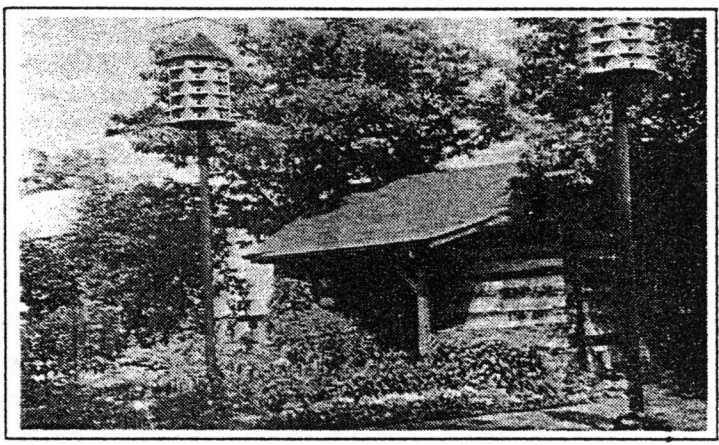




# Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association News

Printed on Recycled Paper. Made in Ohio • Fall 1997 • Vol. XVII, No. 5



A thinking place at the Kline farm. Farm tour coverage inside, pages 6-9.

## Senate Ag Committee Hones in on Factory Livestock Facilities

A debate over the soul of farming in Ohio – as Columbus Dispatch agribusiness reporter Brian Williams described it – is underway in Ohio's senate agriculture committee, where two bills will force discussion and bring closer scrutiny to the issue of high-density livestock farming.

The latest bill, introduced Sept. 23 by Sen. Karen Gillmor (R-Old Fort) under the unlikely name "The Rural Responsibility Act," has been assigned to the Senate Agriculture Committee as SB177. There it joins SB168, a bill that calls for an 18-month study of the potential economic, environmental and social impacts that could result from the growth of high-density farming. SB168 was introduced in August by Sen. Richard Schafrath (R-Loudonville).

Gillmor's bill – an extensive and complicated 95 pages in final draft form – was three years in the making and reportedly has strong support from Ohio's commodity groups and Farm Bureau. Environmental, consumer and some farm groups fault the bill for being tilted strongly towards the needs and interests of a few agribusiness players, for giving too much discretion to the Ohio

*Continued on page 23*

## Membership Faces Full Agenda Nov. 15

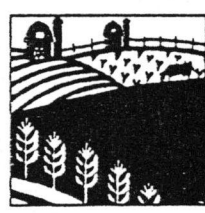
Ma Nature (with a little help from el Nino, et al) granted us a glorious October, which OEFFA board members hope will contribute to a better than usual turnout at the annual fall membership meeting, to be held at Stratford Ecological Center near Delaware on Nov. 15. The agenda is crowded with big organizational issues. And so, the call is going out for members to leave harvest behind and bring their ginkgo biloba-enhanced brains to Stratford (along with a covered dish) so that together we can decide how best to work for the highest common good in accordance with organizational goals.

The fun will begin at 10 am, but be early so you have time to settle in with some morning carbohydrates and a cup of organic coffee. **Bring this newsletter with you.**

The day's agenda (see page 11) will include a discussion of proposed bylaw revisions for OEFFA, a text of which appears inside beginning on page 14. Although the bylaws will not be voted on in November, the board wants input on a plan that supporters feel will significantly move OEFFA's "power" into the grassroots. Is this an appropriate direction for the organization? Can it be improved? Will it work?

Another chunk of time has been allotted for discussion of OEFFA's involvement in organic certification activities. Change is on the horizon. Sometime in the next several months, federal rules will be issued (see opinion pp 19-22). Complicating that fuzzy scenario is the need for about a third of OEFFA's certified growers to have internationally recognized third-party certification through a certifier that inspires confidence (which OCIA of late has not). Learn more about these issues beginning on page 9.

And then there will be reportage from staff, officers and board; election of 1997-98 officers; regional meetings; a shared potluck meal; and consideration of other items submitted (preferably in advance) by the members. Take a break and join us!



19TH ANNUAL OEFFA CONFERENCE  
MARCH 14-15, 1998  
WILMINGTON COLLEGE

## Tour Provides 'Inside Look' at Tomatoes

By Ed Perkins  
New Marshfield, Ohio

Growing tomatoes in a greenhouse is nothing at all like growing them in the field. This became obvious to me at the Sept. 13 OEFFA tour of Sweetwater Farm in Athens County.

Ron and Josie Young grow two crops of 500 tomato plants in their 96x30-foot greenhouse, without using agricultural chemicals. Their two crops are timed to produce during April to July, and October to December. Their early and late tomatoes have been a welcome addition to the Athens Farmers Market, an outlet for much of their crop.

The greenhouse has a top and two thermostatically controlled side vents, and a fan for ventilation. A gas well on the farm provides natural gas for heating. Having free gas is the key to many greenhouse operations. The greenhouse cost \$7,400 as a kit, and Ron, a carpenter by trade, supplied most of the labor to complete the project.

*Continued on Page 8*

## Diversified Farm a Great Possession

"The Amish way of life torments the modern soul."

--*The Mystery of Happiness. ABC Broadcast, 9/4/97*

By Holly Harman Fackler, editor

The August crowd was subdued – perhaps from the heat – welcoming the opportunity to sit in the cherry-shaded space of lawn between the house and the wildflower-bird garden that stops at the door of the cabin David Kline uses for writing such essays as comprise his 1990 book, *Great Possessions*.

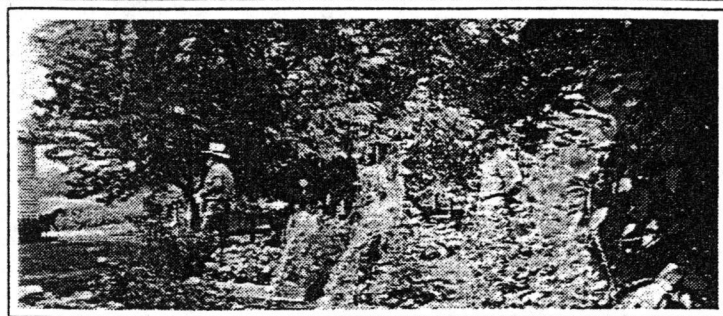
"In traditional farming, the work is spread out over the year," David said. There are some long days during the crop season, he allowed, but often they are fun ones – celebratory even, full of friends, food and fellowship as members of an Amish work ring help one another fill silos, thresh grains or complete some other labor-intensive project. But in winter the work can be accomplished in a modest seven hours a day, which (there being no commute time nor must-see tv shows) leaves time for other pursuits – like porch sitting, fishing, watching butterflies and writing books.

Despite the commitment of a growing Amish community to this rural way of life, it is threatened in Holmes County, as it is elsewhere, by refugees from the city who *think* they are escaping the rat race of the suburbs and buying into rural paradise. But are they actually threatening the existence of what they have escaped to? Are there some things that well-meaning urban liberals should not attempt? David didn't say any of this. But it was a thought that crossed my mind when he described their bid to buy 80 acres of an adjoining 110-acre farm for his son's family. The front 30 acres, destined for housing, sold for an average of \$15,200 an acre. With an interest-free down-payment loan the Klines were able to purchase the back 80 for a mere \$260,000. It's a rare success story in the making since preserving tracts of land large enough to be used for diversified crop and livestock production able to support a family is now one of the greatest challenges of the Amish community.

"We had a lot of support from the Amish community to save the land as a farm," Kline said. But such a farm needs traditional farming neighbors and land pressure is eliminating them to the highest bidder. "We don't want to move. We like the area, but

where can you go to find cheap land?" Kline asked. From his perspective, farming is no longer the real challenge. Paying the mortgage is.

From the highest point on the Kline farm we could see the "new farm," where plans called for a milking herd by fall. The Klines plan to reduce weed populations and improve soil quality there through crop rotation and applications of granulated lime to get the calcium level up. By



Seeking shade on the edge of the Kline farm. (Photo by Holly Fackler)

David's reckoning, 35-40 Jersey cows will be needed to provide adequate nutrients to maintain soil fertility there – with the exception of high-calcium lime. At his original farm (120 acres, 100 of which is tilled or grazed, 35-cow Jersey herd, 20 pigs, 75 chickens, various small critters) he applies lime at the rate of 2 tons per acre during the wheat year of his traditional rotation: hay-hay-corn-oats-wheat. Corn stalks are shredded with the rotary mower and left on the field as mulch. The whole mess is spike-toothed once before oats are planted. Wheat usually follows, nursing a hay crop which is generally a mixture of clover, alsike, alfalfa and timothy.

Inputs, beyond that provided by rotation and manure, are minimal on the Kline farm. Sometimes David uses a little atrazine for quack grass and thistle control. He sprayed an insecticide this year for the first time in two decades – to knock out leafhopper on alfalfa. He may use some starter fertilizer if he must plant corn after corn. He keeps tillage shallow and to a minimum since earthworm populations can suffer in annually rotated field because of cultural practices. Opening up the ground after hay, he said, is "like plowing spaghetti."

The Kline Farm has been part of a SARE study attempting to identify sustainable Amish farming practices that are profitable and could be easily adopted on non-Amish farms. Data collected during the two years of the study have found productivity to be high (187 bu/ac corn in 1996) and profitability equal to that of a 100 to 180-cow dairy. Deb Stinner, one of the researchers, sees the shared community labor as an important part of the profit picture – and as essential as the vast diversity of life the farm supports to their quality of life. Is community cooperation, then, something that farm families can do to enhance sustainability?, Deb asks.

As for David, the way he farms – with a respect for all kinds of life that comes from a daily awareness of it – is an expression of spiritual values. He writes: "Am I wrong in believing that if one's livelihood comes from out of the earth, from the land, from creation, on a sensible scale, where we are a part of the unfolding of the seasons, experience the blessings of drought-ending rains, and see God's hand in all creation, a theology for living should be as natural as the rainbow following a summer's storm? And then we can pray ... "And help us to walk gently on the earth and to love and nurture your creation and handiwork...."" (from *A Theology for Living*, by David Kline, 1995, as quoted in *Honoring Creation*)

### A Pair of Grower Tips:

A grower in North Dakota says the best way to greatly reduce Canada thistle is to let it grow to the purple bud stage, then cut everything off with a Noble plow set with three 7-inch sweeps. Cut it off every 21 days until freeze. Voila! 95 percent eradication!

Organic growers may be at risk for seedcorn maggot damage to soybeans, according to OARDC. Problems in Ohio have been limited to growers who plant cover crops and plow them into the soil. Seed treatment (?!?) or delayed planting will prevent damage.

**DO YOU LIVE WITH PAIN?**  
100 TABLETS *All Natural Ingredients*

**PREVENT & CORRECT**

- ARTHRITIS
- RHEUMATISM
- OSTEOPOROSIS

**BORON -- SELENIUM**  
with calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper and other important trace minerals and vitamins.

\$19.95 for one month's supply! Ppd  
(Available wholesale by case of 12)

ACI  
8303 W. St. Rt. 571, W. Milton, OH 45383

**AGI** 1-800-698-5315  
VISA • MASTERCARD • AMERICAN EXPRESS