Inside this Issue:

Ridge Shinn: Making a living with ecologically regenerative grass-fed beef  
pg 3

Winter Conference  
January 10th at Worcester State University  
pg 7

A Farming reality check  
pg 11
From the Editor
Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass Public

NOFA/Mass is an organization whose staff, membership and board are spread out across the expanse of Massachusetts. From Williamstown to Martha’s Vineyard, Great Barrington to Essex, our reach touches many of the state’s 351 municipalities.

On the rare occasions we gather together past our town, city and county limits as NOFA/Mass, we have a lot of catching up to do, ideas to share, friendships and inspirations to nurture.

One such opportunity is coming up on November 2nd, when we will participate as TEAM NOFA/Mass in our 2nd walk/run to raise funds and awareness for farming methods that can build healthy soils and mitigate climate change. Last year’s run to support our GMO labeling efforts proved to be a success. We raised about $10,000 for the campaign and had a great community bonding experience.

Read more about getting involved in this year’s TEAM NOFA/Mass and hear from team member Jane Hammer about why mitigating climate change is so important to the future and possibilities for our plant’s biodiverse ecosystems (on page 5). Ben Grosscup also supplies a letter to the editor expressing his concerns about measuring and reducing carbon as well as where responsibilities and potentialities for adequately addressing the climate crisis lie (on page 9).

As our 16 staff members gathered around Julie and Jack’s kitchen table in Barre for a recent staff meeting, there was great energy and enthusiasm for this and other aspects of our work. We are firing on all cylinders, but certainly couldn’t do it without the hard work of the NOFA/Mass membership and board. At the December staff and board retreat we will be taking up the next steps of this carbon sequestration work and several other projects. We welcome your thoughts, concerns, suggestions about our work. Get in touch and stay tuned!

Nicole
Interview with Ridge Shinn: Making a living with ecologically regenerative grass-fed beef

Julie Rawson, NOFA/Mass Education Director

On November 3 Ridge Shinn will be presenting a daylong seminar titled Succeeding with Grass-Fed Beef Production at Heifer International in Rutland, MA. For event details and an outline of what will be covered, visit www.nofamass.org/events/succeeding-grass-fed-beef.

Ridge is a long-term friend of Jack’s and mine, and a neighbor in the next town of Hardwick. In Barre and Hardwick we argue over which town is in the exact center of the state. It is an area with lots of rocks, trees and swamp, along with some open pastures, and lots of stone walls. I interviewed him by phone about his work and upcoming seminar.

Julie Rawson: What will people walk away with if they attend this seminar?
Ridge Shinn: An understanding of how to raise grass-fed beef: finding the right cattle and building a great herd; raising cattle on grass and forages only—no grain; and how to make a living at it. A lot of people are raising cattle on grass but very few know how to produce tender, tasty beef consistently.

You can’t succeed without the right genetics—that is, cattle suited for a grass diet. Unfortunately the universities are not providing useful information. Cornell had a grant to study this. They took Holstein bull calves and raised them on grass and forage only. I told them it wasn’t going to work; the modern Holstein will not work in a 100% grass and forage operation. We will discuss and demonstrate the tools to determine if a cow will maximize fat production on grass. It is the fat that makes the meat tasty. And this fat is good for you.

JR: At what weight do you harvest the animal?
RS: When it is fat. That will depend on the animal—1100, 1200, 1300, 1400 lbs. Look at your face in the mirror when you puff up your cheeks. When the behind of the animal looks like that, it is fat. It is a myth that grass-fed beef is leaner than grain-fed. Poor research methodology has contributed to this misconception. They take 50 animals on grain and leave 50 on forage. When the grain fed animals get fat, they kill them all. It takes longer to fatten on forage than on grain. This study does not prove that grass-fed beef is leaner; it proves that cattle get fat faster on grain. We took 8 animals from our program and we took 2 steaks out of each one. We sent them to Susan Duckett from Clemson University to evaluate. She measured ratios, kinds of fats, percentages. One was select, 6 choice, and 1 prime. She was surprised. She knew we didn’t feed grain because our meat had a nearly perfect ratio of the Omega 6 fatty acid to Omega 3.

You will be very hard pressed with Holsteins, the Charolais, or Limousines to get good grass-fed beef. You can get excellent meat in a Jersey but they have very little meat. Jersey is the most tender of any breed and they are tasty.
Any good dairy breed with high butterfat will have good intramuscular fat if they are fed correctly.

**JR: How much land does one need to raise 2 cows for beef?**
RS: You need 2 acres per animal to have enough land to make it fat. But it depends on the Brix, which is a measure of the nutrient value of the grass. You will do it on less land with higher Brix. We will talk about how to get high-Brix grass.

**JR: Will you talk about how to maximize winter time on pasture?**
RS: Yes - minimize the need for hay by extending the grazing season. You have to stock-pile some pasture; that is, stop grazing that area in July. I used to feed all my hay in October – wrapped bales – all over the property. Every time I moved them, I opened a new area around a new bale. Every time I let them into a new area, they ate the stuff on the ground around the bales first. One year I got a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant to do a winter grazing trial here in Massachusetts, which included a forage analysis of what the animals were eating. It showed that the quality of grass in December, January and February was better than that of hay and baleage made in the summer. I left 2 acres that they didn’t graze. *Time Magazine* sent a photographer on January 15, so we brought the cattle out to the knoll that we had saved for winter grazing. It was covered with 6-8 inches of snow. In all the pictures the cattle were digging through the snow and eating. They preferred that to the baleage that was also available. Regarding cost parameters, there is no question that winter grazing saves money that would have been spent to produce hay.

**JR: Is there land available for those who don’t have it?**
RS: I graze 120 acres that I don’t own; I only own 12 acres of pasture. People will stop me at the post office and ask me if I can graze their land. They put up the fence and provide the water. The problem with it is that it is not in contiguous acreage - 40 acres, 10 acres, 12 acres – I need to put them in a trailer and move them. That’s often the case in New England.

**JR: Why should folks come to this event?**
RS: Raising grass-fed beef is good for the land and can save family farming in New England. We have the pastures and the rainfall and markets that will pay top-dollar for high-quality beef. And it doesn’t require a big financial investment. For people willing to learn the basics, it’s a good opportunity.

**RIDGE SHINN** has many years of experience in every aspect of beef production. As a young man he was a herdsman on a dairy farm and the founding director of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (now, The Livestock Conservancy). Later he became Vice President of a Connecticut slaughterhouse, and then founded a meat company (Hardwick Beef—still going strong). Subsequently he imported the 80-head Rotokawa cattle herd from New Zealand to bring this superior gene pool into the United States, and managed the herd for breeding stock. He has consulted all over the world and his work has been featured in *Time Magazine*. Currently he is developing an operations model for large-scale production of 100% grass-fed-and-finished beef in the Northeast.

**REGISTER AND RSVP**
For details on the November 3 Seminar, and to register, visit [www.nofamass.org/events/succeeding-grass-fed-beef](http://www.nofamass.org/events/succeeding-grass-fed-beef)

Visit this seminar’s Facebook event to RSVP and discuss: [www.facebook.com/events/712927608757017](http://www.facebook.com/events/712927608757017)

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:**
Registration: Christine Rainville, 508-572-0816, registrationma@nofamass.org.

Event information: Ben Grosscup, 413-658-5374, ben.grosscup@nofamass.org.
A note from Team Captain, Cathleen O'Keefe

**Last chance to join TEAM NOFA/Mass’ Run to Build Healthy Soil – November 2!**

It’s not too late to join Team NOFA/Mass for our 2nd annual 5k Walk/Run or 10k Run in Lexington, November 2nd, from noon to 1:30pm. Join the fundraising team as a runner or walker, sign up to fundraise only, or come watch the fun.

We’ll be enjoying the fruits of the harvest after the race, potluck style, and all are welcome! Funds raised will support our education and advocacy work on sustainable organic growing practices, which not only conserve BUT actually renew and improve our environment.

Meet team member Jane Hammer:

“There are remarkable stories from all over the world about people helping themselves and the land by building healthy soils and regenerating biodiverse ecosystems. I want everyone to know these stories and thereby know that we can build healthy soils, secure food and water, end drought, sequester carbon, and revive rural livelihoods to guarantee a livable future for all. NOFA/Mass is raising money to continue and build the campaign -- to tell the stories, to learn and work together to regenerate our soil life support system. We’re out of the gates and running, already with some amazing events behind us. Help us hit our stride for the most important race of our lives. Thank you!”

To join the run and for more information visit: www.nofamass.org/teamnofamass.

Sponsor a team member at www.razoo.com/team/Team-Nofa-Mass-Run-To-Build-Healthy-Soil. Select the name of the team member you want to support, and then click the green button to “Donate.” Or donate offline by sending a check to the NOFA/Mass office, 411 Sheldon Rd., Barre, MA, 01005. Please make checks payable to NOFA/Mass and include “Team NOFA/Mass Run” on the memo line. Thanks for your support! Hope to see you in Lexington!
NOFA/Mass outreach update
Sharon Gensler, NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

I thought I’d give you a sample of what it’s like to volunteer for NOFA Outreach events. At the end of September, I attended and tabled at 3 events, each different and unique.

At the Weston Price Foundation Regional Conference I met and talked with people who had an intense focus on health issues and how their food choices affect their well-being. We discussed organic growing/eating as a part of their quest. The conference was held in a large conference center and there were several hundred attendees. The organizers encouraged “tablers” to attend workshop sessions and participate fully, even in the great local organic lunch.

Another was the UMass Extension Service’s 100th Birthday Party, an afternoon event under a tent on the lawn on the Amherst campus. About 100 attendees, whose focus was on celebrating the accomplishments of Extension, listened to speeches and mingled. The folks I interacted with were aware of NOFA and happy that we were there to celebrate with them. It was important for the visibility and credibility of our organization for me to meet or be reacquainted with officials in the university, agricultural and political communities represented.

The Garlic & Arts Festival is a 2-day outdoor event in Orange, MA. It really is a festival! Thousands attend to celebrate local arts, crafts, food, agriculture, and music. Many folks already knew of us but surprisingly, many hadn’t. On several occasions I was told, “It is so great to have found out about you” or “Thank you for all that you do”, or “What fantastic workshops you are offering”, or (seeing I talked a lot about our efforts on carbon sequestration), “Incredible! Tell me how I can become involved”. I talked, talked and talked for most of those 2 days and was both exhausted and exhilarated at the end.

What is amazing about doing outreach is the variety of events we are offered to attend, the valuable information we can share and the amount I can learn from others. I encourage you to think about what you can do to further the NOFA/Mass mission. Wouldn’t it be great to have everyone know what we are about and for NOFA to become a household word? We are invited to many more events that I can attend and we depend on volunteers to make it possible to cover more of these.

THANK YOU September volunteers Leslie Cox, Sam Perkins, Hannah Jacobson-Hardy, and Kathleen Geary (all of whom are board or staff members). We welcome members to volunteer at events to represent NOFA/Mass!

How about you? Let’s talk! You’ll receive some training, maybe learn more about NOFA/Mass and feel good about doing good work! Plus let’s not forget the free NOFA hat OR the $25.00 discount on a NOFA sponsored event. Find out more at www.nofamass.org/programs/nofamass-outreach or email me to sign up at outreach@nofamass.org

OUTREACH CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 8-10</td>
<td>Mass Council on Aging</td>
<td>Falmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22-23</td>
<td>Sustainability &amp; Food Days</td>
<td>Worcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 24-25</td>
<td>Connecting for Change</td>
<td>New Bedford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>Just Roots Fall Festival</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21-23</td>
<td>Biodiversity for a Living Climate</td>
<td>Medford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Winter Conference is changing once again! Worcester State has spent the summer building a mixed-use dormitory/dining facility, and we are happily taking advantage of this new space. You will find registration, exhibitors, lunch, dinner, and selected workshops all in spacious Sheehan Hall. The children’s conference will be moving to a new building as well, directly across from Sheehan Hall.

A delicious, all-organic lunch is included in the price of registration, along with all of the other exciting offerings from the conference: free breakfast and teas, films, workshops, exhibitors and more. Exhibitor hours have been extended until 6pm to provide plenty of opportunities for networking and shopping.

Join our keynoter and all-day seminar leader, Greg Judy, for an optional post-conference dinner and book signing. You won’t want to miss this opportunity for an intimate evening with one of the nation’s leading mob grazing experts.

I had the great pleasure of interviewing Greg the other day. I asked him how consumers can support growers who are choosing regenerative soil practices. This is what he had to say:

“As long as you’re paying the guys who are doing it wrong, buying junk, and feeding it to your family, you’re supporting the status quo. [Consumers need to] back up the farmers who are doing it correctly by buying their products. It’s got to be consumer driven. Consumers have to say, I’m tired of buying nutrient dense-less food. I’m tired of all of the health issues we’re seeing across America, and we’re going to change this.”

Find more about Greg’s all-day seminar at www.nofamass.org/content/greg-judy-seminar.

In addition to this seminar, we continue to have an amazing line-up of diverse workshops. Here’s a note from our workshop coordinator, Stacie Brimmage:

The NOFA/Mass Winter Conference team is busy preparing for an educationally enriching conference for the upcoming year. We’ve received over 70 workshop proposals and are excited to welcome Christie Higginbottom as one of the 2015 Winter Conference presenters.
Christie works as a garden historian and consultant, and at the Winter Conference you can consider her your handy dandy onion expert. During her workshop, “Tips for Success: Growing and Storing Onions”, she will share onion variety recommendations for fresh use and storage, demonstrate techniques for starting onions indoors from seed, review when and how to harvest mature onions, how to cure and store them for long term use, and finally how to properly save heirloom varieties. Look out for other Winter Conference workshop updates in the upcoming monthly newsletters.

Find all of the information you need to register yourself and the whole family at www.nofamass.org/winterconference!
NOFA/Mass’ message on the climate stabilizing potential of regenerative organic agriculture

Ben Grosscup

On September 26, NOFA/Mass e-mailed a promotion for our November 2 fundraising run to support programs educating farmers about carbon sequestering agricultural techniques. I’m pledged to run on Team NOFA/Mass, I serve on the staff, and I’m enthusiastic about the climate-stabilizing potential of our soil carbon work. Speaking as an individual, however, I’m concerned about the message we sent. It said, “Help Us Mitigate Climate Change. ... President Obama pledged to reduce US carbon emissions 17% by 2020. You can help make it happen!”

First, I question the credibility of Obama’s pledge as a standard for measuring climate progress. Second, in the absence of concrete political demands, the phrase “You can help make it happen!” suggests that the responsibility for addressing and reversing the climate crisis ultimately falls on individuals – a view I believe disables us from solving the crisis.

Concern #1: Baselines and Emission Reduction Pledges

When Obama made the 17% reduction pledge at the Copenhagen Summit in 2009, he was the first to use 2005 global emission levels as the baseline for future reductions. Since global climate negotiations began in the early 1990s, the internationally accepted baseline was 1990 levels, which were significantly lower than in 2005.

In December 2009, Larry Lohman, a senior writer at Corner House – a UK-based think tank – pointed out in an interview with Amy Goodman that based on the 1990 baseline, Obama’s pledge amounted to a mere 4% reduction. Making matters worse, Obama’s plan involved not actual reductions but carbon offsets, a financial scam polluters use to get rich and deflect responsibility while accelerating climate catastrophe.

Obama’s 2009 pledge was an attempt to mitigate not climate change, but international condemnation of the US for consistently undermining the inclusion of binding emission reductions in international climate negotiations. The pledge is in the news again, because the President reiterated it at the recent UN meeting as though it exemplified international climate leadership. But Obama’s use of misleading numbers and dead-end policies while promoting offshore drilling and methane-intensive fracking is mendacious and hypocritical, making this pledge an obvious non-starter for organizations serious about the climate crisis.

Concern #2: Climate Responsibilities

NOFA members take a high degree of personal responsibility for the food we eat, produce, and sell and for the health of ecosystems affected by our agricultural practices. We’re also learning that regenerative organic agricultural practices contribute to healing the global carbon cycle – the breakdown of which imperils our planet.

The local benefits organic farmers are already enjoying (e.g., better fertility, crop flavor, and water management) can come as soon as individual farmers transition to regenerative practices. Unfortunately, consumer demand for food produced in a regenerative manner and educational opportunities for farmers to learn these practices isn’t adding up to enough carbon sinks to meet the global emergency we’re in.

Regenerative organic agriculture can effectively mitigate global climate disruption only if practiced on a planetary scale, while emission levels are reduced precipitously and simultaneously. This demands we universalize non-extractive energy systems and regenerative farming, which requires an extremely fast and deep reorganization of society.

Naomi Klein claims that, for the climate crisis, “there are no non-radical solutions left.” In her new book, This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate, Klein argues that solving...
the climate crisis requires leaving fossil fuels underground, equalizing wealth distributions, and making massive public investments in renewable energy, public transportation, and energy efficiency. Nobody can enact these changes alone, but if enough people decided they were necessary and collaborated on effective strategies, we could achieve them. However, these changes are stalled and atmospheric carbon concentrations are ballooning, because the logic of capitalism demands infinite economic growth, privatizes the public sphere, and exacerbates wealth inequalities.

Groups who understand the climate-healing potential of regenerative organic agriculture will most effectively contribute to healing the carbon cycle – not by encouraging individuals to sequester carbon on their farms and gardens – but by joining calls for the above agenda and adding these demands:

- Make massive public investments in soil health and training our people in regenerative organic agriculture.
- Re-distribute under-utilized land and poorly-used land to impoverished people.
- Implement a global soil carbon monitoring system so that we can track soil carbon gains and intelligently allocate resources where they are needed.

We shouldn’t wait for governments to initiate these necessary transformations before transforming individual farms, but if we promote the potential of regenerative farming to heal our planet’s broken carbon cycle, we must be honest about what’s required.

Editor note: Have something to add to the conversation about this or another issue NOFA/Mass has addressed? We welcome your letters and thoughts. Contact our editor Nicole Belanger by email at nicole@nofamass.org.
A farming reality check
Suzy Konecky, NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator

“You can’t learn it from books. I am learning by doing, and by making mistakes,” says Judy Diamondstone, a beginning farmer in the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Program. She is not new to gardening, but she is now taking her growing skills to a whole new level with a well-planned and vibrant permaculture farm in her own backyard.

This winter she was looking for help. With a special interest in urban environments, she knew that she was interested in “perennials, polycultures, and ecologically-informed design of environments as resilient whole systems serving human and non-human needs”, but where to begin? She is also working with a site that is highly contaminated, so needed to build beds on top of the soil in order to avoid the contamination. At times she has thought “how do I move ahead when I know so little”, but has received much support and affirmation from her mentor Jono Niger and the rest of her community.

Judy is very much in the beginning stages of the development of her land, but has received an outpouring of assistance from her friends and neighbors. In early 2014, as soon as the land was warmed, she rented a Bobcat and one of her friends came and took out some of the contaminated soil. She then worked with others on articulating her goals for the space and working on a design. The whole time she was observing and taking pictures of the process. She then wanted to start thinking about irrigation and turned to her mentor Jono for advice on where rain barrels should go. He taught her how to do rainwater calculations.

Judy recently enlisted her community in a “permablitz”, which is essentially an informal gathering of people to work together on a permaculture garden or farm, share skills, build community, and have fun. It was a huge success - they got a lot of work done and she brought together folks who didn’t know one another. As a group they planted sea kale, wild onion, perennial arugula, sage, chamomile, strawberries, chives, groundnuts, sorrel, walking onions, and more. They also put in a rain garden, plants that are not edible but provide other services such as water catchment and some filtration. In all her plantings, she has an eye towards beneficial insects, invertebrate shelter, pollinators, beauty, and aroma. She was pleased to find that at the end, people who didn’t know each other were sharing contact information and making plans. For Judy, producing food on this land is very much about this type of sharing and community building, so even though she has not harvested anything yet she already feels accomplished.

After a great season Judy says: “It finally looks like progress, but what I see ahead of me is at least 2 years of intensive work to just get things going. Hopefully someday this will be a place where people can learn to come and do things that aren’t part of traditional landscaping.” She is in a great position to move forward into these years of intensive work because of how much visioning and planning she has already done. Judy has something that many beginning farmers seek - a confidence and very firm vision of where she wants to go. Upon hearing that she replied warily, “The visioning dangerous, because it is so different from the reality.” Well, one thing we know about any kind of farming is that it can be a great reality check!
Make sure your legislative candidate supports GMO labeling
Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

NOFA/Mass, as you know, has been fighting an intense two-year battle to pass GMO food and seed labeling in Massachusetts. Last session our coalition came closer than we have ever done, and had a majority of legislators signed up in support of the bill. But House leadership kept the lid on tight and we could never get it out of the key committee to the floor for a full vote.

This year we hope to start the 2-year session with a bill supported by a majority of legislators. That should give it some momentum and legs for the struggles it will face. The first step is to make sure the legislators facing contested elections in November understand how important labeling is. Now, when they are asking for our support, is the time to ask for theirs!

If there is a contested election in your House or Senate district (there is one for sure if you see a lot of lawn signs for candidates in your neighborhood) and you want to find out how the incumbent and challenger stand on GMO labeling, go to www.marighttoknow.com/home/elections2014.

You will find there a list of the candidates (by district) and whether they have signed on to support the idea of GMO labeling. (We have polled them.) If a candidate you like has not signed on, contact them (the link to their campaign HQ is listed) and explain that you are a supporter but you want labeling passed this session. Ask them to support it, and to contact www.marighttoknow.com to get that support recorded.

There are also many districts where there is no contest in November. Those are not listed on the above website. But if you want to remind the incumbent of the importance of this issue, you can find their name and contact info at www.openstates.org/find_your_legislator A call or email as a constituent mentioning GMO labeling and why you support it would be much appreciated by us!

Don’t forget to watch the news November 4th to see if the GMO Labeling initiatives in Colorado and Oregon succeed. As in earlier initiatives, the grocery and biotech industries are piling up cash in the millions to buy TV time against labeling – cash that we can’t come near to equaling. But concern about the health and environmental dangers of GMOs is spreading so rapidly we are eventually going to win. A success this year in either of those states would mean a lot toward passage of labeling here!
Start planning your 2015 NOFA/Mass Bulk Order
Cathleen O’Keefe, NOFA/Mass Bulk Order Coordinator

Do you buy cover crop seed, fertilizers, mineral amendments, compost, potting soil, potato and allium seed? Would you like to save money on those items? If so, the bulk order might be perfect for you!

Each spring, 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 order is open to both NOFA members and non-members.

Suppliers we work with include Organic Growers Supply, Moose Tubers, Ideal Compost, Vermont Compost, Crop Production Services, and Fertrell.

The spring order form will be available to download on January 1, 2015. You’ll only have a month to get your order in, so start planning now! To be prepared, we suggest getting your soil tested, with recommendations. Most results are available within 2-3 days via e-mail. Please contact Cathleen O’Keefe, Bulk Order Coordinator if you have ideas for additional items to add to the order: (413) 387-2316 or bulkorder@nofamass.org.
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
FF-288A (0310)

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
Homesteading observations: Autumn on the homestead
Sharon Gensler, Homesteader and NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

It’s a drizzly day and I am hoping that it turns into a good steady soaker, not only because we need it and I planted more beds to their oat/field pea cover crop yesterday, but because it gives me an indoor day and I can finally write this article!

This month’s topic has been eluding me. However, watching the leaves change color and begin to fall brings up the idea of life/death/change.

There is still much produce in the garden to eat and process (still cucs & zucs in October!), the raspberries and kiwi are still being harvested and soon the pears, paw paw and chestnuts will need our attention and after last year’s apple abundance, we will have a sparse crop.

The larder is already pretty full, but I’m looking forward to topping off with more frozen vegetables, especially kale and collards after they are turned even sweeter by the cold weather. The cabbages need to be root-cellar and made into kraut and the last of the winter squash harvested and stored. I love eating in season. The asparagus, salads and fresh spring greens give way to the green beans, tomatoes, summer squash, corn, and peppers of high summer. Soon we’ll be eating more of the cold season hearty root vegetable stews, beans and stored fermented veggies. By late winter I’ll definitely be looking forward to those early wild edibles. Round and round growing and eating!

Our last Guinea hen died of old age this week. I never thought I’d miss her constant vocalizations, but I do. I haven’t checked with the neighbors yet to see if they’ve noticed. One once asked us about “that incessant high-pitched mechanical noise” coming from our place. I also realize that I have to be more vigilant about the pasture fencing. She was our “watch-dog” and always let us know when there was an intruder or any possible danger. Well, you had to learn the difference in her squawks as there was a lot of “Peter and the wolf” scenarios in the beginning. But, last year, after the electro-mesh was shorted-out by a thunderstorm, she did save the flock. It was about 2am when she woke us and we discovered 2 fat raccoons had breached our high security system. Her name was GiGi and we miss her. She’s buried at the top of the orchard with all of the other fowl that have preceded her.

It may seem odd that I’m “eulogizing” a dead Guinea hen while on the other hand contemplating the slaughter of our 5 turkeys. When I was eating a vegetarian diet for over 35 years, I would have been appalled at this duality, but I have come to terms with my behavior. My personal guide to ethical animal eating is to only eat what I could grow and kill myself. This has expanded a bit to include those raised responsibly by friends.

The hens in our egg laying flock are named, and have a long-term relationship and life with us. For the most part they get to live out a full life even through their “retirement” years. While the
turkeys, or other meat birds, are obtained for the purpose of being raised for eating. I am able to give them a pretty darn good life during the time they are with us: a large pasture where they range freely, eating grass, clover, and insects during the day and are cooped at night for security. They are supplemented with organic grain, kelp and fresh vegetables. They seem to be content and free of stress. I wish I could be eaten when my time is up but society would frown on that, so plan to use a green burial so I can at least nourish the earth. What more could a woman ask for!

Well, on that interesting note, I’ll close. Hope your autumn is rich, abundant and colorful.

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!
CLASSIFIEDS

Looking for help? Have something to sell? Have land to lease? Place a classified ad!

Find out more at www.nofamass.org/classifieds

Seeking Assistant Manager at Book & Plow Farm
Contact: Tobin Porter-Brown, bookandplowfarm@gmail.com
Looking to hire an assistant manager to work at Book & Plow, which is partnered with Amherst College, to achieve our compelling production goals, re-imagine the current food culture, while committing to working with some truly incredible students. This person will share responsibilities for leading crews, tractor operation or other independent projects relating to field production, For more information check out www.bookandplowfarm.com/assistantmanager

Looking for nubian buck stud around Northampton
Contact: Jim McSweeney, jim@hilltowntreeandgarden.com

Seeking mature, experienced cow people for fabulous farm
Contact: Doug Stephan, Doug.stephan@gmail.com
Eastleigh Farm in Framingham, MA is seeking staff. Jobs include feeding and milking. Also need dairy store manager, with knowledge of dairy products and marketing.

Boston Organics
Delivering fresh organic produce to your door

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

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

We’re always looking for additional growers and suppliers!

617.242.1700
bostonorganics.com
service@bostonorganics.com
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.
Do You –
  • Want consistent 20-year cash flow for your unused land?
    • ZERO cash outlay
    • ZERO risk
    • No worries about weather, insect damage or under-valued crop yields
  • Have 6 acres or more of unused land that is?
    • Not considered wetlands
    • Clear and Open
    • Not conservation protected

We Are –
  • SunConnect, a National Solar Developer
  • Looking to expand our portfolio in your Massachusetts community

Interested in learning more, and to see if your property qualifies, call Mark at SunConnect today!

Mark Lambley
844.413.2065 Toll Free
www.sunconnectusa.com
Events

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust’s Annual Meeting
Saturday, October 18 from 11:00am to 2:00pm
488 Moore Hill Road, Athol

Join Mount Grace and host, the Farm School. Shanna Cleveland, a staff attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation who is working on issues surrounding the environmental impact of the proposed Tennessee Gas pipeline, will be the 2014 featured speaker. Lunch will be catered by Diemand Farm. Lunch is $25.00 per person and may be ordered.

Please RSVP to attend. More info at www.mountgrace.org/mount-grace-28th-annual-meeting-1018

Connecting for Change Conference
Friday & Saturday, October 24 & 25th
New Bedford, MA

The Connecting for Change Conference is celebrating its 10th year with two-days of keynotes, workshops, music, art, films, a farmers market and amazing local food. Hear from Keynotes Joel Salatin, Janisse Ray and a dozen other Food and Farming speakers! Learn about pollinators, starting a co-op, GMO’s, how grazing can heal the land, wild edibles, falling in love with microbes and much more. The conference also features one of the best locally sourced lunches!

To register or for more info visit www.connectingforchange.org.

Training for Beginning Farmer Service Providers
Monday – Wednesday, October 27-29th
Albany, NY

The Cornell Small Farms Program and the NE Beginning Farmers Project are hosting a 3-day conference for beginning farmer service providers this fall. This train-the-trainer conference will help you deepen your skills in supporting advanced BF’s and connect you with a service provider network that reaches across the Northeast.

Through the support of a NE SARE PDP grant, workshops, hotel accommodations, and meals will be provided based on an application process.

Any questions should be directed to Ryan Maher, Cornell Small Farms Program, at ryan.maher@cornell.edu. More information at www.nebeginningfarmers.org/trainers

NESAWG ‘It Takes a Region Conference -- Region-Sizing: Making It Work’
Monday – Wednesday, November 10-12
Saratoga Springs, NY

What does it take to make our food system strong, resilient and region-sized? What does real
collaboration and cooperation look like? How can we be more effective? Explore the various channels, mechanisms, structures and infrastructures for making region-sizing work. Our keynote speaker Jim Hightower will issue a rallying cry for collaboration and change. Whether you’re a farmer, market manager, ecologist, health care professional, regional planner, educator, advocate, community organizer, or other food systems practitioner; whether you’re working from environmental, economic, or social angles, we invite you to roll up your sleeves and develop strategies with your colleagues, from NY to WV and all across New England. More info at www.nesawg.org.

An Idea Incubator for Franklin County’s Future
Saturday, November 15 from 8:30am to 3:30pm
Greenfield Community College

Creating a Bold New Economy: An Idea Incubator for Franklin County’s Future will explore new business models for the county to help us all thrive. The forum will be kicked off by Marjorie Kelly, author of Owning Our Future, and former editor of Business Ethics magazine. In the afternoon working groups will explore Food as an Economic Engine as well as 4 other topics. $25 registration fee includes lunch. $15 discounted rate for CDC members, students and low income.

To register go to www.GreeningGreenfield.org and look under “Events” or call 413-773-0228.

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate Presents: Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming
Conference, November 21-23 at Tufts University, Medford, MA
International Action Week, November 24-30 (companion events around the world)

Promoting the power of nature to remove excess carbon from the atmosphere and store it in soils where it supports bountiful life, effective water management, and food and economic security for people everywhere. Bringing together climate advocates, farmers, ranchers, scientists, social scientists, policy makers, NGOs, artists, visionaries, and the general public to present, learn about, and discuss affordable strategies for eco-restoration that local, national, and international governments, agencies, communities and individuals can rapidly implement to reverse global warming.

For more info and to register, see www.Bio4climate.org/conference-2014 or email Climate2014@bio4climate.org

Announcements

Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Ag Courses
The new season of MDAR ag courses is fast approaching and once again. They offer three levels from pre-startup to full business plan. Visit www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/land-use/agricultural-business-training-program-abtp.html for more info, or contact Rich Chandler at 413-548-1905 or rick.chandler@state.ma.us.

Greenfield Community College Seeks Farm & Food Systems Program Assistant
Part-time (approximately 8 hours per week, total of 396 hours per year), year-round position, salary: $16.38 per hour, start date: November 1, 2014. Provide administrative support to maintain and grow the Farm and Food Systems program and help with outreach to area high school students, teachers, and local community. This position combines administrative tasks with a need for understanding
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.)

thecorganicfoodguide.com
Run or Walk with Team NOFA/Mass on November 2 in Lexington
Sunday, November 2 - 12:00pm to 1:30pm
Genesis Battlegreen Run, Lexington
Donation
We are running and walking to raise funds to educate and advocate for sustainable organic growing practices, which not only conserve but actually renew and improve our environment. You’re invited to join us. Funds raised will support our efforts to mitigate climate change. We are inspired by the unfolding evidence that proves biological organic farming is a viable way to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and store that carbon, long term, in the soil. It will have the added benefit of helping growers produce superior crops and maintain soil moisture.

Learn more and sign up to fundraise on the team’s webpage: www.nofamass.org/teamnofamass

Succeeding with Grass-Fed Beef: Human Health, Carbon Sequestration, and Farm Viability
Monday, November 3, 2014 - 9:00am to 5:15pm
Heifer International, Rutland, MA
Cost: $65 Member; $81 Non-member (By Oct. 20)
Would you like to build the health of your soil; produce great meat; improve your family’s health; and combat climate change? You can do all of this—and make a profit—by raising 100% grass-fed beef. Join us for a one-day conference with Ridge Shinn, an expert in grass-fed-and-finished beef production, who will share with us the critical lessons he has learned. You can benefit from Ridge’s years of experience in every aspect of beef production. He has consulted all over the world and his work has been featured in Time Magazine. Currently he is developing an operations model for large-scale production of 100% grass-fed-and-finished beef in the Northeast.

When the Belly is the Beast: Dietary Interventions to Address Degenerative Disease
December 4 - 9:30am to 4:00pm
Bristol Community College, Fall River
Cost: By Nov. 19: $70 Member; $88 Non-member. By Nov. 30: $75 Member; $94 Non-member. After Nov. 30: $80 Member; $100 Non-member. All prices include lunch.
The seminar explains how environmental factors, including toxic exposures and processed and nutrient-poor foods, are causing a range of chronic and degenerative illnesses. The seminar addresses details of treating and preventing conditions including autism, auto-immune disease, and Alzheimer’s by healing the gut and preventing inflammation in the brain. The treatments addressed will focus on nutritional approaches to provide excellent quality nutrition using organic and whole foods. Specific attention will be given to the Specific Carbohydrate diet, developed by Elaine Gottschall and the Gut and Psychology Syndrome diet, developed by Natasha Campbell-Mcbride.
Let us take care of your farming needs!

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

See our website for our newest catalog and full details on our products and services.
New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in September

David Anick  Jamie Hall  Kim Peckham
Michael Armstrong  John Hopkins  Diana Phillips
Arielle Aronoff  Margot Hubbard  Julie Potter-Brown
Dorothy and Frank Baptista  Amy Hulbert  Laurie Reese
Carolyn Barthel  John Ivens  Ray and Pamela Robinson
Mark Begley  Erin Kassis  Michael Rocha
Toni Begman  Eitan Kenefick  Johanna Rosen
Jon and Sage Belber  Dedie King and Henry  Nancy Rosenberg
Beezy Bentzen  Jeff King  Jon Ross
Marc Bluestein  Sandra Kocher  Yvette Rowan-Stern
Erika Waly Bourne  Denis and Jane LaForce  Emma Sauvageau
Johanna Boynton  Jim Laurie  Brian Schultz
John Breitbart  Sally Lawton  David Sears
Parker Brophy  Kathleen Leavey  Mark Seifried
Colleen Burke  Mabel Liang  Joanne S. Sharac
Derek and Katie Christianson  Harry Liggett  Marcia Shaw
Dan and Bonita Conlon  Susan Lozoraitis  Adam Isakovitch Sheinsohn
Dave Conna  Spencer McAfee  Bill Sheldon
Mary Lou Conna  Catherine McDonald  Lucinda Simmons
David Consalvo  Vicki and John Mickola  William Snyder
Dawn Cordeiro  Ellen Miller  Pat Stewart
Leslie Cox  Curtis Miller  Janet Taft
Alisande Cunningham  Amirah Mitchell  David and Sally Tarara
Martin Dagoberto  Ansu Mittra  Karl Thidemann
Laura Davis and Donald  Gregory Mori  Jill Vollmuth
Sutherland  Cola Nelson  Jineen M Walker
Mike Donoghue  Ryan Nolan  Valerie Walton and Tad
Katie Emery-Klebart  Jimmy Nowlan  Hitchcock
Richard Field  Cathleen O’Keefe  Eric and Sarah Ward
Pamela Fox  Ben Oliver  Carol Wasserloos
Michael Galasso  Wendy Osgood  Elva Wohlers
Cynthia Gill  Patricia Peck  Allen Young
Molly Gould  

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

GET FRESH WITH A LOCAL FARMER

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
Helping small farms since 1915.
You can help too
Join at www.MFBF.net
Check the website to learn about the store, products offered through our members and information on becoming a member

www.greenfieldfarmerscoop.com