



## News Briefs

### • **Senate Political Differences Push Farm Bill Debate Into New Year**

U.S. Senate Democrats late last month abandoned their efforts to pass a Farm Bill by the end of 2001, “in the face of stiff opposition from Republicans who regard the measure as too costly and contrary to free markets and free trade,” according to *The Washington Post* (December 20, 2001). “Farm groups had been clamoring for action by the end of the year, fearing that the next round of budget estimates due in January or February may be less favorable to their interests.” Citing that same fear, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) said he planned to bring up the Farm Bill again this month when the Senate returns to Washington after the holiday recess. The Farm Bill passed by the House of Representatives had been opposed by the Bush Administration, which thought it gave too much money to commodity subsidies and not enough to conservation efforts; the Democratic-sponsored Senate bill offered an additional \$22 billion for conservation and environmental programs during the next 10 years. The Bush Administration had argued that the Senate Democrats’ bill “would overstimulate production and thereby depress prices,” according to *The Post*.

### • **Farmers Who Plant Bt Corn Are Losing Money, According to New Report**

American farmers who have planted Bt corn are suffering economic losses, according to a new report by Dr. Charles Benbrook for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, and Genetically Engineered Food Alert. From 1996 to 2001, farmers paid at least \$659 million in price premiums to plant Bt corn, while boosting their harvest by only 276 million bushels worth \$567 million in economic gain, the report found; the bottom line is a net loss of \$92 million. “The cash outlay for seed for a field where farmers decide to plant a Bt corn hybrid is about 30 to 35 percent higher than the cost of otherwise well-adapted conventional varieties,” according to the report. “This increase in per acre seed expenditure is by far the biggest in history linked to a single new trait....On average nationwide, from 1996-2001, yield increases due to Bt corn have not increased farm income enough to cover the higher costs of Bt seed.” The report, *When Does It Pay to Plant Bt Corn?*, is available on the Internet at <http://www.iatp.org>.

### • **FDA Warns of Misleading Labels About Genetically Modified Ingredients**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has warned six natural foods companies that they are misleading consumers with labels touting products as free of genetically modified ingredients, according to *The Wall Street Journal* (December 20, 2001). “The FDA letters, issued on November 29, reflect the growing concern of agency officials that some marketers might be trying to play to the public’s worries about an unfamiliar technology—which the FDA has declared is safe,” the story said. The FDA wants to stop companies from claiming products are free of genetically modified ingredients because it “doubts that food companies can make a non-GMO claim with absolute certainty.” The FDA sent letters to B&G Foods, Hain Celestial Group, Healthy Times, Spectrum Organic Products, U.S. Mills, and Van’s International Foods.

### • **Exports of Organic Coffee from Peru Expected to Continue Increasing**

Exports of high-end organic coffee grown in Peru are expected to increase 40 percent in 2002, from \$9.8 million in 2001 to \$14 million, according to Peruvian National Coffee Board figures quoted in a Reuters story (December 14, 2001). Sales of organic coffee from Peru are increasing rapidly, according to the story: “Worth just \$2.1 million in 1996, exports of the niche brew earned \$8.9 million in 2000, and organic coffee is Peru’s top ‘green’ product.” The head of the Peruvian National Coffee Board, Raul Del Aguila, told Reuters, “It’s time for the state to incentivize clean agriculture. We need effective incentives that boost our competitiveness.”

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

### • **EPA Seeks Comments on Assessment of Organophosphate Risks**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is seeking both scientific peer review and public comment on the scientific methodologies used to develop its preliminary assessment of the cumulative risks of organophosphate pesticides. The preliminary risk assessment considers the potential exposures to 31 organophosphates through food, drinking water, and residential uses. The assessment is part of complying with the Food Quality Protection Act that requires reassessing 66 percent of pesticide food tolerances by August 2002. Public comments must be received by March 8; the preliminary risk assessment is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>.

### • **Organic Produce Market Offers Export Potential, Says United Nations FAO Report**

The organic fruit and vegetable market offers significant potential for countries to increase their export earnings and diversify their agricultural base, according to a new report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). "Strong and steady growth in the sales of organic foods have provided these products with a viable and value-added market niche," said the 312-page report. "Consumption of organic foods is expected to outgrow domestic production in developed countries, which will leave room for significant organic imports," providing export opportunities for developing countries. For a copy of *World Markets for Organic Fruit and Vegetables*, contact Daniela Piergentili at FAO, e-mail [daniela.piergentili@fao.org](mailto:daniela.piergentili@fao.org); phone, (39) 06-5705-2864.

### • **List of Applicants for Organic Certifying Agents Available on Internet**

The list of certifying agents who have applied for USDA accreditation as organic certifying agents was updated last month and is available on the Internet. If an agent has mailed an application but his/her name does not appear on the list, please contact the National Organic Program, (202) 720-3252, or the NOP Webmaster by e-mail, [nopwebmaster@usda.gov](mailto:nopwebmaster@usda.gov). The list of accreditation applicants is available at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop).

### • **Visiting Chinese Delegation Interested in Organic Farms**

A delegation of four people from China visited organic farmers in Montana after expressing an interest in American organic farming during a 12-day visit to the United States last month, according to the Associated Press (December 14, 2001). "Chinese consumers are becoming more and more interested in organic food," said Wang Jiadong, who works for the Municipal Bureau of Agriculture in the Chingqing province. "We want to know about organic agriculture carried out in Montana and bring our experiences back to China....Because China is now a member of the World Trade Organization, we hope our organic food will meet the standards of the international community."

### • **Oregon Farm Is Large, Successful, and Sustainable**

Threemile Canyon Farms near Boardman, Oregon, is one of the state's largest agricultural operations—and also one of its most environmentally sound, according to an article in *The Wall Street Journal* (December 19, 2001). The farm, which has been operating for almost two years, milks up to 15,000 dairy cows, grows enough potatoes to feed seven million people, and harvests alfalfa, corn, and wheat in a 100-square mile area. "Environmentalists love the project because it's being carried out to follow an emerging trend in the West called sustainable development," said the article, citing its recycling, composting, and water use practices. The farm has also persuaded Oregon's largest and most famous cheesery—the Tillamook County Creamery Association—to make a major expansion in Oregon and produce cheese from the Threemile Canyon dairy.

---

*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.

Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International  
1621 North Kent Street, Suite 1200, Arlington, Virginia 22209-2134 USA  
Phone: (703) 525-9430; Fax: (703) 525-1744  
E-mail: [wallacecenter@winrock.org](mailto:wallacecenter@winrock.org); Web site: <http://www.winrock.org/wallace/>

## *Wallace Center/Winrock News*

### • **American Journal of Alternative Agriculture Moves to CABI Publishing**

The *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, the Wallace Center's quarterly, peer-reviewed journal, moves this month to CABI Publishing, the well-known applied life sciences publisher located near Oxford in the United Kingdom. Volume 17 (2002) of the AJAA will be published at its new home with no disruption in the publication schedule. As part of the transition to CABI Publishing, Dr. Robert Papendick, retired ARS soil scientist at Washington State University, will continue as Editor until 2003, when Dr. John Doran, an ARS soil scientist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and current President of the Soil Science Society of America, will become the next Editor of the *Journal*. The Wallace Center will continue to advise CABI on the future shape and goals of the *Journal*. With the move to CABI, subscribers for the first time will have access to an electronic version of the AJAA; more information is available on the Internet at <http://www.cabi-publishing.org>.

### • **Harwood Joins Winrock Board of Directors**

Richard Harwood, the C.S. Mott Foundation Chair of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University, has been elected to the Winrock International Board of Directors. Until this month, he had served on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Wallace Center's *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*.

### • **Winrock Formalizes Ecosystem Services As Business Unit**

Winrock International has formalized its Ecosystem Services activities as a business unit. The objective of Ecosystem Services is to provide tools to further Winrock's mission by monitoring land use and environmental change to improve resource management, and thereby strengthen the rural economies that depend on sustainable forests, wetlands, watersheds, and agricultural production systems. For more information, visit <http://www.winrock.org/ecosystems-services>.

## *Positions*

**North Central Region SARE Program** seeks a Regional Coordinator; applications are due February 15; contact Renee Hunt, Chair, NCR SARE, University of Nebraska, 13A Activities Bldg., P.O. Box 830840, Lincoln, NE 68583; e-mail [ncrsare@unl.edu](mailto:ncrsare@unl.edu).

**Rural Training and Research Center of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives** in Epes, Alabama, seeks a Manager for sustainable agriculture demonstration projects, and a Rural Development Specialist; information is available at <http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com>, or from Lukata Mjumbe, e-mail [lukata66@aol.com](mailto:lukata66@aol.com).

## *Resources*

**"Pastured Poultry Questions and Answers"** and **"Starting Your Own Dairy Farm"** are available from Kathy Martin-Taylor, Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (608) 262-5200; e-mail [kmartint@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:kmartint@facstaff.wisc.edu).

**"Organic Livestock Feed Suppliers,"** a resource list published by Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, is available on the Internet at <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/livestockfeed.html>.

**"Profitable Pork: Alternative Strategies for Hog Producers"** is available from the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Network at (301) 504-6422, or on the Internet at <http://www.sare.org/bulletin/hogs>.

**"Educational and Training Opportunities in Sustainable Agriculture," 14th Edition,** is available from Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, National Agricultural Library, (301) 504-6422; e-mail [afsic@nal.usda.gov](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov); or on the Internet at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic>.

**"Topics A-Z on Community Food Systems"** from the Food and Nutrition Information Center, National Agricultural Library, is now available on the Internet at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000061.html>.

**"The 2002 Farm Bill: Policy Options and Consequences"** is available from the Farm Foundation, 1211 West 22nd St., Oak Brook, IL 60523-2197; (630) 571-9393; e-mail [walt@farmfoundation.org](mailto:walt@farmfoundation.org); or on the Internet at [http://www.farmfoundation.org/2002\\_farm\\_bill.htm](http://www.farmfoundation.org/2002_farm_bill.htm).

## Upcoming Events

**January-March**, a series of workshops on “Adapting to the National Organic Program” will be held in several locations in Washington, sponsored by Washington State University, and Washington State Department of Agriculture; for full schedule, contact David Granatstein, WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, (509) 663-8181 ext. 222; e-mail [granats@wsu.edu](mailto:granats@wsu.edu); or Marcia Wilkinson, (360) 902-1885.

**January-May**, several courses in the Sustainable Farming Program will be held in North Carolina; for full schedule, contact Robin Kohanowich, Central Carolina Community College, (919) 542-6495 ext. 229.

**January 25-26**, “Digging In: Cultivating Healthy Soils and Healthy Profits,” the Innovative Farmers of Ohio’s 9th Annual Conference, will be held in London, OH; contact IFO, (740) 368-8552; e-mail [ifoh@aol.com](mailto:ifoh@aol.com); on the Internet, <http://www.ifoh.org>.

**January 25-27**, “Local Farms as the Basis of a Sound Economy,” the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York’s 20th Annual Conference, will be held in Seneca Falls, NY; contact NOFA-NY, (518) 734-5495; information is available on the Internet, <http://ny.nofaic.org>.

**January 25-27**, “Organic Agriculture and the Farm Economy,” the 21st Annual Organic Conference and Eco-Products Trade Show, will be held at the University of Guelph, Canada; contact Tomas Nimmo, e-mail [organix@georgian.net](mailto:organix@georgian.net); on the Internet, <http://guelph2002.organicfarms.ca>.

**February 1-2**, Virginia Biological Farming Conference and Trade Show will be held in Front Royal, VA; contact the Conference, c/o Linda Davis, (540) 463-6363; e-mail [biofarmingconf@hotmail.com](mailto:biofarmingconf@hotmail.com).

**February 2**, “From Liabilities to Assets: Charting New Directions in Agriculture,” the 13th Annual Southern Plains Conference, will be held in Nazareth, TX; contact Father Darryl Birkenfeld, The Promised Land Network, (806) 364-4445; e-mail [pln1@amaonline.com](mailto:pln1@amaonline.com).

**February 2**, “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, (802) 656-3834; e-mail [gharris@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:gharris@zoo.uvm.edu).

**February 7-9**, “Sustainable Livestock Management in the West” and “New Mexico Organic Farming and Gardening Expo” will be held in Santa Fe, NM; contact Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, (406) 494-8636, or Lynda Prim, The Farm Connection, (505) 579-4386; on the Internet, <http://www.westernsawg.org>.

**February 8-9**, “Healthy Farms, Healthy Communities: Our Links to a Sustainable Future,” the 11th Annual Farming for the Future Conference, will be held in State College, PA; contact Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, (814) 349-9856; e-mail [info@pasafarming.org](mailto:info@pasafarming.org); on the Internet, <http://www.pasafarming.org>.

**February 12**, “Managing Soil Fertility, Soil Health, Vegetable Yields and Quality,” and **February 13-15**, “Advanced Organic Vegetable Production for Small and Large-Scale Growers,” will be held in Orrville, OH; contact Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, (262) 642-3303; e-mail [mfai@mfai.org](mailto:mfai@mfai.org); on the Internet, <http://www.mfai.org>.

**February 22-23**, Midwest Small Farm Conference and Trade Show will be held in Lafayette, IN; contact Steve Bonney, Sustainable Earth, (765) 463-9366; e-mail [sustainableearth.steve@verizon.net](mailto:sustainableearth.steve@verizon.net).

**February 28-March 2**, “The Heart of Organics,” the 13th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, will be held in La Crosse, WI; contact Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services, (715) 772-6819; e-mail [moses@wwt.net](mailto:moses@wwt.net).

**March 2**, “Twenty Years of Organic Growth—Celebrating the Harvest,” the 20th End of Winter Conference of Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut, will be held in Hartford, CT; contact NOFA/CT, (203) 484-2445; e-mail [nofact@connix.com](mailto:nofact@connix.com); on the Internet, <http://ct.nofa.org>.



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

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