



A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We are proud of all we accomplished in 2020, despite the challenges of a global pandemic, the worst drought in Maine's recent history, and civil unrest. While we had to adapt almost all of our programs to meet the challenges of 2020, including moving the Common Ground Country Fair online, we've ended the year with record attendance for our workshops. The impact of our work on behalf of organic farms this year was unprecedented; from the Maine Farm Emergency Grants, to our one-on-one technical assistance, we helped many farms navigate the uncertainty and remain viable.

When things get challenging, it's important for us to reflect on what we're thankful for, and put our energy into creating a positive future. As we enter 2021, we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. Over the past half-century MOFGA has built a thriving organic farming community with over 500 certified organic farms and thousands more farmers, homesteaders and gardeners who grow organically.

We have a committed population that supports our local food system by purchasing through the 115 Farmer's Markets, 12 Food coops, dozens of natural and organic food stores, and the hundreds of farm stands and CSA programs at Maine farms. Without MOFGA, none of this might exist today. Without the leadership and vision of a group of farmers and gardeners with ideals and a vision for the future, we might each be charting this path alone.

When we think about what the world may look like 50 years from now, we cannot underestimate the urgency of the issues we face. Producing food organically could be key to mitigating climate change while providing nourishing food for our communities, but there's more to it than just the technical production. We have to pair it with our ideals for a more equitable and sustainable society. We must renew our commitments to building community

resilience, eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels, creating cooperative ownership models, and seeking personal self-sufficiency. Together we can and will build a better future for the next 50 years.

Onward together,

Sarah Alexander, Executive Director

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Setting the standard for organic agriculture since 1971

Throughout 2021 the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association will celebrate its 50th anniversary, and we hope that you can join us for some of the special events and festivities. As the oldest and largest organic advocacy organization in the US, we are delighted to share our rich history as we look ahead to the next 50 years. We're just getting started...

The Maine Organic Vision for 2030

Our vision is to transform the way people relate to their food. By protecting healthy soils and local economies, organic farming and gardening can provide some solutions to the challenges of climate change; food insecurity; rising rates of cancer and other diseases; polluted soil, air and water; and declining rural economies. To move toward this ecological future, each year MOFGA will focus on and report on the following four areas:

Impact Areas

Building common ground - making local, organic produce and other organic products accessible and primary choices for all.



Promoting the environmental and health benefits of local organic – crafting and working for legislation that promotes the organic agriculture model through our new Public Policy Department.

population in skills-based training.

Increasing organic farming and production – increasing the number of certified organic growers to 750 and the amount of organically managed land from 7% to 10% of the state's agricultural land.

2020 Highlights

MOFGA expanded its community through outreach to new audiences, and hosted our first ever online Common Ground Country Fair.



MOFGA launched new communications, resources, and online workshops for gardeners and homesteaders.



MOFGA developed a comprehensive Public Policy Platform, emphasizing the role that organic agriculture has in stemming the adverse effects of climate change.



MOFGA producers implemented organic practices with particular emphasis around soil health and climate change resilience





Certification Services

Accredited by the USDA in 2002, MOFGA Certification Services, LLC (MCS) certifies all production scopes (Crop, Wildcrop, Livestock, and Processing/Handling) of the National Organic Program standards. MCS also administers MOFGA's Certified Clean Cannabis program, focusing on third party verification of growing practices for medical and adult use cannabis in Maine.

2020 by the **Numbers**



MOFGA Certified Organic Growth since 2012



524 certified organic producers, including 7% of Maine farms and 30% of Maine dairies



68,000+ acres of certified organic farmland



\$90+ million in organic product sales



3,612 unique products certified (processed and livestock)



170 unique certified crops (veg, herbs, flowers, berries, fruits, fungi, grains, forages and hay)



420	Crops/Veggies	75%
67	Handlers	63%
48	Livestock	50%
56	Maple Syrup	65%
91	On-Farm Processors	60%
70	Dairy	32%
<i>10</i>	Kelp	900%
48	Wild Blueberries	78%
17	Mushrooms	325%
<i>1</i> 3	Wild Crops	160%

The Power of Local Organic Food Systems

As the impact of the coronavirus pandemic began to shake the foundation of the global food system, MOFGA certified producers were there to meet the needs of their communities. Farms and producers were able to pivot quickly in many ways, including adjustments in crop planning, safe market access, delivery programs, expansion of value-added offerings, and pivoting from spirits production to hand sanitizer. The resiliency of MOFGA producers and the support from eaters and consumers created a win-win and a silver lining in an otherwise challenging year.

The Impact of Local Spending

Our late executive director Russell Libby used to tout the economic impact of spending just \$10 per week on local food. If we modified that today and every Mainer spent an additional \$10 per week on *local organic* food, we would add \$676 million in purchases to Maine's farm economy annually. That could support hundreds of new farms, and provide the incentive for more land to be transitioned from chemical intensive agriculture to organic production. Our small changes can make a big difference if enough people do them together!

MOFGA Certification Services LLC 2020 Management Committee

Bob Lenna, Chair - Retired Director of the Maine Bond Bank

Mary Belding - former MOFGA certified dairy and cheesemaker, Little Falls Farm

Bob Burr - Farmer, Restaurant Owner, and Retired Principal of Pride Manufacturing

Ben Campo - former MOFGA Board Member, Attorney, Douglas McDaniel & Campo, LLC

Ben Tettlebaum - MOFGA Board Member, Attorney and Director, Pinnacle Ridge Strategies PLLC





Farmer Programs

Our Farmer Training Programs are innovative, nationally recognized, and draw new farmers to Maine specifically for the support that MOFGA's programs and community provide. One of our most impactful initiatives has been our Journeyperson Program, which helps beginning farmers with business planning, mentorship, classroom training and financial support over the course of two years. For the 2019-2020 season MOFGA also introduced the two-year Maine Farm Resilience Program designed to increase support to farmers in years 5-10 of their business when they are statistically the most likely to experience business failure. These advanced-beginning workshops focused on how to access and adapt to new markets, how to manage risk while increasing innovation and diversification, and how to re-strategize their business plans to achieve long-term farm viability.

Impact in 2020

68 Individual farms received, technical assistance, including 9 consultations with military veteran farmers.

31 Journeypersons trained.

21 Maine Farm Resilience Program farmers supported.

117 Farmers awarded Emergency Grants in partnership with Maine Farmland Trust.

3 Racial Justice and Farming webinars hosted, and a Racial Justice track created at our Farmer to Farmer Conference

Piloted the **\$50,000** Maine Produce Safety Improvement Grant.



Created the COVID-19 Farmer Information and Support guide.

Doubled the size of our Technical Assistance grant for farmers to **\$16,000**.

Created a new series of biweekly Market Reports in partnership with Maine Farmland Trust to increase communication between farmers and retail buyers during uncertain times.



117 Maine Farmers Receive Maine Farm Emergency Grants

In two rounds of grant funding in 2020, MOFGA and Maine Farmland Trust awarded 117 grants to Maine farmers through the Maine Farm Emergency Grants program. The two organizations collaborated to fundraise and administer the grant program in response to the needs of Maine farmers impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and gave out over \$191,000 in much needed assistance.

Farms in nearly every county received funds, and included various types of farm businesses – from dairy farms to mixed vegetable growers, wild blueberry producers, orchardists and a hopyard. A key qualifier for the grant was that farms must have participated in a MOFGA or MFT program; many of the farm recipients have interacted with both organizations.

The farms that received emergency grants are all adapting their businesses in multiple ways to meet changing markets and adjust to uncertainty this season. A few of the challenges farms faced in 2020 included the loss of sales due to the closure of restaurant accounts, the time spent reconfiguring business plans and finding new ways to deliver products to customers, inconsistent farm labor, and the time, labor and supplies spent on new tasks, such as extra sanitization and packaging steps.

"We know there's more need in our farm community than what we were able to meet with these grants, and we'll continue to offer technical assistance for all of the farms in our network, and aim to boost farm viability in the long term."

Sarah Alexander, MOFGA Executive Director





When the pandemic hit, MOFGA staff sprang into action, leveraging existing resources and creating new ones for the numerous hurdles farmers suddenly faced.

Jill Agnew of Willow Pond Farm in Sabattus found that the new searchable farm map on MOFGA's website helped many new folks find her farm stand in March of 2020.

Jill added, "People were looking for local foods, and the continued publicity was critical. People are realizing that supporting your local farm is an important way to be involved in your community."



Community Education

MOFGA's Educational Programming has long been the way gardeners and organic eaters have found a path to healthier, more sustainable living. In 2020, as people throughout the country turned to gardening as a way to cope with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, MOFGA responded by transforming many of our most beloved events into webinars and adding a variety of new online events to support gardeners throughout the growing season. We also expanded our offerings to include two new newsletters (for our gardeners and those in our low impact forestry community) and a variety of videos and recordings. These remote opportunities enabled us to engage individuals from across the state and New England in learning new skills and growing beautiful gardens to help feed themselves, their families, and their communities.

In 2020, 2,950 people participated in 90 workshops, tours, and educational events.

Some our popular workshops included:

- Our new **Gardening Q&A** series
- Our new **Beginner Gardener** series
- Our Organic Orchard workshops.

The Common Ground Country Fair

In 2020, we created our first alternative, online Common Ground Country Fair to bring people together to learn, grow, and support each other safely during the pandemic. We received a wonderful response from online fairgoers that resulted in over 33,500 views on social media and attracted over 32,000 people to explore our many website offerings.

Looking ahead to 2021, we are working on a variety of plans to produce our much loved Common Ground Country Fair. In most years, the Fair attracts over 60,000 attendees annually to enjoy hundreds of educational demonstrations and workshops and to support farmers, local artisans and businesses. The Fair depends on a community of more than 2,500 volunteers who work with MOFGA staff to create a successful educational experience for all who attend.









Public Policy

MOFGA promotes legislation that is critical to organic farmers and gardeners, addresses climate change, and supports a healthy environment, a strong rural economy, and a socially just, healthy society. MOFGA creates opportunities to educate and engage our members, our partners and the general public in the legislative process, promoting the health and environmental benefits of organic farming and sustainable land management, and advocating for safer alternatives to synthetic pesticides.



MOFGA's Public Policy Committee has established a policy platform organized into six priority areas:

- Climate & Energy
- Farm Viability
- **Human Health & Environment**
- Organic Integrity
- Organic Research & Education
- Social Justice & Equity.

We intend to develop a deep bench of activists with expertise pertaining to these areas as we build our specific campaigns. Our collective policy efforts will help people in Maine and beyond gain access to healthy, locally produced food, and an overall reduction of toxic chemicals in our food, air and water.



Highlights of our Federal Achievements in 2020

- Successful advocacy with the National Organic Coalition and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition to ensure congress appropriated sufficient federal funding for: the National Organic Program and defending the integrity of organic standards; sustainable agriculture research and education; farmers transitioning to organic production; beginning, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers; local agricultural markets; farmland conservation.
- Advocating at the National Organic Standards Board to ensure that organic standards remain strong.

Highlights of our efforts at the State Level in 2020

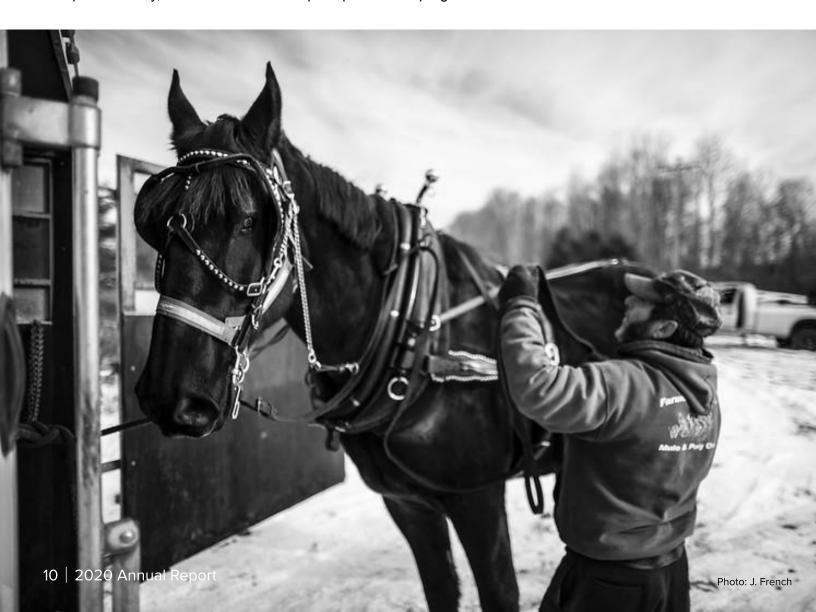
- Participating in the Natural and Working Lands Working Group of Governor Mills' Climate Council and advocating for organic management practices as the gold standard for addressing the agricultural impacts of climate change.
- Testifying, monitoring and advocating for MOFGA's interests during the Maine State Legislative Session. Unfortunately, the session was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic and many bills didn't make it across the finish line before the Legislature adjourned. Many of those bills will be taken up from the start in 2021.
- Monitoring the Board of Pesticide Control, advocating to reduce pesticide use, and supporting communities in passing ordinances limiting the use of pesticides.
- Hosting a virtual Public Policy Teach-In during the online Fair entitled: Climate Change in Maine – the problem, the response, and what all of us can do.



Low Impact Forestry

The LIF program organized and co-sponsored several events this year targeted at landowners interested in becoming better land stewards. These included virtual and in-person workshops about chainsaw safety, forest carbon, and non-timber forest products. Working with partners, the program also contributed eleven videos to the Common Ground Country Fair content library and three presentations to the live stream.

In addition to creating educational content, we focused on expanding our community network and refining our program vision. We launched a monthly newsletter that highlights LIF-relevant news, raises awareness about statewide policy changes that impact the LIF community, and features reader-submitted photos. Finally, our volunteer-led steering committee worked this year to define Low Impact Forestry, and establish a set of principles for the program.



The Maine Heritage Orchard

As Maine Heritage Orchard founder John Bunker likes to say, "we can learn a lot about what to do in a pandemic from an old apple tree: Don't Move, Build Community, Waste Not, Want Not, Eat Local, and have Grace and Flexibility." All of those things are great advice for this year, and we can look to the inspiration of our heritage apple trees to know that this too shall pass.

Over the last growing season from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, the Maine Heritage Orchard, located on the grounds of MOFGA in Unity, has truly begun to flourish. Six years since its inception, nearly three hundred historic varieties are now established, with many of them beginning to bloom and fruit. Orchard Manager Laura Sieger and Orchard Assistant Jenny Doyle, as well as dozens of volunteers, have spent countless hours weeding, pruning, and tending to the unique collection...and their efforts are paying off.

The original terraces have now been planted and a new area in the renovated gravel pit has been prepared to provide an orchard block for future expansion. With the core collection in place, a smaller number of additional discoveries will need to be added each year. Meanwhile, staff is now able to turn their attention to the important work of taking care of the trees themselves, and have harvested some of the first fruit from the orchard.



Looking Ahead from the Past

The Heritage Orchard team is excited to continue DNA research on our collection and other significant historical trees in New England, with the goal to sequence the entire orchard collection by 2022.

To date, we have DNA fingerprinted over 150 varieties from our collection, tracked down additional 'lost' apples throughout the state, extended our geographic reach, and expanded our network of collaborators across the country. Meanwhile our educational events continue to inspire and motivate a diverse and intergenerational group of folks to care about, grow, and preserve these iconic trees.

The Maine Organic Country Store...of Freeport!

During the months of November and December, 2020, MOFGA piloted a pop-up store at 48 Main Street in Freeport, Maine.

The Maine Organic Country Store featured MOFGA and Common Ground Country Fair merchandise as well as items from 24 Fair vendors and MOFGA certified organic producers. The shelves were filled with beautiful products like handcrafted wooden bowls and utensils, felted fairies and woodland creatures, dried flower wreaths and arrangements, garlic, body care products and tea towels.

In all, the Maine Organic Country Store generated \$50,138.01, and saw lots of customers both familiar and new to MOFGA.

Customer Favorites:

- Jennie Blue tea towels
- Frontier Maple products
- Swan's Honey
- Ken Wise Woodcarver Kitchen Wares
- and of course, Common Ground Country Fair t-shirts, poster and bags!











2020 **MOFGA Staff**



Administration

- Sarah Alexander, Executive Director
- Heather Spalding, Deputy Director
- Janice Clark, Finance Administrator
- Kaitlynn McGuire, Database Manager
- Anna Miller, Operations Director
- Jennifer Morton, Administrative Assistant

Farmer Programs

- Ryan Dennett, Farmer Programs Director
- Dave Colson, Ag Specialist Southern Maine
- John Chartier, Ag Specialist Northern Maine
- Bo Dennis, New Farmer Program Specialist
- Caleb Goossen, Organic Crop & Conservation Specialist
- Nicolas Lindholm, Organic Business & Marketing Specialist
- Jacki Martinez Perkins, Organic Dairy & Livestock Specialist
- Anna Mueller, Farmer Professional Development Specialist
- Diane Schivera, Organic Livestock Specialist
- Eric Sideman, Organic Crop Specialist Emeritus
- C.J. Walke, Ag Specialist Downeast Maine

Building and Grounds

- Jason Tessier, Buildings and Grounds Director
- John McIntire, Shop & Equipment Manager
- Don Pendleton, Buildings and Grounds Assistant

Common Ground Country Fair

- April Boucher, CGCF Director
- Tami Colburn, CGCF Assistant
- Jen Sansosti, CGCF Logistics Coordinator
- Anna Swanson, CGCF Coordinator
- Wendy Watson, Kitchen Manager & Food Liaison

Communications & Outreach

- Katy Green, Communications & Outreach Director
- Lucy Cayard, Southern Maine Outreach Coordinator
- Jean English, Editor, Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener
- Andrew Graham, Community Engagement Coordinator
- Tim Nason, Publication Designer & Website

Community Education

- Anna Libby, Community Education Director
- Hillary Barter, Educational Programs Coordinator
- Jenny Doyle, Orchards Assistant
- Noah Gleason-Hart, Low Impact Forestry Specialist
- Jack Kertesz, Landscape Coordinator
- Laura Sieger, Orchards Coordinator

Membership and Development

- Torie DeLisle, Membership & Development Director
- Karen Stimpson, Grants Manager
- Laura Miller, Development Manager

MOFGA Certification Services, LLC

- Chris Grigsby, Director, MCS, LLC
- Laurah Brown, Certification Specialist
- Joan Cheetham, Certification Specialist
- Grace Keown, Operations Coordinator & Information Manager
- Marta Laszkiewicz, Operations Assistant
- Jacomijn Schravesande-Gardei, Associate Director of Crops
- Julie Trudel, Inspector/Materials Reviewer
- Katie Webb, Dairy Certification Specialist
- Corinne Wesh, Certifications Specialist/QAQC

2020 MOFGA Board Members

Executive Committee

- Beth Schiller, President, Dandelion Spring Farm, Bowdoinham
- **Stacy Brenner**, Vice President, Broadturn Farm, Scarborough
- Logan Johnston, Treasurer, Oaklands Farm, Gardiner
- Jo Ann Myers, Secretary, Beau Chemin Preservation Farm, Waldoboro
- David Shipman, Finance Committee, Retired from Fedco Organic Grower Supply, China
- **Eli Berry**, Fair Steering Committee, Crystal Lake Farm & Nursery, Washington
- Sam May, Fundraising Committee, Little Spruce Island Farm, Portland

Board Members At-Large

- Jeremy Blaiklock, Seaflower Garden & Design, Arrowsic
- Sam Brown, Steadfast Farm LLC, Parkman
- Melissa Emerson, Pinetree Garden Seeds, New Gloucester
- **Todd Little-Siebold**, College of the Atlantic, Ellsworth
- Ben Tettlebaum, Attorney, Pinnacle Ridge Strategies, PLLC, New Gloucester
- Ellen Sabina, Half Hitch Flowers, Morrill
- Anna Shapley-Quinn, North Branch Farm, Monroe
- Annie Watson, Sheepscot Valley Farm, Whitefield

Thank You to our Volunteers!

Even, and especially, in a pandemic year, MOFGA would not be MOFGA without our over 3,000 volunteers. Although we did not have many in-person events in 2020, our volunteers helped us pivot to online workshops and events. Thank you to all of the volunteers who go above and beyond to expand MOFGA's reach and fulfill our mission through their work. We look forward to the future when we can all gather in person again.

Committees:

- Buildings & Grounds Committee
- Fair Planning Team
- Fair Steering Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- El Salvador Sistering Committee
- Landscape Committee
- Low Impact Forestry Committee
- Public Policy Committee
- Maine Heritage Orchard Committee

Chapters:

- Penobscot County Chapter
- Sagadahoc County Chapter





2020 Foundations and Government Grant support

Foundations

- The Better Tomorrow Fund
- The Betterment Fund
- Florence V. Burden Foundation
- Community Health Options Fund
- Jane B. Cook 1992 Charitable Trust
- Davis Conservation Foundation
- Debley Foundation
- Evergreen Foundation
- Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement
- John Merck Fund
- The Libra Foundation
- Maine Community Foundation
- MaineShare
- Maine Technology Institute
- The Onion Foundation
- Organic Valley / FAFO
- The Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation
- Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
- Foundation for Sustainability and Innovation
- UNFI Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Woodcock Foundation

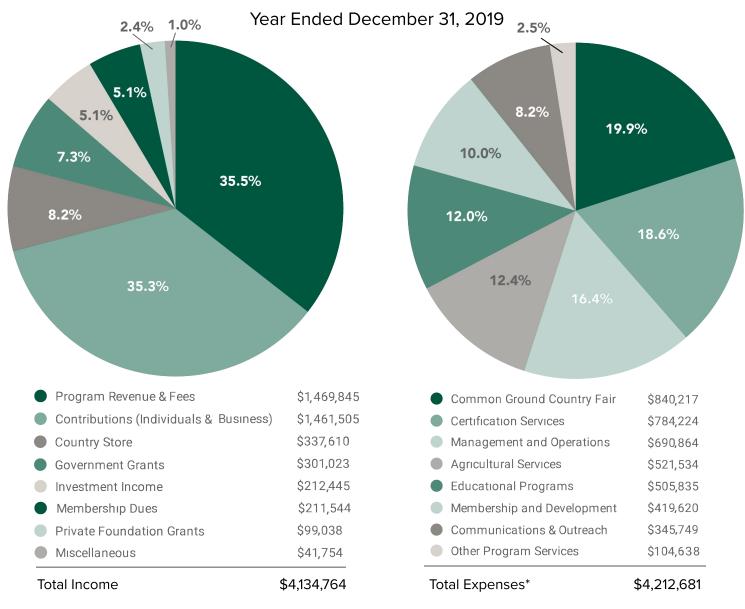
Federal and State Grants

- Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG)
 - Food Safety
- USDA
 - Climate Change
 - Maine Harvest Bucks
 - Workplace to Market
- Natural Resources Conservation Services
 - Conservation Innovation Grant
 - Forestry Management
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
 - Farmer Training
- DACF/AgDevelopment
 - Scaling up for Wholesale Markets
- NE Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Programs
 - Sustainable Farming
 - Pest Management
 - Soil Enhancement
 - Climate Adaptations
 - o Climate Resilience Training



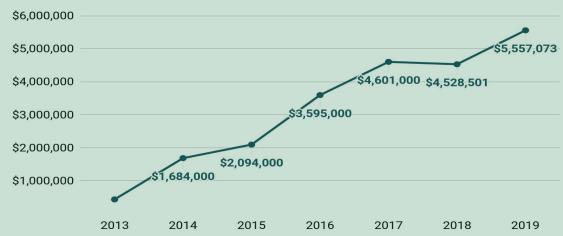


2019 Financials



^{*} The Expense total includes an allocation of \$155,346 for depreciation of property and equipment spread across all programs
The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations to MOFGA are tax
deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS. A copy of our most recent Form 990 is available upon request.





Charitable Giving to Support MOFGA's Mission

Gift of Appreciated Securities

MOFGA is fortunate to receive generous gifts each year that help to sustain our education and farmer programs, as well as fund special projects. A preferred choice for larger gifts often is through contributions of appreciated securities (stocks or bonds). This is easily done and may provide a charitable deduction and save the donor from paying capital gains taxes. To transfer a gift of securities you will need MOFGA's Account #: 6657-4241; Participant ID (DTC #): 0075; and IRS Tax ID #: 01-6048322. Please contact Torie DeLisle, Director of Membership & Development, at: tdelisle@mofga.org with any questions.

Remembering MOFGA in Your Estate Plans

Bequests: The easiest way to leave a gift is by naming MOFGA in your will. The wording can be as simple as: "I give, devise and bequeath to Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association of Unity, ME (Tax ID #: 01-6048322) the sum of \$ ______ (or a description of a specific asset) for the benefit of MOFGA and its general purposes."

Retirement Accounts and Life Insurance

You may name MOFGA as a beneficiary of your retirement account (e.g. 401(k), 403(b), IRA, Roth IRA) or life insurance policy.

Retirement Account Distribution

When people turn 70.5 years of age the IRS requires that they begin to draw down their retirement accounts to avoid additional taxes. An individual may donate up to \$100k per year to nonprofit organizations.

Charitable Gift Annuity

A donor may provide a gift to MOFGA and MOFGA agrees to make a quarterly payment to them for the rest of their life. The donor receives dependable income to meet their needs while helping to strengthen MOFGA. The terms vary depending upon the donor's age.

If you would like to discuss any of these options, please contact Torie DeLisle, Director of Membership & Development, at (207) 568-4142 or tdelisle@mofga.org.

