

NW Michigan Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter - January 2011

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2011

- 1/10** **Culinary Tourism Conference**
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center
East Lansing
- 1/18-19** **NW Michigan Orchard & Vineyard Show**
Grand Traverse Resort & Spa
- 1/19** **[Finding Local Food Resources: An Open House](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf)**
<http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf>
Michigan Works Conference Room
- 1/22** **[Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference](http://smallfarmconference.com/)**
<http://smallfarmconference.com/>
Grayling High School
- 1/24** **[Whole Farm Planning: Holistic Management for Fun & Profit](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf)**
<http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf>
Michigan Works Conference Room
- 1/24-26** **[MSU Tree Fruit IPM School](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/fruitnws1210.html#ipmschool)**
<http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/fruitnws1210.html#ipmschool>
Kettunen Center, Tustin, MI
- 2/2-3** **SW Michigan Hort Days**
Mendel Center, Lake Michigan College
Benton Harbor
- 2/4** **Farm Route to Prosperity Summit**
Oleson Center, NMC Campus
- 2/24** **[Recent Advances in Vineyard Technology & Pest Control](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/grapespray11.pdf)**
<http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/grapespray11.pdf>
SW Michigan Research and Extension Center
- 3/2-5/18** **Master Gardener Volunteer Spring Training Program**
NWMHRS
- 3/16** **Farm Safety & Labor Management Sessions**
NWMHRS
- 3/23** **[Finding Local Food Resources: An Open House](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf)**
<http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/getfarming11.pdf>
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2011 NW ORCHARD AND VINEYARD SHOW

The Northwest Orchard and Vineyard Show is scheduled for **January 18-19, 2011** and will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme. Registration begins at 8 a.m. on January 18 and the show will cost \$30 for both days. On Tuesday, there will be concurrent tree fruit and wine grape

sessions, and all groups will join together for the Fruit Industry Luncheon; the cost for lunch is \$15. Following Tuesday's educational sessions, growers, speakers, and vendors are invited to stay for a wine-tasting and hors d'oeuvre social hour beginning at 5:15 p.m. On Wednesday, the Cherry Marketing Institute (CMI) will host a free cherry industry luncheon, but you must register with CMI before the lunch. In addition to the educational sessions on both days, the exhibit hall will be open during the show and will feature vendors of orchard and vineyard equipment and supplies, as well as commodity organizations, agrichemical businesses, and many other exhibitors. Please see the attachment for a schedule for this year's show.

We look forward to another successful program, and we hope to see you all there! If you would like more information, please contact the NW MI Horticultural Research Station at 231-946-1510 or nwmihort@msu.edu. The full agenda is available at the following link: <http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/orchshow11.pdf>

FARMABILITY PROGRAM REMINDER!!!

If you are enrolled in the FarmAbility Program, you are eligible for discounts of up to \$250 annually on registration fees for approved workshops and seminars provided by sponsoring organizations AND up to \$1,000 in matching funds over the 10-year term for estate and/or tax planning designed to help position the transfer of the farm to the next generation for farming. Please take advantage of this great offer. For more information on the FarmAbility program, please contact: Tom Nelson, Director of Farm Programs, Leelanau Conservancy 231-256-9665 or nelson@theconservancy.com

ORGANIC FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

Jeremy Moghtader, Coordinator & Lead Instructor

Now accepting applications for *2011 Cohort of the Organic Farmer Training Program* at the Michigan State University Student Organic Farm! The Organic Farmer Training Program offers nine months of intensive instruction in year-round organic farming. The program focuses on diversified production of vegetables, flowers, fruits and herbs for local markets. Students manage all aspects of a 10-acre certified organic farm, including passive solar greenhouses used for year-round production in cold climates. Students also manage the SOF field production. Produce is grown for the farm's primary markets, including a 48-week CSA, six-month on-campus farm stand, and sales to campus dining services. Students develop competencies in farm skills through trainings and engagement in the daily operation of the farm. Hands-on training is combined with workshops, lectures, readings and assignments that build participants' knowledge and understanding of organic farming principles and practices. The program is designed to give participants a strong background in production skills as well as the knowledge, management, and decision-making skills necessary to operate a diversified small farm.

Program participants include new and beginning farmers, urban and community farmers and gardeners, educators, and those interested in local or organic agriculture.

Space is limited. Rolling admissions. Visit our website for full program description and application www.msuorganicfarm.org or contact us at msufarm@msu.edu or 517-230-7987.

MICHIGAN CULINARY TOURISM CONFERENCE

This is Michigan's first conference on Culinary Tourism and it is to be held **January 10, 2011**, at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. This conference will bring people together to:

- Facilitate networking among people from diverse roles within Michigan's culinary and tourism communities
- Initiate specific plans and projects based on participants' interests to enhance culinary tourism in Michigan
- Celebrate Michigan's many culinary tourism assets

The registration fee is \$50 (\$75 after Dec. 22) and includes continental breakfast, lunch, and a closing reception. It is limited by available meeting space to 150 registrants. Lodging is available at the Kellogg Hotel for \$65/night (rate guaranteed until Dec. 10).

You can visit www.michiganwines.com/culinarytourism for conference details and registration.

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER SPRING TRAINING PROGRAM

The Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a horticulture education and volunteer leader training program offered by Michigan State University Extension. All adults who have a strong interest in gardening and enjoy sharing their knowledge through volunteerism are invited to apply to become a Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer.

Locally, the volunteer training program is offered each spring at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Station (6686 South Center Highway/County Rd. 633), located in Leelanau County. **This year, classes will be conducted from 6:00-9:30 PM, beginning March 2nd and continuing every Wednesday through May 18th.** The cost of the program is \$275, which covers the cost of an 800 page training manual, soil test kit, speakers and facilities. Financial aid is available upon request. The application deadline is February 14. (Late applications accepted depending if space is available.)

The program offers an opportunity for interested individuals to increase their knowledge and understanding of such varied horticultural topics as best practices for growing flowers, vegetables, and fruit; caring for lawns and woody ornamentals; house plant care; diagnosing plant diseases; pest identification and control, and much more. A major focus of the program is the use of environmentally-sound practices. Instructors are MSU Extension professionals and other experts.

To become a MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, individuals attend the training sessions, and then volunteer in the community. Examples of volunteer activities include teaching gardening classes, gardening with children, or providing leadership to various garden-related projects in the community, including libraries, nature centers, conservation districts, land conservancies, schools, and community gardens.

Individuals who have questions may contact Pam Schmidt Bardenhagen, Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator, at the Leelanau MSU Extension office, at 231-256-8323, or email schmi345@msu.edu . Application materials for the program can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.msue.msu.edu/leelanau> (click on Master Gardener Program).

USDA OFFERS CONSERVATION FUNDING TO ORGANIC PRODUCERS

Agricultural producers who are organically certified or are transitioning to organic production are eligible for conservation financial assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Organic Initiative. In Michigan, just over \$1 million in financial assistance is available for producers who apply by **March 4, 2011**.

"The Organic Initiative allows organic producers to address their conservation concerns without having to compete with non-organic producers for financial assistance. Producers interested in utilizing this program should contact their local office as soon as possible to start the application process," said Garry Lee, state conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Fiscal year (FY) 2011 marks the third year of the USDA's Organic Initiative that reserves conservation financial assistance for producers to plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns in ways that are consistent with organic production. For example, organic producers may use the funding to plant cover crops, establish integrated pest management plans, or implement nutrient management systems consistent with organic certification standards.

Eligible producers include those certified through USDA's National Organic Program, those transitioning to certified organic production, and those who meet organic standards but are exempt from certification because their gross annual organic sales are less than \$5,000. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated nearly \$24 million through the Organic Initiative to help producers implement conservation practices.

Under Organic Initiative contracts, producers are paid 75 percent of the cost for the organic conservation measures they implement. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers are paid 90 percent. The program provides up to \$20,000 per year per person or legal entity, with a maximum total of \$80,000 over six years.

Producers interested in applying for Organic Initiative funding must submit applications through their local NRCS Service Center. For more information about the USDA Organic Initiative including contact information for local offices, visit the [NRCS-Michigan Web site](#).

NRCS is celebrating 75 years helping people help the land. Since 1935, the NRCS conservation delivery system has advanced a unique partnership with state and local governments and private landowners delivering conservation based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests.

USDA SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR WETLAND RESTORATION PROGRAM

Landowners who would like to restore former wetlands on their property are encouraged to contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA is accepting applications for a program that provides financial assistance for restoring wetlands and purchases permanent or long-term easements on land that is enrolled.

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Landowners who enroll land in the program receive financial assistance of up to 100 percent of the cost of restoring land that was once wetland habitat back to its previous condition. Program participants also have the option of selling a permanent or 30-year easement

of the restored wetlands to the USDA. Applications for WRP are accepted on a continuous basis by NRCS and applications received by **Feb. 2** will be considered for funding in 2011. Applicants seeking to enroll land in 2011 should contact their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible to begin the application process.

Restoring wetlands has many benefits for Michigan residents. Wetlands improve water quality by filtering nutrients from runoff water, reduce flooding by storing water from storms and snow melt, help recharge underground aquifers and provide valuable habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

Landowners who choose to enroll their land in a permanent easement can receive 100 percent of the cost for restoring their land to wetland habitat. The program pays 75 percent of the cost for restoring wetland habitat for land enrolled in 30-year easements or for land restored without an easement. Landowners are paid a fixed price for enrolling land with a permanent easement which is based on the market price of farmland in their region of the state. Participants who enroll land in 30-year easements receive 75 percent of the rate paid for permanent easements.

Participants who sell permanent or long-term easements on land they enroll in WRP are allowed to use their land for recreation and other defined uses. They also retain the right to control access to their property.

For more information about WRP contact your local USDA Service Center or visit the NRCS-Michigan Web site at [NRCS-Michigan Web site](#).

FARM ROUTE TO PROSPERITY SUMMIT

Jim Sluyter, Michigan Land Use Institute

Join us on **February 4, 2011** for the *Third Annual Farm Route to Prosperity Summit*. We will spend the day at the Oleson Center on the NMC campus in Traverse City. In February 2009, at the first *Farm Route to Prosperity Summit*, northwest Michigan launched an ambitious effort to increase the resilience and double the value of the region's food and agriculture system in ten years.

Last April, at the second Annual Summit at Black Star Farms, you re-affirmed that goal and made commitments to powerful next steps in achieving it. Now it is time to develop the tools we need to guide the Network to its ambitious goal and evaluate our progress. Details on the third annual summit will be forthcoming. But it is not too soon to get your name on the roster. Contact me if you know you will be coming. And watch for updates at <http://foodandfarmingnetwork.org>

Thank you for your continuing interest and involvement in the food and farming systems of the region!

For information contact Jim Sluyter, 231-941-6584 x 15 or jimsluyter@mlui.org.

MICHIGAN GOOD FOOD REPORT

Kathryn J. A. Colasanti
C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems

The first of the five Michigan Good Food work group reports has been released:

[Institutional Food Purchasing](#) (Click here for the document)

<http://www.michiganfood.org/assets/goodfood/docs/Inst Food Purchasing Report.pdf>

This report provides:

- A vision for institutional food purchasing in Michigan
- Analyses of the current state of local food purchasing in Michigan schools, hospitals and universities
- Indicators to track institutional purchasing of local food
- Descriptions of the agenda priorities related to institutional food purchasing from the Michigan Good Food Charter and suggestions for implementing them

Anyone working to support schools, hospitals, and universities buy more of their food from in Michigan, anyone looking to understand more about the challenges and opportunities institutions have in their food purchasing, and anyone wanting to help implement the charter priorities in this arena will want to read this report!

The report, authored by Val George, Colleen Matts and Susan Schmidt with input from more than 20 work group contributors, is available for download at www.michiganfood.org. The other reports in the series will be released in the following months.