



Small Farm News

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SMALL FARM CENTER • COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Agricultural Policies and the Future of U.S. Family Farming

by Desmond Jolly, extension economist, UC Davis; and director, Small Farm Program

Increasing levels of concentration in the agricultural industry have led to growing concerns about the impacts of agricultural and economic policies on structural change in the food and agricultural systems. Agricultural policy has leaned in the direction of supporting large farms over smaller farms because larger farms tend to have lower per-unit costs. Typically, the cost of production of a standard commodity by this measure declines as the volume of production within a production unit increases. Thus, society is assumed to be better off if larger farms displace smaller, "less efficient" ones.

In contrast to this narrow definition of social welfare, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Commission on Small Farms cited a number of public benefits conferred by smaller scale, family farms in advocating for support of diversity in farm operations. The commission noted that 60 percent of all farms are less than 180 acres, and that responsible management of the soil, water, and wildlife encompassed by these operations is of significant public benefit.

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The famous St. Louis arch crowns the Mississippi River and marks the gateway to America's western frontier.

conference tour visited two St. Louis area sites: Rombach Farms in Chesterfield, Missouri, and Centennial Farms in Auburn, Missouri.

Rombach Farms

As tour participants step off the bus at Rombach Farms, audible cries of delight ripple through the crowd. All eyes are on the brilliantly colored pumpkins carpeting the ground in all directions. Facing north, pumpkins stretch in endless rows out to the great pumpkin pyramid towering 20 feet above the grassy field. To the east and west, they overflow out of wagons and wheelbarrows or lie heaped in mounds stacked throughout the u-pick area.

To the south, school children pour off buses to prance down rows selecting baby pumpkins. Adults consider the equally tantalizing huge pumpkins weighing in at 20 pounds, or the novelty pumpkins in colors including red and white. Not to be outdone by the pumpkins, vibrantly hued gourds compete for selection as they overpopulate the base of a tombstone-tattooed shed at the foot of the pumpkin field.

When the children and their adult companions exhaust themselves from their pumpkin or gourd search, they can relax in a wooden pavilion that shelters several picnic

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Conference Tours Refresh Participants

by Susan McCue, editor, Small Farm News

After spending two workshop-intensive days indoors at the National Small Farm Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, October 12-15, many participants proclaimed the conference farm tours a breath of fresh air. Participants who chose the agricultural tourism-themed



The Rombach Farms pumpkin patch commands immediate attention upon arrival at the 80-acre farm.

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Director's Column

Agri-tourism: A Desperate Last Straw?

By Desmond Jolly, Small Farm Program director

Editor's note: In this column, Desmond Jolly responds to a letter recently submitted to *Small Farm News*.



Desmond Jolly

November 7, 1999

Dear Editor:

I was really very distressed over your Summer issue on Agricultural Tourism. I think you should

be honest about what Agricultural Tourism really represents — the desperate grasping at straws on the part of people who cannot make a living farming because of concentrated markets, unfair world trade agreements, terrible media coverage of farmers and farming, and monopoly capitalism in general.

If I had wanted to run a theme park or become an innkeeper, I certainly would not have gone into farming. Let's be clear on the real issues — we have a farm crisis in this country unlike any seen in the past, and if something doesn't happen soon, the only people who will still be in business will be the theme park operators. But that is not what most of us want to do with our lives and our farms and ranches.

Sincerely yours,
Jeanne McCormack

Desmond Jolly responds:

I am not just respectful of Ms. McCormack's opinions; I am very supportive of the basic concerns she raises. However, I do believe in strategic thinking, and in this context, a focus on agri-tourism to bolster the portfolio of enterprises that a family farm might engage

in to diversify its income sources seems quite rational. Regarding national farm policy, I, along with more than two dozen other commissioners, devoted a significant portion of my life to influencing and changing national policy through our work on the National Commission on Small Farms during a two-year period.

But even if the commission's 146 recommendations were taken and acted upon, individual farmers and farm entrepreneurs would still need to think strategically and find niches that they can fill in the emerging marketplace.

“Through direct engagement with consumers, farmers are able to share the challenges and satisfactions of their lifestyles.”

Clearly, the traditional, conventional approaches of producing commodities and selling them to the grain company or the packer/shipper is not optimal for most smaller scale producers. Additional, higher value products and services are needed to meet operational expenses, to more fully utilize the assets of the farm, and to meet emerging consumer needs. One does not have to envision oneself as a theme park operator to value the potential benefits of more direct engagement with consumers through on-farm visits and on-farm sales.

Benefits

What are some of these benefits? Through direct engagement with consumers, farmers are able to share the challenges and satisfactions of their lifestyles. Direct engagement with non-farm people is a po-

tentially effective way to rebuild connections between urbanites and rural people, and may enhance chances for a more pro-family farm policy environment.



Farmers can develop interpersonal and communication skills through their interactions, and those skills can have payoffs in other important areas. Agri-tourism increases the potential for higher margin, on-farm sales of value added products, further diversifying the product line of the farm operation. The increased revenue may reduce the probability of an early exit from farming.

Diversification into more direct consumer relations through such opportunities as agricultural or educational tours, u-pick operations, farm stands, pumpkin patches, agricultural festivals, and farm stays are not a substitute for a pro family farm agenda. But neither are they irrelevant or merely a desperate grasping at straws. Sometimes we must learn to make lemonade.

In fact, one of my fears is that if farmers and ranchers are too tardy in their responses to this emerging opportunity, theme park operators will develop simulated farms and operate them as agri-tourism attractions.

program news

Appointments

Gail Feenstra, food systems analyst, Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education Program, was named state community food security co-liasion by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman.

Awards

A team of Cooperative Extension specialists and faculty, including **Desmond Jolly**, **Marita Cantwell**, **Trevor Suslow** and **Linda Harris**, were awarded a food safety education grant for California's small farmers from the USDA Food Safety Initiative Program. The grant totaled \$180,000 for a two-year project.

The project design calls for the development of a variety of educational products and outreach methodologies.

Conferences Attended

Ellen Rilla, director, UC Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County, attended the Third Global Tourism Conference October 17-22 in Glasgow, Scotland, where she presented a talk entitled "Agritourism in Northern California-A Cooperative Approach to Adapting Farm Tourism to Local Conditions."

New Staff

Laura Tourte is the new county director/small farm advisor for UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County. Tourte joined Cooperative Extension in 1992, and worked most recently as an assistant specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis. She brings agricultural expertise in farm management and the economics of alternative production practices to the county.

Sujaya Udayagiri is the new strawberry farm advisor for UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County. She also has a 35 percent appointment to work with the county's small and limited resource farmers who grow strawberries, caneberries, and vegetables. Her past research includes Integrated Pest Management (IPM) studies.

Sabbatical Leave

Ben Faber, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Ventura County, began a year-long sabbatical leave November 1, 1999, in Te Puke, New Zealand. His research will include studies on avocado root rot and water use by plants in landscapes of various topographies.

New Publications Authored

Desmond Jolly contributed the article "Urban Agriculture as Food Access Policy," and Postgraduate Researcher **Angela Moskow** contributed the article "The Contribution of Urban Agriculture to Gardeners, their Households, and Surrounding Communities: The Case of Havana, Cuba," to the publication entitled *For Hunger-proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems*. The book is published by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

Ben Faber, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Ventura County, authored a new publication entitled *The Avocado Handbook*. The 200-page book covers all aspects of growing avocados, and will be available after January 2000.



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The Small Farm Center links those who need information on small-scale farming with those who have the information. The Center produces publications and a newsletter; sponsors conferences and seminars; holds a library of periodicals, reports and books; gives referrals; and answers requests for information.

Readers are encouraged to send us information, express views, and contact us for assistance. Mention of a specific product is intended for the reader's information — not as a recommendation of that specific product.

National Conference—FROM PAGE 1

tables. From that central vantage point, they can decide to visit the farm's animal zoo, shop at the farm-stocked produce stand, or check out the hand-crafted wooden furniture created by an Amish farmer who places his goods there on con-



A pumpkin pyramid takes center stage at Rombach Farms.

signment. The tour costs children nothing, but co-owner Steve Rombach says having 1,000 children a day during pumpkin season serves as excellent word-of-mouth advertising.

Asked how many visitors he receives in a year, Rombach says, "One day I flew over the farm and counted 1,000 cars in the parking lot." As for marketing, he says, "I just take it a day at a time," with a customer base that travels primarily from the St. Louis area 45 minutes away.



Rombach Farms' gourds and pumpkins spill across the ground in a dazzling array of shapes, colors, and sizes.

Direct retail sales are the only way to market effectively in his area, says Rombach, whose family has farmed the land for three generations since 1928. "We lose 30-75 percent every year, so wholesale is hard," he explains. Buyers call him a few days before they need supply, and "If I have it, I'll sell it to you," he says.

On-farm sales are part of the farm's history. In the 1950s, Steve's mother started selling produce at their farm stand. She and Steve's father remain on the farm, which is now operated by Steve, his brother, and a cousin.

Part-time employees are hard to find, says Steve, "But fortunately, we've got a lot of really good friends and family who help us." His wife works off the farm, so "I'm kind of a Mr. Mom," he adds. After he takes his children to school, he returns to the farm where his work days slide into nights, often ending around 9 p.m.

Liability insurance is expensive, and he needs five or six different policies to cover his operation, but Steve and his partners still have plans for the future. Soon



Ghosts haunt this Rombach Farms shed during Halloween season when gourds and pumpkins are plentiful.

they'll start renting out the pavilion for parties, offering hay rides, and limiting the on-farm sales to pumpkins only. "I've got three little boys and I'd kind of like to see it continue," he says hopefully. □



Steve Rombach discusses his operation with tour participants gathered in the farm's pavilion.

Centennial Farms

Owned by the same family more than 100 years, the aptly-named Centennial Farms has passed through six generations since 1854 to current owners Bob and Ellen



Ellen Knoerschild explains the apple butter process that begins with this large vat in her shed.

Knoerschild. The Knoerschilds, who share the farm with their children and grandchildren, make sure to keep abreast of agricultural trends that can keep the farm profitable and maintain its century-long success.

Although they grow specialty crops including apples, peaches, grapes, berries, pumpkins, watermelons, and cantaloupes, the Knoerschilds developed a value added apple butter operation that now supplies one-fourth of the farm's income.

The Knoerschilds sell their highly successful apple butter on the farm, to restaurants and to wholesalers. Six days a week, a huge vat boils down the sauce that is later labeled in-house and prepared for delivery. Prices for apple butter easily beat half-pack apple and wholesale bushel prices, making the value added apple butter a healthy income generator worth the family's efforts.

The Knoerschilds became more involved in what they call "entertainment

marketing” 15 years ago, but are only continuing the family tradition of on-farm retail. Like the Rombachs, Ellen says, “Centennial Farms always sold retail by the bushel. In their area, “Nobody sells to wholesale,” she says, due to the unpredict-



Desmond Jolly visits the Knoerschild greenhouse where herbs and flowers are grown for resale.

able weather that makes predictable crop outcomes impossible and therefore, wholesale marketing improbable.

To facilitate sales, the farm’s on-site store brims with apple butter and other value added products available to visitors, including school tour children, who shop for homemade goodies. From April to November, visitors also can stop at the on-site specialty gift shop run by a couple who rent out the original farm house’s first floor from the Knoerschilds, who live upstairs.

“We keep trying to come up with money-making schemes,” says Ellen. “That’s one reason why we’re so diversified. Every year, we have something that doesn’t make it.”

Recently, the Knoerschilds planted 1,000 walnut trees with plans to use them for lumber. On a wagon tour of the farm,

Bob Knoerschild points out the new trees, then shares a tip as he passes his peach orchard. To keep deer away, he ties a cake of soap to the tree. The deer don’t like the soap, so they stay away, he reports happily.

Then he shares a tip about liability insurance with the tour group. Not long ago, he switched to a package offered through the *North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association (*noted in the Summer issue of Small Farm News*). “It’s worth joining just for the insurance alone, and the excellent meetings, if you can get to them,” he says. ■

*For more information about North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association liability insurance, call (888) 884-9270.



Bob Knoerschild addresses farm tour participants in front of the farm’s Halloween-accessorized retail shop.



California Farm Conference Draws High Attendance

More than 500 participants attended this year’s California Farm Conference, held November 7-9 in Berkeley, California. Participants chose from a variety of workshops, including “Starting and Sustaining a Small Farm,” a project of the UC Small Farm Workgroup, and “Farm Stays and Agri-Tourism,” organized by UC Cooperative Extension Marin County and the Small Farm Center.

Look for post-conference coverage in the next issue of *Small Farm News*. ■

Season’s Greetings



The Small Farm Center staff wish you the very best of holiday seasons. With you, we look forward to a new year filled with the challenges and rewards that the world of

agriculture brings to our lives.

In the new year, we invite you to send newsletter comments or suggestions to:

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Agricultural Policies —FROM PAGE 1

In many rural communities, family scale farms provide an economic foundation, generating revenues, taxes, and jobs for local communities.

Consumers connect with agriculture more readily through direct marketing efforts associated with smaller operations than through the more mainstream food chain — the packer/shipper or the supermarket.

Small farms are perceived by the commission as providing healthy environments to raise families. Smaller family scale operations contribute to greater diversity in agriculture — diversity of ownership, cropping systems, biological organization, cultures and traditions. And, reiterating the Jeffersonian perspective, the commission noted that landowners who rely on local businesses and services for their needs are more likely to have a stake in the well-being of the community. In turn, local land owners are more likely to be held accountable for any negative actions that harm the community.

The Jeffersonian Vision

This perception of family scale farming as more conducive to a sustainable democracy and to sustainable communities was a founding principle of the Jeffersonian democratic vision. Thomas Jefferson extolled the merits of family farmers in hyperbolic terms: cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds. Whitney Griswold, a former president of Yale University, suggested in his book *Farming and Democracy* that a family farm structure is more conducive to democracy than larger estates.



Thomas Jefferson

In any case, it was the Jeffersonian vision and its core values that informed the development and adoption of agricultural policies from 1860 and for another 100 years. A host of public policies were embodiments of the Jeffersonian family farm concept, including the Homestead Act of 1862, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the Hatch Experiment Station Act of 1867, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890, the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, the Land Reclamation Act of 1902, the Clayton Act of 1914, and the Smith Lever Act of 1914.

The 1930s Depression era stimulated an exodus of people from family farms, and the strong industrial expansion caused by war production and the Cold War created a pull towards the cities' manufacturing and service industries.

Intensification of agricultural technology in the form of mechanization, petrochemicals, and genetic changes created excess capacity in agriculture, putting further pressure on the sustainability of family scale farming. By the 1970s, the public benefits of family scale farming focused attention on the diminishing diversity in U.S. agriculture.

In California, those concerns generated a renaissance of interest in family farming and produced a seminal report, "The Family Farm in California: Report of the Small Farm Viability Project," submitted to the State of California in November 1977. A comprehensive treatment, the report advocated a new family farm policy for California, and resulted in a number of positive outcomes.

The report recommended more targeted involvement of the University of California in providing technical assistance and information to assist small producers with their operations.

Another recommendation suggested that the University of California Coopera-

tive Extension Service should design and implement cooperative education programs about farm cooperatives.

The report also advocated that the state aggressively establish programs for direct marketing for small farmers. California now has more than 300 farmers' markets, and the University of California operates state funded programs including the statewide Small Farm Program and the Center for Cooperatives.

A parallel concern about family scale farms was articulated at the national level. The USDA published "Structure Issues of America's Agriculture" in November 1979. USDA also held regional meetings on the topic between November and December 1979, and published their findings in "A Dialogue on the Structure of American Agriculture." In January of 1981, USDA published "A Time To Choose — Summary Report on the Structure of Agriculture." The Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives 97th Congress, also held extensive hearings on the structure of agriculture in February and March 1981.

In his foreword to "A Time To Choose," then-USDA Secretary Bob Bergland described the prevailing philosophy of post-war federal policies: "We thought, we hoped, that if we helped the major commercial farmers who provided most of the food and fiber (and exerted most of the political pressure), the benefits would filter down to the intermediate sized and then the smallest producers." This one-size-fits-all paradigm is gradually giving way to the more realistic notion that research needs and educational approaches — as well as technological appropriateness and financial and risk management products and strategies — may vary with scale.

New Directions in Policy

For the first time, USDA specified small farms among the areas for allocating research and education grants in its requests for proposals for the National Research Initiative (NRI) and its Food Safety Initiative grants. The UC Small Farm Center successfully competed for a \$180,000 grant under the Food Safety Initiative.

In October 1999, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman issued a new regulation defining small farms and laying out guiding principles for its programs with respect to small farms. The USDA has had a Small Farms office for some time, but several events have catalyzed a renewed interest in and focus on the welfare of small and family scale farms.

The Report of the Civil Rights Action Team made a large number of recommendations as to how USDA could more equitably make its programs available to all constituents in a nondiscriminatory manner. One of its key recommendations was the creation of a body to address on a more comprehensive scale the diversity of issues facing small and moderate scale farmers. Thus, Secretary Glickman named a National Commission on Small Farms in July



1997. In its report, *A Time To Act*, the commission submitted 146 recommendations to Secretary Glickman. While the implementation has been deliberate, a number of outcomes can be noted, including the following.

- The Secretary has issued a new regulation codifying the USDA definition of small farms and articulating the philosophy of support for small and moderate scale farms.
- USDA Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger leads the Small Farm Coordinating Council comprised of representatives from various USDA agencies.
- The USDA-CSREES (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services) National Advisory Board on Research, Extension, Education and Economics is

in the process of submitting a report on small farms to the USDA-CSREES Under-Secretary Miley Gonzalez.

- Research and education requests for proposals, such as the National Research Initiative and the recent Food Safety Initiative, now make specific reference to small farms as a selective criterion.
- The Agricultural Research Service is scrutinizing its research portfolio for impacts on small and family scale farming.
- Among a broader public, inspired by the legitimizing umbrella of *A Time To Act*, one detects burgeoning interest in small farms. The recent Second National Small Farm Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, October 12-15, 1999, drew more than 700 participants — mainly professionals from land grant universities, Cooperative Extension, USDA, and nonprofit organizations.
- California's 1999 Farm Conference in Berkeley, November 7-9, 1999, drew more than 500 participants, and the UC Small Farm Workgroup's short course, "Starting and Sustaining A Small Farm," drew 60 participants of diverse ages and ethnic backgrounds.

This expression of interest comports well with the results of a recent survey of diverse rural constituencies conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. When asked for their values for rural cultures, the respondents identified responsibility, the worth of rural people and rural places, opportunity, diverse ownership of the assets that create wealth, widespread prosperity, and stewardship of natural resources.

Freedom to Fail?

The 1996 Freedom to Farm Act was predicated on the idea that the world's population is expanding rapidly and that this expanding population would increase demand for agricultural products steadily and significantly. But reality doesn't always conform to theory. To begin with, the Asian economic crisis and the debacles in Eastern Europe caused a serious decline in demand for U.S. agricultural products. Secondly, other countries have proven as good as the U.S. at producing many basic commodities. The result? Increased supplies, decreased demand, lower prices, and declining farm incomes.

Freedom to farm is also a freedom to fail — another powerful dialectic. There is increased sentiment to repeal or at least reform the 1996 Farm Bill — particularly those aspects that constitute the Freedom to Farm initiative. But our government, and in particular Congress, seems up until now to be impervious to the prospects of a new exodus of family scale farmers. Their focus is on commodities, not farmers, and perhaps they think corporate farms can produce commodities as well as family farmers, if not better. So the ultimate beneficiaries of the new farm policy are not family scale farmers.

I have in my hand the Fall 1999 newsletter of the National Family Farm Coalition. It includes what might be regarded as a family farm manifesto containing many provisions endorsed earlier by the National Commission on Small Farms in *A Time To Act*. The list of organizations that have endorsed the manifesto is extensive. It remains to be seen if policymakers are listening. ■

Guest Column

The Small Farm Revolution

by John Ikerd, extension professor and coordinator of the Sustainable Agricultural Systems Program, University of Missouri

American agriculture is in crisis. Until recently, the crisis had been a quiet one. No one wanted to talk about it. Thou-



John Ikerd

sands of farm families were being forced off the land, but we were being told by the agricultural establishment that their exodus was inevitable — in fact, was a sign of progress. Those who failed were simply the victims of their own inefficiency — their inability to keep up with changing times, their inability to compete.

But in fact, it's not inefficiency or resistance to change that is forcing families to leave their farms. It's our collective obsession with our short-run self interests. It's our worship of markets as the only true arbitrators of value. It's our acceptance of corporate greed as the only road to true prosperity. This crisis was neither inevitable, nor was it a sign of progress. The people of America need to know the truth. The time for quietness has passed.

The current crisis reflects a brazen attempt by the giant corporations to take control of agriculture away from family farms, to move beyond specialization and standardization, to centralize command and control — to complete the industrialization of agriculture. This final stage of industrialization is not only destroying the lives of farm families; it's polluting the natural environment, depleting the natural resource base, and destroying rural communities. The industrialization of agriculture is not good for America. The people need to be told the truth.

The food and fiber industry most certainly has a future. People will always need food, clothing, and shelter, and someone will provide them. But there will be no future for farming — not true farming — not unless we have the courage to challenge

and disprove the conventional wisdom that farmers must get bigger, give in to corporate control, or get out. But there are better alternatives for farmers and for society. We must find the courage to challenge the conventional wisdom. It's time for a revolution in American agriculture.

Sustainability: The New Revolution

This new American Revolution is being fomented under the conceptual umbrella of "sustainability." In farming, we talk about the sustainable agriculture movement, but there are also movements in sustainable forestry, sustainable communities, sustainable development and sustainable society in general.

The sustainability movement presents a direct challenge to conventional economic thinking.

Sustainability includes concern for self-interests, but it goes beyond to protecting interests that are shared with others, and the interests of future generations in which we have not even a share. All of the sustainability movements share a common goal, to meet the needs of the present while leaving equal or better opportunities for those to follow — to apply the Golden Rule across generations.

Sustainability and Small Farms

Sustainable farms will not only be independently owned, but they will be smaller farms as well. Sustainable farming is a product of balance, or harmony, among the ecological, economic, and social dimensions of a farming system. A smaller farm lacking this harmony is less likely to be sustainable than a larger farm that is more in harmony. But there are logical rea-

sons to believe that balance and harmony will be easier to achieve with, if not absolutely require, a large number of smaller farms rather than a small number of large farms.

The same breeds and varieties, fertilizers and feeds, pesticides and antibiotics, machinery and equipment, and business and marketing strategies are used across fields, farms, and watersheds, in all regions of the country. The goal of research is to find universal solutions to common problems — to find ways to twist, bend, and force nature to conform to some universal production and distribution process. Industrial, large-scale mass production requires this type of uniformity. Biotechnology is but the latest in a long string of

futile efforts to force uniformity upon nature.

But nature is diverse. Large-scale production creates inherent conflicts with this diverse nature — and inherently threatens sustainability. Farms that conform

to their ecological niches avoid such conflicts. Some ecological niches may be large, but most are quite small. Current concerns for agricultural sustainability are based on strong and growing evidence that most farms have already outgrown their ecological niches and could be more sustainable if they were smaller.

Eighty cents of each dollar spent for food goes for processing, transportation, packaging, advertising and other marketing services. One key to economic sustainability of small farms is to capture a larger share of consumer food dollars by performing some, and bypassing others, of these marketing services. Farmers cur-

—CONTINUED PAGE 10

"The industrialization of agriculture is not good for America. The people need to be told the truth."

The Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook

Updated and expanded from the first edition, the *Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook* contains 63 crop profiles, a comprehensive bibliography, a glossary of Asian vegetables, and an index to common and scientific crop names.

To order, call the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136. Cost: \$35 plus tax and shipping.



The Small Farm Handbook

This practical guide covers topics including livestock and crop production, buying property and equipment, dealing with taxes and regulations, and marketing.

To order, call the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136. New price: \$15 plus tax and shipping.

Publications



The 1999 National Organic Directory includes more than 1,000 listings of farmers, wholesalers, farm suppliers, support businesses, certification groups and resource groups, an index of organic commodities, and explanations of state and federal organic laws. Cost: \$47.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. Contact: Community Alliance with Family Farmers, P.O. Box 363, Davis, CA 95617; (800) 852-3832.

A new 12-page publication, *Put Your Ideas to the Test: How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch*, from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE), contains practical research tips for crop and livestock producers. Cost: free. Contact: Valerie Berton, SARE Communications Specialist, Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Building, Room 10, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082; (301) 405-3186.

Pests of the Garden and Small Farm, A Grower's Guide to Using Less Pesticide stresses alternative pest management practices such as biological control, resistant varieties, traps, barriers, and changes in irrigation and fertilization practices. Cost: \$35 plus tax and shipping. Contact: University of California, DANR Communication Services – Publications, 6701 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, CA 94608-1239; phone: (800) 994-8849.

A new 168-page book, *Cover Cropping in Vineyards: A Grower's Handbook*, details how cover crops enhance vineyard performance. The publication includes color photographs, tables, and illustrations. Cost: \$20 plus tax and shipping. Contact: University of California, DANR Communication Services – Publications, 6701 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, CA 94608-1239; (800) 994-8849.

Resources

Web Sites

Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisonings Manual
National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN)
<http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn/rmppp.htm>

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (food safety) Guidelines
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodguid.html>

UC Cooperative Extension Farm Safety Newsletter (English/Spanish)
<http://www.engr.ucdavis.edu/~bae/FarmSafety/FARMSAFHTML>

Online Newsletters for Growers (U.S. and Canada)
Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture
<http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/crops/othernws.html>

National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Network (Western Region)
<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/IPM/index.html>

Agriculture Law
<http://www.agriculturelaw.com>

USDA Economic Research Service
<http://www.econ.ag.gov>

The California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets
<http://farmersmarket.ucdavis.edu>

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom
<http://www.cfaitc.org/>

Agriculture Network Information Center Database
<http://www.agnic.org/agdb/>

The Small Farm—FROM PAGE 8

rently get only about 10 cents of each food dollar as a return for what they contribute to production, the other 90 cents goes for purchased inputs. By tailoring production to consumer niche markets, and selling more directly to consumers, small farmers have an opportunity to make more profits without becoming big farmers.

Some ecosystems and farming systems are easier to manage effectively than are others, and thus, require less attention per unit of resources to manage sustainably. Those requiring less intensive management can be larger without sacrificing sustainability. For example, a sustainable wheat/forage/cattle farm may be far larger than a sustainable vegetable/berry/poultry farm. But the sustainable wheat/forage/cattle farm is likely to be far smaller than the typical specialized wheat farm, forage farm, or cattle ranch. And the sustainable vegetable/berry/poultry farm is likely to be far smaller than the typical specialized vegetable farm, berry farm, or poultry operation.

The best alternative for American farmers is neither to get bigger, nor give in to corporate control, nor to get out. The best alternative for American farmers, and for society in general, is for farmers to find ways to farm more sustainably — to balance economic, ecological, and social concerns, to find harmony among self interests, shared interests, and altruistic inter-

ests, to pursue their “enlightened” self-interests instead of greed. American farmers need to be told the truth about their alternatives. Farms of the future must be smaller, not larger.

It's Time for a New American Revolution

Corporate industrialization will do for agriculture as it has done for other sectors of the economy. It will pollute the natural environment — the water, the soil, and the air. Farmers and farm workers, like factory workers, will suffer ill health, low pay, and eventual abandonment — as agri-industries find other people in other places who will work even harder, in more dangerous environments, for even less pay. The safety and healthfulness of the food supply will continue to deteriorate as a consequence of the inevitable race to the bottom, to see which corporation can produce the most stuff the cheapest, so they can drive the competition out of business and raise prices to whatever level they choose.

Small businesses allow people to express their individuality and creativity — to use their unique abilities to think and create. The good paying new jobs in the general economy are being created by small businesses, while the old industrial

giants continue to downsize and lay off workers by the thousands. If the future is to be better than the past, it must belong to the small, not the large. The future of farming belongs to the small farms, not to the large. The people need to be told the truth. ■



® Excerpted from a keynote presentation at the Second National Small Farm Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, October 12-15, 1999.

Visit the Small Farm Center web site at
<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu>

You'll find a variety of information including specialty crop research results, free on-line publications, links to agricultural statistics and expert databases, and other resources.

calendar

JANUARY

10-12

The California Weed Science Society Conference Sacramento, CA

For farmers, agricultural industry representatives, scientists and students interested in weed management, this conference presents weed management research results on citrus, grapes, asparagus, tomatoes, onions, small grains and rice, and other crops. Contact: Wanda Graves, California Weed Science Society, P.O. Box 609, Fremont, CA 94537-0609; (510) 790-1252.

11-12

Trainers of Pesticide Handlers and Agricultural Fieldworkers San Luis Obispo, CA

Jan 11: Spanish Session

Jan 12: English Session

This course is held on several dates in locations throughout the state. To find out more, use the contact information below.

Presented by the University of California's Pesticide Education Program, this workshop is targeted toward people responsible for training pesticide handlers or agricultural field workers. Attendees receive certificates to obtain the blue "EPA Training Verification" card from the Department of Pesticide Regulation. Contact: Patrick J. O'Connor, University of California, One Shields Avenue Davis, CA 95616-8620; (530) 752-5273.

19-22

20th Annual Ecological Farming Conference Pacific Grove, CA

This conference addresses organic industry topics including genetic engineering, organic regulations, and innovative growing techniques. Contact: Committee for Sustainable Agriculture, (CSA), 406 Main Street, #313, Watsonville, CA 95076; (831) 763-2111.

22-23

Innkeeping as a Profession California Association of Bed and Breakfast Inns (CABBI) Sonoma, CA

This two-day workshop within the larger CABBI conference provides farmers and others interested in B&Bs with tips on industry trends, financial requirements and potential profitability. Contact: CABBI, 2715 Porter Street, Soquel, CA 95073; (831) 462-9191.

25

Pruning and Care of Landscape Fruit and Nut Trees Davis, CA

This one-day course covers basic irrigation, fertility, weed control, fruit and nut thinning, and pest control, and includes field demonstrations. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

27

Agricultural Personnel Management Seminar San Marcos, CA

Participants will learn tools for effective management of employee relations, employee training and safety management, and other aspects of personnel management. Contact: Ramiro Lobo, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego, 5555 Overland Ave., Bldg. 4, San Diego, CA 92123-1219; (619) 694-3666.

FEBRUARY

1

Pesticides: Principles and Resistance Issues Davis, CA

Practical perspectives on the characteristics of commonly used pesticides and technical and policy issues associated with pesticide resistance will be addressed. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

2

Advanced Landscape Irrigation System Design Davis, CA

Participants are guided through the process of sprinkler layout, pipe sizing, hydraulic flow calculations, valving, and equipment selection. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

5

2000 Annual PlacerGROWN Farm Conference Lincoln, CA

This day-long event offers 32 educational workshops on topics including agri-tourism, organic farming, estate planning, marketing, and getting started in farming. Contact: UC Cooperative Extension, Placer County, 11477 E Ave., Auburn, CA 95603; (530) 889-7398.

8

Soil and Water Testing in Field and Vegetable Crop Management Davis, CA

The practical approaches to managing salts and altering soil characteristics will be addressed using results from soil and water analysis. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

17

Micro-Irrigation of Tree Crops Parlier, CA

2/23 Davis, CA

Learn the advantages and disadvantages of microsprinkler and drip systems, clogging prevention, irrigation scheduling, chemigation and fertigation, and irrigation system costs. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

MARCH

4-5

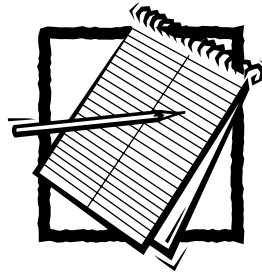
Edible Mushroom Cultivation Davis, CA

Participants learn a step by step mushroom production process including culture maintenance, basic mushroom substrate preparation, composting, spawn generation techniques, inoculation methods, harvesting, and pest management. Contact: UC Davis University Extension, 1333 Research Park Drive, Davis, CA 95616-4852; (800) 752-0881.

Add your event to our web site at <http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/cgi-win/sfcweb.exe/listevents>

News Notes

■ AB 1258, a California legislative bill passed this summer, paves the way for more farmers and ranchers to offer tourists overnight visits. The bill exempts farms and ranching operations that offer overnight stays from the more stringent requirements of operating a commercial restaurant. To qualify for the overnight stays, the farms and ranches must produce agricultural products as their primary source of income. Additionally, farmers are limited to six guest rooms and 15 visitors a night — less than the amount allowed for a bed and breakfast operation.



ganic operations. For more information, contact OMRI, P.O. Box 11558, Eugene, OR 97440-3758; (541) 343-7500; info@omri.org.

■ A USDA campaign, “Farming for Profit, Stewardship & Community,” is built around 10 tip sheets that list free and low-cost resources on topics including soil quality, pest prevention, marketing, alternative crops, organic production, and low-cost livestock systems.

The tip sheets, which direct producers to books, bulletins, and web sites for information, are available at <http://www.sare.org/san/tipsheet/index.htm> or by calling Valerie Berton at (301) 405-3186.

■ The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) budget passed by Congress in October for Fiscal Year 2000 includes an \$8 million appropriation for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE); \$1.5 million for Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) and \$2.5 million for the Community Food Security Act (CFSA).

■ The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) has developed a catalog of allowed and regulated products in organic agriculture, and a seal for organic farmers and processors that identifies the OMRI-approved products they use in their or-

■ According to the October issue of the *Kiplinger Agriculture Letter*, Canadians will ease hog import requirements under a recent agreement. The changes include Canada’s agreement to relax certification rules for hog shipments and to allow more time for producers to slaughter hogs once their shipments have reached Canada. The U.S. now expects to export 50,000 hogs next year, worth \$4 million, to Canada.

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