

The Germinator

SPRING 2024

VOL. 44 NO. 1

Page 6

THE 2024
FOOD &
FARMING
CONFERENCE
HIGHLIGHTS



NPSAS

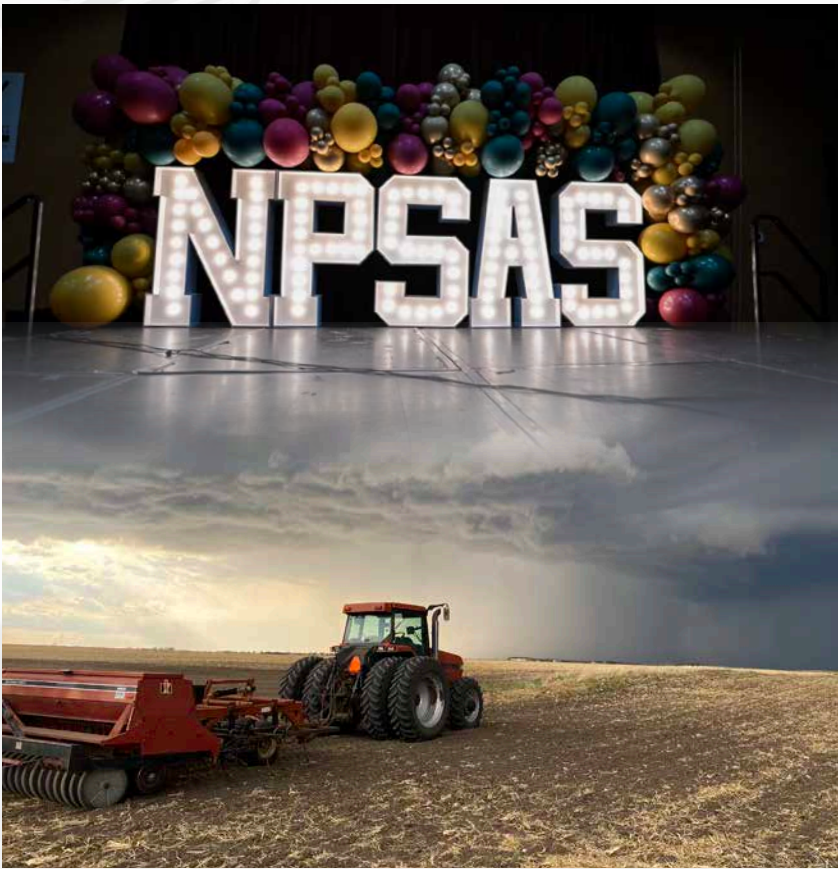
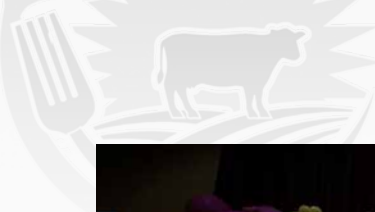
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INNOVATION
IN ORGANIC AG

Page 11 & 12

UPCOMING
ORGANIC
TRANSITION
ROADSHOWS
IN ND & SD






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The 2024 Conference Leads to Planting 2024

By resounding request of the NPSAS members, the 2024 Food and Farming Conference was back in Aberdeen, SD. This change of venue called for a celebratory feel. The stage was set with large welcoming letters emblazing NPSAS surrounded by balloons creating a festive feel for the event. The 2025 Conference will also be in Aberdeen so save the date for January 23 - 25 and join us next year.

The conference was a great intro to the 2024 growing season. The knowledge gained and shared among attendees through networking, keynotes, and workshops will be of great use in the upcoming growing season. The 2024 conference was the perfect segway to take what was learned and implement the knowledge beginning with planting as shown here which is taking place across the NPSAS service area.



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*"Innovation distinguishes
between a leader
and a follower."*

Steve Jobs

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Mission Statement

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society promotes sustainable food systems through education, advocacy, and research.

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President Martin Goter

From the President

It is looking like spring is slowly on its way, I was about to take out the drill a few weeks ago! I won't complain about the additional snow we received recently, we are going to need the moisture come planting season. If you made it to the conference this past January in Aberdeen, thank you for joining us; I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. The board and the committee are working hard to continue to provide a venue for the exchange of valuable information, helping farmers to become more regenerative in their practices as well as transition to organic farming.

I was reading the other day that according to the most recent Census of Agriculture by the USDA the average age of a farmer in North Dakota is nearly 57 (56.8), of this only 11% are classified as 34 or younger; and the average age of a farmer in United States is 58.1. The number of farms in North Dakota is also down to 25,068 five percent lower from the previous estimate in 2017. These statistics shows us how vital NPSAS is, some of these farms are inevitably going to be regenerative or organic, and now more than ever we can not afford to lose these farms to the conventional Ag system.

As I reflect on our conference, it is refreshing to see the wide diversity in age ranges. We need to make sure our group is there as a source for linking up young enterprising organic farmers with older established organic farms. We must continue promoting sustainable and regenerative agriculture and passing down the wisdom and the farms to the next generation. We now have full board and have a few projects planned with the Farm Breeder network this year, good things are coming.



5th Annual Organic Farm Innovation Expo
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Innovation Is Key to Organic Farming Success

One of the distinguishing factors of organic farming is the necessity for innovation. Organic farmers don't have the option to spray or spread synthetic chemicals and fertilizers or buy GMO seeds that may be less needy of attention than non-GMO seeds. This stimulates the need for a lot of research, trial & error, creativity, and innovation to breed success. Whether the innovation teaches us something or succeeds beyond measure, it's all worth the effort in what is learned and can be shared with others. Over the years I've been intrigued by a number of innovations.

The Mikkonen Farm became certified organic for the first time in 1989. My first recollection of the novelty and innovation taking place in the industry was based on the reaction of my college biology professor in 1990 when I wrote a paper on organic farming. I wrote about the strategies being used on our farm at the time. I explained in my paper about a custom grain drill that was built by Lonny and Rory Mikkonen and their dad Ray to help with weed control and moisture retention. They took two 14 foot grain drills and welded them together into one to plant the rows of small grains closer together. Planting the rows closer would help create a better canopy over the ground to prevent the weeds from getting sunlight to grow. My biology professor gave a resounding A+, asked about the grain drill, and asked for permission to share the paper with colleagues.

Another creative innovation for weed control was the development of flammers. Flammers are used to literally burn weeds between the rows of crops. This strategy comes in many forms and has developed over the years from actual flames which are still being used to now the availability of drone laser burning of weeds and other options,

It is fascinating to watch technology being used for new and better innovations. The latest innovation I was recently introduced to is Green Lightning. You can learn more about it in the article on page 18 of this issue of The Germinator. In short, lightning is generated to infuse water with nitrogen that can then be sprayed on the fields. It is far cheaper than other forms of nitrogen injections, natural or synthetic.

We here at NPSAS look forward to sharing a number of innovative strategies being used by organic farmers to combat problems and/or enhance success. If you have an innovative piece of equipment, product, or process that you can share, we'd love to hear about it. Please forward your innovation to director@npsas.org with innovation in the subject line along with any pictures we might be able to use to tell your innovation story.



Executive Director Krysti Mikkonen



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Board Meeting Summarized Minutes

December Meeting Summary

Financial

Financials were reviewed for November and year-to-date preliminary financial reports. Motion made and approved to accept the amended financial report as viewed. For next month changes will be made to inventory as follows, removing stackable totes and 50-pound seed bags, correcting the Dylan Wheat quantity to read 12 bags instead of 120 bags, and changing Minni combines to Minni-Batt Combines.

Executive Director report by Krysti Mikkonen

- OCIA Grant – Received a request from OCIA regarding TOPP (Transition to Organic Partnership Program) If all projects are completed we will secure an additional \$86,500

- Working on recordings and editing of videos for upload into the learning portal

- Working on the directory for the NPSAS TOPP grant

- Talked about providing businesses with a sticker that can be placed in their storefront if they are members of NPSAS

- Working on 2024-2025 Budget for TOPP Grant

- Working on the Germinator to get publication to printer by Dec. 30

- Working with NCAT to finalize the Organic Academy Road Show as part of the BFRD Building a Resilient Future Grant Project for NPSAS this year for January 25 & 26. 30 is the goal for attendance

- We will be hosting 3 more in 2024 one each in North & South Dakota that will be an additional \$15,000 plus some support for the conference expenses (this is a two-year grant)

- Winter Conference Planning

 - o Tentative schedule has been posted

 - o Need to finalize speakers

 - o Getting bios and headshots of all the speakers for the Conference book

 - o 40 sponsors compared to 14 Sponsors at this time last year - \$41,250 compared to \$13,000 at this time last year.

 - Put out monthly eSprout

 - Working on a social media plan

Program Committee

Krysti will be meeting with the Ramkota Hotel on Friday to go over the meal plan for the 2024 conference

Discussed additional workshop speakers for the conference and awards

Sponsors and current registrants were presented in the Executive Director report

Government and Strategic Planning

Discussed a review for the Executive Director. Talked about doing a self-assessment and review by the board.

No Meeting Summary for January as no monthly meeting was held.

February - NPSAS Meeting Summary

Action: Motion made and approved to accept the meeting minutes from December.

Executive Director report by Krysti Mikkonen

- Most of last month was spent working on the conference.

- Overall, the conference went well. The auction was a success. Great feedback from attendees and board members.

- Sponsorships are being worked on for the next conference.

- Currently working two sessions for OOARS, one to be held in North Dakota and one in South Dakota. OOARS asked NPSAS to hold a session in North Dakota at Carrington in collaboration with the Carrington field day event.

- Coordinating TOPPS (USDA) grant for 2024. A few items need to be completed to continue funding. Krysti

noted that she has a meeting with grantors tomorrow. Planning to do a seed saving workshop in 2024.

- Working on 2024 summer field days. Charlie Johnson and Carrington are already set. Krysti would like to have more field days. If you have suggestions, please give them to her.

- Krysti is continuing to look for Germinator articles. If you have some that could work, please send them to Krysti.

- Krysti said that the tax forms were sent in.

- Krysti is currently working on completing SAM registration for non-profits.

- Krysti will send conflict of interest forms to board members soon. Once filled out, board members will send back to Krysti.

- Krysti is meeting with a vendor today that works with membership coordination.

Program Committee

Krysti shared that the conference made a profit. Krysti also listed the approximate income amounts brought in by category for the conference. Categories discussed by Krysti were exhibitors, sponsorship, grants, scholarship, and auction. Krysti said about 238 people were in attendance.

Krysti noted a few individuals were requesting refunds because they were unable to attend the conference. Discussion was had about how to handle the issue. Discussed adding a refund policy to conference registration for future years.

Discussion was had about when the Soil Health Coalition conference was being held in 2025. Their conference may be the same time as ours.

Farm Breeder Network Buckwheat:

The 2023 crop was good with the exception of poor sprouting which happened to a number of different varieties. As the seed gets drier the germination rate can decrease.

Continued on page 15



Meeting Minutes

NPSAS Annual Meeting Summary January 26, 2024

Board President Martin Gorter called the meeting to order at 1:05.

Old Business

Treasurer Brad Wolbert presented the finance highlights,

Topics included year-ending deficit and the work done by Krysti and Kelly to reach former members about rejoining NPSAS

Discussion from Members on finances.

Question was asked regarding items included under the item "Other Income." Brad responded that this include revenue generated by the sales of equipment that was on the NPSAS inventory.

Question was asked about what grants other than TOPPS have been submitted by NPSAS. Krysti provided examples, including Women in Agriculture, SARE, NCAT and one from a student organization at Fargo North.

A question on what was included under the line item Staff/Personnel in the financial document. Krysti indicated that it included all contracted staff members.

Martin requested a motion for approval of the financial report. The motion was made by Glenn Philbrick and seconded by Theresa Podoll.

Krysti provided the Executive Director's report.

Martin provided information for the election of four Board members.

Four candidates had agreed earlier to run for election. These candidates were Randy Nelson, Mike Jorgenson, Carolyn Lane, and BJ McNeil. Randy and Mike

Be Your Own On-Farm Scientist & Engineer

Any job can have the same input and output day after day where there is the stability of knowing what to expect out of each day. In some jobs, for example, scientists and engineers you are allowed and encouraged to try new things, be curious, and be innovative. While there are farmers who do the same things the same way each year. There are the farmers that are more like scientists and engineers who are curious, and inquisitive, innovating and testing to see what can be done to increase efficiency, have better seed, get the best soil, cut down on weeds, increase yield, grow more nutritious food, and more.

The Farm Breeder Network of NPSAS is a group of innovators. The group originally started as the Farm Breeder Club, created to develop seeds for the growing problem of a lack of available organic seed. The group died down and is being revitalized. The NPSAS board saw a greater need not just for organic seeds but for innovations that would lead to better quality food, greater yield, and ideas for markets for its members. This meant bringing the whole network of people to the table.

The group in 2024 is focusing energies in four crop areas:

1. Devyatkia buckwheat
2. White Sorghum
3. Dylan Wheat
4. Einkorn

If you are looking to be part of a group that talks about and takes action on strategies and innovations for a more profitable and creative farm operation and are a member of NPSAS, you are invited to join the conversation. The Farm Breeder Network meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8:00 am in the central time zone. New ideas, conversations, innovations, and strategies are welcome and encouraged. The group is currently small, but mighty as it looks to rebuild and looks forward to becoming large, and unstoppable.

Farm Breeder Network is a research and development committee of NPSAS made up of producers, end users, buyers, chefs and bakers as well as other parties interested in helping farmers grow quality foods and make more money per acre through quality seed development and market creation. If you would like to be added to the email reminder list for the monthly Farm Breeder Network meetings, send an email to director@npsas.org.

were running for re-election to the Board.

Martin requested nominations for the floor.

Martin stepped back from his role as Board President to nomi-

nate Roger Tesla.

Ballots were distributed to members.

Randy, Mike, Carolyn, and BJ were elected to serve on the Board.

Continued on page 24

Organic Farmers Selected for Innovative On-Farm Trials

OFRF is proud to announce the launch of our innovative Farmer Led Trials (FLT) Program with the selection of our first ten farmers. The FLT Program will support farmers and ranchers in conducting practical, on-farm research that addresses farming challenges and increase farmer-led innovations in organic farming. OFRF will provide technical support and seed funding to implement these on-farm trials, and create space to foster a community of farmer-researchers.

“Farmers are experimenters by nature. Helping them add a few scientific steps to their farm trials can lead to more concrete and trustworthy results that they can share with other farmers”, said Thelma Velez, Director of Research and Education Programs. This program was created to support farmers in accomplishing just that by providing technical support and minimizing the risk of trying a new practice.

This first year cohort includes a mix of beginning farmers, BIPOC farmers, and veteran farmers spanning specialty crops, grain, and vineyard operations. All participants are certified organic or in transition to organic. The research topics identified by the farmers focus on building soil health, cover crop use, weed and pest management, shade cloth use during summer, planting distances, companion planting, and variety breeding. The following is the full list of farmers selected:

- Rhianna Simes, Verdant Phoenix Farm, Phoenix, Oregon. <https://verdantphoenix.com/>
- Tim Colby, Colby Farms, Papillion, Nebraska. <https://colby-farms.com/>
- Maggie Dungan, Salad Days Farm, Versailles, Kentucky. <https://www.saladdaysfarm.com/>
- Lindsay Klaunig, Trouvaille Farm, Athens, Ohio. <https://www.trouvaillefarm.com/>
- Nathan Lada, GreenThings Farm Collective, Ann Arbor, Michigan. <https://www.greenthingsfarm.com/>
- Jorge Reyes, Reyes Vineyard, Potrero, California.



2025 Food & Farming Conference keynote speaker Bob Quinn selected for innovative on-farm trials.

- Alexandra Holle, Silver Holle Farms, Severn, Maryland.
- Jennifer Barrientos, Kennebec Valley Farm, Solon, Maine. <https://www.kennebecvalleyfarm.com/>
- Bob Quinn, Quinn Farm & Ranch, Big Sandy, Montana.
- Tiffany Stanley, A Different Chick Farm and Orchard, Johnson City, Tennessee. <https://www.adifferentchickfarm.com/> Instagram: @adifferentchickfarm

OFRF has been working to create this program for over two years, and

we are so excited to get started and provide more direct support for farmers, said Thelma Velez, Director of Research and Education Programs. We are eager to see how these on-farm trials will benefit organic farmers in the long run.

To learn more about the Farmer-Led Trials Program, please visit the program page on the OFRF website. Additionally, check out the brand new OFRF publication titled Farmers Guide to On-Farm Research. <https://ofrf.org/research/farmer-led-research-trials/>



Program for Local Foods Markets

If you're looking for opportunities for more local markets for the food you're growing, you're in luck. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of approximately \$26 million for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate, and expand producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets, and local food enterprises. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is accepting applications for the grant program until May 14, 2024. Additionally, AMS has added to the suite of resources available to support communities and practitioners in local and regional food systems development.

"The Local Agriculture Market Program funnels funding directly to projects in local and regional food systems where farmers are able to retain more of the food system dollar allowing their communities to prosper," said USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. "This year, we are also offering new tools to help stakeholders navigate USDA programs for local and regional food systems, that also showcase the significant impacts of those investments."

LAMP funds projects that increase the availability of locally grown food and develop new markets for local and regional food system stakeholders, farmers markets, and food hubs. LAMP includes the Farmers Market Promotion Program, Local Food Promotion Program, and the Regional Food System Partnerships.

Farmers Market Promotion Program and Local Food Promotion Program

Two of LAMP's funding opportunities, the Farmers Market Promotion Program and the Local Food Promotion Program, seek to develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food systems. The Farmers Market Promotion Program supports producer-to-consumer markets such as farmers markets, roadside stands, agritourism activities, community-supported agriculture programs, and online sales. Local Food Promotion Program grants support local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing.

This year, USDA again offers a streamlined grants process for

applicants applying for marketing and promotion focused projects and is adding an additional streamlined option for training and recruitment projects. The turnkey project type was designed to lift the burden of grant applicants applying for funding for this focal area.

Project Successes:

Community Farmers Market, Inc. received a Farmers Market Promotion Program grant to address barriers to food access in Atlanta, Ga. The project is expanding distribution opportunities, increasing consumer awareness, and addressing affordability challenges experienced by vendors and consumers. Hundreds of local farmers and ranchers and thousands of customers have benefitted from this project's work.

Rosebird Gardens, LLC used Local Food Promotion Program funding to expand the year-round availability and accessibility of locally and regionally produced agricultural products in Kingman, Ariz. and surrounding regions. Over the course of the award, the project provided local farmers with the training to successfully build their individual businesses and improved collective marketing channels – including a CSA program and distribution model to meet the needs of rural community members. The project activities supported a range of producers including both new/beginning farmers and underserved farmers and more than tripled the number of customers purchasing from local producers.

Regional Food System Partnerships Program

The Regional Food System Partnerships program supports public-private partnerships that build and strengthen viability and resilience of local or regional food economies. Projects focus on increasing the availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products and alleviating unnecessary administrative and technical barriers.

Project Success:

Padilla Farm received a 2021 Regional Food System Partnerships grant to evaluate the need for slaughterhouse facilities for small farms in South Texas. Using the results of the study, Padilla Farm has applied for additional funding as they look toward building a facility closer and more central to the producers' location. They were also able to get legislation passed in Texas to allow small producers to send smaller herds of animals to processing facilities.

New Local and Regional Food System Resources

The LAMP Navigator is an interactive tool that contains LAMP grantee data to demonstrate the impact the grant programs have had on local and regional food systems. The tool allows users to explore LAMP grant inputs, activities, and project details.

The Local and Regional Food Systems Resource Guide provides a comprehensive list of permanently available programs supporting local and regional food systems as well as one-time recent programs helping communities actively develop and fulfill their plans and visions for their local and regional food systems.

Continued on page 27

Conference Sponsors 2024

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING THE FOOD & FARMING CONFERENCE IN 2024!

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NCAT's Organic Academy Roadshow Comes to Aberdeen, SD

The National Center for Appropriate Technology's (NCAT) Organic Academy Roadshow (OARS) is successfully demonstrating the profit potential of organic field crop and ranching systems through a series of workshops in five states, making a stop in Aberdeen, South Dakota.



Demand for organic food has experienced double-digit growth over the past 10 years, reaching nearly \$52 billion in 2018 (OTA, 2019). Though several organic vegetable and specialty crops appear to be meeting national demand as demonstrated by net exports, organic field crops such as wheat, rice, corn, and soybeans are being imported at stable or increasing levels (Delbridge and King, 2017). There is a critical need to fully understand why organic field crop farmers don't fill this demand and why non-organic farmers are unwilling and/or unable to convert to an organic production system given this demand.

Enter OARS, a project that came to life in 2021 when NCAT received a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This funding allows NCAT to develop and present two workshops in each of five western states (Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) over three years.

The prime objective of the workshop series is to demonstrate the profit potential of organic field crop and ranching systems. Workshops include topics such as documentation, finding markets, and considerations producers should take into account when transitioning to organic.

Some of the OARS workshops have been standalone events, such as those in Wyoming and Nebraska, and some have been combined with conferences,

such as the Montana Organic Association conference in Billings, Montana, and the Food and Farming conference in Aberdeen. The Wyoming OARS workshop was very successful, the result of a lot of hard work by the project team and local contacts in the Cheyenne area, and we hoped to build on that success with the workshop in Aberdeen, in partnership with the Food and Farming conference.

For all these workshops, it is challenging to gauge the number of attendees expected, even with pre-publicity and pre-registration, because the weather is unpredictable and there are also farm and ranch schedules to consider. We were fortunate in Aberdeen though, with cooperating weather, bringing 32 attendees to the workshops to hear presentations by Nate Powell-Palm, Jess Alger, and Doug Crabtree from the project team on topics such as developing organic systems and the economics and markets for organic products. We also held panel sessions on how to address production, timelines, and other issues during the organic transition period for farmers and ranchers, and a session on working with an organic consultant.

In addition to keynote presentations for the Food and Farming conference, Powell-Palm and Crabtree presented breakout sessions on day 2. NCAT's Andrew Coggins also supported Bobbi Jo Horstead's breakout session on aquaponics with a brief overview of some of the trial work he is doing on hydroponics systems.

Four more OARS workshops are planned for this year in Powell, WY; Carrington, ND; Madison, SD; and Nebraska (location to be determined).

Organic markets are growing, and an increasing number of landlords are leasing land to organic farmers and ranchers as they see the environmental benefits of organic production sys-



tems. Through the OARS workshops, NCAT is providing practical training to support producers in transitioning to organic systems and accessing these growing markets.

NCAT extends thanks to everyone in the NPSAS team for all the preparation and hard work, especially Krysti Mikkonen, who made the workshop and the Food and Farming conference a success, and to Nate Powell-Palm from our own OAR's workshop project team. We would also like to thank BJ McNeil (Rocking Z acres), Nic Podoll (Rodale Institute) and Amanda Stoebner (NRCS) for their participation in the panel discussions.

References

Delbridge, T.A. and R.P. King. 2016. Transitioning to organic crop production: A dynamic programming approach. *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. Vol 41, No. 3. p. 481-498.

Organic Trade Association (OTA). 2019. *Organic Industry Survey*.



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ORGANIC ACADEMY ROAD SHOW THIS SUMMER - 2 SESSIONS ONE EACH IN NORTH & SOUTH DAKOTA

Don't miss your opportunity to explore certified organic production systems for livestock, grains, oilseeds, and pulses!

These workshops are **FREE** and are geared for beginning farmers and ranchers who want to transition their operations to organic production.

Join us to learn about transitioning to organic.

We'll be stopping in:

July 15-16 in Carrington, ND

July 17-18 in Madison, SD

Beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for scholarships up to \$200 each to defray the cost of travel and accommodation.

Questions? Please contact Andrew Coggins at andrewc@ncat.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & JOIN US!



Conference Photos



Board Members connect with members and answer questions in the Annual NPSAS Meeting.



It's all about connecting to buyers, suppliers, and information.



Serving as much organic food and ingredients as possible is always a conference highlight.



The Kids Workshops hosted by the Brown County Master Gardeners were a resounding success.



The vendors and farmers appreciate the opportunity to connect at the Food and Farming Conference.

The Taste of Ag was a Resounding Success!



The vendors and farmers appreciate the opportunity to connect at the Food and Farming Conference.



Participants enjoyed hearing the stories and sharing laughs over local organically grown microgreens at The Taste of Ag.



The down home music had a number of NPSAS musicians jamming and singing together.



This excited little guy just won a drivable tractor at the NPSAS auction following The Taste of Ag



The Taste of Ag highlighted locally grower prepared and shared bites and tastes for attendees followed by a dinner featuring local and/or NPSAS member provided organic ingredients.



Friend of the Farmer – Carolyn Lane

Carolyn Lane grew up on a Century+ dairy and crops farm in central Wisconsin, where she developed a love of agriculture, land stewardship and healthy food production at a young age.

She completed a BS in Agricultural Education and a Masters in International Development Education, with minors in International Agriculture, Spanish and Sustainable Agriculture. Her Master's thesis research focused on Cuba's national conversion to a system of organic food production.

Carolyn has worked in the organic grains industry for almost 25 years at Nature's Organic Grist (which she co-founded), Ceres Organic Harvest, Northland Organic Foods and Northland Seed & Grain. Over the years, she served in a number of positions including but not limited to grain buyer, operations manager, crop production manager, and more. She has spoken at conferences and field days.

Serving is close to Carolyn's heart. In addition to volunteering every week at Treetop Farm, an agricultural ministry

servicing at-risk children, she travels yearly to Give Hope 2 Kids, an orphanage in Honduras. She serves on the NPSAS Board of Directors as well as both the MN and International Boards for Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA). She was also recently appointed to the MN Department of Agriculture's Organic Advisory Task Force.

"I feel incredibly blessed and honored to have been a part of NPSAS for the past many years, and I'm immensely grateful to God for placing so many wonderful opportunities and people in her life and for the lasting friendships that have been formed," Carol said of her time with NPSAS.

Carolyn currently lives in Spring Lake Park, MN, and is the mother of two adult children and has two precious grandchildren.



Board Minutes

Continued from page 6

Two germination tests showed 90% and 93% germination. Buckwheat seed loses germination over time. Follow-up germination test will need to be done closer to planting for a more accurate number. Yield was 800 - 1200 lbs to the acre. Farms that that grew buckwheat were, Owen, Martin, and Millers. These farms will provide Steve Zwinger with their field data. Need to develop a Material Transfer Agreement for field level and seed growth. A royalty fee of 10% was discussed.

Krysti noted a South Dakota specialty block grant will be submitted to work on buckwheat with growers in South Dakota growers.

A group of Wisconsin researchers, led by Michael Fields, will be evaluating buckwheat performance. The researchers will receive 50 pounds of buckwheat seed.

A call was received by a Michigan farmer that is interested in growing buckwheat.

Dylan Wheat

There are 12 bushels of foundation

stock on hand. The seed needs to be grown out to increase the seed availability. In the past, farmers were paid for their time and energy to grow stock seed. Seed production takes a lot of work. Growing in one acer plots and there needs to be clean tractors, clean planters, clean combines, etc. Discussed developing a plan to maintain stock seed of Dylan. Question was asked if Albert Lea Seed has Dylan wheat in stock. They did a seed increase a few years ago. Steve noted we only have 12 bushel of foundation seed in stock.

White Sorghum

Not a great deal of seed is available. Material transfer agreement is needed. Burton Johnson is the only one who has seed available. Dan and Theresa may have about 100 pounds of seed too.

Radish

There is nine pounds of steckling seed available and seven ounces of original seed. Can be bulk planted and harvested, but at this point it may be better to do some seed selection. Want to identify the qualities we are selecting for. Enough seed to plant both spring and fall for selections. A material transfer agreement is needed.

Also talked about grants and totes. Martin said Owen will call other NPSAS members and farmers to gauge interest

in Farm Breeder Network. Steve noted sorghum is open pollinated.

Martin mentioned that storage is cleaned out in Fargo. Brad said he has three pallets of grain totes that can hold 1000 (20 bushel) and 2000 (40 bushel) pounds of grain. Brad said there is a person interested in purchasing the totes.

Martin noted the group is meeting the second Tuesday of the month.

Financial

Brad gave a high-level overview of financials. Brad noted we are in the black for January and are currently in good shape.

Motion made and approved to accept the financials as reported.

Government and Strategic Planning

Mike noted we are having a strategic planning session on Monday, March 25 at the Ramkota in SD. At the meeting only strategic planning will be done. The regular meeting for March will be moved to Tuesday, March 19 at 8 AM. Also discussed a review for the Executive Director and talked about doing a self-assessment and review by the board. Discussed bylaws.

Steward of the Year

Rocking Z Acres is the 2024 recipient of the NPSAS Steward of the Year Award. They are based out of Wessington Springs, SD and have been innovating and strategizing their way to agricultural success and healthy soils for a number of years.



Innovation is a core belief of Rocking Z Acres. BJ McNeil and his aunt, Jonnie Zvonek. They operate the farm together, caring for the land and their employees alike.

Responsible farming is a staple of their operation, from soil health, to prescription-based planting and fertility.

Technology is a big part of their operation. Currently, tractor location, field zones, inputs, and every field pass are all managed in the cloud. In 2009 they incorporated biology into their soil fertility plans. They began planting cover crops, and experimenting with adding microbes to the soil.

In 2018, after seeing the benefits of biology, and realizing they did not need to rely on only commercial fertilizer and chemicals, they began their organic adventure. The innovations and research over the last 15 years have enabled Rocking Z Acres to evolve, with continued trial and error, the science and research of the weed control battle continues. The farm operation went from 100% of their acres under certified organic production in 2021 and

2022 to its current status of 50% certified organic. With every step and change, soil health is at the forefront of every decision.

Rocking Z Acres currently grows organic corn, soybeans, winter wheat, buckwheat, sorghum, sunflowers, pinto beans,

hemp, and alfalfa. They conventionally grow corn, soybeans, and winter wheat. It is the hope that with continued innovations, strategies, and applications, eventually, the entire operation can once again be 100% certified organic production.



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- Beginning farmer training
- Farm Breeding Club
- Food & Farming Conference scholarships
- General operating support
- Matching gift for online giving programs/year-end appeal

TOTAL \$ _____

Thanks for your continued support of NPSAS!

The NPSAS Board & Staff are committed to honoring and building on what the founders created and previous boards and staff nurtured. We will serve the mission of the organization to the highest standard to ensure NPSAS is here to serve for generations to come.



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Have You Noticed It's Greener After a Lightning Storm?

Ask a farmer if he's afraid of lightning and that farmer will probably say "No, we NEED and want lightning, Rain and small hail. It's like free money made out of thin air that we don't have to spend on Nitrogen."

When a storm is coming and lightning strikes the earth it causes a reaction in the atmosphere, taking Nitrogen (N₂) (78-80% of what we breathe.) converting it into NO₃, then rain (H₂O) drops it to the ground., The plant brings it up and turns it into faster-growing, nutritious crops.

Lightning also increases the brix of sugar in a plant. Higher brix makes more nutritious food. It also reduces pest pressure and fungus. So in other words lightning reduces the need for chemicals and makes plants healthier.

This brings us to Nitro Joe and his quest for a better option for farmers to grow healthier, more productive crops. Joe grew up in an area of Florida with the highest level of lightning. He noticed this phenomenon while working on new technologies with hydrogen, and found nitrogen was a by-product of his work in hydrogen.

Nitro Joe studied while working day and night for years... until he finally recreated the natural process of high-frequency rain going through lightning! He learned that by adding this high-frequency water to crops, it works like nitrogen fertilizer but with just air, water, and a little electricity. The cost of production was pennies on the dollar compared to conventional nitrogen.

After ruminating on how a farmer could use this lightning infused water, he realized selling it to the farmer was a good idea. While being the efficiency expert he is, Nitro Joe realized it made a lot more sense for farmers to make this discovery available to farmers. His Green Lightning machine was born so farmers could make their own nitrogen.

Many farmers have said, "Green



Lightning seems too good to be true..."

- There's no salt or chemicals
- The cost to produce nitrogen is 98% less than buying other nitrogen inputs
- It can be made when it is needed
- It doesn't burn the crop, and is nontoxic

What about the data? Well, this is where it gets real interesting. Green Lightning beat conventional production by 28%, more than 5,000 lbs per acre on potatoes. Green Lightning beat conventional by 32% or 14 bush-

els per acre with 281 bushels of corn. We're still hard at work gathering lots of data and seeing amazing results.

Making food and money out of thin air and a little water is the way our grandchildren will add fertility, clean up soils, and make people healthier in the future!

TELL US A STORY OF INNOVATION

Do you know of a new innovative product that NPSAS should be sharing with the readers and members of this organization? If so, send a message on social or send an email to director@npsas.org.



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Learn more at www.sare.org



Explore the World of Ancient Grains at NCI's Third Annual Ancient Grains Conference!

The Northern Crops Institute (NCI) is looking forward to hosting the third Ancient Grains Conference on June 25, 2024. This year's conference will be held at the Peltier Complex on the campus of North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND. The theme is Timeless Trends, and aims to provide an educational and promotional setting to explore characteristics and utilization of ancient grains.

Last year's conference brought 50+ attendees from across the industry, including producers, millers, bakers, academics, and others. Participants listened to a number of presentations and breakout sessions, including a Producer Panel, Nutrition Panel, hands-on baking, stone milling, and agronomy demonstrations. The conference offered a true crash-course in the viability of Ancient Grains in the future and why they've quickly become the latest hot macro food trend. The success and positive feedback of the previous conferences has led NCI to host the Ancient Grains Conference annually.

This year's Ancient Grains Conference will return with both stone milling and hands-on baking demonstrations. Participants will also be able to engage with a number of presentations, including, Production, Sustainable Opportunities and Industry Highlights, Market Significance, and New Uses in Ancient Grains. This 1-day conference will begin at 8:00 am and conclude at 5:00 pm. A welcome reception will be held the day before on June 24 at 4:30 pm at Drekker Brewing Co. in Brewhalla in Fargo, ND.



Networking may possibly be the most important opportunity this conference provides. Last year's event resulted in many new relationships that will strengthen the Ancient Grains movement. Many participants are returning, and this year's event will provide ample opportunity to connect again.

Registration includes:

- Access to the conference
- Complimentary refreshments & lunch

- An invite to the welcome reception the night before

Registration Rates:

- Standard: \$250/person
- Educator: \$100/person
- Student: \$50/person

For more information about the conference and to register, please visit ancientgrainsconference.com.



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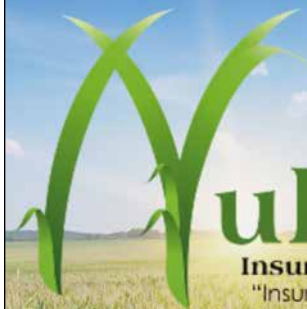
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NPSAS Board Member Semi-Finalist for James Beard Award

Nichole's Fine Pastry in Fargo, ND was nominated as a 2024 Restaurant and Chef Awards semifinalists for the James Beard Awards® presented by Capital One. Nichole's was one of only 20 bakeries in the country to be nominated in the best bakery division. The bakery is owned and founded by Nichole Hensen, an NPSAS Board member who grew up on a farm near Glenburg, ND.



Established in 1990 and first awarded in 1991, the James Beard Foundation's Restaurant and Chef Awards are one of five separate recognition programs of the James Beard Awards. The awards recognize exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive.

The mission of the James Beard Awards is to recognize exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive.

James Beard was a celebrated American chef and teacher who wrote more than 20 books. He was also a well-known television personality.



Meeting Minutes

Continued from page 7

New Business

A member asked about the location for the 2025 conference. Krysti responded that the conference would be held again in Aberdeen on January 23-25, 2025.

Board member Nichole Hensen asked if there was anyone interested in working with her on prepar-

ing a grant that includes gluten-free grains using the NPSAS stone mill.

Board President Martin requested a motion for adjournment of the meeting. The motion was made by Glen Philbrick and seconded by Blaine Schmaltz.

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM

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Benefits and baking with Ancient Grains Einkorn & Millet



Ingredients

- 3 cups all purpose einkorn flour
- 1.5 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp active dry yeast
- 1 ¼ cups warm water (not hot to the touch)



Instructions

1. Mix the einkorn flour, sea salt, and yeast together in a large bowl. Combine water until fully mixed.
2. Cover the dough with a kitchen towel or plastic wrap and allow it to sit in the mixing bowl for a minimum of 3 hours up to 12 hours at room temperature or in a warm place for the dough to rise.
3. When it's time to bake, place the dutch oven in the oven and turn the heat to 450 to heat the dutch oven. You're going to let it heat up for 1 hour.
4. After 30 minutes of heating, take a spoon and scrape around the edges of the dough to deflate slightly, and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.
5. After the dutch oven has heated for 1 hour, and the dough has rested for 30 minutes after scraping down the edges, carefully remove the heated dutch oven from the oven, take the lid off and pour the dough into the pan. Place the lid on and bake for 25 minutes.
6. After 25 minutes, remove the lid and allow the bread to bake and crusty up for 5 more minutes.
7. When done baking, remove the loaf from the dutch oven and place it on a wire rack to cool.



Ingredients

- ¾ cup millet flour
- ¼ cup cassava flour or tapioca flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter softened
- ¾ cup creamy peanut butter unsweetened
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup semisweet or milk chocolate chips

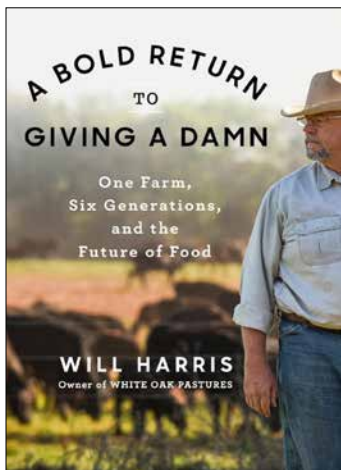


Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. (375 also works)
2. Whisk together flours, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
3. With an electric mixer, beat the butter, peanut butter and sugars until creamy. Add egg and vanilla and beat until light and fluffy.
4. Add the flour mixture and stir until blended.
5. Stir in chocolate chips. Cover and chill dough for about a half hour or until ready to use.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a medium size cookie scoop, scoop up balls of dough and arrange about 2 ½ inches apart on the baking sheet.
7. Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until the edges begin to brown. Let cool on the baking sheet for about 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.



Great Reads for Better Farming

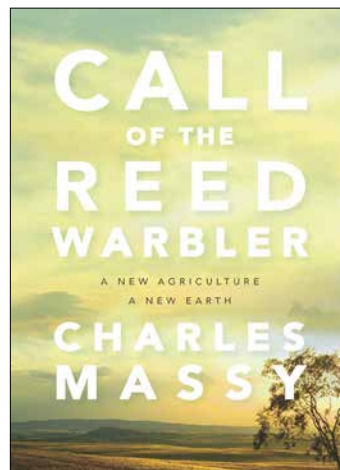


A Bold Return to Giving a Damn: One Farm, Six Generations, and the Future of Food By Logan Duvall

Bold Return to Giving a Damn by Will Harris is not merely a book; it's an enthralling journey through the rebirth of White Oak Pastures

and, by extension, the revitalization of Bluffton, Georgia. This exemplary tale of entrepreneurship and sustainable agriculture intertwines the transformation of a conventional farm into a pillar of regenerative practices with the parallel evolution of a once-sleepy town into a bustling, thriving community.

In this riveting narrative, Harris doesn't just share the story of a farm or a farmer; it's a wholesome tale of sustainability, community, resilience, and a future where giving a damn is the cornerstone of meaningful, impactful entrepreneurship. His story, while deeply rooted in Bluffton and the soil of White Oak Pastures, blossoms into a universal message of hope, change, and sustainable resurgence that can inspire generations of farmers, entrepreneurs, and dreamers to come.



Call of the Reed Warbler: A New Agriculture, A New Earth By Russ Conser

Iwould give it 6 stars if I could, so today it will have to settle for 5. I had high expectations going in, and they were substantially exceeded.

Every once in a long while, a book comes along that EVERYONE should

read – this is that book. If you're a farmer of any kind, of course you really should read this book. But if you're an ecologist, a physician, or a dietician – read this book. And if you care about biodiversity, or climate change, or water, or birds, or just the future of human society – read this book. And even if all you do is just eat food, you should still read this book.

Through the story of real examples, we can see that regenerative agriculture – whether crop, or meat, or forestry or fiber - is not about sacrifice for some abstract greater good, but creates a system leading directly to increased farmer prosperity while also producing both more and better food and fiber. Massy also shows us that restoring farmer prosperity has many other benefits: more nutritious foods, restored water cycles, and putting carbon back to work in the cycle of life among them.

Program for Local Foods Markets

Continued from page 9

The Local and Regional Food System Resource Guide organizes programs and services by steps in the supply chain: land conservation, production, processing, aggregation-distribution, markets-consumers, and food loss and waste reduction and recycling. It also includes a section on research, education, and technical assistance programming.

The Report to Congress evaluates the LAMP programs, providing both quantitative and qualitative analyses of impacts from each grant program

based on self-reporting on grant applications and grantee award reports from 2019 through the 2022 funding cycles. This report responds to a request in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (commonly known as the Farm Bill) regarding the impacts of the LAMP programs.

LAMP Application Information

Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 14, 2024. Any grant application submitted after the due date will not be considered unless the applicant

provides documentation of an extenuating circumstance that prevented their timely submission of the grant application. Read more in AMS Late and Non-Responsive Application Policy.

AMS encourages applications that serve smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, veteran producers, and/or underserved communities. For grants intending to serve these entities, applicants should engage and involve those beneficiaries when developing projects and applications.

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