



Financing your Farm Project in 2013

by Melissa White Pillsbury, Organic Marketing Coordinator

As your fall CSA winds down, your livestock head for processing, and your early spring crops get planted, your thoughts may turn to how to finance the project that will help you reduce your workload next year or increase your output. We want to bring your attention to three financing options – two with deadlines in January.

First, **MOFGA's Organic Farmer Loan Fund** makes loans in the range of \$5,000 to \$20,000 to MOFGA-certified farmers or transitioning farmers for working capital or investments in equipment or infrastructure. MOFGA is particularly interested in lending to organic farmers who need to establish a credit history so that they may borrow from traditional sources in the future. We encourage all applicants to inquiry about funding availability before putting together an application. For more information, call 207-568-4142, send an email to loanfund@mofga.org or visit our website: <http://www.mofga.org/Programs/OrganicFarmerLoanFund>.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.'s Sustainable Agriculture Fund offers a wide range of financing options, from microloans of \$5,000 to investments up to and beyond \$500,000 for farm mortgages, operations, equipment, buildings and supplies, and other working capital needs. Rates are fixed, starting at 5%, and repayment is matched to cash flow. Applications are accepted at any time. In addition to loan capital, free business planning counseling and lending technical assistance is available. For more information call Gray Harris at 207-882-5135 or send an email to gharris@ceimaine.org.

No Small Potatoes Investment Club makes loans of up to \$5,000 with three year terms and 5% interest for equipment or special projects that help a farm operate more efficiently and/or support growth. Several farmers have applied for both a MOFGA loan and a No Small Potatoes Loan at the same time to finance a \$25,000 project. The next round of NSP applications are due on Friday, January 25th, and decisions will be made in mid-March. See www.slowmoneymaine.org/investment-club/ to download an application or e-mail walkermadore@myfairpoint.net to get more information.

A new investment club, called **Maine Organic Lenders**, is starting up in the midcoast. They will lend to organic farms throughout Maine, and have a special interest in Knox, Waldo and Lincoln counties. They will make loans up to \$25,000 and will consider flexible terms. Applications will be accepted at any time. Please contact Deb Chapman at cci@midcoast.com for more information.



Make sure your PRODUCTS and MARKETS info is up to date!

Did you know that the information in your renewal paperwork that lists your products and where you sell them is an excellent- FREE- marketing tool for your farm?

The products and markets information appears in several MOFGA publications: the Organic Maine! Directory of MOFGA Certified Farms, Foods and Products is published annually and distributed to individuals and businesses statewide; MOFGA.net and mofgacertification.org contain online searchable directories of MCS clients, your products, and where to buy them.

In addition, MOFGA staff use the info contained in these directories to direct inquiries we receive regularly from families and businesses wanting to buy MOFGA certified organic products, so this is the best tool we have to make the right recommendations for folks and build your market!

Please make sure your PRODUCTS and MARKETS information is accurate and complete!