

**PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK**  
**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
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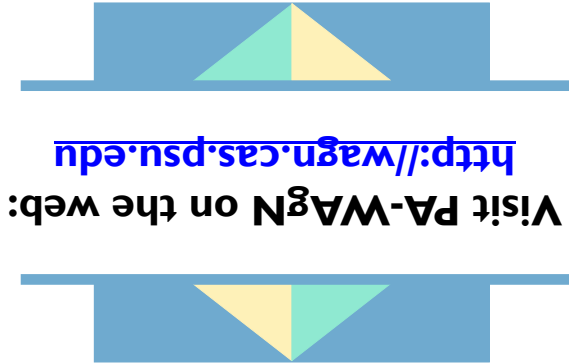


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# Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network

## NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2007

### DOWN ON THE FARM WITH SENATOR CASEY



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On August 15th, Senator Robert Casey met with PA-WAGN members to better understand the struggles of women in agriculture and the concerns faced by small and mid-sized farms. At Tait Farm in Boalsburg, PA-WAGN farmer members Kim Tait, Melanie Dietrich-Cochran, Chris Wise, Lyn Garling, and Linda Moist met with Senator Casey, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook, and Carolyn Sachs and Ann Stone of PA-WAGN.

Senator Casey approached PA-WAGN and requested to meet with women farmers. He asked the women to identify their most pressing concerns as farmers and how the legislature might address their concerns. A lively discussion ensued. Many agreed that health care for farmers and other small business owners topped the list. "The number one reason that prevents me from working full-time on my farm is my need for health care," said Blair County farmer Chris Wise. "I have worked hard to increase my farm's profitability, and I've been successful, yet I still can't afford to buy health insurance for my family—I think very few farmers can."

Melanie Dietrich-Cochran, a dairy farmer from Cumberland County, voiced her concerns over

proposed labeling laws. "I want to be able to market my farm products in a way that reflects their real value. I want to label my artisan cheese rBST-free (recombinant Bovine Somatotropin) and hormone-free so that I can reach those consumers who want healthy products. For small farmers who are direct marketing, meeting customers' expectations is key to staying in business."



Kim Tait of Tait Farm Foods presents Senator Casey with Raspberry Shrub, a Tait Farm specialty developed from a 19th century recipe to create a value-added product with an abundant crop of raspberries.

Kim Tait, a Centre County farmer with a community supported agriculture program, an on-farm market, and value-added farm products, worries that we have few mechanisms for reaching and educating those young people who would enter farming. "The average age of a farmer in Pennsylvania is 53. Yet we have few young people learning to farm. The price of

land is so high that unless a young person is born to wealth, they have little chance of accessing the land they need."

That lack of access to land was a key concern for Centre County livestock farmer Lyn Garling as well. "Unless you inherit a family farm, you must incur extreme debt to farm," Lyn said. She also emphasized the difficulty that small and mid-sized farms have in competing with commodity agriculture. "I sell directly to

*(Continued on page 11)*

**Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network** is a partnership of Penn State Cooperative Extension & Outreach, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture, PA Certified Organic, PA Department of Agriculture, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and The Rodale Institute

# INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

## BUILDING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

A small, diverse and innovative group of 8 women gathered on March 21-22, 2007, in Pittston, Pennsylvania to listen to Winifred McGee and Dr. Jeff Hyde present business planning—the one thing almost all business owners dread. Through their creative and hands-on presentations it became an interesting and fun brainstorming and work session. The process was smoothly broken down to manageable pieces that we could then use to build the whole puzzle. We were all assigned homework before the work session from a valuable resource book, *Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses*, developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. It prepared us for the work sessions on developing our mission, vision, strategic plans and goals, SWOT analysis, and production and human resource management plans.

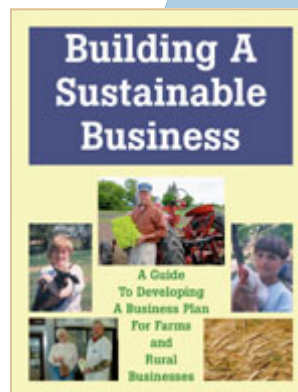
Many of us came into this session feeling as if we couldn't possibly manage to fit all the pieces together, with papers scattered here and there and everywhere. Then, what had been drudgery for us became interesting. By the end, with the patience of Winifred and Jeff and the friendships developed between the participants, we all realized what a great exercise this workshop was in helping us to find the motivation and the direction for either finishing a business plan or starting one. Spending the time together with such a great group of women and talking about our

businesses and our visions really helped each and every one of us define what we wanted and how to make our businesses more unique, profitable, and successful. As business planning is an ongoing process, we will continue to support each other while we move forward in this process.

This workshop was a PA-WAgN event, supported by Northeast Regional Cooperative Extension Director Michael McDavid. PA Department of Agriculture's Crop Insurance and Risk Management tools were presented by Lynn Kime, Senior Extension Associate, Penn State Cooperative Extension in Adams County.

Special thanks to our wonderful workshop facilitators Jeff Hyde and Winifred McGee who are very committed to this process.

Heidi Secord  
Josie Porter Farm  
PA-WAgN Regional Representative  
[cchord01@hotmail.com](mailto:cchord01@hotmail.com)



### ***Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses***

This publication brings the business planning process alive to help today's alternative and sustainable agriculture entrepreneurs transform farm-grown inspiration into profitable enterprises. Sample worksheets lend a practical perspective and illustrate how real farm families set goals, research processing alternatives, determine potential markets, and evaluate financing options. Blank worksheets help the reader develop a detailed, lender-ready business plan or map out strategies to take advantage of new opportunities.

For a free PDF download or to order a bound edition (\$17), visit <http://sare.org/publications/business.htm>

# THE KITCHEN GARDEN

## SWISS CHARD

Swiss Chard is the super-hero of the garden. It is able to withstand summer heat without bolting or becoming overly bitter. It is pest and disease resistant. It is high in Vitamins K, A & C, magnesium, manganese, potassium and iron. It can be successfully grown with minimal effort. In Pennsylvania, where so many things must be tenderly started in greenhouse conditions, Swiss Chard is praised for its ease in sowing since it can be directed seeded into the garden as soon as soil can be worked in early Spring. Continual harvests can be enjoyed throughout the growing season. In fact, with a little extra care, it will survive light to medium frosts.



With a Summer packed full with picnics, it's great to have a few dishes that travel well and can be served at kitchen temperature. Swiss Chart Tart is a family-favorite that meets these requirements. To reduce preparation time, make two or three at once and freeze unused portions to be thawed and slightly reheated for a quick meal.

Enjoy a Summer of success in the garden and in the kitchen and, most importantly, in the company of family and friends!

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

Swiss Chard Tart is extremely versatile. It is a great on-the-go breakfast when pared with a serving of fresh fruit; it's always a welcome addition to a packed lunch; sliced thin, it can be served as an appetizer; combined with a fresh-from-the-garden salad, roasted corn on the cob and a whole-grain bread, it completes a perfect patio dinner; and, it's always a crowd-pleaser at potlucks. Now that's a recipe worth adding to your repertoire.



### **Swiss Chard Tart** (adapted from *The Joy of Cooking*; 1997)

- Crust:**  
2 cups best-quality all-purpose flour  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 cup water  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Filling:**  
2 tbsps. olive oil  
1 medium-sized onion, finely diced  
1 lb. Swiss chard leaves, tough stems removed and coarsely chopped  
2 tbsps. minced fresh thyme  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper  
3 large farm-fresh eggs  
1/3 cup heavy cream  
1 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese\*

Blend flour and salt, stir in water and oil. Knead mixture briefly. Roll out dough into a 14-inch circle on a heavily floured surface or press it into an 11-inch tart pan with a removable rim. Trim edges. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until needed.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Sauté onions in olive oil in large skillet over medium-low heat until softened. Add chard and cook until tender. Season with thyme, salt & pepper.

Combine eggs, heavy cream, and cheese in a bowl. Add the chard mixture then scrape into the prepared tart shell. Bake until the crust is golden and the filling is firm, 40-45 minutes. Serve at room temperature.

\*Otterbein Acres, in Cumberland County, is an excellent source for a Pennsylvania produced aged sheep's milk Romano cheese. Mail order is available by calling: 717-423-6689 or visit the farm at 10071 Otterbein Church Road Newburg, PA 17240

## HELP US HELP YOU!

### PA-WAGN IS CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF WOMEN FARMERS

- How do you learn best?
- What is your past experience with agricultural education programs?
- What are your future needs for agricultural education programs?

**Your feedback will help PA-WAGN develop programs to better meet your needs!**

Have you completed this survey? If so, we sincerely thank you. If not, please take a few minutes to ensure that your voice is heard.

Download and print the survey at:  
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/NeedsAssessment.pdf>  
 Upon completion, simply fold, tape, and place in any mailbox. The form is designed as a self-mailer and no postage is necessary.

An implied consent form is also available online at  
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/ImpliedConsentForm.pdf>  
 Please print and retain this information for your records.

If you are unable to access the online survey, contact Ann Stone at [ams39@psu.edu](mailto:ams39@psu.edu) or 814-863-4489 to request a paper copy.

## WOMEN FROM RURAL AREAS OF PENNSYLVANIA NEEDED FOR PENN STATE RESEARCH STUDY

Women working or residing in rural areas of Pennsylvania are needed to participate in a research study involving the completion of an online questionnaire. The purpose of the study is to examine factors related to physical activity, health, and psychological well-being in women residing or working in rural communities. Participants must be at least 26 years old, reside or work in a rural area in Pennsylvania, be able to complete an online survey, and be available to participate in a follow-up telephone interview.

To learn more please visit:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GS2mzKsvDA\\_2bCLKYRE4VFIQ\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GS2mzKsvDA_2bCLKYRE4VFIQ_3d_3d)

or contact the Kinesiology Aging & Psychology Lab at 814-865-5606 or email Joelle Makon at [jam784@psu.edu](mailto:jam784@psu.edu).

## INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

### CHEESEMAKING BASICS



Participants of Cheesemaking Basics eagerly learn how to create value-added dairy products and proudly display a finished example of fresh ricotta. Photographs courtesy of Wes Ramsey, Penn Soil RC&D Coordinator

In May, PA-WAGN members had another chance to learn to make artisan cheese. A cheesemaking workshop, co-sponsored by Penn Soil RC&D, Munnell Run Farm, and PA-WAGN, was held at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Mercer, Pennsylvania. Twenty-five farmers gathered to learn the art and chemistry of cheese from expert cheesemaker Melanie Dietrich-Cochran.

Participants worked in groups to make Monterey Jack, cream cheese, ricotta, and Brie—basic recipes that all cheesemakers need. PA-WAGN Regional Representative Lynn Gelston pointed out that cheesemaking is like breadmaking; while there is a basic process, artisans have different ways of interpreting the recipes.

"When I took this course, I had already attended other workshops and classes, and I have been making cheese for years," Lynn said. "Yet I was so glad that I took this class! Melanie was very honest about every aspect of the cheesemaking business, sharing what has worked with her and what hasn't. She helped to clear up issues for me that will allow me to move forward in establishing our creamery."

While the cheese was being cultured, the farmers gathered to learn more about fitting cheesemaking into their dairy operations—appreciating the workload required to add cheese to a farm business, understanding regulations, and marketing cheese.

"Making cheese is very labor-intensive and you shouldn't go into it if you don't have enough help. It's a full-time job

to process milk into cheese and you'll be doing it about every other day. And when you're not making it, you'll be selling it," Melanie said. She advised participants to think carefully about the labor required before adding cheesemaking to a dairy operation.

That said, for those who can manage the workload, cheesemaking can be quite profitable. Indeed, it is one of the fastest growing niche markets in farming. Melanie, who markets her cheese in Washington, D.C. through farmers markets and restaurants, had good advice for those who would make a living selling cheese: "Don't undervalue your product. Set your cheese apart from others by its name, its ingredients, your location, and so on, and sell it for what it's worth. In many cases, artisan cheesemakers are able to sell all the cheese that they can make."

If you are interested in connecting with other Pennsylvania cheesemakers, contact the Pennsylvania Farmstead and Artisan Cheese Alliance at <http://www.pacheese.org>. Resources for entrepreneurial food enterprises, including dairy, can be found at Penn State's Food Safety website: <http://foodsafety.cas.psu.edu/processor/resources.htm>.

Linda Stewart Moist  
 PA-WAGN  
[lsm9@psu.edu](mailto:lsm9@psu.edu)



# FIELD DAYS

## HOOPHOUSE CONSTRUCTION

In March, PA-WAgN members in the Northeast got the growing season off to a great start by learning how to construct a simple, unheated high-tunnel greenhouse. Members met at Flint Hill Farm in Coopersburg, where owners Kathy Fields and Anita Russo had readied the site and gathered the materials. The weather was glorious, one of the first warm, sunny days, and nearly 20 women came out to help build the structure.

Kathy Fields welcomed the group and showed them her greenhouse plans. "I need a small greenhouse for starting herbs that I will use in the fresh chevre that I sell," Kathy said. "I have plans for a 12' by 30' greenhouse that will be perfect for my needs, is inexpensive to build, and is small enough that I'll be able to move it later if I need to." Kathy's high-tunnel was built with lumber, PVC plastic pipe, and a plastic skin. The simple structure was built in less than three hours by enthusiastic participants.

Penn State Extension Educator Warren Goll assisted with the construction. Warren, who has many years of experience in greenhouse production, showed members how to prepare the site, tighten the frame, and stretch the plastic. Participants measured and cut boards, drilled bolt holes, and attached the ends. "I need a small high tunnel

like this on my farm," one woman said. "This workshop has given me the confidence to tackle it—with the help of 20 PA-WAgN friends, of course."

If you were unable to attend the workshop but would like more information on high-tunnel production, check out Penn State's Center for Plasticulture at <http://plasticulture.cas.psu.edu/introduction.html>. A manual for high-tunnel production is available from the Center for \$26.50. To order, visit <http://plasticulture.cas.psu.edu/manual.htm>. If you would like more information on small-scale high-tunnel production, please feel free to contact Warren Goll at 610-690-7676 or [wgg1@psu.edu](mailto:wgg1@psu.edu). And if you would like to have a copy of Kathy Field's building plans, please contact the PA-WAgN office at 814-865-7031.

Linda Stewart Moist  
PA-WAgN  
[lsm9@psu.edu](mailto:lsm9@psu.edu)



Hoophouse construction at  
Flint Hill Farm.  
Photographs courtesy of Anita Russo

### POULTRY PROCESSING WORKSHOP BLAIR COUNTY

**FRIENDS FARM**  
OCTOBER 16, 2007  
9:00 A.M.—12:00 NOON

INTERESTED IN PROCESSING YOUR OWN POULTRY? JOIN CHRIS WISE AT FRIENDS FARM ON OCTOBER 16 FOR A HANDS-ON BUTCHERING SESSION. LEARN HOW TO PROCESS POULTRY HUMANELY, EFFICIENTLY, AND PROFITABLY.

REGISTRATION FEE \$ 15

REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-10.html>

TO LEARN ABOUT ADDITIONAL ON-FARM EVENTS AT FRIENDS FARM, VISIT PA-WAGN'S E-NEWS AT:  
[http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E\\_News.html](http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html)

### JOIN PA-WAGN AT HAMEAU FARM IN BELLEVILLE, PA FOR AN FFA MIXER



OCTOBER  
2007  
(DATE TBA)

**HOST GAY ROGERS** WILL GUIDE PARTICIPANTS TO A CENTRAL PA MILK MARKETING COOPERATIVE IN REEDSVILLE, PA FOR A TOUR OF A GOAT MILK PROCESSING PLANT. RETURNING TO HAMEAU FARM, PARTICIPANTS WILL ENJOY AND EVENING PICNIC AND MEET YOUNG WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE—THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA.

REGISTRATION FEE \$ 15  
REGISTER ONLINE AT

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-8.html>

VISIT HAMEAU FARM ON THE WEB TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FARM CAMP FOR GIRLS:  
<http://www.hameaufarm.com>

## AN EVENT OF INTEREST

SAVE THE DATES

**VALUE-ADDED MARKETING CONFERENCE**  
November 7-8, 2007

A conference on marketing value-added agricultural products, offered by Penn State Cooperative Extension's Value-Added Initiative, will be held in Harrisburg. The conference features sessions on organic marketing; adding value to dairy, fruits, and vegetables; developing top-notch product labels; agritourism; effective advertising and promotion; and much more.

Keynote presentations on globalization's impacts on local food systems and keys to developing and managing relationships with buyers and sellers are highlights of this event. Before and after the conference, take advantage of focused workshops on wine and hard cider production and marketing, simple tools for market research, managing a farmers' market, and reaching ethnic consumers.

Each session is designed to provide breadth and depth of information so that you can find something useful for your marketing efforts.

For more information, visit <http://farmbusiness.psu.edu>.

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Frequent Enews Updates Available At:  
[http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E\\_News.html](http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JOIN PA-WAGN FOR A SEASONAL DINNER AT FRIENDS FARM

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2007

6:00-9:00 P.M.

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTING UNIVERSITY PARK, FLEET OPERATIONS 5:00 P.M.

ENJOY A DELICIOUS, FRESH-FROM-THE-FARM SEASONAL DINNER AT FRIENDS FARM IN BLAIR COUNTY, MEET LOCAL FARMERS AND PRODUCERS AND ENJOY AN EVENING STROLL THROUGH THE FIELDS.

#### ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

DETAILS AND ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT:  
[HTTP://WAGN.CAS.PSU.EDU/2007FARM-DINNER.HTML](http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2007FarmDinner.html)

OR CONTACT ANN STONE AT

[AMS39@PSU.EDU](mailto:ams39@psu.edu) OR 814-863-4489

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 10, 2007**

\$35 PER PERSON

TRANSPORTATION FROM UNIVERSITY PARK, FLEET OPERATIONS AVAILABLE FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$5 FEE.

### DAIRY ALTERNATIVES FIELD DAY

YORK COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 26, 2007

10:00 A.M. — 3:00 P.M.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES TO INCREASE YOUR FARM PROFIT? JOIN PA-WAGN AS WE TOUR YORK COUNTY FARMS WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE CHANGES IN THEIR FARM BUSINESSES, INCLUDING ADDING PASTURED MEATS, EGGS, AND ORGANIC VEGETABLES, OBTAINING A RAW MILK LICENSE, AND ADDING ON-FARM MILK BOTTLING.

REGISTRATION FEE \$15 (INCLUDES LUNCH)

REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-9.html>

INCLUDING TOURS OF: STUMP ACRES,  
PERRYDELL FARMS,  
SWISSLAND ACRES, & SPOUTWOOD FARM

## LADIES OF THE LAND

As small, family farms continue to disappear, and large, mechanized farms dominate American agriculture, a new kind of farmer is sprouting up across the land: women. Although women have always been involved in farming, it has long been thought of as a man's job. Traditionally, farm women have often identified themselves as something other than the farmer. That's all changing. According to the USDA, between 1997 and 2002, the number of women who identified themselves as farmers increased by 13 percent. During these five years, Pennsylvania lost 2,000 farms but gained 1,000 farms run by women. Women are a fast-growing demographic in American agriculture and they are doing things differently.

While the average farm size in the U.S. has grown dramatically over the last 50 years, women tend to run smaller operations. Many choose organic and natural methods in contrast to the highly mechanized and chemically-dependent farming that dominates the rest of the agricultural industry. Many women strongly value their relationships with the community—from selling their products at local markets, to using their farms as de facto community centers.

On the surface, women farmers appear to be engaged in an agriculture that is different from conventional and commodity farming and women farmers' association with organic and local foods movements is well documented. Upon closer inspection, however, women farmers seem to be doing a bit more than capitalizing on recent growth areas in agriculture. They are engaging in a new kind of entrepreneurial activity that seeks to restore the farm to a central place in the local community.

Ladies of the Land profiles four women who once never thought they would be in charge of a farm. But today they raise cattle, sell goat cheese and harvest organic vegetables. They have dedicated their lives to cultivating the land and feeding their communities. With commentary from Carolyn Sachs, PhD, one of the nation's leading experts on women in agriculture, and Amy Trauger, PhD, founder of the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network, Ladies of the Land takes us on a journey through America's new heartland.



PA-WAGN members Kim Tait, Lyn Garling, and Elly Hushour are featured in this film and much of the footage of them was filmed during a series of interviews Amy Trauger and Carolyn Sachs conducted on the entrepreneurial and livelihood strategies of women farmers in Pennsylvania. The research highlights the ways in which women are doing business in agriculture and how their farming operations strive to meet social needs for community and healthy foods at the same time they provide a living for women who run the farms.

Megan Thompson made Ladies of the Land while completing her masters degree at New York University. A native of Minnesota and Michigan, she has long been interested in issues of health, agriculture, and the environment. She currently works in New York City television and is always looking for opportunities to get back out in the field (no pun intended).

The film won the Gracie Allen award for a student documentary and recently won an Academy of Motion Pictures as a Student Academy Award

*(Continued on page 7)*

ARE YOU TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ENEWS?  
PA-WAGN member events, classified ads, and much more available at:  
[http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E\\_News.html](http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html)

# FIELD DAYS

## THE RODALE INSTITUTE

Despite forecasts of heavy mid-week rain, 52 eager participants braved the odds to attend a June 13, 2007, field day at The Rodale Institute sponsored by PA-WAgN and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The tour of Rodale's 333 acres, introduction of PA-WAgN and presentation of PDA's Risk Management Tools spanned a fleeting 6 hours.



Touring Rodale's Gardens  
Photograph by Lynda Farrell

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Specialist Karen Powell focused on Risk Management Tools for Women Producers, explaining, "Many of the programs available through PDA are part of good business planning. Just like you protect your home with insurance, crop insurance provides protection against crop loss and therefore lost income. The bottom line is that crop insurance can help a producer survive a disaster and return to profitability." PDA is always creating new programs based on farmers' needs so the audience was encouraged to contact their insurance agent.

PA-WAgN was introduced by Linda Moist, Senior Extension Associate. Linda also farms Clan Stewart Farm, a bicentennial farm producing pastured meats and vegetables. "PA-WAgN is a program that began at Penn



Undeterred by ominous storm clouds, the tour continued to Rodale's research fields.

Photograph by Lynda Farrell

State in 2003, emulating the Vermont and Maine womens' agricultural networks." Linda explained, "PA-WAgN supports women in agriculture by providing a positive learning environment, networking and empowerment."

"Through SARE and NRI grant research we found women farmers are interested in direct marketing, hands-on learning, and sustainable agriculture," Linda reported. "PA-WAgN holds field days and workshops statewide based on those interests." Asked why women seem to prefer woman oriented workshops, audience

(Continued on page 7)

Sun shining, we were welcomed by Rodale Research & Training Manager, Dr. Paul Hepperly. "Rodale was the brainchild of chronically ill Jerome Rodale," Hepperly began, "who in the 1930's researched his way to good health. His keen interest in farming and pursuit of personal health led him to make a vital connection between healthy soil and healthy people. He taught us to feed the soil not the plant."

Ultimately, The Rodale Institute was formed and a three generational commitment was made to finding agricultural solutions to major health and environmental problems, to proving the solutions work, and to sharing solutions with the world. Rodale's motto, "Healthy Soil, Healthy Food, Healthy People®," is echoed on the farm's barn—"Food: The essence of life".

Amanda Kimble-Evans, Assistant Editor of Rodale's *New Farm* introduced Rodale's online farmer-to-farmer newsletter, *New Farm* at <http://www.newfarm.org> and children's site, *Kidsregen* at <http://www.kidsregen.org>. Both sites are reflections of Rodale's commitment to education.

## DOWN ON THE FARM WITH SENATOR CASEY

(Continued from page 1)

consumers and I can never afford to sell at anything close to supermarket prices. I receive no government subsidies to offset my costs of production, so my prices are much higher. Yet, my customers know they are making a choice to support local agriculture when they buy from me. Every dollar they pay me is returned to my local economy to support the equipment dealer, feed store owner, local butcher, and other local people. Unless consumers support small, local farms, we will have no real food security."

Linda Moist, who direct markets pastured meats and vegetables at her Huntingdon County farm, expressed concern over the lack of markets in rural areas of the state. "In my county, we have high land values, yet very few preserved farms--probably only one farm per year is preserved. What hope do we have for keeping our farms from development? I think the only real chance we have is to help farmers increase their incomes by diversifying and selling directly to consumers. To be successful, we need more farmers markets, more ways to connect farmers with urban customers. Extending the funds available for Senior Citizens and WIC program participants to buy at farmers' markets would also help farmers."

The wave of the future is for consumers to "buy local," the group agreed. Kim also mentioned that women farmers were going directly to consumers in their enterprises. As demand for local products increases, there is a real need for federal funding of value-added farm enterprises, Cheryl Cook said. "The Farm Bill must help farmers develop value-added farm enterprises. Specifically, we should greatly increase funding for specialty crops and value-added producer grants."

Senator Casey listened carefully to the words of PA-WAgN farmers and asked numerous questions to help clarify and understand their issues and concerns. He expressed interest in providing health care for farmers and other small-business owners, supporting educational programs for agriculture, increasing support for specialty crop producers, and supporting agriculture in Pennsylvania.

Linda Moist  
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## SANDRA MILLER

(Continued from page 10)

there is even a deeper level of satisfaction knowing that I am providing more than a product by helping immigrants maintain their traditions," Sandra explains.

The philosophy embraced at Painted Hand Farm is to minimize debt to nothing more than the original mortgage. "If I can't afford to do something, I don't do it. The money has to be in the bank for a project to be done." Sandra explains. This limits financial pressures and allows the farm to grow at a manageable rate.

Painted Hand Farm will continue to expand as Sandra adds dairy goats and a cheese making facility. "We plan to grow until the farm says "no more." I'll know because the pastures will show if they can't support the animals."

"I don't always get it right on the first try," Sandra says of her success. "I love having field days here because I want people to know that this is a work in progress. We will continue to learn, share and grow."

Sandra's willingness to share her struggles and successes with new and beginning farmers makes her a valuable asset to the PA-WAgN community. She greatly enjoys teaching and is always available to answer questions offer guidance.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PAINTED HAND FARM AND THEIR PRODUCTS, VISIT:

<http://www.paintedhandfarm.com>

## MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

### SANDRA MILLER



Sandra Miller at Painted Hand Farm  
—Photograph by Ann Stone

and the clothes on my back.” Here Sandra met Ralph and they decided to rejuvenate the overgrown orchards. “We thought we were going to kill the trees with our extensive pruning.” But the following year, the orchard produced an abundance of fruits.

Using her knowledge of animals and fruit production, Sandra decided to purchase a dilapidated farm in Cumberland County with the intent of raising meat rabbits and growing peaches and thornless blackberries. All ventures were unsuccessful. Sandra continued to seek her niche market and quickly discovered that meat goats were (and continue to be) in high demand amongst Middle-eastern immigrants. Sandra purchased two goats and fenced 1/4 acre of land for foraging. Herd, fencing and infrastructure grew as farm profits increased. “Each time we built upon our process, we learned from our mistakes,” Sandra laughingly explains. At one point, it was recommended that Sandra spray herbicides and pesticides and remove pine trees, poison ivy and multi-flora rose.

“Kill everything and plant a monocrop,” experts advised. Sandra quickly realized that this approach was not cost effective and decided to seek alternatives. Sandra attended a PASA conference and began reading *Stockman Grass Farmer* and decided that she did not want to farm conventionally. With her new education, Sandra looked at her massive pine trees and realized that this wasn't a mess that needed to be removed, but an energy source and natural shelter for her goats. She now cultivates poison ivy because of its high protein as well as its natural parasite reduction qualities. “I look at the cultivation of poison ivy from a financial standpoint—I have 70 fat, healthy goats and I'm not feeding them any grains,” Sandra says. “Only does during their last six weeks of gestation are fed grains to increase their energy as they come off pasture and also when they start kidding for extra energy for milk production. “It's a matter of educating yourself. Watch your herd. Know what's working and what isn't,” Sandra advises.

Prior to purchasing the farm, Sandra developed strong business skills through several successful business ventures which she now uses to increase profitability and market her products. With her meat-goat operation, Sandra started with one Muslim customer and now direct-sells almost exclusively to an ethnic market. “It's great to have customers that are absolutely grateful to have a product that allows them to identify with their cultural identity. My customers come to the farm and are thrilled to have access to goat meat. Farming is so satisfying but

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Sandra Miller, together with her family, owns and operates Painted Hand Farm, a successful meat-goat operation in Cumberland County.

Undeterred by the lack of a farming background, Sandra always knew that she wanted her own farm. Her farming career was launched while attending college in the mid-west. She was invited to a ranch “party.” In actuality, it was three straight days of very hard work branding, castrating, and vaccinating cattle. Sandra's passion was sparked, keeping her at the ranch for several years. Sandy moved to Oregon and drifted on to a horse boarding and training facility where she was charged with overall care of the horses. “I learned to let animals do their own thing,” Sandra says of her knowledge gained on these ranches.

Following her ranching years, she moved to California. Sandra explained, “I lived in the middle of an avocado and citrus orchard in an old trailer with two dogs, a horse,

## THE RODALE INSTITUTE

(Continued from page 6)

members offered that an atmosphere of women can be less intimidating. “And children are always welcome,” Linda smiled, “Our next generation of farmers!” PA-WAgN boasts a growing membership of 850 women farmers, agricultural professionals, educators, and consumers.

With sun still shining, we began our tour of Rodale, first visiting the demonstration gardens and greenhouse. Horticulturists April Johnson and Eileen Weinstein discussed the use of composting, grass mulch and raised beds as we toured “Garden of the World” with its array of globally indigenous plants. The medicinal garden, taught us that *Spilanthes* is referred to as the toothache plant and we learned that a recent study verified that organic growing provides higher vitamins and minerals in our food, without a higher farming cost.

A visit to Amy and John Good's community supported agriculture (CSA) farm provided answers to often asked questions about implementing CSAs. Amy described a CSA, “The member makes a spring investment in the farm by purchasing shares of the farm's bounty. Shares are determined by number of people in the share and by expected yield. Farm fresh food is then picked up weekly throughout the season. Arrangements are also made with local poultry, beef and pork producers allowing

members to buy other fresh and local foods at our CSA.” The Good's 190-member CSA has a 70% membership retention rate and a waiting list. Amy offers help to anyone who wants to start a CSA and can be found on Quiet Creek Farm at The Rodale Institute.

Piling into a tractor-drawn wagon, we drove to research fields used for farming systems, water quality, making and using compost properly, use of beneficial insects, mycorrhizae and Rodale's organic no till roller in action. Undeterred by a sudden downpour, questions and answers flew as we watched the roller demonstration.

As we drove back to the pavilion, I asked 9-year-old bench mate Courtney Singley if she was going to be a farmer when she grew up. Wide-eyed and without missing a beat, she replied, “I already AM a farmer.” It was a very good day.

Educational and inspirational, a Rodale tour is a must for farmers and children of all ages. Information on Rodale tours can be found at <http://www.rodaleinstitute.org>.

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## LADIES OF THE LAND

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Winner in the best documentary category. The depiction of the lives of farming women is a boon for women in agriculture everywhere, and raises awareness of the demographic and ideological shifts in agriculture in the United States.

The film is *also* gorgeous, inspiring and engaging. A must see!

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This article includes excerpts from  
<http://www.ladiesofthelandmovie.com>



LADIES OF THE LAND  
AVAILABLE AT:  
<http://www.ladiesofthelandmovie.com>

## GOING LOCAL

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

This month's installment of ravings from your local citizen eater involves explaining how I learned to stop worrying and love purslane. In late May, I went to a conference on food and agriculture in British Columbia. I hastily planted the last of my little baby tomatoes and vegetables and left them to fend for themselves for ten days. They slowly succumbed to the heat and the weeds (namely purslane) while I listened to and participated in a lot of discussions about a lot of things related to food and agriculture, namely foodways.

Microsoft Word© doesn't recognize the word foodways (a sure sign of something radical, as it, rather ironically, doesn't recognize "marginalize" either) and for quite awhile at the conference I couldn't recognize foodways either. I'm still not sure that I would know one if I met one, but in any case, I left the conference with a new word for food culture in my vocabulary and it just won't stop rattling around in my head. In the interest of full disclosure, I must also mention that at the conference I participated in some of the foodways of the Northwest which meant consuming a lot of wild salmon and wild mushrooms, and which, for obviously delicious reasons helped me more fully understand the concept. I suspect I need to participate in some more foodways, perhaps in Italy, to really fully grasp it though.

As far as I can tell, thus far, foodways are the ways in which we "do food" which includes, but is not limited to, the ways we produce and consume food. They can be tied to culture, but not necessarily, and culture, quite significantly, doesn't predetermine foodways. For example, some popular foodways of Philadelphia include pretzels and cheesesteaks. To my understanding, these are products of two different food cultures—German and Italian, respectively. But both are also a product of street-food culture and the need for a fast snack on the feet. How very American...which is exactly the point of foodways. It's the combination of place and culture that

produce a particular way of "doing food."

There is something so genteel, so summer afternoon on the porch eating watermelon, about the idea of foodways that I can't stop thinking about it, especially when I'm picking peas or weeding purslane. Foodways are processes. They are patterns and habits always in the process of becoming. They unfold slowly, carefully over time like a good meal. They are the ways in which we eat, the ways in which we think about and value food. *How*

specific foods become a part of our lives and our habits is as important as the food itself. Foodways are not things, they are menus, recipes, markets, gardens, transactions, conversations and communions. They are constantly open to interpretation and they are food come alive.

As many of you know, I am in a process of developing some of my own foodways. These are patterns and habits that focus on producing and consuming food that comes from the place in which I live. As you also probably know this is a process fraught with trial, error, joy, and frustration. When I came home from my conference

I found that my baby tomatoes weren't big enough for the grown up world of the garden, the chipmunks had eaten my corn seedlings, and purslane had completely taken over the garden (Microsoft Word doesn't recognize purslane either, which gives it some street-cred I guess). I sighed and commenced to hoeing and replanting and hoeing and hoeing.

'Round about mid-June I was beyond hungry for some fresh vegetables and even though I hadn't even finished planting my peppers yet, I was a bit grumpy about having to dig out the very persistent and resilient purslane that had invaded my chard, kale, peas, salad greens, cilantro, beans, carrots, onions...instead of getting to eat some nice green thing. After throwing a wad down in disgust (after learning the hard way that it doesn't really die like a

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Research has shown that purslane contains the richest plant source of omega-3 fatty acids!

Yet another reason to eat your weeds!

Photograph courtesy of Amy Trauger

## GOING LOCAL

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

*(Continued from page 8)*

normal weed when you chop it up with a hoe). I sighed and thought (it was probably closer to whined) I just want something green and substantial to eat. Note, as I did in this moment, how I am satisfied no longer by the spring greens I craved all winter and which were now happily thriving, and how resentful I was of the very abundant green gifts of purslane with which my garden was showering me. *I am green, substantial, abundant, and very edible you ungrateful wretch*, the piles of rejected purslane seemed to say to me as they pretended to die.

I laughed a bit at myself and the world in general as I sat down in the warm soil of my garden and let a new foodway unfold. I can't say I was (or am) completely thrilled with the idea of eating purslane. The ways in which we categorize our world are as persistent as purslane. It was still very much a weed in my mind. Never mind that it is loaded with Vitamin A and C, low in calories and carbohydrates and, hey, no trans-fats to worry about! It's as delicious as any spring green and as substantial as asparagus and makes a nice bridge between the seasons of spinach and asparagus and can keep you going after asparagus until the peas come on. It's also good raw or cooked and it adds color and zest and novelty to everything from chopped salads to "hotdish" (yes, one of the popular foodways of my homeland in the Midwest). And did I mention it is really, really easy to grow?

Both Michael Pollan and Barbara Kingsolver in their recent books about food and agriculture bemoan and decry the lack of an American food culture. They claim that this lack is the reason for our bad food habits. I beg to differ. We have lots of food cultures—some great, some terrible. What we don't have are foodways that make paths back to the farm and to the abundance and health of the earth. Purslane single-handedly blazed a new foodway for me just because I was present, conscious, and longing. Perhaps as my gardening skills get better, purslane may cease to be a part of my foodways (both as an omnipresent weed *and* part of my diet). But it doesn't matter so much what I put in my mouth, it's the conscious choices for health along the path from soil to table that makes a nourishing, in all possible meanings of the word, foodway.

Take a look at your foodways and follow one to a farm or a garden near you.

Eat well, live well...be well.

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#### **Purslane and Mixed Greens Casserole**

*(adapted from Billy Joe Tatum's Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook)*

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced.
- 1 medium summer squash, sliced in rounds
- 2 cups steamed purslane
- 1 cup steamed watercress/mustard greens/chicories/dandelion
- 3/4 cup white sauce
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 cup dry bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sauté onion and garlic in butter until fragrant. Add summer squash and cook until golden. Combine purslane with other greens. Season with salt and pepper. Add white sauce.

Layer greens in the bottom of a 1 1/2 quart casserole, followed by half the summer squash/onion mixture and sprinkle with part of the grated cheese, then bread crumbs. Repeat, with cheese as the last layer. Bake 15 minutes or until cheese topping has melted. Serve hot. Serves 6.