



## News Briefs

### ● **Senate Passes Farm Bill, Conference with House Is Next**

The U.S. Senate last month passed a farm bill that includes many programs and initiatives supported by the sustainable agriculture community, such as the new ten-year Conservation Security Program that rewards farmers and ranchers for good stewardship of working lands. The Senate bill authorizes two new programs for value-added marketing and rural microenterprise development, which will benefit family farmers and ranchers and rural communities. The bill would limit commodity payments, but would eliminate the prohibition on large confined animal feeding operations from receiving clean-up funds under Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The bill would also prohibit packer ownership of livestock for more than 14 days before they are slaughtered. A House-Senate Conference Committee will now negotiate the differences between the two bills, and present a final bill to both houses for a vote.

### ● **Poultry Industry Reducing Its Use of Antibiotics Fed to Healthy Chickens**

The U.S. poultry industry has “begun to bow to the demands of public health and consumer groups by greatly reducing the antibiotics that are fed to healthy chickens,” according to *The New York Times* (February 10, 2002). Antibiotics have been used not only to prevent infection, but also to enhance growth in chickens; opponents have argued that such use has led to the growing resistance to antibiotics of disease-causing bacteria in humans. Tyson Foods, Perdue Farms, and Foster Farms, which produce a third of the chicken consumed by Americans each year, say they have voluntarily taken most or all of the antibiotics out of what they feed healthy chickens, the article said. In addition, the industry is turning away from an antibiotic used to treat sick birds because it is related to Cipro, the drug used to treat anthrax in humans; McDonald’s, Wendy’s and Popeyes are now refusing the buy chicken that has been treated with it, according to the story.

### ● **Proposed 2003 Federal Budget Reverses Last Year’s Sustainable Ag Gains**

The 2003 federal budget proposed by the Bush Administration last month reverses many of the gains achieved in the current 2002 federal budget, dealing “priority programs a serious blow,” according to the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. Here are the proposed funding levels of several sustainable agriculture programs, compared to 2002: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, \$9.2 million (2002 - \$12.5 million); SARE Professional Development Program, \$3.8 million (2002 - \$4.75 million); Organic Research, \$1 million (2002 - \$1.5 million); Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, \$2 million (2002 - \$2.5 million); Rural Cooperative Development Grants, \$4 million (2002 - \$5.25 million); National Organic Program, \$1 million (2002 - \$1.6 million); and no funding for Farmland Protection Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Community Food Security Act, Fund for Rural America, and Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. Proposed funding for EQIP was \$200 million, increased from \$187 million in 2002.

### ● **National Research Council Recommends More Rigorous Review of Transgenic Plants by USDA**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture should more rigorously review the potential environmental effects of new transgenic plants before approving them for commercial use, according to a new report from the National Academies’ National Research Council. The report recommends also that the public be more involved in the review process, that ecological testing and monitoring continue after transgenic plants have entered the marketplace, and that the USDA re-examine which transgenic plants should be tested and allowed to grow commercially through notification. *Environmental Effects of Transgenic Plants: The Scope and Adequacy of Regulation* is available on the Internet at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu), or from the National Academy Press, 1-800-624-6242.

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### ● **Concentration in Most Agricultural Markets Is Increasing, New Study Finds**

Concentration is increasing in all agricultural markets except ethanol production, according to a new, updated study by Mary Hendrickson and William Heffernan of the University of Missouri. Their study found that the top four beef packers control 81 percent of the market; four pork packers control 59 percent; and four poultry processors control 50 percent. Three companies—Cargill-Continental Grain, Archer Daniels Midland, and Zen Noh—have an “incredibly high level of control” in corn exports, with 81 percent, and soybean exports, with 65 percent. The report, *Concentration of Agricultural Markets*, which was commissioned by the National Farmers Union, is available on the Internet at [www.foodcircles.missouri.edu](http://www.foodcircles.missouri.edu) and also [www.nfu.org](http://www.nfu.org).

### ● **South Carolina, Iowa Recommend Tougher Regulations on Factory Farms**

Separate actions in two states are moving to toughen environmental regulations for confined animal feeding operations of more than 3,500 hogs, or factory farms. In South Carolina, the Department of Health and Environmental Control has approved regulations to ban open manure lagoons for new facilities, to require new facilities be located no closer than 25 miles apart, and to require an environmental management plan, according to *Land Letter* (January 31, 2002). In Iowa, a report by scientists from Iowa State University and the University of Iowa has recommended that the state implement air quality standards for factory farms, and measure levels of air pollutants in areas where the public could suffer health effects. The report, *Iowa Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations Air Quality Study*, is available at [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ehsrc](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ehsrc).

### ● **North American Species Face Multiple Threats, NAFTA Agency Reports**

At least 235 North American animal species are threatened by pollution, human encroachment on their habitats, and aggressive harvesting practices, according to a study by the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, an agency created under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The North American continent faces a “biodiversity crisis,” with half of the most biodiverse eco-regions severely degraded, as resources are being consumed faster than they are being replaced, the report said. “North Americans are faced with the paradox that many activities on which the North American economy is based impoverish the environment on which our well-being ultimately depends,” it said. *The North American Mosaic: A State of the Environment Report* is available at [www.cec.org/pubs\\_docs](http://www.cec.org/pubs_docs).

### ● **Animal Waste and Fertilizer from Large Farms Are Polluting City Waters, Oceans**

Animal waste and fertilizer from large farms are polluting urban and suburban waterways, drawing new scrutiny to the farm bill, according to *The New York Times* (February 10, 2002). Huge livestock feedlots and farm fertilizer runoff are also among the fastest-growing sources of pollution in oceans. “Across the country, metropolitan water agencies are battling increasing pollution from the countryside,” the article said. “As a result, the \$171 billion, 10-year farm bill, once seen as a parochial issue for rural lawmakers, has been scrutinized by members of Congress from urban and suburban districts who realize that...agriculture has implications beyond the grocery store.”

### ● **Global Warming Could Change Plants' Response to Fertilizer, Research Finds**

As global warming results in a greater amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, crops will experience difficulty processing certain forms of nitrogen, shifting the way fertilizers are used, according to an article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (February 5, 2002). The study's findings also suggest that because plant species differ in their ability to incorporate ammonium versus nitrate, rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels might cause significant changes in the distribution of plants in the wild. More information is available at [www.pnas.org](http://www.pnas.org), or from lead author Arnold Bloom, e-mail [ajbloom@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ajbloom@ucdavis.edu).

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## *Wallace Center/Winrock News*

### • **Garth Youngberg, Wallace Institute Founder, Retires**

Garth Youngberg, founder and former Executive Director of the Wallace Institute, retired on December 31, 2001. In 1983, he founded the Institute for Alternative Agriculture, after working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the only full-time specialist on organic farming, and co-authoring the USDA's landmark 1980 report, *Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming*. He established the Institute, now the Wallace Center, with the goal of creating "a Washington institution that could provide a voice and a presence to speak for organic and other low-input farmers," he said. While at the Institute, he launched *Alternative Agriculture News*, a monthly report of news and information on sustainable agriculture, and the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal of research on alternative farming and food systems. He served as the journal's Editor in Chief through 2001. In 1988, he won a "genius" grant award from the MacArthur Foundation, the first MacArthur Fellowship in the field of agriculture; his "genius is that he believes we can feed ourselves without ruining the planet," according to a *Washington Post* story. Youngberg in the 1990s was one of the few sustainable agriculture leaders who saw the need to bring together the many disparate organizations in the community to speak with one voice. That "sustainable agriculture dialogue" became the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, which has successfully worked on improving the sustainable agriculture components of farm bills and other legislation.

Youngberg presided over the Institute's transition when it became the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture in 1993 to honor the contributions of former U.S. Vice President and Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, and the Institute's move to Winrock International in 2000, as the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy.

"Everyone in the sustainable agriculture community is grateful to Garth for all that he did for both the community and the vision of sustainable agriculture," said Kate Clancy, Managing Director of the Wallace Center. "Here at the Wallace Center, his legacy lives on."

## *Resources*

**"Biointensive Integrated Pest Management"** and **"Resource Guide to Organic and Sustainable Vegetable Production"** are among the new publications available on the Internet at [www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org); or from Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, 1-800-346-9140.

**"Day Range Poultry: Every Chicken Owner's Guide to Grazing Gardens and Improving Pastures,"** a 265-page book, is \$22 from Good Earth Publications, 1702 Mountain View Rd., Buena Vista, VA 24416, (540) 261-8774; e-mail [GoodEarth@ntelos.net](mailto:GoodEarth@ntelos.net).

**"Farm to Market: A Journey of Change and Independence,"** a 20-minute video, is \$20 from Jerry DeWitt, (515) 294-7801, e-mail [jdewitt@iastate.edu](mailto:jdewitt@iastate.edu); or from Iowa State University Extension, 109 Curtiss Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1050.

**"From Farm to Table: Making the Connection in the Mid-Atlantic Food System"** is \$17.50 from Capital Area Food Bank, Health and Food Systems Dept., 645 Taylor St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; (202) 526-5344 ext. 298; [horam@foodbank.org](mailto:horam@foodbank.org); excerpts are available at [www.clagettfarm.org/fromfarmtotable.html](http://www.clagettfarm.org/fromfarmtotable.html).

**"Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet,"** a 400-page book, is \$26.95 from Penguin Putnam (1-800-788-6262) and other book retailers; more information is on the Internet at [www.dietforasmallplanet.com](http://www.dietforasmallplanet.com).

**"Organic Information Resources: What Are They? Where Are They? How Can I Find Them?"** is available on the Internet at [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/offp/orgfind.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/offp/orgfind.htm), or from Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, National Agricultural Library, (301) 504-6559, e-mail [afsic@nal.usda.gov](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov).

**"Proceedings from the Soil, Food and People Conference: A Biointensive Model for the Next Century,"** a 180-page book from a March 2000 conference, is available from Ecology Action, 5798 Ridgewood Rd., Willits, CA 95470-9730; (707) 459-0150; on the Internet, [www.growbiointensive.org](http://www.growbiointensive.org).

**"Subscribing to Change: Starting and Sustaining a Vegetable Subscription Service: The Story of Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance,"** a 73-page booklet, is \$5 plus \$2 S&H from Kansas Rural Center, P.O. Box 133, Whiting, KS 66552; (785) 873-3431; e-mail [ksrc@rainbowtel.net](mailto:ksrc@rainbowtel.net).

**"Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba,"** a multi-authored, 340-page book on Cuba's successful organic farms, is \$18.95 from Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, 398 60th St., Oakland, CA 94618; (510) 654-4400; e-mail [amittal@foodfirst.org](mailto:amittal@foodfirst.org); on the Internet, [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org).

## Upcoming Events

**April 9-10**, "Building Healthy Soils," a two-day workshop with farm tour sponsored by Sustainable Mountain Farming Program, will be held in Marshall, NC; contact Connie Buckner, A-B Technical Community College, 4646 Hwy. 25/70, Marshall, NC 28753; (828) 649-2947; on the Internet, [www.asheville.cc.nc.us](http://www.asheville.cc.nc.us).

**April 22-23**, 24th Annual National Food Policy Conference will be held in Washington, DC; contact Consumer Federation of America, (202) 387-6121; on the Internet, [www.consumerfed.org](http://www.consumerfed.org).

**April 25-27**, "The Future of Agrarianism: Considering *The Unsettling of America 25 Years Later*," will be held in Georgetown, KY; contact Norman Wirzba, Philosophy Dept., Georgetown College, (502) 863-8204; e-mail [norman\\_wirzba@georgetowncollege.edu](mailto:norman_wirzba@georgetowncollege.edu).

**May 6-8**, "Composting and Compost Utilization," 2002 International Symposium, will be held in Columbus, OH; contact BioCycle, 419 State St., Emmaus, PA 18049; (610) 967-4135; e-mail [biocycle@jgpress.com](mailto:biocycle@jgpress.com); on the Internet, [www.jgpress.com](http://www.jgpress.com).

**May 17** is the deadline for submitting abstracts to "EcoLabels and the Greening of the Food Market," a conference to be held November 7-9 in Boston, MA; contact Willie Lockeretz, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155; [willielockeretz@tufts.edu](mailto:willielockeretz@tufts.edu); on the Internet, <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/conted/ecolabels>.

**May 19-21**, "Foods for Health: Potential, Perspectives & Policy," NABC 14, will be held in Minneapolis, MN; contact National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, (607) 254-4856; e-mail [nabc@cornell.edu](mailto:nabc@cornell.edu); on the Internet, <http://134.84.89.124/nabc2002>.

**May 20-22**, "Urban Agriculture: Emerging Opportunities in Science, Education, and Policy," will be held in Dallas, TX; contact Texas A&M University, e-mail [urbanag@tamu.edu](mailto:urbanag@tamu.edu); on the Internet, <http://urbanag.tamu.edu>.

**May 20-24**, an in-depth short course on conservation easements for farmers, in Poteau, OK; contact Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, (918) 647-9123.

**June 13-16**, "The City in a Garden: Producing and Consuming Food for the New Millennium," Joint 2002 Annual Meetings of the Association for the Study of Food and Society and the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, will be held in Chicago, IL; contact Daniel Block, Dept. of Geography, Economics and Anthropology, Chicago State University; (773) 995-2310; e-mail [D-Block@csu.edu](mailto:D-Block@csu.edu).

**June 24-26**, "Making Conservation Tillage Conventional," the 25th Annual Southern Conservation Tillage Conference for Sustainable Agriculture, will be held in Auburn, AL; contact Kirk Iverson, (334) 844-4741, ext. 179; [kiversen@acesag.auburn.edu](mailto:kiversen@acesag.auburn.edu); on the Internet, [www.ag.auburn.edu](http://www.ag.auburn.edu).

**July 13-17**, "Setting the Pace for Conservation," the Soil and Water Conservation Society 2002 Annual Conference; contact Nikki McClain, (765) 747-5531; on the Internet, [www.hoosierchapterswcs.org](http://www.hoosierchapterswcs.org).

**July 25-28**, "Gardeners Restore Our World," the 23rd Annual Conference of the American Community Gardening Association, will be held in New York City; contact ACGA, 100 N 20th St., 5th Flr., Philadelphia, PA 19103-1495; (215) 988-8785; on the Internet, [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org).

**September 20-22**, American Livestock Breed Conservancy's 2002 Annual Conference will be held in Pittsfield, MA; contact ALBC, P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312; (919) 542-5704; e-mail [albc@albc-usa.org](mailto:albc@albc-usa.org); on the Internet, [www.albc-usa.org](http://www.albc-usa.org).



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