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November Fall Member's Meeting

The OEFFA Membership will be taking a hiatus from the traditional members meeting in November this year. Instead, the Board is planning a workday for interested members to review the organization's goals and vision and make new plans for the upcoming years.

In March of 2002, close on the heels of the creation of the NOP, the OEFFA Board passed a working agenda outlining the goals and the priorities for the organization. With five intervening years, and much on-the-ground change, the Board and Director are now calling for a review and update of OEFFA's vision for the future, and what that means in terms of its work.

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Farms and Foods of Ohio: From Garden Gate to Dinner Plate

By Lynne Genter, OEFFA Board Member

Summer reading for me means... light reading. Last winter Gary Paul Nabhan's book *Coming Home to Eat* was a "must read." I finished it just ahead of last year's annual OEFFA conference. Once spring arrived, my husband and I traveled and I had *Ominvore's Dilemma* by author Michael Pollan in tow. Pollan's book is 100 plus pages thicker than Nabhan's, but both are filled with personal stories intertwined with insights and information about Americans in respect to our role as food consumers. This summer the new book *Farms and Foods of Ohio* has been my delightful companion.

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OEFFA Farm Tours

OEFFA tours are free and open to the public

Beef and Organic Grains / OCIA Meeting
Paul Bell and Sons Farm - Bellefontaine, OH
Saturday, August 18, 2007; 1:00pm - 4:00pm

"Barnyard Garden" / Farmland Preservation
Clearview Farm - Pataskala, OH
Saturday, August 25, 2007; 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Growing Produce for Local Markets
Flying J Farm - Johnstown, OH - \$5 fee
Monday, September 3, 2007; 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Sustainable Grass-Fed Dairy Farm & Creamery
The Brick Farm & Snowville Creamery Plant
Pomeroy, OH
Saturday, September 8, 2007; 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Miniature Cattle / Marketing through Catering
Sweet Water Ponderosa - Mechanicsburg, OH
Sunday, September 9, 2007; 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Composting on a Diversified Farm
Nothing But Nature - Oakwood, OH
Sunday, September 16, 2007; 3:00pm start

Growing for Market / Extending the Season
Bluebird Farm - Cadiz, OH
Saturday, September 22, 2007; 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Diversified Educational Farm
Turner Farm - Cincinnati, OH
*Saturday, September 29, 2007
10:00am - 11:00am and 1:00pm - 2:00pm*

Farm Tour Flyer Correction: The September 27, 2007, OARDC Soil Quality Workshop, will meet in Wooster, OH, at 9:00 am. Pre-registration is required. Call Alan Sundermeier at 419/354-9050 or email sundermeier.5@osu.edu. (On August 28, a similar workshop will be held in Bowling Green.)



Loading up for a hay ride at the 2007 Twin Parks Farm Tour with Dean McIlvaine - Photo by David Benchoff

Letter From the President

Hello OEFFA,

The growing season seems to get better and better. We have had some nice timely rain and with the harvest in full swing it looks like it will be a bountiful year indeed. As I have been speaking with growers around the state (and also around the country), the message is always the same, farm markets are busier than ever, sales are up, and everyone (consumers, stores, and chefs) is screaming for locally produced food. What a great time to be a grower! I feel the acceleration of the move to local food is the result of a number of things, including: the hard work over the past 20 years of the local growers across the country in educating the public and providing the best food you can ever hope to eat; the implementation of the National Organic Program; and the hard work of all the wonderful organizations like OEFFA.

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- The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association news is published bimonthly as part of the educational mission of OEFFA, a nonprofit organization for farmers gardeners and citizens interested in ecological agriculture and creating a sustainable alternative food system.
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- Editorial and advertising correspondence may be sent directly to Anne Bulford at 10600 Mt. Olive Rd., Hopewell, Ohio 43746 or newsletter@oeffa.org. Unsolicited manuscripts welcome. Membership information is available on the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org or from the Columbus OEFFA office (see address above.)
- Opinions expressed in OEFFA news are those of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of the membership, officers, or directors.
- OEFFA does not endorse the products or services of any advertiser, and reserves the right to refuse placement of inappropriate advertising.
- OEFFA Ed Inc. is recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and donations to OEFFA Ed are deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.

OEFFA shall be a democratic association of chartered grassroots chapters, existing within state bylaws, working together to create a promote a healthful, ecological, accountable and sustainable system of agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere.

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Next deadline - Sept 15, 2007

Member of COSMO (Community Shares of Mid-Ohio)

You may have noticed in the last newsletter the article about Michael Henney winning the 2007 Ohio FFA Organic Agriculture Management Proficiency Award. This award was initiated by and is sponsored by OEFFA, and it is the only such award in the entire country. I am proud that OEFFA is a leader in recognizing the young men and women who work in the area of organic agriculture in our state. Sean McGovern, of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), suggested this past month that groups in other states follow OEFFA's lead. In response to Sean's idea, I am challenging all the organic groups across the country to contact state FFA organization about sponsoring an Organic Proficiency award, and quite possibly this could lead to a national award in the future.

It is with sadness that I inform you that a good friend of mine, Clayton Knepley, passed away on July 26, 2007. Clayton was a founding and current member of OEFFA, as well as of many other local, state, and national agriculture groups. His knowledge of organic and sustainable agriculture was incredible, but one of his most noted involvements was being a part of the group that formed OEFFA. Clayton, you will be missed.

- Mike Laughlin



ORGANIC CHEF SHOWDOWN!

In the Wild Oats café:

Wednesday, September 26th, 6:00-8:00pm
1555 W. Lane Avenue, Upper Arlington, OH 43221
(next to Lane Ave. shopping center)

Do you like "Iron Chef"? You'll love this event! Attendees of this year's "Organic Chef Showdown" will be treated to light nosh and hors d'oeuvres, samples, and wine tasting while Wild Oats' Chef Ugur and Chef Tony Miller, from the restaurant Latitude 41, battle for culinary supremacy! Secret ingredients will be provided by local organic farmers (including OEFFA farmers), and the competition will be tight. These talented gourmet chefs will need to work hard to impress the panel of celebrity judges with fast-paced creativity under serious time constraints. The dee-jay will be popular radio-voice Johnny DiLoretto. There will also be a huge raffle for gift cards, a gift basket, and other fabulous prizes. All proceeds from this event will be donated to OEFFA. Call the store at 614/481-3400 for more information.

Farm Bill

Political Update

By Carol Goland, Executive Director, OEFFA

On July 27th, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the Farm, Nutrition and Energy Act of 2007 on a vote of 231-191, with the vote falling generally along party lines.

The House Farm Bill takes several steps forward by providing increased--though still not enough--support for beginning farmers, farmers' markets, value-added producer grants, and organic production.

Two new initiatives included in the House Farm Bill would help farmers retain more of the food dollar through support for local processing and distribution facilities, while increasing consumer access to locally produced, healthy food. The *Healthy Food Enterprise Loan Guarantee* program, would provide guaranteed loans for infrastructure projects to support the aggregating, processing, or marketing of locally or regionally produced agricultural products. In addition, the *Healthy Food Urban Enterprise Development Program* would provide grants for feasibility studies for the establishment of processing and distribution facilities.

Several provisions of the Farm Bill support organic agriculture, including an increase in funding for the *Organic Research and Extension Initiative*, the establishment of an *Organic Conversion Assistance Program* to provide technical, educational, and financial assistance to farmers who wish to transition from conventional to organic production, and an increase in funding for the organic cost share program.

While these are positive steps forward, the House Farm Bill also took some major steps back, including tremendous cuts to the *Conservation Security Program* (effectively shelving the program until 2012) and a change from mandatory to discretionary funding for the *Community Food Project Competitive Grants Program*.

Thanks to everyone who responded to our Action Alerts by contacting their Representative in Washington. They really do pay attention to those calls.

Next up: the Senate will be debating its version of the Farm Bill.

If you are interested in making calls to your Senators as the Senate Farm Bill progresses, please email Carol Goland (cgoland@oeffa.org). For more information about the Farm Bill, please see the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's website at www.msawg.org.

Member Recommendations...

Is your garden space too big for a rototiller but too small for a tractor? A nice overview of two-to-eight-hp, two-and-four-wheel tractors and implements is at endtimesreport.com/garden_tractor_gardening.html.

- Paul Etheridge

We use hog and cattle panels for trellising vertically. We lash it to metal fence posts for Jack-b-Little pumpkins and small hard shell gourds, or use it hooped and pinned to the ground with ground staples as arbors for hop, roses, and clematis in our perennial gardens.

- Kristi Fisher

I use old bread trays to hold pint and quart boxes of produce. They look nice and stack well for transport from field to market.

-Susan Moss

Farms and Foods of Ohio...

Continued from front page

In June, at the onset of summer, Mary Lou Suszko's book, *Farms and Foods of Ohio: From Garden Gate to Dinner Plate*, was released. Suszko is a food enthusiast, writer, and culinary instructor who resides locally in Vermillion, Ohio. *Farms and Foods* is her first book, and what better subject to begin with than Ohio family farms, vineyards, and chefs?

The author takes the reader along with her on a vibrant and delicious journey across the state of Ohio. Readers drop in on farmers, vintagers, and chefs who are proud to share their fields, kitchens, and craft. Along the way readers collect 123 delicious recipes inspired by local cuisine. Suszko's biography/ cookbook hybrid is perfect for scanning on a summer road trip or while lounging on your porch.

Soon after I obtained *Farms and Foods of Ohio*, I took it 90 miles southeast to the Athens Farmers' Market, where several of the farmers that are highlighted in the book sell their produce. A bit surprised to be asked, each farmer humbly autographed their personal story in the book. It was at that moment that I made two personal promises: No. 1--Meet every farmer, vintager, and chef in the book; and No. 2--Encourage Mary Lou Suszko to write more books so that every farmer, vintager, and chef in Ohio with a commitment to growing and using Ohio produce can be heralded along side those in her first volume.

I'll be eagerly waiting. Maybe her next volume will be next summer's perfect read!

Mary Lou Suszko will be signing books at the Clintonville Farmers' Market in September.

Chickens are cheaper than cable!

Breaking Ground

A Column for New Farmers

By Joan Richmond, Meadow Rise Farm

Thoughts on Business and Profit

Recently, I shared in a discussion among women farmers (Promoting Ohio Women in Agriculture) about the new/proposed rules for handling vegetables. New farmers are often intimidated by rules and regulations for so many aspects of a farming business.

Some trends in food-handling regulations disturb me. First, while I certainly don't want to be responsible for putting a three-year old on dialysis from tainted spinach (not to mention the liabilities), I also want to farm responsibly without undue government interference.

Let us remember, it was in the name of "public health safety" that small-scale, local dairying disappeared... and still struggles in its infant resurgence.

Now some calls for ensuring food safety involve \$125 water testing biennially on irrigation sources. Others call for testing compost five times a year.

I know I share many of your experiences when I say that I know each and every molecule that goes into my soil, from the re-Vita, to the cover crops, to the seeds, to the potato beetle larvae I grind into the dirt twice a day under my shoe. I can tell you every morsel stewing in my compost pile, and I drink the very water that supplies my irrigation tapes.

It's corporate organic that is causing the problems, and yet it's the small farmer who will pay. A CNN story recently revealed that the farm that caused one *e. coli* outbreak last year had had 12+ reports of illnesses, and the FDA had sent that farm letters. LETTERS. That's all. Existing laws simply weren't enforced. Now we're getting new ones. And guess who will have to deal with the brunt of it? It's like NAIS tagging--Big Chicken Factories are supposedly going to be able to tag their chickens in something like 20,000 bird lots. Debate continues about whether backyard poultry keepers like me will pay to have each bird labeled and tracked. Yet I have my own guess as to whose chicken is more likely to incubate bird 'flu.

I'm probably painting with a rather large brush here, but I am also recalling my own community's agricultural history. I know where the poultry farm was on Leedy Road. Where the hog farm was on St. Rt. 13. The dairies on Bellville-Johnsville Road and St. Rt. 97. The Fredericktown processor, which would let beef hang



for up to two weeks to age. I remember families who lived on small diversified farms. All gone. And in Bellville we're thankful that at least we have seven antique shops to replace the two clothing stores, laundromat, meat market, two restaurants, and one hardware store. We've kept the drugstore, barber, feed store, and hardware store--the kind where

you can go in and buy one 6-cent washer for the steel glider you're restoring, instead of driving to the new Wal-Mart five miles up the road, then searching for 37 minutes to get a pack of 40 washers for \$1.79 that are *almost* the right size. As if these things are not related.

Sometimes I feel I am part of a "hinge" generation. I'm almost 45, and I remember my parents' and grandparents' stories of farm, school, factory life. My Grandma drove a horse and buggy to town to attend high school. My daughter is considering taking a degree on-line when she finishes her B.S. from OSU next year. I remember black and white TV and Grandpa's crank Farmall, but I have taught classes online and teach in computer labs, encouraging students to create digital movies along with their written compositions.

I wonder whether business is also at a new hinge point. I hope we continue to have OEFFA programs on business issues, and I know I still have a lot to learn. However, I think we must consider carefully what we mean when we say "business." My farm is a business. I know it is--I have a tax ID number from the State of Ohio and LLC status with the Secretary of State. I have an accountant. I have a lawyer. I have liability insurance.

But what is a business? What does "profit" mean? Many of us are small farmers. We are women farmers. We are family farmers. Does the meaning of these concepts in any way differ from that meaning for traditional agri-business? And if I don't have a spreadsheet that takes into account every scrap of expenses I have and translates that into a minimum price for snap beans per pound does that mean that I am just a hobbyist? A dabbler?

Doubtless we are a generation raised on science and objective results. Science and business practices today require us to withdraw emotionally from our work and see nature and people as materials to be quantified, manipulated, and controlled, to be counted and measured and weighed. Such disconnectedness is not the kind of

practice I want to engage in. I want to be involved, immersed. And so profit is often going to be “unaccountable.”

Part of the “yield” of my growing practices includes:

- Soil more fertile than when I started growing
- Delighting my families with some produce that really takes too much effort (e.g., snap beans, baby lettuce, raspberries)
- Eating from my garden without detoxifying
- Growing more nutritious vegetables
- Hearing that one of my littlest CSA children got her final test, free of cancer
- Healthful eating and exercise for my family
- Watching my chickens living a happy chicken life
- Community involvement
- Meaningful work
- Peace of mind

I want to manage my business so the monetary returns enable me to continue. I’d like to grow until I reach a balance in size--the right mix of work and return. But I want a business that makes room for compassion, cooperation, community, and nature.

Recently someone suggested to me that women “of a certain age” missed instruction in modern business, implying, I guess, that perhaps this is the reason for my resistance to established business models. (Does that start in the mid-40s? It reminds me of when in my mid-20s I got called “ma’am” for the first time. At least no one has asked if I want an AARP discount.) But my resistance is not due to ignorance nor to obstinacy, to fear nor doddering incompetence. I am not a member of the gardening set, puttering about in long skirts, quaint hats, and brightly painted little potting tools.

Maybe I want Something New. I want to grow things. I want to feed people. I want it to pay for itself with some money left over. I don’t need to get rich. I don’t want to compete my colleagues out of business.

How? Well, I keep learning. I gave up on peas (too time consuming) and carrots (I cannot keep the damn things weeded), but grow more varieties of lettuce and fewer of squash.

To set prices? I look at what Kroger does, what the organic price index says (which frankly isn’t particularly helpful for me) and what others at the market do. Also what Trinity Farms, my local organic market, does. In May, Friend A sells organic asparagus at Westerville for \$7/lb. Kroger’s sells it for \$1.99, Trinity for \$3.00. I go to Trinity and suggest to Carolyn and Carol they could get \$4.00. (Their/our local customers are not going to pay \$7. We all know this.) So they do, and give me \$3.25. Is this a scientific system? No, but it works well, and I make a tidy sum on asparagus and plan another row.

But this pricing index is based on some legwork, my own powers of observation and persuasion, plus community connection and familiarity. Is it inefficient? I dunno. I do know that I made money on asparagus, and so did Trinity, and its customers and my CSA got some healthful asparagus at a pretty good price. Everybody benefited. Where does that show up in my bottom line? In the Gross Domestic Product?

Traditional measures of business success must change, and changes are coming. For example, I recommend reading Bill McKibben’s *Deep Ecology: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* and Riane Eisler’s *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics* to discover more about holistic and inclusive ways of determining “profit.” They both promote new economic production practices and measurement of value.

These new ways are truly more earth and human centered (Is there a difference?). I am a woman farmer, and I will not be shoved, dragged, pummeled, nor hammered into some corporate business model. I won’t. I’ll quit and do something else first. Not because, as I mentioned above, I’m naive, helpless, stubborn, or afraid. We will Find Another Way.

Maybe one of the things OEFFA and other local agricultural communities will have been is one more enclave trying Something Different, part of a larger movement. We don’t yet know what it will have looked like (I write in the future anterior). But we are creating it as we go.

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Job Announcement

Organic Certification Program Assistant

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) announces an **immediate** opening for an **Certification Program Assistant**.

The **Certification Program Assistant** performs duties associated with the organic certification program as directed by the Certification Coordinator. Ideally, applicants should have an agricultural background (organic preferred but not required) and knowledge of organic standards and regulations; candidates with other relevant backgrounds will be considered. The position is based in Columbus. There may be some travel in Ohio.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience (preferred areas are agriculture, food technology, law, or environmental studies)
- Excellent organizational skills
- Excellent communication and writing skills
- Consistent attention to detail
- Highly proficient computer skills, including word processing and spreadsheets (PC platform)
- A genuine desire to assist farmers

Position Responsibilities

- Undertake daily administrative tasks
- Answer questions about certification
- Understand and implement policies and procedures
- Track application status
- Participate in general staff meetings
- Handle correspondence, phone, fax, and email communications
- Represent OEFFA at public events
- Assist with inspector training workshops

This is a full time position (35-40 hours/week) at a pay rate of \$12/hour. Benefits include health insurance.

How to Apply: Applications consist of a cover letter, résumé, and the names and contact information for three references (please indicate their relationship to you). Electronically submitted applications (preferred) should be addressed to Jannie Marr Werum, Certification Coordinator at [janjemarr@oeffa.org](mailto:janiemarr@oeffa.org), with a copy to Carol Goland, Executive Director, at cgoland@oeffa.org. Applications can also be mailed to Jannie Marr Werum, OEFFA Certification, P.O. Box 1025, Columbus, OH 43216.



Certification Report

By Jannie Marr Werum,
OEFFA Certification

This summer is proving to be as expansive as we projected. Over 400 applications have been received at the time of this writing and the last deadline of July 15 is close. Part of the increase is due to many new dairy farms joining in, especially from Holmes County. So remember when you drink your Organic Valley dairy products and Horizon Dairy products that you could be drinking locally produced milk. Many of the dairy producers are raising their herds on pasture; can you tell the difference?

We have been receiving applications from as far away as Nebraska and New York, but the majority are still coming from throughout Ohio. We also have new processors/handlers supplying livestock feed, cookies, teas, noodles, and cheeses to the market. Although most of the processors use the USDA labels, some are also displaying the OEFFA seal. Look for it as you shop, and be proud that you can buy something your own organization is helping get out into the market.

Steve Sears gave a presentation to the national meeting of the Dairy Division of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) at its annual meeting held in Worthington, Ohio, July 10, 2007, on the growth of organic dairy in Ohio. OEFFA Certification is projected to receive 602 applications this year of which we anticipate 249 dairies. This is 41.4% of all of the projected applications. As a reference point, in 2002, we had 18 dairies, fewer than 9% of the total applications (206) received that year.

Questions on the progress of your certification should be addressed to Steve and Sylvia in West Salem at 419/853-4060. The West Salem office is still your best source of knowledge about certification in general and your certification in particular.

Have a safe summer and keep growing!

Rangeland Management Strategies is the latest of a series of publications that feature the most creative research funded by SARE. Preview or download the entire publication at www.sare.org/publications/rangeland.htm.

Farm to Table: Savoring the Season

By Trish Mumme, Garden Patch Produce



Summer one-dish meals

No one wants to spend a lot of time in the kitchen in August, but when the garden veggies are piling up on the counter or bursting from the refrigerator, some cooking will be necessary. One-dish meals that use a wide variety of garden vegetables and fresh herbs, yet don't take a lot of preparation, are just the right thing to serve for dinner.

Here are some of my favorite recipes that I reach for in August, when everything is coming in from the garden. If you've got some cheese, pasta or couscous on hand, you can probably whip up one of the following recipes right from the garden or from your "haul" from the farmers market. Some fresh fruit and a platter of fresh vegetables and dip or some fresh bread are all you need to add to make a complete meal.

Most of these recipes are adapted from Julie Sochacki's 2005 cookbook, *One United Harvest: Creative Recipes from America's Community Supported Farms*.

Summertime Pasta

- 2-3 tab. olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 med. onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 3-4 sweet banana peppers, seeded and sliced in thin strips
- 3 cups assorted summer squash (pattypan, zucchini and/or crookneck) cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 tab. chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tab. chopped fresh basil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 5-6 cups chopped fresh tomatoes
- 1 lb. whole wheat angel hair pasta or spaghetti
- 1/2 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Saute garlic, onion and celery in olive oil in a large skillet till soft. Add banana peppers and cook 3 more minutes. Add summer squash, parsley and basil and cook 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat. Place raw chopped tomatoes in a large bowl. Add the sautéed vegetables and stir. Let set at room temperature while the pasta is cooking. Drain pasta, add to bowl with a dash of olive oil and parmesan cheese. Mix and serve, passing additional parmesan cheese.

Greek Style One-dish Meal

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 onion, diced
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-2 cups beef broth
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat penne pasta, uncooked
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 2 cups cut green beans
- 2 tab. tomato paste
- 2 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1 cup feta cheese

Brown beef with onion and garlic in a large saucepan. Add broth and bring to a boil. Add pasta and return to a boil. Stir in all ingredients except feta. Return to a boil. Add 1/2 cup of feta cheese. Simmer until sauce thickens and pasta is tender, about 7-10 minutes, adding more beef broth if needed. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Summer Bounty Casserole

- 1/2 lb. green or yellow wax beans, bias sliced in 1 inch pieces
 - 2 med. carrots, cut in thin half-moons
 - 2 med. ears corn, cut from cob
 - 1/2 cup couscous
 - 1 cup milk, scalded
 - 2 tab. butter
 - 1/2 tsp. salt
 - 1/4 tsp. pepper
 - 1 cup shredded jack or Muenster cheese, divided.
- Pour hot milk over couscous. Add butter, salt and pepper, and let stand for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, steam beans and carrots over boiling water 5 minutes till almost tender. Add corn and steam 2 more minutes. Mix couscous, veggies, and 3/4 cup of the cheese well and pour in buttered casserole dish. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes, or until casserole is heated through and cheese melts.

Continued on pg. 9

Protect Your Farm By Using Agricultural Districts And Easements

By David G. Cox

Farmers have various laws available to them to protect their farm. For instance, a previous article described how farmers can use agricultural liens to protect themselves in the event that they deliver agricultural products or they board animals and do not get paid by the buyer or the boarders. In this article, two additional means by which farmers can protect themselves will be discussed: the agricultural district and the agricultural easement.

With respect to the agricultural district, Ohio Revised Code Chapter 929 describes how agricultural districts work. Essentially, an area that is used exclusively for "agricultural" purposes can be "designated" an agricultural district. Once the area is designated an agricultural district, certain benefits attach to that designation. However, a certain procedure must be followed before the area can be designated an agricultural district.

First, the land in question must qualify for the designation. In order to qualify, the land in question must have been devoted exclusively to agricultural production for three years prior to the time an application for the designation is submitted. In addition, the land must be more than 10 acres, or if it is not more than 10 acres, then it must have produced an average yearly gross income of \$2,500 during the three years prior to the date the application was submitted. If your land qualifies, you can submit an application to the County Auditor's office on a form provided by the Auditor. Once the application is submitted it is deemed approved if it is not denied within 30 days of filing. After the designation is issued, it is good for five years and can be renewed for five more years.

There are benefits to having your property designated an "agricultural district." For starters, your property has a defense to a nuisance claim. For example, if your property is out in the middle of nowhere and "civilization" begins to encroach or develop into your area, you cannot be deemed to be a nuisance (i.e., your property is noisy, dusty, stinky, etc.) by property owners who subsequently move into your area. An additional benefit is that your property is exempt from property assessments for water and sewer improvements. For instance, if you have a drinking water well and/or septic system and you continue to use those systems you will not have to pay for water/sewer improvements or assessments in your area. However, if you abandon your drinking water well or septic system and switch to the water and sewer services provided by an entity, then you would need to pay for the assessments.

An additional benefit is that your property has added

protections against being "taken" by eminent domain. Specifically, no monies can be allocated or spent on appropriating your property unless and until the Director of Agriculture, after a hearing, has decided that the benefits of appropriation outweigh the benefits of keeping your land as agricultural. Moreover, you also have the benefit of keeping your property conditionally exempt from annexation without your consent.

Agricultural districts are one thing but an agricultural easement, on the other hand, is a different creature. Under Ohio Revised Code Section 5301.67 and following, the purpose of the easement is to ensure that your property remains agricultural forever, with exceptions however. Basically, you can either sell your property to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) for a price or you can donate your land to a non-profit organization (for example, the Nature Conservancy, Farmland Preservation Trust, etc.) that will then monitor your land to ensure that it remains agricultural. Whether you decide to sell or donate, your land must be in a CAUV tax district first. Moreover, your easement, whether sold or donated, must be recorded in the County Recorder's office.

If you decide to sell your land to ODA, it will assess your property and pay you money for it. The maximum amount ODA can pay is one million dollars, yet since the inception of the easement program only one property has ever received more than half a million dollars. If you sell your land for an easement to the state, you will have to pay taxes on the amount you receive. The easement will run with the land, and the land will remain agricultural forever, with one limited exception, which is that the state may decide to extinguish the easement and take the land for eminent domain purposes.

On the other hand, if you decide to donate your land to a non-profit you will get the tax benefit of the donation. Once you donate your land, the land remains agricultural; you can continue to live there and farm it, but the non-profit conducts annual inspections to monitor your activities each year to ensure that you are still engaged in agricultural production. As with the sale, the donation runs with the land, and the easement remains permanent, subject to the same extinguishment described above.

In short, the agricultural district and agricultural easement are two programs designed to preserve and protect farmland. Use the law to your advantage if you are thinking of keeping your farm protected in perpetuity.

Gary Cox is a former Senior Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio, a former organic vegetable farmer, and is now an attorney with the Columbus law firm of Lane, Alton & Horst LLC. This article is intended for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to be nor should it be construed as either the opinion of Lane, Alton & Horst LLC or as legal advice. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not the firm.

Member's Meeting...

Continued from front page

The starting point for this process has been the existing working agenda, and using that, the OEFFA Board has identified four broad areas of focus: (1) Education, Research, and Extension; (2) Marketing; (3) Policy Development and Networking; and (4) Organizational Development. A group of members has been asked to address each of these areas. The next step in the process will be to identify goals within each area and to match these goals with the activities needed to accomplish them.

On Sunday, November 11, these groups will be meeting at Stratford Ecological Center in Delaware. The OEFFA Board invites all OEFFA members to attend and participate in this day of concrete thinking, courteous listening, and focused exchange about the long-term direction of the organization and the means to achieve it.

Any members who would like to participate in this important work day are asked to contact the chair of the appropriate group by Monday, October 15th:

Group 1 - Education, Research and Extension: Charlie Frye, 330/625-5931, Revnancy95@msn.com

Group 2 - Marketing: David Benchoff, 419/282-0164, Ambanz1@hughes.net

Group 3 - Policy Development, Networking: Brett Joseph, 440/599-2109, brett_joseph@earthlink.net

Group 4 - Organizational Development: Steve Edwards, 513/681-7933, stedwards@fuse.net

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More Farm to Table Recipes

Swiss Chard Frittata

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tab. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. each dried (or 2 tab. each basil, oregano, and thyme)
- 1/4 tsp. dried rosemary or 1 tsp. fresh
- Fresh ground pepper to taste
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 bunch swiss chard leaves, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 4 oz. mushrooms, sliced
- 5 eggs
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

In a 10-inch cast iron skillet, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil with salt, pepper and herbs, about 5 minutes. Add other vegetables and sauté 5 more minutes. Beat eggs and add cheese. Turn heat up in frying pan and add egg/cheese mixture over veggies. Place pan in oven at 400 degrees and cook for 12-15 minutes, or until set.

Ratatouille

- 3 tab. olive oil
 - 2 cups chopped onions
 - 4 garlic cloves, minced
 - 2 lbs. eggplant, unpeeled and cubed
 - 2 med. zucchini or summer squash, cubed
 - 2 bell peppers, any color, chopped
 - 3 lbs. ripe tomatoes, chopped
 - 3 fresh thyme sprigs
 - 1 fresh rosemary sprig
 - 1/2 cup each chopped fresh basil and parsley
 - Salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste
- Saute onions, garlic, and eggplant in oil in a large pot about 10 minutes. Add zucchini and peppers and sauté 6 more minutes. Mix in tomatoes, thyme and rosemary. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until vegetables are very tender. Add basil, parsley, salt, and pepper the last few minutes. Serve hot over pasta, with cheese. Or serve cold with pita bread.

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Books

Three Good Books

By Herman Beck-Chenoweth, Back40 Books

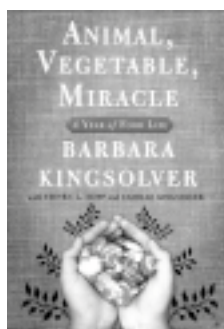
Here we are again facing midsummer's-night steam. I have three good books to share this time; just the thing to take with you out under the old shade tree with some herbal tea.

My first book is perfect for you practical folks who want to have a top quality garden cart but don't want to spend the big bucks most of them self for. Besides, there is pleasure and satisfaction to be gained from doing it yourself. Our friend, Herrick Kimball, the master mechanic who designed both the Whizbang Chicken Scalding and Plucker has a new book out titled *Anyone Can Build a Whizbang Garden Cart*. Similar in design to those built by Carts Vermont and sold by stores such as Lehman Hardware, this cart is just as sturdy and a whole lot less expensive. All of the parts are available "over the counter," and just about anyone, experienced or not, can make one of these beauties.



Herrick has a great talent for writing how-to books: he uses lots of clear illustrations, even showing the length of screws and other hardware. He also has a great sense of humor: One of his suggestions is that you name your cart, similar to the way folks name boats. He is dedicated to the environment and states the following: "This book encourages the use of locally-available, salvaged, scrounged and/or recycled materials... No plastic components are used in the construction of the cart.. "Whizbang" is a word that means conspicuous for excellence or startling effect.... It's not called a Whizbang Garden Cart for nothing. This jewel of book is 8 x 11, has a measly but adequate 45 pages, and sells for \$14.95. (Please add \$2.00 handling fee if this is the only title that you order.) You'll love it: well worth the money.

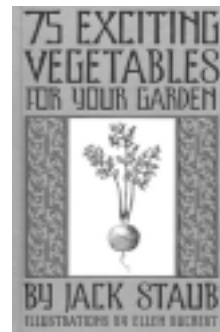
Next, we have *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver. With characteristic poetry and pluck, Kingsolver and her family sweep readers along their journey away from industrial food pipelines to a rural life in which they vow to eat only locally raised food. Their good natured search yields surprising discoveries about turkey sex life and overzealous zucchini plants, en route to a food culture that is better



for the neighborhood and better on the table. I can't imagine an OEFFA member who wouldn't want to read this delightful, insightful book. This is a quality hard cover with 365 pages. \$26.95.

Lastly, I have *75 Exciting Vegetables for Your Garden* by Jack Staub. This old-fashioned looking book contains elegant prose and beautiful original art (illustrations are by Ellen Buchert), a keepsake volume that examines seventy-five unusual and eminently beautiful vegetables that are attractive while growing and yield delightfully edible fruits. There are also recipes, tidbits of unexpected lore and a touch of nostalgia. This is an heirloom book that is sure to be passed from generation to generation. Again, this is a top quality hard cover, contains 240 pages, full color paintings and a wonderful resource guide. The cost is \$24.95.

Remember, these books are all available from *Back40Books.com* and shipping is free, unless otherwise noted. When ordering, please enter the code "OEFFA" in the promo box online or tell the customer representative you are from OEFFA if you order by phone.



Happy reading! - Herm

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Resources

Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Program -

Annie's Homegrown, maker of natural and organic mac & cheese and dedicated sustainability supporter, is now accepting applications for its new Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Program. The new program will award \$50,000 to undergraduate and graduate students pursuing studies in sustainable and organic agriculture, including three \$10,000 scholarships and eight \$2,500 scholarships. Annie's believes healthy farms are the foundation for healthy foods (which help make healthy people!). For more information visit www.annies.com/programs/sustainable_agriculture_scholarship.htm Applications will be accepted through Sept. 30, 2007. Final decisions: January 2008.

Factory Farm Map - Food and Water Watch has created a unique map that shows how many factory farms are in each state and county. How does your state and county stack up against the rest of the country? Who has the most chicken farms? Where are the big dairies located? Find this out and more at: www.factoryfarmmap.org

Managing Agricultural Landscapes for Environmental Quality- This multidisciplinary book brings together the expertise of individuals in the scientific community to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation practices at landscape and watershed scales. It presents the needs and perspectives of a wide range of practitioners and policy makers. To order visit www.sare.org/Webstore, call 301/504-5411 or email san_assoc@sare.org. Agricultural educators may place orders for print copies in quantity at no cost.

Events can be found on the OEFFA website!

SARE's 20th ANNIVERSARY



PHOTO CONTEST!
Details: www.sare.org/2008conference/photcontest

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Four grand-prize winners go to SARE conference for free!
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 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) is a part of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA.
18300 Baltimore Ave., Bldg. 046, Beltsville, MD 20705
www.sare.org/2008conference/photcontest Deadline: October 31, 2007

Meet Me at the Fayre!

Flying J Farm – Johnstown, OH - Labor Day Weekend
By Richard Jensen

Join the Flying J Farm, Blue Rock Station, OEFFA and several other organizations in promoting green living in Ohio by attending the Ohio Green Living Fayre on Labor Day weekend, September 1-3, 2007. The Fayre will offer opportunities to teach, learn, and promote sustainable living in Ohio.

The pre-fayre weekend workshops – never before offered in the Central Ohio area will feature hands-on green building construction. The real fun will take place on Monday (Labor Day), with exhibits, games, horse drawn wagon rides, demonstrations, booths, music, local food, fishing, nature walks, and more. Everyone can join in to learn during workshops on sustainable agriculture, alternative energy, sustainable health, and living simply.

Pre-Fayre Workshops

The Fayre weekend begins with two hard-to-find workshops to be held all day on Saturday, September 1 and, Sunday, September 2. (call for times). Two days of fun and learning... you can camp, enjoy great food, and learn how to build a green building from a pattern that can be used as a garden shed, or any number of larger structures such as a two-bed cabin or a chateau.

Workshop #1: Timber Framing Workshop taught by Jay Warmke of Blue Rock Station

Workshop #2: Basic Straw Bale Construction taught by Jay and Annie Warmke of Blue Rock Station

Event Details

On Labor Day the gates will open at 10:00. Two tracks of classes will start at 11:00 on the four topics: sustainable agriculture, alternative energy, sustainable health, and living simply. In the afternoon, a farm tour will focus on the Flying J Farm's method of gardening called, "Gardening with Grass."

This fun family-oriented event will take place on the Flying J Farm located at 5329 Van Fossen Road, Johnstown, OH. The event will be alcohol and drug free. Children are encouraged, pets are NOT.

Volunteers are needed from sponsoring organizations, including OEFFA, to assist in planning and carrying out the event. Interested sponsors, vendors, presenters, general volunteers, and volunteer musicians still sought (500 to 1,000 people expected).

For more information visit ohiogreenliving.org, email Dick Jensen at rjensen@core.com (740/967-4030), or contact Jay and Annie Warmke at Blue Rock Station Green Living Center at jay@bluerockstation.com. (740/674-4300; www.bluerockstation.com)



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UNCLASSIFIED ADS

Tamworth Organic Feeder Pigs - Available late August. Contact Jeff Dickinson at 740/363-2548; stratfordcenter@aol.com

Down Sizing Herd - Two registered Toggenburg does looking for a good home: a dry three-year-old, and a two year old in milk. Raised organically and with loving care. Would take patience to milk them next year, but they are both healthy, strong, and registered.

Contact Laura Ann at
 740/803-1444 or
selurising@msn.com



For Sale - Organic Farm, Belmont County, OH. An Amish family, deeply committed to organic practices, has been growing vegetables on this scenic tract of land for 14 years, and the results are stunning. Those who practice organic farming know that patience is required when working with nature and the organic method. Under the care of a master gardener, the land is responding to years of good inputs with increasingly productive harvests. Raven Rocks has been bringing vegetables to the Farmers' Market in Worthington, many coming from this farm. The family wants to move closer to their religious group and is reluctantly selling the farm. Aaron is also a master carpenter and the large house he and his family have built is full of his ingenuity and craftsmanship. We would like to see someone get this farm who could continue to make use of what the Schrock family have begun with its wonderful organic farm. 76 acres (35 tillable, the rest wooded with creek) In addition to the house, there is a barn, a woodworking shop and a small greenhouse. \$239,500. Steve Chupp. Office: 330/339-1196; Direct: 330/465-4725