

# ORGANIC LIVING

By

Robert Rodale

## MORE FARMERS SEEK ORGANIC SEAL OF APPROVAL

There's a refreshingly different bumper sticker appearing on California cars that has nothing to do with political scandal or protest. "Organic Farmers Are Great Lovers", it proclaims, only half in jest.

Organic farmers are great lovers . . . of the soil, the natural environment, and pure, wholesome food. That's why they farm without poison sprays or synthetic chemical fertilizers, building up the soil humus with natural organic matter. And the California Certified Organic Farmers, who distribute the bumper stickers, are determined to bring even more good food to the public.

CCOF is typical of the many regional organic farming organizations that have sprung up recently in response to consumer demand for chemical-free food. Now in its second year and growing rapidly (there are 67 certified farmer-members), CCOF shares common goals with other groups from Maine to New Mexico:

1. Growers work together to find and supply markets seeking organically-grown produce. The aim is to sell directly to the consumer through roadside stands, farmers' markets and urban food co-ops.

2. Food from member farms is "certified organic." To do that, soil is tested to make sure the grower is using only natural fertilizers. And crop samples are analyzed in a laboratory for pesticide contamination.

The certification seal of a regional growers' group on the package is the consumer's guarantee that the food has truly been produced using organic methods, and without poison sprays or chemical additives.

"Thanks to certification, I have more customers than I can take care of," says CCOF's Tony Owen, who raises vegetable row crops and Jerusalem artichokes.

3. Regional groups give organic farmers a forum to exchange information. They can help each other by giving advice on soil fertility and insect control problems.

4. Seeds and natural fertilizers can often be purchased at a discount, by pooling orders and buying in bulk.

By farming organically, small family farms have a better chance of survival. CCOF's Fred Adams is a good example. His 55 acres in the foothills of the Sierras grow organic oranges, olives, lemons, grapefruit, tomatoes, zucchini and beans. But his land is surrounded by huge factory farms, owned and operated by giant corporations.

"As I drive to town from my place," Adams says, "I rarely see my neighbors - there are so few owners actually living on the land." He and his son market their produce at San Francisco Farmers' Market, selling about \$1,000 a week.

Adams' crops are typical of the variety that's available in



the organic marketplace. Other CCOF members are raising everything from garlic, grapes and grains to beef and eggs.

Organic farmers are shifting into high gear in New England, also. "I believe that, in the Northeast, the small produce farmer has a bright future," says Maine Extension Agent Charles Gould, "if he can organize to reach and capture the organic foods market." The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association has been created to do just that.

In New Hampshire and Vermont, the Natural Organic Farmers Association is growing cabbage, onions, potatoes, squash and other winter storage crops for sale to New England markets.

## Busy Bakers Cake Decorators

The Busy Bakers Cake Decorating Club had their 4th meeting Wednesday, June 10th at the home of Mrs. Roy Sauder, their teacher.

All of the girls used white frosted layer cakes which they decorated with a clump of orange or yellow roses in the center. The first year members used an orange and white seashell border with little rosebuds all around.

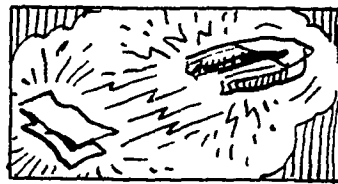
The advanced students used a more complicated border with while bunting of a sort and interesting orange flower cascade as used in wedding cakes.

Barbara Miller was nominated for posture queen and agreed to represent the club in the contest.

The girls decided to each

bring a decorated cake to the Round-up July 24th at St. Mark's Church. The girls and Mrs. Sauder will judge the cakes themselves. The cakes will be judged on smoothness, perfection, originality, appearance and roses. The girl with the most points will receive a cash prize.

Pam Wise



Early scientists held that the presence of a magnet robbed iron of its weight and it lifted itself!

## Lancaster Farming, Saturday, July 20, 1974—35

At present, New England imports 80 per cent of its own food, but NOFA has ambitious plans to make the region more self-sufficient. "The style is very local, long-term and low-key," says NOFA grower Robert Houriet of Marshfield, Vt. "The aim is to work not from the top down but from the bottom up."

In Washington and Oregon, the Northwest Organic Food Producers are raising and marketing organic apples, potatoes, watermelons, corn, wheat, carrots, and other crops. "Naturally we feel that forming an association of organic growers is the only way to go," say founders Pat and Dorothy Langan of Toppenish, Wash. "We have gained considerable strength together and a better sense of direction . . . we are accomplishing much more." They describe organic certification as "a shot in the arm" for small farmers.

Similar success stories are being repeated in other states. The Organic Growers and Buyers Association in Minnesota now covers a five-state area and includes 18 food co-ops in the Minneapolis area alone. One co-op reports a demand for 40,000 pounds of organically-grown hard wheat!

In Pennsylvania, organic grower Paul Hartz says his farmer-consumer organization is "just beginning to reach out to farmers and interested consumer groups." There are already 50 members. Other organic farmer organizations have been former in Texas, New York, Michigan, Colorado, Kentucky, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and New Mexico.

Organic farmers are still outnumbered. They have a long way to go before they'll ever challenge the supremacy of the commercial agribusiness industry with its poison sprays, tax loopholes, and energy-wasting assembly-line shortcuts. But because enough shoppers still care about taste and quality, their ranks are growing every day.

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"Help Is On The Way" is a fifty-page handbook that will answer your questions about raising food organically, whether you have a small salad garden or a fifty-acre farm. It's available for 50 cents from Robert Rodale, Organic Living, in care of this newspaper. When ordering, ask for the booklet by name, and allow three or four weeks for delivery.

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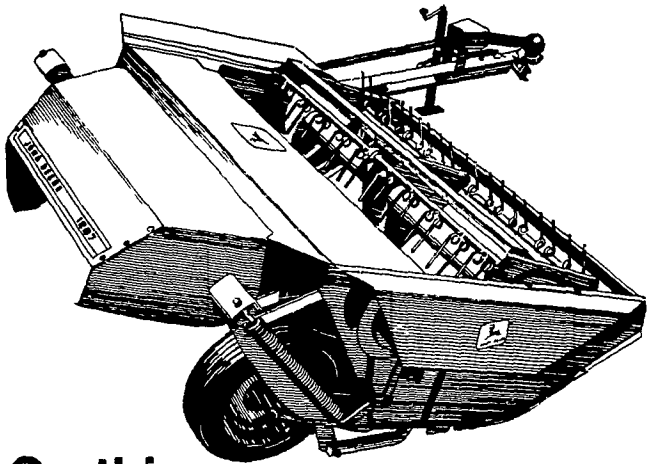
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