



## News Briefs

- **Farm Bill Conferees Agree to Complete Bill in Early April**

The lead negotiators of the House-Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee last month agreed to “speed negotiations for early April completion” of the conference’s final bill, which they will make public in meetings the week of April 8. Negotiators also agreed on a \$73.5 billion, ten-year farm bill budget, which includes \$17.1 billion for conservation programs. The conservation title budget is \$1.1 billion above the House-approved level, but \$3.2 billion below the Senate-approved level. Budget negotiations were complicated by the finding of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that the Senate farm bill exceeded the congressionally mandated spending limit and the House farm bill by \$6.1 billion, or about 8 percent. After correcting its original estimates, the CBO said the cost of the Senate farm bill would be \$79.6 billion through 2011. It remains to be seen which programs in the conservation title will be changed to accommodate the new budget level. Several environmental organizations asked the conferees to make all conservation cuts in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which had been allocated \$6.2 billion in the Senate bill.

- **U.S. Geological Survey Finds Wastewater Chemicals, Antibiotics in 80% of Streams**

The first study by the U.S. Geological Survey of 95 pharmaceuticals, hormones and other organic wastewater-related chemicals found one or more of the chemicals in 80 percent of the 139 streams sampled in 30 states. It detected 82 of the 95 chemicals at least once. The 95 chemicals included human and veterinary drugs, including antibiotics; hormones; insecticides; antioxidants; and household chemicals. Veterinary pharmaceuticals used in animal feeding operations may be released to the environment with animal wastes through overflow or leakage from storage structures or land application, the report said. Among the most frequently detected chemicals were plant and animal steroids. Drinking water standards or other human or ecological health criteria have been established for only 14 of the 95 chemicals detected. “Pharmaceuticals, Hormones, and Other Organic Wastewater Contaminants in U.S. Streams, 1999-2000: A National Reconnaissance,” published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology*, is available on the Internet at [http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc\\_surfacewater.html](http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc_surfacewater.html).

- **California Water Resources Board to Monitor Ag Runoff, Review Regulations**

The California Water Resources Control Board will spend \$1 million on a monitoring program to track how much pollution in the state’s rivers, streams, and other waterways is caused by agricultural runoff, according to *U.S. Water News Online* (March 2002). The results could be used to start a state runoff program, such as a permit system, to regulate the agricultural water that enters the state’s waters. The Board will also review a long-standing policy that exempts Central Valley farms from federal and state clean water regulations, according to *The San Francisco Chronicle* (March 2, 2002). The review decision follows the filing of a lawsuit by three environmental groups against the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board, which seeks to end the state exemption for the farms. Environmental groups say pesticide and fertilizer runoff has devastated fisheries and wildlife in the Central Valley, the delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, and San Francisco Bay.

- **UN Agencies Recommend Pre-Market Assessment of Genetically Modified Foods**

The World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, two United Nations agencies, have recommended a pre-market safety assessment of all genetically modified foods on a case-by-case basis. The assessment would look into both intended and unintended effects, identify new or altered hazards, and identify changes relevant to human health, especially in regard to key nutrients and potentially allergenic components. A Task Force of the Codex Alimentarius Commission last month approved the final “Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Biotechnology.” The report is available online at [www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net).

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

- **Canadian Government to Give \$6 Million to Study Role of Forests, Farms in Climate Change**

The Government of Canada last month announced a \$6 million, three-year initiative to study how Canada's forests and farmlands can contribute to combating climate change while improving the Canadian economy and natural ecosystems, according to Canada NewsWire (March 19, 2002). The carbon sinks provided by forests and agricultural soils could account for 10 to 15 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions reductions under the Kyoto Protocol, according to a Canadian official. "In addition to providing carbon sinks, managing crops to produce clean, bio-based fuels and materials will mean new sources of revenue and jobs for rural Canadians," said Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

- **Number of U.S. Farms and Ranches Declines in 2001, New Report Finds**

The number of farms and ranches in the United States in 2001 declined by 0.7 percent to 2.16 million, compared to 2.17 million in 2000, according to a new USDA report, "Farms and Land in Farms." This is the second largest decline in farms and ranches since the 1.4 percent drop in 1991. The total land in farms in 2001 declined 1.9 million acres from 2000, to 941.2 million acres; the average size of a farm increased 2 acres from 434 acres in 2000 to 436 acres in 2001. The number of farms and ranches declined in 23 states in 2001, remained unchanged in 22 states, and increased in 5 states: California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. The North Central Region lost the largest number of farms, with a decline of 9,500 operations; the West lost 2,600 farms and ranches; the South lost 1,600; and the Northeast lost 800. The report is available on the Internet at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/other/zfl-bb/fmno0202.txt>.

- **USDA Seeks Sustainable Ag Stories for Web Site, Publication**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking stories about sustainable agriculture, forest management, and community initiatives that integrate social, economic, and environmental concerns. The stories will be posted on an interactive Web site to share information about projects and activities that advance sustainability; a collection of the stories will be included in a special publication to be presented at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September. To submit stories, go online to [www.rcdsuccess.com](http://www.rcdsuccess.com); for more information, contact Jeri Berc, e-mail [jeri.berc@usda.gov](mailto:jeri.berc@usda.gov).

- **Canadian Food Distributor To Stop Marketing Pesticides**

Loblaw Companies Limited, Canada's largest food distributor, has pledged to stop marketing chemical pesticides in its 440 garden centers by next spring, according to Environment News Service (March 12, 2002). The discontinuation was made in response to "overwhelming consumer demand," according to a spokesperson. The garden centers have carried some organic-based gardening products in the past, but approached its suppliers last year to develop more of those products to replace their chemical pesticide stocks. Staff will also provide educational materials on how customers can reduce their dependency on chemical pesticides.

- **Organic Trade Association, USDA to Encourage Organic Farmers to Conserve Natural Resources**

The Organic Trade Association and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service last month signed an agreement to encourage organic farmers to further conserve natural resources on their land. The two organizations will cooperate on several conservation activities, including conservation planning, improving the quantity and quality of organic commodities, and identifying soil erosion hazards and limitations of soil for organic farming. During the next five years, NRCS will also develop national guidance on natural resources conservation related to organic production, and furnish local conservation assistance for organic farms. The agreement is available on the Internet at [www.ota.com/mounrcs.htm](http://www.ota.com/mounrcs.htm).

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## *Wallace Center/Winrock News*

- **CABI Publishes Its First Issue of American Journal of Alternative Agriculture**

CABI Publishing last month published its first issue (Volume 17, Number 1) of the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* (AJAA) since taking over ownership and publication from the Wallace Center. Dr. Robert Papendick will continue as the journal's editor in 2002. In addition, the Wallace Center will continue to advise CABI Publishing on the scope and vision of the AJAA on an ad hoc basis. Articles in the new issue examine the relationship between soil quality and crop productivity across three tillage systems in south central Honduras; soil-test dynamics throughout a five-year "Thompson Farm" rotation in Iowa; the wholesale produce auction: an alternative marketing strategy for small farms; barriers to adoption of organic farming by cash-crop producers in Austria; killing cover crops mechanically: review of recent literature and assessment of new research results; the mirage of genetic engineering; and a commentary on moral confidence in agriculture. Abstracts are available free on the Internet at [www.organic-research.com/research/CORP/index.asp](http://www.organic-research.com/research/CORP/index.asp). For more information, contact CABI Publishing, North American Office, 1-800-528-4841; e-mail [cabi-nao@orders.org](mailto:cabi-nao@orders.org).

## *Resources*

**"Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds,"** a 560-page book, is available from American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312; (919) 542-5704.

**"Genetically Modified Food and the Consumer,"** a 248-page report from NABC's 2001 Annual Meeting, is \$5 from National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, Boyce Thompson Institute Rm. 419, Tower Rd., Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 254-4856; e-mail [NABC@cornell.edu](mailto:NABC@cornell.edu).

**"The Midwest Region Commodities and the Environment Conference" Summary Proceedings** and working papers, from a May 2001 conference convened by World Wildlife Fund, American Farmland Trust, and the Wallace Center, is available online at [www.farmlandinfo.org/MRCE\\_Workshop](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/MRCE_Workshop).

**"The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life,"** a 250-page book of collected writings from small farmers and environmentalists, is \$18 from Island Press, 1-800-828-1302; on the Internet, [www.islandpress.com](http://www.islandpress.com).

**"Profitable Poultry: Raising Birds on Pasture,"** a 16-page resource guide, is available on the Internet at [www.sare.org/bulletin/poultry](http://www.sare.org/bulletin/poultry), or in print from USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Network, (301) 504-6422, [san@nal.usda.gov](mailto:san@nal.usda.gov).

**"The Real Green Revolution,"** a report on organic farming in developing countries, from Greenpeace and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, is 24 Euro from IFOAM Head Office, Tholey-Theley, Germany; e-mail [HeadOffice@ifoam.org](mailto:HeadOffice@ifoam.org); fax +49-6853-919899; for more information, visit [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org).

**"Seasonal Dairy Grazing: A Viable Alternative for the 21st Century,"** detailed case studies of six northeastern and midwestern U.S. farms, is available at [www.grassfarmer.com](http://www.grassfarmer.com); or contact co-authors Bryan Petrucci, e-mail [bpetrucci@farmland.org](mailto:bpetrucci@farmland.org), or Jon Winsten, [jwinsten@winrock.org](mailto:jwinsten@winrock.org).

**"Sustainable Farming Internships & Apprenticeships Resource List," 2002 Edition,** is on the Internet at <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/intern.html>; for a print copy, contact Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, 1-800-346-9140.

**"Urban Agriculture and Community Food Security in the United States: Farming from the City Center to the Urban Fringe,"** a 30-page report, is available at [www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html), or in print from Community Food Security Coalition, (310) 822-5410.

**"Water Quality Initiatives and Agriculture: An Electronic Bibliography,"** plus other online resources relating to the national Year of Clean Water, is available from the Water Quality Information Center, National Agricultural Library at [www.nal.usda.gov/wqic/Bibliographies/e-yocw.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wqic/Bibliographies/e-yocw.html); or contact Joe Makuch, Coordinator, e-mail [jmakuch@nal.usda.gov](mailto:jmakuch@nal.usda.gov).

**"Working for Clean Water and Thriving Farms: Profiles of Farms in the Clean Water Farms Project,"** a 120-page report, is \$12 from Kansas Rural Center, P.O. Box 133, Whiting, KS 66552; (785) 873-3431; e-mail [ksrc@rainbowtel.net](mailto:ksrc@rainbowtel.net); on the Internet, [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).

## Upcoming Events

**May 3-4**, Organic Beekeeping Workshop will be held in Chestnut Ridge, NY; contact Pfeiffer Center, (845) 352-5020 ext. 20; e-mail [info@pfeiffercenter.org](mailto:info@pfeiffercenter.org); on the Internet, [www.pfeiffercenter.org](http://www.pfeiffercenter.org).

**May 4-5**, Triad Farm Tour will visit 10 farms in North Carolina; contact Project Green Leaf, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, (336) 256-0439; on the Internet, <http://greenleaf.uncg.edu>; or Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, e-mail [cfsa@carolinafarmstewards.org](mailto:cfsa@carolinafarmstewards.org).

**May 20-22**, "Urban Agriculture: Emerging Opportunities in Science, Education, and Policy," will be held in Dallas, TX; contact Jamie Mills (972) 231-5362; on the Internet, <http://urbanag.tamu.edu>.

**June 6-11**, "Healthy Ecosystems, Healthy People," a conference presented by International Society for Ecosystem Health, and Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International, will be held in Washington, DC; contact ISEH, Health Sciences Addition H041, University of Western Ontario, London, ON N6A 5C1, Canada; (519) 661-2111 ext. 86223; on the Internet, [www.ecosystemhealth.com/hehp](http://www.ecosystemhealth.com/hehp).

**June 7-9**, "NNFA Marketplace 2002," the 65th Annual Natural Products Trade Show and Convention, will be held in Las Vegas, NV; contact National Nutritional Foods Association, 1-800-966-6632 ext. 236; on the Internet, [www.nnfa.org](http://www.nnfa.org).

**June 14** is the deadline for preproposals for 2003 Research and Education, and Professional Development Grants; for information on the new application process for these grants, and NE SARE grants in general, contact Northeast SARE office, (802) 656-0471; on the Internet, [www.uvm.edu/~nesare](http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare).

**June 28**, Field Day: "Regenerating Small Family Farms" will be held in Chester County, MD; for this event plus other 2002 field days in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, contact The Rodale Institute, 611 Siegfriedale Rd., Kutztown, PA 19530; (610) 683-1400; e-mail [info@rodaleinst.org](mailto:info@rodaleinst.org); on the Internet, [www.rodaleinstitute.org](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org).

**August 8-11**, Northeast Organic Farming Association's 28th Annual Summer Conference will be held in Amherst, MA; contact NOFA Summer Conference, 411 Sheldon Rd., Barre, MA 01005; (978) 355-2853, e-mail [jackkitt@aol.com](mailto:jackkitt@aol.com); on the Internet, [www.massorganic.org](http://www.massorganic.org).

**August 14-18**, "The Community Effect in Rural Places," 65th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociology Society, will be held in Chicago, IL; contact RSS Business Office, 211 Mumford Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-6200; (573) 882-9065, e-mail [ruralsoc@missouri.edu](mailto:ruralsoc@missouri.edu); on the Internet, [www.ruralsociology.org](http://www.ruralsociology.org).

**August 16-18**, "Rooted in Community," 4th Annual Conference organized by Neighborhood Nutrition Network, a program of Florida Organic Growers and Consumers, will be held in Gainesville, FL; contact FOG office, (352) 377-6345; e-mail [foodfog@aol.com](mailto:foodfog@aol.com).

**August 24-25**, "SolFest 2002," 7th Annual Solar and Good Living Festival, will be held in Hopland, CA; contact Belle Star, (928) 649-8180; e-mail [belle@sedonna.net](mailto:belle@sedonna.net); or visit Institute for Solar Living's website, [www.solarliving.org](http://www.solarliving.org).

**September 20-22**, 26th Annual Common Ground Country Fair will be held in Unity, ME; contact Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, P.O. Box 170, Unity, ME 04988; (207) 568-4142; e-mail [cgcf@mofga.org](mailto:cgcf@mofga.org); on the Internet, [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org).

**September 21-22**, Prairie Festival 2002 will be held in Salina, KS; contact The Land Institute, 2440 E. Water Well Rd., Salina, KS; (785) 823-5376; e-mail [theland@landinstitute.org](mailto:theland@landinstitute.org); on the Internet, [www.LandInstitute.org](http://www.LandInstitute.org).



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