Granville is the place to be the weekend of February 21 and 22 for OEFFA’s 30th Anniversary Conference, so save the date!

The conference, titled “The Changing Climate of Agriculture,” will celebrate the many accomplishments that have been made in alternative agriculture over the past 30 years, many of which OEFFA has been involved in as a key resource and vocal leader, and the conference will help to lay the groundwork for the next 30 years with a full offering of educational workshops, exhibitors, networking opportunities, and dynamic keynote speakers.

This year’s keynote speakers will be dynamic dietitian, and award winning writer, Melinda Hemmelgarn, and long time organic farmer, and Distinguished Fellow for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, Fred Kirschenmann. They will be joined this year by an exciting array of well known and respected workshop leaders who will join our host of locally accomplished farmers in sharing their experience and thoughts.

Keynote speaker Fred Kirschenmann believes a food system that connects people to their food, keeps people on the land, and stewards natural resources is imperative to create sustainability in agriculture.

Fred manages his family’s 3,500 acres of organic farm land in North Dakota, 1,000 of which is in native prairie and is used for grazing livestock. The rest of the land is planted in eight-to-nine crops each year, in three different rotations. They include durum and hard red spring wheat, rye, buckwheat, millet, flax, canola, alfalfa, sweet clover, and green manure crops. The Kirschenmann Farms are also home to 113 brood cows, and a number of young calves.

continued on page 12
Let Them Know It’s HOMEGROWN!

One of the most important things that consumers can be encouraged to do is to find out where their food comes from and how it is produced. Only then can they make conscientious decisions about what businesses they want to support and what kinds of ingredients they put into the foods on their tables. OEFFA has a new button that says “ASK ME HOW I GREW IT” and we encourage all OEFFA growers to wear one proudly at the farmers’ market. That is really what selling locally is all about: letting your customers know that they can talk to you directly and find out how their food is raised.

OEFFA growers can get buttons or display materials from their chapter representative or email (oeffa@oeffa.org) or call the office at 614/421-2022.

Letter from the President

Hello OEFFA,

Things have started to slow down a little here at Northridge Organic Farm, and the farmer and workers are getting a little reprieve from the hectic summer schedule. I am hopeful that your growing season has been as plentiful for you as ours has been for us. Although some of the crops did not produce at the level expected, the demand was incredible. Even in this year’s tough economic times, the demand for local has skyrocketed, and the number of local farmers has increased. Bigger crowds at farmers’ markets and increased demand for local products from stores and restaurants meant better income and profitability for the farm. Consumers found more products from which to choose and an increase in the volume available. If you are an OEFFA member, you can pat yourself on the back because the years of hard work by our members and staff educating the people of our state about the health, social, and economic benefits of local organic foods are paying dividends.

OEFFA has been at the forefront of this issue and deserves a big part of the credit. So enjoy the fruits and vegetables of your labor, keep up the good work and thank you very much!

- Mike Laughlin

OEFFA News • Fall 2008
Welcome

New Program Director:
Changing Seed Stock

The OEFFA staff would like to voice a hearty welcome to Renee Hunt as she shifts from being a responsible and valued OEFFA volunteer to OEFFA’s new Program Director.

Renee is warm, insightful, energetic, and well organized and comes with a great deal of experience partially from her from eight years with the Illinois Stewardship Alliance during which she worked promoting and advocating sustainable food systems. Some of you may know her and her family already, especially in the Columbus area.

Her devotion to sustainable agriculture is tireless. She has worked on state and federal policy issues, managed on-farm project research work, organized citizens to fight large-scale livestock operations, developed new and useful sustainable ag programs, generated needed funds, and done her fair share of event planning for OEFFA and other organizations.

Renee has served as an active and involved member of the OEFFA Board, been instrumental in bringing together OEFFA’s Capital Chapter and its events, and has recently helped bring to fruition the second OEFFA Local Harvest Dinner held this fall in Columbus. Since moving to Columbus Renee has also been active in the Le Leche League. Renee has a Bachelor of Science in journalism, and most of a Masters in Environmental Studies from the University of Illinois.

"I’m enthusiastic about OEFFA’s focus and purpose,” said Renee when interviewing for the job.

Laura Wies, who held the position of Program Director until October and played a key role in leading OEFFA forward into a time of increased involvement and community leadership, is currently working with Renee and will be dedicating herself to a life of homesteading in eastern Ohio after the conference. Laura has been a gift to the organization and an important part of it’s evolution.

Thanks for all the great work Laura, and welcome Renee!!

Members’ Day

At last year’s annual Members’ Day meeting, a hard-working group of 50 split into working groups to brainstorm ideas for OEFFA’s new long-term plan. Since then, volunteers and Board members have been working to finalize that plan.

Join us on November 16th at Stratford Ecological Center from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as we build on last year’s Members’ Day, when we will share the vision for OEFFA’s future and devote another productive day to celebrating and nurturing our grassroots. With a series of presentations, structured activities, and informal conversation, we will focus our energy on our chapters.

This is the time and the place for the leaders of current chapters, those in the process of forming a chapter (or even thinking about it!) to come together to define the goals and identify the first steps to strengthen individual groups.

All members are welcome (whether or not affiliated with a chapter) for this day of fellowship and planning. And be sure to bring tableware for yourself and a dish to pass for our wonderful potluck meal!

For more information, contact Laura Wies (laura@oeffa.org), or Carol Goland (cgoland@oeffa.org).

Influence Upcoming Research

The Agroecosystems Management Program at OARDC is exploring two new and related opportunities for Ohio farms and farmers: planning the Mellinger Farm as a research and demonstration showcase for smaller diversified farming, and a new ATI two year program in sustainable and organic agriculture. They would very much like to include OEFFA member opinions and ideas in the plans and ask for 5-10 minutes of your time to take a short survey. This is an exciting opportunity for OEFFA to help shape the future of some important educational initiatives related to sustainable agriculture. Please let your voice be heard! The survey is on-line here: www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey.zgi?p=WEB2287YT6LNAZ
Food System and Climate Change Connection

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS CENTER - A study conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health shows that the nation’s top newspapers have largely overlooked the food system as one of the more important contributors to global climate change. The two-year study, available online in advance of publication in *Public Health Nutrition*, analyzed coverage by 16 of the nation’s largest circulation newspapers. According to the study, the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions from food production and agriculture was mentioned in only 2.4 percent of climate change articles. In contrast, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2007 that 31 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture and forestry (with the latter representing deforestation for food production).

The study also found that 0.5 percent of climate change articles made any mention of the greenhouse emissions from livestock and meat production. In 2006, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that livestock production alone accounted for nearly 18 percent of world anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions—a greater contribution than from transportation. Top impacts of the food system on climate include cattle emissions of methane (a highly potent greenhouse gas) and loss of trapped carbon from soil and plants following land clearing for crops or pasture.

“Greater public awareness could lead to consumer demand for food with lower greenhouse gas emissions. Greater awareness could also spur action from policy makers and the food and agriculture sectors toward reducing food and agriculture-related emissions,” said Roni Neff, Ph.D., research director for the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and principal investigator of the study. “The more we know about climate change news coverage, the more effectively we can help to ensure the important facts regarding the food systems’ contribution receive the attention they deserve.”

For the study, Neff and colleagues analyzed climate change coverage in 16 leading U.S. newspapers based on circulation between September 2005 and January 2008. The newspapers analyzed were: *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *Houston Chronicle*, *New York Post*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, *Newark Star-Ledger*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Arizona Republic*, *Long Island Newsday* and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Newspapers were selected over other media because of their influence and broad readership. The combined daily circulation of the reviewed newspapers exceeded 10.5 million, with an expected readership of over 20 million.

In conducting the research, Neff’s team compared all articles in the 16 selected newspapers that mentioned “climate change” or “global warming” in the headline or first paragraph, against the subset that also mentioned “food,” “farm” or “agriculture” anywhere in the text. The team found 4,582 “climate change” articles. Of these, 109 connected climate change to the contributions of food systems. Only 20 (0.4 percent) devoted three or more paragraphs to food and climate change, while 45 spent less than a paragraph on the subject, often with a single word mention, such as including “agriculture” in a list of relevant industries. The contributions of the meat or dairy industries were mentioned in 22 articles (0.5 percent).

Coverage varied widely by newspaper, ranging from a maximum of 22 articles over the study period (*New York Times*) to a minimum of 0 (*Dallas Morning News, New York Post*). Coverage increased slightly across...
The Urban Organic Gardener: Why Grow and Eat Organic?
By Ruth A. Evan

A customer asked, “Do you know where I could buy organic oatmeal for my son who is coming to visit?”
Our store sells vitamins and other supplements, not food. I told her about the stores nearby that sell organic food. We talked about conventional and organic foods. She asked, “Does organic food taste better?”

I hesitated, looked away and then looked back at her, “It’s our gift to the earth.” Her face lit up, and she went off to find organic oatmeal.

“Does it taste better?” is a frequent question here in Northern Ohio. When I answer with facts (pesticides, soil development, bovine growth hormones, farm family health, public health issues of river, lake and land contamination, GMO seeds, antibiotics, nutritional levels of food) I get a blank stare or even an argument.

And I wonder why do I grow organically? Why do I eat organically? I started eating organic food as a young adult, following Helen and Scott Nearing’s lead. I bought organic chicken and was impressed by the different coloration of the bones. I thought the chickens had something conventional chickens didn’t. And yes, they did taste better.

Later my husband and I grew as much organic food as we could on our 1/3-acre plot in Oregon. We coordinated with the local organic farmers, buying the crops they grew better than we could, while concentrating on berries and winter crops that worked well on our land. We stood in the fall sunshine early in the mornings eating concord grapes from our vines, spitting out seeds, and talking. We walked back and forth to the yurt art studio picking and eating raspberries. We ate salads made of several kinds of lettuces and herbs. We’d head to the garden to discover what was for dinner.

We composted nearly everything in composters bought in bulk by the city and sold inexpensively by the thousands to residents. We lived an organic cycle of life: building, planting, harvesting, eating, composting. Yes there were unbalances from time to time—pests were easily rerouted by hand, we added nutrients to the soil, and rain and cold patterns varied. But there were no dark threats, poisons to hurt us, our pets, or the other lives on our land.

I feel this wholeness when I am at the grocery store considering an organic purchase. Many people have done wonderful work to make the organic cycle of life possible on this large scale.

I felt it at Winter Green Farm in Noti, OR, our CSA farm, while standing among the broccoli plants, looking down the mild slope to the blueberries and then on to the river.

I feel it at Mulberry Creek Herb Farm in Huron, OH, where the Langan family grow lush plants for sale.

I feel it in Chester Bowling’s blueberry field near Wellington, OH, lifting my head from the fat berries long enough to gaze at the peaceful hillside.

Living with an organic cycle of life is an acknowledgment that we are part of an enclosed, finite, fragile system. Organic is a gift to the Earth.

References:
Mulberry Creek Herb Farm, Huron, OH. www.mulberrycreek.com 419/433-6126.
Black River Farm, Wellington, OH bowling.43@osu.edu 440/647-3925.
CROP ROTATION

NOP § 205.205 Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and cash crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:

(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content;
(b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops;
(c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and
(d) Provide erosion control.

1) We had serious flooding on a number of our fields. In order to get a crop in I’ll have to plant soybeans in fields where I planted soybeans last year. Is this OK?

And,

2) Can I plant corn (or any other crop) two seasons in a row?

As you can see in the above NOP rule, there is no specific requirement for a crop rotation. The rule does not read, “a legume must follow corn,” or “a grower cannot plant the same crop two years in a row.” So in short, yes you can plant soybeans two years in a row, as long as you are following § 205.205(a)-(d). While it may be difficult to decipher from the legal-speak, the organic program’s overall emphasis is on maintaining or improving soil health. If your crop rotation does this, you can consider it in line with the NOP.

3) Do I need to use organic seed for my cover crop?

Yes. Under § 205.204, all seeds must be organically grown. Of course there is the exception—if the variety that you would like to use as your cover crop is not commercially available, you may use untreated, non-GMO seed. On your organic certification application, you will need to document that you made an effort to find organic seed. This can be done by calling seed dealers and companies using online searches, or by contacting Mike Anderson in OEFFA Education for assistance.

4) I don’t know what my crop rotation will be and my certification application is due. Can I leave the section blank?

No—the staff will notify you that your application is incomplete. Even if you change your rotation, please write an estimate of your plans. Here is an example (from Section 6 of the OEFFA Farm Plan):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CROP ROTATION PLAN</th>
<th>FIELD NOS. WHERE PLANS FOLLOWED</th>
<th>ANTICIPATED CHANGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORN—RYE—SOYBEANS—WHEAT</td>
<td>1, 5, 9</td>
<td>I will send in rye seed information when I order it later this year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) What about permanent pasture?

If you have fields in pasture for a number of years, you would obviously not need a year-by-year rotation. On your application, you may enter “permanent pasture” in the crop rotation and field history sections.

6) How can I make my crop rotation work better at supplying nutrients for cash crops?

Cash crops generally reduce soil fertility. This loss of nutrients can be balanced by the contribution of nutrients from other crops in the rotation. Forage legumes such as sweet clover, red clover, and alfalfa can provide as much as 100 – 150 lbs. / acre of available nitrogen to following crops. Forage legumes are much more efficient fixers of nitrogen than soybeans, which contribute 30 – 50 lbs. / acre of available nitrogen after the beans have been harvested. Soybeans, therefore, should not be considered a substitute for forage legumes in an organic grain rotation.

Deep rooted forage legumes, such as alfalfa, use nutrients such as calcium and potassium from deep in the soil profile, making them more available to subsequent crops. Growers should also consider the contribution of crop residue to the soil when planning a rotation. Researchers at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) have demonstrated that incorporating organic matter in the form of crop residue can increase the availability of nutrients in organic farming systems.
7) Organic farmers in my area tell me that managing weeds is difficult. How does my crop rotation impact weed pressure?

Field tillage, cultivation, and residue management practices all impact the types and density of weeds that are present in a field. When these practices are performed at the same time each year, certain weed species are favored and can become established and increasingly difficult to control.

Consider an example of a six-year rotation for corn-belt organic grains. Corn – beans – corn – small grain – hay – hay. Perennial weed pressure can be reduced during the first three years of the rotation when annual cash crops are being aggressively cultivated. Annual weed pressure is reduced by competition from the hay crop and from the repeated cutting of the hay. Adding a cereal rye cover crop following the second year of hay to this rotation might further improve weed management through the allelopathic qualities of the rye plowdown.

8) What's the relationship between my crop rotation and the conservation of topsoil?

In 1987, Reganold, Elliott, and Unger published “Long-term Effects of Organic and Conventional Farming on Soil Erosion.” In this study, they looked at how organic farm management practices impact the rate of soil erosion over nearly 40 years (1948 – 1985) of continuous organic production. They studied two farms--one organic farm, and one conventional farm. They found that the organic farm lost 5 cm of topsoil over that time period, while the conventionally managed farm lost 21 cm of topsoil. The authors determined that, “the difference in erosion rates between the organic and conventional farms was most probably due to their different crop rotation systems. Only the organic farm included a green manure legume crop in the third year of rotation, and it had fewer tillage operations.”

9) Where can I find more information on crop rotation principles and practices?


Questions about organic regulations and suggestions for future topics may be sent to:
OEFFA Certification
Attn: Making Sense
41 Croswell Rd, Columbus, OH 43214
or email organic@oeffa.org

References:
1. Forage Legumes for Temporary Soil Cover, OSU Extension, AGF-007-90, Columbus, Ohio.
2. Organic Field Corn Production, George Kuepper, ATTRA, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Arkansas, 1-800-346-9140, 2002
Farm to Table: 
Savoring the Season 
By Trish Mumme, Garden Patch Produce

Start Thinking about Thanksgiving

After all, it’s right around the corner. As in past years, the Heart of Ohio chapter is offering Thanksgiving boxes (with or without turkey) for sale to folks in central Ohio who want to eat a thanksgiving meal that is truly local and sustainable. We always put out a recipe booklet with suggestions particularly about how to use all the veggies. Those appetizers and side dishes often don’t get the attention that the turkey and pies get, but they can often make the difference between a ho-hum and fantastic Thanksgiving repast. Start out with a cup of rich Potato Leek Soup, flavored with fennel and celery, or beet and egg salad served on a lettuce leaf. Honey-Mustard Glazed Brussels sprouts or carrots, or Parsley/Walnut beets, are as delicious as they are colorful. Herb Roasted Vegetables create a versatile dish that can use any seasonal veggies you might have on hand.

This year our members had a crop failure on pumpkins and winter squash, but sweet potatoes did well. Sweet Potato Biscuits are too good to serve only at Thanksgiving. They can be whipped up for breakfast or as a side dish to a hearty soup supper. Mashed sweet potatoes can take the place of pumpkin in any pumpkin pie recipe. I like this spicy version.

See the OEFFA website for details on the Thanksgiving boxes. You can order yours online.

Potato Leek Soup

2-3 lbs potatoes
2 large or 3-4 small leeks
2 onions
1/4 cup butter or olive oil, or mixture
1 cup chopped celery or celery root
1 tsp. ground dill seed
1 fennel bulb, opt.
1/2 cup chopped parsley, opt.
4-5 cloves garlic, minced
3 cups chicken broth
2 cups milk
(can use part half-n-half or cream)
Sour cream for garnish

Peel potatoes and onions and slice thinly. Clean leeks carefully. Slice white and pale green parts 1/4 inch thick. Slice white part of fennel bulb 1/4 inch thick. Discard stems but reserve 1/2 cup chopped green leaves, packed. Saute leeks, onions, celery, fennel bulb and garlic in butter/oil mixture till they begin to brown. Add dill seed, potatoes and broth. Boil gently, covered, till potatoes are tender. Add half of the fennel tops and most of the parsley. Puree in blender till soup is mostly smooth. Return to pot and heat gently, stirring occasionally, till hot. Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish each bowl with sour cream, fennel, or parsley leaves.

Beet and Egg Salad

1 bunch beets
1 onion thinly sliced
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tab. vinegar or lemon juice
1 tab. fresh or 1 tsp. dried dill weed
salt and pepper
2-3 hard cooked eggs, quartered

Cook beets whole in lightly salted water till tender. Cool, peel and slice 1/4 inch thick. Toss gently with remaining ingredients and chill. Serve on a lettuce leaf.

Honey-Mustard Glazed Carrots or Brussels Sprouts

Melt 2 tab. butter in a saucepan. Add 2 tab. honey or maple syrup, juice of 1/2 lemon, and 1 tab. prepared mustard. Toss with boiled or steamed sliced carrots or Brussels sprouts. Salt & pepper to taste.

Parsley/Walnut Beets

Peel and dice 1 bunch beets. Heat 3 tab. olive oil in frying pan with 3 cloves minced garlic. Add 1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts and brown lightly. Add beets, 2 tab. Balsamic vinegar, 1/4 cup coarsely chopped parsley, and two tab. water. Cover and steam cook, stirring occasionally, till tender. Salt and pepper to taste.
Herb Roasted Potatoes and Vegetables

3-5 lbs. new potatoes, cut in 1 1/2 inch pieces
2 leeks, white and light green parts, chopped in 2 inch pieces
2-3 med. onions, quartered
1 lb. carrots, turnips, beets or mixture, peeled, cut
1 1/2 tab fresh rosemary or thyme, or 1/2-1 tsp. dried
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil, approximately

Spread vegetables in large baking pan. Sprinkle with garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper. Toss with enough oil to coat all lightly. Roast at 375 degrees for 45 minutes or so, till veggies are fork tender, stirring gently every 20 minutes. Transfer vegetables to serving platter or large casserole dish to serve. Note: one quart of Brussels sprouts can be added after first 20 minutes of cooking.

Squash or Sweet Potato Biscuits

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
2 tab. brown sugar
1 tab. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup butter or margarine
3/4 cup milk
1/2 cup mashed cooked butternut squash or sweet potato

Combine dry ingredients in a bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add milk and sweet potato/squash puree. Stir just until moistened. Turn dough out onto a heavily floured surface. Knead 4-5 times. Cut dough in circles or triangles. Bake at 450 for 15 minutes.

Spicy Sweet Potato Pie

Two 9-inch pie crusts, uncooked
3 cups cooked sweet potato puree
1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
4 eggs, slightly beaten
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
1 tab. ground cinnamon
1 tab. ground ginger
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla
One can (1 2/3 cup) evaporated milk or 1 1/2 cups regular milk plus 2 tab. melted butter

Beat eggs and fold in sweet potato, sugar, spices, salt, vanilla and milk. Pour into pie crust and bake at 450 for 10 minutes, then 350 for 45 minutes or more until knife inserted in middle comes out clean. Cool and serve with whipped cream.

Consumers are finding another reason to be thankful this coming holiday season. Ohio farmers are coming together to offer their farm fresh, sustainably grown, products assembled into one box with recipes, for you to prepare and enjoy. These Thanksgiving boxes will be offered once more through the Heart of Ohio OEFFA Chapter (just north of Columbus), and the Athens Area OEFFA Chapter (in Southeastern Ohio).

In the past, Boxes have included farm fresh squash, potatoes, eggs, flour, spinach, onions, beets, broccoli, leafy greens, fresh herbs, apples, and recipe suggestions, all from local and sustainable farmers. Conscientious eaters can also order their pasture-raised farm fresh turkeys from chapters offering Thanksgiving Boxes.

For more information about Thanksgiving Boxes from the Heart of Ohio Chapter, please visit www.oeffa.org or call Carol at the office at 614/421-2022. For more information about the Athens Area Boxes, please contact chapter president Ed Perkins at 740/664-3370 or perkaber@juno.com.

Lawsuit: Treatment of "Raw" Almonds

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A group of nut handlers filed a lawsuit in the Washington, D.C. federal court in September seeking to repeal a controversial USDA-mandated treatment program for California-grown raw almonds. The almond farmers and handlers contend that their businesses have been seriously damaged and their futures jeopardized by a Sept. 2007 requirement that raw almonds be treated with propylene oxide (a toxic fumigant recognized as a carcinogen by the EPA) or steam-heated before they can be sold, even though they continue to be labeled "raw."

According to Cornucopia’s Will Fantle “We believe this is a strong legal case and hope for a favorable decision in time to protect this year’s almond harvest.” For more, contact Fantle at 715/839-7731.
Welcome to OEFFA’s Newest Members

Business Level
Ruth Ham-Hale, April Showers Greenhouse
Jon Michalek, Suntech Horticulture
Mary Doerr
Karen & Paul Wulf

Family Level
Davis Denman, Denmandale Farms
Judy Page & Philip Hinsay
Scott Knop, Mt Vernon Farms
Jeff Pride, Mel-an-Kate Jersey Farm
Brefman Inc., Snake Hill Farm
Elizabeth VanMeter, Family Matters Farm
Steve Cotter & Marcia Veldman, Meadowlark Farm
Raymond Yoder, Cable Line Crossing Farm

Individual
Lapma’a
Anastasia Anderson
Jonathan Berger
Jeff Browning
Juliann Gardner
Marilou Guy
Janet Joscelyne
J Kendall
Mary Kirsch
Greg & Brian Krause
Robert & Viola Omlor
Randy Simon
Matt Starline
Ralph Strausbaugh

Non-Profit Organization
Jeremy Koosed, Greater Akron Partnership for Sustainability
Michael & Ellen Moor, Nature’s Green

Student
Eli Zook

Local Harvest Dinner

By Renee Hunt

“Delectable” and “elegant” are two words to describe the Local Harvest Dinner, an OEFFA fundraiser held in Columbus in September.

Chefs Kevin Guffey (The Athletic Club of Columbus), Kevin Malhame (The Northstar Café), Jon O’Carroll (Lindey’s), Alana Schock (Alana’s Fine Food and Wine), and Thomas Smith (The Worthington Inn) masterfully prepared a meal using ingredients from more than a dozen central Ohio farms.

Attendees dined on courses that included red wine and rosemary braised beef short ribs served over creamy polenta sourced from three OEFFA member farms, an heirloom tomato salad featuring tomatoes from OEFFA Board President Mike Laughlin, appetizers featuring corn from OEFFA members Ben and Lisa Sippel, and a cheesecake and apple compote featuring apples from OEFFA members Jeff and Shelley Mott.

The hors d’oeuvres and each course featured a wine pairing thanks to a donation from OEFFA members Dennis and Susan Mizer, owners of Natural-State Wines.

The silent auction featured almost 30 items, including an overnight stay at OEFFA member Dick Jensen’s Flying J Farm and an apple and hard cider gift basket from OEFFA member Charlie Fritsch.

While the evening went on without a hitch, getting there was a bit harried. Originally scheduled for September 14, the event had to be postponed and relocated the next day to the Athletic Club of Columbus since the Worthington Inn and many places throughout Ohio were left without power from Hurricane Ike’s windstorm.

Because of the date change, some folks from the sellout crowd had to miss this delicious dinner, and will have to wait for the next Local Harvest Dinner to experience this unique dining experience.

Many thanks to the chefs, the staffs at the two restaurants, and the many farmers, businesses and individuals who donated to the event, and to the many volunteers who put the event together and helped to get the word out.

Setting a table for the Harvest Dinner...
FDA Allows Irradiation of Iceberg Lettuce and Spinach

By David G. Cox

The Food and Drug Administration announced on August 22, 2008 that it will allow the irradiation of spinach and iceberg lettuce. Effective immediately, the new rule allows the use of “ionizing radiation for control of food-borne pathogens.” The new rule is in partial response to a petition filed by the National Food Processors Association on behalf of The Food Irradiation Coalition.

Under FDA definitions, a source of radiation used to treat food is considered a “food additive.” The radiation is not actually “added” to the food but is instead used to treat or process the food. As a “food additive” it is up to the FDA to determine what constitutes a safe level of the additive. In making this “safety” determination, FDA looks to the following factors: the radiation’s potential toxicity; the nutritional adequacy of the radiation; and the radiation’s effects on the food’s microbiological profile.

Not surprisingly, FDA concluded in the new rule that there will not be any significant change in the amino acid composition, in lipid levels, or in the furan levels (which causes tumors in laboratory animals) of spinach or iceberg lettuce as long as radiation levels do not exceed “4.0 kGy.” FDA also concluded that “there is no reason to suspect a toxicological hazard” when consuming these radiated foods.

However, the studies that FDA reviewed in making its conclusions demonstrated that, as a result of consuming radiated foods, the body weight of pups at weaning was lower and the body weight gains of the third generation of these pups was also lower. Notwithstanding these results, FDA dismissed both of these findings as “not of toxicological significance.”

With respect to the nutritional levels of irradiated spinach and iceberg lettuce, FDA concluded that radiating spinach and iceberg lettuce would result in “small losses of vitamin A” yet dismissed this finding with the statement that this loss would have “little impact on the total dietary intake of this vitamin.” In other words, the loss of vitamin A caused by radiation could be made up by consuming other foods.

In addition, the studies reviewed by FDA demonstrated that radiation would cause folate loss by 10%, yet FDA dismissed this finding because such losses “are comparable to or less than the folate losses that have been reported for [other] heat treatments.” In other words, if one form of treatment causes nutritional deficiencies, then it is okay to use another form of treatment (radiation) that also causes nutritional deficiencies.

Most glaring in the FDA conclusions is their acknowledgment that the organizations that submitted the petition did not include any toxicological data on the effects of radiation on spinach or iceberg lettuce. FDA dismissed this omission by stating that the petitioner “made extensive reference to studies considered in earlier evaluations.” In other words, FDA is taking the position that the effects of radiation on shellfish are the same as on vegetables.

In essence, it is going to be harder for consumers to obtain fresh, wholesome, nutritious spinach and iceberg lettuce now that FDA has authorized the irradiation of these foods. All the more reason to support your local farmer by signing up for a CSA, to visit and shop at your local farmers’ market, or to grow your own vegetables.

Gary Cox is a former environmental prosecutor for the State of Ohio, a former organic vegetable farmer, and now an Associate 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, not the firm or OEFFA.
All of Kirschenmann’s work has not been in the farm’s field though. In addition to his past work as director of the Leopold Center, he helped to found Farm Verified Organic, Inc. (a private certification agency) and the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society. He has held numerous national and international appointments, including on USDA’s National Organic Standards Board, the North Central Region’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) administrative council, and the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture board of directors. Kirschenmann is currently the convening chair of a multi-state task force, Agriculture of the Middle, that focuses on research and markets for midsize American farms. The group also has established the Association of Family Farms to create standards and markets for these farms.

Kirschenmann is author of numerous articles and book chapters dealing with ethics and agriculture, including one titled “A Bright Future for Farmers in the Middle,” which was published alongside writers such as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Barbara Kingsolver, Eric Schlosser, Wendell Berry, and Michael Pollan in a book commemorating the grassroots Farm Aid movement. Kirschenmann holds degrees from Yankton College and Hartford Theological Seminary, as well as a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Chicago.

His keynote address at the 2009 OEFFA Conference will acknowledge that change is forever constant, and will be titled “Getting Ready for the Big Changes Ahead.” He will discuss how the ecological farm movement, knowing this, is poised to deal with the effects of industrialization and the current energy situation.

Melinda Hemmelgarn, an investigative nutritionist, will also be a keynote speaker at the OEFFA conference this year. She will unfold the changing climate of the food system, share her charm as an award-winning journalist, and provide an insightful perspective as she connects the dots between food, health, and agriculture.

With humor, kindness, and enthusiasm, Hemmelgarn will invite participants to “think beyond their plates” and better understand how daily food choices affect personal health and the planet the next generation will inherit. In her talk, titled “Feast or Famine: a Fork in the Road,” she will discuss the current climate of food systems—one that has encouraged people to eat empty and unhealthy calories—and will provide a road map to eating “ecologically.”

Hemmelgarn founded and formerly directed the Nutrition Communications Center at the University of Missouri, and blazed the trail for blending nutrition education with media literacy. Her provocative yet practical columns and national conference presentations cover cutting edge nutrition and food safety issues. She is a member of the Society for Nutrition Education, Association of Health Care Journalists, and Alliance for a Media Literate America. Hemmelgarn serves as spokesperson for the Missouri Organic Association, and co-authored a children’s book, Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch: A Healthy Fun Food Adventure! In 2007, she received an American Dietetic Association Award for Excellence in Hunger and Environmental Nutrition.

Also on tap for the two-day conference are a series of workshops, including “Ask the Experts” opportunities with presenters such as organic/biodynamic Tennessee farmer Jeff Poppen. A fun and educational kids’ conference, great homemade meals featuring local organic foods, a child care area, an interesting cast of exhibitors, creative informational sessions, and Saturday evening entertainment will round out this year’s annual OEFFA conference.

We’ll see you there!

For more information about the OEFFA Conference, please visit the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org or call the office at 614/421-2022. More about Fred Kirschenmann can be found at www.leopold.iastate.edu/about/staff.htm. Much of the information used here about Melinda Hemmelgarn was taken from the Organic Valley website at www.organicvalley.coop/farm-friends/moo/straightplate/meet-melinda/

“I appreciated the personal space provided during my years growing up on the farm. I always enjoyed the solitude of getting on a tractor and being close to the earth.” - Fred Kirschenmann

“We are smart to grow some of our food, cook most of it, and know all of it.” - Melinda Hemmelgarn
Adoption of Organic Farming is Top Priority for New IFOAM President

NEW CASTLE, VA - “Organic principles and practices improve world food systems and help mitigate climate change”, said IFOAM’s new World Board President, Katherine DiMatteo. DiMatteo, former executive director of the Organic Trade Association (OTA) was elected President of the World Board of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) at IFOAM’s General Assembly this summer.

“I am pleased and honored to have been elected to the IFOAM Board and to serve as President,” says DiMatteo. “I will do my best to promote our mission of leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity. I look forward to working with the very skilled individuals elected to the IFOAM World Board and to helping IFOAM’s Executive Director, Angela Caudle de Freitas, grow the organization. My top priorities are for IFOAM to become a strong advocate for organic agriculture at all levels, to foster harmonization, equivalence and equitable trade, and to facilitate discussions on the future of organic.”

Call for SARE Grant Proposals

The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), announces its 2008 Call for Farmer Rancher Grant Proposals. The deadline for receipt of proposals is December 1, 2008.

Grant applications can be downloaded at http://sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm

Grants can range from $6,000 for individual farmers up to $18,000 for groups of three or more farmers. Beginning farmers and youth may also apply. Projects should emphasize research or education/demonstration.

The North Central Region expects to fund about 50 projects in the 12-state region.

For more information, contact Ohio’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education coordinator, Mike Hogan, 330/627-4310 or hogan.1@osu or ncrsare@umn.edu.

FYI... The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) has a new name—SARE Outreach. But the mission remains the same: to continue as SARE’s national outreach arm, producing practical, how-to information for farmers, ranchers and educators across America. In addition to the trademark line of books, bulletins, and other information products featuring SARE-funded research (www.sare.org/WebStore) SARE Outreach will also ramp up its sponsorship program and further develop SARE’s website.

Food System and Climate Change... continued from page 4

Neff and her colleagues attribute the lack of news coverage to the origins of the climate change field; relative lack of quantifiable information on the food system contributions; the framing of food-related issues as individual rather than as social concern; initial lack of advocate interest. In addition, the U.S. food industry has not been involved in the climate change discussion until recently while other climate-affecting industries have taken oppositional stances that led to media interest in tensions between them and advocates.

Additional authors of Yesterday’s Dinner, Tomorrow’s Weather, Today’s News? U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Food System Contributions to Climate Change are Iris L. Chan and Katherine Clegg Smith, Ph.D. The research was supported by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future.

Contact for the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future: Chris Stevens at 410/502-7578 or dcstevens@jhsph.edu.
An Organic Classic

Farmers of Forty Centuries by F. H. King is now back in print. For more than 40,000 years, Asian farmers worked the same fields repeatedly without sapping the land’s fertility and without applying artificial fertilizer! How they accomplished this miraculous feat is described by author Franklin Hiram King, a former official of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. King traveled to Asia in the early 1900s to learn how farmers in China, Korea, and Japan were able to achieve successful harvests century after century without exhausting the soil, one of their most valuable natural resources. This book is the result of his extraordinary mission. A fascinating study of waste-free methods of cultivation, Farmers of Forty Centuries reveals the secrets of ancient farming methods, and at the same time, chronicles the travels and observations of a remarkable man. A well-trained observer who studied the actual conditions of life among agriculural peoples, King provides intriguing glimpses of Japan, China, Manchuria, and Korea; customs of the common people; utilization of waste; methods of irrigation, reforestation and land reclamation; the cultivation of rice, silk, and tea; and related topics. 5” x 8.5”, 441-page paperback, well illustrated by many black and white photos, $16.95.

Free-Range Poultry

My own book Free Range Poultry Production & Marketing has been completely revised and now is available with a DVD. This Free-Range Poultry Production and Marketing Valu-Pak by Herm Beck-Chenoweth contains the 3-ring binder production manual containing feed formulas, equipment plans, marketing ideas and slaughter information PLUS the Free-Range Poultry DVD that shows field and slaughter operations in a hands-on style. If you know this is the production system for you, you’ll need both of these resources to get up to speed quickly. An excellent buy at $49.50 including shipping! If you would like more information on this remarkable system visit the all-new Free-Range Poultry website at www.Free-RangePoultry.com, as well as the Free-Range & Pasture Poultry Board on the forums (see pg. 15).

Greenhouse Growing

The Natural Greenhouse is a new book by OEFFA’s own Virginia “Gini” Coover. The book is for beginning and experienced greenhouse operators concerned about the safety of the food they eat and sell. This is a practical guide based on 26 years of experience growing and marketing greenhouse plants and vegetables. Here is an alternative to high-priced and low-quality plants and foods. With the same attention to detail that makes her such an accomplished grower, Gini guides readers through the entire natural greenhouse process: planning and setting goals, choosing or building the greenhouse and work-spaces, planning the growing season, growing and selling organic plants and vegetables, controlling insects and disease naturally, evaluating and changing the operation to increase profit and productivity. 252-page, 8+” “x 11” paperback, $24.95. Color and black and white illustrations are included. A great book!

As always, enter the code “OEFFA” at checkout online or tell the Back40 customer service rep that you were referred by “OEFFA” if you call to order toll-free at 866/284-9844.
Resources

Free On-line Organic Transition Course - The Rodale Institute's Organic Transition Course is a 15-hour on-line program designed to help participants understand the National Organic Standards and use them as a framework for making the transition to organic production. No set hours, fees, or tests. www.tritrainingcenter.org/course/

New Back 40 Forum - A forum for country folks, market gardeners, music lovers, etc. Started just several months ago, the site has grown to 48 boards with nearly 500 posts on over 300 topics. www.Back40Forums.com

Organic Insurance for Organically Grown Crops - Risk Management Agency (RMA) currently provides coverage for certified organic acreage, transitional acreage, and buffer zone acreage. To find a list of insurable crops, please visit: www.rma.usda.gov/policies. For more detailed information about organic crop insurance please visit: www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/2006/organics.pdf

Events

OEFFA Members' Day - Sunday, November 16, 2008 10:00 - 3:30. Meet other OEFFA Members, work to further develop OEFFA’s strategis plan, and join with area members to develop stronger regional chapters. Bring a dish to share and a pair of walking shoes. Stratford Ecological Center, 3083 Liberty Rd., Delaware, OH. (see page 3)

The Agriculture Course: An Intensive Study of the Origins and Future of Biodynamics - January 15-19, Chestnut Ridge, NY (Must have a working knowledge of Biodynamics.) Some of Biodynamics’ leading exponents and practitioners will gather to share their knowledge about the origins and future of Biodynamics. This four-day seminar will include time for artistic activities, discussion, and hearty meals. Participants are expected to leave with much new knowledge – and many new questions as well. For more information: 845/352-5020 x20, www.pfeiffercenter.org/workshops.

30th Annual OEFFA Conference - February 21-22, 2009. Granville, OH. Keynote speakers will be Fred Kirschenmann (an organic farmer), and Melinda Hemmelgarn (a nutritionist and journalist). The Conference will also offer workshops, a trade show, networking, a kids’ conference, child care (provided by Briar Rose Children’s Center), custom organic and locally sourced food, Saturday evening entertainment, and more. Information and registration on-line at www.oeffa.org or at 614/421-2022.

Permaculture Design Course - BELIZE
Maya Mountain Research Farm
March 20- April 1, 2009

Permaculture is a whole systems method of design that organizes ideas, strategies, and techniques from agriculture, appropriate technology, renewable energy, sustainable development, economics and other disciplines into a pattern of mutually supportive relationships. By using principles from nature to thoughtfully integrate land, water, plants, people, animals, shelter, technologies and community, permaculture offers the tools needed to provide for the well being of people while protecting natural resources.

The course will include lectures, discussions, small groups, site visits, and hands on experience, and will be held at Maya Mountain Research Farm (MMRF) one of Central America's oldest permaculture projects.

Instructors: Albert Bates, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Andrew Phillip, Maria Ros, Christopher Nesbitt, and local guests.

Cost: USD $1250/Belize $2500 includes organic farm fresh meals, all course materials and expeditions, comfortable accommodation on the farm, and a Certificate of Permaculture Design upon completion of the course.

For details and registration, see www.mmrfbz.org or contact Christopher at info@mmrfbz.org

OEFFA/ OSU Organics 101
Organic Crop Production • Reynoldsburg, Ohio
Tuesday, December 02, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

All grain and horticulture crop farmers who are looking for information on organic crop production are encouraged to attend this workshop. OSU researchers and organic farmers together will present the latest and best recommendations for transitioning to organic crop production. Participants will learn about the organic certification standards and the certification process, soil biology, crop rotations and pest management in organic cropping systems. The economics of organic production, sources for approved production inputs, and the marketing of organic crops will also be discussed. Contact: Mike Anderson, OEFFA Organic Education Coordinator, 614/421-2022 or go to www.oeffa.org.
OEFFA News  •  Fall 2008

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, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43214, call 614/421-2022, or renew at www.oeffa.org

For Sale
1) J.D. sickle bar mower; 7’ sidemount; fits 10/20 series
2) J.D. cultivator; model RM; six 30” rows
3) J.D. rotary hoe, model 400; covers eight 30” rows; end transport with wheels. Pickaway Co. Louise Warner, 740/983-2487

McGeary Granular Organic Fertilizers
Standard and Custom Mixes available. Feeds and Minerals (QAI cert.) Dale Dyko, 937/372-7411. NewHopeOrganics@wmconnect.com

Wanted
Organic spelt and other small grain. We also do custom dehulling and cleaning of organic grains. Stutzman Farms, 6197 TR 605, Millersburg, OH 44654; 330/674-1284 ext. 2.

Land in Michigan
50 acres located in Livingston County (MI), to sell or lease out. Across from Gregory State Game area, high and rolling, not been farmed in 5 years, sandy loam soil, some water. Rhonda Rose, Associate Broker, Century 21 Brighton Towne Co., 1024 E. Grand River, Brighton, MI 48116; 810/225-8132; roserhon@hotmail.com

OEFFA Members Day - November 16, 2008
Organics 101 - December 2, 2008
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