The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association is proud to announce its 27th Annual Conference, themed “Health from the Ground Up.” The conference, to be held March 4th and 5th at Granville High School in Granville, Ohio, will explore the topic of health, including soil, crop, and livestock health, and extend this theme to consumer choices and community health. The OEFFA conference is Ohio’s largest annual gathering of sustainable and organic farmers, consumers, educators, and retailers.

A highlight of the conference will be keynote speakers Gary Zimmer and Dr. Jennifer Wilkins. Zimmer is a farmer, author, agri-businessman, and educator dedicated to biological agriculture, and Wilkins, a nutritionist, is Senior Extension Associate at Cornell University and a Food and Society Policy Fellow.

Zimmer has spent the last 25 years evaluating farming practices on his family’s farm, as a consultant, and as President of Midwestern Bio-Ag, a biological farming consulting company in Wisconsin. He is recognized around the world for his dedication to improving farming through soil restoration and has spoken to farmers and agri-business professionals across the globe.

Continued on page 12

Farm Bill: We Need Your Input

Every five years (more or less) since the 1930s, the U.S. Congress passes a Farm Bill. The bill is comprised of a set of laws that collectively set the direction of U.S. food and farm policies for the next five years. Hundreds of pages long, the farm bill is far-reaching, and includes not only the familiar commodity price and income support provisions but also those related to rural development, food assistance, conservation, research, and trade (among other things).

The most recent Farm Bill, called the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, will be replaced in 2007, and work on the new Bill has already begun. The Secretary of Agriculture traveled around the country hosting “Farm Bill Forums,” in which the public was asked to respond to six questions (see below). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)—also accepted comments on these questions on its website.

Continued on page 6
Letter

From the President

Happy New Year, and what a year of great expectations and potential it will be! As was stated in the last newsletter, 2005 was a successful year for OEFFA dealing mostly with long overdue housekeeping issues and getting finances straightened out. With that being accomplished, 2006 looks to be a year when we can assess new programs and initiatives to improve the local food supply, support organic and sustainable family farms, and protect our environment.

Our upcoming conference is shaping up to be another great one. With lots of interesting workshops and learning experiences for all, it promises to be once again a fun and informative weekend. One area that receives a couple of complaints each year is the price of the meals at the conference. The committee that coordinates the meals works very hard to put together a menu that is made up of as many local and organic items as possible (which is what our organization is all about), and I feel they do a wonderful job. If you were to purchase a meal at a restaurant comprised of the same high quality local organic food that is prepared at our conference I believe you would be paying much more.

Once again, we will be electing officers and voting on the bylaws at the membership meeting at the conference due to low attendance at the fall membership meeting. If you have any items that you would like to have included on the agenda for the membership meeting please email or U.S. mail them to the office by February 17th so they can be included. The agenda will be posted on the OEFFA website under the events listing or you can call the office to request that one be mailed to you.

The Board meetings are also listed on the website under events and are open to any member in good standing. If you have items for the Board to consider or to discuss please get them to me two weeks prior to the meeting date so they can be included in the agenda.

I am looking forward to a great year for OEFFA. See you at the conference, and until then enjoy the mud.

- Mike Laughlin
OEFFA Member
“Best Green House”

Ohio Magazine has named Blue Rock Station Sustainable Living Center in Philo as the “Best Green House.” An article entitled “The Best of Ohio” saluted the “diverse delights of our state” by spotlighting 35 “new finds” and “old favorites.”

Blue Rock Station Sustainable Living Center is the home of Ohio’s first Earthship, a 2,200 square foot home created of tires, cans, bottles, earth, and straw bales and built by OEFFA members Jay and Annie Warmke. The Earthship serves as the centerpiece for an educational center that features workshops on Victorian cottage gardening, and how to incorporate earth-friendly building techniques into projects by using natural and recycled materials.

Blue Rock Station is closed to the public until March 1st, but is open for scheduled school field trips and tours for five or more people (with reservations) throughout the year. Annie will present a workshop on Cottage Gardening at the 2006 OEFFA Conference on Saturday.

For more information contact Annie Warmke at 740/674-4300 or visit The Station at www.bluerockstation.com.

Latest Economic Data for Organic Ag


- December 2, 2005 OTA News Bytes

National Animal Identification System: Safeguarding Animal Health?

Editorial by Thomas Getts, OEFFA Member

Recently there has been a rustling of the letters NAIS in our local and national organizations. These letters stand for National Animal Identification System. Most people do not know enough to take a stand for or against this proposed system, ready to be a mandatory participation program for all livestock farmers. I hope to inform and encourage all livestock owners and interested citizens to search for more details.

The USDA is working to develop and implement a comprehensive information system that will support ongoing animal disease monitoring, surveillance, and eradication programs. The proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is intended to identify animals and track them as they come into contact with, or commingle with, animals other than herdmates from their premises of origin.

The system is being developed for all animals that will benefit from rapid tracebacks in the event of a disease concern. Currently, working groups comprised of industry and government representatives are developing plans for cattle, swine, sheep, goats, horses, poultry, bison, deer, elk, llamas, and alpacas.

Continued on page 15

Preliminary Farm Bill Forum Results

WASHINGTON, DC – Farmers and concerned citizens across the country are saying federal agriculture policy needs to be reformed. That is the conclusion of an analysis of the public testimony at the 2005 USDA Farm Bill Forums released in the end of January by the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (SAC).

The Coalition analyzed the transcripts of all the listening sessions hosted by USDA in 41 states across the country from July to November, 22 of which were hosted by USDA Secretary Johanns.

SAC’s analysis found that only 2.3 percent of the 1,846 people testifying at the forums urged that the same Farm Bill be extended or passed again without change. (Twenty of those 43 witnesses spoke at a single forum in Lubbock, Texas.)

Among the biggest topics addressed by the speakers were enhanced conservation and farmland stewardship initiatives, addressed by 40 percent (739) of the witnesses, new investments in agricultural and rural development and entrepreneurship, addressed by 32 percent (592), and ideas to assist young, beginning, and minority farmers, addressed by 22 percent (414).

The full press release is available at www.msawg.org.
Apprentice Program

Looking for Host Farmers

By Trish Mumme,
Chair, OEFFA Apprentice Program Committee

The impact that apprentice programs have on the training of future sustainable farmers became clear to me last month when I looked around the room at our local OEFFA chapter meeting. Among fifteen people in attendance were four host farmers and two former apprentices who are now farmers. There is no doubt that nationwide, there’s a growing number of young people interested in a career in sustainable agriculture and anxious to get some “hands-on” experience. If you’d be willing to host a committed and eager apprentice this spring or summer on your farm, the OEFFA apprentice program needs you.

Last year, after the online application procedure was revamped and updated, two dozen apprentices and eighteen potential host farmers applied to the OEFFA apprentice program. Seven placements were made, and results of a survey conducted last fall indicated that both the farmers and apprentices had very positive experiences.

This year the program is able to accept applications earlier, and we hope this will help attract more apprentices. Getting your farm registered in February will maximize your chances of attracting the kind of apprentice you want. In recent years, an increasing number of apprentice applicants have been recent college graduates or individuals over 30 seeking a career change. These folks tend to register in January or February. Most college students register by early March.

We’re planning a workshop on the apprentice program at the OEFFA conference again this year, where both placed apprentices and host farmers will talk about their experiences.

But you shouldn’t wait till then to register your farm’s opportunity. Go to www.oeffa.org and click on the apprentice program link. “Advice to Host Farmers” is a must-read to get you thinking about how best to present your farm’s opportunity and what sort of arrangements to offer. Then simply fill out the farmer application.

The strength of OEFFA’s apprentice program is its flexibility. Some farms offer room and full or partial board; some apprentices want a full-time, live-in opportunity like that. Other farms offer part-time work; this suits the needs of apprentice applicants seeking to gain experience at a farm within commuting distance of their homes. (Most apprentices placed in 2005 were in the latter category.) Most farms offer a modest stipend even to beginners—at least enough to defray transportation costs. Some farms seek experienced apprentices only and offer minimum wage or better. Placements have been made at all kinds of farms with many different arrangements.

As in previous years, we’ll send announcements of the OEFFA apprentice program to college-level agricultural and environmental studies programs around the state. This year we hope to do recruiting presentations at a few Ohio colleges as well.

Survey results showed that web searches were the primary way applicants found out about the program, but chances of placement were better if applicants were Ohio residents or attended school in Ohio.

This year, in order to encourage apprentices to stay involved in OEFFA, we will offer OEFFA membership to all placed apprentices at the student level, whether or not such apprentices are current students.
~ Chicken Tortilla Soup ~
(See page 11 for more hearty winter recipes)

4 cups herbed chicken broth (see p. 11)
2-3 cups chicken meat
1 hot pepper, seeded and chopped
1 tsp. oregano
1-2 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 garlic clove
1 can diced tomatoes with green chilies or
1 can diced tomatoes and 1 cup chopped green pepper
1 onion
1 can corn, undrained
1 can kidney beans, drained
1-2 Tbsp. lemon juice, or to taste
1/4 cup minced cilantro leaves
Shredded cheddar or co-jack cheese
Tortilla chips

Combine all ingredients except cilantro, cheese and chips in a large soup pot. Bring to a boil and simmer 20 minutes. Stir in cilantro leaves. Adjust seasoning to taste, adding more salt, lemon juice or spices as needed. Into each serving bowl, put a handful of tortilla chips, lightly crushed, and two tablespoons of shredded cheese. Ladle soup over and serve. Serves 6.

A Profile:
Alana’s Magical Plates
By Martha Balint

Name: Alana Shock
Business: Alana’s Food and Wine,
2333 North High St., Columbus, OH
Years in business: Six

Alana Shock (Chef/Proprietor) and her husband Kevin Bertschi (Sommelier/Proprietor) opened the doors of Alana’s Food and Wine in June, 1999. Alana had previously worked at Emeril’s in New Orleans, as a pastry chef and garde manger (cold foods) chef at the sorely missed Gourmet Market, as Executive Chef at David’s on Main, and as Corporate Chef at Lettuce Entertain You in Chicago.

From the day she opened her own place, Alana has worked with local farmers and has enjoyed cooking what they grow. A classically trained chef, she calls her food bastardized French--she applies French cooking techniques to ethnic dishes to create unique fresh and delicious foods in styles from all over the world.

Alana’s genuine passion for the “lovely things local farmers have” is reflected in her changing menu and respect for the seasons. She buys from Ohio farms for “their beautiful product.” Last summer’s menu was 80% local—and the more local she can make that menu, the merrier it will be.

What she uses from local sources:
Tomatoes, cheddar cheese, mustard greens, zephyr squash, pumpkins, herbs, mesclun (or mixed baby) greens, beets, mushrooms, reliance grapes, asian pears and black walnuts.

Wish List:
Any beautiful tasting thing you have.

Want to make some magic? Contact Alana by phone at 614/294.6783, and be persistent--if she doesn’t call you back, call her again, and again, and again.

This article was first published in IFO’s fall newsletter as the second in a series of profiles of members of the Chef Growers Network.
OEFFA Benefits When You Shop Back40

Many people already recognize Back40 as the big book store at the OEFFA conference. Now, longtime OEFFA members Herm Beck and Linda Lee have set up a program to benefit OEFFA financially. OEFFA will receive a 5% - 7.5% donation on all orders placed through the Back40Books link on the OEFFA website. When you are ready to shop for books or music, go to www.oeffa.org and click on the link to Back40Books. (If you go directly to the Back40 website, OEFFA will NOT receive the donation.) If you elect to order by phone, be sure to mention that you are a member of OEFFA.

Back40Books stocks quality books on small scale farming, gardening, homesteading, natural building, conscious living, and more. Back40 has each title on the website in stock, and always has free shipping.

Farm Bill...
Continued from front page

OEFFA is joining with partners from other sustainable agriculture organizations to gather input from our membership so that we, too, can be part of the conversation in shaping policy initiatives for this next Bill. We began at our Fall Members Day Gathering, in which we had a lively discussion about how the programs and policies established by the Farm Bill can help or hinder sustainable and organic farmers.

Please share your thoughts! Feel free to respond to any--or all--of the six questions used by Secretary of Agriculture Johanns, or simply tell us how the programs established by the Farm Bill (commodity programs, conservation, agricultural trade, nutrition, research, rural development, energy, forestry, farm credit) can best serve the interests of family farmers and small- and mid-sized sustainable and organic farms.

Here are the questions posed in USDA’s Farm Bill forums:
1. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country’s ability to effectively compete in global markets?
2. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?
3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?
4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?
5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?
6. How should agricultural product development, marketing, and research-related issues be addressed in the next Farm Bill?

Please send your comments to OEFFA, PO Box 82234, Columbus, OH, or email cgoland@oeffa.org.

Organic Trade Association Seeks Organic Title within Next Farm Bill

GREENFIELD, Mass. (Jan. 23, 2006) - The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is seeking support for establishing an organic title within the next Farm Bill to draw attention to the organic sector and to consolidate provisions for U.S. organic agriculture and farmers.

“The 2007 Farm Bill is the key piece of legislation coming up that can influence organic agriculture and trade for years to come. We envision that all sectors of the organic business community can benefit if we work together on a Farm Bill that addresses the entire organic value chain,” according to Katherine DiMatteo, OTA’s executive director.

A membership-based business association, OTA is seeking provisions within the Farm Bill to benefit the organic farm community that will, in turn, benefit any businesses that depend on this community. As a result, OTA is currently reaching beyond its membership to encourage discussion of its Farm Bill proposal. The proposal OTA has drafted thus far calls for the following four major provisions:
1. A National Organic Agriculture Initiative to provide overall policy direction, comparable to what many other countries have done, for increasing U.S. organic production.
2. An Organic Production Office to be responsible for coordinating communication between all USDA organic programs to ensure the maximum amount of cooperative effort.
3. Support and enhancement for existing legislation. Although progress was made in funding organic production in the 2002 Farm Bill, some items can be improved, and almost all need to be reauthorized.
4. Agency Cooperative Programs: Many USDA agencies have existing programs that could be expanded to meet the needs of organic producers and the organic trade in general.

“The Organic Trade Association wants everyone in the organic community to have a chance to get involved in this discussion, especially during this phase of gathering feedback,” DiMatteo said.

As a result, OTA is urging those within the organic farm community to provide input. It will be accepting comments on its draft proposal from the wider community through April 24, 2006. You can submit comments by email to farmbill@ota.com. For further information, contact bfraser@ota.com.
Research in Ohio:
Fewer Pests, $90,000 an Acre?

Polyculture “Modules” for Small Farms/Suburbia

By Kurt Knebusch, OSU/OARDC

WOOSTER, Ohio - Carefully designed polyculture systems, grown on small farms or even in suburban yards, could self-limit pest problems and gross up to $90,000 per acre, says Joe Kovach, head of Ohio State University’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.

Together with Loren Harper and Rosa Raudales, both also of the program, Kovach has planned and planted four different polyculture systems, or “modular ecological designs,” each combining the same wide mix of high-value fruits and vegetables, annuals and perennials, and tall and short crops, into 45-by-60-foot plots.

The goal: To see which system works best based on yield, economics, and pest reduction--and to make, through retail sales, $10 per linear foot, or $90,000 to $100,000 per acre.

“We’ve known that polyculture systems seem to have fewer pest problems than monocultures, and when there are problems, they’re usually less severe,” Kovach said. “We wanted to see if we could come up with a primarily fruit-based system that, if we arranged it in the correct way, would see less pressure from pests.”

At the same time, though, “with a goal of $10 per linear foot, we’ve got to be productive,” he said. “We can’t mess around.”

Polycultures, as opposed to monocultures, grow two or more crops together, not just one. Kovach’s four designs, even more diverse than typical polycultures, combine apples, peaches, green beans, tomatoes, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and edamame soybeans. Each design tests a different arrangement. The first has solid rows, with each row having a single crop, and the crop height switching from row to row: for example, a row of high apple trees, a row of low strawberries, a row of high peach trees, a row of low tomatoes.

“There’s some hint that architecture might have an impact on insect pests that occur,” Kovach explained, “so we decided we’d use tree and shrub crops alternated with lower-growing crops.”

The second design mixes more than one crop within a row, but keeps the high crops and low crops together in their own rows. Apples, peaches, and raspberries, for example, line up in a row, then green beans, strawberries and tomatoes in the next, as a way to roadblock infestations.

“The concept,” Kovach said, “is that insect pests seem to move down rows. So if you’re an apple pest, you might stop at the peaches. A peach pest might stop at the raspberries, a raspberry pest at the blueberries, and so forth.”

The third design goes a step further. It mixes the crops within a row and also alternates heights in the row. A single row might grow apples then strawberries, peaches then green beans, raspberries then tomatoes. Kovach calls it the “checkerboard” system.

The fourth design adds raised beds to the equation--“kind of our souped-up future strategy,” Kovach said--with mixed rows planted within.

All four designs employ drip irrigation, disease tolerant and disease resistant varieties, fencing against rabbits and woodchucks, staggered planting dates for the annuals and maturity dates for the perennials (allowing for early, mid- and late-season harvest and season-long production), and newer, less-toxic pesticides if and as needed, with sustainability, not 100 percent organic production, the goal.

“Once we find this optimum design--and this is where the ‘modular’ aspect comes in--we’ll know how much food you’ll get from one plot,” Kovach said. “Maybe one is all you need for personal use. Or maybe you run a roadside stand; you could have maybe three in a series. Or maybe you sell at a farmers’ market; you could have, say, six or eight.”

Small farms near cities could gain from such setups, Kovach said. Fewer inputs, a steady lineup of high-value crops, and proximity to thousands of hungry consumers would make the farms even more successful.

Homeowners, whether for food, hobby, or both, could use the modules too.

“We have a lot of these suburban houses that have five-acre lots,” Kovach noted. “People spend a lot of time mowing their lawns. This could be an opportunity to do something else.”

Finally, he said, the modules would ramp up local production, a plus in terms of tastier food and lower transportation costs.

The project, funded by the Ohio IPM program, a joint effort of OSU Extension and the University’s Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), will continue for the next five or six years.

The test plots--16 in all, four replications of all four designs, covering a total of 1.5 acres--lie on OARDC’s Wooster campus.

Joe Kovach, 330/263-3846; kovach.49@osu.edu
OEFFA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Name/s: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
Town: ___________________ State:______ Zip: ________
Telephone: (___) ______ County:___________________

Conference Registration

OEFFA Members Registration Fee Late Fee (after 2-14)
Single Adult Registration $75 x ___ $15 x ___ =$ ___
Couple Adult Registration $120 x ___ $20 x ___ =$ ___
Student Registration $35 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Saturday-Only Registration $55 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Sunday-Only Registration $50 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Volunteer (see “volunteers”) — $10 x ___ =$ ___
Registering couples may only register as a couple if they share an OEFFA family membership
or have two single memberships that have the same mailing address.

Non-Members (Become a member now for lower rates!)
Single Adult Registration $115 x ___ $15 x ___ =$ ___
Couple Adult Registration $175 x ___ $15 x ___ =$ ___
Student Registration $50 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Saturday Only Registration $75 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Sunday Only Registration $55 x ___ $10 x ___ =$ ___
Volunteer (see “volunteers”) — $10 x ___ =$ ___

Children Under 13 # of Children # of Days
First Child ___ x ___ x $15 =$ ___
Additional Children ___ x ___ x $10 =$ ___
Total Number of Children under 13 attending:
If you plan to volunteer instead of paying for child care, check here. (See “kids at the conf.”)

Conference Food

# Vegetarian # Meat
Saturday Lunch, Adult, $10.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___
Children 6-12 $5.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___
Saturday Dinner, Adult @12.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___
Children 6-12 $5.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___
Sunday Lunch, Adult, @10.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___
Children 6-12 $5.00 x ___ ___ =$ ___

Exhibitor Booths (booth space, table, and two chairs) ___ x $35 = $ ___
Exhibitors must be registered for the conference.

Pre-conference Registration

Registration Fee
with Conference Registration (member) $40 x ___ = $ ___
with Conference Registration (non-member) $50 x ___ = $ ___
Pre-Conference Only (member) $50 x ___ = $ ___
Pre-Conference Only (non-member) $55 x ___ = $ ___

Membership (new or renewal) $ _____
Individual, $35; Family, $50; Small Business, $60; Student, $10; Nonprofit, $50; Business, $100

Method of Payment:
Total = $ ___
Enclosed Check □ Mastercard □ Visa □ American Express □ Discover □
Name on Card: ___________________ Signature: ______________
Enclosed Check □ Mastercard □ Visa □ American Express □ Discover □
Name on Card: ___________________ Expiration Date: __________

Please make checks payable to OEFFA. Registration will not be confirmed. Refunds are issued as gift certificates. No refunds will be issued after February 14.

Mail registration form and payment to:
OEFFA, PO Box 82234, Columbus, Ohio 43202
Or Register Online at www.oeffa.org

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Gary Zimmer
Farmer, Author, Educator, President of Midwestern Bio-Ag
Jennifer Wilkins
Nutritionist, Senior Extension Associate, and Food and Society Policy Fellow at Cornell University

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 4th
8:00-9:00 Registration and Volunteer Check-In
9:05-9:15 Opening Remarks
   Mike Laughlin, Board President
   Carol Goland, Executive Director
9:30-11:30 Workshop Session I
   Long Session: 9:30-11:30
   Short Session I-A: 9:30-10:25
   Short Session I-B: 10:35-11:30
11:30-1:00 Lunch/Exhibit Area Break
1:15-2:15 Workshop Session II
2:30-3:30 Keynote Speaker: Gary Zimmer
3:45-4:45 Workshop Session III
5:00-6:00 Dinner
6:00-7:00 What Will Be in the Fields Tomorrow?
   Reader’s Theater Featuring Faces from Ohio’s Ag Community
7:00-7:35 Audience Discussion with Fields Creators
6:00-7:30 Kid’s Conference: Story Telling
7:45-9:45 Contra Dance: Back Porch Swing Band
   (All skill levels welcome!)

Sunday, March 5th
7:30-8:15 Personal Meditation
8:30-9:15 Business Meeting
9:30-11:30 Workshop Session IV
   Long Session 9:30-11:30
   Short Session IV-A 9:30-10:25
   Short Session IV-B 10:35-11:30
11:30-1:00 Discussion Lunch/Trade Show Break
1:15-2:15 Workshop Session V
2:30-3:15 Keynote Speaker: Jennifer Wilkins
3:15-3:30 Closing Remarks

See page 13 for a schedule of individual workshops.

VOLUNTEERS

In exchange for four hours of work at the conference, volunteers may register for both days of the conference for only $40—or $30 for students. (Meals not included.) For more information, call the OEFFA office at 614/421-2022. Preregistration required. Limited opportunities.
**PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP**

**Organic Dairy Production**
March 3, 2006  10:00-3:00
Stratford Ecological Center, Delaware, Ohio

Wisconsin farmer and consultant Gary Zimmer will present an intensive one-day workshop on certified organic dairy production from the ground up. Gary will discuss effective ways to improve and manage nutrients in the soil for quality forages and feeds, organic herd management from newborn to adult, herd health, and simple strategies for transitioning to organic. Lunch is included.

**THE FACILITY**

The conference will be held at the high school in the charming town of Granville, Ohio, about thirty minutes northeast of Columbus. The facility offers rooms for large group sessions, workshops, exhibitors, dining, kids’ activities, and entertainment, all under one roof, with off-site restaurants and hotels nearby. (Visit [www.oeffa.org](http://www.oeffa.org) for more detailed maps and directions.)

**LOTS O’ WORKSHOPS**

Over 50 individual workshops will be led by knowledgeable members of the organic and sustainable ag community. Presenters will include successful farmers and gardeners, extension agents, educators, and consultants. A full list of workshops can be found on page 13.

**EXHIBIT AREA**

A variety of exhibitors will be set up in the exhibit hall. Exhibitors will include service providers, nonprofit organizations, and vendors of farm/garden products, books, and related household goods. Booth space may be purchased for $35 by pre-registered conference participants.

**GOOD FOOD**

No warmed over frozen foods trays here! Fresh, organic, locally produced meats, dairy products, vegetables, and grains will be on the menu at the 2006 OEFFA conference. Meals are being planned based on the availability of locally sourced ingredients, many of which will come from OEFFA member farms and producers. Menu options will include selections for vegetarians, vegans, and meat eaters. A limited number of meal tickets will be available for sale at the conference, so if you plan to eat with us, we recommend that you buy your meals tickets in advance.

**KIDS**

We encourage conference participants to bring their kids. Children ages 6 to 12 may attend the kids’ conference and take part in specially designed interactive workshops. Younger children may play in the child care area where snacks, educational toys, activities, and plenty of supervision are provided.

There will be no charge for participation in these programs if a parent or sibling over the age of 12 volunteers four hours during the two days. If you plan to volunteer please mark the box on the registration form.

**HOTELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Conference Rates</th>
<th>Other Hotels:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Buxton Inn</td>
<td>Amerihost Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313 E Broadway, Granville</td>
<td>Hebron, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>740/587-0001</td>
<td>740/928-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>($75-$95, 0.86 mi.)</td>
<td>(around $59, 14 mi.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard by Marriott</td>
<td>Holiday Inn Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Highland Blvd, Newark</td>
<td>Heath, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>740/344-1800</td>
<td>740/522-0770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>($79, 4.3 mi.)</td>
<td>(around $80, 5.5 mi.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Register Online at [WWW.OEFFA.ORG](http://WWW.OEFFA.ORG)**
Certification Report

By Steve Sears, OEFFA Certification

2005 was a very busy year for certification. We received 256 applications, which is more than we expected. Many of these applications were for dairy, which is the fastest growing area in organic production. We have also learned that we can expect about 70 new dairy applications in 2006. Due to this growth, we will be increasing certification staff as well as implementing plans to pay more to inspectors for time and mileage. Certification fees will be increased to $550 in 2006 for farms, with an additional $50 for livestock and an additional $50 for on-farm processing. While these fees may seem high, they are still lower than most other certification agencies and, when the Organic Cost Share rebate is applied, the fees are lowered to $150 or less for most applicants.

Nationally, there has been a lot of controversy over the Organic Standards. The rules have been changed to make it easier for additional synthetic products to be allowed in processing and minor changes have been made to the dairy herd conversion rule. The main controversy surrounding these changes is that they were made with little or no public discussion. The dairy herd confinement rules and pasture requirements are still hot topics, and we hope that there will be some conclusion to these issues in the coming year.

For those interested in learning more about producing organic milk, OEFFA will host a one-day intensive workshop with Gary Zimmer, a dynamic farmer and consultant from Wisconsin, on March 3, 2006 in Delaware, OH. Gary will discuss ways to improve soil, crop, and herd quality, techniques for maintaining livestock nutrition and health, and strategies for transitioning to organic production. (See the conference information on page 9 for details and registration.)

The Certification staff will be at the OEFFA conference again this year. Stop in our booth, or plan on attending our workshop. If you are planning on certifying for the first time this year, or if you have questions about the standards or the certification process, we suggest you plan on coming.

Updated certification information and forms are now available on the web at www.oeffa.org/certification.php.

Conference Workshop

Insurance Options for Small Farms

By Jim McGuire, Starkey Insurance

Family farmers put a lot of blood, sweat and tears (not to mention money) into their farm/business and expect it to add substantially to their lifestyle and future security. Yet in a heartbeat it can all be gone. A workshop session titled “Insuring the Small Farm,” at the 2006 OEFFA conference will look at the important question: How can family farmers protect this most important investment?

As a business manager, the farmer is accustomed to handling risks--financial, market, environmental, regulatory, and competitive. While many of these risks cannot be controlled, adequate planning enables farmers to minimize impact on their businesses.

The first step is a solid business plan addressing risks. Once risks are identified and quantified, a plan to handle them can be established, minimizing their impact on the bottom line.

There are three ways to handle risk:

1. **Retention.** Self-insure part (a deductible) or all of the risk. This type of risk can sometimes be mitigated through loss control techniques.

2. **Avoidance.** Decide not to do it because of the cost of insurance or the hazardous nature of the specific activity.

3. **Transfer.** Contractually transfer the risk. Examples would be:
   - Buying utilities through a fixed price contract
   - Contracting for delivery of produce, “Pumpkin Rides”, etc.
   - Insurance

Whether you retain or transfer a risk, there are techniques to mitigate your liability. If you are concerned, ask your agent to inspect your operation or to arrange for a visit by the company’s Loss Control Engineer.

Jim McGuire, Starkey Insurance, will host a workshop at the 2006 OEFFA conference on March 4-5, 2006 in Granville, OH. People who plan to attend this workshop are encouraged to bring their insurance papers for a free personal consultation.

***WWW.OEFFA.ORG***

Membership Services • Conference Registration
Good Earth Guide • Growing Tips • OEFFA Store Events • Certification Forms • Apprentice Program
Online Resources • Extension Tool Box • And More!
An Organic Chicken in Every Pot

I’ve heard older people complain that chicken doesn’t taste like it used to when they were kids. That’s probably true for the typical grocery store chicken, whose way of life and diet are far removed from the way chickens were raised 75 years ago. Nowadays, to recover the way chicken used to taste, you have to purchase an organic or truly free-range chicken.

Switching to organic chicken may mean weaning yourself from the convenience of individually frozen boneless and skinless chicken breasts. This may mean adapting your recipes back to the way Grandma’s recipes started: “Take a whole chicken, and . . .”

Don’t be too intimidated. It’s not that much work to remove the skin, bones, and cartilage from a cooked chicken. With practice, it can be done in under 10 minutes, and the result will be very much worth it.

Here’s a way to take a single organic chicken and make two hearty family meals special enough for company. (Second recipe on page 5.) Both recipes are very forgiving. In the pot pie, frozen mixed vegetables, cooked according to directions, can substitute, measure for measure, for any listed vegetable you don’t have on hand. All measurements are approximate and can sizes are negotiable. Don’t skimp on the herbs, however. These are the secret to the complex and distinctive flavor of each dish.

Chicken in Herbed Broth

1 whole chicken, about 5 lbs.
2 quarts of water
3 chicken bouillon cubes
1-2 bay leaves
1-2 garlic cloves
1 pinch hot pepper flakes
1 small onion, halved
handful of celery tops
handful of fresh dill or fennel leaves or 1 tsp. dried dill
1/4 tsp each thyme, sage, tarragon, and marjoram
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Simmer chicken in a large, covered soup pot with above ingredients until the flesh is very tender and starts to falls off the bone—about one and a half hours. Lift out chicken onto a plate and cool 30 minutes. Remove skin, bones, and gristle, and divide meat into two parts, about 2 cups in each half. Cool broth. Skim fat off cooled broth and measure as needed for recipes. Broth can be frozen.

Perfect Biscuit-topped Chicken Pot Pie

2-3 cups chicken meat
(half a chicken)
1 Tbls. minced fresh dill or fennel leaves, or 1/2 tsp. dried dill
1 cup diced carrots
1 cup diced redskin potato
1/2 cup diced turnip
1/2 cup diced celery or fennel bulb
1 cup green beans, cut in 1/2 inch slices
1/2 cup frozen peas

Simmer carrots, potato, turnip, celery, and beans in a small amount of lightly salted water, covered, until potatoes and carrots are just tender, about 10 minutes. Add frozen peas in the last few minutes. Drain and set aside. To make gravy: in a small frying pan, melt butter. Add onion and pepper and saute a few minutes. Stir in flour to make a roux, and then add 1/2 cup milk and the 1 1/2 cups broth. Stir and cook a few minutes till smooth and thickened. Adjust seasoning, adding salt, pepper, and more of the herbs to taste. Cut cooled chicken in bite-sized pieces. Combine chicken, gravy and cooked vegetables and spread in an 8 inch or 7 x 11 inch baking pan. Add a little extra broth or milk if mixture seems too thick. Mix drop biscuits and spoon on top. Bake at 400 degrees until biscuits are golden brown, 35-40 minutes. Serves 4. Double recipe for a crowd.

Gravy mixture:
1/4 cup diced sweet red pepper
2 Tbls. butter
1/2 cup diced onion
3 Tbls. flour
1 1/2 cups herbed chicken broth*
1 chicken bouillon cube

*If you use canned broth or bouillon, rather than broth you make yourself, add a pinch each of thyme, tarragon, sage, garlic powder, and marjoram, and 1/4 tsp. pepper.

Drop Biscuits for Topping:
2 cups flour
1 Tbls. salt
4 tsp. baking powder
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup cold butter or margarine

Measure dry ingredients into a bowl. Using a pastry cutter or fork, cut in butter until the mixture is pea-sized. Or you can measure the dry ingredients into a food processor, add butter, and pulse a few seconds till crumbly. Remove to a bowl. Stir in milk and blend.

See page 5 for Chicken Tortilla Soup
New Book Helps Farmers Work with Nature to Manage Insect Pests

Nationwide, farmers are in need of insect pest management strategies that are effective, affordable and environmentally sound. To help meet this need, the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) announces the release of *Manage Insects on Your Farm: A Guide to Ecological Strategies*, a pest management primer designed to help farmers improve their farms’ natural defenses against insect pests.

While every farming system is unique, the principles of ecological pest management apply universally. *Manage Insects on Your Farm* outlines the principles of ecologically based pest management and illustrates the strategies used by farmers around the world to address insect problems by:

- Increasing on-farm diversity above and below ground
- Encouraging beneficial insects to attack their worst pests
- Enhancing plants’ natural defenses against pests
- Managing soil to minimize crop pests

“Well written and illustrated, *Manage Insects on Your Farm* provides both a framework for understanding ecologically based pest management as well as many of the useful details to help minimize insect pest problems,” said Fred Magdoff, University of Vermont soil scientist and regional coordinator of USDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.

Examples of successful pest management strategies featured throughout the book demonstrate real-life approaches for addressing insect problems and developing a more complex and diverse on-farm ecosystem. Readers will learn how to minimize insect damage with wise soil management and identify beneficial insects to put these “good bugs” to work.

*Manage Insects on Your Farm* can be downloaded electronically at www.sare.org/publications/insect.htm for free. To order print copies ($15.95 plus $5.95 s/h) visit www.sare.org/WebStore, call 301/374-9696 or send check or money order to Sustainable Agriculture Publications, PO Box 753, Waldorf, Maryland 20604-0753. (Please specify title requested when ordering by mail.) Discounts are available on orders of 10 or more.

---

OEFFA Conference...

Continued from front page

Wilkins’ work centers on how the food system impacts human nutrition, communities, and environmental sustainability. She conceptualized and developed the first regional food guide in the United States, and initiated the Cornell Farm-to-School program. She is a past President of the Food and Human Values Society.

“Health means different things to different people,” commented OEFFA President Mike Laughlin. “There are many aspects to consider, whether you are a food producer or involved in the food system simply through your food choices. We’re excited that our conference will focus on this important and timely topic.”

Conference participants will have the opportunity to attend over fifty individual workshops including sessions on backyard gardening, composting, tree grafting, farm to school programs, alternative building techniques, community gardening, local food systems, energy issues, CSAs, organic production, balanced soil, regional marketing, and numerous farming and gardening production strategies.

The event will also include an exhibit area full of helpful resources and networking opportunities, delicious organic and locally sourced meals, a pre-conference workshop titled Organic Milk Production (Friday, March 3rd), a readers’ theater performance featuring familiar faces from the local agricultural community, a kids’ conference, on-site child care, and a contra dance with live music. (Bring your dancing shoes!)

The readers’ theater performance on Saturday night is free and open to the public, as is the dance. The reader’s theater will feature Ohio farmers Sylvia Zimmerman and Molly Bartlett, as well as others from the farming community who will perform “vignettes designed to expand people’s thinking about agriculture in the 21st century.”

The performance will include a humorous look at the coded language of agriculture, verbal portraits of real people making an impact in their communities, perspectives on the meaning of sustainability, a look at how work and barter serve the sustainable ag world and what farmers do for fun, spiritual dimensions of working on the land, and several voices sharing their experiences of getting through the worst times.

“Together we can create and restore the healthy communities and the healthy ecosystems that we desire for ourselves and for future generation,” asserts Laughlin. “We hope that many will join with us to discuss food systems and lifestyles that nurture and rejuvenate personal, community, and environmental health.”

---

OEFFA News • Winter 2006 •
Share OEFFA with a Friend!

When you purchase a gift membership for a friend or neighbor, they get free admission to the conference, a subscription to OEFFA News, and discounts on OEFFA events and products. In addition, you will receive a copy of the cookbook From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm Fresh, Seasonal Produce published by the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition.

The recipient must be a new member, and fees must be paid for the recipient by a currently enrolled OEFFA member, and both the current member and recipient must live at different addresses.

To purchase a gift membership, or find out more, call the OEFFA office at 614/421-2022.
Is Your Farm Ripe for the Taking?

By David G. Cox, OEFFA Member

Eminent domain is the inherent power of the State, or maybe even a County, Township or Municipality, to take an individual’s private property for a public purpose. For example, a governmental entity could take or otherwise acquire your farm if the government needs it for a hospital, sewer, cemetery, library, school, to prevent flooding, or to construct an airport. If your farm is taken for any of these public purposes then you are entitled to compensation, and you will be paid fair market value for your farm.

There has been some misconception lately about private property being taken not for a public purpose but instead for a private purpose. Specifically, from original recent ruling in the state of Connecticut, the press would have one believe that the United States Supreme Court believes it is constitutional for a person’s private property to be taken by the government and then turned over to another private party. The press is not telling the whole story, however, as there were specific reasons why the United States Supreme Court ruled the way it did. For instance, Connecticut’s legislature had adopted legislation that expressly authorized the taking of private property to eradicate “urban blight” for “economic development” reasons. In other words, slums, worn down, and dilapidated areas in abandoned parts of a city could be acquired by the government and sold to a developer who would then theoretically bring jobs to the area.

Rest assured, Ohio’s General Assembly has not done, and probably will not do, any such thing similar to Connecticut’s legislature’s laws. Especially not with the presence of Ohio’s strong agriculture lobby! Moreover, Ohio’s Constitution provides that “private property shall ever be held inviolate, but subservient to the public welfare.” Although private property was taken in Toledo to help Jeep expand its production facility, a family farm in Westerville near Columbus was taken for development purposes, and the City of Lancaster recently tried to take the former Anchor Hocking Plant for development, there is no Ohio statute that allows for this. In fact, Ohio’s General Assembly, in response to the Connecticut case, recently enacted and the governor signed a temporary moratorium on the taking of private property for economic development reasons.

This issue of taking private property for “economic” development is actually before the Supreme Court of Ohio right now. The case involves an attempt by the City of Norwood, near Cincinnati, to take residential homes in an urban neighborhood and convert the neighborhood into a commercial development center with the help of a private developer; a ruling should be issued sometime this spring. Until the Supreme Court of Ohio rules on the matter, your farm should be safe from the government, given the recent moratorium.

If the government does want to take or “appropriate” your farm, it has to follow a specific process to do so. Check out Chapter 163 of the Ohio Revised Code for your rights and remedies. In an appropriation proceeding, there are many ways to challenge the government’s action, including denying their right to make the appropriation, denying the parties ability to agree on just compensation, and denying the necessity for the appropriation. Other legal mechanisms are available as well.

David G. Cox is an associate with the Columbus law firm of Lane, Alton and Horst LLC. This article is not intended to be nor should it be construed as either legal advice or the opinion of the firm or OEFFA.
Those opposed to the NAIS are concerned about the mandatory requirement that all livestock owners participate, regardless of the size of their operation or the number of livestock they have. The actual registering of farmers’ property is another rough edge, and the cost that small farmers might endure has not yet been assessed. Some also feel that the program is unfair to horses not raised for food, and argue that the primary reason for disease in the U.S. is the import of livestock.

Citizen groups in favor of the system insist that it will help insure food safety for their families and communities, and are totally in agreement with the mandatory NAIS as proposed.

It is clear that this program will affect all farmers, large and small, so further dialog is a must. Farmers and their organizations must soon take a stand one way or the other on this issue, or accept what may come. As always, doing nothing dictates compliance.

For more information about the proposed NAIS and the development of a privatized animal movement tracking database under the NAIS, visit USDA’s NAIS home site at http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/index.shtml.

Women in Agriculture - A questionnaire titled Women’s Voices in the 2007 Farm Bill is posted at www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=426511502600. Results of the questionnaire will shape the policy work of the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network in the coming year. Results will also be compiled in a report to share with other organizations working on Farm Bill policy. Your answers are confidential. If you have any further questions, please contact Cassi Johnson, WFAN Program Associate, at 319/354-3760 or cassi@wfan.org.

Market Farm Forms by Marcie Rosenzweig - Back by popular demand! Market Farm Forms contains computer spreadsheet templates for planning and organizing information for diversified market farms. This software program will help you plan crops and budgets, order seed and soil amendments, grow transplants, project yields and income, and then track what really happens against your projections. Available exclusively online only at Back40Books. $55. (Go to online resources at www.oeffa.org and click on the Back40 link.)

Farmer Marketing - Simple, inventive ways to increase the value of farm fresh products through direct marketing, internet marketing, and creativity. www.farmermarketing.blogspot.com

Waste Management: It’s About Thyme - Thymol, the active component in thyme oil, has a pleasant odor and natural antiseptic properties. When applied to cattle feedlot soil in field tests, thymol reduced concentrations of odor-causing volatile fatty acids (VFAs) and pathogens such as coliform bacteria and Escherichia coli. For the full story, see http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2005/051216.htm.

Energy Cost Offset for Completion of EQUIP Practices - $40 million has been made available for one-time payment adjustments that will allow eligible Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) participants to complete conservation practices that have been delayed because of recent increases in energy prices. This assistance is part of USDA’s effort to mitigate the impact of high energy costs on agricultural producers and is in response to concerns raised during the nationwide USDA Farm Bill Forum tour. For more information go to www.nrcs.usda.gov or visit your nearest USDA Service Center.

Events! - Local and National sustainable ag events and OEFFA events are posted on the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org/events.php.

2007 Farm Bill
To learn more about the 2007 Farm Bill see:

Sustainable Agriculture in the 2007 Farm Bill

The National Agriculture Law Center
http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/farmbills

The USDA 2002 Farm Bill Website
Welcome to the Winter 2006 issue of OEFFA News.

**Return Service Requested**

**Health from the Ground Up**

27th Annual OEFFA Conference
March 4-5, 2006
Granville, Ohio

Pre-Conference Workshop
Organic Dairy

Registration
p.8

Workshops
p.13

Time to Renew Your Membership? Check the date on your Mailing Label.

Student $10 • Single $35 • Family $50 • Small Business $60 • Nonprofit $50 • Business $100 • Individual Lifetime $500

Mail payment to OEFFA, PO Box 82234, Columbus, Ohio 43202 or call 614/421-2022 or renew online.

**OPPORTUNITY** - 3.3-acre certified organic garden available to an experienced organic gardener. Drip irrigation can be planned. A modernized cabin is provided for living quarters. The location is on a southwest Ohio certified 160-acre farm. Cattle are raised for meat and compost. Call R.K.Harris, 513/523-0079 or email kharr@aol.com.

**WANTED** - Two interns needed: April - October. Start and stop times are negotiable. Bonus at end of season for those who stay through October. Housing and stipend provided. Work involves vegetable production for CSA and market. Call Bridget at 513/561-8482. Turner Farm, 7400 Given Rd., Cincinnati, Oh 45243.

**GARDEN ASSISTANCE** - Want to grow your own vegetables at home?! Turner Farm is launching its new Backyard Re-Leaf Program in the Cincinnati area, installing vegetable gardens at individuals’ homes. For information on how to get your own garden, call Bridget at 513/561-8482 for details.


**WANTED** - Beginning (again) farmer seeks small farm or part of large farm to rent, lease/purchase, or land contract. Need house and barn on property. Will conduct small dairy goat operation and plant gardens. Prefer Knox, Licking, or Morrow counties. Your property will be managed respectfully, organically, and sustainably. Kimberly Orsborn, 740/398-6044.

**GREAT OPPORTUNITY** - If you have experience as a fresh market produce farmer, join the team on a small and highly diversified organic 80-acre vegetable and fruit farm of 30 years, near Pittsburgh, PA. Large CSA, greenhouse, and wholesale market. Stable mature employment situation. For more information visit www.kretschmannfarm.com or contact Don & Becky at kmann2@earthlink.net, 724/452-7189.

**WANTED** - Partner for starting farm market/crop-forest products management on small homestead in London, Ohio. Up to 10-15 acres available adjacent to bike path. Contact Karen at 941/276-2097 or KarenPresents@yahoo.com.