

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Diane Dempster, Tilth Producers Board President

Even though the weather has made it hard to cultivate and plant, the board and staff of Tilth Producers have been very busy indoors!



## STAFF

We began increasing staff at the end of 2009. Last year we got our first office space and hired Kelsey, our Program Assistant, and Randi, our Financial Manager. This year we brought both Nancy and Kelsey to full time. Our staff is extremely productive and it is great to be able to count on them. Nancy also recruited an outreach volunteer, Kate Selting. Kate has worked with farmers in the Peace Corps and speaks agricultural Spanish. She's quite talented and we're grateful for her support!

## DIRECTORY

Hot off the press, the 2011-2012 Directory is now available and free to all. It is beautiful and full of great information about you, our members. Special thanks to Betsie DeWreede who solicited all the advertising, which paid for the whole thing! And thanks to you, for supporting Tilth Producers through ads and listings.

## FUNDRAISING

We need to raise a significant amount of money this year to keep ourselves from dipping too far into savings. Our goal is that each program pay for itself and earn a bit extra, but that is not always possible. We continue applying for grants and soliciting event sponsors. We will be asking for more individual donations this year and hope that these connections will carry us into the future. Thank you for your continued support.

## MEMBERSHIP

Did you know that our membership is made up of 51% farmers, orchardists, and ranchers, and 19% organic retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and processors? The remaining 30% includes agricultural researchers, educators and consultants, consumers, farm suppliers, and resource organizations. We've just developed new membership fliers featuring member farmer faces. If you can help with recruitment, we'd be happy to provide you with materials. We're also planning some new networking events later this year, so stay tuned.

## JOURNAL

Welcome to Cathleen McCluskey, our new journal editor. She hails from Organic Seed Alliance in Port Townsend and comes with lots of experience in writing and farming. We are delighted she has joined us— enjoy her first issue! Many thanks to Carey Hunter and all the journal committee members, as well as Nancy and Kelsey, for producing the last journal and finding Cathleen.

## CONFERENCE

We have an exciting conference planned for November 11-13th, 2011 in Yakima. We'll have a Spanish language track on Saturday and Sunday. On Friday there will be a WSU Symposium on organic dryland agriculture, one on policy and research, as well as a farm tour to Tieton. See page 19 for more information. We will be back at Fort Worden in Port Townsend in 2012, and at the Yakima Convention Center in 2013. The year 2014 is "T-40" celebrating Tilth's 40th year. We are looking for a site near the Columbia River or Portland, so we can celebrate with our friends in Oregon. If you have any ideas for large venues in the area, please let us know.

## POLICY

We recently hired our first Policy Intern, Ariana Taylor-Stanley, who will be with us through the November conference. The policy committee has given her a to-do list that supports our policy agenda, including the Farm Bill and legislation on food safety intern programs and farm-to-cafeteria. Ariana will help us keep on top of the issues while we are busy farming, and will continue to work with our policy partner, The Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network.

## NOSB VISIT

It was great fun having the National Organic Standard Board (NOSB) come to Seattle in April. Public testimony and the board's deliberations about issues impacting organic growers and the industry were very informative. Tilth Producers hosted a great reception in downtown Seattle for more than 200 people. Thanks to all the companies who donated food, to all the sponsors, and to the growers who provided delicious farm products to share.

## WOW!

Washington Organic Week, or WOW!, is set for this year for September 11-17th. We are working with our sponsors to celebrate the Washington organic industry and to encourage people to buy locally grown organic products. See page 6 for more details!

## NOMINATIONS

We are seeking new board members from the eastside - both fruit and vegetable growers. If you are thinking about joining us, contact a current board member or Nancy for the full scoop.

Don't forget to send us your nominations for 2011 Farmer of the Year and 2011 Advocate of the Year! Visit the [tilthproducers.org](http://tilthproducers.org) for more information, or send us an email.

We are looking forward to lots of delicious organic fruits and vegetables, and are glad to be busy supporting you—our Washington organic and sustainable farmers and industry. Have a great season everyone!