

# Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2006

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### PROGRESSIVE DINNER IN PENNS VALLEY



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On July 10, PA-WAgN partnered with Slow Food Central PA to sponsor a progressive farm-to-farm dinner in Penns Valley that featured locally grown and produced foods and beverages at three Penns Valley farms.

Raymond & Mary Fisher hosted the evening's first course at their raw-milk dairy, \*Spring Bank Acres. They served a delicious variety of Spring Bank Acres cheeses accompanied by \*Tait Farm Foods chutneys, Tait Farm Foods raspberry shrub, and "Snaps" (a specialty flatbread) from \*Gemelli's Bakery. Sandy Alexander of \*Mt. Nittany Vineyard was on hand offering samplings of the vineyard's award winning wines.

The dinner party progressed to \*Long Lane Farm, where owner Sue Haney offered a variety of beautiful salads containing edible flowers, accompanied by \*Millheim Bread Company's artisan breads. Guests enjoyed the atmosphere offered by Long Lane Farm's rolling hills of gorgeous, naturally-grown flowers and herbs.

Our final destination, \*Over the Moon Farm, was hosted by Lyn Garling and Patty Neiner. Over the Moon Farm provided organic pastured chickens which were prepared and served by \*Keystone Yankee Catering, along with a

variety of locally grown seasonable vegetables. Guests dined by candlelight in the hoop barn. Dessert, courtesy of \*Gaffron's Sunrise Bakery, was a perfect ending to a perfect evening.

This event brought together farmers, producers, educators and consumers in an atmosphere that was peaceful and serene to share amazing foods and lively conversations. Through generous contributions and the kind hospitality of Penns Valley farmers and producers, the evening progressed beautifully and can only be described as a total success!

Ann Stone  
PA-WAgN  
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\*A complete list of contributing growers and producers is available on page two. For more information regarding Slow Food Central PA, visit <http://www.slowfoodcentralpa.com> or contact Ann Quinn Corr at [aqc6@psu.edu](mailto:aqc6@psu.edu).

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## PROGRESSIVE DINNER PRODUCERS

### Gaffron's Sunrise Bakery 814-364-2560

<http://www.gaffronsbakery.com>

Gaffron's Sunrise Bakery is a small family-owned and operated business using the highest quality ingredients to produce the most delightful freshly baked breads, cookies, entrees, and specialty desserts. For a complete list of products, visit <http://www.gaffronsbakery.com/products.htm> or <http://www.gaffronsbakery.com/holiday-specialties.htm>. Products are available at the Millheim Farmers' Market on Saturdays, Boalsburg Farmers Market on Tuesdays, and the State College Farmers Market on Fridays (<http://www.statecollegefarmers.com>). On-site retail sales are available via advance orders.

### Gemelli's Bakery 129 1/2 South Pugh Street State College, PA 814-880-3289

Email: [easycocktail@msn.com](mailto:easycocktail@msn.com)

Tony & Karen Sapia, owners and operators of Tony's Big Easy, recently added Gemelli's Bakery to their business. Their stone-hearth artisan breads, steeped in Italian traditions, are available at many retailers in and around State College, including Nature's Pantry, Stone Soup, The Harvest Shop, The Granary, The Cheese Shoppe, and Agustonelli Deli, and are being served at Kelly's Steak House in Boalsburg. Telephone or email Karen to obtain a product list and to place special orders.

### Keystone Yankee Catering 707 Pike Street Lemont, PA 16851 814-237-7615

Chef Tom and Judy Everly run Keystone Yankee Catering, a small catering service, out of their in-home commercial kitchen. With locally produced goods and custom menus, they create elegant meals with attention being paid to every detail. A sampling of Keystone Yankee Catering soups is available at Stone Soup in State College, PA (<http://www.stonesoupmarket.org>).

### Long Lane Farm 424 Long Lane Coburn, PA 16832 814-349-5267

Susan Haney, along with her family, has operated Long Lane Farm for two decades, producing naturally grown flowers and herbs. Susan offers exceptionally beautiful fresh flower arrangements, fresh and dried herbs, dried flowers, and wreaths, which are available at the State College Farmers' Market on Fridays (<http://www.statecollegefarmers.com>), Boalsburg Farmers' Market on Tuesdays, Millheim Farmers' Market on Saturdays, and through a Groundwork Farms CSA share (<http://www.groundworkfarms.com>).

### Millheim Bread Company Millheim, PA 814-349-4308

Millheim Bread Company is a small family-owned bakery producing a variety of artisan, sourdough breads. Currently, their products are only available at their in-home registered kitchen.

### Mt. Nittany Vineyards & Winery 300 Houser Road Centre Hall, PA 16828 814-466-6373

<http://www.mtnittanywinery.com>

Mt. Nittany Vineyards is a small, family-owned winery producing award-winning wines. The five-acre vineyard has seven varieties, including Cayuga, Seyval Blanc, Riesling, Chardonnay, Vidal Blanc, de Chaunac, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Products are sold on-site and statewide at PA Liquor Control Board stores and are served at State College area restaurants.

### Over the Moon Farm 190 View Drive Rebersburg, PA 16872 814-349-COWS (2697)

<http://www.overtmoonfarm.com>

Owned and operated by Lyn Garling and Patty Neiner, Over the Moon Farm produces certified organic farm-fresh eggs, pastured chicken and turkey, grass-fed beef, organically-fed pork, and honey. The farm direct-markets to consumers through advance orders (order forms are available on the web at <http://www.overtmoonfarm.com/orderforms.htm>).

### Spring Bank Acres 531 Millheim Narrows Rebersburg, PA 16872

Spring Bank Acres is a small certified organic, grass-fed dairy owned by Raymond and Mary Fisher. Their dairy products include bottled raw milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, butter, and a variety of excellent raw-milk cheeses. Products are available at Spring Bank Acres' on-farm sales office, through a Ground Works Farm CSA share (<http://www.groundworkfarms.com>), at State College Farmers Market on Fridays (<http://www.statecollegefarmers.com>), at Millheim Farmers Market on Saturdays, and at Nature's Pantry (<http://www.naturespantrypa.com>). For more information about raw milk, visit <http://www.rawmilk.org>.

### Tait Farm Foods 179 Tait Road

Centre Hall, PA 16828  
800-787-2716/814-466-2386

<http://www.taitfarmfoods.com>

Operated by Kim Tait, Tait Farm Foods produces over 40 value-added gourmet products including chutneys, fruit butters, jams and jellies, flavored vinegars and oils, vinaigrettes, fruit schrubs, and much more. Products can be purchased at Tait Farms retail location, The Harvest Shop, as well as a multitude of nationwide retailers (visit <http://www.taitfarmfoods.com/retail.html> for a location near you). Tait Farm Foods also offers year-round CSA memberships (visit <http://www.taitfarmfoods.com/community.html> for details).

# FIELD DAYS

## ORGANIC DAIRY

Is organic dairying in your future? With milk prices reaching new lows, many dairy farmers are exploring all the alternatives, including certified organic production. At a recent on-farm field day, Pennsylvania Certified Organic, PA-WAgN, and the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture gathered more than 50 farmers to hear a presentation on organic dairy, crop, and livestock certification requirements. The event, which was sponsored by Organic Valley CROPP Cooperative, was held at Ore Bank Farm in Belleville, owned by Preston and Jen Yoder. After the program, I talked with Jen Yoder about their farm's transition to organic and the benefits and challenges of farming this way.



Pastured Dairy Cows at Ore Bank Farm  
Photograph courtesy Erin James, PCO

The Yoders, certified organic producers since 2001, have enjoyed substantial financial benefits. "Right now, the price per hundred weight is nearly \$26, and we get milk quality bonuses for low cell counts that give us a total of nearly \$28 a hundred," Jen said. "Compared to conventional milk prices, we are doing very well." While the cost of organic feed is an obstacle for many farmers, the Yoders raise all their own crops. Their 170 acres will support 50 cows and young stock easily, and they haven't had to buy much extra feed.

According to Jen, the benefits they have gained from reducing their herd size are just as important as money. "We are now milking only 50 cows, down from 100 before we began farming organically. We could reduce our herd size because we now have a stable milk price. Before, we had to buy feed and have a hired hand. Now with our herd cut in half we can handle the work ourselves. In other words, we own the farm now, instead of the farm owning us. We spend less time in the barn and have more family time."

There are some challenges to learning a new method of farming, she says. "Our major hurdle was that the whole process requires a new mindset, learning to do things a different way. It's not difficult, but we had to learn to farm something like our great-grandparents did, without sprays and commercial fertilizer. But our crops are worth more and we no longer have a spray bill. Record keeping has not really been much of an issue. There is really no more record keeping required than what a good dairy farmer would do anyway."

The Yoders also had to learn new ways to treat their animals—for example, using herbal products to treat mastitis instead of antibiotics. But overall, their cows are healthier, Jen said. "Our cows are on pasture, which helps build a strong immune system, and we don't push them to increase production. We have far fewer sick animals. In fact, I've only culled one cow in the last five years due to mastitis."

Their fields are healthier as well. "We are improving our soil over time," Jen said. "My children are the seventh generation of my family to farm these fields. We believe that by farming organically, we are protecting the land that we hope to pass down to our children. If the market for organic milk disappeared tomorrow, we wouldn't farm any differently than we do now. We wouldn't go back to using sprays or antibiotics because we've learned that we don't need to."

Would the Yoders encourage other farmers to transition to organic production? "I think other farmers should at least explore their options," Jen said. "Organic farming may not be for everyone, but the more you learn about it, the more attractive it is. In time, I think we will see a return to more sustainable lower-impact farming. We can see that change already occurring in the growing demand for healthier food and increasing concerns for protecting the environment."

If you have any questions about organic dairy production regulations, please contact PA-WAgN member Patty Neiner at Pennsylvania Certified Organic [patty@paorganic.com](mailto:patty@paorganic.com). If you would like to hear more about the Yoders' experience, please feel free to call or e-mail Jen at 717-935-5188, [blueriders@earthlink.net](mailto:blueriders@earthlink.net).

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# FIELD DAYS

## SOMERTON TANKS

How much land do you really need to make a living farming? Is it possible to do on a sub-acre plot of land? On July 24, about 50 people gathered under the glare of two 5-million gallon red-and-white checkered water tanks to find out. There, on land owned by the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD), Steve and Nicole Shelly, together with assistant farmer Mira Kilpatrick, cultivate the 1/2 acre known as Somerton Tanks Farm (STF), and produce enough food to generate over \$50,000 in gross annual sales.

The sold-out crowd at this farm field day, co-sponsored by PA-WAgN and the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, is a testimony to two daunting challenges facing those trying to break into farming: increasingly expensive and hard-to-find farmland and lack of sufficient start-up capital. But the crowd is also evidence of the hope and belief that there is a viable alternative to large-acreage farming.

STF was created in response to these challenges as a joint project of the PWD and the Institute for Innovations in Local Farming (IILF). Together, these two organizations aim to provide a training ground for urban farmers and to foster a Philadelphia-based agriculture industry, while reducing urban water-pollution problems and utilizing underused land within the city. STF is serving as a test bed, demonstrating the economic viability of a sub-acre urban farm. Somerton Tanks farmers practice "SPIN-Farming." SPIN (Small Plot Intensive) farming was co-developed in Saskatchewan by Wally Satzewich and Gail Vandersteen, who farmed 20 rural acres 40 miles north of Saskatoon, the city in which they lived. They realized that their highest-value crops were the ones that they were growing at their city residence. They decided to sell their 20-acre farm, and began farming on rented land — over 25 residential backyard garden plots in Saskatoon that range in size from 500 sq. ft. to 3000 sq. ft., totaling 1/2 acre.

As Roxanne Christensen, president of IILF and co-founder of the SPIN method, explained to the crowd, there are three concepts key to the SPIN-farming method: farming takes place on a plot or number of plots that comprise one acre or less; space is maximized by relay-cropping; and equipment needs are limited.

Whether farming in one location, as the Shelly's are doing, or on many backyard plots, as Wally Satzewich is

doing, SPIN farmers grow their crops in beds measuring 2' x 25', allowing for up to 400 beds per acre. The layout of the beds is based on three levels of production intensity. The highest level of production, the intensive-relay beds, are planted to 3-4 high-value crops per season; bi-relay beds are planted to two crops per season; and single-relay beds are devoted to just one crop per season. The goal of the SPIN farmer is to earn \$100 per bed per crop. The Shelly's have divided their field into six "zones," with each zone containing 12 4-bed plots, for a total of 288 beds.



The Post-Harvest Station at  
Somerton Tanks Farm

STF started out with the equipment identified by the SPIN-farming founders as essential, including a delivery vehicle, a walk-in cooler, a post-harvest station, a shed, drip and overhead irrigation, a rototiller, a weedwacker, and traditional gardening hand tools. They have also added an Earthway seeder, a pin-point seeder, and with the support of a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, a 14' x 96' hoophouse. Christensen puts the estimate of the STF start-up costs at less than \$25,000.

The Somerton Tanks farmers grow 60 types and 100 varieties of vegetables during their entire growing season. Such a diverse crop mix coupled with the sequential cropping within some of the individual beds mandates a very strict crop-rotation plan. Nicole uses an Excel spreadsheet to help her manage a 3-year crop rotation. To maintain soil health under such intensive growing conditions, they work cover crops into their rotation, growing either peas or buckwheat during the summer and a rye/vetch mix over winter. They also incorporate an inch of imported mushroom compost from Laurel Valley and municipal compost into their field each year.

Steve, Nicole, and Mira market their produce at three city farmers markets, as well as to a restaurant, a caterer, and a 45-member CSA. Running the CSA forces them to grow some low-value crops that they might not otherwise — such as watermelon — and adds an extra element of record-keeping. But it also provides them with an infusion of cash each spring that they need to keep the farm running smoothly. While Steve and Nicole do not work off the farm (except for a few winter-time substitute-teaching days on Steve's part), the farm continues to receive some financial support from outside sources. The farmers did

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# FIELD DAYS

## VERMICOMPOSTING WORKSHOP

Would you like to turn the approximately 7 pounds of kitchen waste that your family produces every week into rich compost through vermicomposting? Or perhaps you're wondering whether vermicomposting could be a way to manage livestock manure on your farm. Claire and Rusty Orner at Quiet Creek Herb Farm hosted PA-WAgN's on-farm field day on July 15 to answer those questions.



Vermicompost promotes greenhouse growth at Quiet Creek Herb Farm & School of Country Living

Vermicomposting works very simply: worms that live in the top layers of soil feed on organic materials, aerating the soil as they tunnel through it and excreting worm castings that are rich with micro-organisms that enhance plant growth. "The red worms that we use, *Eisenia foetida*, are particularly suited for vermicomposting," Rusty said. "These are not the same worms that you would buy from a bait shop. Some of those worms are imported and have been known to destroy native vegetation."

The Orners practice vermicomposting on a small scale, converting their household waste into fertilizer to enrich the raised beds in their greenhouses. And they model the technique in workshops they offer as part of their farm's educational mission. However, Rusty's brother Frank Orner is using the process on a large scale on his dairy farm. "Frank composts thousands of pounds of cow manure every year through a thermophilic composting process and then feeds it to red worms in large bins. He bags and sells the worm castings nationwide as a

valuable fertilizer," Rusty said. "His compost is highly sought after by home gardeners and greenhouses. Moreover, it's quite profitable, and turns a potential waste problem into an asset. He also brews and sells a compost tea that adds beneficial micro-organisms and nutrients to the soil."

Rusty demonstrated the use of a large tubular separator made of wire mesh screen that is used to remove the worms from the worm castings. "This is basically the same machine—just on a smaller scale—that Frank uses on his dairy farm. We received a grant to build this machine and demonstrate its use at educational facilities. But farmers could easily copy this design." Once the worms are separated from the castings, they are returned to their bins to create more compost.



Rusty Orner demonstrates the use of a large tubular separator used to remove worms from the worm castings

PA-WAgN members enjoyed a tour of Quiet Creek and learned about the various educational programs that the farm offers for both children and adults. The youngest field day participants—six children ranging in age from 4 to 11—took part in a kids' program that included art, games, and worm investigations. Many thanks to Claire and Rusty Orner for their hospitality! If you have any questions about vermicomposting and its application to your farm operation, you may e-mail Claire and Rusty at [quietcreek@usachoice.net](mailto:quietcreek@usachoice.net).

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# FIELD DAYS

## DIRECT MARKETING

The first week of August was a tough one on my farm. We lost at least three fields of newly mown hay to rain, a favorite cow and the calf she was bearing, and most of my market garden squash and cukes to an invasion of vine borers. In addition, my aches and pains had convinced me that I just might be too old to be farming. As you all know, it's easy to get discouraged when the funds are low and the workload is high. But that's where a supportive network of women farmers comes in. On August 9, I (and 35 other PA-WAgN members) toured the Perry County farms of Sandy Miller, Jen Halpin, Susan Dietrich, Melanie Dietrich-Cochran, and Lena Fisher for a Direct Marketing Field Day. The enthusiastic and innovative spirit these women demonstrated for their farms was inspiring enough to get me back in the groove.

All four farms—Painted Hand Farm, Grassroots Farm, Keswick Creamery, and Otterbein Acres—have started down a new path. Or maybe it's actually a very old path. Like my grandmother and other farm women of past generations who sold chickens, eggs, and butter to increase their farm income, these women farmers are selling good food directly to their neighbors: artisan cheeses, yogurt, fresh vegetables, breads, soaps, and grass-fed meat. And they are finding their ventures very profitable.

Painted Hand Farm produces meat goats and pastured turkeys. Owner Sandy Miller has transformed a nineteenth century run-down farm into a successful and sustainable operation. Sandy said, "Goats are one of the fastest growing sectors of Pennsylvania agriculture. We decided to target the ethnic market for our meat goats. Understanding the beliefs and dietary preferences of that market has been key to our success." Sandy has developed a growing list of customers who come to the

farm to buy and slaughter their animals. "Direct marketing our goats offers a steady stream of customers and much higher prices than we'd be getting at the livestock auction," Sandy said. "In addition, it gives me a real feeling of satisfaction to be able to honor our customers' traditions and supply a safe, healthy food for their families' tables."

Grassroots Farm, run by Jenn Halpin and Matt Steiman, sells organic vegetables through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) at their farm. The couple sells 30 CSA shares and all their customers pick up at the on-farm market. "I served in the Peace Corp in West Africa," Jenn said. "That experience shaped my life in many ways, but in particular it made me realize that I could make a living farming and serve my community at the same time by growing good healthy food." Jenn has found the business to be profitable as well. "Although I am only in my second season with our Grass Roots

Farm CSA, our business has been able to use profits earned through CSA membership to cover all of our major capital expenses (tractor, implements, tools, irrigation system, etc.). We have been able to support our business with business revenue." Jenn and Matt also support other local farmers by showcasing in their farm market the grassfed meats, soaps, cheeses, and wool products produced on neighboring farms.



Sandy Miller offers advice on direct sales to an ethnic market.



Pick-your-own cut flowers are another benefit of Jenn Halpin's CSA customers

Keswick Creamery is a long-time family dairy operation. The Bill and Susan Dietrich family was searching for a value-added product that would increase farm income enough to add their daughter's family (Melanie and her husband Mark Cochran) to the operation. That product was artisan cheese. "I attended cheesemaking classes and made my

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first batch of cheese in June 2001," Melanie said. "I first started selling at a farmers market in Shippensburg, and quickly added the Dupont Circle Market in Washington, D.C. We sold a phenomenal amount of cheese that first summer, and when the Dupont Circle Market went year-round the next year, we could sell twice as much. We added another Washington market, the Tacoma Market, in 2002 and now take two trucks to the city, selling 95 % of our cheese at those two Washington markets." In addition the family is selling cheeses to restaurants in the D.C. area. The family added yogurt and soft cheeses to their product line this year, and are now selling as much cheese as they can make.

Otterbein Acres, home of Lena and John Fisher, also produces cheese. "We make and sell cheeses from the milk produced by our two-year-old sheep, a Dorset-East Friesian cross that yields a rich, creamy milk," Lena said. "These sheep produce just 3.5 pounds per ewe per day, but that milk makes a high-quality cheese." On a carousel milking platform designed by John Fisher, the family can milk 100 sheep an hour. Like the Dietrich family, the Fishers began the cheesemaking venture to enable their children to make a living on the farm. In addition to using sheep milk, they also buy all the milk produced by their adult son's Jersey cattle and turn that into cheese, including Gouda, Monchego, and Romano. All the Fisher children help make cheese, manage the on-farm market, and give farm tours to customers.

For all these farmers, reducing work and stress is just as important as increasing profitability. They have found that reducing the size of their herds through making a more profitable product from less milk, year-round grazing, and—in the case of the CSA vegetable farm—growing for a limited customer base have improved the quality of their

lives. "Direct marketing to customers requires more thought and skill, but it ultimately helps us keep our sanity," Sandy Miller said. "When farmers focus on quality rather than quantity, they are able to maintain profitability, but not push themselves and their resources to the limit."

I hope that you will find their stories as inspiring as I did. PA-WAGN is fortunate to have farmer members who will listen, share information, and support each other through the trials and rewards of farming. If you are interested in hearing more about the farming and marketing strategies of these farms (or in purchasing their farm products) please write or e-mail the field day hosts listed below.

Linda Moist  
PA-WAGN  
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Melanie Deitrich-Cochran explains her artisan cheese aging facility



Otterbein Acres' artisan cheeses aging in a controlled environment.

## FIELD DAY HOSTS

**Sandra Miller**  
**Painted Hand Farm**  
173 Jumper Road  
Newburg, PA 17240  
[sandra@pa.net](mailto:sandra@pa.net)

**Jennifer Halpin**  
**Grassroots Farm**  
72 Covered Bridge Road  
Newburg, PA 17240  
[halpinj@dickinson.edu](mailto:halpinj@dickinson.edu)

**Melanie Deitrich Cochran**  
**Susan Dietrich**  
**Keswick Creamery**  
114 Leshar Road  
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**Lena Fisher**  
**Otterbein Acres**  
10071 Otterbein Church Road  
Newburg, PA 17240

## GOING LOCAL

### THE CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER

Because the breeze sends showers of walnut leaves across the lawn and the air is as crisp as the fresh apples at the farmers' market, I know in my bones that it's time to make squash soup. Another telltale sign is a fire in the wood stove and a freezer and pantry full of local foods. The last few weeks have been busy with canning tomatoes, peaches, and pears; freezing peppers, corn, leeks and herbs; and storing squash, shell beans, shallots and garlic. While it is work that keeps us from enjoying other activities, like watching movies, surfing the web or going to football games, storing food for the winter is really about storing up pleasure for later. The joy of a sweet peach in January rivals any other form of entertainment I could consume right now. My belly is warmed already by hearty bean soups waiting for me in December and my taste buds are tantalized by the idea of a roasted corn chowder in November. Now, however, it's time for roasted winter squash soup. I've been waiting all year to roast a hefty specimen from my Burpees Butterbush squash crop with some garlic and shallots, stir it all into stock from pastured chickens, sweeten it with fresh cream from grass-fed Jersey cows and season it with rosemary, sage and thyme.

In a culture so fast-paced it's almost (but not quite) living in the moment, this wait for seasonal foods to make an appearance and the slow and sometimes tedious work of storing up nutrition for later seems almost awkward and unnatural. The wide-mouthed glass canning jars, so sturdy and dependable season after season, seem chunky and square in the hands that most often remember the sleek plastic shape and feel of a computer mouse. The hours of work blanching, peeling, and cutting peaches seems like an unreasonable amount of time to do any one thing after living in the split second world of email. The fruit in the rows upon rows of glistening jars when I've finally finished seems impossibly preserved -- almost immortal. To open them seems profane, requiring a ritual, something beyond simply *eating*.

After I put the garden to bed last week, planted my cover crops and hauled in my harvest, I rested a bit with the

fruits of my labor. I couldn't stop running my hand across the smooth globes of winter squash piled high in the summer kitchen. How soon they will rot and how long they will wait to nourish my body seems paradoxical, impossible, and miraculous. It returns me to a temporal space of peace, somewhere between vitality and decay. The patient and temporal miracle of foods like this goes beyond the simply nutritional and reaches into the emotional and the spiritual. It is a way of knowing about and a way of being in the world that acknowledges the possibilities of the present, and lives for a future waiting like a hundred golden suns in gleaming glass jars.



Freshly harvested butternut squash

Photograph courtesy Amy Trauger

I don't think the emotional benefits of local foods can be scientifically measured or quantified, but I did read today that laughter while eating lowers post-meal blood glucose levels. For diabetics this is good news indeed, but for anyone who eats, this shows without a doubt that how our body uses food goes way beyond calories and nutrients. It is the *way in which we eat* that matters. How we eat is how we live—this truth weighs in on everything from a single meal to entire agricultural systems. All the ingredients of my squash

soup come from an agricultural system in two valleys less than 10 miles from my home. The health of the Jersey cows, the grass they eat, and soil beneath their hooves will now be my health and how I choose to eat will matter to the health of my community.

Among the many emotional, spiritual, and physical benefits of eating local foods remains the delay in gratification (difficult for someone as impatient as I am). Happily my period of waiting for squash soup is almost at an end, as it happens in every season of waiting. I've waited for the seasons to tell me that the time has come for squash soup, and the time is simply just right.

Eat well, laugh well, live well.

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# THE SOLUTION SOURCE

## NEW PENN STATE EXTENSION RESOURCE

If you need trustworthy information and advice on everyday matters concerning your home, family, lawn and garden, health or environment, a new Web site offered by Penn State Cooperative Extension may have the answers you're seeking.

The Solution Source, at <http://www.solutions.psu.edu>, is a dynamic online resource with more than 800 pages of practical, accurate information based on university knowledge, research and expertise. Whether a question pertains to a serious matter -- how to manage finances between jobs, or a lighthearted one -- how to attract bluebirds to one's backyard, users will find practical, easy-to-follow solutions.

Topics include child and youth development; parenting; family living and financial management; food preparation, safety and storage; horticulture; gardening; landscaping; insects and pests; nutrition and fitness; managing natural resources and wildlife; homes; agriculture; and more.

Solution Source topics also are available as recorded messages that can be accessed via a toll-free telephone number: (800) 617-2950. Each solution script contains a code number that is entered after a telephone prompt. Script code numbers are listed on the Web pages and are also listed in a handbook directory available from county Penn State Cooperative Extension offices in most regions. Callers who have free long-distance telephone

services outside of their local calling areas are requested to call (610) 489-5158.

Since 1914, Penn State Cooperative Extension has been reaching out to communities to bring the educational resources of the university to the people of Pennsylvania. The organization's mission is to help people solve real problems by putting university research to work in everyday life. The new Web site represents the work of faculty and extension professionals at Penn State and other land-grant universities.

"Today's extension organization offers a tremendous number of non-formal educational opportunities and resources that can help address important current and emerging issues in Pennsylvania," says Nancy Stevens, the extension educator responsible for the Solutions Source project. "People who visit the primary Extension & Outreach Web site at <http://www.extension.psu.edu> can gain a better understanding of the depth and breadth of what we offer to make life better for people, businesses and communities."

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## SOMERTON TANKS CONTINUED...

*(Continued from page 4)*

not shoulder the start-up costs. According to the SPIN-Farming website, "the farm has received the support of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corp., the City Commerce Department, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development." That said, as Nicole Shelly explained, the non-farm support has decreased as the farm's revenue increases, and all involved are hopeful that the farm is quite close to becoming a self-sustaining operation.

As their tour came to a close and the farmers fielded questions from their audience, the three reflected on how it may be difficult for someone to single-handedly run a similar operation. They each specialize in certain tasks, allowing them to become more efficient and focused. Steve, for example, manages all things related to their

salad mix, which they sell during their entire growing season. Nicole takes care of the farm's detailed records, and Mira specializes in herb and cut-flower production.

Whether or not one person could manage this diversity of tasks on the same scale (and do them well) is an unknown. But hopefully, as STF continues to serve as a training ground for urban farmers, there won't be a shortage of new farmers willing to give it a try.

Kristen Devlin  
Bee-Bop Farm  
Julian, PA



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

	<p>The Pennsylvania Women's Agriculture Network together with The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture presents</p>	<p>The Third Annual Women in Agriculture Day at the Pennsylvania Farm Show celebrates the fastest growing group of farmers in the nation—female farmers.</p>
	<p><b><i>Celebrating Entrepreneurial Women in Agriculture</i></b></p>	<p><b>Keynote Speaker Cheryl Rogowski</b> Additional guests include Cheryl Cook, PDA; Linda Stewart Moist, PA-WAGN; Nancy Dundatscheck, Iowa's Women, Food &amp; Agriculture Network; Heidi Secord, Farmer; Nichole Shelly, SPIN Farmer; and Kyle Nagurny, PDA</p>
	<p>At the 2007 Pennsylvania Farm Show January 9, 2007 10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. VIP Room of the PA Farm Show Complex</p>	<p><b>PA-WAGN members interested in a (free) exhibit table should contact Linda Moist at 814-865-7031 or <a href="mailto:lsm9@psu.edu">lsm9@psu.edu</a></b></p>

<p><b>PA-WAGN PRESENTS TWO-DAY INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS</b></p>	<p><b>SCHEDULE:</b></p>
<p>These workshops are being offered at a <b>50% discount</b> through support from: Northeast Center for Risk Management Education and The Pennsylvania State University Discounted fees range from \$60-90 per workshop</p>	<p><b>January 17-18, 2007</b> <b>Introduction to Cheese Making: A Value-Added Option</b> Keswick Creamery Newburg, PA</p>
<p><b>Registrations:</b> Contact Ann Stone at <a href="mailto:ams39@psu.edu">ams39@psu.edu</a> or 814-863-4489 or register online at <a href="http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html">http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html</a></p>	<p><b>January 31-February 1, 2007</b> <b>Hands on Heavy Metal: An Equipment Practicum</b> Penn State's Ag Arena University Park, PA</p>
	<p><b>March 21-22, 2007</b> <b>Building Financial Sustainability</b> Victoria Inns Pittston, PA</p>

<p><b>A DON'T MISS OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>SAVE THE DATES</b></p>	<p><b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Cheryl Cook, Deputy Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture</p>
	<p><b>March 2-3, 2007 PA-WAGN 2007 CONFERENCE RAMADA INN STATE COLLEGE, PA</b></p>	<p><b>Learning Circles:</b> *Equipment Practicum *Animal Shelter Construction Living in Balance Building Financial Sustainability Value Added Agriculture</p>
	<p>Additional information and registrations will be available soon at <a href="http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html">http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html</a></p> <p>Questions: Contact Ann Stone at <a href="mailto:ams39@psu.edu">ams39@psu.edu</a> or 814-863-4489</p>	<p>*These on-farm workshops are cosponsored by PA Certified Organic. Participants will travel to Common Ground Farm for two full days of participative learning.</p>

# THE KITCHEN GARDEN

## CELEBRATION

Everyone growing produce knows that every ounce harvested as a result of their labor and good fortune is cause for celebration. Every meal comprised of fresh from the garden products is a feast worthy of celebration. Every nurtured body, filled to contentment with foods of the highest quality and freshest flavors, warrants celebration. Whether it be the Harvest Moon, Thanksgiving Day, the Autumnal Equinox, or a harvest festival, in this season of abundance, let's remember to celebrate! Celebrate the soil, sun, and rain that turn tiny seeds into nutritious fruits and vegetables. Celebrate our ability and desire to work the soil in a quest to nourish ourselves, our families, and our communities. And, celebrate the local farmers for providing wholesome and life-sustaining foods.



Today, as I celebrate glorious pumpkins and the local farmer that grew them (mine were merely groundhog food), I would like to share with you a recipe for a hearty soup that, accompanied with a rustic bread, a local artisan cheese, and simple salad, is a satisfying meal. Add a spiral of crème fraîche and a grating of nutmeg and you have a lively and visually appealing soup course to offer with your Thanksgiving Day celebration. Substitutions of yams, winter squash, or carrots can be made without compromising flavor.

In good health and in good taste, celebrate!

Ann Stone  
PA-WAgN  
[ams39@psu.edu](mailto:ams39@psu.edu)



### GINGER PUMPKIN SOUP

Serves 10

- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups vegetable broth (preferably homemade)
- 4 cups peeled and cubed raw pumpkin
- 1 cup peeled and chopped carrots
- 3 or 4 whole star anise
- 1 dash cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon candied ginger, chopped (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon grated orange peel (optional)
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- Garnish with non-fat yogurt or crème fraîche and a sprinkling of freshly grated nutmeg

Sauté ginger, garlic, onion and butter until tender. Add broth, pumpkin, carrots, star anise, cayenne, sugar, candied ginger, grated orange peel. Simmer until tender, about 40 minutes. Add lime juice. Remove star anise. Puree soup in food processor blender until smooth. Reheat if needed. Garnish as desired.

**PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK**  
**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
 302 Armsby Building  
 University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

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