Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative: 
Doing our part to make locally grown 
Foods more available

Jim Crawford
Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative:
Doing our part to make locally grown foods more available
New Morning Farm
Hustontown, PA

- 45 acres in rotations
- 50-60 crops: vegetable, berries, and herbs
- 2/3 of sales: Retail at farmers markets in Washington, D.C.
- 1/3 of sales: Wholesale to Tuscarora Co-op
- $600K sales annually
- 20 employees
- Certified Organic
Our first office: 80 square feet, one desk and two (!) telephones
Grand opening of our 3rd version in 1998
Barn raising for our present warehouse in 2004
Our present Palace of Sustainable Agribusiness: 10,000 square feet, 10 computers, 3 big coolers and much more.
- 4 Full-time staff and 12 part-time employees
- Over 100,000 cases delivered per year
- Twice weekly delivery, year-round
- 1200+ items on the annual production plan
- Marketing: retailers, restaurants, CSAs and our growers
- 47 Member-growers
- Directed by a board of member-growers
Tuscarora Co-op Functions

- Pooling (aggregating) produce
- Planning production
- Staff services: marketing, sales, shipping, accounting
- All profits returned to member-growers
- Sharing expertise for crop improvement
- Group ordering of seeds and supplies
Our Challenges as a Co-op

• NOT marketing or logistics!
• Production problems:
  – Inexperience of growers
  – Small scale of farms
  – Excessive labor costs & inefficiencies
  – Climate/weather problems compared with our competition in other parts of the country
Suggestions for USDA

• Preserve and strengthen extension
• More research appropriate for our imperfect climates
• More research for organic
• Preserve and strengthen the SARE program
• New & beginning farmer programs
• Encouragement of formation of marketing cooperatives and food hubs
• Fix and expand H2A