



## Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance

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### 2008 Annual Report to Members

Submitted on behalf of the MOFFA Board of Directors by Chair, Jim Bingen.

For the past 3 annual reports I've always started by reminding us that MOFFA continues to be the only statewide non-profit, volunteer organization in Michigan whose mission is to promote organic food and farming practices that revitalize and sustain local communities.

More than in the past, the year 2008 reminded us of the burden this should place upon us to inform a broader public about a wide range of issues related to organic food and farming in Michigan and the US, and to promote the interests of Michigan's organic farmers. The Organic Growers of Michigan will officially close its books in 2009, and it's difficult to say whose interests or what purposes are served by the Michigan Organic Products Act. At the same time, MOFFA membership remains strong and other food and environmental groups around the state regularly solicit our support and collaboration.

The 2007 year has been a watershed year for MOFFA. It represents the first year in which we've taken important steps to expand our membership and to take initial steps to broaden awareness of the contribution of organic farming practices to addressing critical climate change concerns. This year also marked our first concerted effort to begin the promotion of Michigan Organic through a Michigan Organic Farmer's Pledge, a Michigan Eater's Pledge, and consideration of a new certified Michigan Organic label.

I think these other groups and new and continuing members look to us because of what we stand for: our conviction that organic farming practices restore wellness in people, community and the earth. We advocate for Michigan organic food and farming that creates the necessary connections between healthy people, communities and the earth.

As we review our activities and accomplishments during the calendar year 2008 we again deeply appreciate and applaud the tremendous achievements and dedication of a few dedicated MOFFA volunteers. These individuals, and many others, will be central in our efforts to build a stronger and broadly based movement to improve the state's role in promoting organic and to foster broader public awareness of, and action to support the multiple benefits of organic food and farming. We need to find ways to tap into the tremendous volunteer spirit for Michigan Organic!

### Activities and Accomplishments

#### *Education and Outreach*

Throughout the year, MOFFA volunteers hosted displays to sell and distribute informational materials at several festivals and events celebrating both organic and healthy living. These included: the Southwest Michigan Community Harvest Fest in Scotts (at Tillers International), and the Healthy Traditions Growing Connections Festival at Kensington Park.

We also continued to collaborate with others in promoting awareness of organic food and farming in a diverse range of venues including: the Great Lakes Bioneers Conference in Traverse City; the Great Lakes Fruit & Vegetable Expo in Grand Rapids, the Northern Michigan

Small Farm Conference in Grayling; the MIFFS Family Farm Conference; and numerous Earth Day events.

Our “signature event”, the 2008 Michigan Organic Conference, held at the Kellogg Center for Continuing Education on the campus of Michigan State University, convened over 200 individuals, including around 26 exhibitors. George Bird, and others, was instrumental in all phases of planning, organizing and running this event. Generous contributions from the MSU Student Organic Farm and others helped immensely to assure the success of this annual meeting for the organic community in Michigan.

Our signature publication, *Eating Organically*, was available for sale at all of our displays and at many farmers’ markets around the state. With help from numerous volunteers around the state, the entries from the 2005 edition were updated for publication in early 2008.

Fair Food Matters in Kalamazoo began operations in the MOFFA mobile processing unit.

However, we failed to maintain regular publication of either the *Michigan Organic Connections* or the monthly *MOFFA News Group*.

### **Organizational Events**

Throughout the year, Board members continued to share executive secretarial responsibilities.

Based on the results of our planning session in November 2007, we negotiated an agreement with Fair Food Matters to take the first steps in creating a statewide collaborative alliance for Michigan food and farming. However, by the end of the year, it became apparent that we needed to find another approach (hopefully in continued collaboration with Fair Food Matters) to explore the creation of such an alliance.

### **Advocacy & Grants**

We distributed Eater’s Pledge at all of our displays, but we made little progress in promoting our proposed Michigan Farmer’s Pledge as a first step to broaden and renew a Michigan organic identity.

Throughout the year MOFFA joined with numerous national and state groups to support several measures of interest to the broader organic community. In particular, Board member Taylor Reid served as the MOFFA representative to national discussion of Sustainability Standards. We continued our membership in the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture.

### **Major Opportunities**

As we enter 2009, we continue to face several closely related challenges opportunities – some organizational and some related to policy and programs.

Organizationally we must find a way to have a MOFFA staff person responsible for many day-to-day operational duties, including membership. We also need to have a stronger and more regionalized presence around the state that draws upon the energy of volunteers. We need an up-to-date and more complete presence on the web, including a searchable *Eating Organically* directory and a range of web-based services. Finally, we need to decide whether and how we should publish a newsletter.

More than ever we must strengthen our leadership role for organic in Michigan. We have a message for, and respond to the concerns of a growing number of Michigan citizens. We are and will continue to be a significant part of the future of food and farming in Michigan! Healthy Food, Healthy People, Healthy Environment!

**MOFFA Treasurer's Report  
(G. W. Bird, April 24, 2009)**

**Profit & Loss Statement (Jan - Mar 09)**

<b>Income</b>	
Contributions - unrestricted	\$215.00
Membership Dues	5,316.50
Miscellaneous income	25.00
Program fees	9,193.48
Sales	1,794.24
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,544.22</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
Bank service charges	\$50.50
Contract Services	688.00
Food	1,829.19
Meeting expense	130.00
miscellaneous	750.00
Office supplies	142.00
Postage & delivery	268.36
Printing & copying	1,619.83
Professional Fees	2,150.00
Program expense	807.00
Purchases	1,092.98
Telephone	31.79
Travel	1,438.04
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>10,997.69</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$5,546.53</b>

**Balance Sheet (March 31, 2009)**

<b>Assets</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking--Primary	\$32,309.07
Total Checking/Savings	32,309.07
Other Current Assets	
Inventory	884.71
Total Other Current Assets	884.71
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>33,193.78</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Accumulated Depreciation – FFE	-23,534.01
Furniture & Equipment	
Computer	1,421.95
Equipment	556.96
Software	483.00
Trailer	21,528.73
Total Furniture & Equipment	23,990.64
Total Fixed Assets	456.63
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$33,650.41</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Equity</b>	
Unrestricted Net Assets	28,103.88
Net Income	5,546.53
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>33,650.41</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$33,650.41</b>