OEFFA Stewardship Award

Roehlings Recognized for their Many Years of Service to the Sustainable Ag Community in Ohio

GRANVILLE - Hundreds of audience members stood to give a thunderous ovation to Harv and Pat Roehling, winners of OEFFA’s 2006 Stewardship Award. The award, which recognizes “outstanding contributions to the sustainable agriculture community,” was presented on March 5 as part of OEFFA’s 27th Annual Conference.

The Roehlings, of Oxford, have been involved with OEFFA for over twenty years. During that time, Harv has served in various positions within the organization, including Treasurer, President, and Vice-President, while Pat also has been elected to the Board as its Secretary. The couple was instrumental in

“I can remember sitting in board meetings and being amazed with their insight and thoughtfulness.”

Continued on page 14

Director’s Report
Setting Priorities for Future Work

2006 is off to a good start! The conference was a success, with lots of great opportunities for learning, eating, networking, book buying, information gathering, dancing, and catching up with old friends for the 500 folks who attended the conference. While we discovered a few downsides to the new location, on the whole the positives seemed to vastly outweigh them, and we think we can resolve most of them in any case. It’s satisfying to bring such an outstanding program to so many people!

With the conference now behind us, I’m looking to our future. We are very excited that in a meeting earlier this year the OEFFA Board committed to a set of priorities for our medium-range future (3-5 years). The three areas we will emphasize in our programming are: (1) recruiting more organic farmers and farmland; (2) exploring on-farm energy use and production; and (3) continuing to develop farm-to-table initiatives. Let me talk about each in turn.

Continued on page 12
Are You Interested in Hosting a Farm or Garden Tour this Summer or Fall?

OEFFA-sponsored farm tours will be held throughout Ohio from June through October and will feature successful farms and gardens that use organic and sustainable agriculture practices. These tours offer an excellent opportunity to share resources and experiences, and to reach out to the local and sustainable ag community. Tours take a variety of forms. Some are designed with farmers or growers in mind, while others are designed with the general public in mind. Some feature walking tours, while others tour people in a wagon. Some also incorporate extra attractions such as farm markets, samples, demonstrations, children’s activities, hikes, or hands-on learning of some kind.

If you are interested in hosting a farm or garden tour, let us know ASAP! Contact Anne Bulford at 740/787-2871, newsletter@oeffa.org or Carol Goland at cgoland@oeffa.org.

Letter from the President

If you missed the 2006 OEFFA conference, you missed one of the best ever! The keynote speakers were awesome, the workshops were jam packed with information, the trade show was outstanding, the food—-as I always say--is one of the top reasons for attending, and it was great to have time to talk face-to-face with so many friends new and old. It was a draining weekend for the staff and volunteers who pulled the weekend together, but I found myself returning home with more energy than I went with and definitely with a higher sense of excitement for the coming year. To spend the weekend with so many energetic people all focused on the same path...I truly believe OEFFA is back better than ever, and I can’t wait to see what wonderful things we can accomplish together!

One topic of conversation that I have heard many times lately, which was also mentioned by our keynotes and in individual conversations at the conference, is about what consumers want--organic or local--and also about the large mega producers getting into organic. What I have been hearing from customers and have seen in surveys is that consumers prefer to purchase LOCAL organic first, local second, and organic from anywhere third. And the fact that sales of organic products has gone up 20-25% each year for the last few years seems to bear this out. As for the idea that stores bringing in organic produce from long distances is hurting local growers, I beg to differ. There is a large demand for organic out there that is growing daily, and if that demand is not met by someone, consumers will lose faith in the organic movement, and then we will lose out. The long distance organic is currently filling that need until local organic can increase production. We have a lot of small producers, one acre or less, and if that is what you are comfortable with for growing that’s fine. But what we need is for growers to increase production where they can and to attract new growers in the five-ten-twenty+ acre range. Then we can start marketing not just to the big natural food stores, but also to the local groceries and the grocery chains. The change we have been waiting for is here, and now is the time to put up or shut up. What do you plan to do?

This is my opinion I would like to hear yours.

-Mike Laughlin


**2006 OEFFA Conference**

Gary Zimmer talks with OEFFA members at lunch during a one-
day intensive pre-conference workshop titled Organic Dairy
Production. Zimmer’s humorous and informative talk was at-
tended by nearly 50 people. Gary was also a keynote speaker and
workshop presenter at the OEFFA conference.

Bill Johnson shows conference participants how to graft fruit
trees. Each participant tried a hand at grafting and took home
a sapling.

Hannah Rickard of Fox Hollow Farm brought her friend Junior to the kids’
conference and talked with the kids about raising sheep.

~ Great Books and Conference Recordings ~

Many of the great books that were available at the OEFFA
conference are also available at back40books.com or by
866/596-9982. (Enter “OEFFA” in the code box or men-
tion us on the phone during check out and part of the
proceeds will be donated to OEFFA.) A list of presenter
book recommendations is available on the OEFFA website.

Likewise, recordings of many of the sessions at the
2006 OEFFA conference are available on-line at
www.dovetapes.com/oeffa or by calling 800/233-DOVE.
These recordings include keynote sessions and work-
shops on production strategies, marketing, personal
health, consumer choices, renewable energy, alternative
building techniques, and more. Proceeds from tape
sales will benefit OEFFA until April 28, 2006.

Visit www.oeffa.org for more about the conference.

**Spring Farm Tours**

Pre-Season Tours - Cincinnati Area
Saturday, May 6, 2006

**Turner Farm - 10:30 am**
7400 Given Rd., Indian Hill, Ohio 45243
Enjoy the sights of historic Turner Farm and its
diverse gardens and farm animals from a tractor
or horse-drawn hay wagon, participate in planting,
and purchase fresh local produce. 513/561-8482.

**Gorman Heritage Farm - 10 am-4 pm**
3035 Gorman Heritage Farm Rd., Evendale, Ohio
Enjoy the sights and sounds of this family farm
including historic barns and out-buildings, an-
tique machinery, friendly animals, gardens, and
hiking trails. 513/563-6663 or

**Granny’s Spring Garden Party - 1 pm-5 pm**
550 Loveland- Madeira Rd., Loveland, OH 45140
Adults can pick up starter plants and hanging
baskets, and kids can do crafts or attend a kid’s
gardening workshop. The day will also include a
decorated cake competition, family photos, and
face painting. www.GrannysGardenSchool.com

OEFFA will be hosting a series of farm tours
throughout the summer and fall. Visit
www.oeffa.org around the first of May or look
for the upcoming tour flyer in the mail.

They’ve done it again! On March 23, 2006, OEFFA
staff met with the staff of Northstar Café (Columbus)
and shared ideas about local food systems. At this
meeting, Café owners Kevin and Katy Malhame
(center--Kevin’s head just above Katy’s) presented a
donation check to OEFFA staff as part of the Café’s
1% for the Planet program.

Thanks Northstar!
Inspector Training

OEFFA will be conducting an organic inspector training at 9 am on April 29, 2006, at Northridge Organic Farm, 4211 Van Fossen Rd, Johnstown.

OEFFA’s certification program hires independent inspectors on a contractual basis to conduct on-site third-party verification that a farm’s practices are in compliance with the National Organic Standards. This is part of an overall review process required for certification.

The program will include an introduction to the organic standards and inspection process. Mentors will be assigned, and an inspection will be conducted. Trainees will be expected to write a report on the inspection. After the training, they will be expected to accompany their mentor on inspections until the mentor feels that they are ready to perform inspections on their own.

There is no charge for OEFFA inspector training; however, students will be expected to purchase an IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspectors Manual and to attend additional IOIA training programs. To register, contact Steve Sears at 419/853-4060.

Organic Consumers Getting Milked

Reprinted: Organic Bytes #78, Organic Consumers Association

The watchdog group, Cornucopia Institute, has published a long-awaited report ranking organic dairy companies, and the facts are rather sobering.

The good news is that most organic dairies in the U.S. are following strict organic standards, including giving animals regular access to pasture. The bad news is that several major players in the organic dairy sector are blatantly violating organic standards, with a wink and a nod from the USDA. Two of the largest organic dairy companies in the nation, Horizon Organic (a subsidiary of Dean Foods) and Aurora Organic—a supplier of private brand name organic milk selling to Costco, Safeway, Giant, Wild Oats, Trader Joe’s, and others—who together control 65% of the market, are purchasing the majority of their milk from feedlot dairies where the cows have little or no access to pasture. In addition, a routine practice on these giant dairy feedlots, many with thousands of cows, is to continuously import year-old calves from conventional farms.

View the report on-line at http://cornucopia.org. To send a message to the National Organic Program of the USDA to stop the labeling of feedlot milk as “organic,” go to www.organicconsumers.org/nosb2.htm.

Since 1885

Hastings Mutual Insurance Company

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) Group Program

We offer a comprehensive Farmowners Package covering your Residence, Personal Property, Barns & Outbuildings, Farm Personal Property and Personal & Farm Liability.

Benefits of the OEFFA/Hastings Mutual Group Program:
• Special Group Discount
• Special Group Experience Credits
• Individual Account Credits and Discounts

Want to know more? Please contact Terry Miller at (800) 442-8277 ext. 1444 for a Farm Insurance Specialist in your area.

New for 2006 - Equipment Breakdown Coverage No Additional Premium Charge!
I read just recently that smokers who quit on a whim have a better chance of success than those who plan. I guess that’s what happened to my husband Reed and me the day we asked Dad to plow up a little vegetable plot for our family of three and we ended up with a 900-square-foot field. Or at least it looked like a field to me.

My strength was perennial flowers. A bed that stretched along our first home, about 5 x 25, was serious gardening, as far as I was concerned. Now this huge square of freshly-turned sod was calling me, seeping into my soul. Naturally I had to plant every square foot of it. We ended up with so much food I felt criminally guilty throwing it on the compost pile (after freezing it, canning it, drying it, and offering it to family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, child’s teachers, strangers on the street, and on seats in random unlocked cars [beware parking in Bellville, as in Lake Woebegon, during zucchini season]).

I have to say that our market garden farm, Meadow Rise Farm, didn’t start entirely on a whim. I really did want to grow healthful food organically for my family and had been voraciously reading. So although planting the whole plot was sort of whim-ish, the plans and preparation were well laid. And besides, what new gardener/farmer doesn’t buy too much seed?

It had begun back in Texas some years earlier when, browsing in a Fort Worth bookstore, I came across Gene Logsdon’s You Can Go Home Again. I grew up in Bellville, which is right next door to Gene’s Wyandot County (or it is when measuring distance in Texas terms). The locale and title intrigued me. His wry humor and heartfelt writing hooked me. I became one of those driven people who scour Amazon, Alibris, and more obscure places looking for out-of-print copies of Better Soil and Practical Skills, Small Scale Grain Raising, and Successful Berry Growing.

I guess that’s the suggestion I can first give beginning farmers. Read everything. Go to every conference you can. Learn stuff. Two years ago I went to my first OEFFA conference and while sitting alone at a big round table I was joined by one woman, then four, and from there, I established friendships that endure. These days, you can’t just go down to the feed store and spit with the guys, gleaning valuable information. And only a few of us grew up on farms and learned by osmosis. Read books, visit websites, borrow magazines, attend conferences, join an OEFFA chapter, make farmer friends.

And don’t plan forever. You don’t need a completed lawyer- and accountant-approved business plan. You don’t need expensive equipment, fancy fencing, an irrigation system, a greenhouse, or a work crew. You don’t even have to have dirt. Or own it, anyway. Rent it or borrow it and share the bounty as payment. Sign on as an intern and work for food and skills.

Mostly, you need a drive to do it—A love for the smell of the soil, some boundless energy, a will that doesn’t flinch at unexpected setbacks, and a healthy dose of optimism. In this column I’ll try to share our successes, failures, dreams and, if not inform you, maybe keep you entertained.

Just go do something... on a whim, if necessary.
WOOSTER - Given the right conditions, organic farming can produce, on average, as least as much corn per acre in Ohio as conventional farming can, according to an Ohio State University (OSU) study.

Corn hybrids grown in last year’s Ohio State Organic Corn Performance Test produced 13% more corn per acre than the statewide average yield--most of that conventional corn--and topped the record-high state average yield by four bushels per acre.

One hybrid tested did even better, beating last year’s state average corn yield by nearly 50 percent.

The results show “how well organic corn can perform under good management and weather conditions,” said Deb Stinner, a scientist on the study and the head of Ohio State’s Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) program.

Until now, organic corn yields in Ohio “were thought to be considerably lower than conventional yields,” Stinner said, though exceptions--Ohio organic farms with consistently high corn yields--have always existed.

Organic farming uses no synthetic pesticides or fertilizers, instead employing manure, compost, and cover crops to “feed” the soil and the crops that grow in it. Cultural practices such as cultivation and crop rotation limit weeds and pests.

“A constellation of factors”-- including good weather, “good but not excessive” soil fertility, and especially good weed control--led to the test’s high yields, Stinner said. The corn saw few problems from pests and diseases, added co-researcher Peter Thomison of Ohio State’s Department of Horticulture and Crop Science.

The test took place on certified organic farmland in Wood and Wayne Counties, both sites in northern Ohio and both managed by the University’s Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), to which OFFER belongs.

Alan Sundermeier, of Ohio State University Extension’s Wood County office, and Rich Minyo and Allen Geyer, both of the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, teamed with Stinner and Thomison on the study. Stinner and Minyo have appointments with OARDC, Thomison and Geyer with both OARDC and OSU Extension.

23 Hybrids: How’d They Do?
The test compared 23 organic corn hybrids. It measured yield and other key traits, such as stalk lodging, grain moisture content at harvest and the percentage of seeds emerging after planting. It did so at two different seeding rates, 23,000 seeds per acre and 28,000 seeds per acre.

The plots grew at OARDC’s West Badger Farm near Apple Creek and at the John E. Hirzel Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Site near Bowling Green, run by OARDC and OSU Extension in partnership with the Agricultural Incubator Foundation.

The West Badger Farm averaged 171.4 bushels per acre, the Hirzel Site 153.6 bushels per acre, for a combined average yield of 162 bushels per acre.

Tops in the test: Doebler’s N659 grew 212.2 bushels per acre at West Badger at the lower seeding rate.

To compare, the Ohio Department of Agriculture estimated last year’s statewide average corn yield at 143 bushels per acre, while countywide yields in Wood and Wayne counties averaged 171.8 bushels per acre and 146.1 bushels per acre, respectively.

The weather in 2005, Stinner said, helped organic corn several ways. It enabled preparing a good, clean seed bed; allowed timely planting (typically later than for conventional corn) and timely weed control (five times by mechanical cultivation); and it provided enough rain at the right times to keep the corn developing well. Especially important was the low weed pressure at the West Badger Farm, the result of five years of diligent management. A long-term war of attrition--started in 1999 when certain fields at the farm began the transition to organic production--reduced weed numbers and seed production and drew down the weed seed bank in the soil. The work has paid off in higher yields, Stinner said.

Other differences between the two sites: West Badger got almost 31 inches of rain, Hirzel not quite 20. The West Badger corn followed red clover in the rotation; the Hirzel corn followed alfalfa. And the West Badger plots received one ton of Daylay composted poultry manure; the Hirzel plots did not.

Though planted later than conventional corn (to allow additional weed control), the plots at both sites got planted in time to avoid a major pest, the European corn borer, Thomison said.

Diseases, too, caused few problems due to crop rotation. Rotating corn with other crops means the corn gets planted in a fairly clean slate: the soil harbors less corn-disease inoculum. (A common four-year organic rotation in Ohio and the midwest: corn, food-grade soybeans, small grains, red-clover hay.)

Cornell Study: 30% Less Fossil Energy
Generally speaking, organic farming takes more work than conventional farming but earns more per unit for what it grows. In Detroit, the week of March 1, for
Thank you to everyone who helped out! Here is a partial list of our sources:

Photos and Food from Local Farms
Photographer Abram Kaplan is currently displaying farm-themed large format photographs at Northstar Café in Columbus. Northstar Café buys ingredients from a number of local farms and is dedicated to supporting sustainable local agriculture and other environmental issues. Stop in to see the photographs and stay for a bite to eat! Northstar Café, 951 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43201. Proceeds from the sale of these photographs will be donated directly to OEFFA.

Food at the OEFFA Conference
We hope everyone enjoyed the meals at the 2006 conference! It was truly a team effort, and we are proud that we were able to offer many fresh, seasonal, local, and delicious foods produced by OEFFA members. Thank you to everyone who helped out! Here is a partial list of our sources:

Curly Tail Farm supplied bacon and bratwurst; bread came from Broken Rock Bakery and Stan Evans Bakery; chicken came from Gingerich Family Farm; tofu was made with soybeans purchased from Rex Sprak in tofu chili and parmesan tofu cutlets were prepared by Bob Hamburg with Spring Creek tofu; salsa came from Casa Nueva; salad greens were from Green Edge Gardens and the Stratford Ecological Center; sunflower sprouts were grown by Doug Siebert from seeds provided by Dan Young; salad dressings came from Del’s Home Cookin’ and Hokkohken Foods; whole fruit and basil-tomato lasagna was from from Mustard Seed Cafe; lasagna was made with beef from Dave and Deanne Maken by Chef Tom Smith at Seven Stars Worthington Inn; garlic was donated by Mic Luber at Blue Bird Farms; ice cream was made at Hartzler Dairy; desserts were from Crumb’s Bakery; milk came from H&D Dairy (Ohio Organic Family Farmers)*; apple cider came from Cherry Orchard and Gillogly Orchard; rhubarb juice was provided by John Knouse; many misc. items came from Clintonville Community Market and Wild Oats in Columbus. Special thanks to Chef Joel Gunderson of Middle Ground Cafe, Chef Shauna Chrisman, and Chef David Tidd for pulling it all together!

- Your 2006 Conference Food Committee, Ed Perkins, Martha Balint, and John Sowder

Countryside Food Guide
A Directory of NE Ohio Farms and Local Foods
In Northeast Ohio, demand for local food is growing! Buyers are seeking out fresh, healthy, delicious foods that are grown and prepared right here at home by people they trust.

Let food-conscious customers know about your local farm, food product or business by obtaining a free listing in the Countryside Food Guide. The guide will help local buyers discover local farms, markets, specialty food producers, locally owned restaurants, retailers and other sources of locally grown and produced foods throughout the nine-county Northeast Ohio region.

Who can be included in the Countryside Food Guide?
- Local farms, farm stands, farmers market vendors, u-pick operations and CSAs
- Farmers’ markets
- Restaurants and caterers featuring locally grown and produced foods
- Grocers, food co-ops, specialty markets, and other local food retailers
- Artisan bakers, cheese makers and other specialty food producers
- Produce auctions
- Distributors and wholesalers who supply local foods

The Guide also includes seasonal availability, local food shopping tips, seasonal recipes, and more!

When will the guide be available?
The Countryside Food Guide will be released this summer and distributed to consumers at Northeast Ohio markets, restaurants, retailers, libraries and other outlets.

Who is publishing the Countryside Food Guide?
The Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy is publishing the guide to raise awareness among Northeast Ohio consumers about the availability, variety and importance of locally grown and produced foods. The guide will help connect consumers with local farms, producers, and retailers, generating more local food commerce that benefits Northeast Ohio’s economy, communities, and environment.

How to participate?
Complete and return a listing application form by April 30, 2006.

Application forms are available on the web at www.cvcountryside.org or by contacting Kari Moore at 330/657-2178; kmoore@cvcountryside.org.
In certain circles, Ohio has been making national news. The issue of raw milk consumption in Ohio has caught the attention of newspapers across the state and been the subject of recent action alerts by the national group, the Weston A. Price Foundation.

For a number of years, consumers all over the country have been deciding that they want access to responsibly raised raw milk because they feel it is better for their health than pasteurized milk. Likewise, in a general climate of falling milk prices and instability for dairy farms, farmers have found that selling directly to consumers helps to increase their farm’s profitability. But in many states, including Ohio, the sale of raw milk remains illegal. Recently, Washington and Colorado have legalized the sale of raw milk, making a total 28 states that allow the sale of raw milk.

In Ohio, however, it is only legal to sell raw milk if the licensed retailer of the milk has been “engaged continuously in the business of selling or offering for sale raw milk directly to ultimate consumers” since at least 1965. There is currently no one in Ohio who meets that criterion. However, it has always been legal for farmers to drink raw milk from their own animals, and many farming families have grown up drinking raw milk from their farms. Along this line, consumers all over the country, including in Ohio, have found ways to become animal owners through herd share agreements, thereby being able to drink their own milk. Although there is no law prohibiting these agreements, they have come into question by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), whose actions have recently been the source of heated publicity.

OEFFA members Paul and Carol Schmitmeyer operate herd shares from their farm, which has, under the actions of the ODA, become a test case on the issue of whether herd shares involve the sale of raw milk or actually represent a legal loophole in the Ohio law. The Schmitmeyer’s farm came to the attention of the ODA in January of this year when two of its herd share members became sick from a bacteria called campylobacter. Although the test results from two labs testing the milk from the Schmitmeyer farm immediately after the two people got sick have shown no presence of campylobacter in the milk, the ODA is still deciding what action to take regarding the Schmitmeyer’s Grade A licensed dairy operation.

According to a Weston A. Price Foundation press release dated February 27, 2006, “the ODA has broad legal powers to conduct investigations of dairy farmers, but only those parts of a dairy farmer’s business that pertain to sales of milk, not to private contractual agreements with shareholders consuming their own milk.” Yet the ODA requested the Schmitmeyer’s appearance at a deposition and asked them to provide documents including boarding contracts, cow and herd share agreements, and other records pertaining to reimbursement of boarding expenses and other expenses pertaining to the care of dairy cows and the handling and distribution of milk, dating back to January 1, 2005.

While the Schmitmeyer case is pending, Paul Schmitmeyer is hoping the ODA will be sensitive to the fact that there is a bill pending in the House of Representatives right now that would make this a non-issue. Representative Arlene Setzer (R) introduced HB 534, commonly called the “Raw Milk Bill,” on the floor of the Ohio House of Representatives on March 13, 2006. The proposed HB 534 would legalize the on-farm sale of raw milk by Grade A dairies that hold a raw milk retailer license. The proposed law would also exempt from regulation “an individual who owns an animal for the purpose of personal consumption of the dairy products produced by that animal.” Rep. Setzer is the primary sponsor for the bill, which has nineteen co-sponsors. She read her sponsor testimony for the bill to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on March 22. The next step is for Committee Chair, Representative Jim Aslanides, to schedule a hearing for the bill.

The question here may be: Who gets to decide who raises our food and how it is raised? Paul Schmitmeyer argues that ODA is acting on behalf of a few large, corporate voices, rather than the voice of responsible small farmers and the consumers who rely on these farmers to raise healthy, locally produced food. Over the past few months he says that he has seen the effects of large industry in politics, soothing the government.
into believing in its causes through paid studies and campaign contributions, and believes that our rights as citizens are at the core of this issue. “The only way to be heard over industry is to make our voices be heard by the press, so that the people’s stories are being reported, not just the industries’ side of the stories. We have to show that we care,” said Schmitmeyer.

Informed consumers have shown that they want to have the right to choose raw milk for their families. The proposed HB 534 can help ensure that consumers and farmers can work together to grow and obtain foods that consumers want. Public voice is needed for this bill to pass through the legislative process quickly. The sooner the hearings are scheduled, the better chance there is for this bill to pass into law.

The Farm Bureau has come out with a stance in favor of licensing additional raw milk retailers, “providing the same opportunities and restrictions as those grandfathered in on October 31, 1965....[Retailers] should follow the same inspections and restrictions as found in the Ohio Revised Code.”

OEFFA’s Board has taken a position in support of HB534, in a written statement noting that “the on-farm sale of milk provides a pathway to profitability that could be critical to the survival of small-scale and diversified family farms.... We applaud Representative Arlene Setzer and her co-sponsors for their leadership in revising our milk retailing regulations so that Ohio citizens have additional options about the food they sell and consume.”

Since the publicity about the Schmitmeyer case began, there have been two other cases involving small dairy farmers. The ODA has received a large number of e-mails and phone calls regarding these cases. The Weston A. Price action alert dated February 27 asked consumers across the country to continue contacting the ODA regarding its actions.

A letter campaign to legislators and other public officials can really make a difference. Now is the time to contact House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Chair Representative Jim Aslanides to urge him to schedule hearings for HB 534 as soon as possible. Other public officials to contact are members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, Governor Bob Taft, individual representatives, and the ODA. (Paul Schmitmeyer has asked that those who choose to send a letter or testimonial to public officials also please send a copy to him at his e-mail address, a1rawmilkmn@yahoo.com)

---

Contact List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Page for Ohio Representatives:</th>
<th><a href="http://www.house.state.oh.us">www.house.state.oh.us</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(click on “your representative”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Members to Contact:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim Aslanides (R) - Committee Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 S. High St , 12th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-6111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: (614) 644-6014 ; Fax : (614) 719-6994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address: <a href="mailto:district94@ohr.state.oh.us">district94@ohr.state.oh.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlene Setzer (R) - HB 534 Primary Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(She can help identify key people to contact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 S. High St ; 13th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-6111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: (614) 644-8051; Fax : (614) 719-3590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address: <a href="mailto:district36@ohr.state.oh.us">district36@ohr.state.oh.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other People to Contact:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred L. Dailey, ODA Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8995 East Main Street , Columbus, OH 43215-6117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph: 614-466-3555 or Ph: 614-466-2732; 614-644-HELP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 614-466-6124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:dailey@mail.agri.state.oh.us">dailey@mail.agri.state.oh.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA Dairy Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8995 East Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynoldsburg,OH 43068-3399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (614) 466-5550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:dairy@mail.agri.state.oh.us">dairy@mail.agri.state.oh.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor Bob Taft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th Floor, 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone 614-466-3555 or 614-644-HELP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of information about raw milk:

The Weston A. Price Foundation
www.realmilk.org

Citizens Against Milk Prohibition
www.wantmilk.org

Raw-Milk-Facts.com
www.raw-milk-facts.com

Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Dairy Division
www.ohioagriculture.gov/dairy/

Ohio Raw Milk Legal Defense Fund
Weston A. Price Foundation, Copley Chapter
1889 Bender Lane, Copley, OH 44321.
Conservation and Green Energy Practices
~ USDA Money Available ~

By David G. Cox

Agricultural producers and landowners can sign up through April 14, 2006, to participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP participants voluntarily enroll highly erodible and other fragile cropland in CRP through long-term contracts of 10 to 15 years. On the enrolled land, participants plant grasses, trees and other vegetation. In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation covers.

As in previous general sign-ups, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) will evaluate eligible CRP offers with the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI), a ranking of the land’s contribution to improving soil retention, water quality, wildlife habitat, and air quality. FSA will determine the EBI cutoff after the sign-up ends by analyzing the EBI factors of all offers. Since the EBI cutoff used in previous sign-ups may be different for this sign-up, those who met previous EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up.

During the last CRP general sign-up, enrollment offers were highly competitive. Of the 1.7 million acres offered, FSA selected 1.2 million acres that offered the greatest environmental benefits. Offers accepted under this sign-up will become effective Oct. 1, 2006. More information on these initiatives and the general sign-up is available at local FSA offices and on FSA’s website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm.

In addition to CRP funds, USDA also has funds available through its “Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency” loan and grant program established under the 2002 Farm Bill. Under the program, renewable energy improvements qualify for a minimum grant of $2,500 with a maximum of $500,000. Energy efficiency projects qualify for a minimum grant of $1,500 with a maximum of $250,000. Guaranteed loans are also available. Applications for grants must be completed and submitted to the appropriate USDA Rural Development state office and postmarked no later than May 12, 2006. Guaranteed loans are awarded on a continuous basis with applications due to the national office by July 3, 2006.

For more information see the USDA website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.

Certification Report

By Steve Sears, OEFFA Certification

It appears that 2006 will be a very busy year for OEFFA’s certification program. As has been previously reported, organic dairy farms are the fastest growing segment of organic production. This has generated many new applications from Indiana, Ohio, and Virginia. In addition to receiving applications from conventional farms switching to organic, OEFFA has also heard from many existing organic farms from Michigan seeking certification with OEFFA. Organic Growers of Michigan (OGM) has announced that it will not be certifying farms in 2006. In 2005 OGM had about 70 certified farms. Between new farms and the additional farms from Michigan, OEFFA has received about 30% more applications than at this time in 2005.

Farmers interested in dairy should also be aware of a pending rule change that will take effect on June 7, 2006. On this date the 80/20 dairy herd conversion rule goes away. To use the 80/20 conversion rule, farmers must have submitted their applications before 6/7/06 and must have actually started the herd conversion process. To start the 80/20 herd conversion process, the farm must be within nine months of certification. If farms miss this window, they will be required to manage dairy herds organically for 12 months. During this 12 month period, cows must be fed 100% organic feed or feed from the farm’s third transitional year. Any feed purchased from off farm must be organic. For further explanation of this change contact Steve Sears at 419/853-4060.

OCIA Chapter 1 Update

Ohio Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) Chapter 1 held its last meeting of the season on April 1. They will resume meetings at the end of the growing season in the late summer. At the January meeting, new chapter leadership was elected: President, David Bell; Vice President, Marty Warnecke; Secretary, Mike Brodman; Treasurer, Ken Rider; Contact Person, Chris Clinehens; OCIA Chapter Rep. to the OEFFA Board, Ed Snavely. The chapter sent three members to OCIA’s annual meeting in Wisconsin where Ed Snavely was elected to the OCIA International Board of Directors for a three year term. Those who attended were David Bell, Ed Snavely, and Steve Sears.

David G. Cox is an associate with the Columbus law firm of Lane, Alton & Horst, LLC. This article is not intended to be nor should it be construed as legal advice and it is the opinion only of the author and not Lane, Alton & Horst, LLC.
Salad Days Are Here!

The first baby salad greens should start coming in from the garden this month, marking the beginning of the “salad days” of late spring and early summer.

If all goes well, by the time the first zucchinis and tomatoes arrive in July, you’ll have satisfied your need for green leafy salads.

Of course, there are pests who are eager to enjoy your garden’s “salad bar.”

Spraying plants with cold, leftover coffee (not decaf) can encourage slugs to dine elsewhere. Studies have shown that caffeine at about the same strength as strong coffee is an effective repellent for slugs. Higher concentrations can actually kill them, but may also damage tender plant shoots.

Rabbits and deer love garden lettuce too, but fertilizing with blood meal can help repel them. Covering the plants at night with polyester row cover or bird netting is also fairly effective.

Here’s another secret weapon: rabbits prefer clover to most garden plants. Resist the temptation to weed and feed your lawn. Instead, strew some Dutch white clover seeds around your lawn in May or June. Cut your grass a little high to encourage the clover, and you’ll have less rabbit damage in the garden throughout the season. Since clover fixes nitrogen, it will also reduce the need to fertilize your grass. The white clover flowers will attract bees, so it’s best to wear shoes in the yard when the clover blooms. That’s a small price to pay for free fertilizer and critter protection, in my opinion.

Soon you’ll need to start more lettuce for a summer harvest. Batavian lettuce varieties are my choice for withstanding summer heat well. Plant seeds in flats in a shady spot by early June. Transplant to the garden at the end of the month and you’ll have lettuce to make BLTs when the beefsteak tomatoes arrive in August.

For dressing spring lettuce and mesclun mixes, go for light, vinagrette-type dressings that won’t overwhelm their delicate flavor. Here are several to try, including my husband’s favorite 14 ingredient dressing.

Burt’s 14 Ingredient Salad Dressing
1/4 cup vinegar of your choice
2 Tbls. water
2/3 cup oils (part olive, part vegetable)
couple pinches of salt and black pepper
generous pinches of dried basil and oregano
generous squirt of Dijon mustard
1 level tsp. horseradish
1 or 2 fresh garlic cloves, sliced
1 heaping Tbls. ground Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. honey or sugar
splash of sherry

Honey-Dijon Mustard Dressing
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. honey
1 Tbls. champagne vinegar
Salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste
1 Tbls. walnut oil (or extra-virgin olive oil)

In a small bowl, whisk together mustard, honey and vinegar until well combined. Gradually whisk in the oil and continue whisking until dressing is well amalgamated. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Makes enough dressing for 2 salad servings.

Red Onion Vinaigrette
1/2 large red onion, roughly chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. honey
1 Tbls. Dijon mustard
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
1 1/2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 cup finely chopped parsley (or any herb you like)

In a blender, combine onion, garlic, honey, mustard, and vinegar. Blend until a smooth puree is formed. With the blender running, remove lid (carefully!) and slowly pour in the oil. Make sure the oil is added slowly in order to form an emulsion; if it looks like it’s separating, slow down and allow the oil to be incorporated into the dressing. After all of the oil has been added, season to taste with the salt and pepper.

Stir in the parsley and serve.
Setting Priorities...
Continued from front page

We feel an urgency to meet the demand for organic food with local organic food. We plan to redouble our educational opportunities for organic producers (both novice farmers and transitioning farmers) as well as help our existing organic producers expand their capacity. We hope to increase the frequency and scope of our organic production intensive workshops, and work to develop additional incentives for transitioning to organic. We are working to expand the Apprenticeship Program, for example by developing a Certificate Program in Sustainable Agriculture (a combination of formal course work and hands-on experience) targeted especially to Ohio’s liberal arts college students. We will be expanding our organic certification services to meet the demand (we project certifying 25-30% more operations this year than last, and are straining to train new inspectors quickly enough). We dream of adding a staff position for education outreach, someone who can provide general assistance to producers but who has special expertise in transitioning to organic, and who will be charged with facilitating an effective farmer-to-farmer knowledge network (which, if successful, would make that position irrelevant someday). While OEFFA will continue to encourage and support all forms of agriculture that use environmentally sound methods, organic production is emphasized here for the value-added premium it returns to farmers.

While this first focus encourages farmers to increase farm receipts through production of premium-demanding organic foods, a second pathway to profitability is in reducing input costs. We believe that one promising area for both greater income and lower costs is to address on-farm energy issues, and thus this is our second area of emphasis. To do this, we will need to develop new partnerships with Ohio energy organizations that can provide technical expertise. Examples of work we might undertake include assisting producers to conduct on-farm energy audits in order to target the most beneficial energy-saving changes; encouraging small scale on-farm experiments with renewable energy as demonstration projects; developing intensive workshops focused on specific needs (i.e., using renewable energy for heating a greenhouse); and exploring possibilities for generating income through on-farm power generation and net metering or wind turbine leases.

The final proposed focus affirms OEFFA’s long-standing interest in involving everyone in building a sustainable food system by raising awareness about the benefits (environmental, social, health, economic) of a regionally self-reliant food system among the general public. Specific work that falls under this heading includes: continuing to build our website to make information about OEFFA producers available to consumers seeking local and / or organic food; exploring the development of a labeling program or information campaign that markets the “homegrown” message; increasing our media outreach to showcase Ohio’s sustainable farms; providing educational opportunities for the general public to learn about how food is grown (on-farm experiences), showcasing the preparation of fresh, locally-grown food (cooking demonstrations, classes, recipes) and the benefits of choosing organically and locally produced foods; working to insure that organic/local food is available to a diverse segment of Ohio’s population; and supporting the redevelopment of Ohio’s lost processing and distribution infrastructure.

This is an ambitious agenda, and it will take the efforts of many people. Given the dedication and passion of OEFFA members, Board, and staff, though, I’m confident we can accomplish these objectives, and I look forward to working with you to achieve them.

The Ohio Good Earth Guide
Local farms and gardens selling to local people
vegetables • fruits • herbs • eggs • honey
grass-fed beef • lamb • dairy products • pork
poultry • maple syrup • grains • feed • and more!
www.oeffa.org/search-geg.php

Laboratory Testing Services for Organic & Sustainable Agriculture
Greenhouse, Produce, Gardens, Lawns, and Field Crop Analysis.
• Water bacteria, suitability, etc.
• Soil and Plant Tissue
• Compost and Manure
• Sugar, Starch, Feedstuff Nutrients
• Comprehensive Fee Schedule Available

Holmes Laboratory, Inc.
3559 US 62, Millersburg, OH 44654
Ph. (800) 344-1101 Fax: (330) 893-3094
Web: www.holmeslab.com
e-mail: info@holmeslab.com
Books

Three Good Books

By Herman Beck-Chenoweth, Back40 Books

I have three great books to suggest for this issue and they all rank at the top of the list for their subject. For all of you “money growers” out there, we will start off with Growing and Selling Fresh-Cut Herbs by Sandie Shores. Sandie has years of experience growing and marketing fresh herbs from her farm in Minnesota. Her book, recently up-dated and now in its second printing, is a complete how-to guide on running a fresh-cut herb business.

Starting with greenhouse considerations and continuing on through propagation, harvest and packaging, you’ll find complete instructions for over 30 popular herbs. You can imagine how much information is packed in this hardcover 6 x 9, 483-page book, especially since there are few photos and the charts and drawings are small but well detailed. If you are thinking of adding fresh herbs to your mix, this quality book is well worth the $34.95 price.

Next, Specialty Cut Flowers: The Production of Annuals, Perennials, Bulbs and Specialty Cut Flowers brings us information that can only be learned through years of actual experience and trialng. Author Allan Armitage has long been THE main source of information for new and experienced growers. Now, he and co-author Judy Laushman have revised and enlarged the original edition of this book to include marketing information that she has learned through her work as the executive director of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers. Weighing in at 586 6 x 9 pages, this heavy weight is indexed by Latin plant names and contains information on varieties, planting, growing-on, stage of harvest and post-harvest considerations. There is information on such subjects as standard stem lengths and shelf-life plus a large full color section. Well illustrated with excellent line drawings and ample charts. This is a quality hardcover and well indexed. This book is not cheap at $39.95, but it is well worth the money.

Lastly, I have a surprise best seller: Why Cows Learn Dutch and Other Secrets of Amish Farms. Ohio Extension’s Randy James draws on his 20+ years of experience working as an ag agent in Geauga County to show how the Amish can make a living when the “get bigger” crowd is struggling. Don’t be mislead though–this is not the scholarly writing of an ag agent. This is the kind of writing Gene Logsdon’s fans know and love. You’ll find it hard to put this book down, and you’ll have more than a few good laughs as you learn fascinating and helpful information about these successful farmers. If the book is not enough, there is a live DVD from the author’s 2005 Farm Science Review presentation. The book alone is $24.95 or the set is available for $42.00.

All of these books are available from Back40Books.com. Go there via the link at the bottom of OEFFA’s home page or be sure to put “OEFFA” in the “Promo Code” box as you check out so OEFFA gets a donation. You can order by phone at 866/596-9982. (Also mention OEFFA when you order by phone.)
instance, a bushel of organic corn earned more than twice as much as a bushel of conventional corn according to The New Farm’s online Organic Price Index.

Organic farmers can’t grow corn as often as conventional farmers can; they rotate it with other crops. In a given field in a four-year span, an organic farmer might plant corn once, a conventional farmer twice or even every year. But a recent Cornell University study says higher prices still make the net return per acre for organic corn equal to or greater than that of conventional corn.

The study, published in the July 2005 issue of the journal, Bioscience, found that organic corn and soybean plants produce as much as their conventionally grown counterparts—more under drought—while requiring 30% less fossil energy, less water, and no synthetic pesticides.

The Ohio State Organic Corn Performance Test continues this summer, part of a long-term OFFER effort to evaluate organic corn hybrids. Plans call for testing at other sites and over many years. The goal: unbiased, science-based recommendations for Ohio organic farmers.

Get last year’s complete test results from county offices of OSU Extension or online at http://agcrops.osu.edu/story.php?setissueID=119&storyID=678.

Looking Further:
2005 Ohio State Organic Corn Performance Test http://agcrops.osu.edu/corn (click on the link for 2005 organic corn performance test)
OFFER Program www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/offer/
Cornell University Press Release (July 13, 2005) www.newjs.cornell.edu/stories/July05/organic.farm.vs. other.ssl.htm
The New Farm Organic Price Index newfarm.org/opx/
Many local and national sustainable ag events are posted on the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org/events.php.

Garden Barter (and other events) - May 20, Philo, Ohio. Blue Rock Station will host a special afternoon of bartering for garden “stuff” such as some of those items you’ve always dreamed of but just never got around to ordering. If you just want to look and experience the fun, but not barter, feel free to take a tour of the house made of tires, cans, bottles, and reclaimed wood. The cost to enter is $4.00. Other events at Blue Rock include workshops on Victorian Cottage Gardening, Hens in the Garden, Lamas, Natural Garden Insecticides, and Vaulted Strawbale Buildings, and an Earth Day tour. Reservations are requested since space is limited: 740/674-4300 or www.bluerockstation.com.

Sheep and Goat Parasite Control Clinic - May 27, 2006; Athens/Glouster, Ohio. Dr. Bill Shulaw, OSU Extension Veterinarian, will cover parasite biology, life cycles, chemical de-wormers, parasite resistance, current parasite control strategies, and alternative parasite controls. The second half will be a hands-on at the farm of Deb Schneider. Pre-registration required by May 19. $30. Call 740/593-8555.


A Midwest Homecoming: Sharing a New Tradition of Sustainability - August 15-17; Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The conference is the 4th SARE national/regional gathering that draws university research and extension staff, farmers, ranchers, youth/students, agribusiness representatives, policymakers at all levels of government, and nongovernmental organizations to explore current issues in sustainable agriculture. For more information visit www.sare2006.org or call 402/472-5678.

International Conference on Animals in Organic Production - August 23-25, 2006. For more information contact Jim Riddle, Coordinator for Organic Outreach, University of Minnesota, 31762 Wiscon Ridge Road, Winona, MN 55987; Ph/fax: 507/454-8310; jriddle@hbci.com


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

Gaia Girls: Enter the Earth, by Lee Welles - “A new kid’s chapter book with all the values we need in order to sustain our planet, set with a ripping good story, not the least bit preachy. Great illustrations, too. Plot: A ten year-old girl needs to save a small organic family farm from takeover by a factory pig farm/greed/eminent domain. She gets help from Gaia herself, appearing as... an otter! Comments on CAFOs, soil health, sustainable practices, organic food, the value of family and community, non-consumerism, and more, are all snuck into this magical tale.” - Jacqueline Sena

Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen, by Bryant Terry and Anna Lappé - In this new book, food justice activist and chef extraordinaire Bryant Terry has teamed up with author and speaker Anna Lappé to celebrate the idea that ‘grub’ is food that’s good for everyone. “Grub is smart and engaging, blending a passionately argued case for how the food industry is making us sick and what we can do about it with seasonal, international, health-conscious recipes to wet your appetite. A call to arms to choose “grub”--local, sustainable, fairly made food--Grub helps each of us get inspired to do so with hands-on tips and menus” - Publishers Weekly. See www.eatgrub.org for more information.
Time to Renew? 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.


Farmers’ Market - The Corporation for Findlay Market is currently seeking growers/producers to participate in our Sat/Sun farmers’ market. We have drop load spaces available on Saturdays, and both drop load and truck farm stalls in the farm shed available on Sundays. Please contact Cynthia M. Brown, Outdoor and Farmers’ Market Manager, for more information: cbrown@findlaymarket.org or 513/665-4839, ext. 16.

Farming with Horses - Turner Farm of Cincinnati is planning a farming-with-horses/mules clinic in the late summer or early fall. Learn to use animal power to get your farm work done. Contact Caleb Smith, Turner Farm Teamster, at 513/561-7575 or first2secede@yahoo.com.

Organic Farm for Sale - A quiet, scenic spot in the country. Less than 15 minutes to Athens and Ohio University. 11.1 Acres with a 3 bedroom, 2 bath ranch-style house with fireplace, large oak-sided barn, excellent fishing ponds, some fruit trees and established, productive organic gardens. Not listed with a realtor yet, but will be soon. Call Keith at 740/698-3827 if you are interested and would like to learn more.

Farmers’ Market Manager - Geauga Fresh Farmers’ Market is hiring a part-time person to direct operations of the Saturday morning farmers’ market in South Russell, Ohio—May to October. The manager will maintain the records and budget, work with vendors and volunteers, and will be responsible for pre- and post-season duties. Call 440/338-1325.


Organic Wines in Ohio - No sulphite added, certified organic, also kosher organic. Taste tested, stored properly. Imported and domestic wines, all price ranges, all styles. natural-State Wines, 800/786-9239; www.naturalstatewines.com. (Local outlets listed.)

Un-Classified ADS