

Field Notes

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Board (NOSB) meeting, MOFGA's Education department highlights and much more. We're also thrilled to have MOFGA's new Executive Director, Sarah Alexander, participating in this issue with her letter to producers and her thoughts on the importance of MOFGA certified organic and the plans to continue to elevate the brand.

Looking Ahead

While we were saddened to lose Katy Green on our Certification staff, we are very excited that she has taken on the role of MOFGA's new Communications and Outreach director. This newly developed department is tasked with outward facing messaging for all MOFGA programs, including the continued brand building strategy of the MOFGA certified organic label and what that means in the marketplace. They will continue to build on the work which began last year with the Pulp + Wire contract (mentioned in past issues) and elevate MOFGA's ability to effectively "tell the stories" of all of the great work you are accomplishing in the marketplace and community. We will again be reaching out to ask all certified producers to participate with a call for content.

As spring turns to summer and the promise of green pastures with grazing animals, flush and beautiful bounties and rejuvenating sunshine, I'm reminded of the integral part we all play in our regional food system. Our communities will continue to rely on the amazing work you do every day, whether they know it or not. And while many may not be aware of this vital work, I believe they will come to it out of need and necessity. I am heartened and humbled to be a part of a community that knew it all along and continues to be a leader in staying that course.



MOFGA Business Services Available to MCS Certified Operations

by Heather Omand, Organic Marketing and Business Specialist

As many of you know, MOFGA's Agricultural Services department offers a variety of services, including business and marketing assistance. We produce the organic price reports, collaborate on many agricultural business and marketing trainings across the state, and offer business and market planning assistance to certified businesses. However, MOFGA wants to ensure that certified organic operations are aware of the full scope of business-focused services and programs that are available.

Please review the list below and get in touch with Heather Omand, Organic Marketing and Business Specialist, (homand@mofga.org, 207-568-6024) with any questions.

Business services/programs available:

1. Direct, one-on-one, technical assistance (TA) for business and marketing needs: this can include on-farm assistance, virtual meetings, email, or phone call support in enterprise budgeting and crop profitability analysis, assessing and improving marketing, record-keeping, market research, writing business plans, and more.
2. Wholesale TA Grant program: this program offers small grants (up to \$2,000) for certified businesses to access professional consulting services (lawyers, food manufacturing expertise, business planning, market

research, production consultants, etc.). Contact Heather if you wish to be added to a postal mailing list to be alerted about future opportunities if you do not access email.

3. In 2019 we aspire to update and finish the online organic farmer business toolkit (available on the MOFGA website under Agricultural Services <http://mofga.org/Programs/Agricultural-Services>), but there are currently excellent resources there for setting prices, evaluating appropriate scale, and marketing the organic message.
4. Heather serves on the review committee of MOFGA's Organic Farmer Loan Fund, on the steering committee of Slow Money Maine and on the review board for Maine Technology Institute's grants and loans. She can act as a guide and liaison to the programs of these organizations, as well as assist with identifying appropriate sources of potential capital more generally.
5. Finally, we are part of a regional network of organizations, consultants, and technical assistance providers across New England that can support agricultural and food entrepreneurs business and marketing needs. Contact Heather (homand@mofga.org, phone: 207-568-6024) and if we can't help with your query, we know someone who can!



A Message from MOFGA's Executive Director (Continued from Page 1)

MOFGA restructured this spring to create a Communications and Outreach Department, and we will be increasing our consumer outreach to help grow the market for MOFGA certified in Maine and beyond.

We want everyone to know that buying from local organic producers is the best thing you can do for our health and our environment. We're proud of the work that we do, and that each of you do to provide the highest quality food for our communities. I promise that MOFGA and MOFGA Certification Services will do all we can to create a level playing field for all organic producers.

