



## MOSES leading the way with UMOFC Conference

By Karen Van Epen  
ATTRAnews Editor

In February, when the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference convenes for the 15<sup>th</sup> time, Executive Director Faye Jones is hoping to welcome a record-breaking crowd of 1500. She has seen the once-small gathering grow into one of the largest farming conferences in the U.S.

Back in 1981 when Faye first attended an organic farming conference in Minnesota, she was dismayed to find that no organic food was served. She complained to conference organizers. The next year they hired her to fill the gap, and conference-goers enjoyed two delicious organic meals. That was the beginning of Faye's organic organizing, and she's been in the thick of it ever since.

### Fledgling Organization

After moving to Wisconsin, Faye volunteered to help with the fledgling Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. Soon the offices relocated to her farm, and conference attendance jumped from 100 to 500 people. At the time she was also running an organic market garden and working at an office job in town.

Then 12 years ago, Wisconsin's chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) decided to form a sister organization to run the conference, field days, and other educational events. They hired Faye



MOSES staff at their Wisconsin on-farm office, from left to right: Faye Jones, Executive Director; Linda Immerfall, Administrative Assistant; Cathy Olyphant, Registration Coordinator, with Dexter Dog; Bridget O'Meara, Exhibit & Volunteer Coordinator. Staff not pictured: Jody Padgham, Education Director and Paul Bransky, Newspaper Editor.

and she finally quit her day jobs. In 1999 Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) was formed, with Faye as executive director and a new, bigger office on her farm. The MOSES Board of Directors is drawn from organic farmers and activists throughout the Upper Midwest. Many staff members are also organic farmers, so they understand the need to provide practical information to farmers who

want to convert to more sustainable operations. The conference offers a range of workshops and speakers,

attracting farmers and would-be farmers from all over the country. Needless to say, the meals are all organic. The organization's many educational programs include the

Organic University, which this year offers eight full-day courses on successful production and marketing of  
(See MOSES Page 2)

For details about  
Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference  
& Organic University  
February 26-28, 2004 — La Crosse, Wisconsin  
Contact UMOFC at:  
P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, WI 54767  
Phone: 715-772-3153  
Email: [info@mosesorganic.org](mailto:info@mosesorganic.org)  
Web site: [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)

### ATTRA Web site features latest info on 'Mad Cow Disease'

The first case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or "mad cow disease," in the United States was confirmed on December 25, 2003. Naturally, cattle producers are quite concerned with how this case will affect both their operations and their markets.

ATTRA is tracking developments, media coverage, and new information about the BSE controversy, and posting this information as it unfolds on the ATTRA Web site. For the latest news on the BSE controversy, visit the ATTRA Web site at [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org) and follow the links to the page, or go directly to: [www.attra.ncat.org/bsespecial.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/bsespecial.html).

### Contents

- Eat in your own backyard // Page 2
- Local food's on campus // Page 2
- ATTRA's new local food guide // Page 3
- CFSC focuses on farms & food // Page 3
- NCAT hosts organic trainings // Page 4
- 'Ag easements' report offered // Page 4
- New/updated ATTRA publications // Page 4

# Local food systems: Safe, healthy eating in your own backyard

*Excerpted from the publication "Vote with Your Mouth: Reasons to eat local, organic food and talk it up" by Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES)*

Here are 13 reasons to eat locally-produced, organic food and to encourage your family, friends and neighbors to do the same.

**#1 Taste.** Organic farmers take special care of their soil, and that often means higher levels of soil nutrients, soil life, and organic matter. These contribute to tastier vegetables. Plus, local food tastes better because it is fresher.

**#2 More nutritious.** Healthy soil also means more nutritious food. By eating balanced amounts of fresh vegetables, dairy products, and meats, you and your family can avoid the health problems associated with obesity and heart disease common in our fast-food nation.

**#3 Support the local economy.** By supporting local family farms, you support the local economy. This keeps jobs and money in the local area.

**#4 Local organic food is productive and cost efficient.** It takes a lot of energy to manufacture synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, which are not used in organic agriculture. And it takes lots of fossil fuels to ship food from far away.

**#5 Preserve the environment.** Organic farms are safe habitats for a wide variety of birds, animals, and insects.

**#6 Provide economic support to farms.** It is especially



important to support smaller-sized and organic farms because government money often isn't available. In the US most money is given to larger producers and factory farms.

**#7 Social benefits.** If you join a CSA or buy produce from a local farm, you strengthen the bonds that hold our society together. Get to know your farmer and take a tour of the farm. Take the opportunity to appreciate food and give thanks.

**#8 Food Safety.** Organic foods have substantially less pesticide residues, compared with conventionally grown produce.

**#9 Genetic diversity.** Diversity is encouraged on local farms.

**#10 GMO-free food.** Organic producers are not allowed to grow genetically modified crops.

**#11 Safeguard traditional farmland.** If we don't want factory farms to take over American agriculture, we need to support our local economy now.

**#12 Better treatment for farm animals.** Animals raised organically are treated humanely.

**#13 Organic food is certified.** Under the new USDA organic standards, food labeled as organic must be certified by a third party, which is your assurance of a quality product that adheres to strict standards.

**For the complete version of the MOSES publication, see [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org) or call 715-772-3153.**

## MOSES

Continued from Page 1

organic crops and livestock. Last spring, in response to the strong need for information about organic systems among extension agents and other traditional providers of agricultural education, MOSES began the Organic Farming Education Project in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. The service includes a series of on-farm and classroom trainings, as well as an on-line newsletter, *MOSES Organic Update*, which provides current information about events and research in the organic industry. In all these educational endeavors, MOSES relies heavily on information from ATTRA.

"I couldn't do my job without ATTRA," she said, explaining that she often refers inquiries to ATTRA. "That 800 number is just what farmers need, and the Web site is great, especially at night when you want information but offices are closed."

For more than 20 years Faye Jones has been working with a purpose. "I want to change the way America farms," she said. This year her goal for the region is to encourage and help the smaller conferences in the Midwest. She'll have no problem attending, because nowadays they all schedule their events around hers.

### Order MOSES organic directory

*MOSES also publishes the Upper Midwest Organic Resource Directory, a user-friendly reference that identifies certification agencies, suppliers, buyers, processors, consultants, resource groups, publications, and events in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The print directory is published every 15 months, with an on-line version that is constantly being updated.*

*The MOSES Book Store offers on-line and mail-order sales of books about organic and sustainable agriculture.*

## Local food goes to college

As of fall 2003, students, faculty, and staff at Oregon State University (OSU) are now able to choose foods from Northwest farms and ranches certified by Food Alliance.

University Housing and Dining Services at OSU have committed to providing the campus with environmentally conscious products. For example, The Main Squeeze, a juice bar and convenience store, offers only organic and vegetarian products. Food Alliance operates one of the nation's leading certification programs for environmentally friendly and socially responsible agriculture practices.

**For more information, contact the Food Alliance at:  
Phone: 503-493-1066  
Email: [info@foodalliance.org](mailto:info@foodalliance.org)  
Web site: [www.foodalliance.org](http://www.foodalliance.org)**

## Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions / *ATTRA debuts new Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Institution resource guide*



Fresh fruits and vegetables at Malcolm X Middle School in Berkeley, CA, leave young patrons smiling. (Photo by Rex Dufour)

By Barbara C. Bellows,  
Rex Dufour,  
& Janet Bachmann,  
NCAT Agriculture Specialists

Small-scale farmers are often unable to sell their produce and processed meats directly to local markets such as grocery stores, schools, hospitals, prisons, and other institutional dining facilities. Food production and processing are very centralized in America, with most of our food grown and distributed by large-scale or corporate farms — some located in other nations.

Consumers overall are disconnected from one of the most important components for their own health and happiness — the food they eat. Rarely do they have contact with or personal knowledge about the farms and

farmers who grow their food. As a result, most consumers have very limited control over the quality and safety of their food.

When small-scale farmers are able to sell their products to local stores and institutions, they gain new and reliable markets, consumers gain access to what is often higher-quality, more healthful food, and more food dollars are

invested in the local economy.

For consumers, local produce means fresh food from a known source. Breakfasts and lunches provided by schools are often the major source of nutrition for children from low-income homes. At other institutions, the food service may be the predominant, if not only, source of food for consumers.

Consumers who have access to local food in schools or other institutions become more aware of local food systems and may be encouraged by the superior taste and quality to increase their purchases of locally produced food through farmers' markets, farm stands, or other venues. This has positive ripple effects on the local economy. For colleges

and universities, farm-to-campus programs can help break down barriers between "town and gown," while also stimulating the local economy.

These programs also provide opportunities for student involvement in related educational and community-based activities such as composting, recycling, and community gardening.

To be successful, farm-to-school programs must have a good buying, selling, and distribution system. Food service buyers want to make their food purchases using a one-stop shopping approach that allows them to order, receive, and pay for produce in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Farmers want a dependable buyer who pays them a reasonable price, while not requiring them to absorb excess processing or distribution expenses.



### Order the new ATTRA publication...

*This article is excerpted from a new ATTRA publication that provides farmers, school administrators, and institutional food-service planners with contact information and descriptions of programs connecting local farmers with local school lunchrooms, college dining halls, or cafeterias in other institutions. The publication is available free of charge at our Web site at [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org), or by calling 1-800-346-9140.*

## Community Food Security Coalition focuses on national food and farm issues

At their seventh annual conference in Boston last November, the Community Food Security Coalition called on Congress to act decisively to counteract obesity and improve nutrition in schools. Lawmakers must have listened, because since then Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) joined Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), to sponsor the Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act.

### Farm to Cafeteria Act

The bipartisan act would help schools create a healthy menu through grants to school districts to buy local food from regional farms. The proposed legislation would connect students to agriculture through visits to farms and farmers' markets, farmers in the classroom, and other hands-on farm-to-school activities.

Returning from the Boston meeting, NCAT Program Specialist Julia Sampson said, "This was the best conference I've ever attended. Organizers planned for attendance

of 350 people and registered over 550."

Julia came back to Arkansas with many "wild project ideas," as she called them, including establishment of a Friends of the Farmers' Market group, holding school fundraisers with farmers/local products, finding a way for farmers to supply local schools and hospitals, creating a Food Policy Council, and expanding the All Ozark Meals she organized last year.

Attendees also discussed national food and farm policy, saving farms and farmland, the lack of supermarkets in urban and rural regions, city food production, and connecting chefs to local farms.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Community Food Security Coalition**

**PO Box 209, Venice, CA 90294**

**Phone: 310-822-5410, E-mail: [cfsc@foodsecurity.org](mailto:cfsc@foodsecurity.org)**

**Web site: [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)**



National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

PO Box 3657 Fayetteville, AR 72702

1-800-346-9140 www.attra.ncat.org

1-800-411-3222 (Spanish only)

## NCAT & IOIA sponsoring organic livestock inspection training

The Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) — which manages the ATTRA national sustainable agriculture information service — will co-sponsor Basic Farm and Livestock Organic Inspection trainings on April 1-7, 2004, at the Mount Sequoyah Conference Center, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

**April 1-7, 2004  
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

The Basic Farm Course includes instruction on the organic certification process, organic standards, how to inspect organic farms, on-farm processing, livestock inspection, audit trail (record keeping) requirements, regulations, risk assessment, investigative skills, report writing, and ethics. The Livestock Course provides more comprehensive details on livestock inspection, addressing dairy, poultry (meat, eggs), and slaughter animals. Both courses include inspection field trips, and each attendee must complete written inspection reports.

For information or application forms, contact: IOIA, P.O. Box 6, Broadus, MT 59317-0006. Phone/FAX: 406-436-2031. E-mail: ioia@ioia.net.

## New report eyes 'agricultural easements' in the U.S.

Agricultural easements allow landowners to sell the development rights on their farms to government or nonprofit organizations in exchange for agreeing to keep the land permanently available for agriculture. The use of farm easements has grown exponentially since the 1970s; today 26 states have at least one publicly funded easement program.

A new report titled *A National View of Agricultural Easement Programs* profiles 46 agricultural easement programs in 15 states — nearly half of all publicly funded farmland protection programs in the nation. The programs studied have spent a total of \$1.8 billion to protect 887,000 acres.

"This study shows how farm

**The study was done by American Farmland Trust and the Agricultural Issues Center, University of California, in collaboration with Farm Foundation.**

**For more information, contact AFT, 202-331-7300 or visit [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org).**

conservation easement programs are conceived, managed and funded," said project leader Alvin Sokolow, University of California-Davis.

*Readers may also order a free copy of ATTRA's Conservation Easements publication by calling 1-800-346-9140.*

### New & Updated ATTRA Publications

- ↶ Converting Cropland to Perennial Grassland
- ↶ Organic Cropping Systems Workbook

## ATTRAnews

Teresa Maurer, Project Manager  
Karen Van Epen, ATTRAnews Editor  
David Zodrow, Production  
January-February, 2004

ATTRAnews is the bi-monthly newsletter of the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. The newsletter is distributed free throughout the United States to farmers, ranchers, Cooperative Extension agents, educators, and others interested in sustainable agriculture. ATTRA is funded through the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service and is a project of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), a private, non-profit organization that since 1976 has helped people by championing small-scale, local and sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, promote healthy communities, and protect natural resources.



Printed on recycled paper 