



Colorado Organic Producers Association Newsletter

www.OrganicColorado.org

February 2009

Winter Issue

We hope you are enjoying the New Year and the beautiful winter season. We have a full winter issue for your reading pleasure that includes information about upcoming conferences, a COPA contest, news about certification cost-share, a delicious winter recipe and much more. Enjoy!

The COPA Board

Welcome to Our New Members

We look forward to getting to know you and your organic interests!

Many Thanks to Our 2008 Donors

We appreciate your generosity and support!

Capitol Hill Wild Oats
Dolores Tippett
Ed & Sue Sparling
Jan van Schilfgaarde
Larga Vista Ranch – Doug and Kim Wiley
Philip & Marlea Antes
Round Earth
Unlimited Expectations – Jim Holland
CSU Extension
WY Coop Extension
Mountain Plains Farm Credit
Aurora Organic Dairy
Western SARE
West Greeley Conservation District
Whole Foods Market
Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage
Southwest Marketing Network

President's Message – Claudia Ferrell

Greetings! I hope this finds you rested and full of hope and anticipation for the coming season. In October, the COPA Board accepted the resignation of Jim Dyer, who has been COPA's Executive Director for many years. Jim has faithfully served this organization and has been a staunch advocate for organic agriculture in Colorado. Fortunately, he will continue to share his broad knowledge and experience with us in an advisory role. I have personally felt privileged to work with Jim and wish to publically thank him for his many efforts on our behalf.

Despite Jim's resignation, The Board has continued the visioning process and is actively moving forward. The Board recognizes the diversity of organic agricultural production in the state of Colorado and is striving to advocate especially for those areas of common interests. We have identified **key roles** for COPA including **education of both producers and consumers; acting as a liaison and educational resource for organic certification; assisting producers and processors in a variety of ways; and networking and coordinating** with other organizations to promote local, **organic** food.

As a Board, we are diligently working on specific ways to address each of these areas. For more detailed information: **Please attend the COPA annual meeting on Thursday, February 19th at 5:30 p.m. at the 4-H building, Island Grove Park in Greeley.** Come be informed and find out how you will gain benefit from your COPA membership. Also, please give some thought about serving on the Board with us. We anticipate one opening. We look forward to working with an individual who is passionate about the possibilities and willing to help guide this organization to a future of service to its' members.

For the Board,
Claudia Ferrell

REMINDER!!

If you haven't yet renewed your membership in COPA, now is a great time to do so. Don't miss out on the value you will receive!

Register Now for the Colorado Ag: Big and Small Conference ~ Adrian Card

We have a stellar conference planned for you February 18 - 21, 2009 in Greeley, CO:

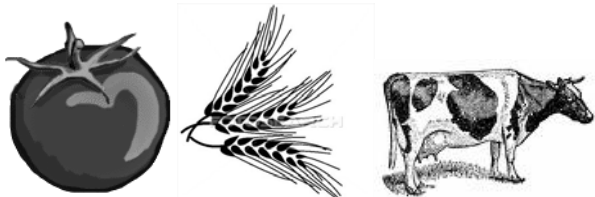
Feb. 18 - COPA "July Farm Tour" - featuring Berry Patch Farm and Full Circle Farm (more below)

Feb. 19 - 20 - Crops and Livestock Business Conference - featuring organic, greenhouse, CSA, alternative livestock, wind, solar, climate, 2008 Farm Bill, labor mgt, COPA annual meeting, and more!

Feb. 21 - Small Acreage Conference - featuring soils, grazing and pasture mgt, weed mgt, grass establishment, poisonous plants, and tractors

Our conference offers tremendous value and features top notch sessions with both farmers and agricultural professionals as presenters. Sessions are intended as advanced learning for producers. In addition, we have created a "Building Farmers" series in the afternoon of Feb. 20 intended for a beginning farmer audience (but likely offering valuable tid-bits for experienced producers). UNC returns this year as our lunch caterer (a big hit with past attendees) offering Colorado food products.

Note that credit card payment is accepted for registration thru Weld County Extension. Scholarships are available for currently enrolled college students. For more information or to register visit <http://www.coloradoagriculturebigandsmall.com/>



COPA "July" Farm Tour (Yes, we know it's really February) - February 18, 2009 ~ Bob Miller

Visit farms in the Brighton and Longmont area as a prelude to the Colorado Agriculture Big and Small Farm Conference February 19-21. We'll spend the day talking with fellow farmers and touring their organic operations. We'll tour:

• **Berry Patch Farms**

Tim and Claudia Ferrell operate an organic farm and farm market offering a large variety of pick-your own and just-picked produce. We'll learn about their use of sub-surface irrigation with GPS, greenhouse to field transplant system with plastic mulch and raised beds plus their "new" system for utilizing row cover.

• **Full Circle Farm aka Rocky Mountain Ranch**

David Asbury will share his experiences in managing his operation, farming, and marketing farm fresh produce since 1993. We'll learn about various marketing techniques, his work in reviving heirloom melons and antique varieties of "adolescent" lettuces.

One of COPA's goals is sharing information regarding organic practices based on personal experiences. The farm tour will provide first hand experience from our colleagues, a chance to network, an in-depth look at other farm operations, and provide opportunity to learn how others are practicing organics on a variety of scales.

Space is limited to 24 participants. We'll tour in 12 passenger vans and depart at 9:30 a.m. from Southwest Weld County Annex parking lot. Indicate your lunch preference on the registration form.

**Dig out your boots, pray for sun,
and see you on Wednesday,
February 18th!**



West Slope Conferences by Tri River Area Extension ~ Edward B. Page

The West Slope will be having a series of programs put on by Tri River Area Extension that will deal with many topics of interest to anyone who has rural land they wish to be productive. The skill and knowledge levels targeted will range from the small acreage horse owner to the organic grower to the commercial farmer/rancher. Unlike the Big and Small program in Greeley, this series will take place in several different locations to best serve the community.

The series will lead off on February 26th with a tour of sustainable and value added enterprises located in the Montrose and Delta area. The tour will start on the Randy Meaker ranch just north of Montrose where we will see soil management with minimum tillage and low pressure irrigation through center pivots. Meaker produces corn, small grains and forage to feed to beef in his feedlot. We will also see a year-round hydroponic operation owned by Deana Sheriff that produces greens and herbs for local restaurants. The profitability and small foot print of this business and the fact that it utilizes land that is otherwise very difficult to crop makes it a very interesting place to see. The final stop on the tour will be a new cheese factory at Jim Webb's Rocking W Dairy. This is an excellent opportunity to see the development of a value-added enterprise that is allowing Rocking W to diversify its products and gain much more of the value in their milk. Lunch will also be served on this tour. This program, which will include lunch, will be free for the first 35 to register by February 23rd. Additional registrants may be charged a fee to cover costs. Those who register after the 23rd may not receive a lunch.

A market and organic producers' conference will be held on February 27, 2009 at Memorial Hall in Hotchkiss. Topics covered will include greenhouse production and disease control, specialty/new crop development grants, and foundation information on many other issues. This program, which will include lunch, costs \$35 for those registered by February 23rd.

A program for small acreage owners with basic information soils, irrigation, and weeds, as well as presentations on pastures, livestock, greenhouses and more will be held on February 28, 2009 at

Community Room of the Mesa County Fairgrounds in Grand Junction. This program, which will include lunch, costs \$35 for those registered by February 23rd.

Additional programs will be held for commercial and small acreage producers in March. For more information on these programs and for complete program agendas, call Ed Page in Montrose at 970-249-3935.

Organic Valley is Recruiting in CO ~ Dennis Lamm

Recently, representatives of Organic Valley Family of Farms headquartered in LaFarge, Wisconsin, met with faculty from Colorado State University to explore ways they could expand their number of Colorado organic dairy farm members. Currently, there is only one organic dairy farmer in Colorado (and two in Wyoming) who is a member of their cooperative. Organic milk is processed for them in Colorado Springs at Sinton's. Hence, they are looking for more members in that geographical area. While we are not endorsing their particular cooperative at the exclusion of others, we did feel a need to share this opportunity with readers of the COPA newsletter. If you want additional information, check out their web site at www.organicvalley.coop or call 1.888.809.9297.

Logo Contest!

As The Board works to energize COPA in the coming months the website will be updated and redesigned. We would like to announce a logo contest for members and organic enthusiasts alike! Please submit your COPA logo entry via email to Addy Elliott (Adriane.Elliott@ColoState.edu) by February 15th so the COPA Board can vote and reveal the winner at the COPA Annual Meeting (Feb. 19th)!



New Organic Agriculture Web Site Features Land-Grant University Research

A new Web site about U.S. organic agriculture production provides research, news and learning modules from land-grant universities nationwide. eOrganic will launch at regional organic farming and production conferences in January and February. It is one of many Web communities within eXtension (pronounced E-extension), www.extension.org, a national initiative of the U.S. Cooperative Extension System.

"This new resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about organic agriculture, one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture," Oregon State University vegetable specialist Alex Stone said. "eOrganic is designed for farmers, ranchers, agricultural professionals, certifiers, researchers and educators seeking science- and experience-based information. Our goal is to be a reliable resource that is responsive to the changing information and technology needs of the organic industry and community. The site is focused on general organic agriculture, dairy production and vegetable production. We expect to continually expand the information available."

Organic Certification Cost Share Program ~ Mitch Yergert

As many of you are probably aware, the Farm Bill that was recently passed included cost share funding to offset organic certification costs. Originally USDA provided each state with a grant for these funds for federal fiscal year 2009 (October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009). The USDA has since stated they will amend the cost share grant to include federal fiscal year 2008 as well. However, we have not received the signed amendment.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture has been providing this cost share money to certified entities who incurred costs in FY 2009. As soon as we get the signed amendment to include FY 2008, we will send out applications to all producers to apply for these cost share funds as well.

A producer or handler may get reimbursed for 75% of their certification costs up to \$750 for each year. This money is available to any certified organic entity regardless of which certification agent they use. The entity must just provide documentation of a current organic certificate and expenses incurred during the appropriate time periods.

If you have any questions, please contact Mitch Yergert at the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 303.239.4138.

The Rodale Institute's New Farm Organic Price Report

Just how much of a premium should you be charging for your organic grains and produce? Find out with The New Farm Organic Price Report (OPR). The OPR is an online tool that helps you price competitively. The tool tracks selected prices from the fruit, vegetable, herbs and grain sectors, comparing organic prices to conventional prices in markets across the country.

Prices of organically grown and conventionally grown foods are seen side by side, highlighting the premiums organic can often obtain. Buyers and sellers of certified organic food now know what certain items should and do sell for around the country. Organic farmers, who have traditionally had to insure their crops according to conventional pricing, now have better documented price information for their goods, resulting in more appropriate coverage. Retail consumers can gain insight into where their market dollars go, resulting in a better understanding of organic versus conventional pricing and the food marketplace.

With the OPR in hand, farmers can better plan their business strategies by tracking price trends over time, have an educated idea of the true value of the products they produce and finally determine production budgets based on organic sales prices.

Where we get our data:

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES—Prices for organic fruits and vegetables are provided by large wholesale distributors or sales agencies that specialize in organic fruits and vegetables. In an effort to present the most comparable prices, we selected large distributors that handle product within the geographic

location and marketing area of the terminal market. Conventional prices for fruits and vegetables are gathered at the terminal markets by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), a division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

GRAINS—Prices for organic grains are provided by large elevators or handlers that specialize in organic grains. Conventional prices for grains are also gathered by AMS. In an effort to present the most comparable prices, we selected AMS regions that handle product within the geographic location of the elevators or handlers.

To use this tool visit:
<http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/Organic-Price-Report>

CO Ag Hall of Fame to Induct Four

Mr. Mel Coleman Sr. (posthumously); **Mr. Miles Davies**, Deer Trail; **Mr. Rex Davis** (posthumously), Kersey; and **Mr. Leonard Pruett**, Lamar, will be honored for their lifetime achievements in agriculture with induction into Colorado's Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Mr. Mel Coleman Sr. of **Saguache** blazed a trail in the American food marketplace in the late 1970s as he established the first federally-recognized label for natural meat sourced from cattle that were never administered growth hormones or antibiotics. Coleman was also a leader in establishing federal legislation in 1990 that led to the development of today's national organic standards.

Mr. Miles Davies of **Deer Trail** has played a leadership role in the cattle industry for more than six decades. He has served in leadership positions with the Colorado Grange Association, the Colorado and American Simmental Association, the Federal Land Bank Association, the National Livestock Producer's Association and the National Cattlemen's Beef Board, among others.

Mr. Rex Davis of **Kersey** learned about service above self as a member of the U.S. Army where he participated in seven of the 10 major European battles of World War II. After returning from the war, he became an agricultural educator, serving first in Wiggins, and then starting the program in Kersey in 1958, where he taught for 31 years. A teacher at

heart, he had a profound, positive influence on hundreds of students over the years.

Mr. Leonard Pruett of **Lamar** has been instrumental in agricultural education since his days wearing a blue corduroy jacket a half-century ago. Pruett started his career teaching agriculture in Flagler, then moving to the Eaton program. After two years in Eaton, he accepted a position with the CSU Cooperative Extension Service from which he just recently retired. Over the years, his personable teaching style has touched literally thousands of FFA and 4-H members' lives.

All four men have contributed to the industry of agriculture following different paths. However, these paths have all led them to the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame, where they will be honored for what they have done, are doing and will do for agriculture in Colorado. For more information, contact the Colorado FFA Foundation office at 970-240-1465 or via e-mail at jeri@coloradoffafoundation.org.

SIMPLE POTATO-LEEK SOUP

Adapted from: The New Best Recipe by the editors of Cook's Illustrated

4-5 pounds of leeks (depending on the size of the white/ light green portion)
6 tablespoons of butter
1 tablespoon of all-purpose flour (for thickening if desired)
5 ¼ cups low sodium chicken broth
1 bay leaf
1 ¾ pounds of potatoes (red for more firm, gold for softer, creamier texture)

1. Cut off the roots and dark green leaves of the leeks, leaving about 3 inches of the light green portion. Slice in half length-wise and wash thoroughly, chop into 1 inch pieces.
2. Heat the butter in a large pot over medium-low heat until foaming. Stir in the leeks, increase the heat to medium and cover. Stir occasionally until the leeks are soft. Do not brown the leeks.
3. Sprinkle the flour over the leeks and stir, cook until the flour dissolves.
4. Gradually add the broth, whisking constantly. Increase the heat to high.
5. Add the bay leaf and potatoes, cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer.

For chunkier soup, cook red potatoes until almost tender.

For a creamier texture, boil gold potatoes until tender. Puree in small batches in a food processor or blender.

6. Remove from heat and let stand, covered 10-15 minutes. Discard the bay leaf and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Soup can be refrigerated for a few days but do not boil to reheat.

Variations: add 8 oz. of cooked ham or kielbasa, cut into ½ inch cube. Adding carrots, while not classic for this soup, they add flavor and nutrition as well as color.



If you have news for the next edition of the COPA newsletter please email it to Addy Elliott at Adriane.Elliott@ColoState.edu