



News Briefs

• **With Incentives, Farmers Have Great Potential to Help the Environment, Report Finds**

A reformed farm policy with adequate incentives for farmers and ranchers can “do a great deal to help the country meet a broad range of environmental challenges,” according to a new report, *Food for Thought*, by Environmental Defense, a non-profit environmental organization. Less than 10 cents out of each federal farm dollar has gone to help farmers implement better land use practices or protect sensitive land, the report found; in addition, many farmers seeking support for improving their farming practices are turned away from the USDA. Traditional support payment programs, by focusing on commodities, have failed to preserve family farms and support rural America, the report concluded. The report recommends that \$10 billion be spent on direct payments to farmers each year for conservation incentives that will improve water quality, preserve farmland and forests from sprawl, protect public health, restore and preserve wildlife habitat, protect and enhance pasture and range land, reduce the threat of climate change, bolster farm income through conservation, and boost rural communities. The report is available on the Internet at <http://www.environmentaldefense.org>.

• **Voters Value Farms and Ranches for Their Conservation Benefits, Poll Finds**

Voters value farms and ranches for the conservation benefits they provide, and are willing to pay to ensure conservation benefits from federal programs to secure those values, according to a new poll by Public Opinion Research Laboratory which was released last month by American Farmland Trust. The poll found that 81 percent of the 1,024 registered voters questioned said they want their food to come from within the United States; 71 percent are concerned about pesticide residues; and 75 percent felt income support to the American farmer should come with the stipulation that farmers be required to apply one or more conservation practices. Sixty-three percent said that if they were to receive a \$100 tax refund, they would forego a portion of it to protect waterways, wetlands, or wildlife habitat. More information about the poll is available by e-mail from Robyn Miller, rmiller@farmland.org, or on the Internet at <http://www.farmland.org>.

• **National Organic Standards Board Seeks Nominations**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is requesting nominations to fill upcoming vacancies on the National Organic Standards Board for five-year terms beginning in January 2002. Nominations are sought for the positions of organic producer, organic handler, consumer/public interest, environmentalist, and scientist. The Board has 15 members who are responsible for developing and recommending to the Secretary of Agriculture a proposed National List of Approved and Prohibited Substances; it advises the Secretary on all other aspects of the program. For more information, contact Toni Strother, (202) 720-3252; e-mail toni.strother2@usda.gov. Written nominations with résumés must be postmarked by October 11 and mailed to Toni Strother, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 2510-So., Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250.

• **House Ag Committee Completes New Farm Bill with “Weakened” Conservation Programs**

The House Agriculture Committee late last month completed its version of the next Farm Bill and weakened all agriculture conservation programs, despite a 75 percent increase in baseline conservation spending, according to Ferd Hoefner of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. “The conservation title is a huge step backwards, with setbacks in conservation policy in every way possible,” Hoefner said. “The bill throws money after a weakened policy framework.” The committee’s bill includes \$16.5 billion over 10 years for soil, water, and wildlife programs; the Environmental Quality Incentives Program received increased funding, but would provide less environmental protection, according to Hoefner. The committee bill does not include a “green” subsidy program, such as the Conservation Security Act, which Sen. Tom Harkin has said he will include in the Senate version of the Farm Bill. The Senate Agriculture Committee will draft its Farm Bill next month.

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• **EPA Will Not Allow StarLink Corn in Human Food**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced late last month that it would continue its policy against permitting even trace amounts of genetically engineered StarLink corn in human food, according to *The Washington Post* (July 28, 2001). “The federal government’s investigation into whether StarLink corn causes allergic reactions failed to establish that the genetically engineered corn was safe to eat, according to an expert panel convened by the EPA,” the story said. Aventis CropSciences, which developed StarLink, had asked the EPA to reverse its prior limitation of allowing the corn only in animal feed. The EPA last month also issued rules regulating genetically engineered plants that produce their own pesticides; they are the final regulatory steps first proposed by the agency in 1994. Under the new rules, genetically engineered “plant-incorporated protectants” will meet federal safety standards through an EPA evaluation as rigorous as that for traditional pesticide registrations, the EPA said.

• **Two New Programs Have Grant Funds Available for Mid-Atlantic Region**

Two new small-grant programs, co-sponsored by the Wallace Center, are aimed at improving the profitability of farmers and farmer groups and are accepting applications through August 30. The Individual Marketing Grants program will award up to \$500 in grants to individual farmers who are working to increase their access to new or existing markets in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. The Group Marketing Grants program is aimed at improving the profitability of farm organizations, farmer groups, and/or farmer cooperatives. Grants of up to \$4,000 are available for farmer-based groups or organizations that are working to adopt and promote innovative marketing techniques and strategies in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Proposals of a two-page maximum should be sent to Jim Hanson, University of Maryland, Maryland Cooperative Extension, 1200 Symons Hall, College Park, MD 20742. For more information, contact John Berry, (610) 391-9840; e-mail jwb15@psu.edu; or Bruce Mertz, (410) 604-2681; e-mail fhcasa@umail.umd.edu.

• **International Commission Approves Guidelines for Organic Food of Animal Origin**

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, a joint United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization program, approved guidelines for organic food of animal origin at its 24th session last month in Geneva. It also defined a restrictive list of additives involved in the processing of animal products. Emphasis in the guidelines was given to animal-friendly housing and feeding systems, including bee-keeping. The guidelines are “an important step toward the international harmonization of governmental regulations, which will help build consumer trust,” and are important for giving guidance for national regulations, according to the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. More information is available on the Internet at <http://www.ifoam.org>.

• **Biologist Develops Sterile Male Fruit Fly to Combat Brazilian Flies on Exports**

A biologist has developed a sterile male fruit fly which can be used to rid Brazil’s mango and papaya farms of harmful fruit flies, according to Reuters (July 23, 2001). Aldo Malavasi plans to build a \$2.5 million facility, with the backing of Brazilian agriculture officials, to create 60 million sterile fruit flies a week; most of them would be used in mango and papaya groves in Northeast Brazil. After mating with the sterile males, female fruit flies would be unable to mate with natural males; in Guatemala, the technique has almost eradicated the fruit fly after the ninth generation, according to Malavasi. “Fruit flies have been a big problem, but we will offer a substitute method to insecticides,” he said.

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Wallace Center/Winrock News

• **Conference Examines Role of Conservation in National Ag Policy, Farm Bill**

The role of conservation in national agricultural policy and the Farm Bill specifically was the topic of a conference held in late June by the Wallace Center, in collaboration with the Center for Sustainable Resource Development at the University of California, Berkeley; the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University; Kansas State University; the National Association of Conservation Districts; and the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics at the University of California. Conference participants addressed environmental trends associated with agricultural resources, federal programs to encourage environmentally sound agricultural practices, new information tools to improve agricultural policy and implementation, and ways to integrate environmental considerations into farm policy. For more details and a summary of the proceedings, contact the Wallace Center at wallacecenter@winrock.org.

• **Next Farm Bill Needs to Link Farmers and Business Resources, According to Kate Clancy**

The 2002 Farm Bill should include new funds and programs to link family farmers with existing business resources, according to Kate Clancy, Director of the Wallace Center, who spoke at a briefing for congressional officials last month. Specifically, Dr. Clancy proposed that money be provided for a pilot program integrating the Small Business Administration and Small Business Development Centers with the USDA to create a coordinated program of support for rural communities. Reacting to the proposal, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, noted that, "More and more farm families are looking for additional income opportunities. It is important to help these businesses obtain the technical help and access to capital they need to get off the ground and build a stronger rural economy."

• **Shelly Grow Joins Wallace Center as Program Associate**

Shelly Grow has joined the Wallace Center as a Program Associate. She had been an intern with the Wallace Center last year, and has worked part-time since January on the Center's Agriculture Policy Project. She recently completed her M.S. in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, and has a bachelor's degree in cross-cultural environmental studies from Grinnell College in Iowa. She is currently finishing consulting work for the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species.

Positions

University of California Santa Cruz Farm and Garden Apprenticeship Program seeks applications for the 2002 training program; more information is available on the Internet at <http://www.ucsc.edu/casfs/>, or from the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, UCSC, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA 95064; (831) 459-3240; e-mail apprenticeship@cats.ucsc.edu.

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Apprenticeship Program lists internship opportunities throughout Ohio; information and online application are available on the Internet at <http://www.oeffa.org>, or from OEFFA, P.O. Box 82234, Columbus, OH 43202; (614) 421-2022.

University of Maine seeks a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist and Assistant Professor of Sustainable Agriculture; job description is available on the Internet at <http://www.umaine.edu/hr/jobs/umce/>, or from Sandra Vaillancourt, 5741 Libby Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5741; (207) 581-3191; e-mail sandyv@umext.maine.edu.

Resources

"**Trampled Dreams: The Neglected Economy of the Rural Great Plains**" is \$10 from Center for Rural Affairs, (402) 846-5428; e-mail info@cfra.org; Executive Summary is on the Internet at <http://www.cfra.org>.

"**National Organic Program,**" "**Organic Marketing Resources,**" "**Organic Certification Organizations and Programs,**" and other publications are available from Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, 1-800-346-9140; a full listing of publications and availability is on the Internet at <http://www.attra.org/new.html>.

"**Natural Cattle Care,**" \$20; "**Natural Horse Care,**" \$20; and "**Natural Goat Care,**" \$25, all soft-cover books by Pat Coleby, are available from Acres USA, 1-800-355-5313; e-mail info@acresusa.com; excerpts are available on the Internet at <http://www.acresusa.com/>.

Upcoming Events

September 7-9, 22nd Annual Conference of the American Community Gardening Association will be held in Salt Lake City, UT; information is available on the Internet at <http://www.communitygarden.org>.

September 21-23, 2001 Common Ground Country Fair will be held in Unity, ME; contact Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, P.O. Box 170, Unity, ME; (207) 568-4142; e-mail cgcf@mofga.org; register on the Internet at <http://www.mofga.org>.

September 29-30, Prairie Festival and Celebration of The Land Institute's 25th Anniversary will be held in Salina, KS; contact the Institute at (785) 823-5376; e-mail theland@landinstitute.org.

October 6-9, 5th Annual Community Food Security Conference will be held in Washington, DC; contact CFSC, P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA 90294; (310) 822-5410; e-mail info@foodsecurity.org.

October 11-14, Natural Products Expo East will be held in Washington, DC; contact Natural Products Expo East, toll-free 1-866-458-4935; on the Internet, <http://www.naturalproductsexpo.com>.

October 16, "Bringing in the Sheaves: A Symposium on Hunger, Farming and the Fairness of the American Food System" will be held at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Poteau, OK; contact the Center, (918) 647-9123; e-mail easepeake@kerrcenter.com; on the Internet, <http://www.kerrcenter.com>.

November 1-3, 2001 National Small Farm Trade Show and Conference will be held in Columbia, MO; contact Small Farm Today, (800) 633-2535.

November 4-5, 2nd Assembly of the Scientific Congress of Organic Agricultural Research will be held in Rock Hill, SC; contact Brise Tencer or Jane Sooby, Organic Farming Research Foundation, (831) 426-6606; e-mail scoar@ofrf.org.

November 8-10, "Working Landscapes in the Midwest: Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry, and Communities" will be held in Delevan, WI; contact Marin Bryne, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, (612) 870-3436; e-mail marin@iatp.org.

November 10-13, "New Crops and New Uses: Strength in Diversity," the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Industrial Crops, will be held in Atlanta, GA; information is available on the Internet at <http://www.aaic.org>.

November 12-14, "Farming on the Edge: Conservation, Community and Commerce" will be held in St. Charles, IL; contact Eileen West, American Farmland Trust, One Short St., Northampton, MA 01060; (413) 586-9330 ext. 27; e-mail ewest@farmland.org; information is available on the Internet at <http://www.farmland.org>.

November 18-20, "The Soul of Agriculture: New Movement in New England Food and Farming" will be held in Durham, NH; contact Office of Sustainability Programs, University of New Hampshire, (603) 862-2640; e-mail Elhafiz@aol.com.

December 7-9, Northeast Community Supported Agriculture Conference will be held in Claryville, NY; contact Robyn Van En, Center for CSA Resources, Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201; e-mail info@csacenter.org.

January 19, 2002, "The New Ranch at Work" will be held in Albuquerque, NM; contact The Quivira Coalition, 551 Cordova Rd., #423, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

January 23-26, 2002, 22nd 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, <http://www.eco-farm.org>.

February 4-6, 2002, New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference will be held in Auburn, NY; contact Diane Eggert, (314) 475-1101; e-mail diane99@dreamscape.com.

March 26-28, 2002, Organic Research Conference will be held in Aberystwyth, United Kingdom; contact Conference Organizer, Organic Centre Wales, Institute of Rural Studies, University of Wales, Llanbadarn Campus, Aberystwyth, SY23 3 AL; e-mail UK-Organic2002@aber.ac.uk.



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