Northeast Organic Farming Association/ Massachusetts Chapter

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From the Editor

By Nicole Belanger
NOFA/Mass Public Relations Coordinator

As the peaches ripen and bit by bit the days get shorter, our thoughts turn to how we can store the summer’s abundance and extend the season. Reflecting on what we might do differently next time, we are also reminded of what we’ve learned over the years.

Longtime gardener and NOFA/Mass member Christie Higginbottom grew up gardening with her parents in central MA. She shared those experiences as an educator and gained new ones working at Old Sturbridge Village for many years. In this issue, Christie tells us her unique story and all about her tried and true tips for preparing the garden for the cold.

NOFA/Mass Executive Director and longtime organic farmer Julie Rawson also reflects on a rekindled respect for comfrey and its diverse uses. (Turns out the chickens love it!).

Those interested in the timely topic of policy will find much information in two articles in this issue by Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass’ Policy Director. Jack provides important updates and calls for comments on the controversial Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). (The comment period for which has been extended until Nov 15). Jack also covers the latest on GMO labeling bills here in Massachusetts.

Hope you enjoy!
Relearning to Love Comfrey

By Julie Rawson
NOFA/Mass Education Director and Farmer at Many Hands Organic Farm

When we moved to our land in 1980, I immediately bought a few comfrey plants, as I had read in my “pre-returning to the land” period – that wonderful time when I had plenty of time to read before actually being out there slogging every day – that comfrey was a miracle plant. And then, for the better part of 30 years I just let it grow and multiply. Every once in awhile I would cut some and feed it to the chickens, but there was, sometime in that span of years, a comfrey scare, that it was somehow bad for you.

The culprit, it seems, is the pyrrolizidine alkaloids that when ingested in extremely large doses over an extended period of time can cause liver damage. While researching for this article I came upon one reference from Dr. James Duke that suggested that the amount of these harmful alkaloids in 1 bottle of beer is equal to about 100 cups of comfrey tea. Perhaps that can put this all in perspective.

It was Harvery Ussery (www.themodernhomestead.us) at the NOFA/Mass Advanced Growers Seminar 2 or 3 years ago who reminded me that this plant’s amazing versatility and value has served intelligent people of the land for centuries. Comfrey is also known as bruisewort, knitback, knitbone, boneset, slippery root, bruisewort, ass ear, and blackwort. Comfrey contains ample quantities of Tannins, Rosmarinic acid (Allantoin (which encourages the rapid growth of cells), Steroidal saponins Mucilage, Inulin, Gum, Carotene, Glycosides, Sugars, Beta-sitoserol, Triterpinoids, Vitamins B 12, A, & C, silicon, calcium, potassium phosphorous, iron, iodine, zinc and other traces.

Comfrey is claimed to contain 22-31% protein and to have produced 140 tons of biomass per acre in the world record. It is the greatest producer of vegetable protein and fastest protein-builder on earth. Acre for acre it produces 20 times more protein than soybeans. Since the 80s it has been suppressed in the US, but it is grown throughout the rest of the world for animal feed, from ruminants to single stomach large animals, poultry, and earthworms.

It is the queen of multi-functional plants, and it spreads by root division; it will spread very rapidly and is hard to get rid of. Sheet mulch it out if necessary, or build a hot compost pile on top of it. It is a beneficial insect attractor, wound healer; enormous root system and dynamic mineral accumulator; and delivers these minerals to its leaves, which are then available for our use. It is a biomass accumulator, and you can grow it for a mulch plant.

Chickens love comfrey. It feeds the soil more than anything else, and it creates a lot of sloughing material into the soil all the time. There will be lots of earthworms around it. It is used to rebuild tissue, muscle, tendons and bones. Comfrey proliferates cell division and cell growth. One resource person uses comfrey in his salads in the early spring.

So enough background... As our comfrey started to escape into our rhubarb, I started to get into the habit of yanking a plant (as much as I could get) of comfrey each day to feed to the baby meat birds and turkeys this summer. I quickly was able to make a few interesting observations. The baby birds flocked to it and ate it ravenously – chose it over their bagged, organic feed, their daily dirt ration, and the sprouted grains. So I brought more. And then their infant health skyrocketed. To date (6 weeks later) we have lost 2 of our 250 meat birds and 1 of our 100 turkeys – our best record ever. They are fat and sassy and very active – pictures of poultry health. They are now out on pasture, and we are harvesting armfuls of comfrey every day and delivering it to them – and also to the laying hens, who are laying like gangbusters. And the comfrey is cranking along – still trying to take over the rhubarb, and proliferating in all the grassy edges of the farm. We also moved it under our fruit trees after the Harvey event, and have a nice stand of it all over in the orchard.

After doing today’s research I have determined to use comfrey yet more on the farm, as mulch for starters, and perhaps to start branching out and feeding it to the cows and pigs. We are now drinking comfrey tea every day, and for two years we have been making a nice comfrey salve that we use liberally around here and also sell. As is often the case, it seems that the best things in life are free!
Many Hands Comfrey Salve recipe

1 quart olive oil
2 cups dried comfrey leaf
4 oz beeswax- by weight
25 drops lavender oil
4 Vitamin E capsules

• Combine olive oil and comfrey leaf and heat at a very low temperature (we put it on the far right of the woodstove overnight)

• Strain the comfrey out of the oil. Combine the infused olive oil and beeswax and heat slowly until beeswax melts.

• Remove from heat; add lavender oil and Vitamin E.

Some internet resources that helped me put together this article:
• Rose Mountain Herbs
• Coe’s Comfrey
• Permies.com
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
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
Homesteading Observations: Preservation Kitchen!

By Sharon Gensler
NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

Here it is September already, a turning point month here on the homestead. The deep green of high summer is passing, and we’re beginning to see more color changes with the yellows and golds emerging. My thoughts turn to making sure as much as possible gets preserved and planning for the upcoming cold weather.

In New Orleans, where I visit my baby brother, there is a place in the French Quarter called Preservation Hall where amazing jazz is played. That’s what I’ve been thinking it’s like around here. It is our “Preservation Kitchen” where I’m really jazzed getting all the food squirreled away.

I’ve been freezing, canning, dehydrating and pickling all summer, but now it’s like a non-stop production line; the pressure is on. I have to keep to a rigorous schedule so that I can balance the freshness of the harvest with what I’m capable of preserving in a day. Whew, but who’s complaining? Surely, not me, especially come deep snow and cold when I am able to taste and benefit from the sunshine and warmth of summer.

I am also thankful that most crops are on their own schedule too. They all aren’t maturing at the same time. Strawberries in June followed by black raspberries, blueberries and red raspberries. It’s great for having a succession of fresh fruit on my cereal and for having the time to preserve each in turn. The tree fruit start in August and will be staggered thru November. The first big pesto making and freezing fits in early summer. It’s also a good time to take a short vacation!

The garlic gets pulled in late July/early August and I have time to dry and move them before the onions need that space. Then it’s tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, green beans and summer squash maturing together and in succession with some wiggle room for harvest. I try to leave the greens like kale and collards until late fall when nights are colder. They become much sweeter after the frost plus I have more time to deal with them then.

I wrote this draft a couple days ago, and now I’m noticing that I may have to re-think my timetable. The apples aren’t supposed to be ripe yet! With the changeable weather patterns and the increased overall heat, both fruit and vegetables are adapting faster than I am. Good reminder not to get stuck in the past. Trying to adapt my thinking and activities to these changes is a challenge.

The other focus in September is winter planning - how and when to remove the old plants and plant cover crops; when to under-sow some oats & field peas beneath the tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos and other tall crops; what soil amendments need to be added.

So friends, it’s not too late to stock-up on some summer for your own family. Read the latest The Natural Farmer (TNF) and learn the multitude of ways to save that sunshine. Don’t have the TNF? Renew or join NOFA/Mass now so you don’t miss out. Hope you get as jazzed as me in your own Preservation Kitchen!
Run or Walk with Team NOFA/Mass on November 3rd in Lexington

NOFA/Mass members, families and friends are coming together for a great cause and you’re invited! Join “TEAM NOFA/MASS: Run for Organic Food for All” at the 18th Annual Genesis Battlegreen Run, a 10k/5k run and 5k walk, to be held on Sunday, November 3 in Lexington at 12pm.

Funds raised by the team will support NOFA/Mass’ policy initiatives, which educate consumers, farmers and policymakers on the most pressing agricultural and food issues of our day. We are organizing our community to advocate for laws and regulations that support local Massachusetts farmers, allow consumers access to high quality, humanely raised food and build a transparent food system that fully labels ingredients – most urgently GMOs!

To join TEAM NOFA/Mass as a runner or walker, sign up at http://www.razoo.com/team/Nofa-Mass-Run. From there, you will be directed to register for the run (a $25 registration fee is required.) Runners and walkers are asked to pledge to raise $200, $350 or $500. All participants who raise $200 or more and register by October 1 will receive a free t-shirt!

THEN let your friends, family and co-workers know that you’re on the team and encourage them to sponsor your efforts! All donations can be accepted online, and you can link to your own personal fundraising page from your Facebook account or email.

Not able to join as a runner or walker? Consider supporting a team member! Learn more about doing so at http://www.razoo.com/team/Nofa-Mass-Run

We welcome everyone – runners, walkers, supporters and spectators alike – to join us for a beautiful, brisk fall day, November 3. We’ll celebrate with a NOFA/Mass style potluck party after the run.

See you in Lexington! GO TEAM NOFA/Mass!
Outreach Updates

By Sharon Gensler NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

Hi outreach volunteers, future volunteers and interested members!
Below is a list of upcoming events that we’ve been invited to attend. Do any interest you? If so, please contact me. We could use your help. You’ll have fun representing NOFA and get credit for doing good work!
See more information about volunteering on our website: nofamass.org/programs/nofamass-outreach

Sept 19: The Big E - West Springfield
Sept 22: Tattersall Farm Day - Havenhill
Sept 27: Harvest New England- Sturbridge
Oct 5 & 6: Garlic & Arts- N. Orange
Oct 6: Boston Local Foods Festival- Greenway
Oct 23 & 24: Sustainability Fair and Food Day events- Worcester
Oct 26 & 27: Connecting for Change- New Bedford

A big THANKS goes out to our most recent helpers: Pam Raymond, David Turner, Mary DeBlois, Wendy Mainardi, Midori Evans, plus all of the NOFA/Mass Board and Staff members who helped out at the Summer Conference. Speaking of which, it was great talking with all of you who stopped by the table. I love talking with members and discussing your interests and views of how NOFA/Mass is doing.

Let us take care of your farming needs!

PRODUCE PRODUCTION
• Cover Crop Management
• Decomposition
• Disease Control
• Custom Blend Fall Nutrient Fertilizers

See our web site for our Newest Catalog and Full Details on our Products and Services

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.
NOFA/Mass Winter Conference Updates

By Cathleen O'Keefe, NOFA/Mass Winter Conference Coordinator

This year the NOFA/Mass Organic Land Care (OLC) program will hold its annual Lawn and Turf Course at the Winter Conference, January 11, 2014 at Worcester State University. Veteran instructors Chip Osborne and Bernadette Giblin - along with a host of others - will offer practical, applicable information about organic lawn and turf management techniques.

Registration for the Lawn and Turf Course and the Winter Conference opens on October 15. In addition to the OLC workshops, this year's Winter Conference will offer a diverse line-up of more than 60 workshops, an all-day seminar and keynote by Mark Shepard, and ongoing exhibits by numerous regional vendors. The children’s conference (for ages 3-12) provides lively and interactive education for kids. Discounts are available for certified organic growers, NOFA members, students, children and teens, and groups of five or more attendees. An all-organic catered lunch will be available for purchase.

Mark Shepard, perennial agriculture and permaculture design expert, will offer a keynote and all-day seminar. A proponent of restoration agriculture, Shepard questions the easy availability of future staple crops, particularly in urban population centers. His work as a permaculture design expert, as well as his experience in water conservation and land restoration, will inform both his keynote speech and his three accompanying workshop sessions.

Shepard’s seminar will consist of the following sessions:

**Session 1: Introduction to Restoration Agriculture/ Farm-scale Permaculture**
The ecosystems of our planet are seriously degraded, and most are in steep decline. Forests, prairies, and savannas worldwide have been cut, burned, and plowed to make way for humankind. Clean air, pure water and rich, fertile soil are all provided by healthy ecological systems. The need for ecological restoration - for a way to rejuvenate our tired, depleted farmscapes - is greater than ever before.

At the same time, the need for reliable food crops is increasing dramatically. Around the world, the staple foods of choice are either annual grains or legumes, both of which require disturbed soils in order to grow. Learn how we can accomplish both ecological restoration and agricultural production of staple carbohydrates and proteins by imitating perennial ecosystems with productive agricultural practices.

**Session 2: MAKS: The Modified American Keyline System: Earth-shaping to manage your water resources**
Plants can survive in all climates, with all manner of weather extremes and soil deficiencies, but no plant can survive without water. Learn how to manage your water resources by using the keyline design system. Keyline design uses simple, inexpensive earth shaping and cultivation techniques to optimize water distribution on the farm. Keyline design spreads water from valleys to ridges, encourages water penetration into the soil, increases soil organic matter, and increases the depth of humic layers. In addition, keyline design sequesters atmospheric carbon more rapidly than any other known technique.

**Session 3: Putting it all together: The step-by-step restoration agriculture process**
Learn a systematic approach to developing a restoration agriculture farm. Know your ecological neighborhood, and design for water optimization. Establish wooded polycultures, build fences and roads, establish agroforestry practices, and then manage for eternity.
NOFA/Mass Features Chris Masterjohn, from Weston A. Price Foundation, at October 24 Seminar

By Ben Grosscup, NOFA/Mass Education Events Organizer

NOFA/Mass is collaborating with the Marion Institute to offer a pre-conference seminar, “Fat-Soluble Vitamins in Traditional Diets: Nutrient-Dense Animal Foods as the Keys to Vibrant Health,” on October 24, from 9:00am to 5:00pm, ahead of the 9th annual Connecting for Change Conference. The event will be held at the Ocean Explorium in New Bedford, MA.

The presenter, Chris Masterjohn, holds a PhD in Nutritional Sciences and writes regularly for the journal of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Wise Traditions. He will explain how his research shows that fat-soluble vitamins (e.g., A, D, and K), which are most abundant in foods from animals pastured on healthy soils and from wild caught seafood, are crucial for fostering human health. The emphasis of his approach to nutrition is to highlight how these vitamins interact with each other in the form of whole foods.

The seminar covers a range of topics including the role of these vitamins in supporting the body against disease, unpacking current attacks on wholesome animal foods, creating grassroots initiatives to support nutrient-dense foods, understanding the role of soil fertility in creating these vitamins, and shopping for these vitamin-rich foods.

It is widely recognized that vitamin deficiencies are related to a wide range of health problems. For instance, in many countries facing extreme poverty, severe Vitamin A deficiencies are associated with blindness. In the developed world today, many doctors are prescribing Vitamin D supplements to people to address a range of health problems.

But Masterjohn is raising questions about mainstream nutrition, which is loudest in discussions on these issues. He says a key part of what is misguided in the mainstream approach to the relationship between vitamins and health is thinking about the nutritional benefits of each vitamin in isolation from one another. This way of thinking focuses on furnishing vitamins as isolated supplements rather than on producing high quality foods from well-mineralized soils. But the latter, he maintains, offers the best nutritional benefits. In a recent article on the role of fat-soluble vitamins in the diet, Masterjohn concludes:

It is clearly time to move beyond viewing each vitamin in isolation. . . . At the level of scientific research, a study about one vitamin can easily come to false conclusions unless it takes into account its interactions with all the others. We should reverently and humbly bow before the complexity of these interactions, realizing how little we know and recognizing that we are always learning. At the level of personal health, these interactions emphasize the need to consume a well-rounded, nutrient-dense diet. . . . The fat-soluble vitamins work most safely and effectively when we obtain them from natural foods within the context of a diet rich in all their synergistic partners. (“Nutritional Adjuncts to the Fat-Soluble Vitamins” in Wise Traditions, January 28, 2013)

Registration for the seminar includes an organic lunch catered by Chef Rosa Galeno, featuring beef bone broth with root vegetables, sourdough bread, butter, salad greens, vinegar peppers, meat, potatoes, and baked apple.

Tickets for the Chris Masterjohn seminar are available online at http://bit.ly/164VAvh. The cost of registration is $85/NOFA Member; $106/Non-member if signed up by October 10.

From October 25-27 in New Bedford, MA, the Connecting for Change conference, sponsored by the Marion Institute, will feature keynote speakers and over 40 workshops addressing food systems change along with myriad other topics. On Friday, October 25th, best-selling author, environmentalist, and “matriarch of the eat-locally-think-globally food movement”, Joan Gussow, will be speaking. Additionally, Tanya Fields from the Bronx, dubbed the “eco-warrior”, will be holding a workshop on growing food in urban areas and will give her keynote address on Sunday, October 27. For more details and to register, visit www.connectingforchange.org.
How I Made My Home Pool Non-toxic

By Luke Pryjma, NOFA/Mass Winter Conference Workshop Coordinator

Our skin is one of our most sensitive organs. The dangers of sun exposure with and without sunscreen have been heatedly debated. The chemicals in sunscreen may do more harm than the rays they protect us from. Organic cotton, or better yet organic hemp, is supposed to not only feel better, but be healthier for our skin because less chemicals are used to grow and process it.

In my quest to find the most balanced health for my family and myself, I have taken aim at all things unhealthy we come in contact with. My parent’s chlorine-based pool was in my sights. From my study of soil and human health, I know that more than a few parts per million of chlorine prevents optimal health. In the past, the fact that bugs and frogs died so easily in it didn’t bother me. Now I know our skin is one of our most sensitive organs and it is the barrier to chlorine.

For me and my microbes, this didn’t sit well. We looked for alternatives. I have a history of biting off too ambitious permaculture type projects that always have rough unresolved quirks. (The rocket-mass stove that is supposed to heat my greenhouse is one such project.) I wanted a “green” living pool but realistically the trial and error involved in perfecting that project would have gotten me outcasted from my family. As it is, my mom thinks a three and a half inch lawn is unbearably too long. So I looked into saline pools. I was just about to commit to saline when I found out that the cleaning mechanism is once again chlorine. Sodium and chlorine break apart in solution and the chlorine disinfects.

What I really wanted was balanced water like balanced soil. Pathogens, pioneers of imbalances, are kept in check by the balanced available mineral solution. It would be like swimming in water that improved your health! Because plant, soil, animal and human are 90% dependent on very similar microbial health, a balance for them would be healthy for us.

I wasn’t about to rip out the plastic liner, clay line the pool, plant the edges and let life filter it... yet. Luckily, I came across Eco-Smarte pools, an American made company whose system is based off of an old NASA technology. Astronauts needed a reliable source of clean drinking water. NASA invented a way to oxidize and ionize the water as it is circulated. It is run on low voltage DC current. The current separates the water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen and the oxygen oxidizes the water that flows past it. Every ten days, I switch the system to ionize. The current charges tiny copper plates and copper ions ionize the water. From my studies, copper at .4 ppm -.8 ppm, the level maintained in my Eco-Smarte pool, is safe and may be beneficial. Oxidizing takes care of any bacteria, algae and other organic matter. Ionizing takes care of viruses.

Teddy Bear Pools of Chicopee, the company who installed my affordable Eco-Smarte system, told me that if they want to make money they sell salt or chlorine. My Eco-Smarte system has very few inputs. I use a little citric acid to lower the pH or baking soda to raise it (6.8 - 7.2 range). Once a year I’ll have to check the calcium and alkalinity. It is simple. I know it is not the living, health improving pool of my dreams, but my family is happy with the clean pool that doesn’t smell chlorine-y, and I am happy my skin can swim without worry. The frogs and bugs can be scooped out alive.
Milk and Honey Herbs Grows

Suzy Konecky, NOFA/ Mass Beginning Farmer Coordinator

Jade Alicandro is a Community Herbalist growing her own farm business. She is a participant in the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Journeyperson Program this year as she builds Milk & Honey Herbs, her medicinal plant nursery.

Jade studied in the Wise Woman Tradition of Herbalism; she has been working with herbs and medicinal plants for years, but it now starting out on the full journey of her own farm. As a participant in the Journeyperson program, she works with her mentor farmer, Jonathan Bates of Food Forest Farm. He grows perennial vegetables such as sea kale, sunchoke, hog peanut, and paw paw. Jonathan and Jade have worked closely together this spring as she has been working out the details of starting her own operation.

Plant propagation has been one of the biggest topics that Jade and Jonathan have discussed, specifically with regards to timing of potting plants up. “We talk about the nitty gritty sort of details,” says Jade. That’s what having a mentor is for - someone who can help you figure out the answers to the small persistent questions, and who has been through the various trials and tribulations that you are tackling.

Another learning goal of Jade’s is to get more comfortable shipping plants, since she will start shipping plants herself next spring. Jonathan ships a lot of plants, mostly reusing collected boxes. In order to ship a live plant, he wraps the pot tightly in plastic so the soil doesn’t spill. The real trick to shipping plants Jade says, is to pack the box super tight so that when it moves through transport the leaves don’t get crushed.

In the Beginning Farmer Journeyperson program, mentors and mentees can communicate using whatever methods work best for them. Jonathan and Jade both have 11 month old babies, so it is difficult for them to find time to connect over the phone, but Jade sends questions to Jonathan over email. The business of running a nursery is very seasonal; fall and spring are the busy times for propagation. This year, during the busy time of April and May, Jade worked with Jonathan at least one day per week helping him fill orders and propagate the plants. Jade has learned from Jonathan how to get a better sense of timing. Says Jade, “in terms of how early in the spring to pot things up and keep them growing slowly... It gave me some perspective of when to really start working.” As I have talked with the beginning farmers participating in the Journeyperson and Mentorship programs this year, a thematic learning experience that they seem to share is gaining a sense of timing from their mentors.

Jade is planning for how to fill orders next year. Jonathan has his customers do pre-orders in the winter. Using this method, the orders come in early enough to buy soil and pots, etc. This follows a similar financing scheme as the CSA model, with the funds coming in up front. Jade says that she is toying with that model; there are nuances of different systems and she is glad to have a first hand experience with Jonathan’s model.

In addition to starting her nursery, Jade makes hand-crafted herbal products that she sells through her website and local CSAs. She also leads herb walks and herbal classes in the Pioneer Valley region. Jade also offers herbal consultations in which she discusses health concerns with her clients and helps them incorporate herbal products into their healing path. Finally, Jade has been offering professional gardening assistance since 2005. She works independently and with Treefrog Landscapes, Wise Ways Herbals, School Sprouts Educational Gardens. She incorporates permaculture principles into her gardening practice and enjoys helping clients develop their creative vision.

Jade and Jonathan both have thorough websites. Check them out to learn more about the great work they are doing. You can find Jade’s website at: www.milkandhoneyherbs.com and Jonathan’s at: www.permaculturenursery.com. They both have loads of information about their farms and offerings.

With any questions about the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer program, contact Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator Suzy Konecky at suzy@nofamass.org.
On Gardening & Teaching: Turning Up the Soil & Putting the Garden to Bed

By Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass PR Director and Newsletter Editor

Christie Higginbottom’s work as a gardener and teacher spans decades. Growing up with a thriving victory garden and parents who enthusiastically tended garden space in every home in which they lived, it is a given for Christie that every home’s landscape should include a plot for food.

As an adult she studied education, initially teaching high school literature. When she decided to stay home and raise her children, they spent a lot of time in the family garden. In the early 1980s, her interests in teaching and gardening found a comfortable connection when she began to work at Old Sturbridge Village (OSV). There she tended the gardens as a costumed educator, answering the questions of museum attendees of all ages.

At OSV she also coordinated special symposia on various historic horticultural topics, working with consultants and authors to maintain the gardens and engage the public in thinking about historical and modern horticultural issues. Through this work she learned much she was able to put to use in her own garden, as well as in her ongoing work as an educator.

Though she retired from full-time work at OSV in 2010, she still works there seasonally two days a week. When not at OSV or in the garden with her grandchildren, she provides hands on, learner-led, education opportunities and imparts a love of gardening teaching programs for adults at Charlton’s Bay Path Adult Evening School and afterschool programs at the Tower Hill Botanical Garden. “The best teachers are learning alongside their students,” she notes. Her passion for learning rivals her love of teaching.

Past the lush green of high summer, she had just pulled out this year’s crop of onions as she showed me around her garden in early September. So many other crops were plentiful, like her dwarf heirloom apples, it was hard to believe her thoughts were turning to prepping the garden for winter. Preparing for an upcoming community class, “Putting the Garden to Bed” at Worcester’s Regional Environmental, she shared her thoughts on fall garden care and maintenance.

THE GARDEN

Rochdale is an old mill village in Leicester, a town to the west of Worcester. Here Christie gardens a 33’ x 33’ plot on her property, on which her 200 year old home is situated. Using the traditional English kitchen four-square design, Christie’s garden is divided into four parts in which like plants are grouped together - 1) brassicas 2) solanaceae (potatoes, tomatoes & eggplants) 3) roots like carrots, beets, parsnips, etc 4) aliums (onions, etc.). Each year she rotates the crops to help manage disease and insects. She has a practical and fun approach to the garden. For her “the garden is not a show place.” She wants it to look nice but doesn’t sweat perfection.

She plants cold hardy crops like Brussels sprouts, cabbage and chard, and she sometimes will plant a second crop of broccoli later in the season. As her garlic and onions come out, she’ll put in lettuce plants – protected from frost and rain with a cold frame or hoops covered with remay. She leaves the parsnips to winter over and plants her garlic in October.

Fall Garden Care

One important thing a gardener may overlook is the importance of cleaning up the garden before winter takes hold. Not only is fall a time with less going on in the garden, but clearing dead and diseased plants before winter is key to good garden hygiene.

Fall is also when she tests her soil to see what amendments are needed. Once the results are back, she finds fall an opportune time to add amendments, compensating for nutrients the garden is lacking, or too heavy in, noting that some amendments need time to break down or become less potent before the soil is ready for planting. She suggests testing the soil again before planting in the spring to see if the results are what you expected.

Compost Care

Once the garden is done producing, Christie pulls dead plants, leaving exposed the roots of some things like peas and beans, which are beneficial for the soil. She is carefully not to add to the compost weeds or plants that may have disease or insects. Some say that the bin will get hot enough to kill seeds, disease, or eggs, but as gardening is a hobby to Christie, she doesn’t pay close enough attention to the compost to guarantee.

She finds fall is also a good time to check in with the compost. If the pile is broken down and ready to be used, she suggests putting it on your garden soil before winter. Otherwise, the winter snow will melt through your pile, seeping many key nutrients into the ground underneath, a place it’s not helpful for your future food! She also will use...
completed compost in any perennials she splits and replants.

**Turn it up**

Once amendments and compost are added, Christie turns up the soil. Rather than rake out nice rows for next year, though, she leaves the soil exposed and rough. By doing so, any insects, eggs, weeds and seeds present are exposed to freeze and thaw cycles and will likely not make it through the winter. She also folds into the bed leaves from garden paths. Having planned out the prior fall and winter what will go into the beds, Christie smoothes out the rough soil come spring.

Remembering her parents’ generations growing cucumbers in milk bottles, she and her grandkids were experimenting with growing a cucumber into the shape of a honey bear container for the upcoming Leicester Harvest Fair. Inspired by the 19th century ethos of “improving the time”, Higginbottom finds joy in tinkering, keeping knowledge alive, and hard work. An enthusiasm she surely has shared, and will continue to share, with many.
Proposed Food Safety Regs Stir Farmer Anger, Especially on Water and Manure

by Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has begun “listening sessions” around the country about its proposed implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The FDA has estimated that it could cost small farms up to $13,000 annually to comply with the new regs, and the officials in attendance at these hearings have gotten quite an earful.

On August 19, in Augusta Maine, farmers told state and federal officials that: “You’re going to be putting farms out of business” despite no evidence that food safety problems have surfaced on small operations. In New Hampshire, on August 20, about 300 farmers and others attended a similar session in Hanover to voice their concerns.

Although roughly 60 percent of US farms (110,000 out of 190,000) would be exempt from the regs, because of the $500,000 gross farm income exemption in the law, many farms were concerned that the exemptions are not guaranteed and could be taken away by any FDA official on the grounds that

- the farm engages in some value-added production,
- gross farm income may exceed the threshold when all farm activities are added together, or
- an outbreak of microbial contamination has been detected on the farm.

On August 22, in Hadley, MA, Peg and John Morse of the Big Apple Farm in Wrentham, MA testified that, since they irrigate from three ponds and two wells, they thought the water testing requirements alone of the new regs could end up costing them an additional $20,000 per year.

Recent FSMA Developments & Comment Period Extension

The Summer 2013 issue of The Natural Farmer brought most NOFA members up to speed on these complex proposed regs, but several developments since that issue must be noted. First, the comment period has been extended to November 15, 2013, to give farmers and consumers more time to read, understand, and comment on the regs. Second, the FDA initially decided that these regs, despite their widespread impact on agricultural land and practices throughout the country, did not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). They have since reversed themselves and are now preparing an EIS. There is no clarity on what will happen should the environmental assessment require changes in the regs – will a new proposed rule be issued or not? But the assumption has to be that the rules currently proposed may be binding and we need to respond to them.

Lastly, although there are significant health issues with pesticide and other farm chemical use, including GMOs and glyphosate, these are specifically excluded from FSMA consideration. The Act applies only to microbial contamination.

The rest of this article will focus on the most controversial two provisions – the water and the manure regulations. (You can get more information on these two, as well as other provisions of the FSMA, at: http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/.)

Agricultural Water

FDA considers water to be “agricultural water” if it is intended to or likely to contact produce or food-contact surfaces. Examples of agricultural water include irrigation water that is directly applied to the harvestable portion of a crop, water used for preparing crop sprays, and water used for washing or cooling harvested produce.

Because the methods for detecting microbial pathogens in water are so limited, FDA is basing its proposed standards on monitoring for hazards and testing water for fecal contamination – specifically for generic *E. coli*, which FDA claims is a satisfactory indicator for determining fecal contamination.

General Water Quality Requirements

Generally, the proposed agricultural water standards require farmers to ensure that agricultural water is “safe” and “of adequate sanitary quality for its intended use.” This general requirement underpins the entire water standard.

If, through any of the scenarios discussed below, a farmer has determined or has reason to believe that the agricultural water is not safe or of adequate sanitary quality, generally the standards require the farmer to immediately discontinue use of that water on the farm. The farmer must then take action to address the water
quality problem in one of two ways:

1. **Inspect the on-farm agricultural water system components that are under the farm’s control, identify any conditions that could be causing the problem, make any necessary changes to fix the problem, and retest the water to ensure the changes were effective;** or
2. **Treat the water (see the water treatment section below).**

**Water System Inspection Requirements**
The proposed standards require a farmer to inspect his/her agricultural water system at the beginning of a growing season. In that inspection, a farmer must identify conditions that may result in hazards contaminating produce through water, and take into consideration:

- The nature of each agricultural water source (e.g., ground water or surface water);
- The extent of the farmer’s control over each source;
- The degree of protection of each source;
- Use of adjacent or nearby land; and
- The likelihood of hazards being introduced in the water by a farm upstream.

**Water Treatment Requirements**
If the water is not safe due to conditions beyond a farmer’s control, and therefore the farmer has to treat the water according to the proposed rule, then FDA suggests treating water with an antimicrobial compound. FDA notes, however, that any chemical used to treat water would need to be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency and that, presently, there is no such registration for chemical treatment of irrigation water. FDA assumes that this issue will be addressed and a new registered product created before farmers must comply with the water standards (see compliance information below).

**Water Testing Requirements**
A farmer would not be required to test his/her agricultural water if he/she:

- Uses water from public water systems and has public water system results or certificates of compliance; or
- Treats the water according to the water treatment requirements (see above).

For farmers that have to test water, FDA is proposing two numerical standards for testing:

1. **No detectible E. coli present per 100 ml of water:** This standard would apply to water used for an activity during and after harvest, water used to make agricultural teas, and water used in sprout irrigation.
2. **No more than 235 colony forming units (CFUs) generic E. coli per 100 ml for a single water sample, and a rolling geometric mean of five samples of no more than 126 CFU per 100 ml:** This standard would apply to water used for growing activities (except for sprouts) that directly contact the harvestable portion of the crop. FDA is also allowing farmers to offer an alternative to this standard (see below).

To determine whether agricultural water meets the above standards, FDA is proposing testing frequencies based on the type of agricultural water used. The most stringent testing frequencies apply to untreated surface water:

- If the untreated surface water is from a source where a “significant quantity of runoff” is likely to drain into it (e.g., a river or lake), then a farmer must test the water at least every seven days during the growing season.
- If the untreated surface water is from a source where underground aquifer water is transferred to a surface water containment in a way that minimizes runoff drainage into the containment (e.g., on-farm constructed water reservoir), then a farmer must test the water at least once each month during the growing season.

For other water sources, such as ground water, FDA is proposing that farmers test at the beginning of each growing season, and every three months thereafter during the growing season.

FDA is allowing farmers to use alternatives to requirements for testing water and taking action based on those tests when agricultural water is used during growing of covered produce (other than sprouts). Farmers are expected to provide documentation showing that the alternative method is supported by adequate scientific data indicating that the alternative would provide the same level of public health protection and would not result in adulterated produce. This alternatives option is not applicable to water used during and after harvest, water used to make agricultural teas, and water used in sprout irrigation.

**Compliance Dates**
Because the agricultural water standard is based on limited scientific evidence, because there are huge research gaps in agricultural water issues, and because the proposed standards are untenable at this time, FDA is proposing extended compliance dates for the agricultural
water standards.

For the water testing, monitoring, and associated recordkeeping requirements, FDA is proposing the following compliance dates from the time that the final Produce Rule goes into effect:
- Six years for very small businesses,
- Five years for small businesses, and
- Four years for all other farms.

FDA Needs to Hear from YOU About Agricultural Water:
If you use agricultural water, FDA needs to hear from you about how these proposed rules might impact your farm operation. See below for how to comment.

Manure and Compost

Farmers use soil amendments such as manure and compost to improve soil fertility and soil quality, and to enhance populations of beneficial microorganisms in the soil. Sustainable and organic producers in particular rely on manure and compost instead of synthetic chemicals to add fertility to their fields.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop regulations aimed at improving the safety of produce. Soil amendments such as manure have been identified as a potential vector for pathogens that may contaminate produce, and Congress required FDA to include standards for “soil amendments” when developing new regulations. In the proposed Produce Rule, FDA has developed standards directed to “biological soil amendments of animal origin” – e.g., manure and compost that includes animal waste and human waste.

In addition to requiring standards on soil amendments, Congress also specified that FDA could not propose requirements that conflict with or duplicate the requirements for certified organic production. Manure and compost are critical soil amendments in certified organic production and in sustainable farming systems, and it is important that new standards work for these types of systems. Congress also required FDA to take into consideration conservation and environmental practice standards such as those by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, which offers assistance with nutrient management and composting facilities, among other things.

Proposed Standards Directed to Manure and Compost
The requirements only apply to biological soil amendments of animal origin – including manure, bloodmeal, and fish emulsion – and human waste. They also address agricultural tea (“compost tea”). They do not apply to non-biological soil amendments (e.g., physical or chemical) and they do not apply to soil amendments of non-animal origin such as yard waste, purely vegetative matter, or shrub trimmings.

Broadly, the proposed standards seek to avoid contamination of “covered” produce by pathogens potentially present in biological soil amendments of animal origin. Generally, the proposed standards set treatment requirements for soil amendments and minimum intervals between application and harvest.

A 45-day interval is required if the amendment has been applied in a manner that minimizes the potential for contact with covered produce during or after application, and if the amendment has undergone a scientifically valid controlled composting process that satisfies the microbial standard for Salmonella and fecal coliforms.

This 45-day interval is in conflict with the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations, which do not require an interval between application and harvest for manure treated by a composting process that is consistent with NOP composting standards.

For situations that would require the 45-day interval, FDA will accept “alternative” methods if they are scientifically valid, controlled composting processes supported by adequate scientific information or data.

In the case of agricultural tea, the water used must meet the requirements of the water standards.

FDA considers a soil amendment to be untreated if it has not been processed by a scientifically valid treatment method, has been contaminated after treatment, has been recombined with an untreated amendment, or is contaminated with a hazard. FDA considers agricultural tea to be untreated if it contains an agricultural tea additive.

FDA is proposing to require a nine-month interval between application and harvest if the soil amendment is untreated and there is chance that the amendment will come into contact with covered produce after application.

This nine-month interval is in direct conflict with the National Organic Program regulations, which require a three or four-month application interval for untreated manure depending on whether the edible portion of the crop comes into contact with the soil indirectly or
directly, respectively. This proposed requirement and the 45-day interval in compost (see above) are also in direct conflict with FSMA, which requires standards not to conflict with NOP regulations.

**Additional Requirements**
FDA does not allow the use of human waste for growing covered produce, except for sewage sludge biosolids that are used according to Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

To accompany these proposed standards, FDA lays out specific recordkeeping requirements.

**What the Proposed Standards Do Not Require**
The proposed standards for biological soil amendments of animal origin do not apply to soil amendments of purely non-animal origin. Additionally, the requirements do not apply to physical or chemical soil amendments, such as synthetic fertilizers.

These standards do not apply to animal feces deposited in a field by wild or domesticated animals. Separate standards apply in that instance.

**FDA Needs to Hear from YOU About Manure and Compost:**
If you use soil amendments such as manure or compost that uses animal waste, FDA needs to hear from you about how these proposed rules might impact your farm operation.

**How to Comment**
You can comment online or by mail. For step-by-step instructions and help in commenting online, go to http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/speak-out-today/.

To comment by mail, type or hand-write your comments and mail them to this address:
*Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)*
*Food and Drug Administration*
*5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061*
*Rockville, MD 20852*

All submissions received must include the following:
- Your Name
- Your Organization (if any)
- The appropriate docket number (the agricultural water and manure and compost regs are part of the Produce Rule):
  - For the Preventive Controls Rule: FDA-2011-N-0920 and RIN 0910-AG36
  - For the Produce Rule: FDA-2011-N-0921, and RIN 0910-AG35
Big Ag Tries to Preempt State Laws on Farm Practices, GMO Labeling. Our Own Senator Elizabeth Warren Supports Preemption – Contact Her

by Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

States have long enjoyed the right to regulate food labels, farm practices (including working conditions and animal welfare), and many other activities affecting intrastate health and safety. In fact, one hundred years ago states were active “laboratories for democracy” trying out reforms before they were adopted at the federal level. Among the ideas first enshrined in state legislation were woman’s suffrage, the minimum wage, non-partisan elections, direct election of US Senators, municipal home rule, open primaries, worker’s compensation, progressive taxation, and popular recall, referendum and initiative.

Now, however, such local ways to address problems are increasingly conflicting with the corporate need for uniformity and a level national (or international) playing field. Reliable sources in Washington D.C. report that Monsanto has begun lobbying its Congressional allies to attach one or more “riders” or amendments to the 2013 Farm Bill that would preempt or prohibit states from requiring labels on genetically engineered (GE) foods.

Sure enough, an amendment to the House version of the Farm Bill, inserted under the guise of protecting interstate commerce, has passed out of the House Agricultural Committee. The amendment was initially proposed by Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) in response to a California law stating that California will allow only eggs to be sold from hens housed in cages meeting state standards. But policy analysts believe that the amendment can be used to prohibit or preempt any state GMO labeling or food safety law.

Will the King Amendment survive the Senate? No one can predict what Congress will do this fall, say analysts. But a chilling vote took place this spring. During the Farm Bill debate 73 U.S. Senators voted against the right of states to pass mandatory GE food labeling laws. Included in those voting to reject this basic democratic right was our own Senator, Elizabeth Warren!

I contacted her office right away, hoping to learn the reason for such an anti-democratic vote, and educate her about the importance of this issue and the national movement for labeling to organic farmers. I received a response from a staffer about a week later saying that the senator preferred to deal with such matters as labeling on a national level. There was no opportunity to reply that the FDA has refused to label GMOs for many years, that Monsanto has a powerful lobby and federal legislation to require labeling has gone nowhere, or to ask her if she would lead a campaign for mandatory labeling.

Given the reality of the King Amendment in the House, perhaps a call or Email to Senator Warren is in order from our members. Her phone in Washington is (202) 224-4543. To Email her, go to http://www.warren.senate.gov/ and click on the Email tab. Tell her how concerned you are about GMOs in your food, how state labeling is the only way open to you to get relief, and how you wish she would support this effort, rather than oppose it.
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.

Bear Swamp Orchard
1209B Hawley Road, Ashfield, MA
413-625-2849. apples@bearswamporchard.com
www.bearswamporchard.com
Farm is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday-Sunday from Sept. 20 to Columbus Day Weekend (Oct. 11-13). We are at the Ashfield’s Farmers’ Market every other Saturday, Sept. 27, Oct. 5, and Oct. 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At the farm: organic apples, u-pick and pre-picked, organic hard cider and sweet cider, cider vinegar, jams, jellies, and donuts. At the farmers’ market: organic hard cider, cider vinegar, jams, and jellies.

Billingsgate Farm
6 County Road, Plympton, MA
781-293-6144, farmgirl@billingsgatefarm.com
billingsgatefarm.com
Farm stand open Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Cherry tomatoes, Tomatoes, Summer Squash, Zucchini, Swiss Chard, Kale, Lettuce, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Herbs. Join us at our upcoming fall events. See our website for details.

Bird of the Hand Farm
33 School St, Sterling, MA
978-422-6217, birdofthehandfarm@gmail.com
www.birdofthehand.com
Farm stand is open Monday-Saturday 9 am to 5 p.m. for self-serve. It is a good idea to call ahead for availability or check website. Apples: $2.75/lb, seconds and drops: $1.00/lb. Varieties available: Wealthy, Gravenstein, and McIntosh. Cider available after Sept. 15. Herbs: sage, thyme, lovage, greens, parsley, valerian root, black cohosh root, plants.

Blue Heron Organic Farm
PO Box 67, Lincoln, MA
781-254-3727, farmer@blueheronfarmlincoln.com
www.blueheronfarmlincoln.com
We sell to many Boston area restaurants; please see website (click on ‘Restaurants’) for seasonal availability. The farm stand is open Friday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are at three farmers’ markets a week. Visit website for details. Please email the farmer if interested in volunteering in 2013!

First Root Farm
55 Old Bedford Road, Concord, MA
firstrootfarm@gmail.com
www.firstrootfarm.com
We have farm bucks available for use in our weekly farm stand, Saturdays 2 to 5 p.m. at First Root Farm in Concord. Buying farm bucks is like buying credit in the First Root Market. Our farm bucks come in increments of $5. You can buy as many as you want. For every $50 you spend, you get a free $5 farm buck—that’s a 10% discount on vegetables! You can redeem your farm bucks for vegetables on Saturdays (2 to 5 p.m.) at First Root Farm, 955 Lexington Road, Concord. Visit our website for more information and to buy farm bucks today. We have kale, chard, arugula, lettuce, beets, carrots, radishes, onions, garlic, potatoes, eggplant, peppers, squash, beans, broccoli, cabbage, sweet potatoes, turnips, and more!

Heritage Fields
309 Gidney 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. Pastured organic broilers (whole only).

High Meadow Farm
28 High St, Hubbardston, MA
978-928-5646, jassy.bratko@gmail.com
www.highmeadowfarms.com
Farm stand open 9 a.m. to dusk daily. Certified organic apples, 100% grass-fed beef, woodland raised pork, pure maple syrup and 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 and Ashland, Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. June-15-Oct 19. 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). Also selling at Farmers’ Markets in Florence, Wednesdays 2 to 6 p.m. and Ashfield, Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All cuts of grass-fed, organic beef and pork, including smoked cuts and sausages. Nine of the 14 adorable piglets are going to Belchertown. One or two GOS feeder piglets might still be available.

Many Hands Organic Farm  
411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA  
978-355-2853, farm@mhof.net  
www.mhof.net  
Call ahead to visit. Lard at $20/quart available October 15. Comfrey salve at $6. Garlic powder at $8. Eggs at $6/ dozen. All of our animals are pasture raised. 2013 Certified Organic CSA, pork, chicken, and turkey information is on the website. Order now for our October 20 batch of broiler chickens.

Puddingstone Organics  
121 Old Center St, Middleborough, MA  
508-946-0745, puddingstoneorganics@yahoo.com  
No website, but check us out on Facebook  
On you honor shack at farm for eggs and honey. Certified organic, AWA-approved pasture-raised eggs; honey; certified organic broilers by pre-order; vegetables available intermittently.

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 stand 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.  Heirloom tomatoes, red slicers, watermelon, peaches, peppers, summer squash, zucchini, pickling and slicing cucumbers, orange carrots, onions, many herbs. Delicious lettuce, kale and collards, Swiss chard. Candy-stripe beets, red radishes, green beans, potatoes, garlic. Fresh organic flowers. As we get to October... turnips, winter squash of many types, decorative gourds and more. Plus the stands keep a wide array of local products, like milk, honey, maple syrup, eggs, artisan cheeses, jams, and more. Paste and saucing tomatoes in bulk - visit website to order! Fall CSA memberships available online with hearty shares of greens and storage crops every other week.

Robinson Farm  
42 Jackson Road, Hardwick, MA  
413-477-6988, info@robinsonfarm.org  
www.robinsonfarm.org  
Farms stand open daily, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.  Check our website for retail locations. Also at the following Farmers’ Market: in Hardwick, Sundays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; with Crystal Creek Farm at Copley Square, Tuesdays and Fridays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; in Marblehead, Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon; and Westborough, Thursdays noon to 6 p.m. Offering our “Award winning” Farmstead aged cheeses (cow), our grass-fed beef/veal, raw milk, Sidehill Farm yogurt, Westfield Farm goat cheese, Hardwick Sugar Shack maple syrup, High Meadow Farm pork, local honey, jams, crackers, and “Real Pickle” fermented veggies.

Sidehill Farm  
58 Forget Road, Hawley, MA  
413-339-0033, info@sidehillfarm.net  
www.sidehillfarm.net  
Our farm shop is open year-round, 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 from grass-fed cows in the farm shop. Come visit! Yogurt and Solar Smoothies at the Amherst Market.

Small Ones Farm  
416 Bay Road, Amherst, MA  
413-253-6788, smallonesfarm@att.net  
www.smallonesfarm.com  
Farm stand is open daily from 9 a.m. to dusk in front of the farmhouse at 416 Bay Road, Amherst.  We will be open through the fall.  We will have apples, pears, our apple cider, our apple cider vinegar, fall raspberries, and apple pies.  All CSA members receive an e-newsletter with farm updates and recipes; and members have access to our farm shop, which offers our other farm products (e.g., cider, vinegar, eggs, garlic and pumpkins) as well as other local products (e.g., honey).  Check our website for more information and to sign up.

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, sweet potatoes, tomatillos, eggplants, garlic, peppers, radishes, beets, and herbs.

Turner Farms Maple Syrup  
25 Phillips Road, South Egremont, MA  
413-528-5710, tfmsyrup@gmail.com  
www.turnerfarmsmaplesyrup.com  
Open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. 7 days a week.  We have 100% pure maple syrup available in sizes ranging from 3.4 oz to 5 gallons.  We are now also offering pure honey.
EVENTS

Learn from a life long farmer’s understanding and first hand experiences utilizing a Biological Approach to crop production. Dan Kittredge, Executive Director of the Bionutrient Food Association (www.bionutrient.org), a tax-exempt charitable organization, will present multiple free introductory lectures and 2-session workshops on Bionutrient Rich Crop Production, $150.00, with scholarship funds available for Farmers. Free introductory lectures on September 24, Westminster; Sept 25, Byfield; & Sept 26, Harvard. For more information, please visit: http://www.bionutrient.org/events or contact Gary Neves, course administrator, by cell: 774-573-6804 or email gary@bionutrient.org.

GMO Labeling Lobby Day
Wednesday, September 25th
Massachusetts State House, Boston, MA

Following a briefing and buffet lunch with legislators, the public is invited to meet with legislators starting at 12:45pm to explain why this issue is important. We expect that to take less than two hours. We plan a conference call on lobbying training/briefing the week before Lobby Day with a current lobbyist and a former state rep.

If you would like to participate, please contact NOFA/Mass Policy Director Jack Kittredge at jack@nofamass.org or (978) 355-2853.

Boston Local Food Festival
Sunday, October 6 – 11am to 5pm
The Greenway, Boston, MA
A zero waste, FREE festival celebrating the virtues of eating local food sourced from the Boston area, Massachusetts, and New England. The festival features freshly harvested produce and seafood, delicious dishes created with local ingredients and take-away from Made in Massachusetts producers, and local craft beer, mead, and wine tastings. Festival-goers can engage with farmers, chefs and entrepreneurs, learn from exhibits and demonstrations about gardening, cooking, nutrition, health and exercise while enjoying art and festive music.

For more information: http://bostonlocalfoodfestival.com

2013 USBI North American Biochar Symposium
Sunday October 13 - Wednesday October 16 (with additional events)
UMass Amherst Campus Center
There couldn’t be a more exciting time to join 400 colleagues for a biochar conference. Interest and investment is growing exponentially as growers, scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs worldwide experience the remarkable properties and benefits of biochar as a soil conditioner for agriculture, ecosystem restoration and wastewater/soil remediation.
To register, visit www.symposium2013.pvbichar.org/register. Cost varies, with low student rates and options for 1-day, 2-day and full conference admission $135-$475 with scholarships available. For more info, contact Karen Ribeiro, conference director, karen@pvbiochar.org
7th Annual Slow Food Gala
Thursday, October 17 6:30pm-9:30pm (please register by October 9th)
Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross
The Regional Environmental Council (REC) invites you to share a special meal of delicious, local, sustainably produced food to support the REC’s work. All proceeds will benefit the REC’s work to build healthy and sustainable communities in Worcester and beyond. We employ 32 teens each year to grow organic food in the city; coordinate a growing network of 60 community and school gardens; & provide farmers’ markets 6 days each week from June- October.
For more info, visit http://www.recworcester.org or call 508.799.9139 or info@recworcester.org

Massachusetts Envirothon Fall Workshop for Coaches and Teams
Friday, October 25
Join high school teams from across Massachusetts at UMass Amherst to learn about local soil, water, forests, wildlife, and this year’s current issue: Sustainable Local Agriculture. Expected session topics include renewable and fossil energy use in agriculture, urban agriculture, organic agriculture, soil health, effects of climate change, and community support. Envirothon teams investigate issues and explore ecosystems in their own communities through the year. This is the first of three workshops leading to the May competition at Sholan Farms in Leominster.
Cost: $10 per person.
Details at maenvirothon.org.

15th Annual North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival
Saturday & Sunday, October 5 & 6
Forster’s Farm, Orange, MA
There’s something for everyone at this fabulous family destination. Over 100 booths featuring regional artists, farmers, and community organizations. Great music, performance, spoken word, and dance on two solar powered stages and throughout the rolling fields and forest. Over sixty inspiring presentations and activities, plus exhibitor demos, and great art and nature activities for kids. Garlic games galore including the famous raw garlic-eating contest.
Admission: $5 per day for Adults, $8 for weekend pass. Kids 12 and under free.
More information: http://garlicandarts.org/

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wholesale and Promotion Opportunity During Mass. Harvest for Students Week Sell your produce and promote your farm to local schools and colleges during Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week, Sept. 30 – Oct. 4. Schools celebrate Mass. Harvest for Students Week by serving foods from local farms or holding special events that can generate media attention. Some schools buy local for the first time, and many others increase their normal orders.

Call The Mass. Farm to School Project at 413-253-3844 or email Simca Horwitz in eastern Mass. (simca@massfarmtoschool.org) or Lisa Damon in central and western Mass. (lisa@massfarmtoschool.org) for individualized assistance or advice.

Announcing the Dean’s Beans Organic Farmers Exchange This winter, Dean’s Beans Organic Coffee will be bringing Organic farmers (you!) to visit Peru and engage in a true exchange with Organic farmers there. We’ll spend six days in the Oro Verde farmer’s cooperative, meeting and engaging with farmers, exploring the culture and landscape, and making a real connection with the folks that grow our coffee and cacao.
To keep this affordable for local farmers, Dean’s Beans will be subsidizing part of the cost. For more information or to sign up, visit: http://bit.ly/16Tw8bC
New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in July and August

Pat Adakonis
Donna Adams
Andres Aguirre
Jade Alicantro
Joan Allaire
Kyle Alspach
Paul Antonucci
Sheila Armstead
Robert Banning
Erik H. Beck
Mark Begley
Jon & Sage Belber
Gordon and Sally Bemis
Lucy Bergwall
Jon Berube
Joseph Bettis Jr.
Stephen Bevis
Karla Bigelow
Marc Bluestein
Irene Branson
Olvind Brockmeier
Aubrey Cabot-Case
Jack Calvert
Melissa Carter
Paul Cavanaugh
Susan Chase
Helaine Chersonsky
Robert Chipman and Family
Diana Cirillo
Sara Clark
Elizabeth Coe
Kathy Cole
Dan & Bonita Conlon
Ted & Mary Lou Conna
Dave Conna
David Consalvo
Samantha and Gregory Corcoran
Cricket Creek Farm
Charles M. Dance
Anita Dancs
Brian Deely
Wendy Degenhardt
Adam Dole
Ryan Donnelly
Meghan Donnelly
Anne Duggan
Mary Dunham
Annette Dupon
Brian A. Earley
Midori Evans
Auril Fabian
The Farm School

Jeannette & Mark Fellows
Kay Fenlason
Richard Field
Margaret Flood
Mary Flynn
Noelle Fogg
Carrie Gerard
Patricia Grady
Eric Hagen
Sam and Amy Hainer
Jamie Hall
Allegrea Halverson
Joanne Hart
Patrick and Frances Hearn
Todd Heyman
Jonathan Hodson-Walker
John Hoffman & Kate Stevens
Marlene Holohan
Beth Hooker
David P. Hopkins
John Hopkins
Margot Hubbard
Stan and Lori Ingram
Estelle James
Benjamin Janos
Jan Johnson
Stephanie Kalinowski
Sean Kane
Michael and Catherine Katz
David Kelly
Elisabeth Kelly
Kenneth and Ginger Kelly
Melissa Kenefick
Matthew Kennedy
Bruce Ketcham
Susan Keys
Kristen Kilfoyle
Rachel Klepner
Jonathan Koch
Sandra Kocher
Michael Lagrou
Abigail Langsner
Sophie Lapointe
Amy and Mike LeBlanc
Michelle Lemp
Claudia Lewis
Bryan Li
Mabel Liang
Amie Lindenboim
Jocelyn Linnekin
Joshua Lipkowitz
Neith Little
Ellen Logan & Thomas Ostrander
John & Margaret Lowry
Ashley Lueders
Vincent MacDonald
Betty MacKenzie
Tatiana Mankin
Carey Marden
Rich Matteson
Alex Matthews
Zan McKenna
Adaela McLaughlin
Corrin Meise-Munoz
Kimberly Messina
Anna Meyer
Carol Michelfelder
Kevin Minngerode
Jessica Moniz
Tom Montagno
Ramon Monzon
Josh Morrison
Peggy Mudge
Anna Muhammad
Martha Mulligan
Jennifer Munoz
Mary Murphy
Michael Murray
William and Linda Nachtrab
Alice Newth
Joan Newton
Lauren Nowlan
Jimmy Nowlan
Wendy Osgood
Susan Parke-Sutherland
Ahu Paul
Mary Abigail Peck
Julia Pedtke
James Penny
Elizabeth Perkins
Don and Sarah Persons
Olivia Pettengill
Mac Mead
Diana Phillips
Christopher Pistras
Ann Pilch
Julie Potter-Brown
Walter Poulsen
Melissa Probst
Andrew Rebelo
Cyd Reiman
Clint Richmond
Suzanne Robert
Iris Robertson
Tom Rozeck
Jennifer Rugg
Mary Sacksteder
Chanya Sae-Eaw
Leslie Saffer
Jamie Samowitz
Alex Risley Schoeder
Jack Scotnicki
Linda Avis Scott
David Sears
Susan Shaine
Diana Simon
Richard W. Skarin
Michael Skillcorn
Nadine Smith
Kristen Smyrni
Lyn Smyrni
William Snyder
Batya Sobel
Soule Homestead
Education Center
Andrew St. Jean
Will Stephens
Emily Stephens
Kathryn Stout
Micky Strachota
Thomas Sullivan
Phillip Szenher
Edward Tivnan
Sara Tower
Thomas Trepanier
Haynes and Nancy Turkle
Peggy Ueda
Kodie Underwood
Matt Verson
Alexander Volson
Risa Waldoks
Mark Walters
Eric and Sarah Ward
John White
Alix Wicker
Lillabeth Wies
Priscilla Williams
John Williams
Mike Witt and Jim Messineo
Tom Yelton
Jon Young
**NOFA/Mass Workshops**

**Putting by Food for Gut Health**
Saturday, September 21 - 9am to 3pm
Noonday Farm, Winchendon, MA
Cost: $45 NOFA members; $56 non-members
The first part will be hands on making lacto-fermented vegetables, bone broth soup and tonics. I will share samples of my products and give instructions to make the soup and tonics. For lacto-fermentation, bring your own vegetables, jars, knife, sea salt and whey and away we will go! I will demonstrate and guide you through the process so you can take home product ready to ferment and have in your larder. The second part will be an informal course on gut health.
Instructor: Beth Ingham

**Fall Time Raised Bed Preparation with Black Plastic**
Saturday, September 28 - 9am to 12pm
Charlie’s Redhouse Farm, Winchendon, MA
Cost: $25 NOFA members; $31 non-members
This workshop demonstrates a method for forming raised beds during the fall when the ground is still workable – more so than early spring. The system warms the soil quicker than with flat fields. The black plastic prevents weeds and erosion, and the drip line laid underneath the plastic keeps the soil moist and microbiology thriving. Workshop covers what equipment is needed to form raised beds and cover with black plastic, methods in spring for transplanting directly into the beds, as well as protocols for fertilizing after the harvest, followed by new plastic or a late crop.
Instructor: Kees Overgaag

**Managing and Growing a CSA**
Saturday, October 19 - 9am to 12pm
Powisset Farm, Dover
Cost: $25 NOFA members; $31 non-members
Powisset Farm grows for 350 summer CSA members, 200 winter CSA members, 55 off-site shares for a partner-farm, an on-site farm stand and weekly donations. There will be a farm tour highlighting our equipment and infrastructure, especially our distribution barn and wash area. We will discuss farm planning, crew management and structure, CSA distribution and community building events, harvest management and post-harvest storage systems. Instructor: Meryl LaTronica
Season Extension
Sunday, October 20 - 1pm to 4pm
Green City Grower’s Office, Somerville, MA
Cost: $48 NOFA Members; $60 Non-members
The growing season in New England is short. In Boston, we typically grow the beginning of April until the end of October. That’s a total of seven months, about half the year. Both freezing temperatures and shorter days inhibit plant growth. Anything that allows us to extend the growing season for even a few weeks can be very valuable to growers. Learning what season extender is right for you can help extend the New England growing season by two months! By taking this workshop you will learn about different types of season extenders and what type is right for your growing method and budget.
Instructor: Tany Horgan

Fat-Soluble Vitamins in Traditional Diets: Nutrient-Dense Animal Foods as the Keys to Vibrant Health
Thursday, October 24 – 9am to 4pm
The Ocean Explorium, New Bedford, MA
Cost: $95 NOFA Member; $119 Non-member
A full day seminar on the role of fat-soluble vitamins (e.g., A, D, and K) in human health. Presentation covers what modern science reveals about why food practices of many non-industrialized cultures have supported vibrant health. Directly relevant to those interested in nutrition for healing, participants will learn to analyze claims about fats and disease, identify superior sources of fat-soluble vitamins, and assess and amend soils for improved nutrition.
Instructor: Chris Masterjohn