Member Spotlight
Ohio Crop Farmer Wins National Sustainable Farming Award

Rex Spray was named the North Central Region winner of the 2006 Patrick Madden Award earlier this year and was recognized as a tireless innovator and one of Ohio’s greatest examples of a profitable, sustainable farmer. The honor, awarded to exemplary farmers in four U.S. regions by the USDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, was given at SARE’s national conference in Wisconsin.

Rex has used progressive farming techniques for decades, receiving organic certification in the 1970s as Ohio’s first enrollee. While he was one of few organic crop farmers in Ohio for years, the recent explosive interest in organic farming has shone the spotlight anew on the Rex’s progressive efforts.

OEFFA nominated Rex for this award partly in recognition of his willingness to share with others interested in organic farming. He has held a number of tours at his farm and hosted farmers from around the globe in his home. “Rex has been credited for inspiring other farmers to transition to organic,” says Carol Goland, executive director of the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA). “Many farmers in Ohio will identify Rex as a primary influence,” she said. “Rex has never turned anyone away from visiting his farm. He once hosted a group of Japanese businessmen developing an organic tofu product in Japan who came to learn how he was able to grow such high-quality organic soybeans.”

Rex began farming with his brother, Glen, in the mid-1950s. Following popular farming dictates, the brothers used agri-chemicals to manage pests on their crops. Yet, it didn’t sit right with them, and the Sprays decided there had to be a better way to farm.

“One day my brother and I got to talking and I said, ‘Let’s just quit using this stuff. We used to do it without it,’ “ Rex recalls. “So we did.”

Continued on page 8
Letter From the President

It has been a busy summer for OEFFA. The staff has worked very hard to put together the latest editions of the Good Earth Guide and the OEFFA Membership Directory, two very important and useful tools for sustainable agriculture in Ohio. We have had a wonderful line up of farm tours all over the state which have gone well and have been very well attended. Now the staff is working to put together the conference on March 3rd and 4th, so if you have workshop suggestions, give Anne a call.

Early in the summer Chef Tom Smith of the Worthington Inn contacted us and wanted to host a fundraising dinner for OEFFA. Having never put together such an event we forged ahead and what an absolutely delicious and educational night we had (plus we put a nice check into the OEFFA account).

The demand for local, sustainably grown, organic food has been overwhelming this summer. Consumers, chefs, health food stores, and grocery stores have been screaming for everything they can get. The newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television have been calling to do stories on local food, marketing, farms, and many other topics. It seems like everyone is hearing our message about the benefits of fresh local organic food.

Our organization has some great ideas for new programs, including on-farm alternative energy, beginning or transitional farmers, and local marketing, but as with our existing programs their implementation will rely on our wonderful member volunteers and on our funding. So this fall when you receive your annual appeal letter, asking you to consider a tax deductible donation, think about what OEFFA means to you. How important is a local food supply to you? What have you learned from OEFFA’s existing programs? Imagine what new and exiting things OEFFA can do with your help!

- Mike Laughlin, OEFFA Board President
The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is resuming its grant program after taking time off from its regular grantmaking schedule to evaluate the impact of its grants on organic agriculture. The deadline for proposals is December 15, 2006.

OFRF encourages organic farmers and ranchers to apply. Many producers find that working with a small group, or with an extension educator or university-based researcher, can make it easier to design and carry out a research project. OFRF encourages applications from such partnerships, and will try to link interested farmers with research partners. For more information please visit the OFRF website at http://www.ofrf.org/research/application.html or contact Jane Sooby, technical program coordinator, at 831/426-6606, email jane@ofrf.org.

Tours ‘06

Thanks to everyone that helped make the OEFFA farm tours series so successful, especially the many people who attended the tours and those who hosted them. Thanks, also, to those volunteers who offered to be OEFFA representatives and who helped transport and set up the signs and OEFFA display materials. It was a great series! Thanks to you all.

Rich Organic Gardens • Turner Farm • Rose Ridge Farm
Meadow Rise Farm • Gassar Family Farm • 2silos Farm
Athens Farmers’ Market • AceNet Food Ventures Center
OSU/OARDC • Crown Point Ecology Center
Rush Creek Gardens • Peach Mountain Organics
Windy Hill Apple Farm • RainFresh Harvest

Consumers are finding another reason to be thankful this holiday season. Thanksgiving boxes are again available through OEFFA’s Heart of Ohio Chapter, and starting this year are also available though OEFFA’s Athens Area Chapter.

For more information about Thanksgiving Boxes in the Columbus/Johnstown region please see www.oeffa.org or call 614/421-2022. Boxes from this chapter will include a locally grown, chemical free or certified organic turkey, squash, potatoes, farm-raised eggs, spinach, onions, beets, broccoli, leafy greens, fresh herbs, and apples, along with recipe suggestions. The deadline to order from the Heart of Ohio chapter is Sunday, November 12, 2006.

For more information about the Have a Local Thanksgiving boxes, available through the Athens Area chapter (which includes locally-grown, chemical-free or organic turkey, potatoes, squash, cooking greens, and salad greens) please contact Ed Perkins at 740/664-3370.
Deb Eschmeyer, one of the planners, talks to her husband Jeff at the OEFFA Local Harvest Dinner on September 17, 2006. The dinner featured fabulous local food prepared by four of Columbus’ top chefs, excellent networking opportunities, and a wide array of silent auction items. Nearly 75 people visited with chefs, OEFFA staff, and others who are dedicated to keeping food fresh and local.

Terra Madre
Ohio Delegates Travel to Italy

On October 26, 2006, 5,000 small-scale farmers, breeders, fishermen, herders, and traditional food producers from five continents and 130 countries, including 500 from the U.S., were joined by 1,000 chefs and 400 academics from around the globe in Turin, Italy, as Slow Food International hosted Terra Madre 2006.

Slow Food’s Northern Ohio chapter selected the following farmers and chefs to represent the region at this event including:

- Beth & Tim Knorr, Farmers at Crown Point Ecology Center
- Heather Kuhne & Eric Walters, Farmers at Basket of Life
- Ed Snavely, Farmer at Curly Tail Organic Farm
- Dominic Cerino, Chef/Owner of Carrie Cerino’s Ristorante
- Douglas Katz, Chef/Owner of Fire Food & Drink
- Michael Symon, Chef/Owner of Lola Bistro and Lolita

Also participating in Terra Madre 2006 were Deborah Stinner, Resident Scientist and Administrative Coordinator of the Organic Food and Farming Education and Research program at Ohio State University in Wooster; and Kari Moore, a 2004 Terra Madre delegate and co-leader of Slow Food’s Northern Ohio chapter.

Farming for the Future
Local Film Receives Grant Award

Matthew Kraus, an OEFFA member and Ohio University film student, won first prize in the 2006 Mion Solutions Environmental Film Program in September, 2006.

He won the award for his short documentary, Farming for the Future, which featured five Athens area farms including the familiar faces of Ed Perkins, Art and Peggy Gish, Rich Tomsu, and Scott Grady who all sell their farm products at the Athen Farmers’ Market. In his 15 minute documentary Matthew looked at the movement of small-scale farmers who produce food without chemicals or significant mechanical input and their personal motivations, and illuminated the subtler and oft-forgotten aspects of this kind of farming.

"My goal was to share, to explore this part of our community that I think is really special," Matthew said. "I wanted to put that out there and share it with people who either don’t have (a farmers market) in their community and might be inspired to initiate it, and to remind people if they do have access to something like that they should enjoy it."

Matthew won $10,000 in prize money which he was asked to split between himself and the nonprofit organization of his choice. Matthew donated half of the money to the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA). “This is my way of saying thanks,” says Matthew.

Farming for the Future premiered at the Woodstock Film Festival in 2005 and has been shown since then at the Athens International Film and Video Festival, the Big Muddy Film Festival, the Appalachian Film Festival, and the at the 2006 OEFFA Conference.

Thanks Matthew!
By October I am secretly yearning for frost. It’s been a good year, and we’ve learned a lot. Some successes, some setbacks, and now I feel that nesting instinct. My thoughts turn more toward indoor projects, and I fight the impulse to rearrange the furniture. I dig out my knitting, a project abandoned last February when I started seeds.

But I need to hold off for a little while longer, because there are still tasks awaiting outside. It’s autumn, the nights are getting longer, and it’s time to put the farm to bed.

I’ve learned that taking care of these things now, at a leisurely pace, when the weather gives us good days, can be so relaxing and pleasant. Much more so than waiting until next spring when all you want to do is get out of the house, shake the cabin fever, and plant. Where’s the shovel? Why are these hoes so dull? Did another hose rupture? Oh, why didn’t I clean these seed trays last year??

First, we take care of the ground. If you’ve been good this year, then you started planting cover crops around July 4th under your crops, so clean up the dead and dying plants and let the cover crops do their thing as they naturally fill in. If you have a few bare spots, throw some annual rye on them. They may or may not take at this late date, but you never know, and rye seed is cheap. It’ll often come on quite well as we get warm spells throughout the fall. Another option for bare soil is to cover it with straw and compost. Be sure your straw is organic, if you are certified.

All dead crop plants must be removed, to avoid harboring pests that will have a jump start in the new season. Fungi, bacteria, early blight, mildews, gray mold fungus, root rot, and wilt can overwinter in old foliage, stems, roots, and withered vegetables. If you haven’t already, start a compost pile. Encyclopedic books have been written on this topic, so find one, or go online. In the meantime, if nothing else you can profit from merely piling the stuff up, mixing 2 parts dried stuff (brown) to 1-2 parts green (say, some of the last lawn clippings of the season), and maybe a few shovels of garden soil. Some like to put a bucket or two of finished compost in storage where it won’t freeze to use in seed starting mixes in winter.

A nice idea for autumn leaves (if you’re lucky enough to have any – we are still growing trees, having built in a cow pasture) is to pile them near your compost pile. Then next season you can use them as more “brown stuff” to add in with the green. Many recommend that you cover your compost pile, once established, for the season, to avoid leaching all the nutrients away. Don’t dump new leaves into your garden. As they decompose, they draw nitrogen out of the soil. Eventually, they will break down and put it back, but the process will tie up the nitrogen you will want available to your crops next year. Use only decomposed leaves (“leaf mold”) in your garden.

As you can see from these suggestions, I never recommend tilling up a garden in the fall and then just leaving the bare ground there. You will lose topsoil that way and the ground gets so hard and pounded after a winter season. If you want to get an area ready to plant early in the spring—maybe peas or lettuce—go ahead and till it and then cover it with a thick layer of mulch and compost. That will keep the soil soft and ready for the new year. You can even start a new garden plot or extend the existing one by laying a very thick layer of mulch on it, say up to 6-12 inches. That will kill grass and weeds underneath, and if it’s good mulch mixed with compost you can even plant right through it come spring.

No doubt there are still some vegetables you can keep using. As the vines die, bring in your winter squash, pie pumpkins, etc. and store them in a cool, dry place. Don’t leave them out if a freeze is forecast. All brassicas – broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards, Brussels sprouts – taste better after a few frosts, though won’t live through a freeze. Enjoy them as long as you can. Carrots will winter over, though you can’t dig them once the ground is frozen. Mulch them and try digging if we get a January thaw.

Pick all your green tomatoes. Wrap each loosely in newspaper and store on a shelf in a cool, dark place. Don’t stack them too high or it’s difficult to check them for ripeness. Once or twice a week go through and take out those that are reddening up. My grandmother used to have tomatoes as late as Thanksgiving this way. See if you can outdo your records from year to year.

Continued on page 12
Law

A Farmer’s Goods and Services are Secured Through Liens

By David G. Cox, Attorney

Although it may not always seem like it, there are laws that protect farmers. For example, if a farmer provides crops to a distributor, the farmer has a lien in the goods that were provided to secure their payment. In addition, if a farmer agrees to board animals for another person, the farmer has a lien in the amount of services that were provided. Thus, farmers have remedies when it comes to securing payment for the goods or services they provide.

Revised Code Section 1311.48 provides as follows: “Any person who feeds or boards an animal under contract with the owner shall have a lien on such animal to secure payment for food and board furnished.” Under this Section, a lien is created if someone either boards or feeds an animal; one does not have to do both. In addition, actual possession of the animal is necessary before the lien can be created. If the farmer is not paid for the feed or boarding he/she provides, the farmer has a lien in the amount of the cost of the services provided.

Once the farmer acquires the lien, R.C. 1311.49 specifies the procedure that must be followed to satisfy the lien, specifically: “If the owner of an animal, upon written demand by the lienholder, fails to satisfy a lien ... the lienholder may sell the animal at public sale to satisfy such lien.” The farmer, however, must publish notice in a local newspaper at least ten days before the sale. Once the farmer publishes notice in the newspaper, the farmer must send the notice to the owner of the animal via certified mail. If the animal is eventually sold to satisfy the lien, the farmer can recover the costs of the feed and boarding, plus costs incurred, from the sale price. However, the farmer cannot make a profit from the sale so any excess proceeds must be returned to the previous owner of the animal.

With respect to “agricultural products” (meat, poultry, dairy, fruits, vegetables, wool, etc.) the Revised Code recognizes what is called an “agricultural product lien.” Specifically, R.C. Section 1311.55 provides as follows: “An agricultural producer who delivers an agricultural product under an express or implied contract to an agricultural product handler... has a lien to secure the payment for all of the agricultural product delivered under that contract.” The lien attaches upon delivery or, if the contract involves deliveries in installments, the lien attaches upon the first delivery. A farmer cannot be forced to give up his/her lien and if no price has been agreed upon the default price is that which is listed in the “market news service” published by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

To perfect the lien under R.C. 1311.55, the farmer must file an affidavit with the County Recorder’s office in the county where the delivery was made. The affidavit must include the name of the recipient of the goods, the date of delivery, and the amount owed. The affidavit must be filed within 60 days of delivery, or first delivery if delivery is in installments, and the lien takes precedence over all other liens except for secured creditors, employee wages and warehouseman’s liens. Once the affidavit is filed, the lien remains good for two years from the date of filing.

Farmers are protected for the products and services they provide. In the event you feel uncomfortable doing business with a person, check out their background to determine what type of business person they are. If, unfortunately, things do not work out the way they are supposed to, make use of the lien laws to secure payment for the products and services you provide.

David G. Cox is an associate with the Columbus, OH law firm of Lane, Alton and Horst LLC and is an OEFFA member. This article is not intended to be nor should it be construed as either legal advice or the opinion of the firm.

NATURAL ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

Insect & Disease Controls

Feed Additives, Soil Testing

SERVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SINCE 1972

- Re-Vita 3-3-3
- Re-Vita 5-4-5
- Re-Vita 2-3-16
- Rock Phosphate
- Soluble Seaweed
- Jump Start
- Humates
- Fish Products
- Sea-Min Kelp Meal
- Diatomaceous Earth
- Greensand
- Potassium Sulfate
- Gypsum
- Sul-Po Mag
- Soil Testing
- And more
- Free Catalog

OHIO EARTH FOOD, INC.
5488 Swamp St., N. E., Hartville, OH 44632
Phone 330-877-9356 Fax 330-877-4237
www.ohioearthfood.com

SOIL AND FEED PROGRAMS FOR THE ORGANIC GROWER
Americans are used to having anything they desire always at their fingertips. So they were shocked to find fresh, bagged spinach disappear from supermarket shelves last month. The E. coli outbreak linked to spinach sickened 187 people in 26 states with one confirmed death. The contaminated spinach was traced to three counties in California, the state where 74% of the nation’s fresh spinach is grown. The source of the contamination has not yet been identified. It may never be.

This was not the first such food-borne disease outbreak. There have been 19 others in the last decade linked to fresh bagged spinach or lettuce alone, and eight cases were linked to California’s Salinas Valley. More than 400 people became ill, two deaths were reported. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are 76 million cases of food-borne illness in the U.S. a year – 350,000 cases are hospitalized and 5,000 people die. Most are caused by meat and poultry, especially ground beef, but the growth in fresh bagged salads has added another likely source of contamination.

America’s highly centralized and industrialized food production and distribution system is a marvel at keeping those supermarket shelves full, but there are underlying problems. One contaminated spinach field, one sick cow, can quickly spread food-borne disease all over the country. The system is also very energy intensive. It takes on average ten calories of fossil fuel energy to deliver one calorie of food to the table. The average morsel of food travels 1,300 miles. To make it worse, just four large corporations control over 45% of the American food supply.

The alternative is a return to a more local food production system – numerous small farms selling foods at local farmers’ markets and supplying the area’s supermarkets and restaurants. Local farms are certainly not immune to food-borne diseases, but any out breaks would not go far and would be easier to track down and correct. Locally grown foods are also much more energy efficient since it is not far to market, and products are fresher. There are studies that also show that local food is good for the local economy – food dollars go furthest when they stay close to home, providing more jobs.

As an Athens County farmer I would like to be able to say “come to the farmers’ market to get your spinach!” but there is not much there. Local food production is seasonal – everything is not always available like at the supermarket. Spinach grows well in the spring or winter if the farmer has greenhouses, but it is more difficult to grow in the summer and fall when the humid weather fosters plant disease.

For local farms to provide all of the in-season produce for the Athens area would require hundreds of new small farms. There certainly is enough unused land available, and unemployed and underemployed people, but how to get those people down on the farm is a big question - especially when farming is such hard work and the pay is low. If you could get them on the farm, how would that many people fit into the Farmers’ Market? The big retailers like Wal-Mart and Kroger would have to take local produce.

Shifting to a local food system is possible, but would require a perspective change in Americans’ ingrained shopping habits and in retailers’ business practices. In the meantime, E. coli outbreaks will continue to remind us of our food system’s vulnerabilities.

Ed Perkins is an OEFFA member who farms in Athens Co. and writes on environmental issues. This article also appeared in the Athens local paper on October 7, 2006.
Until they perfected their crop rotation – now soybeans, corn, wheat, and hay in alternating grasses and legumes to improve fertility – they experienced some yield declines. But, after two years, they improved their rotation, tillage and fertility management on their 680 acres.

Rex also raises beef cattle, which he sells to Ohio’s only certified organic slaughterhouse. But one of his biggest farming successes came from a source he never anticipated – tofu. To maximize profits, Rex erected a new building in which he installed a bean cleaner and grain cleaner, then began preparing and bagging beans for tofu. “That was the high-dollar product that really got us going,” he said.

In addition to doing tours for OEFFA and others, Rex also served on OEFFA’s organic certification committee for a number of years and was instrumental in the Advisory Growers Group that led to the first organic research program at Ohio State University. For two years in the mid-80s, Ohio State researchers Deb and Ben Stinner researched the Spray’s crops and soil management, further expanding Rex’s reach.

“It really gave us solid backing and credibility,” Rex says. “It showed people what we were doing and how we were doing it. It showed that we had as much profit or more than the conventional farmers. The whole attitude changed. After that, we got so many more people involved in it and it turned into quite a movement.”

“Rex’s decades of dedication to increasing the quality of his products makes him an ideal model for others,” says Bill Wilcke, North Central Region SARE coordinator. “He uses innovative practices to improve natural resources like the soil and has been a vocal advocate for sustainable farming.”

Rex Spray is joined by other regional 2006 Madden Award winners, including:

- Alex and Betsy Hitt, vegetable growers in Graham, N.C.
- Paul Muller of Full Belly Farm, a community farm in Capay Valley, Calif.
- Edwin and Marian Fry, organic crop and dairy producers in Chestertown, Md.

__________________________

*Congressman Ted Strickland has been invited to speak but is not confirmed and may replace the chapter/idea exchange. Please check the OEFFA website or watch OEFFADirect after November 9th.*
The fall frosts have not quite put an end to the summer garden. Leafy greens, root veggies of all types, onions, winter squashes, hardy herbs, and perhaps a few “basement ripened” tomatoes are still available. A little row cover—and timely planting—can keep the salad greens coming till Thanksgiving in most of Ohio. There’s nothing better to accompany those salads, and chase Autumn’s chills, than a hearty soup made with fresh ingredients gleaned from the garden.

I give my CSA customers “soup kits” for one of their last deliveries, and over the years, the following recipes have been the most popular. If you have anything left in your garden, you’re likely to have most of the ingredients for one or more of these great soups. Add some hot homemade bread (such as corn bread or whole wheat biscuits) and a salad and you’ve got a great meal. Each recipe serves a family of 4 generously, with a bowl or two left over to heat for lunch the next day.

**African Sweet Potato Stew**

1 large or two med. onions, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 bunch Swiss chard or Malabar spinach  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
1 tsp. curry powder (optional)  
1 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
1 minced hot pepper, opt.  
1 can (15 oz.) garbanzo beans or chick-peas  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/2 cup bulgar wheat or couscous  
2-3 lg. sweet potatoes, peeled and diced in 1/2 in. pieces  
1 large can tomatoes with juice (or 6-8 tomatoes)  
Handful of cilantro leaves, opt.

Fry onion, garlic and white stems of chard (if used) until barely limp. Add tomatoes, minced hot pepper if using, and chopped greens and fry a bit. Add garbanzos, raisins, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, cumin, curry powder, hot pepper, salt and pepper. Cook a couple of minutes. Use a large spoon to make a deep well in the center of the mixture in the pot. Put the bulgar in the well and pat it down until it’s all wet, adding a little water or chicken broth if necessary to cover. (This is important! Or grain will not cook properly.) Cover tightly and simmer gently until grain is tender about 20 minutes. Adjust seasoning and serve.

**Kale and Kielbasa Soup**

3 Tbls. olive oil  
6-8 oz kielbasa, sliced in 1/4 inch half-moons  
1 1/2 cups chopped celery with leaves  
1 1/2 cups chopped carrot  
2 large or 4-6 small potatoes, diced  
1 bay leaf  
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley  
1 1/2 cups chopped onion or leek  
1 bunch fresh kale, stemmed and chopped  
1 can kidney beans, drained  
4-5 cups chicken broth or bouillon  
1 can tomatoes, undrained (or 5-6 fresh)  
1-2 cloves garlic, salt and pepper to taste

Saute onion in olive oil, add carrot, celery, and garlic, and saute a minute more. Add bay leaf, broth, potatoes, tomatoes and kielbasa. Bring to boil and simmer till potatoes are soft. Add kidney beans, kale, and parsley, and cook a few more minutes. Season with pepper and salt.

**Turkish Borscht**

1 Tbls. olive oil  
1 onion and 2 leeks, chopped  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
1 lb. beets, peeled and chopped  
1/2 lb. cabbage, kale, or collard greens, coarsely chopped, about 2 cups packed  
1 bunch beet greens or sm. bunch Swiss chard, chopped  
2 stalks chopped celery  
2-3 carrots, scraped and chopped  
3 med. potatoes (about 1 lb.) scrubbed and diced  
1-2 green peppers, seeded and chopped  
4-6 tomatoes or one 14 oz. can, chopped, with juices  
2 quarts water (part chicken or veg. broth)  
salt and freshly ground pepper  
1/2 tsp. crushed dill seed  
juice of 1 large lemon  
3 Tbls. fresh dill, snipped (or 1 tab. dried)  
1 cup plain yogurt for garnish

Saute onion, leek, and garlic in oil till soft, and add other vegetables except beet greens. Cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add water and bring to a boil. Add salt and pepper to taste, and dill seed. Simmer one hour, covered. Stir in chopped beet greens or chard in last 15 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and fresh dill, and adjust seasonings. Serve each bowl topped with a spoon of yogurt.

See page 14 for another good soup from Trish!
Look for OEFFA in Central Ohio WorkPlace Giving Campaigns

Community Shares generates stable funding for community-based, social justice nonprofits working on long term solutions to local needs.

Community Shares of Mid Ohio was established to strengthen local nonprofits who collectively participate in workplace giving campaigns that provide vital financial support from employee donations.

Community Shares member agencies, like OEFFA, are community-based, volunteer-led nonprofits that prevent family, school, and neighborhood violence, homelessness and hunger, child abuse and neglect, and environmental devastation; protect civil and human rights; and increase literacy, democracy and voter education, healthy lives, and social justice.

Community Shares of Mid Ohio and its forty-four member agencies will be participating in these workplace campaigns in 2006. You can help!

- Remember Community Shares and OEFFA in your workplace giving campaign. It’s easy to give and easy to help when you give through payroll deduction. You can direct your campaign gift to one or several specific organizations.
- Ask your campaign coordinator how you can make a gift through a donor option if your workplace does not include Community Shares.
- Encourage your family, friends, and coworkers to consider giving to OEFFA through Community Shares of Mid Ohio.

You can reach Community Shares at 614/262-1176, email them at comshare@core.com, or visit them on the web at www.communityshares.net. The OEFFA office can be reached directly at 614/421-2022.

Sourcing Organic Seeds

EUGENE, Oreg. – The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), a nonprofit publisher and information service for organic growers, introduced an online, organic seed listing service this month. Once filled, the OMRI Organic Seed Database will provide accurate information on the availability and supply of hundreds of certified organic seed varieties. The web address is: http://seeds.omri.org.

“Our goal is to offer growers and certifiers a single place to find supplies of organic seed,” explains Dave DeCou, OMRI executive director and project manager for the seed list. “We hope this information will lead to greater sales of organic seeds.”

While the USDA organic rule requires that organic growers plant organic seed, it also contains an exemption allowing non-organic seed to be used if organic seed is not commercially available. The OMRI Seed Database will provide growers a place to search for available organic seed and also offer certifiers a tool to verify whether organic seed is available in a particular variety.

“As a nonprofit with a history of serving organic growers and certifiers with information on materials suitable for use in organic production, we are in a uniquely well-suited position to develop this new service,” elaborates DeCou. “We are recognized in the organic growing community as a trusted source of information.”

The OMRI Organic Seed Database is entirely online. Seed suppliers will be able to manage their listings through the website interface. OMRI staff will verify that the supplier is certified as a handler or grower of organic seed. New listings will appear online once certification is verified.

Fees are designed to be reasonable. There is a $25 annual company charge, plus fees based on how many varieties the company wishes to list. Suppliers will be able to pay using a secure online payment service. Listings are for a 12-month period and can be updated at anytime.
Wal-Mart Organic Department Expands — Good or Bad?

CORNUCOPIA, Wisc. - A report released today by The Cornucopia Institute, the nation’s most aggressive organic farming watchdog, accuses Wal-Mart of cheapening the value of the organic label by sourcing products from industrial-scale factory farms and Third World countries, such as China.

Wal-Mart announced earlier this year that they would greatly increase the number of organic products they offered and price them at a target of 10% above the cost for conventional food.

“We have received scores of press inquiries over the past few months asking us if Wal-Mart’s organic expansion was ‘good news or bad news’ for the industry,” stated Mark Kastel, Senior Farm Policy Analyst for the Wisconsin-based farm policy research group. “My stock answer has been: If Wal-Mart lends its logistical prowess to organic food both farmers and consumers will be big winners by virtue of a more competitive marketplace. However, if Wal-Mart applies their standard business model, and in essence Wal-Marts organic, then everyone will lose.”

The Institute’s white paper, Wal-Mart Rolls Out Organic Products—Market Expansion or Market Delusion?, makes the argument that Wal-Mart is indeed poised to drive down the price of organic food in the marketplace by inventing a “new” organic—food from corporate agribusiness, factory farms, and cheap imports of questionable quality. “Organic family farmers in this country could see their livelihoods disintegrate the same way so many industrial workers saw their family-supporting wages evaporate as Wal-Mart and other big-box retailers put the screws to manufacturers—forcing a production shift to China and other low-wage countries,” Kastel added.

Wal-Mart, already the nation’s largest organic milk retailer, partnering with the giant milk processor Dean Foods (Horizon Organic), recently introduced their own private-label organic milk packaged by Aurora Organic Dairy. Aurora, based in Boulder, Colorado, has faced a maelstrom of organic industry criticism and negative press for operating a number of industrial-scale dairies with thousands of cows confined in feed-lot-like conditions. They are also the subject of two current USDA investigations into their organic management practices.

“If there was any previous doubt as to their intentions, partnering with Dean/Horizon and Aurora should leave no question in anyone’s mind as to how Wal-Mart is approaching its organic initiative,” proclaimed Steve Sprinkel long-time industry observer and columnist for the nation’s leading sustainable agricultural journal, Acres USA. Large percentages of milk from Horizon and Aurora come from factory farms, milking as many as 10,000 cows, allegedly without the required access to pasture. The two companies have also been accused of bringing nonorganic cows onto their farms. “Because of the intense media scrutiny there is no doubt that Wal-Mart entered into these relationships in blatant disregard to the ethical expectations of the consumers who have helped build organics into a lucrative $16 billion industry,” Sprinkel added.

This April, The Cornucopia Institute released a rating of the nation’s approximately 70 organic name brand and private-label organic dairy products (www.cornucopia.org). Although almost 90% received a very high rating, Horizon and Aurora refused to participate in the study and received the Institute’s lowest score. And in a subsequent poll of their over 800,000 members, the Organic Consumers Association moved to boycott Horizon and Aurora dairy products. “It’s hard to believe that at this time Wal-Mart would embrace these products,” said OCA director Ronnie Cummins.

In addition to the report’s documentation of the Wal-Mart/factory-farm connection, the study also highlighted the company’s decision to lower the per unit cost basis on organic products by collaborating with its long-time trading partner China.

“Even if it were not for many serious concerns about the propriety of the certification process in China—and the fact that the USDA has provided little if any regulatory oversight there—food shipped around the world, burning fossil fuels and undercutting our domestic farmers, does not meet the consumer’s traditional definition of what is truly organic,” Kastel stated.

While Wal-Mart sources Chinese organic products, the industry’s largest organic and natural foods retailer, Whole Foods Market, announced plans this summer to greatly expand their offerings of locally grown produce in deference to organic consumer sentiments.

“Between Whole Foods and hundreds of the nation’s cooperatively owned natural foods groceries, we are certainly set up for a clash of the titans,” said Cummins. “Will consumers choose cheap industrial food, be it from factory farms or questionable Third World imports, or will they continue to support ethical processors and family farmers?”

Wal-Mart also depends on Natural Selection Foods, Continued on page 14
I have friends who’ve had great luck with their late-season spinach by mulching it with straw and surrounding it with straw bales. Lay some old windows or heavy clear plastic (like old poly tunnel plastic) over it and you can have it a good ways into winter. Plus, in the spring it will be ready for picking extra early, which is such a welcome sight on the table in March.

With the soil and plants tucked away, now turn to your tools. Drain hoses and nozzles, and store them. Drain and blow out irrigation lines, if you use them. Clean all your sprayers, dry, and store them. I like to clean all my bins and baskets and put them away, too. Nothing worse than gunky harvest equipment to deal with come spring. I also wash out my seed flats with a mild bleach solution. I usually re-organize my greenhouse, but since it blew down in late June, I guess that can wait until we get new plastic on it later on.

Clean your tools. Scrub off caked dirt, then oil down the handles (linseed is the traditional choice for this, but olive oil works fine). I also like to pour some vegetable oil into a bucket of sand and chunk each tool into it to get a nice coat of oil on the metal. Store out of the weather.

Finally, I like to organize. Be sure you have everything clearly labeled and stored properly so you don’t lose track of what’s what. For seeds, I separate cover crop seeds from vegetable seeds and take inventory. Making a list of what’s still good for next year will help you at order time this winter. You can save a lot of money that way. Plus, note what you ordered too much of and what came up short. You will become a better planner for next season and, one hopes, stop ordering so doggone much seed, that typical new farmer vice (from which I still suffer).

If you got behind on notes, this is a good time to catch up on that, too. Write down which varieties worked well, which didn’t. I experimented with lots of zucchini this year, and some did better than others. I planted too much cauliflower and not enough broccoli. Too much cabbage and not enough kale. And for once, maybe too many tomatoes.

Be sure to schedule some off-season farming connections – join an OEFFA chapter if you haven’t already, and pencil in the first weekend in March for the conference. Investigate more farming associations online or in magazines. And subscribe to a few, if you don’t already. Winter is your education season. Ready everything you can lay your hands on.

Starting out a new year is so much more productive if you’re not still cleaning up from the year before. I take it one task at a time, in between splitting wood for the winter fires and laying in more bales of straw for the chickens. And then I am going to finish knitting that shawl.
Book

Good Winter Reads

By Herman Beck-Chenoweth, Back 40 Books

Well, as they say spring has sprung and fall has fell. You probably know the rest. I am cutting and splitting firewood for our cooking and heating stove. I love being out in the crisp fall air and look forward to sitting around the stove reading when it cools down even more. I’ve picked a few selections to share and I want to thank all of you who have been “clicking the link” for OEFFA. Remember, if you order from Back40Books.com online and want OEFFA to get a donation for your purchase you MUST either visit via the Back 40 link on OEFFA’s home page, enter “OEFFA” in the “PROMO CODE” box when checking out, tell the order entry person if you call, or write “OEFFA” somewhere in your correspondence if you order by mail.

Now, to the books. My first selection is A Farmer’s Guide to the Bottom Line: A handbook to secure success and profits on the family-scale farm by Charles Walters. This 8 x 10, 222 page book is just what the doctor ordered to help you understand the principles of the farm economy, learn how to write a business plan to protect your investment, read success stories of innovative small-scale farmers and discover the unlimited potential of the farmer-entrepreneur. This is a great book, and is well illustrated with good examples. Not a dry read at all. This soft cover is $24.95.

Estate Planning for Farmers is an enhanced DVD of a presentation at the 2006 Ohio Farm Science review Small Farm Center. This is a top quality presentation and is well illustrated with PowerPoint slides. In about an hour you can learn what works and what doesn’t to transfer your assets with minimum taxes and good family relations. Plays on the computer or the TV. $24.95. (Sorry, no photo available as the project was being edited at press-time.)

Gary F. Zimmer’s The Biological Farmer is a complete guide to the sustainable and profitable Biological System of Farming. The secret to better farming is that... there is no secret; no magic product, no miracle fertilizers. Biological farmers work with nature, feeding soil life, balancing minerals, and tilling soil with a purpose. Biological farming is a common sense ideal that focuses on reducing input cost and increasing profits while improving soil conditions and livestock health. This extensive, well illustrated, 350 page book is well worth the $25.00 asking price.

If you are into aromatherapy here is a great set for you: the bundle consists of Making Aroma Therapy Creams & Lotions and Aromatherapy Companion, both soft cover books from Storey Publishing. The two fine books will introduce you to medicinal uses, Ayurvedic healing, body-care blends, perfumes, and scents and formulas for emotional health and well-being, as well as providing you with 101 natural formulas to nourish and revitalize your skin. Normally these two books would run $36.90, but Back 40 has priced the “Amroatherapy Bundle” at just $32.00 post paid. You get over 400 pages of information in two nicely designed, easy-on-the-eyes duo-tone printed books. What a deal!

That’s it for another issue. Remember, Linda and I will be looking for you at the winter OEFFA conference in Granville!

Keep Your Head Warm!

Let your neighbors know about OEFFA and keep your head warm this winter with a forest green hat embroidered with the OEFFA logo, or a tan hat with a green embroidered logo.

To purchase hats, or find out about other OEFFA items, visit www.oeffa.org/oeffastore.php or call the OEFFA office at 614/421-2022.
Earthbound Farms, a giant industrial enterprise farming tens of thousands of acres in California, Arizona, Mexico and Chile as their prime vendor for organic vegetables.

“I don’t think (consumers) have any idea just how industrialized it’s becoming (mainstream organics),” said journalism professor and author Michael Pollan in a recent interview with the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Pollan’s book, “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” has been a national best seller. “There are some real downsides to organic farming scaling up to this extent,” Pollan added during the interview. He and others worry that the expansion of “Big Organic” will lower food quality, weaken standards and hurt small family farms.

This month The Cornucopia Institute sent a letter to Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott suggesting that Wal-Mart’s approach to organics would likely undermine the corporation’s campaigns to attract upscale shoppers to their stores and to help cleanse the reputation of world’s largest retailer in terms of the widespread criticism that it has endured due to its labor and environmental practices.

“We are afraid that you are grossly miscalculating your move into organics and underestimating the knowledge and commitment of the organic consumer. Those buying organic food are comfortable paying the historic premiums because they think that part of their purchase dollar supports a different kind of environmental, animal husbandry, and economic justice ethic,” the letter from Cornucopia read in part.

The letter also cited an example of Wal-Mart selling mislabeled conventional yogurt as organic. In addition, the Institute’s report red-flagged the retailer selling organic baby formula made with both questionable synthetic ingredients and processing materials. The report also suggests that Wal-Mart might lack the qualifications or commitment to oversee what promises to be one of the nation’s largest organic manufacturing, distribution, and retail networks.

“We are afraid that you are grossly miscalculating your move into organics and underestimating the knowledge and commitment of the organic consumer. Those buying organic food are comfortable paying the historic premiums because they think that part of their purchase dollar supports a different kind of environmental, animal husbandry, and economic justice ethic,” the letter from Cornucopia read in part.

Winter Squash Chowder

7-8 cups peeled, seeded and cubed butternut squash
2 Tbls. vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups chopped onions (can use part leek)
1/4 - 1/2 lb. chopped ham or turkey ham
4 cups water or chicken broth
2 bay leaves
1 cup diced carrots
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced green beans or frozen peas
1 small red pepper, diced, opt.
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup rich milk or _ cup cream
salt and pepper to taste.

Saute onion in oil.  Add squash, diced ham, broth, and bay leaves.  Simmer until squash is tender, 20 minutes.  Use potato masher or hand held blender to break up squash chunks.  In a separate pot, cook carrots, celery, and beans in 1/2 cup water till just tender.  Add the vegetables, cheese, and milk to the squash, and heat gently, stirring. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve. Garlic and fresh herbs such as sage or thyme can be added if desired.
Marketing Your Small Tourist-based Business: Micro-Tourism in Appalachian Ohio - November 14, 9:30-3:30, New Concord, Ohio. Participants will learn how to create and put into practice a basic marketing strategy, as well as review management practices that will help make their micro-tourism business a success. The full agenda as well as registration forms are available at www.bluerockstation.com. Early registration, $35 (must be received by October 30th). Registration after that date is $49. Lunch is included.

Winter Farm Conference - Wednesday, December 6, 9:00-3:00, Cincinnati, Ohio. The workshop, hosted by the Corporation for Findlay Market, will look at Maximizing Your Profits at Farmers’ Markets. Speakers will include Brad Bergefurd, OSU Extension; Janet Eaton, Kentucky Dept. of Agriculture; Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Purdue University; and Diane Eggert, Executive Director of the Farmers’ Market federation of New York. The day will include a continental breakfast and lunch. Cost is $20.00. Please contact Cynthia M. Brown (cbrown@findlaymarket.org) for a brochure with registration information.

2007 OEFFA Conference - March 3-4, 2007, Granville, Ohio. This conference will featuring Sally Fallon as a keynote speaker, will have over 40 workshops, a kid’s conference, and Saturday evening entertainment, and will focus on personal health and farm energy production. Visit www.oeffa.org or call 614/421-2022 for more information.

Soil Biology Primer - The Soil Biology Primer provides exceptional educational information on bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods, and earthworms. This publication has been hailed by top soil scientists and is well received by educators, professional resource conservationists, and anyone with an interest in the use of soil as a medium for environmental improvement purposes. The Primer is published by the Soil and Water Conservation Society, 945 SW Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA 50023-9723; 515/289-2331. $14.00 + sh/h. Make good use of our land and water for future generations!

Photo Essays by Herrick Kimble - Author and Inventor Herrick Kimble has published a few new photo essays on the internet that might be of interest. There are a couple about backyard chicken processing and chicken tractors for those of you who are thinking chickens. They can be found at tinyurl.com/km88p and tinyurl.com/mgkx9. There is also one about selling baked goods at the farm market (tinyurl.com/k3d3c), and there are a few about garlic production (tinyurl.et233 and tinyurl.z38k2).

Tapes and CDs of the 2006 OEFFA conference speakers (both keynote and workshop) are available from the OEFFA office to barrow. Please call the office at 614/421-2022 if you are interested. We also have some tapes available from past years if you are looking for them. There are great keynote speakers like Joan Dye Gussow, Gary Zimmer, Eliot Coleman, Jo Robinson, David Blume, Don Bixby, and more!
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.

Manager/Operator Needed - Certified organic farm, 50-acres with pasture/wood lot, great location near market, Medina County, now producing vegetables and eggs. Owner lives on property and will assist, living quarters available. Call Susan Schmidt at 330/239-2325.
Farm Wanted - We are two Cincinnati-based used-ta-be and wannabe farmers looking for a farm that will become a land-trust home to ourselves and others who want to raise organic vegetables for the local market. A place where younger couples will want to live and work and raise children; where older people will find peace, and appropriate work, and a friendly community; where all can build energy-efficient straw-bale houses and a meeting hall; and where all will want to live, and work, and put our feet up at the end of the day. Contact Mike and Birdie, 513/542-7097 or mmurphy10@fuse.net.

Farmstead Wanted in Northeast Ohio - Family looking for 15-30 acres with farmhouse and barn. You have farm but don’t want to sell? We’ll consider long-term land caretaker/stewardship agreement, allowing you to keep your farm active, enabling us to farm. We have some funds to set up our operation and to repair existing infrastructure. However, we’ll also consider buying if the price is reasonable. Contact Jerome at rigot.3@osu.edu, 330/202-3555 X2750 or 330/925-1423.
For Sale - Disassembled down draft car kiln; built as a Minnesota Flat Top with an arch. Includes kiln shelves, kiln furniture, eight burners, and metal framing. Joe Cooper, Worthington; 614/885-1586; or jcooper@columbus.rr.com.
For Sale - 10’x10’ tent by EASY-UP. Light dome canopy, plus four zipper-down sides and awning. Used six times at most. $200. Waynesville, OH; 513/932-4263; or nospanidk@earthlink.net.
For Sale - Organic red clover hay, 4 x 4 round net wrapped bales. Steve Elliott, LaRue, Ohio; 740/499-3672.