



## *News Briefs*

### • **70 Percent of Antibiotics Fed to Healthy Livestock, According to UCS Report**

Roughly 70 percent of the total antibiotics in the United States are fed to chickens, pigs, and cows every year for non-therapeutic purposes such as growth promotion, according to a new report by the Union of Concerned Scientists. Total use of antibiotics in healthy livestock has increased from 16 million pounds annually in the mid-1980s to 25 million pounds currently. Therapeutic use of antibiotics in humans accounts for 3 million pounds a year, according to the report. "Antimicrobial resistance is a public health problem of growing urgency," the report said. "Mounting evidence is confirming the view, long held in the public health community, that antimicrobial use in animals can substantially reduce the efficacy of the human antimicrobial arsenal." The report, "Hogging It: Estimates of Antimicrobial Abuse in Livestock," is available on the Internet at <http://www.ucsusa.org>.

### • **U.S. Government Launches Plan to Clean Up and Reduce "Dead Zone" in Gulf of Mexico**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, nine other federal agencies, and nine states along the Mississippi River have developed an action plan to reduce the size of the "dead zone," an oxygen-starved area of the Gulf of Mexico where marine organisms either die or flee from the lack of oxygen. The plan's goal is to reduce the area of the "dead zone" by 50 percent by 2015. The plan's participants are developing strategies to reduce nutrients entering the Gulf, particularly the amount of nitrogen, by 30 percent. The decrease of oxygen in the "dead zone" is primarily the result of excess nitrogen from farm fertilizer and manure, residential sewage, and manufacturing plant runoff from the 31-state Mississippi River drainage basin; high nitrogen loads come from basins receiving wastewater discharges and draining agricultural lands in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, southern Minnesota, and Ohio. More information is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/ow>, under "What's New."

### • **Sustainable Ag a Success in Developing Countries, According to *New Scientist***

Farmers in developing countries are "throwing away their ploughs in a dramatic example of 'sustainable' farming, a practice that is now sending crop yields soaring on millions of farms," according to a study described in an article in *New Scientist* (January 15, 2001). "The report's author, Jules Pretty of the University of Essex, says sustainable agriculture is now defying its reputation as a worthy enterprise with little chance of feeding millions of starving people. He says sustainable farming has been the most effective way of raising farm yields in the past decade and that farming without tilling is among the most widely adopted forms." According to Pretty, "sustainable farming has grown in the past decade from being the preserve of a few enthusiasts into a broad movement involving governments and the private sector." Its methods are having "big impacts on farm yields, with typical increases of 40 to 100 percent," the article said. The article is available on the Internet at <http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns9999325>.

### • **USDA Makes \$30 Million in Loans and Grants Available Under Fund for Rural America**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture last month made available \$30 million in loans and grants to expand research, education, and development efforts in rural communities, under the Fund for Rural America. Of that total, \$10 million is being offered as competitively awarded research, education, and extension grants that help promote the creation of local rural development strategies; \$20 million is being used to fund USDA programs that promote business and economic development, outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers, cooperative development, and natural resource and conservation efforts. Of the \$30 million, up to \$600,000 will be available for proposals that address rural community vitality and increased economic development, including locally owned, value-added processing facilities. Funding is open to colleges, universities, and private research organizations. The Request for Proposals will be available on the Internet this month at <http://www.reeusda.gov>.

## **News Briefs** (continued from page 1)

### • **FDA Proposes Guidelines for Genetically Engineered Food**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration last month proposed rules that would require developers of genetically engineered food to notify the agency at least 120 days in advance of their intent to market a genetically engineered food or animal feed, and to provide information to demonstrate that the product is as safe as its conventional counterpart. It also issued voluntary guidelines for manufacturers who want to label their food products as being made with or without genetically engineered ingredients. The FDA will post information submitted by manufacturers, as well as the agency's responses, on the Internet. The draft guidelines on labeling genetically engineered food are available on the Internet at <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/biolabgu.html>; the proposed rule on pre-market notification is available on the Internet at <http://www.fda.gov/OHRMS/DOCKETS/98fr/011801a.htm>.

### • **European Union Ag Chief Urges Potential Member Countries to Adopt Sustainable Practices**

The European Union's agriculture chief last month urged countries seeking membership in the 15-nation group to strengthen their environmental policies and adopt sustainable agriculture practices, according to Reuters (January 23, 2001). Franz Fischler said potential new EU members from eastern European countries should begin work on adopting the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, which has undergone environmental reforms in response to public demand. "We have moved to integrate environmental concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy with a view to promoting sustainable agriculture," he said. "We cannot wait until accession [to the European Union] to get down to the business of rural development and sustainable agriculture."

### • **Scientists Study Farm Chemicals as Possible Cause of High Rates of Parkinson's Disease in Corn Belt**

Scientists are "homing in on farm chemicals as a possible cause" of the high rates of Parkinson's disease in the Corn Belt, according to *The Des Moines Register* (January 14, 2001). A study by the National Parkinson Foundation found that Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and the Dakotas had rates of Parkinson's disease that were about twice the national average. Iowa State University researchers are now studying the role in Parkinson's disease of dieldrin, a pesticide that many corn farmers used before it was banned in the 1970s. The lead researcher there "says research elsewhere found that Parkinson's patients were more likely than other people to have traces of dieldrin in their bodies after death," according to the article. Independent of that research, the Parkinson's Institute is sending investigators to Iowa this spring to compare rural residents who have the disease with those who don't; among their questions will be several about which chemicals people may have used.

### • **Biotech Food Industry Is "In Crisis," According to *The New York Times***

The biotech food industry, despite "an unusually generous policy of self-policing" allowed by the federal government, is "in crisis," according to a full-page article in the Business Section of *The New York Times* (January 25, 2001). "Genetically modified ingredients may be in more than half of America's grocery products. But worldwide protest has been galvanized. The European markets have banned the products and some American food producers are backing away. A recent discovery that certain taco shells, manufactured by Kraft, contained Starlink, a modified corn classified as unfit for human consumption, prompted a sweeping recall and did grave harm to the idea that self-regulation was sufficient." The biotech food industry's current problems are "a stunning example of how management, with a few miscalculations, can steer an industry headlong into disaster." According to a former FDA scientist, "The potential [of genetically modified food] now is an infinitesimal fraction of what most observers had hoped it would be."

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*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.

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# *Wallace Center/Winrock News*

## • **Agriculture Policy Project to Hold National Meeting in Washington, DC**

The Wallace Center's Agriculture Policy Project is holding a national agriculture policy meeting in Washington, DC, this month for 45 farmers, county extension agents, educators, and business and government leaders from across the country, who have participated in the project during the past four years. Working in local and regional groups, more than 350 project participants have provided the foundation for a comprehensive set of draft national policy recommendations that will be refined at the meeting. Participants from Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Texas will provide feedback on the draft recommendations to a panel of national agricultural and rural community policy experts. They will also meet with government agency and congressional staff to discuss their work. The Agriculture Policy Project began in 1997 and is funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

## *Positions*

**Earthcraft Farm** seeks a co-farmer; contact Jim Rose, 4121 W. 500 S., Bringhurst, IN 46913, (765) 268-2669; e-mail [signew@carlnet.org](mailto:signew@carlnet.org).

**The Land Institute** in Salina, KS, is offering Graduate Research Fellowships for graduate students whose research relates to Natural Systems Agriculture; application deadline is March 1; application is available from The Land Institute, (785) 823-5376; or on the Internet, <http://www.landinstitute.org>.

**Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association's Apprenticeship Program** matches interns to Ohio farmers; contact OEFFA, (614) 421-2022; information is available on the Internet at <http://www.oeffa.org>.

**Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas** has compiled the 2001 edition of "Sustainable Farming Internships and Apprenticeships;" it is available from ATTRA, P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702; (800) 346-9140; on the Internet, <http://www.attra.org/attra-rl/intern.html>.

## *Resources*

**"Nutritional Quality of Organically Grown Food"** is available from Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, on the Internet at <http://ncatark.uark.edu/~steved/food-quality.html>.

**"Why Poison Ourselves? A Precautionary Approach to Synthetic Chemicals"** is \$5 from Worldwatch, (800) 555-2028; e-mail [wwpub@worldwatch.org](mailto:wwpub@worldwatch.org); on the Internet at <http://www.worldwatch.org>.

**"Bees and Pesticides"** is available from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, (612) 870-3430; on the Internet at <http://www.iatp.org/pesticide/>.

**"Farming Without Chemicals in Ohio"** is available from Ohio Citizen Action and Innovative Farmers of Ohio, on the Internet at <http://www.ohiocitizen.org/campaigns/pesticides/farming/farming.html>.

**"Managing Grasslands for Profit – A Guide to Grazing Management in the Southeast"** is available from Pat Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service, (804) 287-1681.

**"The Use and Performance of Management Intensive Rotational Grazing among Wisconsin Dairy Farms in the 1990s"** and **"The Changing Face of Wisconsin Dairy Farms: A Summary of PATS' Research on Structural Change in the 1990s"** are available from Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (608) 265-2908; e-mail [nlcarlis@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:nlcarlis@facstaff.wisc.edu); on the Internet at <http://www.wisc.edu/pats>.

**"California at a Crossroads: The Impacts of Genetic Engineering on California's Agriculture"** is available from Greenpeace, (415) 512-9023; Community Alliance with Family Farmers, (530) 756-8518; or on the Internet at <http://www.greenpeaceusa.org>, or <http://www.truefoodnow.org>.

**"The Organic Pages Online"** is a database of member information from the Organic Trade Association, on the Internet at <http://www.ota.com>.

**"A Food and Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century"** is \$20 from Organization for Competitive Markets, P.O. Box 6486, Lincoln, NE 68506; or for free on the Internet at <http://www.competitivemarkets.com>.

**"Nowhere to Hide: Persistent Toxic Chemicals in the U.S. Food Supply"** is available from Pesticide Action Network North America, (415) 981-1771; e-mail [panna@panna.org](mailto:panna@panna.org); on the Internet at <http://www.panna.org>.

**"Soil Biology Primer"** is \$6 plus \$3.50 shipping from Soil and Water Conservation Society, 1-800-THE SOIL, ext. 24; e-mail [mikeh@swcs.org](mailto:mikeh@swcs.org); on the Internet at <http://www.swcs.org>.

# Upcoming Events

**February 21-24**, Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show will be held in Virginia Beach, VA; contact Cathy Belcher, (804) 786-4046; e-mail [cbelcher@vdacs.state.va.us](mailto:cbelcher@vdacs.state.va.us); on the Internet, [www.ext.vt.edu/madmc/](http://www.ext.vt.edu/madmc/).

**February 22-23**, "Agricultural Outlook Forum 2001," sponsored by the USDA, will be held in Arlington, VA; register at (202) 314-3451, or on the Internet, <http://www.usda.gov/oce>.

**March 2-4**, "Grow Biointensive" Sustainable Mini-Farming Workshop will be held in Willits, CA; contact Ecology Action, 5798 Ridgewood Rd., Willits, CA 95490; (707) 459-0150.

**March 2-4**, Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group will hold its annual meeting concurrently with the Farmer Cooperative Genome Project general membership meeting in Eugene, OR; contact J.J. Haapala, (541) 998-3069; e-mail [jhaap@tilth.org](mailto:jhaap@tilth.org); or Jeff Schahczenski, (406) 494-6830; e-mail [wsawg@ncat.org](mailto:wsawg@ncat.org).

**March 8-9**, Organic Livestock Production and Marketing Workshop will be held in Mount Vernon, OH; contact Sean McGovern, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, (614) 421-2022.

**March 10-11**, "Good Organic Retailing Practices" training will be held in Anaheim, CA; contact David Gagnon, Organic Trade Association, e-mail [dgagnon@ota.com](mailto:dgagnon@ota.com).

**March 10-11**, "Food for Thought: Rethinking the Balance Between Food, People, Profit, and Place," the 22nd Annual Conference of the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, will be held in Johnstown, OH; contact OEFFA, (614) 421-2022, e-mail: [oeffa@iwaynet.net](mailto:oeffa@iwaynet.net); on the Internet, <http://www.oeffa.org>.

**March 16-17**, "Organic Farming 2001: Food for Community, Hope for the Future" will be held in La Cross, WI; contact Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, (715) 772-6819; on the Internet, <http://www.mosesorganic.org/umofc>.

**March 17**, Midwest Pastured Poultry Workshop will be held in Herscher, IL; contact Kankakee Farm Service Agency, 685 Larry Power Rd., Bourbonnais, IL 60914; (815) 937-3233.

**March 21-23, 2001**, "Small Farms: A Renewed Opportunity" will be held in Springfield, IL; contact Debi Kelly, Missouri Alternatives Center, (573) 882-1905; e-mail [kellyd@umsystem.edu](mailto:kellyd@umsystem.edu).

**March 27-28**, "Partnerships for Sustaining California Agriculture: Profit, Environment and Community" will be held in Davis, CA; contact University of California-Davis, (800) 752-0881; David Chaney by e-mail [dechaney@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dechaney@ucdavis.edu); on the Internet, <http://www.universityextension.ucdavis.edu/>.

**April 30-May 1**, 24th Annual National Food Policy Conference of the Consumer Federation of America will be held in Washington, DC; contact CFA, (202) 387-6121.

**May 17-19, 2001**, "All Things Organic," the Organic Trade Association's conference and trade show, will be held in Austin, TX; contact OTA, c/o Eurich Management Services, 3721 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 200, Lansing, MI 48917; (517) 327-9207; e-mail Dale Power-Wells, [eurichmgt@aol.com](mailto:eurichmgt@aol.com); or OTA, P.O. Box 547, Greenfield, MA 01302; (413) 774-7511; e-mail [info@ota.com](mailto:info@ota.com); on the Internet, [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com).

**May 18-20**, "Beyond Pesticides: Healthy Ecosystems, Healthy Children," the 19th National Pesticide Forum, will be held in Boulder, CO; contact National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, (202) 543-5450; on the Internet, <http://www.beyondpesticides.org>.

**May 22-24**, "High Anxiety and Biotechnology: Who's Buying, Who's Not, and Why?," the National Agricultural Biotechnology Council Conference, will be held in Chicago, IL; contact National Soybean Research Laboratory, University of Illinois, 1101 W. Peabody, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 244-1706; e-mail [nsrl@uiuc.edu](mailto:nsrl@uiuc.edu); on the Internet, <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/research/nabc2001/index.html>.

**July 12-14, 2001**, "Higher Education and Research for Agriculture and Food Systems in the 21st Century" will be held in San Francisco, CA; contact Global Consortium of Higher Education and Research for Agriculture, e-mail [GCHERA@iastate.edu](mailto:GCHERA@iastate.edu); on the Internet, [www.gchera.iastate.edu/](http://www.gchera.iastate.edu/).

**August 4-8**, Soil and Water Conservation Society's Annual conference will be held in Myrtle Beach, SC; contact Charlie Persinger, SWCS, (515) 289-2331, ext. 12; on the Internet, [http://www.swcs.org/f\\_what\\_calendar.htm](http://www.swcs.org/f_what_calendar.htm).



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