering. Discussion will include how the animals are integral to the farm and how all parts of the farm depend on the others. Handouts provided. Instructors: Pam Raymond and David Turner

Raising Grazers with Grain-fed Animals
Saturday, June 22; 2:00pm to 5:00pm
Simple Gifts Farm, North Amherst, MA
Cost: $25 NOFA members; $31 non-members
This workshop helps producers plan how to integrate multiple livestock species into a whole farm system. While

For info on NOFA/Mass Statewide Education Events, contact Ben Grosscup, 413-658-5374. By email, ben.grosscup@nofamass.org

For info on NOFA/Mass Boston-Area Events, contact Drew Love, 330-801-0389, or drew@nofamass.org
the primary focus of this farm is vegetable production, livestock make crucial contributions to the whole of the farm. This workshop will cover scale thresholds that make animal operations an appropriate size relative to labor input, market potential, and husbandry needs. Each species will be considered for its needs, its economic value, as well as its contribution to overall farm functioning. The presentation focuses on synergies between grazing animals (cattle and sheep) and grain-fed animals (chickens and pigs), using annual cover crops as forage, creating a farm budget, managing production, and scheduling slaughter dates. Marketing discussion will present combined approach to CSA, direct retail, farmers’ market, and restaurants. Instructor: Dave Tepfer

Certified Organic Poultry, Pigs, Steers, and Worms
Saturday, July 27; 10:00am to 3:00pm
Many Hands Organic Farm, Barre, MA
Cost: $30 NOFA members; $38 non-members
In this workshop, Julie will discuss and participants will see two sizes of meat birds, layers, brand new turkeys, pigs, cows, and worms. Participants will learn about the management of all these species and their relationships to each other on this tightly organized and rotated farm system, which includes 2 ½ acres of vegetables and 1 acre of orchard. The workshop covers feeds, housing, pasturing, woods management, rotations with crops, sprouted grains, brooding, marketing, and finances. Participants have the opportunity to help slaughter some chickens. Instructor: Julie Rawson

100% Grass-Fed Seasonal Raw Milk Dairy
Saturday, August 24; 2:00pm to 5:00pm
Blue Hill Farm, Great Barrington, MA
Cost: $25 NOFA members; $31 non-members
The workshop will cover the basics of raw milk production, seasonal dairy management, and intensive rotational grazing, as well as fencing options and water systems for cows and calves. Participants will meet at Blue Hill Farm and view all aspects of milk production from the milking machines to the pastures. Instructor: Sean Stanton

Greenleaf Foundation
Making Small Grants to non-profit organizations that promote organic farming and gardening and community development throughout New England.
For more information please contact:
Greenleaf Foundation
P.O. Box 788, Philmont, NY 12565