



MOFFA
P.O. Box 26102
Lansing, MI 48909-6102
(248) 262-6826
moffaorganic@gmail.com
www.moffa.org

2010 Annual Report to Members

(Submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors, Yvette Berman)

Our mission and dedication remains strong to promote organic food and farming practices that will revitalize our great state and sustain local communities. We promote the value of local and organically grown food and we seek to increase public awareness about the need for decentralized sources of food that encourages greater access to healthy, organic food by all citizens, and improve the state's role in promoting organic agriculture.

As we review our activities and accomplishments during the calendar year of 2010, we deeply appreciate the dedication of a few MOFFA volunteers and hard-working board members, and yet, we continue to work as the only statewide non-profit serving with an all-volunteer board, dedicated to the organic community. The past year has revealed the growing change in "food culture" with epic new films on food security, the rallying for new State policies, and the shifting mindset of consumers to buy local with an increasing interest to find more local organic food.

In an effort to encompass a "shovel to fork" platform, we were delighted to receive the support from a highly reputable advertising agency, a.k.a., Team Detroit, who worked with Yvette Berman on developing a new logo for the organization. The Board took to reviewing numerous designs, which were all unique and creative and came to the consensus of our new logo (see above). We hope you enjoy our new look! We launched the logo in the fall 2010 at the GLEXPO tradeshow.

Accomplishments and Advocacy

Our growing alliances with various local and national organizations continues to blossom. In 2010, we signed on in support of the Michigan Good Food Charter, and maintained an active presence and membership with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) in Washington D.C. Taylor Reid (policy member) represented MOFFA at the NSAC winter session meeting. Also, we became a new member of the Michigan Environmental Council (MEC), which is coalition of over 60 environmental and public health organizations based in Lansing.

In 2009, MOFFA developed a Policy Committee that is working at the grass-roots level to increase awareness and policy support for the integrity of organic agriculture. The Policy committee was represented by George Bird, Timothy Fischer, Taylor Reid and Chris Bardenhagen, who collectively have made positive strides. MOFFA signed the petition for the Cottage Food Bill #5837, with Chris Bardenhagen presenting a position statement to the Legislature in Lansing. This bill allows for aspiring food producers to develop a product to sell at Farmer's Markets, which increases farm or personal revenue from value-add products. To the benefit of many organic farmers, the Policy Committee was also successful in negotiating with the Michigan Department of Agriculture to manage the USDA Organic Cost-Share program.

The Cost-Share committee worked with the MDA to administer federal funds, which reimburses farmers and producers up to 75% of their annual organic certification costs. MOFFA distributed an **approximate \$72,000.00 in USDA funds** to Michigan certified organic farms and processors. Although the undertaking was exceedingly time-consuming for an all-volunteer board, and we received no compensation or benefit, we feel this is an important function for MOFFA to continue for the Michigan organic community. The board is reviewing the feasibility of this partnership for 2011.

Ultimately, we must increase our volunteer base with like-minded folks to work alongside with us, to join our board, or take a dedicated post as a volunteer. In the midst of organics going main stream, our organization must grow to serve more farms and people. To continue its success, the Policy Committee is currently is seeking new candidates.

Organizational Changes

MOFFA has been under a few changes in the past 12 months with a few less board members. After a long, dedicated run with the MOFFA board, Pat Whetham withdrew from the Board and Newsletter Editor. Unfortunately, Paul Keiser resigned due to taking care of an elderly family member. We do appreciate hearing from Paul with his periodic letters. In early 2010, Jim Bingen suffered an illness with multiple complications and has been in recovery and therapy for the past year. We are delighted that Jim's health continues to improve and that he keeps in touch with the Board.

Yet another year was deemed necessary for Board changes. The Board elected Co-Chairs, Yvette Berman (incumbent) and Timothy Fischer, and the Treasurer position filled by George Bird. No Secretary position was filled. Matt Grieshop transitioned from Treasurer to Chair the 2010 Michigan Organic Conference (MOC). Yvette Berman volunteered to develop a Corporate Sponsorship campaign and John Hooper took up Exhibits Coordinator for the MOC. Other board members assisted in various pre-conference details.

In our effort to structure various duties, committee chairs and teams were developed for Membership, Policy, Business Development, Marketing and Communications. Our volunteer Newsgroup Editor resigned; and we have not had the opportunity to replace his list-serve expertise. We are challenged to accomplish our communication goals with minimal volunteer support outside of the Board.

Education and Outreach

The Board announced a Call for Proposals for the MOFFA Mobile Processing Unit (MPU). We received a total of 6 proposals, and most presented a collaborative effort with other farms, business entities or non-profits. The awardee for the MPU was the CSA Farmers Market and White Pine Farm, under a 2 year term contract ending in summer 2012.

Various board members continue to collaborate with others in promoting awareness of organic food and farming in a diverse range of venues. The MOFFA exhibit showcases a variety of informational materials, organic farming books and guides and the MOFFA "Eating Organically Guide" to consumers. George Bird took the road once again to the Northern Michigan Small Farms conference in Grayling and exhibited at the MIFFS conference. John Hooper has made a few trips to exhibit as our dedicated Exhibits and Membership Committee Chair. John attended GLEXPO in Grand Rapids and the Healthy Traditions Network (HTN), Michigan Organic Festival with Yvette Berman in Birmingham. MOFFA was a Bronze Sponsor for the HTN conference, and historically, was a catalyst for the developing their Organic Festival.

In September, John Hooper, Yvette Berman and Timothy Fischer coordinated a membership campaign and held a mailing to past and present membership. Our **membership numbers for 2010 (XX)**, respectively, however, we feel that the economy has affected our membership. We welcome our membership to join us in all exhibit events and conference support is important too. We surely need your voice in supporting organic agriculture, so please call us!

Our signature event and outreach program is the Michigan Organic Conference (MOC). Our theme, "Michigan Organic: Seeds, Soil and Health" was held March 5-6, 2010 at the Kellogg Conference Center in East Lansing. The conference was dedicated in memory of Douglas Murray and Nancy Jones-Keiser. Both were members of MOFFA and their impact and dedication to organic agriculture and the community was shared among numerous people. In their own way, they each touched the lives of many in their travels across parts of the United States and to Michigan organic compatriots.

The 2010 Michigan Organic Conference was well represented by our conference theme, with keynote speaker, Jeffrey M. Smith of the Institute for Responsible Technology. www.responsibletechnology.org. Jeffrey M. Smith is a globally-renowned speaker and expert on GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms), and author of international bestsellers, Seeds of Deception and Genetic Roulette. We were delighted to bring Jeffrey to East Lansing and offer a special book-signing and

soiree after his keynote address at the Friday evening festivities. For sure, we were delighted to have Jeffrey give two keynotes within 24 hours to our conference attendees!

The MOC featured 30 educational sessions for organic consumers, farmers, gardeners, and producers. We are grateful to the corporate sponsors, donors and advertisers who help support the conference. Our 2010 Sponsors included, Organic Bean and Grain, Inc., The Henry Ford, The Rodale Institute, Zingerman's Delicatessen, Harvest Michigan, Inc., Bio Systems & Life Time Foods, and a generous contribution from Mr. and Mrs. George Bird, who developed the MOFFA Student Scholarship Fund. This scholarship allowed 25 students to attend the MOC and encourage beginning, organic farmers! The Board presented the "Farmer of the Year" Award to Almar Orchards and the "Lifetime Achievement Award" to Doug Murray and Nancy Jones-Keiser.

The conference included other activities, such as the 'Taste of Michigan: Local Organic Foods' reception, a Film Festival and the Organic Reporting Session. Our luncheon was at full capacity with approximately 250+ attendees and 30 exhibitors at the conference. The Board extends an extra token of appreciation to Matt Grieshop, 2010 MOC Chair, for all his effort to plan and coordinate a successful conference. There was much learning and networking going on!

MOFFA held its Annual Meeting on September 12, by one of our long-standing board members Pat Whetham at the Whetham Organic Farm in Flushing. Our current membership was sent an invitation in the mail. Although the weather was beautiful, we only had a handful of board members and no membership in attendance.

Closing Remarks

More than ever, in our time of pressing food security and an evolving culture for local organic, we must find a way to have MOFFA succeed in its mission, including our vision to aide in policy making and various outreach programs. We strive to have a stronger regional presence throughout the State of Michigan that draws upon the energy of volunteerism, and your ongoing membership support.

Our genuine sentiments extend to you who believe in organics, in a myriad of spectrums, whether you're an organic grower, an aspiring gardener or farmer, consumer, or food producer. Your involvement with MOFFA as a volunteer, a sponsor, or new board member is greatly needed at this time. Our work continues as we look forward to creating new alliances to strengthen our outreach and leadership role for organics in Michigan.

Sincerely,

The MOFFA Board of Directors,
Yvette Berman, Co-Chair