



News Briefs

◆ New Federal Budget Increases Funds for Sustainable Ag Programs

The new federal budget for Fiscal Year 2001, which began October 1, increases funding levels for several sustainable agriculture programs, most notably the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. Here are the appropriations approved by Congress last month for the primary sustainable agriculture programs:

Ⓒ **SARE:** \$9.3 million; FY00 level was \$8 million.

Ⓒ **SAPDP:** \$3.8 million for the SARE (Chapter 3) Professional Development Program; FY00 level was \$3.3 million.

Ⓒ **ATTRA:** \$2 million for Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas; FY00 level was \$1.5 million.

Ⓒ **OFPA:** \$1.6 million for the Organic Foods Production Act; FY00 level was \$1.4 million.

Ⓒ **CSP:** No funding was appropriated for the proposed new Conservation Security Payments, for which \$600 million had been requested; the program was not funded in FY00.

Ⓒ **EQIP:** \$174 million for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the same as the FY00 level.

Ⓒ **WRP:** \$161 million for the Wetlands Reserve Program; FY00 level was \$157 million.

Ⓒ **CFSA:** \$2.5 million for the Community Food Security Act, the same as in FY00.

Ⓒ **FRA:** \$30 million for the Fund for Rural America; it is allowed to spend half of FY00's \$60 million appropriation in FY01 and half in FY02.

Ⓒ **IFAFS:** \$120 million for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems; it is allowed to spend all of its FY00 \$120 million appropriation in FY01.

◆ Running a Small Farm is “Increasingly Popular,” According to *New York Times*

Learning the techniques and business skills necessary to run a small farm is “an increasingly popular recourse for a new generation who did not grow up on farms,” according to an article in *The New York Times* Business Section (October 14, 2000). “Part of the lure, as always, is the chance to live closer to nature, but these aspiring farmers also know they need to be well versed in the business end of farming—and see a future that makes financial sense.” Despite the decline in numbers of farmers and farmland during the past 20 years, new farmers—from recent college graduates to burnt-out business executives—are “hoping that a renewed interest in organic foods and locally grown produce will make their dream of running a farm of their own a reality.”

◆ USDA Creates Four Regional Pest Management Centers

The USDA last month announced the creation of four Regional Pest Management Centers, which will “help focus research and extension efforts on developing and delivering alternative and safer pest management strategies to farmers and ranchers.” The centers will bring together university research and extension specialists to focus on pest management issues common to agricultural production within that region. In the North Central region, Michigan State University and the University of Illinois will lead a multi-state coalition. The lead institutions in the other regions are: Northeast, Pennsylvania State University and Cornell University; South, University of Florida; and West, University of California at Davis.

◆ EPA Cancels All Remaining Uses of Ethyl Parathion

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has canceled all remaining uses of the organophosphate ethyl parathion, one of the most toxic pesticides used currently in the United States. In an agreement with the chemical's manufacturer, Cheminova, the use of ethyl parathion will be stopped immediately on corn grown for seed, and phased out on alfalfa, barley, corn, cotton, canola, sorghum, soybean, sunflower, and wheat by October 31, 2003. The agreement also cancels registrations of ethyl parathion used to manufacture other end-use pesticides.

◆ **White House Meeting Addresses Japan's Concerns about Biotech Corn**

The White House convened a meeting of biotech policymakers from the USDA, EPA, Food and Drug Administration, and Office of Management and Budget late last month to work out a strategy to address Japan's concerns that grain imported from the United States may be contaminated with genetically engineered corn not approved for human consumption, according to Reuters (October 26, 2000). A Japanese consumer group had reported the previous day that StarLink corn had been found in cornmeal imported to Japan. In addition, "a scientist from the USDA was traveling to Tokyo this evening in an attempt to address the Japanese concerns," according to *The New York Times* (October 26, 2000).

Earlier last month, farmers in several Midwestern states who planted StarLink corn said "they were not adequately warned about restrictions on how it was to be planted, stored and sold, despite suppliers' claims to have done so," according to *The New York Times* (October 17, 2000). The bioengineered corn, approved only for animal consumption, was detected in taco shells, resulting in a recall of millions of the shells in late September. Farmers said they were not told that the corn was to be kept separate from other crops, and were told in the spring that Starlink would soon be approved for human consumption, the story said.

According to *The Washington Post* (October 25, 2000), "anxiety is sweeping across farm communities throughout the Midwest because of fears that large amounts of this year's corn crop may have been contaminated with a genetically engineered grain that was approved only for animals." It is obvious that "warnings to farmers to segregate StarLink corn from other types both in the field and during harvesting did not reach everybody," the story said.

In the aftermath of the taco shell recall, the Kellogg Company last month closed its Memphis plant because the mills supplying it had shut down to make sure their corn supply did not contain any Starlink; Kellogg allegedly could not find corn guaranteed to be free of the genetically engineered corn. ConAgra, also fearing contamination of its corn, temporarily halted operations at its Kansas mill.

Starlink's manufacturer, Aventis CropScience, agreed to stop selling StarLink corn, but late last month asked the federal government to temporarily approve the grain for human consumption, saying "new evidence strengthens its case that the grain is safe," according to *The Washington Post* (October 26, 2000).

◆ **Pesticides Encourage Bacteria on Crops, Researcher Writes in *New Scientist***

Pesticide sprays "encourage life-threatening bacteria to grow on crops," according to a Canadian researcher writing in *New Scientist* (October 7, 2000). "The bugs could pose a threat to people eating raw fruit and vegetables such as strawberries, raspberries and lettuce." Scientist Greg Blank and colleagues at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg found that bacteria thrived in some formulations of pesticides diluted with water, growing best in chlorothalonil, linuron, permethrin, and chlorpyrifos. "Numbers could increase one-thousandfold" in those pesticides, according to Blank. Bacteria multiply in the tanks where the pesticide solutions are stored and where they may be mixed with contaminated water, he said.

◆ **EPA Seeks Comments on Guidance for Managing Agricultural Pollution Sources**

The EPA has developed and is seeking comments on a draft guidance for managing agricultural sources of nonpoint pollution of surface and ground water. The guidance is intended to provide technical assistance to state program managers and others on the best available, economically achievable means of reducing nonpoint pollution. Comments are due no later than January 16, 2001. The draft guidance is available on the Internet at www.epa.gov/owow/nps/new.html.

Alternative Agriculture News (ISSN 8755-4941) is published monthly by the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International, formerly the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture, established in 1983 and supported by publications sales, donations, and grants from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Subscription rates for individuals in the United States are \$16 a year; contact the Wallace Center for additional rate categories. All materials in the newsletter may be used without permission, provided credit is given. Financial contributions to the Wallace Center are tax-deductible.

Winrock/Wallace Center News

◆ **Dr. Clancy Appointed to Board of SANREM Collaborative Research Support Program**

Dr. Kate Clancy, Managing Director of the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International, has been appointed to the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (SANREM) Collaborative Research Support Program Board of Directors. The program is a participatory, interdisciplinary research, training, and information exchange program in support of decisions leading to sustainable use of natural resources. It is located at the University of Georgia.

◆ **New Journal Issue Highlights Wallace Family Vision and Today's Agricultural Challenges**

Former Iowa Senator John C. Culver writes about the Wallace family vision and today's agricultural challenges in the new issue of *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* (Volume 15, Number 3), the Wallace Center's quarterly, peer-reviewed journal of research on alternative agriculture. Other articles in the issue explore the effect of farming systems on the relationship of corn root growth to grain yields; short-term effects of biodynamic preparations on crops, soils, and weed populations; lessons learned from the Upper Midwest Organic Marketing Project; the meaning of sustainable agriculture: reflections of some Kansas practitioners; and statistical analysis of pest-tolerant crop response with reference to corn weed control. 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, including year 2001 subscription rates, contact the Wallace Center, 1621 N. Kent St., Ste. 1200, Arlington, VA 22209-2134; (703) 525-9430 ext. 675; e-mail wallacecenter@winrock.org.

Resources

"Building Soils for Better Crops" is \$19.95 plus \$3.95 shipping from Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Box 90, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082; (802) 656-0484.

"Experiments and Education on the Farm: Giving Children a Role in Sustainable Agriculture" is available from Midwest Food Connection, 2105 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55405; (612) 871-0317; e-mail mfc@wedgcoop.com.

"Organic Certification, Farm Production Planning, and Marketing" (Pub. 7247); "Soil Management and Soil Quality for Organic Crops" (Pub. 7248); "Weed Management for Organic Crops" (Pub. 7250); "Insect Pest Management for Organic Crops" (Pub. 7251); and "Plant Disease Management for Organic Crops" (Pub. 7252) from the Small Farm Center at the University of California are available on the Internet at www.sfc.ucdavis.edu, or from the Center at (530) 752-8136.

"Applied Soil Ecology: A Section of Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment" is the result of a conference; for information about ordering, contact Elsevier Science, P.O. Box 945, New York, NY 10159-0945; (212) 633-3730; e-mail usinfo-f@elsevier.com.

"NOFA-NY's 2000 Organic Food Guide" is \$1 from Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, P.O. Box 880, Cobleskill, NY 12043-0880; (518) 827-8495.

"Addressing Climate Change and Providing New Opportunities for Farmers" is available from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2105 First Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55404; (612) 870-0453; or on the Internet at www.iatp.org.

"How to Harvest the Profits of Organic Produce" is \$50 for nonmembers of the Organic Trade Association, \$30 for members, plus \$4 shipping, from Annie Hassett, OTA, (413) 774-7511 ext. 12.

"Organic Farming in Europe: Economics and Policy" is an eight-volume series; contact University of Hohenheim, Germany, phone 49-711-459-2543; e-mail ofeurope@uni-hohenheim.de.

Position

University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Project is seeking applications for a full-time research position to develop and conduct survey and evaluation projects for three to five years; the position can be based at the University of California Kearney Agricultural Center, near Fresno, CA, or at University of California at Davis; for more information, contact Dr. Frank Zalom, (530) 752-8350, e-mail fgzalom@ucdavis.edu; or Dr. Pete Goodell, (559) 646-6593; on the Internet, www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/.

Upcoming Events

November 30-December 1, "New Connections: Creating Partnerships in Farming and Food Distribution in the Mid-Atlantic Region" will be held in Valley Forge, PA; contact Future of Our Food and Farms, Farmers' Market Trust, 1201 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 568-0830; e-mail fmtrust@libertynet.org.

December 8-9, "The Economics of Contracting in the Agri-Food Sector" will be held in Saskatoon, SK, Canada; contact Dr. Murray Fulton, Canadian Agricultural Economics Society, (306) 996-8507; e-mail Murray.Fulton@usask.ca; on the Internet, www.caes-scae.org/caes-e.htm.

January 16-21, 2001, "Managing Change in the 21st Century," the annual meeting of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, will be held in Orlando, FL; contact NAICC, 1055 Petersburg Cove, Collierville, TN 38017; (901) 861-0511; e-mail JonesNAICC@aol.com.

January 19-21, 2001, 10th annual conference of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group will be held in Chattanooga, TN; contact Toni McLaughlin, (225) 654-2017; e-mail tonihawk@intersurf.com; on the Internet, www.attra.org/ssawg/.

January 24-27, 2001, 21st Annual Ecological Farming Conference will be held in Pacific Grove, CA; contact Ecological Farming Association, 406 Main St., Ste. 313, Watsonville, CA 95076; (831) 763-2111.

February 15-18, 2001, "Bio Fach 2001," the World Organic Trade Fair, will be held in Nuremberg, Germany; contact NurnbergMesse GmbH, Messezentrum, D-90471 Nurnberg; phone 49-0-9-1186-06-0; e-mail infor@nuernbergmesse.de; on the Internet, www.nuernbergmesse.de.

February 22-24, 2001, Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show will be held in Virginia Beach, VA; information is available on the Internet at www.madmc.com.

March 1, 2001, is the deadline for submission of abstracts for a workshop on the successes of the Section 319 National Monitoring Program and other nonpoint source programs, sponsored by the Conservation Technology Information Center; for information, contact CTIC, 1220 Potter Dr., Ste. 170, West Lafayette, IN 47906; e-mail ctic@ctic.purdue.edu.

March 5-7, 2001, "How to Expand Composting/Recycling Programs," BioCycle's West Coast Conference, will be held in Portland, OR; contact BioCycle, 419 State Ave., Emmaus, PA 18049; (610) 967-4135; on the Internet, www.biocycle.net.

May 17-19, 2001, "All Things Organic," the Organic Trade Association's Conference and Trade Show, will be held in Austin, TX; contact OTA, P.O. Box 547, Greenfield, MA 01302; (413) 774-7511; e-mail otashow@ota.com; on the Internet, www.ota.com.

May 22-24, 2001, "Consumer Concerns About Biotechnology in Our Food System: Past, Present, and Future," the annual conference of the National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, will be held in Chicago, IL; contact NABC, 1101 W. Peabody, Rm. 168, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 244-1706; e-mail nsrl@uiuc.edu.



HENRY A. WALLACE CENTER FOR
AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL

1621 N Kent St Ste 1200
Arlington VA 22209-2134
USA

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Greenbelt MD
Permit No.
5769

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

November, 2000
Volume 18, No. 11