



## News Briefs

### • House Passes Farm Bill, Rejects Shift from Subsidies to Conservation

The U.S. House of Representatives last month passed a ten-year, \$170 billion farm bill, after rejecting amendments that would have shifted \$19 billion from grain, cotton, and soybean subsidy programs to environmental conservation measures. The House bill includes \$50 billion in added money “for a raft of traditional farm interests, from sugar and peanut growers to corporate hog operations and horse breeders,” according to *The Washington Post* (October 6, 2001). “The House bill provides subsidies and supports for growers of basic commodities that go well beyond those in the last major farm bill, known as Freedom to Farm, which was passed in 1996.” It reauthorizes the Conservation Reserve Program with increased funding of \$1.5 billion, reauthorizes the Wetlands Reserve Program with increased funding of \$1.6 billion, and provides \$7 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through 2011, but also allows corporate hog farms to be eligible for financial assistance under EQIP.

### • More Than 200 Farm, Grassroots, and Rural Advocacy Groups Urge Senate to Reject House Bill

More than 200 groups representing family farmers, rural activists, sustainable agriculture supporters, consumers, religious groups, and scientists have urged the Senate to reject the farm bill passed by the House of Representatives. In a letter to Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) and ranking minority member Richard Lugar (R-IN), the groups asked that the House farm bill not be used as a starting point for Senate deliberation. The farm bill passed by the House “falls far short of providing solutions to the many conservation, rural development, credit, research and other needs of America’s farmers, ranchers and their communities,” according to the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture. Because of Bush Administration objections to the House bill, USDA officials will work with the Senate in writing legislation, according to the Associated Press (October 12, 2001). “The White House stopped short of threatening a veto, but said the bill provides too little money for conservation programs and would benefit big farms that need federal help the least,” the story said.

### • Pesticide Use in California During 2000 Decreased to Lowest Level Since 1992

Pesticide use in California during 2000 dropped for the second consecutive year, to the lowest level since 1992. Preliminary data from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation showed reported pesticide applications totaled about 188 million pounds, compared to 202 million pounds in 1999. Reported pesticide use in California has dropped almost 27 million pounds since 1998. Reported data also showed that use of methyl bromide, a powerful ozone-depleter, and metam-sodium, another fumigant, dropped by more than 8 million pounds in 2000 from 1999 levels. Use of chemicals classified as toxic air contaminants declined by almost 3.9 million pounds in 2000, but chemicals classified as groundwater contaminants increased by about 100,000 pounds in 2000. Summaries of the data are available on the Internet at <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov>. A 400-page summary is \$10 from Cashier, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, P.O. Box 4015, Sacramento, CA 95812; (916) 324-4100.

### • USDA Extends Application Deadline for Organic Accreditation

The USDA will accept applications for accreditation from potential organic certifying agents until December 21, 2001. The new deadline gives applicants two additional months to submit applications to the National Organic Program in order to be among the first round of accredited certifying agents, to be announced in April 2002. The USDA has also clarified that an accredited certifying agent cannot certify its own employees, including board members or other individuals responsibly connected to the certifying agent. Accreditation application forms can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>. For additional information, contact the National Organic Program staff at (202) 720-3252.

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

### • **Antibiotics in Healthy Livestock Pose Human Threat, Studies Conclude**

The routine treatment of healthy livestock with antibiotics is creating “superbacteria” in food that are a serious threat to human health, according to three studies published last month in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The studies were conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and in Denmark. The practice of giving healthy livestock antibiotics to prevent illness and promote growth “is controversial because it encourages the emergence of antibiotic-resistant microbes,” according to *The Washington Post* (October 18, 2001). *The Wall Street Journal* (October 18, 2001) reported that, “Reflecting the seriousness of the situation, the influential magazine also published a lengthy guest editorial by Sherwood L. Gorbach, professor of community health at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, calling for far tighter controls on how often drugs are administered to cattle, hogs and poultry....[He] called on regulators to prohibit livestock from getting certain antibiotics that are used to treat human illnesses.”

### • **EPA Approves Use of Bt Corn for Seven More Years**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last month approved the use of corn genetically modified with Bt for an additional seven years, saying it was “confident that [the corn] does not pose risks to human health or the environment.” Varieties of corn modified with Bt produce their own toxin to kill the European corn borer. The renewed registrations for five Bt corn products continue to include specific requirements for companies to routinely monitor and collect data to ensure that the products’ continued use does not lead to insect resistance or unexpected human health or environmental effects, the agency said. “The scientific evidence demonstrates that Bt corn does not impact Monarch butterfly populations,” according to EPA. More information about EPA’s decision is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides/>.

### • **Environmental, Organic Groups Oppose “Fast Track” Trade Bill**

Several environmental and organic consumer organizations are opposing a “fast track” trade bill in Congress because it would prohibit the labeling of genetically modified products, and eliminate the precautionary principle for regulation of genetically modified organisms. A bill pending in the House of Representatives (H.R. 3005), called the “Trade Promotion Authority Act,” would allow the United States “to force European countries to accept unlabeled U.S. GMO products, and the U.S. movement to label GM foods would be stopped dead,” according to the Organic Consumers Association. In addition, the association said, “Fast Track forces Congress to surrender its constitutional authority to decide terms for international trade.” Twelve environmental organizations are opposing the bill because it neither encourages environmental protection nor guards against weakening of environmental standards, they wrote in a letter to Members of Congress. “By including only voluntary negotiating objectives on the environment, H.R. 3005 fails to provide sufficient assurances to Congress that the administration will bring back trade and investment agreements that meet congressional negotiating objectives to safeguard the environment and are still entitled to expedited fast track treatment,” the groups wrote.

### • **Groups Ask Seafood Retailers Not to Sell Genetically Engineered Fish**

Citing potential negative human health effects and a threat to the purity of wild salmon, three environmental groups have launched a campaign to prevent the commercialization of genetically engineered fish. The Center for Food Safety, Clean Water Action, and Friends of the Earth are asking seafood retailers not to sell the fish and to oppose their commercialization. The groups fear that an application pending before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for approval of an experimental, genetically engineered salmon could result in the first engineered fish in grocery stores and restaurants, according to Environmental News Network (October 22, 2001).

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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***

### **• USDA Awards \$2 Million to Wallace Center, Several Universities**

The USDA has awarded \$2 million to the Wallace Center and several other entities for a national study of university-industry relationships in agricultural biotechnology. Others included in the grant are Portland State University, where the project will be based, Oregon State University, University of California-Davis, Clarkson University, and the Farm Foundation. The purpose of the three-year project is to assess university-industry research, licensing, and other partnerships, with special emphasis on the mix of public and private goods provided through agricultural biotechnology. Its findings will be used to identify problems and potential policies to foster the development of products with traits that promote widespread public benefits. The project's director will be Dave Ervin, a professor in Portland State University's Environmental Sciences and Resources program, and a senior policy analyst at the Wallace Center; he can be contacted at (503) 725-3935, e-mail [dervin@winrock.org](mailto:dervin@winrock.org).

### **• Sustainability of Terraced Agroecosystem Is Topic in New Issue of Journal**

An assessment of the sustainability of a terraced agroecosystem for production of nopal vegetable in metropolitan Mexico City is the lead article in the new issue of *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* (Volume 16, No. 3), the Wallace Center's quarterly peer-reviewed journal of research on alternative agriculture. The topics of other articles include the contribution of the bison industry to North Dakota's economy; an alternative agricultural plan for the food-deficient, environmentally fragile hills of Nepal; a performance evaluation and impact assessment of a small water-harvesting structure in the Shiwalik foothills of northern India; and a review and update of cultivating the increasingly popular medicinal plant, goldenseal. For U.S. subscribers of *AJAA*, one volume (four issues) costs US\$36 for individuals, US\$70 for libraries, and US\$18 for students; foreign rates are also available. For more information, contact the Wallace Center, Winrock International, 1621 N. Kent St., Ste. 1200, Arlington, VA 22209-2134; (703) 525-9430 ext. 675; e-mail [wallacecenter@winrock.org](mailto:wallacecenter@winrock.org).

## ***Positions***

**Humane Society of the U.S.** seeks a Director of Program Management/Agricultural Economist, and a Campaign Manager for its Farm Animals and Sustainable Agriculture section; both jobs will be based in Gaithersburg, MD; contact Nancy Allen, HSUS, (301) 548-7757; e-mail [nallen@hsus.org](mailto:nallen@hsus.org).

**Center for Environmental Farming Systems, North Carolina State University**, seeks a Farm Manager/Internship Coordinator to be based in Goldsboro, NC; contact Nancy Creamer, Director, CEFS, Box 7606, Raleigh, NC 27695, (919) 515-9447; e-mail [Nancy\\_Creamer@ncsu.edu](mailto:Nancy_Creamer@ncsu.edu).

**Youth Farm and Market Project** seeks an Executive Director; send letter, resume, and five references to Executive Director Search, YFMP, 1502 Nicollet Ave., # 5, Minneapolis, MN 55403; (612) 872-4226.

## ***Resources***

**"Cultivating Community: Principles and Practices for Community Gardening as a Community-Building Tool"** is \$10 from American Community Gardening Association, 100 N. 20th St., 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 988-8785.

**"Holistic Management: A New Environmental Intelligence"** is \$10 from Allan Savory Center for Holistic Management, 1010 Tijeras NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102; (505) 842-5252; on the Internet, <http://www.holisticmanagement.org>.

**"Composting Manure for Value Added Products"** is \$39 from BioCycle, 419 State Ave., Emmaus, PA 18049; (610) 967-4135, ext. 21; e-mail [biocycle@jgpress.com](mailto:biocycle@jgpress.com).

**"This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader,"** by Jane Gussow, is \$22.95 from Chelsea Green Publishing Company, P.O. Box 428, Gates-Briggs Building # 205, White River Junction, VT 05001; 1-800-639-4099.

**"Consumer Preferences, Premiums, and the Market for Natural and Organic Pork: Locating a Niche for Small-Scale Producers"** is available from W. Parker Wheatley, (612) 669-0331; e-mail [whea0025@umn.edu](mailto:whea0025@umn.edu).

**"Farming Without Chemicals in Ohio"** is \$5 from Innovative Farmers of Ohio, 3083 Liberty Rd., Delaware, OH 43015, (740) 363-2548; on the Internet, <http://www.ohiocitizen.org>.

# Upcoming Events

**November 29**, First Annual Iowa Organic Conference will be held in Ankeny, IA; contact Margaret Smith, Practical Farmers of Iowa, (515) 294-0887.

**November 29-30**, "Spreading the Bounty, Safeguarding the Future," the Third Annual Future of Our Food and Farms Summit, will be held in Philadelphia, PA; contact Meredith Stone, Farmers' Market Trust, 1201 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 568-0830; e-mail [fmtrust@libertynet.org](mailto:fmtrust@libertynet.org).

**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](mailto:info@csacenter.org).

**December 9-10**, "Farm-to-School Cafeteria: Partnerships for Improving Health, Supporting Farms and Building Community" will be held in Ithaca, NY; contact Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, Cornell University, (607) 255-0417; e-mail [hmm1@cornell.edu](mailto:hmm1@cornell.edu).

**January 11-13, 2002**, "Sustainable Greenhouse Design and Production: Season Extension and Winter Growing for Vegetable and Flower Farmers"; **February 1, 2002**, "Increase Your Profit: Financial Management for Established Farmers"; and **February 2-3, 2002**, "Creating Healthy Soils and Overcoming Weeds: Biological Principles of Organic Agriculture; will be held in Saratoga County, NY; for workshop information, contact Regional Farm and Food Project, (518) 427-6537; e-mail [farmfood@capital.net](mailto:farmfood@capital.net).

**January 18-19, 2002**, "Farming for Profit and Stewardship," the Third Annual Future Harvest Conference of the Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, will be held in Hagerstown, MD; contact Ruth Sullivan, Future Harvest-CASA, 106 Market Court, Stevensville, MD 21666; (410) 604-2681; e-mail [rsullivan@friend.ly.net](mailto:rsullivan@friend.ly.net); on the Internet, <http://www.futureharvestcasa.org>.

**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>.

**January 24-25, 2002**, "Looking at Genetic Engineering Through the Lens of Sustainability," the 7th annual Southern Region SARE Professional Development Program Workshop, will be held in Chattanooga, TN; contact Rosanne Minarovic, Southern Region SARE PDP, North Carolina State University, (919) 515-3252; e-mail [rminarov@unity.ncsu.edu](mailto:rminarov@unity.ncsu.edu).

**January 25-27, 2002**, 11th Annual Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference will be held in Chattanooga, TN; contact Ryan Cohen, (404) 819-2122; e-mail [ryancohen@msn.com](mailto:ryancohen@msn.com); on the Internet, <http://www.attra.org/ssawg/>.

**February 2, 2002**, "Grass Farming: Connecting Land and Communities," the Sixth Annual Vermont Grazing Conference, will be held in Randolph, VT; contact Gwyneth Harris, Vermont Pasture Network Coordinator, Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Vermont, 590 Main St., Burlington, VT 05405; (802) 656-3834; e-mail [gharris@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:gharris@zoo.uvm.edu).

**February 2-5, 2002**, "IPM and Monitoring: Back to Basics with New Technology," the Annual Conference of the Association of Applied Insect Ecologists, will be held in Berkeley, CA; contact Jill Klein, AAIE, (530) 758-8909; on the Internet, <http://www.aaie.net>.

**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](mailto:diane99@dreamscape.com).

**February 8-9, 2002**, "Healthy Farms, Healthy Communities: Our Link to a Sustainable Future," the 11th Annual Farming for the Future Conference of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, will be held in State College, PA; contact Kate Francis, PASA, P.O. Box 419, Millheim, PA 16854; (814) 349-9856; e-mail [info@pasafarming.org](mailto:info@pasafarming.org); on the Internet, <http://www.pasafarming.org>.

**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](mailto:UK-Organic2002@aber.ac.uk).

**April 7-8, 2002**, "Natural and Organic: Products for a Sustainable Future," the Sixth International Trade Exhibition, will be held in London; contact Natural Products Europe, 44-1903-817301; e-mail [sales@naturalproducts.co.uk](mailto:sales@naturalproducts.co.uk); on the Internet, <http://www.naturalproducts.co.uk>.

**September 17-20, 2002**, the Third National Small Farm Conference will be held in Albuquerque, NM; for speaker recommendations and questions, contact Denis Ebodaghe, CSREES/USDA, (202) 205-0467, or Nelson Escobar, (202) 401-4900.



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