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From the Editor
Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass Communications Director & Public Relations Coordinator

With seasonable weather and finally some rain, mid-June is here with its bounty of strawberries and asparagus. I’ve been traveling a lot lately, both for my work with NOFA/Mass and personal fun and exploration, and couldn’t be more grateful for the hospitality and time shared with others. These individuals have made their ideas a reality with time, patience, perseverance, community, and hard work.

My travels this year began with a trip to Troy, NY where I reconnected with the Sanctuary for Independent Media, where I served as an Americorps VISTA 5 years ago. They are doing some great urban gardening and education work in Troy. While there, I was inspired to sign up for The Regenerative Urban Sustainability Training in Albany this July.

Interviewing processors, producers, and certifier staff for a video project, I’ve traveled to businesses and farms this spring. The video, on dispelling some myths about organic certification, sharing resources available and experiential advice from processors, producers, and certifier staff, will be available this fall.

I’ve also had the pleasure of visiting several of my co-workers’ farms and homesteads these last few weeks. Seeing how they put their values and passions into practice, while learning about their growing operations and getting to know them better has been a huge gift.

In this issue of the newsletter, you can read about the small stepping stones and large epiphanies individuals have experienced on their paths. Lynda Simkins shares her evolving experience growing organic flowers, which she’s done for the past 15 years (page 8). Read about two new members of the NOFA/Mass community and how they came to this work - our new Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator, Brittany Sidway Overshiner (page 5), and new Board of Director’ member Vidya Tikku (page 3).

Here’s to a productive summer and taking steps together along our paths!

Nicole
Vidya Tikku joins NOFA/Mass Board of Directors
Julie Rawson, NOFA/Mass Executive Director

We are happy to welcome Vidya Tikku to the NOFA/Mass Board. Vidya, an immigrant from Delhi in India, has been in the United States for 15 years. She works for The Trustees of Reservations, Boston region, formerly Boston Natural Areas Network, as the Regional Engagement Manager. Here below, Vidya shares some of her thoughts and experience with us. We look forward to the strengths she will bring to the NOFA/Mass Board.

“NOFA is certainly one of the first organizations that I learned about when I joined BNAN in 2005. NOFA was running a bulk order distribution site at City Natives at the time, and I came to recognize NOFA as the go-to, expert organization around farming and soil care. I came to BNAN as an urban designer, but have become more involved in issues such as access to food and urban agriculture over the years. It is a good opportunity to learn more about organic gardening in the city — both for my own education and for me to be able to connect all the urban gardeners in the city with healthy growing. I think the two things I can focus my work on is urban agriculture in Massachusetts and also to help raise money from foundations to further NOFA’s work. Working with NOFA will help me pursue my personal values and goals: to connect folks in the greater Boston gardening community with education around organic food production via NOFA.

My father worked as a plant geneticist. He spent his career as an employee of Indian Agriculture Research Institute where he spent most of his career trying to develop drought resistant crops and seeds. I spent a lot of my childhood in the fields around Delhi. I was just playing, but also learned about the challenges, the monsoons, the size of the farms, the increasing use of pesticides.

As I have grown older as a new immigrant in the US, I was baffled by the amazing food choices in the grocery store – 12 kinds of bread, 3 kinds of carrots, 5 kinds of milk. What does 1% mean? I have had to teach myself. I am lucky that I have a job that helps me to do that, but not everyone has that opportunity. I will never forget standing in the grocery store and not knowing which item to pick up. When I was growing up in India, I bought food directly at my neighborhood farmers’ market where the food was kind of still organic because there was no or limited access to pesticides. I knew where my food came from.

Especially as I became a mom (I have one daughter, Mahi, who is 8 years old. Mahi means ‘Earth” in Sanskrit), it was important to have good food for my family. I started wondering about the milk and the meat and the chemicals I put in her mouth. My personal query, combined with working with the refugee community and the urban gardeners in Boston brought this interest to a head. I have a very small back yard that gets just a little sun, and I have a small garden where I experiment with growing a new vegetable each year. It brings me a lot of personal joy to help people get good food. As a teen, I had rebelled against my father’s wishes to become a botanist like most of my family, and trained as an
architect. But here I am 20 years later, working like him to improve food access for all.

When I first came to the US, I moved to St. Louis, MO. My first impression was that there is a very diverse population in this country. Then I moved to San Francisco. But it wasn’t until I started to live in Boston that I got a chance to engage with all the diverse immigrant groups in the US. It would behoove us to capture and leverage the combined knowledge and strength of so many cultures. Some of the best time I spent here was working with Haitians, Vietnamese, Somalis, Sudanese and Eritreans – Ethiopians. I became an American citizen two years ago, when India started to offer dual citizenship. At my oath-taking ceremony, I was struck by the number of nationalities present in the room and noticed the shared joy. Many in the room have seen types of poverty and challenges that are thankfully not to be seen in the US. It’s a country that should be proud of the benefits its offers its citizens. Most of the immigrants actually come from farming communities. They don’t have to be taught how to grow, and its benefits. What is needed is just to acclimate them to New England growing conditions. How do you access land and the understanding of the urban soil-testing, fixing? And how do you deal with the New England weather – transplanting, season extension techniques, etc?

I am excited that we are in a moment in time when a lot of folks are focusing on food, what they are eating, with a curiosity about what is organic. There is an opportunity around education and outreach. At the same time my personal goal is for folks to understand what farming really means. It is not easy to make it profitable for the farmer. How individuals as consumers can complete the cycle and support the farmer that feeds them is important knowledge to gain. Not many consumers know how things can go wrong so quickly for the farmer. How do you bring to consumers the sense of what it takes to grow your food? What does it take for the journey of what they consume, from the farm to their plate?

For me personally, it is fulfilling to help connect urban families and youth with food production. The joy I see when our youth grow their own food is wonderful. I don’t expect them to become a farmer later in life, but they become educated consumers. It is fascinating to see how you can turn around people’s perception of food with just a little bit of engagement in the production of the food itself.

When I was a kid in India, standing outside my apartment in July, I would be standing in knee high water from monsoon floods. Now it is mostly dry. There are just huge dry spells in Southern Asia and you may have heard of the mass suicides of the farmers in Southern India when monsoons fail to arrive as expected, wiping out their crops. Climate change is real. Also, as I learn more, people say that farming is not profitable. As a non-farmer that feels unfair, as food is the common denominator for all. For example in India, in a middle class family we would eat certain foods once or twice a week. In the US you can eat meat seven days a week with the cheaper alternatives available. There are all sorts of ramifications of not understanding the real cost of food.”
Brittany Sidway Overshiner hired as Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator

Glenn Oliveira, NOFA/Mass Education Director and Statewide Education Events Organizer

I am very happy to announce the hiring of Brittany Sidway Overshiner for the recently open Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator position. Brittany will work with us 10 hours per week – this in addition to her work as a farmer at Medway Community Farm. As the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator, Brittany will be leading the cultivation of the next generation of committed organic farmers in Massachusetts. As a beginning farmer with over seven years of growing experience (and one who has helped build the non-profit Medway Community Farm from a 1/4 acre garden to a 6 acre CSA/retail vegetable farm), we know Brittany is the perfect person for this important role.

I asked Brittany a few questions about her plans for the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Program.

Glenn Oliveira: Why are you excited to be joining the NOFA team?
Brittany Sidway Overshiner: I’m excited to be joining the NOFA team because I admire the work NOFA does and love connecting with new people who are passionate about sustainable agriculture! I can’t wait to meet the rest of the staff and be a part of team working hard to promote and support farming in Massachusetts.

GO: What motivates you in your work?
BSO: Farming is my passion. When I realized so many issues that are important to me connect to this profession: nutrition, environmental sustainability and social justice, I knew the rest of my life would revolve around agriculture. After apprenticing for a few years I learned that I thrive in outdoor, physically challenging work conditions and love every task involved in growing vegetables, even hand weeding carrots. After managing a farm for a few years I learned that I love business management, crop planning and communicating with customers. Farming is my passion, and I am deeply inspired and motivated by the network of farmers and farm supporters I have encountered over the last eight years. I believe the work that I do, both as a farmer and now as the Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator is a part of a collaborative movement to improve the health and sustainability of our food system.

GO: Why do you want to work to support beginning farmers in Massachusetts?
BSO: As a beginning farmer myself I understand the challenges beginning farmers face. I believe NOFA can support farmers and help them transition into successful business owners who will have a lasting impact on our local farm economy and community. I’m excited to connect with more beginning farmers to better understand their needs and connect them with the people and resources that will aid in their success.

GO: How do you envision improving the NOFA/Mass Beginning Farmer Program?
BSO: I hope to increase the outreach of the program by connecting with more farmers, both beginning farmers and potential mentors through networking to increase awareness and participation. I also hope to build collaboration with the Beginning Farmer Network of Massachusetts to find ways to better serve beginning farmers with solutions that are practical and deliver results. I will listen to participant feedback and work hard to make improvements in the program for future participants.
Hope and transformation at the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference
Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass PR Coordinator
Ben Grosscup, NOFA Summer Conference Coordinator

Join us for the 41st annual NOFA Summer Conference: August 14-16, 2015. The conference is a dynamic and diverse gathering of people working at the intersections of organic agriculture and gardening, food justice, land management, education, carbon sequestration, environment and health.

This year NOFA is focusing on the role that healthier microbial communities can play in addressing the greatest collective challenges humanity has ever faced: global climate disruption and epidemics of chronic disease. This year’s theme is “Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology.”

Our Friday Night keynote, Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride – developer of the GAPS nutritional protocol – focuses her work as a medical professional on the health of human gut microbiology. Her work shows that the theme of “regeneration” applies not only to soil, but also to the human body. Her hopeful message is that we can reverse degenerative illness in people by providing a diet optimized for gut microbes that contribute to human health. In addition to her keynote, Dr. Campbell-McBride will give a full day pre-conference on Friday, August 14, followed on Saturday, August 15 by three workshops sessions that address the key role commonly misunderstood healthy fats and cholesterol can play in fostering health.

Our Saturday Night keynote, Ronnie Cummins – director of the Organic Consumer's Association – will highlight our theme’s focus on global climate disruption. His hopeful message is that farmers and land managers can reverse the climate crisis by managing soil microbial communities in combination with growing plants to transform excessive atmospheric carbon concentrations into stable soil-based carbon molecules that produce fertile soils. While drastic cuts in fossil fuel emissions are essential for a stable climate, Cummins reminds us that we can’t stop at removing the harm; we also need to regenerate the biological systems that create a livable climate.

Workshop tracks have just been announced: biodynamics, cooperatives, organic land care, permaculture, and soil carbon and climate change. Explore the Summer Conference program, now online in its entirety.

We offer a variety of scholarship and work exchange opportunities so that the conference can be accessible to as many people as possible. These are available on a first come, first served basis, so check them out soon!

Young friends and new friends are welcome to the Children’s Conference, with art, theater, music, science projects, meeting lots of animals and making butter too. Teen Conference participants will have great hands on experiences with animals like draft horses, goats and alpacas, make a solar cooker and learn to work with walnut ink!
We also have five wide-ranging pre-conferences on Friday, August 14. There will be sessions on herbal medicine making, pastured poultry, beekeeping, GAPS nutritional protocol and regenerative agriculture.

Register by the July 17th early bird deadline and save 20% on registration.

Registration, workshops, logistics and more at www.nofasummerconference.org!

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Farm Credit East Congratulates Thriving CSA From the Ground Up

Ryan Voland, owner of Red Fire Farm, got started farming while still in high school. Shortly after college graduation, he purchased his first farm and his business has been growing, from the ground up, ever since.

To accomplish their expansion goals and provide adequate shares to a growing client base, the Volands turned to Farm Credit East to help purchase land of their own and expand the business. “I talked with other banks, but Farm Credit East has a much deeper understanding of agriculture,” said Ryan.

In addition to financing assistance for several expansions, the Volands discovered that Farm Credit East could also be a key resource in preparing their payroll. “When we first started our business, we hired someone to do our payroll who wasn’t familiar with agriculture and made a number of mistakes,” said Ryan. “That person just didn’t understand the regulations specific to agriculture, so we turned to Farm Credit East.”

With key financing opportunities and the added protection of payroll support, Red Fire Farm has grown to be one of the largest CSAs in Western Massachusetts. Serving more than 1,500 CSA summer shares, plus 2,000 fruit, egg, flower and winter shares, they’re once again preparing their thriving business for growth.

Farm Credit East
FarmCreditEast.com / 800.562.2235
Growing organic cut flowers
Glenn Oliveira, NOFA/Mass Education Director and Education Events Organizer

On July 29th at Natick Community Organic Farm, Lynda Simkins will host a workshop on all aspects of organic flower production. Perhaps it’s the challenge, or simply the beauty of the harvest, that keeps many flower growers out in the garden or farm decade after decade. Whatever the reason, I’m hoping Lynda’s passion for flower growing will rub off on new local flower producers. I hope you enjoy my conversation with Lynda and consider attending her July workshop.

Glenn Oliveira: What was your introduction to organic flower production?
Lynda Simkins: I’ve been farming for forty years – mostly growing certified organic vegetables. Probably fifteen years ago I started incorporating certain ornamental and cut flowers into my production and got more and more interested in flowers. I was getting bored with vegetables, so I branched off into the flowers and let someone else take over the vegetables.

GO: What was the primary interest that took you down the flower path?
LS: I found that growing vegetables was always the same old thing with the same way of starting and growing them. Flowers have much more variety and species; their seed, light, and day length requirements are all different. All that makes a difference in flower production. I found the challenge very interesting.

GO: What major changes have happened in your system since your introduction to flower production?
LS: I’ve fine-tuned the whole production system. I’ve added a greenhouse system into it. I’ve added woodies (stiff stem flower production, i.e.: pussy willow, lilac, hydrangeas, and others). Then there are all the bulbs (dahlias, etc). It’s much more diverse and challenging to overlap, grow, and pick them. Each flower has a picking requirement and a post-harvest requirement. Over time that experience has added to my cut flower growing knowledge.

GO: Has there been a lot more interest in organic flower production since you started?
LS: There seems to be quite a large market for local flowers for wedding and events. Florists are starting to key in to the localness and seasonality of flowers, but I’m not sure if organicness is an issue. A lot of the flowers grown here in New England are not sold on the open market because they are too hard to ship. Zinnias, dahlias, and some other flowers don’t ship well, so you have to get them locally. There’s your market.

GO: What are you learning currently? What are you passionate about now when it comes to flower production?
LS: Right now I’m weeding. I try to fit learning in around being the Executive Director of a pretty large non-profit and trying to sell, market and grow flowers. It’s a challenge to fit into the whole system. I’m pushing to be ten steps ahead of just putting in a row of zinnias and picking twenty to a bunch.

GO: What are you trying to achieve with your production?
LS: I’m just busting my butt to put flowers on the
stand and into markets. Everyone, like florists or Whole Foods, has his or her specific requirements for flower production. It’s not the same for every market, so you have to figure that all out: stem length, when to pick, post-harvest management, when it’s sold and for how much.

**GO:** Are you integrating new types of flowers into your production? What’s your favorite flower right now?

**LS:** I’m always integrating new flowers into my production. I love dahlias. I just think flowers are very interesting, dynamic, and changing every day; that’s the neat part about growing flowers.

**GO:** What advice would you give to someone who is interested in getting into organic flower production for market?

**LS:** Find easy flowers to pick, and find a market for them. Then add flowers as you go, growing little by little every year. You need fillers, you need flowers, and you need a long market season; that’s what it’s all about.

**GO:** What’s the difference between an organic and non-organic flower grower?

**LS:** I don’t think there is much difference. You should be able to grow flowers without many chemicals involved as long as you have a good healthy soil base for it. You don’t eat flowers, so the main reason to grow organic flowers is for the soil.

**GO:** That’s a topic I’ve heard brought up a bit. You don’t eat organic flowers, but won’t the long term health and sustainability of your flowers benefit if you build that soil organically?

**LS:** People go through stages when they choose organic. One of the first reasons you go organic is to feed your kids or because you’re sick and you need to feed yourself healthily. Then as you get older you start realizing that the reason that you grow organic is for the health of the soil, the water, and the air around you.

**GO:** For people interested in joining you at the workshop in July, what should they expect?

**LS:** They can observe most everything they need to know about flower production. That’s why we are holding it at that time of year. And by them we’ll have fields and fields of flowers in bloom.

To find out more, or to register for the Growing Certified Organic Cut Flowers Workshop with Lynda visit [www.nofamass.org/events/growing-certified-organic-cut-flowers-0](http://www.nofamass.org/events/growing-certified-organic-cut-flowers-0).

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**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.)

[thetheorganicfoodguide.com](http://thetheorganicfoodguide.com)
Mark your calendars for the 29th annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference

Saturday, January 16, 2016
Worcester State University, Worcester, MA

The Winter Conference features 70 workshops, children’s conference, and many exhibitors. Ben Burkett, family farmer and coordinator of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, will give this year’s keynote.

Before September 1st, we are taking workshop proposals on these topics

- Season extension
- Urban gardening or farming, gardening in small spaces
- Healthy food access, farm & food policy
- Growing specialty crops organically
- Livestock & beekeeping
- Farm management, Irrigation & Machinery
- Homesteading skills, food preparation & preservation, soap making
- Carbon sequestration
- Soil & Human health

To submit a workshop proposal contact Stacie Brimmage at wcworkshops@nofamass.org or 508-579-0725.

3rd annual Team NOFA/Mass 5/10K Run & 5K Walk
Cathleen O’Keefe, TEAM NOFA/Mass Captain

Sunday, November 1, 2015 - 12:00pm
Genesis Battlegreen Run in Lexington, MA

It’s not quite summer yet, but mark your calendars for this cool weather event!

Are you excited to help NOFA/Mass raise money to support its mission? Do you want to be part of a group that is passionate and motivated to make a difference and help a good cause? Does the idea of taking a fall walk/run in historic Lexington appeal to you? If you answered yes to any of these questions, join us as part of medal-winning Team NOFA/Mass at the 2015 Battle Green 5/10K Run & 5K Walk on November 1st.

This year, we aim to create a team of 50 fundraisers to generate $25,000 for NOFA/Mass’ policy work and educational programs. Help us meet our goal! Families and teams are encouraged to join. Sign up or find out more by emailing teamnofamass@nofamass.org. In addition to feeling camaraderie and winning prizes, all fundraisers enjoy an organic potluck lunch after the race.
Farms and businesses, check your snail mail
Sharon Gensler, NOFA/Mass Outreach Coordinator

Many thank yous to Emily Egan Bright, Amie Lindenboim, Jane Bindley, and Judy Diamondstone for representing us at several great events.

May also is the time of our big mailing to farmers and businesses that have enthusiastically agreed to distribute our literature to their clientele.

In 2011, we purchased 100 4-tiered plastic brochure holders and mailed out around 50. Each holder contained our general NOFA postcards, Summer Conference postcards, the Events Calendar and either the Raw Milk or the GMO information brochures. Since then, each spring we mail out more holders plus refill packets of literature. This year, along with the refill literature, we sent out the last of our holders. We have received enthusiastic support from recipients and are thrilled to know that our information is available to consumers of organic food across the state.

So, our appreciation goes out to those farms, co-ops and stores that have generously taken on this responsibility. Also, we want to acknowledge two who have gone above and beyond what was requested. Boston Organics will be distributing 2500 Summer Conference postcards in their deliveries in July and Red Fire Farm will do the same with their 500 CSA shares. Wow! That will surely help spread the word about our fabulous conference. We welcome other farms and business to help spread the word about our conferences and other offerings. If you’d like to help, get in touch.

The final Thank You today is to the great mailing crew: Kathleen Geary, Nicole Belanger, Christine Rainville and Mandy Burton who were excellent counters (we have to keep weight down to keep postage costs down), stuffers, conversationalists AND pot luck lunch providers.

What about YOU? Are there ways you want to be more involved in NOFA? Right now, there are not any June or July events on my radar. That’s a way you could help without leaving your home. Send me information about events you hear about that would be good venues for a NOFA table and I’ll take it from there.

Remember to check the website to find an events that may be added. Contact me at outreach@nofamass.org

Upcoming Outreach Events:

August 21-23: Heath Ag Fair
August 21-23: Boston Green Fest
August 29-30: Wachusett Farm Fresh Festival
September 26-27: North Quabbin Garlic & Art Festival
September 26: Bristol Honey Festival
From across the web, some interesting things we’ve read this month
Amie Lindenboim, NOFA/Mass Policy Organizer

Click on title to read each article.

TRADE/LABELING

Free Traders to Food Consumers: Get Lost
Rick North – Blue Oregon
“On May 18, the WTO ruled that the U.S. law requiring meat packages to label country of origin was illegal, discriminating against meat companies from Canada and Mexico. In other words, profits of foreign corporations trump your right to know where your meat is coming from. So much for the 92% of American consumers who want country of origin food labeling, according to a 2014 Consumer Reports survey.”

Trading away food safety
Debbie Barker - The Hill
“Although there is heated debate about the fate of fast track—or Trade Promotion Authority—and the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a little-discussed aspect is how trade pacts affect the food we eat, and the food we feed our children.”

Special Report: The war on big food
Beth Kowitt – Fortune
“Major packaged-food companies lost $4 billion in market share alone last year, as shoppers swerved to fresh and organic alternatives. Can the supermarket giants win you back?”

Similac Advance Infant Formula to Be Offered G.M.O.-Free
Stephanie Strommay – New York Times
“Abbott will join a growing number of companies offering popular products without genetically modified organisms.”

MONSANTO/ROUNDUP

Monsanto, RoundUp and Junk Science
Michael Hansen, Ph.D - Huffington Post
“Glyphosate (RoundUp) has long been touted as virtually harmless. EPA doesn’t even bother to test for residues in food, having decided years ago they pose little risk. But studies to the contrary have gradually been accumulating, and in March of this year, 17 experts from 11 countries meeting at the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), unanimously agreed to re-classify glyphosate as “probably carcinogenic to humans” “

Monsanto GMOs Defeated by Oregon Organic Farmers as Federal Judge Upholds Seed Ban
Steven Rosenfeld - AlterNet
A coalition of Oregon organic farmers has beaten Monsanto—the corporate agriculture giant—in a landmark federal lawsuit that will make national waves by the way that their rural county banned the use of genetically modified seeds.”

Government witch hunt to eliminate Monsanto critics
Jon Rappoport – ejfood.blogspot.com
“Wonder how a federal agency as large as the USDA can keep claiming pesticides like Roundup are safe? Wonder how the truth can be kept from leaking out? Wonder how this agency, tasked with protecting the public from unsafe food, can turn fake science into “real science” like clockwork? Wonder how, in Hawaii, Monsanto and Dow can defend their toxic, open-air, pesticide experiments as “approved by the USDA?” Government scientists who believe in exposing the truth are being targeted.”
GMO TECHNOLOGY

A Proposal to Modify Plants Gives G.M.O. Debate New Life
Gina Kolatamay - New York Times
“What’s in a name? A lot, if the name is genetically modified organism, or G.M.O., which many people are dead set against. But what if scientists used the precise techniques of today’s molecular biology to give back to plants genes that had long ago been bred out of them? And what if that process were called “rewilding?””

PESTICIDES

Without Federal Input, Colorado Pot Is On Its Own With Pesticides
Luke Runyon - Harvest Public Media
“The marijuana industry has a pesticide problem. Many commercial cannabis growers use chemicals to control bugs and mold. But because of the plant’s unresolved legal status, Colorado regulators are having a tough time making sure pot buyers don’t ingest those pesticides. The parts of the federal government that regulate agricultural pesticide use want nothing to do with legalized marijuana.”

To fight bee decline, Obama proposes more land to feed bees
Seth Borenstein – Associated Press
“A new federal plan aims to reverse America’s declining honeybee and monarch butterfly populations by making millions of acres of federal land more bee-friendly, spending millions of dollars more on research and considering the use of fewer pesticides.”

FOOD JUSTICE

Raj Patel: Gender Equality Missing From the Food Policy Conversation
Erica Housekeeper - Civil Eats
The author and academic talks about what it will take to level the playing field for women on farms around the world.

LOCAL NEWS

Boston to Launch the Nation’s First ‘All-Local’ Public Market
Sarah Shemkus - Civil Eats
Almost everything sold at the new Boston Public Market will be produced or originate in New England.
Comment on reckless antibiotic use in animal agriculture
Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that 70 percent of all antibiotics administered in the US are used as feed or water additives for pigs, poultry and cattle for the non-therapeutic purposes of growth promotion and general prevention of disease. Many doctors and medical associations have expressed concern that this widespread use of antibiotics in livestock production – not for promotion of health but simply to encourage faster growth – is a dangerous practice. It results in increased resistance to antibiotics and can destroy the effectiveness of such drugs when they are finally needed to treat human suffering and disease.

On May 19, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a proposed rule that will enable more detailed data collection on antibiotic use in livestock production in the United States. This rule would require drug companies to obtain and report estimates of sales by major food producing species – namely cattle, chickens, turkeys, and pigs. The additional information from drug companies is intended to allow the FDA to help ensure the proper use of these medically important antibiotics.

Annual reporting of distribution and sales by these antibiotic drug companies has been required under Section 105 of the Animal Drug User Fee Amendments of 2008 (ADUFA). This proposed rule would require sales and distribution information by individual animal species as compared to the current rule that simply requires a summary prepared by the FDA based on data submitted by drug companies. The rule also requires the FDA to publish its annual report of antibiotic sales and distribution information by December 31 of the following year, which is a more stringent deadline.

There has also been recent action in the House on antibiotic use in animal food production in addition to this proposed FDA rule. Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY) has reintroduced the Delivering Anti-microbial Transparency in Animals (DATA) Act. This bill would also require drug companies to submit annual reports that specify antibiotic sales by animal species and would require identification of the reason for antibiotic use.

Representative Slaughter has stressed the importance of this data to allow for independent verification of the phase out of antimicrobial growth promoters that the FDA requested under Voluntary Guidance 213. Rep. Slaughter introduced similar legislation in the House in early 2013, which followed several other attempts in both the House and the Senate to pass legislation restricting antibiotic use for healthy animals.

The FDA is seeking comments on the proposed rule. They must be received on or before August 18, 2015.

You can view the Federal register notice here, and submit comments to the docket here (type FDA-2012-N-0447 in the search box to comment on the correct docket). Please take a moment to comment on this crucial step in phasing out the unwise use of these drugs in animal agriculture.
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Vitamins & Supplements
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Bakery & Deli
Free WiFi

One Co-op...Two Great Stores:

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144 Main Street, Greenfield
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Sunday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
(413) 773-9567
Two blocks from the Energy Park

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3 State Street, Shelburne Falls
Open Daily
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
(413) 625-9411
Across from the Bridge of Flowers

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Events calendar, sales specials, menus, and more on our website:
www.franklincommunity.coop

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* Meets the Humane Farm Animal Care Program standards, which include nutritious diet without antibiotics, or hormones, animals raised with shelter, resting areas, sufficient space and the ability to engage in natural behaviors.

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Homesteading observations: Drought/Greywater

Sharon Gensler, Homesteader

Finally, a rainy day! Here it is the first day of June and we’ve had only a bit of rain, less than an inch, in over a month. The forecast calls for showers over the next few days and I’m counting on that to be accurate. I was fortunate to get much of my beds sown with an oat and field pea cover crop early enough to ensure germination. The soil in those beds is dryer than I’d like but better than in areas that have little vegetation or mulch.

The more I learn about soil biology, the more responsible I feel about all of that life in the ground and the need to keep moisture levels up. However, the reality is that we share our well with another household. It’s only 250 feet deep and doesn’t have a fast recovery rate, so a lot of watering is out of the question. With the unpredictability and change in weather patterns, I’m going to have to give serious thought to creative solutions. In the past with some exceptions in New England, one could count on about an inch of rain a week. Last year we had a cycle of either drought or deluge. If that continues, I could begin to save rainwater but without building a cistern, I could only easily save a few 50-gallon barrels.

My brother in California is continuing to deal with real drought. His city is “encouraging” a 25% decrease in household consumption. Last week, he retrofitted his clothes washer to drain through the wall of the house into a 50-gallon rain barrel. He then uses a sump pump to water his veggies. This could be an option for us but even on a larger scale. Being that we have a compost toilet, there is only greywater leaving our house. I’ve often thought of intercepting the septic tank outflow at the “D” box and creating a small marsh for water filtration. This idea always gets placed on the “back-burner” due to more urgent time demands. However, maybe it will soon move up the urgency scale.

Besides the reuse of the water for food growing, a marsh would be a great addition to this homestead lacking a stream or pond. It would help increase biological diversity, create more beauty and soothe frayed nerves, as I find being near water calming. We do have two “water features” (ha) in the garden, which have to be tended daily; a large clay saucer much appreciated by the birds and a shallow basin with pebbles, small rocks and shells for the beneficial insects and amphibians. Many beneficial are attracted to the sound of dripping water. We’ve created this dripping effect by hanging a gallon jug, with a pinhole in the bottom and in the cap, which allows a slow but steady drip to fall into the stone/pebble basin.

Looks like there are many good articles and videos on the web about building greywater marshes. That will be a great winter project; reading, dreaming and maybe even designing one. Watch out, next spring we may have a hands-on workshop where we’ll do a “Tom Sawyer” and invite you to help dig!

In the meantime, an easy and inexpensive way
to reuse water in the garden is to save the veggie wash water. I have an old double basin sink which I placed on top of two fifty-gallon barrels. I drilled a hole 2 inches up from the bottom of each barrel and fitted a hose bibb into each. After harvesting, I pre-wash in the sink and catch the drained water in the barrels. About 2/3 of the garden is slightly down hill from the sink, so I am able to attach a hose and use gravity to assist my watering.

Here’s a view around the homestead: We’ve had good fruit-set, as the pollinators didn’t have to contend with rain during blossom time. Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, plums, peaches, apples, and pears all have developing fruit. The paw paw has been in full flower and the kiwi buds are about to burst. We did have to cover the strawberries during those late frosts, but luckily, the others weren’t affected. I’m really glad I held off on planting the heat loving vegetables, tempting as it was to put them in when we had those weeks of hot weather. That frost would have killed them. The asparagus has been phenomenal, delicious and prolific. Early greens are tender and yummy, as are the volunteer garlic greens, endive, and wild edibles.

As I pick this article back up a day after beginning it, it has rained all day yesterday and today. The rain gauge says 1½ inches so far and more is likely to come tonight. I feel blessed and am very grateful. Tomorrow I’ll put more mulch on to help retain as much moisture as possible and I’ll continue to conserve that precious water. Hope your growing season is bountiful and the rain, sun, wind, and heat plentiful and in balance.
Natick Community Organic Farm seedlings all-stars at Fenway Farms
Trish Wesley Umbrell, Natick Community Organic Farm’s Farm Administrator

Natick Community Organic Farm’s (NCOF) certified-organic seedlings have made the Big League this year; they’re growing in the new rooftop garden at Fenway Park! Green City Growers (GCG), which planted and maintains Fenway Farms, ordered 240 trays of certified-organic seedlings from NCOF this spring, including leafy greens — think lettuce, arugula, spinach, kale, chard and pak choy – heat-loving okra and cucumbers, and even a few vining veggies like summer and winter squash.

“We’re trying out a little of everything up there,” said Laura Feddersen, Director of Horticulture for Green City Growers, on a recent trip to NCOF for more plants. “We have a good mix of spring and summer crops.” Fenway Farms covers 5,000 square feet of flat rooftop along the third-base side of the park. The plants themselves are being grown in 1,750 milk crates, which are lined and filled with soil from Vermont Compost and watered on emitter irrigation. GCG’s partner company, Recover Green Roofs, did installation, which included getting all the supplies onto the roof by crane. According to Feddersen, NCOF’s plants seem to thriving in the ballpark environment. “They’re doing really, really well. We’ve already harvested head lettuce, as well as arugula, salad mix, spinach, pea shoots, broccoli raab, radishes, and herbs.” Green City Growers hopes to raise 4,000 pounds of produce this season for Fenway’s EMC Club Restaurant.

We partner with local farmers to bring organic produce to the people of Boston.

Learn more and sign up at BostonOrganics.com

www.nofamass.org 18  JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER
To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and the earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.

Howe Farm, VT
One of the Organic Valley family farms that supply milk for our yogurt
NOFA/Mass Workshops & Events

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

Organic Small Fruit: Raspberries, Blueberries, Currants and Goumis
Sunday, July 12 - 2pm to 4:30pm
Old Frog Pond Farm, Harvard, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
Join Linda Hoffman and Charlotte Trim for an afternoon of berry talk. We’ll meet at Old Frog Pond Farm in Harvard where Linda grows 1/3 acre of fall raspberries for her pick your own operation and blueberries for their farm stand. Charlotte grows berries, goumis, and currants at her home in Lincoln and sells her crop to local restaurants. We’ll talk about remineralizing the soil, foliar sprays, and getting your raspberries healthy enough to ward off the the Asian fruit fly that arrived in the Northeast in 2011 and has been a challenge for small fruit growers. Join us for an enjoyable and informative afternoon.

Growing Certified Organic Cut Flowers
Wednesday, July 29 - 3pm to 5:30pm
Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
During this mid-summer workshop, Lynda Simkins, Executive Director of Natick Community Organic Farm and long-time organic flower grower, will welcome participants to the farm to learn about all aspects of organic flower production. The workshop will explore harvest and post-harvest of certified organic cut flowers, weed management, marketing and selling, and strategies for season extension. This is a fantastic opportunity for those who are just starting or those who would like to transition to organic flower production.

2015 NOFA Summer Conference – Save the date!
Friday, August 14 – Sunday August 16
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
Cost: Prices range. Early bird pricing through July 17.
Features three days with 144 workshops on farming, gardening, nutrition, land care, food politics and much more. The conference is fun for the whole family with 100+ exhibitors, contra dance, country fair, organic meals, in-depth pre-conferences, meet-ups and children and teens conferences.

Budget conscious accommodations are available, including camping and dorms. Group registration discounts and limited scholarships and work exchange opportunities are available.

This year’s keynote speakers are Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride, a medical doctor and nutritional consultant, and Ronnie Cummins, a consumer activist and regenerative agriculture advocate. The theme for this year’s Conference is “Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology.”

Organic Apple Growing
Sunday, August 23 - 2pm to 4:30pm
Old Frog Pond Farm, Harvard, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
Spend the afternoon with grower Linda Hoffman in the orchard, where over fifty varieties of apples are
growing. She will discuss her yearly schedule of care, show how she has grafted a number of rows to change Red Delicious trees to new varieties, and share all things practical about planting, staking, and protecting young trees. You will also walk through the farm’s new Asian pear orchard and learn about growing this delicious fruit.

**Growing Vegetables For Health, Quality, and Profit**
**Sunday September 13 - 2pm to 5:30pm**
Brix Bounty Farm, Dartmouth, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $36; Non-member $45
Learn about profitable, small-scale vegetable production with farmer Derek Christianson at Brix Bounty Farm. This third workshop in the series will focus on enterprise analysis and profitability and fall fertility practices including soil analysis with a concentration on alliums, lettuce, and tomatoes. (Includes season extension with late blight resistant tomatoes, downy mildew resistant fall lettuce varieties, and leek harvesting efficiencies).

**3rd Annual Team NOFA/Mass 5/10K Run & 5K Walk**
**Sunday, November 1**
Genesis Battlegreen Run, Lexington, MA
Are you excited to help NOFA/Mass raise money to support its mission? Do you want to be part of a group that is passionate and motivated? Does the idea of taking a walk/run in historic Lexington appeal to you? If you answered yes to any of these questions, be a part of medal-winning Team NOFA/Mass!

**2016 NOFA/Mass Winter Conference**
Saturday, January 16
Worcester State University, Worcester, MA
Cost: $65 NOFA Members; $81 Non-members
Join us for our annual one-day conference, which features 70 workshops and exhibitors; keynote speeches with Ben Burkett, family farmer and coordinator of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives; children’s conference and more.

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**Support NOFA/Mass’ 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!
Looking for help? Have something to sell? Have land to lease? Place a classified ad!

Find out more at www.nofamass.org/classifieds

16 acres & property for sale in Maine
Contact: Joyce Shelleman; joyce.shelleman@gmail.com or Shawn Losier (207) 838-4663
Secluded quiet 16 acre Maine property centrally located accessible to I-295, 50 mins. Portland, 30 mins. Midcoast. Four outbuildings offer 3 bay polebarn, large heated workshop, 2 car garage, oversized garden shed, storage. 3 lg. fields. 3 BR Farmhouse features open living rm., HWBB heat & woodstoves, greenhouse room, more. MLS# 1211288. $256,900.

Landscaping Crew Leader
Contact: Dan; dan@talbotsgardening.com
Established, family owned professional gardening/landscaping company based in Cambridge is seeking an experienced gardener to fill a Crew Leader position. For more information please visit our web site: www.talbotsgardening.com/jobs

Herd Manager or Herdsperson, Sidehill Farm, Hawley MA
Contact: Amy Klippenstein; amy@sidehillfarm.net
SideHill Farm is a grazing dairy in western Mass, seeking a skilled cow person as full herd manager, or as herdsman, depending on experience. Responsibility for milking, feeding, herd health, monitoring heats; equipment maintenance, calf and barn chores. Minimum 2 years’ experience with organic dairy and grazing. Calm and gentle with animals, skilled with tractors and equipment. Fun to be around. Year-round, begins Sept. 2015. Competitive pay, 5 days/week, paid time off. Visit www.sidehillfarm.net/jobs/ for a full job description. To apply, please email a resume and 3 references to amy@sidehillfarm.net

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
551 Harlemville Rd, Hillsdale, NY 12529
Community Happenings

Announcements

MDAR Farm Viability Grant Programs Open
The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is accepting applications from farmers who wish to participate in three Farm Viability Grant Programs. This is a great opportunity! Applications are due by June 23rd. More info: http://bit.ly/1FmBXwm

Millions Available to Help Farmers Purchase Land
USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) still has nearly one billion dollars available this fiscal year for farm loans to help family farmers across the country buy land. Last year, Congress significantly increased the appropriation for FSA farm loans, including a big bump up in FSA Direct Farm Ownership (DFO) loans, which can be used to purchase farmland. Check out NSAC’s Grassroots Guide to Federal Farm and Food Programs for more information on FSA farm loans, including eligibility criteria and how to apply. More info: www.sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/farming-opportunities/farm-ownership-operating-loans/

2015 Position Openings with MassLIFT-AmeriCorps
The Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT) is an AmeriCorps program managed by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. MassLIFT-AmeriCorps is a collaborative effort of regional conservation groups. Our members build organizational capacity to meet critical community needs for land protection, stewardship of protected lands, conservation outreach and education, and service learning that engages young people in conservation. MassLIFT members serve in one of four positions: land stewardship coordinator, regional conservation coordinator, service learning coordinator, or community engagement coordinator. Our 2015 program runs from September 8, 2015 through August 5, 2016. Application specifics, position descriptions, and information about the program and organizations hosting MassLIFT members can be found on the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website: www.masslift.org.

Wachusett “Farm Fresh Fest” Seeks Vendors
This August 29-30 event will feature a variety of locally grown specialty foods and farm-to-table vendors. Our goal is to highlight local produce; specialty foods; an extensive farmers’ market; live animal displays; agricultural education; craft beers; local wine growers and cooking demos. We will also feature live music, family entertainment, local crafts and our popular SkyRide chairlift ride to our summit. We will also be reaching out to Massachusetts’ Agriculture in the Classroom as a beneficiary of the event. Contact Audra Kirtland at 978.464.2300 x3703 or audra@wachusett.com.

Honey Harvest Festival Vendors Sought
The Bristol County Beekeepers Association is holding a Honey Harvest festival, the first of its kind, in Berkley on 9/26. The goal of the festival is to promote pollinator education and public knowledge about native pollinators, honey bees and beekeeping. We are looking for vendors for the festival that would like to sell their products. Anything that relates to pollinators including honey and products made with honey, fruits, vegetables and flowers would be great. Details can be found at the BCBA website: www.bristolbee.com/brcba_023.htm
New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in May

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<tr>
<th>Kathy Alexiadis</th>
<th>Sonya Harms</th>
<th>Kristin Moore</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne Benson</td>
<td>Emily Haslett</td>
<td>David Pratt</td>
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<td>Becca Berkey</td>
<td>Kerstin Hertel</td>
<td>Anne Richmond</td>
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<td>Alison Bloch</td>
<td>Sally Hilgendorff</td>
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<td>Emily Egan Bright</td>
<td>Mary Holt-Wilson</td>
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<td>Carrie Sue Broderick</td>
<td>Ruth and Michael Ireland</td>
<td>Pamela Saffer</td>
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<td>Stephan Brown</td>
<td>Abbie Jenks</td>
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<td>Nathaniel Clark</td>
<td>David Kennard</td>
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<td>Nicole Crouch Diaz</td>
<td>Kathryn Kennedy</td>
<td>Ros and Dan Smythe</td>
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<td>Rich Eldred</td>
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<td>Linda Enerson</td>
<td>George C. Kruisen II</td>
<td>Daniel Talbot</td>
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<td>Henry Fairlie</td>
<td>Ruth Bailey Langh</td>
<td>Vidya Tikku</td>
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<td>Lynn Fisher</td>
<td>Michael Levin</td>
<td>Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice, and the Environment</td>
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<td>Lisa Fisher</td>
<td>Mike Lombard</td>
<td>Douglas Whalen</td>
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<td>Sam and Margaret Fogel</td>
<td>Leslie Malloy</td>
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<td>Rael Gleitsman</td>
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Since the founding of the first successful co-operatives 170 years ago, food co-ops have enabled people to work together to improve access to healthy, local food and community ownership. For a map of member locations, visit www.nfca.coop/members.

Visit your Neighboring Massachusetts Food Co-ops to learn more!
- Green Fields Co-op Market, Greenfield
- Leverett Village Food Co-op, Leverett
- McCusker’s Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls
- Old Creamery Co-op, Cummington
- Quabbin Harvest Co-op, Orange
- River Valley Co-op Market, Northampton
- Wild Oats Co-op Market, Williamstown

Supporting Food Security Since 1844!

Your Local Food Co-ops...

**New and Used Washing, Grading, Planting, & Harvesting Equipment For Any Size Operation**

**Multi-Purpose Digger**
Potatoes, garlic, onions and many more!

**Drum Washer**
Continuous flow or batch washing
Is Your Risk Management Plan Up to Date?

Crop Insurance Crops

Sales Closing Dates: March 15th

Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP)

Corn

Potatoes

Tobacco

Fresh Market Sweet Corn

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

NAP covers crops where Federal Crop Insurance is not available.

NAP is sold by USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Sales Closing Date for Annual Crops: March 15th

Check with your agent.

www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html

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

Visit us at:

http://ag.umass.edu/risk-management

This institution is an equal opportunity provider