



I S S U E

INFORMATION FLIER – A PUBLICATION OF THE ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

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This newsletter is published by the Organic Trade Association, the North American trade association committed to the promotion of organic products in the marketplace, and the protection of the integrity of organic standards. Its membership includes more than 1,200 producers, processors, distributors and retailers of organic foods, fibers, farm and garden supplies, and health and beauty products. OTA is your leading resource for information about this industry.

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## Essay Contest Winners

Why organic agriculture is important to me and my family

*Approximately 6,000 consumers from around the world submitted entries*

*in the recent "Organic Way to Grow" essay contest conducted by OTA in cooperation with Mambo Sprouts. Co-sponsors of the contest included Stonyfield Farm, Stretch Island Organic Fruit Leathers, Eat Smart from Snyder's of Hanover, Organic Valley, Nature's Gate, Annie's Homegrown, After The Fall, San-J Organic Tamari, and Brown Cow Farm Organic Yogurt.*

### Grand Prize Essay

By Madeline Olsen

*Madeline Olsen, 26, is a graduate student in urban and regional planning at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute. She works at an emergency shelter for homeless adults in Minneapolis, MN.*

I envision organic agriculture to be like a seed, starting small, growing into something large and fruitful, creating small seeds to be spread, renewing the life cycle. Organic agriculture, as with many things, begins with one person. I am the seed, and in many ways selfish. I want to be healthy, eating fruits, vegetables, and meats that are free from chemicals and minimally processed.

As I expand my knowledge about organic agriculture, I realize how much the earth's system is affected by the fact that I purchase and eat organic foods. It starts simply: I recognize that when farmers do not spray their plants with pesticides, the soil is free from chemicals. If the soil is not contaminated, then the river by the farm is also not contaminated. The creatures in the river are then safe

and the creatures that eat those creatures are safe.

As I comprehend the large impact I am having on the world, I want to spread the word. I teach my friends and family about organic foods and why they are so important. I will pass this knowledge on to my children, and so on. It will become a universal expectation that our food be free from chemicals. The system, from plant to soil, from river to fish, will be returned to what is natural. Selfishly and selflessly, I know that organic agriculture is good for me, my children, and the earth.



### First Place Winner

By Natasha Marshall

*Natasha Marshall, 19, is a sophomore at Wesleyan*

*University in Lincoln, NE, who is studying sociology and anthropology. She envisions having a career related to environmental issues.*

**For today.** Organic farming treats our earth respectfully by understanding the cry for nutrients in the earth's soil. They go the extra mile to ensure quality while not

taking advantage of our precious land. When you eat food that is organically grown, you are taking a pledge to your health while helping our environment, one bite at a time.

**For tomorrow.** Organic farming is sustainable agriculture, which means that they are looking out for the future of our children. They softly caress the land that was gracefully given to us. Even a simple procedure as leaving the excess crop on the field, thus allowing the nutrients of the crop to flow silently into our earth, is beneficial. Within organic agriculture lies the healing power of the wounds from traditional farming's past.

With organic farming there is more biodiversity in the cropland, which improves the vitality of the crop. Every action in the process of organic farming prevents the use of harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Because of this, consumers do not have to worry about whether the food they eat causes water and air pollution or the food is traced with poisonous pesticides.

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