
2022

ORGANIC VEGETABLE PRODUCTION CONFERENCE

February 3, 4, 7, & 8
Online Everywhere



Extension

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SCHEDULE

Central Time

THURSDAY, 3 FEBRUARY

8:45 **Where We Are** Create your own pin where farmers can find you throughout the conference

9:00 **Welcome**

9:15 **Farmer Quality of Life**
Ariel Pressman, Real Organic Project

Vegetable Varieties Round Tables
• Rebecca Morse, Osborne Quality Seeds
• Paul Feenan, High Mowing Seeds
• Adrienne Shelton, Vitalis Organic Seeds
• Julie Dawson, University of Wisconsin - Madison

10:00 **Break & Visit Hallways**

10:15 **Sweet Potatoes**
• Laura Mortimore, Orange Cat Community Farm
• James Nisly, Organic Greens LLC

Keeping Employees Coming Back
• Stacey Botsford, Red Door Family Farm
• Jim Crawford, New Morning Farm

11:15 **Social XLV**
Optional Game - Farm Tools Tournament
hosted by John Hendrickson, Center for
Integrated Agricultural Systems

Social XLV
Optional Theme - Mechanical Weed Control
hosted by Sam Oschwald-Tilton, Lakeshore Technical
College

12:00 **End**

MONDAY, 7 FEBRUARY

8:45 **Where We Are** Create your own pin where farmers can find you throughout the conference

9:00 **Welcome**

9:15 **Demos**
• Food Safety Fixes - Dan Fillius, Iowa State
University Extension and Outreach
• Task Management Systems - Sarah Janes
Ugoretz, FairShare CSA Coalition

Building Intercultural Competency as Employers
• Cassie Noltnerwyss, Crossroads Community Farm
• Claire Strader, Extension Dane County & FairShare CSA
Coalition

10:00 **Break & Visit Hallways**

10:15 **Broccoli**
• Nate Drummond, Six River Farm
• Abby Benson, Featherstone Farm

Spinach
• Sandy and Paul Arnold, Pleasant Valley Farm
• Tenzin Botsford, Red Door Family Farm

11:15 **Social XLV**
Optional Theme - Optimizing Onion Thrip
Management hosted by Pin-Chu Lai, Cornell
University

Wrap Up

12:00 **End**

TUESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY

8:45 AM Where We Are

As an easy way to connect with others in the conference, we created a map through Padlet. Just go to the link below and follow the instructions under the conference title to add your name and location to the map. Then you will be able to receive messages on your post, see where others are attending from, and add messages to their posts. A full Padlet how to sheet is included in your attendee packet. tinyurl.com/22VegConfMap

9:00 AM Welcome

9:15 AM Farmer Quality of Life

Production, markets, and financials are all essential to running a successful farm. Sometimes we can be so absorbed with those basics that we overlook the core importance of quality of life in our farm success. From his travels to hundreds of farms working for Real Organic Project, Ariel has seen every type of farm work: big, small, diversified, mechanized and everything in between. One unifying factor that shows up in all those very different operations is how the farmer's well-being is an indicator of overall success. Illustrated with examples from real farms across the country as well as his own lived experience, Ariel will help us think through the components of farmer quality of life and how to improve it.

Ariel Pressman spent seven years running Seed to Seed farm in Western Wisconsin. Seed to Seed was a 12 acre, certified organic vegetable farm specializing in servicing larger wholesale accounts. Ariel currently works as the Director of Certification for the Real Organic Project - a non-profit which offers an add-on certification focused on integrity within the certified organic community.

10:15 AM Sweet Potatoes

This session will provide detailed production information from variety selection to postharvest handling enhanced by photos from the field and specific to a variety of scales. Participants will receive a handout detailing the systems of each of the presenters, including everything from germination techniques to crop spacing to equipment to disease and pest control and more.

Laura Mortimore runs Orange Cat Community Farm in Reedsburg, Wisconsin. The farm has been in operation since 2010 and grows 3 acres of certified organic vegetables, primarily marketed through a 150 member CSA. At Orange Cat, sales of fall harvested sweet potatoes extend through March. Laura has a degree in horticulture, 17 years of growing experience and loves growing sweet potatoes more than any other crop (but don't tell the carrots she said so!)

James Nisly owns Organic Greens, LLC in Kalona, Iowa. He has been growing sweet potatoes since 2006. He also created a food hub to distribute his sweet potatoes, asparagus and cabbage, along with produce from other local growers to grocery stores, restaurants, K-12 schools, colleges and universities.

In 2021 he grew 3 acres of sweet potatoes. He has fabricated several tools and techniques to reduce labor inputs and bodily strain. James sells nearly all of his sweet potatoes to wholesale markets.

11:15 AM Social XLV

Hosted by presenting sponsor Vermont Compost!

Connect with other attendees in the main room or move freely into the breakout hallways to have conversations with smaller groups. To join a hallway, click the "breakout rooms" icon at the bottom of your screen. A list of hallways, and the names of attendees in them will pop up. Click the hallway you wish to join. Switch to another hallway or go back to the main room at any time by clicking the "breakout rooms" icon again.

Optional Game: Farm Tool Tournament

This single elimination tournament is designed to reveal the most important farm tool for 2022! Fill out the paper bracket in your packet and be ready to cast your votes throughout this session.

John Hendrickson (tournament facilitator) coordinates research and training programs in organic and sustainable specialty crop production, marketing, and profitability at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, UW-Madison. His work focuses on the economics of small-scale vegetable farming and includes the Veggie Compass program—a spreadsheet tool to help growers measure profitability by crop and market. For 16 years, John operated his own organic vegetable farm.



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Sam and Rich, Foxhole Farm, Brookville, OH

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8:45 AM Where We Are

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9:00 AM Welcome

9:15 AM Vegetable Variety Round Tables

Excellent varieties are central to successful organic vegetable production, which is what makes this session perennially popular. This year representatives from three major organic seed suppliers will introduce their picks for new and old varieties particularly suited to organic production. Then we will split into smaller breakout groups for focused discussion by crop family.

Rebecca Morse of Osborne Quality Seeds owned and operated her own small organic farm in Washington state for 15 years. She started at Osborne in 2010 and now works directly with growers, in addition to participating in variety selection for trials and creating Osborne's catalog. She loves getting to know growers and seed producers across the country at conferences, field days, farm walks, and searching for unique new varieties. and wholesale list.

Paul Feenan of High Mowing Organic Seeds has spent thirty years in the field of diversified agriculture and recognizes that organic producers must employ a complex combination of resources, information, methods, and tools to accomplish their goals. He is committed to working alongside growers to find the right seeds for their operation and is very proud to be doing so at High Mowing Organic Seeds.

Adrienne Shelton of Vitalis Organic Seeds is a Senior Organic Product Specialist in the Northeast USA. She completed her Master's and PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is proud to have participated in the breeding and release of Who Gets Kissed?, an open-pollinated sweet corn bred for and with organic farmers. Adrienne has been involved with the organic farming movement as a farmer, organizer, seed saver, breeder, and researcher for 20 years.

Julie Dawson (facilitator) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Horticulture at UW-Madison. She works on organic and participatory variety trials and variety selection for direct-market farms and gardens as well as extension resources for beginning farmers and urban growers. She coordinates the Seed to Kitchen Collaborative, working with plant breeders, farmers and chefs on participatory variety trials for the upper Midwest.

10:15 AM Keeping Employees Coming Back

Finding and keeping skilled employees is a challenge that many farmers can relate to. The constant cycle of hiring, training, and hiring again takes time, energy, and money, while making it difficult for farmers to step back, reassess, and refine systems for efficiency and sustainability. Stacey Botsford of Red Door Family Farm and Jim Crawford of New Morning Farm have taken different approaches to this issue and both have found solutions that positively impact labor retention on their farms.

Jim Crawford and his wife Moie ran New Morning Farm for the last 50 years, growing about 30 acres of certified organic mixed vegetables and berries in south-central Pennsylvania. In June 2021, after a years-long transition period, they transferred ownership to a long-term employee who started with them as an apprentice in 2009. Both Jim and Moie still stay involved by working as part-time employees.

Stacey Botsford, along with her husband Tenzin, owns and operates Red Door Family Farm in Athens, Wisconsin. Red Door produces certified organic vegetables on 12 acres and supports a 120-member CSA. The farm also produces ethically-raised pork, chickens, and eggs, and sells at farmers markets, stores, and restaurants throughout the greater Wausau area. Stacey and Tenzin have participated in the Organic Vegetable Farm Manager Apprenticeship since 2019 and have trained two apprentices during that time.

11:15 AM Social XLV

Hosted by presenting sponsor Osborne Quality Seeds!
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Optional Theme: Mechanical Weed Control

Talk shop with other pros about mechanical weed control. We will start with videos of tools at work in the field and then discuss dialing in cultivation setups and the systems for keeping weeds suppressed.

Sam Oschwald-Tilton (presenter & facilitator) is a horticulture instructor at Lakeshore Technical College near Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He has a background in vegetable farming and a master's degree from Michigan State University with a focus on precision weeding tools. Sam has designed weeding machines for KULT-Kress and visited farms throughout Europe and the U.S., and he organizes the Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day.

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9:00 AM Welcome

9:15 AM Demos

Food Safety Fixes Take a pack shed video tour and discuss both quick fixes to common problems and possibilities for deeper modifications.

Dan Fillius is the statewide field specialist for commercial vegetables and specialty crops with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Before joining Extension, Fillius grew organic vegetables for 13 years including stints managing the Michigan State University Student Organic Farm and 140 acres of vegetables at Featherstone Farm.

Task Management Systems Staying organized on the farm is both a science and art. We will walk through various tools to help with task management, from the

very low-tech to more complex, app-based systems.

Sarah Janes Ugoretz oversees the Organic Vegetable Farm Manager Apprenticeship program, of which FairShare is the industry sponsor. In addition to her work with FairShare, Sarah is a PhD candidate focusing on the labor experience with the organic vegetable industry.

10:15 AM Broccoli

This session will provide detailed production information from variety selection to postharvest handling enhanced by photos from the field and specific to a variety of scales. Participants will receive a handout detailing the systems of each of the presenters, including everything from germination techniques to crop spacing to equipment to disease and pest control and more.

Nate Drummond and his wife Gabrielle Gosselin own and operate Six River Farm, a certified organic vegetable farm in Bowdoinham, Maine. They grow over 40 crops on 40 acres of farmland interspersed with woods and wetlands and sell year round at a farmers markets, farm stand, local grocery store, and restaurants. They employ a year-round staff of 12 with a seasonal workforce of approximately 25. The farm grows around 1.5 acres of broccoli, spread across 10-12 successions, with the goal of providing fresh broccoli from June through early November.

Living Potting Soil for Organic Growers

"I first used Vermont Compost potting soils on my farm in 2008. Since then, I've never looked back. Their nutrient packed soils give my plants a great head start and keep them happy and healthy."

– Chip Allen Natvig, Pebble Brook Farm, East Braintree, VT



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Abby Benson is the field production coordinator at Featherstone Farm, a certified organic farm in Rushford, MN growing about 140 acres of vegetables for wholesale and CSA. Abby has been farming for over 10 years and at Featherstone for 8. She loves growing broccoli and all of the brassica crops which make up a significant part of the Featherstone rotation.

11:15 AM Social XLV

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Optional Theme: Optimizing Onion Thrip Management

Onion thrips feed on onion leaves leading to reduced bulb sizes and may facilitate pathogen infections causing diseases such as bacterial bulb rots. The association between thrips and bacterial bulb rot is not well understood. A promising new thrips-resistant onion cultivar may reduce thrips infestations and thereby potentially reduce bulb rots leading to higher bulb yields. Learn about the performance of this cultivar on an organic farm over three years.

Pin-Chu Lai (presenter) is a graduate of the University of Georgia and a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Cornell AgriTech in Brian Nault's lab doing research on insect ecology and vegetable crop IPM. Her recent projects involve pest management research on onion thrips and allium leaf miner in Allium crop production.



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TUESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY

8:45 AM Where We Are

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9:00 AM Welcome

9:15 AM Building Intercultural Competence for Farm Employers

It can be challenging to work across cultural differences in any workplace. As employers who tend to work closely with those they employ, farmers especially can benefit by building skills in intercultural communication. This session will expand your take on culture and give you real tools to work with people on your farm.

Cassie Noltnerwyss, along with her business partner Mike, owns and operates Crossroads Community Farm. Crossroads is a 30 acre, organic vegetable farm with a 800 member CSA. The farm also wholesales to area coops and restaurants. Cassie makes social justice a priority on the farm by educating herself, including social justice topics in her CSA newsletters, and making CSA shares accessible to those who cannot pay the full cost.

Claire Strader is the Organic Vegetable Educator for University of Wisconsin - Madison Extension Dane County and the FairShare CSA Coalition. In this shared position, Claire works with organic vegetable farmers serving direct markets. Her key projects include on-farm research on cover crops and reduced tillage techniques for organic vegetables, the Organic Vegetable Farm Manager registered apprenticeship, and the annual Organic Vegetable Production Conference.

10:15 AM Spinach

This session will provide detailed production information from variety selection to postharvest handling enhanced by photos from the field and specific to a variety of scales. Participants will receive a handout detailing the

systems of each of the presenters, including everything from germination techniques to crop spacing to equipment to disease and pest control and more.

Tenzin Botsford along with his wife Stacey, owns and operates Red Door Family Farm in Athens, Wisconsin. Red Door produces certified organic vegetables on 12 acres and supports a 120-member CSA. The farm also sells at farmers markets, stores, and restaurants throughout the greater Wausau area. With a short growing season, overwinter spinach production in 2 of their 4 high tunnels has helped them to generate sales longer into shoulder seasons and better serve their 50 additional "winter shares" and Wausau's vibrant indoor Winter Farmers Market.

Paul and Sandy Arnold are the owners and founders of Pleasant Valley Farm in Argyle, NY. For over 35 years their family farm (with their 2 children) has provided their community with the freshest, highest quality and tastiest vegetables, herbs and fruits grown with organic methods. They sell over 90% of their produce directly to local customers through an online ordering system and a local farmers market, and the rest to local outlets, including community programs. Since 2006 they have supplied a full array of vegetables and herbs year-round using unheated, large high tunnels and carefully controlled root cellars/storage facilities. They run their solar-powered farm like a business by focusing on efficiency, lean principles, customer driven marketing practices, constant improvements, crop research, and use of cutting-edge technology.



Rhone Eazyleaf Lettuce

Red tango type with durable, dense heads and uniform leaves with a crisp, medium to firm texture. Leaf volume adds weight to harvest totes quickly. Pelleted seed. Eazyleaf lettuces can be cut once above the growth point and yield a ready-to-bag salad mix.



11:15 AM Wrap Up



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