Inside this Issue:

Winter Conference workshop preview  
pg 5

NOFA/Mass awarded Sound and Sensible grant from USDA  
pg 7

GMO Labeling Pressure Grows  
pg 18
From the Editor
Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass Public Relations Coordinator

Big thanks to all of our contributors this month - this was a fun issue to put together! We are hitting the ground running for 2015. There are many new and expanding programs, as well as a nearly fully developed array of classes for 2015. This issue gives you a taste of what to expect!

Suzy Konecky, our new Raw Milk Program Coordinator shares examples of business practices that work on her own farm as well as a fun, informative poster you’ll soon begin to see around the state (pages 16 & 17). Our Beginning Farmer Mentorship Program is also looking for new mentees and mentors. Check out our website for details.

We also have an exciting partnership with Baystate Organic Certifiers, piloting a USDA program to support those interested in becoming certified. As a certifier Baystate is limited in what technical support they can provide, so they are training NOFA/Mass staff to be able to offer help and guidance to those interested in or working towards becoming certified organic. Read more about this project on page 7.

I’m really excited about the upcoming Winter Conference (January 10th at Worcester State University)! Over the last few months I’ve been corresponding with presenters, Greg Judy our keynoter, and other folks - there are some really fascinating presenters and topics. Our staff and the community have been firing on all cylinders and this year’s conference will be a treat. Hope to see you there! Read about the conference on pages 4 & 5.

2015 is just around the corner. Wishing you and yours a warm, safe and happy holiday season and a fruitful, inspiring 2015.

Nicole
Dear NOFA/Mass friends,

I am writing to ask you to consider an end-of-the-year gift to NOFA/Mass.

As the growing season winds down a bit, the wind blows outside, and we happily throw another log into the wood stove, I ponder the miracle of life and death, seasonal rhythms, and the peace that comes with a year of agricultural toil that has borne a strong harvest.

Organizationally we move into the fast lane at this time of year. The second annual run, Ridge Shinn’s “grass-fed beef save the world” workshop, our SE Mass seminar on the relationship between digestive health and autism, the winter conference, and the soil and nutrition conference will all appear in rapid succession. Soon the calendar will be littered with on-farm workshops, and we will be unloading bulk order trucks all over the state. As I write this letter Jack is in the background on the phone with folks from the statewide coalition, working out language for the 2015 version of the GMO labeling bill.

I want to share with you some thoughts from some of our members I interviewed for this occasion. Jamie Hall, a gardener from Springfield, shares how fascinating it has been to learn about soil nutrition and to see the wonders that better soil has wrought for her garden production.

Bill Minier owns a gym in Woburn and he is struck by how much education we offer. He feels we need to maintain the organic standard, and be proactive to support young people in farming, so future generations can have organic food.

Lionel Zupan from West Newbury is grateful to Tricia Smith and the beginning farmer mentor program. Tricia has spent countless hours helping him and his wife with their dairy goat operation. Says Lionel, “Discovering NOFA was one of the highlights of this year. One of the nicest activities we did this summer was to go to the summer conference. I can talk for hours and give you many, many compliments. The point for me is to one day be able to give back.”

I hope that NOFA has touched you this year and made a real difference in your life and growing practices. Please consider a donation to help us keep the fires stoked for 2015. We have big goals to accomplish!

Increasing Support through Matching Employer Donations

Consider asking your employer to make a matching donation to NOFA/Mass.

Once you have made your donation, we will send a confirmation thank you letter. You can take the letter to your employer who offers this benefit, and he/she will donate directly to NOFA/Mass.

Julie Rawson
NOFA/Mass Executive Director
Winter Conference Update
Cathleen O’Keefe, NOFA/Mass Winter Conference Coordinator

January 10 is less than a month away, but you still have time to register for all of the fun. We’ve extended the day until 6pm, so you can network more, catch up with old friends, and visit all of our wonderful exhibitors.

Greg Judy, a truly inspirational grazier, will be enriching everyone’s day with his keynote address “Managing Our Farms In Sync With Nature: Heal Land And People.” Judy says: “By focusing our daily management on the patterns of nature, our farms will become a mirror of nature and thrive. We can build healthy soil, healthy people, and healthy communities while eliminating costly outside inputs.”

Graziers will not want to miss his all-day seminar, “Using Livestock to Build a Healthy, Profitable Farm.” In this seminar, Judy will discuss all the steps involved in setting up a profitable, managed grazing operation from scratch. He will also cover a variety of topics to ensure success in starting your own grazing operation. These include grazing methods, fencing, water, monitoring animal performance, recovery periods, building a litter bank, calving, winter stockpiling, developing your grazier’s eye, drought management, and daily monitoring. The Judy’s graze cows, cow/calf pairs, bred heifers, horses, and stockers, and also own a 250 head grass genetic South Poll cow herd, 300 head St. Croix hair sheep flock and graze pigs. They have also started direct marketing grass-fed beef, lamb and pork. The Judy’s use no lime, no fertilizer, no seeding, no chemicals, and no equipment.

And if you still haven’t gotten enough of Greg, you can join him for an intimate dinner and book signing post-conference. Red Fire Farm in Montague will provide vegetables, in addition to other area organic farms. Before dinner Greg will be dishing dirt, as in the growing kind, in his talk “Let’s Get Some Life Back In Our Soils.” Wisely he says: “Healthy soil is the foundation of our future on this planet. Our nation’s soil is being depleted with modern farming practices, and nutrient dense food cannot be produced on lifeless dirt. By returning vibrant soil life to our farms, we can grow healthy food for our animals and people.”

Bring your kids for the day and together the whole family can learn how to be a part of creating a smarter, healthier planet. Katie Rozenas, our Children’s Conference Coordinator, believes in teaching youth about the impacts of the conventional food system and wants to share simple alternatives with the next generations.

There is a limited amount of Winter Conference scholarship funding available to NOFA/Mass members in financial need. If you are willing to work for 2 hours, we will credit you $25 off your conference registration. Apply for a scholarship now at www.nofamass.org/wcregistration.

Learn more at www.nofamass.org/events/wc!
As 2014 draws to a close, I am excited by what 2015 will bring. For many, December is a busy time chock full of celebratory events. January typically offers us a bit more solitude, and some time to reflect and set goals for the new year. The Winter Conference takes place at a very fitting time. Leading up to the conference, conference goers can reflect on the year past, take some time to learn new concepts and techniques, and begin to set goals for the coming year.

This year there will be a wide assortment of workshops, and there is sure to be something for everyone: the farmer, the beekeeper, the gardener, the homesteader, and the activist. Here are just a handful of the 70 workshops that will take place on Saturday January 10th.

**Plant Disease Update: 2014 Year in Review – All Levels**
Susan B. Scheufele
Using the 2014 growing season as a guide, this workshop will review disease management principles that focus on the impact of pathogen biology related to the spread of disease and disease management. We will review new diseases like basil downy mildew, and dig deeper into perennial diseases like Alternaria in brassicas. We will discuss major 2014 disease outbreaks like late blight on tomatoes and potatoes, and conclude with a Q&A.

**Polyface Poultry Production Methods - As Explained by a Polyface Intern - All Levels**
Kristen Kilfoyle
Joel Salatin and Polyface Farm are famous for their simple, straightforward and easy to apply small-scale poultry production methods. Come learn from a Polyface intern about how you can apply these methods on your own farm. We will cover how to care for the birds, portable shelters, pasture rotation, processing and marketing, and the benefits of employing the methods used at Polyface.

**Breeding Honeybees - All Levels**
Bonita & Dan Conlon
Breeding Honeybees for strength, disease resistance and mite tolerance requires large populations to select the best stock. It also needs expert beekeeping to evaluate and make the selection, and an organized program to select the best Queens. Learn the facts of organic beekeeping and why current rules do not measure up to current breeding standards. Learn how honeybee breeders select for the best Queens, and what criteria they value in the selection process.

**No-Till Organic Gardening – Beginner, Intermediate**
Liz Joseph
Working to mimic nature, we are growing mixed vegetables on 1-acre scale without tillage except for hand tools and occasionally pigs or chickens. This class will cover the benefits of no-till, growing with permanent “raised” beds, weed prevention through mulches and cover crops, and breaking ground for new garden space with cardboard.

**Homemade Fertilizers & Inoculants**
Bryan O’Hara
In this 2 part workshop Bryan will review methods for manufacturing the following on the farm: indigenous micro-organisms for biologically inoculating agricultural fields; different types of compost for use in no-till as well as for use during specific periods of crop growth, i.e., leaf growth,

**Conference schedule and full listing of workshops available at www.nofamass.org/events/wc.**

---

**Winter Conference workshop preview**
Stacie Brimmage, NOFA/Mass Winter Conference Workshop Coordinator

Conference schedule and full listing of workshops available at www.nofamass.org/events/wc.
flowering, and fruiting; liquid fish extract; liquid calcium extracts; and various plant extracts. These preparations are inexpensive to make and of superior quality.

Legislative Update & Preview for Massachusetts Agriculture – All Levels
Jack Kittredge & Brad Mitchell
We will cover legislation being filed at the state level: GMO labeling, increasing slaughter capacity, expanding raw milk sales, livestock standards, estate tax and tax credits, farm breweries and plumbing code requirements. We will also review recently passed legislation; unemployment threshold changes, tax credits, APR changes, and the Board of Agriculture expansion. Participants will also learn how to participate in the process.

NOFA/Mass Bulk Order opens January 1!
Cathleen O’Keefe, NOFA/Mass Bulk Order Coordinator
The NOFA/Mass bulk order opens next month on January 1st. You’ll only have a month to get your order in, so start planning now! The order is open to both members and non-members and will be available to download January 1. No order is too small or too large - all participants save by purchasing together.

Do you buy cover crop seed, fertilizers, mineral amendments, compost, potting soil, pest controls, animal health/feed supplements, potato and allium seed, or tools for the farm/garden? Would you like to save money on those items? If so, the bulk order might be perfect for you.

Each January, NOFA/Mass organizes a bulk order with popular suppliers for distribution at sites in western, central, & eastern MA, central CT & RI. Take advantage of significant savings through group purchasing power and collective shipping, while helping NOFA support organic practices throughout the Tri-State region. The suppliers we work with are Organic Growers Supply, Moose Tubers, Ideal Compost, Vermont Compost, Crop Production Services, and Fertrell.

PLEASE HELP! As always, the Site Managers can use help unloading the truck, organizing, and breaking down orders. This is another reason why we save money - everyone chips in a little work. Tubers are delivered and distributed in the first week of April. Everything else is delivered and distributed the week of March 10th. Many of our farms are busy preparing for the season, so all of your help is greatly appreciated. Just circle “I can help breakdown” on your order form, arrive on the breakdown date at a time to be determined, and take home your order early. Volunteering is a great way to meet other NOFA members and to participate in a wonderful communal tradition.

If you’d like a paper copy of the order or have ideas for additional items to add, contact Cathleen O’Keefe, Bulk Order Coordinator, (413) 387-2316, bulkorder@nofamass.org.

For more info and to download the form (available January 1), visit www.nofamass.org/programs/bulk-order-program
NOFA/Mass awarded Sound and Sensible grant from USDA
Laura Davis

NOFA/Mass and Baystate Organic Certifiers together are testing a pilot program that could be utilized by other organizations throughout the US to assist farmers and handlers to gain organic certification. To make organic certification attainable and affordable for all, the USDA has established The Sound and Sensible Approach to Organic Certification.

Through technical training given by Baystate Organic Certifiers, NOFA/Mass Education staff can implement a program that will assist one livestock farmer, one crop farmer and one handler in completing their organic system plan, documentation necessary to obtain organic certification.

We have identified two farms – stay tuned to learning all about their journey. We are looking to identify an operation that wants to complete an organic handler plan and submit a processed food product for certification. This is a great opportunity for someone to have an Organic Systems Plan Expert help them navigate the process at no charge. Please email your interest and a description of your business to lauradavis@nofamass.org.

Want your crop, livestock or value added food product to be certified organic? Are you following the National Organic Program and want to explore certification? Just starting on your own farm and want to build consumer confidence in a certified operation? Not sure who to call to clarify questions you might have? NOFA/Mass is here to help. Please direct your inquiries to lauradavis@nofamass.org.

Looking for local, organic produce in season?

Check out the NOFA/Mass Organic Food and Products Guide!

Find farms and businesses all across the state selling the products you want!

(You can search by region or product.)

theorganicfoodguide.com
Interview with Dan Kittredge: Masonry Heater Building Intensive Workshop at Kittredge Farm
Glenn Oliveira, NOFA/Mass Education Director and Education Events Organizer

From February 1-10 at the Kittredge Farm in North Brookfield, MA, Albie Barden will present a Masonry Heater Building Intensive Workshop. To find out more about what will be covered, visit www.nofamass.org/events/masonry-heater.

My interest in masonry heaters began over seven years ago, and I’m thrilled that my first workshop as an organizer with NOFA/Mass is such a unique, practical and exciting opportunity. Masonry heaters are highly efficient, easy to maintain, and have a visceral comfort to them.

Below is my interview with Dan Kittredge, founder of the Bionutrient Food Association and lifelong farmer, who will be hosting the workshop at his farm. In next months newsletter, look for an interview with Albie Barden himself, master of the masonry heater.

GO: What will people experience at your farm if they attend this workshop?
DK: I would like to give them as much of a full tour and explanation of rationale and systems as I can for what I like to think will be a fairly self-sustaining homestead. We’ll talk about having basically taken an old wreck of a farm and retrofitted and salvaged it, how we did it for cheap, cleared fields, where we’ve dug in ponds, freezers, hoop houses, infrastructure, all that systems stuff. I’ll also share plans for marketing for crops, what kind of crops you can make good money on without too much work and then long term systemic crops, more of a permaculture mindset.

GO: What do you currently heat with? Do you have a typical wood stove?
DK: Wood. It’s a $500 [wood stove] from Tractor Supply. It has a cover on it like a gas stove or radiator, so kids don’t get burned. Just a regular old stove, nothing fancy.

GO: Why are you making the switch to a masonry heater and what excites you about that?
DK: Well, because we have an old 1800’s farm house for starters, it’s poorly insulated.

Having the ability to create more heat than I need is certainly very attractive. When it’s windy and cold, it gets pretty cold in the house. Which is not necessarily the best rationale. We are putting in a wrap-around porch and fixing up a lot of the holes.

My understanding is that and my experience in having been in the presence of these [masonry heaters] in the past, there’s a warmth and radiance, comfort and coziness that is hard to match. I think a lot of houses in the winter, especially those heated with forced hot air, oil or propane, never really get warm. There’s some sort of warmth you get from wood which is better than anything else I’ve experienced, sort of at a visceral level. That wood heat coming through stone, that stone radiating out the wood heat, the warmness is the most comfortable sensation in the winter.

It’s a quality of life thing I think. The fact that I’ll basically keep the house warm, if it’s 50 below outside, with almost no expense makes me
excited. I like to have systems built for extremes that are abnormal. Who knows what the future holds, but it feels like a very safe, resilient, empowering infrastructure to have.

GO: You mentioned moving towards a self-sustaining homestead, it seems that this heater will be much more efficient than your current heater.

DK: Exactly, I expect it to be at least three times more efficient. Because of the fact that the stone captures all of the heat from the smoke and fire, opposed to going up the stovepipe like it does in most chimneys.

GO: Do you have any experience with Albie’s heaters and if so do you like them?

DK: My understanding is that he is the father of all this in North America, people weren’t building these forty years ago when he started and most of the people building them now learned from him. The opportunity to be learning from someone who’s been doing this for decades and teaching the rest of the professionals and writing all of the books is a pretty special opportunity.

GO: Why should people attend this workshop?

DK: Well, I think on the very practical level if this is something that they are considering they can save themselves probably close to $10,000 if they are at all handy. If you’re homesteading, generally you want to figure out how to do things yourself that others charge a lot of money for, and then you can live a high quality life without having to work all the time for money, the system, etc. If you’re going to be building one of these things at cost, it’s generally 15-40k in my understanding of the market price. Understanding what the raw materials are that are necessary, being able to harvest those or get them slowly over time. Saving yourself a 10k labor bill is significant.

I plan to be available for people to talk about topics from agronomy and biological systems, to movement strategies. I expect to have lots of inspiring conversations around the edges.

To find out more, or to register for the February 1-10 workshop, visit www.nofamass.org/events/masonry-heater.

Support NOFA/Mass’ Work

Here’s a simple way to support our work. Buy local when you can, but if you do use Amazon, they will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to NOFA/Mass whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

To sign up, visit www.smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2987723.

Thank you for your support!
To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.

Donegan Family Dairy, VT. One of the Organic Valley family farms that supply milk for our yogurt.
The first of my two interviews is with Bryan O’Hara of Tobacco Road Farm in Lebanon, CT. He will be presenting on No Till Vegetable Cropping Methods, Homemade Inoculants, Sprays, and Drenches.

GN: Bryan, what excites you about this topic?
BO: It is tied to overall agricultural improvement. It is moving forward to better the quality of crops. This is all part of the movement to improve agriculture techniques.

GN: What first brought you to understand of the potential of what you will be presenting?
BO: It was out of necessity. Modern conditions of production, pollution, weather conditions, different quality in the crops grown, etc., leads one to develop more productive techniques.

GN: What would you say to someone who is new to farming - the ideas or thoughts to suggest thinking about and doing?
BO: Pay attention to the soil.

GN: If someone has several or many years of farming experience, what ideas or thoughts to suggest thinking about and doing?
BO: Stay abreast of developments and fertilizer changes.

GN: How does one stay abreast?
BO: Attending workshops, reading various publications, ag media, connect with other farmers.

GN: What do you expect Soil & Nutrition Conference attendees will walk away with?
BO: From my presentation, specific details on techniques and procedures to produce higher quality and more bountiful crops.

My second interview is with John Slack. He will be presenting on Soil GeoChemistry and Mineral Deficiency, Crop Health, and Strategies for Scientific Remineralization.

GN: John, what excites you about this topic?
JS: Evaluating soil geochemistry from an entirely different perspective. Traditionally no more than 8 inches is considered, analyzing soil with weak acid digestion, in the hope that it will describe soil mineral deficiencies and requirements to overcome plant deficiencies. Doing very deep geochemistry, with total element digestion versus weak acid, coupled with the fact that microbes can accelerate rock weathering up to 1,000,000 times.
Worrying about solubility with traditional soil analysis is not necessary. One must emphasize soil complexity, where life is the driving force and mineral complexity results in optimum plant nutrition. What happens with traditional soil management is over fertilization and not recognizing the full soil profile. We need to address soil health, the solubility of minerals and their behavior in the soil system.

The goal is to help farmers make more rational decisions, with significant reduction of input costs.

**GN:** What would you say to someone who is new to farming, the ideas or thoughts to suggest thinking about and doing?

**JS:** A thorough land search utilizing the extensive government geological and soil databases; evaluating soil landscape to ensure a naturally high geochemical footprint = most critical site pick. Equally important is the region’s ecological diversity that is isolated from conventional farming and looking for large tracts of ecosystems in tact (i.e., swamps, forests and natural hydrology). This information is within various government departments, they have very good databases of regions.

The bottom line – if a piece of land doesn’t match your criteria, then walk away from that land and find another area to farm. Otherwise, trying to farm unsuitable land may lead to increased production costs.

**GN:** If someone has several or many years of farming experience, what ideas or thoughts to suggest thinking about and doing?

**JS:** Typically farmers I have worked with who are having difficulty are caught in the “commodity treadmill,” where there is price fluctuation. You need to look at the opportunity in direct marketing, which is driven through local food initiatives and change in strategic crops growing.

**GN:** What do you expect Soil & Nutrition Conference attendees will walk away with?

**JS:** I hope that people will come away with concepts have been describing: (1) How to look for good farms; (2) Strategy for marketing food; (3) “Elephant in the Room” - niches in quality, it is one thing to broadcast that I am a local farm and people should support me, but a farmer should be able to describe agricultural practices, the soil that the farmer is working with, and the increase in quality that is possible. There are growing numbers of distributors who are paying for higher quality and a unique flavor profile; (4) Strive to be the best that one can be, increasing the nutritional content of the crops growing, whether it is beef, vegetables, eggs, etc., where these high quality products demand a premium and make farming operations economically viable.

**GN:** John, do you have a quote that you would like to share that summarizes the work that you do?

**JS:** This quote has taken me a lifetime to realize. My quote is: “Soil can be described as a self-organizing system that adapts and transforms parent mineral material into a developed soil profile that is best suited to the landscape’s mineralogical, physical, biological and climatic conditions, maximizing geochemical potential.”

**Learn more about the Soil & Nutrition Conference and register at [www.nofamass.org/events/2015-soil-and-nutrition-conference](http://www.nofamass.org/events/2015-soil-and-nutrition-conference).**
We came, it snowed, and we conquered the Genesis Battlegreen Run/Walk November 2nd!

Cathleen O’Keefe, TEAM NOFA/Mass Capitan

Yes, conquered: NOFA/Mass placed #1 10K Team, and two of our team members placed silver and bronze in their heat – nicely done Sam and Greg! Not only are we dedicated to NOFA/Mass, we’re wicked fast too.

Huge, tremendous, and heart-felt thanks to our 316 online donors, innumerable offline donors, and 33 proud fundraisers. Together we raised $17,639 for NOFA/Mass’ educational programs and carbon sequestration campaign. Such an incredible effort and support will prove to be beneficial for us all.

Be a part of the Team NOFA/Mass magic and fun in 2015: Mark your calendars for next year’s race on November 1. See you in Lexington!
Ronnie Cummins to keynote 2015 NOFA Summer Conference
Ben Grosscup, NOFA Summer Conference Coordinator

Ronnie Cummins, co-founder and International Director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), will give a keynote address at the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference, August 14-16, 2015 at UMass, Amherst, MA. Conference Registration opens in May 2015 at www.nofasummerconference.org.

OCA is a non-profit, U.S. based network of two million consumers, dedicated to safeguarding organic standards and promoting a healthy, just, and sustainable system of agriculture and commerce. The OCA’s primary strategy is to work on national and global campaigns promoting health, justice, and sustainability that integrate public education, marketplace pressure, media work, litigation, and grassroots lobbying.

Cummins has been active as a writer and activist since the 1960s, with extensive experience in public education, grassroots mobilization, and marketplace pressure campaigns. As a tireless international campaigner fighting genetic engineering and factory farming, he has generated support for grassroots GMO-labeling efforts throughout the country.

He is currently developing strategies farmers can use to lead the way toward regenerative farming practices that build soil carbon by removing it from the atmosphere. As a speaker, he helps to shed light on the relationships between industrial agriculture, corporate power, soil health, and the global climate crisis.

Save the date! 2015 NOFA Summer Conference, August 14-16, 2015
Homesteading observations: A Stairway To Heaven
Sharon Gensler, Homesteader and NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

It’s a cold dreary day and I’m sitting here thinking about aging and life at Wild Browse Homestead. This is triggered by the aches and pains acquired over the last 2 days while rehabbing the access to our house – once again. We built the house about 100 feet down a moderately steep slope from the road and parking area. Thirty years ago when I visualized the farm layout, I was young and had no thoughts of growing older or that my physical capabilities might alter. Actually, it didn’t take long for us to realize that hiking up and down a “goat path” hauling heavy loads wasn’t much fun.

First we scavenged 4 or 5 old railroad ties and made GIANT steps, which we filled in with wood chips. I know, I know, what was I thinking? Upon learning that those ties were creosote impregnated and not good to have on the land, we replaced them with hemlock 8X8’s. My consolation was that the ties were very old and had already leached out much of the creosote on the railroad tracks plus they were a couple of hundred feet from the garden. After many years of trudging up those impossible steps, we added more intermediate ones making it a bit easier to navigate. Every few years we would have to haul more woodchip filler to replace that, which decomposed and/or migrated down the slope.

Thankfully, those steps finally rotted out. We realized that this ongoing problem needed a better solution, one that would allow us access to the house as we aged. We hired a couple of strong guys to build new steps that we thought would be the perfect solution. Pru designed a series of moderate steps composed of trap-rock gravel filled boxes. We even added a handrail and I buried electric cable alongside so that we could have a light that switched at the top and bottom rather than the motion controlled one, which was triggered by the wind, or any random animal, domestic or wild that passed by.

This was a huge improvement but alas, it still had some flaws. The steps became harder to use as the trap-rock was packed down. Also snow removal was difficult and tedious trying to shovel the snow but not the stones. Adding new stones regularly became a backbreaking chore. And remember, this was to help keep our house accessible, not add more work.

So, for the past two days we have been remodeling them yet again! This time we made the decision to add recycled plastic planking to each 4-foot wide step. We wound up with 222 4-foot wide planks, screwed down in 3 locations, for a total of 1332 screws. All of which took two days basically on hands and knees. I was very sore but after a couple of days, and the help of some muscle relaxants, I’ve bounced back! Though I do pray that this was the last remodeling job on those blessed stairs.

What’s the lesson? Well, as a friend likes to say, “we are all only temporarily able bodied”, so think ahead. This has been one of the lessons we like to share in our homesteading workshops. Really look at your site and think of all the possibilities both in the present and in the future. Another is, if you have the resources both physical and monetary, try to do the best thing the first time. But, if you find yourself in the position we were in of not having the cash to do what we’d really like, then do the best you can. Each of these stairs was better than the last and what we could manage at the time. And each was really a stairway to our little bit of heaven.
Raw Milk Program update
Suzy Konecky, NOFA/Mass Raw Milk Network Coordinator

One of NOFA/Mass’ smaller programs is the Raw Milk Program. This is a network of dairy farmers around the state who produce and market their fresh, raw milk, and have a license to do so by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. There are 29 licensed raw milk dairy farms in the state that we know of, producing either cow’s milk or goat’s milk. I coordinate the program and plan to share the stories of these farmers in coming newsletters. In this issue, I want to give a little insight into the economics of selling raw milk, using the farm where I work, Cricket Creek Farm, as an example.

Let’s Look at the Numbers
For the past 2 years we have sold about 84 gallons of raw milk per week, coming to about 4,400 gallons per year. At a rate of $8 per gallon (or $4 per half gallon), we have grossed about $35,000 each year from our raw milk sales. We operate our business by dividing up each enterprise as being financially independent (although truly they are all under one umbrella of the farm), so that we can more clearly evaluate each enterprise on its own merit. Therefore, the “raw milk enterprise” buys milk from our dairy cows. The cows also sell milk to the creamery, where we make cheese.

Tracking the internal transactions of the distribution of milk to our various enterprises helps us to see how selling raw milk compares to other potential avenues of milk distribution. We sell our milk to ourselves at $30/ ctw (per hundred pounds of milk), since milk is most often sold in units of 100 lbs. Therefore, the “raw milk enterprise” paid the dairy cows $11,352 for the milk that was sold. Our other expenses amounted to about $4,000 each year, which includes the packaging of the raw milk (bottles, caps, labels), and labor of bottling it. Since we can only sell raw milk from the farm in Massachusetts, there is no expense of transport.

$35,000 gross profit - $11,400 for milk - $4,000 other expenses = $19,600 profit

For a dairy farmer, there is no better way (that I can think of) to package and sell your milk. This brief analysis is a vast simplification of a very complex industry, but I hope that it sheds some light on the financial benefit of raw milk to the bottom line of a dairy farm. I don’t intend to speak on behalf of other dairy farms with these numbers, but simply to provide a glimpse into what is happening on one small Massachusetts dairy farm.

Stay tuned for more insight into raw milk dairy farming in Massachusetts in future newsletters. In the meantime, check out this graphic that touches on some of the important concepts surrounding raw milk in our state.
GMO Labeling Pressure Grows: Oregon Recounts, Vermont Defends, Massachusetts Re-files

Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

The millions of people in the United States who are actively concerned about the risks to health from consuming untested genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in virtually all processed food in this country have reasons to hope.

Although voters in Colorado defeated a statewide initiative to require labeling of GMOs, voters in Oregon ended up in a virtual dead heat on the issue. The first count had the initiative losing in the Beaver State by a mere 812 votes out of 1.5 million. This differential is far below the threshold for Oregon to require a recount. So by the time this is published (mid December) we should find out the final numbers and whether Oregon will be the second state in the union to mandate GMO labeling.

In the first such state, Vermont, lawyers are already filing motions and counter motions to test the legal waters as to whether Act 120 will be enforced during the months to come while the courts are hearing arguments about the constitutionality of the measure. This battle will be expensive, win or lose, and donations have amounted to only about half of the early projected total need to defend the law. If you would like to help, you can donate directly to the State of Vermont for the Food Fight Fund at www.foodfightfundvt.org.

In Massachusetts, after two years of stunning progress in gathering support and moving a labeling bill forward, last July the legislative session ended without a floor vote. So we (NOFA/Mass, MASSPIRG, MaRighttoKnowGMOs and MoveOn.org) are re-filing a stronger bill this year. As written our bill includes a list of strong findings designed to show a compelling state interest in the issue, drops the trigger of other states needed to pass similar laws before ours goes into effect, prohibits use of the term “natural” for foods containing GMOs, requires labeling of GMO seed as well as food and registering those sales with the state, and imposes a $1000 per day fine for violations.

The bill will undoubtedly undergo some changes and amendments as it progresses through the legislature, but we are happy to be starting off with a bill we all support and which mirrors many of the features of Vermont’s successful legislation.

For the immediate future, folks interested in helping can urge their State Representatives and Senators to co-sponsor the bill. There is as yet no bill number, but the primary sponsor is Representative Ellen Story of Amherst, and her office will be happy to add sponsors to the bill up until the January 16 deadline. Beyond that, if you would like to get involved there are a number of ways you can help in the months to come. We will be having rallies, going to hearings, contacting legislators, asking people to write letters to editors, talk with health professionals, and send messages upstream to food retailers and manufacturers. Let me know if you are interested in being on our activist list and I’ll make sure you get action alerts and calls for activity. Best way to sign up is to email me at Jack@nofamass.org.

One darker shadow on our horizon as a result of the November elections, however, is the possibility of passage in Congress of HR 4432 or what we are calling the DARK (Deny Americans the Right to Know) Act. It was introduced by Kansas Representative Mike Pompeo at the
behest of the Grocery Manufacturers Association, ag biotech companies, and the Koch brothers. It would prevent states from adopting their own GE labeling laws (and outlaw them if already passed), block any attempt by states to make it illegal for food companies to put a “natural” label on products that contain GE ingredients, and prevent the Food and Drug Administration from requiring companies to label GE ingredients and instead continue a failed “voluntary” labeling policy.

A number of conservative Congresspeople have already signed on to the act and this threat is suddenly, after the November elections and the change of the Senate to GOP control, much more serious and immediate. President Obama is not, unfortunately, a supporter of GMO labeling and cannot be counted upon to veto such a measure. If you want to record your opposition to the Dark Act, contact the Center for Food Safety at www.salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/1881/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=14356 and sign their letter.
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

100% ORGANIC COFFEE
CELEBRATING 19 YEARS OF ADVOCACY, ACTIVISM
& POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

www.DEANSBEANS.com

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
Hutchins Farm: Harvest Manager & Apprentice Positions Open

Contact: Gordon Bemis/Liza Bemis, liza@hutchinsfarm.com

Hutchins Farm, one of the oldest certified organic vegetable and fruit operations in Massachusetts, is seeking applicants for our Harvest Manager position, and Apprenticeship program for the 2015 season.

Organic since 1973, Hutchins grows over 25 acres of vegetables, about an acre of small fruit, 10 acres of apples, and about an acre of cut flowers. We sell our produce directly to consumers at our farm stand in Concord, MA, and at three weekly farmers’ markets, with a small amount of sales to local restaurants.

Full job descriptions are available at our website: www.hutchinsfarm.com
Events

Massachusetts Farm to Cafeteria Conference
Tuesday, January 13 at College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

This conference brings together farm to cafeteria advocates – farmers, food service professionals, educators, policy makers, public health advocates, community organizers, youth leaders and more – for a day long event with workshops and panel discussions addressing a wide variety of farm to school topics including: local foods procurement and promotion, experiential food and nutrition education, food, farm, and nutrition policy, growing for the institutional market, state, regional, and local networking.

For more info and to register, visit www.massfarmtoschool.org.

Announcements

Snake Den Farm Apartment and Land for Rent
NRICD has a 2+ bedroom apartment for rent in 2nd floor of historic farmhouse at Snake Den Farm in Johnston, RI, 15 minutes from Providence. The farmhouse is located in the Brown Avenue Historic District, on a 100+ acre farm, with plenty of outdoor space to enjoy, directly adjacent to Snake Den State Park. There will be farmers starting to utilize portions of the property and get it back into active production, so tenants must be comfortable living on a working farm, and having people around the property during working/daylight hours. Apartment is available immediately for lease at $900/month, utilities not included.

Land is also available for rent on a rolling basis. NRICD is looking to provide interested farmers with secure long-term leases on Snake Den Farm. We are interested in producers who already employ innovative approaches to conservation farming, or folks who would like to learn and incorporate these practices into their farm operations. Get in touch soon!

Please see the Northern RI Conservation District website at http://www.nricd.org/snake-den-farm.htm
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
NOFA/Mass Workshops & Events

Visit nofamass.org/events for workshop additions and updates.

**Greg Judy To Keynote 2015 Winter Conference**
Saturday, January 10 - All Day
Worcester State University, Worcester, MA
Cost: By January 9 NOFA member $75; Non-member $94. Discounted rates available for students and youth. Seminar pricing varies.

Join us for 70 workshops, exhibits, an all-day seminar and keynote by Greg Judy, rotational grazier and carbon sequestration advocate. It’s fun for the whole family! The children’s conference (ages 3-12) provides a lively, interactive educational experience for kids. Hands-on, do-it-yourself workshops keep teens active and engaged.

Judy will be offering an all-day seminar entitled, *Using Livestock to Build a Healthy, Profitable Farm*. In this seminar, he will discuss all the steps involved in setting up a profitable, managed grazing operation from scratch. These include grazing methods, fencing, water, monitoring animal performance, recovery periods, building a litter bank, calving, winter stockpiling, developing your grazier’s eye, drought management, and daily monitoring.

**Masonry Heater Building Intensive Workshop**
Sunday, February 1 – Tuesday, February 10
Kittredge Farm, North Brookfield, MA
Cost: NOFA member $500; Non-Member $625

This is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about masonry heaters and how to build/install one yourself with renowned masonry heater designer and builder, Albie Barden of Maine Wood Heat. Masonry heaters are one of the most efficient ways to burn cordwood, they last a very long time, are passive, requiring no power to operate, and the radiant heat from a high mass masonry fireplace can be much more comfortable than the much higher temperatures from an iron stove, they’re even safe to touch on almost all the masonry surfaces.

The workshop will take place at Dan Kittredge’s farm and offers a chance to not only learn more about masonry heaters, but also to tour the Kittredge farm, spend time with Dan and learn more about the systems he has put in place there.

**Winter Greens Workshop Series: Continuous and Efficient Production throughout Winter**
Sunday, February 8th - 9am to 12pm
Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass member $25; Non-member $30

Natick Community Organic Farm systems include passive solar greenhouses – one free standing and another attached to the barn and unheated hoop houses with both single and double layer covers. This workshop will focus on using greenhouses continuously fall through spring, for both winter greens
and seedlings, with emphasis on soils, harvesting techniques, and pricing as well as experiments with flower growing. This is one in a series of workshops on winter greens production. Presenter: Casey Townsend.

2015 Soil and Nutrition Conference
Wednesday, February 11 - Thursday, February 12 - 8:30am to 5pm
First Churches, Northampton, MA
Cost: By Dec 1: NOFA/BFA member $100; Non-member $125; By Feb 10: NOFA/BFA member $125; Non-member $156; On Feb 11: NOFA/BFA member $150; Non-member $188

This two day conference will be filled with valuable, useful, and time tested information for growers and consultants seeking to expand their growing skills with proven strategies. Participate in the discussions to further enhance your understanding of creating healthy, vibrant soils and resilient crops of higher quality. Intensive information sharing taking place during these two days will help provide invaluable guidelines to improve production and profitability on your farm, improve your health and vitality, and increase your likelihood of achieving continued success and viability during a period of time of increased extreme weather conditions, from droughts to high rain amounts.

Presenters include John Slack of Boreal Agrominerals, Inc., Ontario, Canada; Derek Christianson of Brix Bounty Farm, Dartmouth, MA; Dan Kittredge of Bionutrient Food Association; Bryan O’Hara of Tobacco Road Farm, Lebanon, CT, and Mark Fulford of Teltane Farm, Monroe, ME.

Winter Greens Workshop Series: Commercial Greens for Market
Sunday, February 15 - 9am to 12pm
Red Fire Farm, Granby, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass member $25; Non-member $30

This workshop will focus on the techniques and infrastructure that Red Fire Farm has used to scale up their production of winter greens, so they can grow plenty of greens for their CSA members and markets. These will include greenhouses, high tunnels, low tunnels, seeding and harvesting methods, packing greens for sale, record keeping, and economics. Marketing discussion will cover sales to farmers markets, CSA’s & wholesale.

This is one in a series of workshops on winter greens production. Please Note: Red Fire Farm has two farm locations. This workshop is happening at the Granby location. Do not go to Montague! Presenter: Ryan Voiland

Winter Greens Workshop Series: Producing Greens for a Winter CSA
Sunday, February 22 - 9am to 12pm
Freedom Food Farm, Raynham, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass member $25; Non-member $30

The workshop will include discussions on marketing of winter CSA, low-till winter management, timing of crop rotations between successive harvest seasons, managing crop residue, timing of irrigation and mulching for adequate moisture for seeding/transplanting, and the use of row covers.

This is one in a series of workshops on winter greens production. Presenter: Chuck Currie.
Winter Greens Workshop Series: Growing Greens on a Homestead Scale
Sunday, March 8 - 10am to 1pm
Noonday Farm, Winchendon Springs, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass member $25; Non-member $30

This workshop will be divided into two parts. First, Bob will cover the designs of the greenhouse attached to the home and the root cellar. Participants will learn all the structural and design components, including orientation, materials, glazing, insulation, thermal mass, and hot air transfer. Uses include climate manipulation for plant growth and heating the home and domestic hot water.

Second, Beth will discuss crops in the greenhouse and in the kitchen: including her choices for greens, salad, oriental greens and cole crops. She will discuss preparation techniques like braising, wilting and flash-cooking. They will cover root cellar storage, lacto-fermentation, and creating a rhythm to this style of living. This will be a great learning opportunity for current and aspiring homesteaders/home gardeners. Participants are welcomed you to stay for a potluck lunch, from 1 to 3PM.

This is one in a series of workshops on winter greens production. Presenters: Bob Jennings & Beth Ingham.
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.
New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in November

Frank and Sally Albani Jr.  Todd Heyman  Brent Pitcher
Mrs. Annye Anderson  Arthur Hildreth, Jr  Winton Pitcuff and Michal
Janet Anderson  Mike Iannoli  Lumsden
AppleSeed Permaculture  Russell and Nancy Iuliano  Murtaza Qutab
Harmonie Arcisz and Dennis  Beth Jackson  Becky Reed
O’Loughlin  Leslie Kelly  Steve and Susan Rice
Karen Barlow  Kenneth Lane  Ned Rossiter
Alyssa Bauer  Raean LeBlanc  Michael Sandoval
Laury Blakesley  Michelle Lemp  Dan Schmid
Esther Braun  Leanne Limoges  Marilyn Ray Smith
Leslie Caponigro  Emma and Milton Hanzel  Imrana Soofi
Claire Chang and John Ward  Linderman  Phillip and Nancy Szenher
Anthony Costello  Jason Lobisser  Andrew Teichner
Curtis Dragon  Michael Lueders  Fran Van Treese
Kathleen Gaffey  Johanna R Lynch  Ryan Wagner
Edith Gillespie  Jean Maestre and James  Leah Wang
Sarah Goldsmith  McAuliffe  LeeAnn Warner
Doris Goodwin  Holly Mansfield  Lolita Werhan
Christine Greene  Bruce Netherwood  Lisa Wiesner
Eric Hagen  John O’Keefe  Wild Oats Market
Frank Hains  Glenn Oliveira  Tamir Zausmer
George Hayes  Mary Abigail Peck
Christopher Heinz  Don and Sarah Persons

Thank you to Fall Appeal Donors in November

Stephen Anderson and Ava  Susanna Hilfer  Casey Ravenhurst
Gips  Leo and Marjorie Immonen  Laura Reiner
Mrs. Annye Anderson  Jean Iversen  Alison Robb
Harmonie Arcisz and Dennis  Mark Johnson  Ann Rothenberg
O’Loughlin  Alvin Kho  Adele Rustino and Warren
Alice and Ted Armen  Rebecca Knapp  Carberg
Margie Baldwin  John LaStella  Irving and Linda Schwartz
Ann Banks  Emma and Milton Hanzel  Richard W. Skarin
Robert Banning  Linderman  Carol and Kevin Smith
Cape Cod Organic Gardeners  Jason Long  Nancy B. Soulette
David Carlson and Maria  Don MacFarlane  Rhianna Suprenant
Roberts  Jean Maestre and James  Richard Thompson
Tom Coughlin  McAuliffe  Joe Thumann and Tania Jacob-Thumann
David DeGhetto  Dorothy Matthews  Jineen M Walker
David Eppstein and Deborah  Ervin and Gloria Meluleni  Wild Oats Market
Foster  Paul Peckham  Seth Wilkinson
Robin Fielding  Susan Phelan  Nancy Wittenberg
Christie Higginbottom  Odessa Piper
Crop Insurance

Guarantees a pay day
either a CROP YIELD
or $x

“It’s a program that can help a producer survive a disaster and return to profitability!”

UMass Extension, in cooperation with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA), is there to help farmers develop a risk management plan.

Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umext.umass.edu
Paul Russell at pmrussell@umext.umass.edu

Visit us at:
http://ag.umass.edu/risk-management

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider”
Check the website to learn about the store, products offered through our members and information on becoming a member.

www.greenfieldfarmerscoop.com