



OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT LAST YEAR...

We grew farmer and citizen know-how through high quality, educational programs that lay the groundwork for business success and food system change.



"The conference really was a big deal. The workshops I chose focused on herbs, bees, raising chickens, restorative plants, living soil, and food justice. Imagine a group of people passionate about growing great food, feeding their communities, working towards food justice, and raising animals humanely all in one place. This is that place."

— Violet Kennedy

► More than **1,100 people** from **24 states** and **67 Ohio counties** (including **220 beginning farmers**) attended three-days of annual conference events

► **600 people** attended **11 farm tours and open houses** where they experienced first-hand examples of sustainable and organic farming

► **146 participants** gained practical skills during seven workshops and courses for beginning farmers and community leaders

"I am grateful to OEFFA for the support it affords emerging farmers like me. The conference, newsletter, tours, and community events all provide great education and inspiration on the local level."

— Jodi Kushins, Over the Fence Urban Farm



Our Begin Farming Program nurtured budding farmers in the field and in the classroom.

► **58 property owners and farm seekers** used OEFFA's new Heartland FarmLink land linking website

► **11 apprentices** learned on-the-ground production and marketing at **6 host farms**

► **9 mentor pairs** matched experienced farmers with beginning farmers

► **640 aspiring and beginning farmers** found community in OEFFA's Next Farm Team Facebook group

"As beginning farmers of color living and farming in an urban setting, we found the Heartland Farm Beginnings class beneficial. It helped us identify our holistic farm plan and made our connection to the earth and land we depend on closer. OEFFA is dedicated and tremendous in supporting sustainability in our enterprise."

— Minister Aaron Hopkins, Family Farms at SSCAN



2019-2020 Heartland Farm Beginnings graduates (Aaron Hopkins, second from right)



Begin Farming program mentor pairs at OEFFA's conference



OEFFA apprentices at Sunbeam Family Farm



OEFFA apprentices at Banzhaf Garden Organic Farm

We helped whet decision makers' appetite for change by building grassroots support for policies that uplift farmers and protect our environment.

"Increasing pressure from large corporations and investors on landowners to sell their farmland for development purposes has been detrimental to small family farmers like me. The availability of farmland continues to decline at an alarming rate, yet there is currently no incentive for landowners to take a chance on beginning farmers, such as myself. Without OEFFA's dedication to the future of beginning farmers, House Bill 183 would not have been introduced."

— Jason Ward, JCW Enterprises



► More than **425 members** visited the statehouse, provided testimony, and signed a petition in support of OEFFA's Family Farm ReGeneration Act (House Bill 183), bipartisan legislation to preserve farmland and improve beginning farmer land access, which OEFFA will continue to advance in 2021

► More than **150 OEFFA farmers** signed onto the National Letter on Climate Change Solutions to deliver a message to federal decision-makers that farmers want to be part of addressing the climate crisis

► As a result of OEFFA's advocacy at the federal level, certifiers, inspectors, and farmers across the country will have access to an **online course**, developed by OEFFA for the Organic Integrity Learning Center, **on the impact of fracking and pipelines on organic farms**

► **1,561 people** were informed and engaged by the in-depth policy news in OEFFA's new Farm Policy Matters blog



OEFFA staff at the 2019 National Organic Standards Board meeting



OEFFA Family Farm ReGeneration Act lobby day



Be the Change OEFFA leadership training

We certified a growing crop of organic farmers and processors, allowing us all to reap the environmental, social, and economic benefits of organic farming.

► **1,326 operations** were certified by OEFFA, including **102 new farms and businesses**

► OEFFA processed organic cost share reimbursements for **459 organic producers and handlers**, who received \$348,917 in organic cost-share funds to help make certification affordable—a **12% increase** since 2018

► More than **165 farmers** received technical assistance from OEFFA sustainable agriculture educators with their transition to organic, helping to convert **8,000 acres** into new organic grain production



"OEFFA has been extremely helpful in our transition to organic... We are thrilled to be able to differentiate ourselves in this new and growing market and provide a quality product our customers can trust. The team's thoughtful guidance enabled us to make moves quickly and get our plants in the ground in time for a successful season. We couldn't have done it without the whole OEFFA team's responsiveness throughout the process."

— Mindy and Gino Piazza, Ghost Hollow Farm



"I learned that getting your crop rotation is a big part of being successful. It was a lot of blood, sweat, and tears getting to this point, but everyone at OEFFA was awesome to work with and we worked through the issues."

— Eric Brown, Darke Harmony Acres

The Brown family worked with OEFFA staff, a mentor, and others for more than three years to certify 220 acres of organic grains in 2020, with plans to transition 100 more acres.



Settlege Dairy



Buckskin Valley Farm, Julia Barnside



Down the Road Farm

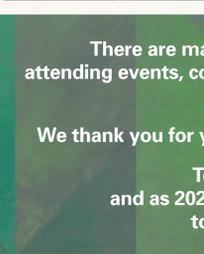


Seminary Hill Farm



"To know that OEFFA has lasted and continued its good work for 40 years is a pleasure and an encouragement to me. Though I wish for government agricultural policies more favorable to our aims, I remain convinced of the even greater importance of organizations and their members who undertake the actual work that needs doing at home and on the ground under their feet. And so I give you my admiration and respect, and my earnest wish that you will continue your work in happiness and in good faith for the next 40 years."

— Wendell Berry



"Please allow me to extend my congratulations to OEFFA on your 40 years of service. Ohio farmers and consumers are better off because of the hard work of OEFFA."

— Senator Sherrod Brown

► **4,076 members** supported OEFFA—including **535 new members** who joined us for the first time in 2019

► OEFFA's **11 regional and issue-based chapters** helped **1,234 members** connect around common interests

► OEFFA reached nearly **10,000 followers** on Facebook, Twitter, and a new Instagram page

► OEFFA's new Market Gardening chapter grew to **91 members** in the first year, holding meetings, potlucks, farm tours, socials, and group orders for market gardeners and urban farmers

► Nearly **300 people** celebrated OEFFA's 40th anniversary by attending farm-to-table dinners and an open house and enjoying a specialty crafted all-Ohio OEFFA beer

There are many ways for you to support this work, including becoming a member, attending events, contacting your legislator, engaging with a chapter, mentoring a young farmer, making a donation, or certifying your farm.

We thank you for your support, as it is the foundation on which the strength of OEFFA is built.

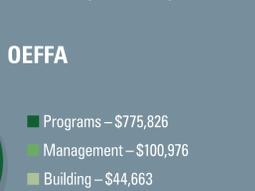
Together, we make OEFFA greater than the sum of its parts, and as 2020 and beyond bring us some of our greatest challenges, we ask you to continue to walk the path with us to achieve our mission.



OEFFA'S MISSION:

cultivating a future in which sustainable and organic farmers thrive, local food nourishes our communities, and agricultural practices protect and enhance our environment.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



For the Year Ending 3/31/2020
Total Income: \$890,763

A diversified funding stream is a strength of our organization.



For the Year Ending 12/31/2019
Total Income: \$1,879,392

Virtually all revenue is derived from application fees.



For the Year Ending 3/31/2020
Total Expenses: \$940,255

The deficit is explained in part by a reduction in income from partner grants and expenses related to investment in distance learning platforms and unrecovered debt from the prior fiscal year.

3/31/2020 Net Assets: \$536,326



For the Year Ending 12/31/2019
Total Expenses: \$2,024,204

We received fewer applications than expected; additional expenses were related to new software. Years of disciplined stewardship of our resources allowed us to cover the shortfall with retained earnings.

12/31/2019 Net Assets: \$629,241

OEFFA STAFF

- Camille Ackerman, Quality Systems Coordinator
- Julia Barton, Sustainable Agriculture Educator
- Haley Behnfeltd, Inspection Administrator
- Vanessa Brown, HR and Operations Coordinator
- Sheryn Bruff, Farm Certification Coordinator
- Andrea Delaney, Administrative Assistant
- Carol Cameron, Accountant
- Carol Goland, Executive Director
- Lauren Hirtle, Food Justice and Organic Certification Specialist
- David Houston, Certification and Inspection Specialist
- Renee Hunt, Program Director
- Joy Johnson, Certification Specialist
- Shakita Kabicek, Certification Specialist
- Lauren Ketcham, Communications Director
- Jen Kindrick, Senior Certification Specialist
- Michelle Kozlowski, Training Coordinator
- Jackie Leizerman, Certification Specialist
- Maria Losh, Compliance Coordinator
- Amalie Lipstreu, Policy Director



- Sean McGovern, SARE Outreach Coordinator
- Amber Mitchell, Administrative Coordinator
- Tanay Nestico, Certification Specialist
- Rowan Patton, Certification Specialist
- Eric Pawlowski, Sustainable Agriculture Educator
- Milo Petruziello, Programs and Events Coordinator
- Kate Pierfelice, Handling Certification Coordinator
- Sarah Pinkham, Certification Program Assistant Manager
- Emily Romain, Certification Specialist
- Claire Saunders, Materials Specialist
- Alisha Schleinig, Certification Program Manager
- Julie Sharp, Bookkeeper
- Rachel Tayse, Begin Farming Program Coordinator
- Steve Wilson, Certification Specialist
- Kristy Yonyon, Member Care Associate

2020 OEFFA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Christine Beckman
- Dave Bell, Vice President
- Jim Bidigare
- Bryn Bird
- Jeff Dean
- Paul Dorrance
- Steve Edwards, President
- Lisa Helm
- Christina Hughes
- Ben Jackle, Treasurer
- Val Jorgensen
- Tom Rapini
- Mary Taylor
- Sarah Townsend, Secretary
- Abbe Turner

2020 OEFFA CERTIFICATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Christine Beckman
- Jim Bidigare, Secretary
- Bryn Bird, President
- Paul Dorrance
- Steve Edwards, Treasurer
- Lisa Helm
- Tom Rapini, Vice President

OEFFA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

- Steve Corso, Lake Effect
- Eli Dean, Grain Growers
- Steve Edwards, Southwest Ohio
- Sheryl Grant, Real Farmers of Organic Delicacies (FOOD)
- Justin Hamlin, Southeast Ohio
- Greg Hargett, Staff and Board Alumni
- Jeff Harris, Little Miami
- Lisa Helm, Market Gardening
- Harv Roehling, Miami/Oxford Organic Network (MOON)
- Josh Stephens, Youth Agricultural Education

OUR 2019 WORK WAS SUPPORTED IN PART BY: Clif Bar Family Foundation, Earth Island Institute, Farm Aid, Food and Farm Communications Fund, The George Gund Foundation, Masherwa Farm Foundation, Northstar Café, Ohio Humanities Council, The Ohio State University Office of Sponsored Programs, USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, UNFI Foundation, USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and the USDA SARE Program... as well as the donations of many individual members, sponsors, and other supporters. **Thank you!**