



OCIA International, Inc.
Organic Crop Improvement Association

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCIA 2019 Farmer of the Year

LINCOLN, NE: The OCIA Research & Education Outstanding Organic Farmer of the Year award honors talented producers who certify to the OCIA level of excellence. These farmers excel in thoughtful cropping and livestock practices that build soil and reduce pests and weeds. They maintain and enhance the environment and are innovative in farming practices. Outstanding organic farmers are also involved in their organic community, promoting and supporting organic agriculture.

Jake Geiger, OCIA certified since 1989 on Alba Ranch in Robinson, Kansas was the 2019 award recipient. Member of the OCIA Eastern Kansas #2 chapter, Jake's crop rotations are diverse and include clover, alfalfa, oats, rye, wheat, sorghum, soybeans, and corn. The reasoning behind his rotations are just as diverse as the rotations themselves: soil enrichment, weed suppression, helping with bee habitat/insect diversity, a source for livestock feed/bedding, clover tea/an excellent human tonic, seed cash crops, and more. Jake believes that abundant organic forage makes healthy livestock and that livestock play an important role in making an organic farm whole. He raises American British White Park beef cattle, which provide not only a source of income and milk, but nutrients from their manure help to build the soil. You will also find mules and AQHA Foundation Quarter Horses on the Alba Ranch, which help to care for the cattle and offer a source of recreation and stress relief.

Jake is the fifth generation of his family to live and work in the Wolf River Valley, a major wildlife corridor. John Quinn, a bird researcher from UNL, monitored a large number of avian species when he conducted a survey on Alba Ranch. Jake also believes that water stewardship and organic farming are interconnected. In 1965, he formally started working on water stewardship issues with the State Association of Kansas watersheds for about ten years.

As a member of OCIA, Jake has served in a number of capacities. He has participated in the Nominations, Promotions, and IRC Committees and he was instrumental in the formation of OCIA Research & Education. Jake's six surviving children are also all affiliated with Alba Ranch: three full time and three tangentially.

When asked the secret of keeping a multi-generational organic farm alive, Jake says "try to identify the resources you have and build on them in the place where you are. We need to identify those things that will sustain us morally, vocationally, and financially."

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OCIA is a not-for-profit organic certification agency that has offered a wide variety of accreditations to our members throughout the world for over 30 years. During an annual meeting, organic farmers from the United States, Canada and Latin America come together to meet and vote on the Bylaws, Standards and Board of Directors for this member-run organization.

OCIA: The Worldwide Standard for Certified Organic Excellence