“Absence Labeling”  
Becoming Hot Issue

By David G. Cox (AKA Gary Cox)

Pennsylvania recently became the first state to outlaw what has been described as “absence” claims on dairy products. What is an absence claim you ask? An example would be a carton of milk that has a label that says it is “hormone free” or claims “this milk is rBST free.” Why has Pennsylvania outlawed such claims? The reasoning is enough to make a consumer want to shout at the government.

It all begins with Monsanto, which manufactures a synthetic hormone known as rBST (aka rBGH). Monsanto’s rBST is supposed to make cows more productive in their lactating cycle, thereby increasing the amount of milk the cow produces. Farmers who use rBST in their production process swear by its use and argue it makes them more profitable because they can get more milk from their cows than they can without using rBST. They also claim that rBST has no harmful effects on either their cows or on the people who consume the milk from those cows. Finally, they claim that since hormones are naturally occurring in cows, rBST (a synthetic hormone) cannot be distinguished from other hormones. However, these same farmers generally do not claim on their milk cartons “we use rBST in our process.”

Continued on page 12

More about Dairy Labeling on page 6
Organic Education Hire -

The OEFFA staff is excited to have Mike Anderson join OEFFA as the new Organic Education Program Coordinator. He will be available to OEFFA members interested in learning more about specific issues regarding organic horticultural and field crops, and will oversee the OEFFA apprentice program. His position was created in response to a growing need for production information, and is funded, at least for now, by a special grant.

“I am thrilled that we were able to find a candidate with such strong professional credentials, as well as impeccable personal qualities,” Carol Goland, (Executive Director) told the Board. “Mike will truly be a fabulous addition to our staff and to our common cause of building a strong and healthy food system in Ohio and beyond.”

The OEFFA staff would like to extend special thanks to Trish Mumme for her work as Apprenticeship Program Coordinator. While this work will now be done by the new Organic Educator, Mike Anderson, her past work with the program is appreciated.

Thanks Trish!

Check out the next issue of the OEFFA News for a special meet the staff section!

Next deadline: January 7
Reclaiming Economics

By Peter Bane

When the subject of economics comes up, most people’s eyes glaze over. But we all understand bread-and-butter issues. They’re on everyone’s mind these days as the national economy begins to contract. The purpose of the economy, the Greek root of which, oikonomos, means “the regulation of the household,” is to deliver the goods and services we need to live well.

Our present economy does this by a terribly complicated and energy intensive system of global production and sales, that as we are increasingly aware, is vulnerable to disruptions from lots of random forces, and rests on a dwindling bubble of fossil fuels. The profits can (with effort) be traced, though they don’t go to many of us, but the costs are carefully hidden from view. These include toxins in our bodies, mountains of garbage, millions in prison, deterioration of our families and communities, soil erosion, loss of political power, and the seemingly irrational eruption of violence around the world that some like to call terrorism.

Besides fossil fuels, the other supports for the formal economy of corporate balance sheets, banks and brokerages include, most importantly, nature—which provides all the real goods that ultimately get bought, sold, or borrowed against, and the informal or household economy wherein we all do for ourselves and each other without exchanging money. Regardless of the trajectory of GDP (but especially when it goes up), these are the real losers in the present economic game and we all know it. Forests get clearcut, Mom goes to work, there’s no vacation this year, god-forbid anyone should get sick.

Since the shell game of the capitalist system is running out of fuel, its ability to fool the rest of us will soon evaporate and we’ll be left with only the informal economy to meet our needs. That wouldn’t be so bad if the household were in good shape, as it still is in some traditional cultures like Slovenia, a little central European country that used to be part of Yugoslavia. There, the standard of living is good, if somewhat lower than in the US, but most households still keep a cow or a few chickens, put up hay, grow grapes and make wine, and of course tend a large garden. The countryside is well wooded and every property seems to have not only plenty of firewood, but a large stack of sawn lumber put by for the next project. Yes there are cars and shops, and most people have a town job, but the culture of self-reliance is still strong.

Not so in Ohio or most of the USA, where food and everything else comes from the big box store, sourced 2,000 or 12,000 miles away.

OEFFA members understand something about the value of locally grown food and the connections it makes in community, but what about the other basic elements of our economy: water, energy, shelter, tools, transport? How will we supply these when they are no longer reliably available at the tap, the pump, or the mall?

The national economy has collapsed within living memory, and the challenges and stresses it faces today are far greater than they were in 1932. East Texas crude was coming on line in a big way in the 30s, but now oil worldwide will be in dwindling supply forevermore. Population was then two billion; now we are 6.5 billion headed for 8 or 9 or 10. Climate was rough in the Dust Bowl era... for a few years, and then it recovered nicely. But we face climate shift on a scale unknown in human history. Grain harvests don’t match consumption and reserves are at dangerously low levels. Throw in the very strong possibility of runaway melting of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets and inundation of the world’s coastal cities looms as the refugee crisis for all time. No governments or economies that we know have come through such catastrophic conditions intact.

It looks like it is high time to begin saving the economy from itself. You see, all the global economic, environmental, and social problems of today’s world (and they are massive and unprecedented), are problems of success. The world GDP is bigger than ever, more people are being fed (and more are still hungry) than ever before. Corporations are behemoths, global trade is colossal, tractors are churning more acres of soil, coal shovels are stripping more mountains, oil wells are pumping faster and deeper than ever before. And... doing more of the same is certain to get us into deep water.

Changing directions means changing everything about the way we use energy and material, in other words, the economy. Climate change and peak oil/coal/gas are combining to force us to live within an ecological budget for the first time since the dawn of the Industrial Age, perhaps for the first time since the beginning of history. And we have a very steep learning curve ahead of us. Developed economies like the U.S. are going to have to go on an energy and materials diet, only instead of giving up that second cookie or chocolate for Lent, we are like the obese person who needs to shed 150 pounds, and fast. Not so we can look good and go out dancing again, but so that the house doesn’t burn down or, more to the point, so everyone in New York, Florida, and California doesn’t move to Ohio. And, it just might be good for us, and could be very satisfying as well.

Continued on page 10
OEFFA chapters provide a great way to meet like-minded people in your region. Each group is different and responds specifically to the needs of its members. Chapter membership is not restricted by county lines and is open to all members.

If you would like to form a new chapter, please visit www.oeffa.org or give us a call!

~ Capital Chapter (Franklin Co.) ~
OEFFA’s Capital Chapter finishes off its second year with another Garlic Festival under its belt. We were at the North Market this year, where good fun and lots of great foods were served up. We also held the first in a series of educational events with an Apple Butter Cook Down. We are planning future events in this vein to share some of the “lost arts” of canning, pickling, and so forth.

In January, we’ll be putting together a group order for the Fedco Seeds catalog and other suggested catalogs. We should be able to receive a discount. Let us know if you’d like to take part!

Our chapter welcomes any and all persons interested in attending our meetings and events or volunteering along with us to help make these events happen.

Suzie Watkins-Martinez, watkinsmartinez@hotmail.com and Renee Hunt, 614/523-0895

~ OK River Valley Chapter ~
(Brown and Adams Co. [OH], Mason and Robinson Co. [KY])
The OK River Valley Chapter recently met for the first time in awhile. We have some new members as a result of contact made at the County Fair last Sept. We’re looking into seed money for farmers markets, a community kitchen, and a mobile cheese factory. We are also exploring the possibility of purchasing supplies together and taking on Thanksgiving boxes as a regional project.

Julie Kline, 937/392-1543, jkparsnip@yahoo.com

~ SW Ohio Chapter (Cincinnati area) ~
The Southwest Ohio Chapter just held its annual December potluck dinner and reviewed the past year’s events and started making plans for next year. This will continue at the January meeting. This past year the group held a Taste of Tomatoes at the Hyde Park Farmers’ Market. Group members plan to participate in a group seed and potato order and to have an OEFFA booth at the spring sale at Grannie’s Gardens. Members are also working on a flyer that will highlight the products available from local farmers.

Steve Edwards, 513/681-7933, stedwards@fuse.net

~ REAL Food Chapter ~
(Wayne and Holmes Co.)
The Real FOOD Chapter of OEFFA will resume meeting in January and will kick off the 2008 season by putting together our group potato seed order (as facilitiated last year by Jerome Rigot). In the months leading up to our “BUSY Season,” we are hoping to continue having speakers/lectures from the researchers in the OFFER Program (Organic Food and Farm Research) at OARDC-OSU Extension. In 2007, meetings were held at the Wayne County Public Library Conference Room, and will likely be held in 2008 at the new Public Library facility.

Dave Benchoff, 419/282-0164, ambanzl@hughes.net

~ Athens Area Chapter ~
We have had a good year here in the Appalachian hills. The Athens chapter has had five gatherings: visiting Ohio University’s Eco-house, The Niches Retreat in Vinton Co., Green Edge Gardens, and Art Gish’s Dutch Creek Farm. We sponsored a talk on Clean Energy by Michelle Greenfield of Third-Sun. We just completed our second Thanksgiving box sale and sold 23 boxes.

Our last activity of the year will be Tuesday, December 11, 7:00 PM at the Athens Co. Extension Office. The evening’s program will be a slide presentation on old barns by Tom O’Grady and a brief look at the cultural settlement patterns as seen by the types of barns with a discussion of their architectural characteristics and uses and the future of barns in our changing landscape.

Ed Perkins, 740/664-3370, perkaber@juno.com

~ Heart of Ohio Chapter ~
(Knox, Licking, and Delaware Co.)
The two main accomplishments of our chapter for 2007 are combined seed and potato orders that gave our members a discount by sending in one order to one seed company and one potato company; and organizing and selling Thanksgiving boxes filled with home grown food for delicious Thanksgiving meals. About 75 boxes were sold through the OEFFA website this year, a number that grows a bit each year. We will also be helping with the OEFFA website this year as much as we can. When we weren’t planning these things, we had discussions of various topics.

Larry Wright, 740/967-8383, wrightacres@netzero.net
Certification Report
By Janie Marr Werum,
OEFFA Certification

The calendar year is almost up but applications keep rolling in. So far this year, we have had 566 applications, another record! With 76 renewals still outstanding we expect to surpass our estimate of 600 this year. By now you would have received your renewal letters if we haven’t heard from you yet this year. We hope next year to get everybody but handlers into an earlier rotation so that we can see all of your crops in the ground. Please help our hard working inspectors by being available when they schedule you.

I appreciate all of your patience with any delays you have experienced and hope you can join me in appreciating the many farms and farm families, and processing facilities that support organic agriculture.

At the recent OEFFA Business and Planning Meeting held at Stratford, many great suggestions were put forth for helping Certification move into the future. Those in attendance also confirmed that OEFFA Certification is committed to being a local certifier and not to go for international accreditation. There were suggestions for web information, fact sheets, and stewardship/mentor ideas. OEFFA’s new Organic Program Educator, Mike Anderson, will present educational programs designed to help new and experienced organic farmers improve their operations. This will benefit OEFFA growers interested in certification and the Certification staff a great deal. Led by OEFFA Certification Board President, John Sowder, the planning meeting group working on certification included certification staff, inspectors, and growers. Thank you all for your thoughtful proposals.

We’ll be setting up shop at the Conference with a booth and we’ll be presenting a workshop for all of you with questions about certification, the National Organic Program (NOP), or about your own operation. Hope to see you there.

Sylvia Upp and Steve Sears will be retiring as of the end of this calendar year. Please join me in thanking them for their many years of service to OEFFA and hoping that their enjoyment of life and their farm expands threefold when they aren’t worrying about everybody else’s farm!

Thank You
Sylvia and Steve!

MOON/OEFFA is planning programs for 2008. These include: Miami Tribe of Ohio/Oklahoma – Native, Traditional Foods; an annual mid-winter program; and an organic gardening workshop with local farm tours in the spring. During the spring semester MOON/OEFFA is giving three one evening classes in Miami University’s Continuing Education series: “Going Green, What Does It Mean?”

Harv Roehling, locustrun@nuvox.net

~ Lake Effect Chapter ~
(Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Lake Counties)

During the past year, the Lake Effect Chapter has had several public showings of the movie “The Future of Food,” for which we received permission and which were then open to the public. As a result the group had several good discussions about sustainable ag. We also met several times at members’ farms this summer for tours. In the upcoming year, we plan to meet quarterly and hold similar events (event/discussion) between planning meetings. Group members also distributed materials at three local county fairs (Lake County, Geauga County, and Ashtabula County) this last summer and collected names of people interested in learning more about OEFFA. Group members also attended and reported on the Direct Marketing meeting held by Farmer’s Union in November, and participated in the Policy Development group at the OEFFA Member/Planning meeting.

Brett Joseph, 440/599-2109, brett_joseph@earthlink.net

~ MOON (Miami Oxford Organic Network) Chapter ~
(Butler and surrounding Counties)

The MOON/OEFFA education planning committee includes local organic growers, consumers and Miami University students. We plan educational programs and OEFFA chapter meetings between September and May. The most recent event, the Harvest MOON Festival, celebrated local food, farmers, and sustainable agriculture with live music, farm animals, a skit on “Why Buy Local Food,” pumpkin painting for the kids, farmers offering a variety of foods, information booths, the MOON Coop (enthusiastically working toward the opening of a full service grocery store selling organic and local food and products), the Three Valley Conservation Trust, and the chapter table selling local popcorn, home made cookies, and cider, and a Harvest Supper nearby.

MOON/OEFFA is planning programs for 2008. These include: Miami Tribe of Ohio/Oklahoma – Native, Traditional Foods; an annual mid-winter program; and an organic gardening workshop with local farm tours in the spring. During the spring semester MOON/OEFFA is giving three one evening classes in Miami University’s Continuing Education series: “Going Green, What Does It Mean?”

Harv Roehling, locustrun@nuvox.net
OEFFA Sours on Milk Label Bans

By Carol Goland, Executive Director, OEFFA

As the article by Gary Cox describes (front page), dairy labeling has become quite a hot issue in Ohio, and OEFFA is at the center of activity. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture passed new regulations with little, if any, public awareness or input regarding dairy labels. We want to make sure that doesn’t happen in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) held a listening session in early November about the subject.

OEFFA’s Executive Director, Carol Goland, was invited to be a panel member at that meeting and has provided a report on it, along with the subsequent meeting on Dec. 6th. A final meeting is planned for December 19 from 1:00 to 4:30 at the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

The November 6th meeting was characterized by Director of Agriculture Robert Boggs as a “listening session,” spurred by calls the Department has received in reaction to the Pennsylvania decision. Each speaker on an eight member panel was given approximately seven minutes to speak; the speakers were evenly divided between those who want to ban “absence claims” labels and those who want to retain them. The latter included me (on behalf of OEFFA), Warren Taylor (Snowville Creamery), John Turcinov (Dairy Farmers of America), and Joe Logan (Ohio Farmers Union). Generally speaking, the panel represented a reasonable coverage of the topic area in terms of the divergence of opinion (which is not to say I found everyone’s opinion reasonable!).

The producers spoke poignantly about grappling with their financial reality and what it will mean for them to give up this “tool” (rBST). They feel boxed into a corner by their processors, who will refuse to pick up their milk without a signed affidavit that they have not used rBST. Ohio processors who are still accepting milk from cows treated with rBST are not taking any new suppliers. So these producers feel like they have nowhere to go: they can’t sell their milk produced with rBST to their current processor, they can’t get a new processor, and they think they’ll be financially devastated if forced to give up rBST. No matter what you think of this whole labeling question or your opinion on rBST, one’s heart goes out to anyone who feels their livelihood is threatened.

On the other hand, the second speaker from OSU (St. Pierre) presented a less sympathetic figure. His comments centered on the proportion of people who don’t know that light travels faster than sound and/or who don’t know what continental drift is, as a way to claim that it would be impossible for the average consumer to understand what synthetic growth hormones are and so are easily duped by the labels that claim their absence. He pulled out the example of the “pet rock” fad to suggest that consumers in this country are easily manipulated by marketing and are just plain, well . . . dumb. He touted the environmental benefits of rBST. His argument is that fewer cows producing more milk on rBST, less manure, less herbicide grown on crop land to grow their grain, etc., means less environmental harm. [Great, then take advantage of malleable consumers and labeling opportunities to promote these benefits and imagine this label: “From cows treated with rBST — doing more with less!”]

What became clear to me at this meeting is that the stir is being created because we have producers who don’t have access to a market. Framing the problem in this way, it’s clear that doing away with “absence claims” labeling does not provide a solution. Producers who want to continue to use rBST should be able to sell their milk. (I know some people will take issue with me here, but if I’m going to claim that consumers have a right to be informed and have the right to be able to make choices in the marketplace, then to be consistent I have to allow for this choice, too.) An alternative (not exclusive of the first) is that producers who are selling milk which is marketed as non-rBST should receive a fair price for their product from the processor. We heard at the meeting that they are getting about a 30 cent (per hundredweight) premium, compared to the retail price for that same milk commanding a premium of $10/hundredweight. I would rather work to bring these positive solutions to the root problem than have to fight over labeling.

Following the first meeting, the Director appointed a “Dairy Labeling Advisory Committee,” and I am on it representing OEFFA and its membership. Other panelists from the first meeting were also appointed, including Joe Logan and Warren Taylor. We were happy to see Bob Welker of Simply Living also join the committee. There are half a dozen dairy farmers, all of whom, as near as I can tell, currently use rBST. Several of the processors are represented. There is only one commit-

How does “dolphin-safe tuna” differ in intent from the production process claims made by a label [on milk] which states “from cows not treated with synthetic growth hormones?”

- Carol Goland
Dairy Labeling: An Open Letter

Excerpted from a letter to Robert Boggs, Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) from Carol Goland, Executive Director of OEFFA in November after the meeting, summarized on pages 6-7.

I firmly believe that the focus on labels fails to capture and address what the fundamental problem is. How we frame a problem determines what solutions we can identify which, in turn, determines whether or not we can find effective solutions. If we do not frame a problem appropriately, we risk treating a symptom rather than addressing the cause. In short, here is how I see the terrain:

• Consumers DO know what they want (or don’t want).
• Retailers and processors are responding to consumer demand.
• Label claims about production practices (i.e., ”milk from cows not treated with synthetic growth hormones”) are valid.
• Consumers need these labels to make informed choices and purchase what they want.

At the same time, we have family farmers who feel that processors are taking away a valuable production tool from them without appropriate compensation, and they are fearful of the economic hardship that may bring them. This is the problem we must work to address.

Removing “absence claim” labels regarding the use of rBST is NOT the solution. Indeed, it may create several more problems, given the consumer outrage it will provoke, the market distortion it will create, and the precedents it will set.

It is imperative that these farmers be provided assistance by:

• Helping them to find new markets for their milk if they want to continue to use rBST.
• Securing a higher premium for their milk produced without rBST.
• Providing them with technical and/or economic assistance as they transition from using rBST.

Please help these farmers by proactively addressing their problem through these constructive steps. Please safeguard consumers’ right to know by protecting but clarifying “absence claim” labels regarding rBST. Because there is no test for compositional differences between ”rBST” and ”rBST-free” milk the most accurate and appropriate labeling claims refer exclusively to the production practice (“from cows not treated with synthetic growth hormones,” or “from cows not treated with rBST”).

Next Steps:

OEFFA is leading a cooalition of partners working to prevent a ban on labeling rBST-free milk. The Dairy Labeling Advisory Committee will meet again on Dec. 19th, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. at the Ohio Department of Agriculture, 8995 E. Main, in Reynoldsburg.

Also, we need letters, phone calls, faxes, and or emails to the Governor to let him know that you support Consumers’ Right to Know how their milk is produced and to request that he direct the ODA to take no action to ban labels on milk from cows not treated with rBST. Governor Ted Strickland can be reached by mail at: Governor’s Office, Riffe Center — 30th Floor, 77 South High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-6108. Phone: (614) 466-3555; Fax: (614) 466-9354 or via his website at http://governor.ohio.gov. Please also consider writing a letter to the editor of your local paper and/or inviting a reporter to do a story on this issue.

In Pennsylvania everything has been put on hold because the Governor heard from enough angry citizens that he ordered a review of the decision, delaying the enforcement of the new rules for at least a month, perhaps forever. Don’t let it get that far here: let the Governor know what you think!

Those interested in finding out more can follow the discussion on OEFFA Direct (sign-ups for this listserv are taken at www.oeffa.org or contact Carol Goland at 740/398-9099. Also see Gray Cox’s article beginning on page 1.
Local and Organic Meals
We strive to provide delicious quality meals made from fresh, organic, locally produced meats, dairy products, vegetables, and grains (many from OEFFA farms). Perhaps his most noteworthy accomplishment has been the creation of a mobile meat processing facility. Joel will share his experiences on the farm, as well as his vision for a locally grown, quality food production system that brings added value to farmers. He will give his talk, “Grass Fed, Organic Livestock — Opportunity Knocks!” on Saturday from 1:00-2:30. (Co-sponsored by Innovative Farmers of Ohio—IFO)

Granville, Ohio
The conference will be held in the centrally located and charming Victorian town of Granville about thirty miles northeast of Columbus. Conference rates have been arranged at several hotels. Visit our website to find out more.

Kids Welcome
Participants are encouraged to bring the family! The OEFFA kids’ conference offers a variety of exciting workshops for ages 6-12. Younger children are invited to spend time in the Playroom, organized by Rebecah Freeling, co-founder and teacher of Briar Rose Children’s Center, a Waldorf pre-school in Columbus specializing in preserving the magic of childhood. (There will be no charge for participation in these programs if a parent or sibling over the age of 12 volunteers four hours during the two days.)

Volunteers
In exchange for four hours of work, volunteers may pre-register for both days of the conference for only $45. (No further discount applies, meals not included.) For more information, call OEFFA at 614/421-2022. Pre-registration by February 9th required. Limited opportunities.

Pre-Conference Workshop: High Tunnels 101
February 15, 2008, 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Want to extend your growing and marketing seasons? Protect your crops from cold, wind, and rain plus certain pests and diseases? Make more money in the process? High tunnels can help you. Learn how they work, where to buy them, how to build them, their benefits, draw backs, and more in this introductory course. Matt Kleinhenz (OARDC) and extension agents Brad Bergefurd and Ron Becker will lead the works. Pre registration is encouraged; $20. ($25 at the door)

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Local and Organic Meals
We strive to provide delicious quality meals made from fresh, organic, locally produced meats, dairy products, vegetables, and grains (many from OEFFA farms). We also do our best to provide meal options for meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans. A limited number of food tickets will be available for sale at the conference, so if you plan to eat with us, we recommend that you buy your meal tickets in advance. A full menu is available on page 2.
Welcome IFO!
We are pleased to have the Innovative Farmers of Ohio (IFO) Conference and Meeting in conjunction with the OEFFA Conference this year! We welcome IFO members to write “IFO member” on their form and register for the conference at the member rate. For more info on IFO, visit www.ifoh.org.

Book Signing
Gene Logsdon and Marilou Suszko will be signing books this year in the Exhibit Hall.

Marilou will be signing her new book Farm and Food of Ohio: From Garden Gate to Dinner Plate (reviewed in last two issue of the OEFFA News). She will be at the OEFFA book table on Saturday during the exhibit hall break from 3:45-4:45.

Gene will have copies of his recent release, a novel titled The Last of the Husbandmen, along with some of his older titles. He will be available to sign books most of the day on Sunday.

Exhibit Hall
The exhibit hall will offer an interesting array of information, products, services and resources that relate to sustainable ag. A 10’x10’ booth includes a covered table, 2 chairs, and can be equipped with electricity upon request. If you are interested in a booth in the exhibit hall, or in participating in the poster session, please visit www.oeffa.org for more information or contact the OEFFA office at 614/421-2022.

Contra Dance
Come dance with us! The Back Porch Swing Band will play (with caller Steve Edwards) from 8:00-10:00 on Saturday night. Beginners and experienced dancers welcome.

Non-Denominational Service
A relaxed Sunday morning service will be led by IFO’s Sylvia Zimmerman.
According to Sylvia, “Scripture is full of the goodness of the land. Let us rejoice and be glad in it, celebrating the coming together of so many happy stewards.”

Many hands make light work!
We are looking for volunteers in various aspects of conference planning and implementation, including the kids conference, meals, OEFFA book table, exhibit hall, audio visual equipment, transportation, signage, and office assistance. Opportunities range from ordering books to planning workshops for children to helping transport food. Talk to us today to let us know how you would like to help! laura@oeffa.org or 614/421-2022.
There are technical matters that can help us: energy conservation and redesign of cities and industrial systems, but these will take some time to implement, and time is something we don’t have much of. We certainly haven’t been using our investment dollars very well for several decades—look at the railroads. Our biggest hope lies in pulling in our reins a bit, bolstering the household sector of the economy, and leaning heavily on biology instead of industry. We need to plant gardens and forests, many of them in our towns and cities, but all over the country too. We need to capture as much runoff as we can and hold it in soils, ponds, and tanks. And we need to reorient much of what we make and do in the formal economy to creating renewable energy systems like windmills, solar panels, and intermediate scale equipment for food processing and storage. And then we need to get on with doing it. That means motivating everyone around us to help out.

And for that last part, we need a lot of goodwill and people skills: the ability to get along with our neighbors, the ability to entertain ourselves with very little but telling stories, putting on plays, or making art, dance, and song; the ability to learn from our mistakes and get back on the right course, and to inspire others to pitch in.

This decidedly unpopular course of action is what permaculture designers have been up to for the last 30 years—swimming against the tide, if you will—and we’ve learned quite a bit that should be very useful right about now. You can learn it too. The fun part is, you can very quickly find yourself at the frontiers of knowledge: what does it take to coax food out of a forest? How do you make your house carbon neutral? Which are really the low-hanging fruit on the tree of sustainability?

Peter Bane will be exploring these and many other fascinating questions, starting February 22 in Columbus, when he will begin teaching a five-weekend course in Permaculture Design (or if you will, Reclaiming the Economy) Start learning and remembering what our grandparents might have known and what smart and successful people everywhere have figured out: If I needed it, I grew it... or made it... or made it up! Peter Bane will also be presenting a workshop at the OEFFA conference on the morning of Saturday, February 17, titled Permaculture: Building the Economy of the Future - NOW!.

See page 15 for more details about the permaculture course being offered by Peter this spring in Columbus.
Ohio’s Grass-fed Meat and Game

Since Jo-Ann Robinson’s keynote address at the OEFFA conference a few years ago, I changed my semi-vegetarian ways to include grass-fed meats. She presented compelling evidence that the anti-carcinogens found in the fat of ruminants fed a natural diet of green grass makes grass-fed meat health food. Buying grass-fed beef only from a local farmer you trust just makes sense.

We shouldn’t forget the meat of those other ruminants whose population is exploding in Ohio—deer. Most farmers, intentionally or not, are raising plenty of them on their acreage.

If you are a hunter, or have hunters among your friends and relatives, perhaps you’re lucky enough to have venison in your freezer. If you need ideas for how to prepare it, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has a great website of recipes. Go to www.dnr.state.oh.us/home and search the site for “venison.”

Below are some recipes for venison from that site, and two of my favorite ways to use grass-fed beef. The pot roast recipe comes from OEFFA member Nancy Rose of Long Meadows Grass Beef.

Venison Stroganoff

1 1/2 lbs. venison steak, cut in thin strips
3 tab. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3 tab. butter
2 cups sliced mushrooms
1 large sliced onion
1/4 cup flour
2 cups beef broth
1/4 cup white wine
1/8 cup tomato paste
2 cups sour cream
noodles, cooked

Mix 3 tab. flour, salt and pepper; add venison strips and roll to coat. Melt butter in a large skillet. Add venison and cook over medium high heat until browned. Remove meat and add mushrooms and onions. Stir in remaining flour. Add broth, wine and tomato paste and stir. Return the venison to the skillet and simmer gently for about 10 minutes, until heated through. Add the sour cream and stir until well mixed. Serve stroganoff over hot cooked noodles.

Nancy’s Grass-Fed Beef Pot Roast

One 2-3 lb. frozen grass-fed beef chuck roast
1 tab. sea salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
2 cups brewed regular coffee, unflavored
2-3 cloves garlic
Cut up potatoes, onions, carrots and celery, as desired

Put frozen meat in crock pot. Add salt, pepper, coffee and garlic. Set pot on low heat and cover. Add vegetables after 1-2 hours. Use a meat thermometer to check at 4 hours. Temperature should be 20 degrees less than conventional beef. Do not overcook.

Crockpot Cabbage Rolls for Beef or Venison

1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 cup raw rice
1 egg
1 tab. dry parsley or 2 tab. chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. marjoram
2 tab. tomato paste
1 med. green pepper, divided
2 med. onions
1 8 oz. can tomato sauce, divided
1 head cabbage
1 small can chopped tomatoes

Combine first eight ingredients with half the green pepper and one onion, finely chopped, and half the tomato sauce. Pull off outer leaves of cabbage, leaving whole. Cut out about 3 inches of the tough center rib. Steam about 10-12 leaves over boiling water till limp. Remove from heat and cool. Coarsely chop inner cabbage leaves. Place in crock pot or saucepan with 1/2 green pepper and remaining onion, coarsely chopped. Add can of chopped tomatoes, salt and pepper and water just to cover cabbage. Roll meat mixture into balls and wrap cabbage leaves around. Place on top of chopped cabbage mixture and pour remaining tomato sauce on top. Simmer several hours on low setting of crockpot, until rice inside is tender.

Continued on page 13
Pennsylvania has now gone on record as stating that claims of “rBST free” or “hormone free” are misleading for a number of reasons. First, since hormones are naturally occurring in cows, claims of “hormone free” are misleading because all cow’s milk have hormones in it. Also, since rBST is indistinguishable in cow’s milk, claims of “rBST free” are misleading because there is no way to verify whether rBST is or is not present. Finally, since the scientific community has yet to reach a conclusion whether rBST is or is not harmful to humans, claims of “this milk comes from cows that are not treated with rBST” are misleading because they lead the consumer into thinking that milk which comes from cows that are treated with rBST is inferior.

According to Pennsylvania, claims of “rBST free” or “hormone free” are misleading and are now prohibited. Ohio and New Jersey are soon to follow. In fact, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) tried to hold a secret “public” meeting on the issue in early November. However, when word got out and spread that ODA was considering following Pennsylvania’s footsteps, nearly 60 people showed up instead of only the select handful of industry invitees. At the meeting, ODA insisted that it had not yet made up its mind on what to do with “absence” claims and that ODA was committed to “gathering information” and “holding other public meetings” on the issue. ODA’s promises rang hollow, however, since a representative for Pennsylvania was invited to ODA’s public meeting to explain that the types of labels that it had determined were “misleading.” The ODA was also concerned that the consuming public was “confused” by absence claims. Apparently, an “advisory panel” of about 20 members has been formed, but just who these members are remains a mystery.

It seems that the issue of absence claims has less to do with truth in labeling than it does with manipulating public opinion. The regulatory authorities want to paint the picture that the consuming public is being “misled” into purchasing hormone free and antibiotic free products, rather than recognizing that consumers actually want these products as a matter of free choice in the marketplace. As long as the regulatory authorities continue to portray the public as “ignorant” or “confused” on the issue, their regulatory efforts will serve no purpose except to manipulate public opinion. The last time I checked the Ohio Revised Code, ODA did not have the authority to regulate in the arena of public opinion.

Instead of prohibiting what in fact are truthful claims, the regulatory authorities should require all dairy products to list their ingredients, synthetic or otherwise, and let the consumers decide for themselves what products they want to purchase. After all, that is what truth in labeling laws are all about.


Gary Cox is an attorney with the Columbus law firm of Lane, Alton & Horst LLC, a former Senior Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio, and a former organic vegetable farmer. 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 neither the firm nor OEFFA.
Pecan Venison

4 or more venison steaks, preferably from the backstrap
1 tab. olive oil
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 cup sliced onion
8 oz. sliced mushrooms
3 tab. medium dry sherry
2 cups vegetable broth
1/2 cup heavy cream
2 tsp. cornstarch
1/3 cup pecan halves
1/4 cup green onions, finely sliced

Season venison with salt and pepper. Heat olive oil in a non-stick skillet, add venison and cook until venison is rare. Remove from skillet. Add onion and mushrooms to pan; cook 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 2 more minutes. Add sherry and cook 1 minute. Add broth and, boil until liquid is reduced by half, skimming any fat or foam. Combine 2 tbsp. cream with the cornstarch. Add remaining cream to skillet and bring to a gentle boil. Whisk in the cornstarch mixture, simmer 4 to 5 minutes. Add venison, pecans and green onion. Simmer about 2 minutes and serve. Great with rice or noodles.

Greek-Style Sloppy Joes

1 pound ground venison or grass-fed beef
1/2 cup chopped onion (1 medium)
1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
1/3 cup bulgur wheat
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. Greek seasoning
1/4 tsp. black pepper
2 cups shredded romaine lettuce
6 kaiser rolls, split and toasted
4 ounces crumbled feta cheese with tomato and basil or plain feta cheese

In a large skillet cook ground meat and onion until meat is brown and onion is tender. Drain off fat. Stir in tomato sauce, bulgur, oregano, greek seasoning, salt, and pepper. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, about 5 minutes or until desired consistency, stirring occasionally. To assemble, arrange romaine on bottom halves of rolls. Spoon meat mixture on romaine. Sprinkle with feta cheese; replace top halves of rolls. Makes 6 sandwiches.
Call for Posters: At the 2008 OEFFA conference, academic researchers will have the chance to discuss their findings with OEFFA’s diverse membership. Abstracts of not more than 200 words that include title, 3 to 5 keywords, and names, affiliations, and contact information for the author(s) should be sent via email (preferred), postal mail, or fax by January 15th 2008. E-mail: andy@oeffa.org; OEFFA Poster Session, 41 Crosowell Road, Columbus OH 43214; Fax: 614/421-2011; Phone: 614/421-2022

2008 Conference Workshop Schedule

(subject to change)

Saturday, February 16, 2008
Session I: 9:30-11:30
(one long or two short sessions)
The Thundering Hooves Story* (Joel Huesby) (2 hr)
All About Lettuce (Rich Tomsu) (2 hr)
Dairy Herd Health (AJ Luft) (2 hr)
Permaculture: Building the Economy of the Future - NOW! (Peter Bane) (2 hr)
Consumers: They are Your Partners* (Parker Bosley) (2 hr)
Tuscarora Org. Growers: Our Vegetable Marketing Coop (Jim Crawford) (2 hr)
Ecologically Based Weed Management (Larry Phelan) (1 hr)
Seed Saving Basics (Leah Smith) (1 hr)
Chicken: The Good, the Bad, and the Tasting! (Darren Malhame & Beth Elder) (1 hr)
Field Crops Tips (Ed Snavely) (1 hr)
Tomatoes in the Garden (Joan Richmond) (1 hr)
Winter Finales (Marilou Suszko) (1 hr)

Session II: 2:25-3:45
Plant Quality: Soil Fertility and Plant Health (John Kempf)
Natural Ways to Maintain Healthy Pets & Livestock (Annie & Jay Warmke)
Sweet potatoes: The Lazy Gardener’s Crop (Melinda O’Briant)
Organic Corn Production (Peter Thomison & Richard Pratt)
Livestock Processing: Part 1 (Greg Gunthorp)
Farms and Foods of Ohio (Marilou Suszko)
Record Keeping for Organic Certification (David Benchoff)
FarmLink: Connecting Farmers and Land in Ohio (Chris Norman)
Just Can It Part 1 (Shari Gallup)

Session III: 4:45-5:45
Composting for Farm Fertility (Bill Pennell)
The Amazing Worm Circus: Worms for Kitchen Composting (Will Dewees)
Post-Harvest Handling of Vegetables (Jim Crawford)
Farming: The Carbon and Climate Change Equation (Joe Logan & Debbie Read)
Livestock Processing Part 2 (Greg Gunthorp)
Ohio Women Farm Owners and Operators* (Sharon Sachs)
Finance: Show Me the Money* (Joel Huesby)
Working with Institutional Food Buyers (Kamyar Enshayan)
Just Can It Part 2 (Shari Gallup)

* Workshop Co-sponsored by IFO

Sunday, February 17, 2008
Session IV: 9:30-11:30
(one long or two short sessions)
Planning Your Plantings (Mick Luber) (2 hr)
Specialty Small Grains: Production and Marketing (Deb Stinner & Dean McIlvaine) (2 hr)
Pigs on Pasture (Greg Gunthorp) (2 hr)
Basic Accounting for a Family Farm (Jim Crawford) (2 hr)
Sustainable Strategies on the Farm (Rich Tomsu) (1 hr)
Farm to School: The ABC’s and 123’s of How to Get Started (Deb Eschmeyer) (1 hr)
Re-discovering the Scythe (Nick Leone) (1 hr)
Local Food Consumer Campaign (Kamyar Enshayan) (1 hr)
Creating Healthy Indoor Environments (Tom Yugovich) (1 hr)
Organic Certification for New and Experienced Producers (Janie Marr Werum) (1 hr)
Garden and Landscape Irrigation (Chris Luers) (1 hr)
City Fresh: Toward a Just and Regenerative Food System (Brad Masi) (1 hr)
Building Effective Farm Internships (Howard Sacks) (1 hr)
Buying Our Way to an Alternative Food System: A Critical Look at Social Change via Consumption (Jeff Sharp) (1 hr)

Session V: 1:30-2:30
Overview of Biological Farming (Steve Edwards)
Gardening for Maximum Nutrition (Kris Johnson)
Produce (TBA)
Basics of Organic Grain Farming (Steve Berlekamp)
Poultry Processing at Home (Guy and Sandy Ashmore)
How to Establish an Electronic Food Stamp System at Your Farmers Market (Ann Fugate)
It’s Not Just Insuring Your Farm Anymore (Jim McGuire)
New Roots for Agrarian Education (Brad Masi)
Risotto: Expanding Dinner Pastabilities (Matt Prokopchak)
Permaculture Design Course - Columbus, Ohio

Co-sponsored by OEFFA and Simply Living Columbus, the Assn. for Regenerative Culture is offering this training in ecological design. Open to all, the course, which has been called “life changing,” will present the internationally recognized Permaculture Design curriculum over five weekends of winter and spring 2008.

Permaculture is a system of agricultural design based on nature, science, and traditional knowledge. The course, open to everyone, is intended as a broad-based introduction to holistic problem solving for all aspects of human culture and settlement. The course syllabus summary is available on-line at www.permacultureactivist.net/DesignCourse/

We will meet Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays beginning February 22-24 and Feb. 29-March 2 and alternate weekends thereafter.

Leading the course will be Peter Bane, publisher of Permaculture Activist, the world’s longest running journal for ecological design. He lives on a suburban mini-farm in Bloomington, Indiana where he is creating a demonstration of sustainable living. He and co-teacher Rhonda Baird will be joined by local teachers and special Ohio guest presenters during the course. He will also give a presentation at the 2008 OEFFA conference on Saturday, discussing Permaculture as a response to climate change and energy descent.

The fee of $895 includes tuition, materials, and weekend lunches. Some work-trade scholarships are available. To register or for questions, write courses@ARCulture.org, or call 812/335-0383. A deposit of $150 is required. Payments may be sent to A.R.C., c/o Peter Bane, PO Box 5516, Bloomington, IN 47407.

North Central Ohio Dairy Grazing Conference - January 24-25; Wooster, Ohio. “The Key to Making Money is Growing Good Pastures.” A dairy field specialist and grazing specialist will join producers to offers two days of solid information for both beginners and advanced dairy graziers. $45. Register by Jan 18. Call 740/545-6349 or email leah@smallfarminstitute.org.

2008 Ohio Produce Growers and Marketing Association (OPGMA) Congress and Trade Show - January 15-16; Sandusky, Ohio. Visit www.opgma.org

Time to Renew Your Membership?
Student $10 • Single $35 • Family $50 • Farm Family $50 • Nonprofit $50 • Business $100 • Individual Lifetime $1000
Mail payment to OEFFA Membership, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43214, call 614/421-2022, or renew on-line.


Organic Dairy Farm For Sale - Fully operating organic dairy in Northeastern Ohio. 200+ certified acres, 100+ additional certified rented acres, with or without 50 certified holstein cows. Double 6 parlor, automatic takeoffs, tethers, 5 years old. Free gas. 1800’s farm house, 3 bedrooms. 330/257-5794.

NewHopeOrganics@wmconnect.com

Lamb for Sale - Turner Farm in Cincinnati has naturally raised lamb for sale. The lamb is available in December 07, March 08, June 08, and September 08. We are specializing in rare purebred Welsh Black Mountain lambs. All meat is pre-ordered, so please call 513/561-7400 for more information or to request an order form.

For Sale - Certified Organic Kenland red clover seed. Spray Farm. Rex Spray. 740/397-4207

Creep Feeder Needed - Turner Farm is in search of a creep feeder for hogs. Please call 513/561-7400 if you have any information.

See page 15 for more Un-Classifieds!