

# OCIA MN #1

**Organic Crop Improvement Association – OCIA MN #1**  
**Lorri Ann Hartel, Chapter Administrator**  
**2609 Wheat Drive, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750**  
**218-253-4907 (Office) 218-686-6144 (Cell)**  
**Email: [lhartel@prairieagcomm.com](mailto:lhartel@prairieagcomm.com)**



## **Newsletter – Fall 2025 Issue**

News from Chapter Administrator Lorri Ann Hartel – Hello 😊

Happy Fall y'all! The weather took a turn to cold and wet this week but looks like warm days are trending soon. The summer went by much too fast, and it seems the older we get the faster time goes. Inspections are still going on and we have 20 members that have received their 2025 certificates. If you are still waiting to hear from your Inspector about date and time of inspection, please give me a call and I will check in to. Membership is down this year for our chapter and our hope is that we grow over the next few years. Many have retired and their land has gone into conventional farming or new owners may have certified elsewhere. OCIA is here to do our best for all of our members and we take pride that the [Cornucopia Institute](#) has consistently rated OCIA International as an [exemplary certifier](#)—the highest qualification possible.

See page 3- 4 for information on the Organic Cost Share program for 2025. **I spoke with Cassie Dahl at the MN Department of Agriculture, and she noted they are waiting for more details for 2025. She will be sending out information to you all when it becomes available.**

**Also – check out our chapter website: [www.mnocia.org](http://www.mnocia.org)**

## **A special thank you to our corporate members**

**Albert Lea Seed - Blue River** , 1414 W Main, PO Box 127, Albert Lea, MN 56007 – Phone: 507-352-5247

**Cashton Farm Supply**, 300 State Hwy 27, Cashton, WI 54619 – Phone: 608-654-5123

**Crop Revenue Agency, LLC**, 100 Center Drive, PO Box 345, Buffalo, MN 55313 – Phone: 763-229-3196

**FW Cobs Company Inc.**, PO Box 30, Saint Albans, VT 05481 – Phone: 888-531-4888

**J & J Corporation (Soyko)**, 3260 40th Ave SE, Suite D, Fargo, ND 58104 – Phone: 218-356-8214

**Mid-State Supply Company**, PO Box 136, Sartell, MN 56377 – Phone: 320-240-0033

**MN Farmers Union**, 305 Roselawn Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55117 – Phone: 651-639-1223

**Natures Organic Grist**, 701 Xenia Ave S, Golden Valley, MN 55416, Phone: 952-746-6800

**Nature Safe Organic Fertilizer**, 1901 Hwy 66, Hordville, NE 68846, Phone: 308-940-2020

**Richland IFC, Inc**, 100 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Breckenridge, MN 56520 – Phone: 218-643-1797

**Sunrise Foods**, 715 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Pender, NE 68047 – Phone: 402-705-1076

**Sustainable Farming Assn of MN**, 4924 Upton Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55410 – Phone: 763-260-0209

**Welter Seed and Honey Company**, 17724 Hwy 136, Onslow, IA 52321 – Phone: 800-470-3325

**Message from President Denise Olson** - Greetings from Northern MN, Fall is definitely in the air with a crisp 55 degrees this morning. As we have just passed Labor Day, I pray all had a great and safe weekend. I also want to say the true meaning of Labor is to remember those who have given their time, best efforts, and worked hard in their lives for this blessed country. A special **Thank You** to all the farmers who do and have worked so hard so the world can eat nutritious meals each day!

Well up here, our wheat harvest for many is coming to an end, there are still some acres left but many farmers are nearing the end or have completed the harvest. I have heard there is a lot of problems with getting the wheat dry this year, but one agronomist up here has a theory and really thinks it has to do with the 42 days of heavy smoke from Canada that didn't dry down properly this year. I really hope everyone is having a good, safe and bountiful harvest this season. As the harvest continues in many areas with the large equipment and long hours in the fields, just a friendly reminder, please take time to slow down and be safe. All our families are counting on us to come home at the end of the day.

Alot of the inspections have been completed now and OCIA International has been working hard to get certificates out. If you have any questions, please give Lorri Ann a call. If you receive a letter with minor or major non compliances, please take care of as soon as possible so you can receive your certificate in a timely fashion. Always make sure Lorri Ann has a copy of items sent to OCIA International.

I really hope as you continue in your harvest and fall work, you take a few minutes to look around and enjoy the changing of the fall colors and give thanks and appreciate this great country we live in. Please also remember to thank your family members, friends and employees for all their help and all they do for us for it to be possible to bring in the harvest. **Wishing everyone a beautiful fall, and a bountiful and safe harvest with your families.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Denise Olson**, President, Warren, MN (218) 289-0835  
**Darin Dorn**, Vice President, Vining, MN (320) 760-5964  
**Carolyn Lane**, Secretary, Spring Lake Park, MN (763) 377-2461  
**Paul Vanderwoude**, Treasurer, Pipestone, MN (507) 825-4130  
**Dennis Week, Director**, Evansville, MN (218) 948-2199



Please contact the chapter or the OCIA International office if you need a No Spray sign. Cost is \$10.00 each.



## Chapter Happenings and Education Updates

**The deadline for the December newsletter will be December 1.**

**MN Organic Conference – January 8-9, 2026 (St. Cloud Convention Center)**

For more information about:

- **Midwest TOPP goals and resources:** [organictransition.org/region/Midwest](https://organictransition.org/region/Midwest)
- **Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Ag:** [organicag.umn.edu](https://organicag.umn.edu)
- **Midwest TOPP in Minnesota:** Helene Murray | [murra021@umn.edu](mailto:murra021@umn.edu)

**The Organic Certification Cost Share Program** has been allocated \$8 million per year through 2031 as part of the latest federal budget reconciliation legislation. This program offers partial reimbursement to certified organic farmers, ranchers, and processors/handlers for the cost of organic certification, helping them maintain compliance and meet rigorous organic standards while staying competitive in a growing market.

The program reimburses 75% of eligible certification fees, up to \$750 per scope. Eligible scopes include:

- Crops
- Livestock
- Handling
- Wild crop

Organic operations can be applied through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or participating in state departments of agriculture.

### **Who is eligible?**

Organic farmers and handlers who are currently certified to the [USDA National Organic Program](https://www.usda.gov/nop)

- If your certificate of operation has been suspended, revoked, or withdrawn, you are not eligible for this program.

- If you operate in more than one state, apply to the state where your farm or facility is physically located. This is usually listed on your organic certificate.

If you are transitioning to organic, see our [Minnesota Transition to Organic Cost-Share](#) program.

#### What You Should Do

- **1. Contact Your Local FSA Office:**

The best course of action is to visit your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to inquire about the status of the 2025 program.

- **2. Check with Your State Department of Agriculture:**

- You can also contact your state's Department of Agriculture for information and to see if they have received approval to administer the program

### **History of OCIA**

*In the depression years of the dustbowl, farmers started meeting informally to share their mutual farming experience. Having no technical support to enhance the development of their profession, they formed the first “crop improvement” associations. The principles were simple: farmers are the experts on their lands; having regular meetings as opportunities to share their experiences with such techniques and trials, they could acquire the basics of adapted technology.*

*In the mid-seventies the notion of organic agriculture began circulating within a group of pioneers. A certain parallel was noted between the technological situation of the nineteen-twenties and the challenge of the new organic “movement”. Work started on the idea of an “organic” crop improvement association, which was envisioned as farmers working together to facilitate the development and the transfer of technical expertise. In the early eighties, certification guidelines were formulated which eventually formed the basis of OCIA’s certification program. After few years, a small number of farm groups (chapters) formed independently and assumed the leadership of a combined crop improvement/certification program.*

*Thus, in the fall of 1985, in Albany, New York, a diverse group of farmers met and structured the concept of a “farmer owned, and farmer controlled” association. This initial meeting set the cornerstone of what was to become one of the foremost organic certification agencies in the world.*

*During those early years, OCIA became well rooted in many farming communities in Canada and the United States. Two important events occurred in 1988. First, the OCIA program took on an international identity when a group of Peruvian farmers joined the organization attracted by the concepts of farmer-to-farmer networking and crop improvement. Second, OCIA International was incorporated as a non-profit organization in the state of Pennsylvania, USA. From then on, the program expanded throughout Latin America. In the early nineties, membership from Europe and Asia added further dimensions to the international body.*

*In January 1997, OCIA moved the International Office from Bellfontaine, Ohio to Lincoln, Nebraska, which provides easy access to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s sustainable agriculture program.*

*Today, OCIA is an industry leader and one of the world’s largest organic certification agencies. OCIA has thousands of members in North, Central and South America, Africa, Europe and the Pacific Rim. From its humble beginnings to locations*

all over the world, OCIA continues to be committed to providing members with the highest quality organic certification, as well as access to global organic marketplace.

### **Accreditation**

OCIA International is accredited by IOAS for the scope of product certification. Registration number: 30. Please refer to [www.ioas.org](http://www.ioas.org) for current information. The latest accreditation certificate can be found on the IOAS website [here](#). IOAS accredits/assesses OCIA for ISO/IEC 17065, the Canada Organic Regime (COR), and EU 2018/848 (EU Compliance), Reglamento técnico para los productos orgánicos (RTPO), and Reglamento de la Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO). Please see **other** accreditations/recognition information under [Why Certify with OCIA](#).

**OCIA International** is one of the world's oldest, largest and most trusted leaders in the organic certification industry. A nonprofit, member-owned, agricultural organization, OCIA is dedicated to providing the highest quality organic certification services and access to global organic markets.

