



THE BUCKWHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

NEWSLETTER No. 8

Summer – August, 2011

A Farmer Owned and Operated Cooperative—
Organic certified with OCIA Intl.

Summer 2011

Thank you to our Customers/Vendors:

We would like to take a moment at the beginning of this newsletter to express our sincere appreciation to all our customers and vendors who make our business possible.

Lamberton Field Day

We attended the Field day at SWROC in Lamberton, MN on July 7th where we had a booth also. Many people who visited the booth were interested in the organic grass fed cattle and possible cover crops for the fall. It is always exciting to see what the university is researching for new ways to farm. They are trying to co plant buckwheat with soybeans to attract certain types of beneficial insects that help with aphids. Also they are using alfalfa on corn crops to add nitrogen into the soil. The alfalfa is being used as mulch. We were also able to explore their high tunnels. They were already harvesting vegetables. Another area had a no till for rye and soybeans. They rolled the rye in the spring and then planted the soybeans. It is still research phase. Due to the extremely wet summer a lot of their test plots had been flooded and no crop in them. If you have any questions regarding what research is being done in Lamberton visit their website at <http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu>

Board of Directors

- Tom Bilek (Aldrich) -Chairman
- Mike Sams (Staples) -Vice Chairman
- Jeff Nardello (Sebeka) -Secretary/Treasurer
- Glen Borgerding (Albany)
- Floyd Hardy (Brainerd)
- Al Holmquist (Clarissa)
- Rod Mursu (New York Mills)

Tom continues to fill the role of Manager and Board Chair for the business. He can be reached by phone at the Mill (218) 631-9212 or on his Cell (218) 639-2312.



"The best fertilizer on the land is the footsteps of the owner." --Aristotle

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Grain Cleaning at BGA

Cleaning is available for:

- Rye/Vetch
- Triticale/Vetch
- Oats
- Barley
- Wheat
- Peas
- Flax

206 Aldrich Ave SE, Wadena MN 56482

Phone: (218) 631-9212 Tom's Cell (218) 639-2312

Website: www.buckwheatgrowers.com





E-Mail: info@buckwheatgrowers.com

HARVESTING AND STORING ORGANIC GRAINS



The methods you use in harvesting and storing your grain is a critical step in producing a high quality crop for sale. It is important to thoroughly clean machines and hauling equipment if conventional crops are also harvested with the same equipment. This is done to prevent genetic and/or prohibited materials contamination. It is also a good idea to harvest the outside rows first, especially those neighboring conventional crops to prevent genetic (and pesticide) contamination. Treat these rows as conventional (harvest, store and sell as conventional grain).

Focus your storage management on the following factors:

-  Grain temperature
-  Grain moisture
-  Air relative humidity
-  Storage time

An excellent preventative post-harvest grain management approach is the SLAM system (**S**anitize/**S**eal, **L**oad, **A**erate, and **M**onitor)

Sanitize/Seal: Clean bins, aeration ducts, and auger trenches. Clean up around your bins by removing weeds, trash, and moldy grain. Seal all openings to provide barrier protection against insects.

Load: Load clean, dry grain. Core the grain—this involves operating the unload auger to pull the peak down and remove the center core of the bin that contains most fine and small foreign matter. Spread/level the grain—a level grain surface is easier to manage and less likely to change temperature during storage.

Aerate: Aeration can be used to equalize grain temperature and moisture throughout the bin. Maintain grain temperature at below 60° F to control insects and mold. Use aeration to prevent moisture migration. Aeration can reduce grain moisture content from ¼ to ½ percent during one aeration cycle.

Monitor: Use a grain thermometer to track grain temperature and schedule regular grain sampling and monitoring. When hot spots are detected, use aeration and turning techniques.

Another important factor when storing your grain is insect management. Keeping bins, ducts, and augers clean, as well as storing the grain at low temperature (at or below 60°F) and low humidity is very important in minimizing insects. Another suggested and often used method to prevent insect problems is to add food-grade diatomaceous earth (DE) to the grain as it is being loaded into the bins (at a rate of up to 4# per 1000 bu of grain). Sprinkle on top of the grain while it is moving in the auger to the bin, and then on top of the grain after it is loaded. DE works because the surface of each particle is very sharp on a microscopic level and the sharp edges cut into worms as they feed or move over the grain. (Diatomaceous Earth is available at Buckwheat Grower's Association.)

Harvesting and storing info was adapted from the website:

www.organicgrains.cnsu.edu/marketing/harvestandstorage.html



PRODUCTION PRACTICES (Soil Testing)

Glen Borgerding, BWGA board member and Certified Crop Advisor, reminds us that after your 3rd hay cutting and small grains harvest it's a good time to start your fall soil sampling program. Stop in at BWGA and pick up the soil testing probe and a soil sample bag. Follow the instructions on the soil test bag and return everything to the BWGA. You can expect your soil sample results in about a week to ten days. Soil improvement recommendations will be included with your test results.

FALL COVER CROPS



Consider planting Rye, Vetch, Austrian winter peas, or Camelina for your fall cover crops.

Cereal Rye – Cereal Rye (also called rye, winter rye, or grain rye), is a cool season annual cereal grain.

Its main benefits/roles include:

- ✦ scavenging excess nitrogen
- ✦ preventing erosion
- ✦ adding organic matter
- ✦ suppressing weeds (lambsquarters, redroot pigweed, velvetleaf, chickweed, foxtail, dandelions and Canada thistle)
- ✦ pest suppressor
- ✦ early spring forage
- ✦ nutrient catch crop

Rye can be seeded later in fall than other cover crops and still provide considerable dry matter, an extensive soil-holding root system, significant reduction of nitrate leaching, and exceptional weed suppression. Inexpensive and easy to establish, rye is great on infertile, sandy, or acidic soil. It is widely adapted, but grows best in cool, temperate zones. Pair rye with a winter annual legume such as hairy vetch. (www.extension.org/pages/18571/cereal-rye-for-cover-cropping-in-organic-farming)

Hairy Vetch – Hairy Vetch is a winter annual or summer annual legume.

Its main benefit/roles include:

- ✦ Providing a nitrogen source
- ✦ Suppressing weeds
- ✦ Improving topsoil condition
- ✦ Reducing erosion

Hairy Vetch is hard to match for spring residue production or nitrogen contribution. This legume is widely adapted and winter hardy through Hardiness Zone 4 and into Zone 3 (with snow cover). The cover grows slowly in the fall, but the development of roots continues over the winter. Growth quickens in spring, when the vetch becomes a sprawling vine up to 12 feet long with a height that rarely exceeds 3 feet. (www.extension.org/pages/18570/hairy-vetch-for-cover-cropping-in-organic-farming)

Austrian Winter Peas—Austrian Winter Peas produce a cool season, annual legume that is often used on organic farms as a rotational cover crop to naturally rebuild the soil.

Its main benefits/roles include:

- ✦ Providing a natural nitrogen source
- ✦ Producing a moderate amount of dry matter for grazing, hay, and silage
- ✦ Providing a green manure crop for other agricultural crops
- ✦ Reducing erosion

Austrian Winter Peas are an excellent cover crop and green manure crop. They build tilth and add organic matter and thus humus to the soil. Austrian Peas can provide from 90 to 150 lbs of natural nitrogen per acre of land. The peas can be mixed with other annuals such as rye. Austrian Winter Peas cannot tolerate high water table or substantial flooding. Exposure to long periods of sub-zero weather without snow cover can cause winterkill.

(www.seedsofchange.com/garden_center/product_details.aspx?item_no=PS11527)

Camelina—Camelina (also called gold-of-pleasure, false flax, wild flax, or German sesame), is a member of the mustard family, a distant relative to canola, and an exciting new player on the biofuels scene.

Its main benefits/roles include:

- ✦ Competes well against weeds once established
- ✦ Contains 35-38% oil, high in omega-3 fatty acids (fit for biofuel production)
- ✦ Remaining meal is protein-rich feed source for cattle, poultry, or swine
- ✦ Can be seeded and harvested with conventional farm equipment

Camelina is a short-seasoned, fast-growing crop. It is generally planted in early spring and harvested in late July, but there has been success with fall, or dormant seeding of camelina, which allows an even earlier start to the growing season. (www.susoiils.com/camelina/)

SEEDS FOR FALL PLANTING



This is a list of seeds we have available - organic and transitional (non-treated, non-gmo)
Call the Mill for type, quantity, quality, variety needed and price info. Blue River Hybrids just let us know that they have great savings for those who order early. They are starting to take orders in September. Also they have radish seed available for purchase.

Legumes -Alfalfa, Clovers, & Hairy Vetch

Grasses for Hay Mix- Brome/Timothy

Camelina

Winter Peas- Austrian

Rye

Triticale

The Buckwheat Growers Association of MN - A Farmer Owned and Operated Cooperative!

Remember that the Buckwheat Growers Association of Minnesota is a cooperative, owned by the members. It is also operated by the members through the Board of Directors. The Directors are elected as representatives of the membership at the annual meeting. The more involved and informed the members are about the activities of the cooperative, the better they can support the Board. The success of the coop depends on the commitment and support of the members. The purpose of the coop is not only to provide a market for grain, but also to add value to the member's production by providing feed processing, grain cleaning, and storage services.

Greetings from Tom:

Here it is August 1, 2011; summer is downhill after the 4th of July. It was a long cold spring but we made up with high heat and humidity in the last two months. We are approaching small grain and pea harvest at this time. Grain prices are on their way up. Organic corn went from low \$ 5.75 at harvest to \$12.75 August 1, 2011. Soybeans are holding steady at \$19.00. Feed grade regular oats market is pretty flat at \$4-\$5. Barley is at \$7.50-\$9.20. Buckwheat contracts did not get filled due to the wet summer. Good quality hay is hard to find as well. There is a good demand for organic straw. We have been working to establish a market for organic grass fed cattle. Thousand Hills is also looking for grass fed beef (non organic). There will be more information on the organic grass fed cattle from Panorama meats later this month. See Mike Sams beef news in this newsletter. Seed corn sales were poor this spring. Peas, oats and barley sales were average. Registered seeds sales were up this year. We purchased a protected variety of barley; we will have Qwest barley in the spring for anyone interested in trying it. At this time we have lots of rye looking for a good home. It is really hard to get a fair price at harvest time out of the field. Tom Bilek 218-639-2312

OFARM

By: Oren Holle

There appears to be a general attitude among Organic Producers that there is currently little need for group marketing initiatives since attractive contracting opportunities abound on most marketing fronts. Be reminded, however, that this might be a great opportunity for discussion with one of the OFARM marketers about extending those opportunities into the future and put some price stability into your marketing plan. (A list of marketers can be viewed at www.ofarm.org)

In addition OFARM is continuing to represent producers concerns in the areas of GMO contamination issues, organic integrity issues, and moves to further 'commoditize' Organic Marketing such as an ongoing study for the possibilities for futures trading in Organics. We stand firm in our position that GMO patent holders need to bear responsibility for contaminations, organic integrity must be a constant priority, and any marketing initiatives need to take into account the need for Organic pricing to start at the farm gate where the producers have input to assure that their profitability potential is protected.

Oren Holle

Ph 785.337.2442

FAX 785.337.2112

Cell 785.562.7500

The best way to get people to think outside of the box is not to create the box in the first place.



Livestock Market Access 2011 – Organic and Grass fed Beef
By: Mike Sams VP BWGA

After our meeting with Panorama Meats in Aldrich, many things have happened. The most important is that even though our beef cattle numbers are weak, they're still moving forward with G.A.P. certification on 4 farms/ranches. We don't currently have enough beef to support our local markets but we can still process at Cannon Falls and have access to pricing opportunities not currently available.

I toured local farms with Panorama representatives and Meg Moynihan prior to and after the meeting in Aldrich. They were very surprised that there is this amount of beef and grass in MN. Not only do they think we can fill the orders for Whole Foods we can or could expand into some new markets with a natural program.

We are still looking for more producers for beef that fit Global Animal Partnership's criteria for step 4 beef production. Call ASAP if you are interested. As a Co-op we are allowed to negotiate pricing, numbers really back it up and allow us the opportunity to strengthen our position for more money returning to the farmers.

There are opportunities for dairy beef also but the GAP criteria could be a bugger to deal with.

Mike Sams
320-241-2227

Schedule of Events

August 13th (Saturday) 6th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival at the McLeod County Fairgrounds, Hutchinson, MN (10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m) www.mngarlicfest.com

August 17th (Wednesday) In Her Boots: Sustainable Farming or Women by Women – Montevideo, MN (9:30am-4:30pm) \$20/person - To register for MOSES event (715) 778-5775 / angie@mosesorganic.org

September 10th (Saturday) 18th Annual Harvest Festival & Energy Fair – Bayfront Park, Duluth, MN
Contact: www.lssf.org (715) 209-0370

September 13th -15th (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) Big Iron Farm Show at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds, West Fargo, ND -- OCIA MN #1 and OCIA Intl will co-sponsor an exhibit at this event.

December 8th -10th (Thursday-Saturday) ACRES Conference at the Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio
www.acresusa.com

2012 Events

January 13th & 14th (Friday & Saturday) MN Organic Conference at the St. Cloud Civic Center
Contact: Mary Hanks 651-201-6012 or 1-800-967-2474 or Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us
or Meg Moynihan Meg.Moynihan@state.mn.us (651) 201-6012

January 13th (Friday) 5:30 pm - OCIA MN #1 Chapter Annual Membership Meeting

Radisson Hotel, 404 West St. Germain, St.Cloud MN
Contact Lorri Ann lhartel@prairieagcomm.com or (218) 253-4907

January 27th & 28th (Friday & Saturday) NPSAS 32nd Annual Winter Conference – at Ramkota, Aberdeen, SD www.npsas.org (701) 883-4304

February 17th & 18th (Friday & Saturday) Sustainable Farming Association of MN Annual Conference
at St. Ben's in St. Joseph, MN www.sfa-mn.org Contact: John Mesko at (763) 260-0209

February 20th – 22nd (Monday-Wednesday) OCIA Intl AGMM at Radisson Hotel, LaCrosse, WI

February 23-25, 2012 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday) Upper Midwest Organic Conference, LaCrosse, WI
<http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html>



*Buckwheat Growers Association is proud to be OCIA certified.
Organic Certified with OCIA Intl. to Process/Manufacture Feed for Livestock & Clean/Bag Grain*

Hours Open: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Please call ahead if you want a larger order of our products so that we may serve you more efficiently.

Phone: 218-631-9212 ---- Our Fax number has been changed to 218-631-1711

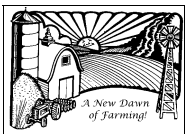
E-mail us at info@buckwheatgrowers.com Visit us on the web at www.buckwheatgrowers.com



BUCKWHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF MN

MISSION STATEMENT — To provide an opportunity for farmers to learn more about growing and harvesting buckwheat and other alternative crops and to add value to these crops by processing and marketing as a group of growers.

- The Buckwheat Growers Assn of MN incorporated in 1997, organized by a group of farmers to market buckwheat.
- The business expanded in the fall of 2000, with the purchase of the feed mill in Wadena.



The **BUCKWHEAT GROWERS**

ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

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Wadena MN 56482

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E-Mail: info@buckwheatgrowers.com