



## News Briefs

### ◆ National Academy Recommends More Research on Alternative Pesticides

More government-sponsored research and incentives are needed to spur the development and use of alternative pesticides or new pesticides that pose fewer risks to humans and the environment, according to a new report from the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. The committee that wrote the report concluded that chemical pesticides will continue to play a significant role in U.S. agriculture for at least the next decade, because “effective and affordable alternatives are not universally available.” The National Science Foundation and U.S. EPA should “fund research aimed at improving understanding of pest behavior on actual farms, which could provide farmers with the missing information they need to implement environmentally friendly pest-management practices,” according to the Council, which also said “government research focused on providing alternatives to chemical pesticides will be critical for farmers hoping to compete in [the organic] market.”

*The Future Role of Pesticides in U.S. Agriculture* is available from the National Academy at 1-800-624-6242, or (202) 334-3313. More information is available on the Internet at [www.nap.edu/books/0309065267/html](http://www.nap.edu/books/0309065267/html).

### ◆ SARE’s “Trap” Crop Project Featured on *Wall Street Journal’s* Front Page

The “Business Bulletin” column on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* last month (July 13, 2000) featured SARE-funded research into planting nematode-resistant “trap” crops in the traditional sugar beet and barley rotation. The project (SW97-018), which began in 1997 at the University of Wyoming, found that radish and mustard trap crops “prevent worms from multiplying and harming a cash crop,” according to the article. “Typically, farmers use pesticides and crop rotation to work the worms out of the soil. With trap crops, too, the idea is to clean up the soil a season before planting beets. For instance, an early barley crop can be harvested for income and the field replanted with radish. By the next season, the soil can be purged of as many as 75% of the worms. Trap crops, at about \$70 per acre, are cheaper than pesticides, which can cost \$100 or more an acre.”

More information about the SARE project is available on the Internet at [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).

### ◆ GM Crops: Revolutionizing Farming, or Destroying the Ecosystem? “You Decide,” Says *Time*

“Genetically engineered crops could revolutionize farming,” according to a cover story in *Time* magazine (July 31, 2000). “Protesters fear they could also destroy the ecosystem. You decide.” The story’s focus is the work of Ingo Potrykus, a Swiss scientist who developed “golden rice,” enhanced with beta-carotene and hopefully able to “improve the lives of millions of the poorest people in the world.” Golden rice is an example of “a genetically engineered crop that may benefit not just the farmers who grow it but also the consumers who eat it,” according to the story. But the golden grain “has illuminated an increasingly polarized public debate . . .” The article asks whether genetically engineered crops are “a technological leap forward that will bestow incalculable benefits on the world and its people? Or do they represent a perilous step down a slippery slope that will lead to ecological and agricultural ruin? Is genetic engineering just a more efficient way to do the business of conventional crossbreeding? Or does the ability to mix the genes of any species—even plants and animals—give man more power than he should have?”

### ◆ USDA Seeks Nominees for National Organic Standards Board

The USDA is requesting nominees to fill five upcoming vacancies on the National Organic Standards Board. The appointees will serve five-year terms scheduled to begin in January 2001. The five nominees will fill vacancies for one organic certifying agent, two organic producers, and two consumer/public-interest positions. Written nominations, accompanied by resumes, must be postmarked on or before August 31 and sent to Keith Jones, Program Manager, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP, Rm. 2510-S., Ag Stop 0268, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20009-6456. For more information, contact Jones at (202) 720-3252; e-mail [keith.jones@usda.gov](mailto:keith.jones@usda.gov).

◆ **Seven Academies of Science Urge Governments to Use Biotechnology to Fight Poverty, Hunger**

Seven international academies of science last month urged governments “to base their decisions regarding biotechnology on sound science,” and strongly encouraged private corporations and research institutions “to share their technology with scientists and farmers in developing countries who desperately need it.” According to their written report, “It is essential that we improve food production and distribution in order to feed and free from hunger a growing world population, while reducing environmental impacts and providing productive employment in low-income areas.” A key to moving forward is “responsible research, development, and implementation of genetic modification technology for widespread agricultural use.” The report pointed out “the need for concerted, organized efforts on a global scale to quickly identify potential health and environmental risks from GM crops.”

The seven academies contributing to the report were the Royal Society of London, the national academies of science of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and the United States, and the Third World Academy of Sciences. More information is available on the Internet at [books.nap.edu/html/transgenic](http://books.nap.edu/html/transgenic).

◆ **Congress Approves Increased Funding for SARE, Professional Development Programs**

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have each approved a USDA budget for Fiscal Year 2001 that increases funding for several sustainable agriculture programs. The differences between the two approved budgets will be worked out by a conference committee in September. Here are the appropriation amounts approved by the House and Senate, compared to the current fiscal year’s funding:

**SARE:** House, \$9 million; Senate, \$9.5 million; FY00, \$8 million. **SARE (Chapter 3) Professional Development Program:** House, \$3.3 million; Senate, \$4 million; FY00, \$3.3 million. **Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas:** House, \$2 million; Senate, \$1.5 million; FY00, \$1.5 million. **Organic Foods Production Act:** House and Senate, \$1.6 million; FY00, \$1.4 million. **Conservation Security Payments:** House and Senate both deleted funding for the first year of this proposed program. **Environmental Quality Incentives Program:** House and Senate, \$174 million, the same as FY00. **Wetlands Reserve Program:** House, \$44 million; Senate, \$159 million; FY00, \$157 million. **Community Food Security Act:** House and Senate, \$2.5 million, the same as FY00. **Fund for Rural America:** House and Senate both deleted funding; FY00, \$60 million. **Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems:** House and Senate both deleted funding; FY00, \$120 million.

◆ **UNEP Hosts Meeting in Russia to Find Pesticide Alternatives**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) last month organized a meeting in Russia to discuss alternatives to pesticides that are persistent organic pollutants, identify sustainable strategies using the principles of integrated pest management, and develop plans to lower overall pesticide use. Participants were environment, health, and agriculture officials from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. “Countries will need assistance to develop effective strategies for malaria control that do not involve a return to reliance on DDT against malaria-bearing mosquitoes,” according to UNEP. More information is available on the Internet at [www.chem.unep.ch/pops](http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops).

◆ **American Farmland Trust Accepting Nominations for Steward of the Land Award**

American Farmland Trust is now accepting nominations for its fifth annual Steward of the Land Award, which is given to a farmer or rancher who demonstrates farm stewardship and land conservation. The winner will receive \$10,000 at a ceremony. Nominations must be received by mail or fax by November 1 at 5 p.m. For more information and a nomination kit, call AFT at (202) 331-7300 ext. 3044, or on the Internet, visit [www.farmland.org/files/steward/index.htm](http://www.farmland.org/files/steward/index.htm).

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# Wallace Center/Winrock News

## ◆ Reduced Fertilizer Inputs Assessed in New Issue of *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*

An assessment of reduced herbicide and fertilizer inputs on cereal grain yield and weed growth is featured in the new issue (Volume 15, No. 2) of the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, the Wallace Center's quarterly, peer-reviewed journal of research on alternative agriculture. Other articles cover purslane as a living mulch in broccoli production; studies of the preceding crop effect of ley in ecological agriculture; performance of reduced-tillage cropping systems for sustainable grain production in Maryland; and factors influencing resident attitudes regarding the land application of biosolids. For U.S. subscribers of *AJAA*, one volume (four issues) costs US\$44 for libraries, US\$24 for individuals, and US\$12 for students; foreign rates are also available. For more information, contact the Wallace Center, 1621 N. Kent St., Ste. 1200, Arlington, VA 22209-2134; (703) 525-9430 ext. 675; e-mail [wallacecenter@winrock.org](mailto:wallacecenter@winrock.org).

## Resources

**New Publications from Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)** are now available free: "Evaluating a Rural Enterprise," "Direct Marketing," "Sustainable Cut Flower Production," "Organic and Low-Spray Apple Production," "Organic and Low-Spray Peach Production," "Organic Grape Production," and "Organic Greenhouse Vegetable Production;" for copies, and a list of other publications, call ATTRA at 1-800-346-9140.

**"Direct Marketing Today: Challenges and Opportunities"** is available free from Velma Lakins, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456, (202) 720-8317; e-mail [velma.lakins@usda.gov](mailto:velma.lakins@usda.gov).

**"World Food Security and Sustainability: The Impacts of Biotechnology and Industrial Consolidation"** is \$5 from National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, 419 Boyce Thompson Institute, Tower Rd., Ithaca, NY 14853; e-mail [NABC@cornell.edu](mailto:NABC@cornell.edu).

**"Working Trees for Treating Waste"** is available from Nancy Hammond, National Agroforestry Center, East Campus, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0822; e-mail [nhammond@fs.fed.us](mailto:nhammond@fs.fed.us).

**"Splice of Life: Implications of Genetic Engineering for Family Farmers, Consumers and the Environment,"** a position paper of the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, is available from Renee Hunt, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, P.O. Box 648, Rochester, IL 62563-0648; (217) 498-9707; e-mail [ilstew@fgi.net](mailto:ilstew@fgi.net).

**"A Comparison of Management-Intensive Grazing and Conventionally Managed Michigan Dairies: Profitability, Economic Efficiencies, Quality of Life and Management Priorities"** is available free from Michigan State University Bulletin Office, 10-B Agriculture Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824-1039; (517) 355-0240.

**"The Environmental Impacts of Organic Farming in Europe"** and **"Economic Performance of Organic Farms in Europe"** are the latest two publications in a series, "Organic Farming in Europe: Economics and Policy;" details are available on the Internet at [www.uni-hohenheim.de/~i410a/ofeurope/](http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/~i410a/ofeurope/).

**"Food for Life,"** a special issue of the magazine *Yes: A Journal of Positive Futures*, is available from Positive Futures Network, 712 Cherry Ave. NE, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-2922.

**The Iowa Organic Farming Mentor Program's** half-hour video is \$19.95 from Iowa Organic Farming Mentor Program, 610 S. 4th St., Fairfield, IA 52556.

## Positions

**Evergreen State College** seeks an environmental scientist to teach sustainable agriculture in an interdisciplinary context; for application procedures, write to Faculty Hiring Coordinator, Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505; e-mail [blodgetd@evergreen.edu](mailto:blodgetd@evergreen.edu).

**University of California, Davis**, Department of Vegetable Crops, seeks an Assistant or Associate Cooperative Extension Vegetable Specialist; complete position description is available on the Internet at [veghome.ucdavis.edu/positions/CESpecialist.html](http://veghome.ucdavis.edu/positions/CESpecialist.html).

## Upcoming Events

**September 7-11**, "Planting Millennium Seeds for Future Urban Growth," the American Community Gardening Association's 21st Annual Conference, will be held in Atlanta, GA; contact Bobby Wilson or Cathy Walker, (404) 762-4077; e-mail uge1121e@uga.cc.uga.edu.

**September 22-24**, Common Ground Country Fair will be held in Unity, ME; contact Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, P.O. Box 170, Unity, ME 04988; (207) 568-4142; e-mail cgcf@mofga.org.

**September 22-24**, 9th Urban-Rural Food Systems Conference will be held in East Troy, MI; contact Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, (262) 642-3303; e-mail mfai@mfai.org.

**October 10-12**, Permaculture Design Certificate Course will be held at the Northwest Louisiana Commerce Center; contact Victor Guadagno, NWLCC, (303) 247-1800; e-mail vica@nwcc.com.

**October 20-22**, "Bioneers 2000: Revolution from the Heart of Nature" will be held in San Rafael, CA; contact Bioneers Conference, 901 W. San Mateo Rd., Ste. L, Santa Fe, NM 87505; call toll-free, 1-877-246-6337, or (505) 986-0366; e-mail chisf@bioneers.org; on the Internet, [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org).

**November 3-4**, 8th National Small Farm Trade Show and Conference will be held in Columbia, MO; contact Small Farm Today, 1-800-633-2535.

**November 9-10**, "Land, People and Profits: Integrating Agriculture, Communities and Economic Development," sponsored by the Northeast Training and Support Network for Agricultural Development, will be held in Albany, NY; contact Kathy Ruhf, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, (413) 323-4531; e-mail nesawg@smallfarm.org; or Roger Clapp, e-mail rclapp@together.net.

**November 17-19**, "Healthy Farms—Healthy Communities: Ingredients for Success," the 16th Annual California Farm Conference, will be held in Santa Rosa, CA; contact California Farm Conference, (530) 888-9206; e-mail fullcircle@jps.net; on the Internet, [www.CaliforniaFarmConference.com](http://www.CaliforniaFarmConference.com).

**November 30-December 1**, "The Future of Our Food and Farms," a regional summit for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware, will be held in Philadelphia, PA; contact Meredith Stone, Farmers' Market Trust, 1201 Chestnut St., 4th Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 568-0830; e-mail fmtrust@libertynet.org.

**December 5-8**, First National Conference on Grazing Lands will be held in Las Vegas, NV; contact John Peterson, NCGL Program Manager, 9304 Lundy Ct., Burke, VA 22015-3431; (703) 455-4387/6886; e-mail jwpeterson@erols.com; or Monti Golla, NCGL Administrative Assistant, 101 S. Main St., Temple, TX 76501; (254) 742-9947; e-mail Monti.Golla@tx.usda.gov.

**January 24-27, 2001**, 21st Annual Ecological Farming Conference will be held in Pacific Grove, CA; contact Ecological Farming Association, 406 Main St., # 313, Watsonville, CA 95076; (831) 763-2111; on the Internet, [www.eco-farm.org](http://www.eco-farm.org)

**February 5-7, 2001**, "Growing Your Profits," the New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference, will be held in Owego, NY; contact Ben Vitale, NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, (315) 422-8647.



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