



MOFGA's Agricultural Services Department

Providing Assistance to Maine's Organic Farming and Gardening Community

One annual visit that certified organic farms can plan on is the visit from a MOFGA Certification Services inspector as part of the process for continuing in the certification program. In earlier days of MOFGA Certification, before the National Organic Program began, MOFGA's inspectors were able to inspect and give advice to growers on their annual visits. In order to avoid a conflict of interest (such as inspectors requiring the use of a certain product or offering to consult for a fee) the NOP discourages inspectors from giving specific information to growers regarding meeting the rules. For this reason MOFGA has staff available through the Agricultural Services Department that can help with many of the questions or challenges of the annual certification update and organic production questions.

Eric Sideman

Eric Sideman began working with MOFGA farmers in 1986 and became what some call "the nation's first Organic Extension Agent." From 1997 to 2002 Eric served on the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), an advisory board to the USDA National Organic Program. Eric provides technical support for farmers and gardeners. Vegetable and small fruit production are his specialties. He gives numerous talks throughout the year and issues weekly pest reports during the growing season. Eric's main focus is farms in the southern area of Maine. He is available for consultation and farm visits. esideman@mofga.org

John Chartier

In Aroostook and Washington Counties MOFGA Ag Services is pleased to add John Chartier as the Farm Advisor for Maine's northern region. John is proud to have grown up on a mixed crop and livestock farm in Kansas. John is pleased to provide a "one stop shop" for northern Maine farmers and gardeners accessing MOFGA services. John is available for farm visits and consulting as well as working on developing events

and programs of interest to growers in northern Maine. jchartier@mofga.org

Dave Colson

Joining the Ag Services Staff in 2011 as the Ag Services Director and Farm advisor is Dave Colson. Dave has worked with MOFGA in countless ways since 1985 when his family's New Leaf Farm in Durham first became certified organic. The Colson's New Leaf Farm has been a source of organic vegetables, fruits and herbs for markets and restaurants in the greater Portland area. Now as a member of MOFGA's staff, Dave is scaling back farm production somewhat, providing leadership to an evolving Ag Services staff, and sharing the wealth of knowledge that he has gained through decades of organic farming in Maine. dcolson@mofga.org



Diane Schivera

Our Organic Livestock Specialist, Diane Schivera, assists farmers with questions about raising farm animals organically. Diane works closely with the Maine Alternative Poultry Association (MAPA), and the Maine Grass Farmers' Network.

She coordinates workshops and pasture walks on alternative livestock health practices and management. Diane also writes fact sheets on livestock issues. Diane provides technical assistance through on-site farm visits, phone conversations and written and email correspondence. dianes@mofga.org

Katy Green

MOFGA Organic Transitions Coordinator Katy Green can help growers transition to organic production and connect with on-farm conservation programs. Trained as an NRCS Technical Services Provider, Katy not only helps new and transitioning farms enter the Certification Program, she can also aid farmers who wish to access NRCS conservation programs and

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funding. She is available to help evaluate conservation on the farm, particularly on-farm water quality issues.

kgreen@mofga.org

Melissa White Pillsbury

Don't know what to grow or how to sell it? Melissa White Pillsbury, our Organic Marketing Coordinator, helps MOFGA farmers with their marketing plans and assists markets in securing reliable sources of farm goods. Melissa also compiles the monthly organic price reports, maintains a directory of Maine farmers' markets, and oversees the publication of Organic Maine! and The Maine CSA Directory.

melissa@mofga.org

Cheryl Wixson

Cheryl Wixson, Organic Marketing Consultant, is helping MOFGA develop a strategic marketing plan for organic, locally-grown foods. Aiding farms in gaining access to markets which require Food Safety Plans and connecting hospitals and institutions with local organic foods has been a focus of Cheryl's marketing work. As a certified organic farmer and value-added food processor (Cheryl Wixson's Kitchen brand), Cheryl can provide assistance to organic producers who are struggling with production records and lot numbering systems. Contact Cheryl about food safety plans, record keeping for processors, institutional markets. cheryl@mofga.org

C.J. Walke

C.J. Walke, MOFGA's Organic Orchardist, manages the two orchards at MOFGA's Common Ground Education Center in Unity, Maine. He also works with fruit tree growers and home gardeners to build orchard health and establish organic methods of pest and disease control. C.J. is deeply involved in MOFGA's Organic Orchardling Workshop Series and gives various presentations on organic growing in the Belfast, Maine area. C.J. helps with Orchard Events both at MOFGA and around the state and is available for orchard and fruit tree related questions. cjwalke@mofga.org

To consult with or contact any of the MOFGA Ag Services Staff you may contact them directly by email or call the MOFGA Office at 207-568-4142. All of us at MOFGA look forward to working with you.