



Organicology 2011 Highlights

February 10 ~ 13, 2011

Thursday Schedule

Intensives

Soils

The soils intensive focused on practical soil management techniques for organic farmers and the research principles that they are based upon. Topics included nutrient management, soil organic matter and soil structure, disease suppression and opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration. The session was led by farmers and extension agents from Oregon State, Washington State and Michigan State University.

Speakers: Nick Andrews, Small Farms Extension Agent, OSU; Doug Collins, Small Farms Educator, WSU; John Luna, Associate Professor Dept. of Horticulture, OSU; John Reganold, Regents Professor of Soil Science and Agroecology, WSU; Sieglinde Snapp, Assoc. Professor of Soils and Cropping Systems Ecology, MSU.

Seeds

This intensive covered basic seed production for new farmers. Topics included an in-depth look at the fundamental techniques of seed production, including seed crop spacing and timing, fertility and irrigation needs, managing selfers versus crossers, organic disease management and hot water seed treatments, as well as determining seed maturation, harvest methods, threshing and cleaning, and handling basics. It also covered specific seed production methods for lettuce, spinach, onions, carrots, beets, and a variety of Brassica crops, as well as important information on improving seed quality, managing isolation distances, avoiding genetic contamination, and selecting seed crops for local adaptation while maintaining healthy, diverse crop varieties.

Speakers: Micaela Colley, Executive Director, OSA; Jodi Lew-Smith, Director of Research and Production, High Mowing Seeds; John Navazio, Senior Scientist Research and Education, OSA; Joel Reiten, Seeds of Change; Don Tipping, Producer/President of Family Farmers Seed Cooperative, Seven Seeds Farm.

Sustainable Business: Skill Building for Leadership, Impact and Results

This day-long intensive was designed for leadership-oriented organic companies who are passionate about building more sustainable businesses, value chains and communities. It provided knowledge need to businesses to the next level and drive greater returns for the business, as well as people and the planet. It provided valuable insights, discussion, information and networking opportunities to help improve performance outcomes and differentiate organizations as a sustainability leaders. The training focused on high-level skill building that empowered people with essential tools and knowledge to implement leading-edge practices, and fine tune strategy and implementation plans.

Speakers: David Allaway, Senior Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Marsha Willard, CEO, Axis Performance Advisors; Alissa Becker, Environmental Coordinator, UNFI; Haven Bourque, Principal, HavenBMedia; Diane Crane, Director of Sustainability, PCC Natural Markets; Dr. Kevin Danaher, Global Exchange Co-Founder, Green Festivals Founder and Executive CoProducer; Maria Emmer-Aanes, Director of Marketing and Communications, Nature's Path; Teresa Marquez, Chief Marketing Executive, Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative; Chad Smith, Manager of Sustainability Initiatives, Earthbound Farm; Tom Wright, CEO, Sustainable Business Practices.

Eating

Eating connects us to our landscape and climate and serves as a component of all cultures. How food is produced affects not only our personal wellbeing, but the environment and the creatures who share it with us. The artistry, skills, and knowledge of "culinarians" (chefs, produce handlers, deli managers, food writers and nutritionists) who work with our food, play a crucial role in the organic foods movement. They are at the forefront of trends in sourcing, preparation, education and appreciation of food, communicating to the public and supporting organic agriculture through sustainable kitchen practices. This intensive engaged all of the senses and explored the evolving roles of those who interact directly with eaters, and provide tools and resources to support professional efforts at engaging customers in the quest for the best.

Speakers: Charles Benbrook, Chief Scientist, The Organic Center, Deborah Kane, Vice President Food and Farms, Ecotrust; Tom Barkin, Regional Governor for Oregon and Idaho, Slow Food USA, Aaron Stark, Chef, Cultivated Palette Catering/Brassica Restaurant.

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Policy--“Food and Farm Policy – Inter-Generational Farm Bill Thinking”

The organic sector had significant gains in the last Farm Bill with increased funding and support in many areas including research, education, marketing, cost-share, crop insurance, conservation stewardship and the administration and management of the National Organic Program. This growing body of producers, processors, retailers, consumers and activists and, with additional efforts, sought to increase the impact of organics on the 2012 Farm Bill.

This session was led by a group of leaders with decades of experience in shaping agricultural and food policy. Panelists presented the key shifts in policy and funding needed over the next 50 years, with a focus on the priorities and actions needed for the 2012 bill. They discussed attainable goals in the next farm bill cycle, how to improve communication and leverage our weight in media and to policy makers, as well as how to attract food companies, farmers, and consumers to increase their engagement in developing food and farm policies at a federal level.

Speakers: Eliav Bitan, Climate Specialist, New Era Agriculture; Liana Hoodes, Director, National Organic Coalition/National Organic Action Plan; Ariane Lotti, Senior Policy Analyst, Organic Farming Research Foundation; Michael Sligh, Director, Rural Advancement Foundation USA (RAFI).

Keynote Address ~ Stephen Jones, Ph.D.

Stephen Jones, Ph.D. Director, WSU Research and Extension Center at Mt. Vernon Professor and Scientist, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences Washington State University Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center. Dr. Stephen Jones received a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture from California State University, Chico (1981), and a Masters of Science in Agriculture (1987) and a Ph.D. in Genetics (1991) from the University of California, Davis. He is currently director of the Mt. Vernon Research and Extension Center. He teaches graduate courses in Advanced Transmission Genetics and the History and Ethics of Genetics. Dr. Jones serves on the Advisory Board of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Organic Seed Alliance. His research has been mentioned in Audubon, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, National Public Radio, Bill Nye the Science Guy's PBS show “The Eyes of Nye”, CBS News, the documentary film “Not For Sale” and other national and international news journals. Published article: “Breeding Wheat for Sustainable, Perennial and Organic Systems.”



Special Events

Seed Swap

Today, it represents a powerful act of ensuring open access to genetic resources, preserving and increasing biodiversity. The Organicology Seed Swap exercises your rights and learn more on seed saving and exchange, all while celebrating with a cold beverage and good company! It's an opportunity to share your seeds and mingle with experts while learning seed saving information.

Live Music ~ DJ Jimbo

Get on up--To the dance floor! This is the real deal, a dance party and a great place to let down your hair after an intense day of getting schooled. DJ Jimbo, a.k.a. Jim Sandberg, lives in North Portland and has been DJing for nearly 10 years.





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Friday Schedule

Workshops

State of Organic Seed Report

Organic Seed Alliance published the first State of Organic Seed Report and Action Plan in August of 2010. Included in the report were results of a national survey of organic farmers regarding their attitudes and experience with organic seed, a survey of the seed industry, reports on organic breeding initiatives, and an analysis of challenges by crop type with recommendations for collaboration from the organic community towards solutions. This session followed up with the “the seed we need” discussion. Participants shared their own experience and vision for how to improve organic seed systems to meet the needs of organic farmers. Panelists included professionals from the seed industry, breeders, farmers, and seed advocates. A roundtable discussion on organic produce variety needs and issues was held. Participants brought a diversity of perspectives on the challenges, priorities and opportunities for organic seed development.

Speakers: Mathew Dillon, Organic Seed Alliance; **Panelists:** Don Tipping, Seven Seeds Farm; Erica Renaud, Vitalis Seed; John Navazio, Organic Seed Alliance; Tom Lively, Organically Grown Company; Zea Sonnabend, California Certified Organic Farms; Jeff Fairchild, New Seasons Markets.

Cradle to Cradle Environmental Responsibility: Processing and Packaging

In nature there is no waste, and businesses needn't create it either. This session showed new ways to reduce resource inefficiencies and waste. The focus was on best practices for optimizing process efficiency, engaging suppliers and business partners, packaging and product design, managing byproducts, materials and ingredient selection, and more. We'll cover frameworks (Cradle to Cradle, Zero Waste) and provide practical guidance with peer examples.

Speakers: Elaine Deckelman, HABA Manager, Ashland Food Co-op; Brie Johnson, Sustainability and Communications Manager, Straus Family Creamery; Tom Wright, CEO, Sustainable Business Practices.

Document Archives: [Ashland Co-op](#), [Straus](#), [Tom Wright](#)

Organics for All: Improving Access, Affordability and Food Security

Many consumers lack access to affordable, safe, nutritious foods, with food insecurity a persistent challenge. Our industry can lead the way in addressing these challenges to benefit communities, our industry and the environment. The workshop reviewed current trends, opportunities and needs related to access to affordable organic foods, and strategies for improvement. Experts working in diverse areas including policy, social service and business all presented relevant information.

Speakers: Molly D. Anderson, Partridge Chair in Food & Sustainable Agriculture Systems, College of the Atlantic; Anna Curtin, Education and Outreach Specialist, Portland Farmers Market; Mark Winne, Food Policy Council Program Director, CFSC.

Document Archives: [Anderson](#), [Curtin](#), [Curtin Handout](#), [Winne](#)

Designing Farmscapes for Beneficial Insects

This workshop focused on the best ways to improve beneficial insect habitats through farmscape design. While organic farming offers significant environmental benefits, even some organic farming practices can harm these valuable insects. Experts in the field, including representatives of the Conservation Biological Control Project and the Xerces Society lead an interactive exercise in farmscaping.

Speakers: Gwendolyn Ellen, Integrated Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University; Mace Vaughn, Pollinator Conservation Program Director, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

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Farm Food Safety

Food safety throughout the supply chain has become increasingly important in recent years. To minimize the risk of food borne pathogens, producers need to look closely at their on-farm practices and assess potential contamination sources. But how does this fit in with my organic certification? Though the combination of organic certification and farm food safety can appear complex, there are many successful practices that have been proven to integrate both. Come and learn how you can successfully manage your farm to minimize the risk of food borne pathogens, identify critical monitoring points and learn how farm food safety can successfully integrate with the organic certification requirements.

Speakers: Marty Mesh, Executive Director, Florida Organic Growers; Jamie Kitzrow, Spring Hill Organic Farm; Alan Schreiber, Schreiber & Sons Farm; Michael McMillan, Organically Grown Company.

USDA NOP and NOSB Listening Session

The session was an opportunity to meet members of the USDA National Organic Program and hear about priorities and projects for the upcoming years. NOP leaders answered questions, heard needs and learned about desires for the program that will lead organic agriculture and food in the years ahead. In addition, representatives from the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) will be present to discuss priorities and current hot topics with the Board, which is making recommendations for policy change on the national level.

Speakers: Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator, National Organic Program, USDA; John Foster, NOSB Earthbound Farm.

Organic Plant Breeding Collaboration

Farmers need varieties that perform optimally in organic systems, yet most varieties they rely upon were bred for and under non-organic conditions. Introduced were national collaborative efforts of plant breeders, farmers, and seed companies to breed and trial varieties in and for organic systems. How to get involved and access organic trial results were also emphasized.

Speakers: Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Plant Breeder, Louis Bolk Institute, Netherlands; Laurie McKenzie, Graduate Student, OSU; Jim Myers, Professor Dept. of Horticulture, OSU; Lane Selman, Faculty Research Associate, OSU.

Rewarding Farmers for "Eco-System Services"

Decades of research is yielding compelling evidence about the multiple, specific benefits associated with organic food and fiber systems. These include contributions to public health (increased nutrition, toxin reduction), climate change mitigation, and stewardship of natural resources (water, soil, air). Speakers shared ideas for how to communicate these system-level impacts to advance public policy and an organic marketplace that rewards farmers for the public benefits of organic practices. They defined and discussed the emerging field of "eco-system services" and mechanisms that pay farmers for the protection of "the commons."

Speakers: Chuck Benbrook, Chief Scientist, The Organic Center; Eliav Bitan, Climate Specialist, New Era Agriculture; Ariane Lotti, Senior Policy Analyst, Organic Farming Research Foundation.

Document Archives: [Benbrook](#), [Bittan](#), [Lotti](#)



Get Schooled!



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February 10 ~ 13, 2011

Good Work: Best Practices for Domestic and International Labor

Employees are the heart of a strong business and it's becoming increasingly important to verify good workplace practices in our businesses and supply chains. Attendees learned about initiatives to support fair, safe and healthy practices, domestically and internationally. The workshop reviewed various standards and certifications, including Domestic Fair Trade, Agricultural Justice Project, Fair Trade Certified, Rainforest Alliance, IMO Fair for Life, SCS Fair Labor and Community Benefits, and others.

Speakers: Tom Hanlon-Wilde, Western Sales Manager, Equal Exchange; Michael Sligh, Director, Rural Advancement Foundation USA (RAFI); Mayra Velazquez de Leon, Founder and President, Organics Unlimited; Melissa Schweisguth, Director of Membership Development & Education, Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association

Document Archives: [FTSLA MSchweisguth](#), [AJPDFTASligh](#), [Equal Exchange](#), [Organics Unlimited](#)

Keynote Address ~ Andrew Kimbrell

Andrew Kimbrell is one of the country's leading environmental attorneys and the author of several articles and books on environment, technology and society, and food issues, including *Your Right to Know: Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food* (2006). He became Executive Director of the International Center for Technology Assessment (ICTA) in 1994 and Executive Director of the Center for Food Safety in 1997. He is one of the country's leading environmental attorneys, and an author of several articles and books on environment, technology and society, and food issues. His books include *101 Ways to Help Save the Earth* (1990), *The Human Body Shop*, *The Engineering and Marketing of Life* (1993), *The Masculine Mystique* (1995), and general editor of *Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture* (2002) and the *Fatal Harvest Reader* (2002). His articles on law, technology, social and psychological issues have also appeared in numerous law reviews, technology journals, popular magazines and newspapers across the country.



Special Events

Potato Tasting with Wine/Spirits & Beer Social

Participants investigated the flavor nuances among a myriad of potato varieties. Attendees got to rate the taste of these varieties and enjoy the unique flavor profiles from these organic spuds. In addition, friends old and new imbibed delicious wines, beers and spirits.



Live Music ~ Karaoke from Hell

An evening with Karaoke From Hell —this is not your run-of-the-mill karaoke night. Here is a back up band who knows how to make you sound good!





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Saturday Schedule

Organic Exhibition

Keynote ~ Jim Hightower

National radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, **Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow**, Jim Hightower has spent three decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be - consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks. Twice elected Texas Agriculture Commissioner, Hightower believes that the true political spectrum is not right to left but top to bottom, and he has become a leading national voice for the 80 percent of the public who no longer find themselves within shouting distance of the Washington and Wall Street powers at the top.



He broadcasts daily radio commentaries that are carried in more than 150 commercial and public stations, on the web, and on Radio for Peace International. Each month, he publishes a populist political newsletter, "The Hightower Lowdown," which now has more than 135,000 subscribers, which has received both the Alternative Press Award and the Independent Press Association Award for best national newsletter.

Trade Show

2011 welcomed a wide array of folks within the organic trade who engaged on a real level and sampled some great, organic products. The exhibition runs all day on Saturday and is well attended by pertinent, high energy participants. Vendor booth displays are full of information, goodies and samples for the picking. This show has the feel of a community market celebration; an interactive and engaging opportunity to see "old friends" and make new, meaningful contacts from all aspects of the trade—from soil to seed to table.



Saturday Sessions

Researcher - Farmer Listening Session

Organic farmer's hold great insight into their farm's ecology and are most familiar with the challenges of their farming systems. University researchers are eager to support organic farmers by providing research-based tools, but they need feedback from farmers to best prioritize and direct their efforts. This session was an opportunity for farmers to meet researchers working in organic systems and provide then their direct input.



Speakers: Moderated by Jane Sooby, Grants Program Director, Organic Farming Research Foundation and Micaela Colley, Executive Director, OSA.
Panelists: Gwendolyn Ellen, Integrated Plant Protection Center, OSU; Nick Andrews, OSU Metro-Area Small Farms Extension Agent: Horticulture Crops; John Navazio, OSA; Stephen Jones, Director WSU Research and Extension Center at Mt. Vernon; Jim Meyers, OSU; Elanor O'Brien, Persephone Farm, Or; Brad Bailie, Lenwood Farms, OR; Andrew Stout, Full Circle Farm; Nash Huber, Nash's Organic Produce.

Document Archives: [Organicology Poster Abstracts](#), [Farmer Insights](#), [Breakout Group Notes](#)

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Organicology 2011 Highlights

February 10 ~ 13, 2011

Is GMO Co-existence a Reality?

The biotechnology industry and U.S. regulatory authorities both assert that "co-existence" is a reality, yet many organic farmers and seed and food companies already experience contamination of genetically engineered (GE) material in their fields and food products. This panel provided an update on legal issues and cases involving GE crops and discuss why the regulatory frameworks in place fail to protect the integrity of the organic label. Panelists explained the importance of a federal Farmer Protection Act; Seed Matters, a new collaboration between advocacy groups and the food industry on seed issues; and the roles of testing and labeling in tackling the contamination problem.



Speakers: Matthew Dillon, Adviser, Organic Integrity; George Kimbrell, Senior Staff Attorney, The Center for Food Safety; Michael Sligh, Director, Rural Advancement Foundation USA (RAFI).

Pasture Regulation Session

The USDA NOP held training sessions for producers across the country on the new Pasture Regulation and its implementation in 2011. Sessions provided an overview of the new regulations, examples, and a panel of producers who are in compliance. It also offered assistance to those who needed to become compliant by June 2011.

Speakers: Melissa Bailey, Ph. D., NOP Standards Director, USDA; Trudy Bialic, Director, Public Affairs/Editor, Sound Consumer-PCC Natural Markets.

Crop Insurance for Organic Farming

Organic farmers and ranchers pay more for federal crop insurance while generally having coverage that only provides for the conventional value of their crops and livestock. This session provided a general background on the history and current developments of federal crop insurance as it relates to organic agriculture.

In addition, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) which has managed the ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service has been working with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and has developed a computer-based tool that helps the diversified farmer assess whether the federally subsidized whole farm revenue based insurance product called Adjusted Gross Revenue Lite is a viable means for insurance. This product may be ideal for diversified organic farmers because it insures a percentage of the farms historical adjusted gross revenue based on tax records, rather than specific crops. Since an organic or specialty crop farm's historic revenue may be based on organic or other price premiums, then in general their revenue is higher and the insurance reflects the higher value of that production.

In addition this insurance product is one of the very few federally subsidized insurance products that also insures revenue from livestock production. The workshop provided a background on the constraints of crop insurance for diverse organic farmers. The tool will be demonstrated using real world scenarios relevant to the types of farmers attending as much as possible. Each attendee received a free copy of the tool that can work on their home computers as well as other handouts about RMA and insurance products in general.

Speakers: Jeff Schahczenski, National Center for Appropriate Technology; Anna Jones-Crabtree and Doug Crabtree, Stewards, Villicus Farms.



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February 10 ~ 13, 2011

The Great Debates

Knock-down, drag-out Debate—it's serious issues, it's taking sides, it's having a sense of humor about it all. The 2009 Organicology debate has become the stuff of legend. If you saw it last time, you know it's up-roarious...you should also know it's PG-13. In 2011 the debate topics focused on organic integrity.

First Argument—"That the organic foods trade should reject the USDA proposal for 'co-existence' between the organic, conventional and bio-tech agricultural sectors as a fatally flawed approach to ag policy given bio-techs track record of being a "leaky" technology, and maintain that the only way to preserve organic integrity is through a total ban on GMO crops."

Second Argument—"That organic food policy should be modified, so that only certified organically grown seed may be used in the production of organic crops."

Third Argument—"That organic food policy should be modified, so that only foods that are 100% organic may carry organic claims on the label, and only companies that produce 100% organic products can include the word organic in their company and brand names."

For each argument two presents share their opinion on the issue at hand. The Debates are moderated by Organically Grown Company's own lively character, Tom Lively—he helps moderate the debates and announces which presenter wins.



Live Music ~ The Pheromones

After school it's time to get **ROCKED!** by the Pheromones. This is the perfect way to top off your Organicology experience. The Pheromones are an earthy mix of jump blues, rockabilly, and rhythm and blues, with an eclectic, modern sensibility. The band is made-up of farmers and plant breeders, a fitting bunch for our conference:

John Navazio, Martin Diffley, Billy Black and Jason Mealhow