



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment

Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

January 29, 2022



Prepared by:

Beverly Bushyhead and Garnetta Lowman

Side by Side Associates

Partners in Community Building

(612) 399-4310

<https://sidebysideassociates.com>

Table of Contents

Overview.....	3
Objectives	3
Methodology	3
Online Survey	3
One-to-One Interviews	3
Strategy Retreat Group.....	4
Limitations	4
Acknowledgements	4
Major Findings.....	4
Defining OFGA Current Members & Stakeholders	4
Membership Benefits Need Clarity and To Be Tied to Strengths of OFGA	5
Research	5
Organizational Support and Leadership	6
Policy Agenda.....	6
Technical Assistance	6
Communication Needs to Be Maximized for Greater Cohesion and Member Organizing	7
OFGA Innovation is Needed to Support a Visionary Future	7
Recommendations.....	8
Objective 1. OFGA Organizational Infrastructure	8
Objective 2. OFGA Research Program.....	9
Objective 3. OFGA Policy Agenda	11
Objective 4. Technical Assistance (Deeper Education).....	12
Next Steps	13
APPENDIX A: Survey Transmittal and Questions.....	14
APPENDIX B: Individual Interview Feedback and Comments.....	20
APPENDIX C: Strategic Retreat Themes Presentation.....	23
APPENDIX D: Strategic Retreat Brainstorm Idea Priorities	37

Overview

Side by Side Associates has been engaged by Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA) to do an internal stakeholder assessment that will deepen the understanding of where programs and opportunities need to be aligned to create more engagement and sustainability as part of its strategic planning.

Objectives

This report will explore the following objectives:

- Defining OFGA by its current interested parties and contributors
- Membership Benefits
- Research
- Organizational Support and Leadership
- Policy Agenda
- Technical Assistance
- Communication Needs
- Vision of OFGA Future

Methodology

As part of this organizational assessment, the following data collection methods were utilized:

Online Survey

To begin the process, the established OFGA listserv of 129 emails were sent an invitation to participate in an online Survey hosted on the Survey Monkey platform November 12, 2021 – January 14, 2022. Initially a survey closing date was to be January 4th, however, OFGA extended the closing date to accommodate interviews and social media outreach to encourage greater survey participation. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A. After several reminder emails, posting access to the survey in OFGA newsletters, website, and online social media platforms; a total of 14 participants completed the survey yielding an 11% response rate. A summary can be found in Appendix A.

One - to - One Interviews

Interviews, with a total of 15 individuals, were comprised of a selection of community partners and OFGA members (see Appendix B). The interviews took place from November 12, 2021 – January 14, 2022. Interviews were scheduled, facilitated, and reported by Peggy Callahan and Amy Bacigalupo. Comments and feedback in response to the interviews can be found in Appendix B. These are formatted in strengths, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) format.



Strategy Retreat Group

A focus group with OFGA Board Members and stakeholders from varying levels of engagement was conducted on January 29, 2022. Survey data was categorized into themes and interview responses were added to these themes and presented at the Strategy Retreat. Information presented there can be found in Appendix C.

Limitations

Review of financials, organizational documents and previous strategic plan information was not available.

Acknowledgements

Side by Side Associates wishes to acknowledge Amy Bacigalupo, Peggy Callahan and John Knisley; also known as the strategic planning committee, for all their help with providing information and coordination to execute this process. They managed the outreach OFGA members and interested parties. Also, thank you to all of the individuals who participated in the interviews and completed the survey.

Major Findings

Membership benefits need clarity and to be tied to strengths of OFGA

Communication needs to be maximized for better cohesion and member organizing

OFGA innovation is needed to support a visionary future

Through analysis of the survey as well as aligning interview responses, the narrative of **determining membership characteristics and needs met through membership** became clear. Member respondents seek to refine tools and methods to reach more growers. Members shared ideas and recommendations based on their needs, resulting alignment emerged. OFGA members respond in various ways to meet climate, pandemic, unforeseen developments and sustainability. Consideration of opportunities were categorized to meet additional needs not asked about specifically. Conversations were facilitated at the Strategy Retreat to include stakeholder participants connected through their interest in growing organic fruit, as well as other characteristics.

Defining OFGA Current Members & Stakeholders

The majority of respondents are members. Nearly 2/3 of those surveyed, interviewed and retreat participants were members. Other demographic characteristics of OFGA respondents indicated that nearly all members of OFGA are Caucasian. There are two elements that create discussion points: a growing interest in fruit growing is at a high pitch during this time elevated by the pandemic, also diverse growers are increasing across the region.



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

Most member respondents fall into the age range of 41 to 55 years of age. **This creates quite an opportunity to reach younger growers as well as retired folks.** Consideration about what barriers might be for younger growers or potential growers would be important. Also, challenges for growers of 56 years of age and older might build greater supports for that group, especially given the time available to this group. Maybe the age range OFGA attracts is exactly the group OFGA seeks to attract.

In addition, the respondent group maxed out at growing on 150 acres. Growers on more acreage didn't respond to OFGA's request for input. Something that continued to come up for the group was size of acreage for growers. Half of OFGA members grow on 2-50 acres. This led to discussion of **methods to attract larger growers, hold their interest and identifying ways that OFGA can fill the needs of larger growers.** More discussion is needed to understand the needs against capacity of OFGA in meeting those needs efficiently.

One hidden strength is the comparatively larger knowledge base of growers with 10+ years of experience. It was interesting to consider ways to **engage experienced growers as a resource** to infuse education and support for less experienced growers.

Two major reasons for those who are thinking about joining OFGA as members, but who haven't joined yet, is that:

- A. They needed more information to make the decision to join, and
- B. They were not asked to join OFGA.

Membership benefits need clarity and to be tied to strengths of OFGA

Benefits to membership fell into four areas:

- Research
- Organizational support and leadership
- Policy agenda, and
- Technical Assistance

RESEARCH

Research is an important benefit attractive to members and potential members. In fact, it is a unique niche that OFGA has offered in the past and that is seen as worthy of refinement. Some ideas for improving research offerings are:

- Establish (and/or strengthen) research partnership and priorities,
- Connect to research being done at universities, in addition to Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin,
- Share research findings in strategic ways,
- Create the ability for members to upload research reports and charts,



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- Confirm the benefits of membership (possible benefits may include: provision of research, access to research, find grant/funding resources for research and promotion of member research),
- Determine differentiators that lead to joining as members, what are benefits to members?
- Identify value of membership. Determine how much to charge in order to be sustainable. (Listserv maintenance, events, etc.),
- Support research supplies, such as a searchable listserv database
- Support member research,
- Perform regional data management on organic fruit growing,
- Assign a point person for each university partner to connect with about OFGA's research needs,
- Focus on the listserv and OFGA's own research and data sharing as priority

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

- Determine intended audience, discuss goal characteristics to include
- Younger people, inclusive of organic practices, size, type of operation, level of expertise,
- Determine coordinator position and organizational chart for efficacy considering resources
- Creating a geographical footprint mapping of the region called upper Midwest, so better understanding is available for best service area based on geography
- To remain sustainable and to maximize capacity, don't over-extend or dilute OFGA's efforts,
- Recruit, hire and retain a coordinator long-term

POLICY AGENDA

- Advocacy for organic fruit growing practices
- Legislative relationship building and policy forming work,
- Determine the economic and human impact of specialty crops in MN and leverage the data,
- Support organic initiatives such as Land stewardship project data of 10K specialty crops in MN

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance can be subsidized through funding as well as through deepening engagement of the growers with 10+ years of experience. Other ideas for offering of technical assistance included:

- Regional, designated point person/contact who serves as specific fruit ambassadors, perhaps on a rotating and shared role basis,
- Help members with research, grant/funding resources and support grant applications and grant writers,
- Identify priorities for multifaceted approach to technical assistance,
- Categorize the data for access.
 - advanced growers vs. new/hobby growers
 - according to topic and farming practices,



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- Establish dominant and consistent resources
 - Monthly publications, Website updates, mentorships, events, info library, webinars
- Consider expanding to a national reach/climate zone coverage expertise model
- Provide financial advice/considerations for commercial growing
 - Cost of producing, yield, prices etc.
 - Offer webinars, talking bureau series and other supports for members
- Offer and support urban farming tours throughout the region

Communication needs to be maximized for better cohesion and member organizing

Communication was determined to be an underutilized resource and one worthy of refinement.

- Creating a communication channel and building relationships in which reputable resources/growers/researchers may access the information as well,
- Ways to communicate membership benefits,
- Communication methods that align messaging,

OFGA innovation is needed to support a visionary future

Definition of organic practices and specifically inclusive of practices has become important for the best branding and purpose of Organic Fruit Growers Association. The special niche that OFGA fulfills is critical for sustainability and mission delivery. **The unique identifier and scope of membership offering has come to describe the footprint of OFGA and helps clarify who is a potential OFGA member and what type of services are provided by the organization.** Most importantly organic fruit growing is the internal and external branding that is most visible and important. Specifically defining organic and its practice is what makes OFGA stand out. **The reason growers turn to OFGA is the knowledge base on the topic of organic fruit growing.** All research and education is specific to this focus. In addition, vision of ways to deliver on this promise include:

- Organic fruit focus of:
 - Organic Education – field and orchard tours
 - Organic fruit growing education and assistance
 - Organic fruit marketing
 - Connecting organic fruit growers regionally
 - Inclusive organic practices knowledge base sharing
- OFGA could be visioned growing in size, if that is a goal, meeting it would include:
 - Understanding clearly what membership offers,
 - Considering what benefits potential members are interested in,
 - Being realistic on what capacity is of OFGA support and technical assistance related to member services, research support, organizational administration.



RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: OFGA Organizational Infrastructure

- **Staff OFGA**
- **Update Listserv**
- **Review Funding Capacity and Systems**

Strategies	Actions
1. Hire long term coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement recruitment strategy • Use board committee to screen and hire coordinator • Assign rotating mentors to train and onboard new coordinator • Design annual workplan for continuance improvement and staff development
2. Secure technology support through volunteer or in-kind donation of expertise and time to update Listserv and organize stakeholder and member list management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and publish RFP for outline and scope of work • Use references and recommendations within network • Listserv levels of member and non-member to support group needs
3. Increase funding diversity to include research and organic education streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and complete outreach to potential prospects • Use references within network • Ask for letters of support from within network
4. Update or Initiate Quickbooks for Nonprofits methods, bookkeeping and align with organization needs and goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use MCN resources for key training of coordinator and board member • Obtain and train on Quickbooks for Nonprofits • Use annual accounting calendar to keep on track for reaching objectives

OBJECTIVE 2: OFGA Research Program

- Set Research Annual Goals
- Secure Research Partners
- Establish Research Dissemination Protocol
- Develop and Implement Communication Plan

Strategies	Actions
1. Set Research Annual Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set three (3) research goals for 2022 focus • Use Annual Meeting to determine three research area priorities
2. Secure research partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the annual priorities choose the best situated research partners for the focus areas • Meet with potential partners and outline goals • Ask for inclusion in their research and determine ways OFGA research can help them fulfill or inform their research goals • Consider academic, organic focus and other appropriate partners/supporters
3. Establish research dissemination protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote organizational and member research projects using all communication methods of OFGA • Apply for presentation of research at MOSES annual conference • Apply for presentation of research at organic grower focused conferences • Add links to research to website
4. Develop and Implement Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create communication plan at various levels: Member, Interested parties, Partner and Public

- Determine messaging to share at regular frequencies – research, education, tours and dashboards of measurable results, introduce growers

OBJECTIVE 3: OFGA Policy Agenda

- Bring pertinent policy to Board Meetings as standing agenda item
- Partner with policy makers working on appropriate measures related to OFGA priorities and interests
- Use research to inform policy makers and influence policy at State Level

Strategies	Actions
1. Bring pertinent policy to Board Meetings as standing agenda item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator researches monthly status of policy legislation and tracks its progress • Coordinator subscribes to appropriate updates and online reports • All policies are on the Board Meeting agenda along with update information
2. Partner with policy makers working on appropriate measures related to OFGA priorities and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to policy makers and legislators working on OFGA policy agenda items • Meet with policy makers and legislators bi-annually • Ask policy partners to speak at OFGA Annual Meeting on a policy panel
3. Use research to inform policy makers and influence policy at the State level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize OFGA research into categories and align with related policy if applicable, or potential/needed policy for future • Invite policy makers to tour research demonstrations, conference settings and to interview research designers • Update legislators on research progress and developments • Share published research broadly • Invite policy makers to OFGA events

OBJECTIVE 4: Technical Assistance (Deeper Education)

- Offer members technical assistance along several key OFGA niche programs
- Prioritize USDA Organic Certification

Strategies	Actions
1. Offer members technical assistance along several key OFGA niche programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share organic fruit growing education: • Maximize experienced growers as mentors and knowledge sharing guides • Align research and member requests into urban, orchard and regional tours • Identify new funding resources to target for goal areas: examples might be research, organic practices, land use and marketing • Assist with writing for research publication, conference presentations and grant funding proposals
2. Prioritize USDA Organic Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the USDA Organic Certification process. Choose small cohort of members to move from beginning to completion of certification.

Next Steps

A major focus and goal of the annual meeting strategic priorities conversation will be to determine short term and long-term goals. Identifying not more than 5 goal areas will help create an environment for greatest success. Pushing additional goals into following years will help create a defined 3-5-year Strategic Plan.

The opportunity created at the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic and working from home in shaping the increase in individuals' interest in fruit growing as well as time available to build this into daily lives. This creates a larger opportunity for growth in membership using the niche of research, education, knowledge sharing and connection to the mission of OFGA. Grower tours and urban grower focus increase in importance and relevance based on these newly sparked interests.

Another factor that presents in highly visible ways are the changes in the climate and weather patterns that impact growing. Education and communication will be more important on this point moving forward.

Keep in mind feasibility and capacity for each priority and timeline.

The engagement of stakeholders providing input at the survey, interview and retreat portions of this planning has provided thoughtful and strategic direction for OFGA into the future. The pathway to progress looks promising.



An opportunity to increase awareness of the Organic Fruit Growers Association to the organic fruit grower community should never be wasted!

2022 Survey respondent quote

Appendix A: Survey Transmittal and Questions

Appendix B: Individual Interview Comments and Feedback

Appendix C: Strategic Retreat Themes Presentation

Appendix D: Strategic Retreat Brainstorm Idea Priorities

Appendix A

Survey Transmittal and Questions

Hello,

I hope your week is going well. Soon we'll all be busy with travel and joy together with family, friends and loved ones.

Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA) has partnered with Side by Side Associates on strategic planning. As part of this process, you have been identified as one of the community partners who are important to survey. We invite you to participate.

In that spirit, this is an invitation to share your valuable voice. There are two options for you 1) complete an online survey by January 4th when the survey closes. Or 2) allow Side by Side Associates to schedule time with you to have a private conversation style interview. For either option, I wanted to catch you before the flurry of activity!

The survey link is your invitation to share your ideas and experience on issues such as:

- Your perception of how OFGA is positioned,
- OFGA's relevance as an association organization,
- its impact on the community, and
- the successes and/or needed improvements to OFGA partnerships

Please note, the survey is completely anonymous with optional sharing of identifiers at your discretion.

Alternative opportunities for deep sharing are facilitated through an interview if you prefer. Please reply if you'd like an interview time to be scheduled. Availability for an interview via Zoom or by phone can be scheduled beginning the week of January 4th. Either way your voice is valuable and we invite you to share with us.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Initially the survey was scheduled to close January 4th but has been held open for your response to tomorrow the 14th.



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)
Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

If you've completed the survey, thank you for your valuable opinions and ideas. If you haven't completed the survey, I encourage you to by the end of this week.

Stay tuned for next steps and upcoming report backs. Thank you! And Happy 2022!

SURVEY QUESTIONS

RELATIONSHIP WITH OFGA

1. Membership status
 - a. Are you a current member of OFGA?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. What is the main element that makes membership with OFGA valuable?
 - b. Are you a past member of OFGA?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. What was the main reason for ending membership with OFGA?
 - c. Are you considering membership in OFGA?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. What would make it more likely for you to become a membership of OFGA?
 - d. If you are not a member, tell us why not.
 - i. Membership dues are too expensive.
 - ii. I don't have time to get involved
 - iii. I don't know enough about OFGA.
 - iv. I haven't been asked to join.
 - v. Other comment
 - e. Are you available to share your thoughts with a member of OFGA by phone to help us become a stronger more relevant organization going forward?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
2. Is OFGA fulfilling meeting your needs?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. How could OFGA better meet your needs
3. OFGA's Mission is to share information and encourage research to improve the organic production and marketing of fruit and to represent the interests of growers engaged in such. Is OFGA fulfilling its mission?
 - a. Yes

Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- b. No
- 4. What do you think OFGA should focus on more in the future?
 - a. Organic fruit growing research and information
 - b. Organic field tours of fruit growing operations
 - c. Organic fruit marketing
 - d. Connecting Organic Fruit Growers
 - e. Other (Please Specify)
- 5. How do you see OFGA as an organization in the future?
 - a. Getting bigger
 - b. About the same size
 - c. Getting smaller
 - d. Why? (Please specify)
- 6. If there was one piece of advice you could give OFGA to make it a better organization, what would it be?

EDUCATION

- 1. What educational tools are you most likely to use? (Pick your top three)
 - a. Website pages
 - b. Workshops, in-person
 - c. Webinars
 - d. Listserv
 - e. Online Newsletter
 - f. Talking with other farmers
 - g. Printed materials
 - h. Field days
 - i. Social media, please specify
 - j. Other, please specify
- 2. Where do you get your information currently? (Choose 3)
 - a. Other growers
 - b. Extension office
 - c. Grower organizations or nonprofits
 - d. Universities (specify name)
 - e. Other, please specify
 - f. Private professional consultants
 - g. Please specify

FARMING PRACTICES

- 1. Identify your farming practice



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- a. USDA Certified Organic
 - b. Organically focused, not certified
 - c. Following conventional practices for pest management
 - d. Practicing integrated pest management
 - e. Both conventional and organic
 - f. Strictly conventional
2. What is the more challenging issue that you face as a fruit grower? Comment box
3. Where do you sell your product? (Pick the primary three)
 - a. Wholesale
 - b. Retail
 - c. Farmers Market
 - d. CSA
 - e. Restaurants
 - f. Schools
 - g. Grocery stores
 - h. On farm/U pick
 - i. Roadside
 - j. Other, please specify
 - k. I am growing for my own personal consumption
4. Do you need help marketing your product(s)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other, please specify

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Name (optional)
2. Contact information (optional)
3. Age (in years)
 - a. 25 – 40
 - b. 41 – 55
 - c. 56 – 65
 - d. 66 +
4. Ethnicity
 - a. American Indian
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. Black/African/African American



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- d. Hispanic
 - e. Multi-Racial
 - f. White
 - g. Other, please specify
5. State
6. Which fruit crops are you growing?
- a. Not currently growing any
 - b. Apples
 - c. Blackberry
 - d. Blueberry
 - e. Raspberry
 - f. Strawberry
 - g. Other, (please specify)
7. Which of the fruit crops are you interested in growing?
- a. Not currently growing any
 - b. Apples
 - c. Blackberry
 - d. Blueberry
 - e. Raspberry
 - f. Strawberry
 - g. Other, (please specify)

(is this a place where people get split down different tracks in response to #8)

8. Are you currently farming?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
9. On how many acres do you currently produce fruit?
- a. None
 - b. Less than ½ an acre
 - c. ½ - 2
 - d. 2 – 10
 - e. 11 – 50
 - f. 51 – 150
 - g. 151 – 499
 - h. 500 or more acres
10. How many years of farming experience do you have?
- a. None
 - b. <5



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- c. 5 – 10
- d. >10

Appendix B
INTERVIEW COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Sourced from 2021 Strategic Planning Interviews facilitated by OFGA Planning Committee. Prepared by Side by Side Associates.

OFGA 2021 Strategic Planning Interviews: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Format

➤ **Strengths**

- Meeting other OFGA growers, the network connection to experienced growers to share best practices and trouble-shooting tips.
- Valuable knowledge and skills about organic fruit growing
- Appreciates the explicit focus on fruits, not offered elsewhere
- Communicate with other organizations/advisors and professionals

➤ **Weaknesses**

- Too much focus on growing apples vs. other fruits. Sidelines other audiences within the region.
- Blueberry, Grapes, Currants, Mulberry, Elderberry, Strawberry.
- New generation should be involved/engaged with family events and/or projects to learn more about organic growing
- Coordinator position has frequent vacancies
- Board is not as engaged, needs to make decisions so that Coordinator can execute and a change culture in needed.
- Information on listserv was overwhelming as a beginner and access was discontinued at that time
- There is a perception that it is impossible to grow organic fruit and people are discouraged

➤ **Opportunities**

- Additional OFGA events together with other growers.
- On-site visits with other growers to ask questions
- Capitalize on the new global interest in healthy eating, environmental factors to traditional organic growing
- Help growers to find financing and develop a business plan
- Represent growers on a legislative platform

Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- Provide a mentor or liaison to beginning growers
- Complementary livestock information and how it can support organic growing.
- Coordination for sellers to participate in markets, warehouses and commercial growing support overall
- Encourage more commercial growers to OFGA
- Identify orchards doing research and promote their efforts. Research should be a priority and a vehicle to bring the U of Minnesota and U of Wisconsin and fruit growers together to do more fruit growing research.
- Active daily online forum models could be emulated or accessible to members at the least.
- Active newsletters to encourage donations and memberships
- Advocacy on policy issues
- Pursuing funding outside of foundations - like cooperatives, or market driven
- Adding a resource page to the website to include suppliers, technical service providers, market trends, and additional data
- More support on in depth pest management
- Connect consumers with organic growers for product with a online resource and map
- Have a director that doesn't own or manage growing might allow for more capacity to complete OFGA goals

➤ Threats

- Hard to make money in the Organic fruit growing/price comparison vs. no-organic options for shoppers.
- Price of the farm/land is expensive to get started in Organic growing. Affordability for startups.
- Too much OFGA growth could threaten local connectivity
- Selling at a Farmer's market selling was a lot of labor. Hard to find additional help/workers.
- Visa expiration, housing etc. and need knowledgeable about organic growing procedures
- Buyer's use looks of produce vs. organic growing factors to determine market value of fruit.

➤ Concerns

- Too many regional differences to consider blending East and West coast growing practices under OFGA.
- Note that Michigan and NE have similar climates and would be ok to help grow the critical mass of growers



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)

Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

- Concerns about the retreat event in conjunction with the MOSES conference to encourage attendance
- Board should abide by Robert's rules
- Changes should be made unilaterally, publicly and more transparent
- Prefer brainstorming be complete in the strategic process before members weigh in to respect time.

Appendix C STRATEGIC RETREAT PRESENTATION



**Strategic Planning Team
Side by Side Associates**



Garnetta Lowman
Strategic Facilitator



Beverly Bushyhead
Strategic Facilitator



3/29/2022 (c) 2022 Side by Side Associates 2

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Priorities
- Shared Goals & Strategies
- Next Steps

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Welcome and Introductions

Connecting and Sharing Together

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

4

Hello
my name is

**Your first name,
+ an adjective**
(that starts with the same letter as your first name)
& describes you well.

1/25/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

5



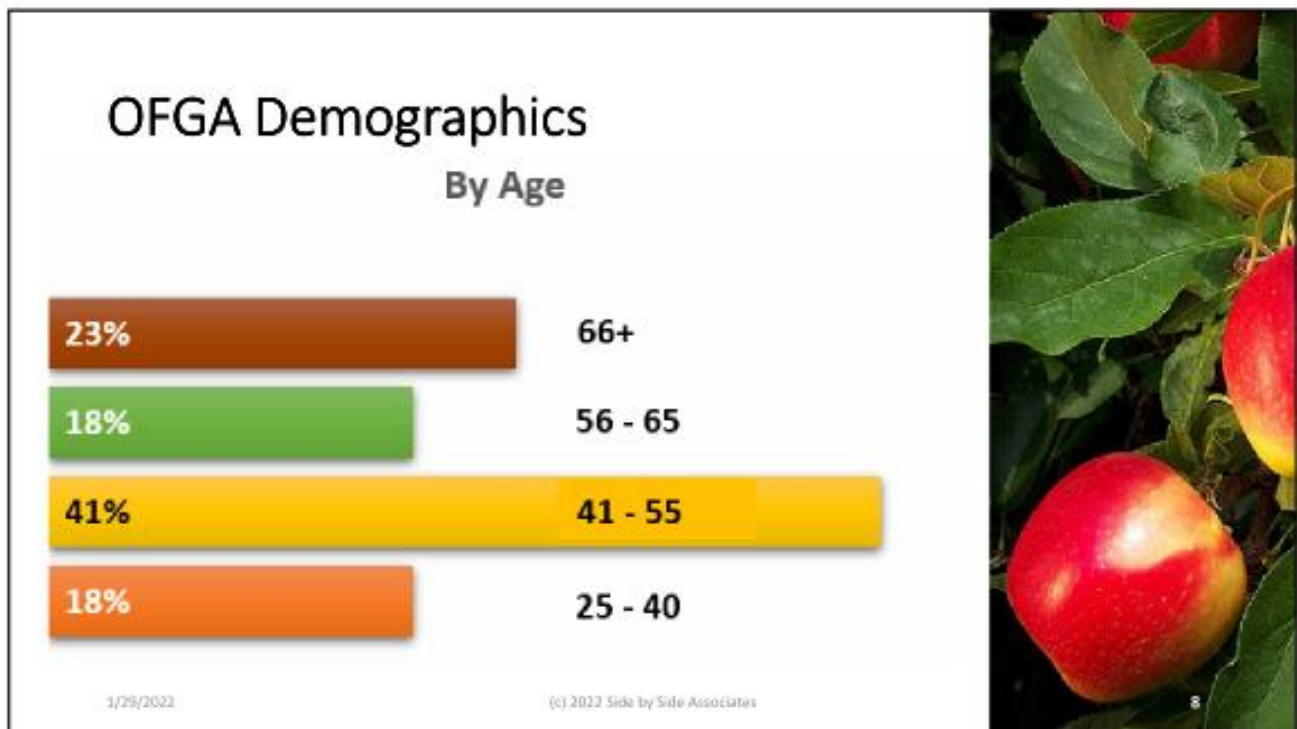
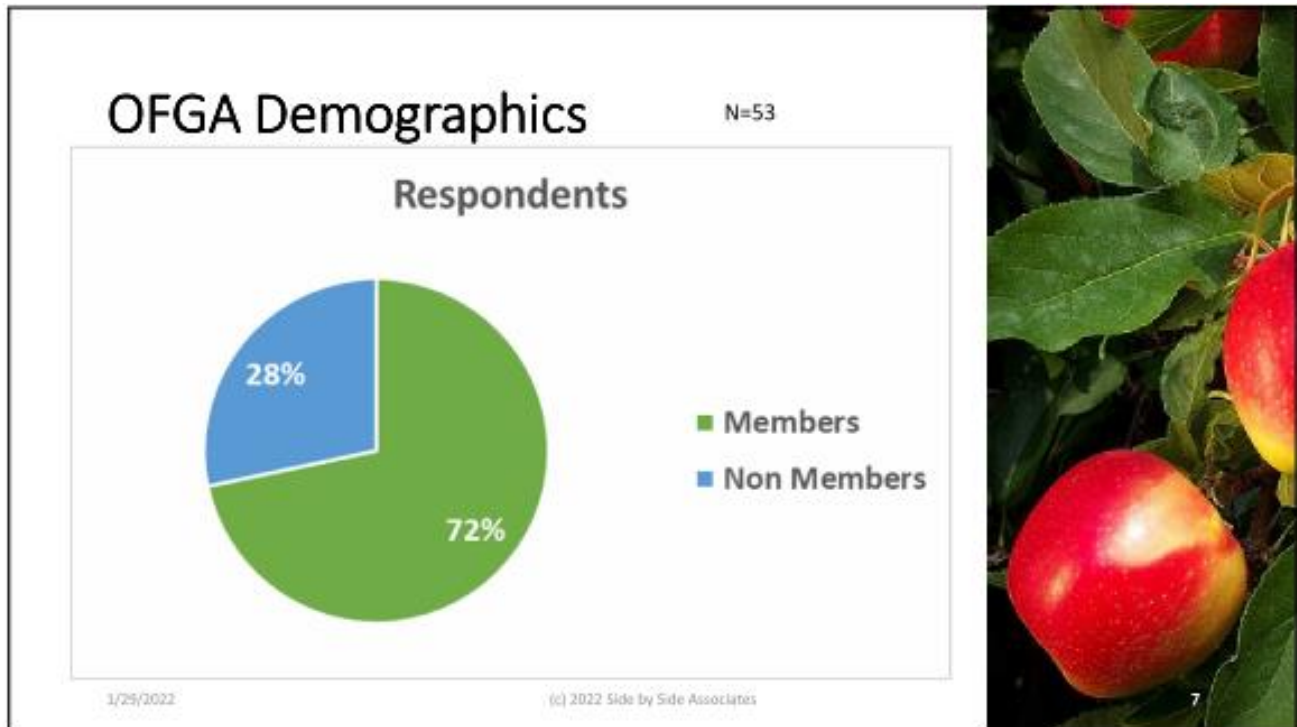
Stakeholder Feedback

Listening Deeply

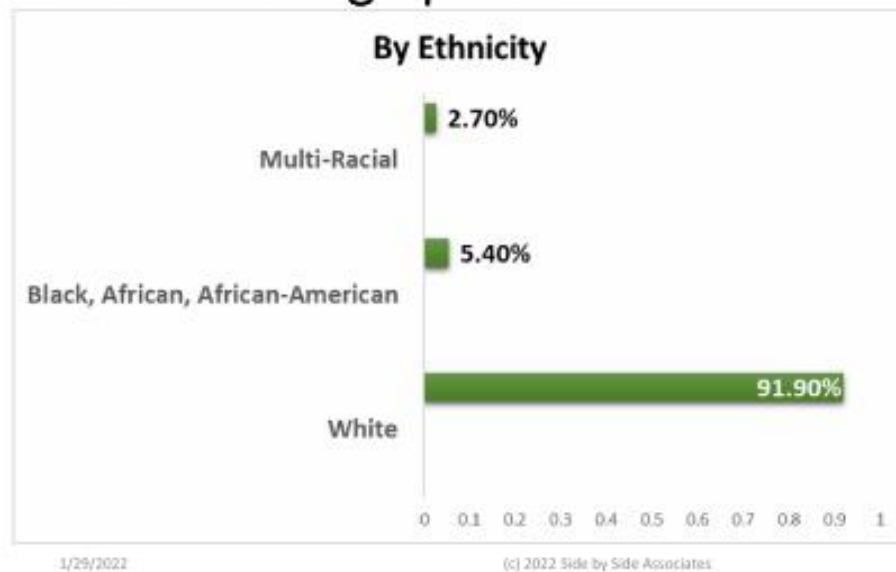
1/25/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

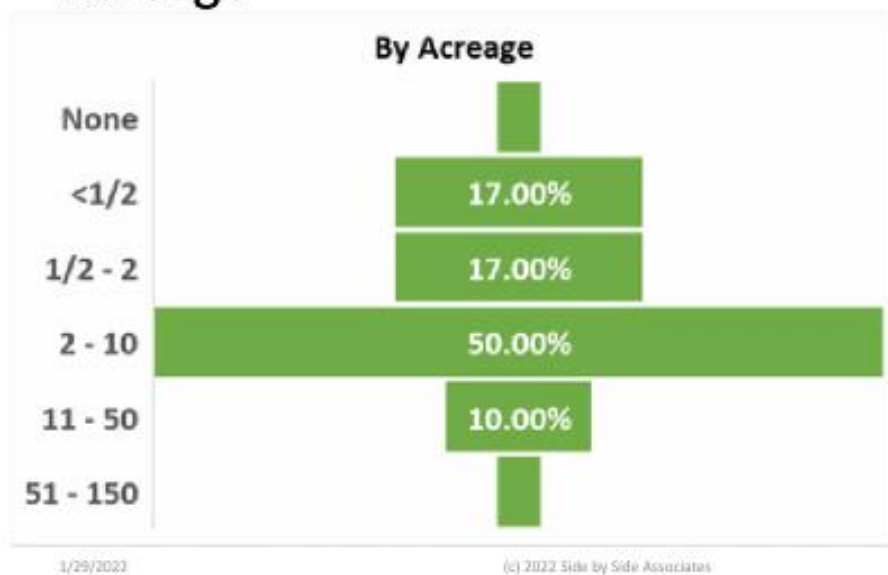
6



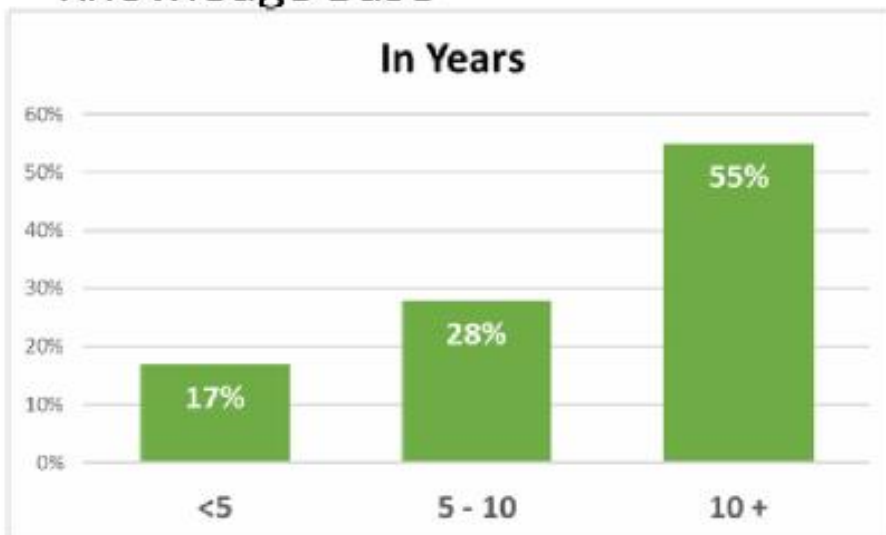
OFGA Demographics



Acreage



Knowledge Base

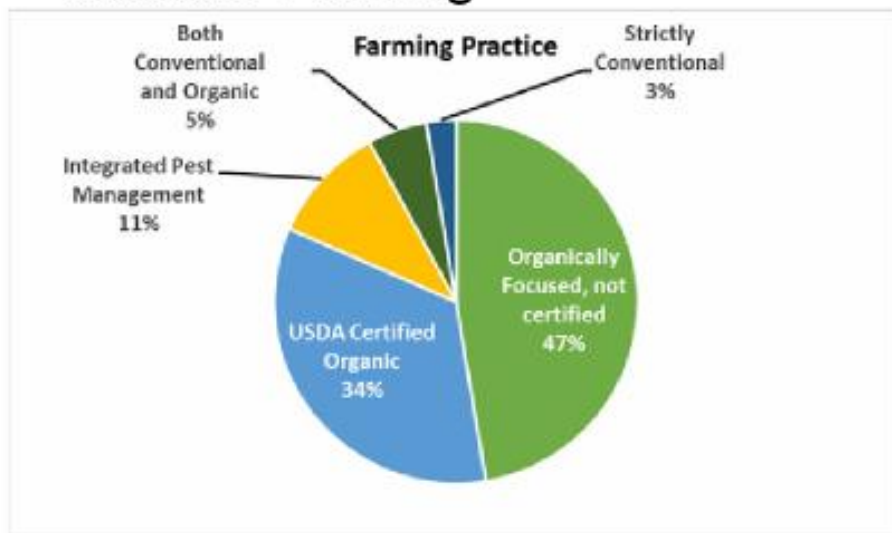


1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Growers' Farming

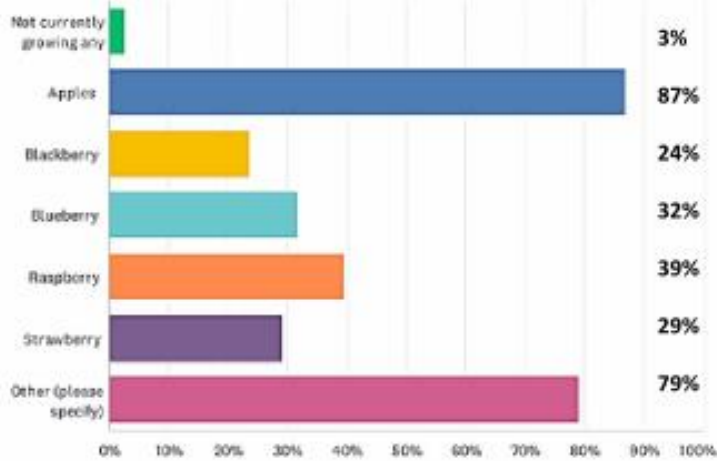


1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Growing Fruit

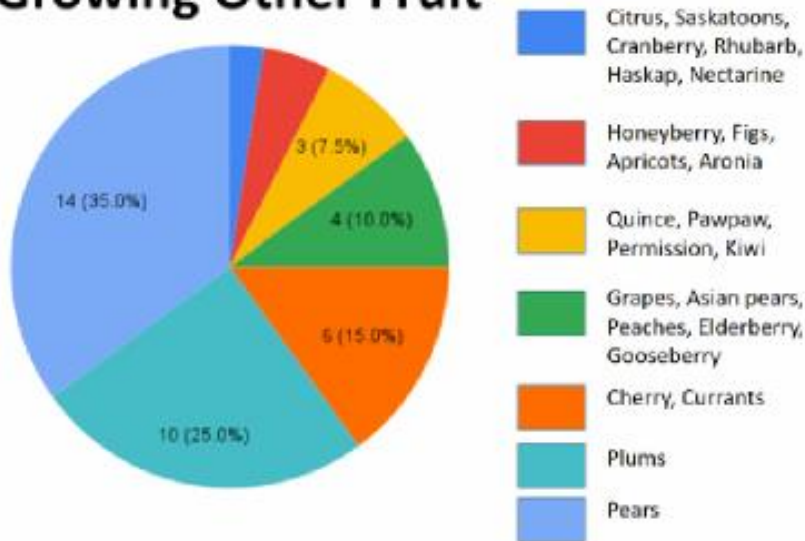


1/25/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Growing Other Fruit



1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



About Membership

Of those not OFGA members, reasoning:

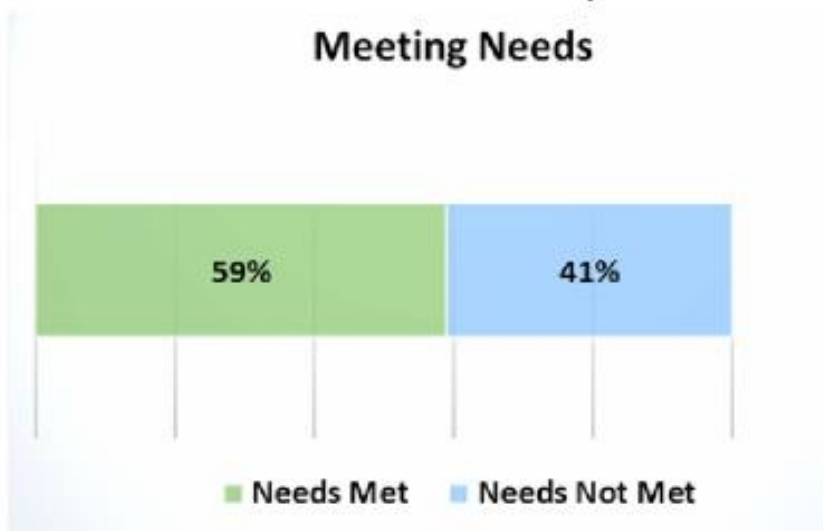
- 73% don't know enough about OFGA to join
- 27% have not been asked to join

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



More About Membership Meeting Needs



1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



End User Connect

Exchange

Farmers Market

44.44%

Retail

33.33%

Personal Use

33.33%

CSA

25.00%

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Priorities

What Matters Most

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

18

Tied to Mission and Purpose

- Fruit growing research and information
- Field tours of organic fruit growing operations
- Connecting organic fruit growers

3/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



OFGA Mission Delivery

- Share information
- Encourage organic production research
- Marketing fruit
- Represent growers' interest



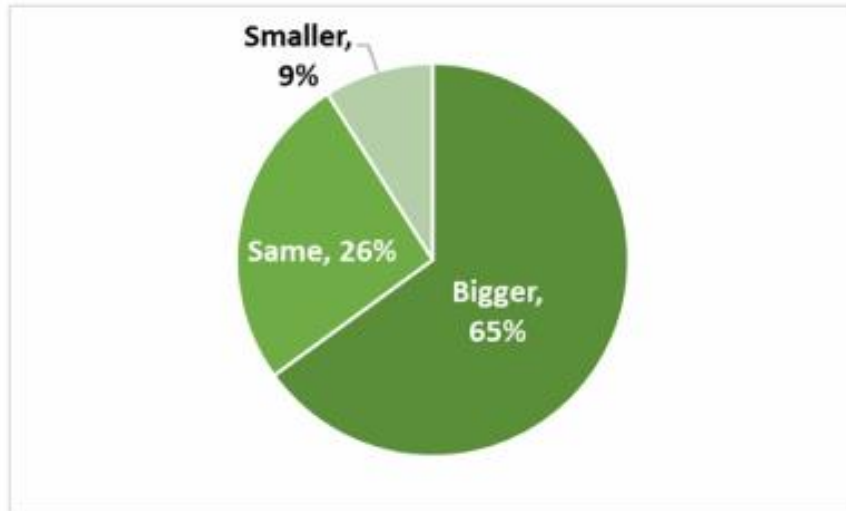
3/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

20



Right Size for OFGA

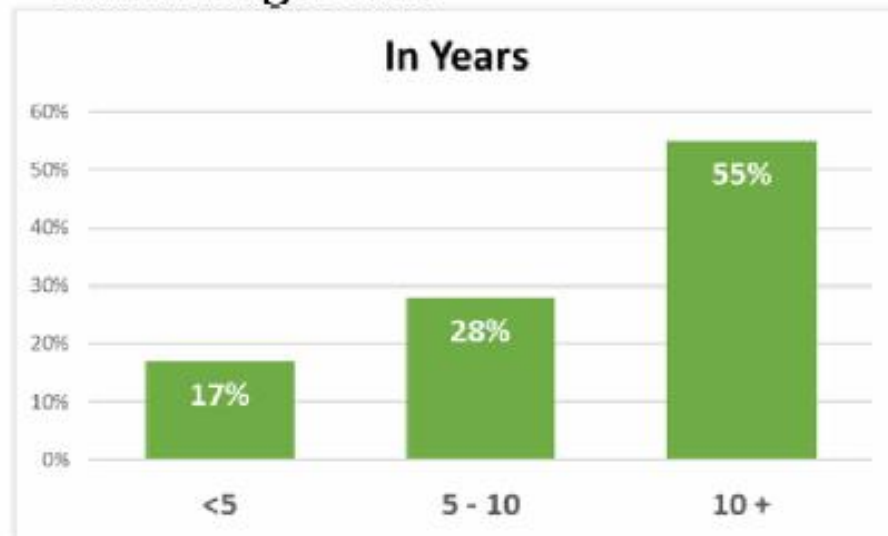


1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Knowledge Base



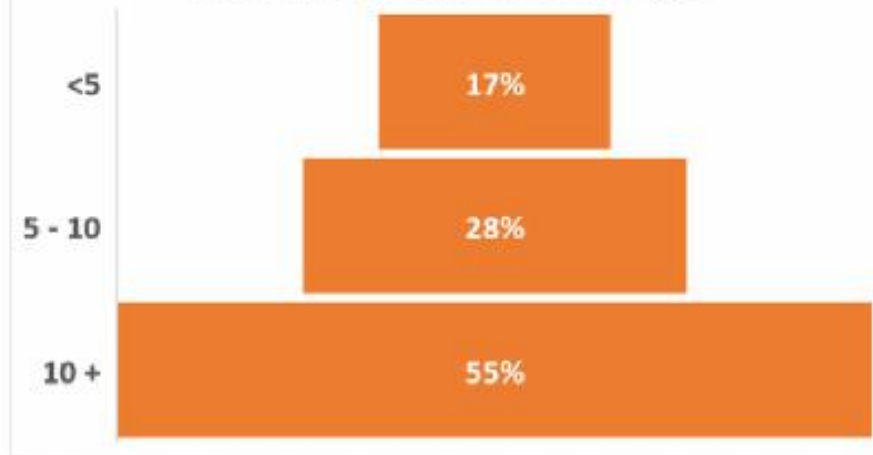
1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Knowledge Opportunity

but what if... the knowledge



1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates



Priorities Themes

- Education
- Research
- Outreach
- Other Ideas

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates





Shared Goals & Strategies

Doing it Together

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

28



Next Steps

The Plan Unfolds

1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

29



1/29/2022

(c) 2022 Side by Side Associates

30

Appendix D
Strategic Retreat Brainstorm Idea Priorities

Choose most important.

Member
resources

Keep organic
but define it
to be inclusive
of organic
practices

**Priority - Clarity
regarding OFGA's
mission - Audience
is growers and
prospective growers
in the upper
midwest - what do
we mean when we
say organic**

OFGA ORGANIZATION

- Strong Leadership
- New member prep
- Member Resources
- Online newsletter

try to get younger
people involved in
organic
agriculture(fruit
growing)

**Need to make
benefits of
membership
clear to
potential new
members**

Member benefits
should be available
to members -
otherwise, why join?

An organization of
(organic, naturally
grown, sustainable)
fruit growers
(established and
those who are
beginning and want
to begin) in the upper
midwest. Providing
resources and
support.

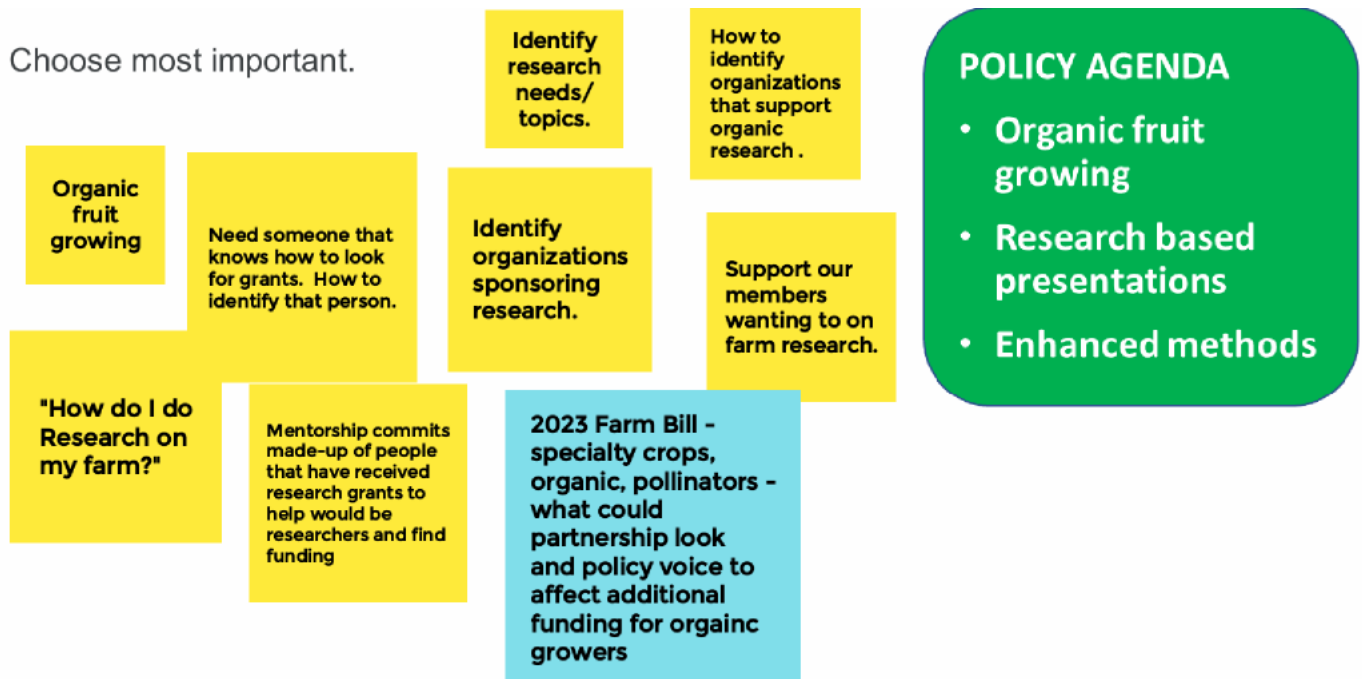
who is intended
member? Size? type
of operation?
Established?
Beginning?

Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)
Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary

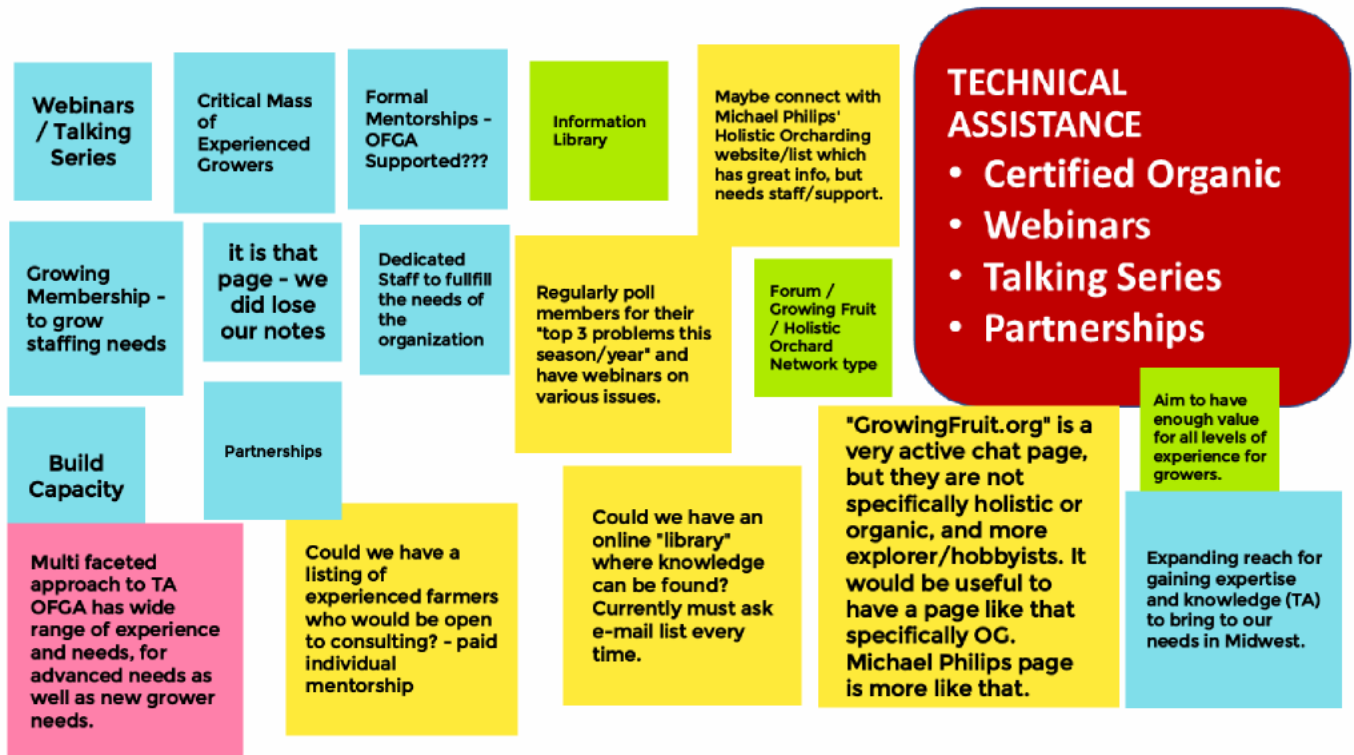
Choose most important.



Choose most important.



Organic Fruit Growers Association (OFGA)
Stakeholder Assessment – Interviews, Survey and Strategic Retreat Summary



Choose most important.

Coordinator needs assistance.

How we plan to retain a coordinator in the long-term. Change the position in order to retain longer.

Farm tours

Urban farming tours.

Maybe some member benefits could be: the searchable database, access to database of articles, a discount for farm tours, etc.

OTHER IDEAS:

- Membership Levels (benefits/access)
- Promote OFGA
- Farm tours, forums
- Relevance to small to medium growers