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## FOR A SUSTAINABLE FARM LABOR FORCE

For many small-and medium-scale growers, it is the love of the craft and art of farming that keeps them in the work despite significant financial pressures and difficult conditions. Many folks are driven to keep farming because it is deeply life-affirming work. There is without doubt beauty and satisfaction in working with the land to grow food which nourishes our loved ones and communities, all the while regenerating soil, sequestering carbon, and strengthening the local foodshed.

But we must begin to take seriously the question of whether or not we can rightly call the arrangement which does not allow those who provide labor on farms year after year to support themselves sustainably. Many farms in our region, even those most ardently committed to principles of ecological and social sustainability, find themselves balancing season after season on a tightrope of financial precariousness as they try to make ends meet with tiny margins, increasing debt, and a highly unstable work force. Farmers have trouble retaining workers, covering costs of production, and many cannot or do not pay themselves a living wage. Farmworkers are in turn compensated

little for their labor on the farm and are often subjected to dangerous working conditions without significant legal protections.

Social equity for farmers and farmworkers is too frequently overlooked, but it is an essential component of a truly sustainable, regenerative food and farm system. We need what Margaret Gray calls in her book *Labor and the Locavore* a “comprehensive food ethic”, which encompasses all the relations from soil to farmhand, to farmer, to retailer, to eater, and maximizes justice between them.

To respond to the need for increased social integrity in our local food and farm systems, OEFFA's new Fair Farms Program works in collaboration with the Agricultural Justice Project to tend to the interlocking concerns of fair pricing for farmers, and fair wages and labor standards for farmworkers. By providing free support and educational opportunities around these issues for farmers through a recent North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture and Education grant, this program contributes to a more socially just and resilient food system.

(Continued on pg. 3)

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Visit [oeffa.org/employment](http://oeffa.org/employment)  
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The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association news is published quarterly as part of the educational mission of OEFFA, a nonprofit organization for farmers, gardeners, and citizens interested in ecological agriculture and creating a sustainable alternative food system.

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Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of the membership, officers, or directors.

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OEFFA is recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and donations to OEFFA are deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.

Formed in 1979, OEFFA cultivates a future in which sustainable and organic farmers thrive, local food nourishes our communities, and agricultural practices protect and enhance our environment.

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## FOR A SUSTAINABLE FARM LABOR FORCE



OEFFA makes it simple to receive support. When a farmer fills out our short Self-Assessment on Labor and Pricing Standards and sends us any written documentation they have on employment policies, we send back an individualized report with resources to help strengthen their commitment to social and financial sustainability. Those resources include ready-to-adapt templates and model policies and procedures on subjects such as:

- » Creating a thorough employee handbook and farm health and safety plan
- » Calculating full production costs and living wages, fair pricing, and negotiating with buyers
- » Working through grievances and conflicts on the farm
- » Creating learning programs for interns and apprentices

We work one-on-one with farmers and carefully consider their specific context and needs to provide technical assistance at no cost to the farmer. Many of the resources we provide have been developed over the past 20 years through the Agricultural Justice Project's efforts to transform the existing agricultural system through education and their Food Justice Certification. Their stakeholder-driven certification is considered the gold standard for domestic fair trade for farm products, and their wealth of time-tested resources help equip farmers to implement food justice principles in their operations.

In addition to providing this support, we are also offering a series of educational events that dig deeper into many of these topics such as moving from legal to fair employment, creating a health and safety plan, improving calculation of costs of production, and designing intern training programs. Created by farmers for farmers, these programs are practical and interactive, designed to equip growers with content and tools that can be applied to their operations.

At the core of this work is the understanding that fair pricing, pay, and labor standards benefit everybody: farmworkers are treated and compensated well and as a result may choose to return season after season. Farmers benefit from a well-trained workforce, which enhances productivity, care for the environment, and the long-term resilience of the farm. In turn, eaters are provided with the added value of knowing the people who grew their food received a just compensation for their work and were treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

The need for more small- and medium-scale farms committed to feeding our communities, honoring the land, and strengthening the local foodshed can hardly be understated. But for sustainable farms to grow and thrive, the issue of social sustainability must be as integral as environmental sustainability. All who labor to feed us season after season with healthy, nourishing food should not have to sacrifice financial sustainability for themselves and their families in order to keep their operations afloat. Farm work could be a viable and attractive career choice for up-and-comers not only because it is noble work, but because it could realistically sustain them.

By focusing on the joint concerns of fair pay and labor standards for farmworkers and fair pricing for farmers, OEFFA's Fair Farms Program contributes to the realization of a comprehensive food ethic in our region. Stay connected with Fair Farms programming on [fairfarms.oeffa.org](http://fairfarms.oeffa.org) and reach out to receive free technical assistance.

Take our Self-Assessment on Labor and Pricing Standards at  
[surveymonkey.com/r/fairfarms](https://surveymonkey.com/r/fairfarms)

Learn more about the Agricultural Justice Project at [agriculturaljusticeproject.org](http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org)  
Email [jacob@oeffa.org](mailto:jacob@oeffa.org) for more information on the Fair Farms Program.



Photos by Zoe Schaeffer





# 43RD ANNUAL OEFFA CONFERENCE

ONLINE: FEBRUARY 12, DAYTON: FEBRUARY 17-19

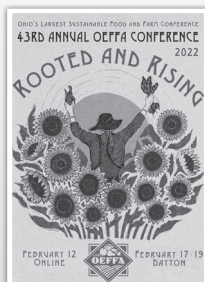






## THANK YOU TO ALL

who attended the 2022 OEFFA Conference online, in person, or both!



After two years of uncertainty, OEFFA took on the challenge of hosting a hybrid conference across four days in February. We kicked off with a fully virtual day that provided learning and engagement from anywhere with an internet connection, and then moved to Dayton for more educational sessions, networking, community building, and celebrating together.

This year's conference hosted knowledgeable speakers, welcomed a robust exhibit hall with hundreds of products and services, forged new connections in our community conversations and talent show, and much more. We truly appreciate everyone who joined us in this new hybrid world, especially to the speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers, and others who made it possible!

### BY THE NUMBERS:

- » Our presenter lineup featured speakers from **a dozen states**
- » **More than 60 sessions** offered over the course of the conference (plus chapter meetups)
- » The trade show featured more than **60 conference exhibitors**.



## 2022 OEFFA Conference Reflections

By Suellen Shupe

As I enjoyed attending *Rooted and Rising*, I kept running into my neighbors. By the end of the day, Saturday, I realized that seven of us from my small neighborhood in Cincinnati were in attendance. OEFFA has been there to support us as we have worked in our various ways to support sustainable practices in our community. Our community developed the environmental education organization, Imago, as well as the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage, which ran an urban CSA for 10 years.

Jim Schenk and his late wife Eileen were instrumental in developing both organizations. Jim was raised on a southern Indiana farm and was always determined that CSA could be done in urban neighborhoods. He still grows and "puts up" much of the food he eats.

This year, Dan Divelbess presented the session on appropriate technology, *Doing What We Need by Hacking What We've Got*, with Nathan Rutz. Nathan, a former Enright CSA member, moved on to become one of the Rust Belt Riders in the Cleveland area. Dan is a water guy. He was an early developer of hydro/aquaponic systems in Cincinnati.

Three attendees from one family were Bill Cahalan, Deborah Jordan, and their son, Dylan. Dylan is currently working with Our Harvest Cooperative, which delivers weekly food boxes to members via sites all over the Greater Cincinnati area. Deborah said their attendance at OEFFA has always been about a love for ecological food, farming, and gathering with the tribe. Deborah is the publisher of the Central Ohio River Valley (CORV) food guide that connects community members with local growers and fresh, healthy, and local food. And Bill continually reminds all of us how to stay rooted in our place.

Howie Zufle attended the conference for the first time this year, but he is no novice to living from the land. Howie works mostly with native perennials that he propagates. He says he learned more about how to rotate animals into the garden to promote soil health, and the importance of linking our food directly with a farmer, not just an organization.

Over my 20 years with OEFFA, I have grown from a novice organic gardener, through CSA administration, and made my initial connection with permaculture design, which I now teach. This year I found myself soaking up sessions on food and farm policy to share with my regional food policy colleagues and my progressive political group.

Dan Divelbess summed up the conference this way: "OEFFA is a worthwhile experience for anyone wanting to learn more about food and farming in Ohio, as well as all levels of community surrounding them."

# FARM BILL TOWN HALL MEETINGS



NEWARK



WOOSTER



YELLOW SPRINGS



ONLINE

OEFFA members—whether farmers, educators, researchers, or community food activists—work hard every day to create more just, sustainable, and ecological farms and food systems but we are not doing that work in a vacuum.

The farm bill, a major piece of legislation passed every five years by Congress, powerfully shapes every aspect of our food systems and influences what we eat; how much we pay for what we eat (including the fact that we pay more for organic and ecological foods than for conventionally grown); who gets to farm (by favoring large growers who already have access to land and capital); and what kinds of crops farmers grow, what methods they use, how they treat the soil, and how much risk they shoulder.

Currently, the farm bill props up large-scale, chemical-dependent, energy-intensive systems, and favors growers who already have access to land and capital. But it could be different. We could help create legislation that supports our vision.

Because this legislation is so far-reaching, the OEFFA policy team has already started working to create a platform and campaign for the 2023 Farm Bill. But this is not a job for OEFFA staff alone.

We need to hear from **YOU**.

- » What is your vision?
- » What are your priorities?
- » What are you already doing?
- » What more could you be doing if you had the resources you need?
- » How could the farm bill support that?
- » What have been your experiences (either positive or negative) with farm bill/USDA programs in the past?
- » What needs to change?



To gather answers to these questions, OEFFA recently welcomed 50 members and supporters over two virtual and three in-person meetings to discuss and share their ideas. These meetings produced rich conversation and many good ideas, including:

- » Providing beginning farmers with access to land and training
- » Funding more public research on seeds and breeds for climate resilience, including perennial systems
- » Addressing inequities that affect BIPOC farmers and others who have been excluded or marginalized
- » Creating support for regional food systems, especially for meat processing, food storage, and value-added products
- » Funding soil testing to create healthier soils and more nutrient-dense foods
- » Supporting organic agriculture through certification cost shares and research programs
- » Reducing the red tape that creates barriers for access to USDA programs
- » Reforming crop insurance so it supports ecological practices and all scales and types of production
- » Creating paid opportunities for teaching and learning about sustainable agriculture
- » Increasing funding for conservation programs like CSP and EQIP
- » Creating solar programs that are integrated into farm systems
- » Addressing corporate consolidation
- » Providing health insurance for farmers
- » Strengthening nutrition assistance programs for farmers' markets



### Did you miss these farm bill meetings? Do you have an idea that you don't see here?

OEFFA policy staff are available to talk personally with you to learn more about your experiences as a farmer or food advocate, and how you can become more involved in this important work. There are many ways that members can create the necessary changes: working with staff to further develop the farm bill platform, writing letters to the editor, participating in farm policy tours, and meeting with members of Congress, among others.

Contact Heather Dean at [heather@oeffa.org](mailto:heather@oeffa.org) to set up a conversation.

## MEAT LABELING



A recent White House analysis found the top four meatpacking companies—Cargill, Tyson, JBS, and National Beef Packing Co.—control between 55-85 percent of the market in the hog, chicken, and cattle sectors. Confirming what independent farmers and ranchers have been saying for decades, this is not a level playing field.

One example of how this consolidation harms independent farmers and ranchers is the sourcing of undifferentiated foreign beef. When these multinational corporations hold the power, they can choose to source beef from more than 20 foreign countries. The USDA allows the deceptive practice of labeling these "Products of the U.S.A." when they simply unwrap and rewrap this foreign meat. Using this lower-cost option as a direct substitute for U.S.-produced beef reduces the demand for cattle from American farmers and ranchers.

Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (M-COOL) is one of the most common-sense solutions that addresses this problem by shifting power away from meatpacking giants, and back to consumers and producers. When we have transparent and accurate labeling of beef, we transform a generic demand for beef into a more competitive domestic market that gives consumers both more information and real purchasing power. With M-COOL, consumers will be empowered to disrupt the ongoing concentration and consolidation efforts of the big beef packers by choosing to support more local and regional facilities that exclusively produce beef born, raised, and harvested in the U.S.

The bipartisan "American Beef Labeling Act of 2021" (S.2716) which was introduced in the U.S. Senate on September 13, 2021, by Senators John Thune (R-S.D.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), and Cory Booker (D-N.J.), would require the implementation of M-COOL for beef within one year of being passed.

In addition to the sponsors, Senators John Barrasso (R-WY), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), John Hoeven (R-ND), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), and Cynthia Lummis (R-WV) have signed on to co-sponsor the bill.

While the bipartisan support for the bill is hopeful, it's going to take all of us working together to move this bill forward. Don't see your senator among the co-sponsors? Take action at <https://rb.gy/qvn3to>.



# SAVE THE DATE Grain School

August 12-14th, 2022, Yellow Springs OH

Join us for a 3-day immersive course exploring the history, culture, cultivation, & culinary uses of ancient and heritage grains. Price: \$250 for three days, or \$90 for one day.

If you're interested in sponsoring this event or participating as a guest speaker, please reach out to Beth Bridgeman at [bbridgeman@antiochcollege.edu](mailto:bbridgeman@antiochcollege.edu). Registration: <https://grainschool.eventbrite.com>



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# NEWS BITES



## VILSACK ANNOUNCES URBAN AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack selected 12 members of the agency's Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture. This committee will provide input on policy development and help identify barriers to urban agriculture in an effort to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country.

Committee members are composed of agricultural producers representatives from higher education or extension programs, non-profits, and more:

Sally Brown	Washington	Angela Mason	Illinois
Tara Chadwick	Florida	Allison Paap	California
Zachari Curtis	Washington D.C.	Viraj Puri	New York
John Erwin	Maryland	Kaben Smallwood	Oklahoma
Jerry Ann Hebron	Michigan	Carl Wallace	Ohio
John Lebeaux	Massachusetts	Bobby Wilson	Georgia



## HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN FLU SPREADS

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a highly contagious virus circulating the U.S. that can affect all poultry. About 45 percent of confirmed 2022 cases have been detected in flocks ranging from eight to 255 birds. HPAI is carried by free flying waterfowl (such as ducks and geese) and spreads quickly with the potential to be fatal to poultry.

"Enhanced biosecurity is the number one preventive measure against avian influenza," said Dr. Dennis Summers, Ohio's state veterinarian. "HPAI can infect any size flock. We urge all poultry owners to intensify their biosecurity and best management practices."



## REPORT FINDS 29 PERCENT OF AMERICAN JOBS LINKED TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The 2022 *Feeding the Economy* study, an economic analysis of food and agriculture industries, found these sectors are tied to seven percent of the nation's economy, 29 percent of U.S. jobs, and more \$7.4 trillion in total food and industry economic impact. Visit [feedingtheeconomy.com](https://feedingtheeconomy.com) to learn more.



## GROUPS FILE COMPLAINT AGAINST DEERE

Farm groups and advocacy organizations filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against John Deere over the right to repair their equipment, citing federal antitrust and consumer protection laws. The groups said the company "has deliberately restricted access to diagnostic software and other information needed to repair Deere equipment" by independent mechanics.

"Manufacturers have far too much control over what farmers are allowed to do with their own equipment," said Rob Larew, president of the National Farmers Union, in a press release. "The Federal Trade Commission should take action to ensure that farmers and independent mechanics have the freedom to fix their equipment in a timely and cost-effective way."



## AGRICULTURE RUNOFF CONTINUES TO IMPACT WATER QUALITY

The Food and Environmental Reporting Network analyzed more than 700,000 miles of rivers and streams in the U.S., determining fertilizer runoff from cropland and manure from factory farms are leading to waterways fouled with pesticides, phosphorus, nitrogen, and fecal bacteria.

According to Eric Schaeffer of the Environmental Integrity Project, "...agricultural runoff is really the leading cause of water pollution in the U.S. today."

While regulation is frequently looked at as suspect, the report also found that water quality has dramatically improved in the 50 years since the creation of the Clean Water Act, which exempted agriculture.



## USDA INVESTS IN MEAT AND POULTRY PROCESSING

In light of the disruptions caused due to the pandemic, repeated investments are being made to meat processing infrastructure. The USDA is investing \$1 billion to expand meat and poultry processing capacity, including in :

- **Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP)** – Rural Development offered \$150 million in grants to expand processing capacity through a variety of activities, including construction, expansion of existing facilities, and acquisition of equipment.
- **Meat and Poultry Processing Workforce Development** - National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will invest an additional \$40 million through existing workforce development programs to provide a pipeline of well-trained workers to meet the demand for both current processors and increased independent processing capacity.
- **Meat and Poultry Processing Technical Assistance** - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will provide approximately \$25 million in American Rescue Plan funding to establish partnerships with organizations that will provide technical assistance to applicants and recipients of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant program, and those who require general guidance and resources on meat and poultry processing.

USDA AMS is accepting applications for meat and poultry inspection readiness grants through May 24. This is their second round of funding for this program.



## CLIMATE CHANGE LEADS TO HIGHER CROP INSURANCE PAYOUTS

A story from *Inside Climate News* analyzed the effects of extreme weather on crop insurance costs. Crop insurance payments rose more than 400 percent for drought-related losses, and almost 300 percent for rain- and flooding-related losses in the past 15 years. Currently, taxpayers contribute to about 62 percent of the overall cost of crop insurance for farmers. The current crop insurance program is considered "actuarially sound," meaning the premiums don't exceed the cost of what is paid out in losses, but that is due to the fact that taxpayers pay most of the cost.



## OEFFA Staff are Here to Help YOU!

### Do you need...

- Production advice or resources?
- Help with transition or becoming certified organic?
- Assistance filling out your Organic System Plan?
- Help preparing for your organic inspection?
- Help responding to a Noncompliance?

### OEFFA offers complimentary:

#### Phone Assistance:

OEFFA educators are happy to talk about your production, marketing, and compliance questions. If we don't know the answer, we'll find out or connect you to someone who does.

#### Transition Guide and Workbook:

The guide will walk you step-by-step through the transition process. It explains the organic standards, methods, and the certification process. The companion workbook helps you develop an organic management system, and ultimately an Organic System Plan, that will prepare you to apply for certification. Download an electronic version for free or purchase a printed copy by phone or mail.

#### Fact Sheets and Sample Recordkeeping Documents:

We are glad to send you paper or digital copies of application packets and sample recordkeeping forms so you can get a sense of the requirements, records, and paperwork.

### Don't let farming, transition, or certification be harder than it needs to be!

Go to [certification.oeffa.org/transition](https://certification.oeffa.org/transition)  
or contact Sustainable Agriculture Educators:



Julia Barton at (614) 359-3180, [julia@oeffa.org](mailto:julia@oeffa.org) or  
Eric Pawlowski at (614) 947-1610, [eric@oeffa.org](mailto:eric@oeffa.org).

Funding for this project was provided by in part by the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture under Award Number 2018-70027-28586.



## Know Your NOSB Spring Report

Organic advocates across the nation geared up for this spring's National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting held online April 26-28. The NOSB holds a public forum twice each year to hear public comments, discuss agenda items, and vote regarding issues and materials for use in organic production and handling systems. The outcomes of board votes are shared as advice to the Secretary of Agriculture, which then often returns to the organic community with clarifications or changes to the organic standards.

### Big Issues

Each NOSB meeting has a particular topic or two that rise to the top. At this meeting, we kept a close eye on two topics: one intended to create a tracking system to help deter fraud, and the other to limit the use of highly soluble fertilizers in organic, much in the way that the use of Chilean Nitrate was limited in the past. Several OEFFA members, including both Plain Community leaders and a subset of the OEFFA Grain Growers Chapter, have held meetings with NOSB farmer members over the winter to provide feedback on these topics.

It's critical that the NOSB hear from farmers who are putting the standards into practice in the field. There are multiple ways for you to stay informed on the issues under discussion and provide input to the NOSB:

To see subcommittee proposals, a meeting agenda, and other meeting materials: Go to [oeffa.org/nosb/NOSB\\_April2022.pdf](https://oeffa.org/nosb/NOSB_April2022.pdf) or contact OEFFA.

Help inform OEFFA's comments: Please share your insights with OEFFA to help inform NOSB. To provide your input on these topics, or any others of importance to you, please contact Julia Barton at (614) 359-3180, [julia@oeffa.org](mailto:julia@oeffa.org), or by mail at 41 Crosswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214.

Share your comments directly: There are opportunities for farmers to participate in NOSB meetings! Participants have a three-minute time slot to share their thoughts over the phone. When the board hears directly from farmers, they listen.





## Family Farm ReGeneration Act Signed Into Law

House Bill 95 passed the Ohio legislature and was signed into law by Governor Mike DeWine, clearing the way for the next generation of farmers and a more resilient food system.

The Family Farm ReGeneration Act encourages those with farmland, livestock, buildings, or equipment to sell to beginning farmers with the promise of income tax credits. Beginning farmers who attend a financial management program are also eligible for tax credits.

“Young farmers in Ohio are taking on the risks inherent in farming and working hard to build successful farm businesses,” said Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) Policy Director Amalie Lipstreu. “Access to—and secure tenure on—affordable, high quality farmland is the number one challenge young farmers are facing.”

According to the USDA, Ohio is home to more than 33,000 beginning farmers, the sixth-largest number of any state in the country. In her testimony to the Senate Ways and Means Committee on March 2, Lipstreu emphasized the hurdle many farmers face with finding land and capital when they do not come from a farming family.

Advocates also note that millions of acres are likely to change hands as many older farmers retire, meaning HB 95 provides an important bridge between landowners and land-seekers.

“We are currently experiencing one of the greatest transfers of agricultural land in history and we do not have adequate measures to keep agricultural land in production,” Lipstreu said. “We may lose that land to development, threatening the future of agriculture and the resilience of the Ohio food system.”

HB 95 passed unanimously in the Senate on April 6, but with amendments. The House concurred shortly after. The governor signed it into law on April 18.

These changes included lowering the percentage of the tax credit for farmers to 3.99 percent of the sale price or rental income. Originally, the House allowed credits equal to 5 percent of the sale price, 10 percent of the rental income, or 15 percent of the cash equivalent in the first three years of a share rent agreement with a beginning farmer.

“This was the compromise that we made, and I do believe that it strengthens the bill,” said Rep. Susan Manchester (R-84), a sponsor of the bill alongside Rep. Mary Lightbody (D-19).

Lipstreu said, “This is a positive first step. We are disappointed that the tax credit for farmers leasing land has been reduced. For farmers that do not have the ability to outright purchase large tracts of land, leasing remains the most viable option. We look forward to working with agricultural leaders in the Ohio legislature to continue to support an industry that is critical to our future.”

For more information, visit [action.oeffa.org](http://action.oeffa.org).

### facebook

#### Take the Community Online: OEFFA Facebook Groups

OEFFA's Facebook groups are friendly, inclusive forums where you can network with other members, crowdsource answers to questions, and share ideas, resources, photos, and events.

Go to the Group tab on OEFFA's Facebook page to join OEFFA's Heart of Ohio, Marketing Our Organic Ohio, Next Farm Team, Marketing Gardening, Southeast Ohio, or Southwest Ohio Chapter Facebook groups.

### Go Paperless!



Help us save resources and receive your newsletter faster! Sign up to receive the *OEFFA News* online.

Email [newsletter@oeffa.org](mailto:newsletter@oeffa.org) and write “I want the electronic newsletter” in the subject line.





## ORGANIC NEWS

### USDA Trademarks Organic Seal

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office granted the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) final trademark approval for the USDA organic seal. This trademark allows the USDA to better enforce the organic seal and protect the integrity of the organic market.

"With official Trademark protection, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service and the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center may seize and destroy shipments when fraudulent claims are found to have been made, significantly raising the risk and cost of crime," the USDA said in the release.

This trademark approval is tied to the collaborative work of the Organic Agricultural Product Imports Interagency Working Group, established by the 2018 Farm Bill.



### Northeast Organic Dairies Possibly Find Home for Milk



In 2021, Horizon Organic and Maple Hill notified more than 100 dairy farmers that they would be ending their contracts, leaving them without a place to sell their milk. Organic Valley is filling the gap. In March, the nation's largest organic dairy cooperative sent 80 farms in New England and New York letters of intent. These farms would join the ten other farms in the region that have accepted the offer.

Bob Kirchoff, Organic Valley chief executive officer, told *Farm and Dairy* their business model as a cooperative allows the operation to focus on sustaining farmers over profit.

### Congress Approves Spending Legislation with Organic Components



To avoid a government shutdown, Congress passed a \$1.5 trillion spending package to fund federal government activities, including for organic programs.

The bill will boost funding for the NOP at the USDA from \$18 million to \$20 million in fiscal year 2022. The report accompanying both the House and Senate bills encouraged the USDA to increase enforcement of full compliance with the soil health and pasture requirements of USDA organic standards.

This legislation also boosts funding for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, for organic research with the Organic Transitions Program, and for organic data collection and analysis with the AMS.



### USDA Publishes Origin of Livestock Final Rule

In March, the USDA published the anticipated final Origin of Livestock rule for organic dairy. This new rule provides clear and uniform standards about how and when livestock may be transitioned to organic, promoting a more fair and competitive market for all organic dairy producers. Learn more at [go.usa.gov/xzFnU](https://go.usa.gov/xzFnU).



### Good Earth Guide

visit: [oeffa.org/geg](https://oeffa.org/geg)

### Find Food and Farms in the Good Earth Guide

The *Good Earth Guide* is an online directory of hundreds of businesses and their farm products. The database allows you to search by product, county, community supported agriculture (CSA), organic status, and more. Currently, OEFA is offering free listings to all sustainable and organic food and farm businesses. Find local foods, or create a listing at [oeffa.org/geg](https://oeffa.org/geg). Contact Renee Hunt at (614) 947-1642 or [renee@oeffa.org](mailto:renee@oeffa.org) with questions or to request a form to create or update your listing by mail.





## Improving Soil Health and Fertility through Micronutrients and Secondary Nutrients

Soil health and fertility are fundamental to organic farming. Organic farming practices aim to feed the soil to provide the proper physical, chemical, and biological structure that allows crops to thrive, as opposed to just feeding the crop itself. The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 states that “an organic plan shall contain provisions designed to foster soil fertility, primarily through the management of the organic content of the soil through proper tillage, crop rotation, and manuring.” The National Organic Program (NOP) standards further clarify that a “producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials.” [NOP 205.203(b)]. Properly balanced soils provide innumerable benefits such as improved yields, crop quality, and soil structure and tilth. When the use of crop rotations, cover crops, and application of compost or manure are not effective enough at fixing nutrient imbalances in the soil, an organic producer may decide to use micronutrients or secondary nutrients.

Common micronutrients include boron (B), copper (Cu), cobalt (Co), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo), selenium (Se), and zinc (Zn). Secondary nutrients include calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S). Micronutrients and secondary nutrients are available in both nonsynthetic and synthetic forms, and the use of these nutrients in organic agriculture is addressed in the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. Nonsynthetic substances are allowed unless they are specifically listed in the National List at NOP 205.602. Therefore, nonsynthetic and natural forms of micronutrients are allowed. However, calcium chloride produced through a brine process, which is natural, can only be used as a foliar spray to treat a physiological disorder associated with calcium uptake, such as Blossom End Rot in tomatoes.

Synthetic micronutrients and secondary nutrients, which are listed at NOP 205.601(j), are restricted inputs. Synthetic forms of micronutrients are not allowed to be used as a defoliant, herbicide, or desiccant. Before using a synthetic micronutrient, a deficiency in that specific nutrient must be documented.

OEFFA frequently receives questions about what type of documentation is enough to show a deficiency in micronutrients. Here are the most common ways to document a deficiency:

**Soil tests**—OEFFA will accept soil tests that were taken within the last three years. The soil tests should be representative of all areas where the micronutrients will be used and must show a deficiency in all synthetic micronutrients that will be applied.

» The Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTEC - [farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/otecp](https://farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/otecp)) will reimburse 75 percent, up to \$100, of soil testing costs that are performed to document a micronutrient deficiency. At this time, the program covers expenses for fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021–September 30, 2022) and applications must be submitted to the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

**Tissue tests**—OEFFA accepts tissue and crop leaf tests from the current year’s crop. Similar to soil tests, these must be representative of all areas where the micronutrients will be applied and must show a deficiency in all synthetic micronutrients that are intended to be used.

**Documented visual observations**—On a case-by-case basis, OEFFA will accept documented visual observations and monitoring of the plant health through field records as documentation of a deficiency.

When deciding which input to apply to your fields, it is essential to first verify that the input is approved for use in organic agriculture by OEFFA. You can check the current version of OEFFA’s Approved Products List, contact our office at (614) 262-2022, or email [materialsreview@oeffa.org](mailto:materialsreview@oeffa.org) to confirm whether a product is approved or not. It is also important to list any new inputs planned for use on your Organic System Plan (OSP).

If you are interested in learning more about the restricted use of micronutrients and secondary nutrients in organic agriculture, please reference OEFFA’s *Application of Secondary Nutrients & Micronutrients for Soil Fertility Policy and Secondary Nutrients & Micronutrients Fact Sheet*, both available at [certification.oeffa.org/resources](https://certification.oeffa.org/resources).

Also, you may choose to contact one of OEFFA’s Sustainable Agriculture Educators, who can suggest soil testing labs and help you choose products based on tests that have already been performed, by calling (614) 421-2022.



## Organic Inspectors Needed!

As the organic movement grows, OEFFA has a continued need for inspectors



OEFFA’s inspectors work on a contracted basis and organize their own schedules, performing as few as 15 and as many as 100+ inspections per year. While utilizing their people skills, knowledge of the organic standards, and analytical eye, inspectors navigate a diverse array of operations and the folks who run them.

Future inspectors can start their journey by attending an International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) in-person training or a live online training at <https://ioia.net>. This industry standard, week-long training covers the standards, prepares individuals for the inspection process, and teaches report writing skills.

In order to become an inspector at OEFFA, we require 3+ years of experience in agriculture or similar work, and a completed training with IOIA (or equivalent experience). Once an application is accepted and depending on prior experience, we set up an apprenticeship program, where mentor and apprentice complete several inspections together.

If you are interested in inspecting for OEFFA or if you have questions, please visit <https://certification.oeffa.org/inspectors> or contact Haley Behnfeldt at (614) 947-1640 or [haley@oeffa.org](mailto:haley@oeffa.org).



## Internships

Find a seasonal farm job and learn the basic skills of farming with OEFFA's internship listing service. Farms throughout Ohio that offer employment with a focus on education list their opportunities on OEFFA's website. This listing service allows both farmers and farm job seekers to connect and securely contact one another to find out if they are a good fit. To sign up, visit [oeffa.org/seasonal](http://oeffa.org/seasonal).

Interns that use this service are offered free access to OEFFA's *Farm Vision Course*, while the first eight farms to list their internships receive free conference registration.

## Intern Host Farm Spotlight

Photo courtesy of Purple Skies Farm



**Purple Skies Farm**

### Purple Skies Farm

—North Royalton, Ohio

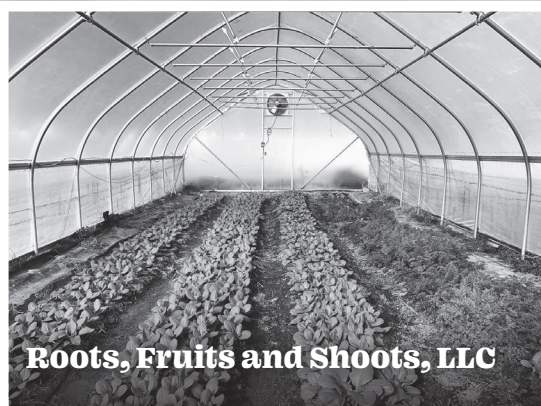
Purple Skies Farm has been in operation for 10 years, starting parttime with a plot of red raspberries. Before they knew it, there was a high tunnel with more red raspberries, asparagus, garlics, strawberries, and blueberries.

In addition to the farm, Purple Skies runs a two suite bed-and-breakfast and hopes to add agritourism, including photography opportunities and tours.

Their goals:

- » Nourish the land, and receive the most delicious produce in return
- » Reduce waste through repurposing whenever possible
- » Practice good safety, including food safety
- » Provide fair wages when possible
- » Promote food as medicine

Photo courtesy of Dana Hilfinger



**Roots, Fruits and Shoots, LLC**

### Roots, Fruits and Shoots, LLC

—Johnstown, Ohio

Roots, Fruits and Shoots, LLC, is a three-acre fruit and vegetable farm in Johnstown, Ohio. The operation uses no-till, sustainable practices to grow raspberries, melons and a variety of vegetables throughout the year. They sell produce primarily to two Columbus-area farmers markets and wholesale accounts. Dana, the farm owner, is particularly passionate about helping grow the number of new farmers.



## How Can the Support Me and My Farm?

The USDA currently offers several programs to foster the development of both new and experienced farmers. Just starting out? Schedule an appointment with your local **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** to register your land and obtain a **farm number**. This number identifies your farm, allows you to apply for FSA and **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** programs, and makes you eligible to elect County Committee members who represent and advocate for farmers in your area. Registering also allows you to participate in the USDA Ag Census. There is no minimum acreage to register as a farm, and Land Bank properties are also eligible. And, above all, it is free.

So, where do we start?

1. **Call** to make an appointment at your local Farm Service Agency, which can be found at [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).
2. **Prepare** documents needed to verify your operation, like property deed, bank account information, production records, personal identification numbers, and more. Ask your FSA agent which documents are necessary.
3. **Meet** with your local FSA agent to register for a farm number and discuss your business and conservation goals. You will need your SSN or Employer ID and property deed for this step.

Looking for more free resources? Reach out to your local NRCS the same way you engaged with your FSA: call, prepare, meet. A **District Conservationist** will visit your space and walk your land with you to identify your farm's strengths and challenges, providing a foundation to establishing more robust conservation practices.

Once you have met with your conservationist, you might consider applying for the NRCS **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**. EQIP especially helps beginning farmers start to identify their conservation needs and establish a plan for meeting those needs. Financial assistance can cover part of the costs of implementing these plans, and advanced payments are available for beginning farmers, limited resource farmers, farmers of color, and military veterans. Examples of EQIP activities include creating:

- » High tunnels
- » Buffer zones
- » Pollinator habitats
- » Irrigation systems
- » Cover crop and rotational grazing plans

If you have already been established with your FSA and NRCS, register for the NRCS **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**, which can provide you with technical and financial assistance to farmers who want to find new ways to meet their conservation goals.

Whether you are a new farmer, or have been farming for decades, the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resource Conservation Service can provide support and resources to help bridge the gap between developing your goals and putting them into practice.

Contact OEFFA Communications and Outreach Associate August Taylor at [august@oeffa.org](mailto:august@oeffa.org) or (614) 725-3161 for more information.



### Farmland Specialist Now Available Have you struggled with farm transfer?

**Our trained Farmland Specialist, Kelly Henderson-Cabral, is here to help.**

OEFFA's Farmland Specialist, Kelly Henderson-Cabral, offers consultation services for beginning farmers searching for land or transferring landowners who need technical assistance in the process. Contact [farmlink@oeffa.org](mailto:farmlink@oeffa.org) or (614) 947-1633 to find out if this service is right for you.



### Produce Farm Manager Apprenticeship

Are you looking to take the next step in your career as a farmer? OEFFA's Produce Farm Manager Apprenticeship is a professional, hands-on training program that provides a thorough, well-rounded education in organic produce farm management. Apprenticeship graduates will be fully prepared for employment as a farm manager or to begin their own produce farm.

The program includes 2,500 hours of paid on-the-job training combined with 144 hours of related instruction and 20 hours of group education. Classroom instruction is available in person at Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio or online through the Wisconsin Technical College System. Scholarships are available for qualified applicants.

Visit [beginfarming.oeffa.org/produce-farm-manager-apprenticeship](http://beginfarming.oeffa.org/produce-farm-manager-apprenticeship) or contact Begin Farming Program Coordinator Robin Hackett at (614) 947-1633 or [robin@oeffa.org](mailto:robin@oeffa.org) for more information.



### Find a Farm or Find a Farmer with Heartland Farmlink

Heartland Farmlink is a free listing service and land linking site designed to match farmland seekers with exiting landowners offering properties for sale, lease, or partnership.

Go to [heartlandfarmlink.org](http://heartlandfarmlink.org) to browse the opportunities listed, create a profile yourself, and help us keep farmland in sustainable farming! Videos on the about page will show you how. The site also includes a suite of resources detailing the land assessment, legal and financial tools, and OEFFA services that can support a successful farm transfer.

If you have any questions about Heartland Farmlink or want help creating an attractive profile, contact Begin Farming Educator Lainie Rini at (614) 421-2022 or [lainie@oeffa.org](mailto:lainie@oeffa.org).





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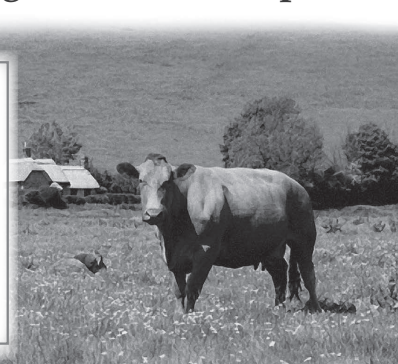


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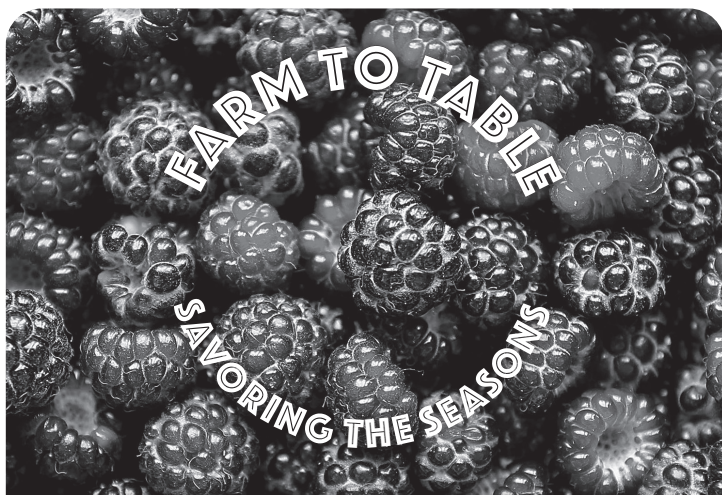
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## Black Raspberries: memories of a native species

By Marjorie Lee

This recipe is the taste of early summer in a salad, and comes into season each year when spring ends and summer begins. As the last peas of spring ripen on the vine, black raspberries start to fruit, and the flavor combination is pretty spectacular. Some chèvre adds a creamy, goaty flavor to the crisp refreshing taste of the peas and berries, and balsamic vinegar brightens it all with a little salt, black pepper, and a drizzle of honey for balance. I'm not sure how I first put these two flavors together, but I was probably wandering around in the garden trying this and that, and had a handful of each.

Some of my earliest foraging memories are of picking black raspberries with my parents. My father worked for CSX, and we would walk down the railroad tracks to big patches of berries he scoped out while he was at work. This was back in the '80s when you could still do things like that. If you're foraging berries (or anything else) these days, go at least 50 feet off roadways or railroad tracks to avoid any possible contamination from spraying.

Black raspberries are native to Ohio, and usually start ripening the last week of June through July. They have a strong, unique raspberry flavor and a beautiful deep purple color.

### Black raspberry pea salad with chèvre

#### Ingredients

¼ cup fresh black raspberries, <i>foraged or grown</i>	Drizzle of balsamic vinegar
½ cup fresh peas, <i>shelled or chopped if still in the pod</i>	Drizzle of honey
Chèvre, <i>crumbled</i>	Pinch of salt
	Fresh ground black pepper

#### Directions

Combine peas and berries in a bowl with vinegar and salt. Crumble chèvre on top and enjoy.



## Sunday Creek Sanctuary

Marjorie is the owner of Sunday Creek Sanctuary, a 6-acre small farm in Athens County, Ohio, that is dedicated to land access, learning opportunities, and rest and creative retreat space for BIPOC LGBTQ+ farmers.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

For a complete calendar of events go to [www.oeffa.org/events](http://www.oeffa.org/events)



## Walking the Talk on the Climate Crisis 2022 OEFFA Farm Tour

Saturday, July 9

Stratford Ecological Center

On July 9, OEFFA and Stratford Ecological Center will co-host a daylong event to learn how to walk the talk on combating the climate crisis. Walk with us through Stratford's farm and forest to discover how agroforestry, cover crops, pasture-raised livestock, and soil health practices can all contribute to ending the climate crisis. Enjoy a locally-sourced lunch before we build our collective understanding of why we face the problems we do, and how to make change with specific pieces of legislation. This includes the Agriculture Resilience Act (ARA), which supports farmers to make their own farms more resilient while also contributing to positive climate results.

More details will be sent in OEFFA's 2022 Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series brochure early this summer.



## Use Your Numbers to Assess Profitability and Full Cost of Production

Mondays, December 5, 12, 19

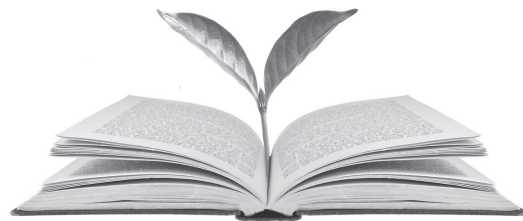
Online Event

Join farm consultant Ellen Polishuk in this three-part course diving into your numbers from this 2022 growing season to understand your farm's full costs of production and calculate fair prices and wages. The cost is \$75 and includes a one-on-one consultation with Ellen. Capacity is limited, so register today. Contact OEFFA Fair Farms Program Coordinator Jacob Taylor at [jacob@oeffa.org](mailto:jacob@oeffa.org) for more details and to view two introductory course videos.

## FACED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE? OEFFA OFFERS FREE CONSULTING SERVICES

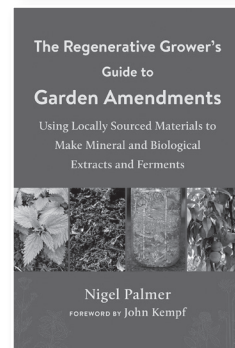
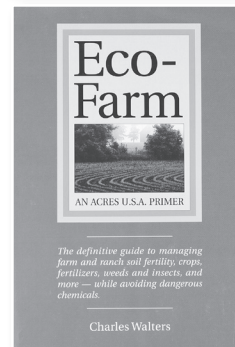
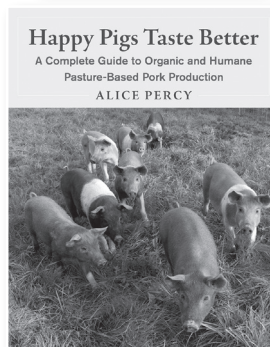
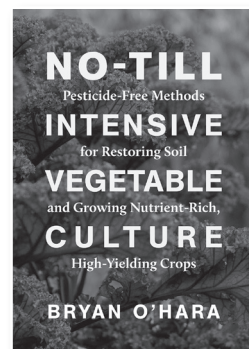
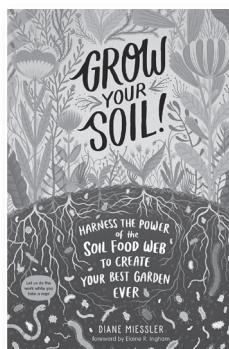
Are you facing infrastructure development on your farm, like power lines or pipelines? We can help! Let's talk through your situation and share tools to help you navigate, negotiate, and protect your farm resources, and maintain your organic certification. As a benefit of membership, there is no cost for this free consulting service.

Contact Amalie Lipstreu or Julia Barton at (614) 421-2022.



## ACRES USA Bookstore

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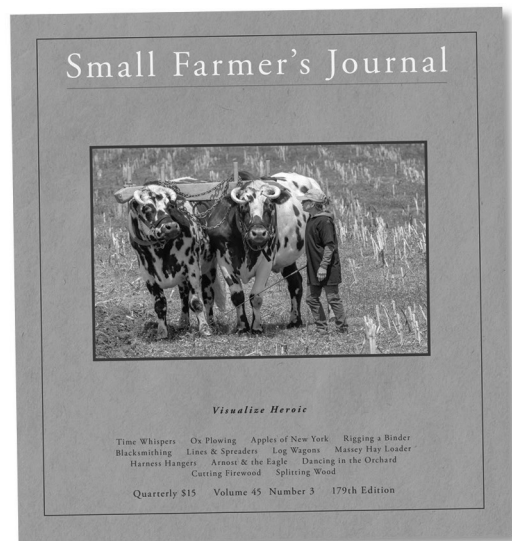


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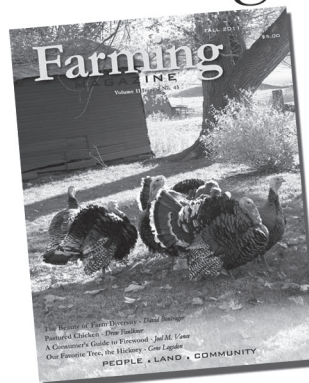


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## HELP OEFFA SUPPORT FAMILY FARMERS



If you find value in OEFFA's work, and you're able to afford it, please consider making a donation at [oeffa.org/donate](http://oeffa.org/donate) or joining or renewing your membership at [oeffa.org/membership](http://oeffa.org/membership), so we can continue to help sustainable family farmers. The additional giving options below are another way to support OEFFA's work and make an impact.

**Gift Donations** – Give the gift of OEFFA membership or make a one-time donation to OEFFA in honor of someone close to you. Create a custom message for the gift recipient and we will send it to them with a membership welcome packet.

**Memorial Donations** – Honor your loved ones' memory and ask that charitable donations be made to OEFFA in lieu of flowers at a memorial service.

**Leave a Legacy** – There are many ways to help OEFFA through planned giving, as a beneficiary of all or part of your retirement plan, life insurance policy, or a gift designated in your will.

Should you choose to honor a persons' memory, or commemorate a special event with donations to OEFFA, we will provide you with a list of the donors' names, mailing addresses, and messages of goodwill. Each donor will receive an individual thank you letter acknowledging their tax-deductible donation to OEFFA.

### LEARN MORE

To learn more about alternative giving, go to [oeffa.org/donate](http://oeffa.org/donate) or contact our Member Care Associate at (614) 947-1611 or [oeffa@oeffa.org](mailto:oeffa@oeffa.org).





## RESOURCES

**Tool to Report Anti-Competitive Practices**—Farmers and ranchers can now anonymously report unfair and anti-competitive practices in the livestock and poultry industries through an online tool launched by the USDA and the Department of Justice.

 [farmerfairness.gov](http://farmerfairness.gov)

**Cost of Production and Fair Pricing Webinars**—Learn how to calculate costs of production and fair pricing with farm consultant and Plant to Profit founder Ellen Polishuk.

 [bit.ly/polishukwebinar](http://bit.ly/polishukwebinar)

**2022 National Organic Research Agenda**—Organic Farming Research Foundation's NORA report is composed of survey and focus group responses by certified organic and transitioning-organic farmers in 2020. It includes input and perspectives on current organic production systems, technical assistance needs, and more.

 [bit.ly/22nora](http://bit.ly/22nora)

**Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program and Regional Food System Partnerships Grants**—The Local Agriculture Market Program will receive \$97 million in competitive grant funding to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate and expand producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets, and local food enterprises. Applications are due May 16.

 [grants.gov](http://grants.gov)

**Local Food Directories**—The USDA AMS's Local Food Directories is a platform for farmers market managers, CSA or agritourism venturers, and food hub operators to list their business for consumers across the country.

 [usdalocalfoodportal.com/#directories](http://usdalocalfoodportal.com/#directories)

**Growing Opportunity: A Guide to USDA Sustainable Farming Programs**—NSAC's updated growing opportunity guide simplifies key federal programs that can meet and support diversified, sustainable farming operations.

 [sustainableagriculture.net/fsaguide/](http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsaguide/)

**OEFFA Soil Health Petition**—Healthy soil is foundational to sustainable agriculture, and Ohio farmers interested in experimenting with soil health and growers implementing soil health should be supported. Sign OEFFA's petition to show the Ohio Legislature the importance of soil health.

 [action.oeffa.com/oeffa-state-soil-health-petition](http://action.oeffa.com/oeffa-state-soil-health-petition)

**Value-Added Producer Grants**—Individual farmers and ranchers, agricultural businesses, and producer groups can apply for these grants encouraging the development of new products or the expansion of existing markets for value-added products.

 [rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants)

**Manage Weeds On Your Farm**—SARE's new book is a guide to understanding and managing agricultural weeds effectively for organic and conventional farmers alike.

 [sare.org/resources/manage-weeds-on-your-farm/](http://sare.org/resources/manage-weeds-on-your-farm/)

**USDA 2501 Program Funding**—This program helps socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, foresters, and veteran farmers who have historically experienced limited access to USDA programs and services. Grants are awarded to higher education institutions and nonprofit and community-based organizations to extend USDA's engagement efforts in these communities.

 [usda.gov/partnerships/socially-disadvantaged-farmers-and-ranchers](http://usda.gov/partnerships/socially-disadvantaged-farmers-and-ranchers)

**Want to learn more?** OEFFA's online Resources section includes links to dozens of websites, publications, and organizations on a wide range of topics. Visit. [oeffa.org/resources](http://oeffa.org/resources).

## 2022 Stewardship and Service Award Winners: Dean McIlvaine and Louise Warner

The Stewardship Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the cultivation of sustainable agriculture, the Service Award recognizes outstanding service in support of sustainable agriculture, and the Advocate of the Year Award recognizes exceptional contributions to sustainable agriculture policy advocacy. The awards are announced each year as part of OEFFA's annual conference. The following award winners have all played a vital role in advancing sustainable agriculture in Ohio.



### 2022 Stewardship Award

Since 1985, Dean McIlvaine has operated Twin Parks Organic Farm, a 1,200-acre farm in West Salem, Ohio. When he took over the conventionally farmed land from his father, he began transitioning it to organic, a newly emerging trend at the time. Twin Parks was certified organic by OEFFA in 1988. McIlvaine first grew food-grade soybeans for tofu by Eden Foods, then spelt for Purity Foods, and is now cultivating a rotation of corn, rye, soybeans, and hay, as well as livestock. He markets his organic products widely, including with Western Reserve Distillers, a certified organic distillery outside Cleveland.

A longtime advocate for sustainable agriculture, McIlvaine has frequently championed farm policy with OEFFA. He has served on the Organic Farming Research Foundation and OEFFA boards, and is a member of OEFFA's Grain Growers Chapter and the Ohio Farmers Union.



### 2022 Service Award

Louise Warner of Pickaway County is a retired physician and anesthesiologist, as well as a farmer and educator. Inspired by an educational farm her late daughter Gale had worked on, she and her late husband, Jack Warner, started Stratford Ecological Center in Delaware County in 1990. The nonprofit hosts almost 16,000 visitors each year through camps, a farm school, community events, and adult programming. A pin oak tree that OEFFA planted at Stratford in 1993 in memory of Gale is a focal point and gathering place for many of the groups who visit.

Warner is also a founding board member of the Ohio Forage and Grassland Council, Innovative Farmers of Ohio, and the Appalachia Ohio Alliance. She and Jack established the Warner Endowment Fund at Ohio State University to support many on-farm research projects in sustainable agriculture.

Visit [oeffa.org/news/awards](http://oeffa.org/news/awards) to read more and nominate your favorite sustainable agriculture leader.

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December 2, 2021 **NEW MEMBERS** March 31, 2022

# OEFFA MEMBERSHIP



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Hannah and Joe DiVencenzo, *Healthy Harvest Organics*  
Sarah Finney, *Finney Family Farm, LLC*  
Paula and Kevin Gionfriddo, *Lost Bell Acres*  
Jonathan and Jessica Greer, *Eden's Blessing*  
Ava Johnson and Tracy Taylor, *Southeast Gardens and Farm*  
Joshua Kruszynski  
Clarissa Eve Luna and Ricardo Sanchez, *Flying Foxes*  
Obalaye Macharia, *144 Farms*  
Peter and Jessica Merkle, *The Little Flower Farm of Newark*  
Kent Morgan, *Brenneman Farms*  
Rose Pelzl and Jonny No, *Forest Village Farm*  
Brittanie Petit and Mark McCann, *McCann's 1901 Farm*  
Branson Pyles, *Howell Farms*  
Patricia and Erich Rottenbiller, *Rottenbiller Farms*  
Jessica Smith, *Verity Farm*  
Amanda Stephenson and Chris Strayer, *3 Hares Farm*  
John Stock  
Phillip Waller and Zenia Perez, *Fiera Farm*  
Bernice West and Rebekah Smith  
Joshua White and Kelsey Colwell, *Wild Prairie Flower Farm*  
Zach Zientek, *Z Farms*

## FAMILY

Christopher Jetter and Andrea Jetter-Ayala  
Kari and Lisa Lindberg  
Nicholas and Gary Townsend

## BUSINESS

Daniel Brown, *Tilth Soil*  
Ted Gudorf, *Gudorf Law Group, LLC*  
AnneMarie Hawkins Hodgson, *Fuzzy Farms, LLC*  
Bill Kilimnik, *Golden Lamb Farm*  
Robert Segerson, *Christopher Springs Farm*

## NONPROFIT

Adner Boyce, *The Nature Conservancy*  
Emily Diefendorf, *Northside Farmers Market*  
Yvonne Dubielak, *Toledo Grows*  
Angela Huffman, *Farm Action*  
Amy Hurst, *Learning 4 Life Farm*  
Sharron Johnson, *Hand in Hand, United for the Greater Good, Inc*  
John Munsel, *Edwards Mother Earth Foundation*  
Chandler Patterson, *Homefull*  
Susan Plummer, *Society of St. Andrew - Ohio*  
Whitney Shields, *Center for Agriculture and Food Systems*  
Brady Smith, *Butler Soil and Water Conservation District*

## INDIVIDUAL

Robert Bacheller  
Bradley Bahan  
Sheri Bigelow  
K. Ayo Boykin  
Donnetta Chante Boykin  
Rachel Carr  
Reilly Clark  
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Micki Cole  
Joshua Couch  
Nancy Crace  
Carie Cufu  
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Sophia Sorboro  
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David Stuart  
Aaron Tayal  
Lenore Teevan  
Brandon Thomas  
Kacey Trueblood  
Casey Walden  
William (Curtis) Watson  
Marcellus Wheeler  
Michele White  
James Woodard  
Howard Zuefle

## STUDENT

Stacy Brunner  
Shawn Kelley  
Sara Marston

Florentina Rodriguez  
Jocie Steinke

## LIFETIME

Kathryn Maddy



**JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE**

[oeffa.org/membership](https://oeffa.org/membership)

## OEFFA CHAPTERS

OEFFA's regional and issue-based chapters have already kicked off their 2022 programming! Join one of the nine chapters this year for workshops, meetings, potlucks, farm tours, networking events; new faces and ideas are welcome.

Visit [oeffa.org/chapter](https://oeffa.org/chapter) to learn more about OEFFA's chapters, see pg. 2 for chapter contact information and Facebook groups, or contact OEFFA at (614) 421-2022 or [oeffa@oeffa.org](mailto:oeffa@oeffa.org) to learn more or select a chapter affiliation.



## OEFFA BOARD ELECTIONS

At OEFFA's members meeting on February 12, four Trustees were elected to serve on the OEFFA Board as at-large Trustees.

These four Trustees were elected to begin serving three year terms beginning in April 2022: Bryn Bird, Steve Edwards, Mardy Townsend, and Abbe Turner.

You can always find a full list of current OEFFA Board members on the OEFFA website: [oeffa.org/board.php](https://oeffa.org/board.php).



### STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2021, OEFFA members, board, and staff joined together to craft a new strategic plan to see us through to 2025. This plan reflects the input of more than 400 members who gave their time and energy to it, sharing their thoughts and visions for the future of OEFFA.

Thank you to everyone who participated in strategic planning by attending a listening session at last year's conference and/or completing a survey. OEFFA's new strategic plan is posted on the OEFFA website: [oeffa.org/oeffa.php](https://oeffa.org/oeffa.php)



### OEFFA IS INVESTED IN AGRICULTURE!

How would you like to access zero-interest, zero-fee capital to grow your farm business? You can, and OEFFA can help! Kiva is a global crowd-funding site with more than 1.4 million lenders who invest in micro-loans of \$15,000 or less. OEFFA became a Kiva Trustee in 2014 and can endorse loan requests to help Ohio's sustainable farmers access this unique funding opportunity. For more information, go to [oeffa.org/invest](https://oeffa.org/invest).



### WEAR BECAUSE YOU CARE

Getting your hands on OEFFA swag is now easier than ever! CLOZTALK, an online merchandise business set up to help raise not-for-profit awareness, selected OEFFA as one of its charities. A wide selection of branded clothing-t-shirts, hoodies, trucker baseball caps, and much more-is available. Shopping and delivery are made easy, and OEFFA receives a share of CLOZTALK's net profits.

[oeffa.org/shopoeffa](https://oeffa.org/shopoeffa)

## OEFFA Farmland Access Feasibility Study

One of the greatest challenges facing the next generation of farmers—particularly those who do not come from farming families with existing land resources—is accessing land. We know that secure land tenure ensures that farmers are able to invest in place and provide culturally relevant food, medicine, and connection to their communities. Keeping sustainable farmers on the land also strengthens the viability of regional economies and ecosystems.

OEFFA is interested in exploring and understanding different models or mechanisms that would facilitate access to land for beginning farmers and how OEFFA or a different entity could establish and implement this. OEFFA is seeking proposals to conduct a Farmland Access Feasibility Study to help create a strategy to increase and expand farmland access for beginning farmers in Ohio.

Our goal in conducting this feasibility study is to understand what OEFFA, in partnership with others as needed, could do to obtain farmland from retiring farmers or non-farming landowners and make it accessible for beginning farmers to purchase or lease. We are seeking a consultant to complete the following feasibility study:

**Part 1:** Research models in other states that accomplish similar goals in order to evaluate what it would take to implement in Ohio.

**Part 2:** Make recommendations for implementing a similar model(s) in Ohio.

Visit [beginfarming.oeffa.org/land-access-feasibility-study-request-for-proposals](https://beginfarming.oeffa.org/land-access-feasibility-study-request-for-proposals) for more information. **Proposals are due May 15, 2022.**



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## 2022 OEFFA SUSTAINABLE FARM TOUR AND WORKSHOP SERIES

### FARM TOURS KICK OFF THIS SUMMER!

In May, OEFFA and our partners will announce the 2022 Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series, featuring hands-on educational workshops and public tours of sustainable and organic farms. This year's farms include:

- » **Roots, Fruits and Shoots** in Licking County will showcase its three-acre vegetable and raspberry farm, including the high tunnels that house growing produce during the winter.
- » **Old City Acres** in Belleville, Michigan will host a tour of its no-till vegetable garden that feeds folks year-round with a flexible CSA model.
- » **Stratford Ecological Center** in Delaware County will offer a tour of its farm and forest, all while discussing agroforestry, cover crops, pasture-raised livestock, soil practices, and legislation that can contribute to ending the climate crisis over a locally-sourced meal.
- » **And many more!**

Members will receive a farm tour announcement by mail and email this May with a list of tours, including dates, times, farm descriptions, and directions. The tour schedule will also be available at [oeffa.org](http://oeffa.org).

### Interested in advocating for healthy soils?

We know healthy soil is the foundation for sustainable agriculture. We also know that the process of implementing policies that support stronger soil health practices must be informed and led by the experiences of farmers, gardeners, and concerned citizens.

**Interested in advocating?** Want to talk to other farmers who are building the soil on their farms? Contact the OEFFA policy team at [policy@oeffa.org](mailto:policy@oeffa.org) or (614) 421-2022 to get involved in our policy work. When we take a proactive approach to building healthy soils, we are taking steps toward a more resilient food and farm system.

### Dedicated Funding for Ohio Organic Producers

The Ohio Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced an additional funding opportunity for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – with \$300,000 dedicated entirely to providing financial and technical assistance to Ohio organic producers. Through CSP, conventional and organic agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat – all while maintaining active agriculture production on their land.

Organic producers are encouraged to apply by the **May 13, 2022 deadline**. Learn more at [nrcs.usda.gov/csp](https://nrcs.usda.gov/csp).