

Growing the eOrganic Community - Annual Report 2012



2012 marked eOrganic's fourth year of offering information on organic farming and research to the public. Our eXtension Community of Practice now has approximately 1,000 members, including researchers, Extension educators, agency personnel, organic certifiers and inspectors, farmers, and other agriculture professionals. More than 200 members have actively contributed to eOrganic by authoring and/or reviewing articles and FAQs, producing or reviewing videos, answering Ask an Expert (AaE) questions, presenting webinars, and/or attending outreach and leadership events. Read on to learn about our accomplishments in 2012 and upcoming plans for 2013.

Big Gains in Content Views

In 2012, eOrganic articles, news, and FAQs received 26% more hits compared with 2011. A total of 191,732 unique visitors resulted in 409,820 pageviews. The most popular page was [Webinars by eOrganic](#), followed by the [eOrganic Home Page](#), and the following articles: [Weed identification Tools and Techniques](#), by Mark Schonbeck, Virginia Association of Biological Farming; [Use of Tillage in Organic Farming Systems: The Basics](#) by Joel Gruver, Western Illinois University and Michelle Wander, University of Illinois; and [Training Systems and Pruning in Organic Tomato Production](#) by Bonnie Cox, Oregon Tilth. Our bimonthly newsletter, eOrganic Updates, that features newly published articles, upcoming and archived webinars, and important organic news, now reaches more than 6,400 subscribers.

Expanding our Reach with Webinars and Broadcasts

Starting in late 2009, eOrganic started offering free web-based presentations, or "webinars." A webinar allows people from all over the world to hear a presentation, view the presentation slides, and type in questions--all while sitting at their computer. The presentation is recorded and available for viewing at any time from eOrganic's YouTube channel. To date, eOrganic has delivered more than 65 webinars attended by over 7,300 attendees, of which, on average, over 25% were farmers. Our webinar topics range from practical farming methods to the latest in organic research.

Highlights of the 2012 Webinar Season

In 2012, 20 webinars were presented on a range of topics from seed sourcing and cover crops to dairy feeding systems and organic weed management. Highlights of our 2012 season included the following presentations:

- [Participatory On Farm Research: Beyond the Randomized Block Design](#), by Sieg Snapp, Michigan State University
- [Barley Fodder Feeding for Organic Dairies](#), by John Stoltzfus, Be-A-Blessing Farm, and Fay Benson, Cornell University

- [The Role of Cover Crops in Organic Transition Strategies](#), by Brian McSpadden Gardener, Ohio State University
- [Stink Bug Management Using Trap Crops in Organic Farming](#), by Russell Mizell, University of Florida
- [Fire Blight Control in Organic Pome Fruit Systems Under the Proposed Non-antibiotic Standard](#), by Ken Johnson, Oregon State University
- [Cultivation and Seedbank Management for Improved Weed Control](#), by Eric Gallandt, University of Maine.
- [Breeding for Nutrition in Organic Seed Systems](#), by Jim Myers, Oregon State University; Phillipp Simon, University of Wisconsin; Walter Goldstein, Mandaamin Institute; and Micaela Colley, Organic Seed Alliance
- [NRCS EQIP Technical and Financial Support for Conservation on Organic Farms](#), by Sarah Brown, Oregon Tilth

eOrganic conference broadcasts expand the reach of in-person presentations to online viewers. In 2012, 550 people listened online to 5 conference broadcasts. Many of the broadcasts included multiple presentations, resulting in 79 recordings available on eOrganic's YouTube channel (which were viewed 2599 times). In 2012, eOrganic broadcast presentations from the following in-person conferences.

- [The Organic Seed Growers' Conference](#)
- [The 2nd International Organic Fruit Research Symposium](#)
- [The Carolina Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference](#)
- [Why Eat Organic](#), by Jim Riddle, University of Minnesota, broadcast from the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference
- [Fly Management on Your Organic Dairy Workshop](#)

Webinar Evaluation

An evaluation is sent to each participant immediately following each webinar to assess whether or not the participants liked the quality, utility, and accessibility of the webinar, and whether they would recommend the webinar to others. For select webinars, an impact survey is sent the following winter to evaluate any participant behavior change as a result of attending the webinar. Read eOrganic's complete evaluation report at <http://eorganic.info/evaluation>.

Across all topic areas, feedback from participants of 2012 eOrganic webinars was positive. In surveys administered immediately after the webinars, 97% of participants agreed that their understanding of the topic had been improved to some degree, and 96% reported that they intended to apply the knowledge they gained in the webinars in their work. The technical level of the webinars was viewed as appropriate by 82% of participants, and 85% of participants reported that webinars were very easy to access. In all surveys, 82% of participants stated that they would recommend the eOrganic webinars they attended to others.

In follow-up surveys conducted 9 to 16 months after the webinars, 88% of respondents reported that they had applied the knowledge gained from webinars in their work to some degree during the subsequent months. When farmers, in particular, were asked whether the webinar contributed to changes in their farming practices, 57% answered "Yes." eOrganic webinars influenced changes in farming practices and the ability of advisers to better inform their constituents on a wide variety of subjects.

Webinar Participant Feedback

“Thanks to eOrganic, this knowledge is now available to anyone with a computer. This is the state of organic science: we didn't have this knowledge ten years ago, nor the technology to disseminate it, anyway. Now we have both and this is encouraging.”

“eOrganic provides an invaluable service. I have worked in this field for many years in federal government, land grant system and non-profit world. Great to have cutting edge research like this available straight from the experts.”

“I liked that the speaker was someone who used their system every day and had first hand knowledge of the things that work or could go wrong.”

“What I liked best about this program...and a couple of others I've seen...is good visuals that help the audience see what the presenter actually did or how they did it. The presenters have been very knowledgeable in their subject matter and are capable of answering important follow up questions from the audience.”

"Obviously the presenter had a very thorough knowledge of the topic...I especially appreciate the information about new tools for weed management for small scale farmers -- this is the kind of info we are all hungry for! Other than some minor technical problems which were resolved quickly, I thought it was excellent! I appreciate that I was able to hear this webinar from the comfort of my home, without having to travel anywhere, and will definitely check on the other webinars in your archive."

“The things you folks are doing well include....making it very easy to access the webinar; then archiving it for future use; keeping the program to a defined time period without it rambling on. The email announcements from eOrganic are also good communications tools for upcoming programs.”

Looking Ahead to Webinars in 2013

Upcoming webinars in 2013 include presentations on ancient grains, pest and disease management in pecan and peach, climate change research, crucifer production, pasture management, and brown marmorated stink bugs. Register for upcoming webinars, and find our complete archive of webinars and broadcast recordings at <http://www.extension.org/pages/25242>.

eOrganic Online Courses

Introduction to Organic Dairy Production Course

Members of the eOrganic Dairy Team have been working on online course and other content development as part of "Development of Technical Training and Support for Agricultural Service Providers and Farmers in Certified Organic Dairy Production Systems," a USDA NIFA Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) project. In 2012, "An Introduction to Organic Dairy Production" online course was developed under the leadership of Cindy Daley and Audrey Denney at California State University-Chico, Sarah Flack of Sarah Flack Consulting, and Heather Darby and Deb Heleba at University of Vermont Extension. The course is composed of 10 modules addressing a range of topics related to certified organic dairy production, including certification, soil health, pasture and forages, herd health and nutrition, milk quality, and calf management. Each module has required readings, a narrated powerpoint presentation from an expert on the topic, and recommended additional resources.

During the 2012 fall semester, the course was piloted with a group of 57 undergraduate students at Chico State. Students took the course either entirely online, or online with supplemental in-person instruction. An end-of-course survey revealed that all students gained knowledge on all topics covered through the course. All but one indicated they would use the information learned in the future, mostly as they prepare for their

careers in agriculture. One student said, "One of the best online classes I have taken." Another said, "The information is solid. Being that I am headed back to my dairy, I will certainly use the knowledge I gained from this course." Still another said, "Having this knowledge will really give me a "one-up" on a lot of other people in the industry, as the organic side of things is becoming more prevalent in farming. Whatever direction I may go in, I can always use this information to try to better operations and educate other farmers."

The course will be offered through eXtension's Moodle campus in early 2013 for farmers, Extension educators, and agriculture service providers.

Organic Seed Production Course

A new eOrganic course on Organic Seed Production was created by Jared Zystro and collaborators at the Organic Seed Alliance. The course consists of a set of tutorials which cover the fundamentals of seed production for onions, beets and chard, brassicas, carrots, and wet seeded crops, as well as climatic requirements for seed crops, important diseases, and seed quality. After having been peer reviewed and checked for organic certification compliance, the course is now available on the eXtension Moodle campus site at <http://campus.extension.org/enrol/index.php?id=377>.

Video Production Course

In January to March of 2012, eOrganic conducted an online Introduction to Video Production course on the eXtension Moodle campus. There were 12 participants, who were researchers and Extension educators who are supporting eOrganic with project funds from USDA NIFA OREI and ORG grants. The instructors, Lane Selman and Jeff Hino of Oregon State University, taught the basics of video planning, making storyboards, filming, and creating production plans so that participants can create videos about their research results for posting on eXtension.org and eOrganic's YouTube channel. Materials from the course are now publicly available at <http://eorganic.info/video>. eOrganic will offer the course again in 2013. The course was developed by Lane Selman, Jeff Hino, John McQueen, Alex Stone and Alice Formiga of OSU, and Deb Heleba and Amanda Gervais of the University of Vermont.

In an evaluation following the completion of the class, the course was viewed positively by participants. 75% of class attendees responded to an evaluation survey. Of those, 100% agreed that, as a result of the class, they know how to write a storyboard and a production plan; 100% agreed that they know when it's a good idea to capture video separately from audio, and 100% gained knowledge on how to avoid common mistakes.

eOrganic Articles

All of eOrganic's 260+ published articles can be found at www.extension.org/organic_production. Before publication, every article is subject to two anonymous, peer reviews and National Organic Program compliance review.

Notable articles published in 2012 include the following.

- [Biology and Management of Squash Vine Borer in Organic Farming Systems](#), by Abby Seaman, Cornell University
- [Weed Management Strategies for Organic Tomato, Pepper and Eggplant in the Southeastern United States](#), by Mark Schonbeck, Virginia Association of Biological Farming

- [Soilborne Disease Management in Organic Vegetable Production](#), by Fulya Baysal-Gurel, The Ohio State University.
- [Legume Inoculation for Organic Farming Systems](#), by Julie Grossman, North Carolina State University
- [Radishes - A New Cover Crop for Organic Farming Systems](#), by Joel Gruver, Western Illinois University; Ray Weil, University of Maryland; Charles White, Penn State University; and Yvonne Lawley, University of Manitoba
- [Managing Cucumber Beetles in Organic Farming Systems](#), by William Snyder, Washington State University.
- [Frost Seeding: A Cheap Alternative to Improve Hay and Pasture Land](#), by Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension

eOrganic Videos

Find eOrganic's 212 videos (including webinar recordings) on eXtension at <http://www.extension.org/pages/18726> and on the [eOrganic YouTube channel](#), where we have more than 1300 subscribers and over 968,000 views.

Videos published in 2012 including the following.

- [Healthy Cow Check-Up--How to Perform a Physical Exam](#), by Hubert Karreman, VMD, Penn Dutch Cow Care; and Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension
- [Innovations on an Organic Dairy--Successful Calf Rearing on Pasture and Mob Feeder](#), by Kevin Jahnke, Jahnke Family Farm; Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES); and Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension
- [Innovations on an Organic Dairy -- California Mastitis Test](#), by Kevin Jahnke, Jahnke Family Farm; Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES); and Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension
- [Innovations on an Organic Dairy -- "The Fly Barrel,"](#) by Kevin Jahnke, Jahnke Family Farm; Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES); and Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension
- [Creating a Grazing Map in Accordance with the Access to Pasture Rule](#), by Sarah Flack, Sarah Flack Consulting; and Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension

Ask An Expert

The Ask-an-Expert service is a way for our stakeholders to get answers from Land Grant University (LGU) and Extension professionals through eXtension.org. Ask your question at <https://ask.extension.org/groups/1668/ask> -- you can even submit an image to help with a diagnosis.

eOrganic provides oversight of all questions tagged with "organic production" within the Ask-an-Expert system. Our staff finds an answer by either answering the question directly or by soliciting the best

response possible from our eOrganic members. In 2012, community members answered approximately 150 questions, and more than 1,000 organic agriculture questions have been answered through the service since its inception in 2007.

Outreach to Farmers and the General Public

Representatives from eOrganic attended three major organic farming conferences in early 2012: The Ecological Farming Conference (Eco-Farm) in California, the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in Wisconsin, and the PASA conference in Pennsylvania. eOrganic had booths at these conferences and ads in the conference programs. eOrganic also had a presence at the Oregon State University Small Farms Conference, the Illinois Specialty Growers' Association, and the NOFA Northeast Organic Farming Association Conference in Vermont.

In 2012, presentations about eOrganic were given at the American Society of Agronomy, and the American Society of Horticultural Science meetings. Jim Riddle gave a presentation on "Using eOrganic to Create Collaborate and Educate" at the NOFA Organic Research Symposium, and Annette Wszelaki represented eOrganic during an eXtension panel discussion at the Tennessee State Small Farms Conference. Articles about eOrganic were published in [HortTechnology](#) journal (Stone, et al. 2012), as well as the [Tilth Producers Quarterly](#) journal. eOrganic also advertised in the monthly periodical [Growing for Market](#).

eOrganic maintains an active presence on the social media sites [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#), which have been experiencing steady growth. With 968,000 video views and over 1300 subscribers on YouTube, 1600 Twitter followers and over 1200 Facebook likes, eOrganic is growing its presence in social media channels. As a result, these channels resulted in over 5,000 pageviews for eOrganic content on eXension.org from 2,400 unique visitors.

eOrganic Revisioning Meeting

In November 2012, eOrganic convened a revisioning meeting in Portland, Oregon, attended by eOrganic leaders, staff, and members as well as current and potential project partners. The goals of the meeting were to discuss ways to improve eOrganic's current programs and brainstorm new partnerships, opportunities, and programs. eOrganic leaders and staff are using the great ideas from this meeting in crafting a plan to guide eOrganic's work over the next five years. As always, we welcome any and all thoughts from eOrganic members and participants to improve our content and programming! Contact us with your ideas at joineorganic@gmail.com.

Get Involved with eOrganic

eOrganic is a Community of Practice, which means it relies on community members like you to help it grow and better serve our farmer and agricultural professional stakeholders by developing and delivering critical and timely resources. eOrganic wants YOU to write an article, shoot a video, deliver a webinar, or develop and teach an online course. All of our articles and videos undergo NOP compliance and peer review before publication. Contact Alice Formiga at formigaa@hort.oregonstate.edu for more information on how to contribute content to eOrganic, or visit our website at <http://eorganic.info>.

Write eOrganic into Your Next Grant Proposal

For complete information on the diverse opportunities eOrganic offers project groups and how to write eOrganic into your proposal, visit <http://eorganic.info/proposal>. In 2012, 4 OREI projects were funded which included a plan of work and subaward for eOrganic. During the past year, eOrganic received

subawards from 20 previously funded ongoing OREI and ORG projects.

We can also partner with you on regional IPM, AFRI, SARE, NRCS-CIG and proposals to other funding sources. A 2 page handout describing our services to funded projects which can be distributed at meetings can be found [here](#).

eOrganic can offer your project:

- Web conferencing
- Webinars and webinar series to stakeholders and community members
- eXtension publication editing, and peer and NOP compliance review
- Video capture training, editing, review, and posting to the web
- Online course development and support
- Outreach for your articles, videos and webinars to our established network of farmers, extension personnel, ag professionals, and researchers from around the country and the globe - at conferences and through our newsletters and social networking activities
- Project workspace at eOrganic.info to facilitate project communication and management
- Project websites that are easily managed by your project members from eOrganic.info (see <http://eorganic.info/novic>)
- Ask-an-Expert support

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