Spring Highlights

Partner Spotlight: Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) was started in 1979 by a group of farmers, food workers, and consumers who were concerned about the chemicals being used on our farms and in our food. They knew organic agriculture was better for the environment and people.

When the word "organic" finally came into common usage in agriculture, OEFFA was one of the first organizations in the country to offer organic certification, long before it became law and a USDA-led program. OEFFA has since grown to include three collaborative teams: organic certification specialists who ensure that farmers and processors meet organic's high standards, educators who teach farmer members on best practices, and grassroots policy leaders who advocate for organic and sustainable agriculture at the state and national level.

Because of OEFFA's long history in the organic movement, we were invited to become a TOPP core partner for Ohio in the Midwest Region. In those early days, we leaned on our previous experience in technical assistance and running mentorship programs to help launch those two TOPP priorities.

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Midwest TOPP 2026 1st Quarter Summary

MIDWEST
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) continued to strengthen organic agriculture across the Midwest. During the last quarter, the Midwest Organic Mentorship program supported ***89 mentor pairs*** across the 11-state region. Partners provided ***1:1 technical assistance to at least 206 producers***, created ***83 new resources***, and participated in **93 events** reaching over ***3,200 farmers and agriculture professionals*** with wide-ranging resources about organic certification, crop production, markets, and other related topics.

Success Stories

Organic Seed Alliance is Strengthening the Midwest Organic Seed Network

The Organic Seed Alliance is putting the power of seeds into the hands of certified organic and transitioning producers in the Midwest. The MW TOPP partnerships have boosted OSA's presence within the Midwest, creating new relationships and knowledge resources that improve our nation's capacity to meet the growing demand for organic seeds. This collaboration allows more effective promotion of community building events and technical resource.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Organic Farmer Meet-ups Across Iowa Offers Community and Technical Support

The Iowa Organic Association coordinated four "Organic Farmer Meet-ups" across the state, where over 75 farmers shared real-world insights and strengthened local connections. The energy was high as peers and neighbors reconnected and laid the groundwork for a more collaborative organic community. Topics discussed included: organic grain pricing and marketing, managing southern rust, testing new weed control methods, and developing stronger markets for extended crop rotations (3rd and 4th crops).

>>> READ MORE >>>

Building Toward Certification in Kentucky: The Hollow Oak Farm Journey

Julie and Jeremiah Muth of Hollow Oak Farm in Berry, Kentucky, exemplify the determination and vision of 1st-generation farmers building a diversified operation from the ground up. Managing 122 acres, they raise grass-finished beef, pastured pork and poultry, grow produce, and develop value-added products, all while learning what it takes to build a resilient and sustainable farm business. They have been intentional in strengthening systems to support long-term success, especially as they work toward organic certification.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Maximizing MWTOPP Partnerships to Expand Organic Resources and Support

The Organic Farming Research Foundation partnered with Marbleseed at their Annual Organic Farming Conference in Wisconsin, to coordinate a farmer listening session and a regional meetup for researchers to identify urgent research needs and foster a collaborative atmosphere for sharing expertise within the organic community. These sessions strengthened a collective commitment for advancing organic research and resources in the Midwest.

>>> READ MORE >>>

>>> MORE TOPP NEWS <<<

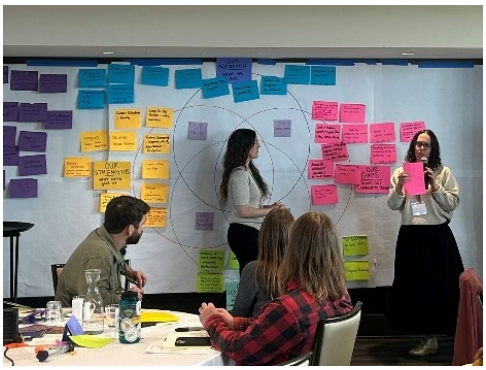
News & Announcements

MW TOPP Meeting of the Minds Partner Retreat – March 2026

The Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) core partners gathered in Madison, Wisconsin, for the third "Meeting of the Minds" partner retreat. This group of dynamic organic leaders dedicated their time and expertise to strategic planning and collaboration around the program's final year.

Keith Miller and Kate Noble of TerraLuna Collaborative returned to guide the group, leveraging their familiarity with the project and partners to maximize each organization's strengths, experiences, and collective wisdom. Some of the topics explored were TOPP successes and how to address the existing gaps of support and resources needed for transitioning farmers.

The outcomes from the work resulted in deeper connections, expanded awareness and opportunities for organic partnerships, and a continued commitment to advancing TOPP priorities.



Kathleen Delate Retires from ISU After 27 Years of Organic Agriculture Research

After 27 years at Iowa State University, pioneering organic agriculture researcher Kathleen Delate, PhD, is retiring — closing a chapter that helped shape the modern organic movement in the United States. Her scientific contributions include more than 114 publications and over 2,280 citations on ResearchGate, with influential work demonstrating the connections between organic agriculture, soil health, water quality, and food quality. Perhaps most importantly, Kathleen helped give legitimacy to organic agriculture inside institutions that were not always welcoming to it.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Cover Crops in Organic Grain: Making Them Work in the Real World

Cover crops are often talked about in simple terms: build soil, reduce erosion, improve water quality. And while those benefits are real, the day-to-day reality is more complex. In organic grain systems, cover crops are doing real work, as part of fertility, weed control, and long-term soil health. This guide what farmers are seeing in the field, and how to think about making cover crops work in a practical, consistent way.

>>> READ MORE >>>

OEFFA Ag Policy Tracker: Keeping Up with Food & Farm Policy Just Got Easier

With so much happening across Congress, USDA, and the White House, NOC member Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) has created a new Ag Policy Tracker to help the organic community stay informed. This searchable tool tracks key federal and state actions and highlights important marker bills.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Why Are Traditional Weedkillers Dangerous, and What Are Safer Alternatives?

Weedkillers, or herbicides, are used primarily in commercial settings on row-crop farms, or in urban and suburban areas on lawns, parks, golf courses, and more. Herbicides vary in strength and attack plants in different ways. This includes blocking photosynthesis, root growth — or leaf growth — and reducing water retention. **List of Herbicides Sold at Home Depot and Lowe's.**

>>> READ MORE >>>

Organic agriculture and climate change—update after 15 years

In a review article published in the Journal of Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems in 2010, we described the mitigation and adaptation potential of organic agricultural systems. In this article, we reflect on our findings and update the results from 2010. Today's scientific evidence confirms that the principles of organic agriculture can facilitate a transition to climate-neutral food systems.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Regenerative Food Labels: What's Behind the Claim?

Not all "Regenerative" labels are created equal. A growing number of food labels claim to verify that foods are regeneratively grown. But with no widely accepted definition of regenerative agriculture, and each label offering its own interpretation of what qualifies, what do these labels really mean? Friends of the Earth evaluated how ten labeling programs stack up in terms of phasing out harmful pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, building soil health, verifying farmer practices, and tracking products from farm to shelf.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Organic Center: Organic Consumer "Tip" Sheets

THE ORGANIC CENTER

The Organic Center continues to expand its library of consumer-focused tipsheets designed to translate organic science into clear, practical resources for everyday decision-making. Current tipsheet topics include: organic meat, dairy, produce, cotton, spices, herbs, and teas, and resources explaining the USDA Organic seal.

>>> READ MORE >>>

Organic Mentorship Program

Transition to Organic!

TOPP connects transitioning organic producers with experienced organic farmer mentors.

>>> BECOME A MENTOR <<< ***>>> BECOME A MENTEE <<<***

organictransition.org/mentorship-program

Find an Accredited Certifying Agent

The National Organic Program **Organic INTEGRITY Database (INTEGRITY)** provides accurate information about accredited certifying agents on the Organic Certifier Locator.

>>> FIND A CERTIFIER HERE <<<

Upcoming Midwest Events

>>> VIEW ALL TOPP EVENTS HERE <<<

Jun 16-17	Midwest Meat Summit | Ankeny, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 17	Field Day: West Tennessee AgResearch Weed Tour| Jackson, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 18	Field Day: Organic Grain, Ground & Grown | Ashkum, Illinois	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 20	Field Day: Farm, Faith, and Food Security | North Little Rock, Arkansas	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 20	Field Day: MW TOPP & Organic Production | Pipestone, Minnesota	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 22	Field Day: Organic Cereals Field Walk | Verona, Wisconsin	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 24	Field Day: Organic Forage and Pasture Ecology Field Day | Dubois, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 24	Field Day: Regenerative Organic Certified | Waukesha, Wisconsin	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 25	Field Day: Organic Cranberry Field Day | Three Lakes, Wisconsin	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 26	Field Day: Overcoming Challenges and Finding Opportunities for Growth on an Organic Farm | Wesley, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 28	Field Day: Soil Health and Diversified Systems at Blue Gate Farm Chariton, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jun 30	Field Day: Celebrate Local Foods at Camp Cultivate | Des Moines, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 07	Field Day: The Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center | Marion, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE

Upcoming Midwest Events-continued

Jul 07	Field Day: Blooms, Bees and Biodiversity for Thriving Farms | Frankfort, Kentucky	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 09	Field Day: Ventures with Seed: Building a Seed Conditioning Business Carroll, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 09	Field Day: Organic Row Crop Equipment & Field Management Early, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 10	Field Day: Urban Farming for Pollinators and People | Des Moines, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 12	Webinar: USDA Organic Certification	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 15	Field Day: Of High Tunnels and Wholesale Organic Vegetables Bridgewater, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 15	Webinar: Building a Biological Powerhouse in Your Soil--Infusing Your Soil and Plants with Beneficial Microbes	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 16	Field Day: Purdue Fruit and Vegetable Field Day | Lafayette, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 16	Webinar: Organic Certification for Urban Farms	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 21	Field Day: Purdue Turf and Landscape | West Lafayette, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE
Jul 21	Field Day: Organic Kernza, Sunflowers, and Oats: Seeking Financial and Agronomic Sustainability | Cambridge, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE

Arkansas Field Crop Meeting
(October 2025)

Iowa Backyard Gardening Field Day
(August 2025)

Marbleseed Organic Grains Field Day
(October 2025)

Upcoming Midwest Events-continued

Jul 21	Farm Tours: Growing seeds, flowers, and more! | Whitmore Lake, Michigan	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 23	Field Day: 34th Annual No-Till Field Day | Milan, Tennessee	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 23	Webinar: Research & Education that Centers Farmer Knowledge	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jun 24	Field Day: Organic Seeds to Spirts | Paxton, Illinois	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 25	Field Day: CAFF Open House at the Farm | Fayetteville, Arkansas	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 28	OFARM Organic Producers Regional Meeting | Morris, Minnesota	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 30	Webinar: How Producers Weigh the Cost-Benefit of Organic Certification	**FIND OUT MORE**
Jul 31	Farm Tour: Organic Value-Added and Agritourism Farms | Sodus, Michigan	**FIND OUT MORE**
Aug 06	Field Day: Agroforestry, Regenerative Organics, and Community Food Resilience | Mount Vernon, Kentucky	**FIND OUT MORE**
Aug 06	Field Day: No Till, No Spray, No Weeds & Experiences in Organic Arlington, Wisconsin	**FIND OUT MORE**
Aug 09	Field Day: Organic Certification Best Practices & Marketing Organic Vegetables | Bridgewater, Iowa	**FIND OUT MORE**

Sweet Tooth Farm-Iowa Field Day (July 2025))

OGRAIN Winter Conference (February 2026)

Michigan Organic Weed Management (July 2025)

Upcoming Midwest Events-continued

Aug 11	Farm Tour: Explore Farm to Institution Markets—Schools to Hospitals Muskegon, Michigan	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 13	Farm Tour: Hort, Hops and Crops | Knoxville, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 18	Field Day: Farming for People, Purpose, and Profit | Petoskey, Michigan	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 18	Field Day: UW Organic Research Station | Arlington, Wisconsin	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 19	Field Day: Pinney Purdue Agricultural Center | Wanatah, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 19-20	Midwest Organic Seed Summit | Twin Cities, Minnesota	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 22	Field Day: A Practical Farm Family's Journey: Sustaining a Legacy of Stewardship | Harlan, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 22	Field Day: Perennial Farm Ecosystem Conference | Traverse City, Michigan	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 25	Field Day: Greenhouse Propagation, Seeding, and Planting | Lexington, Kentucky	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 26	Field Day: A Diversified Direct Market Meat Business with Organic Row Crops | Durango, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 28-29	Field Day: Grazing 102| Dubois, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE
Aug 29	Field Day: UT Arboretum Pollinator Conservation in Agriculture Oak Ridge, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 08	Field Day: Soybean Insect and Disease | Milan, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 09	Field Day: NE Purdue Agricultural Center | Columbia City, Indiana	FIND OUT MORE

Upcoming Midwest Events-continued

Sep 12	Field Day: Plum Ridge Fruit Farm's Favorite Pear Varieties: Ongoing Variety Trial and More | Decorah, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 16	Field Day: 2026 Midwest Mechanical Weed Control | Benton Harbor, Michigan	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 17	Field Day: Virtual Fencing: Year One Takeaways | Spring Green, Wisconsin	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 21	Field Day: The Importance of Seed Saving and Heirloom Seeds at Seed Savers Exchange | Decorah, Iowa	FIND OUT MORE
Sep 22	Field Day: Precision Livestock Technologies: Beef and Forage Systems Spring Hill, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE
Oct 4-6	Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference – TOPP Celebration Bellaire, Michigan	FIND OUT MORE
Oct 22	Field Day: Agriculture and Wildlife | Oak Ridge, Tennessee	FIND OUT MORE

>>> SUBMIT EVENTS HERE <<<

About TOPP

MOSA is the Midwest Lead Cooperator for the **USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)**—a coalition of partners serving producers in **Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin**. The Midwest Regional Center and its partner organizations will connect farmers transitioning to organic with local, experienced organic mentors; provide farmer training and education; develop and expand access to technical assistance and training; build network and strengthen the organic community; and support workforce training and development. **OrganicTransition.org**

MIDWEST TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program