

Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network NEWSLETTER

FALL 2005

FIELD DAYS

SPIRAL PATH & MOOECHO FARMS

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On Saturday, June 25, 2005, women from all over the state gathered for a Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAGN) Field Day at Hertzler's MooEcho Farms and Brownback's Spiral Path Farm, both in Loysville, Pennsylvania.

The women attending came from all walks of farming—certified organic produce, fiber production, and livestock operations for both meat and dairy. Some women had more than 30 years of experience in farming, while others were in the process of purchasing their first farm. A few women brought their daughters along, illustrating their common interest in creating the next generation of the farming family.

One of those women was Cathy Soutl, whose daughter Gwendolyn—a recent graduate of Bucknell University—accompanied her mother to the field day. The Soutls are in the process of building a goat milking operation on their Perry county farm, Wayside Acres. Both mother and daughter shared their obvious passion and vision for their herd of dairy goats from which they eventually plan to sell milk and farmstead cheese. "Most of the time when I tell people I want to build a goat milk dairy, they just laugh at me. But with PA-WAGN, I actually meet other women who are out there achieving their goals and being successful regardless of what others think," said Cathy.

The morning began with a pasture walk through fields of June and Duane Hertzler's MooEcho farm as the group learned about the advantages of grass-based dairying and pastured poultry. The Hertzlers farm 367 acres of their own land and an additional leased 300 acres with their son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren.

In 1994, the Hertzlers switched from a free-stall barn to an entirely grass-based model, resulting in a healthier herd and better profit margin for their business. The cows are rotated to fresh pasture every twelve hours. In addition to seasonal grazing, they also try to calve all at once in the spring and the fall. The Hertzlers currently graze 250 Holstein, Holstein/Jersey crosses and Dutch Belted cows.



June and Duane Hertzler's broiler chickens on pasture using pull-along cages popularized by sustainable agriculture guru Joel Salatin

This family farm has reaped many advantages of incorporating sustainable practices into its agricultural operation. In addition to being more profitable, the less labor-intensive farming practices have increased the quality of life for the family as well as the livestock. "If we take care of the land and cattle, they will take care of us," has been the Hertzlers' philosophy, and it obviously paid off as they often have a surplus of premium dairy animals to sell each year. They have also received a number of accolades including the Master Farmer Award for the Mid-Atlantic Region. About four years ago, they began experimenting with pastured poultry

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FIELD DAYS

SPIRAL PATH & MOOECHO FARMS

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and built a portable egg mobile out of an old hay wagon. They're now running about 100 layers on the pastures following the cows.

The Field Day proceeded to Spiral Path Farm, owned and operated by Mike and Terra Brownback and their son and daughter-in-law, Will and Deirdre. They offered a delicious lunch buffet using the most recent addition to their farm—a licensed food-manufacturing kitchen.

During lunch, Terra gave the group a brief overview of their 200-acre farm. A veteran woman in agriculture, Terra Brownback has been farming in Perry County for nearly 30 years. Starting with a 200-acre dairy farm in 1978, the Brownbacks raised hogs for 16 years before transitioning into organic produce. Spiral Path has grown to include over 70 acres in produce and several large greenhouses that support a thriving wholesale business, a 652-member Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation serving Perry, Cumberland, Dauphin, and Lebanon counties, as well as two weekly markets in Philadelphia. "We started young and had never farmed before so it is do-able," Terra told the women over lunch on the patio.

Terra now oversees all aspects of the business, including field workers, packinghouse employees, and greenhouse workers—many of whom are women and all of whom are considered "family."

After lunch, the tour continued in the kitchen where the Brownbacks produce organic tomato sauce, apple sauce, roasted sweet peppers, and fruit preserves. The greenhouses, fields, and packinghouse came next. Up the hill past the culinary herbs and specialty vegetables and a greenhouse full of 70,000 leeks, the group entered a large greenhouse containing staked tomatoes. Terra demonstrated how each stalk is carefully trained up a string and the suckers removed. "The boxes there contain bees for pollination," she said. "We also order beneficial insects for fighting pests."

"Almost everything we grow here is started in seed trays and then transplanted," said Terra. "We get a jump on the weeds and germination guarantee is greatly increased." Spiral Path also plants the same species in staggered waves, meaning they are growing the same crop at different times, thus spreading their risks.

Most of the seeding is done using a vacuum seeder that sucks seeds up through transplant trays using a shop-vac. This method is necessary due to the sheer number of flats that need to be planted. Terra held up a 512-holed seed tray recently planted. "This is my November and December income," she told the group as she pointed to several trays on the wire racks.

The 52-degree produce coolers were next on the tour, and particularly welcome in the nearly triple-digit heat.



Terra Brownback demonstrating how tomatoes are trained to grow vertically in the greenhouses at Spiral Path Farm

Terra discussed various aspects of farming, including liability insurance, logistics, and marketing, that are commonly overlooked by beginning farmers. Particularly challenging, she said, have been her efforts to develop sanitation methods for Spiral Path's salad packing plant that meet both sanitation and organic requirements.

The day ended with a brief discussion of future PA-WAgN events. Linda Moist and Amy Trauger, PA-WAgN facilitators, explained their goal of creating core groups of women agriculturalists in regions throughout the state so people don't have to travel great distances to network with each other on a regular basis.

—Sandra Miller
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Visit Spiral Path Farm on the web:
<http://www.spiralpathfarm.com>

FIELD DAYS

GUIDELINES FOR A REGISTERED HOME KITCHEN

1. No animals/pets are permitted in the home at any time.
2. Children are not permitted in the kitchen area during commercial processing.
3. The water supply serving the home must be from an approved supply. Private sources must be tested annually for coliform bacteria.
4. Department approval may not be in conflict with any local zoning or ordinances. A written statement from the local municipality must be obtained stating such.
5. Registration and fee by the Department of Agriculture are required.
6. All ingredients must be separate from those for personal use and must be properly stored and protected.
7. There must be restricted use of the home kitchen during any commercial processing.
8. Products must be properly labeled as follows:
 - Name of product
 - Name and address of manufacturer
 - Ingredients listed in decreasing order by weight
 - Net weight or unit count
9. Processors must comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Visit PA-WAgN on the Web:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu>

FRIENDS FARM

PA-WAgN sponsored a field day at Friends' Farm in Blair County on July 19, 2005. Gracious hosts, Chris Wise and John Favinger, guided a tour of their organic vegetable gardens and newly constructed on-farm market and future commercial kitchen.

A CALLING – In the Spring of 1992, Chris and John purchased 20 depleted acres of fields and woodlands that included a dilapidated farmhouse and dysfunctional barn. After a year and a half of extensive renovations (including a new well), they were able to take up residence.



Mary Barbercheck and Amy Trauger (PA-WAgN) enjoying a tour of Chris Wise's (Friends Farm) organic gardens

A photo album proudly displays their laborious efforts and the end result — a spectacular restoration of an 1840s home.

Next came the barn. The old barn was removed and a new barn constructed at the same location. This is now home to meat and dairy goats and horses.

After the barn was built, they moved on to the pastures and fields and began nurturing and restoring the land. Their organic produce is now available through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and their on-farm market, open Fridays and Saturdays. The CSA started with just five families, gradually increasing to host 25 families during the growing season, extended through greenhouse production.

In 2005, Chris and John decided to take a break from the CSA to construct their on-farm market and commercial kitchen. John, the architect, general contractor, and laborer, has constructed a beautiful timber-frame building with many homey features, making visitors feel welcome and comfortable. Upon completion of their commercial kitchen, they

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FIELD DAYS

FRIENDS FARM

(Continued from page 3)

intend to host seasonal dinners and offer fresh baked goods and preserves at their on-farm market.

During all of these renovations, Chris and John raised and home-schooled two daughters; became active participants in their local 4-H program, including founding a goat club; and maintained full- and part-time jobs. Their perseverance, hard work, and determination has brought to fruition their dreams for a sustainable lifestyle.

Originally from the Philadelphia suburbs with backgrounds in nursing and carpentry, Chris and John do not have a long family history of farming on which to rely. Their experience has been gained through research and trial and error. When asked why they made the move, John replied, "Chris wanted a garden." Well, a garden they do have, and much more. Chris and John are passionate about their work in sustainable agriculture and educating the public. Chris said, "I feel we are supposed to be here. We are supposed to farm this land and share it. I love it here."

"I feel we are supposed to be here. We are supposed to farm this land and share it.

I love it here."

—Chris Wise

Friends Farm

FIELD DAYS ALWAYS INCLUDE FARM FRESH FOOD – A favorite among participants of PA-WAgN's field days is the farm fresh food. This day was no exception. Lunch included fresh fruit, salads and Chris's homemade bread and zucchini squares.

GUEST SPEAKERS – Our guest speakers for the day included Clifford Sweigart of Weaver Insurance Group and Christine Hattler of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services.

Through a question and answer session, participants learned the importance of the appropriate coverage for a multitude of farming practices and products. Clifford recently witnessed a barn fire where the owner stated that, although he complained every time he paid a premium, he sure was grateful for the coverage in a time of crisis.

"In insuring our property, our actions (liability), and ourselves (health, disability, and life); it is important to remember that the insurance industry is based on honesty and if we are honest when initiating a policy we have fewer worries when it is time to submit a claim," Sweigart said.

A good rule, according to Sweigart, is that, "If you are happy with your agent, stay with him or her. Building a relationship with your agent ensures a full understanding of your changing needs."

Christine Hattler discussed the difference between a registered home kitchen and a licensed commercial kitchen. "If you are interested in processing food at your facility but are unsure of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's requirements, a basic rule is that anything not requiring refrigeration to maintain food safety can probably be produced in a registered home kitchen while anything that may be considered a Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF)

must be produced in a licensed commercial kitchen," Hattler stated. "For example, you could legally sell jams and jellies, acidified foods, most candies, bread, cookies, and most pies in a registered home kitchen. PHFs, such as those containing dairy and eggs, require a licensed commercial kitchen," Hattler concluded.

Many thanks to the Friends' Farm hosts and guest speakers for providing participants with an educational and inspiring experience.

—Ann M. Stone
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DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING COMMERCIAL OR REGISTERED HOME KITCHENS IS AVAILABLE

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture:
<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us>

Food Employee Certification Program:
<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=127011>

Commercial Kitchen License:
http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/lib/agriculture/legalreference/007_0046.pdf

Application for Commercial Kitchen License:
http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/lib/agriculture/foodsafetyfiles/afsls_273part_ii.pdf

Registered Home Kitchen:
<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/foodsafety/lib/foodsafety/homeproc.pdf>

Request for Registration:
<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/lib/agriculture/foodsafetyfiles/requestforregistration.pdf>

FIELD DAYS



Mindy Schwartz describing bio-intensive methods utilized at Garden Dreams

TWO URBAN FARMS

heavy metals. We had a lively discussion with many questions and suggestions of ways to deal with these issues.

We then headed to Mildred's Daughters Urban Farm for lunch and our afternoon on the farm. We ate a delicious lunch in the newly built straw-bale house on the farm. Barbara Kline and Randa Shannon told us the story of how they began operating this five-acre farm in the middle of the city of Pittsburgh. They have vibrant internship and teen programs that provide opportunities for young people to learn about farming and make some money.

As the rain let up, we toured the farm and fields and learned about their successes, challenges, and new experiments. Mildred's Daughters specializes in growing heirloom tomatoes and after learning about field production methods and marketing strategies, we were treated to an incredible heirloom tomato tasting session. We sampled a stunning array of crimson,



A sampling of heirloom tomatoes, grown at Mildred's Daughters Urban Farm, being enjoyed by field day participants

Undeterred by pouring rain from the tail end of Katrina, 40 people attended the "Two Urban Farms field day" on August 31 in Pittsburgh. The field day was co-sponsored by PA-WAgN, Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture, and Pennsylvania Certified Organic.

We began our day in the carriage house at Garden Dreams where Mindy Schwartz uses bio-intensive methods to cultivate a ¼ acre plot on reclaimed land. Randa Shannon welcomed us and introduced us to Grow Pittsburgh. Established in May 2005, Grow Pittsburgh is building on the excitement around urban agriculture to model, teach, and facilitate urban agriculture in Pittsburgh. They are building an exciting effort to make the city green, teach young people about health and nutrition, and provide food security through promoting self-reliance.

The amazing Mindy Schwartz shared her story of reclaiming land and buildings in the Wilksburg area of Pittsburgh. Her beautiful garden is an oasis in this area of the city and sits on the site where a house was razed. Corn, okra, basil, tomatoes and more are thriving. Several people involved with the garden explained issues related to reclaiming urban land, including soil reclamation and heavy metal remediation. Lead and arsenic are in high concentrations in the soils in Pittsburgh and people working with Garden Dreams and Grow Pittsburgh are investigating creative ways to reclaim the soil and reduce the presence of

scarlet, burgundy, orange, yellow, golden, striped, and green tomatoes. Choosing our favorites was an impossible task. Finally, we met to discuss future needs and activities of the Southwest WAgN group and headed for home a bit wiser about the promise of urban agriculture.

—Carolyn Sachs
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Visit Grow Pittsburgh on the web at:
<http://www.growpittsburgh.org>

LOW-INTEREST AG LOANS

ASSISTANCE FOR PA FARMERS

The Chester County Economic Development Council has been awarded a contract by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's PA Grows Initiative to assist farmers statewide in accessing low-interest state loan programs.

Suzanne Milshaw, the Economic Development Council's Agricultural Loan Coordinator, works with farmers to determine which programs best suit their needs. In addition, she conducts outreach and training efforts to educate the agricultural community on the availability of loan programs.

Through the Economic Development Council, Suzanne is able to guide farmers in obtaining low-interest financing, small business lending, workforce training, retention and expansion, customized international business assistance, land and building site selection, brownfields consultation and remediation, urban redevelopment, and agricultural economic development.

Suzanne's background includes work as a program manager for a cost-sharing program aiding promotion of exports for small food companies and agricultural cooperatives in the northeastern United States. She earned a B.A. in International Studies from Trinity College, Washington, D.C., and a M.S. in Agriculture, Food and Environment from Tufts University School of Nutrition, Medford, Massachusetts.

To contact Suzanne Milshaw, call 610-458-5700, ext 239.



For additional information visit:

<http://www.cceconomicdevelopment.com>

WOMEN IN PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE

A HIDDEN AUDIENCE IN YOUR COUNTY?

Evidence suggests that more women work in production agriculture than is reflected at Extension programs. This may or may not be true in your county. A new Tip sheet: **Women in Production Agriculture: A Hidden Audience in your County?** provides an informal approach for extension educators to explore this issue firsthand. The Tip Sheet also suggests a more systematic technique at a later date.

Farm women fall into two groups. One group consists of Principal Operators of farms. A Principal Operator is that person from the farm designated to provide information about the farm in the U.S. census interview. Although male Principal Operators of farms continue to decrease across the country, the number of female Principal Operators of farms continues to *increase* (Oliveira and Cox, 1989). Since 1997, there has been an increase of 13%. Women make up 11% of all Primary Farm Operators and 27% of all Farm Operators (*2002 Census of Agriculture*). Between 1997 and 2002, Pennsylvania lost 2,000 farms but gained 1,000 woman-led farms. However, women who are Principal Operators are only some of the farm women.

The second group comprises the largest segment of farm women: the spouses of Principal Operators. Since labor

on farms performed by spouses of principal operators is not documented in the Census, there is unfortunately, no official record of farm labor performed by this second group of farm women nationwide. The census interview collects information and reports on only the farm labor for one person, the person interviewed, *even if there are other legal partners on the farm such as a wife.*

Without an official tally, how do we know then, that women are involved in farm labor? Three sources reveal their work: indirect indicators from accident data, direct measures from recent studies, and indicators from women themselves. These sources suggest that farm women are deeply involved in production agriculture. This group may be a hidden audience for extension in your county. Find out by making it a point to seek out farm women and other members of the agricultural community and ask them questions outlined on the Tip Sheet at: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS77.pdf>.

—Nancy Ellen Kiernan
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BOOK REVIEW

Women and Sustainable Agriculture presents 14 interviews with farmers, researchers, and entrepreneurs who have embraced sustainable agriculture. The author, Anna Anderson, notes that over the past 40 years, food production in the United States has soared, and farmers are feeding many more people than ever before. Yet the environmental and social consequences of industrial-scale agriculture, including environmental pollution from agricultural chemicals, depletion of aquifers, and the displacement of small farmers and communities, are increasingly evident.

Anderson explores how farmers and consumers can change the way food is grown and distributed to protect our health and the natural environment. She interviews academics, policymakers, and farmer advocates who explain how they've established farmers markets, food cooperatives, and local food initiatives that benefit farmers and their communities.

But most importantly she asks, "Why do we know so little about the hands that feed us?" and "What will become of the people who have spent their lives on the land?" Of the 14 interviews, two stand out for their honest and heartfelt answers to that last question.

La Rhea Pepper's family farm in West Texas has raised cotton since 1926 without chemicals. But Pepper says that conventional markets are no longer an economically viable way to support a farm family. So she chose a new direction, moving the farm toward organic certification and value-added production in 1992 by having the farm's first certified organic cotton crop woven into 4,000 yards of denim fabric. The Pepper's brand, Cotton Plus, now includes over 40 fabrics. The Peppers also manufacture one of the few organic cotton tampon brands, Organic Essentials. As well, they've enlisted other growers in a successful organic cooperative that bucks the idea that cotton production *requires* high levels of pesticides and fertilizers (a pound of chemicals is used for every three pounds of cotton produced in conventional operations).

Pepper concedes that farmers need advocates. Nevertheless, farmers hold the key to their own future. "For agriculture to change, the first thing that has to change is the mindset of the people," she says. "They're going to have to decide to take an active role in their futures—and that may mean painful changes." Pepper cites her grandfather's maxim: "Truth goes through three stages. First it's ridiculed, second it's violently opposed, and third it's accepted as being self-evident." When making change,

farmers have to be willing to first accept ridicule and opposition.

The Peppers have weathered the transition. Now, she says, "the farm is taking care of the farm, and it's taking care of the families, and we are making a difference in O'Donnell, Texas."

Another interview with farmer advocate Mona Brock underscores the risk involved for farmers selling in the global marketplace. Brock and her husband farmed most of their lives in Oklahoma before their farm mortgage was accelerated and foreclosed in the 1980s, completely without warning. Explaining her bewilderment over their dire

situation, Brock said, "We only knew that we were plowing our fields and doing our work. We were farming the land and contributing to feeding the people of our community, our state, our nation, our world. We had no idea that someone somewhere was making decisions that would affect our work, our investments, even our lives."

After she weathered her personal crisis, Brock began to serve phone duty on the suicide hotline at Oklahoma's Farm Crisis Center, where she continues to field calls from distraught farmers who sometimes call with a loaded gun in hand.

We have to change policies that result in this kind of desperation, Brock says. "The very thing that the farmer has devoted his whole life to is being taken away with pen and paper, a twist of the

wrist, NAFTA. What the farmer really wants is to be left alone, to produce food to feed hungry people, and pay his bills."

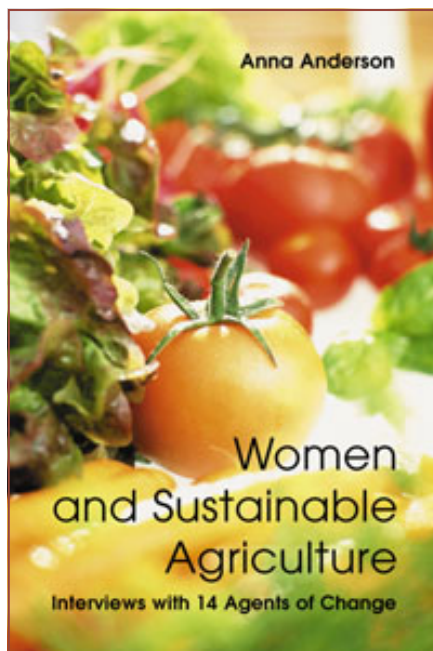
Brock concurs that the best hope of that may lie in small-scale production. "If there is an independent farmer left in existence, it will have to be on that basis."

Few books have investigated women's specific connection to the sustainable agriculture movement, why they feel compelled to change the world and how they're going about it. Anderson's work offers a unique opportunity to hear from women on the frontlines.

—Linda Stewart-Moist
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This book may be ordered from McFarland Publishers at:
<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?isbn=0-7864-1747-1>



PA-WAGN IN YOUR REGION

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Regional Representatives are volunteers who work with WAgN staff to help provide high quality educational opportunities for members in their region.

Contact a Regional Representative in your area with ideas for events, happenings in your area, or to host a PA-WAgN Field Day at your farming operation.

COUNTY/REGION GUIDE

NORTH WESTERN

ARMSTRONG
BUTLER
CLARION
CRAWFORD
ELK
ERIE
FORREST
JEFFERSON
LAWRENCE
MCKEAN
MERCER
VENANGO
WARREN

SOUTH WESTERN

ALLEGHENY
BEAVER
BEDFORD
BLAIR
CAMBRIA
FAYETTE
GREENE
INDIANA
SOMERSET
WASHINGTON
WESTMORELAND

CENTRAL

BRADFORD
CAMERON
CENTRE
CLEARFIELD
COLUMBIA
HUNTINGDON
JUNIATA
LYCOMING
MIFFLIN
MONTOUR
NORTHUMBERLAND
POTTER
SNYDER
SULLIVAN
TIOGA
UNION

SOUTH CENTRAL

ADAMS
CUMBERLAND
DAUPHIN
FRANKLIN
FULTON
LANCASTER
LEBANON
PERRY
YORK

EASTERN

BERKS
BUCKS
CARBON
CHESTER
DELAWARE
LACKAWANNA
LEHIGH
LUZERNE
MONROE
MONTGOMERY
NORTHAMPTON
PHILADELPHIA
PIKE
SCHUYLKILL
SUSQUEHANNA
WAYNE
WYOMING

WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE AG CONFERENCE

Farmers, ranchers, educators, agricultural service providers and activists will come together to explore ways to expand the success of women farmers at the 2005 Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference: A Celebration of Hope & Opportunity. The conference will be held October 21-23, 2005, at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in Burlington, Vermont.

Conference participants will share educational and organizational strategies; build production, business, and leadership skills; and explore cultural and policy issues that affect the experience and success of women in agriculture. The conference will also set the agenda for the next decade of supporting female agricultural entrepreneurs.

Featured speakers include Frances Moore Lappe, whose 1971 bestseller *Diet for a Small Planet* awakened a generation to the human-made causes of hunger. Lappe and her daughter, Anna, will share stories and lessons of "Hope in Action," providing models for how ordinary people can make important social change. Activist Pamela Kingfisher, whose mesmerizing story-telling is rooted in her Cherokee agricultural heritage, will provide the closing address.

Participants will choose from 38 workshops offered during four concurrent sessions. Topics include production, marketing, and business planning and development information relevant to small-scale farming; advocacy and leadership skill-building sessions; and roundtable sessions where participants can share and learn from each other's experiences. Exhibits will provide additional opportunities to gather information and learn from each other.

Throughout, conference meals will feature locally grown food that reflects the bounty of Vermont's harvest season.

Networking is woven throughout the conference to celebrate the experience that each participant brings and explore ways to combine resources for greater success. Cornelia Butler Flora, director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, will guide the group through the Appreciative Inquiry process to build awareness of our collective assets and brainstorm new ways to combine them to reach individual and collective goals.

There will also be a series of small-group, pre-conference farm tours of some of Vermont's innovative, sustainable farms. The half-day tours leave at noon on Friday, October 21 and will return by 4:45 pm. Traveling by 12-passenger van, each will visit one or two farms to learn about the innovative production, marketing and business approaches these producers employ.

For attendees who want a more intensive learning experience, the conference offers a special, business development and marketing track. This "Grow Your Business" (GYB) track is essentially a "conference-within-the-conference," designed to help farmers who have made it through start-up and now want to strengthen their business for long-term sustainability.

"If you are assessing what parts of your business need more attention, whether to diversify, how to boost profitability or whether changes in management or marketing structure are needed, this track may be for you," says Mary Peabody, director of the Women's Agricultural Network. Participants who complete this track will be eligible for follow-up technical assistance and reimbursement for up to \$150 in professional services as part of a Northeast Center for Risk Management Education grant.

The conference registration fee is \$150 for registrations received by August 19. The fee includes five meals and access to all conference sessions and workshops. There is a separate \$25 fee for the pre-conference farm tours. There is no extra charge for the GYB track. Space is limited for both the GYB track and the farm tours, and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

The conference is hosted by the Vermont Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN) a program that assists women interested in farming and agriculture-related businesses. It was one of the first programs in the United States to focus on female farmers and their needs.

Sponsors include: The Northeast Center for Risk Management Education; USDA Farm Service Agency; The Vermont Women's Fund; The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program; The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture; University of Vermont Extension; Organic Valley/CROPP and the Ben & Jerry's Foundation; the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development; the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network; the University of Arkansas; the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (Iowa); and Heifer Project International.

Find out more about the conference and/or register online at: www.regonline.com/womeninagconference <<http://www.regonline.com/womeninagconference>>, or contact the conference organizer at 802-223-2389 x15 to request a paper registration form. Early registration is encouraged.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FIELD DAY & MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST WAgN GROUP

September 22, 2005

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Rippling Brook & M&M Robertson Farms
Sligo, Pennsylvania

Focus on direct marketing, CSAs, and crop insurance.

10:00 a.m.— Meet at Rippling Brook Farm for a farm tour and a discussion about CSAs with farmers Aaron and Priscilla Schwartz.

11:00 a.m.— Travel to M&M Robertson Farm, where Rita Pollock will discuss the Western PA Farmers' Market Alliance and crop insurance.

Noon — Lunch and a Northwest WAgN Group networking meeting.

TO REGISTER:

E-mail or call Linda Moist

ism9@psu.edu, 814-865-7031

DETAILS & DIRECTIONS:

Visit <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html>

Cost: \$5 for WAgN members (includes lunch)



Northeast Small Farm & Rural Living Expo

September 17-18, 2005

Greene-Dreher-Sterling Fairgrounds

LOOK FOR PA-WAgN's EXHIBIT

FOR DETAILS VISIT:

<http://www.smallfarmexpo.org>

15th Annual Farming for the Future Conference



February 1-4, 2006

Penn Stater Conference Center
State College, PA

For details visit:

<http://pasafarming.org>

Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2006, PA-WAgN offering new full day of programming: Introduction to Equipment Ag Arena, Penn State Campus

Thursday, Feb. 2, 2006, ALL DAY WORKSHOPS on Business Management or Equipment Maintenance



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THE KITCHEN GARDEN

BEAUTIFUL KALE

This year, I planted True Siberian Kale (seeds ordered from <http://seedsofchange.com>) and it has proven to be the trooper of the garden. It has tolerated lack of water, lack of weeding, high temperatures, overcrowding, and flea beetles. Its beautiful blue/green foliage continues to produce and, with a little care, will provide something garden fresh through early winter. This prolific plant has an earthy flavor and has more nutritional value for fewer calories than almost any other food around (see Nutrients in Kale). Kale is rated one of the world's healthiest foods. My only dilemma was deciding how to use this high-yielding vegetable. The following recipe has become a family favorite:

KALE CRUNCHIES

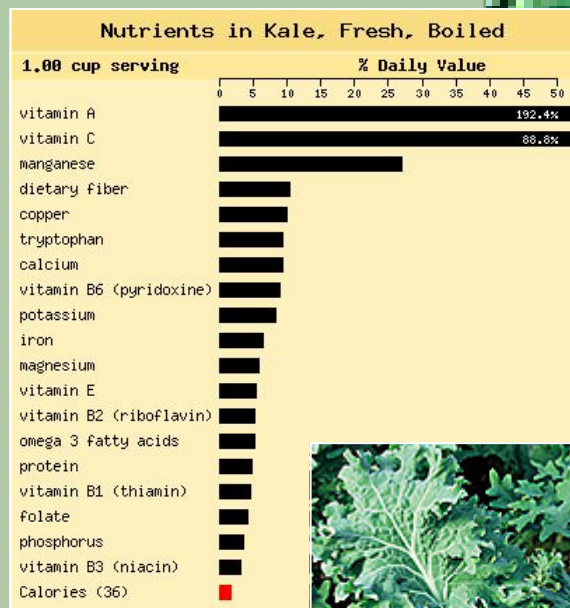
(adapted from *Vegetable Heaven* by Mollie Katzen)

A little olive oil for the baking tray
 1 giant bunch fresh kale, stemmed and chopped (about 1 pound)
 2-3 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese (optional)
 Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a large baking tray with foil, then brush with olive oil.

Add the kale and spread it out as much as possible.

Bake for 10 minutes, mixing it up once or twice during that time. Sprinkle with parmesan, if desired, and bake for 10 to 15 minutes longer, stirring occasionally, until it's as crisp as you like it. The kale will continue to shrink and crispen the longer it bakes. If you watch it closely and stir it often enough, you can get it quite crisp without burning it.

Supposedly, these will keep for a week or two in a covered container but they have not lasted for more than 5 minutes in my home. They are a perfect snack and a great garnish for hearty soups and stews.



—Ann Stone
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**PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**
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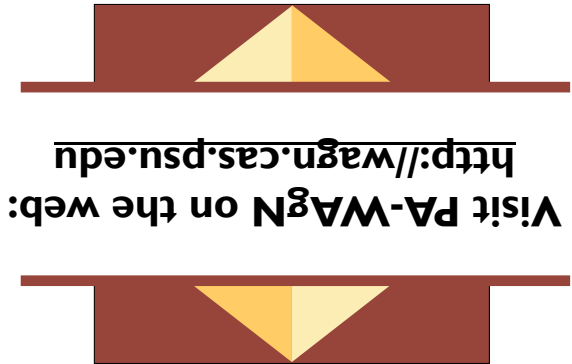
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