

LETTER FROM THE FAFO CHAIRMAN

Having received 35 proposals requesting a total of \$1,332,446 in 2010, it's clear that FAFO—in only our fourth year—is becoming better known in the granting world. However, with an annual budget of \$350,000, this recognition presents obvious challenges. You can see we needed to be very selective, so this year, the FAFO Committee identified two areas under the fund's umbrella mission of "organic research, education and advocacy" which they felt are in special need of increased attention and resources: *Sustainability*, and *The Organic Message*. Some approved proposals fell outside of these categories, but this framework provided a helpful focus for the committee within the sea of proposals and numbers.



Sustainability: The approved Sustainability proposals will provide research and measurement on the environmental benefits of organic agriculture, innovation toward reducing the carbon footprint of farm operations, and disseminate information via education and outreach.

The Organic Message: This category of projects intends to promote key organic messages such as "natural vs. organic," compile and distribute information about nutritional benefits, and advocate for legislative policies supporting organic food distribution and production.

I am pleased to have served as Chairman of the FAFO Committee for the past two years. To the more than 1,600 CROPP member-farmers, I thank you for contributing to the FAFO fund and allowing us to support these grant recipients who are working to improve organic production and protect the organic market.

In Cooperation,

Doug Delling
FAFO Chairman, 2009-2010

2010 FAFO Committee Members

Doug Delling
(Eggs)
Ontario, WI

Jim Gardiner
(Dairy)
Otselic, NY

Dan Pearson
(Dairy and Beef)
River Falls, WI
CROPP BOD Member

Pam Riesgraf
(Dairy)
Jordan, MN
CROPP BOD Member

Elena Johnston
(Dairy)
Tillamook, OR

John B. Martin
(Meat)
Williamsburg, IN

Charles Roper
(Juice)
Winter Garden, FL

Matt Schlabach
(Dairy)
Millersburg, OH

George Teague
(Dairy)
Elon, NC



FAFO Staff Contact Information

Applicant Information & General Fund Operations:

Kristine Salmi-Snowdeal,
608.625.3541

FAFO email:
farmerfund@organicvalley.coop

Farmer Opt In/Out Information:

Lisa Hass,
Dairy Pool Administrative Specialist,
608.625.3233

APPLYING FOR GRANTS:

Proposals are considered twice a year. Deadlines for the next two granting cycles are September 1, 2011 and February 1, 2012. Details on applying for grants are available through the FAFO website at www.organicvalley.coop/farmerfund or contact Kristine Salmi-Snowdeal at 608-625-3541.

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2010 GRANTS AWARDED

There are two granting arms of the FAFO fund: Small Grants and Full Grants. Small Grant proposals (\$5,000 or less) are reviewed year-round, while Full Grant proposals (\$5,001 - \$50,000) are reviewed on two separate granting cycles. The list below describes all grants that were awarded in 2010. These projects' results will be shared in future FAFO Annual Reports as the projects are completed.

RESEARCH:

CROPP Cooperative Pools Department \$24,000 (\$12,000 in 2010; \$12,000 in 2011): The goal of this project is to discover the correlation between feeding regimens and nutrition factors for humans in cow's milk by conducting studies of milk from individual farms.

CROPP Cooperative Sustainability Department \$15,300: This "Organic Agriculture and Climate Change International Working Session" will bring together a network of organic industry researchers and scientists to combine knowledge and develop an action plan which will address organic research needs.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Zoology Department \$50,000: Using proprietary technologies, UW-Madison's research project aims to develop a quantitative assessment to measure the health and genetic consequences of pesticide exposure.

USDA-ARS Livestock Behavior Research Unit \$11,918: This study will investigate hen behavior, physiology, immunology and egg quality between hens housed in organic and conventional production systems.

ADVOCACY:

Center for Food Safety (CFS) \$20,000: CFS is waging a full-scale battle against Monsanto in the Supreme Court to maintain a previously successful legal ban of GMO alfalfa, supported by the organic marketplace and consumers looking for ways to reduce contamination by GMOs.

National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) \$10,000: NYFC is creating a young farmer policy agenda and advocacy plan to engage local and national farm and food advocacy organizations and academic institutions in an effort to grow the number of young farmers in the U.S.

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) \$10,000: OFRF received three separate grants in 2010. \$47,744 (\$22,744 for stage 1; \$25,000 for stage 2): OFRF plans to publish and promote a scientific literature review and, from this, develop organic policy and research recommendations to motivate policy in support of organic. \$8,000: This project aims to ensure that organic farmers have a strong voice in the creation of agricultural policy and programs by sponsoring travel and training for organic farmers to participate in meetings with federal and regional policy makers.

Organic Seed Alliance \$27,000: OSA will use this funding to create and operate four organic seed working groups to implement pivotal recommendations and strategies resulting from the 2010 State of Organic Seed report.

Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) \$7,500: This project is focused on taking action toward implementing the National Organic Action Plan through coordinated national strategy for policy reforms which benefit organic farmers in the 2012 Farm Bill.

EDUCATION:

CROPP Cooperative Generation Organic™ (Gen-O™) Program: Gen-O received two separate grants in 2010. \$15,000: CROPP's Pools department coordinates a strong organic presence and valuable educational opportunity at the 2010 FFA National Convention by setting up a large booth and sponsoring the travel of Gen-O farmers to the event. \$32,647: After the success of the 2010 Gen-O Northeast Bus Tour, the group will conduct a second tour on the west coast in 2011 to promote the organic food industry to the college-age (next generation) consumers and foster leadership among current CROPP Gen-O farmers.

CROPP Cooperative Marketing Department \$30,000: This second installment to "Project GO!" continues the development of a consumer education campaign to increase awareness about the current food system, clarify misinformation about organic food, and encourage consumers to play an active role in their food system.

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) \$8,668: These funds will support a pilot farmer-to-farmer organic dairy and field crop conference and field day series in Central and Western New York.

Xerces Society \$15,000: This project aims to expand the training and resources of the "Organic Farming for Bees" Toolkit (originally funded by FAFO in 2008), which will continue building the knowledge of organic farmers to take advantage of the ecological and economic benefits of native pollinators.



FARMERS
ADVOCATING
FOR ORGANICS

ANNUAL REPORT
2010

FAFO's mission:

“TO GATHER VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CROPP MEMBERS FOR A FUND DEDICATED TO PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE ORGANIC MARKETPLACE BY INVESTING IN ORGANIC RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY. THE FUND WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE DISCRETION OF A COMMITTEE OF CROPP MEMBERS TO FURTHER DEVELOP ORGANIC FARMING METHODS AND TO STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT ORGANIC PRODUCERS' INTERESTS IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.”

THE FAFO FUND IS MADE UP OF 100% VOLUNTARY DONATIONS FROM CROPP MEMBER-FARMERS, AND DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS IS GOVERNED BY THE FAFO COMMITTEE MADE UP OF NINE CROPP FARMERS FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.

COMPLETED PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Reading and reviewing progress reports submitted by grant recipients is a task that FAFO committee members perform throughout the year. Here is a brief overview of the projects that came to a close in 2010.

To receive a copy of a project report, please contact farmerfund@organicvalley.coop.

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST (AFT)

\$5,000 - Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands - End date: December 2009

This project aimed to lay the foundation for a successful farmland protection program in the state of Wisconsin, encourage the adoption of policies that preserve farmland, and change the way farmland protection is viewed and practiced by farmers, decision-makers, and the public. These goals were accomplished, and most significantly, this project made a strong contribution toward the passage and funding of key Working Lands Initiative (WLI) recommendations by the Wisconsin State Legislature in June 2009, which will help farmers and agricultural landowners in Wisconsin protect their land for future generations. AFT has also shared information about this campaign and the WLI with the Departments of Agriculture in Iowa and Missouri, to their great interest. www.farmland.org

CROPP COOPERATIVE GENERATION ORGANIC™ (GEN-O™) PROGRAM

\$28,300 (\$13,300 in 2009; \$15,000 in 2010) - Increased Gen-O Presence at 2009 and 2010 National FFA Conventions - End date: December 2010

The National FFA Convention is the single largest gathering of FFA members and advisors in the U.S., with more than 75,000 students, advisors and attendees each year. As a leadership development and educational event, the Convention is a prime opportunity to educate these influential students and teachers about organic agriculture and the opportunity it presents for young farmers. For the 2009 Convention, CROPP updated and distributed 400 advisor packets and hosted two student workshops led by two experienced Gen-O farmers. In 2010, they developed and distributed an organic educational resource list and co-hosted two workshops with the Rodale Institute. In both years, they gained a prominent (and envied) booth location where they connected with over 10,000 future farmers each year, as well as strengthened relationships with partner organic agriculture organizations and the National FFA Foundation. www.organicvalley.coop/GenerationOrganic



CROPP COOPERATIVE EGG POOL

\$9,180 - Hen Perch Preferences Research Project - End date: August 2010

Animal welfare experts encourage or even require the use of perches from the beginning of a laying hen's life since the instinct to perch is lost after the first weeks of life. This study installed roosting perches on two Organic Valley egg farms in order to compare productivity, aggressive acts, mortality, and floor eggs between farms with and without perches. This study concluded that immediately introducing birds to perches encourages natural bird behavior and significantly reduces the labor of training the hens to use perches when they are moved to the laying house. Furthermore, the perches proved to be a positive investment for both farms, resulting in increased production and sales, and, on one farm, the lowest ever recorded mortality rate of 3.5%. www.organicvalley.coop

CROPP COOPERATIVE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

\$3,850 - CROPP Biofuels Program Educational Video - End date: October 2010

The Biofuels Video educates interested CROPP farmer-members about growing and using biofuels on their farms, explaining the process from seed to fuel while addressing many frequently asked questions. Within five weeks after the project was funded, the 13 minute video was shot, edited and distributed via the Organic Valley website and YouTube, and DVDs were distributed at the CROPP Annual Meeting and mailed to interested members. Additionally, universities, businesses and the general public have requested information about the CROPP Biofuels Program and its research, and the DVD has helped raise the profile of the program and the mobile biofuel press trailer. www.organicvalley.coop/Sustainability

DAKOTA RURAL ACTION (DRA)

\$15,000 - South Dakota Beginning Farmer Training and Linking Program - End date: January 2010

DRA proudly exceeded their initial program objectives and accomplished their ultimate goal of launching the first South Dakota Farm Beginnings Program in fall 2009 with 25 trainer/presenters (exceeding their goal of five)—four of whom are organic producers—and 13 families (21 individuals, exceeding their goal of 10 families). FAFO funds were also used to provide training to the presenters and a Farm Beginnings Steering Committee and Leadership Team; conduct recruitment and outreach at events throughout eastern SD; garner print and radio publicity; engage the local community in raising \$4,700 in program scholarships, and to begin work on a Farmer Network Resource connecting beginning and established farmers. www.dakotarural.org

CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS, FARM AID, MOSES, NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION, ORGANIC FARMING AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION

\$50,000 - Organic Infiltration and Outreach Project - End Date: November 2010

With a goal of ensuring organic agriculture is fully represented, acknowledged and supported at all levels of the USDA, these five organizations set out to “infiltrate” and influence local, state and federal agriculture policies. The groups conducted farm bill and policy advocacy workshops for farmers, developed the “Organic Farmers/Ranchers Guide to State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups,” conducted meetings with staff at the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to

advance recommendations for improvement of the Organic Initiative and integrate sustainable and organic systems into NRCS programs and procedures, and more. The groups are currently looking ahead at identifying the key states for the next farm bill debates.

LOCAL HARVEST ALLIANCE (LHA)

\$15,000 - “Advocating for a Local and Organic Future” - End date: January 2010

LHA spent 2009 building support within the community and local and regional governments for the preservation of agriculture in Scott County, MN. The focus of that effort has been twofold: to preserve agricultural land, and to enhance the production of healthy, organic, locally-grown foods as an economic activity serving county residents and the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Through its work, LHA has successfully influenced the county to establish a Farm Advisory Task Force and to alter its 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include support for agriculture and local food production. LHA continues to be quite active, with its members participating in Land Stewardship Project events and local food events, sending press releases and letters to the editor, and speaking on the radio, in the news, at public hearings and at the legislature. www.localharvestalliance.org

MIDWEST ORGANIC & SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION SERVICE (MOSES)

\$25,000 - Expanding the “Help Wanted: Organic Farmers” Campaign - End date: January 2010

In 2009, MOSES collaborated with a number of partner organizations to host 16 trainings and farm field days (six more than in 2008) with nearly 500 participants. MOSES values these collaborative efforts because they create a unified message, reach more farmers and enable the organizations to combine resources. They attended three large farm conventions in MN, WI and IL, and teamed up with Organic Valley to co-host a booth at the National FFA convention in 2009. In addition, they have also hired a new outreach coordinator who has been invaluable to the creation and updating of educational materials, answering farmer questions about organic certification and production, and developing curriculum modules and organic education events for two Wisconsin colleges. www.mosesorganic.org

NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION (NSAC)

\$5,000 - “Advocacy Beyond the Farm Bill” - End date: September 2009

The goal of NSAC (formerly the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture) is to promote grassroots involvement in the development of federal farm policy to support sustainable farming, food systems and rural communities that are healthy, environmentally sound, profitable, humane and just. Their FAFO grant provided travel and substitute farm help to bring farmers to participate in the National Summit on Organic Food & Agriculture, February 2009 in La Crosse, WI. The event was a success, with increased grassroots participation in the dialogue and development of a National Organic Action Plan. The farmers' participation built momentum around a positive vision of organic agriculture, with shared objectives and benchmarks for measuring organic agriculture's social and environmental benefits. www.sustainableagriculture.net



NORTHWEST COALITION FOR ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES (NCAP)

\$5,000 - “Idaho's Potato Icon is Going Organic” - End date: December 2009

With a goal of tripling Idaho's organic potato production from 2007 to 2009, NCAP used FAFO funds to provide a variety of educational opportunities for Idaho potato farmers. They held two winter workshops at the Potato Conference and two summer field days, with 209 farmers and agricultural professionals attending; conducted on-farm field tests of a new bio-control for early blight in potatoes on three organic farms, which showed improved disease control; and recruited 11 researchers and extension specialists (exceeding their goal of three) to use and/or promote the Pest Management Strategic Plan, which resulted in securing funding for eight projects of significance to organic potato farmers, including a two million dollar project on potato pests. www.pesticide.org

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-MORRIS WEST CENTRAL RESEARCH AND OUTREACH CENTER (WCROC)

\$12,303 - Study of Mammary Health and Fertility in University's Transitioning Dairy Herd - January 2010

University of Minnesota is transitioning a portion of its dairy herd at the WCROC to an organic production system—nearly 500 acres pasture and cropland and 80 dairy cows will be certified organic. The goal of this research is to benchmark mammary health and fertility changes in a transitioning dairy herd, and one year into organic transition, the research showed positive trends toward the organically managed herd. FAFO granted additional funds in 2009 to continue the research for another year to determine whether these trends are maintained over time. Upon completion of the study, the University plans to publish the results and present them at the Minnesota Organics Conference, extension meetings and other venues. wcroc.cfans.umn.edu



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CENTER FOR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS (CIAS)

\$15,000 - Development of a Great Lakes Region Farm to School Network - End date: November 2008

This matching grant supported the establishment of a National Farm to School Network in 2007, with funds directed specifically to the creation of a Great Lakes Region—IL, IN, MI, MN, OH and WI—coordinated by the UW Madison CIAS. A Great Lakes (GL) Region Coordinator was hired to create necessary Farm to School Program infrastructure and coordinate programming in the region over the last three years. At least 75 different projects aimed at getting locally grown, healthy foods into school lunches are going on in the region now. GL Region highlights include influencing the 2010 Child Nutrition Act, supporting Farm to School legislation in three GL region states, and facilitating the National Planning Committee and hosting a GL Networking Day at the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, which broke attendance records with over 700 attendees in 2010. www.cias.wisc.edu

XERCES SOCIETY FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION

\$15,000 - “Organic Farming for Bees” Toolkit and Workshop Curriculum - End date: January 2010

Using their FAFO funds, Xerces Society successfully produced the “Organic Farming for Bees” toolkit and workshop curriculum, which was presented five times (including twice at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference 2009 and at EcoFarm 2010), training more than 400 people. The workshop and toolkit educates farmers about the economic and ecological advantages of conserving native pollinators, and the resources are available in print and on the Xerces Society's website. Farmers can now find organic-specific resources alongside a plethora of information on pollinator plants, conservation measures for pollinators, and how to get Farm Bill funding for pollinator conservation. www.xerces.org

YOUTH INITIATIVE HIGH SCHOOL (YIHS)

\$15,000 - Development of “The Whole Plate: A Return to Real Food” Curriculum - End date: January 2010

This project has truly been a cooperative effort between YIHS faculty, students and parents to turn loose lecture notes, recipe handouts and disparate readings into a cohesive, four unit curriculum (plus two bonus “mini-units”) which teaches students the importance of “real food,” nutrition, and how to make easy, organic and healthy (yet inexpensive) recipes with the college dorm in mind. Upon completion of the development stage, they surveyed potential users at farm-to-school and charter school conferences to gain additional feedback for future editions. Marketing efforts began in full force in 2010 with mass email invitations to educators, and YIHS has set up a website summarizing the contents and where people can order the curriculum: www.thewholeplate.org.

AGRICULTURE, COOKING AND NUTRITION—FROM THE FARM TO KITCHEN TO THE CLASSROOM—YOUTH NEED TO EXPERIENCE THIS CONNECTION. THANK YOU TO FAFO FOR HELPING TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN! ~ Shawn LaVoie, Youth Initiative High School