



As we begin 2011, it's a good time to reflect on all that Tilth Producers accomplished this past year. Last January, the Board of Directors developed a detailed annual plan, and we accomplished a good share of it!

In March, we moved into our first "real" office in Seattle's Good Shepherd Center, which houses many other great non-profit organizations. The staffing committee of the Board created job descriptions and hired a talented program assistant, Kelsey Maki, and a financial manager, Randi Weinstein, while Nancy Allen took on more responsibility in managing the whole show.

We had a big change in plans for our IT functions and web site in May, but Nancy and Kelsey handled it with aplomb, launching a new web site and absorbed the listserve functions in-house.

## **Farm Walks**

Tilth Producers offered ten very successful farm walks across the state. We are grateful to the host farmers who opened up their farms and shared their best practices with other growers.

Attendance ranged from 30 to more than 100 while our farmer experts covered topics as broad ranging as sheep dairying, emergency planning, greenhouse production, season extension, orchard transition, planned grazing and organic grains.

One farm walk even led farmers through a mock GAP certification process! Get ready for some great farm walks in the coming year and, if you have a farm walk suggestion let us know.

## **WOW! Washington Organic Week**

Tilth Producers encouraged consumers to *Choose Washington Organic* through a new program called Washington Organic Week or WOW! held September 12-19, 2010. We partnered with organic stakeholders across the state to run activities, advertisements, and promotions supporting the purchase and consumption of Washington organic foods.

## **Tilth Producers Quarterly**

Once again editor Kate Halstead, the TPQ committee members, and advertising director Betsie DeWreede delivered four excellent issues covering a variety of topics important to organic and sustainable growers and supporters.

## **Conference**

A record 600 people registered, making the 2010 conference a dynamic agricultural happening! There were over 200 young people wanting to learn more about farming and sustainable food systems. Fort Worden State Park was comfortable, affordable, and the food from Bon Appétit was fantastic.

A post-conference survey told us the WSU Organic Grains Symposium held on Friday before the conference was great, the workshops were well received, and the networking highly valued. Save the dates—Nov. 11–13, 2011—when we will head back at the Yakima Convention Center.

## **Board of Directors Elections**

We offer sincere thanks to David Muehleisen, Melissa Barker, Michel Wiman, and Amy Sills who all retired from the board this year. David and Melissa worked hard on the *Tilth Producers Quarterly*, farm walks, and the conference; Amy chaired the membership committee, and Michel co-chaired the farm walk committee. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

At the conference annual meeting, Tilth Producers members re-elected Carey Hunter, Kia Armstrong, Mary Robinson, and Anne Schwartz. Doug Collins of WSU's Small Farms Program, Kaitlin Hansen of Terry's Berries in Tacoma, and Kellie Henwood of The Food Co-op in Port Townsend were newly elected.

The new members bring renewed energy and varied experience, creating a team who will work with staff to "get it done."

## **2011 and Beyond**

Tilth Producers' 2010 strategic plan outlines four broad outcomes upon which programs are based: Growing Farmers and Farm Businesses;

Promoting Tilth Producers and Its Mission; Expanding the Health and Productivity of Tilth Producers; and Changing the Food Paradigm.

At its annual retreat in January 2011, Tilth Producers' board of directors will create a long term plan and annual Strategic Planning Matrix.

Plans for 2011 already include continuing the conference, farm walks, WOW! campaign, Quarterly, and 2011-2012 Directory. We will also expand membership and outreach efforts and continue to improve the organization's web site.

While we are talented and energetic, "Changing the Food Paradigm," may take more than one year! Tilth Producers will continue to support all its members, our whole community, as each person continues to do what they can in their area of expertise and geographic region.

Tilth Producers is a unique organization made up of farmers and farm supporters who know most intimately what needs to be done to change our agricultural system.

We are making steady progress toward our goals by hiring competent staff and working in partnership with sister organizations.

As the agricultural sector continues to become more consolidated, it is a critical time to ensure the farmer's voice is heard. When resources are limited we must work together.

Tilth Producers provides a valuable place for all growers in the organic and sustainable community to have a voice. We invite you to join us in whatever way you can to create a thriving sustainable agricultural community.

Wishing you and yours a most Fruitful New Year!

*Diane Dempster*