




Web links for organic, transitioning producers and educators

For questions or assistance to transition to organic or questions on production please contact Vicki Morrone MSU Organic Vegetable and Field Crop Specialist, 517-353-3542 or sorrone@msu.edu. You can also join an organic farmer listserv by contacting Morrone or visiting the following web site:

Information Warehouse

 <http://www.michiganorganic.msu.edu> The web page, Organic Farming Exchange is a source of technical production information and events for Michigan's organic farmers.

<http://www.attra.org> is the USDA site for sustainable and organic agriculture production and organic certification of all crops.

www.usda.gov is the main site to the United States Department of Agriculture that has numerous resources on statistics, certifications, and connections to government organic programs.

www.organicaginfo.org contains information on production, economic data, research results, farmer anecdotes, certification information, transition strategies, as well as many other subjects related to organic agriculture.

Vegetable and Field Crop Organic Production

 <http://www.new-ag.msu.edu/> New Ag Network is a bi-weekly, seasonal newsletter for and by organic and sustainable farmers in the Upper Midwest U.S.

 <http://www.msuorganicfarm.com/> offers the organic certificate program that will start Jan, 07 at Michigan State University.

<http://asap.aces.uiuc.edu/> Agro-ecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program at University of Illinois

<http://www.oacc.info/> Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada offers extension information and research reports on agriculture production and soil building.

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.html> Cyber-help for the organic farmers sponsored by Canadian Organic Growers and the Certified Organic Associations of BC.

www.omri.org is the site of the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) that is a national nonprofit organization that determines which input products are allowed for use in organic production and processing.

www.biosci.com provides products for home and garden as well as commercial use from biological to organic.

Compost Production and Utilization


<http://ohioline.osu.edu/anr-fact/0015.html> is a fact sheet from Ohio State University on how and what tests should be done on compost to assure quality and compatibility with a cropping system.


<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/ageng/resource/utliow.htm> Utilization of Organic wastes: On-farm composting. By Dana Porter from West Virginia University. This paper discusses what should go into compost making and ways to produce a quality product.

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/compostfs3.pdf> is one of series fact sheet from Cornell University, "Improving and Maintaining Compost Quality." This sheet offers information on how to manage and maintain compost quality on a large scale.


Cover Crop Information

<http://www.sare.org/publications/covercrops/covercrops.pdf> is the USDA general guide book on cover crops. Note that a new edition is now in progress and should be out by 07


 <http://www.covercrops.msu.edu/species/index.html> offers several publications on different species of cover crops including crimson clover, oil seed radish and medics.


 <http://www.covercrops.msu.edu/systems/index.html> offers info on organic systems based on research from Kellogg Biological station, MSU.

<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cgi-bin/ccrop.exe> lists crops that are used for cover crops and offers a link to each type.

 <http://www.kbs.msu.edu/Extension/covercrops/home.htm> offers information about Michigan Cover crop variety selections, management and benefits of cover crops in sustainable and organic systems.

 <http://ipm.msu.edu/plants/home.htm> Enhancing Biological Control with Native Plants

 <http://www.safs.msu.edu/> Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems at MSU and soon (Dec 15, 06) to include a section on organic agriculture production.

 <http://www.michiganorganic.msu.edu> Organic vegetable and field crop production information from MSU and beyond. Also available, is information on certification of farms.


Organic & Sustainable Pest Management


http://www.omri.org/OMRI_datatable.htm is the searchable database of animal products that are permitted in organic systems. Note that their stamp of approval is not legally binding (although there is discussion with USDA to change that) but offers assurance to the farmer and certifying agency that the product is ok for organic systems.

<http://www.sare.org/publications/insect/insect.pdf> is a publication from Sustainable Agriculture Research & Extension Service (SARE) called "Manage Insects on Your Farm, A Guide to Ecological Strategies by Miguel Altieri and Clara Nicholls. This book offers a whole system approach to manage pests on a farm, from soil to enhancing plant diversity.

<http://www.ipm.msu.edu/new-ag/soybeanrust.htm> Soybean rust resources at New Ag Network with reports throughout the growing season of action needed and suggested management tools to reduce soybean rust incidence.

Soil management and soil building information

 <http://www.safs.msu.edu/> is a site of soil and sustainable agriculture information including cover crops, nutrient management, soil ecology economic analysis, integrated pest management, biological control with native plants, crop biotechnology & Sustainable agriculture, livestock-beef, cultural diversity, and women and agriculture.

 http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pageset_id=212421 Keep it in the Root Zone from MSUE provides some info on appropriate manure management and maximizing return to your soil using manure and compost.

http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/agron/nutrient/Plan/Multi_calc.pdf is a worksheet to help you calculate your nitrogen credit for the soil using manure as the nitrogen source.



<http://www.new-ag.msu.edu/> is the site of the New Ag Network, an on-line newsletter from farmers and researchers in the Great Lakes region, including Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. Information is appropriate for crops and vegetables farmers seeking input on organic soil building, field management, and cover crop implementation. This newsletter includes bi-weekly reports from farmers throughout the region and reports from researchers and educators.



<http://www.css.msu.edu/SoilTesting.cfm> Soil testing process and analysis through Michigan State University.

http://www.algreatlakes.com/lab_agr_soi.asp A & L Great Lakes soil testing. Results can be sent via email as an excel file and/or paper copy. They can perform tests on plants, soil and compost.

Organic Tree Fruit

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/treefruit/events.htm> Upper Midwest Organic Tree Fruit Network:

Organic and Sustainable Animal Production



<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/fis/extension.htm> offers resources for farmers using forage for animal production or ground cover systems.

http://www.omri.org/OMRI_datatable.htm is the searchable database of animal products that are permitted in organic systems. Note that their stamp of approval is not legally binding (although there is discussion with USDA to change that) but offers assurance to the farmer and certifying agency that the product is ok for organic systems.

<http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/pages/resources/production/organic.cfm#dairy> Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) has put together a nice packet of info for dairy farmers who are considering to transition to organic. Since NY is a similar USDA growing zone and similar climate the info is relevant to Michigan.

<http://www.glti.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/publications/nrph.html> NRCS offers a manual on pasture management. Chapter 6 is useful to calculate the nutrition needed by the grazing animal and how to supply that in the pasture.

Market Identification and Decision Making Tools

<http://www.newfarm.org/opx/> offers a database with updated prices for organic produce found at main markets in the U.S.



<http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu/vendors.asp> is a site for the Michigan Farmers' Market Association for farmers and vendors. This site offers resources to assist with the decision and details of selling at farmers markets.

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/NewCrops/decision.html> is a site from University of Kentucky extension offering tools to identify and develop new farm enterprises.

<http://www.farmnotebook.com/> is a free on-line record keeping system for farm market growers and CSAs.



<http://www.productcenter.msu.edu/> The MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) The center can help you develop and commercialize high value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the agriculture and natural food sectors.

www.ams.usda.gov/govdirectmarketing is the Farmer's Direct Marketing website that provides information about direct marketing and opportunities available for small farmers.

http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm USDA list of templates to build business plan and lists of grants for small farms. Many of the grants require collaboration with an educational institution.

Organic Certification

<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/plantsci/crops/a1181w.htm> is an article entitled, "Organic Farming: Is It For Me?"

http://attra.ncat.org/new_pubs/attra-pub/PDF/organcert.pdf?id=Michigan offers info on certification process from USDA group called ATTRA. Note the section on \$5000 exemption if you are a new and smaller sized grower may be relevant to farmers selling less than \$5000gross per year.

http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1569_25516-55175--,00.html is a list of certifiers that can certify a farm for organic. Note that many of these certifiers have area chapters and each chapter has its own staff. Thus when searching for an agency check with the various chapters to find one you want to work with.

<http://www.ccof.org/cert-faq.php> is a list of frequently answered questions and answers about requirements of organic certification

<http://www.omri.org/> OMRI is an institute that is independent but tests if products are suitable for certified organic systems. Note that all products do not have to be approved by OMRI but if they are then you are sure it is ok to use in an organic system.

http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1567_1600-70307--,00.html is for a cost share application. Michigan Department of Ag will pick up 75% of the certification cost for all organic farms in Michigan. It is available after you have received your certification.

Periodicals related to organic farming

<http://www.acresusa.com/magazines/magazine.htm> Acres U.S.A. is North America's oldest, largest magazine covering commercial-scale organic and sustainable farming

<http://www.newfarm.org> is the electronic version of Rodale Institute's magazine with articles and resources for organic farmers.

www.nal.usda.gov/afsic has many publications and readings about organic and sustainable agriculture at the USDA's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center website. Production, SARE grants, and local organics are areas of interest that this site covers.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/> offers technical resources, market listings (where a farmer could list their farm) and other weblinks about CSAs and Biodynamic farming.

<http://www.csafarms.org/> is a resource for farmers starting a CSA or needing technical information.

Resources for the home/family organic gardeners

<http://homeharvest.com/linksorganics.htm> offers general consumer information on organic agriculture and production

<http://www.organicgardening.com/channel/1,,s1-5,00.html> offers information suitable for home organic gardeners

Grant Resources

www.ofrf.org Organic Farming Research Foundation: An annual CFP with a deadline of Dec 15. This is strictly for research applied projects

www.sare.org Sustainable Agriculture Research & Extension is the USDA source of grant money for organic and sustainable farmers' research, professional development and applied research. Each section has a separate call for proposals and separate financial support.

<http://www.attra.org/> National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service offers fact sheets and information sources on all aspects of sustainable and organic agriculture. There are many fact sheets as pdf files that are excellent educational resources to use for references and farmer references.

www.fsa.usda.gov is the Farm Service Agency where farmers can apply for loans and other funding that assist farmers for start up, disaster relief, and other needs.

Organizations to promote organic agriculture and organic foods

<http://www.moffa.org/> Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance brings consumers and farmers together to understand the values of organic and local food systems in Michigan. They organize an annual organic conference held in March. This year it will be on March 2 and 3rd at the Kellogg conference center in East Lansing.

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/> Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service has an annual organic conference and offers fact sheets on many aspects of organic agriculture and marketing.

www.organicaginfo.org Organic Ag Info, searchable organic resources by topic, region, etc. Emphasis are research reports, but also links to grower groups and other support organizations: